

genesis
literary & art magazine
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are honored to share this special 50th anniversary issue of *genesis*. IUPUI students have been contributing to and creating our magazine since 1972. In each issue, we are amazed by the talent and dedication displayed by our editors and contributors; as we reflect on 50 years of *genesis*, we are further moved by the work of those who came before us. Our issue contains art lovingly crafted by current IUPUI students as well as pieces selected from the past five decades. The contemporary pieces consider different topics and perspectives. They contemplate identity, comment on personal and social tensions, explore science fiction, and enkindle warmth.

We are truly grateful for our fellow editors, our faculty advisor Sarah Layden, and all artists brave enough to submit their work. Our time with the magazine has allowed us to build connections and community while doing what we love—talking about art. This is our last issue as managing editors, and we are proud to share it with you. We hope it reflects the experiences of current IUPUI students while acknowledging the history and legacy of past *genesis* issues. Thank you for picking up a copy.

Abby, Kelsey, & Zoe
Managing Editors

NOTE FROM THE ADVISOR

Creating a literary journal is a labor of love. Unpaid volunteers run the show, and while you can set your own hours, there are many, many hours of work involved to produce each issue. Worth it, say the student editors of *genesis*, who have kept this award-winning magazine in print for fifty uninterrupted years. We share our lives through the art we create, and the work in *genesis* tells a story about IUPUI.

The magazine has taken a variety of shapes (rectangle, oblong, square, back to rectangle) and materials (stapled cardstock, spiral-bound pages, perfect bound with spine). In 2018, the magazine preserved its complete archive of issues online, thanks to University Library's Open Access Journals (<https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/genesis/issue/archive>).

Amid all those changes, the constant is the labor and love of putting student words and art into the world. Editors passionately argue for their picks, spend late nights navigating new technologies, and handle the ups and downs of leadership, management, and collaboration. They distribute free issues that represent our creative student body. They learn from each other and share a common goal: making the best possible magazine each semester. A point of pride for IUPUI, the School of Liberal Arts, and the English Department: *genesis* is frequently honored by the Indiana Collegiate Press Association, most recently sharing 2021 Literary Magazine of the Year with Notre Dame.

In addition to reading and selecting work submitted by current students, the *genesis* staff scoured the archives and voted to select pieces from each decade. This tour of our publishing history gives a taste of the diverse, compelling, and unique writers and artists who have made up our campus for a half century. We hope that you enjoy reading this 50th anniversary issue as much as we enjoyed making it.

Sarah Layden
Faculty Advisor

HISTORY OF *genesis*

When we became editors, we entered the den of *genesis* – a small, windowless room on the 3rd floor of Cavanaugh Hall, with boxes of old issues stacked precariously along the walls. The room was a bit stuffy, very much cramped, but undoubtedly filled with history. Atop the bookshelf was the whiteboard calendar, unwiped since 2017. Underneath, the half-empty drawer with a masking tape label reading “Party Supplies.” And most importantly of all, the archives: a filing cabinet full to the brim with every issue published since the magazine printed its first issue in 1973. *genesis* was started in 1972 by the English Club - Sigma Tau Delta, and the Philosophy Club - Phi Sigma Tau. Its first editors were M. Anne Wilcox and Dinah Rockwell. For decades, the magazine has been publishing what students were interested in, starting with writing and then branching out into art. Early issues held book reviews and philosophical essays alongside memoirs and several of the genres we still publish today.

Before I (Abby) started as a managing editor, I was particularly interested in the history and began scouring the archives. As we prepared for the 50th anniversary, it became something I was excited to share with others. There was no documentation in the office of how *genesis* began and how it changed through the years, but a history was compiled through the written records of the magazine itself, left behind by the editors before us. On the yellowed pages, there were dedications to impactful professors, solicitations for paper submissions of artwork and writing, changes in logo from time to time, and information hidden in the different letters from the editors.

Each issue, new editors reconstructed the magazine. In the Fall 1976 issue, faculty, as well as students, were invited to submit. The first open call for art was in the spring of 1977 – the previous issue had included a single illustrator, with their drawings spread throughout the magazine. Starting in the 1980s, the magazine was published simply by the “*genesis* Editorial Team” instead of by editors from the two clubs. At some point, *genesis* switched from being capitalized to being all lowercase, a change that the current staff are very fond of. In 2004, there was an entirely new staff, who recruited a former contributor to help redesign the look of the magazine. They altered the shape of the books, the layout and fonts, and new submission guide-

lines. Through all the issues, the most consistent element of *genesis* is change.

Even in our time as editors, aspects of *genesis* shifted. In 2020, we learned to host editorial meetings online, trying to keep the lively discussions going while using the raise-hand function. Our staff produced an issue without fail every semester, seeking to publish the art reflecting times of great change, but also just wanting to make the next issue of *genesis* our own, as editors had done in the past. We argued over zoom about margin widths, the pros and cons of Baskerville and Marion, and built friendships over late night debates on art and author purpose and the place of literature in our lives.

We look into the archives and see the years of labour that go into making this a magazine. We see the ink on paper as a translation of the story occurring around it, the change in the larger culture and the personal taste that shapes each issue. In a few years, *this* issue of *genesis* will be a moment in time - history in someone else's eyes.

Cheers,
Managing Editors

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Kumain

Frances Dimaranan

Gouache and acrylic, 18"x24"

A Story About Pensions

Corlan McCollum

The nineteenth floor of the thirtieth building on tenth street was occupied by people in white hazmat suits, carefully decontaminating a spilled vial of uranium-235. They were prepared for this sort of thing; which is to say, it happened often. Often enough that between the eighteenth and nineteenth floors of the building, enough radioactive and acidic spillage had eaten through and the floor was much thinner than it had been originally.

There'd been a small uproar about the danger that presented some time ago, but the uproarers had since retired on good government pensions, and no longer cared.

So the radioactive spillage on the nineteenth floor of the thirtieth building on tenth street might have, quite possibly, just maybe, leaked through a tiny bit.

The eighteenth floor was occupied solely by accountants. A quarter million accountants worked there, jam-packed into cubicles that warped the fabric of reality in order to cut costs. That's what the accountants did; cut costs, sometimes by also cutting conventional physics. They were very good at their jobs, despite their radiation poisoning.

This was a significant mystery for some time—they did not know about the lab above them, and the Geiger counter the accountants bought was silent everywhere but the water cooler, which nobody drank from anyways. Eventually, there was an uproar about it, because the accountants' insurance didn't cover radiation poisoning, and there was a big switch to private providers, and finally, upper management began to take notice.

Upper management occupied the twenty-second floor of the sixteenth building on ninth street. All the other buildings in the city were full of accountants and atomic labs. Their insurance provider gave them a kickback from having everybody sign up for their plans, and had very suddenly lost a significant profit. Upper management responded by buying another Geiger counter for the accountants and then firing them all when they said they already had one (to recoup their losses after buying the Geiger counter).

Upper upper management noticed the firing of a quarter million accountants. Upper upper management occupied the gazillionth floor of the only building on first street, three cities away. Upper upper management wrote very neatly in a file about upper management that they had demonstrated very diligent fiscal responsibility and sufficiently handled the accountants, and recommended them for promotion.

Upper upper upper management had just retired, so upper upper man-

agement put the file on the unoccupied desk in the corner office on the gazilionth and first floor. By the time the elevator arrived with the new upper upper upper manager, he was old enough to retire and did so without even stepping out of the lift. Then he died and drew pension in hell, and his pensioned healthcare didn't cover radiation poisoning.

Safety Brief

Siren Hand

One wrong move: that curb becomes my headstone.
I saw it in American History X and didn't know
that cruelty could happen in real life
until the news showed it. The cop pushed
the old man backwards, his head cracked back against the brick.
The blood poured from his ear and pooled baptismal,

a halo around the whole puddle

Be(/ a)ware: this time
stay on the sidewalks.

The woman driving the van in Monument Circle
said she feared for her life when she stepped on the gas.
He punched out her back window,
sliced his arm on the shards as she swerved past him.

When you think the march is over, leave immediately.

In Bloomington, another woman tore through us
after driving two hours, fuming
from the protest announcement in the papers.
Neither of them used their horns.

Do not drink water offered to you
by someone you don't know.
The video showed how people can poison it all
without breaking the tamper seal.

Do not march through the streets here, this time.
Do not block oncoming traffic with your vehicles:
they will press charges when you draw on their revving engines.

Link arms like in Brazil. Protect the organizers.
Don't be shaken by the Fourth of July fireworks
outside the ICE Facility—
double-barrel pressed into the protestor chest

waiting for first flinch.

Make sure protestors with wheelchairs and walkers
are not being harassed or targeted;
The march pace reaches fever pitch and the bullhorn,
chanting pulls away from 2.5 miles an hour.
Tear to the highway back through Nazi-salute lined sidewalks.

Watch for their horses, switch the route up to confront head on:
otherwise they will kettle.

The tear gas is expired
could concentrate here,
explode like a gender reveal bomb,
Congrats! It's expired! It's inhumane!
all wildfires starting with inspired spark.

The old man's skull is cradled
firmly by cracks of the sidewalk,
concrete angel cooing:
*Shhh, shh. Because of this,
perhaps this year things will change.*

A Bone to Pick

Tara Ventura

The boys played games in the back of the butcher shop. Blackjack, poker, it didn't matter. They all ended the same, with their own urbanized version of Russian roulette. I was fresh out of the army then, a field medic of all things. I was 95 pounds and in basic training a week after my high school graduation. Got my degree. Did a tour in Desert Storm. Cut into the wounded with a cigarette hanging out of my mouth. When that couldn't do it for me anymore, I started counting during surgery. I remember this one guy, Bishop from Fayetteville, got carried in with his left arm turned inside out but the bone, by the grace of God if you ask him, still intact. I counted all the way to 16,752 on that one. I always took the first two beats to breathe and cut into the skin on three. I never got used to the feeling of my knife slicing into their flesh. Didn't matter after Khafji, anyway. I took a bad fall, messed up my hip, and that was it.

I sat at home with my dad through the spring. Drank beer. Watched golf on TV. He didn't ask me for war stories and I didn't offer any up. I was twenty-five years old and burnt. Hobbled around the house. Sucked on snack cakes and Aunt Chrissy's cobbler until one May day when I pinched at my waist and found a new layer of fat.

"What are you doing?" My dad asked when he found me lying face-down, cursing at the floor.

"Planks," I muttered through my teeth.

"Jen," my dad huffed. "This ain't doing nothing." I collapsed.

"It was doing something!" I protested, trying to find comfort in pulling my knees to my chest. I tugged on my shins, wanting so badly to reign them in. My hip locked, blocking its path. One leg fell lopsided on the floor, the other touched my chest. The walls of my room were still the same Tiffany blue that my dad had painted them when we first moved to Staten Island twelve years ago. He said New York was a city of islands so I asked for the room downstairs, my Tropic of Cancer. A gallon bucket of paint had sat on the floor since my return, collecting dust, reminding me of the reality of what Staten Island actually was; slate grey, minus the sparkle. There it all sat in the corner, so unbothered by itself. A gallon of grey paint. Me and trips to the V.A. and gas station down the street and all of Staten Island for that matter sealed inside of it.

"My buddy, Louis, you remember Louis, don't ya'?" I shook my head no. "Oh, come on, Uncle Louis? With the, the uh, the red leather jacket he always had on and that son of his, Nico?"

"Dad," I spoke, half asking him to stop this train before it got to wherever it was going.

“He owns the deli on Adele?” My dad tried one last time. I knew the one. “Well anyways, baby, he needs a cashier. Said the job’s yours if you want it.”

“I don’t know if-” I retorted.

“He’s got a stool all ready for ya’. No standing required.” A man conscious of the hip.

“Okay, sure.” I agreed and became all the worse off for it.

When I walked in the backdoor of the deli at 4 a.m., I sneezed. It was cold and reeked of carcass. Peppercorn littered the countertops. No standing became two hours of nothing but standing real quick when Nico handed me a spray bottle of bleach and rag and told me they opened at six.

So I cleaned. I scrubbed and washed and turned my back when I heard Nico and his five friends shouting slurs at one another while gathered around a folding white table. They were all drunk off their asses, throwing Jokers to the stain-splattered floor. They hadn’t just started either, at 4 a.m. they were deep into two bottles of vodka.

“Fuck you and fuck your mother,” I heard one of them yell, slamming his hand down. “It’s not going to be me tonight, boys.” It felt like the army again. The boys looking for a rise and me refusing to give it. I mopped with more vigor. Pretended a sergeant was looking over my shoulder. I scrubbed grease off the walls that looked older than me. The floors were cream-colored after but not before. Fifteen minutes from open and my stool. That’s when I heard them flip the meat grinder on.

“You don’t bet with money when you work at a deli and nobody shoots a gun in New York without somebody else around to hear it,” Nico told me when he noticed me peeking. Like that explained it.

“It’s now or never, Michael,” Nico warned.

“Lose your hand and you might lose another,” one boy teased, nudging Michael closer to the machine. Michael closed his eyes, bit his lip, and screamed, “now!” right before jamming his hand in the meat grinder. Nico pulled the plug and Michael’s hand returned in one piece.

“Maybe next time, Mikey,” another boy joked. I leapt, the medic in me wanting to inspect the hand that had somehow escaped the claws of death unharmed.

“Jenny, you tryna’ be our virgin sacrifice or something?” Nico asked and the boys laughed, and I thought about it. That rush-hour savior that I used to be really thought about it, and when the rational, ‘doing planks in my bedroom alone is enough thrill for me’ part of me jumped out and tried to resist, I gave her and the boys and the rest of Staten Island the finger.

Show off. Girl with a grudge. A bone to pick. Nothing but carcasses came through the back door of the deli. The belly of a pig swung by my face and I dared it to spill its guts.

“Alright, Jenny,” they whooped and hollered from behind. Nico stood with plug in hand, ready to yank, the meat grinder rumbled on.

“One, two,” and I thrust my hand forward. A chorus of "holy cows" could be heard from behind me but I was the cold cut. I was the mangled meat, wounded soldier, wrist-deep in a mess of my own making.

“Three,” and I cut myself free with a butcher’s knife as the boys watched, mouths wide. I stood up tall and saw the cream floor beneath me turn red, heard someone say “lock the door.” I’ve cut to the bone before. It was nothing new, not really. I performed my own autopsy and lived to tell. Cause of death: who cares, ask the V.A.

I came home from the hospital a week later, all bandaged up and fixed by doctors who found a life in medicine more stable than I ever could. My dad didn’t ask me why I did it, just if it hurt and by how much.

My first night home, I woke up sweating but silent, like after so many nights in the desert I had forgotten how to scream. It was summer in New York, hot and stuffy. More uncomfortable, harder to ignore than the desert’s dried-lips kiss.

'I had lost my hand without ever even playing the game,' I thought to myself. My room was too small. Too optimistic. Opening the windows just meant letting this city win. Again, I picked up a knife, felt its familiar blade. Glorified it, lied to it, hated it. Used it. Slashed open that can of grey paint. Tore down my posters of the Everglades and coral reefs that I would never see. Took my one good hand and painted all through the night. Became the begging city bird Staten Island always knew me to be, hungry for a taste of something carnivorous.



Bladed Mirror

Kaiti Shannon

Photography, 4"x6"

Midwestern Gothic Road Trip

Sage Justice

Frost clings to the corn fields
that line roads with no painted lines,

no names, just numbers like prisoner
9860 trudging through solemn dirt.

A billboard warning HELL IS REAL stands
outside the house with its roof sunken

like a boulder dropped on the family
that called it home. It's antler shedding season—

ribbons of red flesh hang from a buck's head
as it darts from fields to quaking aspens

whose eyes haunt the cloven imprints left in the earth.
HELL is indeed REAL in Indiana, its devils crossing

the corn fields late at night when the January winds
tousle the tresses of the aspens and its angels' bones

are buried beneath the fallen leaves, golden and raw,
dipped in honey and blood.



Waffle House Wednesday

Frances Dimaranan

Digital



Shepard's Causeway

Tamara Watkins

Sharpie, black and white gel pen, acrylic, and watercolor, 12"x16"



Stargazing

Teresa Copenhaver

Ink drawing on multimedia paper, 12"x9"

Moon Mother

Kat Scott

Her thumb gouges deep as the night
unfolds. Lifting
to pour sticky jam in divots,
tart and overwhelming.

As she looms
heavy and round,
pregnant with disappointment.

With a face, so faithfully dusted
concealing acne craters,
the voice of mother
through still air

reminds you to floss.
Then, from rocky silence,
regards your new lover,
taking notes.

So then,
what is the name your pillow calls?
Perhaps your father's

already half-full
the moniker, a mould.
Asking, is the door unlocked
do the birds have covers?

Until a horizon, pink with sleep
is duly impressed
with her pale pale thumbprint.
She accedes

and
we arrive.

Black Indeed

Sidnea Hearn

*Some say the blacker the berry,
the sweeter the juice
I say the darker the flesh,
then the deeper the roots.*

- Excerpt from Tupac Shakur, "Keep Ya Head Up" 1993

Braids, locks, passion twists, weaves
falling down the back of the black woman
unashamed her flesh is darker than most.
Afros defying gravity – untamed.
Gold chains glitter around the necks of
Black Kings and Queens.
Gold jewelry strangling the fingers, wrists, and ankles.
The mouth opens revealing a golden smile.

Braids, locks, waves, durags
worn on the head of the strong, Black man
bloodied by brutality,
the young black man awaiting an athletic
scholarship to escape his hood.

Black Kings and Queens.
Melanated Kings and Queens.

Bullets love to kiss our skin.
Hateful words love to caress our ears.
Words of retaliation claw at the flesh of our throats.

We are not violent,

We are passionate.

We are not ghetto,

We are ourselves.

We are not unprofessional,

We are educated.

We are *OUR* culture.

Walking Down an Evening Beach

David Casey

[1]

The tide draws in now, leaving
Lonely bolls of seafoam skating along the sand,
So packed and smooth in the day's late hours.

I think about the sand.

About how each step breaks new grains.
How, no matter how many ancient, creeping things
Have slithered out of these waters,
No matter how many ships
Have straddled this shore,

I am the first, and the last,
To walk these particular sands.

I think about how we used to build castles with it.
About how different things are now, and how complicated.

How we lay roads,
Build homes and office buildings with it.
Add water for cement. For glass, apply heat.

Demolish it.
Drop bombs on it.
Send it up in a cloud of smoke.
Dust to dust.

I think about a phrase from a source I cannot place:
"We are agents of entropy."

I think about the future.
About finding what we're looking for—
She, out there in the water, and I.

And I think about an old family story:

How the very first husband of my mother's mother's mother
Left a note by her bedside,
And walked into the sea.

[2]

Then I think about the sands of a different time.

About that spring break, way back,
Hatching sea turtles in Mexico.
About laughter and tequila at night,
Bloodshot eyes and metallic breath,
Instant coffee from a tin pot.
About how sea turtles lay eggs in the sands of their birth,
So we couldn't carry the hatchlings to the water,
Couldn't save them from the crabs lurking, buried,
Or the birds circling darkly there, above.
How nature doesn't care about irony.

I think about the rock beaches of Rhode Island,
Where we moved when I was in high school.
How we sat at Goddard Park, looking out over the bay,
Sipping from crumpled water bottles half-full of cheap vodka.

About how Nick would recite Kerouac there,
And we started calling it *God's Park*,
Like Sal Paradise would do.
How we laughed as he played up
The pipe-smoking beatnik, wagging his finger,
Strumming it on each syllable as he read.
How, when he got to the last line,
He leaned his elbows on lifted knee
And lavishly drew out that final phrase:
“*I think of Dean Mo-ri-ar-TEEF!*”

How the hairs on my neck stood at rapt attention.

I think about how I wore long sleeves in those summers,
Because my arms felt too skinny.
How I wish I was that skinny,
Now that things are different.

[3]

We walk up from the water's edge
And see children combing the sand for shells,
While their parents watch the orange sun
Droop over the horizon.

And I look over, and she's smiling.
And I smile because she's smiling.

And I think about how simple my world has been.
How it once consisted of frogs and dinosaurs
And the snare drum I got when I was nine.

How I could sit in a box on the floor of my bedroom,
Pretending that the ceiling fan could sweep me up into the clouds.
How I long for my own children,
That I might glimpse that so-small world anew.

[4]

Sitting far above the shoreline now,
I grab a fistful of sand and let it trickle upon my feet.

*There are more stars in the universe
Than grains of sand on every beach in the world.*

This thought astounds, almost
Angers me in its incomprehensibility.

Then I bury my foot, then my hand, then my forearm.
I imagine pulling my limbs back out,
Only to see that they have dissolved away—
That they have become sand.

I imagine what it would be like
Were the rest of my body so atomically absorbed:
The carbon and oxygen and phosphorus in my cells
Vibrating into the substrate around me, bit by bit,
Until it reaches my skull and the neurons within it,
Still sparkling with thought and image and memory;

Until the border between myself and the world disintegrates,
And the tide sweeps us back into the sea.

*Does the sand wonder where the time has gone?
Do the mollusks?*

Perhaps that's why old people come here, they say: to die.
That they may be washed away,
Folded back, seamlessly,
Into the universe.

The Conductor's Funeral

Aiden Heavilin

TIME IS SPINNING AWAY FROM the human like fraying thread but the human does not reach out an aged hand to grasp and struggle as clockwork unspools, delicately fluttering, inch after spiraling inch. Perhaps it helps that this human is not alone, or perhaps this human is wiser and older, though the word *older* is losing its meaning, and the human is becoming aware that its soul is as young as the laughing infants and as ancient as Gravity himself.

This human dreams itself as a woman. And so she is a woman. And she is aware of another person beside her as she falls toward the light, offering her relief across leagues of unimaginable distance, comforting her against a loss that seems too much to bear, and they are wrapping one another into a glowing pulsar of love and acknowledgement, acceptance of the tides of absurd unknowing that surround them.

This is why she is not afraid, even as she opens their eyes tentatively, barely breathing, and inhales the cold wind of the twilight otherworld.

The tide is coming in.

Marla stands in the lapping waters and giggles. The water musters enough courage to surge against her knees then retreats shyly into the endless beyond, and she feels the way the sand is pulled away beneath her feet in little eddies and vortices.

She breathes the cold ocean air, but as she exhales she is aware that this vision is forbidden to her, and that it will be forgotten as soon as she has been pulled into the clutches of the story that awaits her somewhere behind in the all the tangled streets of a little village quieter yet more tumultuous than the dying city where Mr. Bjorvan is casting his gaze across leagues of billowing smoke. This will all be gone when she opens her eyes, so in this inhale of grace, she casts her eyes far across the sea, across pitching miles of sparkling water where a solitary wandering albatross stretches its wide wings, gliding so close to the surface that she cannot distinguish it from the hazy mirages and silvery highlights on the water. The ocean courses through colors, pale greens and full blues interlocking in an amorphous jigsaw puzzle. The wash and spray of the water whispers a lullaby. She can smell the salt bleached rocks strung with kelp. The wind blows her hair into her eyes and the vision is lost.

She breathes out. Centuries pass.

The clouds and fog hang so heavy here that she cannot see more than a few feet in either direction. Men and women are gazing despondently at their shoes or peering through portholes as if now is the moment that the vaporous curtains shall be drawn away to permit them to see the landscape beyond.

The boiler roars like a loud, endless sigh. Above them, the cords anchoring the basket to the balloon creak tautly.

“Where are we going?” asks Marla brightly, crying out with delight as she realizes they are flying, *flying*, no doubt through some unimaginable chamber so large that they might soar for hours before they reach the other side.

“Keep your voice down,” says a woman grimly.

“Oh,” whispers Marla. “Are we escaping or something? Is it dangerous?”

An old man with silver spectacles shakes his head. “It’s a tragedy how quickly the young neglect the Principles. When I was a lad, me and my friends were the first to the orchestra hall and the last to leave.”

“I apologize,” says Marla, smiling patiently. “I just got here. It’s all a bit hazy at the moment, but if I remember correctly...”

“Marla...” says a young girl laughing. “What do you mean?”

“What do I mean what?”

“What do you mean you just got here?”

A village huddled against the wolves and things worse than wolves that they know patrol these lawless wastelands on either side. Barren stonework blasted and sculpted by the acid rain. Great streaming trails of smoke at each corner of the horizon like wispy watchtowers. Jagged clouds like spidery writing on a black ceiling so far above them that Marla, as she staggers into the town square, dizzy and alone, cannot even make a guess as to the size of the room. This must be the biggest chamber in the entire world, she thinks to herself.

“Only a few books remain,” says the old man with silver spectacles, and Marla shakes her head sadly.

“I’m sorry,” she says.

“Don’t apologize for wrongs you had no hand in committing,” says the man, waving his hand. “Bad habit.”

“Oh, but I did commit *that* wrong,” she says, averting her eyes.

The man squints at her without understanding, and she does not speak of the Festival of the Desecrators, and the mountain of sacred texts and Classics, and the lottery to determine which young desecrator, freshly armed with passion from the training camps, would be allowed the honor of setting the first match against the yellowed paper and then, laughing, retreat from the consuming flames and dance with his brothers and sisters to the music of the crackling bonfire of knowledge.

But there’s no more time for guilt, the man told her long ago, when they were standing at the edge of the village and peering into the mouth of the black canyons on either side and watching vague shadows on the distant hills. You were born into a world of lies extricated from the memory of truth, carved into every paragraph of every book of ritual. So is everyone.

“I cannot help the stab of fear when I find myself using an adjective,” she

says miserably, one night when the rest of the passengers are asleep, and the pilot is too hypnotized by the monotony of his task to pay attention. "I try to say that it is a *grand* view and I feel a stab of guilt."

"That's to be expected, young one," he says kindly. "You must learn a new way of understanding the world."

Everything is infinitely interesting, if you pay close enough attention. Or at least, that's what Marla feels, reading the few surviving dictionaries and learning a new vocabulary to process the world, finding that in the acquisition of these words, the objects themselves are subtly changed. She listens to the soft guitar music of a lonesome pilgrim and understands that the textures of the music are *ominous* and *eerie*, that his voice is *gravely* and *matured*. Even in the glimpses she catches in the mirror, waking up in the early morning to get breakfast in the common area with the rest of the village, working the tangles out of her hair, she begins to describe herself, and in the describing, change herself. Her hair is *golden* and *shiny*. Her eyes are *sympathetic*. She is *curious* and *excitable*.

Not much excitability around these parts, the old man with the silver spectacles tells her. Excitement is drawn from the new, and this is a land of struggling remembrance. There is nothing new in a world of sulfur and spreading apocalypse, of oncoming twilight that pursues her at every turn through the firelit village. Remnants of a city that stood for so long that the world had accepted it as a natural outgrowth of the stone. Charred skeletons of buildings surround her dreams, dwarfing her even in their destruction, metal beams like broken bones dangling from bodies that bleed flames into the sky and find no hope of rebuilding. A perpetual cycle of violence, and a man sitting in the heaps of destruction, looking out at her as she waits in the village, standing in the freezing cold.

The old man with silver spectacles tells her his name but she cannot remember it. It's enough to know he is the Conductor, a title from which he unsuccessfully pleads innocent like a desperate convict who, finding the verdict unfavorable, shoulders the burden of his oncoming fate with reserved dignity, raising his chin against his accusers as if to say, "Enough then. I submit."

He submits as if frustrated to his responsibility but Marla secretly suspects that he finds some sense of fulfillment. After all, when librarian's son suggested that he might try his hand with the baton someday, the Conductor's face, frozen in a static smile, seemed to project such condescension that Marla could not help but remember how her own father had smiled at her when she pulled at the pages of a book with clumsy hands, succeeding only in tearing dozens of little strips of paper but sparkling with joy in the attempt. She threw the shreds in the air like confetti and looked up, watching them drift lazily to the ground like paper snow.

The orchestra meets every week, which means nothing here. When she arrives at the hall, day or night, rain or heavy rain, they are playing, and the old man with silver spectacles is paging through the last book of symphonies and pausing

every few measures to deliver some line of sharp criticism to the assembled players.

“This is all we have,” he says to her on board the hot air balloon. “This is all we have ever had. This first, last, and only symphony. It is our mission to perfect it, and beyond perfection, to transform it. I will not rest until we have fulfilled its purpose.”

Marla’s confusion abates as she spends weeks in the empty auditorium seats, watching as the Conductor raises his baton and announces, “second movement, third measure, brass only please!” then counts an empty measure, listening to the trumpets and trombones narrate their contrapuntal melody strangely exposed and cold, lonely without their brethren. He closes his eyes and picks out every individual timbre, listens to every phrase and crescendo, then he shakes his head.

“Wrong, wrong, wrong!” he cries. “Where is the humanity? Where is the grace? I hear you play these notes as if you are solving a math problem. A plus B plus D... There is a story in that phrase, and you are neglecting it entirely, and I can hear it! Again, again!”

But if you haven’t achieved it, Mr. Conductor, Mr. Old Man with Silver Spectacles, then you won’t achieve it, will you, taking your position as the leader of the multifarious rituals and stomping his foot in anger at the dozens of mistakes he perceives yet lacks the energy to criticize.

So we journey onwards. Are we dispelling the clouds or merely becoming one of them, bodies dissolving in a southern wind? Marla stands at the edge of the basket and gazes into the pale abyss and, although she dimly senses the staggering altitude, she cannot remember any world that did not consist of clouds.

The Conductor taps his baton upon the stand and says, “Movement one, measure one. Play the whole thing through,” and then he lets his baton chase invisible vertexes, dictating strange constellations of rhythm and desired expression, as his left hand motions “come hither” as if coaxing from its cave some mighty dormant dragon that, when it stretches scaly wings and crushes the mountains between its talons, will so transcend this little village that its inhabitants shall return shocked into a familiar yet slightly changed world where all the daily tasks of gardening and cleaning seem like privileges granted a lonely prisoner. He says it is possible. He says it is coming and that no one can stop it but that we can make it come quicker if we try our hardest. Perhaps, he imagines in his deepest despair, he will never achieve the perfect performance, but there will at least be a perfect *measure*, a sudden alignment of hearts, the entire orchestra looking up in astonishment and realizing that they are no longer reading music, they are merely playing what is *right*, and that what is right happens to conform perfectly with the master score. It’ll happen one of these days, just you wait, if that word means anything.

Marla asks where they are going, and someone says they are seeking the Composer, an annual pilgrimage to the great temple in the mountains where he

will sit waiting, endlessly compassionate and endlessly brilliant, narrating the music of the world with his quill pen as heartbreaking melodies pour from him instinctually like babble from the mouth of a madman.

And just beyond this next bank of impenetrable clouds he will sit at the edge of a cliff looking down into a broad valley of crystal waterfalls and he will look up at the hot air balloon and say, "Welcome, my musicians!" but they emerge from the clouds again and again and there is no Composer, there is no music to echo in the deep mountains, and they are once more making their return journey to the little village where the Conductor will disembark and scream, "You failed me! You failed all of us! You failed the music!" at no one in particular, and the musicians hang their heads in shame.

They try again.

He raises his baton and says, "Fourth movement, twenty seventh measure," then begins conducting before any of the musicians can flip to the proper position. False starts and dissonant tones. The Conductor says, "You should know this by heart! No! Put down your music! Play with your soul! You should know this all!"

But they don't know it. The violinists peer sadly at the Conductor and look to their fellow musicians for help, but it would appear, regardless of the years they have spent rehearsing, that no one has memorized the music. The Conductor whirls his baton but the orchestra sits baffled and silent until tears burst from behind his silver spectacles and he hurries off stage. When he returns the following day, his words are grimly serious.

"I sustained my people in the wastelands," he says in a whisper amplified by the acoustics of the concert hall like a gentle cymbal solo. "I brought my people out of the Desert of Nothingness and led them to a land of life and water. It hasn't been perfect. I admit that. But we have survived. And it is time to move beyond survival and achieve that pinnacle of sophistication that only humans are capable of achieving. This..." he taps the Book of the Symphony, "is the last recorded music in the world. And until we have read from that book and understood its meaning we shall be just as lost as we were when we floated aimlessly through the void. We must understand the Composer completely, we must replicate without error the music he imagined and in doing so, resurrect him in all our minds. Only when we have done that might we say we have achieved our rest in this cruel and unforgiving world. Only then might we feel his soul running through our own and glimpse the divine order."

Marla, having listened to the orchestra rehearse for century after dizzying century, returns to her own home one day having bartered away a few memories for a stack of paper and a pen. She doesn't know how to write music, but there is music in her mind, and, opening her eyes as if from a murky sleep, she begins to scribble on the paper.

It begins with a drum roll, light hammers tapping away on the timpani,

and then the horns enter in a bright, joyous fanfare, before quieting down into twinkling filigree accompaniment, accenting a pompous melody carried primarily by the strings.

Years later, when the Conductor discovers Marla's music, he furrows his brow in concern.

"My child," he says without anger. "You are getting ahead of yourself. Only when we have fully understood the music of the past might we forge ahead into the music of the future. Oh, believe me, I have thought of composing many times myself, but that is not my role here. First we must come to know the true Composer."

"But there is a melody in my mind," she says. "And I want to write it down."

"There are melodies in all of our minds," he says sadly. "But we must learn to recognize their ephemeral nature. We must learn humility. We must remember that the composers of the past drew upon a long tradition, and we have only one symphony remaining to remember them by. Only through careful study of this piece of music, over generations, might we come to an understanding, albeit incomplete, of that old tradition. And only when we understand the old tradition as best as we can, only then might we move on to a new tradition."

Everything has already happened, and the ultimate fate is known to all, plainly, waiting outside their doors with a blank smile, following at a few paces behind down every street. Yet when it arrives, they look up with a flash of surprise and stammer out excuses, alone in the shadows that are rapidly swelling out like soft wings to enfold them.

Marla wakes up.

The hot air balloon hums and creaks *threateningly*. That's the word she happens upon, shifting to a sitting position and breathing on blue fingers to warm them against the nighttime air. At the tiller, the Conductor stands still like a statue... *stone statues in conflict a knife in a bony gray grip and a shimmering mirage in the air...* but as she adjusts her eyes in the dark, she can see him breathing almost imperceptibly, faint steam like candle smoke escaping his nostrils. He is old and weary and she has watched him die time and time again, a failure, abandoned by all, slipping into beyond in a last moment of annoyance and anger. There's children outside. They're far too loud. Get them to shut up will you. *Get them to shut their goddamn mouths!*

Marla has leaned close to the Conductor on his death bed and listened to his faint whisperings, accompanied him as a final friend during those torturous weeks of timeless illness, affliction that spread through all that had been and all that would be. He told her that he wouldn't wish this on his worst enemy, and then paused and said maybe he would.

"Conductor," she had whispered to him, last kindness splashing fruitlessly against stubborn bulwarks. "Conductor, can you hear me?"

“Don’t call me the Conductor,” he had said, straining to enunciate each syllable. “You are to call me the Composer. I understand him now. My musicians fell short, but I have finally heard the music as it was meant to be played. He is my friend now. He told me to tell you this.”

Marla had paused and gazed with wonder and eventually found herself asking, “What is he like?”

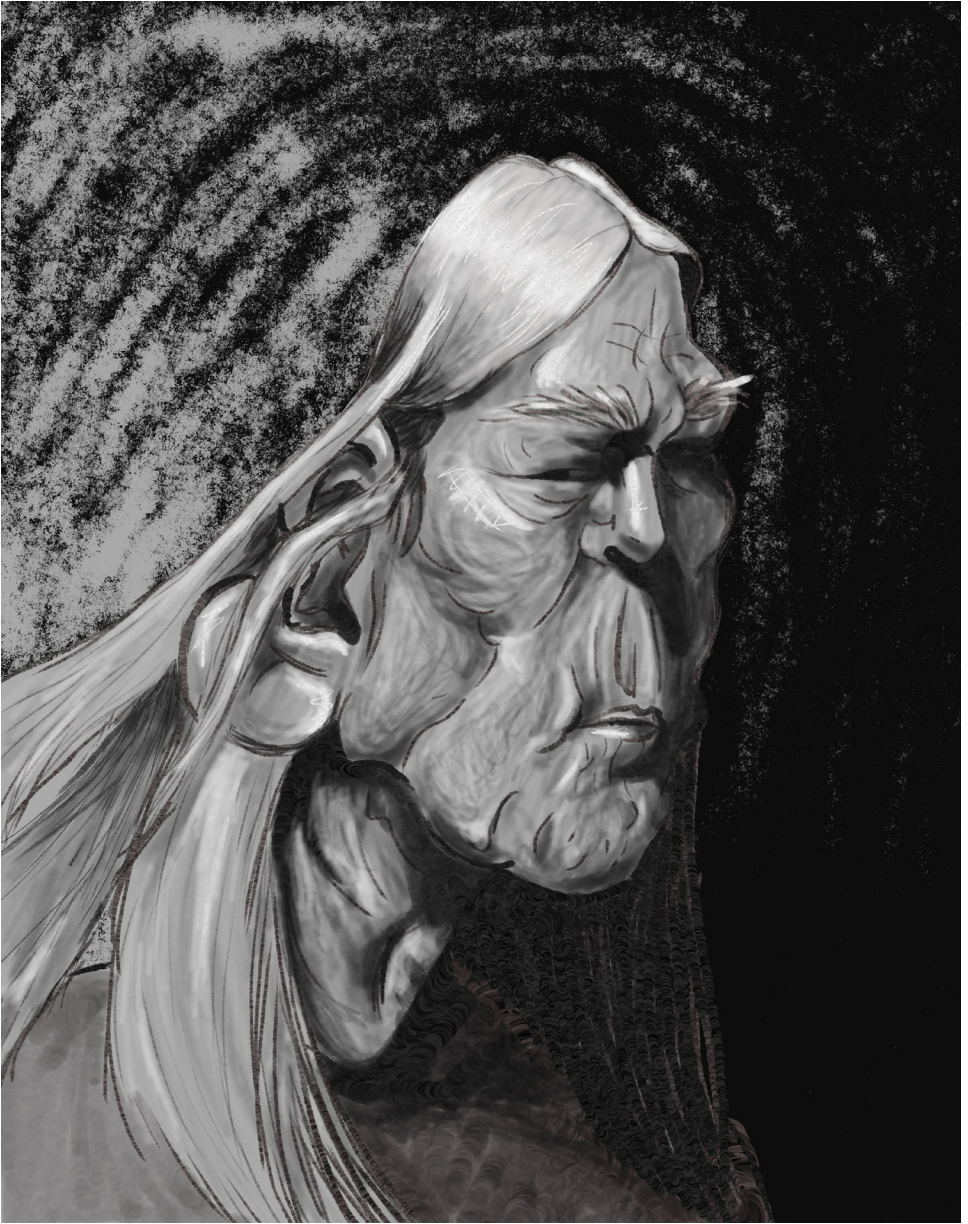
“Well, he’s actually a lot like me.”

Marla shifts to a more comfortable sitting position and says, “This has been a longer journey. Are we not seeking the mountain?”

“No. I must return to my homeland in search of the ancient libraries. Perhaps one survived. There is always hope. There is always hope. There is *always* hope.”

On his death bed, the Conductor had wept. He said, “If only there were paper left in this accursed village.”

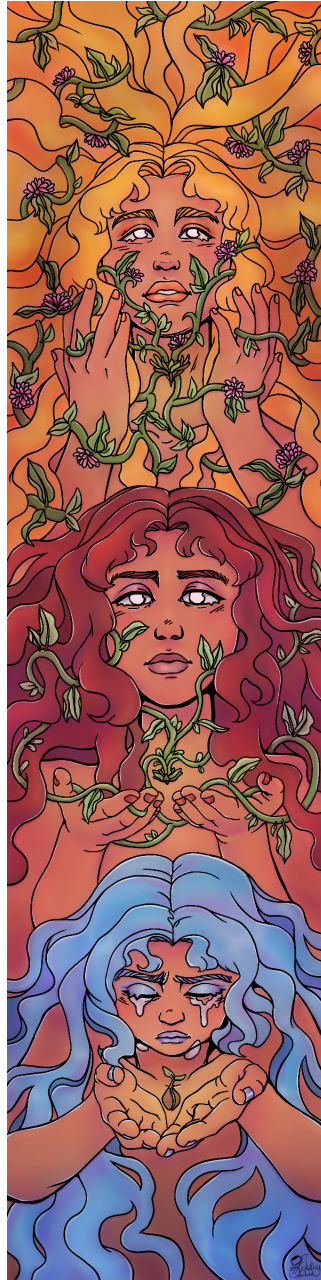
The Conductor says, “I hear music. I’ve heard it all my life.”



Wavering Dark Thought

Lauren Pickering

Digital Photoshop brushes, 11"x14" 300 DPI



Growth

Megan Fisher

Digital Art, 2"x8"



Pattern I (Recolored)

Kyle Battin

Acrylic ink, 3-color screenprint on 100lb paper, 9"x9" image on 12"x12"paper

Fanwa Road

Emma Yuan Fecteau

JANUARY 4, 2002

The birthing was the easy part.

Zhou Li's mother had cleared a table in the kitchen. The wood-paneled windows were bolted to keep out prying eyes, though their nearest neighbor lived five miles away. The pale light of a single lamp flooded over crates of potatoes, eggplants, and leafy bok choy. The spuds stared at Li in an accusing fashion. Their brown spots and wrinkled skins resembled the face of Li's disapproving mother, who had left the house after the birthing and hadn't returned.

The reason for her mother's disapproval was asleep at the moment, swaddled in blankets with pink lips slightly parted. Zhou Zeng Ya had been alive for all of two hours. Li had refused to budge from the birthing table. Though her throat burned with thirst, Li satisfied herself by drinking every detail of her newborn daughter, from the shape of chubby her face to the dip in the bridge of her nose. *Like mine?* Li felt mingled warmth and unimaginable sadness, two opposite feelings that tugged at her heart, poised to tear it apart.

The pain of birthing was nothing.

Li would never teach Zeng Ya how to speak Chinese or tie her shoes or make dumplings. Li's mother had given her two days to abandon her daughter, and two days was not enough time for such things.

"Law is law," Mama Zhou would say, a pinch in her nose and a glint in her eye. "You are unmarried and young. No husband will want to marry a woman with another man's daughter, and you won't be able to pay the fees to keep her!"

Li lifted her daughter's tiny hand, which had slipped from the folds of the blanket.

How can I give you up?

JANUARY 6, 2002

Red-tiled roofs sagged on either side of the road like hunched shoulders, with rain pouring down their stony necks. Zhou Li ambled through the stone streets of Hefei City, her shoes slipping on cracks and loose stones. The hike from the train station had left a chill in her bones. Li's worn coat weighed on her, drenched in mingled tears and rainwater. The wind cried and tugged at the frayed ends of her clothes, catching at wisps of her hair. Li wished she were a dandelion seed, so she could let the wind carry her away.

Zeng Ya wailed louder than the storm, pounding little fists into Li's coat. Li did not look at her daughter as she slipped from shadow to shadow. The new

mother limped past homes with blinking windows and grimacing balconies and rusted doors that groaned in their frames. Fanwa Road was witness to her transgression, and made its objection known.

Hefei Social Welfare Institute gleamed like the gates to heaven. Li shook the bars of the front gate until her fingers were numb. Locked. She bent down and positioned her daughter in a small crevice of the wall, so that her face was shielded from the storm. Zeng Ya's eyes fluttered, tears frozen on a face that was too pale and pink.

Voices rose in the distance, and Li pulled her hood over her head, brushing her snow-riddled hair from her face. Her puffing breath formed clouds in the frigid air. Zeng Ya yawned and stretched in her blanket bundle, which Li had wrapped tighter than a silkworm's cocoon.

Li couldn't think of what to say that wasn't a lie or an empty promise and an apology that only the wind would witness. Numbness spread to Li's toes and fingers and cheeks, but the worst of the cold was inside, a winter that froze her heart.

"Good luck," choked Li. She touched her daughter's cheek with one mitten-clad hand. "Zhou Zeng Ya."

Li turned around. Each step was like plunging into heavy snow. Every instinct pulled Li back to the little bundle, but she pressed on. Her breath came out in gasps and her hands curled into fists, nails sinking into the skin of her palms.

Yes, birth was easier than this.

...

Fanwa Road slept on as Officer Wang made his rounds.

The day shifts were long, and the night shifts were longer still. Officer Wang swept his flashlight around the darkened alley, a blaze of orange in the deepening blues of the village. He shrugged against the pouring rain, anticipating the cup of tea that would warm his hand when morning came. His skin grew paler and his hair turned grayer with each late night shift. He reminded himself to have a word with his boss about next week's schedule; he had a few decades to go before he was ready to look like an old man.

A soft cry broke the monotony of street traffic. The beam of Officer Wang's flashlight lurched down to illuminate a bundle of mud-splattered blankets near the gate. It was a sleeping baby, no doubt his careless footsteps and incessant muttering had woken her up.

Officer Wang studied the baby girl, for he knew in an instant that it was a girl. Abandoned daughters were as common in these streets as empty bottles and alley cats. The only thing unusual about this baby was the letter tucked within the folds of the blanket.

Officer Wang lifted her. He headed back to the station, grateful for an excuse to satisfy his boss and perhaps leave a few hours early. At the Shushan Police Station down the road, Officer Ming was brewing a cup of coffee.

“Another baby?” he grumbled. “It seems you’re always the one finding them.”

“It would seem so.” Officer Wang held up the note. “But I found her with this.”

“It’s probably forged by the institution, all those notes are.” Officer Ming shook his head. “You ought to take her back where you found her. The Welfare Institute will take her.”

“Yes, sir.”

Officer Wang plodded back the way he’d come, he unfolded the letter in the baby’s blankets. He struggled to read the messy scrawl within, and paused to stand beneath a lamplight.

I'm extremely grateful for you taking in my baby. Due to the harsh reality of the circumstances, my baby can't grow up with me, by my side. I am sure you all will love her dearly and educate her well. My daughter's name is Zhou Zeng Ya. She was born on January 4, 2002. Please, I request that you remember her birthday. This is my greatest wish. Please, please treat this little orphan well. As a result of mistakes caused by my ignorance, I will never ever forgive myself. My daughter is a healthy baby. I believe that with the support of you good-hearted people, she will become a successful child.

January 6, 2002

Officer Wang folded the note. Streaks of dawn painted the rain-thick clouds. He searched the lightening shadows of Fanwa Road, from the blinking windows to the grimacing balconies to the grumbling doors.

There was no mother in sight.

Devils in the Livery of Heaven

Kaiti Shannon

*“...stealing the livery of the court of
heaven to serve the devil in.”*

Frederick Douglass

Using religion as a justification for slavery goes far back into the creation of America, for in New England the Puritans thought it acceptable to take over anyone whom they felt was lesser. According to Zinn, they “...appealed to the Bible, Psalms 2:8: ‘Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession’” (14). They used this scripture to defend their enslavement of the Native Americans and then later the Africans. As slaves in America, Harriett Jacobs and Frederick Douglass both experienced and understood how religion was used—specifically in the South. In their memoirs, they examine the hypocrisy of religion being used to moralize treatment and excuse atrocities done towards slaves. They also examine how slaveowners condoned their actions under religious guise by practicing religion and not spirituality, using religion as a ticket to improve reputation and excuse actions, and as a form of control. Finally, Jacobs and Douglass demonstrate the distinction between the religion and spirituality of Christianity through their interactions with others and, despite everything, had their own spiritual relationships with God.

Despite the adoption of religion, unbelievable hypocrisy was passed down to and practiced by the slaveowners of the South in how they moralized the treatment of their slaves for monetary gain. Like their Puritans forefathers, they looked upon the Africans as heathens to be mistreated while simultaneously helping heathens in other countries. As Jacobs says, “They seem to satisfy their consciences with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves. What a libel upon the heavenly Father, who ‘made of one blood all nations of men!’ And then who are Africans? Who can measure the amount of Anglo-Saxon blood coursing in the veins of American slaves?” (69). Africans were considered to be heathens, and therefore, slave-worthy, despite how intermixed was the blood of many slaves with that of the whites. Many masters would have sexual relations and children with their female slaves and consider it perfectly moral, despite clearly going against the Biblical commandment against adultery—not to mention rape. They were “represented as professing to love God whom they have not seen, whilst they hate their brother whom they have seen. They love the heathen on the other side of the globe...while they despise and totally neglect the heathen at their own doors” (Douglass 104). Douglass shows the tip of the iceberg of Southern Christian hypocrisy in this quote where the slaveowners of the South did not

care whether a slave was a heathen to be loved or what the Bible commands but whether religion could justify using someone viewed as lesser for a slaveowners' profit.

The religion of the South was used as an excuse for atrocities done towards slaves. Douglass says that, "the religion of the South is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes,—a justifier of the most appalling barbarity,—a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds,—and a dark shelter under which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slaveholders find the strongest protection" (67). The religion that ruled the land was framed in such a way to allow for all sorts of mistreatment to slaves including rape, starvation, abuse, and more. Because men could call themselves religious and say they were just treating the heathen as they should be treated, religion was the perfect justifier.

Slaveowners who converted to the religion of the South not only rejected Christianity's teachings of love and grace but were crueler because of it for it allowed them to condone their actions under a religious guise. It is also clear that what they adopted was the religious part of Christianity and not the spirituality aspect. When Douglass was with Mr. Auld, he hoped that after his master attended a meeting and learned about religion that Auld would come back the better for it, and maybe even free his slaves; however, Auld's conversion made him even crueler than before. For "prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty" (Douglass 47). The religion he ascribed to not only neglected to better him but aided in making him even less humane by justifying his actions by letting him believe he was in the right. Auld only ascribed to the religious element of Christianity, for he went through the rituals required of him and said he believed what he needed to believe. He made pretensions of being extremely devout and religious, but he didn't truly attempt to have a spiritual relationship of his own with God.

Because masters were able to use their association with religion as a ticket to excuse their actions and improve their reputation, they were some of the basest slaveowners around. Jacobs witnessed her master take up religion and become worse for it as well, for he, like Auld, used it to justify his actions, and he also did it largely to improve his reputation. Jacobs said she "...supposed that religion had a purifying effect on the character of men; but the worst persecutions I endured from him were after he was a communicant. The conversation of the doctor, the day after he had been confirmed, certainly gave me no indication that he had 'renounced the devil and all his works'" (115). He hadn't joined the church to become a holy person or to follow God. He joined, as he told her, to improve his reputation with the community so his actions of abuse and general cruelty towards his slaves would be less frowned upon (115). As a doctor, he needed to keep the reputation he'd built up, and religion was a prime way to do so. Religion gave him a guise of goodness to hide underneath and gave him a way to condone

the way he treated Jacobs and the rest of his slaves in the eyes of the community. Douglass says in his memoir, “being the slave of a religious master the greatest calamity that could befall me. For of all slaveholders with whom I have ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly, of all others. It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists (67). For, like Dr. Flint, Mr. Covey also joined the church to increase his rank in society and the way he was viewed by those around him. In fact, his rank as a Christian even increased his ability in the eyes of the town to break slaves because he had religion to back him up. Religion was a way not to become close to God or to be a better person but to help masters justify the actions of themselves and those around them. However, slave owners didn’t only use religion to ease their own consciences and bring them up in society.

Religion was also used as a form of control towards the slaves because masters could use slaves’ religious devotion against them for their own benefit. According to Zinn, “A book consulted by many planters was the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, which gave these instructions to overseers: ‘You will find that an hour devoted every Sabbath morning to their moral and religious instruction would prove a great aid to you in bringing about a better state of things amongst the Negroes’” (160). The masters of this time most definitely took up determined to use this advice and encouraged their slaves towards religious instruction. Religion was not held back from the slaves but was orchestrated in such a way that would be beneficial to the slaveowners. In Jacobs’ narrative, she explains how the services arranged for slaves were of a singularly manipulative nature, pushing towards the master’s agenda. The minister preached on the text, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” which is the King James Version of Ephesians 6:5 in the Bible, but it’s doubtful that the Apostle Paul ever intended the minister’s twist to be put upon it. He said, “Although your masters may not find you out, God sees you; and he will punish you. You must forsake your sinful ways, and be faithful servants. Obey your old master and your young master—your old mistress and your young mistress. If you disobey your earthly master, you offend your heavenly Master. You must obey God’s commandments” (Jacobs 106). As religion was used to back up the actions of the masters, it was also used to convince slaves of their errors and how they could obey their masters better to be more valuable to them. This sermon clearly was preached in order to gain control over the slaves and encourage them to have complete submission towards their masters.

Despite witnessing the horrible ways that religion was interpreted and acted out towards him, Douglass still understood what Christianity ought to be and the distinction between religion and spirituality. He clarifies at the end of his memoir that he isn’t trying to insult Christianity as a whole, but the religion

of the South. He says, “I mean strictly to apply to the slaveholding religion of this land, and with no possible reference to Christianity proper; for, between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference—so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked” (Douglass 101). To Douglass, there is a difference between the way he was treated by these so-called Christians and the real, true religion of Christianity. Again, we can see the difference between spirituality and religion. Douglass understands that God is a good God and that having a relationship with Him is valuable, but he also understands that religion is something that is corrupt and used for masters’ gain. Similar to Douglass, Jacobs was also able to see the distinction between spirituality and the religion of the South.

Jacobs had two opportunities to see Christianity lived out in a more spiritual aspect in contrast to the religious one of her master and other so-called Christians of the South. After the sermon when the preacher explained the importance of obeying their masters, she also heard a sermon where the minister spoke to the black congregation with a completely different goal. He said, “‘Try to live according to the word of God, my friends. Your skin is darker than mine; but God judges men by their hearts, not by the color of their skins.’ This was strange doctrine from a Southern pulpit. It was very offensive to slaveholders” (Jacobs 111). Instead of catering to the slave owners and sticking to the status quo, this minister spoke Biblical truth to his audience without an agenda for obedience and profit. Jacobs also knew a young lady who had some authenticity in her religion, for, “She taught her slaves to lead pure lives, and wished them to enjoy the fruit of their own industry. Her religion was not a garb put on for Sunday, and laid aside till Sunday returned again” (77). Jacobs was able to recognize this and see the charade of the religion practiced by Dr. Flint and many other slaveowners in contrast to an example of true Christianity.

Douglass and Jacobs also had their own relationships with God, which is surprising after all the torture they faced with their masters doing their work “in God’s name.” While religion was used to control them, it was also a way for them to retain their independence, for “Music, magic, art, religion, were all ways... for slaves to hold on to their humanity” (Zinn 163). It allowed them to maintain their humanity against the inhumane treatment they suffered, for they were able to have their own relationship with God distinct from the religion of the time or the way religion was used to control them. Both Jacobs and Douglass appealed to God in times of trial. They never stopped praying, hoping that He would deliver them. They did have their doubts, however, for Jacobs was stuck in the garret, it seemed to her there “was no justice or mercy in the divine government. I asked why the curse of slavery was permitted to exist, and why I had been so persecuted and wronged from youth upward” (186). She questioned why God had let all these things happen to her, but she still prayed and sought God for comfort amid

her trials (202). She understood the distinction between religion and spirituality and took spirituality upon herself in the midst of these trials even when the religion claiming to practice following the same God she worshipped had failed her. Similarly, Douglass sought for God, ridden with similar doubts as Jacobs, when he was seeking freedom: “O God, save me! God, deliver me! Let me be free! Is there any God? Why am I a slave?” (56). It is no wonder that both Jacobs and Douglass sought for God (and questioned if He existed) because of what happened to them, but it is important to note that they did seek Him despite it all.

The religion of the South was an atrocity to the name of Christianity and of God. At the end of his book, Douglass says, “Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of ‘stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in’” (101), and this could not be a more accurate description. The way religion was used in the South to justify the cruelty done to the slaves, to control them, and to take away their independence is a direct attack not only on people but on the name of Christianity. Christianity is a religion about a kind God coming down, dying for His people, and encouraging them to love their neighbor as themselves. The Southern slaveholders used it to justify cruelty, giving it a reputation of hatred. However, the way Jacobs and Douglass still chose to have spirituality and seek after God despite their experiences shows that this religion can be stronger than what men try to turn it into, for the religion of the South was truly full of devils in the livery of heaven.

Ode to Healer, Indianapolis

Sage Justice

We toss back hard ciders, lap up
sweet toxins with greedy tongues.
Our bodies collide, molecules,
our chemical bond the poetry of bass guitars
and trumpets, Doc Martens and beer.

We wander room to room, TV static
ringing in our ears. Monstrous
statues wearing bones and pearls,
deities dressed in spray paint, keepers
of garage bands stand in every corner.

The guardians are watching, welcoming
us to the stage. They wave scepters
in welcome; they speak in snare hits,
blue and pink light shining from their mouths
and painting the battle jackets of punks.

We are performance artists, in our element
with Dana Skully and Moon Goons.
We piss in bathrooms with “whatever”
door signs, kiss under crocheted blankets,
smudge our eyelids with black grease.

In the pit we reach nuclear fission, boiling
bodies of absolute heat. Throw yourself
to the crowd and we’ll swallow you whole
like a mushroom cloud of legs in fishnets
and arms embracing one another.



I'm an Octo + I Love My Cats

Lauren Pickering

Micron and ink pen, digital Photoshop brushes, 13.69"x10.5" 400 DPI



My Parents' Crazy Hoarder Basement

Tamara Watkins

Sharpie and white gel pen on paper, 22"x30"



Pattern V

Kyle Battin

Digital, 7200x10800 pixels



Dirtied

Kitley DeFelice

Digital photography, 3398x2448 pixels

The Abandoned, the Alone, and the Left Behind

David Casey

Rolling past the gates of my apartment complex, I trip the left turn signal and pull up to the main road. Not a second after big-toeing the brake pedal, the anti-lock brake system crunches and groans, as if melodramatically warning me to turn right *the hell* around. A winter weather warning has been issued, I know. But I don't, at this point, know why. I don't know that in just the last hour, a light rain had briefly fallen, then temperatures plunged below freezing, spreading a lacquer of ice, laced with oil, atop the pavement. But I have promised my parents that we'll make it over for dinner. So the four of us pull out in a small Chevy sedan—my girlfriend, our two little dachshunds, and I.

In slips and skids, we make it to the road just uphill of my parents' neighborhood. There, the four-lane road sprouts a fifth off to the right, so that cars can slow down before turning into the entrance. Veering over, I crank us into low gear and feather the brake, just so. We slide.

Slipping quickly now, my field of view narrows to a pinpoint and my thoughts whiz. Images of the potential outcomes fan out before me like so many rivulets—until the front right wheel slams against the curb and collapses these forking paths into one. The bumper leaps at once onto the grass. So I stomp on the brake, and we skid to a stop. Wide-eyed, we turn toward each other and remember that, yes, it is permissible to breathe. Then, there's that... *smell*. The stench of road burn and battery acid sizzles out of the mangled fender.

We grab what we can and run away from the street, fearing a gas leak or another car skidding off. Or, heaven forbid, both. No tow trucks will be able to take my car until the next day, so we leave it alone on the side of the road, hazards blinking, like a beacon in the night.

There is an apocryphal tale of the former Israeli politician Moshe Dayan, who (and this is the *un*-apocryphal bit) had lost his left eye during the Second World War while peering through his binoculars... straight down the barrel of a Vi-chy-French sniper. Some years later, Dayan was stopped for speeding by a military police officer. "I have only one eye," he pleaded in his defense. "What do you want me to watch—the speedometer or the road?"

I am fortunate enough to have both of my eyes, so, while one watches the road, the other often looks to the shoulder, where interesting things tend to occur. I might try to glimpse the faces of people pulled over, curious whether they're ashamed or anxious or upset. Maybe two burly gentlemen are tilting at each other over some perceived offense, on the brink of duking it out right there and then.

More often, though, and ever since I can remember, I've been most intrigued by cars left abandoned on the side of the road. Each one begets a question, and in its answer, a story.

How far has your owner gone? Did he run out of gas on the way home? Was this just his luck—the last goddamned straw? How long did she wait, wondering whether, and whom, to ask for help? What did they carry with them? What clues, what secrets, do you harbor?

You'll find them everywhere if you look, not just on the roadside. Like a compass needle, my eyes are drawn to a darkened lot with a lonely gray pickup sat dead, inexplicably, in the center; to a sunburnt sedan lurking on the fourth floor of a parking garage, with flat front tires and a manifold of parking tickets stuffed under the wiper.

Does the parking official believe these will someday be paid? Does he merely fulfill his role, believing, like the rest of us, that whoever oversees things will eventually take action?

I'm not sure whether I find it more or less ominous when those same solitary cars are occupied. I sometimes drive by an elementary school near my apartment, and have more than once seen a single car parked far, far back—back by the playground—late at night. Just idling. Of course, we can't linger too long on these questions, these feelings, as we usually have places to get to if we're driving, and our thoughts are soon pulled in unplanned directions.

But if we do allow ourselves to linger a little longer, perhaps we shouldn't be surprised to find cars in such solitary and haphazard situations, in places we think people have no business being. For our cars are much more than mere means. They, like us, contain multitudes and contradictions.

The car is a liberation, a method of swift escape. At the same time, it is a deathtrap, a two-ton mass of charging steel. It is a refuge for the night or a temporary home. A place to sleep off the alcohol. Or, perhaps, to take a nap between the longer legs of a road trip.

The car is a viewfinder. You can perch it on a cliff and look out to a distant skyline, or lay under the moonroof and draw shapes among the stars. It is a privacy for young lovers and adulterous trysts. But a privacy, mind you, that can be invaded—forced to go where cries cannot be heard. A car can roll up slowly like a creep in the darkness. The buzz of a rolling-down window can perk up your ears. It is a mobile store, an update on the medieval street vendor hiding under coat so many baubles and trinkets. A place of buying and selling. Of being bought and sold. Of rearview-mirror-looking and unspeakable acts.

The first car is a thankless teacher, a pensioner giving his final, bone-tired days to teenage whimsy; bruised, dented, trashed, run roughshod 'til the transmission develops a bronchial wheeze and sputters black bile from its innards. While the luxury car is a midlife dream nigh achieved, worn down and faded but still held close, handwashed weekly by undocumented immigrants—its owner standing over them, watchful and imposing. The final car is a harbinger of finitude, missing exits more and more and getting lost on the way home. It portends the loss of independence and the walls closing in: *First, they'll take your license, then your car, then your home. Then they'll tow you away and strip you, like a carcass, for parts.*

Such is the whole of human life entwined with the car.

People even seem to *look* like their cars: sleek, knife-edge jawlines sporting black and chrome-plated suits; heat-damaged hoods like lined foreheads, pockmarked by drug abuse and hard labor in the sun; minivans sagging low and heavy, hunched by the burdens of childbirth and the weight of multiplying responsibilities. This phenomenon must, I think, originate in that Man, like God, fashioned the car in his own image. Two lights like bright eyes shine from either side of the face, a touch above the grill, which smiles or scowls or bares its metal teeth. The side mirrors peek out like tiny ears astride the windshield, behind which sits the brain, the driver. That homuncular ghost inside the great machine. Even the guts of the car, that twisting convolution of compartments and tubes, resemble the organs and intestines and the vessels running through them.

And I say “Man” deliberately. For the quintessentially *feminine* car is built, if not overly dainty (see: the miniature coupe) or voluptuous (see: the Beetle), then frumpy and sexless (see: the aforementioned minivan), while no car may be more quintessentially *masculine* than the modern-day pickup—the length and breadth of its protruding bed seeming to correlate exactly with how infrequently it is put to practical use. Who but men could contrive such a scheme?

I recently read a story in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* about the city's worsening problem with abandoned vehicles, about which officials receive over four thousand complaints per month. Over four thousand. That's the numerical equivalent of Princeton University's entire student body driving somewhere in San Diego, parking on the street, and simply never returning. Every month. And this is the contribution of only one mid-sized, not-particularly-remarkable city. I'm tempted to believe that people must rather be falling through manholes or subway grates than so regularly, so... *frivolously*, abandoning their cars.

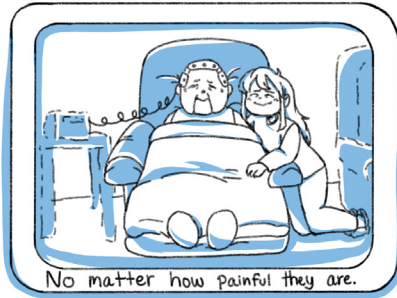
My car is gone now. Not fixed, no, but gone from the roadside. Still, I remember that it was once one of these, an untold story with a clue left behind. And I know that my decision to leave it there, slumped pitiful in the cold with a broken axle, was anything but frivolous. My experience, in that way, shines the

brighter light of personality over these artifacts. These un-peopled objects. Nuisances, as some might call them.

You know, we're not so different from snails: gobs of flesh encased in protective shells. Only, rather than taking our shells with us, we travel from shell to shell. From house to car, car to office, office to car to favorite restaurant to home. Still, like snails, we, too, outgrow our shells. We crave some change, or our shells wear down or break, and we must move quickly on. Often, there is a palpable sense of loneliness, a despair, that attaches to abandoned artifacts like cars and houses and children's dolls. But we don't feel this when we look at empty shells. We see an object that has served a noble purpose, that was molded from common elements into a form that, miraculously, will never quite be replicated. That was made with a unique and complex intention. We might, then, interpret those things we leave behind not as merely *abandoned*, never to be returned to, but as physical traces of our nonphysical consciousness—as testaments that we, too, were here—spelled by the bumps, dents, holes, and bruises, by the swirls and the ridges and the shadows and the colors that we've left—that we've *printed*—there, upon them.



But they are my last memories with you.



No matter how painful they are.

So I treasure them dearly.

2

Last Memories of You

Megan Fisher

Digital

Better Fences

Siren Hand

My therapist asks me to describe what guilt looks like, where it sits in my body. I fidget with the brass buttons stitched around the border of the couch pillow as I piece the words together. I tell her guilt is Bitty, Miss Valentine's pit bull.

She asks me when the first time I encountered Bitty as guilt. I tell her, well, it wasn't the first time but this one time she was in the house party's doorway in high school, after I kissed Marta's best friend. Then I saw her again at the *STOP SHOP* when I misdirected a customer into the service well during an oil change. I saw her little grey muzzle poking down at me through the gap left by the tilted car.

My wrist twists, and my fidgeting pops a button free. I clap a hand over it, stop it from rolling. I tell her that most recently, Bitty sat at the foot of my bed when I forced a cough and gritted my teeth to let my mother know: I was too sick to go visit her for her birthday. I just didn't want the hassle of the trip, but instead I traded it for another, to her funeral later that year.

Tomás, she interrupts my spiraling, tell me about the *first* time.

I tell her I try to live every day not seeing that dog.

I tell her when I see Bitty, I'm almost always sitting with my head in my hands. The pit bull beside me sets her gray, meaty head on my thigh and nudges my elbows away from supporting. My head lulls, but I catch myself before it drops completely. Bitty wags her tail at me. Her body sways gently, hopeful for a good ear scratch. I oblige, even when I know what's coming.

I tickle her ribs and massage her neck, fingers finding bald lines in the patches of her fur. I scratch the fuzz under her jaw, smooch her jowls and cheeks together, and run a slow seam up her nose with my nails. Then, they catch on an edge of her skin. I pull my hand back, tear away from her, and my palms are bright and bloody.

We were nine then. Summer days started early with kids running our long, straight street as soon as the sun gave them permission. Our houses were packed close together, a crowded row of teeth, the gumline cut short by the fill and highway that separated both parts of East Perry Street. Some houses, like Zion's, had a large yard with the house built at the back of the lot. Miss Valentine's brown house, across from mine, squatted right in the middle of hers. My family's house sat at the front of our property with a gravel driveway running the depth of the back yard, so my dad could park his HVAC van and still have room for my cousins, aunts, and uncles. We always had a visitor and somehow managed space

for them. After my mother drove to work, her vacant space left a perfect half-court for Zion and me to play basketball in, until she got home in time to start dinner. Our basketball games were only ever interrupted by drivers revving their car engines, wanting to peel down the road's straightaway. Or, by dogs barking.

The door to the brown house opened and the dogs spilled out into the plank-fenced yard. The burly husky ambled to the fence with his nose in the air, while the little pit bull raced around the outside of the house in a circuit. Zion pushed the basketball to me.

"They good?"

"I think so, but I've only ever seen them in that yard," I responded. He'd been nervous about the neighborhood dogs for weeks, after a German Shepherd on Hanna broke through the fence to chase him on his bike.

The ball bounced off the back of the hoop. Zion caught my rebound, squared up his feet, and shot a beautiful failure.

"They ever try to jump the fence? No? Well, I'm fine as long as they stay there, and I stay here, and you get the ball if it goes over that way."

"Yeah, I got you." I dribbled, I shot, and missed the backboard completely. He ran after it. I called, "Zee, you got plans for the Fourth? We're doing fireworks in the street again."

"You know my mom doesn't let me go out after dark."

"But my parents are going to be there, so they might. Just ask them, already."

Zion scratched at his scalp. "Yeah, I guess. I might, I just need to wait until they're in a better mood."

"What happened this time?"

"They caught me making an extra sandwich."

Zion was the oldest and only boy of five kids. They all moved to East Perry Street from Greenwood just after New Year, so his dad could live closer to the shipping warehouse in Plainfield. Most families in Bean Creek kept to themselves until they got to know the neighbors, know which ones were safe or who was best avoided. It wasn't even a week after they moved in, before my mother told me I would never be playing or visiting at Zion's house. His family had taken to fighting so loud we could see them rolling in the street or hear them shouting behind closed doors and shaded windows.

I first met him walking on his own to the bus stop for school. He was holding and rubbing his arm, trailing behind the girls when I caught up.

"You hurt?" I asked.

"Yeah. I got a *whuppin* this morning."

"What's a *whuppin*?"

He sucked his teeth. "Come on, you don't know what it is? You ever

make a mistake or mess anything up, and they hit you?”

“Oh! Yeah, sure. Sorry.” I didn’t actually know who they were. They could have been his sisters ahead of us or the lanky, greasy high school boys that hung out at the bus stop on their dirt bikes. The boys loved riding behind our bus to school, making crude faces and flipping off the kids on-board. We’d slouch in our seats, hoping to duck low enough to avoid the harassment.

The *they* he was most likely talking about were his parents, I figured. Only because it was early in the morning and I didn’t know who else he might’ve seen in such a short time. I couldn’t speak much from experience. While threats of getting set right were numerous in my house, the only times they became promises were when I misbehaved at school and cut my mom’s work short to come pick me up. Even then it only happened twice. A sore ass later, I figured I’d behave for a while.

I knew that if I listened to this kid, he’d probably tell me what happened, and who *they* was. He did. We got so carried away talking, he told me everything except for his name the first three days. He even told me the *they* was his parents.

Barks braided in between strands of yapping and whining as the mailman opened the box across the street. If Zion jumped a mile, the basketball flew two—and it was a brick.

“Hush, you’re not scary,” the mailman teased over the fence, “You’re a teddy bear. Just a big bear! You don’t scare me, you giant fluffball.”

“Al! Al, I’m so sorry! I let them out—I thought you’d already come by.” She hurried, yelling from the brown house, this darkhaired, short, thin woman. She was dressed in gray sweats with a head of black ringlets that twisted chaos around her like a stormy crown. She clapped her hands to pull the attention of the dogs. It didn’t work.

“Here. Miss Valentine, here! You’re already out here, anyways,” Al offered the mail over the fence as the dogs scuffled at their feet and pressed against the gate. She took it and showed it to the husky, who sniffed and inspected the junk mail. Sensing no threat, he grew bored and ran off with the pit bull to wrestle.

The woman’s gaze swept the street. She spotted us and waved. Zion waved back.

“Y’all doing ok out here? It’s hot, boys. You drinking water?” she asked. Her accent leaned heavy into the summer air.

Zion and I looked at each other, and Zion let her know we hadn’t been; we just went inside for water when we got thirsty. She retreated to her house and came back with a whole gallon, and it was chilled. “I’m sorry, it’s all I have, but it’s too hot to not be drinking water.”

“You got cups?”

“Sorry, I don’t, I’m washing the dishes right now.”

“It’s okay—we can waterfall. Tomás, waterfall!”

I squatted down a bit with my mouth opened skyward like a baby bird’s. He uncapped the jug and carefully tipped a steady stream of water into my mouth. The cold soothed my throat and spilled out the sides, chilly rivers that tore me away from the haze of summer.

“Hey, your dogs. Do they bite?” Zion asked her.

She leaned against the fence on her elbows and laughed. “Not really, just each other. They’ll roughhouse. The big guy, Sampson, will wrap his mouth around your arm, but he just wants you to think he’s in charge. He’s not in charge of anything, though. Bitty is the little one, and she’s scared of everything so she won’t stop barking. Together, they’re not a bad alarm system.”

Bitty had circled the house and returned to the front gate. I offered Miss Valentine back her gallon, but she held up a hand and shook her head. “Keep it,” she said, “just keep drinking water. We don’t need you passing out on the street, with these idiots driving so fast through here. Need anything else?”

With no hesitation, Zion spat out, “You got any food?”

The creases between her brows deepened. Even thinking about it now, I only really saw Miss Valentine frown a handful of times: one when she told me not to worry about what happened to Bitty, that she would be okay, and another was this very time when Zion asked for food. Any of the times I saw Miss Valentine frown, it didn’t seem to be from disapproval or disappointment. It was from sadness.

“I’m sorry, I don’t really have anything to make—my payday’s tomorrow. Wait, what are y’all doing tomorrow? I know it doesn’t help much now, but I could make sandwiches. Y’all like grilled cheese, right?”

She had a voice like sun tea that was too sweet to resist. Zion asked his parents, who said it was fine if she fed all his sisters, too, and they wouldn’t worry about dinner whichever night. Mine might have said it differently, but they meant the same thing the Roths did. The meal was a relief. It was nothing fancy, but still appreciated. It was one that my parents didn’t have to cook, and a novelty I could happily eat.

The next day Miss Valentine made good with napkins and paper plates for all six of us kids, crunchy grilled cheese—some with dried tomato, potato chips, and a couple gallons of ice-cold apple juice. She handed them over the fence, over the hopeful dogs’ heads, and shuttled back and forth to her small brown house to make more. Her garbage bin sat right outside the gate for us to throw our trash into.

At first, she did it every payday, then all the Fridays in between. We

looked forward to the grilled cheese Fridays at Miss Valentine's fence. We even snuck Sampson and Bitty more than their fair share through the gaps in the planks. The dogs would snap up the scraps and crunch at the toasted cheesy crusts, sneaking them out of earshot from Miss Valentine.

I picked at the wooden crate that we used for our front step and listened to the crying from down the street. Zion sobbed as his mom yanked him by his elbow to the small brown house. Everything about her was large: her square shoulders, broad chest, and full stomach. Her feet. Her hands, which pulled Zion through Miss Valentine's open gate and straight to her front door. Mrs. Roth pounded it with the side of her fist, police-knocking until it opened.

"Zion said you aren't going to be in town next week?"

"Oh, hello, Miss Roth. No, I won't be. I wanted to make sure y'all could make arrangements." Miss Valentine was small but still offered a cheeriness, even as Mrs. Roth loomed over her.

"Why not?"

"I'm sorry?"

Zion's mom leaned in, at least a good head taller than Miss Valentine. "I asked why you won't be here. We've got five kids, and every Friday this summer you gave them grilled cheese, chips and juice. Why not next one?"

"Missus Roth, I don't mind helping out, but I'm not going to physically be here. I can give you money for the food, if you'd like?"

"I don't have time to make all that, either!"

"Ma'am, I don't know what you want me to do. Zion, I'm sad I won't be here, too, but I'll make sure to give you the money for the food and teach you how to make the plates, if that would help?"

"He doesn't cook."

Miss Valentine tried to wave it away, saying, "That's no problem, I can teach him."

"I don't think you understand: He's not allowed to cook. His sisters do."

Tension hung between them. I sat frozen and unnoticed on my stoop. I only knew Mrs. Roth had taken the Fridays the children were occupied in the neighborhood and used that time to get as much done with errands as she could. She didn't have to cook or clean, so she'd take the city bus to get groceries. Sometimes, she made it back by the time her husband's swing shift ended. Either way, paying a babysitter and getting food for at least six children was out of the question.

It was quiet but crystal clear. "I'm sorry."

Mrs. Roth stormed home.

Zion sank down next to me, cradling his arm. I asked if he was allowed

to go to A&A's for a snack before it got too dark. He just sat there.

I grabbed the basketball and started dribbling into the street. *Turn, shoot.* Made it; dribbled back. *Turn, juke, layup, shoot*—it bounced off the rim and spun across the street. The ball bounced into Miss Valentine's gate and settled into smaller skips. "I got it," Zion called, jumping up and swooping to get it. As he snatched the ball up, I swear I saw him pause for a beat with his hand at the gate latch. Before I could ask, he turned and pushed the ball from his chest. "Shoot again," he challenged.

I don't know why I didn't take a closer look at the gate latch, or why I thought it wasn't my business, but business between the Roths and Miss Valentine. The boundary of the wooden fence buzzed electric with that tension. All I know was that we stopped basketball for the truck that peeled down our road right when Bitty bolted across the yard, through the unlatched gate, straight into its wheels.

Bitty wags her tail at me. Her body sways gently, hopeful for a good ear scratch. I oblige, even when I know what's coming.

I tickle her ribs and massage her neck, fingers finding bald lines in the patches of her fur. I scratch the fuzz under her jaw, smooch her jowls and cheeks together, and run a slow seam up her nose with my nails. They catch on an edge of her skin and pull back, bright and bloody.

Each time I recoil in this dream, I wish the dog would just unravel like a sweater. Even once, I wish for her to be filled with insulation fluff. I wish for wasps or birds to escape from the nest of her body; or maybe music instead, pouring out from her like a jewelry box. I've even wished for her to be empty.

Instead, I tug and her skin peels from one side of her body, zigzagging in a long fleshy strip where the wheels of the truck dragged her along East Perry Street. I see her lungs quiver against the fence of her ribs. She leans further into my lap and I push her away, my hand sinking deep into the soft pulsing of guts and muscle. I taste copper.

Bitty is still panting and wagging her tail. Her ear hangs off the side of her skull, flapping loose and on-level with her empty eye socket. Her tongue falls out the side of a bony jaw, frothing bright red as she licks me awake.

The lights flicked on in the laundry room. "Tomás, what the hell is wrong with you?" my mother hissed so loud, I jumped. She caught me standing naked and barefoot on the cold basement floor, my arms full of my wet sheets and pajamas. My throat coiled tightly around my words.

I knew my mother would think it was silly to fear dreams, and I knew it was a dream. In it, this time, I was sitting at the end of my bed instead of on my wooden front step, and Bitty came right for me, nudging me like I was the only one who could fix her. Bitty's face was halfway scraped off where the truck caught her behind the jaw and dragged her. She nudged me, pushed to lick my mouth, whined her hurt. I tasted her blood in my dreams and I tasted it when I woke up and my pillow was all bloody and my nose hurt. "Mama, please—don't be angry, Mama, please don't."

"I already am, and I don't even know why. Why am I angry right now, Tomás?"

I looked to see the white knuckles pressing through her skin. I pleaded. "Mama, really, please don't. I had a bad dream, and I was really scared. I woke up and I promise I didn't try to pee the bed."

My mother's shoulders relaxed a bit. Her knuckles returned to their sandy color. "And what about the rest of you? You look like you lost a fight."

I lifted up my arms to wipe my nose on the back of my wrist and got a huge whiff of old pee. I kept my face from scrunching up. I was already embarrassed enough without being called *stupid* too. The sheets dripped on my feet as I tried to explain.

"My nosebleed."

"Was it another dream about your father?"

I shook my head.

"Is it the dog across the way? The little one?"

I nodded.

"The one that got hit?"

I shook my head *no*, but *no* turned into *yes* and I nodded again and harder and faster. I started crying and I couldn't stop it. My mother came to hug me, but I tried to push her away.

I didn't care about being naked. I didn't even care about the stupid pee. I cared that I saw Zion undo the gate and I didn't say anything, didn't tell him no or ask him if that's what I saw—that Samson and Bitty got out. I know that Zion didn't do it *to* get Bitty hit with the truck. I knew that all I just wanted the grilled cheese sandwiches Miss Valentine promised us every Friday *like clockwork*, tapping on her wrist. I wanted her to know it's not okay to break promises, even those promises, even for me. And I didn't *need* the grilled cheese, unlike the Roths.

Mama took my sheets and they fell to the cement with a wet *thwap*. She steered me to the bathroom, where I sat on the toilet lid while she turned on the shower. I heard her tell me to wash up and then go to bed, and that she'd check with Miss Valentine tomorrow to see if there's anything we could do for her. It was a long time before I could fall back asleep.

In my dream, Bitty is still panting and wagging her tail. Her ear is hanging off the side of her skull, flapping on level with an empty eye socket. Her tongue falls out the side of a bony jaw, frothing bright red as she comes closer. I can smell the jungle of her breath and see earth and gravel and stick bits stuck to her. I remind myself, *this is not her. She's dead.*

Surely by now, she's dead.

She can't do anything to you now. Just let her lick you.

An Appalachian Morning

Jacob Stewart

A fragrant fog, a mountain mist
 Closely clings to springtime air
Upon the scene, great evergreens
 Densely hug the landscape there

Down the path, a bubbling brook
 Is hidden, save to those who seek
It sings a psalm with current calm
 Praising, without words, so sweet

And in the drear, a distant sound
 Grazing steer call, long and plain
While deer scurry, without hurry
 Past the patter of the rain

Peace protrudes the place not touched
 Long by the infirm hand of man
Where one can see God's majesty
 Smoky peak to creek bed sand



Acceptance

Megan Vogeler

Oil on canvas, 30"x50"

Ode to Gray Men

Alex Spurling

I'm no spring chicken
inside I feel rowdy
young
and
tempestuous

I am tawdry
and bold
never mild
smoking in corners
flying by the seams
violating étiquettes
The Trumpeting Troubadour!
a hot iron skillet,
a grease fire
hoppin'
out of the pan

The residue
of boyhood—
powder kegs
with short fuses
Mighty Roar!
mighty squeak!

No longer,
nimble in the feet
No longer,
sound in the mind

I'm still a grease fire
and
I'm no spring chicken.



Rooster

Rachael Cunningham
Oil paint and sand, 20"x16"



Queen of Hearts

Veronica Breach

Digital, 4400x5600 pixels



Blue Dragon

Teresa Copenhaver

Silkscreen monotype print, 11"x9"



An Unexpected Guest

Julia Dryer

Acrylic and colored pencil, 11"x20"



Laid to Rest in Lilacs

Julia Dryer

Colored pencil on black paper, 11"x14"

Lavender Boy

Sage Justice

I met a trapeze artist named Eve when the full moon rose deep
in the navy sky, orange clouds kissing Lake Michigan.
Circles of tamed fire twirled in the air and we danced, feet
traipsing one in front of the other until we tumbled
to the dark dewy grass. She offered me a Pacific Rose.

“It tastes like flowers,” she said. I bit into it, juices
flowing down my throat. Eve’s face, full of folds, spread
into a wrinkly grin. Her seventies had opened the door, holding
marigolds and baby’s breath. We breathed them in deeply
as she asked me what my “real” name was.

My name was a wildflower plucked from the ditch
running along my childhood farm’s edge, living on rainwater,
the chill of the lake effect. I couldn’t expect her to understand.
I told her anyway, my mouth contorting downward as I spoke.
She didn’t tell me how “beautiful” a name it was, just nodded

and chewed on the floral notes it left behind. She told me
I was less like lilies, more like lavender as the menace who came
before me, fought for us he-she’s and she-he’s. As the lake
crashed against the rocks and the moon hung high, I swallowed
whole the blossoms I had tried so hard to renounce.



A Dream of Frog and Toad

Lauren Pickering

Fabric, polyester fill, embroidery thread, buttons, plastic greenery, copper wire, cardboard, and LED lights, 25"x51" 300 DPI

The plaster tub

Kat Scott

"I'm collecting my strength; one day I shall manage without her,
And she'll perish with emptiness then, and begin to miss me."

-Sylvia Plath "In Plaster"

Will I never get out? Is there only one of me here?
This outstretched pale body, it's enough now.
The alternate is certainly better, she is painted and clothed,
primped and teetering up to gently brush cheeks.
All day long I breathe through her noxious perfume,
her wires compress and lift, an automaton.
She is folded around me every morning,
and I was defeated, because who doesn't like a gift?

I didn't mind at first, the corners pressed and tucked away.
Taped closed with Revlon and adorned with vanity, over a vanity.
Every morning she woke me, minutes before the sun,
to reflect on my imperfections. What a keen eye, what artistry!
She noted my stumbling speech with fond amusement,
and prescribed me coffee and tequila _ my treatment.
She made sure I was never without, and I appreciated her.

I needed her. I wasn't in any condition to dismiss that.
Her smiles opened doors, her words slicked chintzy palms
while I became a receptacle for long nights gone awry.
Strays began showing up at our door: fed once, twice
and she lapped up the milk I put out, along with them.
Her rough spined tongue stripped flesh from fingers
not quite fleet enough, I had never felt so raw.

She wanted me to embrace them: the ones who shriek and yowl
from their trucks like they're in heat, latching bitter eyes
as they caress your ass. She thought we were a service.
And secretly I began to hate what lay under, so docile and ghastly.
The clamor of the bar became a call to arms, a gauntlet,
thrown forth with blood and pus streaking stiletto soles.
I couldn't walk for a week: she was so fierce, the Shoes so Red.

But my knees are knolly hills now, they flow down to fingerlands
and up an untamed valley. She wouldn't like it there:
Too much squirrelly brush, too few scabs for our efforts.
I had even forgotten how to breathe, always cut short
my chest provides the rhythm, though it did all along.
I sink down, until my nose crests the way an iceberg drifts—
hinting at the beast below.

january poem

Tara Ventura

in my dreams
i rip my heart out myself and offer it to you—still salvageable and everything—
i am the sacrifice
i never get used to it
seeing it lie there
screaming in front of you
i put it all on the table and watched you walk

in reality i do it alone
they say it's a two person job but that's never stopped me before
forget the rope or any of the toys for that matter. you won't need them
everything has become a hand wrapped around my neck, feeling for that tender
bruise so easy spot and squeezing
sort of exertion anyways and
i am exhausted

i can pretend to be the chinese takeout you shove into the back of your fridge and
maybe, if i'm lucky,
you'll poke and prod around with chopsticks the next morning before you decide
i'm just no good anymore and toss me out because better safe than sorry
but why kid ourselves?
i always was an eleven pm decision.
not fucked up enough to forget me but not quite sober enough to want me
the next morning either

rub those circles in my back,
connect every sun kissed freckle and mole

i don't want to hide them
they're proof i've lived without you

i could be the perfect confidant
unable to tell another soul



Lollipop, Lollipop, Oh Lolli-Lolli-Lolli

Emma Schwartz

Oil on canvas, 22"x32"

My Partner Shaves My Head in the Bathtub

Sage Justice

and the porcelain soothes my restive fingers; wandering
flurries of hair drift around me like dove feathers.

He steadies himself on me, hand on my shoulder, blows hair
from the clipper blade. Four glinting window tiles, blooming
glass flowers, are embedded in the wall behind the shower. The evening
rays peer through them, kiss our naked heads as I lower myself under
the running water. A warm stream rinses the locks to the drain stop

and I am blessed, bare and bald as I was after C-section. Removed,
I was, not born. Extracted from the cavity of my mother as I now uproot
myself from her, clip the umbilical cord growing from my head
and baptize my new name in the saliva of my lover's mouth. Church pews
line my bathroom walls, empty but for my partner, and I rise, dripping,
holy and whole as a babe bathed in afternoon sunlight.

A Final Argument over God, Alternatively Titled “Menopause,” Alternatively Alternatively Titled “For Nathan”

Tara Ventura

The New York Times said that South Korea said that North Korea has fired two more missiles and I think for the second -but definitely not last- time today about how it'll all be over soon and The New York Times won't report on climate change or missiles anymore because no one will be left waiting to read it.

I'm sad -as much as I hate to admit it- at the thought of an earth without polar bears and bamboo and my junky car and especially me and you -but only together- in it. But then I think back to when you told me that the world, this earth, will adapt. It will survive without us and without god and you or me -together or not- because that is what it was made to do.

It's not over, it's just changing -for the better- and trying to survive like the rest of us, “*eradication*” she screams, “*let me.*”

THROUGH THE DECADES

White English: A Satire

Juan Taylor, 1981

Few pieces of literature have given me more insight on myself than Peter Farb's essay on Black English. He brought out conclusions about a whole race of people that I am sure the majority of the public, especially the Black public, are not aware of. After reading this essay, I began to understand that objectivity, not insight, is what one must possess in order to understand cultures different from one's own. Then I began to notice how strange the Caucasian dialect actually is. (I must emphasize that my discussion of the history of White English is highly controversial.) Down at Leon's Barber Shop, there are at least three different opinions on the matter: that White English is a completely different language from regular English, that it is only a different dialect, and the "let's change the subject" viewpoint. After extensive research I feel that the first opinion is the most accurate one.

The whole subject of White English is so tied up with both racism and good intentions that it is rarely discussed calmly, even by the linguistic experts at Leon's Barber Shop. At one end we have the racist who attributes the White hyperactive use of words to some physical characteristic such as thinness of lips and tongue. On the other end we have those of goodwill who try to rationalize that White English is simply an Americanized English and that it is no more incorrect than any other dialect because hardly any of us speaks pure English anymore. Noted linguist, Chico Gomez, says that the whole theory of White English is, in his words, "a bunch of chit." (I assume that the word "chit" is referring to the phrase "chit-chat" or small talk.) Both of these views are wrong though. White English has nothing to do with the anatomy of a race or with the "Americanization" of the language. The history of the English spoken by New World Europeans show that it has been different from the beginning. Of course, not all Whites speak "White English." Some speak just as we do, but besides Wolfman Jack, these cases are rare.

By "White English" I do not mean that quaint vocabulary adopted by some non-Europeans in order to pretend to be white. These rich and metaphorical words are just common slang, although even we who speak Regular English sometimes use such words to express feelings. Such words and phrases as "Mr. Hard Guy," "jerk," "gross," and "Mercedes" (rather than the more typical "Cadillac") are now used by speakers of Standard English. When I refer to White English, I am speaking of a different history, a different sound system, and a different basic structure.

Peter Farb had one definite advantage in his research that I have not had. Because all Blacks came from the plantation and formed ghettos up north,

he was able to observe them without too much trouble. In addition, Mr. Farb had that wonderful research paper done by Lorenzo Dow Turner, in which Mr. Turner studied the speech patterns of Blacks in the deep South. I personally had a hard time going along with this research work; I just assumed that natives of the deep South had a distinct dialect; I expressed this thought to my mother, and she replied, "You makin' sense, but you don't be makin' sense."

Because the White population is more diverse than the Black population, I had to find a group that would represent the White race. My three representatives were the Kennedy family, the Carter family, and the students of IUPUI. Another wonderful source of research was the daytime soap opera. Here, I could observe Europeans in a natural setting communicating with one another. All these sources helped me formulate the theory I will endeavor to explain to you now.

Since people from all over Europe had to ride the same ships over to the New World, and since they all did not speak the same language, a form of communication had to be established; the need resulted in what is known as "pidgin" English. (It is reported that the first words used were obscenities and ethnic slurs. These words are the bases of many words that we use even today.) Therefore, most of the Europeans arriving in the New World could communicate at some level with each other, and eventually they taught this language to their Black employees. As the nation grew, White English began to diversify, but these variations are minor in comparison to the major differences between White English and Regular English.

It would take a novel to discuss these distinctions sufficiently, but I will point out a few of the differences between White English and Regular English. In the Kennedy family, for example, the "r" is left off the ends of words, so "car" is pronounced "ca" and "rear" is pronounced "rea." In the case of the Carter family, some words are unrecognizable. For example, "sure" is pronounced "show," "bulb" is pronounced "bub," and "far away" is pronounced "way over yonder."

The grammar the Europeans use should be examined closely also. It is apparent that young Caucasians have a hard time forming thoughts into words, so many of them use "filler" words such as "I go" to help link their thoughts. A typical conversation at IUPUI will sound like this:

"I go, 'Are you taking me out tonight?' Then he goes, 'I can't.' I go, 'Why not?' Then he goes, 'I've got to go to the store.' Then I go, 'Can I go too?' He goes, 'Sure.' So I went."

After viewing soap operas, I noticed that the use of phrases like "I go" was superseded by use of more sophisticated words. In one episode I heard a woman say, "His exuberant behavior at the funeral was reprehensible. He acted like a debased imbecile." I had to get my dictionary out to see whether she liked the man or not. Some of the experts at Leon's have theorized that because Whites have no rhythm, they cannot space their words properly, so instead, they

use enormous words, such as “irreconcilable,” to keep their speech fluent.

Some argue that my findings are not valid. They say I cannot judge a whole race on a few examples. Some accuse me of inadequately defining “Regular English” and point out that no one form of English is universal. But I feel that Mr. Farb’s research has set a precedent that all researchers can now follow. My only hope is that my subsequent studies of Red, Yellow, and Brown English will not cause this much controversy.

GENESIS



40

Untitled

Pamela Sue Keller, 1979

Green Eggs and Spam

Davinia Yalimaiwai, 2009

Keola Beamer, one of Hawaii's best known slack-key guitarists, eats Spam and loves poetry. Let's just call him the Dr. Seuss of the Hawaiian island chain. Although he isn't a published author like the late Ted Geisel, Beamer collects Spam haiku poetry that he posts on his website. Once a fun pastime, Spamku is now Keola's religion. But can a local island girl like me blame him? After all, Keola is a descendent of the great King Kamehameha I, unifier of the Hawaiian Islands. If Kamehameha's descendent is wrong about his Spam religion, then I don't want to be right! In fact, our love of Spam in the islands brings us so close to Keola that, when spotted, it is not uncommon to hear shouts of, "Eh, howzit braddah Keola? How yo maddah? You hungry? You like come grind wit us?"

To the tourist who decides to grace our islands: never say "No" when we ask you to come eat with us. Your noncompliance will be taken as snobbery, and your inability to adapt to our local standards will be held against you for generations to come. Yes, we will tell our grandchildren of the rude *haole* who said, "No." Trust me, you don't want to be labeled a foreigner for your entire visit. And there is always enough Spam to feed everybody thrice over. So, hang loose, Brah, and no worries! I have taken the liberty of picking out my favorite Spamku from Keola Beamer's website to show just how much we treasure this fine meat:

*And who dares mock Spam?
You? You? You are not worthy .
Of one rich pink fleck!*

After eating with us, some uncle or aunty will always bring up braddah Keola's first song, "Honolulu City Lights." It might not even be a blood uncle or aunt considering that we call everyone older than us "Uncle So-and-so" or "Aunty This-and-that." Nevertheless, Keola's first hit is a classic. And, if you are a local who doesn't like 1970s Western-style Hawaiian music, you keep that information to yourself. God forbid that blasphemy ever leaks out because what ensues is a good two hours of drunk relatives singing and saying, "Braddah Keola, why you nevah wen bring yo slack-key?"

There might also be some talk about his mother, Winona Beamer, during this musical jam session. Winona is one of the key activists of the Hawaiian revival movement in our high schools. This is obviously where Keola received his calling to pay homage to the voiceless Spam. But usually the mood is too light to get into any political stuff—especially on a sunny surfing day like the day a friendly tourist decides to eat with a local family.

*Born in World War Two
Hogs marching off to battle
Dressed in tin armor*

If this were *Animal Farm*, it might be easier for a non-Hawaiian to imagine the haiku above: pigs going off to war, marching in blue armor, ready to defend their country. Or perhaps the “hogs” suggest the raw power of actual human soldiers who went off to fight during the war. Either way, history shows our lovely Spam did not migrate to our islands until the mid-1900s. Hawaii became a strategic location to send American troops during World War II. Being in the Pacific Ocean, and midway between continental USA and Japan, troops often stopped off at Hawaii, particularly Pearl Harbor, to refuel and strategize for the next attack. Unfortunately for the food and farming economies, this meant thousands of troops entered our small Hawaiian chain. Trying to feed the locals and the soldiers proved to be a bigger task than anticipated. It was also a waste of money to ship fresh meat all the way out to the Pacific Ocean just for it to spoil by the time it reached land. And then there was Spam:

*Pink tender morsel
Glistening with salty gel
What the hell is it?*

Shoulder of pork and ham or so Hormel Inc. has us believe. No one really knows for sure the exact ratio of pork or ham or feet or fat or unknown substance that is in Spam. All we know is that it is salty, and meaty, and that it tastes good with just about anything: Spam musubi (Japanese sushi made with Spam), Spam saimin (hot soup with noodles and a slab of Spam), Spam fried rice (self-explanatory), Spam and eggs for breakfast (now on our McDonald’s Dollar Menu), Spam and cheese sandwich for lunch, and Spam and shoyu rice (white rice covered in soy sauce) for dinner.

*My friend pork shoulder
I return to you. This time
I’ve brought mayonnaise*

Soldiers during the war found it to be a convenient source of protein that they could depend on when food was sparse. Since Spam doesn’t have to be refrigerated, we locals buy it in bulk. During the rare instances when the islands are placed on hurricane or tsunami watch, we stock up on three necessities: water, toilet paper, and king-sized cans of Spam.

*Jelly for mortar
Seven hundred tins and more
I build a Spam house*

Surprisingly, Hawaii is not among the fattest states in America. However, you might disagree with me when you see my three-hundred-pound Aunt Leilani. According to Calorie Lab's "United States of Obesity Map for 2007," Mississippi weighs in as the fattest state in America, with a few states like Alabama and Indiana coming close behind. In fact, this map makes Hawaii one of the leaner states.

I'd now like to insert my expert opinion on the matter; completely unbiased, of course. Apart from the various Hawaiians, and Samoans, and other Polynesians of slightly smaller numbers: we have Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, and *many* Asians populating our islands. Most of our Asians are Japanese: the ancestors of farmers who came to Hawaii to work on our rice plantations. I'm not saying local Japanese don't eat Spam. Au contraire! Remember the Spam musubi? It was invented by the Nagasaki family, or the Hayashis, the Nakamuras, maybe the Tanakas. The point is this: local Japanese families in Hawaii eat just as much Spam as any other group in the islands. But ask yourself one question: have you ever seen an obese Japanese man or woman? Exactly. (Sumo wrestlers were not taken into consideration during my extensive research on overweight Asians in Hawaii).

Where, then, do all of the side effects of consuming millions of cans of Spam end up? And why is Hawaii *still* not ranked among the fattest of fatties? Because "fat" in American standards means overweight. Whereas all the other medical problems that come along with constantly eating crap, such as diabetes and heart disease, can affect even the skinniest of us.

*Old man seeks doctor
"I eat Spam daily," he says.
Angioplasty*

We still have our share of big-boned people. Hawaii is a Polynesian island, and, like all Polynesians, we love us some food. Fish is an essential food if you want to live on an island. Pork is also an essential, especially if you don't want to be excluded from family get-togethers. A *lu'au*—a local celebration where we eat a big pig that's been cooked underground for a day—stems from victory parties hosted by the great King Kamehameha. Girls (big, small, and in-between size) dance the *hula*, and Aunt This gets into an argument with Aunt That over whose husband provides the best for his family. My bet is on Uncle So-and-so.

So imagine how my dad's side of the family reacted on the fateful day of my freshman year in high school when I announced I wanted to become a vege-

tarian. They reacted the same way any Polynesian family would. They laughed.

"You realize you can't eat meat anymore, right?" That was my Uncle Peter. He's about seven years younger than Dad, but his daily ritual of consuming *yaqona* (a slightly intoxicating root drink) and beer, has left him with wrinkles and ashy skin which make him look a million years older.

"Yes," I replied.

"You know Spam is meat, right? You can't eat Spam." Uncle Iguanodon, I mean Uncle Peter, has great deductive reasoning skills.

"My teacher says Spam is for poor people and that Spam is trash." Strike two.

"Trash? What are these schools filling your head with? You tell your teacher that God made three things in this world: Spam, sex-I-mean-marriage, and more Spam."

*Pink beefy temptress
I can no longer remain
Vegetarian*



Whale Watching

Lifan Fan, 2016

Oil on canvas

Block C

Camille Millier, 2015

This is Warden Hartwell McCullen of Rosenbaum State Penitentiary trying to reach District Attorney Steve Zenotov. Friday, September 27th, 2163. 10:42 PM. Calling to report an accident involving prisoner 339 and Officer Brett St. John, guard in charge of Block C. Full report with details will be filed and sent to the office as soon as possible. This has been a terrible inconvenience, will need a temporary replacement guard immediately. End transmission.

Thursday, September 26th - 8:52 AM.

Brett St. John exhaled smoke as he leaned against the stone wall just below the stairs leading up to the giant, ancient doors of Rosenbaum State Penitentiary. He sweated underneath the militant green pea coat and matching peaked cap of the uniform in the early fall air. Down the hill a distance, the ocean crashed at the edge of the grounds. The great, stately fortress structure of the prison and the ocean must look beautiful from the water to an outsider. The insomnia was getting bad again. In fact, he couldn't remember a time in his life that he didn't have difficulty sleeping. Even in his blurry childhood. But today was just another day like all the rest.

"Officer St. John!"

Brett looked over to see Alexander Snodgrass strolling toward him, holding up a hand in front of his face to shield his eyes from the sun. Alex was the young guard in charge of Block D. He had dark brown hair and the demeanor and attitude of a chipper character from an old film. He treated every encounter with Officer St. John as if he were greeting an older brother home from college for the first time.

"Morning, Alex." Brett dropped the cigarette butt and scraped it with the toe of his shiny dress shoe.

"Gee, am I nervous." Alex said with a breathless laugh. "I'm getting a new one in today. Warden McCullen said he's an armed robber. Made away with about two million down in Westmore 'fore they caught him."

Brett nodded as Alex continued, before turning to walk up the stone steps while Alex trailed alongside, still talking excitedly and looking at Brett for approval, through the doors, down one hall, and then another. "I bet he won't be so tough though. Say, it's not as exciting as your job. That's a fine gun you have there. I wish I could be on the block with the automatons. You'd never know what to expect." And then "Okay, see ya later, Officer St. John," as Brett opened the steel door to Block C and tagged out the night-shift guard.

Block C was the smallest of the prison, with only twenty cells lining the hall and only about five of them ever occupied at a time. There were no cots

or toilets or sinks in these cells, just concrete walls. Although they were almost indistinguishable from humans now, the automatons didn't need any of those comforts. They only required a confined space to stay in for a few days until a government truck came to pick them up and take them to the CTM—Center for Technology and Machinery—to be shut down. Automatons used to have a kill switch on their bodies, at the beginning when they were made of steel pipes and gears. But too many instances occurred in which the switch was accidentally bumped or pushed, resulting in a permanent waste of a perfectly good automaton. Now they had to be shut down officially if they malfunctioned, short-circuited, or wreaked havoc.

Officer St. John walked down the hall and looked into the occupied cells. Printed on the labels outside the bars were the prisoner number, model number, and reason for confinement. *Prisoner 336, model number CV 4.568 X, short-circuit, killed family dog and destroyed home. Prisoner 335, model number CV 6.889 J, corrupted SIM chip, seduced male owner, caught by wife. Prisoner 338, model number CV 8.113 L, malfunctioning hard drive, could not understand simple tasks—did opposite.* And so on.

Brett sat down at his desk, placed at the end of the hall. The job was easy, to make sure none of the inferior beings caused any trouble. They usually didn't, and he would spend his time reading. He had never had a chance to use the gun. It was a revolver loaded with highly magnetized pellets, designed to destroy an automaton's main circuit board, or at the very least, wipe the hard drive, reverting the machine to a dull yet docile personality. He was given the gun on his first day, five years ago. Warden McCullen had handed it to him delicately, ran a hand through his own white hair and looked intensely at Brett.

"It won't be necessary very often, but I've had to use one a time or two before. Believe me when I tell you these no-good pieces of tin are strong, and it ain't worth you or anyone else's life to clam up in the moment. So if one of 'em gets outta line, don't hesitate to take the motherless bastard out."

. . .

The steel door crashed open and in came Warden McCullen and Alex, each struggling to hold onto one armpit of the automaton between them, who dragged his knees on the tiled floor. The automaton was a male, with curly brown hair that flipped vigorously as he convulsed and snarled. He was wearing a dirty white T-shirt and black jeans. Brett sprang from his chair and helped push the machine into one of the empty cells. The other automaton inmates slowly walked to the front of their cells and watched curiously. Prisoner 338 stood up straight in his gray suit and turned his head to see the action, while Prisoner 336 hugged his knees and rocked back and forth on the floor inside his cell, his shoulders twitching up and down from the excitement. Prisoner 337, who had caused a six-car pileup on the highway while driving his owner to an optometry appointment,

stuck his arms through the bars and yelled, with extreme volume, "We got a live one!"

The three men panted. McCullen wiped sweat from his forehead.

"Sir, what's the deal?" Brett asked. "You didn't say anything about this."

McCullen caught his breath and sighed.

"It's bad. Just happened. He needed to be contained immediately."

Just then, the new prisoner slammed his body against the bars and made the officers spring backwards.

"Come to my office, St. John."

Thursday, September 26th - 9:05 PM.

"Hey, St. John," Warden McCullen called as Brett crossed the office door threshold.

"Don't work too hard or you'll become one of 'em yourself."

The warden laughed, and Brett said, "Will do."

Brett carried the newly written label to the newly occupied cell and hung it on the tiny hook. *Prisoner 339, model number CV 5.600 X, strangled elderly owner with rope until dead.*

"Hey." A scratchy voice came from inside the cell. He appeared to be sitting with his back against the side wall, but only his legs and dirty work boots were visible. Brett slowly turned his head back.

"What's wrong, prettyboy?" The prisoner cackled an airy laugh. He appeared in the light as he neared the front of his cell. He extended an open palm through the bars.

"My name is Jamie," the automaton said.

Officer St. John looked at the hand with its shiny white skin, and then up at the prisoner's face. His eyes were still and tranquil, focused on the officer's own green eyes. So different from this morning, when his glass eyeballs were rolling back in their synthetic sockets.

"Your name is Prisoner 339!" Brett said slowly, "and you are not to speak to me unless I speak to you first." He turned and left Jamie there, hand still outstretched.

Thursday, September 26th - 11:15 PM.

Brett sank deeper into his leather couch and swallowed the rest of the vodka tonic. His tie was draped around his neck at both sides and the starched white button-down was loosened to reveal a gray-stained T-shirt. Victoria appeared from the small kitchen with a refill in her hand. She was wearing a tight red dress and her chestnut hair was swept back into shiny rolls. She folded herself onto the

couch next to Brett and stroked his strawberry-blond hair. Silver and diamonds glittered on her wrist.

"Are we gonna do somethin' or what?" she asked. For whatever reason, she was programmed with a Jersey accent.

"No," he said.

She scoffed. "I've just never had a customer who wants me to pour 'em drinks and sit next to 'em."

"Then go," Brett moaned, closing his eyes and leaning his head against the back of the couch.

She looked at him apologetically. "What's on your mind, love?"

He looked at her. She was pretty, he supposed. She better be, for the price her owner was charging. Philonels Robertson—the town treasurer who owned over fifty female automatons and sold them off wearing revealing clothing and smelling like a French bath house for \$500 a night.

He rubbed his eyes. "I got a new prisoner today."

"... and?"

"He murdered his owner."

Victoria looked confused.

"Sometimes I just feel like," he thought for a moment, "every day is the same. I do the same thing over and over. I don't want to become so robotic, mundane."

Brett knew she didn't understand. He told her never mind, and kissed her unnaturally firm red lips.

"Same time next week?"

Brett lay awake in bed like every night he could remember. Tonight, he blamed his insomnia and lack of sex drive on recurring thoughts about Prisoner 339. The glassy, empty eyes that stared through him. The eyes that watched the brutal death of its human owner. Brett had predicted it a long time ago—the automatons were going to be the downfall of humanity. The fatal flaw that would develop into mindless evil, created by humans themselves.

Friday, September 27th - 2:30 PM.

Prisoner 336 made a constant buzzing noise in his cell. Prisoner 335 sang softly to herself. Brett sat at his desk, scribbling his initials down the side of the twenty-five page cell maintenance report.

"Hey," a scratchy voice came in a hoarse whisper from a cell on the left row.

Brett shifted his eyes from the paper up to the source of the sound. After a few seconds, he continued the report.

"Officer St. John," came the whisper again. It was Prisoner 339. He

sounded as if he had an urgent secret to reveal. Brett ignored it.

It came again a few seconds later, louder this time.

"Officer St. John. Hey! Come here."

Brett's chair scraped the floor as he forced it back and strode to Cell 5, where Prisoner 339 stood, hands wrapped around two bars like a child at the zoo. Brett stared at him in disgust and expectation.

Prisoner 339 scanned the officer's chiseled face and made a grin that evolved into a high-pitched, insane laugh.

"What do you want, filth?" Brett snarled.

"Jamie," Prisoner 339 responded.

Brett laughed. "I will not call you by name like an equal."

"Suit yourself," Jamie hummed, "but we're more equal than you know."

Brett told the prisoner to shut the fuck up, and turned to walk away when his arm was caught with a crushing grip through the bars.

"Wait, listen," Jamie pleaded. He licked his lips and his eyes darted around before settling back on Brett's face. "I want to talk to you. Outside of this cell." He suddenly looked concerned. "Trust me, it's something you *need* to know. Please." Jamie loosened his grip and gently let go of the officer's arm.

Brett glared at the prisoner, and straightened his own rumpled jacket. Jamie's automaton eyes looked desperate and pleading. Brett decided to humor the prisoner with a little metaphorical game of wit, which he would most definitely win against a lowly, scum-of-the-earth creation. It could be entertaining, if nothing else. If anything happened, he had the gun at his hip.

"You get five minutes. Later tonight," Brett said.

Jamie's eyes darted. "Thank you for trusting me, Officer."

Brett turned around and gave the automaton a sharp look.

"I don't trust you," he said coldly. "I'm just bored."

Friday, September 27th -10: 15 PM.

Brett lit a cigarette and stared across his desk at the disheveled automaton sitting on the chair opposite him. Jamie was rocking slightly, rubbing his hands on his knees.

Brett exhaled smoke.

"Talk."

Jamie watched the officer smoking for a few seconds before speaking.

"You're a man of your pleasures, I see," he said. Brett took another drag and quoted a favorite vintage *film noir*.

"What else is there in life, I ask you?" Brett smiled, partly impressed by his slight to the automaton.

Jamie smirked.

"You know, it's funny..." he trailed off. "I've always been intrigued by the concept of being human. I mean, as I sit here and have this conversation and I wonder...what's the difference, *really*, between a human and an automaton?"

"I'll tell you the difference, my friend," Brett said. He reached into a bottom drawer of his desk to pull out a clear glass and a bottle of amber liquid, expensive brandy labeled year 2105. He poured the alcohol into the shallow glass and lifted it, as if giving a toast.

"I, for example, can enjoy this brandy. I can smoke cigarette, I can make love to a woman." He looked Jamie in the eyes. "Furthermore, I'm capable of a higher level of thought and consciousness than you could even *try* to understand."

Jamie leaned forward, not breaking eye contact.

"Actually, Officer St. John," he said "they're beginning to adapt automations to be able to partake in human pleasures, such as food, drinks."

He looked at Brett. "Want me to prove it?"

Brett slowly poured another glass of brandy and slid it cautiously across the desk, staring suspiciously at the machine opposite him.

Jamie tipped it back and poured it down his throat, letting out a sharp sigh afterwards. He set the glass down and looked at Brett. Brett watched in horror.

"I'll still never understand the appeal, so you got me there," Jamie said about the alcohol.

"Unfortunately they still haven't mastered the sleep or sex thing, though." He shot the officer a mischievous grin. "Tell me, Brett, do you *actually* do those things?"

"I have insomnia," Brett quickly answered.

Jamie laughed hysterically.

"Officer, I disagree with what you said earlier. In a way, I have a level of consciousness that you will never be able to understand. Because I know things that you'll never accept."

Brett clenched his fists, digging short nails into soft palms.

Jamie continued. "You and I. We're actually very much alike." He smiled in reminiscence. "I knew from the second I first saw you."

"Shut the fuck up!"

Jamie laughed. "It's clever, really. To create such a perfect prison guard, programmed to hate his prisoners."

Brett shook his head back and forth violently, as if trying to stop the input of sound and words flowing through his brain.

"You really are a magnificent creation," Jamie said.

Brett reached across the desk and grasped Jamie by his dirty shirt collar, pulling him close with extreme force. He talked in a harsh, breathless voice into the small gap between their faces.

"I am not like you. You're a useless, filthy piece of metal covered in rubber meant to look like the human form," he growled. "You're a perversion of nature."

Jamie looked at Brett's still, focused eyes, and then began to laugh the same high-pitched, insane laughter he had on the first night in his cell. Just then, he pulled the officer over the desk and slammed him onto the concrete floor. Brett fought back, with equal force, bringing Jamie down with him. Within two seconds, Jamie was standing, pointing Brett's own gun at the officer's chest.

"I just want you to see."

The gunshot echoed through the long hallway of Block C.

The magnetized bullet drove through Officer St. John's chest as if it knew it was on a mission. It traveled through skin, metal, and through the fundamental hard drive. The information was destroyed—Brett's first day at the prison, the pixelated memory of a red-haired mother driving them to the grocery store, the conversations with Alexander Snodgrass, the hatred for automatons, all fizzled out like a broken firework. The bullet continued and obliterated the main circuit board. Nothingness.

A few seconds later, Warden McCullen crashed through the steel door, his tie blown over his shoulder. Alexander came through after him, looking frantic and nervous. They both beheld the scene in front of them. The warden turned and walked in a panicked circle while pulling on his disheveled white hair. Alexander looked like he might cry.

McCullen kicked the bars of a nearby cell and the sound rang out through the hall. "God damn it," he yelled "They said this wouldn't happen!"

Alex collected himself and jumped into action, grabbing Prisoner 339 hard by the back of the neck and forcing him into an open cell, angrily yelling something about the motherless piece of trash. They regrouped and both stared down at Officer St. John—his handsome pale face motionless with eyes closed, just above the open cavity in his chest where twisted metal shone. The last tiny flame went out with a final electrical *pop*.

Friday, September 27th - 10:38 PM.

Warden McCullen sat down in his dark office rubbing his forehead. He shakily lit a cigarette and sighed smoke. He pulled the transmission machine across his desk, picked up the receiver, and began to speak.

Friday, September 27th - 12:02 AM.

McCullen watched as the Center for Technology and Machinery professionals closed the final seal on the large, rectangular wooden box. One of them muttered something about how it was a shame—a waste of one of the most advanced experimental automatons of the age. “Yeah,” the other replied, “They haven't even started adapting them for the market yet.” The first man carefully taped the label to the lid of the box.

*For disposal at the CTM.
Model Number: CX 10.650 J
Fatal gunshot wound - unrepairable.*



Steam Street

Kimberly Balding, 2006

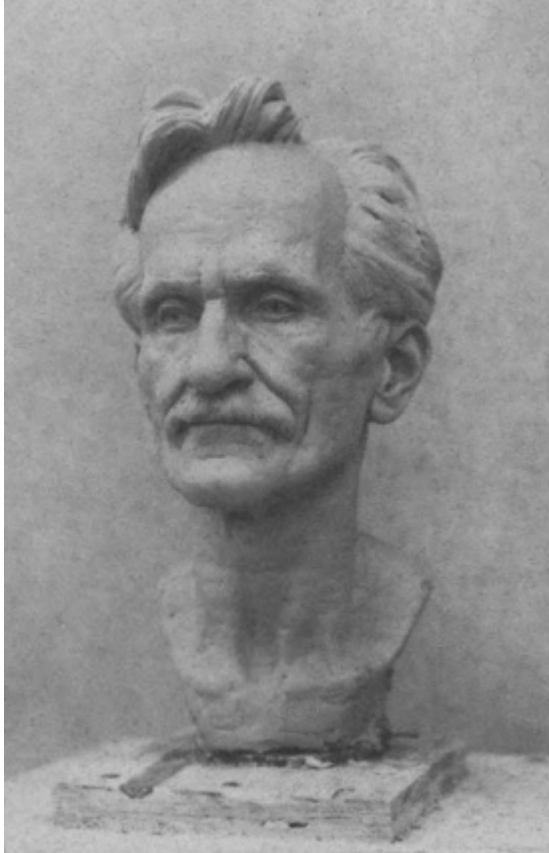
Photography



Nobleman from Sculptor Portfolio

Casey Eskridge, 1996

High clay, 21" high



Marshal Walz from Sculptor Portfolio

Casey Eskridge, 1996

High clay, 12" high

Burning Butterflies

David Brent Johnson, 1990

After I was born, my father brought me home from the hospital, placed a giant stereo speaker on each side of my crib, and welcomed me into this world with the voice of Jim Morrison screaming “Break On Through (To The Other Side).” I’ve told you this already, I know. I’m telling it to you again only because we are both LSD babies, red and purple microdot children conceived and born in the year 1967, when the Summer of Love burned to an end in the streets of Detroit and Newark, when Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were both breathing and well on their way to the year 1968.

I told this to you on our first date, in the dim place we called Coffeehouse Hell, with windmill fans and huge potted plants that hung just a few feet above our table. You ordered lemonade and when the waiter brought you iced tea instead, you held the glass up and said, See? That’s the story of my life. Then you laughed and banged your head on the table. I must seem like such a freak, you said. So I told you my story and when it was over we both looked up at the potted plants and you said, We’d better get out of here.

Where we went from there—the flood of young-body passion, the careful lowering of guards that is like nuclear disarmament, the inevitable disappointment of discovering the other will not solve all your problems—felt like familiar territory, but you refused to erect the usual signposts. You never said I love you; you thought it destroyed something, began the bogging-down of conventional commitment. When we decided to live together, you insisted that we rent separate apartments across the hallway from each other. When I pointed out the economic impracticality of this arrangement, you fell on my couch and bit a cushion, exasperated with my ignorance of your spiritual practicalities. Even then, you must have sensed that some day you would disappear.

You’ve disappeared before. You drove to California to see if the swallows really do return to Capistrano. You called from Carbondale, Illinois, and asked me if I wanted to run away to Wyoming with you. Wyoming, I said. Why Wyoming? We could be cows there, you said. We could sit in a field and eat alfalfa sprouts all day. This is Indiana, I said. We can be cows here, I said. But I want to be a cow in Wyoming, you said.

You’ve disappeared before, I know, and I’m sorry if I’m being unbearably paternal. I’ve always had the urge to take care of you, feed you, take out your trash, water your plants. I came over to your apartment today for the sole purpose of watering your plants. We keep a vigil at your windowsill, your plants and I. I play a game: I stare at the droopy green leaves and try to make them rise with the force of my eyes. So far, the leaves still droop.

You left a pair of sunglasses on your kitchen table. I put them on, I look at your world through transparent circles of green, I pretend that I am you. For a few moments, we share the creation of a green glass mind. I listen to this dummy oracle, not wanting to lift the glasses from my face, but the only secrets it has to offer are the ones I never told you.

Through your window I watch a flock of black birds in the grey sky, swirling like ashes in the wind. Leaves flutter like butterflies as they fall. You thought that you would go to hell because you burned a butterfly once when you were little. You caught it and set fire to its delicate green and black wings that reminded you of an Oriental fan. And when you woke up the next day, you started to cry. You discovered that the bed forgives everything, but the morning offers no repentance. You went to church that weekend and when you picked up the program, it said, Welcome to our Sunday Service. The story of your life. You walked home and prayed to God to change the rain into flowers. And when He didn't, you walked home and drew a picture of it.

You warned me, I must admit. Once, drunk on the roof outside your kitchen window, you told me I was another butterfly. I'm in love with doom, you said, and I laughed at how seriously you took yourself. I turned my collar up, Dracula-like, and moved with bared teeth towards your neck. It's not funny, you said. I'm happy being unhappy, if you know what I mean.

Go to hell, it's where you want to go anyway, I told you the last time I saw you. Still, sometimes it seemed the only place to go. We both understood the lure of a statue in a cemetery at night. Dissect a joke and it's not funny anymore, we knew that too. You are what you beat, we used to say.

An aroma of spices and soap is most of what's left of you here. I can't embrace the air, the clothes in your closet are bodies without souls. Your sunglasses stare at me from the kitchen table, green circle green circle do not add up to eyes. If you were here right now, I know what you'd say. This, you'd say, makes all the sense of a vegetarian hamburger. Well, they exist. Vegetarian hamburgers are everywhere.

I step outside and the night comes down around me like a coat I love to wear. We were the kind of people who don't turn on their lights as soon as it gets dark. Sometimes I still worry about you. I worry that the star inside you will collapse and turn into a black hole. You will walk alone with a ruined face and nobody will say hello. You will have what you thought you wanted, and you will try to cry, but only Moses could draw water from a stone. How will you avoid it? You might kiss a statue. You might touch your face to see if it's still there. You might pray for a rain of flowers on the funeral pyre of a butterfly.

Progressions

Daniel Lucy, 1974

I stand on the riverbridge
In the soft-hazel post-frost morning;
Ducks lie
On still water, plume-
White pillows. I heard
The morning moon without looking,
Saw trees seeming flat
Against the hillsides, veins
In loam, august arteries, under
This puckered sun, patches
Of capillaries, leaves;

Far away child are making laughter,
Spun slowly as though from
A laughter gin; I feel
The toothless path of morning
Without putting out my hand
To find its wind;

I stand, pan the river with a look
As hungry as the eyes of taxidermied
Owls;
I make home wherever evening settles;
I make my way home hopefully.

And I would turn old oaks into
Pianos; and whittle parts of etudes
Into wishes: They are waiting now,
These cluttered cantos,
Inside a practiceroom somewhere, each
Vicious smile acoustically alone, each
Note awaits audition, counting time

So like the old ones
Held in porchswing pendulums
Swinging through the precious
 summer nights,
Striking the hours with sighs.



Untitled

Ed Norman, 1980

Photography

ARTIST NOTES

Kyle Battin is currently pursuing a BFA at the Herron School of Art + Design, with a concentration in visual communication design. He studied VCD at Ivy Tech from 2009-2011. He then served six years active duty in the US Air Force. After military service, he studied illustration at the School of Visual Arts in NYC. Kyle is interested in blending design with illustration and fine arts. Currently working with the concept of patterns, he is attempting to produce works that might not be produced by camera: somewhere in between the surreal and the psychedelic, with subtle nods to abstract expression and cubist juxtaposition.

On "Pattern I" - Praying hands surround an eye: resembling something floral; something human; something familiar. The bordering bats are of primitive design. Together, a repeating, visual mantra. There is a focal-breathing between the singular element and the expanded whole; and a visual trilling throughout. The metallic, gold-ink sings among its red atmosphere.

On "Pattern V" - Digital plan for acrylic painting; work in progress. This is about the patterns of work: a tenacious drive, or a somber desperation; to exploit, or to be exploited; the hunter, or the hunted; to be enslaved by industry, or to be enslaved by one's own passion or obsession.

Veronica Breach is a Drawing & Illustration major. Myth and folklore serve as frequent inspiration for her art, and she counts many of her favorite artists from the Golden Age of Illustration. You can find more work and contact her through her Instagram @bitterbriar, or through her email vbreach@iu.edu.

On "Queen of Hearts" - A playing card design.

David Kendall Casey is a post-bachelor pre-medical student at IUPUI. Born and raised between Indiana and Rhode Island, he completed his B.A. in Philosophy at Rhode Island College in Providence, RI, then his M.A. in Philosophy, specializing in neuroscience and philosophy, at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA. He became interested in the medical sciences while completing his graduate coursework in neuroscience. Then, while researching and writing his master's thesis, he was also inspired to pursue writing, which he found to satisfy his interests in the intersection of medicine and the humanities. He plans to attend the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University beginning in the fall of 2022, and to one day become a physician, author, and professor.

On "The Alone, the Abandoned, and the Left Behind" - Though Casey's background is in analytical philosophy and science, which typically emphasize plain language and thorough argumentation, he's always appreciated the power

of the literary essay to meditate on subjects both grand and pedestrian, using language in all its beauty, precision, and ambiguity. This piece attempts just such a meditation on oft-ignored yet illuminating human artifacts: our cars.

On "Walking Down an Evening Beach" - The contours of this piece came into view on a recent trip to Florida; something about the vastness of the ocean always amplifies, for better or worse, the big questions of identity and purpose and mortality. Though originally written as a lyrical essay titled "Recurrence," which points more overtly to some of the themes it explores, this piece found its more natural, more evocative form in poetry.

Teresa Copenhaver is from Granger Indiana (better known as near Notre Dame) and is an Illustration major at Herron. She has published a novella, *Of Wood and Stars*, that she wrote and illustrated this spring! *Of Wood and Stars* is available for purchase on Amazon.

On "Blue Dragon" - This is a 11"x9" silkscreen monotype print. This dragon's design was inspired by the fossils of the Dilophosaurus. A marbling technique was used to achieve the textured background.

On "Stargazing" - This is an ink drawing on 12"x9" multimedia paper. This piece depicts two figures seated on the edge of a cliff gazing at the stars.

Rachael Cunningham is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at Herron School of Art and Design, IUPUI. Her major area of concentration is Integrative Studio Practice. Rachael is currently experimenting with a variety of mediums including painting, photography, and sculpture.

On "Rooster" - The main subject is a rooster located in a shop in Morocco. I found the bulging eyes and body language quite humorous.

Kitley DeFelice is studying Visual Communication Design at the Herron School of Art & Design. To gain more beneficial skills for her career, she has also taken some business classes from the Kelley School of Business at IUPUI as well. In addition to graphic design, Kitley produces digital photography as well, and she also enjoys working with typography. Her ultimate career goal after graduating from college is to work in the graphic design industry. For fun, she enjoys stationery, poetry (both reading it and writing her own), fountain pens, planning (the kind that's functional but also utilizes lots of fun stickers, washi tape, doodling, and fun pens, etc.), nature, animals, nail polish and nail art, bugs, foil washi tape, and—of course—graphic design, photography, art, and typography. She truly loves all sorts of things. She considers herself to be a "Renaissance Woman" of sorts.

Furthermore, she has even traveled to Japan, and she will even be taking another trip back there soon!

On "Dirtied" - This is a digital photograph taken by Kitley DeFelice. She candidly snapped the photo of her older brother off-roading in his ATV. Immediately, Kitley knew this photo would be best in black and white to emphasize all of the textures of the mud and dirt.

Frances Dimaranan, the artist, is a Visual Communication Design major. Currently, the artist is a freshman, and focuses on themes from their personal life.

On "Kumain" - The Filipino word 'kumain' means 'to eat.' The piece is done with a smoked fish in the center, a popular dish in the Philippines. Surrounding the fish, various dishes are placed with ambiguous hands, depicted using negative space. The piece celebrates different cultures intertwining through food.

On "Waffle House Wednesday" - A college tradition within the artist's friends. Waffle House became a weekly midnight dinner every Wednesday to celebrate the new relationships built by the college experience. Every week, there are old and new faces that attend, but it has always been a fun and whimsical experience for everybody.

Julia Dryer enjoys thinking about what could have caused old sculptures to break and fall apart and then draw whatever she imagines that to be.

On "Laid to Rest in Lilacs" - This piece was made to represent the coming together of nature and machine. It depicts an android who recently died resting in a field of lilacs. The lilacs will eventually overgrow the android and the machine will become a part of nature again.

On "Unexpected Guest" - I like to think about what could have caused old sculptures to break and fall apart and draw whatever I imagine that to be. For this piece I used the "Fragmentary Colossal Head of a Youth" from the Greek Hellenistic period around 2nd century B.C. as my reference and imagined that an alien broke out of the sculpture to escape.

Emma Yuan Fecteau is a Chinese-American adoptee. While she normally writes about dragon-riding heroes who break the fourth wall, Emma is also interested in portraying the adoptee experience, a unique subset of Chinese-American culture that she wishes was represented more often.

On "Fanwa Road" - This is a fictionalized account of real events, and explores the hypothetical experience of a birth mother.

Megan Fisher is a digital illustrator who has a BFA in Drawing and Illustration from Herron School of Art and Design. Her work mostly includes character

design/concepts, and world building illustrations. She has also created an online presence, Pudding Overlord, and sells prints, stickers, pins, and other merchandise.

On "Growth" - When creating this work, I was going through my first breakup. The relationship I had been in was abusive for two years, and each emotion shown on the work was stages I had felt during the process.

Siren Hand (They/Them/Mx.) is an Indianapolis (IN) writer and disabled veteran who uses poetry to process and communicate their veteran experience, and fiction to examine the relationships in the world around them. They served as a Geospatial Imagery Intelligence Analyst and Drill Sergeant in the US Army for nine years, and now attends IUPUI for Creative Writing and Sociology with the goal to specialize in Poetic and Narrative Therapy. Siren and their wonderful partner Adam Henze run Antiquated Arts, a creative literary arts project that incorporates typewriters and vintage touches into community and private events. They also have three dogs who are complete jerks (even still, since last publication).

On "Better Fences" - This examines how social dynamics affect coming of age in Bean Creek, an Indianapolis working class neighborhood.

On "Safety Brief" - This uses a security-minded framework to examine protests that took place throughout Indiana during 2020.

Sidnea Hearn is a junior attending IUPUI, graduating in May of 2022, majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Africana Studies. Sidnea knew early on that she enjoyed writing and illustrating and she fell in love with the art of writing poetry.

Aiden Heavilin is a philosophy major at IUPUI. He makes music with the band Lava Lamp, and writes stuff too.

On "The Conductor's Funeral" - It is an excerpt from his forthcoming novel *His Unfinished Symphony*.

Sage Justice is a senior studying Creative Writing at IUPUI. He is interested in writing poetry and horror stories in the future, working towards a life as a professional writer and editor.

Corlan McCollum is a real human being from Pittsboro, Indiana, who loves to explore the worlds of his characters.

Lauren Pickering is a junior at Herron School of Art and Design working toward an ISP major with a focus in Drawing and Illustration as well as

Printmaking.

On "A Dream of Frog and Toad" - A sweet dreamy memento to the *Frog and Toad* books by Arnold Lobell with two hand sewn plushes with a copper wire armature resting on top of a set I built with faux grass and plants.

On "I'm an Octo and I Love my Cats" - A fun and silly self-portrait remake of a Yuko Shimizu album cover with my two cats, wine, and my favorite chrysanthemum flowers.

On "Dark Wavering Thought" - An exploration of exaggeration using digital mediums to mimic traditional.

Emma Schwartz is a senior Drawing and Illustration Major. Within her work, she explores how secular and religious cultures intersect and clash. Within those realms, she surveys topics of purity, morality, and goodness and how they relate to body autonomy.

On "Lollipop, Lollipop, Oh, Lolli-Lolli-Lolli" - This painting is part of a series where I show how numerous religious and secular customs violate women by subjecting them to physical and emotional abuse. This painting is a self-portrait, however, the work is not purely an introspection to my own life. I hope to represent a broader experience that many women have. I choose to pose with objects that symbolize purity in religious art and customs.

Kat Scott holds a BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design and is a graduate student at IUPUI. She currently lives and works in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Kaiti Shannon is a graduate student at IUPUI finishing her master's in Applied Communication in Spring 2022. She went to IUPUI for her undergrad and received a bachelor's in Communication Studies, a bachelor's in English Literature, a minor in Spanish, and a certificate in Theatre and Performance Studies. Kaiti has published two books, *Life is Poetry Volume 1: The First Decade* and *Life is Poetry: The Four Seasons*. She loves spending time hiking in nature which inspires much of her writing, academic and otherwise.

On "Bladed Mirror" - This photo reflects (literally) a thinker contemplating deep thoughts about the world while doing simple activities such as standing in the kitchen or doing dishes. The thinker suddenly catches their appearance reflected in a blade, where one would least expect such introspection to be.

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Alex Spurling is in his junior year at IUPUI, double-majoring in Philosophy and English. Alex enjoys: traveling, writing, and meeting new people.

Jacob Stewart is an honors student at IUPUI studying neuroscience with the intentions of going to medical school to become a pediatric neurologist. He has loved writing poetry since he was 13, drawing inspiration from traditional and folk music as well as the Christian hymns of his youth. In his free time, he loves running and playing the piano.

Tara Ventura is a junior majoring in history and minoring in creative writing at IUPUI. As an aspiring writer and future educator, her poetry focuses on girlhood, identity, and mental health. When she's not in class at IUPUI, she can usually be found at work in high school classrooms, trying to explain to fifteen-year-olds what a semi-colon does.

Megan Vogeler is a senior working towards getting a BFA in painting at Heron School of Art & Design while also getting an Associate's degree in Interior Design. She plans to graduate in the spring of 2022 and work back at home in South Bend, IN with a business associated with interior design and continue to focus on painting in which she can be sell to clients through her interior design work, while also expanding her artist business. Megan's work currently focuses on emotions, contentment and the idea that there is much more to life as a human that we often fail to recognize. She gets her inspiration from self-reflecting on past experiences, deep conversations and life experiences with others and explores the use of color, mainly in portraiture as well as dabbling in landscape work. She also likes to incorporate floral work into her paintings to symbolize these feelings and emotions she responds to so deeply. Through her interior design work, she hopes to be able to reach more people on a daily basis and open their minds to tapping into their own emotions to feel alive again, especially in their own home, and not get stuck in the "American way of living."

On "Acceptance" - This piece is a reflection on learning to accept the love one has and not dwelling on the past or future of wanting what was or what will be, but acknowledging and accepting what is. The idea of reaching that point of acceptance/contentment is represented through the mandevilla flower.

Tamara Watkins is an illustrator who specializes in a wide range of materials and styles. She enjoys making works about fantasy scenes or parodies. Oftentimes she will experiment with unusual color schemes or subject matter to elicit specific emotions, usually made to shock or inspire the viewer.

On "Shepard's Causeway" - This piece was produced as an assignment in

an illustration class where we had to mimic the style of a 20th century illustrator to create a new piece of art. The artist I chose was E. H. Shepard who illustrated *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The Wind in the Willows*.

On "My Parents' Crazy Hoarder Basement" - Made in a drawing class as an assignment where we had to draw a room of our house. I drew my parents' messy basement because I thought it was funny and it made for great subject matter.

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