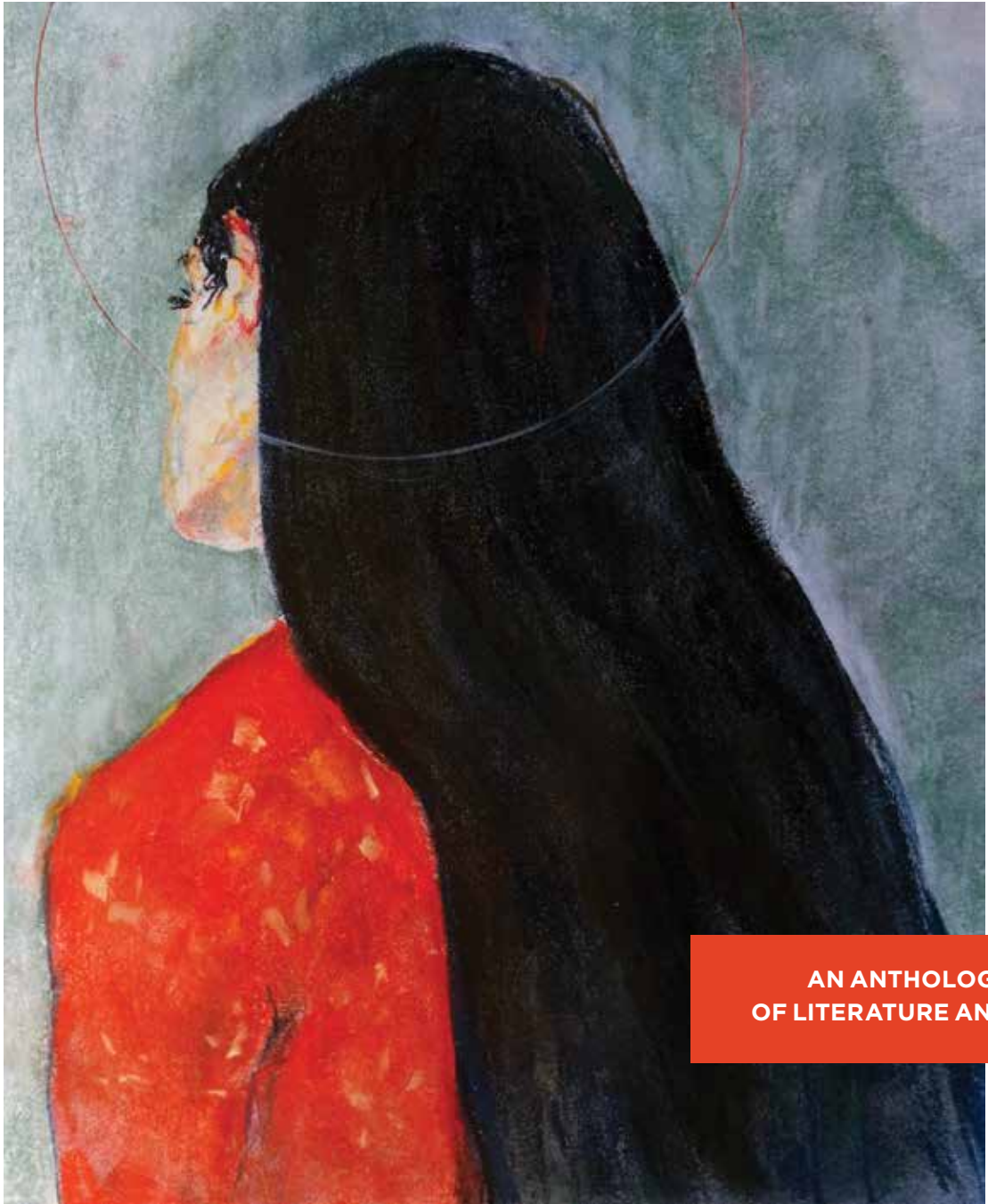


POICTESME



AN ANTHOLOGY
OF LITERATURE AND ART

TRIBUTE

In memory of
Claudia Emerson

PROSE

A personal essay
by Brennan Chambre

POETRY

Editor's choice winner
David Brunson

Sticks
Dakota Becker
Graphite



POICTESME

(pwa-tem)

1. A fictitious French province created by James Branch Cabell that serves as a setting of several of his fantasy novels.
 2. Virginia Commonwealth University's anthology of Literature and Art
-

Print Shop
Josh Williams



Editor's Note

POICTESME IS VERY DEAR TO MY HEART.

When I was a sophomore, it was a place for me to explore all of the facets of the literary world that interested me and that weren't provided by the English major. It became more than reading and writing about what you read. It became about re-working, editing, curating, designing and illustrating what you read. My ideas were never invalid and I quickly learned the art of polishing thoughts into reality. I learned to speak up, to confront, to ask questions, to remember to proofread emails.

I became the editor-in-chief of this publication quite suddenly and unexpectedly. It was the week before the fall semester started and I had received no training for this position, no pep talks, no informational packets, and quite frankly I had no idea what to do. But this year, I got lucky. I got the most creative, steadfast, and trustworthy staff I could have asked for. I got the staff that would lead me calmly through every roadblock, the staff that had an infinite supply of ideas, the staff that taught me about community, friendship, and dedication. I was only the vessel for their thoughts and ideas. This year we have introduced a lot of new ideas to the journal and are truly keeping our promise of showcasing various types of art and literature. For the first time, Poictesme is including doodles, medical illustration and an essay. We have extensive back matter filled with artist statements. We no longer have sections for art and literature as if they were separate. The amount of effort and labor this staff have poured into this publication is quite humbling and I am very saddened to leave them in May.

Even outside of Poictesme's official members, I was always helped by the wonderful staff of the Student Media Center. Collectively, I've spent hours asking questions to Greg Weatherford, Jacob

McFadden, Mark Jeffries, Susann Cokal, and Samantha Foster. Whether it was an appointed meeting in an office chair, or after an unsolicited knock on their door, or after chasing them down in the hallway, they were always willing to drop what they were doing to talk to me and help me through my usually unnecessarily frantic questions.

Even outside of the Student Media Center's office hours, I was able to receive and learn from the ideas of my coworkers and peers. I discovered so much about the publication world and the world in general from Cort Olsen of Ink Magazine, Brittany Maddox of Amendment Literary Journal, Cyrus Nuval of the Commonwealth Times, Michael Pasco of Mesh Media, Heather Hudgins of WVCW, Michael Rodriguez and Madison Doeckel of the Advertising Staff, and the SMC designers Veronica Sung, Miranda Leung, Anya Shcherbakova, Kayla Seabridge and Raquela Hamman. The wealth of their knowledge is overwhelming.

It doesn't end there, however. It is the art and literature of VCU students that gives Poictesme an existence. It is their work and their efforts that make Poictesme possible. Those countless hours of typing and sitting in a studio have not been taken for granted. They are worth so much more than a grade. I am thankful to be given the opportunity to showcase their work. Thank you Anthony Sudol, for gracing the cover of this issue and for allowing us to use your work as the embodiment of the creative energy of VCU's student body. Thank you to the College of Humanities and Sciences, VCUarts, the English Department, and the Richmond community for accepting Poictesme with fervor.

I can't take credit for the book you are holding in your hands. I had only a small part to do with it. This was a village.

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We accept submissions all year round from VCU students only.
All styles are welcome.

Send us your submissions, thoughts, questions, concerns,
or just say hello at pwatem@gmail.com

**“There is not
any memory
with less
satisfaction
than
the memory
of some
temptation
we resisted.”**

JAMES BRANCH CABELL



Concave

LAUREN COLIE

Your last act
was full of
peanut butter. In a
back-of-the-drawer,
back-alley burial,
your saliva settled
into the hollow
of my neck. No one
now reaches for
my hand to hold or
my hips to use.

I was a sturdy vessel.

I brought sweetness
To your lips and
lived in the cool,
silvered tomb in a
drawer in your kitchen.

Your fingers wrapped
around my curves.
You spun me, dizzy,
in your grasp and
I reflected your
smile upside-down.
You plunged me into
hot and cold, dragged
me in your caravan
through your Kilimanjaros
and Death Valleys.
You lifted your mood
swings on my sloped back.

Bent, dented and
pitted from use, you
bathed me in lemon and
warm water,
the scent of sun and
the wash of the Ganges
kissed my curved jaw.

Between scoops of
mint chocolate chip ice cream and of
macaroni and cheese,
your fingers
traced unfamiliar ridges
up my spine. I don't know how
I grew so thin.



A Life In The Woods

NICOLE MARIA WILLIS


THE OLD MAN'S BONES CREAKED as he made his way between the snowdrifts, his arthritic fingers jolting about trying to grip his rifle. He heard small wheezing noises in the distance and slowed down a bit to let his grandson catch up. The boy raised his knees to hip-level with determination, goose-stepping shakily through the snow in rolled-up pant legs and boots so loose they didn't quite manage to touch his toes. Eventually he made it to his grandfather's side, standing just below his elbow.

The man leaned in and whispered, "Don't make so much noise, you'll scare away the animals." There were still too many mouths to feed, regardless of however much work he could find because of the war effort. He hadn't hunted in

years, having usually left it up to his two sons. His boys were gone now, one of them leaving behind a wife pregnant with a second child. Keeping enough food in a home with four and a half people was a challenge. His grandson was growing, and he would not let the boy go to bed hungry.

"Yes sir!" The boy eagerly followed his grandfather. It was not the first time he had been taken along on a hunt. When his father and uncle were still at home, they would let him tag along. Now the two were gone; both were oceans away. Father in a pillbox and Uncle in a pine box.

The old man and his grandson weaved between the fresh evergreens and lifeless deciduous trees whose skeletal branches hung heavy with ice from the last storm. Slowly and quietly they made their way



towards a sloping clearing by the trees. It was sometime between late winter and early spring. The snow was still abundant but the ground was beginning to thaw, causing large patches of coarse, frostbitten grass to come through. Heavy stalks of sickly chartreuse grass dragged at the ground, its weight forcing it to arch over, forming a soft, cushioned blanket. Small animals scavenged in the dirt, scratching about, looking for something to change up the mundane flavors of winter.

“Look over there. See it? Right there by the hollow tree. That fidgeting under the grass,” The old man whispered as he crouched by the boy; hand on shoulder, eye to eye.

“Yes sir.” Shaking, the boy tightly gripped his peashooter with both hands, his bright eyes wide with excitement. He looked to-and-fro; his eyes darted about hoping to find some rustling between the bare trees, wanting to appear vigilant so as to impress the old hunter. His grandfather, expecting him to take part in the hunt, had bestowed upon him a small rifle which he held with pride.

It was late in the day, yet the thick morning fog remained. The vapor clung to blades of grass, stirring only when things rustled underfoot. Quails had assembled uneasily under the grassy canopy; they had heard the old man and his grandson approach. Feathers still puffed from their bath in the dry snow, the birds gathered and waited.

In the other end of the field, two deer picked at a small patch of grass.

The hunters crept towards the clearing. The old man treading in timeworn, well-rehearsed movements. The boy reeled his legs up and sharply tiptoed through the grass and snow. The man stopped just before the last tree marking the boundary between the woodland and the glade, his feet digging into the fallen pine needles by the trunk. The boy crept past his grandfather, a sharp tug at his collar brought him back into the forest shade.





A sole bird shot out from a grassy tuft, shattering the stillness of the clearing. Just as quickly as it took flight the quail hit the cold ground, its limp body bouncing from the impact, feathers falling slowly after the bird. The quail disappeared into a layer of mist. An assortment of rabbits, birds, and mice scampered back into the forest, leaving the body of their fallen comrade behind. The man walked out to collect the bird. The old man returned to his grandson, quail hanging by its ankles from his belt.

“Good job, boy,” the old man softly patted his grandson on the back, a small smile beginning to spread on his face.

“Thank you, sir.” His little hands relaxed on the rifle’s polished stock, shoulders slacked. The boy exhaled, his warm breath heating the air.

The two deer at the end of the clearing tensed up. The doe lifted her head and shook it violently from side to side, trying to find the source of the noise.

Shots rang out, the doe and her fawn took off. The old man had seen her lift her head and was now following her with the barrel of his rifle. He saw the fawn and tweaked his brow, finger trembling at the trigger. Need begets action. The two deer ran down the slope and jumped

over a small, frozen creek. The muzzle still trained on the moving doe, the old hunter fired. The doe slid forward on its neck, skipping ever so slightly and leaving a dragged imprint on the snow. The little fawn had escaped between two snowdrifts and into a thicket, never once looking back.

The old man slowly made his way towards the deer, but not before shoving the quail into the boy’s hands and ordering him to stay behind. The man cautiously approached the deer, making sure it was no longer alive before rolling it over on its stomach and spreading its limbs outwards. He took a knife from his waist and carefully poked it into the deer’s neck. The knife glided down, cutting from sternum to tail in one smooth gesture of the arm. He wavered a little before plunging his hands into the animal’s stomach, shakily dragging out warm entrails. The hunter tugged on the guts until he felt resistance and immediately cut the animal’s diaphragm. He swiftly shoved out the remaining organs, leaving the stomach cavity empty. He wrapped the liver in a few sheets of that day’s newspaper and then tucked it away into a coat pocket that crinkled and squished whenever the old man shifted. The deer was effectively hollow now, its ribs visible from in between marbled slabs of meat. The hasty

dressing of the deer left the hide speckled with blood. The frozen earth around the deer's body had become muddy and red, defrosting under the animal's heat. The old man's feet sunk into the soil.

The boy had been watching his grandfather in the clearing. He flinched at the tugging, cutting, and wrapping. The boy gripped the bird tightly, bending and snapping feathers with each successive swipe of a carving his grandfather made. The dressing of the deer was a bit too much for the boy; he shrunk back into himself, curling into his own chest, much like the crumpled quail he held so tightly. The boy walked stiffly towards his grandfather, dragging his feet and clenching the bird to his chest.

The old man sighed, "Son, didn't I tell you to stay by the tree?" The boy stood near the deer's head, peering down at its half-lid eyes whose lashes wrinkled together, matted with blood. The old man slowly lifted himself from the muddy earth, his worn knees bucking slightly. The boy -jolted out of his daze by his shaky grandfather- shot out an arm, helping the man steady himself. The old man's rickety knees were covered by worn, perforated hunting flannel that had time and time again been re-patched by a wife who had long ago accepted her husband's careless nature. The old man began an attempt to

ruffle the boy's hair until bloodied fingers came into view after which he quickly withdrew his hand. The man bent down to rinse his hands in the snow; he began to wipe them on his jacket when the boy offered up a handkerchief. The old man smiled down at his grandson; his grandson, in kind, tried to tweak the corners of his mouth. A firm hand slapped down on the boy's shoulder.

The sky was growing dark, and snow was beginning to fall. The old man and the boy began their victorious return home, dragging a deer and cradling a squeezed quail.

In the distance, past the old man and his grandson, the faun weakly poked its head out from its shelter of brambles. It mewed pitifully, calling out for its mother, before noticing the presence of a large, imposing stag. Their eyes met, and the faun fell silent; its body froze and its eyes went wide before conceding to tightly-shut, weak-limbed heartbreak. The faun followed the stag into the forest, head hung low as it trailed behind, only looking back once into the deepening snow.



Sometime Before December 13th

HEATHER HUDGINS

When I first went inside it was just a skeleton
I was young and so was he and
we were stupid and we were running
its metal spine reflected the passing
headlights and in every step hollow wood
bent under our echoing feet.

He told me about this one time he took too
much Benadryl and freaked out and
I told him about when my house
was just bones and we laughed and pretended
we were walking to class, up the stairs, down the hall
why did we sign up for such a late class?

I warned him not to touch the insulation
and he warned me not to stumble on a brick
we ran in circles invincibly, loudly,
till the cops flashed their lights and we panicked
and stood as still as the support beams
he whispered "shit," and I whispered "we'll be fine."

We told them we were freshmen
"we can't help it that we're stupid"
and the police agreed, they let us go
he smoked a cigarette and my arms kept shaking
and we sat in the dark shaking and smoking
I put my head in his cloud and thought about his hands.

When the building was finished I hated him
he had moved halfway across the world
and I passed by its bricks everyday
it still stood despite our meddling
and despite the memory of rubbing
my hands on its skeleton.

I had this class upstairs about world cities
and when we talked about where he lived
I sat in the back and played Tetris
focusing on building walls that kept getting destroyed
and no one told me I was trespassing
I was so bored that I almost fell asleep.

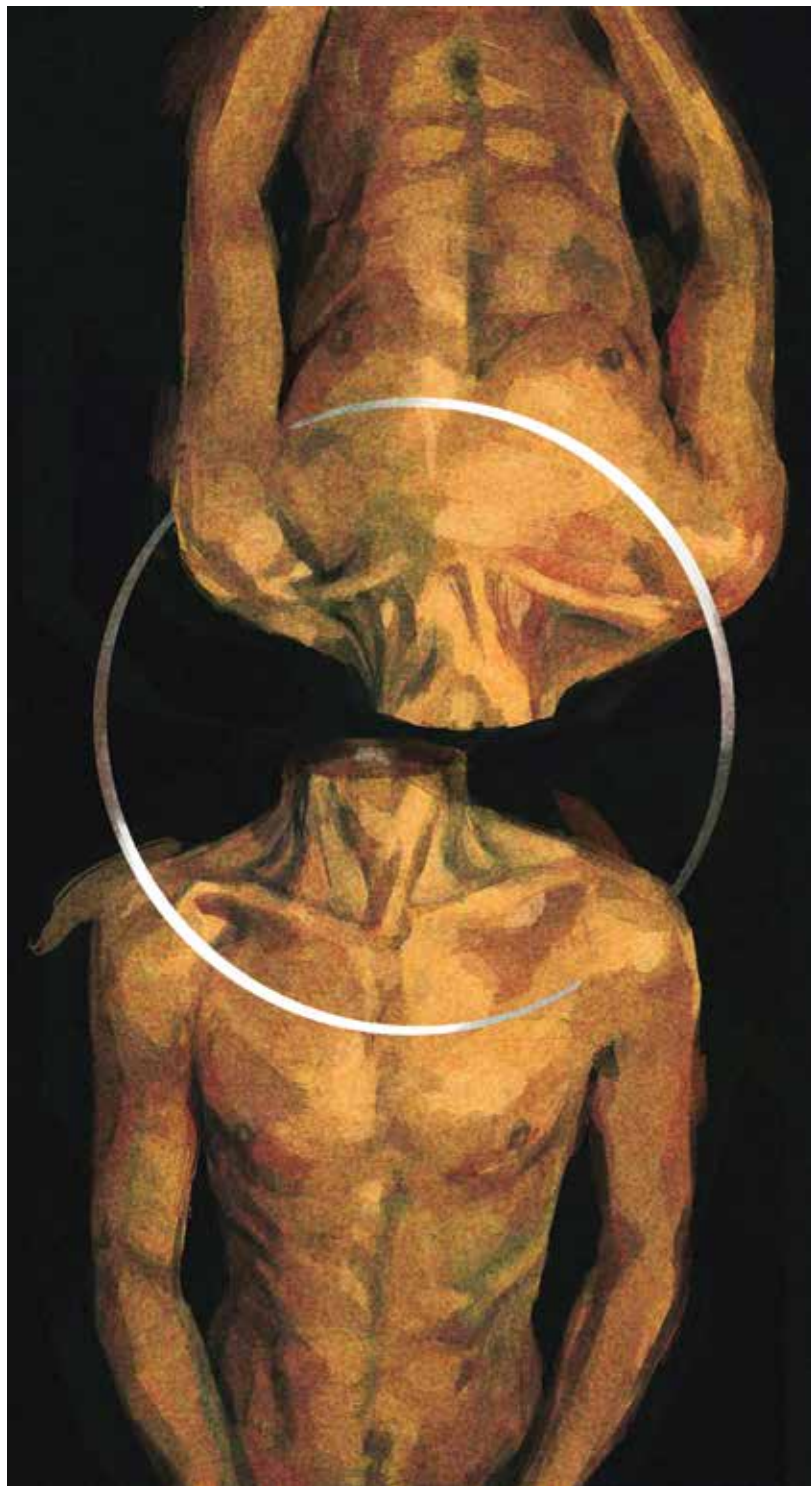
I Will Tell You My Sins

CLAIRE THOMPSON

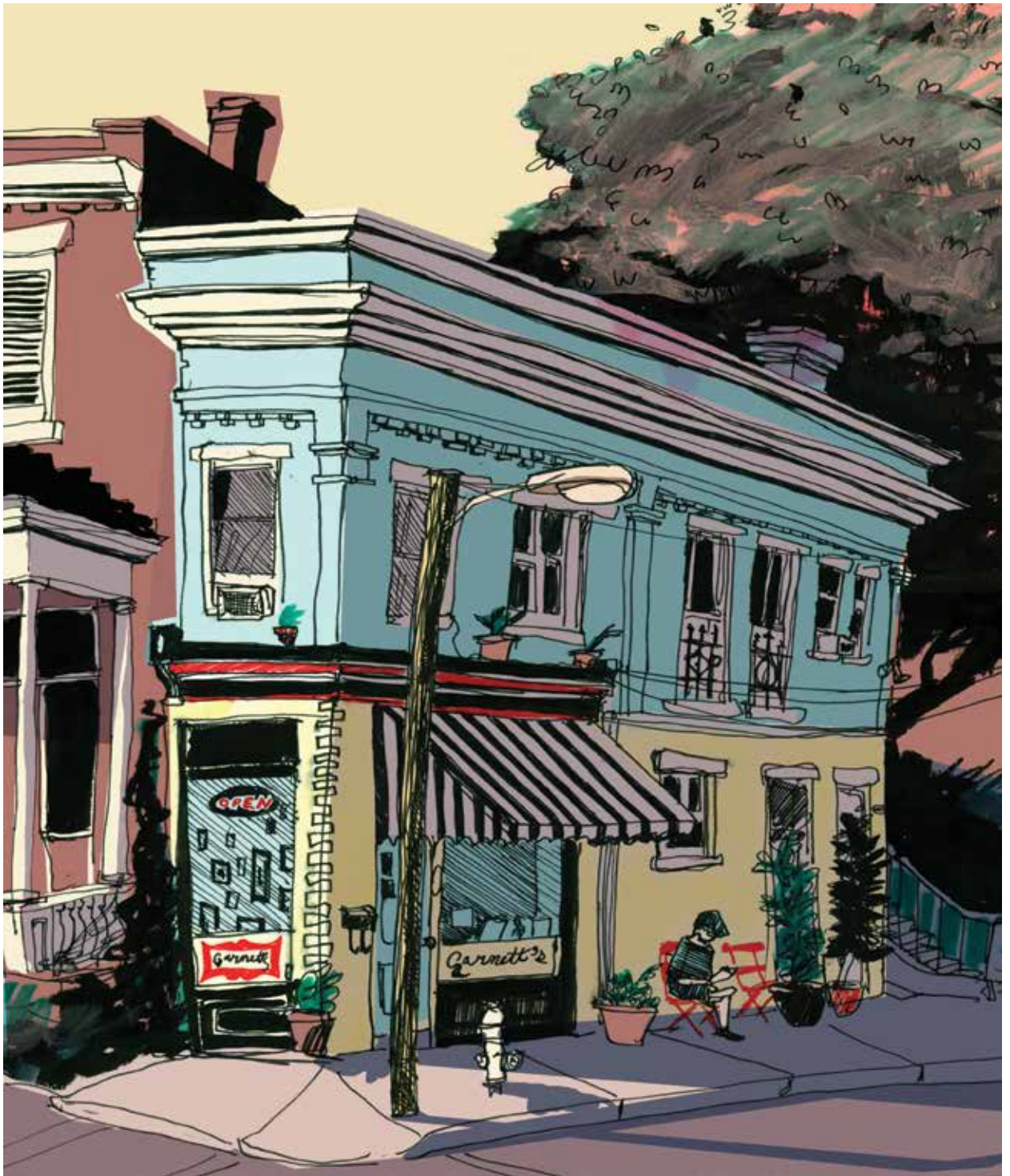
Cedar pews moaning that pained
creak of antique wood under our weight.
I was a child the last time I was inside
a church. This is the monster
made of smoke, thinner and greyer than you
had imagined—shimmering and seeping
with its cloying sweetness: a sickly
breath of rotten plants. I was a child,
folded in bed under a quilt left threadbare
by generations of use. My mother,
sitting beside me, reads from her Bible
and it is spellcraft. Behold, everyone
who quotes proverbs will quote
this proverb concerning you, saying,
'Like mother, like daughter.' When I prayed,
it was never as reverent and filled
with diffuse blue light. I was a child,
taking the rattling dim train through Italy,
asking if torn posters on the stained walls
were also beautiful paintings. A minister leads
the church in petitioning God to keep
the soul of the departed. I am
filled with an empty noise—
the static at the end of a VHS tape.
I'm sorry, Mother. I can still recite the Lord's Prayer.



(Opposite)
Altered Appearance Self-Portrait
Anthony Sudol
Acrylic, chalk on panel



Twin
Anthony Sudol
Digital



Garnett's
Keith Pfeiffer



Flare
Weston Clark

This Is How It Happened:

BAYAN ATARI

You allowed yourself to trust.
Imagine your arms raised towards the atmosphere
like two fleshy candles, your marionette twirling
with the ferocity of a child throwing a temper tantrum,
face alight with delusion –
this is the road to recovery! you thought.

Then you learned,
revelation by revelation, about the subtle,
yet colossal, see-saw push-pull
of power that crept in.
Imagine children throwing each other
into a muddy patch of earth, neither playful
nor laughing, preparing to slather mother's
gleaming hardwood floor with grime
and decapitated worms that look a lot like you.

Consider all the trickle-down control issues
that changed form as they pass from one
face in your memory to another.
Imagine every face you've ever photographed
Chanting your name as they disintegrate
Into a puddle around your feet.

Consider how all that coalesced and dripped
onto your head and eroded you into what you are.
Imagine ground water seepage in its
centuries-long crawl along rock walls,
carving stalactites with its obnoxious persistence,
the way you learned about it in high school
when you weren't sleeping.

All that manifested as
the pockmark festering on your ego,
the void gnawing at your chest,
the weight perched on your spine



Windows
John Dijulio

Dry Season

ISHAN BOSE

In the duststorm,
we found no survivors—
only splinters of bone
pieces of angry skin
carried by the wind.

Our desert home will
surely perish in the coming rain.

The last time I thought of spring,
I spent a day and night
in the shower, waiting
for the mountain of water
to melt my body
through the drain,
through the walls.

“She was simply the most alive, gracious, and courageous human being I have ever met. Incredibly funny and down to earth, she lived and loved life to the fullest. And she loved every minute of being at VCU.”

KATHERINE BASSARD, THE CHAIRWOMAN OF THE VCU DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Claudia

(1957–2014)

Setting “I”

EMILIA PHILLIPS

in memory of Claudia Emerson

I’M SETTING CLAUDIA’S “I” FOR A BROADSIDE in my beginning letterpress class at the Visual Arts Center, but I can’t find any em dashes (the poem has three) in the donated type cases. The substituted hyphens draw the eye—into the break between them, to their doubled length, away from the words and, therefore, their meanings—and I don’t want anything to disrupt the text, its sonic texture, the tincture of narrative: a scene from another’s illness, presumably her father’s, in which the first-person pronoun, “familiar / beginning of what he means to say,” has lost its meaning, “the word having returned / to sound,” in his confusion.

~

Claudia often talked candidly to me about the responsibilities of the poet, not just on the page but in the classroom, the local and arts communities, toward oneself. She advised me on handling publishing issues and reminded me to always think of my students first. These conversations were brief and free of reductive aphorisms, and therefore hard to quote or relate, but every time I’m exhausted from hours of grading or worried about my “career,” I think of Claudia and redouble my efforts.

~

The longer I spend setting, proofing, and correcting, the more “I” returns to letter, to image, to object. “I” as the letter—the stuff of poems, of letterpress. Damion Searls reminds us “that there once was a time when every letter, number, and punctuation mark printed on paper started life as a sculpture.” I think Claudia would’ve liked this idea: language as a sculpture, a crafted art form, and also a life. And with the word’s life, a responsibility to be, quite literally, meaningful.

~

At her funeral, I remember hearing someone say that Claudia Emerson will continue to live on in her work, something we always say of makers. I believe this in some way, and I don’t. I tell my poetry students that whenever we write I, it becomes the reader’s I, and whatever the I does in the poem, so the reader does in the imagination. It’s not so much Claudia herself will live in her work, though we may come to know and reknow her by it, every one of her words now “oblivious elegy” for her; it’s that we live in her work and we should try to live closer to it.

And I think she would’ve wanted it that way. To those who knew her, her life, her “I,” generous as it was, always included they, us, you.

~

I plan to print the broadside next week. I post my third proof of the poem to Facebook, noting my frustration about the missing em dashes. Another printer comments that I can search the sans serif drawers for a capital “I,” that I can turn it sideways in order to create the missing character—that break in thought, the connection between two.

“A few years ago I [wrote] that Claudia could be tough without being bitter, lyrical without being soft. That her clarity of vision was matched by her emotional honesty and love of life. I was talking about her splendid poems. But, of course, we who knew her saw that was simply Claudia. For all her cheerful courage this past year, she never pretended life wasn’t painful. She once wrote, ‘There will always be / . . . things I regret knowing.’ But know them she did, face them she did. Her death is one of those things I want to rip from reality.”

RON SMITH, IN AN EMAIL TO STYLE WEEKLY

The First Chord I Ever Wrote: A lesson Taught by Professor Claudia Emerson

JOHN S. BLAKE

ROBERT ALWAYS SENDS ME LINKS TO USELESS INFORMATION. If I posted on Facebook about my disdain for Republicans, I'd quickly get an emailed link—some random story about a conservative politician that did something humane. If I mentioned in conversation I despised cats, it was only a matter of minutes before Robert sent me some random crap about a cat saving some old lady's life; dialing 9-1-1 and meowing into a damn receiver. So you can imagine my knee-jerk response—upon finding out how euphoric I was after reading Claudia Emerson's "Late Wife"—when Robert sent another link. It was an article announcing Claudia Emerson's intention to teach at VCU.

I had toyed with the idea of returning to college. After twenty years of heroin addiction and alcoholism, I didn't know if I could handle it. I emailed professor Emerson—expecting no response—to share my joy for her work and to let slip my desire to be a student again. I also admitted my fears of being lost in class language, leaving a lesson feeling dumber than when I entered. She emailed me back that day. After some correspondence, she said I would be able to sit in on one of her classes as soon as the semester was underway.

When I walked into her class, professor Emerson welcomed me with a hug and introduced me as a "fellow poet". I damn-near died. I remember my face caught fire and I could barely fathom the redness of my cheeks. I sat and listened. The lesson was about scansion. I learned. I measured lines. I kept up. I had been self-teaching poetics eight years prior to that moment, and I realized it would have taken me weeks to learn what only took hours in Emerson's class.

When class was finished, I asked professor Emerson to sign my copies of her books (Robert bought me a copy of "Figure Studies". The professor asked me to walk with her towards her office. When we were far enough from other students, she asked me about my experience. I told her I was surprised to discover I had already read most of the books required in the syllabus and had already studied some of what she explained on my own.

"Of course you did. You're a poet." I felt bashful.

"I do have to say, I guess I can handle a beginner's poetry class" Professor Emerson laughed.

"That was an advanced writing class. I told you, you're ready. You've learned to play music all by yourself. You just need to come in here and learn how to write and read music. The things you know so many of them have yet to learn, but what they're learning..."

I enrolled that next Fall. Professor Emerson also helped me with a Cave Canem Fellowship submission. I can only hope to half the professor—and a molecule of the writer—she was.

“I never knew what the soul of a poet was until I knew Claudia. She was a loving soul, a creative mind and had the ability to express herself in ways not many of us can. This has hit us really hard down here.”

FORMER SENATOR CHARLES R. HAWKINS FOR THE RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH IN 2014

“I don’t know how much I heard from family and friends: You’re going to study what? But I think if I hadn’t pursued poetry...I think I would have stayed at home and that’s what I would have done. And I would have had a good life. It would have been fine. I just thought: Okay, I’m going to give this a go. And it worked out. And I was fortunate to be able to keep writing, and that I do love teaching. So, don’t be talked out of it by the naysayers.”

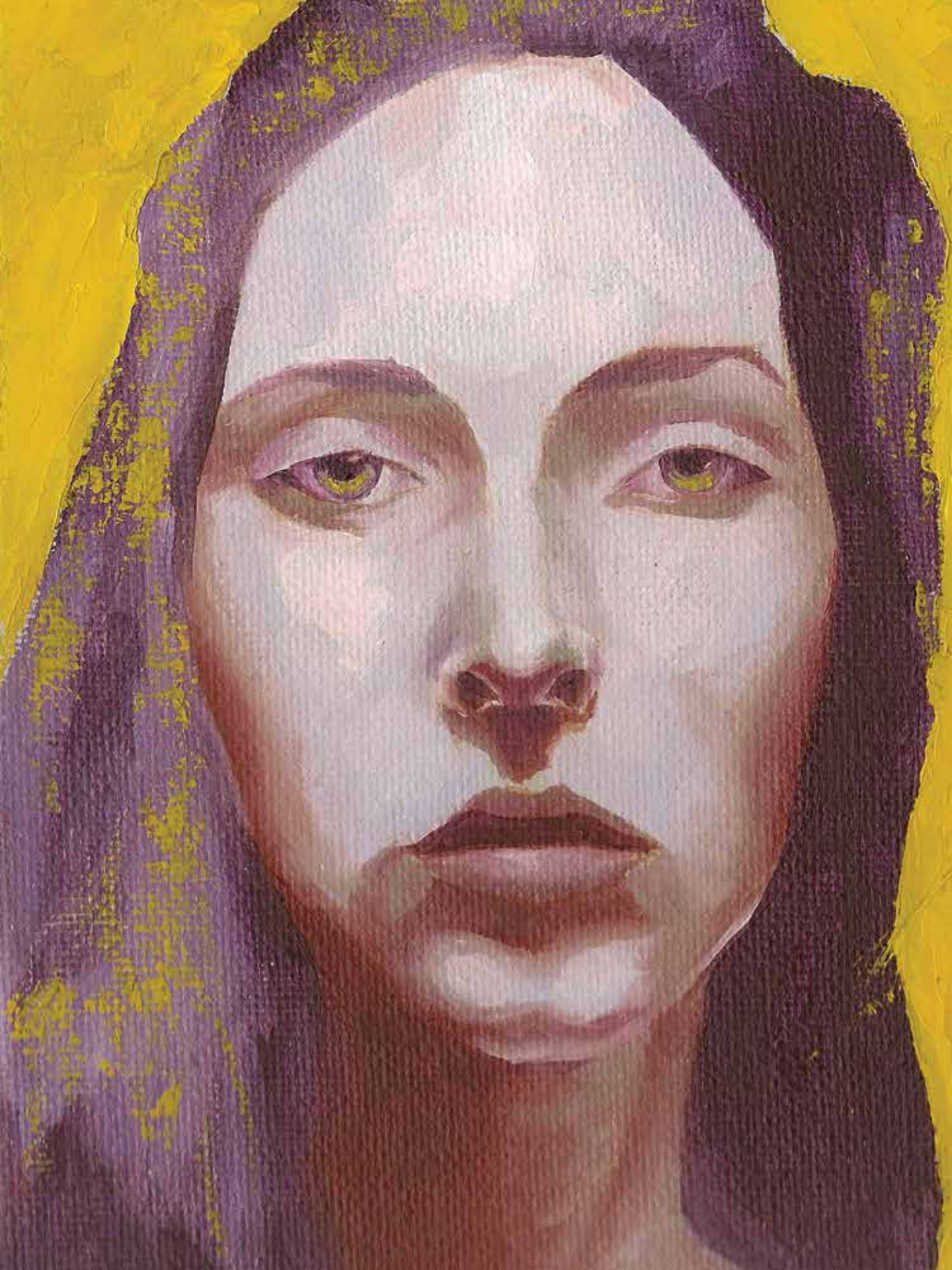


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The Lightning
Grace Popp
Oil on canvas

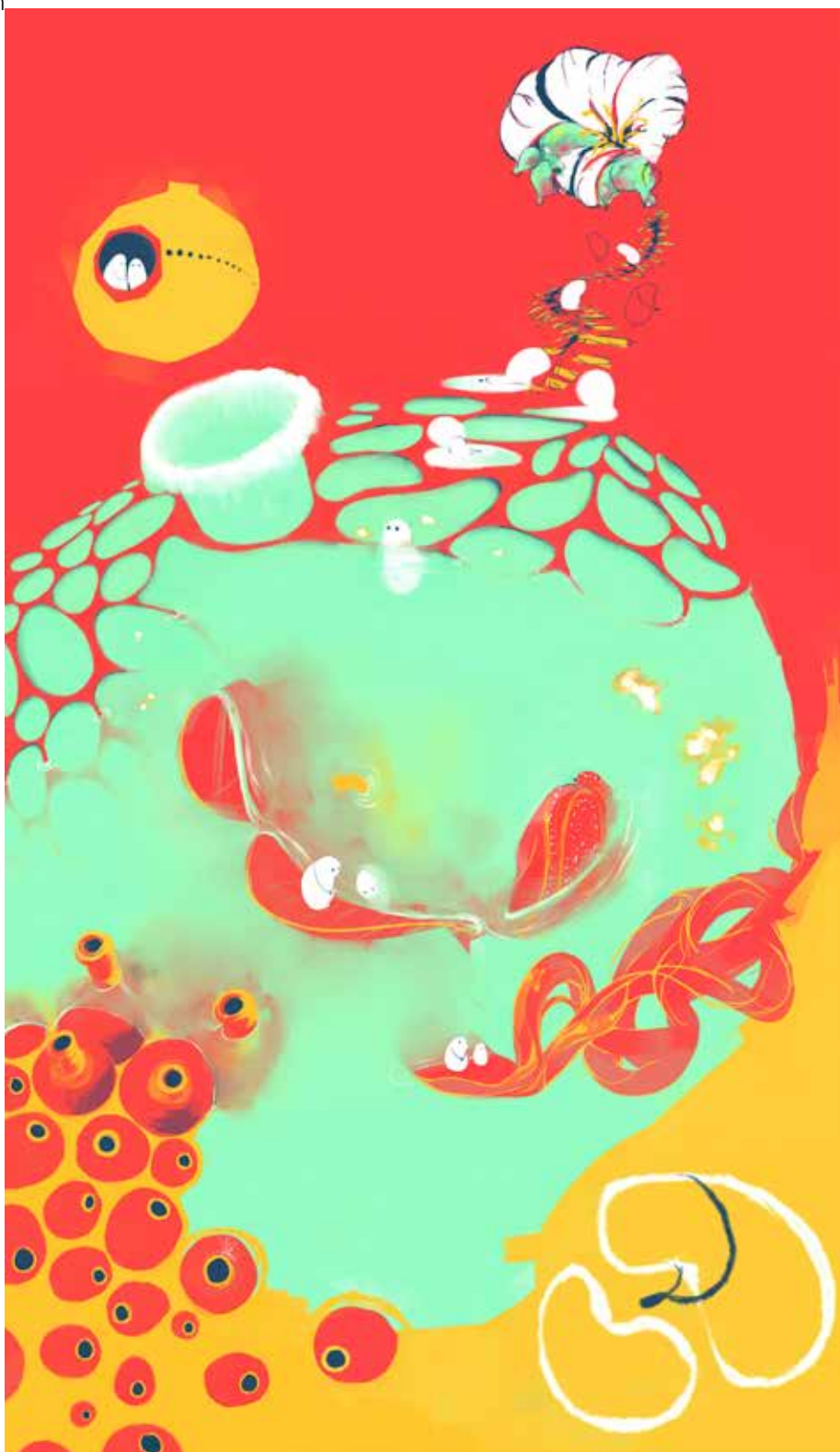


F. Azim

FAHIMDA AZIM



(Previous page)
Portrait Study
Fahmida Azim
Digital



Mothers: the birth of 3.
Ryan Schultz

(Space) Potatoes Re(produce) by (Bond)ing
Ryan Schultz



Sums

TAYLOR MANIGOULT

1.
tri-dear
licentious, licking
drip.

lilt tongue
syncopated umm'
honeyed.

group sweat got me
tangy.
then i fell asleep

2.
forever
bustling i can't
enunciate the word.
di am et er.

every whisper taste
like eyelashes and
let's keep it quiet that way.

3.
fraud u
lence, love,
broken.

in dist in guish able
sugar oh! hate, love,

whispered to
un i ntended
crev i ces. where

doess fraudulence belong?
not my tongue.

Breakers
Anthony Sudol
Digital





The Lair of Saint House

GRANT WOLFE

THE STEPS TO THE SIXTH PLATFORM were always smooth, no matter the year, the weather, or the number of people who stood on them and said aloud, “What’s The Lair of Saint House?” That final set of stairs were the ones he never climbed, that region where the wallpaper became something else entirely – sort off-white color that was difficult for the Man on the Fifth Floor to describe. The rest of the apartment complex had a sort of glow to it, and, in his apartment, the white walls were sometimes so bright and reflective that the Man on the Fifth Floor had to close all the blinds to be able to see.

It had been that brightness that had attracted the Man on the Fifth Floor and His Partner to the apartment to begin with. When the Man on the Fifth Floor first paced the empty living room where the walls radiated vacancy, where a path was discovered along the side of the wall that wouldn’t creak beneath his feet and force the neighbor below to raise his eyes, and where the lingering musk of bleach drifted out the window, he knew this was the place he wanted. Throughout the first week, the Man on the Fifth Floor and His Partner lined the floors with furniture, but the walls remained empty.

When he returned home from work every evening, the sun was always sitting just above the windowsill, forcing its way into the house. It was then that he was obliged to close the blinds and set down on the table the mail he had carried from the entryway. He would separate the mail into two piles for himself and for His Partner, then arrange the piles according to the due dates of the bills. He then knew ahead of time. The Man on the Fifth Floor was never late with his bills, a tactic he devised for the purposes of avoiding confrontation with a wide variety of individuals.

It was on a Friday that the Man on the Fifth Floor was stalled in his system as he held a letter in his hand with no name, just the label “No. 5”

Inside was a small blue card with gold laced borders. The card smelled of perfume, and the text on the card was indented into the paper. His Partner emerged from the bedroom.

“What’s that?”

“It’s an invitation to a potluck. The new downstairs neighbor is trying to get everyone together. She says it’s an international potluck, this Saturday. We’re supposed to bring food related to where our ancestors are from.” His Partner took the paper and examined it.

“She had these things printed. She’s taking this seriously.” He handed the card back. “Can you even say no to an invitation like that?”

"I don't think so. This is pretty much mandatory, at this point. I don't want to be offensive or anything." The Man on the Fifth Floor put the card down on the top of his bills pile.

"I guess we'll have to go shopping then. What are you again? Irish?" His Parter asked.

"Yeah, a third Irish. I think. I mean, all four of my grandparents were dead before I was even born, so I don't really know about any of that stuff. What are you?"

"Anglo-Something. Who knows. I'll just be Irish too. It'll be easier that way."

"Ok, that's fine. What do Irish people eat anyway? Potatoes?"

"Sure, why not. I wonder if the woman from the third floor is going to go. I still haven't actually spoken to her. Have you?"

The Man on the Fifth Floor paused to think, and the sun made its final shift down below the windowsill. With the blinds still down, the room filled with the shadows of early evening and they strained their eyes to see. As he turned on the apartment lights, the Man on the Fifth Floor thought briefly of the Woman from the Third Floor and wondered if she had been invited. He remembered the first time he met her. It was the first week they had moved in, three years prior, and he and His Partner were carrying their couch up the stairs, as there were no elevators in the old building. She had been wearing sweats and had been trying to take her pit-bull for a walk. The dog had rushed under the couch while she stood stuck above them in the stairwell and she had said the only words he had ever heard her speak: "Joseph! Bad Joseph!"

Once she managed to get by them, the Woman from the Third Floor and Joseph slid along the side of the building. She

passed the "Zoning Application Pending" sign in the empty dirt lot between her apartment and the next, and let her dog loose. It was here that she would usually let her thoughts wander, when the dirt sank into her bare feet. It could have been something in the way the ground was inconsistent, a series of mounds and puddles, that made her feel like this was the last place on earth where zoning was pending. It must have been here that the men who labored over the building that housed her had lain to rest in the thick of summer, stretching their tools across the grass where the families before them had once stretched their legs. It seemed to her that the remnants of communities before her were wrapping themselves around her feet while Joseph ran through them and trailed the mud to the concrete sidewalk. When they were through, the Woman from the Third Floor re-chained Joseph and struggled past the Man on the Fifth Floor once more to return to her apartment with the mail in her hand.

She kept a pile of mail on her shut-off radiator that remained a consistent size as the excess mail would slide off the side between the radiator and the wall. She was afraid to throw the mail away from fear of identity theft. She couldn't be sure that the people in the apartment wouldn't look through it.

When the letter labeled only "No. 3" hit the top of the pile, it slid off the radiator right back to her. Together with Joseph, they glared at the letter now stuck to the mud beneath her shoe. She read it aloud to her dog.

"What do you think, Joe? Do you think the neighbors are nice? Do you think the new downstairs neighbor was just trying to get some extra food for the week from all of us?" Despite her best efforts, the

Woman from the Third Floor struggled to understand Joseph's response. When she put the card back in the envelope, some of the mud on the side of the envelope stuck to her hand.

"I guess we can give it a shot."

The fading lights reminded the Woman from the Third Floor to lock the deadbolt and set the chain. This time of night was always a difficult time for them, with all of the sounds of movement throughout the apartment as different people came home. Joseph was always agitated, and the Woman from the Third Floor could never be sure if this time, when the sound of a door slamming echoed throughout the stairwell, was the time an intruder had arrived. But the two of them persisted together, and as the night carried on they discussed the value of putting faces to the names she saw on the mail left in the hallway. They agreed there was a Jordan Hillsbee, a Gerald Porter, a James Lang, a Christina Vest, and a few others who lived there. In the end, getting to see how the rest of the apartment members interacted seemed to the Woman from the Third Floor to be a good way to ensure they were safe people to live near. In any case, if rejecting the invitation only made them angry, then there would be even more reason for concern. In the morning she gathered her resolve to walk to the grocery store to find something relevant to her ancestors.

With Joseph at her side, she walked to the grocery store and strained to think of what she might buy. The extent of her knowledge of her family history ended in the early 1800s when her ancestors had first been brought to America. But to avoid the potluck crowd from turning against her, she resolved to pace the aisles until she found something that looked like it could

*It was as if they
had never walked
before and required
full concentration
on the ground
in front of them.*

have come from somewhere else.

"Wait here while I figure out where I'm from," she told Joseph as she tied him to the post outside. She picked an aisle and read the different labels: Mexican, Asian, Mediterranean. At the end of the aisle she saw two men walking towards her that she recognized as living in one of the apartments above her, up the stairwell she had never climbed. She kept her eyes glued to the beans and rice and held her breath as they walked past without speaking to her. Afraid she might be caught spending too much time deliberating, and so cause the other members of the house to conspire against her in secret conversation, she quickly left the store without buying anything at all. Outside, she untied Joseph and walked back home.

She spent the next hour creating a giant bowl of whatever she might have made for herself that night. When it was done, the Woman from the Third Floor sat by the window that overlooked the vacant lot. With Joseph leaning against her leg, she

let the time wash away the part of her that begged her not to move.

When the sun began to set, she took up her bowl and went to the front door. She put her hand to the chain, but held it there as she heard movement in the stairwell. She watched through the peephole as two men walked past the door and waited for them to leave before unsetting the chain and releasing the deadbolt. The sound of her hand shaking on the chain sounded through the stairwell, and the Man on the Fifth Floor and His Partner took it as initiative to move faster to the bottom.

In the entryway, the Man on the Fifth Floor and His Partner stood together and read a hand-written sign taped to the door.

"She moved the potluck to the sixth floor?" The Man on the Fifth Floor asked.

"Yeah, looks like it." They stared ominously up the stairwell. "The sixth floor. Does anyone even live there? I never see any mail for the sixth floor. I thought it was just storage up there."

The Man on the Fifth Floor laughed but then whispered to His Partner, "Not so loud! That's so rude!"

"I guess let's head up then," His Partner said. As they marched back up the stairwell they passed the Woman from the Third Floor on the second platform. She was heading downstairs, carrying a giant bowl, and they had to hug different walls of the stairwell to get by each other in such tight quarters. It was as if they had never walked before and required full concentration on the ground in front of them. Once she was past them, the swirl of thoughts in the Man on the Fifth Floor settled, and he stopped walking.

"Hey," he said, and she stopped and turned back. "Are you heading to the potluck?"

"I am, actually."

"Well, we just went down and checked, and it actually got moved up to the sixth floor. We're heading up there now."

"Oh wow, thanks for the warning! I guess I'll head up there too." They continued to walk up in silence.

"Hey, this is the first time I've seen you

Inside, she could tell there was a history hiding here, something that almost mocked the busy, overcrowded city around it. The walls themselves seemed saturated in some strange illumination.

without your dog!" His Partner joked as they climbed together.

"Joseph isn't feeling well today."

"Ah. Well, I'm sorry."

When they crossed the threshold beyond the fifth platform together, a wave of heat hit them all at once. It was as if all of the heat in the building had been hiding

in this portion of the old apartment. When they got to the top they stopped again. There was another sign posted on the door of the sixth floor apartment. This sign was an engraved plaque.

Reading it aloud, His Partner asked, "What's The Lair of Saint House?"

After some deliberation, the Man on the Fifth Floor knocked. Saint House opened the door with a broad smile.

"Hi! Come in, please!"

Saint House was an older man with a thick mustache, wearing a suit with a bowler cap. He looked immaculate except that his skin and clothes were covered in an off-white layer of dust. They stood uncomfortably for a moment, surprised by his appearance, but a young woman sitting on a couch behind him smiled and waved so they made their way inside. The apartment was decorated in the fashion of an old study and lacked the dust that consumed its patron. The walls were lined with bookshelves that held antique books on some shelves, record collections and CD collections on others, and even a stack of computer games on one shelf. A soft stream of classical music was drifting from the room beyond the living room. Plastered across the walls were portraits of old white men and women, but then an authentic looking Pollock painting hung between two of them.

"Wow, you have a fireplace up here?" The Woman from the Third Floor remarked. The fire in the fireplace was generating an immense heat that made the air almost unbearable. Saint House laughed.

"Of course I do. You all will have to forgive me, I haven't quite finished preparing my food for the potluck, but I'll be ready in a moment if you'll wait here." The leather couch was large enough for them all to sit.

"Hi, you must be the new downstairs

neighbor?" the Man on the Fifth Floor said as they sat down. "I'm on the fifth floor." The New Downstairs Neighbor excitedly shook his hand.

"Nice to meet you! And you're his..."

"Partner. Although we don't really like to use labels," he added as they shook hands.

"Ah, that's fine."

"Hi, I'm from the third floor," the Woman from the Third Floor mentioned with a handshake.

"Hi. So what did y'all end up bringing?" The New Downstairs Neighbor looked to the Man on the Fifth floor with the question. He reached into the old plastic grocery bag and pulled out one of the many warm sacks of tin foil.

"We made baked potatoes." The Man on the Fifth Floor held the potato out in front of her. The New Downstairs neighbor hesitantly took the potato.

"Ok, that's cool!" she said, unsure of what to do with it. The Man on the Fifth floor suddenly regretted having handed it to her and threw his hand out to take it back, but knocked it on the floor in doing so. The potato burst open and scattered on the rug beneath the coffee table.

"Oh, shit! I mean, shoot. I'm sorry. Let me clean that up." He jumped out of his seat and went to the kitchen.

In the silence that followed, His Partner leaned in to whisper to the New Downstairs Neighbor. "So, what's the deal with the guy that lives here?"

The New Downstairs Neighbor whispered back, "Well, I noticed that no one picked up the envelope for the sixth apartment so I figured I'd bring it up myself. He said he didn't like to leave his apartment and invited us to eat up here. He seems nice!"

The Man on the Fifth Floor came out

with cleaning supplies, and the group spent the early evening tucking their legs to the side of the couch to make space for the Man on the Fifth Floor as he tried to wash clean the rug.

The New Downstairs neighbor was determined to make the most of her new environment. On the drive around the city to look for possible housing, she had become mystified by the presence of this old house, renovated into an apartment complex. Inside, she could tell there was a history hiding here, something that almost mocked the busy, overcrowded city around it. The walls themselves seemed saturated in some strange illumination, like they were shining internally. With her ear against the wall, she could almost hear the voices of the families from the past, which spoke like the whispers of mice walking within the woodwork.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have a community of my own?" she would ask the voices in the wall. And the families of mice behind the wall would try to whisper back, but the New Downstairs Neighbor would always have the greatest trouble deciding what they said. It was there, with her head leaning against the white paint, that she resolved to create the invitations to the potluck. But she had not found employment yet, and so struggled to afford printing the cards she wanted. She was still living off of the budget her parents had given her to help her move. Resolved as she was, she used the money for the week's groceries to pay for the cards.

In the living room of Saint House, the New Downstairs Neighbor rose to free space for the Man on the Fifth Floor. She paced the floor, wondering anxiously who else might arrive.

"I guess we can set up the food on the dining table while we wait," she said, and they all brought their food in. She had already set up the food she brought, and they added theirs to it. Saint House came in behind them.

"Good timing! I've just finished up," he said, and began adding an impressive display of tea and sandwich rolls.

They spread around the table, trying to decide how far apart to sit from one another. The table was surprisingly large and capable of seating at least ten. "Sorry, my cooking skills are a bit...well, what's the modern word...fucked?" Saint House said as he retrieved more cups from the kitchen. They all laughed.

"It's ok, I'm no better," the Man on the Fifth Floor replied. They stood behind their respective chairs, unsure of whether to sit or continue to wait for more people.

"So, are you Saint House? Is this your lair?" His Partner asked.

"That's right!" he said laughing. "I am Saint House, in the flesh. But, to tell you the truth, I am not rightly a Saint yet."

"Tough rules, yeah?"

"Well, the whole system is rigged. To be a Saint requires two miracles after death. But then, you see, in my situation, my first miracle after dying was to achieve immortality for as long as I don't leave my apartment. So how am I supposed to perform any more miracles from here? That's the Catch-22!"

"That does sound rigged. So how long have you been up here?"

"I was the first one to move into this house in 1917! The same family has owned this house for years, and I gave them enough gold bars to rent the place indefinitely. And to buy me a laptop. So I keep up with the times alright. And you can get pretty much everything you need on Amazon." The Man on the Fifth Floor took a moment to look closer around the dining room. In the corner on an old wooden side table were the iPod and speakers that played the classical music from a Spotify playlist. "For my second miracle I've been trying to get the most views in history on a Youtube video, but competition is tough right now."

Standing together in this small room, the apartment got hotter, and the Man on the Fifth Floor found himself having to swipe sweat from his forehead.

"Please, open a window if you'd like. I know it can be hot in here if you're unaccustomed to it. The fire never changes, it

just keeps burning.” The Man on the Fifth Floor threw open the window behind him and leaned out for a brief moment to feel the breeze in the evening sky. The sun was perched in that peculiar place that had always haunted him, but from one floor above it seemed altogether different. In the light of the sun, he cooled off from the heat of the crowd of people in the room.

The sound of glass breaking echoed across the empty lot, and set off the dog on the third floor. Looking down, the Man on the Fifth Floor watched a woman jump in through a window on the ground below. Another man stood in the lot, looking around.

The Man on the Fifth Floor brought his head back inside the apartment and looked over to the New Downstairs Neighbor. “Hey, I think the couple that lives on the second floor might be breaking into your apartment right now.” She came over to the window and looked down at the pair of legs dangling from her window.

“Son of a bitch!” She rushed out the front door and left it open, filling the apartment with the sound of Joseph barking.

“Once he gets going he never stops, I better go quiet him down,” the Woman from the Third Floor said, and walked quickly out the door. His Partner’s phone rang. He looked at it briefly.

“It’s work.” He paused with pained expression. “They probably need me to come in.” He answered it as he walked out of the apartment, closing the door behind him. Seconds later came a loud pounding at the door. Saint House laughed.

“I’ll bet that’s whoever lives on the fourth floor. Looks like they missed all the fun!” Saint House opened the door to find two police officers. “Oh, are you here about the robbery? That was fast! But it’s not here, it’s on the first floor.”

“Robbery? No, we’re not here about that. We’re here about a noise complaint for your apartment.”

“A noise complaint? From who?”

“It says the complaint came from this address, one or two apartments below this unit. You’ve been playing your music too

loud.”

“Too loud? But it’s classical music. Do you hear it?” They both stood silent for a moment. The sound of the music became barely audible as they all listened together.

“Well, this is just a warning anyway. Just remember that other people live here too.”

“Ok, thanks.” The officers left, and Saint House removed his cap with a sigh and placed it on the coat rack by the door. He walked back to the dining room, where the Man on the Fifth Floor still stood behind his chair.

On the table sat a large bowl of pasta shells stuffed with spinach and covered in pesto. Several dishes of bratwurst and sauerkraut were mixed with the sandwich rolls and the baked potatoes. Steam rose off of everything, including the cups of tea spread across the table. All of the chairs were still neatly tucked.

“Do you want me to help clean up?” the Man on the Fifth Floor asked.

“I suppose, that would be nice. I guess we can just shove it all in the fridge, in case we ever want to try again.” They worked together to remove the evidence of social activity. As the Man on the Fifth Floor began to leave, it occurred to Saint House he might never see him again.

“Are you sure you don’t want to take your potatoes?”

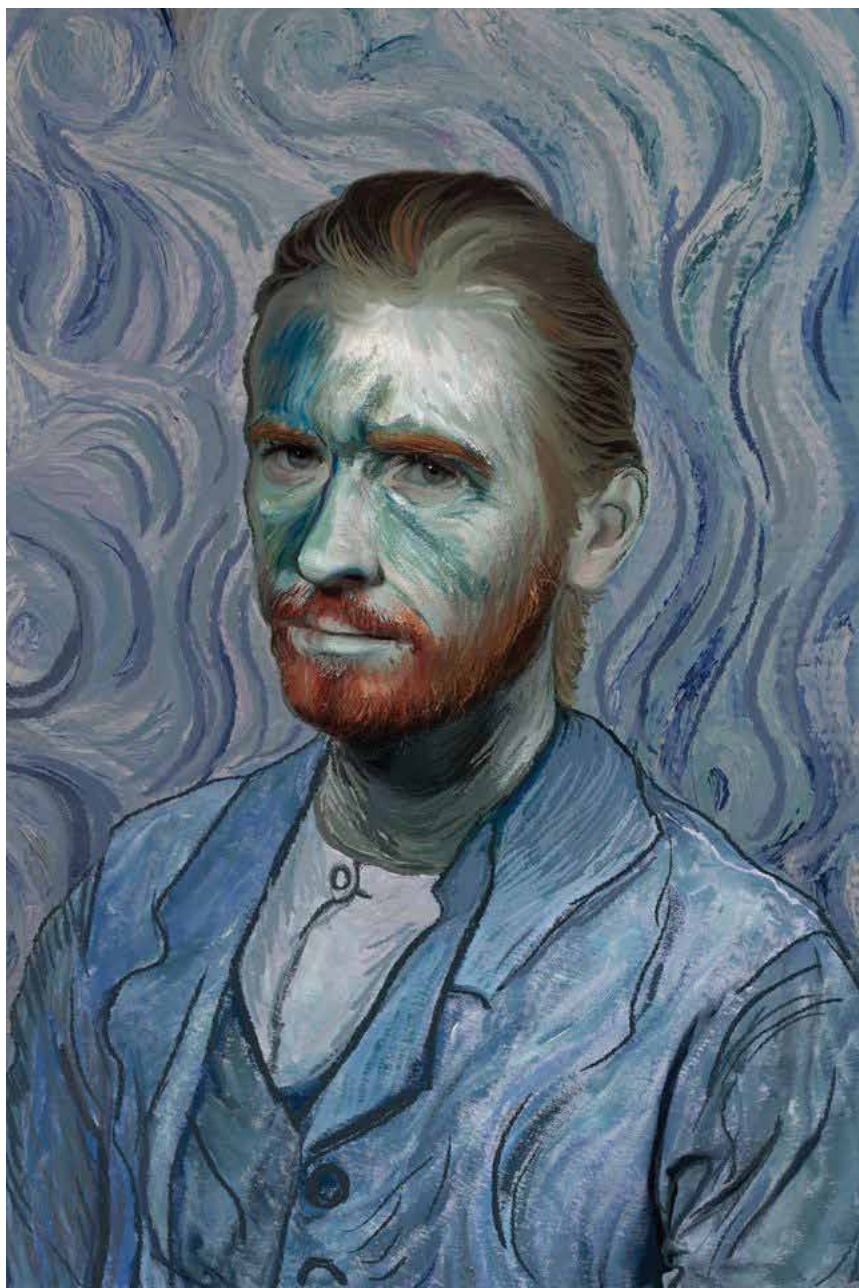
The Man on the Fifth Floor shrugged. “No thanks. I don’t really like potatoes.”

Saint House held the door open for him as he left. At the top of the stairwell, Saint House stretched his hand through the doorway. He watched as it disappeared, and he felt the heat from the fire behind him rush out into the new air. The doorway was his favorite location, where the old air and the new air met one another like lost lovers. He stood there as the two became entwined, and was enraptured in their union. It could have been something in the way the sounds met, when sliding chains and classical music mixed together, that made Saint House feel like this doorway was the last place on earth where anything was pending.

Portrait Recreations

Ilana Bean





Dusk in Nelson County, Virginia

DAVID BRUNSON

Everything grows
knowing the moon's perspective.
Twilight and branches
bend towards night.
Different mornings
burn upstream
like rustling leaves spread idly
over water—spread
with the soft understanding
of the autumn in their branches.
The grove has a heart and it beats
with the grace of pines.
This grove is a ripple in the night.
Something within me burrows
to the place where hope and weeds
come before dawn.

I wade beneath my time.

Gravestones nestle my road,
my backbone, my grove.
This river's wild knee
furls my face and hands.
It reads starlit scripture
and recounts the knowledge of fire
that swims to the tomb.
What do the woods know
as I swim to the center
of my world
the hemlocks yellow
beyond my reach?
All that is not root
and life is the life
that rolls the full moon
from the cave.

Ft. Lee Firing Range, 2014
Alex Matzke





Necks
Anthony Sudol
Digital

Bangladesh 1996
Fahmida Azim
Digital



Dinnertime for the Pescetarian

JESSICA KRAEMER

Cool skin glides
on crackling grease,
weeping done
through snapping butter.
Short lived bubbles squeal again, again.
His old voice carries
darkly in the smoke.
Blackens the chef's eyes.

There—make him feel it
as you feel it, dying again,
as you still live and as he
performs a violence to you.

For every rubber bone
toothpick thin but lithe and good-natured
he cinched between bitten nails
and plucked like you were
an unfeeling thing.
Like you were a flowering plant
Or worse.

When I was a painter, I painted you well

MADDIE HUDDLE

Pigments seeped from my pores and dissolved
in the oils of my skin, cursive strokes
of synthetic hairs: size twelve
round short handle
seven by twenty mm. I planted

you in the ground, dug a fissure
in the bloated earth: sixteen and a half
by nineteen by two
and slid you in, just enough
to cover
you there. And each day I brushed

the dust from your top,
unearthed you gently to marvel
at this growth, a vehicle
for an image already imagined.
And under the
watching sun I added
strokes and saturation,
until the dusk came and I
buried you again. And there on that thin

mound I slept each night, waking once
a slumber to feed you the red
water of my heart, each night
for one turn of the moon I fed
you. And as I dwindled you pushed up

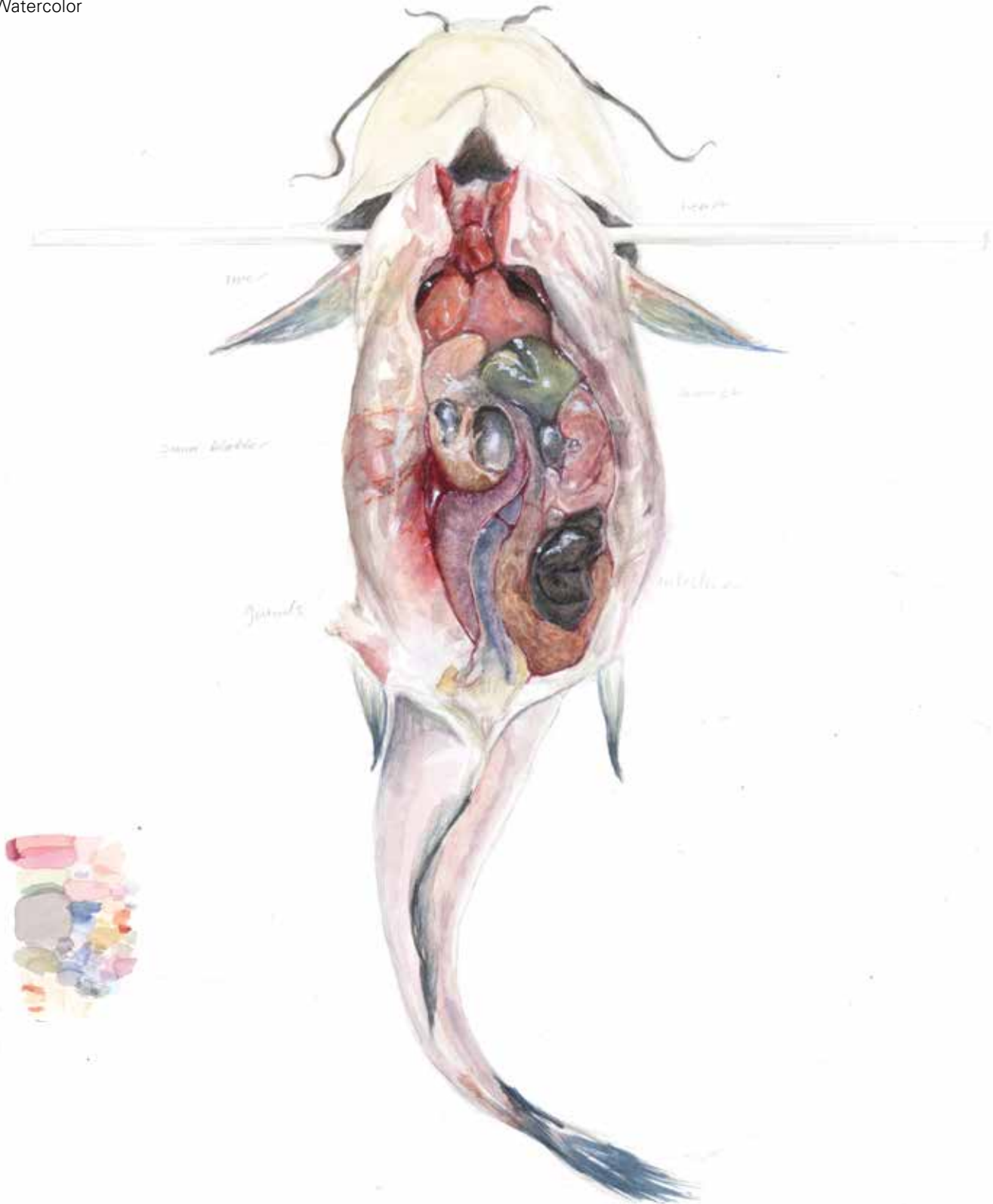
until the corners of you
breached the ochre top
and you were ready
for plucking.

But though the white
orb was full and I had
fed you until I was a shadow
and you an absolute, I pulled you from the oozing rouge
sediment and

found mud, held together by four
wooden bones and one stretched membrane.
No trace of pigment, oil, brush.

Catfish
Skye Young
Watercolor

Catfish





Lamb Hip
Skye Young
Gouache

Women in Service for America Memorial, 2014
Alex Matzke



Builders
Keith Pfeiffer



Windhand Proffered *Soma* to the Underground

TREVOR HART

Solemn and pressed through crowd of black denim
lo-fi layers, overtone white noise to
a guttural void. Steel bass, sternums

shake the sleight of hand, it is just too
heavy. A lead ball pendulum, steady
metronome, (they're just tuning up); true

to taste, if my ears had a palate. The
cadence, electric swung juncture
when no one can hear themselves; we

hear Her asking for more light-

More light, more light, more . . .

Can we get more light?

This is bright darkness.

Goddess of Orchard & Evergreen; live & die

for Soma. We meditate on doom. Masked-
armored men & women let down thy shield;

we need not fight, nor search for a thing to ask

of Them. Embrace Woodbine, nectar we feel—
long stained Cassock—Virginia creeper,
I keep Her in mind. Words with mass like metal-

a rumble that shakes fog off Boleskine—proffer.

Her words resonate beyond atmospheric
bounds, echoing

go on and love

what you are

echoes like a phantom bludgeon, mystic
swung by some past god, drugged with nothing to hide
I drink up and nod to her promise;

There is no secret I cannot keep, she cries,
until the lead's amp starts leaking smoke fumes
and illusions stop, as all the lights

come on. Burnt tubes transcending in plumes,
which mix with incense, on the side of the bass drum.
I don't move, left so content, so confused.

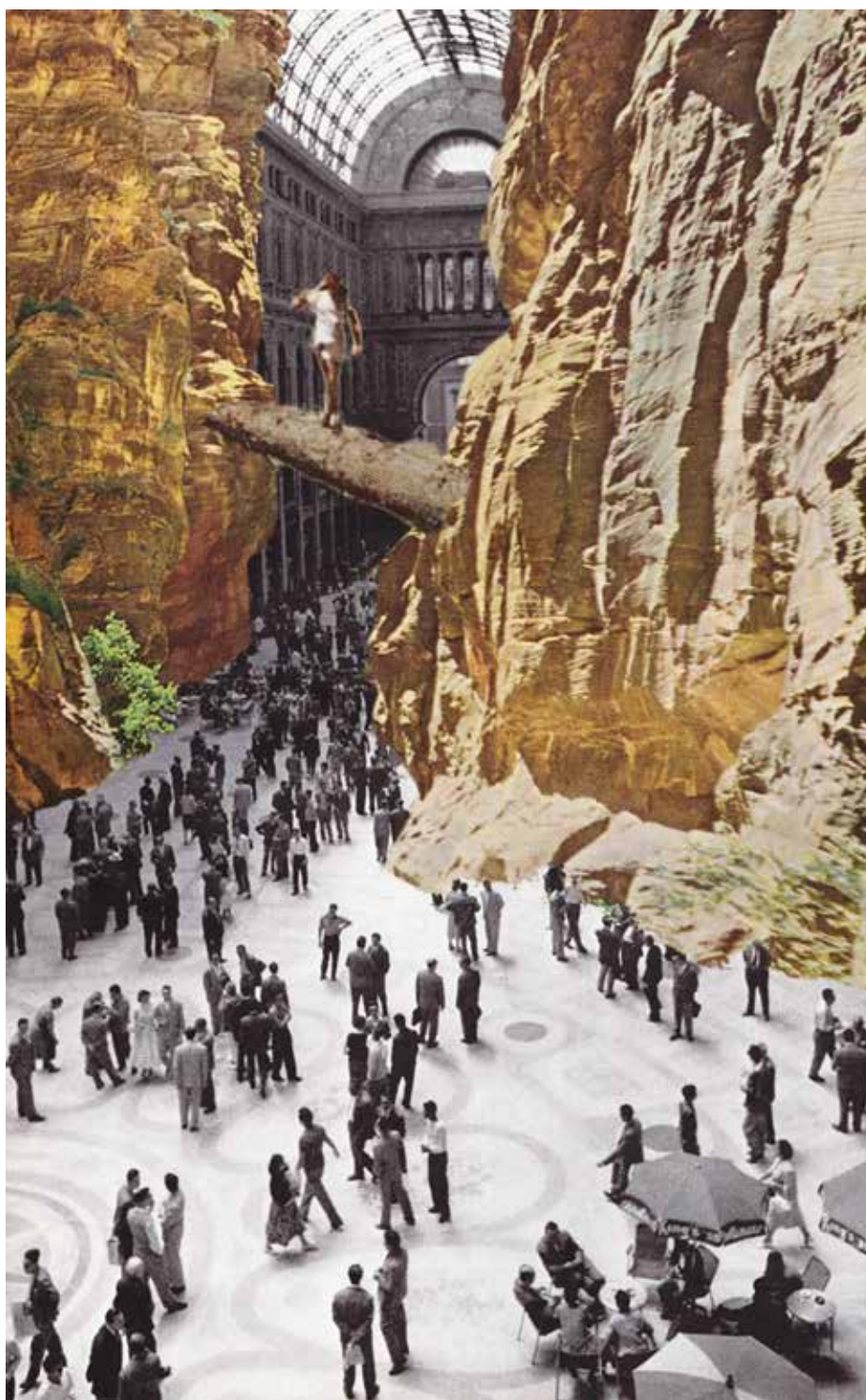
a sickly blue light

JAMAL STONE

like an icicle trickling off the crater's edge
it creeps in at 6 AM
painting my walls with a splash of indifference
I'll wait for the moon's knuckles rap at my window
her deep-set eyes washed out by monsoons in Lahore
but she is worlds away
can't tell the satellites from the stars
through the sticky blue ice lodged deep
deep in her chest
her words buzz softly like a mosquito
immortalized in amber
come here, she says, and whispers in my ear
as if my lobes were cotton candy
dangling blue as the morning
I stretch to the sky or to whatever it is that cats stretch towards
'til a plate shifts with a satisfying click in my spine
'til a sinkhole swallows a city block in Guatemala
'til you shift forward and merge onto I-95
wondering if GPS redirects when you careen over the cement median
crash into the fog lights of oncoming traffic
your cheeks are stained a cathedral blue
the metronomic tick of the turn signal calls back to better times
singing wild unbuckled in the passenger seat
a tear-soaked sponge wrung out by the hands of Apple brands
the salt on your skin gives you the pearly hue of scratched CDs
so you'll happily cry on, careful not to drift off
in a baby-blue Hyundai hurtling through space
two clean-shaven men will stop us on the street later to ask us where hell is
they'll see the moony pallor on your skin
and they'll know that God put it there
but you are comfortable
your toes wriggle keenly in their black lace shoes and
under your soles, at the earth's ever-hot core
the breaking newscasts are sad, sad, sad, but you're not
so you'll tell the Mormons to fuck off
and you'll leave smoke signals to prove that you were alive
sharpening the vapor in your lungs until it glows, and the end glows brightly

a sickly blue light

Balanced
Brad Eisenhauer
Digital



Frontier

MEGAN DERMODY

When we passed through the mountains of Utah,
strange, looming, repressive, dark,
so dark even the lights of the highway,
the yawning, dizzying swallowing
of galaxies too visible, too accessible—
these lights could not touch
the gaping pressurized darkness
of that unfamiliar landscape,
so dark it absorbed the light of his voice,
so dark I could not be reassured

When we passed through the mountains of Utah,
full of invisible beasts, brutes, friends and foes,
crudely built, unidentified by science,
like a new, harsh planet where the natives
weren't friendly, I was sure they were mean—
I mean malicious; I mean inferior; I mean
starving—just the shadow of that potential
was enough to convince me of their reality,
their cruelty, and their intentions toward me.

When we passed through the mountains of Utah,
rocks stacked by some old,
unseen hand, rocks stacked unnaturally,
at least for what I knew, too geometric,
too jagged, too intentional,
and far too tall, like little elevators to space,
shapes on shapes, rectangles that touch and negate.

We like to sit by the water

BRENNAN CHAMBRE

We like to sit by the water,
eyes like a swivelfish,
marooned on a bank
by the bank,
waiting to cash a check,
praying our footprints
will survive the tides.

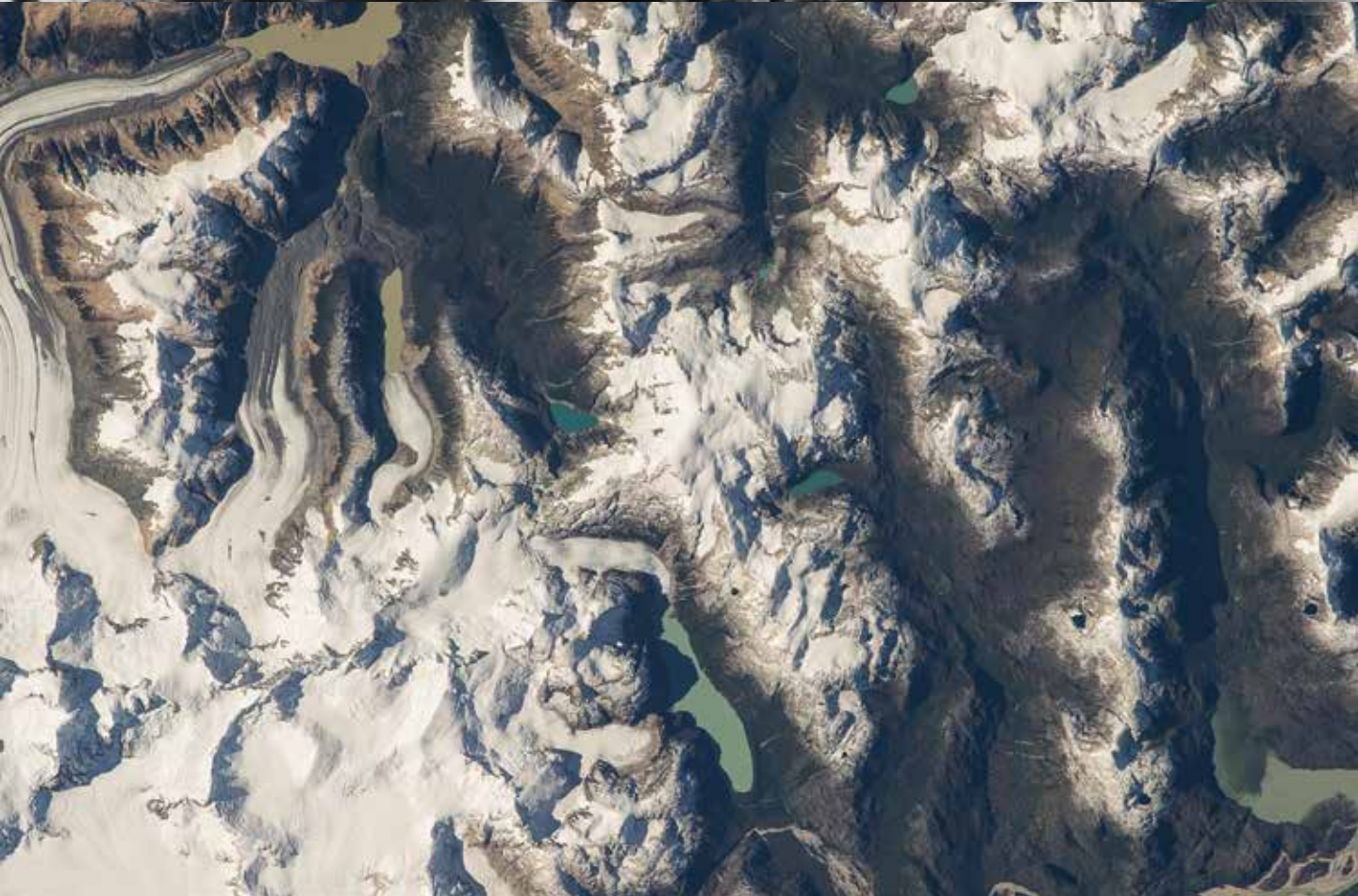
Now in a Greyhound station,
we see the wet again
in a puddle that's gone
untended.
But people are parched,
so they'll sip
before they slip
Or gulp, more like
because we still have gills
but our fingers do the gasping.

Every Teardrop is a Waterfall
Boying Chen
Mixed mediums



Lunar Lander
Keith Pfeiffer







Artwork by
Elise Ketch

Balloons in Memoriam

ELISE KETCH


They are worried there are not enough
balloons to go around.

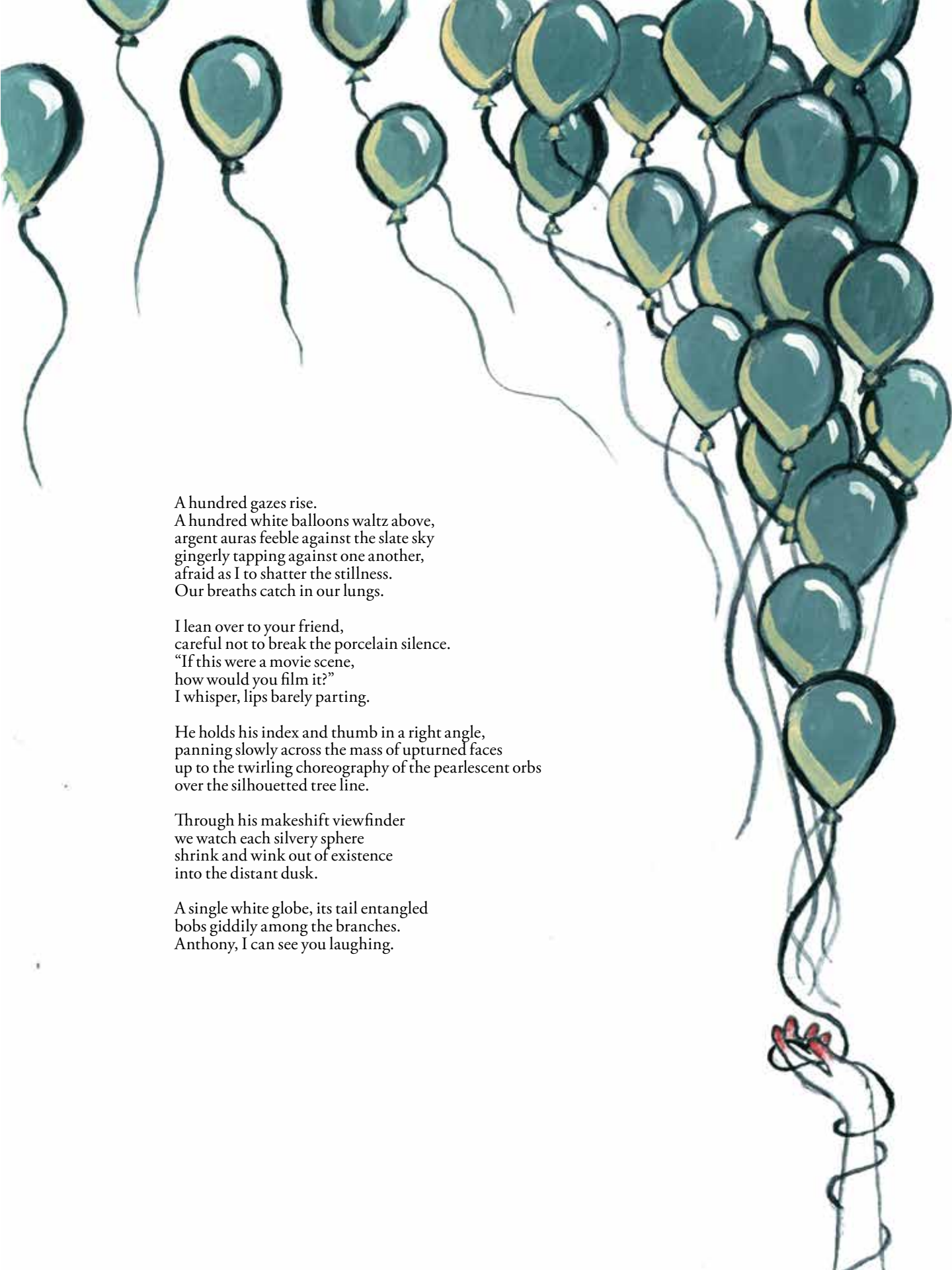
We stand huddled
our soft breaths rhythmic, shallow
warm breezes ruffling the down hairs
on the back of my neck, my goose bumped forearms
unintelligible prayers hovering
on every exhale.

A cloud of pearls floats above your mother
that she begins to dismantle, piece by piece.
Our hands tremble
as we pass the ribbons between each other,
feet softly shuffling
the gray gravel of the baseball diamond.

I wrap the iridescent strand around and around my finger,
release into a curl, repeat.
I shift my weight and brush against your friend
both barely lifting our hung heads
A slight smile fills his cheeks.
It doesn't reach his eyes.

Melodious moans of the violins
slide through the air.
I clench the ribbon tighter,
bite my lip,
let it slither through my fingertips.





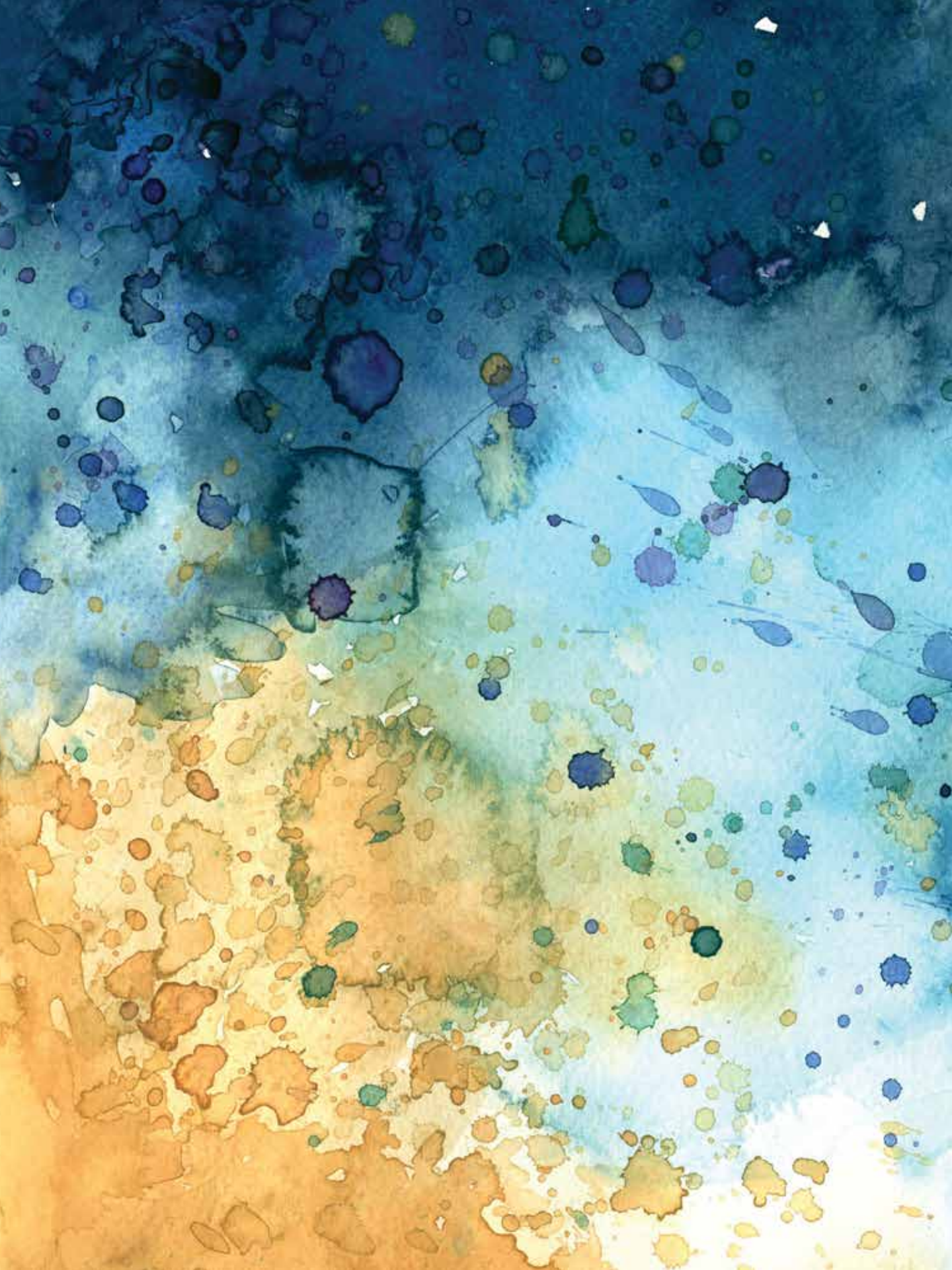
A hundred gazes rise.
A hundred white balloons waltz above,
argent auras feeble against the slate sky
gingerly tapping against one another,
afraid as I to shatter the stillness.
Our breaths catch in our lungs.

I lean over to your friend,
careful not to break the porcelain silence.
“If this were a movie scene,
how would you film it?”
I whisper, lips barely parting.

He holds his index and thumb in a right angle,
panning slowly across the mass of upturned faces
up to the twirling choreography of the pearlescent orbs
over the silhouetted tree line.

Through his makeshift viewfinder
we watch each silvery sphere
shrink and wink out of existence
into the distant dusk.

A single white globe, its tail entangled
bobs giddily among the branches.
Anthony, I can see you laughing.



Sovereignty

BRENNAN CHAMBRE

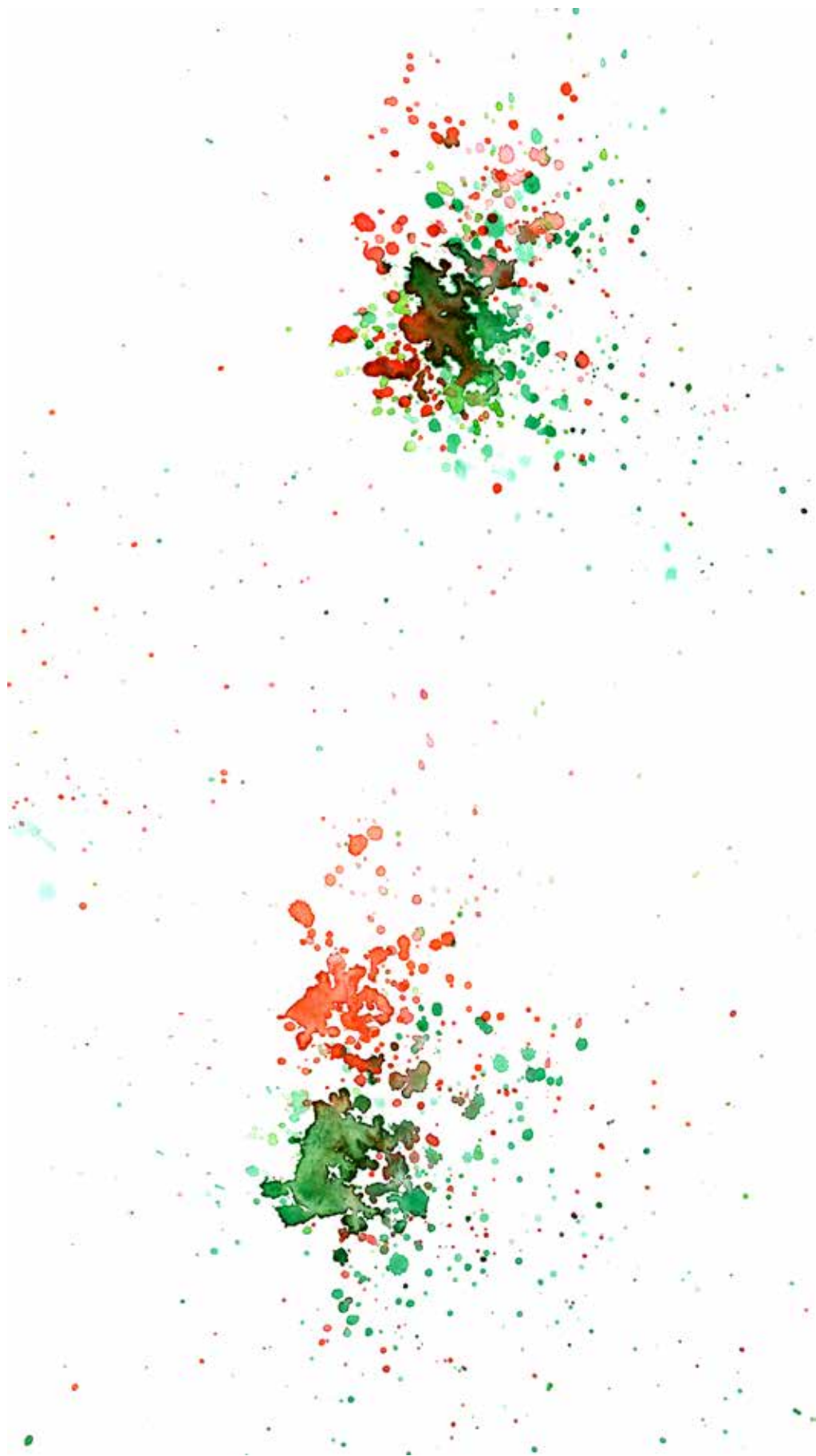
And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.

—Daniel 2:44

MY GRANDFATHER, JOSEF, DIED ABOUT a week after spending 24 hours on the bathroom floor on which he fell a few days before Christmas 2010. Back then I would have called it something snide like “he was put down” or even “he was killed.” But really I know, knew, that his body would not be able to survive the sepsis. Taking him off life support was the only humane thing to do, I think.

As my mom, uncle, aunt, cousin and I went about the task of going through the Orlando, Florida home two generations had grown up in, I discovered a Romanian-English dictionary on the bookshelf in the living room. I knew my grandfather was born and raised in a village in Romania before he moved to the U.S., but my second language growing up was German. The family members who visited from overseas to go to Disney world flew from Germany. And yet, this was not a German-English dictionary in my hands, nor was one found elsewhere in the house. It was a *Dicționar Român-Englez*.

¹ Indeed, the government of East Germany venerated him as an intellectual (or spiritual?) forefather of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik. His face adorned the 1975 Five Mark bill.



I showed it to my mom. Perhaps she was too busy shredding financial documents, which was the herculean task I remember consuming her at that time, but she didn't make much of the Dictionary. Maybe she didn't want to face anything too personal, with any memory involved. Shredding financial documents is much less likely to make you remember the sound of your dad's cackling laughter at the John Wayne movie on the TV or how every time he farted he'd do that thing where he'd spin his head around and say "did you see that elephant?!"

When I showed her the Dictionary, mom just said "Huh, he must have been brushing up on his Romanian..."

And to be literal, yeah, that is probably what he was doing. But why?

—

On the 13th of July, 1524, the German theologian Thomas Müntzer gave a sermon to a group of Saxon nobles in Allstedt, urging them to revolt alongside the German peasants against the Catholic Church. Müntzer was a contemporary of Martin Luther who saw an opportunity in the questioning of authority invited by the Reformation—an opportunity to inspect the foundations of all hitherto unquestioned power structures. In particular, the latent egalitarianism of some of Luther's ideas, such as the "priesthood of all believers" (embodied by the notion that people should be able to read the Bible in their own language, not just Latin) demanded to be applied unto all spheres of life. Müntzer advocated a kind of proto-communism. His "Sermon to the Princes," as it has come to be known, saw Müntzer positioning himself as a contemporary Daniel, prophesizing to the earthly rulers the toppling of all existing kingdoms and the establishment of the eternal Kingdom of God.

Daniel 2:44 was the pivot in Müntzer's theology.

A year prior to the sermon, Müntzer completed the first liturgy entirely in German. A year following the sermon, in 1525, he was captured at the Battle of Frankenhausen, tortured, and beheaded, but only after affirming, under torture, his belief that *omnia sunt communia*—all things are held in common. German princes did eventually join the protestant cause, but under a less cosmopolitan slogan: "German money for a German church."

When I moved to Winchester, Virginia at the beginning of high school my mom and I started going to a Baptist church. I liked Protestantism more so because I had just read the Communist Manifesto and was attracted to the idea of belonging to a religion that had the word "protest" in its name than out of any real faith. I debated with my girlfriend at the time furiously, herself still a devout Catholic, as if we were





in 16th century Germany. She pointed out to me that the word “catholic” just means “universal.” As she explained, it just means all believers coming together to worship God as equals. Meanwhile, I soon discovered my fellow congregants at Calvary Baptist Church were more interested in stopping women from having abortions than ending poverty. How to reconcile this? From then I remained an insurgent lapsed-Catholic communist going to Baptist potlucks before Bible study every Wednesday night.

—

In 1771, Nicolaus Chambre and his third wife Marguerite Romignon sold most of their possessions, gathered their children and departed from their farm in Lorraine, France for Ulm, a port city in the German region of Swabia. Ulm, located on the left bank of the Danube River, was the processing center for a group of German-speaking families who had accepted Empress Maria Theresa’s offer to colonize the eastern portion of the Austrian Empire, acting as a Christian buffer against the looming Muslim Ottomans, who still had their eyes transfixed on Vienna. At Ulm these colonists gained the name Donauschwaben, or Danube Swabians, even though many of them were not originally from that region.

The Donauschwaben sailed from Ulm to ports in Hungary, where they registered for the free land, homes and livestock promised to them by Maria Theresa. Nicolaus and Marguerite settled in a town called Mercydorf along with many other colonists. When Nicolaus died, the family relocated to a smaller town called Wiesenheid, in the present-day Romanian region known as the Banat where they remained until my grandfather, Josef, left for New York City in the 1950’s.

I know this information about my distant ancestors because my uncle, John

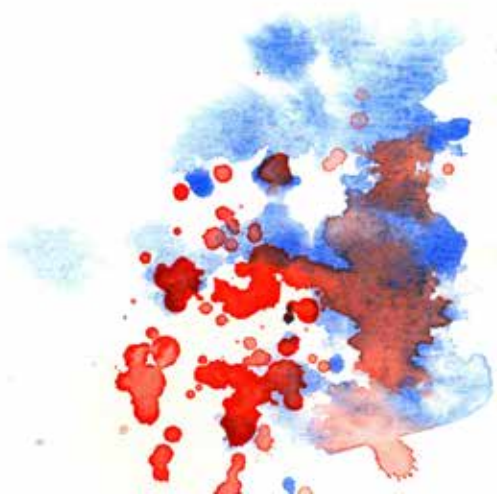
Chambre, is retired and has enough free time and money to travel to France and Romania to search through hundreds of records and trace our family lineage back to the 1400’s. I call him my uncle because he is significantly older than me and does things like petition the city council of San Francisco to let him renovate the façade of his historic Victorian townhouse, but he is technically my cousin.

He assembled an extensive family tree based on his research and wrote a narrative of sorts of our migrations which he then emailed everyone he could. This narrative tells the story of a group of German-speaking French farmers with French last names who pledge allegiance to the Empress of Austria in exchange for land in Hungary, then Romania, who now proudly report their heritage to the US government as purely “German.” What it doesn’t tell me is why there was a Romanian-English dictionary on my grandfather’s bookshelf and not a German-English one.

—

In 1939, Nazi Germany began, alongside its plans to exterminate various “undesirable” populations of Europe, to promote the category of people known as Volksdeutschen. This term, literally translated, means “ethnic Germans,” but in German it means much more than its dry, scientific English counterpart. In practice, however, Nazi authorities sought to identify those living outside the borders of the Third Reich who were German in “blood” if not on paper, reeducate them in Nazi ideology, and resettle them. Often, the Volksdeutschen in Poland, the Czech Republic, and other occupied regions received the property stolen from Jews who were sent to concentration camps.

What were the criterion for identifying the Volksdeutschen? In her essay “Tenu-



ousness and Tenacity: The Volksdeutschen of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust,” Doris L. Bergen writes that

Nazi ideology assumed ethnic Germans to be easily identifiable—from their appearance, language, habits of living, and qualities... But when German authorities tried to implement policies regarding the Volksdeutschen, they found the concept to be full of contradictions, unclarity, and absurdities.

The Nazis found that no one category could easily identify the mythic Volksdeutschen. Not even language—long assumed by German thinkers to be central to a national consciousness since Jakob Grimm proposed his *sprachgeist*—not even a shared language could be counted on to connect the long lost ethnic Germans to their brothers and sisters in Germany proper. Later in her essay, Bergen writes of how

Reich authorities of all kinds gripped about Volksdeutschen, who they said lacked proper German qualities: diligence, cleanliness, sexual self-control, and the ability to speak German... In 1944 SS officials in the Wartheland grumbled that the Volksdeutschen sent from Russia spoke only Polish, Russian, or Ukrainian and had forgotten how to work.

In other words, the Reich authorities discovered, sans supremacist stereotypes, what sociologists and the children of immigrants have been telling us all along: culture is fluid; culture changes; people adapt and adopt.

When I was little I always looked forward to events at the German-American Society of Central Florida, colloquially referred to by my family as The German Club. Every year around Christmastime I sat on Santa’s lap and received a present at the Weihnachtsfest. Of course, Oktober-

fest was also a big deal. I was never allowed to go to the New Year’s Eve party, but I do remember my grandparents stumbling in our front door at 2 in the morning like sloppy twenty-year olds.

These kinds of ethnic heritage organizations are of course an important part of a multiethnic society. People want to hold on to the traditions of the old country, whether that may be Germany, Mexico, China or wherever. However, at least in my experience, as much as people try to hold on, there is also a great deal that is let go. The Reich authorities who were so appalled by the assimilation of the Volksdeutschen would have reacted similarly to my family. We were not the quiet, controlled Germans upheld as the model but were as boisterous as any of our neighbors. We were diligent, hard workers but also, like all good Americans, didn’t think twice about spending an entire Saturday in front of the television. Our German was not even polluted with English; our English was peppered with German.

—

When my mother and I read John’s essay and looked at the enormous family tree he sent us, I remember remarking to my mom, “So we’re French and Romanian, too, then.” She assured me that no, we’re just German. I mentioned that my grandfather, her father, was overjoyed whenever he got to talk to the two Romanians who worked at the IHOP by his house in Orlando. He was giddy at being able to speak to them for hours every once in a while in the other language of his youth. It occurs to me this may partially explain the presence of that dictionary I found after he died.

I also pointed out our last name to my mom. “I mean it’s literally a French word. It means ‘room.’” Still, she insisted we were just German. She reminded me that none of these details mattered to the Russians who captured my great-grandmother

Katherina, Josef's mother, and sent her to work in labor camps and coal mines after the war because she was a Volksdeutsche.

The Russians. Many collaborationists in Central and Eastern Europe claim they participated with the Nazis merely because they preferred German tyranny to the Russian, Fascism to Communism. At least the Germans were civilized, etc. Indeed, John discussed the treatment of ethnic Germans by the Russians after the war in his essay. He wrote that the property of German-speaking citizens had been confiscated without compensation and that those citizens had been deported to labor camps. However, he also noted that, despite the fears everyone had about what the Red Army would do when they reached Hungary and Romania, hundreds of thousands "refused to leave the only homeland they had ever known." Further, many populations liberated by the Red Army saw their chance to rebuild their societies along more socialistic lines. Fear of the Russian was not ubiquitous.

Nevertheless, the hardships faced by ethnic Germans after the war were real, of that there is no doubt. Punishment for the crimes the Third Reich committed against the insufficiently-Aryan populations of Europe were revisited upon the ethnic Germans who remained, regardless of what they actually believed or what other ethnicities and nationalities they might have claimed. But does the historical ignorance (in the sense of ignoring) of the complexities of one's ethnicity actually erase them? And so what of the disturbing coincidence that today, in our woundedness, we still can find ourselves trying to prove a tenuous sense of purity? We're still caught up in the sad work of building, and rebuilding, borders. Bergen writes that

After years of Nazi domination...Central European ethnicities were no longer as flexible as they once had been. Insistence

on the category of Volksdeutschen created a concrete identity out of what had been rather fluid...and promoted a deadly polarization of ethnic relations that outlasted Nazi control in Europe.

The drive to ethnically cleanse a population begins, partially, with this drive in oneself. I'm not particularly comfortable with my genealogy flirting with ethnic cleansing.

—
When I actually met John this past summer of 2014, my mom and I were on the last day of a trip of the west coast. He picked us up in his 4-door Honda at our motel, a Super 8 on Lombard Street near Divisadero in San Francisco. We were driving to his house to do some laundry, get lunch and catch up. Later, he was going to give us a ride to the airport.

Bicycling is popular in San Francisco, and the city does a pretty good job of accommodating cyclists with lanes, share-the-road paint, and so on. As we drove to John's house, we found ourselves behind a bicyclist who wasn't going fast enough for John. He said to my mom, "Ugh, here's the Left Coast for you. See that paint on the road? That says they're allowed to take up the whole lane. You know what I say? Roads were made for cars." I resisted the urge to inform him that roads have been around for thousands of years, long before cars existed, and were made for pedestrians, and that cars really only came to dominate the roads in the 1920's, and if you hate lefty politics so much why the hell are you living in San Francisco, but he was giving us a ride to the airport later so I thought that would be rude.

When we went to lunch the topic of conversation turned to the on-going water crisis in California. Consumer prices had been fluctuating from week to week. Last week the sandwich he bought at this

restaurant was \$12.99, now it was \$13.99. Next week it could go back down or go up again. The state didn't want to resort to rationing but no one had any ideas for how to get more potable water to the Bay Area. Maybe they'd have to release a dam or something. I wondered, if this weren't San Francisco in late-capitalist end-times America but Warsaw in occupied Poland in 1943, if we'd be drinking clean water from cups that used to belong to our Jewish neighbors or if we'd be scooping up the muddy water next to them in Auschwitz. At least John would be spared, since he spells his last name Schambre because that looks more German.

A month after I returned from San Francisco, I read a declaration of numerous Polish intellectuals entitled "From Danzig to Donetsk," imploring the West to take action against the expansionist aims of Putin's Russia. The declaration ominously compares today's situation to the eve of World War II, in which Hitler, using the premise of defending the Volksdeutsche of Central and Eastern Europe, was allowed to invade, occupy and annex territory in sovereign states. Today, Putin dispatches troops into Ukraine under the auspices of protecting ethnic Russians.

On October 31, 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, defeated in World War I, was officially dissolved. Later that day, councils of the various ethnicities of the Banat region, comprised of Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Jews and Serbs, met to discuss what this meant for the region. Dr. Otto Roth, a German member of the Social Democratic Party, proposed at one of these meetings the creation of a Banat People's Council which would be the embryo of a multiethnic state. The very next day, the Republic of the Banat was proclaimed, the first officially multiethnic

republic in Europe. Fifteen days later the Republic was destroyed by troops from the Kingdom of Serbia and its territory divided between Hungary, Romania and Serbia.

The spirit of the Banat Republic still lives, in a way, in the house in which I grew up on Quintilian Avenue in Orlando. I found that *Dicționar Român-Englez* in the living room when we were cleaning the house after my grandfather died and was struck by the proximity of the Romanian "Englez" to the Spanish "Inglés," which, having grown up in Orlando, I was quite familiar with. I remember when I was little, sitting at the dining room table as my grandfather sang German songs while cooking goulash soup, a dish that was originally Hungarian. Today, a family of Puerto Rican descent lives in that house and the neighbors are still the McKees, Irish Catholics. And my last name still means "room" in French.



Artist Statements

BRAD EISENHAUER

In my work, I want to create imagery that lends viewers a new perspective on objects or situations that go unnoticed or are unexpected.

SKYE YOUNG

With a heart for exploration and an insatiable curiosity, I aim to promote understanding by learning and translating intricacy into simplicity. The world around us contains infinite processes and complexities, and within these exists a minute level of detail, which must be magnified.

ELISE KETCH

I created a surreal image of a young Victorian girl racing down a hill with a kite string, but instead of flying a kite she is flying a biplane as a commentary on the role technology plays on youth, innocence, imagination, nature, and tradition. Some look at technology in a negative light, believing it corrupts our culture and our minds, but in this piece I challenge that statement by portraying technology in a positive light and showing how it redefines rather than corrupts.

DAKOTA BECKER

Completed as an assignment for Drawing Studio, "Sticks" is an exploration of the relationships between light, form, depth, texture, and context.

KATHLEEN BRIEN

My work deals with autobiography and emotional narrative. I tell stories and one-liners, capture thoughts, and express feelings in a frank and approachable manner. I actively try to approach my problems as emotional systems to be puzzled out and understood, and aim for my work to make the process less frightening for others. Themes of romance, gender, mental illness, responsibility, and gratitude frequent my art, and I hope viewers feel comforted and more comfortable to engage their minds with their own problems when experiencing my work.

BOYING CHEN

Maybe I'm in the black, maybe I'm on my knees
Maybe I'm in the gap between the two trapezes
But my heart is beating and my pulses start
Cathedrals in my heart
As we saw oh this light I swear you'll,
Emerge blinking into to tell me it's alright
As we soar walls,
every siren is a symphony
And every tear's a waterfall Is a waterfall
Is a waterfall...

Contributors

DAVID BRUNSON

David Brunson is an English major at VCU with a minor in creative writing. For the past few years he has focused on writing poetry and creative nonfiction, and hopes to pursue a MFA in one of these genres. When he's not busy with school work he's usually honkin' on a saxophone or pickin' on a banjo with his band.

WESTON CLARK

Weston is a fine art and conceptual portrait photographer from Virginia Beach, VA. He is currently 18 years old and in the Art Foundations Program planning to get his BA in the Photography & Film department.

BRYCE MELTON

A self-proclaimed Renaissance Man, Bryce pursues interests spanning technology, design, music, cooking, and creative writing. He holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering and is working on a Masters of Product Innovation at the VCU da Vinci Center.

TAYLOR PURCELL

Taylor Purcell is an English major currently in her Junior year at VCU. She has no idea what she wants to do after she graduates, but in her free time loves practicing yoga and playing guitar, as well as attending as many music shows as possible. She also enjoys reading and writing poetry, eats too much peanut butter, and dreams of driving across the country in a VW Bus one day.

BAYAN ATARI

Bayan is a journalism major in the middle of an existential crisis. She plans on freeing Palestine one day.

LAUREN NICOLETTE COLIE

Lauren will graduate from VCU's Honors College with dual degrees in English and

mass communications, print/online journalism with a writing minor this spring. She is a Senior SI Leader for POLI 103 in the Campus Learning Center, a student adviser for Auctus and a public relations assistant in the National Scholarship Office. Last year, she served in AmeriCorps, teaching literacy skills in Richmond elementary schools. Lauren also writes a bi-monthly column for the Metaphysical Circus Press magazine, See the Elephant, about fantastic short fiction. Upon graduating, she will pursue graduate school for English and seek a career in either writing or public relations. Lauren's portfolio is available on her website: www.laurencolie.com.

TREVOR HART

Trevor is currently a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University, and will earn a BA in English with a creative writing minor in May 2015. He has worked as a literary intern for Blackbird. His work has also appeared in Assonance and is forthcoming in Poems To Fuck To.

JESSIE KRAEMER

Jessie Kraemer is a junior at VCU majoring in theatre performance and English. She can't help making art, but sometimes it turns out okay.

NICOLE MARIA WILLIS

Nicole Maria Willis is a writer, editor, and artist living in Richmond, VA. The themes of her work generally center around the exaggerated grotesque, the hyperreal, and the darkly comedic. Nicole is graduating in May with a BFA in Kinetic Imaging and a minor in Creative Writing.

GRANT WOLFE

Grant Wolfe received his Bachelor of Arts from UVA in 2009, Majoring in English and Minor in Comparative Literature. Since graduation, he has enjoyed the

opportunity to deliver pizza across the Richmond area, but has now reluctantly enrolled as a Master of Social Work student at VCU that may jeopardize his ability to deliver pizza.

MADDIE HUDDLE

Maddie Huddle is a graduating senior in the Communication Arts Department. When she's not working towards becoming a successful gallery artist, she struggles to vanquish the forces of darkness. She's kind of a big deal.

BRENNAN CHAMBRE

Brennan Chambre is a senior at VCU and a pagebuilding intern for Blackbird: an online journal of literature and the arts. He will be graduating this spring with a degree in English and a minor in Creative Writing and will be studying Nonfiction in the MFA program at the University of Pittsburgh this fall.

ISHAN BOSE

Ishan's first love was traveling. He plans to live in New York one day and be fluent in at least four languages.

JAMAL STONE

Jamal Stone is an eligible Bachelor of Arts seeking a fun new lifestyle. Do you have health benefits and comfy chairs? Please respond.

HEATHER HUDGINS

Heather Hudgins is a Creative Advertising student minoring in Creative Writing (she subconsciously did this so that her diploma will say "creative" on it as many times as possible.) She has written two books, one called Party Girl Broken, and a sequel, October, both of which were very, very, very limited release. In addition, she wrote a digital zine in 2014 called Vast Majority. Heather has also published work in a variety of mediums, including the zine What Kind of Trouble? and USA Today College.

Heather likes hanging out with friends, the color pink, having a lot of opinions and glitter.

TAYLOR JANAY MANIGOULT

Taylor Janay Manigoult is a Sophomore at Virginia Commonwealth University arts. Although her major has yet to be decided, she will most likely study photography with a double major in social justice. Her passion is best spent helping those mistreated by oppressive forces; she does this by leading the student organization, Students for Social Action, and also by creating art work, visual and literary. Her mediums of expression range from acrylic to found objects, and from film to short, silly poems written in graphite. Lately, Taylor spends her time reading, eating donuts, and scribbling ideas on to loose sheets of paper that have accumulated into unhealthy collections of used napkins and old receipts.

BRAD EISENHauer

He is eighteen years old, and originally from Mount Airy, Maryland. The mediums he enjoys working in most are photography and collage.

SKYE YOUNG

Skye Young will be an alumni of Virginia Commonwealth University's Communication Arts department with a concentration in Scientific and Preparatory Medical Illustration and a minor in Biology in Spring of 2015. She had the pleasure of interning as an illustrator in the Botany Department of the Natural Museum of Natural History in DC and is currently applying to graduate schools in order to pursue a career in scientific/medical illustration.

ELISE KETCH

Elise is an Honors and Art Foundations student and prospective Communication Art major. Her favorite medium is acrylic. Though most of her life is centered around

creating, viewing, and talking about art, in her free time she indulges in her passions of writing, dancing, volunteering, and studying Spanish. Her art has been displayed in the VMFA and her poetry has been published in three national anthologies. Her ideal careers include illustrator, concept artist, designer, screenwriter, journalist, and novelist. She is obsessed over MBTI, birds, magic tricks, cuisine, paranormal phenomena, exploring, and the color purple, and hopes to one day do missionary work, direct a movie, give a TED Talk, learn to blow sugar glass, and visit the moon.

JESSICA KUSUMA

As a senior at VCU, Jessica produces designs ranging from hand lettering and graphic illustrations to logo design and editorial layouts for community organizations and small businesses. She believes in creative collaboration and establishing strong relationships between designers and the local community. Her interest in purposeful design is complimented by her pursuit of other artistic mediums such as digital photography and pencil portraiture. When she is not working on projects, Jessica enjoys baking apple pies, teaching swim lessons, and organizing her friends' living spaces into functional works of art.

JOHN DIJULIO

John is a Sophomore at VCU studying photography. He is interested in documentation, manipulation, and combining many mediums to create his work.

DAKOTA BECKER

Dakota Becker is a first year student enrolled in VCU's School of the Arts. After completing the Art Foundation Program, she plans on majoring in Communication Arts.

SAMUEL ADKINS

Samuel Adkins is an undergrad in the Graphic Design department at VCUarts. He is also a mentor and educator at the Science Museum of Virginia's maker-space, The Mix. This summer he, as a part of a team, will be working on building sustainable skateboards through a VCUarts research grant.

WESTON CLARK

Weston is a fine art and conceptual portrait photographer from Virginia Beach, VA. He is currently 18 years old and in the Art Foundations Program planning to get his BA in the Photography & Film department.

BOYING CHEN (陳伯英)

Boying Chen is a 19 year old art student from China who still trying to figure out who he is.

GRACE POPP

After graduating VCU in 2014, Grace Popp began working as a designer at World Art Group. Grace also creates darkly humored greeting cards in her free time, which are available on Etsy as well as gracepoppart.com. She currently lives in Charlottesville and has been working on keeping her house plants alive.

KATHLEEN BRIEN

Kathleen Brien is a junior in Craft and Material Studies with a minor in Anthropology. She takes great pleasure in getting to the root of people's problems including her own, which is why she goes to therapy. She firmly believes oversharing is a necessary element to living an emotionally informed life and does so accordingly. Kathleen also loves gingersnaps, the sexuality spectrum, cheesecloth, standoffish cats, and people who laugh at her jokes. She does not love unrequited feelings, researching, the patri-

archy, and the word “gland”. Her personality does not match her fashion sense, which was described as “mushroom” by a friend.

MEGAN GOLDFARB

Megan Goldfarb is a double major in art education and painting and printmaking. This is her second year illustrating for Poictesme, but in her other endeavors she enjoys constructing glowing ambiguous mini-environments. During her leisure time she likes to do work.

STEPHANIE TRUJILLO

Stephanie Trujillo is a transfer student in the VCUarts program, and intends to major in Graphic Design. Before she moved to Virginia, she studied Art History at John Cabot University in Rome. She plans to pursue a Masters in Museum Studies to become an art director or curator. Stephanie’s cultural and artistic views are largely shaped from her nomadic lifestyle, having grown up overseas in Europe for 15 years. In her free time she enjoys being with her friends and family, exercising, doing photography, and catching up on sleep. She is addicted to travelling around the world, making international friends, and living outside her comfort zone.

NICHOLAS SHIPMAN

Nicholas Shipman is currently pursuing degrees in History and English at Virginia Commonwealth University. His poetry and comics have appeared in such publications as The Other Herald, the Mountain Echoes anthology, Weird, and Quail Bell. He serves as an editor at the Poictesme literary journal and interns at the Metaphysical Circus Press. If you encounter him in the wild, he can be approached safely via the application of caffeine and literature.

ILANA BEAN

Ilana Bean is an illustrator and occasional writer. She’s focused in scientific illustra-

tion, and spends most of her time drawing bat tendons and daydreaming about bringing back The Magic School Bus. Until she gets around to choosing a clever domain name and creating her website, you can find her work at <https://www.behance.net/IlanaBeanArt>.

LAUREN CHARTUK

Lauren Chartuk is an English major who adores critical reading and writing. She is also an active member of environmental groups on campus. When she isn’t protesting for the environment, she is reading and writing feverishly.

COLIN MCELIGOT

Colin McEligot is an English major and after graduation hopes to teach English in Japan. He is interested in visual art, music, songwriting, and coffee. After teaching for a little bit, he wants to pursue a second degree in visual art.

FAITH VASKO

Faith Vasko is a sophomore, majoring in English and pursuing VCU’s Da Vinci Program. She has a strong connection to the books on her bookshelf and wishes they could travel with her everywhere. A note on her phone contains about 10 names she’s ready to utilize for her future felines.

ELIZABETH DUNFORD

Elizabeth Dunford was born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1995, but spent her formative years in Georgia and Virginia. Dunford now attends Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond as a part of their Painting and Printmaking program. She works in both digital and traditional painting, with a preference for acrylic paints, although she is currently branching out into the fields of printmaking and metal-working as well. Her pieces generally focus on themes of nature, female empowerment and fantastical

other-worlds. In 2013, she ran a booth as a part of her high school's Senior Art Show. The following year, in 2014, she displayed a piece in Virginia Commonwealth University's Art Foundation Program show. She will be studying abroad in Peru during the summer of 2015.

MAYA CHESLEY

Maya Chesley is currently studying Biology and Spanish at VCU, but also enjoys creative writing. This is her third year as a member of Poictesme's editorial staff and she hopes next year will be her fourth.

AMBER KERRIGAN

The quiet and artsy type, Amber has always been interested in all things creative, most specifically design. Currently in the Art Foundation Program, she is planning to major in Fashion Design next year, and hoping to be working in New York or London after graduation.

DANIEL PARKER

Handsome but not too handsome, Daniel Parker is a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University majoring in journalism. When he's not hustling for stories, Daniel spends his time: writing his dreams and donating to charity.

CARLA DOMINGUEZ

Carla Dominguez is a proud Cuban-American and loves Poictesme dearly.



**I DANCE FOOLISHLY
WHEN I AM CONTENTED**

Crepe Myrtle
Skye Young
Pen and ink



OPPOSITE:

Wright Kite
Elise Ketch
Linoleum print



