



CRIMSON & GRAY

SPRING 2017

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Krista Rossi & Emily Arzeno

ADVISORS

Peter Norberg & Tom Coyne

CREATIVE DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND FORMAT EDITOR

Brittany Swift

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jillian Buckley
Cecilia Conmy
Meg Croley
Amber Denham
Kerry Dowd
Alicia Ezekial-Pipkin
Lori Gallagher
Vivian Milan
Caroline Mulligan

Natalie Ochs
Christopher Pendleton
Charley Rekestis
Brenna Ritzert
Brittany Swift
Elana Valentin
Brianna Vassallo
Alisa Verratti
Tylar Weber

COPYEDITORS

Jillian Buckley
Meg Croley
George Fenton
Brenna Ritzert

Brittany Swift
Elana Valentin
Brianna Vassallo
Alisa Verratti

SPECIAL THANKS

Cover Art, Tylar Weber



Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, feelings, or ideals of Saint Joseph's University. Additional pictures used without accreditation are protected under fair use.

Foreword

This year's issue of *Crimson & Gray* presents to you the contemporary American Dream in all its facets. Starting in the darkness, but ending in the light, it covers the many sides of society's modern dream, which ranges from beautiful to ominous in different shades. It plunges first onto a black page, daring to delve into the dark depths of some of the most unpleasant sides of humanity that plague us all, such as fear, hate, violence, death, and loss in all its forms. Emerging from the engrossing nightmares, we gradually begin to enter into the light, acknowledging the tainted joys of lost loves and wishes before stepping fully onto white pages that hold perfect moments of love and hope.

We invite you to be part of our American Dream. We hope you will walk with us to hear the many different voices that compose our modern dream, and to maybe hear your own echoed among those brave enough to speak.

-Krista Rossi



CONTENTS

Writing

I'm Afraid	Alisa Veratti	10-11
Dresden	David Dorsey	12
The Black Body	Dominique Joe	13
June 12, 2016	Kerry Dowd	14
9/11/01	Colleen Baltovski	15
Angel Dust	Rob Roy	17
January	Molly Ledbetter	18
Aftermath of an Argument	Meg Croley	19
The Receipt	George Fenton	20-21
American Sentences (Part 1,2,3)	Meg Croley	22
Lavender	Krista Rossi	23
Shadow Doll, Puppet Master, Snare Weaver	Christopher Pendleton	24-25
Doppleganger	Brenna Ritzert	26
Stalker	Kayla Winters	27
Big Sister	Karleigh Lopez	28-29
Tango with the Insatiable King	Lucy Higgs	30
The Patient	Lori Gallagher	31
The Land We Came From	Krista Rossi	32
Cocoon	Maggie McHale	33
Achoo	Christopher Pendleton	34
Colors	L.Ane	36
The Pariah's Confession	Jillian Buckley	37
Homecoming	Jillian Buckley	38
self checkout	Allison Craven	39
Kings and Queens	Ian Hocson	40
call numbers are hard to remember	Allison Craven	41
We met on my first night in Paris	Nick Crouse	42
and you spent the night		
Figment Fairytales	Alisa Verratti	43
Submerged	Jillian Buckley	44
Little Cracks and Life Hacks	Alisa Verratti	45-46
Ode to the Cockroach	David Dorsey	47
The Napkin's Journey	Elana Valentin	48-49
Hindsight	Anne Clark	50
body in a basket	Allison Craven	51
Antivenom	Molly Sweeney	52

A Vintage Store Downtown
 The Bungalow
 Parceled Time
 A Taxicab Confession
 4:35PM on Monday
 Accent

Hannah Hershberger 53
 Krista Rossi 55
 Meg Croley 56
 Amber Denham 57
 Christopher Pendleton 58
 Molly Sweeney 59-60

Visual Art

World War 2 Melancholy
 Blur
 The Dark Hedges
 Narcissus' Grave
 Cutting Ties
 Morning Cig
 The Outsider
 The Modern Creation of Man
 Blank Face
 Simply Home
 Tornados at Midnight
 Poppop's Tools
 Overview
 Boat Paradise
 J.E. Mehrer
 Florence in the Fall
 Flux Retrospectif
 Carousel
 Crystal Blue Persuasion

Susan Henry 12
 Alicia Hennessy 14
 Christie Kennedy 16
 Christopher Pendleton 18
 Susan Henry 19
 Rodrigo Corral 21
 George Fenton 22
 Nick Crouse 25
 Rodrigo Corral 27
 Brenna Ritzert 29
 Rodrigo Corral 30
 Franki Rudnesky 31
 Rafaella Dhelomme 32
 Brianna Vassallo 33
 Maura Holcomb 35
 Alicia Hennessy 36
 Rodrigo Corral 37
 Susan Henry 38
 Jesse Buxton, photographed by
 Timothy West 43

Maras Peru: Salt Ponds
 Self-Preservation
 Smoke Screen
 Teapot

Rafaella Dhellomme 44
 Rafaella Dhelomme 46
 Christie Kenendy 47
 Jesse Buxton, photographed by
 Timothy West 50

Turning
 Venice Canal
 The Jump
 Midnight at Paris
 Carnival
 Still Life from a Summer Picnic
 Barbelin Beauty

Susan Henry 52
 Alicia Hennessy 54
 Christie Kennedy 55
 Rodrigo Corral 57
 Brianna Vassallo 58
 Nick Crouse 60
 Luke Malanga 61



Crimson & Gray Award for Best Poetry

"The Black Body" -Dominique Joe

Crimson & Gray Award for Best Short Story

"The Receipt" -George Fenton

Crimson & Gray Award for Best Visual Award

"The Dark Hedges" -Christie Kennedy

*American
Dream*

I'm Afraid

There is a sickening air that lingers too close to the homes of newborn babies.
I'm afraid it's going to suffocate them with its hatred before they have a chance to grow up.

There is a terrifying truth that lies in graveyards with hopeful soldiers and harmless civilians armed in the name of "God."
I'm afraid the smell of death will begin to overpower the smell of coffee at dawn.

There are governments that breathe down the necks of children teaching them that guns can make winners out of the one's who pull the trigger.
I'm afraid that one day only the guns will be left, and not the children.

There are movements that promote peace in cities where violence is rampant and rape is frequent.
I'm afraid no one will remember these people because all I see in the headlines are the latest mass shootings.

There are towns who force silence in replacement for courage because society taught them that a boy who loves another boy could never be a man, and a girl who loves another girl must be mistaken.
I'm afraid that this voicelessness will overpower the beautiful sound of freedom in a free country.

There is a teenager, 1 in every 5, who is suffering from a mental disorder that drowns them in a pool of guilt everyday.
I'm afraid their illness will go neglected due to the stereotypes that surround the word "depression," and suicide and addiction will be thought of as a synonym for "weakness."

There is a race war in my background, and inequality swarming outside my front door; it's contaminating my water and blocking my driveway.
I'm afraid the clutter will cause a war of its own, and sooner or later, there will no such thing as neighbors.

There are remorseless fugitives who take innocence from the hearts of growing kids, only to

leave them with endless nightmares and shaking hands.
I'm afraid this world will turn into a nightmare that shakes everyone's hand.

There are animals brutalized so that their fur can be used to warm someone else's back.
I'm afraid that this cruelty will go undiscussed while their species wither away into nothing.

There are health care scams spilling over Tuesday's leftover dinner.
I'm afraid because the elder generations would rather die by Sunday than live to see Monday's morning news.

There is your God, and my God, and his God, and her God.
I'm afraid because no one believes They sit down to talk about the weather, so instead they bleed out rain and hope it washes us clean.

There are pranks on playgrounds done to the kid with an oxygen tank because he's too different not to stand out.
I'm afraid that in 2017, people are still standing out.

I am afraid that one day,
the voices of those who fought to stand out will be forgotten in the tragedies left behind by those who refused to open their eyes to who stood up.

I am afraid that while our world should be progressing,
it's too busy digressing from the truth and the hate that still swallows us whole every night.

-Alisa Verratti

Dresden

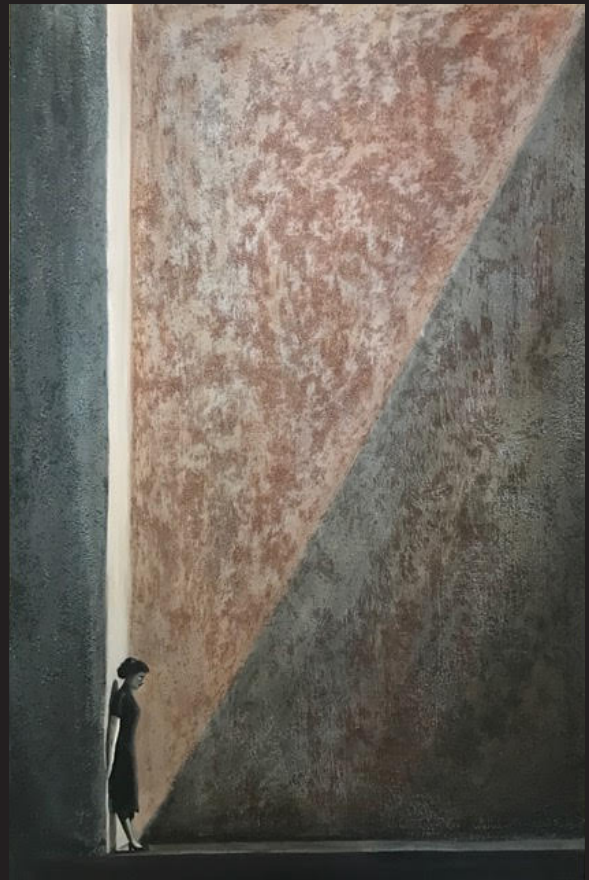
We hold hands and walk
Through dry, cool ash
That feels like sand in our shoes.
Shattered street lanterns,
Clouds blanket the moon.
It's as dark as when the planes covered the sky
Before the flames.
In the night, we pray for new beginnings.

We walk towards home
Back from the shelter.
We only have each other's
Rough hands to guide us.
Moving through the streets
From memories alone.
No light in the rubble.

All we can hear
Is our quiet breathing.
We imagine the town as it used to be:
Cars moving both ways,
Occasionally swerving by others when in a rush,
Honking their horns and slamming on the brakes.
Young people in groups chattering and giggling,
Going four wide on the sidewalk.

We stop at our destination.
Afraid of what we will see,
We await the crimson daybreak
That will illuminate where we are beside
The carcass of our home.

-David Dorsey



World War 2 Melancholy,
Susan Henry

The Black Body
Crimson & Gray Award for Best Poetry

Our black bodies are bloody.
Every one of us, raw.
Exposed for your viewing pleasure, skin muddy,
Lying on the sidewalk; you are in awe
Of our tan to blue black figures, once sturdy
Now malleable, an unwritten law.

Our bodies are still not our own.
Commodities from ship to street corner.
Bullets to the back, chest, through bone,
Cotton, inked blue, sending us to the coroner.

No video tape sends murderers to prison.
To fight this system,
People have risen,
Crying, “I can’t breathe—no justice, no peace,”
Redefining the condition
Of black bodies, fighting the
Historical and institutional position
Of the black body.

-Dominique Joe

Originally published by SJU Independent Press.

June 12, 2016

Wake up 7:30AM.

Sun, already awake, peaks its rays
through my window.

“Good Morning.

You’ll never believe
what the moon witnessed
last night.”

Pulse.

My bliss fades as the steam from
my shower surrounds me.

News notifications on my phone:

20 confirmed dead.

Orlando, Florida.

Pulse.

Scroll through news
while I sit on Regional Rail.

Whispers and shock echo
through the rail cars.

The ever so clever hashtags repeat
across social media. This doesn’t change that
now.

30 confirmed dead.

Gay night club.

Pulse.

Walk into the office, I see the rainbow flag
hanging on the wall, proud.

Friends sit on the floor defeated,
silent.

40 confirmed dead.

Latin Night.

Pulse.

Stand in our circle,
speak our names, where we’re from,

and our preferred gender pronouns.

We skip the question of the day.

49 confirmed dead.

Plus the shooter.

Pulse.

I go out to the streets of Philadelphia.

I wave at strangers as they walk by,
Trying to make them stop for a moment
or even just notice.

-Kerry Dowd

Blur,

Alicia Hennessy



9/11/01

for Shannon

six years

closer to leaving
polka dotted teacher
with sunburnt hair

lunch time, pb&j

mom comes to my table
to take me home

the sky looks like newspapers

the clouds are on the ground

sirens shouting while voices play tag
we find our way home through the fog

play date with Shannon

her dad was called into work today
we are happy

day off delights

pancakes for dinner

i want sprinkles and get it this time
because today is special

mom is yelling at me not to touch the TV
Pocahontas or Batman

we fight, play dress up,
and fall asleep

i wake up and hear crying
Shannon's mom is here

and her dad is never coming home

-Colleen Baltovski



The Dark Hedges,
Crimson & Gray Award for Best Visual Art
Christie Kennedy

Angel Dust

A drug dealer enters an evangelist church to buy angel dust with the belief a supplier will meet him there. It is a busy church gathering, and as the drug dealer shuffles through the crowd, he believes he sees the man.

Drug Dealer: Hey, hey I heard you were the guy to get some angel from.

Evangelist: Good Morning. And of course, all are welcome to the angels in His house.

D: Sweet man, cool, uh... how much?

E: Oh, that is nonsense neighbor, angels are for all God's creatures, rich or poor. However, if you feel compelled, you may donate to our fair flock. He gestures toward a nearby gold platter.

The drug dealer sniffs and rubs his nose with his index finger.

D: Oh, I gotcha man haha. He winks and places a wad of small bills in the platter nearby.

E: You are most generous, my son.

D: Sure whatever, now where's the angel man?

E: Oh, they are always with us my child, and your charity brings their favor to you.

D: What the fuck does that mean? Dude, you better cough up some angel du-

The Evangelist slaps the drug dealer.

E: Shut the fuck up, you idiot.

The drug dealer was stunned, but silent. The church crowd begins to funnel out, oblivious to the altercation. When it is empty, the Evangelist speaks.

E: If you ever pull shit like that again, I'll have you buried in a fucking meat grinder.

Still in a stunned silence, the drug dealer watches the Evangelist walk over to the cross, blesses himself with the sign of the cross, and open a hidden compartment in the back of it. From this compartment, the Evangelist produces a large package of angel dust. Walking over, he hands it to the Drug Dealer.

E: This is my ship here, walk the goddamn line or you won't walk at all.

-Rob Roy

January

I should have lived like the mice and grizzly,
retreating in unthawing cold, as nature weighs,
instead of pressing onward, dying daze,
only to be frozen again, by the one who melted me.

-Molly Ledbetter



Narcissus' Grave,
Christopher Pendleton

Aftermath of an Argument

Buttons jumped off a collared shirt and fled,
The battleground a shoelace, a lamp, a bed.
His shirt sweaty, gray, dark gray, and open.
Her rage like tin, flung, seeping.
He ran before she threw more garbage
The sky a dimming tear, wetting the foliage.

-Meg Croley



Cutting Ties,
Susan Henry

The Receipt

Crimson & Gray Award for Best Short Story

Like I usually do at the end of every day, before making the climb up my apartment building's steps, I reach into the breast pocket of my denim jacket to find my apartment key. Sifting through loose change and tangled headphones, I wade my hand through my pocket until the cool brass surface of the key meets my finger tips. I make a grab for the key only to end up grazing past a crumpled receipt beneath it. The paper crunches under the key. I stop walking up the stairs. I unconsciously slip past my keys. My hand flirts with the waxy parchment for a moment. I know what the paper is. I can already picture the words printed on it. Slowly I bring the receipt out into the open and uncrumple the document until each line of text is present. Through various stains of dirt and coffee, the faded ink reads:

“BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO RENTAL

Good Will Hunting

Run Time: 126 Minutes

Rental Date: 12/05/2007

Return Date: 12/15/2007

Total: \$5.35”

The key no longer matters. My apartment stairwell melts away in surrender to a dream. The memory has begun again-- I can't do anything to stop that now. Without consent the receipt has made me eleven-years-old again. I am home in my living room. Three sides of paisley wallpaper have appeared. Dad sits parallel to me on our olive corduroy couch, manning his usual position next to our cat, Patches, with his feet resting on the ottoman. I'm sitting on the hearth of our fireplace, my back to the flames. The Saturday night ritual begins again. Tonight's communion: Good Will Hunting. A light smoke rolls out of the fireplace and engulfs the room in the smell of burnt cherry tree. Mom materializes from the darkness of the kitchen with three cups of tea in hand. Robin Williams is on the TV telling Matt Damon how he ditched the 1975 World Series because he met his future wife. Mom shoos Patches off the couch and sinks into the sofa under Dad's arm. A light layer of sweat forms on my back from the heat of the fire. The wind howls outside, but tonight we are sheltered together, kept warm by the familiar comforts of our Saturday night rite. Matt Damon goes in to kiss Minnie Driver. Mom nudges a few inches closer to Dad. Elliott Smith's "Say Yes" plays from the TV. I sip my tea from my freckled mug. Then I sip it again, and again, and again as I always will every time I revisit this flip book memory, or grab for loose change, or reach to for my headphones, or just want to experience a time when reality felt concrete. But isn't that what we all want? To live in the past again, even if it's only through a

two-way mirror.

My living room begins to dissipate. The paisley wallpaper, the warmth of the hearth, my parents sitting together on the couch all vanish in the smoke. I am in front of my apartment door now. The receipt is still in my hand. My phone vibrates in my pocket with a text from Mom.

“Do you know if you’ll be spending Easter with me or your dad this year?” she asks. I crumple up the receipt and go inside.

-George Fenton



Morning Cig,
Rodrigo Corral

American Sentence Pt. 1

Funeral on a rural road, toupee askew – the dirt is guilty.

American Sentence Pt. 2

Ten seconds left, should I ask, I need, no, must know – do you love someone?

American Sentence Pt. 3

My words came out like strangled pets and I can barely admit her flaws.

-Meg Croley



The Outsider,
George Fenton

Lavender

The purple pastel pigments
smeared and blurred
in messy lines
on the cracked pavement
as ignorant feet
stepped over,
on,
and around
the crushed petals
that once had been held together
by tiny yellow centers
smelling of fresh lavender.

In its massacred state,
the bouquet
of sweet-smelling aroma
lay scattered about—
dismembered
by countless pairs of shoes
and oblivious passerbys
whose busy schedules
forced them to overlook
the scene of the crime.

What an arrangement
it had once been
only hours ago—
before the world
had become indifferent
to the simplistic beauty
one can hold in two hands.

-Krista Rossi

Shadow Doll, Puppet Master, Snare Weaver

1. I never knew what it was like to be a child's toy
Until I needed to be stitched back together.
I always did enjoy your warm, hollowed hugs,
But I now see they just gave me freezer burn.
I didn't mind being squeezed and drooled on,
Because I felt I had a purpose, someone to be a bastion for,
Until my seams started screaming,
And my innards rolled out.

2. You strung me like a puppet man on a stage for only you,
Limbs torn, skin burning as if caught
Between two steel plates
Ripping past each other at impossible speeds.
Loss of control, of time, of what a relationship is supposed to be.
My joints inverted, neck crippled and twisted,
Spinal disks bloodily ejecting
One by one by one.
My skin now leeches by the memories sapping my mind,
Eyes dehydrated, drained of white and now just empty.
All because it was "I" instead of "us."
If only we were back on that night in Cherry Springs, watching God,
Where the only darkness around us was the gaps between the stars.

3. Let us lock eyes, my two, your eight.
We used to slowly lose ourselves
in a webbed labyrinth of each other's realities,
But that was before you revealed your fangs.
I struggled away.
For you,
The loneliness will set in,
The dew blossoming on your half-frozen hairs.
You'll consume all of those closest to you that cannot escape your string.
Phantoms of quarrels past pass;

Flickering for a time so small, you have to question if they were really there.
Fear and hysteria sets in
And I will hear you hyperventilate,

But I won't go back to you again. That's my revenge.

Slicing endlessly at the walls I now established,
All your limbs flailing erratically but robotically
As you try to catch some prey one last time,
The only way you know how,
But the only obstacle will always be your own spinning.
I'll watch you try to restring your life back together,
As I fix my broken glasses, my viola, and fishing pole,
Which you all denied shredding.
But when you, if you ever,
Forgive yourself,
Maybe someone sheds a tear,
Maybe someone gives,
And then maybe,
Someone gets to see life like a beautiful conflagration

Like the one in this Beretta.

-Christopher Pendleton

*The Modern Creation
of Man,*
Nick Crouse



Doppelganger

A dripping profile
melting behind my very eyes.
You grow faint.
I grow far.

The days become easier.
The nights become lonelier.
I tell myself I don't miss you.
The echo in my hollow heart resounds,
"I miss you."

I catalogue every hour in my agenda,
making no time for you
to linger in my memories,
to hang on my heart.

As if it's a sick joke—
sick because it's not funny,
sick because I feel sick,
sick because this isn't in my agenda—

that melting memory becomes a carbon copy.
Living, breathing,
hardened wax—solid carbon.

He has your body,
Broad and stout.
He has your hair,
Blonde and rough.
He has your awkwardness,
Bad jokes and muted voice.
Matt

he has your name.

But he hasn't your face
that face I loved:
button nose, coarse beard,
softened blue eyes that crinkle at the corners

and uncomfortable smile.

He hasn't
he isn't
he wasn't
you.

I see him
Not you
Every Tuesday, Thursday
in class
from three to four.
And he isn't,
he just isn't
you.

These days are dripping by,
swirling together—I can't pull them apart.
I am drowning in days,
in you,
in me,
Drowning.
Because I'm trying to sculpt with melting
memories,
gasping to breathe rapidly evaporating feelings
to preserve your image—the waxen you in my
mind.

I can barely keep my head above it all;
howling bubbles as I sink beneath it all.

It isn't,
just isn't
you.

-Brenna Ritzert

Stalker

She likes to play with knives,
cutting with her eyes.

Click.
She follows me
with her fingers
made of ice.

Stop.
Let me
see your face.

Behind the wall
she follows me,
the keyboard her mask,
the strokes her show.

Slice.
Look away.

She likes to play with knives,
cutting with her eyes.

-Kayla Winters



Blank Face,
Rodrigo Corral

Big Sister

My big sister,
She thrives in the curtain shadows of midnight,
While the moon and street lamp lights
Throw bright kisses on her cheeks.
The masses of a thick, nigh atmosphere
Leave her skin a certain kind of
Heated and
Thirsty.

My big sister,
Scantily clad,
Cloth that never really liked her,
Hangs from the tablespoon curves cut from her sides.
I have never seen her
Without the billowing traces of
Matted and muted
Black
Dripping from her eyes,
Tangled up with smoke and burned gray
When the sun comes up,
When the dampness of her pillow
Starts to dry.
She speaks only in detached grunts and
Unalarming profanities.
I have never seen her teeth.

My big sister,
Whose world exists only outside her window,
Where her unpainted toes dwindle across cooled asphalt
And needles tickle and bite her skin
Between her lips and between her hips
Underneath and over on rooftops
begging,

Her mind and pores reeking
Of a promise someone gave to her
All the shouts my mother patronized her with.

My big sister,
Emaciated
Down to bones I'm not sure exist
From the phone calls
The rattled walls
From my father who thought I couldn't hear
From unwanted hand-me-downs
Stained
From stolen jewelry
And broken curfews
From nights none of us saw her.

My big sister,
Gone again
Thrusting herself into the night
Burning with possibility.

-Karleigh Lopez



Simply Home,
Brenna Ritzert

Tango with the Insatiable King

enthralled in footsteps,
drowned by repentance,
inebriated with your scent
I play

eclipsed in darkness,
conquered by manic bones,
awakened with your taste
I shake

emerged in incitements,
suffocated by manipulation,
flooded with your timbre
I break

-Lucy Higgins

Tornados at Midnight,
Rodrigo Corral

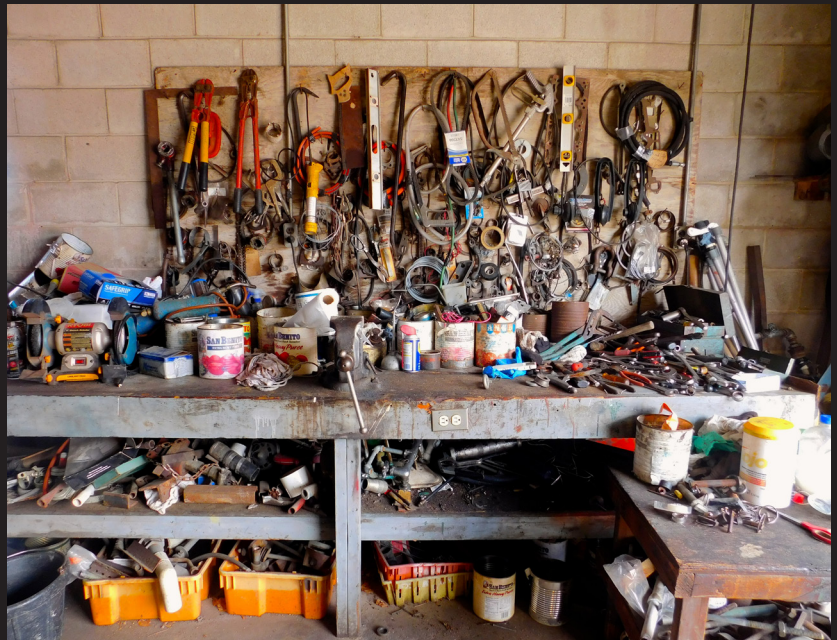


The Patient

What is living a life where the mind is blind?
The ear cannot hear the sights all around.
The nose cannot talk because words are dead.
The lips cannot smell the glorious sounds.
One cannot function when functions are wrong.
The body gives in to the attacker at hand.
Tears of the family members fall to the ground
As the patient accepts the Promised Land.
That is where the eye can see,
The ear can hear, the nose can smell,
The skin can touch, the tongue can taste,
The heart can beat, no longer in Hell.
To live a life where the mind is blind
Is to leave a life full of life behind.
Yet to live a life where life can thrive
Is to be in a place where the mind is not blind.

-Lori Gallagher

Poppop's Tools,
Franki Rudnesky



The Land We Came From

Bantering brown eyes
that I knew lay under
those closed, crinkled eyelids
stared at me in lifeless silence.

Pale, sunken cheeks
that caved in like valleys
beneath ivory mountains of bone—
covered with a thin layer of skin
that had once been warm—
echoed with the laughter
my ears could still hear.

The bear-cub-paw hands
that once held my own
lay twisted and curled
in swollen outlines
I could faintly recognize,
but could not actually remember
by their cold, stiff touch.

Overview,
Rafaella Dhelomme



It had only been days before
we played in valleys and climbed mountains,
but then suddenly we became them—
or at least you did—
and I realized
that we had been running,
and laughing
over our graves all along,
unaware of our fated returns
to the land we came from.

-Krista Rossi

Cocoon

I haven't felt very beautiful lately.

Maybe

-Just maybe-

It's time to stop overthinking,

And drinking

Cheap beer

Just to feel like I'm here.

I am not present.

But I keep present-ing

Myself in a mask,

But no one dares ask

Why my wings are wilted.

This caterpillar cocoon

That I've built, it

Is strangling my expression

Even with my professions—

Giving up my body

For what feels good.

I don't mean to be crude,

But even with his kisses

There is still something missing.

And I can't help but notice

That finding solace

In a soul that feels like home

Is just a garden overgrown,

And I am feeding

The weeding

That waters me like a rose.

I hope to be the rainbow

Coming after the rain,

But I am just the storm--

And maybe this is norm-al,

To feel that this flood

Both kills and renews.

I haven't felt very beautiful lately.

-Maggie McHale



Boat Paradise,
Brianna Vassallo

Achoo

Sweating feverishly and coiled in her hoodie,
She entombs her bundled body in swirling red, velvet blankets.
Stressed whimpers sneak their song from her polyester fortress.
Shivering, brittle shoulders and tucked in hands match the mood
Her puffed, pale cheeks and dead stare portray.

Her soft voice, like a piano solo,
Is still welcoming
Despite the few words she musters from her half-smile
(The only thing not cowering from the dank, desk lamp's light).

The scent of way too much ramen
Combined with a truly toxic amount of Febreeze overwhelms her.
The smell—a whale—gulps the entire apartment
As if the air was krill.

She struggles,
A scowl plastered upon her face,
Rolling around clammy, annoyed—
Annoyed at the clock for being the same time as an hour ago.
Fatigue leeches the optimism from her eyes,
Aching from the ingrained migraine.
Her anxious sweat and a single, sick tear
Slip into the scalding chicken broth bowl beside her.

-Christopher Pendleton



J.E. Mehrer,
Maura Holcomb

Colors

I want it;
The calm greens
And glowing oranges.
I chase it,
Hungry for its glowing passion,
But all I seem to touch
Are the scorching reds woven
Among the gloomy blues.
It blurs the clarity
Of my perceptions,
Smothering me
Like a flame suffocated
By a lack of oxygen.
There is enough air
To protect all, but
The other flames
Greedily steal it,
Selfishly growing
While I am left to simmer.
I can't keep up.
I resign myself to
The shadow of obscurity;
A life alone.
It comforts me,
Making me feel clean,
Like I am bathing.
I can depend
On who is always there,
Rather than deviate,
Ending up at the
Brink of asphyxiation.
It lingers in the
Back of my mind;

My real substance,
Suppressed by doubt.
It plagues my thoughts,
The fear of forever chasing
The warming colors, while
Trying to flee the chilling ones.

-L.Ane



*Florence
in the Fall,*
Alicia Hennessy

The Pariah's Confession

Tonight will drown me in car alarms
As my nails dig into the street.
I will count the wishes tossed out of doors,
Wondering what is left for me.
The stars will rock me in a mother's silence,
With grins that hardly forgive.
Redemption was not written with me in mind,
I cannot be the sin who lives.
This is not a new sight for the stragglers,
I forget that the sun will rise.
My vision is clouded with shooting stars,
What is the symbol for one who tries?
I am not worthy of the lion's roar,
The tongue that begs to be cut out,
Even the moon has turned his back,
For this heart refuses not to shout.
I ponder what came before and who lies ahead,
My choices sink beneath my skin.
Whether I am bound for Heaven or Hell,
There is no doubt I will be let in.
We all start with a fire beneath us,
But who am I beneath this subterfuge?
Merely the angel with soiled wings,
A poet's boast to an unclaimed muse.
These horizon edges are always gray,
I remember every life I've ever lost.
My struggles were gifts meant for the gods,
Destiny's grip made sure they never crossed.
What is this life if it cannot be ended,
Why give me wings if you will not let me fall?
Every eternity brings me back to these streets,
I wonder if this was meant for me at all.

-Jillian Buckley



Flux Retrospectif,
Rodrigo Corral

Homecoming

Isn't it funny the way our paths touched,
How I still see you when my eyes are shut
And the doors are locked?
I would come back a hundred times
To show all that I am,
All the secrets just waiting on their toes
To bounce beneath my feet
Until I am unable to stand again.
This house is no longer occupied.
It does not remember the stench of the forgotten
Or the sensation of blue eyes in a blackened body.
It will take years until I can smile without
it being from your name.
It will take years for us to meet again,
And again,
And again,
And each time we meet,
I'll forget a little piece of you.
I'll forget the shape of your promises,
How they left me with nothing more
Than bruises on these cardboard veins.
I'll forget how your name curls up in this darkness,
Tasting so bitter on my tongue
And leaving me with nothing in return.
We can't pretend that we didn't know this was coming,
But neither of us imagined
Just how much it would hurt
To turn our backs on each other
For the final time.

-Jillian Buckley



Carousel,
Susan Henry

self checkout

today I find three new ways to shrink myself:

1. I park out of the sun. when it finally disappears, I drive through the snow storm and over the hill. the theatre reminds me of all the nights I never touched in high school, this invented memory so distant it feels like a dream: two seats in the back and two in the front. I sit in all four at the same time. there's a film playing about woods and witches and somewhere my mother starts to cry. I can't see her, but I know she's looking at me. the guilt pours out of the walls and washes over my shoes. the four of us sigh.

2. I let myself believe in the sun for a minute like I'm scared for her to disappear. if tones keep echoing for years will they ever really go away? I think I'd like to. something like a train into the city and red velvet curtains, rocks for a floor. I sit back and watch: call it empty space, call it infinite nothingness, call it just one strain in a group of three thousand but I believe that at least here, I was meant to keep my mouth shut. isn't that what they teach you when you sit in groups of girls whose heads are brighter than yours? let them talk. let yourself get buried in the grime.

3. I leave before anyone can ask me about what's hanging off my shoulders, the edges of dreams where the feelings get stuck. but the things we hide in the drawer have a way of coming back to us right before we leave for the show. if you listen to it in the right slant of light, you'll convince yourself no one ever turned the spotlight off. you're looking up and over the empty seats to see someone working the levers. he's looking down. he's turning off the sound and it feels a lot like driving into the sunrise when you know you're getting further away from home.

I'm in the shower or I'm cutting my hair or I'm leaving the lights on but I'm always thinking about when the air finally gets tight. I could stay stuck in the sunset or I could close my eyes when it rains but it always feels the same: like my head is being held down against the pavement, like it's snowing but the sun is out and for some reason, that makes more sense than anything else.

-Allison Craven

Kings & Queens

Toronto was no match for us.
We knew its streets by daybreak,
Spent our last night of three
Embedded on the shores of Lake, Ontario,
Enamored by the Queen City skyline
Glowing in the darkness.

It's blurred reflection,
Stretched across the water,
Slightly distorted by the subtle waves
That broke against our feet.

The song Asleep by The Smiths,
Played from her phone.
As she clenched my left hand,
I could hear her singing softly
In the stillness:

Sing me to sleep.
Sing me to sleep.
I don't want to wake up on my own - anymore

Our bodies tangled.
Arms intertwined.
Meshed together,
As her grip on my hand -
Loosened.

She turned towards me,
The whites,
In her eyes visible.
She locked me in a gaze.

I Love You,
She said softly.
Her words resonated
With the slight breeze.

They echoed for me to stay.
And the skyscrapers,
That colored the horizon,
Gated me in.

She wanted me to stay.
I should've just canceled my flight,
I should've stayed there,
Maybe I loved her too.

But she'd be 500 miles away.

The next morning, we parted ways.
A painful goodbye boiled over in tears
Outside terminal three at Pearson.
I remember her in a sky blue dress,
Spotted with white petunias.
Her arms wrapped around the small
Of my back.

But, this is the way it has to be.
Because, if she's supposed to be my
Queen,
I think the distance alone makes me,
Unfit.

To Be Her King.

-Ian Hocson

call numbers are hard to remember

fire is a hazard. fire is not allowed in this building, but I'm putting it at the center anyways. hardwood floors at the middle of my heart and there is paper everywhere, falling out of my dress, coming out from under my coat sleeves and drifting through the park.

the drive is not scenic but I watch two airplanes. wait no, three, I'm sorry, and it's on the third one that I clench my teeth. everything in numbers that I count down when I'm staring up at the lights of apartment buildings where people are talking. I imagine myself wedged between the walls, standing at the end of a hallway. a girl in a red dress looks at me while she locks her door. our eyes get caught. "your hair is so shiny," I tell her. she tilts her head like there's something sticky she recognizes underneath my clothes. behind my skull. her lips fall apart. "it's the conditioner." sea salt leaks between us and she turns her head and takes the stairs.

there is no one home but me. when you are living in a girl's body and the girl's body won't stop aching, you have to scrub it clean. methods of removal. techniques to get small but smell better. I want to be all skin you can touch but it cracks whenever I try to look at it in the light. sometimes I stare at my hands with the candles all around me and it's Christmas Eve again. I am the one in the red dress, black heels, looking back at the clock, back at the collective body with a shadow for a face. you say "calm" and I say "nothing really ever is." this parish is where things start to go wrong with God watching. he doesn't blink.

everything on tv is white and gold. like things I imagined when I was stuck sitting on my staircase. like things that can fill your head with a slow kind of nervous jolt. blue doesn't wash out too easily, but that doesn't mean I don't put the sweater through a second cycle. the hues that keep me warm at night make me shiver in the morning. maybe that's just what waking up is.

-Allison Craven

We met on my first night in Paris and you spent the night

Tippy top jars full of those American Blues you seemed to breathe

You were cool and from Seattle

We were cool and lived in Paris.

You always said I was nice, which stung the way hot drinks do

that still taste sweet sliding down the back of your throat.

We sat at your little blue table on the terrace, listening to your music

I didn't know.

I carried you with me to Amsterdam after we had to leave the city.

And then in Barcelona I could hear you whispering about some new

bar you'd heard about in the 14ème.

But I don't hear you anymore

All millions of miles and billions of people.

And you let me get stuck back here

Or I let myself. I can't really remember anymore.

You know how I'm bad at remembering stuff.

You said it was good luck

That I always forgot things that happened.

But once upon a time

We met on Rue de l'Étoile

Right by that goddamn Arc

I ordered my café au lait and you lit your American Blue,

And you'd just stopped saying I reminded you of some guy from some movie

I didn't know

And I'd told you I loved you.

-Nick Crouse

Figment Fairytales

There's delusion stuck inside my fingertips from the last time they touched you
It's tricking me into thinking you're still moving under them

There's a burning spreading over my skin from the last time you brushed against me
It's got me itching for even the slightest feeling of you

There's a lingering rush inside my veins
from the last time your eyes met mine across that busy street

I've got impulses tangled against my willpower
like your hands when they were tangled in my hair

We stood under the night sky
and I became lightheaded with the thought of you

You've always been too close
yet, too far away to reach

There's words caught in my throat like a vulnerable confession
And it's got me wanting to say that
your face in the moonlight was the closest thing I've ever known to perfection

-Alisa Verratti

Crystal Blue Persuasion,
Jesse Buxton,
photographed by Timothy West

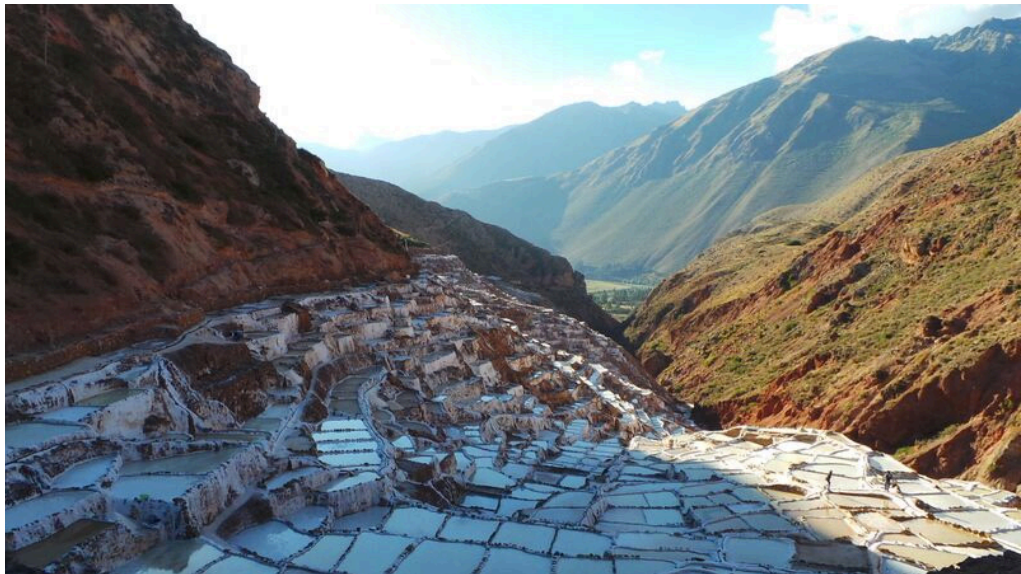


Submerged

We hid ourselves in abandoned homes until the storm receded,
But we didn't know that we carried the hurricanes inside of us the whole time.
Our car-crash hearts could not define us, the anchors beneath our ribs never pulled us down.
Once I was the only one left,
They told me about the stars hiding in the backs of my eyes,
About the brilliance that was too tempted to reveal itself at the wrong times.
I could not help but wonder who would want a natural disaster,
Who would be reckless enough to go outside and drown again.
I was never able to love the way that I was taught to,
And after so many years of being alone,
I started to get used to the lack of echoes between the walls.
Today, I press my fingers to the peeling paint,
Feel my future scars burn beneath my skin,
And know that I have the power to wash it all away.
I may be a natural disaster,
But I can be what the universe needs
In the most unnatural of ways.

Maras Peru: Salt Ponds,
Rafaella Dhelomme

-Jillian Buckley



Little Cracks and Life Hacks

Part I

I found you as a pocket knife in a labeled box
I knew what was inside
and was surprised when I got the chance
to memorize your engravings
My hands were sweaty when we first met
Maybe that's why you were always slipping from my grip
I tried keeping them velcroed to my sides
but your silver rimmed eyes caused my
love drunk smirk to flirt back
That was my first mistake
The liquor made us submissive
and soon our fingers sprung towards each other
like your broken shard that wouldn't stay closed
Your sharp edges were dulled down
Yet, you still made a scar when you fell from my grasp

Part II

I became the piano keys you started playing
on days when you wanted to hear serenity
Your feet created a rhythm too quick for me to keep up with
on foot pedals too large to fit your step
Soon your hobby changed once a new instrument came around
Our music sheets got damp with dust and now the only time I hear them is in my dreams
The inches of water flooding through my front door
started dripping off the hinges to the rhythm of our last conversation
It keeps me up at night
My ivory still remembers what your tentative fingers felt like
the first time they grazed over hushed melodies
But too much liquid has gotten stuck in my strings
so our soundboard became tone deaf

Part III

I found your smile in a sidewalk crack yesterday

I stepped over it

I continued down the street and realized
maybe
that's how you get over the person who has no clue
you fell in love with them

You just keep walking,
even when they come back around
brushing past your car door

-Alisa Verratti

Self-Preservation,
Rafaella Dhelomme



Ode to the Cockroach

Ancient insect and perpetual
Survivor, you are omnipresent,
Hiding in college dorms,
Doing business in steel high-rises.
Scampering around mansions' marble floors,
You understand the perils of life.
You endured the extinction of the dinosaurs,
The Black Death and the Cold War.
Adorned in bronze armor
Like Hector before the walls of Troy,
Or like a chivalrous knight to face an enemy.
We must look like dragons to you
With our clenched fangs glowing
blue eyes, and poison breath.
We fight to kill you,
But however many times we
Stomp on you, you continue to live on
With a broken shell and lost legs.
Only God has seen more; you have
Faced death more than anyone.
Yet you take each day anew,
Strong as your outer shell,
Awaiting danger as if
It were just another rise of the sun.

-David Dorsey

Smoke Screen,
Christie Kennedy



The Napkin's Journey

I have a friend who uses napkins to illustrate his points. Why the two party system doesn't work. Why my classmate is like a giraffe. Why my heart is a castle brimming with dragons because we couldn't get past the first date.

Distracted by his crude sketches, ignoring all the details, he never realized that there was someone else on my mind. I grappled for a napkin. Thrust my fingers into the plastic box. The edges were sharp enough to hurt, but too dull to draw blood. No proof of incident. I yanked out some paper that looked like it was forced through a sieve. I pulled out another one, more gently this time.

Ballpoint in hand, I tore a hole into the next napkin. An irregular gash cut into the corners. The corners folded into the center, like hands covering the face. I pulled out another one, and wrote more gently this time. Dancing between my fingers, the pen falls as I finished the phrase, You didn't understand when I said "I'm going to miss this," did you?

That was the first of many attempts.

Blue ink reminded me of his eyes, so I tried to use other colors. Black reminded me of the shadows of the room, that three-in-the-morning darkness that drenched us in morning twilight and temporarily delayed the dawn of revelation—of paranoia, really.

Purple ink like the titles of the music he played. Some of the songs I recognized. Some I didn't. Some we howled along to between peals of laughter.

Light blue ink never seemed to last. Have you noticed that? It's one of the prettiest shades, and yet it fades away all too quickly.

Sometimes I'd use Sharpies, but they bled too quickly. The lines were too shaky and faded all at the same time. All the details disappeared under the stretch of permanency.

Oh, and red ink? Too expensive. Too vivid and precise. Not expansive enough. Damn. It would have been too easy to write about red.

But I never felt red.

Crumpling the images hidden away in those napkins—not just one image, but one on each side of each fold—would have been a much easier task than to pretend they had never been drawn. The ink has already been used up. Dried. I cannot draw any more.

No. I cannot replenish the old ink. And when I finally realized that, I felt CRIMSON. Oh, the glorious escape and destruction of crimson! A means to romp about the theatre of my mind, the secret abuse of all things that hurt an execution of reality's complexities. The naked torture, the tremulous delight, the swift bastardization of values and tremendous power exuding from crimson! Why the hell would anyone settle for red when the burden of blues and blacks just begged for crimson?

Human dignity erased, I ignored the scabs on the paper —the lingering essence of remark-

ability. No. He was now drawn as the hobo sitting on the bank of 21st Street, chugging his mixed drink with a smile that spilled egotistical charm and dominance. Fruity-flavored intoxication on his breath that smelled as cheap as his lies (stained it with the strawberry from my last meal). Lies I almost believed. Some that rolled in as suddenly as the pineapple from across the street, and floated away into the stars like the leafy paraphernalia freed from under the crates of some yearly celebration.

But that was one of my favorite memories. Even if that was when the blue settled in. That when I looked at him, sitting with her, after a whole night spent on two bus tokens, regaling under the stars and the veil of indefinite vitality, I realized that I was never even a stroke of ink in his picture.

Days later, I scribbled over her face. It didn't matter who it was. I already knew it was going to happen. It was in his nature. I faded from the secondhand to the outside observer.

I still have a friend who likes to use napkins to illustrate his points. He has a girlfriend now. I have a boyfriend now. I still don't talk to him about the boy who didn't understand.

The boy who didn't understand and I are still friends. I'm not sure if he realizes that things are not the same. Like the whispers in my throat, he is only vulnerable in bursts. He keeps everything too close to his chest.

Like yesterday, I can feel the rising and falling of his chest, and his breath on my hair. My perfume and the scent of his freshly-laundered shirt had mingled smoothly, and in the silence we found understanding. For a few minutes we were back to our giggles in the dark. I wish my memories weren't tinged with the frantic haziness of my thoughts (the effervescence of pale color in the night, the unfillable edges of the page). Frayed napkins don't clean up anything. I don't even know if he heard me. My voice was too low, and didn't sound like carefree abandonment.

His thoughts tend to distract him from conversation. He is only vulnerable in bursts. He keeps telling me that "only real men let a woman go when he knows he can't take care of her."

I can never seem to fold that napkin, and I don't really want to. So one day I carefully tucked it away into my backpack, in a separate pouch from where I used to stuff the others, as not to be crumpled and jumbled between my textbooks and drawing pads, not to be stained with new inks. Not like the other napkins that have long since been opened and carefully set aside, reorganized for what always felt like the hundredth time: almost always revisited in that dimly lit room with the photos corralled by mismatched fairy lights, accompanied by the hum of the radiator.

No longer did these napkins persuade the comforter to drag its heaviness over my body or sit idly while, in the early morning before the forest bled orange, the cotton anaconda found new and creative ways to constrict my body: tangle my legs, clutch my torso, strangle my neck, force out more tears. Now, thankfully, there was a place to put them.

My friend with the napkins only sees me vulnerable in bursts. You deserve to be happy, he writes.

-Elana Valentin

Hindsight

I.

The first person who ever loved me would
only look at me when I stood next to her.
I was twelve, and
I only took my eyes off her to count the freck-
les on
the face of that boy she said she liked
to compare them to my own.
We'd play our little games underneath
tie-dyed sheets with wrinkled pleats and
swear it was all just pretend.

II.

At sixteen I was sure of it, though
I was only comfortable proclaiming it around
perfect strangers.
We had a mutual friend, and
we both liked bad TV, and
it was nice to feel wanted.
We fit together oddly.
When I was next to her, she clung to me
just a bit too tightly, and
I wrenched myself free only to realize I was
alone.

III.

We sit too far apart as we
try to keep our hands from touching as we
speak in euphemisms and
ask for answers we already know.

I never wanted to know what it was like
to sit next to you at dusk and
feel the weight of your head on my shoulder
as you fell asleep beside me.

I think if God were real he'd bottle your laugh
and
sell it at every corner store in this hemisphere.
Maybe then we'd all know peace.

-Anne Clark



Teapot,

Jesse Buxton, photographed by Timothy West

body in a basket

I talk about my hands in everything that I write, but it's not the truth. book shelves keep falling on my head from where I sit, five years younger, gold enamel sunk beneath my nails. this week a professor tells me about confessional poetry and all of the ways it makes the poet's veins crack. five years younger feels the snap in her ears. her hands were hovering over the keys at the piano recital and her parents were watching and the girls were staring up at the ceiling fans but they were all humming the missing notes. twelve years is nothing if she can't get the black dots to fade into something sustained. it's like the smell of teeth and tongues that say "little girl, your brain is so light," but always resting on the beat before the "but you keep yourself too still to love."

so this is the moment I know, the one where the silence is something I create rather than something that finds me. I have spent a lot of time molding this with idle hands, wrists that shudder but don't bend. I break it in half everyday, sometimes three times. I even try to catch the way my back curves in the half light, maybe the colors that drip to the bottom of the shower when I open my eyes again. leaking things out requires the wringing of your hands, skin against the sort of things that are too sharp not to clench your teeth. but I sit inside of them instead.

sometimes on fridays it all softens and my hands at least turn the wheel. someone talks to me from my backseat and i don't try to stop myself from getting lost on back streets. on these days, I move better. I can talk to you without letting the haze come out of my mouth like a cloud. maybe it's better to let my hands move on their own, arms lifting up like I am eight and music notes are still something that taste good. at the end of the night, the closet door is always open. my hands are going to shut it.

-Allison Craven

Antivenom

Serpentes inspiratione strikes suddenly
with the slightest provocation.
Venom shoots through my veins
and rushes to my brain,
which short circuits upon its arrival.
My heart pulses wildly, aggressive and burning.
I search for antivenom—pen and paper.
Hands moist, shaking,
sweat drips as I lean over the page.
Words pour out, written in blood.
Letters loop, melding together,
unrecognizable to all but me.

As quickly as it happens, it's over.
On the page, two lines—a start.

Relief.

-Molly Sweeney



Turning,
Susan Henry

A Vintage Store Downtown

I daydream of you this late afternoon, Edgar Allen
Poe, when I walk through this quaint downtown.
Beneath the lights, with a mind overflowing,
looking at the setting sun.

Old clothes on and in need of new, I walk to a vintage boutique,
imagining what you are doing.
The clothes and shoes! Hipsters shopping, others browsing. Full of teens
and adults alike! Girls in the rack of shoes, boys with the hats---and you, Emily
Dickinson,
What are you doing with that cameo brooch?

I see you, Poe, looking sad and lonely wearing that too small hat,
spying on children, playing with rusted toys.

You approached them, asking “How old are those toys? Where are the scarves? Have you
seen my raven?”

Enticed by your madness, I stalked you around the store.

You finally notice and nod at my presence.
You stopped to try on a beret and waited to hear the Friday night band play.
What are we doing? The store closes soon. Where will you go next, raven
master?

Will I continue to spy, to stalk, to wonder?

Will I follow you home and understand where you come from?
Will we walk by the traffic lights that signal red, stop, and ponder life?

Ah, fine friend, old crazy, morbid mentor,
What life did you live, who did you meet, and what things did you see
before you saw me?

-Hannah Hershberger



Venice Canal,
Alicia Hennessy

The Bungalow

The warm, sticky floor in the
kitchen of the bungalow sprays the
room with salt; its faded mosaic all a

mystery. The memory of numerous
feet that once danced across its
surface through endless summer nights

hold the taste in their pores; the sense of
passed holidays and whispered
secrets deep in its surface of abiding

confidence. The consumption of such
magnificence demands an exchange, so the
feet trade their own salts, their own secrets.

What undiscovered mysteries I
unknowingly walk over—only my feet can say,
but they never sit still long enough.

-Krista Rossi



The Jump,
Christie Kennedy

Parceled Time

She had been ordering packages for weeks, hoping, knowing he would be there with a line and a greasy pen to sign off on underwear, dried pears, play scripts. She never saw him outside the center where boxes flew in like graham cracker crumbs on a plastic yellow table; no, in order to see him and gain a smile, money had to be spent. She was running somewhat low, she realized, but it was worth a broad nose and blue eyes and a red cap.

They closed at 3:30, and they all knew her there—Chuck who kind of suspected, and Tina who liked to pretend she did. The lines were humid, too, a lot of bodies, but she didn't care, her feet stayed planted as pink as her cheeks and her hope for him.

"Maybe this package will be the one?"

Thirty-five in one month. That's a lot of cardboard to bend, a lot of squares to heft, but he did it for her. He waited every day to see her, rose to the occasion of driving to campus with a sweaty bagel and rubber cheese to sleep less and work more. She'll come, he always hoped, even when proof had made it clear she would. The doubt would still creep in, only to be banished by fluffy hair and silk shoes and a wool scarf.

"Maybe today I'll ask her out?"

Maybe the sun shone just right on that gray scope of the bleak building, warming letters and paper and signatures, or maybe the wind had started out cold and then grew rosy by the time it settled on faces. But she approached, looking forward to poetry she didn't need, and saw his eyes, and she knew.

"Would you like to get a bagel sometime?" He stepped on a box as he said it.

"Thank God. Now I can stop ordering packages."

-Meg Croley

A Taxicab Confession

The leather seat crashed into my
shoulder as I rung your sweat-stained
address between my poorly
painted nails.

I almost turned around.
I almost climbed over forgotten tips,
prayer beads, and a wedding ring
to grab the wheel and pull it back
to the curb.

Instead, I tried making small talk.
I picked up my mother's trait
of tying a loose measured knot
in my hair and forgot just how
much I knew about
erratic driving patterns.

I checked the watch I knew I
wasn't wearing that day,
though I knew those roads
by the smells seeping through
the air-conditioner vents.

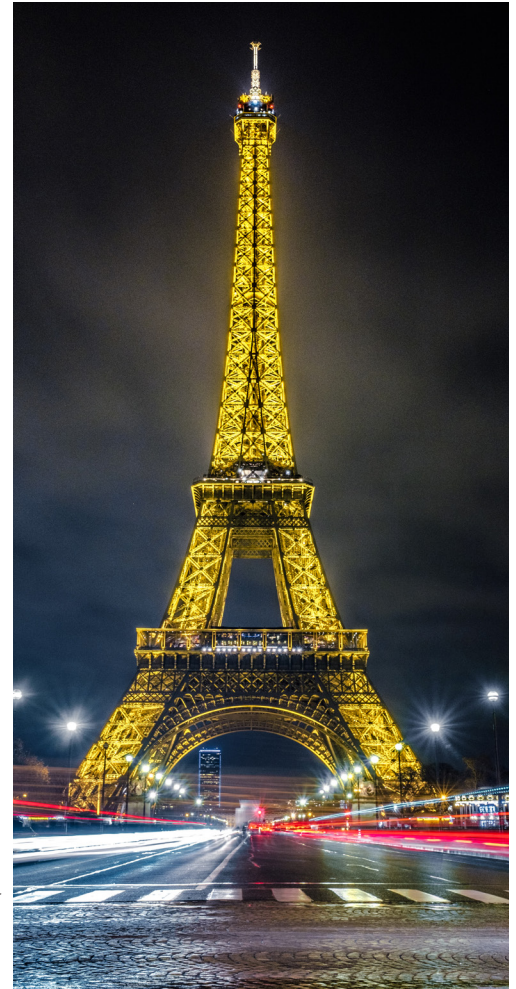
I counted how many times
the radio mentioned "happy hour"
and wondered if your dog would like me.

Your name now tears across my lips,
as a fraction of time on the watch
I now wear is spent memorizing how
you breathe—

that half skip of breath that
parts your mind and your voice—

and noticing your leaning smile,
the one that makes me fall in love with vertigo
and taxicab traffic.

-Amber Denham



*Midnight
at Paris,*

Rodrigo Corral

4:35PM on Monday the 25th, 1951 – Rockefeller

Their footsteps thin but trailing long behind,
December lovers swiftly skate on past,
Sliding in glassy gray circles around.
Gilded Prometheus merely observes
The sparkling flames in undemanding hearts.

These psychedelic scarves sing siren songs,
Captivated eyes slowly observe,
But my benched view is only drawn to one.
The purple stripes fuse with orange passion,
Intertwined by overlapping threads.
A twister of those creamy swirling hues
Stirs the sherbet mix into my pupils.

I see her and her scarf do laps around,
Colors flapping like the great condor.
They swim careless in the monochrome,
Airing their season premiere for the world.

-Christopher Pendleton

Carnival,
Brianna Vassallo



Accent

Sometimes I can taste
it, distinctive as an onion.
It stands out
among the garlic cloves.
Other times, it's more of an apple, red
delicious to everyone else's granny smith.
Occasionally, it will surprise me,
sugar
instead of salt.

Always, it is a home cooked meal and the words
flow from my mouth like wine around
a dining table.
When I catch a hint of it in
unfamiliar air, I
go looking
for the source;
we must have grown up in the same kitchen.

It is always a most welcome
discovery
to find a brother in this new home.
Though
the knives and forks are different,
and the view from the window above
the sink has changed, we are not
afraid.

We've come prepared with the
ingredients from all our
favorite dishes,
so no matter what
kitchen we find ourselves

in, whatever house, whatever city, whatever state,
a taste of home is
never
out of reach.

-Molly Sweeney



Still Life from a Summer Picnic,
Nick Crouse



Barbelin Beauty,
Luke Malanga

