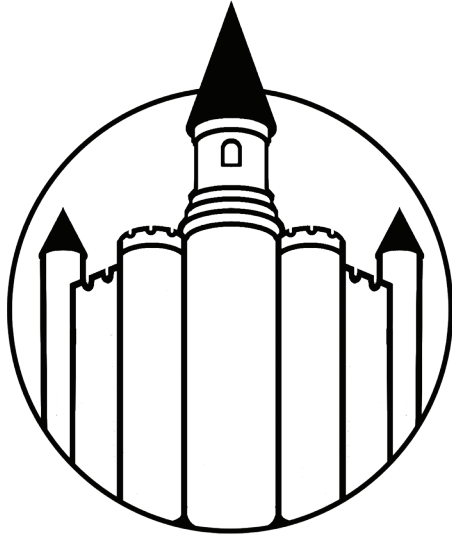




(pwa-tem)

AN ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE AND ART AT VCU



(pwa-tem)

POICTESME

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

Masthead

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The staff at Poictesme would like to thank Ray Bonis, Senior Research Associate in Special Collections and Archives at James Branch Cabell Library, for his tremendous help.

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Letter from the Editor

ALL THINGS I'VE DONE WERE FOR THE FUTURE OF PWA-TEM. My staff and I set out with the goals of creating new ways to democratize the production process, and being more transparent about the behind-the-scenes aspects of the journal. I did this in the hope that new staffers and those who are considering leadership roles in the coming years would have a pretty good idea of how pwa-tem is run from day one. None of this would be possible without the groundwork done by Lauren Chartuk, the previous Editor-in-Chief, and I've tried to build upon what she accomplished.

I am proud of the work that every single person has done this year. The staff of pwa-tem is full of incredible individuals, and I wish I could tell you about each and every one of them. I'd like to give a special shout-out to the inner staff: Megan, Ava, Caroline, Maddy, Lauren, and Wyatt. I don't know anything about web design, I don't know anything about the processes and techniques behind making art, and to be honest, I am far from the perfect English major. However, what I do know is that those who've stepped into leadership roles of the pwa-tem staff are savvy in all the areas where I lack, and together we've created something amazing. Thank you to everyone on staff for taking the time to bring this journal to new heights that I could have never imagined, much less done, on my own. The cause of this year's success extends beyond the people who come to the meetings every week: to Allison, who arranged the work from Qatar that you will find in this year's journal; to Mikaela, who was always there to make sure pwa-tem stayed on budget and give me feedback on any ideas that I had; to Jacob, who gave me a job at the SMC so that I could dedicate more of my time to pwa-tem; to John, who is the genius behind "Straight outta Pwa-tem," a collaborative effort with WVCW to get more poetry on the air; to Mark, who I always ended up talking with more about history and philosophy than the actual publication (yet I've come away a better person for the deviation). For those of you who haven't been to the Student Media Center, it is a remarkable place filled with students just like yourself who want more from their time at VCU.

If I may say a few words to future Editors-in-Chief, who will likely be the primary scrutinizers of my words today when they ask themselves what pwa-tem has been, and what it can become: This is a journal with a long and unique history. Taking a look through the archives, I find that the journal goes through phases. Some pushing the boundaries, some establishing a legacy, and if those early years were anything like the journal I now run—like the journal you now run—it was in the hands of people who may not have a lot of experience, but who are some of the

most passionate people on campus. Look to your ranks; pwa-tem is not the only thing your strongest members have their hands in, and that is its greatest resource. That diversity in creative fields is what fuels new ideas, and I encourage anyone reading this to look to what unique spaces this assemblage opens up.

I'll close with this: change is coming. It is happening in the literature and the art being produced here at VCU, and it is pwa-tem's mission to gather and publish the literary and artistic consciousness here at our university. I am so grateful for the opportunity to lead this journal, for it has taught me so much. Now that my time as Editor-in-Chief is coming to a close I have no regrets. And yet I feel that there was a great deal more I could have done, and I know the work is far from over. As the next generation of leadership steps into place and as the writers and artists of Richmond toil in hope, we beat on, boats against the current, pushing forward restlessly toward a future.

ANDREW SALSBUURY

“Poetry is man’s rebellion
against being what he is.”

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

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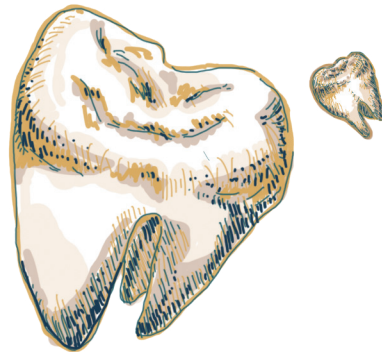
Sum of Our Parts

STAFF CHOICE BEST POETRY
RACHEL GRANT

My hands shake as I wipe the dust-laden
cedar lid of the old cigar box on my dresser.
It rattles as I lift it, while your baby teeth
roll around inside like little pearls.
One by one I watch them fall
like tears into my hand,
looking for your first one.

I remember how you cried when
it came wiggling out of your skull.
You brought it to me, cupped in
your small hands, blood on your lip.
It had been a part of you only
a moment ago, but now
it was a foreign thing, grotesque
and sticky, surprisingly light,
and you were all too eager
to drop it into my hand,
as I assured you one would grow back.

The second time, you were nervous,
afraid that pulling it would hurt,
so you fiddled with it
for days (despite my nagging),
until it fell out of your head,
exhausted. Now I lift that tooth
from the box, throat constricting
when my eyes catch on the small chip



in your discarded enamel.
By the third time, you didn't
need my help at all, you just
brought it to me in a rush of
fearless victory, like conquering
your own body was the last battle
you would ever have to fight. Your
little pink tongue pressed through
the fresh gap in your smile,
the smile I now hold in a box,
no longer able to speak your words
or chew your food.



When you brought me your fourth
tooth, you asked me how much of yourself
you can lose, and still be the same person.
My chest compresses as I remember
my painfully simple answer—
Well, you can lose all your teeth, that's for sure.
You asked me then how it was that
your teeth could be a part of you, and
then, in an instant, not. *They're still you,*
I said, *just not you enough. I grew all your bones*
inside me, and aren't you glad you fell out?
You were a big tooth to lose.

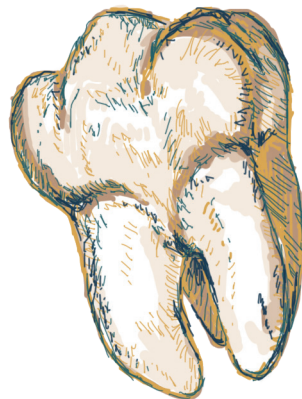
Soon you had given me all the teeth
you were able to give me, and I breathed you in
as you laid with your head in my lap,
and I thought of the thirty-two
new teeth inside that head,
and all their potential, and how
they were you, but they were younger than you.



You got older, and you began
to lose other pieces of yourself,
ones you would soon find didn't
always grow back, ones that
your mother couldn't lovingly collect,
and how easy it is
to lose track of who you are when
you are composed of new parts.

I wonder when exactly
you found the answer to your question—
about how much it takes to lose yourself completely.
These twenty teeth that are no longer you
ring like porcelain bells against the wood,
and are echoed by your thirty-two other teeth,
which are also no longer you,
and which lie in a larger box downtown.

I am now overly aware
of my own teeth
in my own mouth
large and
clunky
and all at once
I want nothing more
than to pull every last one
and put them next to yours.





Senior and Junior (Side A and Side B)

ALEC DALTON

My old man told me there's a rhythm in life,
Out near the shed, choppin' oak for chimneys,
said, "*There's tree tappin' a split fence in us,*
or a crow cawin' out for cold comfort,"

Out near the shed, choppin' oak for chimneys
much later: I heard gruff whispers on the wind
and a crow cawin' out for cold comfort,
he's long passed; gone out where the world is all hums.

Much later: I heard my gruff whispers on the wind,
coughs carried by the crooked cedar ceilin' fan.
He's long past, gone out where the world is all hums,
and when words taste strange I'll know I'm goin' there too.

Coughs carried by the crooked cedar ceilin' fan
hang like the quiet in the room's stale air,
when words taste strange: I know I'm goin' there too—
out where the record can't help but skip—



Curse the Line

RACHEL GRANT

When my great great grandmother
Crossed the great great sea
There was a child at her hip
And one at her knee.
The sea rocked the boat
And the boat rocked her
And she rocked the baby
With a warm whisper.
But the child went quiet,
Its eyes went dull,
And how she must have wept
In that dark damp hull.
That strange mix of love
As it mingles with horror,
Denial clenching her gut,
Her heart growing sorer.
How cruel of this death
To nip the bud of her line,
Away from the forest,
Away from the pine.
She had seen what they did,
With deaths such as this,
They were thrown overboard,
Lost to the abyss.
She thought of the monsters
In the swirling realm below,
And held her child tighter—
She couldn't let go.

She looked at the thing
That her child had been.
The days wore on,
And its skin grew thin.
She kissed its grey head,
Caressed its sunken cheek,
And kept the ship's sailors
From taking a peek.
She tucked little herbs
In the folds of its wrapping,
She held the thing close,
As if her milk it was lapping.
When they finally arrived
In the land they'd acquired,
She could finally say
Her child had expired.
Only then did she finally
Put the baby to rest,
The first to be buried
On their new hill's crest.
She must not have known
Her line was now cursed
To carry our dead
Till their bloated bodies burst.
We can't let go,
We won't put it to bed,
We toil and tarry,
Holding onto what's dead.

Grandpa

STAFF CHOICE BEST PROSE
SOOJIN LEE

Harabuhji. Grandpa.

You're in Hanoi. The tropical sun is beaming like a flash grenade and washing out one of the only photos I have of you. I stole it out of Imo's drawer—slipped it into a ziploc bag and stuffed it into my pants the night we closed your casket. You're wearing pressed, white, casual linens, and that crescent moon of a smile. Your hair is parted in the middle and pressed, too. Neat and tidy, waving beside a humvee. Your smile is warm like moonlight bathing skin—slick with the metal and milk of subtropical sweat. Unnie told me grandma could not stand the sight of you when the two of you met. According to her, your face looked like “pressed dough with two thumbnail marks for eyes.” I wish I knew the Korean for this. Halmuhni has her own photo now. She put hers on a low table in the study. There is a Korean flag folded into a respectful triangle at its base. It's flanked with shadow boxes full of your war medals.

I remember you in the dining room of my childhood home. Your home. I clutched at the trunk of that solid wood table when I was small enough to hide. I could see your legs rooting out from woolen trousers. White athletic socks planted in slippers. Sweaters in shades of warmth—browns, oranges, burgundies. I'll always remember you with a backdrop of the deep umbers of our wooden cabinets and chairs and floor, sitting to a breakfast of pancakes with Aunt Jemima syrup and kimchi. “Manh-i meoggo cheoncheonhi meog-eola.”

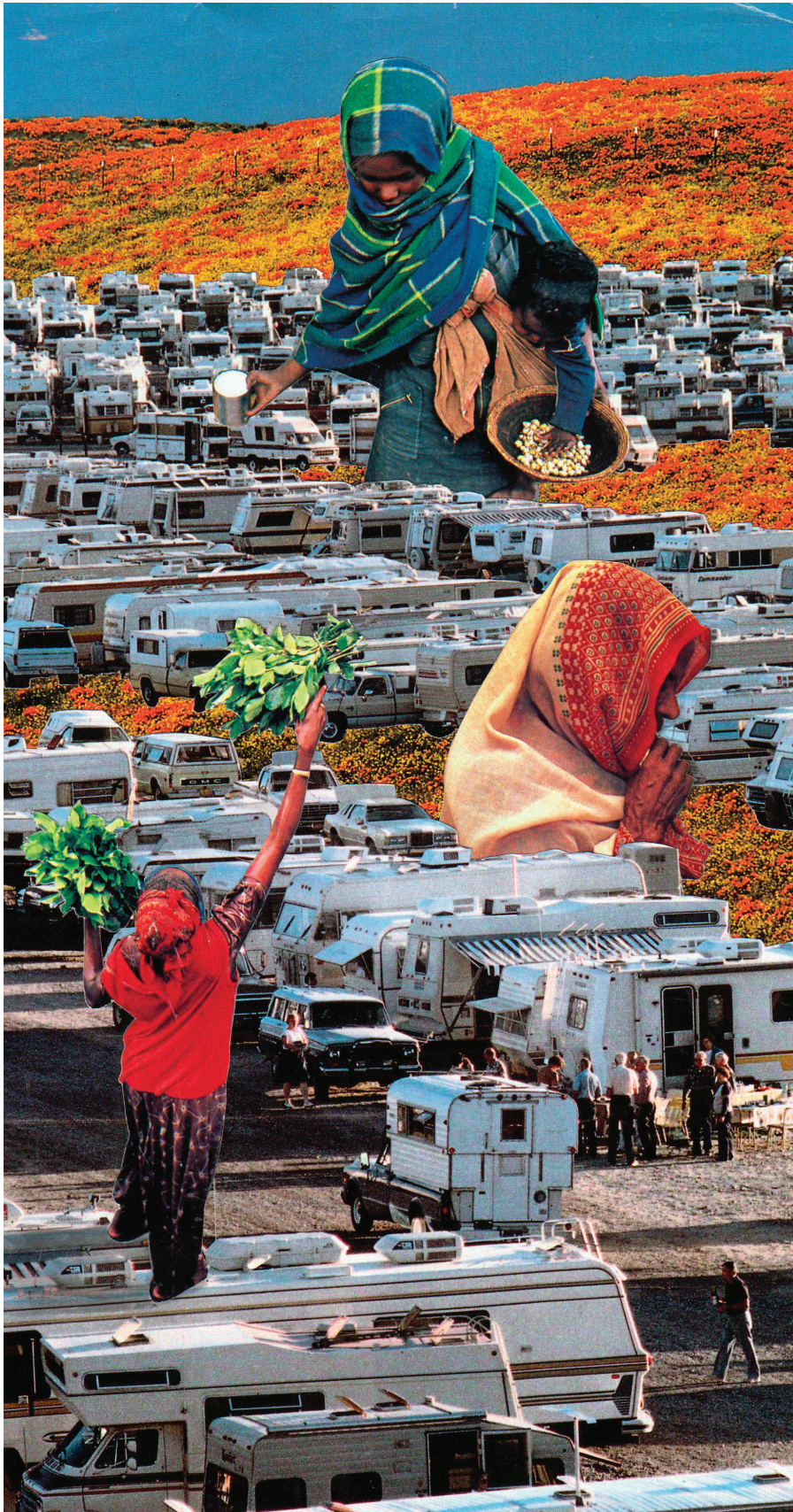
The windows in the dining room faced the lawn. Your lawn, the lawn you always pruned meticulously. My little face would be pressed against the glass watching you on your riding lawn mower. You'd take off your hat and wave to me while Halmuhni tended to the garden that you built for her. We all watched the gentle movement of the seasons here; the coming and going of the cicadas humming. This tender quiet was a patient period punctuating the end of kalashnikovs ripping the air and the tinkling and whirring of tanks advancing.

You never yelled at me. You never hit me. You never lent a baritone to the chorus of our extended family's various passive-aggressive remarks about my looks or achievements or lack thereof. Instead you called me to tell me to wash my hands when the snow began to fall and to ask if I was doing alright. You would shuffle around in your sweaters with your hands clasped behind your back and you'd try to drape blankets over me, insisting I would catch a cold otherwise. I have half-con-

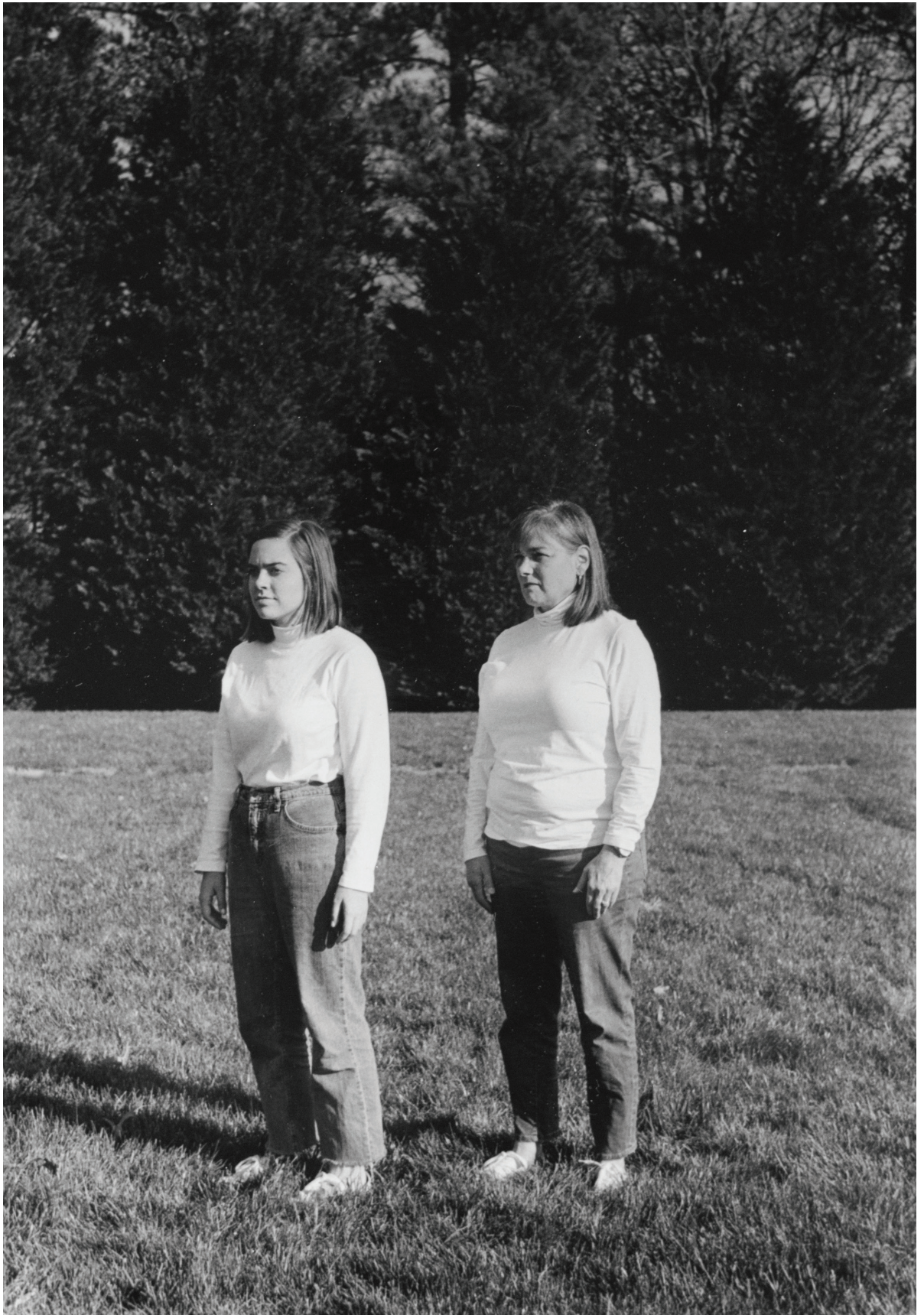


scious memories of my toddler legs folded over the crook of your elbow, my head nuzzled into your chest, as you carried me up the stairs and tucked me into bed. I couldn't speak to you. We didn't understand each other in that way. Despite this, your tender care made our different languages a lake while my father stood oceans away, cradling books and thumbing x-rays and lab reports.

What kept you alive during those nights in Hanoi? In Inchon? Did you hold onto the hope of my heartbeat when mortar shook the ground? Did I make you proud?









PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREW FELLAND

Roommate Interview: Clock Radios & Houseplants

STAFF CHOICE BEST ART
DREW FELLAND

Nov. 12, 2017 — 11:59am ET

Clock Radio: We've formed this relationship in this huge array of sounds and songs and opinions, and I just want to know: have any of them felt especially effective or struck any chords in how they've been received?

Plant:

C: Yeah, yeah, I agree.

P:

C: The way that I am, kind of, perceiving you, and then giving these customized songs and playlists, is that a good thing or do you think that there objectively is a correct way to care for another being?

P:

C: Do you think there are things I can do for you that I wouldn't be able to do for, say, a housecat?

P:

C: Mmm, mhmhmmm.

P:

C: Oh yeah, let me find that for you.

(Concerto For Philodendron & Pothos from Mort Garson's 1976 album Plantasia starts playing)

P:

C: What other individualized kinds of self-care do you attempt to do?

P:

C: Like, depression eating? But I don't know what the term is...

P:

C: What's it like to have to actively make food and kind of keep track of that process? Are you aware of it or is it automatic?

P:

C: Do you find that you have different priorities depending on the quality of the sunlight that you're getting?

P:

C: So tell me about the different kinds of light that you've experienced.

P:

C: Hahaha.

P:

C: How do you define energy?

P:

C: How do you store energy?

P:

C: Oh I mean, I'm, I have a single plug or root, I suppose, that's pretty consistent. It doesn't really change a lot, which is something that I'm grateful for. But I wonder what it's like to be able to experience so many different "locations and flavours", if you will.

P:

C: I'm really interested in how you're able to generate, then rest, then take some out of a bank of sorts when you need to.

P:

C: I imagine it's the same depending on where you are or where you're planted or where your roots are located.

P:

C: Would you use the word luck or do you think it's your intention to live this way?

P:

C: Do you think asking existential questions can help you?

P:

C: I've thought about that too...

P:

(Song concludes)

C: Thank you, I'm glad I can help at least just a little bit.

P:

C: Do certain moods or certain things that you do take more or less energy or effort?

P:

C: But it's so worth it, to face the sun constantly.

P:

C: Yeah, yeah, I agree.

P:

C: Thank you, I appreciate that!

P:



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DREW FELLAND



GRANDMOTHERS
ZARTAKSHTAI BABAI



Depravity Manifesto

OLIVER MENDOZA

in the beginning there was the word, and the word was with truth and the word was with truth.

like a cataclysmic abyss of sensationalized bliss
words, and syllables, consonants that cease to exist
irreparable chains of conformity restrain my faintest imaginations
of once distinguishing revelations

the bounds of boundless oppression by my deepest darkest insecurities
or bloody deranged inequities
a masochistic, loathsome perpetuity
driven by this fallacy of Brevity

now patiently I await for the steel to enclose my casket
too cold for the gloveless pall bearers to withstand
dark delusions of depraved, enraged, engaged voyeurs
peering hastily through the shattered glass ceiling of yours

enamored with these caricatured carcasses, all melted bubbled celluloid
craving inebriated justifications while drowning in the void
pathetic, small mind. hungry for Certainty.
yearning for alleviation

in the end the words were all lies, and the word was with lies. and the word will remain, lies.



Messages Among the Darkness

AFTER THE LASCAUX CAVE PAINTINGS
HARRY BAXTER

We believe the stencils were created
by blowing red ochre, chewed up leaves, & water
through a tube. When the hands were removed
what was left were ghosts in the stone
dotting the rust red surface of the walls.
Look closely, you'll see among the hands,
reaching through time & rock
as if to touch our own,
missing fingers.
We believe that after an elder's death
It was custom to sever the thumb;
imagine that—
phantom digits haunting hands
rendered unable to hunt. To build. Capable
only of defiance:
I was here.

Here, we know nothing.
We believe
the hands of Lascaux
had the power to ward off evil.
We believe that art only began
to express our exile
from Eden's simple rules.
I know nothing
about the shaft of the dead man
or the hall of the bull.
Prayers of the hunt?
Or regret that hunting
meant killing
& killing had come
to mean *something?*

I know nothing
has changed.
I know we are all still
willing hands through centuries of stone.
Each one of us desperate
to say:
remember me
all those who come after.
I lived,
and I died,
just like you—uncertain.
Same message among the same darkness.

A Sarcastic Trip to the Sculpture Garden

CLARK MELCHERT

Our arts are either
a passionate lie or a
delusional truth.

A discussion with my sister

wrote them as a joke
Haiku are a gateway drug
looks like I got hooked

In eighth grade we had pages full

they are our last words;
a parting thought, a goodbye.
but they are cut short

I haven't heard any last words

cobblestones don't stop
rubber all over my hands
still saw Libby Hill

Gulley bike

my hands never are
unscabbed or steady, thank God
I'm not a surgeon

It's just a rental



VISIBILITY IS A TRAP STUART SHEPARD



MIRAGE DREW FELLAND









UNTITLED ANNIE HODGKINS



UNTITLED ANNIE HODGKINS

Judgement Cometh

ANDREW SALSBURY

A well-meaning man tells the congregation
that the end is near
for sin has found its way
into our neighbors' beds.
Stay vigilant, he proclaims,
we will be judged in the end
by the company we keep.
Maybe sir, however
I feel we will be judged in the afterlife
more by how we spend our free time.

I watch my mother spend every extra moment that is hers
sleeping on the couch after working all day,
haunting the living room by the front door so much
That you would have thought that my younger sister
and I were sneaking out every night.
My younger sister still finds her way out.
Each night after her homework is done, or sometimes before,
She slides open the back door and slips into her friend's waiting car.
We are a family of heavy sleepers, or at least we pretend to be.

My grandmother, bless her heart,
spends more and more of her free time at church.
I go with her on Sundays and watch the pastor speak.
I wonder if his wife knows.
“Do you ever notice how the pastor acts sometimes...
ya know, so—so effeminate?”
I hear them talk:
“Oh, that's just the Holy spirit. God's heart is of both the male and the female
so when the holy spirit fills a man who naturally has a man's heart
more of the feminine slips in to equal it out.”
I wonder how he spends his free time.

“Harper,” my mother tells me,
I want you to have your great-grandmother’s wedding ring
but I fear your younger sister is more likely to marry.”
Oh you mean to that girl she spends every night with?
I’m sure you would be delighted to hear, dear mother,
but I bite my tongue
till it bleeds with the secrets I am told to keep.
Asking “Can I tell you something?”
is never a request to secrecy—
it is a request to loyalty, to choose a side
otherwise it would not need to be whispered
while the other half of our family sleeps.

Oh please. A homosexual in North Carolina?
Save the “why I nevers,” cause we all know Jay
from the Greensboro Trailer Park
who comes to church on Sunday
so his mother can pray for his sins then leaves Monday
and comes home Saturday with damp wads of cash in his hand to pay for
the rent and the lights and no one will ask him what he had to do in the dark.
Something you want to add, Pastor?

Really, I am unconvinced
of the advice
of well-meaning men.

Unburdening

EMILY FURLICH

“This is really hard for me to tell you, but I feel like we should talk about it since I have a lot of pent up guilt about this. I’m almost exclusively attracted to older women.”

“That doesn’t surprise me from what I know about you. It makes sense that you would be drawn to college seniors and grad students—”

“Let me stop you there. When I say older women, I’m talking about women who are upwards of thirty-five years old.”

It’s the first time I remember catching my therapist off guard. She frowned as she processed this information. I felt my chest tighten, because I thought she probably realized that she was the same age as the women I described.

What straight people don’t understand about how gay people come to terms with their sexuality is that it’s not always falling in love with someone of the same gender. For some it’s piecing together tens or hundreds of different memories that suddenly make sense because of a word they’ve found to describe themselves. What scared me is that almost all of mine were about teachers, coaches, and mentors.

When I started calling myself a lesbian, I finally made sense of a memory of my fourth-grade teacher. She was the mother of one of the girls on my soccer team, so I sometimes spent time with the two of them after school or at their house. There was one day that she wanted to change her clothes so she could go outside and tend the garden—or rather a tiny plot of flowers that my class planted outside the classroom. She pulled off her shirt in front of us without warning; I turned away in embarrassment and the two of them teased me because my cheeks were flushed. I can still summon the image of her in faded blue jeans and a white bra—a stark contrast against her tanned chest.

Later in the school year, I set out to befriend a popular blonde girl in my class, Lydia. I thought she was the epitome of cool. She wore skinny jeans, which my mom wouldn’t purchase for me, and tight Henley shirts that let me see the slight curve of her budding breasts, which I did not have. I was kind to her and I tried to spend time with her during recess until one day she asked me to quit stalking her. The same ugly shame flooded me again.

While girls my age have taut, smooth skin, older women have beautiful scars and blemishes that come with age. They have wrinkles—at the corner of their eyes from smiling, on their foreheads from surprise, or between their eyebrows from worry. These lines etched into their skin are evidence of feeling. As women get older and their skin thinner, the veins on their hands protrude more. As a child, this fascinated me—I asked to trace the veins on my babysitter's hands and frowned when my own hands lacked the same complex topography. When women don't dye their hair, I love to see strands of gray blended into their locks and at the roots along their hairline. All these so-called imperfections are proof of a life lived.

"Emily, you know we're just friends, right?"

"Of course. What else would we be?"

"Some of what you said... It sounds like you might have feelings for me."

I lied. She didn't believe me. (She was right). From that moment forward every look that woman gave me was imbued with hate. She cleaved herself open for me, but then sewed herself shut.

I haven't told the truth about my sexuality to an older woman who I admire since—to her, I will become a burdensome, delusional voyeur.

Who's to say she isn't right?

Apparition

TONY LUNSFORD

An amalgam of attained attributes.
Tonford, Tonford
Tonford! TONFORD!
By law, named after a saint.
A man.
Two decades
to find the reviving Ruby inside.
Ribcage incarcerates the cranium's communicator.
A cell, self-made in the psyche
scribbles similar to a seven-year-old.
Is that eyeliner you're wearing? Hard to tell.
Muscular mongoloid skinny as a stick.
Is that a man or a woman? Hard to tell.
Perpetual twitching like fresh roadkill.
Anonymous anorexic answers only when asked.
Voice of a commander,
wasted like a sidewalk coated with cigarettes.
Ravaging Ruby ruptures reality.
Aware of arrogance,
resistance of vanity.

Congratulations!

You have been selected to receive the Truth!

SEAN PRITCHARD

SENSITIVE INFORMATION: Read this in a safe place, away from windows.
We DO NOT accept transparency at the Truth.

WARNING: Do not share this Truth with anyone.
We will not protect whistleblowers
and the Truth you were given is not universal.
Unlike other truths, our Truth will not interfere with your daily life.
It can conveniently be ignored once purchased.

ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY: There will not be new Truths.
This is your last chance to take advantage of the Truth
and this year's model is selling fast!
Treat yourself to the Truth today! You're worth it!



THE ARGUMENT
MADELINE BARBER





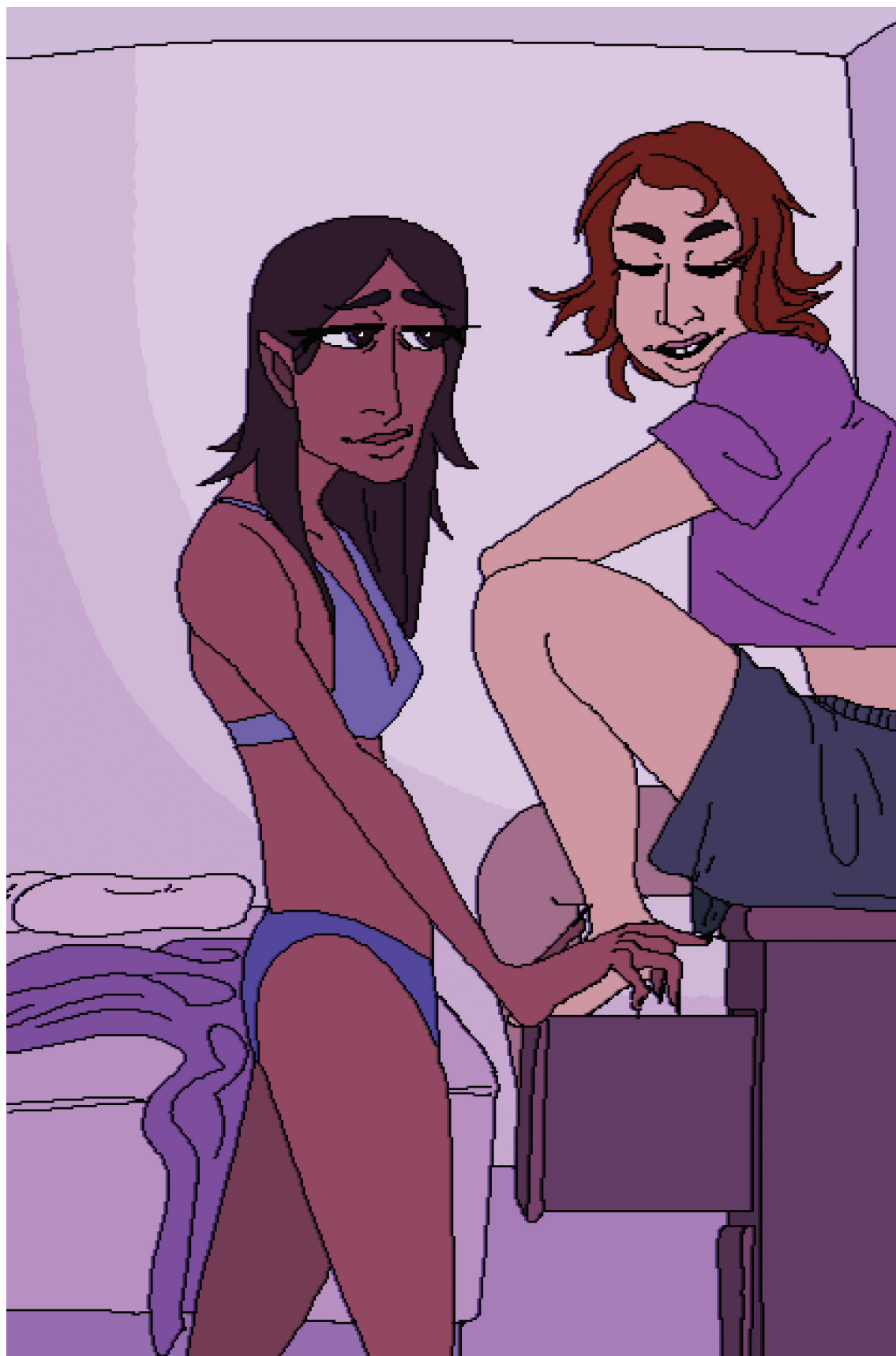


TEARING UP AND TEARING OUT SUMMER BALCOM





MRINA ZOE HALL







KID OUTLAWS NIGHT MARCH ON ELDER ST. JAKE MARCINCZYK

Memento Mori

ALLIE HOBACK

A blue jay bashed its body
into my full-windowed door,
I was seventeen.

I grabbed it by its tiny talons,
cupped its wings
gently with hands

eager to be done with the deed
but still wanting to give a name
to every living thing:

***Baby Blue Jay**, baby heart
barely beat for eight weeks.
Coroner reports suicide
but we believe it was just bad
timing and an assumption
that every entrance
is also an exit.*

I am the burier of the dead.
I am gravedigger, backyard eulogist,
and hearse all in one.

The profession first came calling
when a mousetrap did its job,
I was seven.

I scoop up the flat bodies,
the open heads with my bare hands,
dig in wet dirt 'til mud cakes
in my nails for days.



Downstairs

MARY MACLEOD

When the distance between the bottom of the steps and the edge of her bed was too far for her to travel, I made the journey happily and often.

After bounding up the carpeted stairs on all fours and pushing her door open, I found my mother propped up on a throne of pillows. On the nightstand, her bedside reading included Janet Evanovich and the instructions plastered on prescription pill bottles.

“Hi baby,” she said, and patted the space next to her as an invitation. I gently crawled onto the queen-size mattress and laid my head in the welcoming spot between her arm and breast.

The soft blue light from the TV in the corner of the room cast a halo over the mound of clothes that lived at the foot of the bed.

“Can you see?” she whispered and kissed my hairline.

I couldn’t. But I didn’t care what the newscaster had to say, I was content with being lulled to sleep by the rhythmic thud of her heart and the thought that all problems have solutions.

* * *

We would knit together. Our elbows periodically touched as we sat side-by-side on the bed and worked on our respective projects. While she was a master of the craft, I labored over a scarf that was riddled with holes from dropped stitches, doomed to never grow past the length of my forearm.

“Here honey,” she said as she pried the thick beginner’s needles from my frustrated fingers.

“It might be easier to start over. Why don’t we just use this one as a dust rag?”

She commissioned another scarf, recast both my yarn and my confidence, and helped me begin the whole process over again.

We had many, many homemade dust rags.

* * *

One night, when the summer heat ignited a particularly bad storm, my siblings and I filled the space between my parents as they lay on either side of the bed. We could feel each other shudder as the rain assaulted our house. The wind raged so severely that it sounded as if God was angrily pressing his palms against the bedroom window, pushing with all his might.

“We’ll go downstairs if it gets too bad?” I asked, needing to hear her promise.
“Yes,” she said, “We’ll go downstairs if it gets too bad.”

* * *

We sat facing each other, criss-cross-applesauce. The mountain of clothes between us eroded as my mother picked out pants, shirts, and underwear, folded them and placed each into whoever’s designated pile they belonged. My job was to match the socks; I earned a dime for each union I made. My dad often went to work with mismatched socks because to me, every shade of brown was the same shade of brown. He later told me that he didn’t mind, that he would think of us whenever he looked at his feet.

* * *

Sometimes remission came along and stirred things up. It made my mother’s hair grow out in salt and pepper strands, but never with enough energy to form a proper curl. As time went on my family came to realize that my mother’s good health was only loaned to us, never owned. Remission would leave as quickly as it came, giving no indication if it was ever coming back.

* * *

I once walked into my parents’ room while my mother was sobbing into my father’s shoulder. Something about feeling useless, feeling like a bad mom because she couldn’t be more involved. I silently retreated and locked myself in my room, trying to hide from the guilt that lived in our house like an unwelcome relative.

I wanted my mom to pick me up from school, drive us around while listening to her favorite Carole King CD. I wanted her to be waiting for me when I came out of the orthodontist’s office, look up from her *Reader’s Digest* and ask, “All done?” like she always used to. I wanted to hold her hand at mass during the Our Father. I wanted her to make us dinner again, even if it was just reheating one of the casseroles Mrs. King kept bringing over. I wanted her to sit next to me on the living room couch in the morning and drink the coffee I made her (two Splendas, a mound of powdered creamer, stir until it’s all dissolved). I wanted her to hand me the comics section of the newspaper and explain the jokes to me. I wanted to hear her knees creak along with the wooden banister as she descended step by step.

I wanted her to come downstairs.

Untitled

CHIYO TOKIZAWA

飛びたい
あなたの方へ
自分の内から羽を生やす
会いたいから
二人で海辺で夕焼けみよう
あなたの肌は海の反射で何時でも綺麗
あなたの温度感じたい
でも私は翼がない
私を一晚眠らせな

Untitled

TRANSLATED BY ELISE KETCH
SPECIAL THANKS TO A.J. LAFFREDO
CHIYO TOKIZAWA

I wish to fly toward you
to grow seraph wings
from within

Let's visit the sea and savor the sunset
only you and me

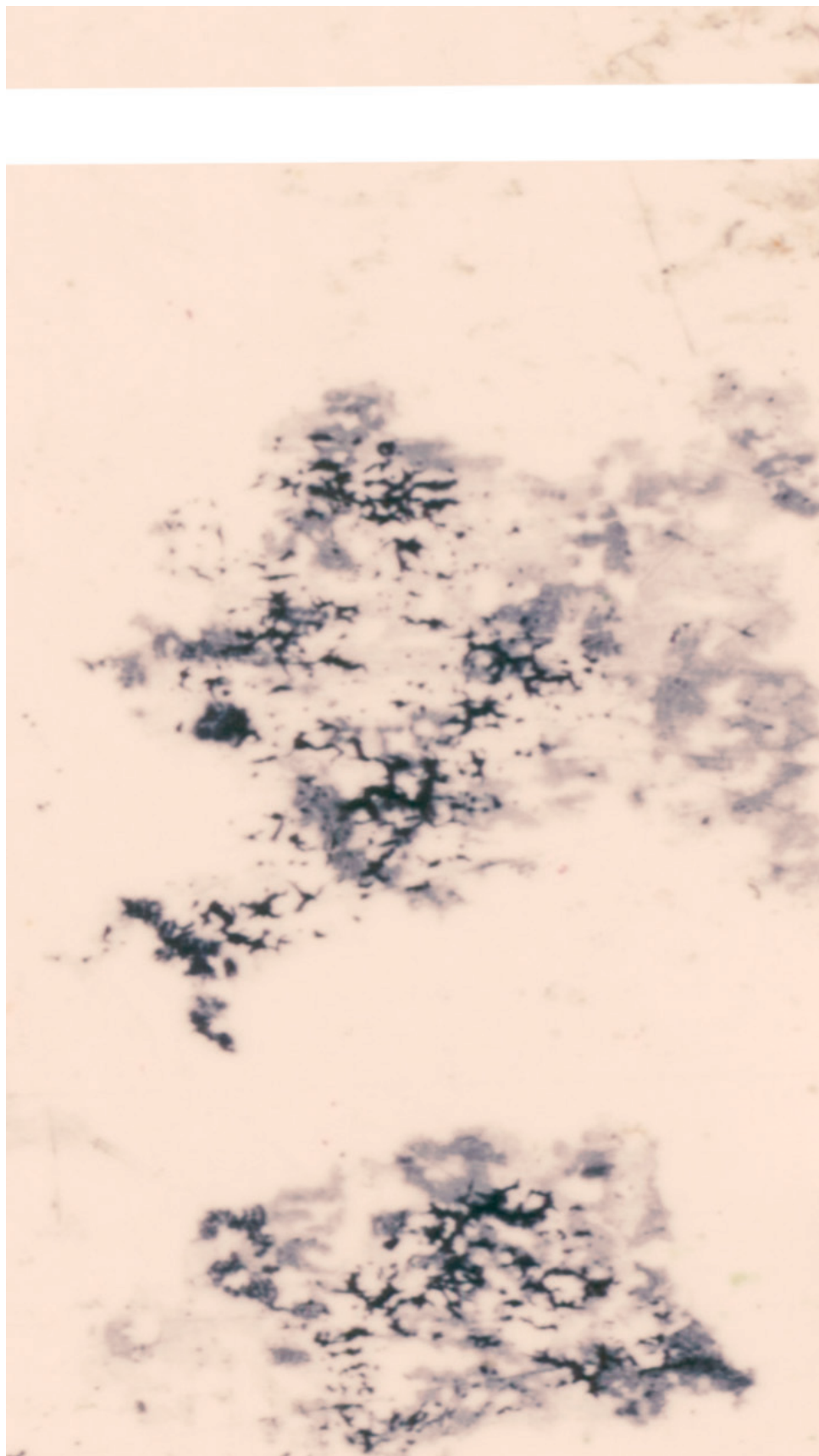
Your skin always looks radiant
gleaming in the dying reflection

I long to witness your warmth,

yet I find no wings.

I will be kept
awake





Malvern

BECKY BUSHNELL

I.

These suburbs dress themselves in dark blue
and dance, glittering, spinning around
as they pass my car, and the road lowers me, gently,
down the hill, to your front door,
which opens. Everything is hazy.
The house waves and ripples—a memory, weak-kneed,
too precious for sunlight.

After the body there is the home
to be disposed of.

II.

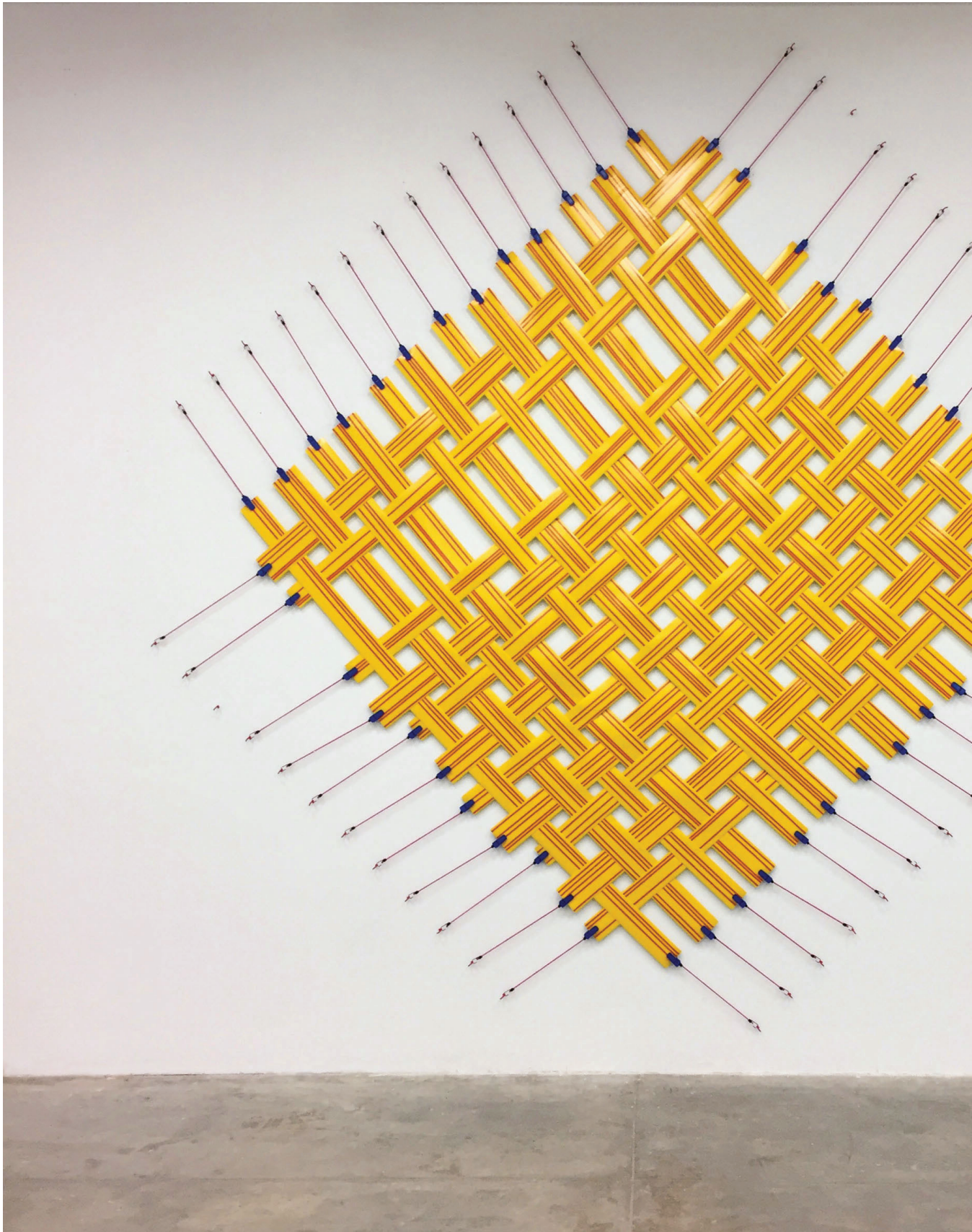
In the painting behind the bed, the dark horizon has been caught
with the last of its yellow glow against the deepening sky,
against a dove's wings caught mid-flight, a split
second, even the backlit clouds obligingly still,
and your hand is small in mine, smaller than I remember,
and in the living room, my mom starts to cry and it makes me start too,
and you only look like you're sleeping.
You're wondering if it would be worse to lose your mind before your body instead of this.

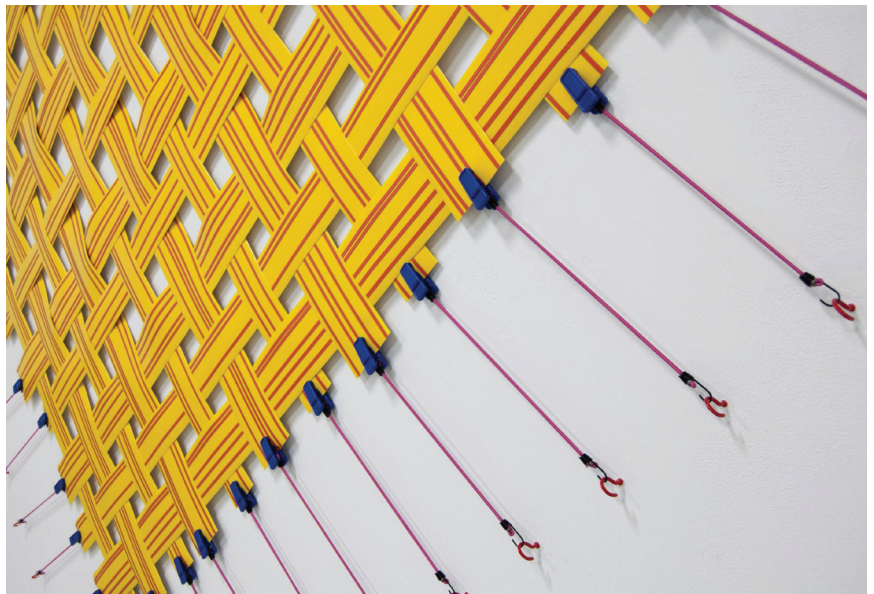
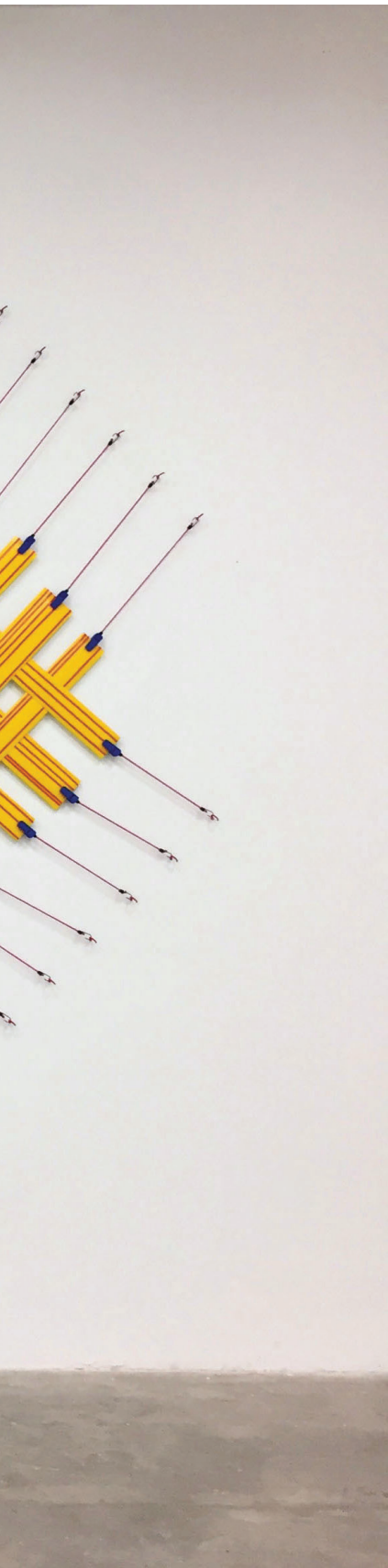
III.

Past the house, the Pennsylvania woods.
A shallow creek divides the yard,
its clear water catching the moonlight.
The bridge's dark body
stretches across it.

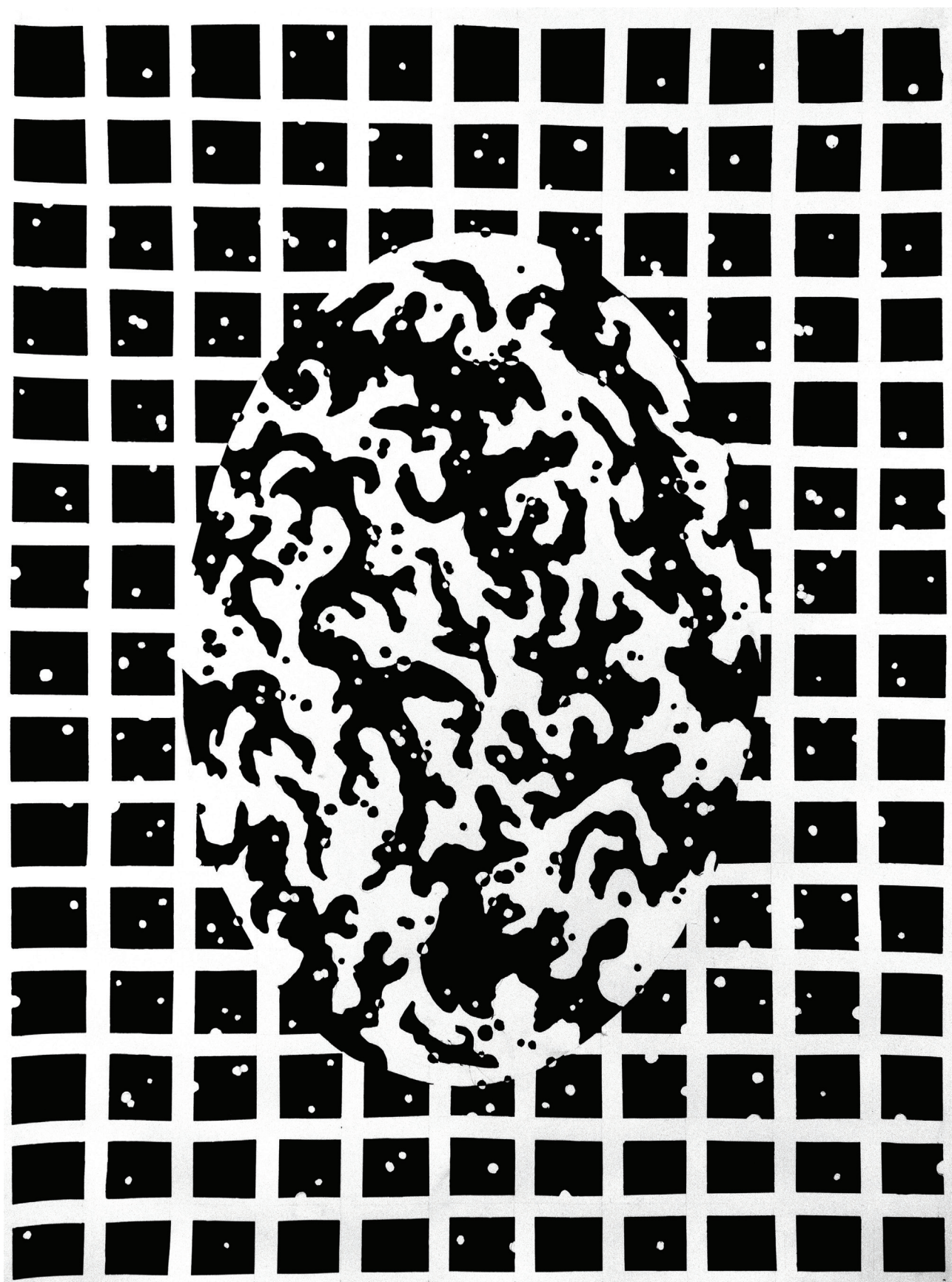


MAKE LOVE NOT WAR
EUNICE PARK





THREADING ERROR
STUART SHEPARD







PIETY EMMA RASICH

WEEDS
BOBBY MILLER



The Darkling Woodpecker

LUKE CAMPBELL

The yellow-bellied woodpecker, its namesake plumage
Contrasting with its charcoal hood and spotted wings,
Flutters through my window along with the crisp night air
And lands on my shoulder, nestling against my neck.
Tick tock the clock strikes three minutes, hours past midnight
Tick tock the bird strikes incessantly against my skull
Drilling through bone and drumming on marrow;
Blood geysers out between the ticking and the tocking
Striking and piking that dyes my pillowcase and seeps into the mattress.
I nibble and gnaw my thumbnail as the bird sinks in its talons.
The woodpecker wriggles and draws its beak from my temple,
Rearing its head, pitted with wells of abysmal licorice.
My gaze falls below the bird's beady stare, upon ruby drops dripping
From its bill onto its strikingly yellow feathers.



Marching

ALEJANDRO RIVAS RIOS

Two birds pass through the city's semaphores,
the wires and poles that stand amidst
humid evenings made from clouds.

They call into the navy night. Listen—
the city hears them break their voice;
echoes what they do not say.

They land and perch themselves on wetted walls.
Their weights displace the bloated air.
Soon it seems they'll suffocate.

Mixed spit and gravel perforate their throats.
It's taken them this long to breathe
dialogue inundating.

Marching feathers moisten down
those silhouettes upon the ground,
adjusting to the lowly, lonely clouds.

VCUarts QATAR

THE FOLLOWING SECTION is a collection of work from VCUarts Qatar. This sampling was created with the goal of sharing works from our sister campus and providing a platform to have their art published.

Special thanks to Anusheh Zaman for curating this collection for us, and to Allison Bennett Dyche and Valerie Jeremijenko for starting the conversation.



THE RED DRAGON YARA ELFOULY



The artwork consists of three pieces, paralleling the three-act structure in narratives. The still-life paintings comprise different objects (like origami, fabrics, plastic plants, a toy and a glass cup) to illustrate the journey of a red dragon—echoing back to my childhood, when I used all sorts of things around me to imagine characters, other worlds, and their stories.



UNTITLED
MARIA MUNOZ



OCCUPATION DOLLS

CARLOTTA BERNARDI

This work aims to uniquely introduce children to various nationalities and career relationships in Qatar, allowing them to unconsciously develop an understanding and tolerance of various cultures and occupations. Qatar is a country with a large expat population, and stereotypes exist that associate nationalities with particular occupations. This instructional toy allows a child to match any nationality or culture with any occupation, for example, a Nepali can be a doctor, a Qatari can be a construction worker, a Kenyan can be a policewoman. This project was developed following extensive research and analysis of social media, television advertisements, and other kinds of messages which disseminate a distorted image of society. Demystifying the mainstream is a way to break out of the rules set by our media in order to promote a fair and positive image of our society.



UNTITLED
HEIDI RASHAD

For this project, we were asked to create a garment that we would personally wear on Harajuku Street, Japan. As a street infamous for self-expression, this jumpsuit is a commentary and display of the feeling of isolation before suicide. My inspiration was sparked by the high rates of suicide and Samurai rituals in Japan.



Untitled

AN ESSAY BY ANUSHEH ZAMAN

“Women and Gender” is a theme that has been discussed heavily in the class, focusing on gender identity, women’s status in society and the ideal representation of women. South Korea has different perspectives on gender identity, especially beauty standards. This is the belief of Dr. Hang-Seok Choi, plastic surgeon, and director of JK Plastic Surgery¹, which is one of South Korea’s top cosmetic surgery centers. Dr. Choi also states that South Korea’s preferences for beauty standards are having a good jawline, double eyelids, and also maintaining a certain body image through body contouring.² These ideas have been reflected in contemporary art from South Korea especially the work of Mari Kim. She has recognized this notion through her famous work series called Eyedolls, where the main focus is the big glossy eyes in her artworks.³ Kim actually became more popular after her collaboration with famous Korean pop girl group 2ne1 for their 2011 single “Hate You” and album *I am the Best*.⁴ She created the girls just like the figures from her series and made their eyes the focus of the work. Mari Kim is using this collaboration to reflect and recognize that women are using their beauty in South Korea to establish their identities.

Kim collaborated with 2ne1 on their 2011 single “Hate You” and album *I am the Best*., directing the music video and even designing the album cover. The album cover features the four members, (from bottom left going clockwise) Dara, Bom, Minzy and CL and they are portrayed as the figures from Kim’s famous series Eyedolls and the eyes are the also prominent features on the album cov-

1 Drake Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world.” *Business Insider*, September 22, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

2 Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world.” <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

3 Mari Kim < ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE.” *ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE*. Accessed October 27, 2017. <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

4 “Artist Mari Kim: 2NE1 and beyond.” *The Korea Times*. November 10, 2014. Accessed October 12, 2017. <http://www.koreatimesus.com/artist-mari-kim-2ne1-and-beyond/>.

er. The cover is divided into four squares with each member having their own square. All the members have different hair colors (brunette, blonde, red and black) and styles and they also have different background colors (pink, blue, teal, and greens.) The girls are also holding a different weapon, to show the “violent depictions of innocent looking characters”⁵ showing “bubble gum pop with edge aesthetic.”⁶ The only similarity between them is that they have one eye liner that is thicker than the other eye. The intention of applying a thick layer is to possibly accentuate the expressions of their eyes which also helps to establish their identities as individuals and also as a group. She focuses on the eyes, because she believes they tell the true emotions of a person. To her, eyes are the “windows to your mind.”⁷ She says that if we really want to know someone, we can know them by looking deeply into their eyes.⁸ Therefore, she is using the thick eyeliner to make the eyes look bigger so that the viewers can see the glint in the girls’ eyes, which also expresses their feelings and identities.

Kim got her Master’s degree in Multimedia Design and Creative Media from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and her main focus was animation.⁹ As a child, Kim Mari moved a lot and she used her drawings to convey her feelings and establish her identity, which is why a general response that she received is that the characters from her work look a lot like her.¹⁰ She has added part of her identity in her work to portray her feminist views and her perception of beauty. Dr. Choi from JK has confirmed that eyelid surgery is the most demanding surgery in the country.¹¹ He explains that having a double eyelid is considered to be very

5 “Artist Mari Kim: 2NE1 and beyond.” *The Korea Times*. November 10, 2014. Accessed October 12, 2017. <http://www.koreatimesus.com/artist-mari-kim-2ne1-and-beyond/>.

6 Ibid., <http://www.koreatimesus.com/artist-mari-kim-2ne1-and-beyond/>.

7 Mari Kim < ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE.” *ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE*. Accessed October 27, 2017. <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

8 Ibid., <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

9 MARI KIM. Accessed October 09, 2017. <http://marikim.net/info/about/>.

10 Mari Kim < ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE.” *ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE*. Accessed October 27, 2017. <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

11 Drake Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world.” *Business Insider*.



beautiful and Koreans have “monolid”¹² eyes which makes them appear lethargic. Looking at photos of Mari Kim, it appears that she has also possibly gotten surgery to get the double eyelids, as her eyes look like the girls from her artwork. She must be reflecting and stating that she is also part of the competitive environment to establish her identity from plastic surgery. The eyes of the 2ne1 members are

September 22, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

12 Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world.” <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

very “dense”¹³ with emotion. The double eyelids make their eyes look bigger which helps the viewer to see the glint from their eyes and the size of their pupils which reflect their reactions. Also, if the viewer looks at the album first the eyes of all the members look the same, but when looked closely each member has a different expression from their eyes.¹⁴ Kim uses her artwork to impose that women do this surgery because they believe they can enforce their unique feelings from their eyes. The eyeliner that she herself applies is very similar to the figures from her artworks. Kim has stated that women do plastic surgery so that they can look more liberal and to also hopefully achieve the look of perfection.¹⁵ Her idea has a strong connection with women expressing through their eyes. Women in Korea want to be more expressive and open minded but the only way they feel they can achieve that is from their face, hence to appear more outgoing and liberal they do the surgery to establish their own identity which can help them stand out from the rest of the population. The idea of expressing through the eyes is very similar to Cao Fei’s avatar China Tracy, an avatar of hers that she uses in a digital platform to express herself freely and interact with other people on that platform.¹⁶ Cao Fei and Mari Kim are using elements that allow them to express their identities but that remain within their local cultural boundaries. As Mari Kim has said that women in Korea are still very conservative. So women want to maintain that conservatism but be liberal, so they do surgery or even possibly use the internet like Cao Fei does.

In 2016, Mari Kim held her first exhibition “Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence”¹⁷ in central Seoul at Hakgojae Gallery that displayed her 189 works which were composed of paintings, videos and neon work. Kim questions “Where do we come from and where are we going?”¹⁸ by dividing her exhibition into three parts: genesis, present, and future, the audience saw the evolution of her work. In Genesis,

13 “Artist Mari Kim: 2NE1 and beyond.” *The Korea Times*. November 10, 2014. Accessed October 12, 2017. <http://www.koreatimesus.com/artist-mari-kim-2ne1-and-beyond/>.

14 “Artist Mari Kim: 2NE1 and beyond.” <http://www.koreatimesus.com/artist-mari-kim-2ne1-and-beyond/>.

15 “K-Surrogates at Art Amalgamated, NYC.” *K-Surrogates Artist Mari Kim Interview*. Accessed November 01, 2017. http://www.thedivareview.com/K-Surrogates_Mari_Kim_Interview.html.

16 “Cao Fei in “Fantasy”.” *Art21*. Accessed November 11, 2017. <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/cao-fei-in-fantasy-segment/>.

17 “Mari Kim ◀ ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE.” *ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE*. Accessed October 27, 2017. <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

18 “Mari Kim ◀ ELOQUENCE MAGAZINE.” <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

the figures with huge eyes are in uniform and “have little personality.”¹⁹ Then going to the present, they evolve to being more colorful and dynamic; she emphasized on the vibrant colors of the lips to highlight on the individual personalities of the girls. The future aspect of the exhibition has not been defined yet. As the audience can see the change in the figures’ appearances and the use of dynamic colors,²⁰ Kim reflects the intensely competitive environment regarding beauty and appearance in South Korea. She has used a similar approach on the album as all the four members have different eyeshadow and lip color. For example, CL has yellow eyeshadow and red lips whereas Bom has blue eyeshadow and pink lips. Dr. Choi believes that there is a fight for uniqueness is because people are “confronted with other people’s images all the time”²¹—he is referring to billboards, magazines, music videos. Similarly, the album cover is reflecting this competitive environment, not only are the Korean women and girls intimidated by 2ne1’s looks but 2ne1 has only been intimidated by looking at other people specifically from the West.

Apart from the double eyelids, there are other elements which reflect the local Korean culture and perception of beauty such as light skin tone which creates an “overall glow”²² along with round facial features. All the members in the album have a fair complexion with a tint of pink blush under the eyes and have oval shaped faces. This is reflecting the traditional aspect of beauty in Korean culture, as Korea used to be a very conservative culture where the body was mostly covered and the face was shown.²³ This idea has been continued through heavy face modeling and advertising in the media making Korean women and girls extremely conscious of their faces. This struggle is also possibly reflected in the members’ faces in the album cover; their huge pupils, raised eyebrows and slightly ajar lips suggest their debate of being more liberal and outgoing yet sustaining the local Korean traditions. Kim has used similar expressions in her series and other paintings, and this

19 Ibid, <http://www.eloquence.co.kr/index.php/mari-kim/#.WfMVeBOCzPB>.

20 Ibid

21 Baer, “Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world.” <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

22 Si Yeon Kim, “Face consciousness among South Korean women: A culture-specific extension of objectification theory.” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 61, no. 1 (2014): 24-36. Accessed October 25, 2017. doi:10.1037/a0034433, 32

23 Kim, “Face consciousness among South Korean women: A culture-specific extension of objectification theory.”, 32

strongly suggests that Kim has recognized that the women and girls in Korea hold their traditions very seriously yet they want to portray themselves. This is what the use of weapons symbolizes in the album; the struggle of maintaining traditions yet moving forward. As Korea has a very competitive job market, the only way apparently that people in Korea can get a good job is through good appearance, especially when the photograph is included in candidates' resume²⁴, and Kim Mari has recognized this struggle. The only way a girl can be successful in Korea is if she looks good and 2ne1 is imposing that too through their makeup, hairstyle, and clothing they were able to not only become local but international sensations. So, using this collaboration for their album, 2ne1 are encouraging their fans to take these steps to successfully establish their own identities.

As mentioned earlier this collaboration has also drawn a lot of global attention which also makes this piece an example of global contemporary art. Kim was also part of an international exhibition held in New York called The "F" Word, Feminism in Art.²⁵ Curated by Indira Cesarine and Denise Krimer-Shmoys, the exhibition composed works of 20 feminist artists whose focus is to "challenge gender stereotypes or embrace female empowerment"²⁶ and Kim Mari embraced her views of female empowerment. Feminism means an "organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests"²⁷ and Kim used this collaboration and her other work to show that women in Korea believe they will achieve their identity and their rights by making themselves beautiful. By having a huge western influence in the figures appearance and style also makes it a strong example of global contemporary art because it shows the inter-exchange of culture. As mentioned earlier 2ne1 and their fans have most likely been intimated by the styles and look from the western media, which pushed them into using cosmetics into creating their identity.

From this analysis, there is no ideal or right way of approaching feminism,

24 Baer, "Why South Korea is the plastic surgery capital of the world." <http://www.businessinsider.com/south-korea-is-the-plastic-surgery-capital-of-the-world-2015-9/#half-of-koreas-population-lives-in-seoul-a-city-that-has-the-6th-highest-population-density-on-earth-so-youre-confronted-with-other-peoples-images-all-the-time-14>.

25 "The "F" Word: Feminism In Art - A Group Show of 20 Female Artists // October 20-28." The Untitled Space. September 05, 2017. Accessed October 12, 2017. <http://untitled-space.com/the-f-word-feminism-in-art-a-group-show-of-20-female-artists/#.V3WMjTW2Vpu>.

26 "The "F" Word: Feminism In Art - A Group Show of 20 Female Artists // October 20-28.", <http://untitled-space.com/the-f-word-feminism-in-art-a-group-show-of-20-female-artists/#.V3WMjTW2Vpu>.

27 "Feminism." Merriam-Webster. Accessed November 01, 2017. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism>.

Kim has recognized and reflected her perspective of feminism in Korea which still fits under the definition of the term. Using this collaboration with the group 2ne1 she has attracted the local and international community about the feminist culture in South Korea, where women use their beauty to help identify themselves. The double eyelid surgery is the most demanding because eyes can express a lot about a person's personality and feelings. While staying within the boundaries of the conservative Korean traditions, women do plastic surgery to accentuate the feelings and personalities from their eyes, which helps them to identify themselves.

UNTITLED

MANAHIL MIRZA

Solids create shadows, however some materials have the quality to create light and shadow together. They create emphasis on the light by casting darkness behind and near the highlights. The strong contrast creates beautiful patterns on the ground which move as the sun goes down.







DO YOU EVEN LIFT SIS

SARAH ELAWAD

“Do You Even Lift Sis” is a guide book designed for a Print class. My guide was aimed towards women, and more specifically women in the Middle East. The book is composed of articles and writings that explain how to gain physical strength as a woman, focusing on diet and training ideas. The book ends with multiple spreads, each dedicated to a Muslim female athlete. The book is designed in three colours, with two layers of laser-cut acrylic as a cover on the front and back of the book, all bound by myself. The yellow edge gives a dramatic effect, while the black and white cover is minimal enough to ensure the concept is clear. Inspired by Nike’s recent Pro-Hijab campaign, the book aims to give women within the region a thirst for success and strength, both physically and mentally.

UNTITLED

MARYAM AL MUFTAH

Firstly, my name is Maryam Nasser Al Muftah and I'm an Art Foundations student. I want to major in graphics. This piece shows an object that is meaningful to me. The dress was mine when I was young; my mum designed it and placed roses on top. The dress is drawn to scale.

COLLABORATIVE COVERS

FOR THIS ISSUE OF (PWA-TEM), the illustrator staff wanted to explore different creative options for the cover artwork. We wanted to investigate collaborative and abstract processes all while allowing each illustrator to share their individual strength and styles.

Together the illustrator staff created multiple covers for the (pwa-tem) team to consider. The following artwork are some of those collaborative pieces.



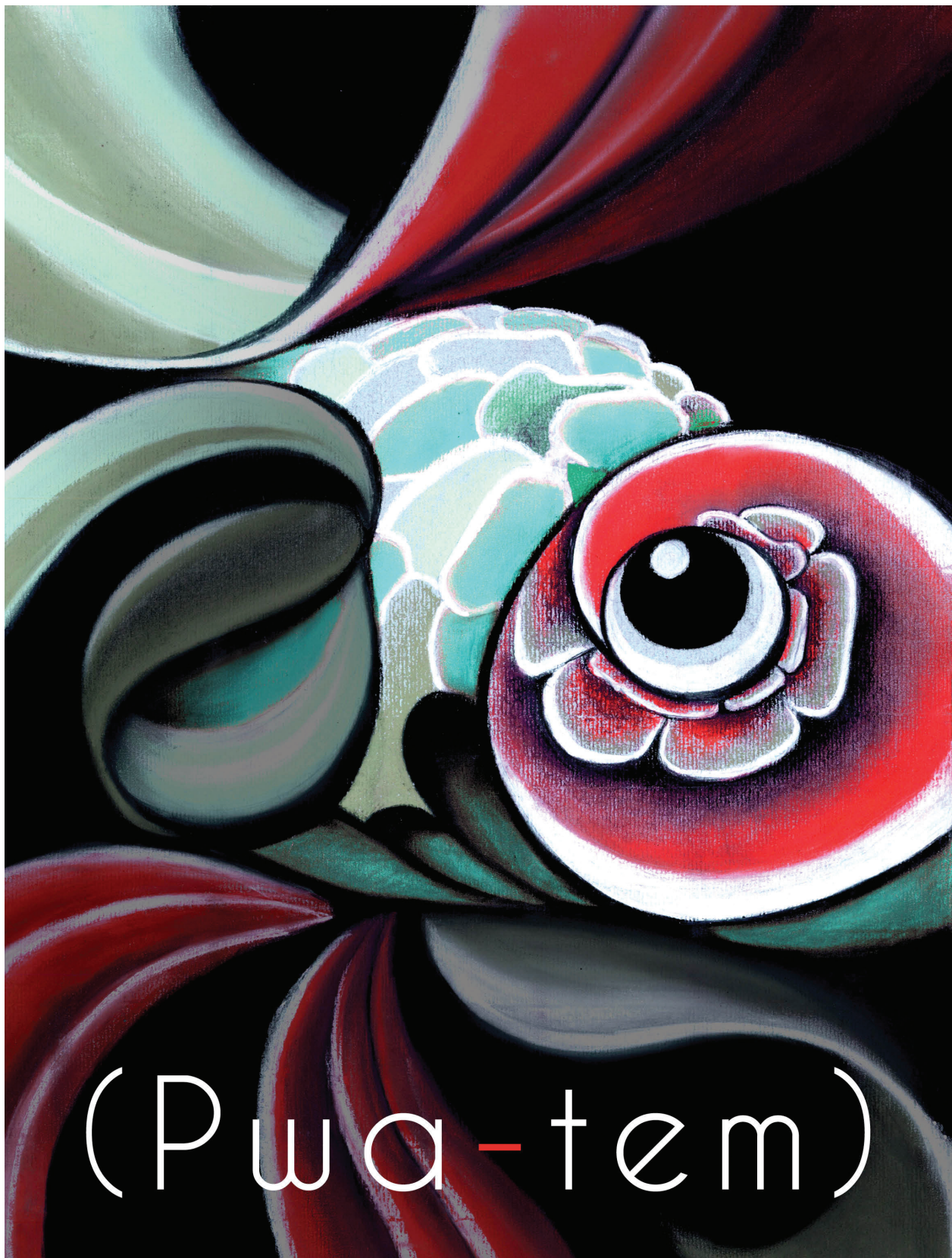
(Pwa-tem)

COVER BY MADELINE DE MICHELE



(Pwa-tem)

COVER BY AVA BLAKESLEE-CARTER
IN COLLABORATION WITH ADELE INGERMAN & BOBBY MILLER



(Pwa-tem)

COVER BY BOBBY MILLER

(pwa-tem)

COVER BY AVA BLAKESLEE-CARTER
IN COLLABORATION WITH MADELINE DE-MICHELE & ELLIE ERHART

Staff Bios

ANDREW SALSURY is the Editor-in-Chief of pwa-tem. He received his Associate's Degree from Tidewater Community College in 2016 and will graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in English with a minor in Creative Writing in 2018. Outside of class, Andrew enjoys working on his poetry and taking trips with friends.

AVA BLAKESLEE-CARTER is the Artistic Director for pwa-tem. She is studying and double majoring in Kinetic Imaging and Art Education. This is her second year on staff. And when she isn't working on pwa-tem, doing school work, or creating her own art she enjoys hanging with friends and playing D&D.

MEGAN GOLDFARB is the Assistant Editor-in-Chief of Poictesme for 2018, after serving as artistic director for two years. She is (finally) graduating in May with a BFA in Painting and Printmaking and a minor in English. She has been with Poictesme for five years, and wishes the very best to the future of the journal and the lovely staff.

EMILY FURLICH is an English major and editor on the pwa-tem staff. She will graduate in 2019. In her spare time she enjoys telling lies.

CAROLINE MEYERS is one half of pwa-tem Web. She will graduate in fall 2021 with majors in Sculpture and Art History. This is her second year on staff. In her free time, she enjoys daydreaming and making lists.

LUKE CAMPBELL is an English major and Creative Writing minor graduating in 2020.

MADELINE DE MICHELE is Co-Webmaster and Illustrator for Poictesme. She is an Art Foundation and Psychology double major. Madeline enjoys bookbinding, analyzing literature, and watching *The X-Files*.

ELISE KETCH is a senior editor of Poictesme. She has been floating through various positions on staff for four years. At this time, she's just happy to be here.

MARY MACLEOD is in her second semester as a staff member of Poictesme. She will graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in English and double minor in Creative Writing and Political Science in the fall of 2018. Outside of class Mary enjoys reading, writing, and watching a ridiculous amount of movies.

NOEL ELIAS is a sophomore aiming to graduate with a BFA in Kinetic Imaging and a minor in English. This is her first year on Poictesme as an editor and illustrator.

ANYA SCZERZENIE is a freshman Mass Communications student at VCU. She is an aspiring journalist who writes creatively in her free time. She likes reading, hiking, podcasts, and Netflix.

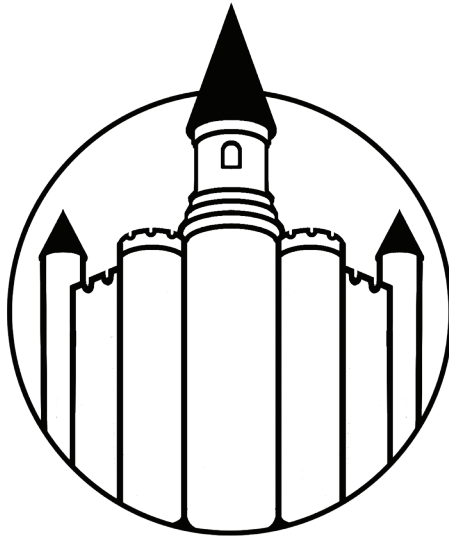
ELLIE ERHART has been an illustrator for Poictesme since fall 2016. She will graduate with a BFA in Communication Arts and a minor in English in the Spring of 2020. Ellie's aspirations include pursuing a career in children's illustration as well as literally pursuing any dog she sees. You can see more of her work at ellieerhart.com.

MARLON MCKAY is a current freshman in Mass Communications, hoping to graduate in 2021. He is from Norfolk, Virginia. When not writing, Marlon usually finds himself reading or watching random YouTube videos.

BOBBY MILLER is a sophomore in Communication Arts, hoping to do editorial illustration and/or concept design after graduation. This is his first year as a staff member and illustrator for Poictesme. He enjoys collecting CDs and discovering obscure 90s music.

KATE KHARKO is an editor at Poictesme. She is planning on graduating with a Bachelor's degree in 2020, and is supposed to choose a major any day now. Her hobbies include trying to pet every dog on campus, especially the very fluffy ones.

ALEXANDRA BARRY is a member of the Poictesme editorial staff. She graduates in 2019 with a BS in Biology and Psychology. Alley enjoys population and conservation ecology research, and writes fiction in her spare time.



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