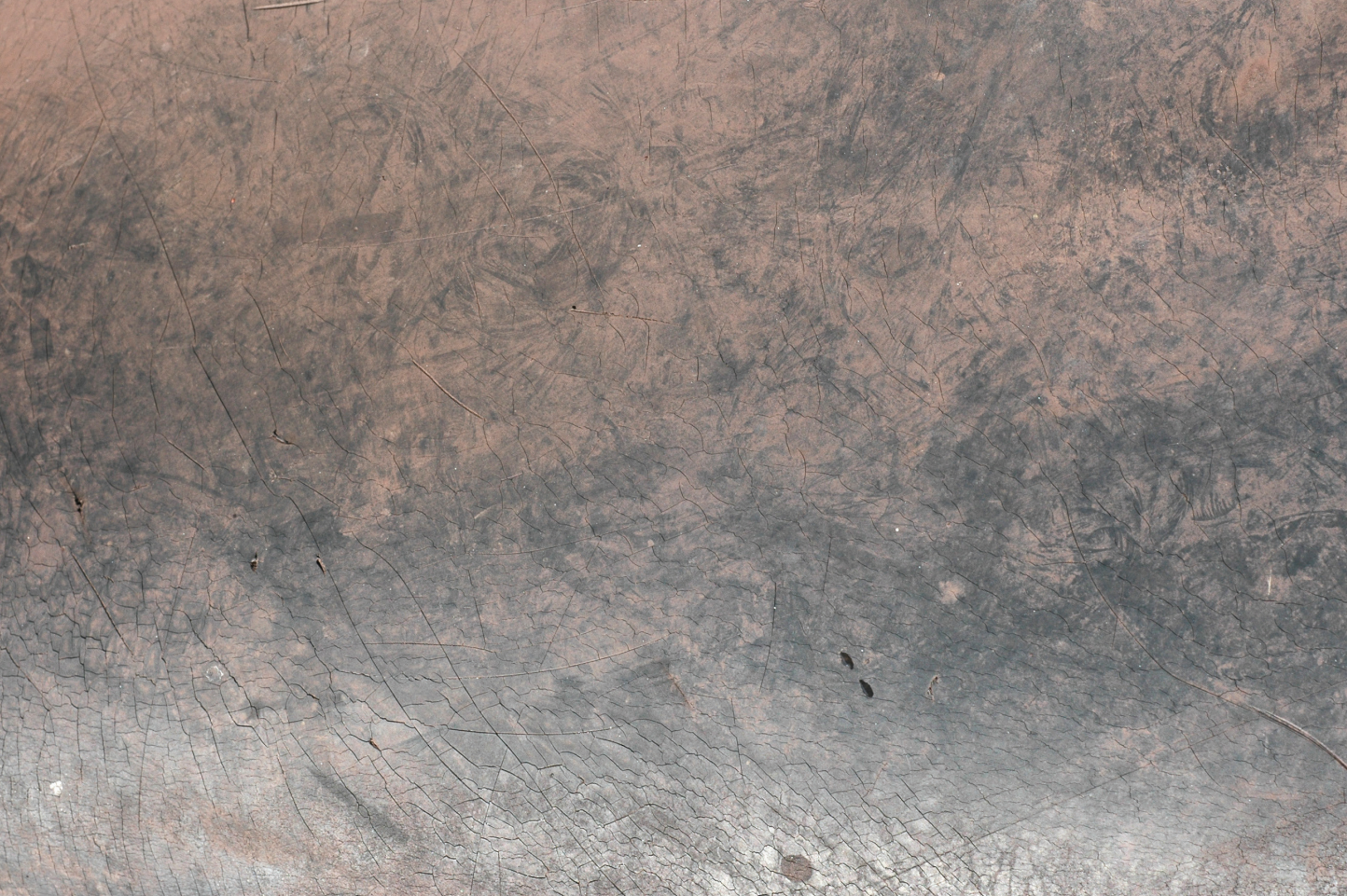




PROGRESSIONS

ASSEMBLED BY THE HORN RVA & AMENDMENT LITERARY JOURNAL



FOREWARD

Each semester the Horn RVA collects recordings from diverse performers in the Richmond, Virginia, to produce The Horn RVA Presents, a free compilation cd featuring original artwork from VCU students.

After releasing three samplers of local music in the past two years, The Horn's staff felt it was time to expand the project to include voices from the entire music scene with an emphasis on originally generated content. Our goal is to feature narrative perspectives from all sides of the music scene to mirror the inclusivity of the music community in Richmond.

To meet the needs of the expanding project, The Horn invited Amendment Literary Journal to co-produce. The team hosted two flash fiction events centered around local music. Students wrote and drew brief works after listening to recordings from our accompanying cd of local recordings, which is available for free online at TheHornRVA.Bandcamp.com.

Music was recorded in a living room marathon recording session during a Saturday afternoon in November of 2013. Artists recorded one take of each song to preserve the live sound of each performance.

The main themes of the project, creativity and identity, are central to Richmond as a city and a community of individuals. The Horn and Amendment hope that students and residents promote art, writing, music, and creativity in all of its forms to enrich our experiences and understanding.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Front Cover by Mike Edmonds
Rear Cover by Julie Ferguson

Page 1 by Becca Weil
Page 3 and 4 by Todd Raviotta
Page 7 by Kat Krug
Page 8 by Caitlin O'Conner
Page 11 by VCU Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
Page 14 by Caitlin O'Conner
Page 17 and 18 by Mike Edmonds
Page 21 by Becca Weil
Page 22 by Jake Cunningham
Page 32 and 35 by Craig Zirpolo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

“Flow Arts” by Cody Parker	Page 2
“Ableism” by Kat Krug	Page 6
“DIY Adulthood” by Mackenzie Werner	Page 9
“Restroom Access” by Craig Zirpolo	Page 10
“Why I Won’t Go to Shows Alone” by Claire Thompson	Page 15
“How to Make a Music Video” by PJ Desutter	Page 16
“Safer Spaces” by The Horn RVA and Amendment Staff	Page 20
 Flash Fiction	 Page 22
“Houseshow” by Maya White-Lurie	Page 36
“Identity” by Tommy Crisafulli of Imaginary Sons	Page 37
“The One” by Cole Sullivan	Page 38
“Mantra” by Chris Tait aka Inland Ocean	Page 39
“City Lights” by Trey Hall of Rivers Crude	Page 40
“Metal Wrist” by Kaylin Kaupish	Page 41

IDENTITY AND MUSIC



FLOW ARTS

CODY PARKER

When you think of the circus, you might imagine a huge striped tent full of elephants and lions, giant strongmen and bearded ladies, cotton candy and peanuts. However, circus arts have existed much longer than the bastardized commercial circus tour owned by Barnum and Bailey which profits from the mistreatment of animals and the sale of merchandise.

Circus arts are movement arts, such as fire spinning, juggling, or aerial acrobatics, which combine dance with athletics, quick reflexes with creative thinking, meditation with performance. In progressive cities all over the world, the circus arts are experiencing a beautiful renaissance, and Richmond is no exception.

My first experience of fire spinning, generally referred to as the flow arts, was actually at the G5 Fire show in front of Gallery 5 during First Friday's in Jackson Ward a few years ago. I was immediately enamored with the glow, the sound, and the peace the performers seemed to carry. I knew I must make myself part of this. Three years later, and I'm now the Fire Safety Administrator for the very show that birthed my pyromania.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that before I found the circus arts, I was depressed and agoraphobic, unable to maintain healthy relationships or even leave my house sometimes for a week or more. Circus, specifically contact staff, provided me with a fun, focused activity, tricking me into hours of meditation. I realized this and began to pursue seated meditation, causing me to see a lot of what I had been doing wrong in my life, and slowly fixed it. Picking up a stick and making circles with it literally changed my life, by giving me the power to think and focus on what it was that truly mattered to me instead of forever being chaotically swept up in the whirlwind of "real life."

In spite of my earlier agoraphobia, I've spent the last year travelling up and down the east coast, up and down the west coast, and even all the way out to northern Thailand to share the gift of flow as I went; teaching, performing, and learning any chance I am given. From performing at music festivals, to teaching at circus arts festivals, to simply spending time with some of our nation's best performers, once I left my home, the wanderlust took hold. Most of the travels were all fun and games, some beautiful networking and life lessons along the way, but working with Spark! Circus in Thailand was really the most important opportunity I've taken in my life yet.

Spark! Circus is an international, non-profit, volunteer-run social circus group which focuses on giving aid to Burmese refugee children and their communities along the Thai border. These people have been removed from their homes as part of the world's longest internal civil conflict which began in 1948, which has pitted the Burmese State against the many hill tribes which populate the border. It was our job to find our inner clown and share as much laughter, joy, and smiley funtimes with these kids as we could, to put a 'spark' into the lives of these children who are faced with hunger, sex-trafficking, and violence.

Dolled up in sparkles and make-up, we performed our hilariously cute dayshow acts followed by 'playshops' where we would teach the basics of circus arts like juggling, staff, flower sticks, and hooping. We would leave for a few hours and then return at night for our professional-quality fire show for their entire community. It was a lot of hard work, choreographing an international team we had just met, organizing not one, but two full shows, along with all of the stage-management and simple social interactions along the way, but as





other veterans of the team had told us, "Once you see the kids smile, it'll all be worth it."

The work we did might seem like play, even to us, but to those young ones we had a profound impact; life can be light and fun, and all it takes is a little play. I'll never forget the little boy who grabbed my hand and ran, pulling me on a tour throughout his entire village despite the bewildered looks of his tribesmates. Or the toddler at Nu Po refugee camp who, wanting to show off his own sweet skills, grabbed my pants leg, flipped me the middle finger, and did a cartwheel. He made sure I got to see his little performance three or four times.

Even outside of the work we did, exposure to an unfamiliar culture was a beautiful thing. Performance arts are highly respected in Thailand, and everybody, even children, seemed to know what a fire show was. However, Thai-style fire performance is different from American and European performance; the Thai performers and audiences prefer very fast motions and super flashy maneuvers, whereas Westerners tend to employ slower speeds and geometric patterns. Everywhere we went, even after our tour was over, we would captivate audiences with a style of show they had never seen. Bars would often serve us free drinks and guesthouses would even occasionally discount our rooms. It felt pretty cool to be appreciated for the art that we do, a stark contrast to my home in a city that seems to be actively working against our free show, while simultaneously using its "artistic" image in tourism and advertising.

When I left, I felt Richmond was struggling; I was the only person that I knew of to be holding regular spin jams, and I was having trouble keeping them falling apart into parties.

Now, however, there have been plenty of new dedicated spinners cropping up from all different walks of life, including a whole handful of incredibly talented folk who found the flow arts

through the Richmond EDM scene. There was even a local flow arts retreat held just a few weeks ago! The aerialists' community in Richmond, affectionately titled Host of Sparrows, has seen a lot of growth in the past year as well after performances at plenty of local events and festivals.

Fire-friendly cities from New York to Baltimore, Asheville to Atlanta, have the whole east coast ablaze. We now have multiple flow arts festivals, including Fahrenheit Flow Arts, F.L.A.M.E. Festival, and our nation's oldest, Wildfire. These festivals serve to unite the greater regional and national fire community in an effort to support and inspire each other through skillshare and workshops.

As a casual musician, part of what really appealed to me about fire was that it's almost like playing music but without having to get a whole band together. All it takes is me, my prop, and a speaker blastin' some fat beats. With Richmond being such a musically badass town, it's the perfect place for more movement; if you hit the right spot with the right musicians, there's no telling what kind of crazy collaboration can take place.

I've had the opportunity to play with some of my favorite DJs, and we'll often make eye contact right before they drop the next track, specifically to see where it will take me in my dance. It is true collaboration, born in the immediate present. Fire also allows for more combusive collaboration through partner play, group choreography, or something called 'tunnelling': two performers standing in front of each other, either completing patterns or simply providing complementary shapes.

Fire and circus arts saved my life, and now I am compelled to share these arts with everyone. If you remember one thing about the circus, there is no better time than now to get your body groovin'.

I am disabled. I have a rare birth defect called Klippel-Trenaunay Syndrome and I had my foot amputated when I was six months old. I wear a prosthetic and have been in and out of a wheelchair. When I was 10, I had my knee amputated. Chronic pain comes with KT, and with chronic pain comes anxiety and depression. To society, this means I am not worthy. I am not worthy of accessibility, whether it be physical, social, or otherwise.

Two years after my knee amputation, Motion City Soundtrack's released their album *Commit This to Memory*. At the time, I was struggling with how my physical disability affected my mental health. The lyrics of MCS's "Everything Is Alright" told me that it's okay to be anxious and there are other people who feel the same way. I found solace in music because I thought if I could have music in common with people, no one would care about my prosthetic leg. From pop-punk, I ventured into punk and hardcore music. I was angry about my disability, and to me everything about punk and hardcore was about being outcasts of society. I thought no one would care that I was disabled, because I would be out having fun at shows just like everyone else. I was wrong.

Ableism is the discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities. As I've grown, I've been able to identify instances of ableism nearly everywhere I go. The most common one is the lack of handicap accessibility. When I confront people about their facility's lack of handicap accessibility, the response I get the most often is that they didn't even think about it. Am I not worthy of being thought about because I can't use the stairs or open a door?

Additionally, I have encountered a staggering amount of social inaccessibility -- most of it stemming from the belief that since I am disabled, I should not be at a show. When I started going to

shows, I was worried about how I would be able to stand up in a crowd. I thought, "I'll just tell people I have a prosthetic leg and need to be near the barrier so I can hold on. People will understand." They didn't.

At one event when I was already close to the barrier, I asked the people in front of me if I could hold onto the rail because of my disability. They replied by saying it was horrible of me to lie about being disabled and if I really was disabled, I shouldn't be at a show anyway. In a few years' time, I became heavily involved in photography and was able to obtain press passes to some shows and avoid the crowd issues. Still, I faced ableist comments. "You only got that pass because you're handicapped. I bet you don't even know how to use that camera." "Why do you get to be closer than me? You shouldn't even be at a show with your leg." I've received similar treatment at smaller local shows as well.

About halfway through a show, my leg starts to hurt and I ask whoever is sitting side-stage if they could make room for me. More often than not, people will stand up and tell me that it's cool that I'm at this show despite my disability and the danger that comes with it of being knocked over. While comments like this can be ableist (by saying that I'm doing X despite my disability, you're putting my disability as my defining characteristic and implying that I really can't do X because I'm disabled), I try to ignore it because it's better than the alternative, which is people will tell me to go home because I don't belong there if I can't handle it.

Music, especially the local scene, is supposed to be inclusive. I am not asking you not to mosh. I know I can't do it and I'm not here to tell you to stop. All I've ever done is ask someone to move so I can sit down. Yet, I still feel victimized, singled-out. Am I not a member of the scene, too?





Entering the Richmond house show scene at the age of 16 was incredibly intimidating. On top of the air in some venues of everyone trying to be cooler and more disinterested than everyone else, there I was: still in high school, usually sober, non-smoker, and thinking that I really didn't belong. Worse, it seemed like everyone else thought so too.

At the first show I went to I found myself sort of dropped into the middle of this crowd of people in DIY jackets with tattoos that I wanted but was too young to get, all talking about their roommates and professors, and things that I didn't have. I didn't like the feeling that because I was two or three years younger than these kids that I was somehow inferior, but I figured the best way to get over that was to frequent as many houses as possible and become a regular.

As I went to more shows I became more comfortable, started recognizing more people, and gained a familiarity with the ever-growing list of new and cool Richmond bands; it was a great way to spend my senior year of high school. This was the year that I saw a lot of my friends spending more and more time with people they didn't really like doing things that they didn't really want to do just to feel like they were adults. I was much more comfortable (and having much more fun) learning who I was and how I liked spending my weekends: with loud punk music and interesting strangers.

House shows helped me grow up; I decided that if I told myself that I belonged then I would. I started talking to more people, I realized that there wasn't actually a stigma about my age, most people thought it was cool when I told them I was 17, the only ones that seemed to mind were the guys that wanted me to be 18.

I had great discussions about movies in between bands, and just generally felt more and more at home in other people's loud, crowded, stuffy living rooms and basements. I actually made my decision to go to VCU sitting on the porch of Johnny Cave at their last show on 4/20, which happened to also be my prom night.

My friends and I showed up around midnight in our dresses and tuxes with corsages and everything. My corsage was made by my date, Dylan, from an old wedding dress, plastic fingers, and rhinestones (the manicure on the plastic fingers coincidentally matched my nails that night.) I remember getting all kinds of looks from people, looks that made me worry again about being too young, and then about my hair that I had all cut off that day, but then I remembered that I had just walked into a show house in a floor length, black velvet evening gown. This didn't exactly follow the dress code of flannel, denim, and beanies.

I sat on the hardwood floor, drank warm champagne from the bottle, and watched Will Bollinger play his intricate fifteen-minute songs on an acoustic guitar. The music was great, but low key as to not get shut down by the cops at their last hurrah. Around 2am I found Dylan and convinced him that our next stop should be cookout for milkshakes.

I have such fond memories of the strangers that I've connected with at house shows. All the fashion inspiration, bearded boys in sweaters that I wanted to make out with, all of the people that I unexpectedly had meaningful, hour long conversations with only to never see again. I drank my first beer at a house show, and I've made major life decisions at house shows. House shows are rad, and I'm glad I live in a city where you can do it yourself.

RESTROOM ACCESS

CRAIG ZIRPOLO

Beads of sweat drip from Teagan Widmer's brow as she rushes out of the Singleton Performing Arts Center down Harrison Street to her apartment. Heels shuffle and keys fumble as she hurries to open door. Widmer disappears inside for a moment before running back to campus.

Using the restroom is not a political or stress-inducing act for most people, but memories of harassment and violence in public bathrooms drive Widmer to the refuge of her home.

Widmer identifies as transgender, meaning her gender identity contrasts with a her gender assigned at birth. Transgender includes a variety of identifications and actions to achieve comfortable identity. Transgender people and others who do not fit traditional notions of "masculine" or "feminine" experience discrimination in many forms, but the most dangerous, intimate decisions based on gender identity often involve public bathrooms.

Widmer came out as trans to her family and started hormone therapy during her two years teaching theater pedagogy and attending MFA theater classes at VCU.

"Richmond itself was where I created the space to allow myself to experiment and be ok with being trans," Widmer said. "I had been in denial for a long time and it was not a quick journey for me."

While her confidence grew thanks in part to reassurance from her peers in theater, students in the VCU Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Department and friends in the Richmond trans community, the binary of "men's" and "women's" public facilities forced daily tough decisions on and off campus.

As a teacher Widmer eventually shed her masculine clothing entirely, favoring cowl neck

tops, skinny jeans, and small heels. She reserved taller heels for social events with the VCU Theater Department, but those small steps reinforced her decision to continue her gender transition.

"I'm sure some students said stuff behind my back, but I got the perception that most students liked me as a teacher and person and didn't care what I was wearing," Widmer said.

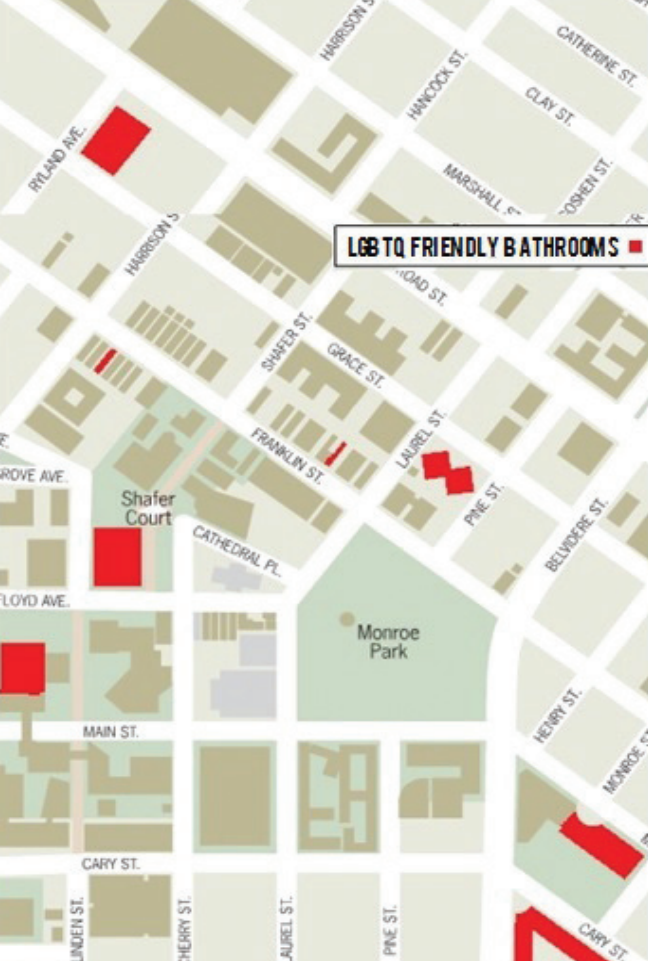
Widmer fostered a close circle of trans community members over queer vegan Sunday brunches at a friends' house, but she did not discuss her identity with most of her students.

"Only a select few undergrads that I taught actually knew I identified as trans," Widmer said, "but the ability to get up in front of them and not be laughed at was really big for me before I came out. Most of them just thought I was really gay, which was humorous because I actually identify mostly as a lesbian and am not all that attracted to men."

When she lived further from campus, Widmer sprinted four blocks to Crossroads Coffee on Morris Street. Crossroads offered a single-stall restroom without a sign on the door designating sex, a common form of gender-neutral restroom that eases social tensions in public spaces.

"I always went out of my way to use unisex bathrooms, even if I had to go home to feel safe," Widmer said.

Gender-specific restrooms originated during the Industrial Revolution in the late 1880s. Laws separating public facilities by gender are rooted in the belief that women need to be protected from predatory men and maintain an image of Victorian bodily purity according to CJ Griffin, a former Rutgers Law Review editor who likened gender segregation to Jim Crowe laws.



GENDER-NEUTRAL RESTROOMS ON THE MONROE PARK CAMPUS

Crenshaw House

Thurston House

Cabell Library: basement

Cary Street Gym: basement, 1st, and
2nd floor

Snead Hall

500 Academic Center: 1st floor

VCU Honors College

Cary St. Cafe/Deli: 1st floor

In 1887 Massachusetts was the first state to pass a law mandating that government buildings provide gender-segregated bathrooms. By the 1920s and 1930s most states had similar laws, while gender-specific facilities also became a part of public health inspections at factories.

In a landmark 2011 study about transgender discrimination conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 51 percent of participants said they were harassed or bullied in school while 53 percent reported being verbally harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation like a restroom or locker room.

"Individuals are forced to choose between two restrooms which may or may not match up with their gender identity," said Kaylin Tingle, the Wellness Center at VCU's LGBTQ Violence Prevention Health Educator. "Not only are they forced to make this public declaration of gender in order to simply pee, but once inside the restroom they face harassment, physical and sexual assault."

After years of violence against transgender individuals in public restrooms, cities and states are changing their policies to be more inclusive.

Philadelphia law now requires that city-owned buildings maintain at least one gender-neutral restroom. In January of 2014 California passed the School Success and Opportunity Act, the first state law allowing transgender public school students to use facilities aligned with their gender identity including restrooms and locker rooms.

But in stark contrast to these changes, Utah lawmakers doubled down on current policies by proposing a law that would provide separate facilities for transgender students only when requested.

On April 29 the Office of Civil Rights, part of the U.S. Department of Education, issued guidance stating that Title IX, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in public education and financial assistance, protects transgender individuals.

"Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition extends to discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity and OCR accepts such complaints for investigation," authors from the office said in the statement.

In response to high rates of discrimination and harassment, VCU includes gender and sexuality in its diversity statement along with race, color, religion, national origin, age, political affiliation, veterans status and disability. Widmer was not aware of VCU's trans-friendly policies when she interviewed with the Theater Department.

"When I was searching for a grad school, the only thing that I cared about was the academics," Widmer said. "It wasn't until after I was accepted when I had an advisor who acted in a play directed by a trans woman that I learned about VCU's inclusivity."

The VCU community asserted their dedication to inclusivity during a battle with Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli in 2010, a year before Widmer arrived at VCU. In a letter to public university boards across the state Cuccinelli asserted those schools could not offer protection for diversity of gender or sexuality because the state's discrimination policy does not cover them.

Denouncement of Cuccinelli's letter is now included in VCU's Diversity Statement written by president Michael Rao. "It was within days, and in a very powerful voice, that faculty, staff, students and members of the larger community we serve affirmed our commitment to non-discrimination and equal opportunity [through voicing opposition to Cuccinelli]," Rao said in the letter.

In the letter Rao said that it is within the best interest of the university and community to "include additional categories when it is evident that existing policy is inadvertently blind to discrimination."

VCU's Monroe Park campus features gender-neutral restrooms in six buildings including the Cary Street Gym, Cabell Library, and the 500 Academic Center. More than 150 colleges and universities have gender-neutral bathrooms on-campus currently according to The Transgender Law and Policy Institute, a non-profit transgender advocacy group.

In 2013 Faith Wilkerson and her colleagues at the VCU Office of Multicultural Student Affairs generated a map of gender-neutral restrooms on the Monroe Park campus to help inform students and reduce the risk of harassment and violence on campus. They are currently compiling more extensive data about gender-neutral facilities on the Monroe Park and MCV campuses for release in the fall of 2014.

Despite VCU's support from Wilkerson and new staff hires such as LGBT coordinator Michael Pisarcik, construction projects on campus do not include gender-neutral restrooms, and there are no plans to convert restrooms in existing VCU buildings according to Kevin Wade, senior associate director of administration for VCU Residential Life and Housing.

"We don't have plans in place, but it is a topic that needs attention," Wade said.

Transgender students and their allies respond to the lack of gender-neutral access on campuses across the nation in varied ways. While students at many schools protest and petition officials to convert facilities to gender-neutral, activists at Wesleyan University tore down signs on bathrooms across campus and replaced them with gender-neutral signs, incurring vandalism fines and intensifying wider debate about gender and public access.

Students at VCU have not brought concerns about restrooms to housing representatives' attention, though Wade says he is open to conversations with students organizations, faculty and staff.

After graduating from VCU in 2012, Widmer moved to San Francisco and taught herself how to write computer code to increase her chances of finding a well-paying job. Widmer got a job as a software development engineer intern, and continued to explore applications of her new skills.

While reading forums and speaking to friends in the tech industry and trans community, Widmer linked her struggles with public restrooms and coding savvy to create an open source app called Refuge Restrooms which catalogues gender-neutral and handicap-accessible restrooms. Users input the location of restrooms which are confirmed and updated by other users, allowing the app to apply across the world anywhere users interact with it.

After launching the app Widmer found that the audience expanded beyond trans users.

"One mom uses the app because her son needs help to use the restroom due to disability," Widmer said. "It's hard for her to accompany him into most bathrooms, but in unisex bathrooms it is much easier."

Widmer plans to add a text function to the app that will allow users without a smart phone to text their address and receive a list of the three closest accessible, inclusive bathrooms in their area.

"To this day I worry about bathrooms, but I hope I can prevent one trans girl from being harassed," Widmer said. "No one deserves that."



WHY I WON'T GO TO SHOWS ALONE

CLAIRE THOMPSON

The music pulses through my chest, vibrating across my whole body. I'm electric, on fire, alive. My mind has completely separated from everything, the friend I came with, the fight with my boyfriend, everything. Oof!

Suddenly I'm jerked forward, slamming into bodies in front of and beside me. Some six-foot-whatever ass has decided to either not notice that I occupy space, or just not to care. He pushes past me, elbowing his way into the center of the crowd. "Hey, fuck you, man! I'm standing right fucking here!" I shout half-heartedly after him. He doesn't hear me or doesn't care.

This is the curse of being tiny and having breasts at a show. It goes along with uncomfortable staring no matter what I'm wearing, uninvited touching, and a general sense of unease and risk. Going to shows kind of scares me. I still do it, because I love music, and I want to have a more personal experience with my favorite performers, and of course because I love the rush. I certainly don't feel totally safe, though.

Live music creates a unique space in which a lot of people are packed tightly, emotions are running high, and many people are not sober. This is the kind of public space where if someone grabs your ass, you may not ever really be able to tell who it was. It nurtures anonymity, where a person may disappear and become one pounding, sweating, undulating body in a sea of them. And with anonymity comes boldness.

The amazing thing is, being inside the club was not the worst part. I was most worried about the walk across the parking lot. Thirty seconds each way; you wouldn't expect it to be such a source of stress. I debated going to this show for weeks. One of my favorite bands, Built To Spill, was headlining and I wanted to go, but I wouldn't go alone.

Sure, I was worried about being inside and getting groped, pushed around, ogled, and just generally disrespected, but mostly I was worried about walking across the parking lot at night, alone, in Shockoe Bottom.

I'm not really sure what frightens me about it, but like being inside the club it has to do with being treated like a pair of breasts instead of a human. I know the statistics: rape by a stranger makes up less than 1% of sexual assault cases. But facts don't help because I live in a society where walking outside feels dangerous. I have been taught that the tank top I wear, the make-up on my face, the drinks I might have, and the simple fact that I was unlucky enough to be born with a certain set of body parts, makes me vulnerable.

When I heard about the show my mind jumped from being stoked about going then remembering a headline my mom recounted to me about two girls who disappeared in Shockoe Bottom. Even if it was fake, that does not matter.

I know the stranger-rape myth isn't true, but that doesn't matter either. Every myth serves a purpose, and it is not to be believed as fact. Myth teaches us grander lessons about how we should conduct ourselves in the world. This particular myth reminds us that, as people who are read as female, we are both dangerous and in constant danger, safely confined within a fear that puts us at the mercy of those in power. Rape culture relies on power. The power to keep us at home, to make it our fault, to tell us how to dress, act, and present ourselves.

The control that looms over me because I am a person with a vagina is the reason I would not go alone. It is the reason I insisted my male friend come too. It is the reason that no matter how free I think I am, I will always be at the mercy of a cultural system. And that is bullshit.

HOW TO MAKE A MUSIC VIDEO

PJ DESUTTER

A music video is a backwards movie score. Sound translated into moving pictures. Cinema designed from its very bones to look, feel, and move in a way that is inherently musical. Video doesn't get more pure than that.

I spent a lot of my time as a kid listening to movie soundtracks and studying movie score; how a composer tells a movie's story with an orchestra, and the inherent relationship that movies have with music. They tell stories using time, math, pace, rhythm, and feelings.

It was another foggy Saturday night in a smoky car in Northern Virginia when my friends, Joe and John-Marc, off-handedly mentioned that one song on their album could make for a decent music video. After saving their grades in high school by filming History projects and the occasional performance, I was handed the job of first video director for the band Streaking on Seneca.

"So how do you make a music video?" I wondered.

There's no guide online and, as I quickly learned, music videos don't have formulas. Music videos have a flexibility as an art form that conventional narrative cinema does not. Beyond your freedom in terms of tone, content, style, and form, I also discovered that there's a huge freedom of budget. Some of the most memorable music videos I ever found served their songs beautifully on what appeared to be a budget of eighty-something dollars. The best of these videos never tried to hide their scrappy, haphazard production value, but rather used their limitations to make recognizable and indelible imagery that had the added charm of feeling truly handmade. These videos didn't care about looking expensive. They cared about bringing the song to life.

A year after that car ride, the five-minute long "Town for the Titans" was shot over two weeks

in local farm fields and abandoned basements with hilariously limited resources, ambitious storytelling, and stoned, stumbling teenagers pretending to be masked zombies. It was silly. It was flawed. It was the most important and rewarding learning experience I've had.

As a young filmmaker, moving to Richmond one year after the release of "Town" changed everything for me as I became aware of the musical and artistic communities in Richmond. Beyond it being a living, vital city, teeming with countless diverse and innovative musical acts, it's a city where cameras, editing software, lighting equipment, and performers willing to take huge risks (read: willing to make complete idiots of themselves) are all immediately available. It's a city made of artists dying to collaborate.

My second video was decidedly less ambitious; a two-and-a-half-minute video for "Cool" by local fuzz-punk duo Navi as an entry for VCU Student Media's first-ever music video contest. It featured my friend Phil wearing nothing but tighty-whitey underwear and a serial killer mask and smothered in blood, and my friend Joe in a cardboard robot costume running through the city streets delivering pizza to strangers. We were stopped by seven cops and almost arrested for indecent exposure on our first day of filming. It was a bizarre rush of exhilaration and embarrassment that we thought we could get away with something so brazenly stupid. But it was that very freedom that gave us pride in our video and an unforgettable story.

Like "Town for the Titans," it was the product of a lot of work, energy, time, and money poured into a video that none of us would make a dime over. But the feeling of making a video that represented everything we thought was fun and exciting about a piece of music was enough of a reward.





Unlike "Town" where the band was intimately involved with every level of story conception, filming, and editing, none of us met or spoke to the players in Navi until halfway through shooting at one of their performances. We showed up and filmed, then grabbed the duo before their set. The conversation went:

"Hey, are you guys Navi?"

"Yeah, dude."

"Cool! We're big fans! We're making you guys a music video for a local contest. The video has a serial killer in his underwear and his robot sidekick delivering pizza to strangers. Mind if we film you?"

"Sure thing, dude. Go for it. Sounds awesome!"

"Rad, mind if we have the underwear dude jump around the crowd?"

"Yeah dude, do it! Hail satan."

It was a unheard-of level of laid-back trust and willingness to let these strangers have fun and experiment with their work. I've never had an experience like that working on a video and I don't know if I ever will again.

While I am new to music videos, there is a long history of them in Richmond. VCU student Nils Westergaard's animated music video for Inland Ocean's "Wallflower" features over 1,900 cut-out frames of flowers, animals, and graffiti moving via some incredibly well-executed stop motion animation. It's a work of enormous time, energy, and patience, while both artists benefit from each other's best work. The locations and musical/visual sensibilities have Richmond's distinct fingerprint.

I'm currently in production on my third video for local math-rock jazz-fusion quartet Dumb Waiter and their absolutely bizarre instrumental track "Vegan Mustache Jazz."

I met the band when they opened for Tera Melos at Strange Matter last November, and we found common ground in our fondness for Tera Melos' experimental, low-budget music videos. Somewhere in between making a video for my best friend's band on "Town" and having virtually no contact whatsoever with

Navi on "Cool," "Vegan" has led to forge a relationship with a new group of funny, creative local artists who've trusted this weird kid with their music and their image. I've had the added benefit of having this city at my fingertips. Dancers, cinematographers, mask-sculptors, and the owners of a local laundromat have poured resources, talent, and hard work in sweltering heat into this video so far with their only compensation being the promise of a solid final product. It is the hardest-working group of collaborators I've ever worked with, which is humbling and intimidating. People are counting on me leading shoots effectively so the video makes everyone proud. This isn't just my video; this video belongs to a community.

But I feel a safety in the people I'm working with and the people I'm working for. They trust me, and they can tell that I love what I'm doing. As a result of that, people have put their hearts and souls into videos that feature nonsense like aliens breakdancing in a laundromat. The heart of what makes Richmond's culture so damn special is that it's a community of people who give back and contribute. People have worked their asses off to create memorable, exciting, experimental art for no other reason than their desire to play. I'm surrounded by addictive and unique music that I love too much to just let sit there, I need to play with it and see what it looks like. The things this city has to offer are too galvanizing to ignore. This city constantly offers chances for artists to push themselves in challenging, exciting new directions and meet exciting, new people. If I do my job properly, I'll have given something to this city's artistic and musical legacy that will entertain, amuse, and maybe even inspire people to pick up a camera and try something silly.

Music videos are like Richmond in that way. They're a tantalizing platform full of opportunities to try something new, take some risks, make some weird art, and maybe even get yourself in some trouble. I can't encourage people enough to give directing their first music videos a shot.

SAFER SPACES

EDITORS

While parties and house shows are common in Richmond, there are many considerations to weigh concerning safety, body autonomy, respect, and consent of guests and hosts in shared spaces. The list below represents a good starting point for conversations about these topics, but should not limit considerations for an event.

- Draft a list of rules that clearly state the expectations of guests and hosts in the space. Make sure they are displayed publicly and available to all who consider attending.
- Designate hosts/roommates/responsible parties who are available to address attendees' concerns. You can't cater the evening to every guest, but listening helps prevent larger conflicts.
- Foster an environment in which people look out for one another. If someone is being violent or predatory, calmly mediate the situation and explain the importance of mutual comfort for attendees. If that person continues or escalates their behavior, remove them from the space.
- Make events accessible to people of limited mobility. Can a person on crutches or in a wheelchair attend an event in your space?
- Consider providing free or low-cost condoms as easy harm reduction.
- Have non-gendered or unisex restrooms. If you are required to label them, use numbers or "stalls" and "urinals." Everyone should be able to pee safely.
- Consider providing free water and an area where attendees can cool down outside of the performance space.
- Consider providing information about taxis and other methods of avoiding intoxicated driving.
- Be considerate of your neighbors in regards to both music and crowd volume. Communicate with them and be sure to pick up trash and cigarette butts.
- When in doubt, check the laws enforced in your area. It is always better to be informed before you host a show.



FLASH FICTION



KATIE PELICAN

Trespassing is the type of sweet temptation that draws you in and makes your stomach turn with foreign unease.

That house was as lonely and misplaced as a polar bear in our upscale suburban town.

We just smiled with pounding hearts and gripped the cool, grooved necks of our cameras and stepped over broken glass into someone else's ghost of a life.

The fridge was covered in heart-twistingly bright letter magnets, nameless smiling faces. An old chair faced the window.

All there was or once was was crushed into dusty insignificance next to the torn photograph of a child. And another. And another.

The old chair bled yellow foam onto cracked wood.

The only living thing was the wind that caught on the curtains and ripped mournful songs around broken walls.





MONICA THORNTON

When I was eight my family and I went to a show on Broad Street.

Even at eight, I loved cities. I loved the energy, the lights, the noise -- maybe they reminded me of Seattle, the first home I knew.

As we left the show, we walked past a few energetic, vibrant men -- as alive as the city night lights, banging away on buckets, metal scraps, and wood bins.

My mother tried to hurry us along, but I was fascinated. They knew it too because they stopped to chat with this curious staring kid probably standing too close.

One guy gave me a drum stick and let me tap on a bucket, and they complimented my off beat.

Suddenly, I was in my first jam session on the streets of a city I was just beginning to love.

MORGAN BRITT

My freshman year as a voice student, I had a bad habit of practicing with my windows open. This was a bad idea for at least two reasons.

One: my cat is disturbed by the sound of my voice above a G5 to the point of literally shredding my possessions e.g., screen windows.

Two: have you ever heard vocal warm ups? I don't think they sound like something to call the police over personally, but apparently my neighbors had different opinions.

LAUREN MCCLELLAN

The girl whined;
She only came to see her idol.
Someone she fantasized about
While listening to his
Horrendous records
On repeat, touching herself.

The bodyguard told her
"You can't get in there,
Miss.
VIPs only."
She was amiss to find
She did not fit into the
Category of
Very important pussy.

MONICA THORNTON





HEATHER DUKE

The heavy guitar and drums fade completely. He looks expectant; she looks bored.

"So?" he asks, already dreading the answer.

"I'm just..." she starts. He deflates. "I'm just not into it." She looks truly remorseful.

He falls backwards onto the bed, pulls up a pillow to cover his face with, and screams into it. She arches her eyebrows and puckers her lips, her nose twitching in slight disgust.

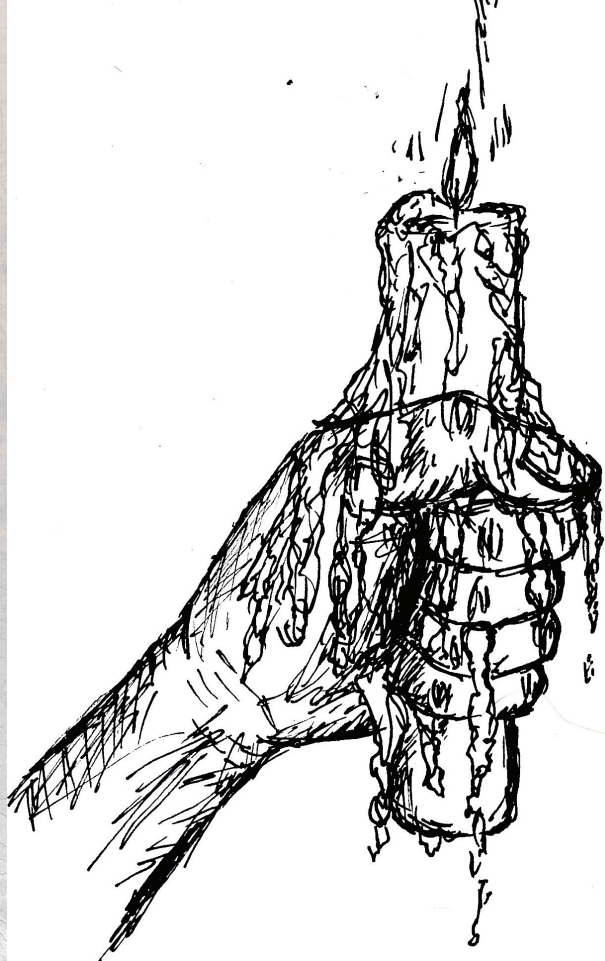
"I can't believe it. I just literally can't believe I'm dating a girl whose just 'not into' Navi."

She shrugs her shoulders and pops a Frito into her mouth, careful not to touch any of her carefully done lipstick.

Kissing the air above his cheek, she calls behind her as she leaves, "You'll just have to get used to it, you big baby."

KATIE PELICAN

Mountains are thrown into existence
by guitar strums, rapid
jagged in their blind magnificence
and everything
is cracked
like the mud finger-painted on our cheeks
like the earth where
indigo berries
hang frosted, dusty
gems for the wild
wanderers.
I remember the first time
I tasted a star-freckled night
It was the type of
cold where
you inhale the lonely
white glow right out of the moon
The pines swallowed our
tiny souls,
hummingbird hearts
gripping to uncertainties
and you said,
"There are bears."
And I squeezed my eyes shut
so I couldn't see
the night lost
in yours.



LULLABY



TOMMY MCPHAIL

As I casually ride my fixie down Grace (because screw Broad traffic), the crust punks wave and the sorority girls giggle, both heading to buy the same PBR with equal chances of being apprehended by someone, chili pepper pants or not.

The river city, where most don't go to the river...
Or, if they do, make sure everyone knows about it with 12 filters and a smile.

With a YOLO and a swagtastic leap, this town is, quite honestly no better or not worse than anywhere else you can go.

With its issues and flair and embarrassing-at-times "heritage," RVA is a place for dreams to stay.

Be careful, for this is a double-edged sword, for when you first arrive, the outlook is promising.

Dreams realized, but rest assured.
Dreams that will stay grounded nonetheless.

Just don't get stabbed and take a vacay.
You'll be just fine in RVA.

GABBIE ROBINSON

There they go again,
waving That Flag. This time
they found a black woman.
I laugh loudly and scream
"You tried" out the car window.

PJ DESUTTER

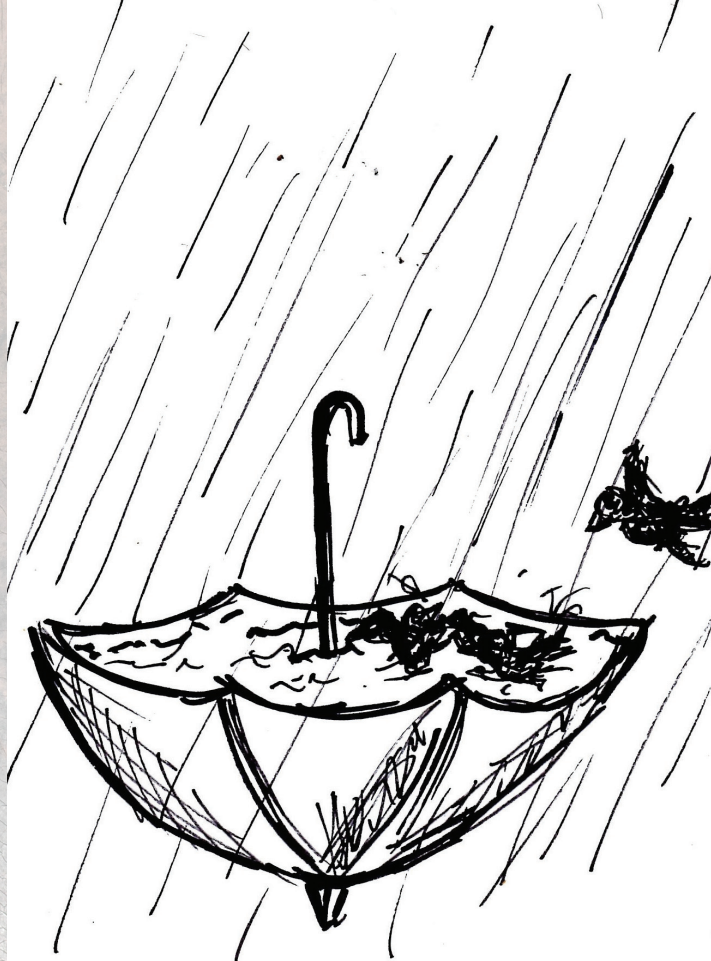
"It's warmer than I'd expected," said the pudgy 19-year-old standing in front of me in tighty whities and splatters of blood.

Our short, gangly producer is wearing a clunky cardboard robot costume. Phil, dressed as a masked sex pervert, and Joe, as a robot, will run down Broad Street in full costume at full speed, chasing me, the camera man in rolled-up blue jeans and a head band, as loud punk music blares out of my backpack. We are shooting a music video, and I am having some of the most fun I've ever had.

No footage can contain the frantic, irresponsible energy of this moment. We are living the song.

And then the cops saw us...

KATIE PELICAN





PJ DESUTTER

The great thing about having a person rip themselves out of your life so hard that you feel like your arm gets yanked off is that when the wound heals, you find out who you are.

You fall in love with a city.
You meet weirdo brilliant sick fuck sweethearts who become drinking buddies you'd take a bullet for.

You fuck up.

You make art.

You pull all-nighters.

You call home to Mom with good news.
You form two-minute bonds with stray cats.

You talk someone off a ledge.
You help someone carry the heaviest furniture in the world and feel like Hercules when the deed is done.

You yell at bad movies.

You cover every inch of a grimy street with a new memory until its yours.

And then you've fallen in love with a city so hard that your ache over one person seems silly. And then you're home?

LIVE RECORDINGS



The audio portion of Progressions is available for free download online at
TheHornRVA.Bandcamp.com

Musical performances recorded live in a living room
on a Saturday afternoon in Richmond, Va.

Poetry recorded at the Virginia Commonwealth University
Student Media Center

1. "Penny Lane" by Tommy Crisafulli
2. "Ode to Awareness" by Cole Sullivan
3. "Orange Lights" by Dane Ferguson
4. "Peeping Tom" by Georgie Isaacs
5. "To Conquer Hell" by Furious George
6. "Cardinal" by Inland Ocean
7. "City Lights" by Rivers Crude
8. "Houseshow" by Maya White-Lurie
9. "The One" by Cole Sullivan
10. "Colder Shoulder" by Dane Ferguson
11. "Barometric Pressure" by Georgie Issacs
12. "Looking for the Two" by Furious George
13. "Apocalypse Now" by Rivers Crude
14. "Mantra" by Inland Ocean
15. "Metal Wrist" by Kaylin Kaupish
16. "Identity" by Tommy Crisafulli
17. "Home to a Ghost" by Furious George
18. "Constant Thought" by Cole Sullivan

Music Engineered and Mixed by Allen Bergendahl of Viking Recording

Poetry Recorded by Craig Zirpolo



Skippping through inky alley-ways
in the company of laughing friends
I sashay through the back fence.

Music bleeds out the open back door
no tickets, no brick bartender,
no bouncer to smudge young hands,
my PBR sweats like the palm
that brings the nectar to to my lips.
Dancers swirl, birds flitting through
rainforest canopies, exhibiting
dizzy joy for future mates in
humid air, hot with squealing amps
and squawking speakers,
distant calls from far-off friends
get lost in the tangle of hands
fluttering in the air like leaves.
My arms fly to catch notes radiating
off vibrating strings and flicking fingers,
the trumpeter calls through the haze,
his horn echoing small lights
on the keys grinning in their irregular splendor
like the teeth of their player.

We steal outside for air and smoke,
a quieter clearing where
fireflies on the clap-board fence
are strung lights and
the only empty chairs are broken,
rubbing shoulders and shins.

The bass drum's growl rumbles our chests,
drawing us back to join the forest
of swaying forms, so dense,
but I could swear only tones
brush against my skin, only notes
comb through my hair,
sweat rolls down my neck, drips to
floorboards bobbing under the weight of our bodies,
the force of one hundred springing feet
pounding in unison, the beat
cut only by the singer's wail
her back arching like a jaguar
persuaded by percussion and instinct
to begrudgingly say good night,

though just begun,
I head home, my skin wet
with the sweat of musical communion,
I sashay through my back fence,
my feet still tapping time.

IDENTITY

TOMMY CRISAFULLI

Who do you think I am?

Trust me this is not some philosophical game
I want to know the man you're thinking of when you say my name
'Cause I've thought up all these versions of myself in my dreams
And its hard to tell when I'm awake if that's really me

I feel I'm being used

Well I see the friendly faces when they're smiling at me
But I also hear the talking when I'm up in my tree
Let's bring the conversation down with some melody
I can't tell if I'm winning or they're laughing at me

Find who you are its the secret you seek
Open your mind or you'll never be free
Find who you are its the secret you seek
Open your mind or you'll never be free

I don't know who I am

I'm dropping all the metaphors for more brass tacks
Writing all these words down or I'll never relax
These feelings that I've got inside they're making me sick
When you see the game you're playing is some fucking schtick
Feeling buzzards circling down when we're laying in bed
And I'm praying to God nightly that it's all in my head

I think it's all in my head

THE ONE

COLE SULLIVAN

Yes I am your brother
Oh I am your son
And I am your lover
Oh I am the only one

You picked me off the ground and got me on my feet
Oh I hope you understand I appreciate your kindness well
It's not too often I can see my hands
Through all the dirt and blood
I left home on a Saturday
Oh I thought I'd be gone for a while
But you could see in my eyes
I wouldn't get further than a mile

Yes I am your brother
Oh I am your son
And I am your lover
Oh I am the only one

We were close and I thought I knew what I wanted what I needed out of you
You took the blindfold off my eyes and made me realize there is more, more to my life
I am the one you see on the street
I am the one you'll probably never meet
But I'm part of you and you're part of me
And I know it's hard to believe

Yes I am your brother
Oh I am your son
And I am your lover
Oh I am the only one
Yes I am your sister
Oh I am your daughter
Oh I am your mother
I am the only one
And we are the only one

MANTRA

CHRIS TAIT

The ivy's quivering slow in the dusk light
Soft rain teeming on down from the ink blue sky
Zephyr's baying echoes off the moon by
The feelings are all too much cordoned off

Setting sail as a solus one
Wandering through the salt air, a ghost's song I hum.
But I've been living lives long lost for far too long
I think I need make an escape.

But I still try to tempt my own fate again
Crooning hymns all along the day, i wait for change again
Cause it's all the same now
No one left to blame now
Cause it's just a mantra
Ad infinitum

Feel like a machine when the dark goes high
Need a change of scene for my cold mind
Vedic strains of yore I've let pass by
Time to carve my own into stone and steel

Soundly spinning worlds blows through your bones
Jai guru or a hallowed drone
Love forever to all those, but yet I know
We're all our own architects of the waking life

But I still try to tempt my own fate again
Crooning hymns all along the day, I wait for change again
Cause it's all the same now
No one left to blame now
Cause it's just a mantra
Ad infinitum

CITY LIGHTS

TREY HALL

I been walkin' on uneven sidewalks
This city ground breeds concrete dreams
I been searchin for my ray of sunshine
But the skyscrapers block out the heat

Mountain trails running through my mind
Mountain air you get me high
Mountain trails twisting up the hillside
Mountain air you get me so high

I been walkin' through busy traffic
No one ever told me life was a race
I been searchin for a greater purpose
But my carbon footprint can't be erased

Mountain trails running through my mind
Mountain air you get me high
Mountain trails twisting up the hillside
Mountain air you get me so high

Now I'm heading toward the country
Now I'm heading toward my home
The city lights scare away the stars

I been strollin' through a city meadow
But this town don't have my wild flowers
I've been searchin for my four-leaf clover
But I've always kind of had good luck

Mountain trails running through my mind
Mountain air you get me high
Mountain trails twisting up the hillside
Mountain air you get me so high

Now I'm heading toward the country
Now I'm heading toward my home
The city lights scare away the stars

METAL WRIST

KAYLIN KAPUSH

I jump in without taking a breath, without thinking. The thrashing bodies in front of me were daunting at first glance. But as I watch, as I observe the way the torsos sway and swell together, the way the arms and legs flail about, it all becomes strangely inviting.

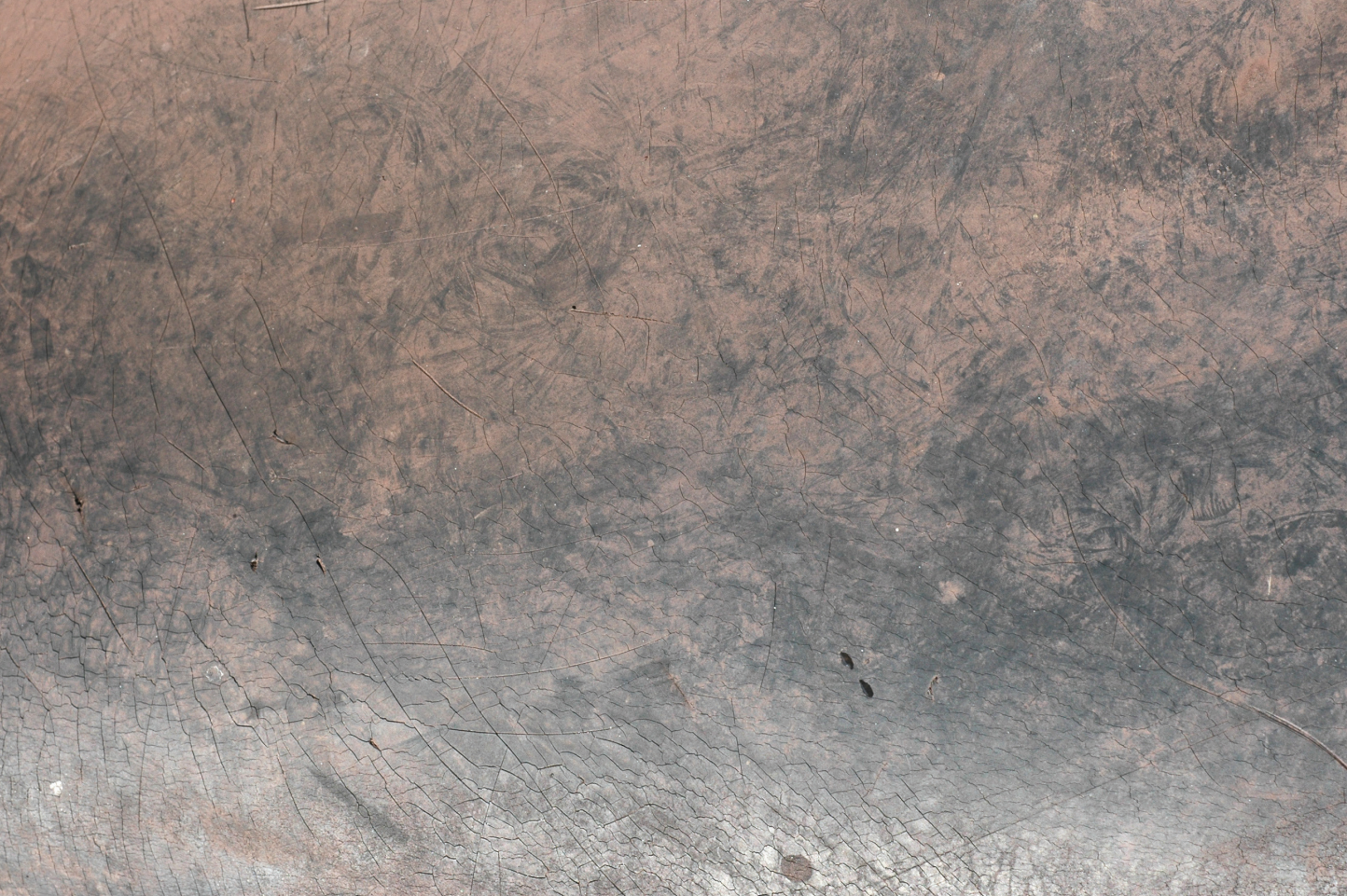
The man above us screams and wails, his throat hoarse, forehead drenched in sweat. We bathe in the shower that comes down as his head hammers the beats. Slight pains form on my skin from other bruised bodies that whack! against my own. I whack back and I feel things coming out, departing my body, from the bruises that form. Sweat, shouts, adrenaline, anger. I laugh.

Suddenly my body is thrown forward and two masses converge upon the hand I have extended to catch myself. I hear a snap. Looking down, my wrist looks twisted in the red lights.

The doctors ask how it happen and roll their eyes. Kids these days... My sweat covered body shivers when they tell me I will need surgery. I'm going to have a metal plate in my wrist. I smile. Metal in my wrist. How appropriate. The doctors place my arm in the cast, squeezing my shattered bones back into place.

"Was it worth it?" they ask.

"Hell yeah it was."



STAFF AND PRODUCTION

The Horn RVA and Amendment Literary Journal are student media organizations based out of the Student Media Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. Progressions is the first multimedia collaboration between the two organizations.

The Horn RVA produces videos and multimedia projects reporting on local music in Richmond. The Horn also provides print reporting for The Commonwealth Times.

Amendment is VCU's literary magazine promoting social progression through artistic expression by giving a megaphone to marginalized voices. Amendment releases a yearly journal and flash fiction zines.

Edited by Claire Thompson, Maya White-Lurie, Kaylin Kaupish, and Craig Zirpolo

Designed by Carson McNamara, Craig Zirpolo, and Mark Jeffries

Produced by Craig Zirpolo



Visit The Horn RVA online at TheHornRVA.com and pick up a copy of Amendment on campus and around the city! Don't forget to download the 58-minute accompanying cd Progressions from TheHornRVA.Bandcamp.com!

