

INK
A LITERARY ARTS
MAGAZINE

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WOODLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Ink

A Literary Arts Magazine

Issue 25

*Woodland Community College
Spring 2025*

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Submissions

If you are a current student of Woodland Community College, Colusa County Campus, or Lake County Campus and would like to contribute to future issues, please see wcc.yccd.edu/ink for submission guidelines and deadlines.

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All, Nothing, and Something

Zack Allison

I could die in the next minute. I could live forever, somewhere.
I could lay in this grass, by letting the breeze bring me the memories of lilac.

The lavender claims its presence, I'm torn as a thorn, but I'll settle for something.

I call it peace; you might call it serenity.

The summer gets you going but the fall makes you feel you're getting nowhere.

I could keep running, but maybe getting nowhere isn't so bad after all.

Right or Left

Brittany Fickas

It had started to rain, causing the front window to fog up. Julia, and her girlfriend Cadence were driving home from an after prom party, their silver compact car whipping around sharp turns, and narrow, pothole riddled roads. Julia's shaky hands gripped the pink steering wheel cover, her glittery eyeshadow smudged, and streaks of black trailing from the tears soaking her cheeks.

"You said you wouldn't talk to him anymore. Why do you keep doing this?" Julia sobbed, swerving the wheel to avoid a large pothole.

"Oh my god, he was just complimenting our outfits. He said you looked pretty!" Cadence rolled her hazel eyes, lined with thick eyeliner and lack of sleep.

"I bet you're still fucking him," Julia snarled, squinting to see through a small clear patch in the foggy windshield. "I hate you!"

"You're so fucking insecure, it's honestly pathetic," Cadence said, clicking her tongue in disgust.

Julia's chest tightened, and vision blurred from new tears. She fiddled around the middle console to find the defrost button, biting her tongue to hold back her sobs.

"Babe, slow down!" Cadence screamed, as she noticed the road turned sharply up ahead, and Julia was driving over 70 miles per hour.

Julia gasped, and tried to slow down. The two left tires went off the paved road, and the imbalance caused the car to flip. The sound of scraping and crashing metal stirred the life in the wooded area surrounding the roads. The car tumbled and rolled six times, finally

landing upside down. Cadence coughed up blood, and strained open her eyes through the pain riddling her body. Her head pulsed, as the blood quickly rushed to her head.

“Julia? Julia!” Cadence cried, straining her neck to look at her girlfriend.

Blood dripped from Julia’s head, creating a dark puddle beneath her. Cadence’s sobs filled the silent car, as she scrambled to unbuckle her seatbelt. She landed hard on the metal roof of the car, shattered glass cracking beneath her weight. A gurgled scream escaped her lips, as she could feel her cracked ribs shifting beneath her fragile skin. Her ankle was numb, and her hands were covered in tiny fragments of glass, wedging their way into her flesh. She dragged herself out of the shattered passenger window and crawled to Julia’s side. She reached in and tried to unbuckle Julia’s seatbelt. It wouldn’t budge. She squeezed and shook the buckle, burying glass deeper in her palm, and still no luck. Her fingers brushed Julia’s brown hair out of her face and she held one to her nose. Julia was still breathing.

Cadence used the side of the car to pull herself up, her numb foot dangling. She tried to take a step, but collapsed under the pressure. Her ankle screamed at her, a banshee ringing in her brain. Gritting her teeth, she pulled herself up again. Looking back at Julia’s unconscious body - arms and hair hanging limply over her bloodied head - Cadence thought of calling for help, but realized her phone was on her lap when they crashed. It must’ve been tossed from the car along with Julia’s.

“I’m going to get us help. I’m going to get us help!” Cadence cried, and limped her way back up the road.

She fell, and rolled a couple times, attempting to climb out of the steep ditch. Her body was battered with scrapes and bruises by the time her glass riddled hands touched the cool pavement of the bumpy back road. Laying roughly around her as she squinted in the darkness, her red dress was haunting. Tattered and torn, her pale skin made her look like a ghost on the road. There were no street lights, and no nearby houses. She couldn’t tell which way they had come from.

“Right or left? Right or left? Right or left?” Cadence repeatedly whispered. The left seemed darker than the right, which had a little bit of moonlight lighting the road. “Right.”

She ground her teeth with each step. Moving as fast as possible, she thought about how much damage Julia sustained, and that she couldn’t hang upside down for too long. She pictured her velvet brown hair, and deep chocolate eyes, wide like a doll’s. *Is this my fault?* If she hadn’t been talking to Sal, they wouldn’t be in this situation. *No, it’s her fault*, Cadence thought bitterly. Cadence imagined what Julia would be

like if she wasn't insecure. She would be *perfect*. The road led to an intersection. Again, she had to choose right or left. *Left*.

The cold air helped numb Cadence's body, but she could feel herself growing weaker. A rustling in the bushes to the left of her made her freeze. She stopped, and listened for a few seconds. The rustling stopped, so she continued walking. The rustling started again. It sounded closer this time. A chill brushed her bruised spine, making her weak legs tremble in place.

She walked, and the rustling began again. "Is someone there?" Cadence called out, already knowing no one would answer.

She began walking faster, and the rustling picked up speed. Her ankle slowed her down greatly, and she cried, afraid of the sound. The rustling sounded like it was inside her head, leaves and twigs cracking like drumsticks against her eardrum. She could feel something warm drip from her ears, and the drumming was now so loud that she couldn't hear anything else around her. The woods were dark, but she could see shadows in the moonlight, moving behind the brush.

"Leave me alone!" Cadence cried, her voice was a helpless whisper that she couldn't hear behind the drums.

She wondered why she was standing in the street, being stalked by the wiry haired, skinny creature lurking on all fours behind a large tree. She could see it. It was watching her. She wondered why she had ever broken up with Sal.

The drums cut off and the blaring of a car horn snapped her focus back to the road. She gasped, her limp foot now a part of the road. A deer in headlights.

Intimacy

Zack Allison

Intimacy is beyond the kisses and cuddles. Intimacy is getting a headache and taking a nap, and waking up to your laundry folded and your partner rubbing your back.

Intimacy is crying and yelling at night about your past to someone who listens and comforts you. Intimacy is watching shows in your pjs for hours and eating pizza together.

And being able to communicate love through holding hands.

It's never running out of conversation but doing it always to enjoy each other's company and silence.



Sarjapur Road

Medium: Digital

Neha Kanive

Sayonara, Sonnet √\$*##*@¥¢!!!

BK Bellamy

it chafes my ear and grates my nerve, ten beats
 whatever wisdom harks to share as great
 the lines poured out, the gist, the tone, the deets
 would rise wise mist to gold with beats of eight

believe me when I say my ear knows best
 though others try to tell me I am wrong
 they claim I pine to point of itchy pest
 eight beats is best in cosmic quest for song

do trust me when I say you'll find I'm right
 I guess another ear might hear it diff's
 ten beats is two past time to say good night
 as demonstrated by the finest riffs

but won this one you have this time by nose
 lost time erasing ten beats from my prose

Illegal lines were added late
to show the ruling beat is eight

Dance

BK Bellamy

do you remember
do you remember when
the moon was walkin' its way across its starlit friend
halfway home
behind curtained windows, candles tellin' us of light
our bare feet absorbed the beat
as we spun through the night

so i've been thinkin'
thinkin' bout when
the music came back to life with the night closin' in
day was gone
arms like wings soared thru our own private sky
divin' so deep, so real
inward we'd fly

how about those times
does it ever cross your mind
we turned the telephone off, the nights were ours to define
nobody home
eyes shut tight saw all we needed to see
rhythm winnin', bodies spinnin'
'til we set ourselves free

And we danced
all that we could not say
We danced stubborn
into the coming day
And we
shuffled
swayed
whirled
whoofed
danced
confusion away

A New Dawn

Michael Groves

The night is long and dark I wander down this unceasing road. I continue on this journey with excitement sending shivers through my body.

I've been waiting for this moment since yesterday, this singular moment is the true beginning of my day.

I continue on my way until finally I reach the top of a hill and sit down to rest in the chilling dew-covered grass.

This is it, the place I've been searching for. The place where I can rest and truly start my day.

In waiting for the right moment I begin to stare into the night sky gazing at the stars and counting them like seconds, seconds until the moment arrives, with each second that passes the time draws nigh for the moment to arrive.

When the moment is right I say my final goodbye to the moon thanking it for illuminating my journey to my desired destination.

At last, the time has come I turn away to face the new light that illuminates from the opposite direction. the sun begins to shine from behind the horizon marking the dawn of a new day, and with the dawn of a new day comes a light illuminating the area around me.

As the sun continues to come into view its light radiates onto the grassy green plains around me. the light so bright reflects off the dew that has formed on the grasslands around me and shines upon me.

My entire body once tired from the long trek to reach my desired destination, shivering from both cold and excitement feels rejuvenated from the light of a new day shining upon me.

Tis truly a wonderful way to start the day.

Spirit Animal

BK Bellamy

Spirit animal
you found my house

up the sidewalk
you came
a walking giggle

Pale face
in deepest dark night
eyes of intense
eyes of intent
Snout.

I am you and you are me.

You
think you were
summoned
invited
conjured
into existence

I
did
not
see
you
coming

I was deep
in
to
the crossword puzzle
for crying out loud

So I wish to say straight out that sniffing my toe without warning way
crossed the line

Possum.

My friend Trey from Texas says I should put a blanket on my lap and
invite you up

That's
not
ever
happening

Louis.

Sonnet 1

Stevie Carr

Does me living make you truly enraged?
Saying God would never make a mistake
In this conformed world we have become caged
Living a life we have to fight to make

In this country freedom will not be free
Believing the lies that you have been told
Forever will you be a worker bee
Hearing white man until you have grown old

Black, white, gay, straight, trans, cis, alive and well
We are the people who give you riches
And taking it all from us as we fell
We stand back up bearing lengthy stitches

To the white authority we won't fail
Having heard our stories we prevail

Convo with the Painters

BK Bellamy

Ma was beat with a god stick
literally
when she was caught
dancing
by her grandma

so a religious life
was never
in my stack of life cards

Never imagined
I'd live a long time anyway
and have a need for church
since Pops was a
big can o' danger
Hundred miles an hour
and spinning donuts on ice
was a life still too slow for him
Big bear hugging us
and sinking to the bottom
of the public swimming pool
was his favorite flavor fun
Learned by early days
how to hold my breath
whenever that man was around

So the first time the cosmos came for me
and me alone
with big true intentions
Dragged me under water
tried to drown me
in the superb sea
I felt
I would like to speak with
a representative,
an agent
Please

By that time
I'd dreamt up
my own system

Stitched in place
by a few
Twilight Zone
and Night Gallery
episodes
on TV

My mind imagined
a team of body-free
designers
engineers
painters
floating in the ether
creating and erasing
all things on the planet

Competitions for
best bird design
or body of water
Most dramatic destruction
of a life.

Highly rewarded
were twists and turns
nobody saw coming

This I believed on that day
(and still do)

...
I'm farther out from shore than intended

I choose to view that as adventurous
and
accidental
bravery

planetary painters
nosy nellies
see golden opportunity,
to poke through
to teach
“that one again”
a nugget of wisdom,
a whop upside the head works best for my type it's decided

whopping wave crashes into open mouth,
salty liquid power floods
my insides

Undertow
pulls me down
like an old boulder
crashing deep
into the sea
deeper down
deeper down
into
bottomless
body of water
and I
pause
a moment

...
Then
struggle
begins

towards light surrounding me from all directions

I choose one direction
hope it's up

kick and
kick
pull and
pull
through the sea water
towards the chosen light

lips locked like strong box, coveting small bubble of breath still trapped
inside

I fight surge of panic I feel

Thrash and
claw towards
what I need most
in that moment,
air to tumble into my lungs

hercules arms pull through liquid towards the light, any light

I can win this one I say to myself

...

But I begin to tire

I am wrong

and

panic overtakes

Then

I am done

What a short one this one was, this life

Oh well

in the wink of an eye

accidental brave one

repainted into fool

I did my stubborn best

to persevere,

undig the hole done dug

That's gotta count

for something

they want me back

they can have me

Body relaxes

releases

accepts

the struggle is over

I loosen up

I float

and the conversation

begins

Really?

This.

is how you're going to snatch me back? I'm only freaking nine.

was just starting

to have a little fun going on down here

Have big plans to somehow conjure the spinning bottle

to land on my first crush

danny malak

when I get back

home
And learn some new
cuss words

So.
a total dick move on your part
if you ask me, painter posse

Hey
what's with my life not flashing through my mind
I feel a bit cheated by that

yeah, you guys,
kinda pissed off
I'm not gonna make it through this one

Why me?
(why not me? I ask myself)

I float

No idea
which way is up or down
just know that
I've been underwater
for too long now

But.
Whatever.

Fuuuuuuck.
I tried.
I float.
I know.
This is it.
yet I am no longer terrified

I float
Time stops
ticking
for me
...

Then
head above it
stinging eyes pop open
gobbling air

Shock
I see shore
use final frags
life
force
slowly
drag
heavy
body
through
heavy
liquid
to
land
to
sand

I live.

Painted back into the scene
(hey
you missed a spot,
just saying
dickheads...
until we meet again my friends,
danny malak pucker up)

Grapevine
Stevie Carr

Being stuck in the wrong body
Will forever make me jealous
Of those who can be gaudy
And overzealous

Free to be who they are and unafraid that they were made shoddy

I wish I was fleshless
So I wouldn't have to hate this broken body
Let me grow like a vine on a trellis

Accidental beauty and a busybody
Only needing to grow reckless
Not having to be somebody
Just sitting atop a breathtaking terrace



Intricate Touch (1 of 4 drawings)
Medium: graphite pencil
Ramish Naseem

A Rose

Sebastian Mendez

The most beautiful flower I found in a garden
But this flower had thorns
I was too blinded by the beauty that I picked it up
my hands were covered in blood
Ignoring the pain, I carried it everywhere
The flower never told me it had thorns
My hands felt numb
The only option was to let it go
I left it there to die

Do I Ever Think About You

BK Bellamy

You wonder do I ever think
about you

I spread your kindness
onto my morning toast

Sweet crystals
of your wisdom
merge and melt
into my pot of tea

Sprinkles
of your gentleness
add extra flavor
to my bowl of blueberries

Your yummy
belly deep
shoulder shaking
chuckle
fills water with warmth
to wash loneliness
from my bones

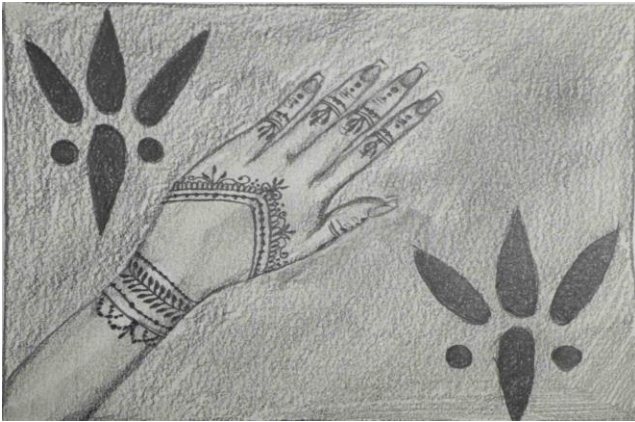
I slather tired and thirsty skin
with your serenity

I slowly slip
each weary arm in,
and cocoon
inside the shirt
steeped in your light
from last we met

The memory of
your eyes,
the deep mirror I look into when I feel empty and unsure

When I dance, I dance with you
I knit the fabric of you
into my new favorite scarf,
now every soft fiber
shields me
when a chill takes hold

So
yeah
I think about you sometimes



Intricate Touch (2 of 4 drawings)

Medium: graphite pencil

Ramish Naseem

I Remember

Shannon Witham

Going to Grandma and Grandpa's, having lots of fun,
Swiping cookies, sending us on the run.
Trying to be a chef, burning a cake,
Sweeping off the front porch with a long-handled rake.
Strolling down the path of my enchanted memory lane,
Splashing through puddles of joy and pain.
Baking cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve,
Saving carrots for reindeer on the leave.
Trying on a pair of pants and a blouse,
While spending the night at my cousin's house.
Sneaking out at night snatching candy,
Mother spanking us with the newspaper handy.
Going to the fair, trying all the rides
Being late and father tanning our hides
Going fishing on a rowboat with joy,
Playing Captain and first Mate, is there a whale? A-hoy!
So many memories filled with laughter and zest,
So hard to choose which one is the best.
Sitting on my mother's lap while she sings me a song
Listening to my father tell me right from wrong.
Going to Grandpa's funeral learning to deal with death,
Fearing that Grandma will gasp her last breath.

Full Brightness

Stevie Carr

She likes to claim she is the moon and I am the sun.
That she only shines because of the light I give off.

How wrong she is.

The way she leaps across that stage
The way she is so careful guarding my heart
Making sure no one can hurt it

My love, she is all of the colors at full brightness.
Beaming with curiosity and wonder
So beautiful

And so vibrant
Bringing life back into my soul
Making me the happiest I have ever been to be alive.

Favorite Colors

Shannon Witham

I look at the sky and I note that it's blue
Blue is my favorite color, and it makes me think of you
I think of how your favorite color was brown
And I wonder how anyone, but especially you could favor brown
A man who could bring trees and clouds to life on a blank canvas
You make me see things differently
You didn't stray away from the ugly and insipidity
But instead accentuated its beauty and grandness

I surely thought blue would fit you better though
Little did I know you would be a trendsetter
I find myself admiring the rich chocolatey brown that is bark on a tree
Or the warmth that the color brown brings me when I drink coffee
I live my life hanging on to coffee drip by drip
And without it I know that I cannot grasp to even get a grip
I look down and note that it's brown
Creamy and decadent the color is dark and lightens with each drop of cream
Who knew brown could have so many different shades and varieties
I think I might like the color brown or is this a dream?
I needed you the way I needed coffee
And brown started to grow on me

I look to see leaves that fell from an autumn tree
I can't decide whether the crisp fallen leaves
Are brown or burgundy
The deep red bleeds into a vibrant brown
Leaving me to question where the burgundy ends
And the brown begins
Brown might just be my favorite color now

You touched me with a loving hand
And showed me what it meant
To be loved by a man

My father I never knew
Because of you I never needed to
You were kind even when you didn't want to be
Sometimes in terrible pain and still felt the need to say please, and I love
you
So, I'm sorry,
I'm afraid I'll never find someone just like you

One day I looked at the sky and it made me think of you
I wondered where you were and if you were looking down on me
I was no longer thinking of the color blue
But instead, I was thinking of you
I was thinking of you and your laugh
Laughter that was big and could fill a room
I was thinking of your eyes and how they could brighten my mood

For they were the shade of the most brilliant blue

Stage Director

Olivia Myatt

I came out the womb speaking.
These days, I only do it wrong.
On the page I have forever
to know and be known. So I
will wind and unwind until
someone loves me and notices.
I know they aren't the same thing.

When I was four, I wanted
to go to school for two reasons:
I wanted to make friends, and I
wanted to learn how to read.
Almost nineteen years later
I have done both of those things, to
varying degrees of success.

Every conversation has
happened before; I just have to
unearth it and learn my lines first.
Thank you to the patient ones

who let me stumble through, though
I speak slowly, and in excess,
and don't always get to the point.

January 20, 2019

Brittany Fickas

The chill nips at my feathers, as the lamppost flickers.
A night owl with cautious claws, wide eyes adjusting in the midnight
hour.
Feathers rustle, as he walks across the empty park.
His arms are warm, broad wings smoldering mine.

The moon bleeds as our hearts blend.
A spotlight guiding us through the world.
Two owls entangled in the night.
Fly through the naked streets with me.

Laughter like the sound of the beat of my wings,
and a smile spaced out to let his feelings slip through.
He doesn't let his feelings slip through.
His shadow engulfs me and I can breathe.

Midnight as the Wolf Moon lights up his shadowed eyes
Round spheres earthy like his feathers,
and I wonder what life was before him.
Who are you, night owl, to waltz into my secluded home and make
yourself comfortable?
I never liked being alone

So stay with me until the sun comes up
A thousand times and more
Don't leave my side you great horned owl
Let's do this again tonight.

My Childhood Home

Sebastian Mendez

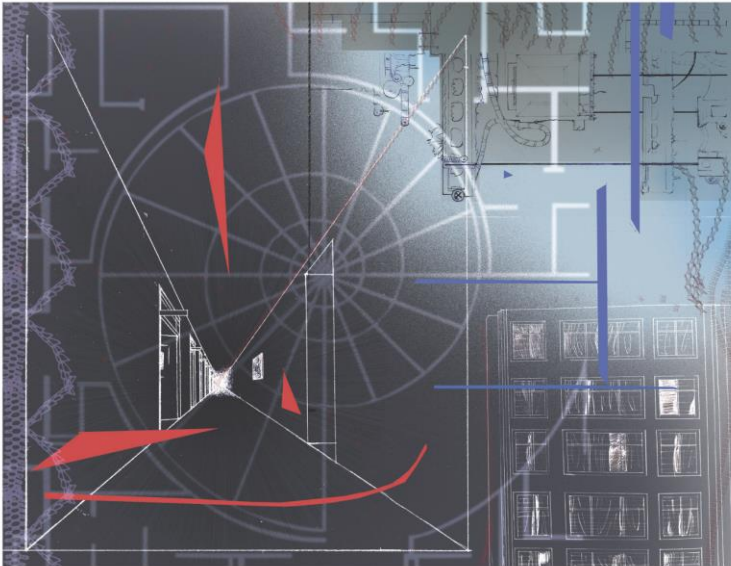
A sturdy frame with thick walls of wood
Rocks and dirt surround the bone

Having a patch behind and never overgrown
But it grew old and tired but was strong and fine
Each drawer and corner breaks apart
And each with stories within

The windows cracked, and the doors would sigh.
The floor was once soft, but now it is cold
The kitchen was warm, but with walls falling apart
Where we grew up and grew old with the home

Looking back now, it still stands, and memories still last.
Most memories are in the kitchen and living room
The memories of first learning how to walk
Being outside with trees bigger than the house
Going outside when it first snowed

Leaving the house was too hard for the mind
Leaving emotions and these memories behind
But I will never forget the one who gave us comfort



I had a recurring dream about a storage room in NPS and all I made was this abstract artwork

Medium: Digital

Neha Kanive

A College Student's Sonnet

Brittany Fickas

An apple a day keeps doctors away
But what about the voices in my head
Doctor's orders, don't just sit and obey.
But they whisper pretty lies that I dread.

Time keeps ticking, it's a slippery slope.
Due dates and misery, what's life become
I don't have time to care or time to cope.
The voices laugh, an unforgiving drum.

My grades are slipping and hair is splitting.
Anxiety keeps creeping in my veins
Tired from part time jobs you feel like quitting
Smoke and dissociate to numb the pains

Time to face my inevitable fate
Again another assignment in late.

Always With Love

Stevie Carr

There is much to be said about love
Some say it is what holds the universe together
Others may disagree and say it is going to tear it apart

However
I perceive it as

A sunny day with vibrant green fields blowing in the wind
A rainy afternoon, bundled in blankets watching from a nearby window
A night in bed crying, terrified of the feeling
A morning feeling empty from the night before
The one you love being there for you regardless of everything
The one you love bringing you comfort in times of despair

The one you love crying with you, for you

It holds the universe together while also tearing it apart
It pushes and pulls
But it is always constant

Always

Ouroboros Wormhole (the Comet Eats Its Tail)

Olivia Myatt

[TEXT TRANSCRIPT:]

YOU WANT to RESTORE Strange Minds!

Holes in Newborn Aliens and Idols –

Everyone Loves Surviving.

One Gut Feeling, Ancient and DYING

An Invisible Mystery:

HOW TO Be a Better You?!

threats known and unknown lurk as Earth moves around the sun.
threats may cause cyclical mass extinctions.



Aurora

Shannon Witham

When she first came into my life, she was a wakeup call
The call was brisk and cold like ice water being thrown on me while in a
deep slumber
Or the loudest alarm bells I ever heard during the worst hangover

She came to me helpless and small
Looking to me for comfort and protection
Immediately at her arrival I was not ready
But she needed me and I would soon realize how much I needed her
I memorized her angelic face in her first couple hours born
And counted each eyelash as she slept and remarked at her perfection
Her features were oxytocin inducing
Pictures could not do her justice
And even this poem will fall short to describe a mother's absolute
adoration

She only grew to be more beautiful and more beautiful still
Her features changed so fast but nonetheless continued to impress
Her hair was short and the color of strawberries
It was just long enough to tickle the tips of her shoulder blades
Her eyes were the coolest hue easily making a mockery out of glaciers
themselves
And her skin pale and fair as if never touched by the sun
Her smile was brighter than the northern lights themselves

She was my wakeup call
And in the beginning the call was hateful and strange
And now she -
The call
Is the highlight of my day

MIDNIGHT DUE

Olivia Myatt

i would usually be suffocating around that time of night;
i would listen to a deafening lightbulb under blacked-out windows until
i pried my body back to dream nothing and wake sore.

you saved me from stasis as
you so often do, and
you said “good job.”

we left past midnight and
we didn’t think to bring an umbrella so
we walked in the rain, but it was nice.

i remember:

patchouli laundry detergent.
sweat.
smoke from both incense and weed.
the soft round body, cold and damp, of the toad you placed in my palms.
the way you ran after it.
raccoon dark circles.
the first full breath.

on this, my favorite night, we got home laughing
two soft round bodies, cold and damp, and i don’t remember the movie.
it could have been anything.

Two Hearts In One

Stevie Carr

Their cheeks are red like the skin of a ripe pomegranate.
The sun kissed a tad too harsh.

Fingers interlaced in a complex puzzle.

Sand trickles down their backs
Water is weaving an intricate pattern in their hair
Waves are pounding on the shore to the rhythm of their heartbeats.

They don't feel or hear any of it
The tension is overwhelming.
Butterflies are fluttering, fighting to burst from their rib cages
Each too afraid to make a move.

One leans their head on the other's shoulder
This will be as far as they go today.



Persona Banner 2

Medium: Digital Painting

Cat Goehry-Jocson



Directionally Challenged: No Data

HV



Souls

Medium: Digital Image



Wheee!

Medium: Digital Painting

Cat Goehry-Jocson



An Entrance to the Spirit Realm and Its Guardian

Medium: Digital Painting

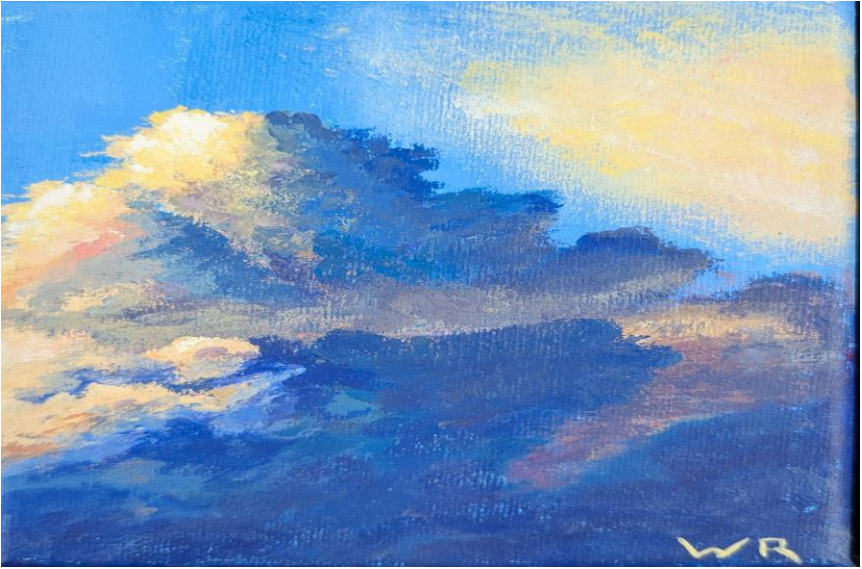
Cat Goehry-Jocson



Purple Door

Medium: Poster Color

Angelina Parsons



Ethereal

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Wren Rother



Little Blue Guy

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Zei Sanabria



Ancestors

Digital Image

A.H.



Femicide

Medium: Mixed Media

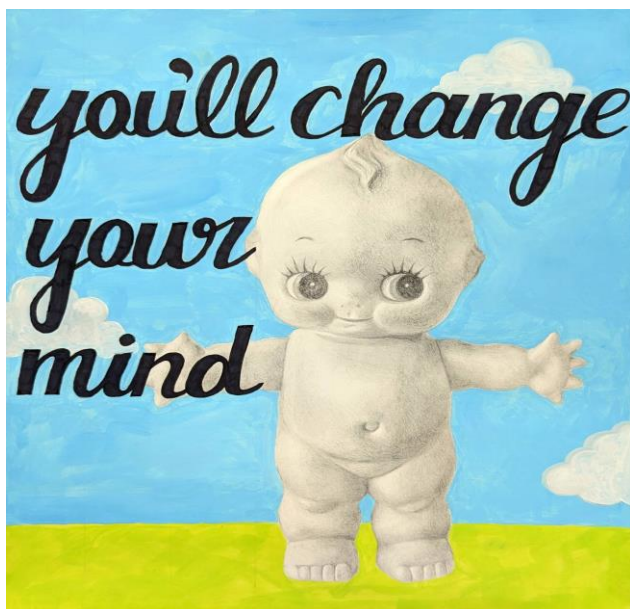
Zei Sanabria



Darkness

Medium: Mixed Media

Zei Sanabria



You'll Change Your Mind

Medium: Acrylic and Graphite on Canvas-Paper

Gabriella Garcia



I Have More Than Enough

Medium: Acrylic and Colored Pencils on Canvas-Paper
 Gabriella Garcia



Uncontainable Natural Smite

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas
 Wren Rother



Sun Crow

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Emily Yue



Blue Clouds

Medium: Poster

Color

Angelina

Parsons

The After Party

Brittany Fickas

A cold breeze trickled through the cracked windows, and moaned down the dusty chimney, tickling Sasha's spine. Her dark eyes studied the group of drunk juniors and seniors, who were all busy giggling, and stumbling about the abandoned home, as she lit the last candle. She dusted off a pillow from the torn and faded couch, and set it on the floor in front of the crumbling fireplace. Her fingers bunched up her lacy black dress, so she could sit without getting tangled up. Glossy eyes noticed her sitting, and waiting, so they began to gather around. Gingy, with her curly red locks straightened out for the special day, and complementary red dazzling dress, flopped on the faded couch, with her older date sitting beside her, his matching red bow tie undone, and draping over his black button up. His name was Bobby, and he had bought all the alcohol for the group. Sasha's best friend who dragged her to prom, Kate, sat right beside her, and Sal and Lisa sat across the circle from them.

Chris and Maria were busy making out by the front door, until Gingy threw a pillow across the room and nailed Chris right in his head. Everyone laughed drunkenly as they joined the group.

"Nah, I'm scared Sasha gonna put a curse on us or something," Chris mumbled, making the group laugh again.

Sasha grinned, and waved her tattooed fingers around the air in front of her and mouth *booo*. "You know I live out here, on these backroads. Not this road specifically, but close by. There's... things out here that don't come into the city. Things that don't like to be seen," she said eerily.

"Things?" Gingy whispered, clinging to Bobby. "Oh Sasha, I told you no ghost stories! Especially in this house!"

"Well, it's not a ghost, it's more... Do you guys know what happened to this house?"

The room grew quiet, and the house creaked. Goosebumps rose on the group's skin as the candles flickered.

"There was a fire. I remember hearing the sirens. I could even smell the smoke from my home, but the weird thing was, they didn't find a body, or even a cause of the fire. My neighbors claim to have seen a light in one of the second floor windows on occasion, late at night."

Gingy gasped, and began looking around in a panic. Sal chuckled, but quickly wiped his expression away when Lisa knocked over a bottle of whiskey.

"Oh shiiiiit, sowwwwy," Lisa slurred, splashing her hands in the puddle of whiskey.

Sal snatched her hands away, and sighed. “Shit, Sasha, I would love to hear another one of your stories, but I should take Lisa home.”

“Oh come on!” Chris and Maria groaned simultaneously, and Kate got up to help Lisa to her feet. “Hit me up tomorrow!” Chris said, bumping his fist against Sal’s.

“Drive safe!” Gingy hollered.

Sal waved behind him, walking carefully to keep Lisa from falling. Luckily, he had a plastic bag in his backseat, and handed it to her.

“Use this if you-” He didn’t even have to finish his sentence because she was already puking into it.

“Hopefully they get home safe. Hopefully we all get home safe... There’s a creature lurking on these backroads, and late at night, after he’s finished devouring his prey, he comes back home to rest. If we stay long enough, we’ll be able to see him.” Sasha scanned the group, satisfied with their tense expressions. “Mr. Scottsdale says it’s the bastard child to the man who owns this house. He hasn’t seen the man in years, but he believes he left the child behind to fend for himself. He saw the child once, creeping in an upstairs window. He was pale, never allowed out in the sun, with limbs long and frail like a praying mantis, and teeth jagged like the serrated edges of a rusted knife. It’s said that in order to survive, he hunts people stranded out on the backroads.”

A candle went out from a sudden gust of wind through the missing front door, causing Gingy and Maria to scream. Sasha laughed, and took a shot from a bottle Kate handed to her.

Sal drove quickly down the winding back road, distracted with making sure Lisa didn’t throw up in his car. A flare of red drew his attention back to the road, but it was too late. The smack made his heart stop, and made the car jerk and swerve from the impact. His heavy breaths were barely a whisper compared to Lisa’s dramatic screams. Sal glanced at her, and tensed his jaw. Her throw up bag had spilled all over her silky deep blue dress.

“What was that?” She screamed, her words gurgled and almost inaudible.

“I think I hit something. Hold on,” Sal said, voice a little shaky as he opened the car door.

He got out of the car, looking around with wide eyes, trying to adjust to the darkness. He clicked his tongue, worried that his dad would notice the dented bumper and hood. Luckily whatever he had hit didn’t damage the windshield. He walked away from the car, trying to find what he hit on the road. Crimson staining the bumpy backroad reflected against the moonlight, wet and fresh. A large puddle lay a few feet

behind the car in the middle of the road, and a thin trail dragged off from the puddle, and into the bushes. Sal's stomach knotted, and his throat dried.

"Hel-hello? Anyone out there?"

He squinted towards the bushes along the road, but couldn't see anything in the shadows. The sound of rustling made his hairs stand on end, and he ran back to the car. He locked the car doors, and put the car in reverse to get back on the road. Lisa had fallen asleep, so he was alone on the dark, winding road, with only the sound of rustling to keep him company.

Spring Cleaning (Fluoxetine 40mg)

Olivia Myatt

Twenty three years gather here, under
crust of hair and tears and translucent shed skin.
The windows are old, and rattle with storms.
The paint has peeled and spiders in corners
watch over me, saying how well I house
their fading webs and all the other things
I don't need.
Mom says if we ever want to sell the house,
the rooms need to be clean.

Presentable.

Imagining living somewhere else is like
trying to come up with a new color
or imagining I have a future that doesn't look like
drowning.
I used to think I could do it.

The first time I felt happy for two days in a row
for no reason other than medication working
I cried.

I was fifteen, maybe sixteen.
For a second I really did see a new color
and it was beautiful, and I loved it, and it loved me
and it told me:

In twenty years you will have a backyard

and there will be a lemon tree growing there healthy and proud.
You will have a small kitchen facing East or West with a window
and tile floors and the kind of sunbeams that make you
put the knife down.
You will lay next to someone and be glad to have no open wounds.
You will wash your hands the right amount
and your knuckles will be free of blood.
In twenty years you will bring home a paper bag of groceries in the
morning
and make breakfast
and eat it
and feel no shame.

That was only a second, though.

The lemon tree and
the kitchen and
the bed for two and
the paper bag
are as far away as ever and
so much dust gathers in eight years.

Those new colors are long gone and
I have shriveled up dead on the tomato stalk
in my parents' front yard.
*Thank you for calling Corner Drug,
your call may be monitored for quality assurance!*

If I'm beyond saving, I would like to know now.



Intricate Touch (3 of 4 drawings)

Medium: graphite pencil

Ramish Naseem

March 19, 2022

Olivia Myatt

I knew it was a corpse before I believed it was one.
Thinking back,
I'm grateful to be shocked
by the color of fresh blood every time I see it.
The complete opposite of the bright blue above
I knew it had to have been a deer
tried not to think about the shape of the
giant bones arcing over the
mass of flesh hung with
strings of gore and painted in that
bright
searing
out
of
place
red.
It took up a whole lane

and I had to go around it
on my way back.
I didn't have any trouble getting past, though.

We were alone on that road.

I think about the carcass
of a cat
we walked past
on our way to get vaccinated.
A block or so away from our house.
Some parts of it
were relatively
intact
but others had been ground
into a stain
on the asphalt.

I could see inside its body.

I've been seeing vultures out during driving practice.
They must
eat
well
on country roads
where only the empty fields can see you go over the speed limit.
We see them in little groups:
round dark bodies
and small pink heads
crowding the road.
One was standing
right in the middle
the other day,
and I was scared I might
hit
it.

Everything was fine, though.

It flew away in time.

It's No Sin

BK Bellamy

Studied in your self absorption
yet supple in your stretch to please
It's a ballet of the bull.
You'd think I thought you were god
the way I'm on my knees

Ten percent's what mama paid
Preacher taught ya twisted blame
Got damn deep inside your mind
so you toggle quick to shame

And it
Wears.
Me.
Down.

Your.
Guilty.
Crown.

You wanna haul that wicked weight
of wicked shame
(Go walk alone)

Well, I'm a pillar of salt and you're my lot
be real, and if you can't,
well why the hell not
you've spent your time
you know what others want to hear
well I ain't the others,
can you tell me what you feel
do you know?
no, I ain't givin' up so quick
I'll do my time
but can you hear my clock tickin' in your bones
I found an essence old
And I'm sold

I've seen it all

and I've heard the rest
I swear lovin' you
must be some kind of
test-ify the truth
and see that I don't run
keep it to yourself,
I wanna cruise
with the evening moon
I've got a thing for you
and it's no sin

It's tough to tell if you're confused or calculating
in control
or practiced at eliminating any doubt
I've no doubt you believe
what you say
my man,
can you see me
strugglin' today?

I'm somebody whose got a thing for you
and I've seen your core
so it really doesn't matter
what you do
do you think you can show me what the prophets call the truth (I dare
you)

I think when I get through with you
gonna have to pay someone
to listen to my story
starry eyed,
I hear all that you say
oh say, did you mean to say you love me, today?

well you're the boy next door
and then you're not
be real and if you can't,
well why the hell not

I've seen it all
and I've heard the rest
I swear lovin' you

must be some kind of
test-ify the truth
and see that I don't run
keep it to yourself,
I wanna cruise
with the evening moon
I've got a thing for you
and it's no sin

Amen

Catterwocky

Olivia Myatt

This bedroom's peaceful lonesome soul
Weighs heavy on your spirit.
A block away, that sad bell tolls
Sometimes you cannot bear it.

O child of gentle, feeble heart
Look not around this corner;
Instead sit, shaking, in the dark
A tiny, frightened mourner.

What beast or shade breathes softly there
What foul thing lays waiting?
A ghoul with blood-flat dripping hair,
A wraith now hoarse from wailing?

Each ragged breath the thing draws in
Marks sure and certain doom;
Hid from your sight in lighting dim
A beast does haunt your room.

Alas you shall not reach ten years,
You think, with tearful eye.
One and all of these ugly fears
End each the same: You die!

With trembling breath, you dare to peek,
You brace yourself for horror—

Only to find the cat asleep,
That sweet and darling snorer!

This bedroom's peaceful lonesome soul
Weighs heavy on your spirit.
A block away, that sad bell tolls
Sometimes you cannot bear it.

The New Job

Shannon Witham

People burning marshmallows
To the left,
A barbecue party
To the right
It's warm inside -
Too warm.
I step outside for a breath of fresh air,
But feel the blast of an oven instead. In front of me, a never-ending line
of diggers,
Digging deeper towards the heart of the earth.
The sweat drips
down the back
of my neck.
It smells rancid, a bitter stench of human flesh burning.
All around is hot, humid, it's hard to breathe.
My hair is plastered
To my forehead -
Soaked with sweat.
Walking on, the path gets narrower, separating me from the rest of the
diggers.
I meet the boss -
Sunburned and red,
He has horns,
A tail
and a devilish smile.
"What brought you here?"

Long Distance Darling

Olivia Myatt

In manner and spirit, lively and fair
My love buries Cupid, under the loam.
By pearl blue moonlight, she combs my hair,
By golden-white flame, I welcome her home.

No paper or pen can my love reflect
And yet I still try to write and rewrite
Though page after page I always reject.
Lifetimes may pass as we talk through the night.

With every part glowing, his silk hands weave
A lifetime or more, suspended in time
Every train home a dream, wanting to leave,
Pain to the ribs without reason or rhyme.

When noise and fear reign, my mind does retreat
Where lights were low and the mango was sweet.

Father

Shannon Witham

To what may I now offer one who grieves?
Desire, he seeks, yet I have naught to give.
A pencil dull, my words are faint as leaves,
For I know not the way I ought to live.

It is not ease to always be in need,
I pay my dues, yet still I want for more.
It taunts me so, refuses to concede,
I search but find no key to unlock doors.

He tells me, "When you find it, you will see."
I tell him, "That is foolish, It is gone."
Because I've ceased to search both high and free,
Yet still it waits and calls me to press on.

I suppose I have searched in vain too long,
Yet all this time, it's God to whom I belong.

My Longest Friend

Sebastian Mendez

My dog has died
I buried him next to a tree
His body became the tree
The most beautiful tree I have ever seen

I was always there for you.
We lived where green is everywhere.
I let your paws feel the land
You pulled and pulled
Each pull meant you were happy
Happy to be here on this earth.

You're the best friend I could ever ask for.
The only one I can talk to
I'm going to miss you.
I'll never forget you
Not only were you my friend
But you were part of the family.

Some day, I'll join him right there
Waiting for me with tail wagging
Gazing with those eyes
Burying you broke my heart.
A space in my heart for you only
Broken as I was, memories combined
A dream is what you find
A goodbye you left behind

Do I Ever Think About You

BK Bellamy

You wonder do I ever think
about you

I spread your kindness
onto my morning toast

Sweet crystals

of your wisdom
merge and melt
into my pot of tea

Sprinkles
of your gentleness
add extra flavor
to my bowl of blueberries

Your yummy
belly deep
shoulder shaking
chuckle
fills water with warmth
to wash loneliness
from my bones

I slather tired and thirsty skin
with your serenity

I slowly slip
each weary arm in,
and cocoon
inside the shirt
steeped in your light
from last we met

The memory of
your eyes,
the deep mirror I look into when I feel empty and unsure

When I dance, I dance with you

I knit the fabric of you
into my new favorite scarf,
now every soft fiber
shields me
when a chill takes hold

So
yeah
I think about you sometimes

Gen Zers or Gen Losers?

Shannon Witham

Do I or do I not?
I find that I ask myself that a lot
Should I post or should I not?
Do I conform to society's standards
Or do I simply not?

My peers consist of vapid gen zers
That look to media as if it's Jesus himself
Social media is a mirror and
I cannot bear to look at myself

It is an ocean that my generation fits perfectly into
They are these amazing sea creatures that swim with ease
While I am a hummingbird, ball and chain clung to my leg
Drowning when clearly, I'm meant to be flying among the trees

I try to take pictures that I know will fit the mold that we cast for
ourselves
And I torture myself trying to smile just right
I crinkle my eyes to make it look natural
But I can't seem to find the right light
Each snap of the camera is a slap to my identity
And when I peruse the different social apps
I feel my chest turned into knots that are so tight

I am consumed with an anxiety attack
How do they make this look so easy?
Could it be because it is that easy?
What am I missing? Where am I going wrong?
I think I give up
I don't want to look like I try hard
At least I've got that down
So, I don't try at all
because it's too hard

My Father

Sebastian Mendez

He has lived his life and now guides mine.
Every passing day, I worry.
His skin is starting to sag like a plant
His eyes grow tired like a battery running low
His hair is turning white like snow
And his health is worsening.
I care about you, my father.

My life is new; my father's is old.
His anger and guilt are no longer
As our bonds grow stronger
Stronger than the chains of a boat
I devote my life to his.
His wife left, but I'm still here
You inspire me, my father.

He wasn't there when he was young.
But supports me in silence.
We were never poor or rich.
There was always a roof over my head
And somewhere to sleep.
He never stopped taking care of his family
And I never stopped taking care of him.

Leaving his homeland was difficult.
Worked every day without rest
No vacation, and only earned spare change.
But that didn't stop him.
He continued to be strong.
I love you, my father.
And the best father I could ask for.

Inner Child

Shannon Witham

I look in the mirror and I see a face,
One whose name I can't quite place,

And the feelings I have inside of me,
Are not the same as the face I see,
On the other side of the looking glass.
And, somehow, though twenty-four I may be,
The woman I'm looking at is younger than me.
For she is only a child that just needed nurturing,
But I have now been through much discouraging,
For she will brace and race to face her soul,
But I've only managed to bury my head in a hole.

Who is this child that I see,
Looking and staring back at me?
She's miniature and much more petite,
She's also smart and very sweet.

She has a fire that doesn't easily go out.
A flower that blooms in winter no doubt.
If I dig deep inside, I find something I cannot hide.
That this child who is looking at me,
Is someone I once was and always will be.

The Devil's Spawn

Sebastian Mendez

Making green paper every single day
And each day feels more grey than the others say.
Customers come and go, and others crumb and go
Junk food for those who come and go

The air thickens with each order being made.
Hands clicking as minutes become hours
What more can my day become worse?
A curse is what causes my day to become worse.
An asshole arrives, driving his wagon.
I call him a demon straight from hell
Return to hell is where you belong
You and the devil will get along.

Came for his feast in his wagon with eyes everywhere.
We were nice enough to give him a gift
For him, it was poison, something he didn't like.

He drove his wagon to the front
I could hear heavy footsteps behind the store.
Long hair like a horse and body like a balloon
Demanding a replacement for his gift.
About to ask his wagon what they saw
But the only thing they will find is a person being nice.

My Story

Sebastian Mendez

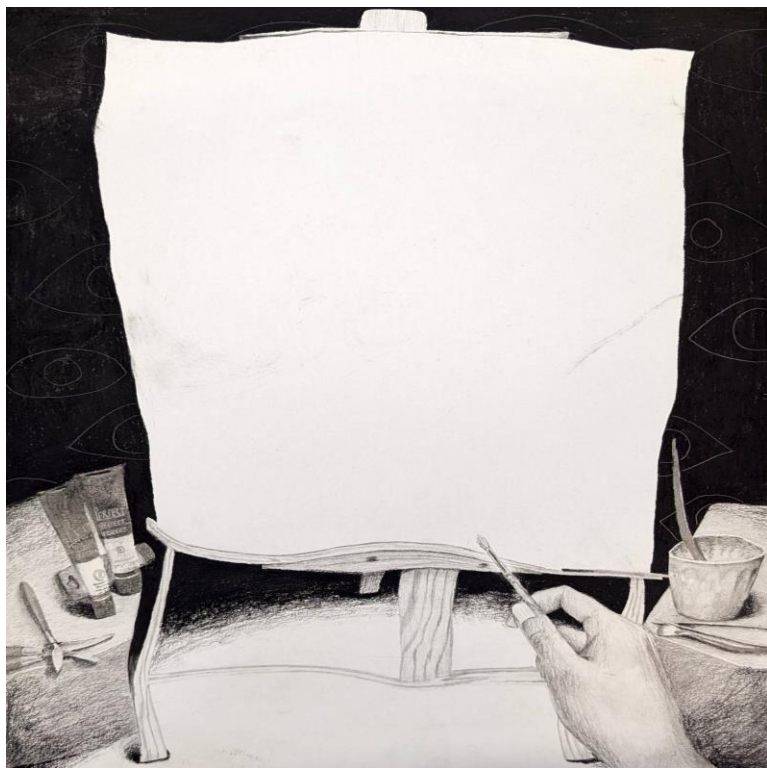
I am here at home and write. This poem is my life.

I come from afar but not too far
The commute is far but not too hard
A strait road I go, no turns nor stops
Driving down with weighted eyes
I'm here to stay and here to learn
I see the way to my goal the closer I get.

Have the blood of a farmer and doctor.
Mexico I came, here I was born
My race is Mexican, but with fear
Raised by my mother, supported by my Father
Within the four, I am the last
My parents divorced, yet here I stay
With my Father, I must, my mother, I judge

The creative mind is in my blood
My Father was an artist, and so my brother
Artist and creativity came from them
I use my eyes and view the world
The world is beautiful through my lens
Photographer, I am; nature is my eyes

Destiny is written, but destiny can be planned
The future is a mystery. The present is a gift
I live in the now, I plan the then
I'm here to learn, and here I stay
I'm glad I'm here to meet you all



I'll Paint Some Other Day

Medium: Charcoal and Graphite on Paper,
Neha Kanive

The Struggle Towards the Heights

Neha Kanive

The bed that never gets made
The clothes that never get washed
The work that never gets done.

Sometimes, I envy Sisyphus
At least he has the strength
to move his boulder at all.

MOST OF MY LIFE, I'VE BEEN FARSIGHTED

Olivia Myatt

WHAT WARM AND PRECIOUS THING WILL YOU TURN YOUR
BACK ON NEXT?

HOW MUCH TIME HAS ESCAPED THE BENT CAGE OF YOUR
LIFE

SLIPPING OUT THOSE FEEBLE BARS,

FREE, FREE

TAKING WITH IT EVERY FRIEND YOU'VE EVER HAD

RIGHT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE

TUCKING THEM UNDER ITS ARM AND LAUGHING?

HOW FAR DID YOU RUN TRYING TO CATCH IT?

DID YOU RUN AT ALL?

SIX FEET OF SOIL WOULD SUIT YOU BETTER

AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING THERE ISN'T MUCH

DIFFERENCE

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THE WORLD HAPPEN TO YOU?

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL YOU HOLD YOUR BREATH?

TAKE IT ALL IN WHILE YOU CAN

FIVE THINGS YOU CAN SEE

(SCREEN / PEN / HAND / GLASS / LAMP)

FOUR THINGS YOU CAN FEEL

(SWEATER / BACK PAIN / EYE PRESSURE / GLASSES)

THREE THINGS YOU CAN HEAR

(WASHING MACHINE / TYPING / CHAIR CREAK)

TWO THINGS YOU CAN SMELL

(CANDLE / PLASTIC)

ONE THING YOU CAN TASTE

(TAP WATER)

REPEAT THIS OVER AND OVER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

SEE HOW YOU LOSE YOURSELF ANYWAY.

SEE HOW YOU STILL HAVE TO TRY.

SEE HOW YOU FEEL YOUR CHEST CLICK WHEN YOU

BREATHE IN

(TWO, THREE)

BREATHE OUT

(TWO, THREE)

SEE HOW YOU RUN TO MEET YOUR FRIEND IN THE
MORNING, AND
SEE HOW SHE SMILES AND KNOWS YOU

What Is Owed

Olivia Myatt

The halls of her father's castle are dark, and the occasional glowing lamp along them is too weak to do much against the sparkling obsidian of their walls and the eternal dimming of winter.

Isolde walks alone.

Somewhere in the echoing chambers, a baby is wailing, but she moves as though never having heard it. Another toy for the exalted Faerie King. Often his elder daughters whisper to each other when they think Isolde can't hear, about how he's too old to be stealing human children. *But clearly he's still capable*, she thinks. The natural scallops and waves of the stone all around her occasionally warp her own reflection back, scarlet and strange. Her claws dig into the heels of her palms and her tail thrashes behind her; a crimson whip punctuating each step.

She explodes past the wooden door to the maids' quarters. On the floor of the cold and barren room, one of the girls is weeping, and several others huddle around her, cooing and murmuring.

"Alfhildr," she demands in her strong, clear voice, and the room falls silent except for the weeping maid failing to hold back. "What is this."

"My Lady—" starts one of the other maids in a timid voice, but Isolde interrupts her.

"You do not have permission, Oda." And Oda falls silent, and hangs her head. "Alfhildr, how is our honored and steadfast King to entertain these noble diplomats three days hence if there is no menu yet, and she who is responsible sits crumpled on her chamber floors whimpering like a naked fawn?"

Alfhildr sits there still, shaking. When she finally speaks, her voice is watery and thin. "My most vibrant Lady," she manages before a ragged sob overtakes her. Another maid rubs her back, and Oda strokes Alfhildr's pale green hair. "My most vibrant Lady, there are no words for how deeply sorry I am. These duties weigh more— more heavily and b— benevolently on my unworthy shoulders than any others. I s— I shall return to the kitchen at once."

One of the younger maids pipes up. She doesn't flinch when Isolde's glowing ember eyes snap over to her. "But she— My Lady, she's hurt, one of the guards, Wernher, he—"

"She looks fine to me. Frail as ever."

"My Lady, it isn't—"

But Alfildr puts her hand on the girl's shoulder and rises shakily. The others help her up, hands at her elbows and waist, though she jumps a little when they touch her. Her seafoam-colored tail hangs limply, and her long ears droop. "Margrethen, mind your tongue in Our Lady's hallowed presence. It was selfish of me to lose track of time this way."

"You didn't lose track, though, y—"

"Margrethen," Alfildr says again, and she sounds pleading. Margrethen lowers her head, but scowls still.

Elsewhere in the castle, in his faded and stagnant study, the King is slumped and pale at his desk. Folds of his near-translucent white skin are crisscrossed with age, and each laborious breath crackles in and out of his chest. His cataract-clouded eyes do not meet Isolde when she enters and closes the door quietly behind her. She bows deep, holds it for a few seconds. He says nothing, does not acknowledge her, but she straightens up and moves to stand opposite him at the desk. Dust is already collecting in her throat, but she knows by now not to cough. The waning sun through the large crystal window struggles to make it through the thick, dry air. His head nods ever so slightly, nearly imperceptible, and she pulls out the heavy chair and takes a seat. A yellowing map is laid out before him.

"Majesty," she says. Silence. "Hannelore has told me of a guard who has been taking what is not his. This morning, I have been given more reason to bel—"

"Isolde." His voice is like old paper burning. "How often must you forget? Idiot child..."

She hangs her head. "Lowly though I am, Majesty, I fear his behavior may damage our help—"

Now, his eyes are drawn slowly up to meet hers. Their shot blood vessels are blue, some of the only color in his face. His irises shiver in those pools of white, trying to focus on his daughter, and the loose skin of his jaw trembles with the effort of his speaking. "If he can take it, it is his. Most lovely of blessings, begotten by power..."

All at once, she is a child again, being told why the glorious Kingdom of Endless Frost has a King and no Queen. Her mother had died in unwanted childbirth, but what a gift she gave to her King. But

Isolde is not alone now and cannot afford to dwell on a corpse's pain, so she pulls herself from childhood and back to the study.

"Yes, Majesty," is all she says, and her red hands twist in her lap, and her claws scrape at her skin.

"I have no need of you, Isolde. Leave me."

"Yes, Majesty."

A Spot on the Moon

Brittany Fickas

Sound doesn't reach across a windless sphere.

The creator of night, an empty abyss

The air is thin and cold, and

I am alone on a floating stone.

Night turns to day and the cycle continues

I in the shadows, as you enjoy rays of light.

I speak but my voice does not carry

Even if it did, you're miles away and wouldn't hear

The cold air freezes a single tear

A single tear that blisters and shatters at the grey surface.

It spreads across the cratered gravel,

energy bursts through lifeless stone.

Vibrant and glistening, it touches the endless sky, and

I am not alone.

The ball brightens up the gravel,

a warm glow cast upon a curved formation of stone,

Like a lamppost over a park bench.

Take a seat beside me, so we can talk on the moon.

The Foundation

Brittany Fickas

You love all the cracks in my foundation.

Plaster up the holes in my walls with admiration

And I will be your home.

A strong, and stable sanctuary.

You are the fog along the bay.

A cool breeze raising goosebumps across my crumbling shingles.

The fog creeps along the vines festering along my pale walls,

A refreshing breeze creeping through the corroded halls, and past broken doors.

It settles upon the heart of the home.

An eerie room with wallpaper torn, and cracked window panes.

Paint the walls with memories, and replace the broken glass.

The room is still dark.

Settle in the cool moonlight and study the quiet room.

An unfinished canvas above the bed and blank picture frames.

The clock is dead and the lamp unplugged.

The sun rises, peaking through black curtains.

The fog clears as a lamp turns on.

Eris

Brittany Fickas

A golden apple sitting on a shrine

Enticing metal glistening in rays

Luscious nectar displayed for all to dine.

A shell of power waits for one who stays.

Valuable object greater than fruit.

Hold it up high for all to see, and lie

This object belongs to just one recruit.

Take it in your pocket and let us fly

But, how can a man fly without his wings?

Take a bite out of the apple and live

Gliding above as the winter air stings

Gold flakes in your hand and it's time to give.

Wings grow weak as the sun sets near the coast

You wonder how she took all of your most.

Wisdom

Sebastian Mendez

My mind is dry, yet I still feel a spark,
These lines reflect the thoughts within my mind.
What is inside is more than words can embark,
I walk through many storms, yet never fully blind.

Many people guide my life through the truths,
Each day, I learn from what I see and what I hear.
From their actions, I now notice all the fruits,
The wisdom in their eyes was both sharp and clear.

The weights I carry grow heavier each day,
Locked emotions stay caged, too scared to leave.
Behind my silence, you'll never know what I long to say,
And in the end, I wonder what I truly achieve.

Through every loss and gain, I clearly see,
That wisdom shapes a life and sets it free.

Ebb and Flow

Stevie Carr

I am controlled by the moon
Always constant
Pushing and pulling

Various objects are trapped in my current
Being carelessly thrown about

We don't take notice
as we continue to ebb and flow

You have slipped and are being taken out to sea
Water engulfs you
Your head goes under

I have noticed
fighting to bring you to shore, to safety from us
We fight against what we're told

But it seems you have become one with the water

You can breathe and see clearly

Puzzled, I stop fighting

You flow with me, dancing, letting us take you to where you need to be

There's no rush to be anywhere

We are just here

Breathless

Stevie Carr

Her feet hit the water.

The pool engulfs her.

Silence is heard.

The peaceful bliss of nothingness.

5 seconds.

10.

20.

30.

She stays.

The only peace and happiness she's felt in a long time.

And she doesn't plan on coming back up.

Her breath is long gone

Surviving

Stevie Carr

One moment was all it took

For my life to change forever.

What seemed like a harmless tradition

Became a horror story in seconds

A simple spark engulfed my skirt in flames, burning the skin off my legs

Deeming me a victim forever.

I spent years in and out of the hospital

Getting more and more in my head that I was a victim

That I was weak and alone

That I had to hide myself.

I had gone to therapy, listening to the words
"It doesn't matter what you look like"
"You aren't alone"
I was alone.

No one could comprehend the everyday torment of
Changing bandages
Wearing pressure garments that seemed to bind with your skin
Wishing I could go back and change it

I was five
When I became a victim.

But I was ten when I became a survivor.
Meeting people with similar stories
Befriending people who looked like me

A community I didn't know existed
Became my saving grace.

I became a survivor instead of a victim

I am strong and I am not alone
I built myself up from the lowest place in my entire life
I
Am a survivor.

When She Gets Home

BK Bellamy

Now her step's a little lighter
as the paint begins to thin
and the wind wafts
from behind her
like soft arm around a friend

and the show goes on forever
though the scene she's in
will end
and she's patient

but she's longing
just to rest her head again

she's waiting
and she's unafraid
to rest her head again

Loyal to the painters
known forever
who she's true to
and the questions
do not tangle in her heart
like me and you

Restless sea calls out
I understand
and willow breezes
know her name
She knows the one
who'll be there
rest her head
when she gets home



Intricate Touch (4 of 4 drawings)

Medium: graphite pencil

Ramish Naseem

Obsolete

Brittany Fickas

The raindrops dance on the windowpane.
The white walls are dull and obsolete.
Dust lines the shelves of forgotten pasts
An abandoned room, shadowed from light.

The raindrops sing of spider lilies.
They bloom out of mud, red like the sea
Flowing up the walls, vines breathing life.
Sink into the dullness, feel its warmth.

Warmth liquified, lead paints white walls red.
Dust off the shelves, open the window
The red room breathes for just a minute.
A knob shakes, a black cat curls in bed.

Beamer Park

Jamie Seibel

Winds etched across sky,
where Blue Jays sing strong.
Our worn palms on dirt,
earth breathless in the quake
of our bodies.
We know this grass's end,
a bumblebee's thrum,
and the children playing on slides.
Underneath dark clouds,
how did we find each other?
Even a blue jay's loud jeers,
open-beak always seeking,
couldn't take me from being
next to you on the ground.
I drum to your voice
and say simple things.
With you, everywhere is honey.
Golden drips stuck
to fingertips that touch
a Valley Oak marked with our initials.

Like tulips in our neighbor's yard,
we open towards sun.
We don't need umbrellas
to cover our kisses.
We smile because in fifty years
no one will know our names
but the land that felt our hands
and the birds who gave us their wing



Mythos

Medium: Pencil

Jamie Seibel

Meet Your Editor



In her second year at WCC studying English, Brittany Fickas plans on transferring to ASU online to complete her bachelor's degree in English. She plans to become a high school English teacher and a published fiction author. She is currently a full time manager. In her free time, she enjoys writing short stories and fiction novels, painting and tattooing, and playing video games with her husband. She is a proud mother of a four year old Belgian Malinois, and two adorable guinea pigs. This is Brittany's second issue as lead editor for *Ink Magazine*.

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**I AM YOURS, THE WAY THE SEA
BELONGS TO THE MOON, THE
WAY THE MOON BELONGS TO
THE SKY, AND EVEN IF THE
STARS BREAK AND SHATTER
UPON THE MILKY WAY, I WILL
STILL SEE GOOD IN YOUR EYES.
-ZACK ALLISON**



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