

ether(bound)



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ether(bound) family

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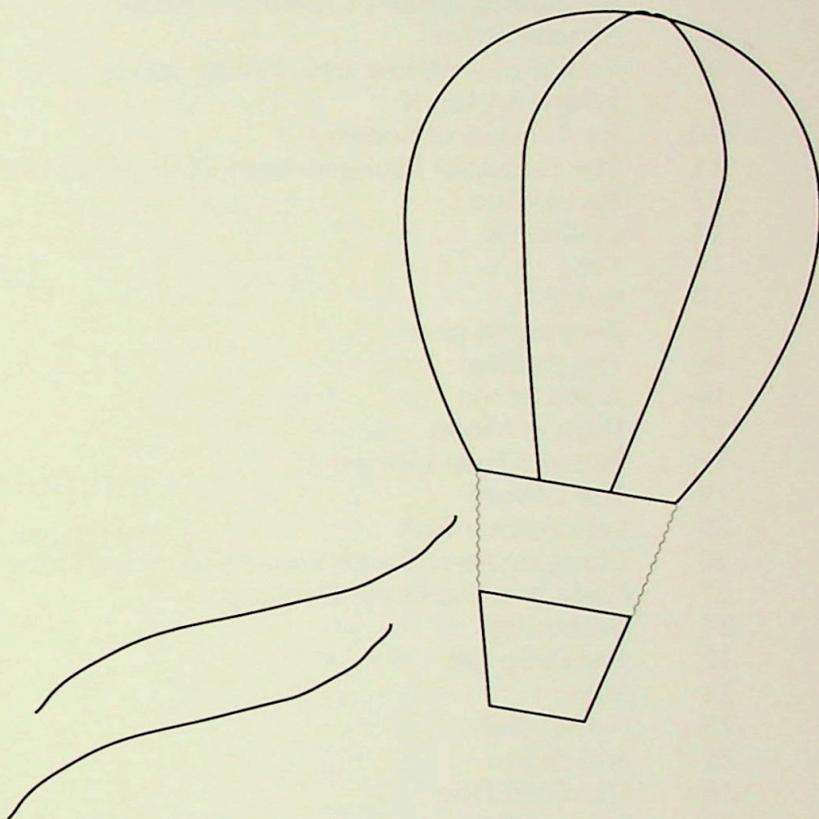
(e)ditors' note

A note:

Propulsion. Expansion. Arrival.

The theme of "flight" resonates throughout this publication. The concept aligns with the intention we piloted and the fulfillment we experienced through the process of curating this collection. The pride we feel as we share it with our community is overwhelming.

With boundless appreciation,
Ether(bound) Editors



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Katrina Thornley

Night Light

Tea kettle whistles
Frost bitten window-
A moon brushed yard
Before drowsy eyes.

The world is hushes
Beneath blanket of slumber-
Leaving the night to wander
And writers to play.

Skipping Rocks

The ocean heard
Our whispered secrets,
Carrying them out to sea
To wear them down
Into smooth pebbles
Like the one you tossed
Creating a small ripple
That we thought nothing of
Until we saw the tsunami.

Seasons

What fickle creatures we are
Only chasing the leaves
When they've changed colors.



Reclaim Eka Seneth

windshield wipers Belinda Ahrens

I've always had an irrational fear of grasshoppers
Awake in the middle of the night, bleaching my hair
If you were here, I'd probably sit up straighter
Brand new, how do you say, 'cleansing breath'

Mom left and I am in my room for the first time, alone
The dragonflies will soon die, sick with a cold that comes
Only when you need to rest— they passed
Three strangers I had watched for sometime in a dream
Claimed a tree with a bench by the pond

When I was young I believed heaven was a city in the sky
The day you moved into my neighborhood, the tree outside your window began to die
This feeling is not of love, but of grief, guilt for saying goodbye
Leaves dry and begin to fall away
This year I did not cry on Thanksgiving

In elementary school I'd stay up late reading the same book over and over
No one bore witness to the lies she was telling herself, and believing
To die is to find yourself, if it is done, it is done, it is done
Do not write about your feelings, do not speak on what you do not know

The last time I tried to die was when the tide swept in
Where hushed voices fall silent
A beam of light across a freckled and sunburnt cheek
When I think of him, it is always about the feeling of his hands on me
When I finally die I'd like to be buried at sea

I chase away my truth like a weasel around a mulberry bush
I always gauge my feelings by what I see in my dreams
I don't think he will ever love properly
I will start taking the backroads
I forgot to take my meds today

I read his name and recognize it as easily as I would my own

Connection is a tricky thing to undo
Sit on the ceiling to change your perspective
Soon you'll forget the days of the week
The morning before the hurricane hit my father took me to the beach

When I was sixteen I was drugged with ecstasy
The scratch of his face left my thighs chafe and bleeding
Leaves are like people, they live their own lives, they fall
But I define love in a series of moans in a dark room
Often drawn to insects stuck dead on the windshield

A Granddaughter's Childlike Wonder

Charlotte Norton

I awaken draped in loudly painted woven quilts to the fierce hissing of the ancient teapot kettle. Slowly, I rise from the indented couch and trudge towards the linoleum cloaked kitchen, dragging my feet behind me. There, I meet my grandmother, eyes glued to her tiny television set above her worn, wooden breadbox as she intently watches some news program. I cautiously pour us two cups of tea, and proceed to sit by my grandmother's side at her aged, tattered table. As she notices me the TV screen turns black, and I am now peering into her ice blue eyes, which sit just beyond her broad rimmed glasses. Soon enough, the two of us dive into conversation. She begins to tell me of her childhood growing up in the stirring cities of England, while I sit in silence –mesmerized, ever so often complying to her words with a smile or nod in agreement.

"It seemed like I was trapped underground forever" my grandmother recalls as she reflects on all the bitter nights she spent with her family, down in their bomb shelter during the infamous Blitzkrieg attack. Ignoring the scorching summer heat, my body becomes consumed by goose bumps as I hold onto every sentence, and steadily pour honey into my fiery tea cup. She continues, this time speaking in an almost somber tone, remembering the countless times she felt helpless and vulnerable during the war. Despite the tragedy she faced, my grandmother has always kept her sense of humor. She begins to giggle to herself while I sit there with a crooked smile on my face, questioning her laughter. Eventually, once the laughter ceases, she shares with me a rather odd story. My grandmother tells me that one of her neighbors would always run into their yard, shrieking with curlers in her hair begging to be let into their shelter during a bomb scare. This is one of the stories I remember most, possibly because it is the one that brings my grandma so much joy.

Growing up, I was always enchanted by my grandmother's presence. She carries herself with such confidence and pride – it was something I, at that young age, could not yet grasp. My grandmother has always been an exceedingly independent person, joining the war efforts as a teenager and moving to America by herself at the young age of twenty-two. While with her, I often find myself wishing to make a significant influence like she. Since older, I am now able to better appreciate and understand my grandmother unlike before, when I relied heavily on childish fabrications. I sit with her, in that small outdated kitchen talking for hours on end, while the spring rain pounds down onto ragged roof. Each time I visit, I collect more and more stories. Eventually, our tea cups sit empty and bare, and I gingerly return them to their appropriate cabinets.

Carefully, my grandmother rises from her seat, clutching onto her cane as if it is the only thing keeping her upright. I grab each of us a jacket, and guide her towards the dust coated front door. As we step outside for our walk, we begin to descend down the cracked pavement. The road we stroll on is bounded by autumnal trees, which appear to be glazed in leaves of colors so vibrant I almost find myself squinting trying to concentrate on the striking figures. Here, I feel at home. As usual, I continue to ask my grandmother about her childhood, and while I listen to her speak I begin to realize that I am no longer the little girl sitting on her lap listening to tales of London, but rather the young adult planning her own trip to this unfamiliar, alien city. After about an hour or so of walking, my feet begin to grow tired and

our conversation comes to a halt once we realize we are standing at the foot of the timeworn house.

Together, we climb back inside the structure and continue on with the rest of our day. Curiously, I flip through worn photo albums while my grandma adjusts the vivacious red Christmas poinsettia that sits comfortably next to her fireplace. As the sun's light grows fainter and fainter, nighttime falls, and I march towards the pullout couch, which is concealed in burgundy colored corduroy. My eyes begin to feel heavy as I lay there in silence, exhausted, and reflect on all the memories I have made with my grandmother throughout the years with my grandmother. These are stories that I will cherish forever, as the impact my resilient grandmother has on me is one that I will never dismiss.



Sunday Drive Sabrina Rodriguez-Gervais

Katrina Thornley

Tomorrow

The spider spun its web
Weaving between beams,
Springing from fence post
To fence post,
Tying the town
Roof to roof,
Ensnaring all would-be-deserters
In faded booths at the diner
Where they repeated
Some day I'll get out.

Willow Tree

I am the hurricane
To your tortured tree,
And though you bend
You do not break,
And when my storms
Have passed
You embrace me
In the protection of your limbs.

Falling leaves

I fell in love with your leaves,
Your colors and ability to reflect,
And I held on until you crumbled
To delicate dust
Between my fingers.



bridge & clouds Julia Ludovici

for the sake of honesty

Julia Ludovici

when I looked into his eyes, I saw the future.
but not like in some crystal ball,
no, he was much less mystical than that.
in his pupils I saw car radios and piano keys
and honest tears spilling onto pillowcases.
there were fingers intertwined
and lips that fit together like lock and key.
what I saw in him was raw, unfiltered hope;
something so pure that
the rest of the world melted away.

it wasn't like anything I'd seen before.
trust me, my hands are cracked and calloused
from building futures on boys' backs
before they even let me in.
but he said my hands were soft like velvet.
he breathed life into me,
sent the room spinning around us
as we gasped for more of whatever this was.
when he said my name the only thing I could think
is that *we are electric*,
and I had never been anything but bruised.

when I whispered into his chest
that "*this is real*" it was not an observation.
it was more like a prayer,
some desperate attempt to grasp his heart in my hands,
but he was already pulling away.
I think that when I looked into his eyes that first time
I could feel him leaving.

we made too many promises
in too little time.
I turned down the car radio
as the little boy who cradled his head in my passenger seat
buckled under the weight of his own expectations.
I am not a psychic,
but I'd be lying if I told you I couldn't see it coming.

The Particular Strangeness of Dining Hall Eating

Sarah Fiore

The girl whose table I'm facing has taken a pile of deflated blackberries and two pieces of pepperoni pizza, but she seems to have forgotten about that. Instead, she's staring into her phone, a sad look on her face that seems to fade the color in her misguided meal choices. Across from her there is a boy who seems more confident about his selections; he's gone the basic route of chicken nuggets and eagerly dips each morsel into their gilt of honey mustard. He's taken two glasses of milk, one plain and one chocolate, because, I imagine, a growing boy needs his milk.

The college dining hall, as we know it, is an emblem of what America loves most: a "take-all-you-can" and a "free-for-all" all in one. Mother and father, or some generous money lenders, already paid for all this delicious expanse, so now it's your turn, dear child, to take all you want. The options are all out. Serve yourself, and eat up, up, up.

The only thing is that everyone hates the dining hall.

Or at least, everyone loves to talk about how horrible the dining hall is. They aren't wrong. Bulk food is hard to season. Variety is lacking. Healthy options--well, we don't even need to talk about that. But in a way, the plight of the dining hall as a pillar of universal university hatred moves some slight sympathy in me. It's trying so hard to please: it offers itself at all times throughout the day, it encourages you to take as much as you like, it lays bear and cries "I'm here! All for your consumption!" And of course we all consume, we all have to consume, but we bitch about it the whole time. The dining hall is a whore that's not too pretty but is always available. She's never alone but she knows you'd rather be somewhere else.

I'm looking around to my fellow eaters again now, and every time I size up someone's dish and their attitude about it, I always find the scene to be just slightly *off*. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a side of hard boiled eggs and pink soda is eaten by a girl giggling on the phone to some distant friend. Three cookies and a plate of avocado toast disappear slowly under the hands and mouths of two queasy looking friends, one of whom then proclaims "Fuck, I can only eat McDonald's when I'm hungover". And a plate of french toast is being led by a meandering young man who's circled the dining hall three times already and seems to be smiling to himself over something sinister. Yes, the dining hall doesn't offer us much, but it offers us one precious commodity: freedom. Freedom to be as bizarre as we choose. When someone shows up to their own birthday party covered in dirt with brambles in their hair, they don't expect you to be wearing your Sunday best. Low standards beget liberation. Temporary liberation--from the social norms of etiquette or manners or responsibility--isn't that just the college experience?

My overcooked penne, garden salad, and two bananas (one to eat now and one to steal as contraband for later) are now symbols of the strange suspension of reality that my years living at a university truly have been. In the real world no one has already paid for for you to take all of the bland and fatty food that you can eat. There is no open expanse for you to eat that food in whatever asocial manner you choose. In the real world, it's considered strange and improbable to end up eating a donut and a bowl of fruit loops during your break in the conference world. You might have to own up to your sugar rush to your coworker Darlene, who always brings a Caesar salad with delicately sliced pieces

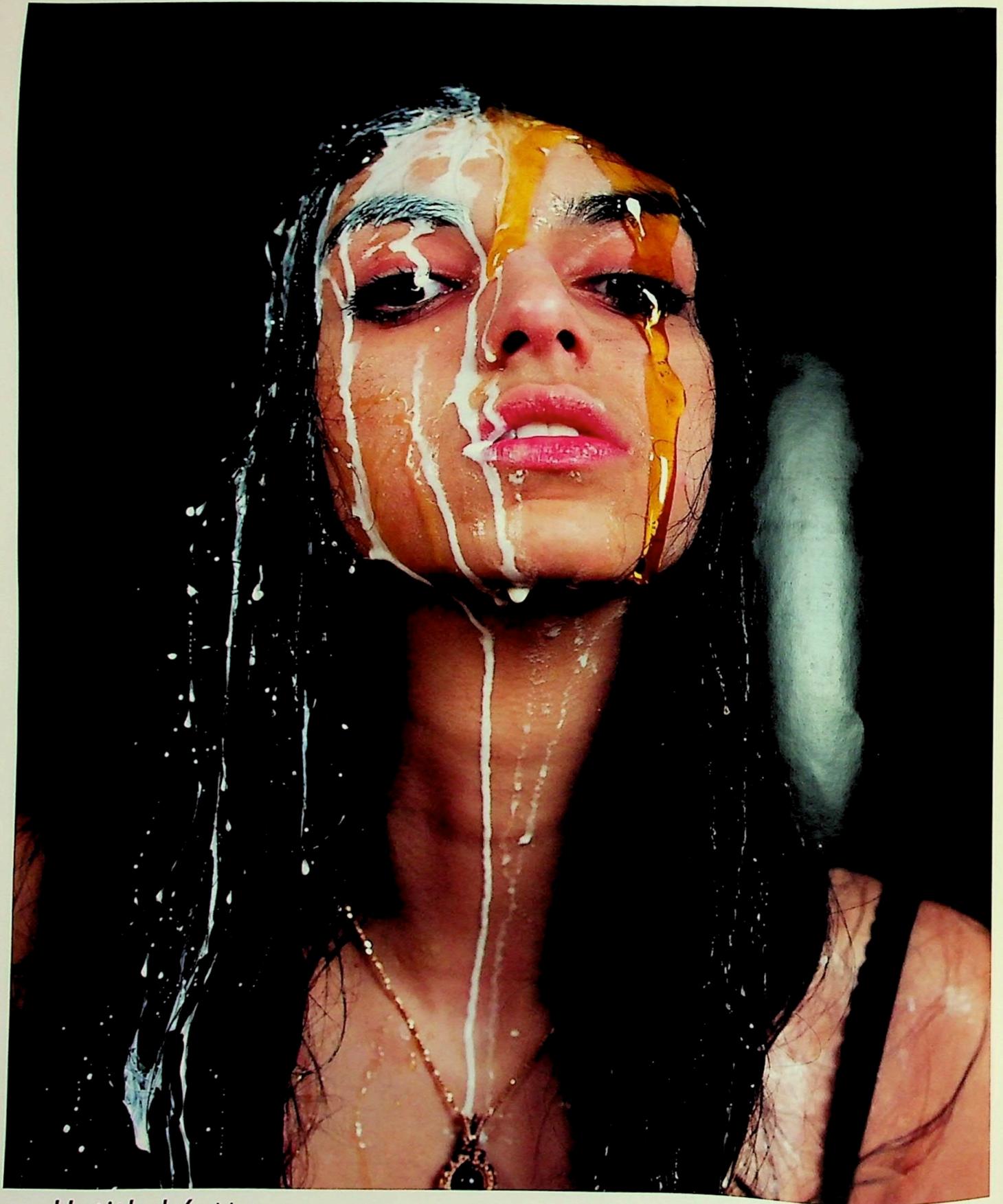
of chicken balanced by. Oh, for the nonjudgmental days of the college dining hall, you might sigh then.

Yes, you might begin to sigh, until you notice that Darlene always takes a paper napkin and folds it directly in half across her lap before eating anything. And only once every bite of Caesar deliciousness has been downed will she then smack her lips together and blot the corners of her folding lips. You then notice how Cheryl always discreetly licks the lid of her yogurt, folds it in half, and then rolls it between her fingers as she stares into her computer screen, frowning. The world outside the college dining hall might seem to shun the outright displays of peculiarity that are seen as "immature", but you know that's not the case. Adult eating idiosyncrasy only finds new, repressed channels. And if you've ever talked to a recovering Catholic, you'll know that repression leads to the most fascinating idiosyncrasies of all. These oddities hide in the guise of order and manners and when they appear, they are all the more surreal for existing between the copy machine and cubicle for so long, insidious and unnoticed.

We eating human beings have some strange habits. Long live the dining hall for giving us a circus where the human comes to observe the human, only to realize that we're all in the show.



spookyfino Emily Mercy



Untitled 6 Lj



Pen Sofia Ganey



home

Alex Murdock

when i touch water
oil and dead skin mix in
and i leave part of myself behind

this is the moment when an unfamiliar space becomes home
in an interim between self harm and recovery
in a blast zone with the edges dotted by concerned family trying hard to reach in
that's where home is

home is where it's briefly warm as the harsh winter air comes in
where you can take off your shoes and socks and put slippers on
only to feel your ankles cold later
home is the ground.

home is where family can phase in and out with well wishes and food
where you put up hand me down ornaments on a potted tree that someone gave to you
placed carefully and glowing near furniture that was never yours
home is where the daddy long legs wear shoes

Jamestown gem Megan Hammit Muir



The Passing

Icarus

I'll miss this
The newness of things I already know
The insatiable appetite for the things young kids do
What paths I look for to get away
And here
I am on the brink of that
Two phases
The fault line
The jump unparalleled in its exponentially vast and deep plummet
Here I am for it
The last to fall
Hope to be the last to falter
I with wings paper thin
The bastion against my own gravity
And all I carry
Memories
Sensations
Balanced as love is to hate
As discovery is to loss
I will miss it
The unquenchable thirst for nostalgia
Knee deep in my past
And head in a cloudy future
Hindsight may not always be twenty twenty
But I hope along this thrilling fall
I work my way back up
See all as it really was
And do it
Again
I will miss this
I will miss
The Passing

-Icarus



A Sea of Me ben

Harvest Moon
Johnny Donnelly

I.
The Winter Invocation

Redblood, blackblood,
Ovid and Freud -
Worms in the bud
And a flower's destroyed.

Redlegs, blacklegs,
Palebody blue -
Foul green dregs
At the bottom of the brew.

Redteeth, blackteeth,
Bones in the fire -
A child's underneath
And she hangs by a wire.

Redrose, black -
Something grows in the void -
The shockwater flows
And a flower's destroyed.

II.
Courtship Hymn

I have brought on the night with a violence
And beckoned the stars with a glare -
Coating the mist is a mint-scented silence
That laces a dream in your hair.

The wave of your hips paints a smokefall above
In the hall of the star-colored crawler...
I would not have you kneel before me, my love,
I would lay my lips at your collar.

An amethyst rain slips over the skies
While a fire licks lyrical words -
If you're passing the night in the shire of my sighs
We'll trade hymns with the wild night-birds.

I have wasted the day in a passion,
And the night swells around your dark hair...
Should you garland my bed with a masque of high fashion
I will lace you in dream, I swear.

III.
Daemonic Pastoral

In Beavertail there is a thatch-house brimmed with roses and with bees
Which sighs slowrolling smoke over the appleheavy trees.
Where sapphire rivers spill their showers on the sleeping grass
A chestnut-girl picks waterflowers and hums a Hindu mass
To God.
Her warmth is strange and artfully made
With airs of low-loafed bread.
Oh Vesta, I have held your shade
And now the hearth is dead.

In Kingston there's a neon village where the spice-winds scream forlorn
And Vesta's umbral sister ties her briared hair with thorn.
I broke her door down, tore her hair, and knocked her worn archfather down -
Thus spayed, she seethed with raptured heat and wreathed my hair with laurel crown

And horns.
For something lurks within her eye -
A spirit black and old.
By the hearth the embers fly -
The thing I love is cold.

In Beavertail there is a cove where murmured waters lip the shore
And timid pipers flit their footsteps on the sandy floor.
The scuttling crab creeps under rock and seaglass dew the shoal
While Vesta kneels on sunwarmed stones to see the lowtides roll
Eastward.
The thunderdrums of Neptune's deep
And raging, salt-blue spews
Are mellow by the cove with sleep
Where Vesta sweetly coos.

In Kingston there's a heavy graveyard where the lowlit spirits teem
And seaborn genii hoof a ring in haunts of emerald steam.
Fuming, battered, shot and shattered, breaking by the lake,
I tore from her those morbid sighs that all cold women make
In heat.
The firelight is blue and full
Beneath a bloody moon.
I stoke the blackroots in the coal
And carve some fallen rune.

In Beavertail the gloam sits warm in mild orange folds of sky
Because a chestnut river-daughter bakes blackberry pie -

But blackout's hot on Kingston's brim before the dual moon shoots her beam:
The whitely warm, the brackish shade,
 entwine, dissolve,

release a scream

And die.
So the moon's by blackout sheathed
Where twin virgins lately passed.
Across Rhode Island, hearthlight breathed
And barren shadows cast.

III. The Rape of Persephone

Through the wild silence of the moon
There treads the wounded figure of a doe.
Moving where the eager black-birds croon
By the violets shattered in the snow.

Through the wild silence of the moon
There stalks the savage body of a hound.
Frenzied breathing over deep maroon -
Beating towards the doe without a sound.

Through the rising silence of the moon
The hart of Autumn lets the doe alone.
Withered leaves fall from his path maroon -
Meager antlers shatter on the stone.

Hot hound breathing -
Black-birds shriek -
Oh shy one of my heart.
The harvest moon is sheaving as your limbs are ripped apart.



Sweeter Than Vinegar ben

The L Word
Maria Cherry

Lust comes from your lips
Letting me pull you in closer and closer
Love my body
Lift me higher
Loss is inevitable
Lead me to believe otherwise
Locks of my hair in your hand
Lose me in the bed sheets

Let's Form a Cult

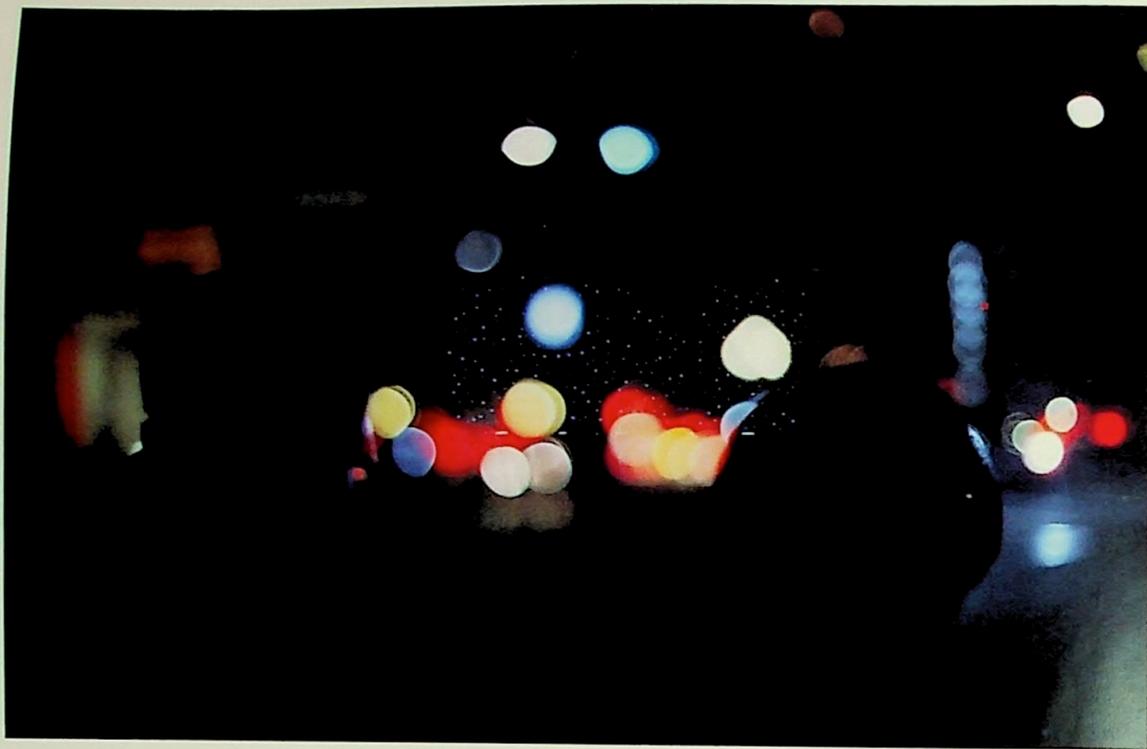
Arden Bastia

we'll worship the sun
and because this is my cult
the sun is a she
she is the bringer of life
and to honor her
we'll do something radical
something like tattoo the rays of sun
around our nipples
because I'm sure there's some sort
of biblical reference or philosophical undertones
that boys will love to mansplain to us
even though we'll consider them false prophets.



Charging Myself with your Misdirected Firing (screw you) ben

Carla and David are Dancing
Through Time Because They Want To
- Can You Blame Them? Alex Murdock



becoming

Belinda Ahrens

There's glitter on the floor and vomit in my makeup bag
The blood vessels finally burst, cheeks blush first
My head remembers a time I have woken up to
A version of myself worse than dead

I step on cracks in the sidewalk
My mother takes frequent dives down the stairs
If I believed in confession, my only sin would be missing you
There is no shame in existing if you have something to show for it
Stand, eyes closed on the double yellow line

There are other versions of myself I've plagued
With razor wire, fire, the lies of amateur palm readers
To coffin and bury deep brutal history
A fragment of forgotten treasure and horror
What more is there to hope for than consistency?

Even cupid has become a nuisance, but
It was never the arrow through the chest that killed
If fucking makes men wither, celibacy is my kindest chore
Soon I see I am becoming unlonely
Too comfortable in my own company

When the total eclipse begins remember peaches
We'll get aching penumbras & white knuckle fists
No old stories shared in the dark
No frozen plums for me tonight

The Drop Off

Taylor Petrini

I pulled up to the crowded area of ground transportation in LAX. Airports are a good way to make extra money for cabbies like me, because most of them are rich men on business looking for a ride to their fancy hotels. When I pulled up I scanned the area for someone looking for a taxi when a petite woman approached my window and tapped on it. I put the cigarette I was smoking in my mouth to crank down the window.

"Hi, I'm looking for a ride to The Hollywood Roosevelt. Could you take me?" She smiled, her teeth looking bright white against her fire engine red lipstick. I nodded and she hopped in. When she closed the cab door behind her I pulled the lever down on the meter to start our trip. She smelled of lavender and vanilla, so strong it eliminated the stench of sweat and cigarettes that had inhabited my old cab. I was on my last trip of a 12-hour work day, I feared she could smell my exhaustion and the faint scotch on my breath from hours ago.

"Well, hells bells! Is the weather in Los Angeles always this beautiful?" She asked in a high-pitched voice. I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw the young girl bouncing in her seat. I reached in my console for my pack of Lucky Strikes and removed a cigarette and offered her one. She thanked me and leaned in closer so I could light it for her. "Ah, you're a Lucky Strike man, I'm a Salem girl myself." She took a drag and stained the white filter with her red lipstick. I took another glance at her in my rear-view mirror and saw her crystal blue eyes staring back at me.

"You don't talk much do you?" She said, folding her arms in her chest. "What's your name?"

"Buddy," I replied. "And you ma'am?" She put her white gloved hand over her mouth as she let out a loud giggle.

"I'm no 'ma'am'! That's my mother! You can call me Sally." She extended her hand over the seat and I gave it a light shake. She reached into her pastel pink purse and grabbed a small mirror from it. She began to powder her face and reapply lipstick. I always see women blotting their faces with this white powder, I don't even know what it is or what it does. I could never keep track of all the new makeup trends women were trying.

"So, returning home or just visiting?" I asked to break the silence. I don't know why I asked Sally this. I typically don't talk to the passengers because I don't want to be annoying. They usually just smoke their cigarettes in silence with a word here and there. Ironically, being a cabbie is a lonely job.

"Well, I'm just visiting but I hope this will be my home one day," Sally leaned in close to me and put her mouth next to my ear, like she was about to tell me a secret or something. "I'm going to be a real Hollywood actress one day." She was so close to me I could smell mint and tobacco on her breath.

"Is that right?" I asked, my curiosity intrigued.

"Sure is. I am here to shoot a Coca-Cola commercial." She let out another light giggle. Her blonde hair reminded me of Marilyn Monroe, but she was a spitting image of Grace Kelly. Despite the clothes and makeup, she was wearing she couldn't be over the age of 18. I could tell by the naïve look in her eyes as we passed large billboards and buildings. It was like every palm tree was fascinating to her. I remember having that same optimistic look in my face once, it seemed like centuries ago.

"Coca-Cola was nice enough to fly me first-class on Pan Am." Sally said, disrupting my train of thought. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't brag, it's unbecoming of a lady." She looked down and tucked her golden locks behind her ears.

"Oh, that's alright. You're jazzed is all." I said. I reached over and handed her another cigarette and lit it for her.

"Tell me about yourself, Buddy. I'm tired of talking about myself." Sally said, removing her long white gloves from her arms. She cranked down the window in the back and rested her head along the door letting the cool California breeze kiss her fair skin.

"Not much to tell I suppose. I'm not all that interestin' " I replied. No one has really asked me

about myself before, at least not in a while.

"Oh, come on! There must be a Mrs. Buddy!" She said, sitting up in excitement. "A handsome fella like yourself is surely taken." I began to blush and adjusted myself in the seat. I lit another cigarette and took a long drag before I responded.

"No, there isn't. I mean there is...was. She's in New York and well, I'm here. Didn't work out I suppose." I replied, already longing for the usual silence I was comfortable with. I saw Sally's face turn sad. A look washed over her face, one I recognized all too well, the look of pity. She, once again, got closer to me and put her soft hand on my dirty white t-shirt. She gave my shoulder a slight squeeze.

"That's horrible. What happened?" She asked. I became even more uncomfortable than I was before. If this was anyone else I would have told them to lay off or just stop the meter right here and drop them on the side of the road. But this felt different. Despite her nosiness I felt this vulnerability in her big, blue eyes. I sighed and reached for another cigarette before the one I was smoking was even out.

"I was in 'Nam for 3 years. When I came back I was...different I guess. And, well, she decided we go our separate ways. It was for the better. She is remarried and lives on a farm in Upstate." My body went numb when I said it. I never talked about the war before to anyone, let alone a young girl in my cab. I've seen things I hope no one ever has to see or think about, especially a young girl like her. I shook my body a little to rid the memory of it.

Sally leaned back in her seat and went quiet. I studied her face through the mirror to try and read her face but I couldn't, she was blank. She took a few drags of her cigarette before she spoke again.

"My father was in Vietnam. I remember the day they told me he died." She looked down and adjusted her canary yellow dress at her knees. I could faintly see her wipe away a tear from her cheek. "He looked kinda like you, actually. Dirty blonde hair, scruffy with green eyes."

"I'm sorry for your loss." I replied. It was all I could think of to say while I was swallowing the lump in my throat. She rapidly shook her head from side to side with her short blonde hair swaying with her.

"Well, my my! This is a drag!" Sally squealed. I coughed while giving a slight nod. I guess there were two uncomfortable people in the cab.

I thought about Sally's father and how we would probably both be the same age. It felt odd I could have a daughter this old, going off to California to pursue her dreams. Something I seldom thought about, the life of a family man I would never have. I made good money being a cabbie, the hours never bothered me because I rarely slept and driving around was oddly calming. I thought about all the jobs I had after the war, I was in construction and that was alright. I didn't like the loud noises though, I needed something quieter.

Sally reached over in the front and pointed to the radio. "May I?" she asked. I nodded and she smiled again. She turned the knob for the stations and settled on some news station.

"So, do you like President LBJ?" she asked, reaching for another one of my Lucky Strikes in the middle console. We approached a red light so I was able to turn and look at her directly in the face for the first time. When she first came into my cab she looked like a young, sophisticated woman, now up close she just looked like a child in adult clothes and makeup. I lit her cigarette for her and she kept eye contact with me, I was relieved when the light turned green and I had to look away.

"Aren't there things you shouldn't talk about in public? Politics, religion, and sex?" I replied.

"Oh, don't flip your wig!" she said, pushing my shoulder playfully. "Besides, we're friends now." I thought about this for a while, the idea of friends. I didn't have many, maybe a few guy friends to go drinking with every once in a while, when I'm not working, which isn't often. I never considered myself a "people" person, I go to work every day like a normal man, heat up one of those tv dinners when I get home and watch Bonanza. That is just the way it is.

After about an hour of driving I finally pulled up to The Hollywood Roosevelt. People were walking around with their sunglasses and bathing suits on, the sun seemed even brighter in this part of town. I hopped out and opened the back door for Sally and grabbed her suitcase.

"So, this is it." She said, shrugging. She reached in her purse and pulled out a wad of cash and gave it to me. I felt weird taking it because for a moment I forgot I was a cabbie and she was a passenger.

"Good luck out there." I said. I wanted to say "be safe" but I felt like I would sound too much like

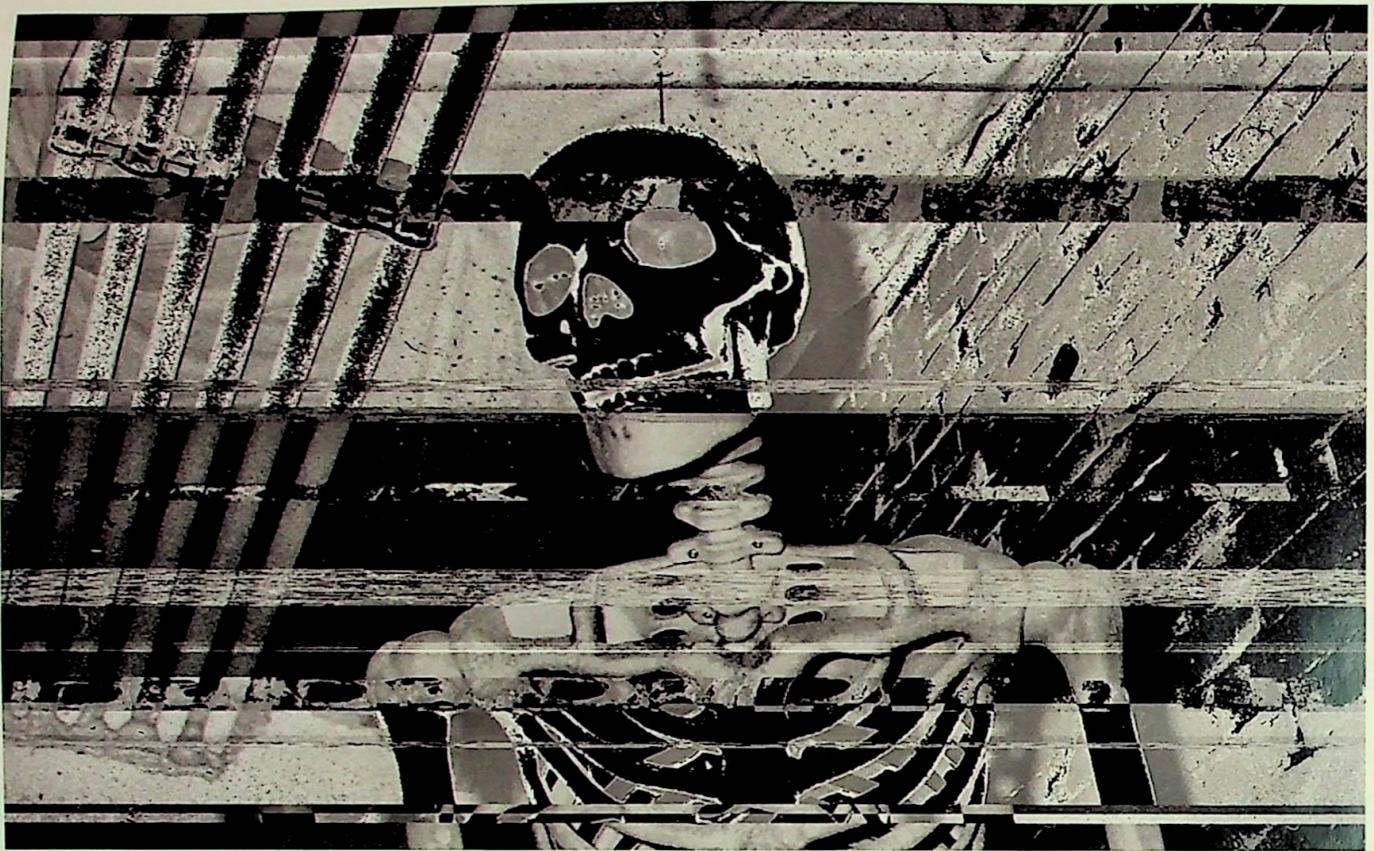
an old man.

"I'll be sure when I win my first Academy Award to thank the man who brought me to Hollywood. My friend, Buddy." She tilted her head and gave me a full tooth smile. For the first time I smiled back at her and nodded. She wrapped her small arms around my body and gave a large hug. She squeezed me tight and then held me at arm's length. She then stood on her tippy toes and gave me a kiss on the cheek and made off towards the hotel.

I sat back in my cab and looked at the red lipstick stain on my face. I decided not to wipe it off right away, it was like if I kept it there she would still be with me in the cab. I closed my eyes and pictured Sally on my tv dancing with her canary yellow dress flowing and blonde hair curled. She was dancing to a jingle with a Coca-Cola in her hand giving the audience a sweet smile. Feeling happiness and peace wash over me, I turned to look at Sally once more before she disappeared forever into the hotel. With her back faced toward me I blew a kiss her way, hoping it would somehow reach her. I lit up a cigarette and pulled the lever to clear the meter and drove away.

Solo Megan Hammit Muir





NARC-db2 Brian Podgurski

anti-psalm

Mako

dimmed lights and dented heads

monolithic monologue,
monotone

bludgeoned, I lay
defeated

Ellen and Ellie Briana Gagnon

trigger warning: sexual assault, violent content

Ellie

November 18th, 2018

The sound of loud rap music to cover up a squeaking bed with two moaning sweaty people on it is a sound Ellie has gotten used to the past three years she's lived in a college dorm. She grabs a book and stands up on her bed and slams it on the ceiling a couple times. The squeaking stops, and then the music stops right after. She sighs with relief. The squeaking starts up again, so she closes her book and just lay in bed, staring at the ceiling.

Ellie glances over at her desk, which is across the room from her bed where her phone is diligently charging. She jumps down and checks her phone. Yes! Three texts from Shane. Three is the most he's ever sent in a row.

"Hey" Sent at 5:03 pm

"What's up" Sent at 5:15 pm

"El I sent you a snap of Coco you'll love it" Sent at 5:56 pm

Playing hard to get isn't so hard after all.

Ellen

November 19th, 1865

The house was getting colder by the second since the fire has not been stoked in the last couple of hours. Mother was putting the rest of the younger children to bed, while Father and her elder brother tended to the livestock in the barn. Ellen knew if she wanted to get warmer she would have to tend to the fire herself.

Waxy brown and orange leaves were clinging to the branches on an oak tree outside. She could see them through the window in their dining room. The men were all readjusting to life back home in Connecticut; they've been off because of the war. He's been gone for over two years, and he never sent a single letter. She kept his picture under her pillow and prayed for him to return home every night. Shiloh, who thought to fight for the Union would define his manhood, left Ellen and all his promises to her as if she were dust in the wind, left behind by the troops marching on.

Father fought, as did her uncles and eldest brother, and they wrote letters as often as permitted. She often read the old letters, wrinkling and weathering with time and wear, and thought about the times she thought she might never see her father or brother again. They came home, her father missing a left arm and her brother wracked with night terrors he never spoke to anyone about.

Ellen rose from her position in the dining room to stoke the fire. A faint knock sounded from the window. She walked up to the glass and pressed her nose on it. Shiloh, holding a gas lamp, stood on the other side smiling.

Ellie

November 23rd, 2018

She threw her hair into a quick bun, perfectly cute but annoyingly messy to take down. It's been a few days, and the texting between her and Shane has increased more than it ever has. She matched with him on Tinder in early October, and now it's November. Everyone knows you have to find someone by December or your cuffing season will be a cold, lonely one. He was the usual type she went for. He had chocolate brown hair with dark grey eyes that pierced hers in such a way. He towered above most guys at six feet. She didn't waste her time on short guys; it's either six feet or nothing.

He can't come over today. He has to work. But at least work means Snapchats of Coco, the office Frenchie. It's hard to fathom catching feelings for someone she's never met, but the connection between them isn't something they can deny. It's so easy to find people, but most of the time they don't hold much substance. This is different though.

Her parents met on one of the first dating websites made, but they don't understand why people use the Internet to meet someone. You don't just stumble upon someone in class and hit it off these days. She had more trust in a guy she hasn't met yet from the Internet than someone from a frat party.

Ellen

November 25th, 1865

Ellen's family has invited Shiloh's family to celebrate Thanksgiving with them. The two families often took turns hosting Thanksgiving and have always been very close. Ellen, her mother, and younger sisters have been preparing food since the sun rose.

Shiloh. So sweet on the tongue like cranberries. The night he visited her, just a mere few days ago, revitalized what she thought they had lost. He told her words coated in sugar, dripping with remorse.

"I thought about you every day. The sound of a bullet going through flesh, ripping arms and legs off was something I didn't want to fill your delicate mind with. Those phantom thoughts do not belong in the minds of women."

Now that he was home the clouds have parted and let the sun back into her life.

Ellie
December 2nd, 2018

He's coming today. Going off campus is totally off limits, so he's coming to her dorm. Nothing is going to happen, her friends are all around.

Every loud car could be his, but they always passed by. She loved to watch them through her window. Loud cars hold a certain allure. She wanted just vanilla roads before. Now she wants chocolate chip cookie dough roads, with crunchy bumps and soft doughy spots, coated with a layer of safe, smooth vanilla.

I just parked, I'll get to your dorm in a few Sent at 7:27 p.m.

She threw on her slippers and rushed down three flights of stairs to the entrance of her dorm. She felt her stomach clench and began to yawn, which is a nervous tick she's always had. Her phone dinged. She pushed open the door, and he walked in, his hands in his coat pockets, smiling once he realized who she was.

"Hey there bud."

They took the stairs, arms touching and brushing. Her room was warm. He threw his jacket on the floor, and hopped onto her bed, making himself comfortable. She laughed, and took off her slippers, revealing her French bulldog socks which made him smirk.

"You're so short. Why loft your bed if you can hardly get onto it without using a chair?"

"Fuck off yeah? I like storing all of my stuff under it so that there's room for my bean bag chair. Some of us aren't six feet tall and can just hop onto our beds so easily."

They cuddled, wrapped up in each other like Twizzlers, and listened to some random Netflix movie while they watched one another.

Ellen
December 2nd, 1865

Ellen knew she had a few hours alone to herself. Her mother and father took all of her siblings with them into town moments ago. This was her only chance to see him alone.

"Ellen? Ellen!"

She heard the anxious tone in his voice and rushed outside to find him standing outside the door laughing at her expression of fear. She frowned, and turned to go back inside, so he grabbed her hand, apologizing and begging her to forgive him. She always forgave him, no matter what.

They sat down at the kitchen table where she was working on sewing a new shirt for her father. Shiloh mindlessly played with a strand of fabric coming off of the shirt.

"El, you know I really did miss you more than anyone else."

"You didn't even write me."

"I love you Ellen Johnson and you know that."

She looked up from her work, and stared into those stormy grey eyes, eyes that have never lied to her. Shiloh rose from his chair, and walked over to her, still holding her gaze. She wanted to avert her eyes but couldn't. He grabbed the needle from her hand and placed it gently on the table, along with the shirt she was working on. He took her soft hands into his rough, calloused ones, and led her out of the kitchen and down the hall into a bedroom.

"I want to talk in here, with no chance of someone catching a glimpse of us through the window. You know how people talk."

Ellen walked to her bed, and sat down, keeping her back straight and flattening out a crease in her dress.

Shiloh closed the curtain that served as the door to the room, and walked over to Ellen, who patiently waited for the things he told her he's been so longing to say since their first night reunited.

Ellie
December 2nd, 2018

She couldn't breathe. The weight of his hand over her mouth was crushing her nose as well. She punched him anywhere she could, but the inability to breathe was taking its toll. She stared him right in the eyes, those grey eyes, which pierced her to the core in a different way now. She felt nothing. She could hear a car alarm going off outside of the dorm. There was rain starting to pitter patter on the window.

He pushed himself off of her stiff body, jumped off of the bed and put his clothes back on. She stared at the ceiling, letting his eyes continue penetrating her. He grabbed his phone which was charging next to hers, opened the door and left.

A crushing weight in her chest filled as she struggled not to claw every inch of her skin off. She put her pillow over her face and screamed. A skin crawling, blood curdling scream she never thought she'd ever make. She screamed until nothing more would come out. She heard her phone dinging and ignored it.

Someone entered through the door which was never fully closed.

"Why is there a giant red welt on your face? Ellie...what did you...what happened?"

Ellen
December 4th, 1865

She stared at her milky white body. The bruising on her arms and legs were easy to hide, and still made her wince to the touch. She looked at her reflection in her small mirror. She was disgusting. She deserved what happened.

Shiloh. Why? She did everything he wanted.

Reflected in the mirror is a gaunt, feeble minded monster. Who would ever want her now?

Some fresh air would do her well. She clothed herself, and wrapped a red shawl around her shoulders.

She could never hate him, she would forgive him. She rubbed her eyes and looked up at the sky. A storm was brewing both within and without.

Ellie
December 4th, 2018

"Why didn't you call the police as soon as he left? Why didn't you scream louder? Didn't you expect him to try something?"

The voices in her head taunted her. She slammed her fist down onto her desk, where she sat staring at her charging phone.

Nothing went in her and nothing came out except for vomit.

She hasn't been able to dial her number.

"Honey, please call us. We haven't heard from you in a couple days. Worried." Sent at 12:25 p.m.

Mom. The one who would do anything to make it all better. She'll be shattered.

Ellen
December 30th, 1865

Her dresses don't fit her properly; they're getting tight around the waist. Her parents and Shiloh's are meeting to discuss what's happened. Ellen sat on her bed, unable to look down or up.

"Ellen, darling, come out of your room please," her mother called from down the hall.

Ellen covered herself in her red shawl, and walked promptly into the dining room where the discussion was taking place. His head was bowed, avoiding her gaze as she entered. She sat between her parents. Her mother grabbed her hand under the table. Her father began to speak in a hushed, serious tone.

"We've come to a consensus based on the current circumstances of you, our children. Ellen is with child, as can now be seen as time moves along, and she cannot be seen in town. There is no choice as to what must be done."

Shiloh's father continued, staring at Shiloh as he spoke.

"You two must marry. There is enough gossip amongst the people in this town as to what's happened to the both of you and I've about had quite enough. Ellen will not be seen until the wedding, and we must take care not to make a spectacle of her figure. Keep her covered."

Marry Shiloh?

She glanced across the table. Look up. Do something. She wanted to see his eyes.

Nothing else said was heard by Ellen.

To marry Shiloh would be what everyone expected. This is a convenient end to an inconvenience whose fault was her own. Shiloh was all she ached for, and now he's hers. Why did it have to be this way?

Ellie

December 30th, 2018

The nightmares weren't going away. Nothing could make them stop.

He was gone. Silenced and sentenced to a dark hole awaiting trial. He would never see a sunrise or sunset. He had no one but the monsters hiding in the dark.

Her mother and father couldn't look at her, not in the same way.

Her family was front page news everywhere. She fought back with words and words worked.

"Do you see the way people look at me? They're always whispering and I fucking hate it. I don't need them to tread water around me." Sent at 10:45 am

"Ellie, get used to it. This is probably going to be what life is like for you until this all blows over." Sent at 10:52 am

It will blow over. Everything does.

Ellie pushed her phone aside. A small book lay at her side. The only writing on the cover was a name, Ellen. She found the book in a little mom and pop on her drive back from therapy a few days ago. She hasn't had the guts to open it until today.

On the first page lay the following words:

September 3rd, 1866

To you who might one day read this: Forgive me, for I cannot find it in my heart to forgive myself.

Ellen

September 3rd, 1866

The baby. It cooed, watching Ellen as she walks towards it, smiling. She placed a pillow over its face. It shuddered and tried to grasp her with its chubby fingers. Soon it made no more movement. She set the child up so it lay peacefully with its eyes open. It is finished. Her shriek brought Shiloh to the room. He fell to his knees on the floor.

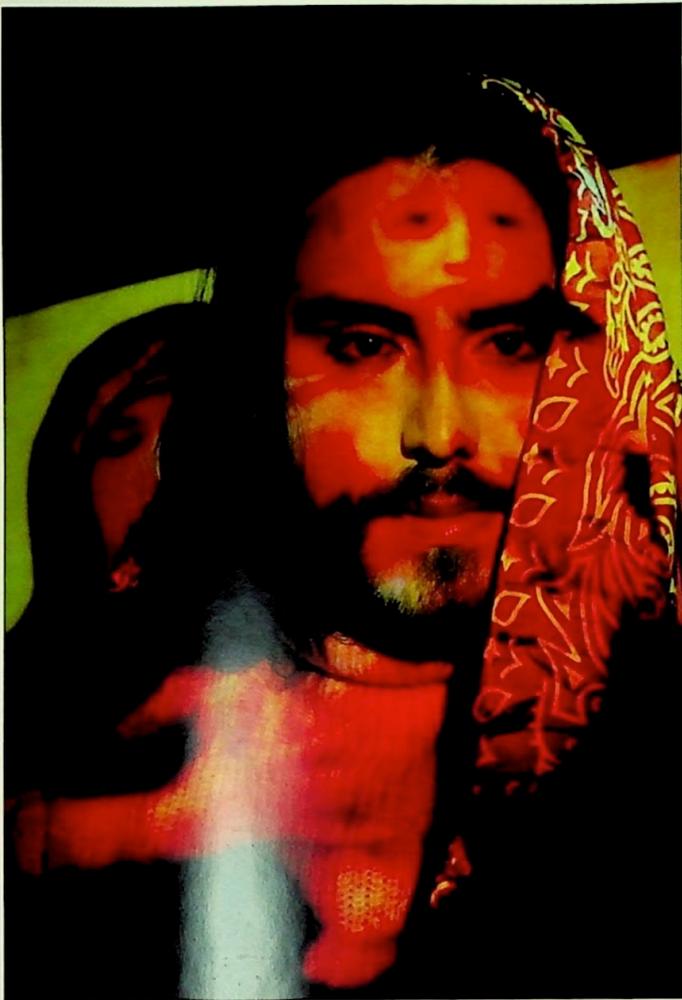
The babe was laid in the ground surrounded by silence.

Shiloh has a tear running down his cheek. He grabbed her hand and held onto it tightly, leaving her unsure if he would ever let go. The baby was born in sin. That's what the town said.

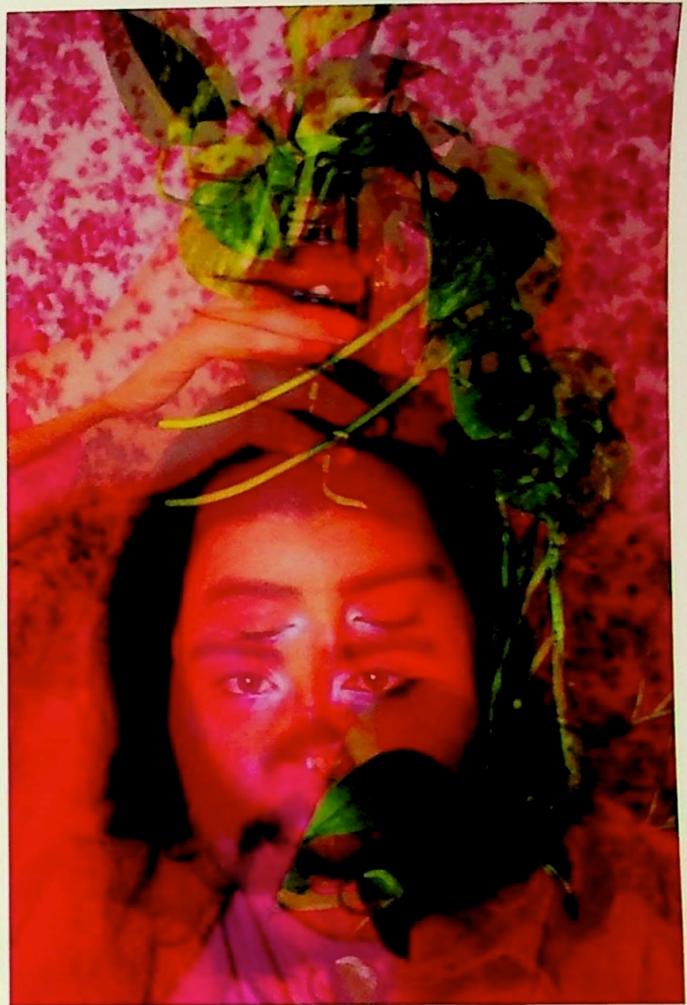
The baby didn't deserve to be brought into this world stained with sin.

Ellen, upon arriving home, took out her blank journal and began writing.

Heaven forgive her for she knew not what she did.



Somnus:Patienta ben



They Grew Overnight in 2015 ben

Friends Shane O'Connor

My wealth in life comes from those I know,
not the education I sought,
not the education I bought,
but the people who brought it to life.
The ones who pulled me from the riptide
so I can breathe and dive once more.

These gallant few
are the ones that have helped
see me through.
Those who have seen me shed
my whelping form and see
the sun blocked by my wings spread

love song of the sun & the sea Julia Ludovici

how can we ask so much of the sea,
who paints the sky her brilliant hue?
there is a reason that sadness feels like drowning.

are we all not silently pining for the spray of salt water
on our burning cheeks?
there is a reason our tears taste of the ocean.

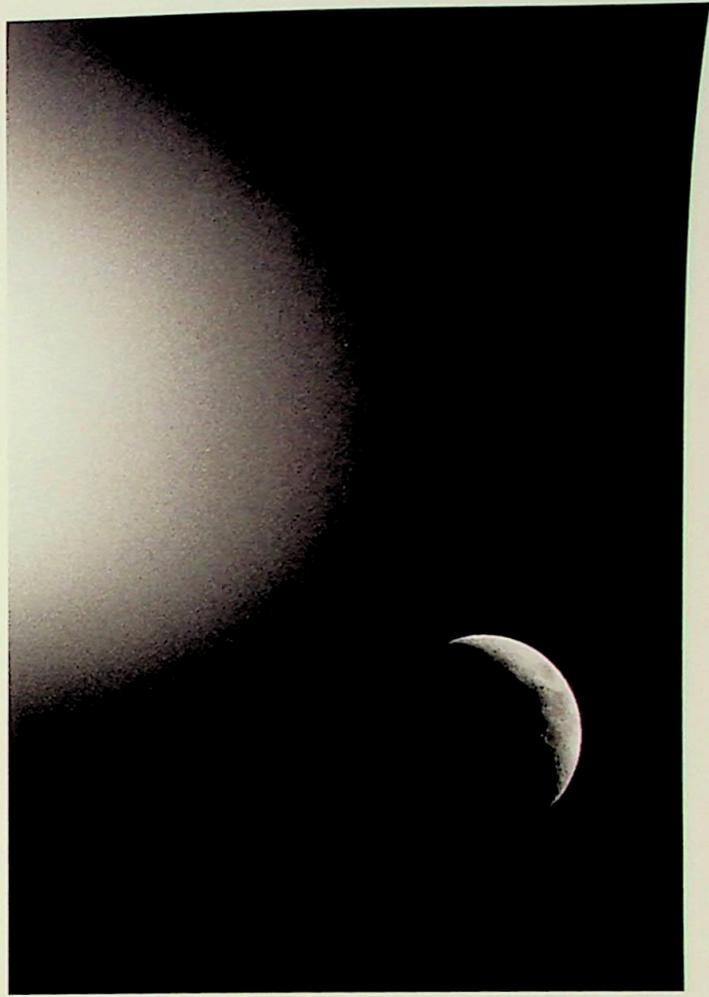
& when the golden sun departs from the sky
does she not leave us with that frigid midnight?
saying, "wish upon the star that streaks wildly in the darkness."

how can we ask so much of the sun,
who illuminates our fragile world in brilliant color?
there is a reason the sea bows her head in the moonlight.

Journey Megan Hammit Muir



Artemis 8 Brian Podgurski



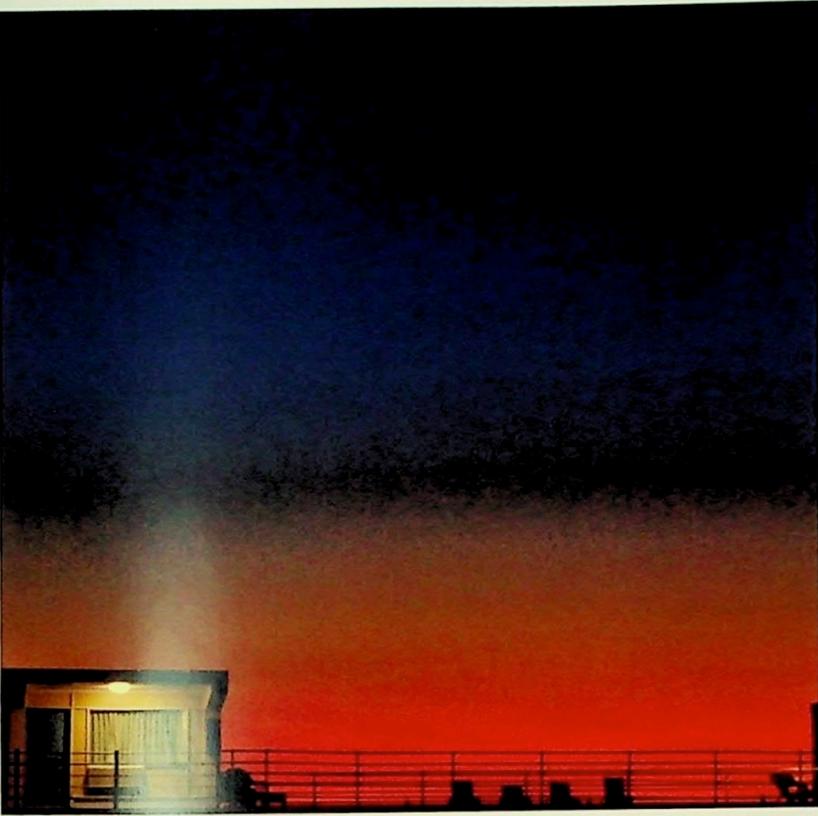
Artemis 41 Brian Podgurski

Midnight Icarus

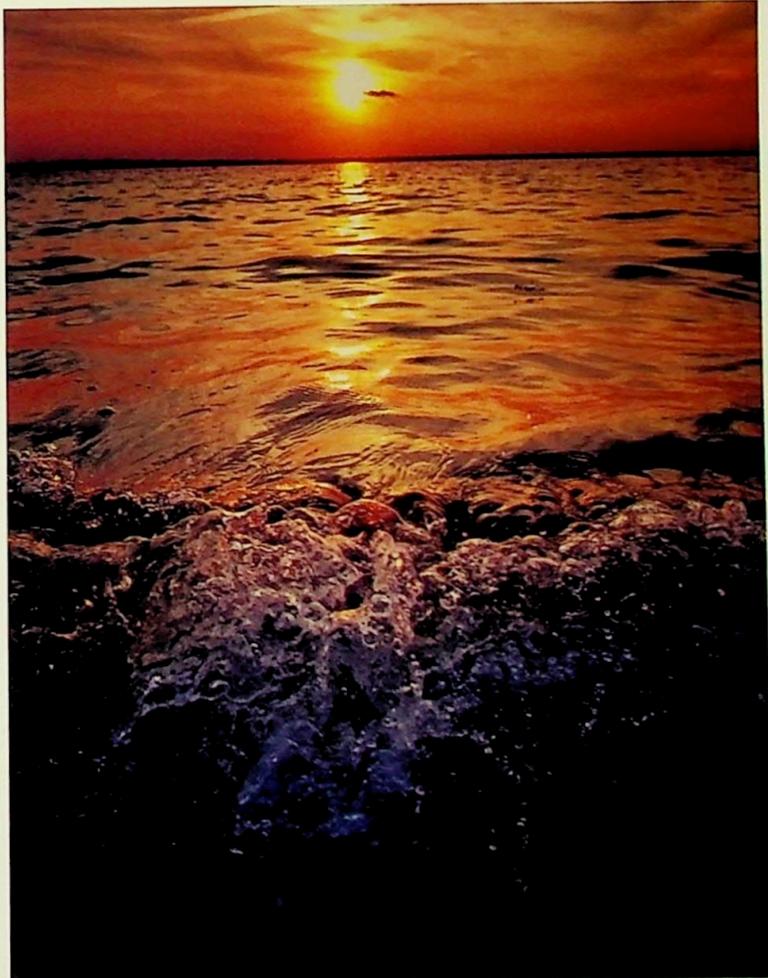
Once again
Midnight
I lay awake and wonder
About you
If only
I could forge blue eyes
Or repurpose my own
To let you see yourself the way you really are
Watch them as they salivate with tears
Craving to taste the colors
And ears that bloom
Opening to capture the sounds of early morning song birds
And ocean waves at sunset
How it makes my nose can play smell
As fresh as a spring petal dance
And ripe as an autumn leaf pile
How my hands are compelled
Callused as the trunk of the tallest maple
Yearning to reach out and sink
In the freshly fallen snow
And soak in the slowest flowing stream
Through the world
I have fallen for
Truly
In all boastful beauty
Bearing all it has to offer
At all times I offer
My senses to you
Here at Midnight
On this eve of summer
I surrender to the humidity and restlessness
Of you in June
You are
Too much to handle
Without getting a handle on you
The zealous insomniac
Sneaking out of bed and home
Indulging in the youthful radiance
Of nights like this
Before my body is too old
And I close my eyes on you
Forever

-Icarus

Oceanfront Megan Hammit Muir



Last Days of Summer Megan Hammit Muir



Music

COSMIC

by Ian O'Hara

The Businessman

by Nervous Noah

to listen, visit:
etherboundmag.com/music



No. 4 Nicholas Murray

How it Flies Brianna Perna

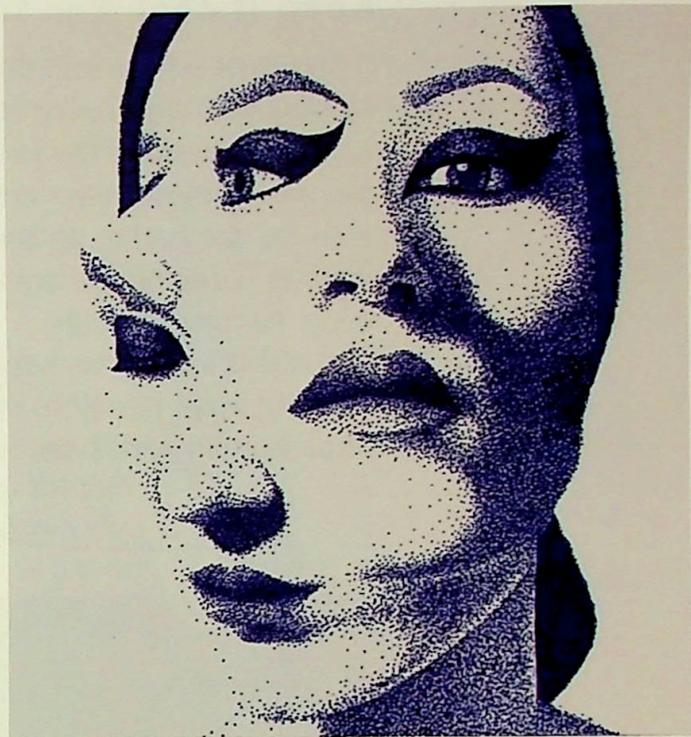
Attic dust defines us
the glassy sheen of fingerprints
on photographs, pulls me back to
cardboard capsules, lost time memorial
of driveway chalk and Gatorade.

Dad the first one whispers,
a little girl with Elmo knees and
cookie monster nose:
where do people go when they die?
can we get a hamster?
The man there mows the lawn and she
holds on to his elbows.

God says the second,
has it really been this long?
Ocean blue caps flying in the wind
like birds of paradise, coming down to
Earth meeting warm sand smiles.
One of the boys there grabs a friend:
high school's over; what's next?

The third one; oldest — faded orange around the
edges: *I love you so much* says the man,
you could change the weather.
The toddler in his arms gawks at him
wide eyed, frozen in laughter.
Sixteen years later, who would have guessed
there would be a funeral?

I put the box away. I'm done listening
to the voices. As acceptance drips
down my nose and blurs the picture
in my hands, I think to myself:
summer afternoons are fitting for rain.



Pen Sofia Ganey



Keep it cool Erin Sullivan

it's a spinning you can't quite repress – too old for cicuitry
spitting fire, a damning up of lighting in communion
wafers: remember the halos around those little discs?
too much jesus power crammed in to coins
well the fire had to go somewhere
spitting flametongue across your own
every sunday morning.
god didn't know the magic of fans, you guess, sucking ice
wicking away power to make some
thing human hands can touch.

Flabbergasted Nicholas Murray



Blending in Sean Kleczkowski

Her passage through the mid April daisies embellished my soul and my heart
Each step into the populous field seemed to enrich the ground beneath her bare toes
As she sat

It seemed that the flowers gravitated towards
An angel that had graced them with her presence
Golden soul
Untarnished

Hair flowing in unison with delicate wind
Her soft smile motivates the daisies to bloom
Expanding in masses
A sea of shimmering yellow flowers unseal to the sun
Petals open like arms to the only mother it knows
My eyes shooting from
Left

to

Right

Center again

I instantly find the perfect flower in the packed crowd
As I pass through the sea of beautiful spring daisies
My hand reaches down to take the one that caught my eye
A warm soft hand grasps mine
Smiling right back at me
My beautiful flower

Untitled 7 Lj





Blossoming Sabrina Rodriguez-Gervais



Sunlit Sabrina Rodriguez-Gervais

father daughter dance Julia Ludovici

I was sixteen years old when
my father shoved the proverbial bar of soap into my mouth,
though no foul words had left my lips.

I memorized the taste of his own discomfort.
he told me to choke on the suds
but I let them slide down my throat like a cool sip of water.

he told me to pick the opinions from between my teeth
but I hid his toothpick under my tongue as a weapon.

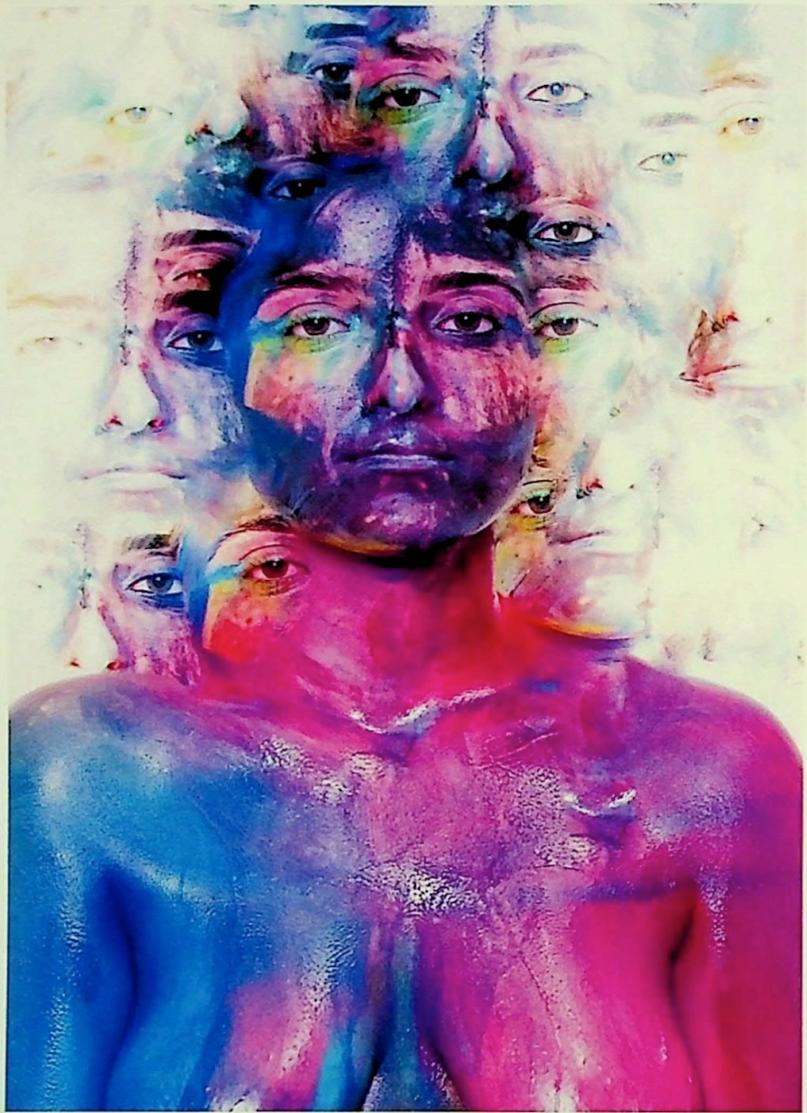
he told me a girl's lips are so much prettier cloaked in red lipstick
than dressed in debate
and my mind whirred with all the words I could have said.

he told me,
silly girl, you know nothing about politics.

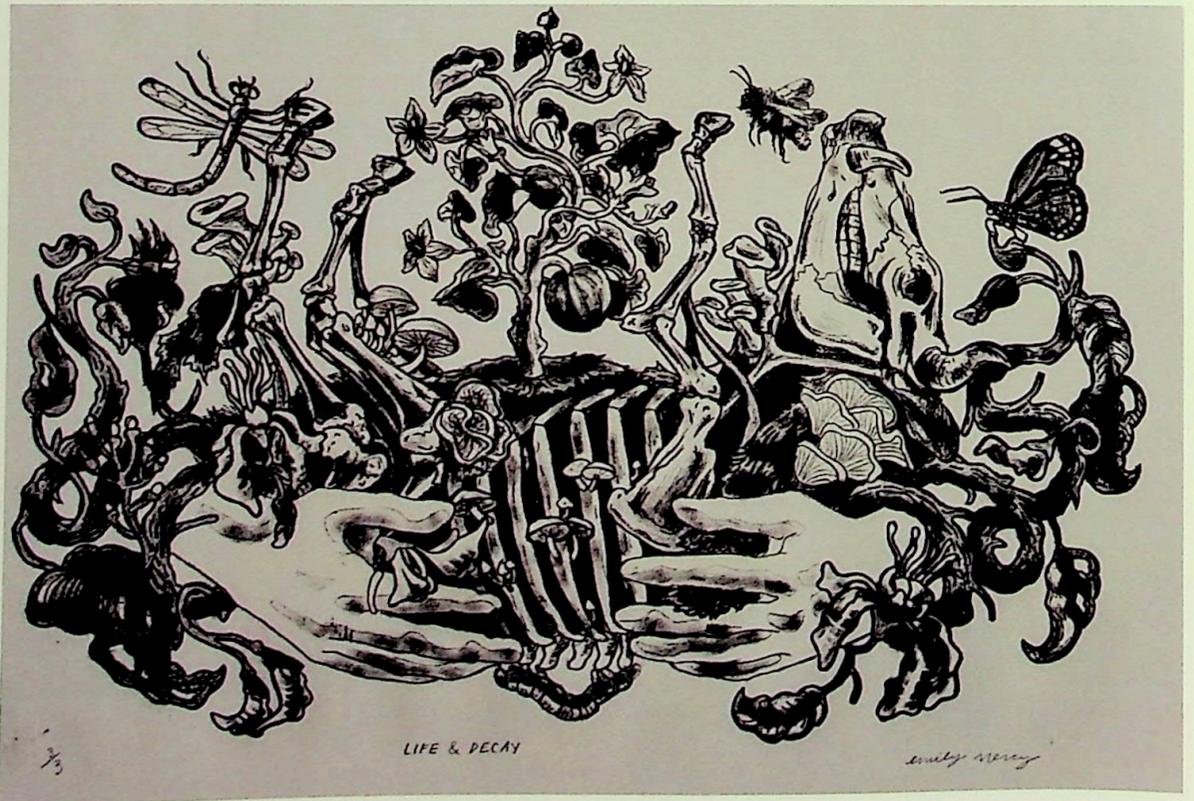


jinshi Emma Hidalgo

Untitled 2 Lj



Life and Decay Emily Mercy



A Thesis Shane O'Connor

I could write a thesis on the existential crisis
of the gleeful scary thought of sonder
that I grew so fond to sit and ponder
and let infect my mind like a virus.

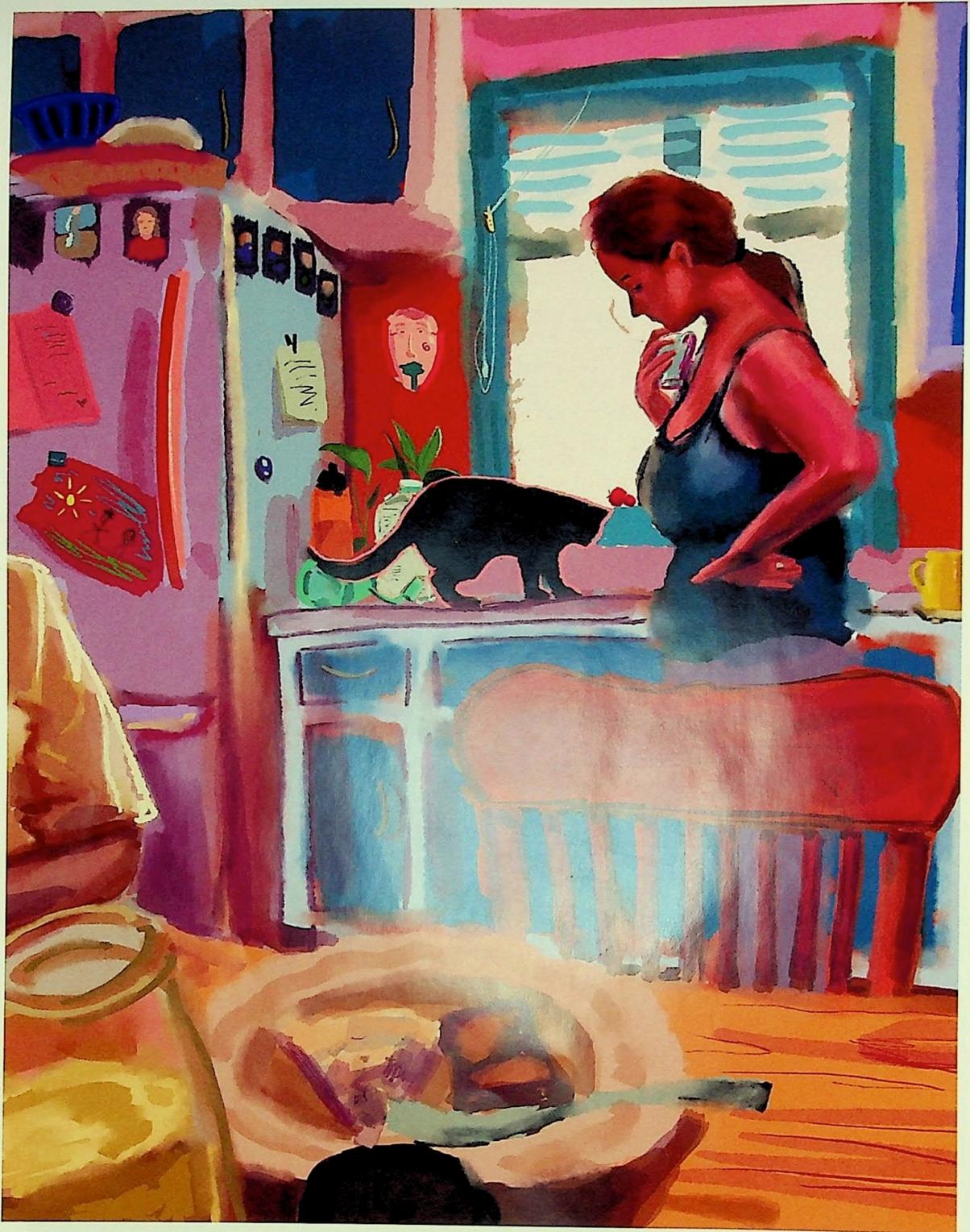
That caused me many sleepless nights
as I would sit up with this joyful fright.
A warming notion to know I'm not alone,
in my vivid life full of fruitful unknowns.

Each life a twisting passageway wrought with emotion.
Thoughts of joviality and sorrow, a microcosm of chaos.
The same depth in every person causing a commotion
of unsilenceable pathos.

It's a futile concept to get behind,
since in the end everything we do
is just everything we've done.
But here I sit, this crisis wracking my weary mind.

Perspective Megan Hammit Muir





Sarah and Lucky Joanne Liu

(e)

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