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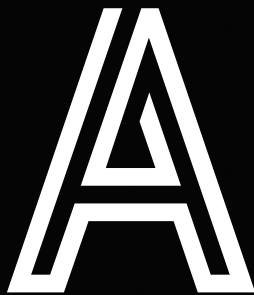
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THE REBIRTH

This past year's solar eclipse brought Coastal's student body together on Prince Lawn, the heart and center of the university. For one brief hour, we emptied ourselves of hate and looked toward the sky, searching for light within the darkness. With that in mind, it felt only fitting to expand upon this theme for the 27th edition of Archarios Literary Art Magazine. As a staff, we investigated the juxtaposition between darkness and light by implementing the photographic style of light painting, as you'll notice throughout the transitional pages of the book.

The 25th Anniversary of Archarios promised big changes for the direction of the magazine. Now we're here, just two years later—a new staff under new advisement—and we are proud to unveil our rebranded logo. We, at Archarios, continue to encourage you to live your art; we promise to uphold the integrity of Paul Olsen's original vision, and to propel the magazine forward in directions never thought possible.



ARCHARIOS

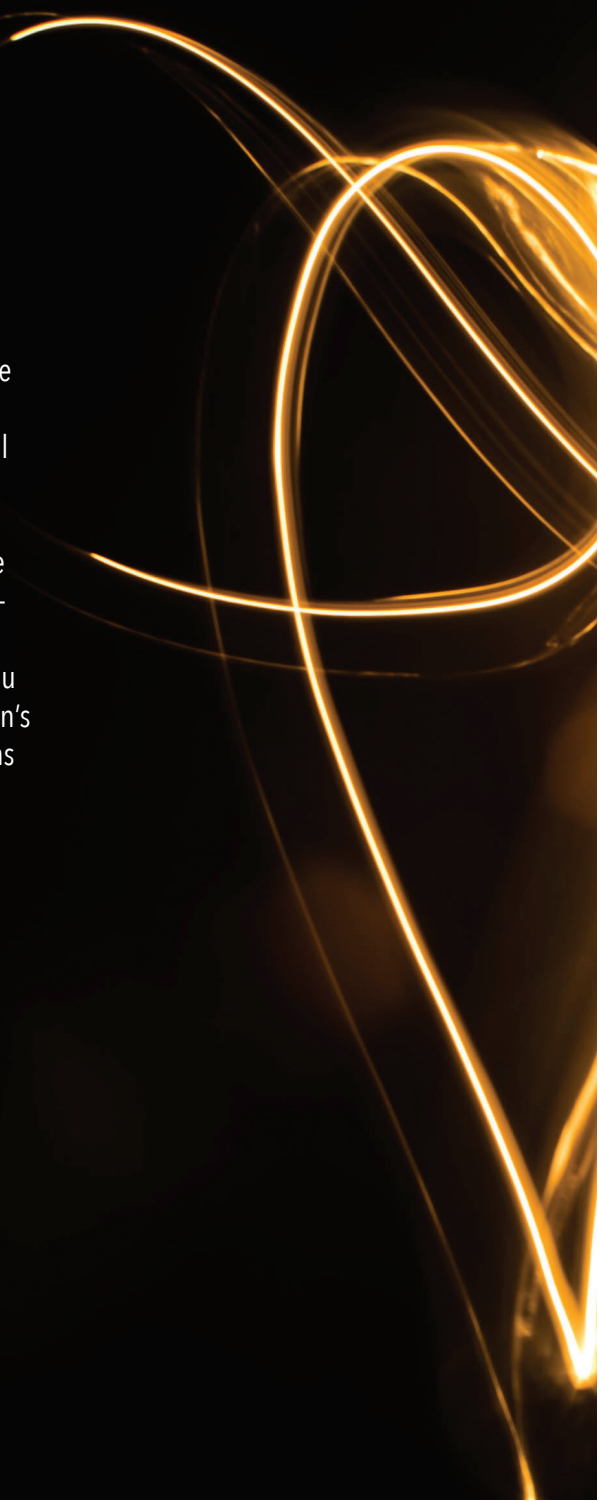








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An abstract light painting on a black background. A bright red light trail starts from the left edge, curves upwards and then downwards towards the bottom right. A blue light trail starts from the left, loops into two circles, and then extends towards the right edge. The trails are composed of multiple overlapping lines, giving them a sense of motion and depth.

BEST
OF
SHOW

FIRST PLACE ART

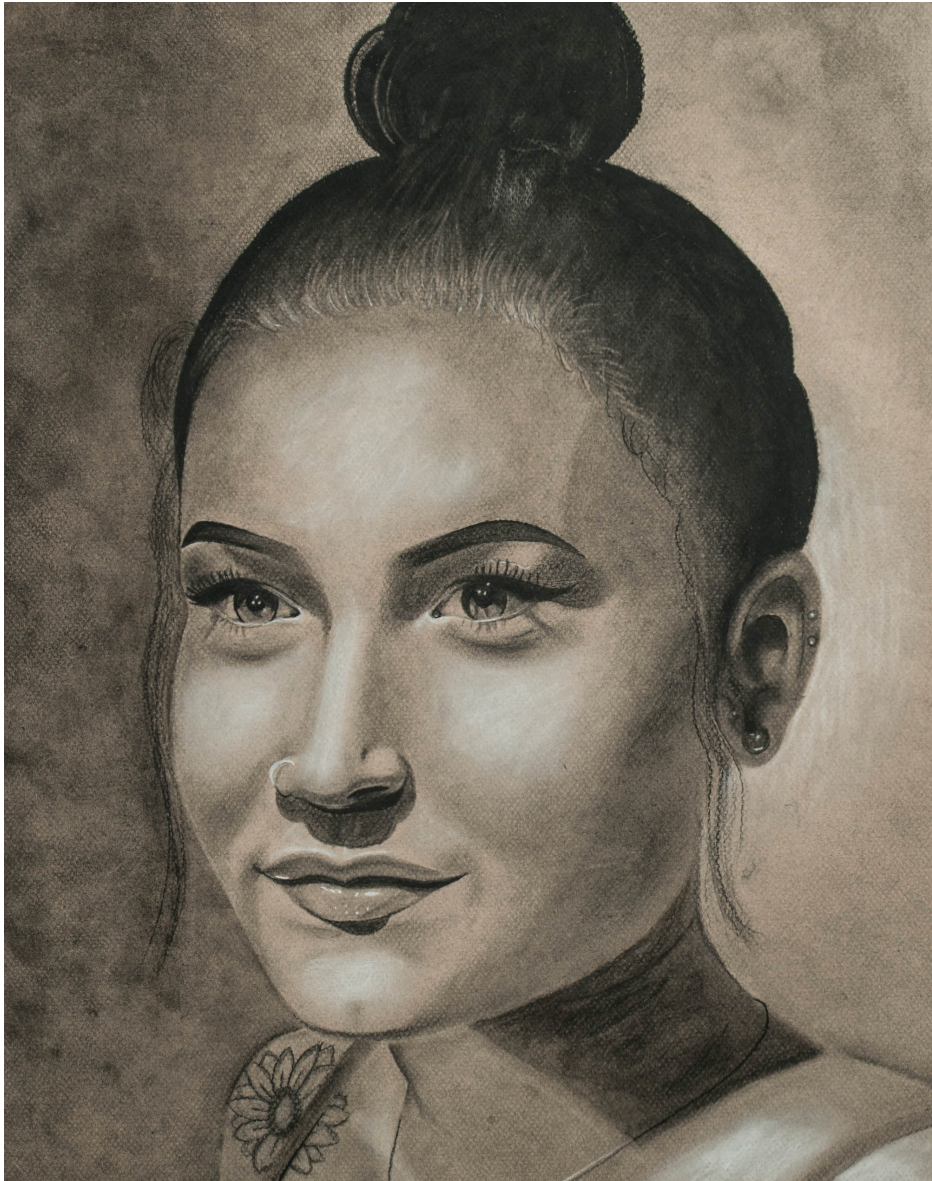


ASH

ASHLYN SMITH

BLACK AND WHITE CHARCOAL

This was my first ever self-portrait. When I first drew it out, I hated it. It wasn't until I added value with the black and white charcoal that I actually began to like it. I spent hours, days, and nights in the studio listening to music and focusing and was so satisfied with the way it turned out. Upon realizing this satisfaction, I started drawing with charcoal more often. This may have been my first portrait, but there will be many more to come.



FIRST PLACE LITERATURE



THE EFFIGY

JUSTIN JOY

FICTION

I wrote this piece with the idea of how a child's innocence and perspective influences mystery. The piece is intended to slowly build, revealing more information about the central image, through a vague scene. The idea of the reader making the same discoveries of the characters has always been something I have found enjoyable and I hope my readers do the same.

It was sometime around noon, just past where my family's land ended and the McCay's property began, when we found it. My Pa had always told me to stay off their property and never to play with their boy, Jent. They were rumored to be odd people.

This was running through my mind when we had crossed the picket of yellow flags waving on the thin stalks that marked the property line about a mile back, before we found ourselves in a clearing—not quite a perfect circle—more like an eggshell that had been cracked open and now spilled its insides. We were hedged in by red maples, sugar maples, white ash, green ash, American holly, shortleaf pine, southern red oak, and various types of underbrush. They closed off the clearing, looming ominously as if they were guards watching us, waiting to pounce on a single misplaced step.

Pooch waved the metal pipe he had found stuck in a rock in the air. "You think it's a scarecrow, maybe got lost?" he asked. Pooch was two years older than me and earned his nickname playing football. The coach often said he was "a dog with a bone."

"Scarecrows walking from their fields at night is just ghost stories," I said. I thought it might be one of them circus folk on account of how it was bent up all funny.

Pooch squinted at it. It made him look brutish. "You're probably right, Croaker."

I'd earned the name when Billy Lee started calling me that because of how I talk and the way my glasses make me look like a frog. I didn't mind the name; I thought frogs were neat.

"Maybe we should just go," Bell chimed in. She was Pooch's little sister, a year younger than me, and had a pretty singing voice.

Pooch turned towards her, angrily brandishing the pipe. "Don't be a scared little bitch." Undoubtedly Pooch had heard the word from his father who was known for his colorful employment of words. I'd overheard my folks talking about his and Bell's parents, how they were so religious they drank the communion wine at home all through the day and night. My Ma said when Pooch and Bell's Pa was really in tune with God, he'd beat his wife and children to better make them understand the Bible. One time I'd seen Pooch with a black eye—which he said he got from football—so big it looked like a crow had made its nest on his face.

Bell shrank back from her brother. "I don't like this game anymore."

We were playing Camelot. Pooch was the King because he was big and strong and brave. He knighted me as Gawain even though I wanted to be Merlin. He said wizards were stupid. Knights were badass and chicks dig knights. I thought about telling him that I thought wizards were cool and that I didn't really care about what chicks thought, but held my tongue. Bell wanted to be Guinevere because she was a Queen, but Pooch thought it would be weird. So he made her be Morgan le Fay. There wasn't any real point to the game. We usually just went out into the woods and messed around. Today was different because we found it. We could see the sky above the treeline where a black halo of dark shapes circled lazily above it.

Pooch poked it tentatively with the pipe. "What do you think it's for?"

It did not react to Pooch's prod, so I stepped closer to peer at it. The smell was unpleasant and I had to swat at the flies that were gathering around. "Maybe it's a message or something."

Bell whimpered in the background. "Guys."

Pooch ignored her. "We should take it and put it on our treehouse."

We liked to pretend that our treehouse was a castle. It wasn't even much of a treehouse, really, just a large oak that had grown over a small hill. It formed a hollow and the roots overhead functioned as a cave. We made palisades out of sticks and twine to surround it and stashed our gathered treasure within. Pooch had stolen a barrel from his Pa and inside we stored interesting rocks, an animal skull, the biggest pine cone we had ever seen, the bolts of the fallen stop sign from the four-way stop that no one actually stopped at, and a bra so big that it could fit around Pooch's head like earmuffs. Bell didn't know we had the bra.

But it did not seem like something that we should take to the treehouse, so I shook my head. "Maybe we ought to leave it like Bell said."

Pooch seemed about to protest when Bell shrieked. We whipped around to see Bell pointing a thin, crooked finger at a man emerging from the brush. He wore tattered jeans tucked into snakeskin boots, a belt of similar hide failing to keep the jeans at his waist. He wore no shirt, exposing the gaunt pale torso splattered with dried crimson stains. Glasses thick as a window pane adorned a head with skin so tight his face looked like a skull. On top of his head was a green hat with the word "BUCKET" stitched across it. The hat was further embellished with a gleaming gold fishhook. In his right hand he held a large brown sack that looked like it might have held flour at one point. Poking over his shoulder and to the left of his head was the muzzle of a rifle. He regarded us, tilting his head to the side and flashing a grin of yellowed crooked teeth.

"Howdy, kids."

Bell backed up to stand beside Pooch and he held the pipe out in front of him, opening his mouth in a snarl. Being curious, I took a step forward.

"Hi," I said, with a limp wave.

The man waved back and stuck a finger in his ear. "What y'all doing out here?"

Pooch found his courage. "We're playing Camelot."

"Camelot?" The man's eyes widened, dramatically. "Ain't seen no castles around."

"We left our castle and most of my knights there." Pooch pounded his chest with a fist. "I'm King Arthur."

The man immediately dropped to a knee. "Begging your pardon, m'lord; no idea I was in the presence of royalty." He drew out the final word. He looked at the pipe, quizzically. "That supposed to be Excalibur?"

Pooch puffed up with pride. "It is. And if you don't show respect I'll cut you up with it."

The man chuckled. "That ain't a weapon fit for a king." He reached behind his back and pulled out a large bowie knife. He stood, and as he did so, flicked the knife in the air. The sun gleamed off the spinning blade and as it fell, the man plucked it out of the air at the tip with the ease a child might catch a kernel of popcorn in their mouth. He held the knife out to Pooch. "A gift from a humble traveler."

Pooch eyed the knife suspiciously, but took a tentative step forward. The man lowered his gaze as Pooch grabbed the hilt of the knife and pulled it out of his hand. He swiped the air with the knife once, twice, three times, before he dropped the pipe and stood admiring his new sword. "My daddy never let me play with his knife before."

The man cackled, then grabbed Pooch by the wrist that held the knife. He pulled him in close, glaring into his eyes with a sudden fury, all humor gone from his haggard face. "Say, you kids ain't relations of the McCays, are you?"

Pooch was frozen by the intensity of the man's demeanor. Bell stepped forward and stomped her foot. "We hate the McCays," she shouted. "Their son is mean and always pulls my hair in church."

Pooch stumbled, almost falling to the ground as the man released him. "Good. Good," the man said. "I don't like the McCays, either." He licked his lips. "Sorry for the scare, your Grace."

I took my gaze from the man's chest and looked at his eyes, dark with the map of intelligence. "Who are you anyway, mister?"

He scratched his chin. "Don't you recognize me?" He pulled the rifle from his back and took an archer's pose, using the stock of the rifle as the wood, and the strap as the bowstring. "I'm Robin Hood," he said and nodded behind us. "That there is Little John."

Pooch didn't take his eyes off Robin. Bell and I turned to our initial discovery, the supposed Little John. "Why is he like that?" I asked.

Robin scratched his chin. "You know what flaying is, boy?"

I shook my head. "No."

"They flayed him, the McCays." He raised the sack in his hand. "See, we was taking from them to give to the poor, but they caught John."

"My Pa always said that they didn't just farm. That they," I paused, trying to remember my father's words. "Made and sold math, I think." I liked math a lot but didn't know how one could get rich off it.

Robin laughed so hard that he bent double and put his hands on his knees. He eventually straightened out and wiped a tear from his eye. "Math. That's funny," he said and threw the sack in front of Bell and me. The impact spilled its contents in front of us: stacks of red stained bills and several Ziploc bags of opaque crystals.

Bell picked up one of the bags. "Is this candy?"

"Of a kind I suppose," Robin said. "Listen, you kids go on back to your castle. I'd like some time with my partner here. You take all that, something to remember me by."

Bell and I scooped up the money and candy, dumping it unceremoniously into the bag. We nudged Pooch and our touch seemed to snap him out of his trance. He and Bell took off toward the edge of the clearing. Robin slowly walked, and as he passed me I reached out and touched his shoulder.

"Sorry about your friend," I said. "We will see you again, Mister Hood?"

He gazed at me and remained silent. After a minute had passed, he spoke. "No. No, I think I'm going to Sherwood Forest to see John." He ruffled my hair and gave me a push. "Go with your friends, and take care little one."

I ran to the edge of the clearing and glanced back. Robin held John's head in his hands and was mouthing something to him. As he planted a tender kiss on his forehead I turned and ran into the woods, following the shouts of Bell and Pooch. We ran toward our castle with our treasure, hollering war cries and huzzahs of victory as the crack of a gunshot rang through the air.

SECOND PLACE ART



POPPY

ALICE HART

PHOTOGRAPHY

I never thought that flowers could be hairy until I found this cute little bloom. The incredible texture and beautiful color captured my attention. Selective focus was used to isolate the bud and draw attention to its graceful form.



SECOND PLACE LITERATURE



THREE LITTLE BIRDS

MADISON HIBBS

NONFICTION

I've been working on this piece for about two years. The subject is the period of time I spent in a mental institution when I was sixteen years old. While writing about this time in my life was difficult, it was also incredibly cathartic. I am a much stronger person now than I was when I was sixteen. And even more so, having written this piece.

"Don't worry, 'bout a thing. Cause every little thing is gonna be alright." - Bob Marley

Although some see depression as a very human condition, humans aren't the only ones who can feel sadness. National Geographic suggests that animals, especially primates, can and do get sad. Trained observers say they can see signs of depression. Though these animals can't communicate with us, they can still exhibit all the signs of depression. They lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. They stop eating. They stop interacting with other animals.

■

When I was sixteen years old, I became depressed. I was taken to BridgeWay, a mental health hospital. I spent two weeks in the adolescent ward, a unit for teens. There were usually eight or nine girls, and five or six boys. We slept in dorm style rooms, two patients in each. The faces changed as people left and others took their spots, but an empty bed never stayed empty for long.

■

The nurses watched everything we did at BridgeWay. They made a note of everything we said, how we acted with the other patients, what we ate. The first day I was there, I didn't feel able to eat lunch. Instead, I grabbed a handful of saltines. I walked to the long table and sat next to Miranda, a girl who had been in three different mental hospitals. She looked at my lunch. "Are you anorexic?" she asked. No. She didn't look convinced. "You need to eat more, or they'll take you to a real hospital for a feeding tube." The nurse called, "Less talking, more eating, girls." I couldn't eat anything after that, not even the crackers.

■

Koko is a gorilla who can communicate with humans. She speaks a version of American Sign Language, and can understand nearly two thousand words of spoken English. In 2001, Koko met Robin Williams, the comedian. The two grew close. Thirteen years later, Koko was told of Robin's death. Her handler said she "looked sad" and signed the word for "crying."

■

My diagnosis was depression and major anxiety. I was prescribed Celexa, a cure-all drug that could treat both of my disorders. The doctor said it could take up to four weeks for me to feel different. The negative side effects kicked in right away. A few days after I began taking the pills, the girl from the room next to mine, Sarah, found me in my room. My hands were shaking. "New meds?" she asked. "Celexa," I told her. "I took that for a while," she said. "Don't worry, your hands will stop soon." I asked if it made her feel any better. She didn't answer.

■

Group therapy was twice a day, every day. It was one of the few times the boys and girls were together. We sat in the therapy room, a large sitting room where most of our activities were. In the morning, we met there to talk about the past. I learned that Ariel, a redheaded fourteen-year-old, had tried to hang herself with a dog's leash. Dinah, a fifteen-year-old with a stutter, had hidden a kitchen knife in her room for weeks, trying to work up the nerve to cut. Tom, sixteen years old, had made plans to take a gun to school and shoot randomly before turning it on himself. In the evening, we talked about the future. Ariel wanted to be a veterinarian. Dinah wanted to have three kids. Tom wanted to own a marijuana farm. My first evening, I told them I wanted to travel the world. The next morning, I told them how I tried to throw myself off the roof of my house.

In 1845, *Illustrated London News* reported a "Singular Case of Suicide." A large black Newfoundland dog threw himself off a boat and began sinking. He was rescued by humans, but again threw himself into the water and began to sink. This happened several more times, until finally, he kept his head under water for several minutes. When the rescuers pulled the dog up again, he was dead.

■

"I need you to tell me that if I let you go home tonight, you won't hurt yourself." The nurse stared at me, but I couldn't meet her eyes. My mother sat behind me, crying silently. "I can't promise that," I said. That night was my first at BridgeWay.

■

My depression never felt like a disease. It always felt a part of me. For a while, it seemed like suicide was inevitable. It was never a question of if I would do it, but when. I would wake up in the morning and think: *maybe today. Maybe today I'll be able to do it.* But I never did. I didn't see this as bravery, but that I was such a failure I couldn't even kill myself.

■

In the 1960's, Kathy the dolphin was one of five females who shared the starring role in the TV show, *Flipper*. She lived in an isolated chamber, alone. One day, she swam to Ric O'Barry, her trainer. She stopped breathing and sank down to the bottom of the small tank. Dolphins are not involuntary breathers. They must consciously decide to breathe. Kathy decided not to. "She was really depressed," O'Barry said. "She committed suicide right in my arms."

■

Everybody at BridgeWay had demons. Ariel tried to kill herself because her father had rejected her mother and married her mother's sister instead. Having to call her aunt "mother" and her cousin "brother" had taken a toll. Sarah told us that her grandfather had touched her as a child, and she couldn't deal with it anymore. So she tried to slit her wrists. I was there because a boy said he loved me, and then told me no one else would.

Don't worry, 'bout a thing.

Nighttime was a special kind of hell. Someone was always crying and someone else was usually screaming, trying to fight off the monsters of their mind. Lights out was at ten, but it never really got dark there. We weren't allowed to close the door, so the florescent light of the hallway flooded the rooms. Even while we slept, the nurses were required to check on us at least once per hour. At my first breakfast there, I sat next to Ariel. "Why do they have to check on us so often, even at night?"

"I heard it's to stop us from sneaking to the boys' hallway. I heard one time a girl crawled past the nurses' station to go down there. She fucked him all night and they didn't find her until the next morning." I figured she was lying, but I didn't realize until later that the nurses were checking to make sure we were alive and unharmed.

■

Mental illness is a disease, the same as cancer or HIV, except many people don't, or can't, understand that. When I was sick, before and after I went to the hospital, many people told me I wasn't trying hard enough or said that I just wanted attention. They didn't realize that it took every ounce of strength I had to simply get out of bed in the morning. I wasn't living, only existing, and barely doing that. The few people outside of my family who did talk to me about how I was feeling rarely suggested taking medication. Instead, they suggested natural remedies—yoga, herbal tea. Try telling a cancer patient to try harder. I dare you.

Overtoun Bridge is located in Scotland. Since the 1960's, over fifty dogs have leapt off the bridge, killing themselves. Nobody knows why they do this. Some think that the dogs smell something that humans can't. Others say the dogs are depressed and suicidal.

■

Unlike some of the others in my unit, my family visited me whenever they were allowed. But not everyone had a family like mine. Miranda's mother said that she was sick of visiting her daughter in the hospital. Sarah's father believed that she was just acting out and didn't want to reward her behavior with any kind of attention. Desmond, a sixteen-year-old boy who looked prepubescent, was brought in by a school counselor because his parents were in prison. When these kids were released, they were sent back to the same demons that had driven them to BridgeWay in the first place.

■

Relapse was a common fear in the unit. Miranda and Ariel had both been in hospitals before, and had had to return because they couldn't cope. "This is the last time, though," Miranda told us. "If I relapse again, they'll make me go to a long term program, and my insurance won't cover that." Miranda was released three days before I was. The night before she left, all she could talk about was seeing her little sister, and wondering if the cache of razor blades she kept in the bathroom was still there.

■

I remember wanting to feel brave. After weeks of feeling numb, I wanted to feel something, anything. It was early March, just starting to feel like spring. My parents weren't home. They had thought it would be fine to leave me by myself. I was sixteen years old. It should have been fine. I don't remember leaving my bedroom, but I do remember walking to the spare room on the second floor and looking out of the window into the backyard. I pushed the window up and sat on the sill, feet dangling outside. I must have been very careful crawling out of the window, staying as flat as I could so no one would see me. I climbed up, closer to the top. I stopped halfway, crouching beside a drainpipe, hidden. I stayed there for a long time, with the wind blowing. It was cold, and my thighs ached from crouching. But I didn't care. I looked up to the blue sky, nice change from the grey winter. A bird flew over. From my spot, I could see the nests at the top of the trees in my backyard, almost close enough to touch. I wished I could fly. I crawled to the top of the roof and looked over it. I saw the concrete driveway fifty feet below. I pulled myself up a little higher, sitting on the edge of the roof. Anyone looking up would have seen me. I sat on the very edge. If I slipped forward, I would fall down the front of the roof. If I slipped backwards, I would slide all the way into the backyard. But I didn't slip. I just sat there, balanced on the edge. I still felt brave. I wondered: if I jumped high enough, would I fly or would I fall? I was still on top of the roof when my phone rang. I didn't answer, couldn't tell anyone where I was or what I was doing. But the ring scared me. I didn't feel brave anymore. I turned around. I wasn't as careful on the way down. I scraped my hand against the windowsill when I grabbed it to steady myself, and it started to bleed. I pulled myself inside the window quickly, and sat on the sill again, this time with my feet on the ground. I started crying and turned to look at the sky one last time, trying to feel brave. But I didn't feel anything. I went to BridgeWay three days later.

■

Over the past one hundred years in Jatinga, India, thousands of birds have fallen from the sky, dying as they hit the ground. Ornithologists have not determined the cause of this behavior. The birds that don't die instantly when they hit the ground are beaten to death by the villagers. Perhaps out of fear. Or perhaps because the villagers know that, sometimes, death is better than a lifetime of pain.

Every little thing is gonna be alright.

THIRD PLACE ART



MORNING ROSE

SARA HALLSTEIN

CHARCOAL AND PASTEL

Sometimes a single moment is more precious than a thousand. Spend a day outside in a garden and it's easy to find one in the quiet and in the colors of the plants and flowers. Everything slows down and becomes simpler, except for the one thing our eyes focus on. It's as if the world is in black and white, making the beauty of the moment thrive in color, and that is what I want to capture within my work.



THIRD PLACE LITERATURE



SKETCH ARTIST

ALYSSA CONNER

FICTION

This piece is about putting the wrong person in the wrong place while
being the right person at the right time.

Mare knows herself to be certain of cornering every guy that enters the convenience store and that she can't stomach pasta after 8 PM. She prefers the night shift, especially around 2 AM. The hot dog roller hums from the corner. The light above the register sometimes half-off, sometimes on. The store is sensual and slow. There's no need for niceties here. Not like at her job a few years ago, when she was just a teenager. Most of the men grumble something inaudible at the back of their throat and don't waste time for eye contact with her. So, Mare takes it as entry and leans on the counter, staring at the space between their eyes.

It's sleepy, romantic. Legs crossed, thighs pressed tightly together, is her position. Until she feels faint from locking her legs and uncrosses them. Then she presses her hips against the counter and rubs her thumb against her stomach.

She loves them all, but she has her favorite types. The unattainable ones that place a box of condoms in front of her. In a disgusting fantasy, it's an offering to her. In reality, they're one of the few that actually make eye contact with her. Maybe because there's no blood circulation in their heads at the moment. It's endearing and, in all honesty, arousing to her. It makes it easier to swallow the medicine of, obviously, the fact that they are not there at that moment for her. But they could be.

A lot of cigarettes. Young, twenty-somethings, but they're all different. Some wear tight pants and scroll through their phones without acknowledging (how their hand slightly grazes hers) the transaction of money. Glasses. Stubble. Full-on beards. Goatees. Some smell like smoke, others smell like cologne, armpit sweat. Camo jackets. Blood-shot eyes. Hair that looks like they shaved it in the dark. Cuts on their hands. Smooth hands. No matter the type, she likes all of the cigarettes they buy. She's never smoked a cigarette in her life, but Marlboro is her favorite. Camel is her favorite. Lucky Strike is her favorite.

"Newport is my favorite," she'll say.

And for a quick second, they glance up at her. They're taken aback. They don't expect such conversation with a convenience store clerk. And it doesn't hurt that she's painted on a bright red lipstick specifically for this moment. They usually don't say anything back, but it's enough to spark a thrill through her. To them, she's cool, badass. A French girl with smeared lipstick and rosy cheeks, a cigarette dangling between her lips.

A few years ago, she would've rocked back onto her heels whenever an older man so much as slid his card through the card reader. If she could smell the alcohol or smoke from behind the counter, her tongue would curl behind her teeth. Now, she smiles. Not out of kindness or the sake of her job. But a white, pressed envelope with gold lettering on the inside. *You are invited. For you.*

Everything is comparable to a waitress at a diner, food balanced at the hip. By the rules, she's not supposed to eat the food, but it doesn't mean she can't still be enticed by it. Plus she knows what they're eating. If they go for a chocolate bar, they're actually hungry and don't really care. If they go for a granola bar, they're trying.

June 3 is the only day things don't move slow. The door snaps open and it takes Mare a few seconds to adjust to the change of scene. At 2:38 AM she picks at the dark blue nail polish on her fingernails and scratches the back of her one leg with her other foot. At 2:39 AM a man with a black mask over his face takes up half the store wielding a gun in his right hand.

Her first instinct is to fall down to the floor, even though she knows he sees her. Her knees bruise the back of the counter on the way down. And then the man presses against the counter, closer than any man has been before. He's looking down and it's very likely he can see the cleavage she has on display. She'd popped open the buttons on her polo after midnight when she got bored. Now she feels stupid.

He's flicking his gun at her. "Open the register! *Open the register!*"

The only thing above women is money. Even Mare knows this.

But she struggles to stand, hands up with her thumbs parallel to her ears. The gun is practically in her face, close enough that she can kiss the tip if she angled her head just right. It causes her to stumble back a little bit.

The man notices and repeats the same phrase and, this time, adds in "bitch" at the end.

She considers how easy it would be to knock the gun from his hand. He holds it loose enough where his wrist flicks when he jerks it at her. He's inexperienced. If he didn't have a mask on, she'd be able to tell more. But his body language is enough. His arms shake, maybe from nervousness, but probably from holding the weight at the end of his arm for so long. Part of her wants to give him the money just to relieve him from the pain. She wants to ease everything off his shoulders.

"Okay, okay, okay," she mumbles and lowers one hand into her pocket to pull out the keys to the register. He must know her pants are too tight for her to pocket a pocket knife or pepper spray.

He inches forward slightly—so slightly that only someone as perceptive as Mare would notice. His mouth opens behind the hole in the mask, and his throat makes a noise, like he was gonna say something. He lets out a breath, a sigh, a moan instead.

"I'm—I'm just getting the keys." The constant, quick jingling of the keys indicates that Mare's arm shakes, too, but the keys aren't heavy in her hands.

As she turns the key in the register, she glances up. He's gone soft. Completely still and concentrated on her stubby fingers wrapped around the key. His mouth is gaped open, slightly. His pinky finger has slid off the handle of the gun. His shoulders are now well below his chin. Maybe he's surprised at the result.

But as the key clicks and she tugs the register open, the gun is once again intimate with her personal space and his arm is taut. "*Hurry up! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!*" He keeps chanting, banging his legs against the counter. "*Fucking...*" he mumbles.

The metal clangs as she takes the drawer out of the register. It clashes against the counter. Loud. He pulls out a bag and tosses whatever he can into it. He starts with the hundred-dollar bill stashed in the corner. Then the twenties. Then the tens. All while constantly looking over his shoulder every few seconds. She can feel his heart beating. Or maybe it's just her own.

She doesn't turn her back on him, but she begins taking a few steps back.

The shuffling stops and he's standing upright, the gun once again pointed at her. "If you call anyone, I'll shoot you," he says, his voice cracking at the end.

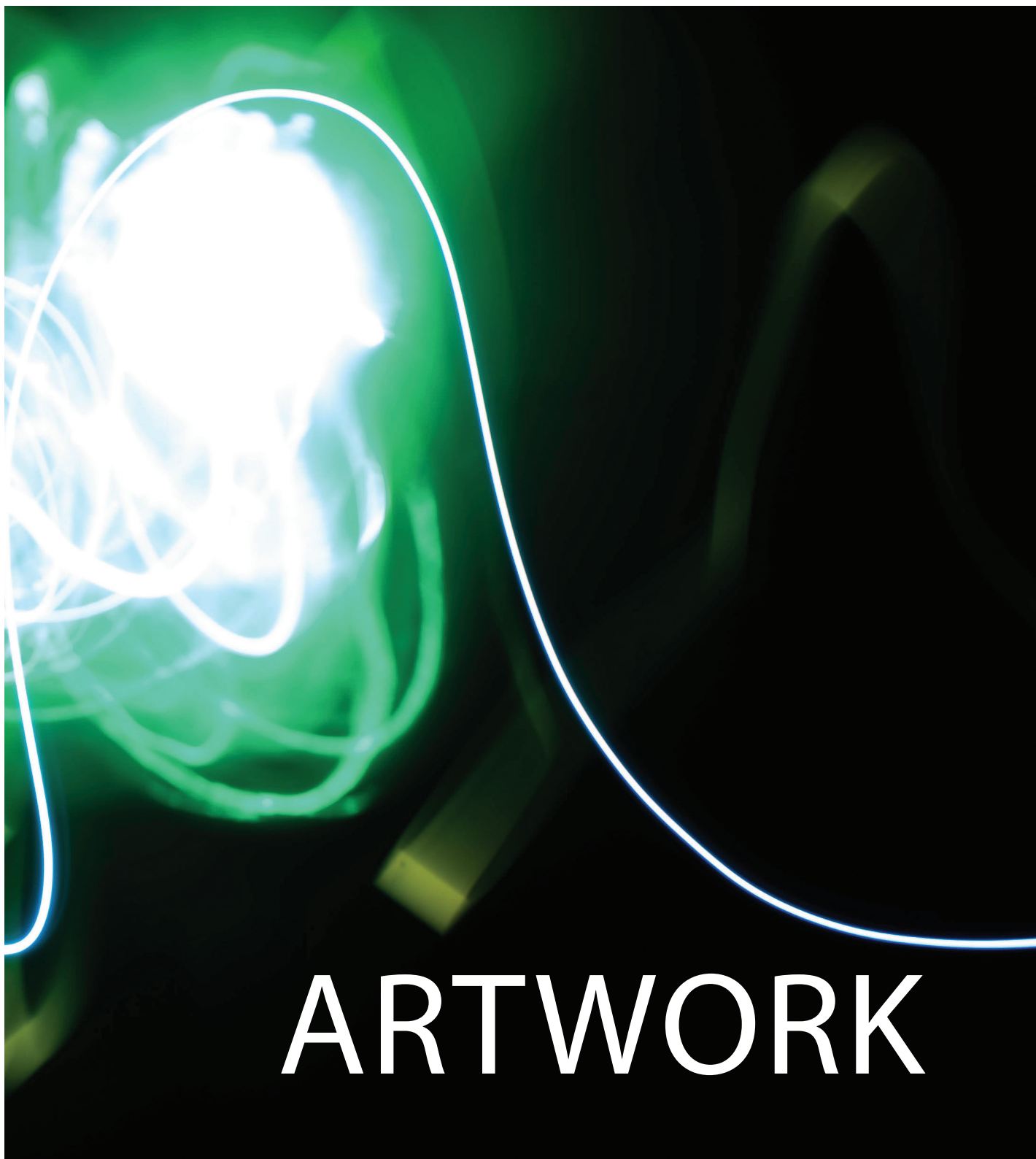
She mouths "okay," but doesn't actually make a noise.

"Shit," he mumbles and dumps the rest of the drawer into the bag. About half of the coins clatter onto the floor. Then he zips it up, tosses it over his shoulder, and rushes out the same way he came in, except this time his gun hangs limp at his side.

She calls the police. "No, no one else was in the store. No, I'm fine. I don't know. He had a mask on. Yes, it was a male. He was white. He had green, almost blue eyes..." she tells them. He's probably in his mid-twenties, but carries himself with the grace and insecurity of a young twenty-year-old, she wants to say. He has issues with himself. He doesn't have very good friends. He hasn't been through a lot but, to him, it feels like a lot.

And then she sits on the stool behind the counter. Although no actual bullets had grazed her skin, she'd been shot.





ARTWORK



FATHERS ARE DADS TOO

CHRISTINA MELCHIORRE

WATERCOLOR

The concept for this piece is about how men can be the “caretakers” in the family too. They can provide and support their children, which defies the stereotype that women only fulfill this role. The nudity displayed shows the essence of purity—the true connection between father and child. To exemplify the multiple emotional sides of the male figure, the colors of blue and red are used throughout the piece.



LORD OF THE FLIES

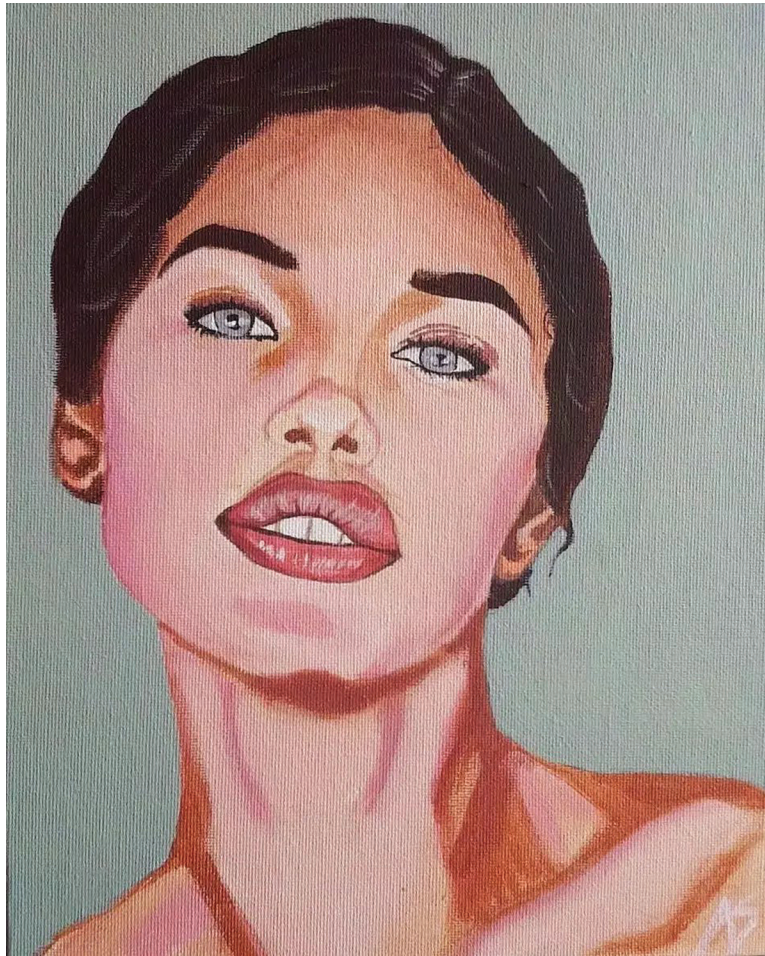
MALIK GREENE
ACRYLIC AND OIL PEN

This work represents isolation and the understanding that comes with it. My first acrylic piece, which was inspired by the Grateful Dead, exemplifies the glory of understanding the Self.



MAN IN GOLD
RINEY WINTERHALTER
WATER COLOR/MIXED MEDIA

I have always loved narratives of heroism and of the grandeur of science-fiction storytelling. In this painting, I explored reframing a regular person in an elevated form of power. The model I chose depicts a personal friend who embodies fluidity and strength in both his demeanor and lifestyle. Through this emphasis of the bizarre and ethereal elements, they pull the background into the movement. Mixed media and other elements were also implemented to create texture, to leave the audience questioning what realm the Man exists in, and how he participates in this movement. This piece marked a transition in my mastery of the watercolor medium.

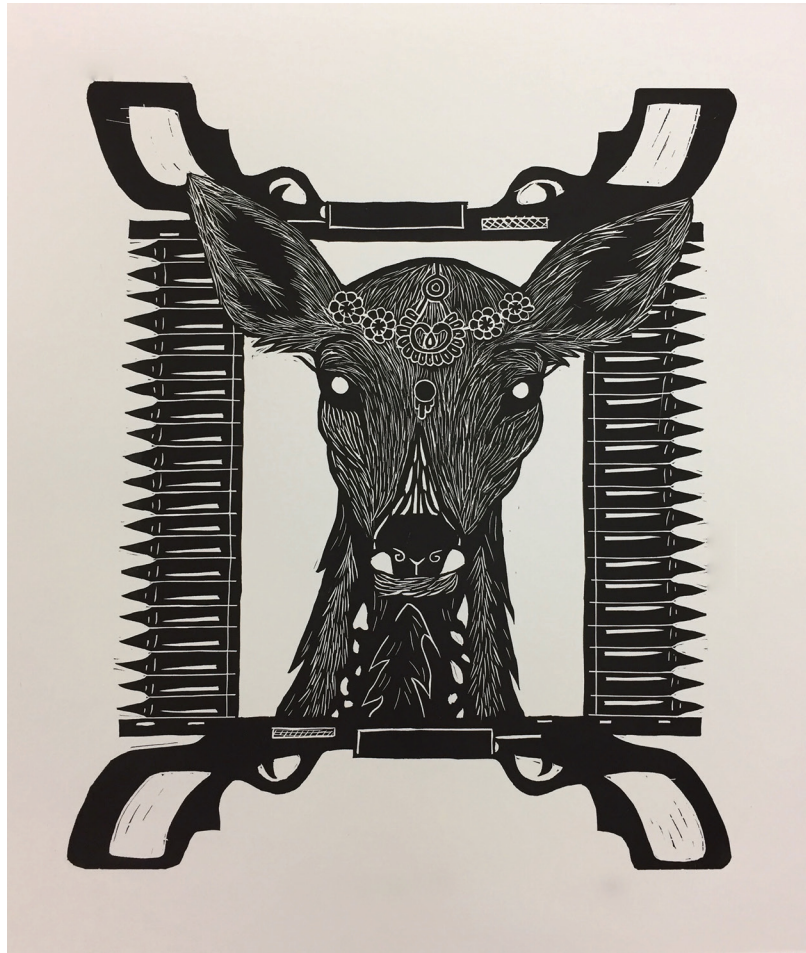


SENSUAL WOMAN

ADRIAN SMITH

ACRYLIC PAINT

This painting is a portrait study. It is my first acrylic portrait inspired by Amberly Valentine, a photographer.



INNOCENT HUNT
ANGELICA D'ANTONIO
LINO CUT

"Innocent Hunt" is a relief print that explores the parallels between hunting for sport and hunting for a sacred purpose. An innocent buck encased in a frame, constructed of shotguns and ammo, stares back at those who hold her life in their hands. This piece strives to bring light to the controversial topic: Is taking another life justifiable, even if it isn't human?

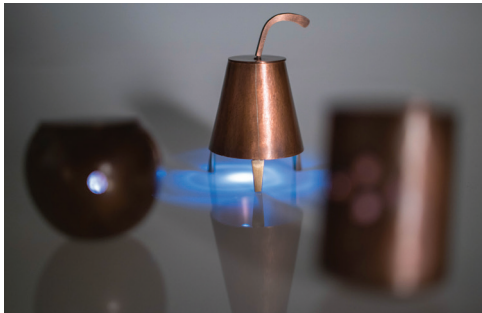


QUETZALCOATL

RACHEL MOORE

ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT AND ACRYLIC PAINT

Though myths began from word of mouth and appeared in ancient art forms, they eventually became available digitally. Mythology has always been a way for society to explain the unexplainable, and with this in mind, I took my photography and explored how to tell mythological stories in a modern manner. Being comfortable amongst other mediums such as painting, I created mixed media narrative photos. As part of a series of photos entitled "Modern Mythology," I aim to tell stories by crafting paintings tailored to each digital shot. By mixing the mediums, I bring old, ancient art, and modern art together to form something new.



GUIDANCE SERIES

TONI SMITH

COPPER AND BRASS

In "Beacon," the top is a moving element to be gently turned by physical interaction. The rotation of the light spreads out and breaks up the darkness around it. "Guidance" is meant to both metaphorically and physically light the way within the darkness. In the same way railroad lanterns directionally illuminate, this vessel contains the light, reflects it within itself, and then expels it through the holes—thus providing a path to follow. In "Light Within," the bulbous form houses the light and keeps it within itself, only to be witnessed through one small hole. "Beacon," "Guidance," and "Light Within" are part of a three-piece series which explores the vessel form, alongside the phrase, "light is a symbol of hope."



SELF-PORTRAIT

SARA HALLSTEIN

MIXED MEDIA

I am equally as much of a writer and a seamstress as I am an artist. It's a major part of my identity, so merging it all together creates a deeper kind of a self-portrait than what a lone drawing expresses. Lines of thread connect the pages of an old book draft I wrote when I was young, marked and edited for revision. It was constantly under change for years, just like I have been my entire life. I do not intend to stop changing, nor to stop transforming myself into a better person, writer, seamstress, and artist.



POST MALONE
TAYLOR BROWNE
CASSETTE TAPE

Post Malone pours himself into his music so that every song is a piece of him. For this project, I decided I wanted to show that his music makes up who he is.



CERBERUS

RACHEL MOORE

ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT AND ACRYLIC PAINT

Though myths began from word of mouth and appeared in ancient art forms, they eventually became available digitally. Mythology has always been a way for society to explain the unexplainable, and with this in mind, I took my photography and explored how to tell mythological stories in a modern manner. Being comfortable amongst other mediums such as painting, I created mixed media narrative photos. As part of a series of photos entitled "Modern Mythology," I aim to tell stories by crafting paintings tailored to each digital shot. By mixing the mediums, I bring old, ancient art and modern art together to form something new.



POWER
ADRIAN SMITH
WATERCOLOR

This painting is my first watercolor portrait. The position of my face looks down upon the viewer, which emphasizes a sense of empowerment. This, alongside the bright red and high contrast, evokes feelings of dominance.



WINTER SOLACE

ALICE HART

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY/PAINTING

Lone trees stood braving the cold. I used Corel Painter to enhance the feeling of late day frost, alongside the chill that had settled on the mountains. For me, the mix of warm sunset colors and cool blues and purples elicits a feeling of peace.



PLASTIC FREE SEAS

TAYLOR PASCALE

DESIGN/PHOTOGRAPHY

As our ecosystems become more threatened by the invasion of plastic, it is important that we make changes to our lifestyles and save the wildlife that rely on us to protect them. The simple action of not using a plastic straw collectively makes a difference and contributes to the goal of producing zero waste. This car wrap was designed to spread the message of reducing the use of plastic and becoming straw-free, to restore our oceans.



MOTHER NATURE

ASHLYN SMITH

WATERCOLOR

This was a piece I did for fun, made to represent mother nature.



LVL UP

JASMINE SHEPHERD

GRAPHITE, CHARCOAL, AND COLORED PENCIL

On Instagram, a lot of artists drew the woman depicted in the picture, and I decided to try my hand at it, as well. My focus was to perfect my craft of drawing women, as much as I do with men.



CYCLE OF THE SOUTH

BRIANNA ALEXANDER

COPPER, PEARLS, AND TOBACCO

Cycle of the South is an exploration into the exchange of services between the Agrarian Working Class and the Upper Socialite Class throughout the history of the South. Formed from sheet copper, the tobacco leaf is sewn together with pearls, signifying this exchange. This piece is worn as a necklace, displaying openly the Upper-Class reliance on the Agrarian South for their means of relaxation.



DUALITY

LUCY ROMANIK

ACRYLIC AND OIL PAINT ON WOOD PANEL

The adolescents I worked with were just as nervous and uncertain about themselves as I was about myself and of my ability to connect with them. It is through their own laying of the foundation that I was able to respond to their actions. This back and forth creation process comments on the give and take that goes into building a relationship. It demonstrates the residual effects that creation can have on adolescents who struggle with intensified doubt and uncertainty. It emphasizes not the children's superficial, beautiful aspects, but rather the raw layers composing each individual child. The relationships we've developed came about through many struggles of learning, trust, and culture.



EDWARDS COURTYARD

THOMAS MESIARIK

DIGITAL 3D MODELING

This was a 3D rendering done for the 2017 Fall Cultural Arts Catalogue, something familiar that most students could easily recognize, but abstracted and simplified in a way that would draw the viewer in to appreciate the whole scene. The courtyard is a place unique to the Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts, a spot for quiet contemplation and nature.





LITERATURE

HOMOGNOSTALGIA (UNLUCKY 17)

ANNA GREEN

POETRY

Homognostalgia is equal parts aggression and experimentation. A combination of the greek roots "homos," meaning of the same; "gnosis," meaning to know; and "algia," meaning sickness: a word for a feeling we have, in different ways. Sick of doing the same things day in and out. Sick of being the same person, or having trouble changing, maybe. However you want to take it.

My feelings have been so quiet lately,
but a molten blade still sears fresh wounds
and all the spiced ash is left to clot on flat rooftops.
Taste it still, that cinnamon, let it catch in your throat, too.
A bridge on fire, you're coughing, and a moth man sighting—
everything burns on the way up.

And the tongue is braided, triple-braided rope,
wrapped to keep the young tree from falling off the stake.
Nutrients! Give it nutrients! Fresh water and some egg shells!
Let it rinse the elixir behind gnarled lips at the 7-11 on Tuesday night.
Swing the car back 'round right after, swerve against the mountain curves
three hours late, apple-laden, just in time to plan the funeral.

And don't get caught by Medusa in the window,
that epileptic reflection of some glossy human things
shattered, save the stricken Vesuvian statues still tripping in the dark—
they borrow your throat, lend their concreted homognostalgia, same-knowing-sickness.
With the jagged teeth, I'll carve a feast of the witness.

GRANDMOTHER

MIA JONES

POETRY

An analysis of old age and the wisdom it brings.

Through and through,
the puncturing epiphany lies within
the timeless manner
in which she folds the crisp white
corners of the bed sheets. Between her
short-lived sighs. Across
the china matched impeccably
with the evening silverware.

Sometimes you can hear her bones
creak beneath its weight.

She is the humble ascension
of morning's illicit wanderings,
an enigma lost between the pages
of a Roald Dahl novel
and the idea that one day you will be forgotten,
but the dust from your musings
will lay eternally
between the cracks.

GHOST LIGHTS

ANNE KELLEY

FICTION

This is a flash fiction ghost story from the perspective of a fox. It establishes a different type of narrative, something from an outside perspective that also wasn't human. My goal was to bring this type of legend to light without telling a traditional ghost story, but rather to have a curious creature experience something unknown. The fox's perspective highlights what is most intriguing and terrifying about ghosts: we don't understand them.

There is a fox standing on the side of the road at night in a thick fog. She knows that these flat, warm rocks are dangerous and that large monsters can stampede you to death in an instant. Her ears twitch, checking for the roars of monsters. Nothing. She puts one paw down—even in the cold months it's still warmer than the ground—even in the fog. She places another paw down, cautious of what could happen on this slick slab, but she hears the rustling of food across the rock in that round patch of smaller, crunchy rocks outlined by wooden posts. She knows that beyond the wooden posts is a drop-off, but somewhere over there she can hear her prey.

She's trotting across the road, miles of silence wrapping her padding paws, when out of the darkness two headlights zip around the mountain bend. Her tiny heart jumps and she flashes across the road. She darts onto the mountain outlook and into the high grass along a wooden post.

The lights follow her onto the gravel patch. They make no noise. The beast should make a crunching sound when it kneels on the tiny rocks, but it doesn't. Her eyes reflect the lights in the fog before they stop, aimed just a few lengths from her hiding spot. She can see a beast behind the lights, flakes of orange metal like gnarling teeth on its underbelly. She still doesn't move. Her heart is beating so quickly that she is paralyzed.

The light spins the world golden; the fog is unmoved by the monster's entrance. There is still no noise. The fox's ears flick at nearby sounds of prey, unstartled by the uninvited, silent beast. They do not know. The fox turns her ears toward the lights trying to find the roaring, the hissing, the moaning that these monsters are known to emit. But there is nothing. This one is silent.

The fox raises her head and peers through the grass to see what the lights are touching. They have turned this section of the world gold. The wood is gold, the grass is gold, the gravel is gold, and beyond the cliff where the other mountains stand, the air is a deep blue where once only blackness lied. Is this beast real? There is no sharp smell in the air, no rumbling from its gut, and no sound on the rocks. There is still noise around, other than the beast, and it is the food that she came here for.

The fox eyes the beast again. It is silent and unmoving. She takes a chance and steps out of the grass, looking from the lights to the sound of her prey across the streams of gold, and with a second step of caution, she hones in on the mice. Ears down, eyes forward, she holds her breath, and sprints across the lights.

A flash of gold. The beast makes no noise. The glowing eyes do not stall. The fox pounces on the mouse, pinning it with its paws, and delivers the killing bite. There's two noises at this moment: the snapping of tiny bones, and the screeching of the second mouse as it is startled off the cliffside, falling to its death and disappearing forever. The fox is satisfied.

In the darkness, she turns around in remembrance of the silent monster and lays on her belly, looking at it with the dead mouse between her paws. The aroma of blood wafts into her nose but she can't concentrate on that right now. Inside the beast, there is a figure of a human. Behind the golden lights, settled in the dark, the human lays inside its beast looking into the light and what it outlines in gold. The fox begins to bite into her meal, scissoring the animal's bones with her molars and sinking her fangs into it. All while she watches the soundless monster.

All of her senses are telling her that it isn't there, except of course, her eyes. She crunches the mouse down her throat and swallows. The figure inside the beast leans back, still looking forward. The human has no definition to it other than being a shadow behind the lights. The fox tries to smell for the monster's toxic drool that it always leaves singeing the dirt beside the rock slabs. There is none. The fog seems to hang too heavily around this spot along the woods, so much that the fox is beginning to have trouble seeing past the beast. She can't see beyond its lights, and she doesn't understand why. She stands up and in a moment of curiosity, bolts across the headlight streams again, listening for movement, trying to find a change in the air. There is nothing. Only the swift curls in the fog where her golden fur ran through, disturbing the air.

She is a disturbance in the fog and she doesn't understand how this monster isn't adding to it. Where are the growls? The looming presence? She gazes into the portal of the beast, trying to pin the smell of rust in her nose and failing. And sees that the figure inside is still the same; sitting there, looking over the cliffside. She quietly tip-toes towards the beast's underbelly to search for its scent. She stretches her nose to the side of the monster, sniffing at the gnarled, old metal, but there is no scent there. There is nothing here. She steps away.

In a moment of curious bravery, she sprints into the middle of the lights and stands staring into the beast's golden glowing eyes. She stands, tail up, fur spiked out, glaring down the middle of the beams waiting for a confrontation to start—waiting for any sign of life. The monster nor the figure inside is startled, or even seems to notice her. She goes unseen even when she pads closer, all caution left to the fog. Her wide eyes wonder what this thing really is. Her snout is inches away from the base of the beast and still everything but her eyes are telling her nothing is here. The lights continue to burn, no hum of electricity.

Her tail droops, her haunches visible in her crouch as she inches closer. Then, in a single breath, she stands tall and walks through the front of the beast as the fog rains heavier. Her fur stands on end and she turns around, cold and still, within an illusion of fog. She is within the car, within the mist, and still able to see those burning golden headlights. The fox stays here trying to understand what she cannot. Sometimes, there are mysterious lights in the fog... but very few ever get to see the myth in the mist.

ELEGY FOR PRUDENCE

TEIATRA DAVIS

POETRY

I wrote this poem to commemorate the awareness of deeper meaning. In our day and age, ideas are so misunderstood because our society tends to read things only at the surface level, or to their accordance of need and desire. This poem encourages everyone to move beyond that.

The depth of the ocean is eternal
to those who cannot dive
deep enough. All that is relevant
to us lie beyond the surface.
As long as our necessities
seem to fit our present lives,
we normally fail to realize
that what we really need happens
to boil beneath what
the naked eye can see.

The fire from the searing sun
can set the world ablaze,
but as long as it burns miles
away, we worship the light
it brings. Like a candle,
the sweet, serene scent
is all we think about when it is lit.
But when it falls, we seem to forget
that we always knew it was hazardous.
The world is on fire, and we just admire.

WATERY GATES

ALISHA PETRIZZO

POETRY

I have always held poetry close to my heart because it is a form that allows for honesty and complete emotional nakedness. My poem conveys this emotional nakedness by providing a literary description of how I see the eye. It is one of those vessels to a person's inner secrets and emotions that they do not want the world to know or see. When I think of an eye, I think of masked beauty, as the poem portrays.

As crisp as the pigment of the deep ocean
striking as a burst of lightning on an open
field. Strong enough to cause a tilting motion
and can be masked with a demanding shield.
Blessed with a beauty of imperfection
that creates the whole package.
Behind its watery gates lies a mirage
of a Message. Whispered secrets exposed
by every drop, yet it still is never enough.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHERE YOU COME FROM

NICOLE CONNER

NONFICTION

This has been a work in progress for about a year now. I've thought about it a lot, but several different events in my life in the past year have made it possible to make it a completed draft.

I remember the lights flashing blue and red around me in the late-night-early-morning dark, and my uncle's arms carrying me. I remember being put into the backseat of my dad's car, my pajama-clad legs curled under me because I could never sit normally; the headlights on the police car making the world outside that much brighter. That's all I remember about that night.

I can remember being in a different condo every other weekend. I remember liking it since I didn't have to see my step-mother that much anymore. My Uncle Chuck was always there. He was still there. I remember asking my dad to leave the house and do something, and him telling me he didn't have the money to do that. I remember my brother getting angry anytime I brought up why we weren't staying at home anymore. I can remember learning to sharpen my pencils over the sink with a knife because my dad was too cheap to purchase a sharpener. I remember getting my first library card and discovering my love of reading, asking my dad to take me back every day to get a new book. I used to like watermelons because it was almost all my dad had, cutting it into little cubes and eating them in the kitchen of our temporary home.

■
They say when you're eighteen and in college it all gets better. You can leave things of the past behind, start over, and meet some of the best people in your life. But when you're eighteen, you're even more confused than you were the month before. You forget what it feels like to be sure and not worried and not question everything. You miss the feeling of not caring about someone so much, not giving someone the power to hurt you. Because you've been hurt before and you'll do anything to avoid it ever happening again. You miss never acting on your feelings and never getting hurt. You miss your naive and innocent self.

Because when you're eighteen, you're eighteen. You're an adult. You don't see your dad as much, but when you do, you act like you love him. You hug him and joke about his new car because you're afraid of what'll happen if you don't. You avoid conflict like a cold, repeatedly washing your hands every ten minutes.

But you hug him and you know what your sister told you. You know that South Carolina is the leading state in the country concerning violence against women. And you know now that he is part of this statistic.

He texts you and you ignore it. A day later: "Hello?"

"Sorry, I just saw this!" You hate conflict.

■
My friends actually believe what they learn in their basic Psychology 101 classes. You're attracted to people that are like your father. I hope that's not true. But he did have crooked teeth and was very good with words and promises and lies. And even though his accent was more country than northern, the bill seemed to fit.

He cuts me out of his life like I do with my dad. He ignores me; I can't take a hint. Maybe it's the opposite. Maybe I am my dad, treating the people I love the same way. Maybe I am the statistic. Or maybe I'll learn. Psychology isn't set in stone.

FLOWERS AND WHY MEN BUY THEM

JUSTIN JOY

POETRY

Flowers are typically looked at solely for their beauty and not much further. This poem dives past that surface and strives to show what flowers could mean and to represent the ideas they convey. "Flowers and Why Men Buy Them" takes the reader through the meaning of flowers from childhood to adulthood, and I hope it is an enjoyable one.

Pluck the petals. Childish questions of love and love not. Gifts to mothers to show affection. Meaningless crushes to woo. Good intentions on first dates. Pin them to tuxes and dance with beautiful girls. Hope to make love in cars, the seats covered in petals. To see beauty in their shades and hues, highlighted by wedding gowns. To mark occasions—Valentine's, birthdays, and anniversaries. Gifts to devoted wives to ease the guilt of secret affairs. To mark tragedies. To adorn the tombstones of parents buried. To adorn the tombstones of children buried too early. To remember the way they ran through fields. Nobody runs anymore. Watch them die. Divine the way the petals fall and how the stems droop. Know all things die, especially beautiful things.

WE ALWAYS HAD MUSIC

EMILY JOHNSON

NONFICTION

A flash memoir I composed regarding my grandmother's final weeks in hospice care. The piece offers a quick glimpse into the afternoon my mother's extended family and myself gathered to serenade my grandmother before she passed. Music was the glue that held my family together, so to offer comfort to my grandmother through song in those final days was priceless.

Sweaty thighs stick to dark leather seats. The rolled down windows and open sunroof make a mess of my long brown hair as we roll down Main Street in St. Albans. The air is hot and moist, rare for our state in the summer, let alone early fall. We come to a stop at a red light, before turning right onto Lake Street. Passing the outdoor bottle return at The Beverage Mart, and the tall steeple at Holy Angels, we arrive at the right turn for our grandparent's home. Slowly banking the curb and avoiding the sunk-in storm drain, the small one-story white ranch with black shutters comes into view.

The short blacktop driveway and street is littered with at least a dozen cars. My eldest brother, Derek, parks his red Suzuki in front of the hand-painted white mailbox with pink flowers, which reads: *Bettis*. I unstick my sweaty thighs from the leather and exit the sedan, spotting the familiar faces of my mother's expansive family on my way to the front door. Typically, we enter through the white kitchen door, but today: the front.

My Uncle Chuck, one of many relatives, holds the door adorned with a blue and silver bell wreath open for my two brothers and myself. As we usher into the already crammed living room, the usual scene is in disarray—organized chaos. The tan suede loveseat with reclining seats is pushed up against the far-left wall in front of the windows. The cherry coffee table, topped with a homemade white doily and crystal candy bowl, has been shoved under the piano along with the countless porcelain baby dolls and their frilly accessories. These pieces, along with the remainder of the furniture, are pushed to the outskirts of the peach living room to make way for the hospital bed.

Inside the small space, in a half circle around the bed, are my numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and their children—second cousins. We glance around at one another with a slight nod and smile, a wordless greeting; this is not the time nor place for chatter. My mother, one of eight, and the spearhead for this event, hands out double-sided sheets of song lyrics to each family member. There are not enough copies for the dozens of bodies crowded into the compact home, so we share. My cousin Patrick sits down on the old wooden piano bench that has seated our grandmother and numerous grandchildren throughout the decades, and begins to strum the ivory.

Mouths mimic the words on the paper to the tune of the piano's voice. A beautiful melody erupts, eliminating the bounds of the tiny space. Line after line, song after song, we sing in our semicircle serenading the frail shadow melting into the bleach white sheets of the hospital bed. Voices crack and choke with emotion; silent streams roll over the hills of our cheeks. My grandfather, Pepere, perched upon a small claw footstool beside the hospital bed, has one hand clasped around hers. His familiar baritone voice floats above the popcorn ceiling and our makeshift choir as we sing the lyrics he wrote to the song they composed together: *I Love You So Baby Jesus*. My grandmother, strategically centered within the semicircle of bodies, is an infant in the manger. With a weak smile painted across her thin blue lips, her eyelids rest. Our voices and her shadow fade into one another, like passing breath.

SHADES OF BLUE

TEIATRA DAVIS

FICTION

I wrote "Shades of Blue" in contrasts of warm and cold while talking about temperature, colors, and tone. Time played a huge role in this piece as I was writing.

Blue as the frozen, icy lake that one could clearly see expanding distantly beneath the surface. He diminished with the snow, pale and as pure as ivory. His cheeks changed from being rosy, transforming into a flushed front that blended with the fog. As the temperature kept decreasing with the departure of the sun, he became blue.

He had been walking for hours now. Probably days. He did not know, for his watch had frozen over, and the spherical, rotating widgets within stopped overlapping one another. Once the batteries died, so did the time.

The sun did show for a few hours, but because he could not physically keep track of time, he did not know whether it was rising or setting. What was the east and the west anymore? For all he knew, north had become the atmosphere and south was now the cold ground that he walked on directly after the frost bit through the soles of his boots, at his toes and heels.

THE FOUR NOCTURNALS

CONNOR UPTEGROVE

POETRY

Only half of the natural world is experienced during the day. What is explored beyond that thrives nocturnally and can hold beauty, not in spite of, but in collaboration with cryptic journeys. "The Four Nocturnals" follows the narrative of a physical and metaphysical journey from an evening with a loved one, to sleep. Then, from sleep to a dream. Finally, from dreams to waking in the morning, only to find the memories left in the night.

Wayfaring Stargazers

Night masks the veering stones but our feet step ahead
near tiers and tiers and tiers of water falling into pools
to be struck by ripples. Where are we being led?

The pulse of crickets lurking drew us from our bed
to dark moss and lilies that cover heads by threaded spools.
Night masks the veering stones but our feet step ahead.

Ensorcelled with the stream and the river rocks red,
the fed hare and the feeding fox—we no longer fear the fool
that became lost the preceding time we were led.

We come across silhouettes eloquently wed
by their leaves and branches bonded night after night after
night masks the veering stones but our feet step ahead.

Wolves and other game lie far from the beaten path dead
but we've lost the key to mortality, found two art tools
instead. Here we draw the loch with paper and lead.

Beneath the moon, we weep to wander affected
by the water's fantasy and laws of nature unruled.
Night masks the veering stones but our feet step ahead.
The mystic stone trail sings no matter where we're led.

Sleep

Return, return under my softened sheets
now clouds to limbs of lead and weathered soles.
Your feet may rest now. Oh, how we find sweet
relief from beast's nocturne appearance cold.
Hush the rustling leaves, in light were lush
but in night prevent slumber with their
shudders. My hippocampus sparks a rush:
rewinds to cries of flame and mem'ries fair.
Ground your flighted thoughts, a rock be my shoulder
covered in soft moss, grounded: a boulder.
And you, stoney trail, led me to hold her.
But the drain of walk makes legs feel older.
With my surrender, I succumb to sleep.
I'm at peace drifting, drifting, drifting, drift...

Water Color Dreams

Bright colors twirl on brush around my head
where scattered wonders wash away the day.
The splash of fantasy: blue, pink, and red
warm me to be in the soft heat of May.
Black canvas feeds the pull of wondrous ink
for darkened nights invoke the great escape;
emotions are peaked with a new moon's wink.
God, should I not wake, I pray my soul take.
But if I do, as nights are waves that passed,
recede and pass, recede and pass, recede
the banks of beaches shore that never lasts.
Let dreams come first to paint my wavered need.
I give myself to sleep, the sweet impaired.
For only does days of rare peace compare.

Morning Dew

Tell her who left at dawn and wept you upon grass:
I'm grateful for the path of stones and shelter that was brought.
Although I wish she could have stayed, time must always pass.

Fast must be our feet to voyage the Earth that's vast
as not to skip a step or have a stutter of thought.
Tell to her who left at dawn and wept you upon grass.

The gallant fox trots away and deserts a cast
of a dastardly pup who had hid instead of fought.
Although I wish she could have stayed, time says she must pass.

Until we meet again, my friend, I look in rippled glass
to reflect far I've come: My eyes were once distraught.
Tell to her who left at dawn and wept you upon grass.

With morning dew, the moon illuminates it's last
beam throughout the trees and helped me achieve the sleep caught.
Although I wish she could have stayed, Night must now pass.

As with beauty, one can never stay too long or last,
but with the lessons learned, the courage will stay taught.
Tell her who left at dawn and wept you upon grass:
although I wish she could have stayed, time must always pass.

EASY WAY OUT

VERONICA GOOD

POETRY

Unfortunately, we don't pay enough attention to what we say.

*Veronica's poem was awarded an honorable mention by David Eye
in the 23rd Paul Rice Poetry Broadside Series.*

To the professor who laughed to a class of freshman creative writing students: "Suicide is the coward's way out." Thank you. Thank you for enlightening me about the ease of pulling a blade across the valley of your own shaking wrist and the calm of locking your finger on a trigger, cold barrel pressed to your warm temple. Tell this coward how brave you are. Tell me about the ease with which you spill your own blood, how you have poured your cowardice out on the sidewalk for others to step in. Tell me how you keep your fingers from getting tangled in the nooses you tie.

Professor, tell your freshman how easy it is to write stories in permanent marker while you teach them syntax and plot structure. Trace your finger along Freytag's Triangle like soft flesh on a wanting blade.

Exposition: The story starts. The character is ok, cheerful, laughing.

Rising action: Complications appear. The character is having issues.

Climax: The turning point: The character falls apart.

Her new best friends are inanimate and dangerous.

Falling action: The character is spiraling. She leaves bad poetry wherever she goes. A professor's laugh echoes in her ears.

Resolution: Careful. This is the one that creates weak stories—the easy way out.

HOLY BIBLE
BRITTANY ALFORD
POETRY

This piece is about a poisonous bond in a relationship, and of finding out that the person you trusted turned out to be a serpentine façade. This person slithers across your back, chaining you to a toxic situation, and no matter how hard you try to escape it, you're left wondering where the person you thought you knew went.

Scribblings in Latin of love notes we left—
deliver me with your tongue,
then wash your eyes with bleach.
You skimmed over the chapters I'd written;
you thought you understood me.

My feet were dipped in battery acid
disguised as communion wine.
My white dress clung to me
as pipe organs clawed their way through my skull.
Unions don't hinge on the truth.

I used the pages as rolling paper
and I set us ablaze.
You've bound me in chains and hung me to dry,
my snake veiled in lamb skin,
spewed in tongues and poured your venom on me.

When God is dead, what drives you?

You ripped the leather spine
and glued the pages of our holy book
to the windows of the house
we built.
Sunday morning is one hell of a drug.

#RELATABLE

CHRISTINA MELCHIORRE

NONFICTION

*This piece of writing expresses a reserved emotion, held in
by all of us at some point or another in time,
aimed toward someone else.*

Having feelings for someone else who doesn't return them is one of the worst pains in the world.

It's an empty pain. One that is so full of hurt and yearning, and an almost-but-will-never-be-fulfilled satisfaction that is impossible to escape.

But it's also an unnecessary pain. You cause yourself to have it. You hold on to these feelings, even though they may or may not be reciprocated, but you still take that chance, and the pain just feels

Oh,

So,

Good.

It rules you. How you think. How you act towards others. You would do anything for them. Be anything for them. And that is a sacrifice in itself. You feel so much for them. As palpable and dictating and strong as those emotions are, you would be a friend, sister, brother, family member, acquaintance, or non-existent—just to have them happy. Because in some sick way, even if the extreme happens and you aren't in their life at all, it, in turn, makes you happy.

You look into their eyes—deep into their eyes—and feel something without a name. It is deep and it is human and it is moving. Like you're on a slope of snow, and the avalanche is coming down ready to take you with it. And you just hold your arms out wide, close your eyes, and smile. Welcoming its force with joy. Unadulterated joy.

And you imagine being in their arms. Just being held by them. Just having the slightest graze of their skin on yours sends chills cascading along your whole body. And it's the best thing. Or a full embrace, with the comfortable weight of theirs pressed against yours. It makes you feel like you're at a home you never knew existed.

And when they talk, you listen to every. Single. Damn. Word they say, wanting and striving to really hear what they're speaking because it's just that important to you; even though you may not know what they're talking about at all, but you find it so fucking hard to focus on the words and their context because your eyes

just drift from their eyes, to the way their mouth forms the words that drip from their tongue like smooth honey; and its enticing golden glow ensnares you, hypnotizes you; and you just can't give a damn about what they're saying at the same time because you are just so caught up in the fact that they're talking to you. To you. Entrusting you. Laughing with you. Spending time with you. And it feels oh so good.

And every time you just look at them, with or without them knowing, you feel yourself growing warm. A comfortable warmth that spreads from your head to toes. Its... everything.

But yet, because you feel this way, and maybe they don't know or just don't feel this way toward you, the yearning to touch them, to gaze upon them, to simply just be with them. To simply be with them... it's a feeling that is purely the devil's snare, and you are Eve reaching for the apple. But right before you grab it, the apple is a fingertip's graze out of reach. You swipe its side, the waxy feel of it just a hint of a sensation, but it's just too far away.

So you relax your arm,

Knowing it can't be reached.

And so you stand there.

Head tilted back, just looking at it glisten in the sun.

Resigned and content to just watch it bask,

Remaining happy up there attached to the tree limb.

Forever waiting,

And hoping,

And praying,

That it will fall.

THE CAB NEEDS FIXING

NICOLE CONNER

FICTION

I'd like to think this short story is part of a larger story I intend to tell someday. However, I wanted to test out the idea with a completely different character than I had originally intended.

I need to get the cab fixed, and soon. The constant hum from the passenger side door is going to fucking kill me. "Should've gotten his cab fixed. Fucking cab drivers, man." I already told my roommate that's what I wanted on my gravestone.

I don't think he even heard me.

The first time I heard it I thought I'd left one of my vibrators in here. But then I remembered I wasn't allowed to have too many "personal" items in my cab and Mr. Cab's Big Time Cab Company was generally shitty. But even that may have gotten me fired had I picked up the kind of telling passenger who'd rat me out.

Technically it wasn't even my job to fix my cab. My cab. Mr. Gunther's annoying voice pops into my head, telling me, "Steven, stop calling it your cab. And make sure you clock in your hours this week."

Not my fucking cab. Insane. I practically live in this thing, sometimes sleeping in it when Brian's got his girlfriend over. No one can sleep through their fucking, not even my step-dad, and he's the heaviest sleeper I know. I spend every waking hour in this thing. My shit is in here, I jack off in here, I eat in here; I've named the thing.

So technically, fixing the cab isn't my problem. It's Mr Gunther's. But I haven't exactly brought up the issue with him because anytime I envision a scenario in which I do, he's always bringing up some shit I did in the past. Like the bad review I got just last week for playing My Chemical Romance in the cab when some goth girl hitched a ride. I was only being courteous. It wasn't like she directly told me to turn it off.

She totally wanted to fuck, though.

No, but when I do finally bring the issue up with him, it's gonna be good. I'm gonna have to sacrifice my pride and juice it up real nice. Compliment him, act professional, dress nice, all the shit I've never once done in my life.

I'm laughing to myself at the image of me (dress shirt and slacks) sucking good ol' Gunther's (potbellied, balding, hardly keeping his marriage together) dick as I'm being hailed from the side of the street.

I see it. The look most everyone gets when they see my cab. The lady slowly lowers her hand, her eyes squint, her lips purse. I'll admit good old Dick isn't that nice of a sight.

She wears one of those coats that my ex used to be really into, even in the dead of spring. Pea coats. She looks like she might have money but she's probably only trying to look like she's got money. I've met plenty of those people. You know how I know? They always travel short distances that are within walking distance of their actual destination.

Or they're just cheap.

She looks like she likes hairspray (not the musical) and as she opens the back door I notice she's wearing gloves. Fucking gloves. Like, not my trusty driving gloves I've had since I was nineteen, but ones that could potentially keep your hands warm but are also there to designate some sign of status.

I snort and ask her where to. She gives me a curt answer and I notice she's got a bit of an accent, but her answer's so short I can't quite place it.

I pull back out on the street and glance in the rearview mirror.

"So, your accent? What is that? Canadian?" I need to shave.

"Northern."

"Yeah, no shit." My eyes flick back to the rearview mirror. She's twiddling around with her phone. Not amused.

I'll be the first to admit the "not amused" act she's pulling on me is kinda hot. I'd try to get in her pants if not for the fact she looks a little old. Although who knows. I thought I was into shy girls until I met my wild ex.

I'm still into shy girls.

"England," she clarifies and I nod like I know the difference between a northern and southern British accent.

We move on in our merry silence which, most of the time, I prefer. Unless it's a couple. Or it's a girl who's hot. Then she starts talking and at first I think she's talking to me. I even look back at her and make a noise like I'm about to respond. But then I see she's got her phone held up to her mouth like she's talking on speaker phone, except I don't hear anyone on the other end. And the shit she's saying doesn't seem to be a normal conversation.

"Book five. Chapter six. Starting from where we left off—Nate has miraculously escaped from the dungeon, his arm searing with pain. He's broken it. We don't know that yet."

I gotta admit it's kind of trippy, and I'm furrowing my brow and glancing back at her and she just keeps going at it. She's throwing other names into the mix and for some reason it starts to trigger something in my memory.

"Haley is overly concerned with the state of Nate's arm," she says. "As is Ryan. Through Haley, it is revealed to us his arm is broken and she offers up the suggestion to repair it herself. She claims she's been practicing a healing spell. Nate disagrees."

And that's when it hits me. One night I was thirsty as hell so I got up in the middle of the night for a glass of water. I ended up tripping on something left in the living room and my mind was immediately aware it was something of Brian's girlfriend that she'd left over. Whether on purpose or by accident I'm never really sure.

It was an actual book, which I wasn't aware people kept in their households unless it was for school. Curious, I'd read the first three chapters before falling back to sleep; I'd always intended to continue but I figured his girlfriend had left it there not for me to read.

I'd looked it up and, as it turns out, it's a pretty popular book series and the fifth one is set to come out later this year and shit.

Shit.

It's not like I can stop listening now. Not now that I know Scrap (whoever the fuck that is) has just betrayed Nate and Haley's in love with Ryan; and I've never been good with secrets. One time my friend Nick told me he liked our other friend Jenny in sixth grade and by third period the entire school knew.

I'm thinking about it so much and literally (literally) sweating that I almost miss her stop. Miraculously, I come to my senses in time enough to drop her off and like that she's stepping from the cab and my life, like it's nothing, and her heel almost catches on the curb, but she corrects herself in time and walks down the sidewalk, her phone still balanced to her mouth.

And I'm left to sit there, my pulse hammering so hard I can feel it in my wrists; and I haven't felt like this since I had my first kiss; and I'm drumming my fingers on the steering wheel.

I wipe my palms on my jeans and I reach in my cup holder for my phone. I unlock it and dial a number I'd never thought I'd use. One that when Brian gave to me "for emergencies" I laughed in his face for.

I dial Brian's girlfriend's number.

STAG'S ELEGY

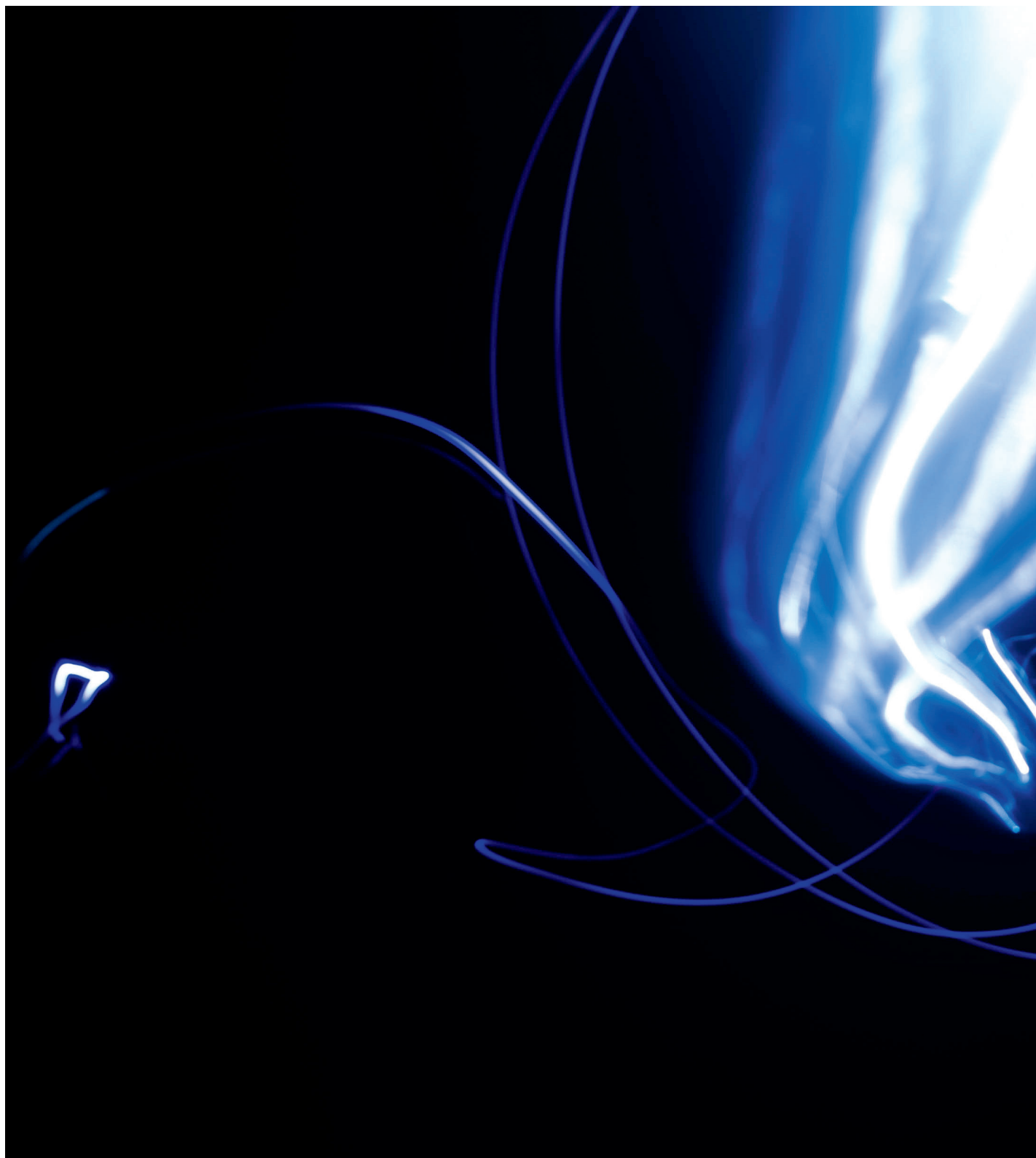
ANNA GREEN

POETRY

Stag's Elegy is a poem about a memory from my childhood in North Carolina. It's an elegy, or a remembrance of death, for a deer that used to steal from the bird feeders in our yard all the time. I never saw it after that night, though there were plenty of paw prints in the snow.

When we heard the screech that Winter's night we knew.
Dad stood up, ran out, and I followed fast.

I watched deep snow give way to plowing knees
and walked in his carved path until I crashed
against his thigh. "It was a mountain lion,"
he said, "After that big deer." And then, from out back,
another manic bray and the heavy thumps
that fueled the cougar's revving engine cries—
then nothing. My Father crept around the house.
He hoped to see a messy death, and I, a healthy buck,
but when we turned the corner, no blood-stained snow.
Then silence fell, save the rapid cracking taps
of icy branches breaking all around.
My Mother and the stinging cold chased us back inside.



The image features a dark, almost black background. In the upper left, there is a bright, glowing blue light source that creates a soft, ethereal glow. From this source, several thin, wavy lines of blue light trail across the frame, resembling smoke or energy. These lines are most prominent in the lower half of the image, where they form a series of connected, undulating shapes. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and energy.

CREDITS



RICHARD VICTOR, MARKETING MANAGER



BROOKS LIEBEE/PHOTOGRAPHER



SIERRA WINDHAM, STAFF



MADISON RAHNER, STAFF



JEFF CASE, ADVISOR

NOT PICTURED:
REESE COLLINS, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
RACHEL CURRIE, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER



ROB SPERDUTO, EDITOR

Serving as Art Director has been such a privilege to see this edition evolve from a simple concept to the final product. I have first to thank my Editor, Rob Sperduto, for all of his hard work and dedication to the publication and the club, as a whole. He is someone I am glad to have met here at Coastal and I know he will do great things in life! Another thank you goes out to my Advisor, Jeff Case, for his continuous encouragement and support toward my abilities as a designer. Next year's staff is certainly lucky to have him. Huge thank you to Brooks Liebee, our photographer, for his attentive attitude and for putting up with my spur-of-the-moment requests. Thank you to all of the staffers, as we had so much fun light painting; you're all artists now! Lastly, thank you to everyone who submitted. This publication wouldn't be possible without your support and fantastic pieces. Never neglect your passions. Live your art. And do what makes you happy! Thank you for a great past year; this experience is one I will always be thankful for!

It would be an understatement to say I had big shoes to fill following Alison Lane's three-year tenure. I can't imagine what this publication meant to her, but with one year under my belt, I've begun to understand. So an enormous thanks goes without saying: thank you, Ali, for believing in my abilities to propel the magazine forward after such a tenacious run; for recognizing talent within myself that had yet to be tapped. Thank you to this year's Art Director, Leah Kohler, for her incredibly gifted abilities and kindhearted soul that was brought to the office every week. This year's theme would be nothing without her. Thank you to Jeff Case for encouraging the both of us to reach out as far as possible and for motivating us to create a magazine unlike any other—I know Paul handed the torch to the right person. Thank you to the friends I've made along the way—Parag, Ian, Drew, Leah, Cait, Alexa, Kaley, Yaicha—you're all going to attain the unattainable. Thank you to the dedicated staff and all of our judges—student and faculty—for encouraging the successful direction of the magazine. Thank you to my wonderful girlfriend, Sierra, for rooting me to the ground, for pushing me forward when times were stressful, and for loving me every day. A final thanks to everyone reading:

I hope the selected pieces inspire you to
light up the world with your art.



LEAH KOHLER, ART DIRECTOR



ARCHARIOS

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