



JET FUEL REVIEW

Fall 2021 / Issue 22



A High Octane Literary Journal

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Artwork: Bonnie Severien's *Flower Garden*
Cover Design: Cassidy Fontaine-Warunek

Mission Statement

As an online literary journal, we believe in the power of language and seek to provide a platform for quality writing and artwork that pushes boundaries, surpasses expectations, and creates an emotional resonance in our readers. In order to do this, we aim to showcase work that is representative of the complex and evolving human condition while featuring a diverse array of voices and styles. Every semester, we have a rotating editorial team of Lewis students who carefully evaluate our submissions. Our diverse staff strives to include authors that represent ourselves and others. We hope our journal will inspire and unite the literary community. In addition to our journal, we maintain a corresponding blog that offers an array of commentary on art, literature, film, music, and more, allowing us to interact with and expand our community.

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Foreword

Dear Reader,

Welcome to Issue 22 of *Jet Fuel Review*! This fall, our editorial team combed their way through nearly 800 submissions in an effort to give you a collection of writing and artwork that is outstanding and thought-provoking. These works were carefully selected over the last few months, and represent our mission statement of publishing remarkable and diverse work that represents the human condition and the world around us.

Housed at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, *Jet Fuel Review* is a student-run, faculty-advised, nationally recognized literary journal that publishes writers and artists from across the globe. Founded in 2011, *Jet Fuel Review* continues to grow with writers and artists who unapologetically challenge the artistic canon. This semester, our journal received a CMA (College Media Association) Pinnacle Award for 2nd Place in the category of "Literary Magazine of the Year" for Issue 21, from Spring 2021. As a journal, we are incredibly honored to have received this designation and are motivated to continue to do work that enlightens and enriches our community. For this issue, our cover art, titled *Flower Garden* comes from contemporary artist Bonnie Severien. This piece shows the differences in nature and architecture which relies on the area of geometry. It inspires the idea of natural and human made beauty working together even in their opposition. Each leaf and petal represents growth and prosperity in an ever changing modern world.

For our poetry section, we feature the excellent work of 2020 RHINO 2020's Editors' Prize winner Maureen Seaton and winner of the 2013 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Poetry, Amanda Auchter. In addition to the pieces from our cover artist Bonnie Severien, we feature the wonderful work of Camilla Taylor, whose art uses a variety of materials and techniques. Our fiction section for this issue includes a notable piece from David Obuchowski, "Volcano," which comments on the concepts of relationships and obsession. Obuchowski keeps the reader engaged through his use of symbolism as the volcanoes become the norm in this story. Amy Nicholson is the author of "Request", a nonfiction piece which brings complexity to the emotions of a mother and daughter dynamic. Exhibiting the ups and downs of life through a realistic lens that helps readers to relate and also be impacted by the depth of Nicholson's story.

So many more powerful pieces and creators that can be found within Issue 22 of *Jet Fuel Review*. The works express many complex ideas not only intellectually but also emotionally, and are a testament to the hard work of the creative minds included. They will resonate with readers from all backgrounds and capture the attention of those looking to explore the complexity of the human experience, as told from the perspective of writers and artists from around the world. We hope you enjoy the sophisticated and brilliant work that makes up this issue.

Read on!

Jordyn Spangler and the *Jet Fuel Review* Editors



POETRY



At sea level the warship was a spectre. Luminous at one moment, eternity's termination the next. She couldn't see the recording of its lines on the horizon, a white wake among waves. No towering.

We're all likely murderous. –she said—

The force slips through your mind. It arrives the moment you look down the barrel and know someone will not come back alive. You might cut and leave— you think. – But for a while, for a while what's normally, plainly said, must stay inside. What stays inside is an attention to movement. A secret word thrashes. No one will get to it. No one will hear it. Not even you, though it bangs it's knuckles against your skull.

You said it would hit me, the shoreline, the waves sheen. I no longer knew what was true. A cross-out Saturn, the waves, with their silvers and touchings. One is made by thoughts and then in my thoughts I knew. I couldn't carry the space between the body and the memory of the body. The earth swam with you as you swam among the shadows.

The illusion of a sphere came to her, and with it, the splendour of repair which held within it a dark mineral, a carbon imprint. Her whole face turned slightly farther than in profile. Her eyes followed the speed of the pallid boat.

Once you and she were just two people walking into the clear night. You gaze into a dream of the street's end. You stood in the meadow.

You stood before the equestrian-gray house where smoke's pewter complexion softened the fence line. In her blouse you see her form in fire. This was her third death, where she drown in fire's doorway. Your lungs witness fire's stratum. The house an anthem upon the crest of the iron-burnt harbor, a searchlight.

Even now she is gone, proven too late to speak. Her invisible country fills with signals.

You'd come to understand there would be no intercession. What acolytes remained were now orphaned.

You remember the veteran grass in which she lay, looking upward to the dark grains of hydrocarbon, Saturn's sputtering rings.

§

As I knew it —the strange banks of your blue house, silent shores, downs and dark, The night-window murmurs. Tides glittering your tiny claw, my logic settles with you, settles my ship, my city.

I wade through crescent pools wound through two ruts along the channel, deeper as I settle at the bottom of the sea. We perch upon unnamed stones, fire's thousand shields around us. Held in abeyance you said you'd had enough. Had held out enough. You spoke of winners and losers. I grieved for you. I grieved for you. You did not grieve for me.

‡

I am death myself falling over the leaves the waters the particles of every silence.

In the trenches with your ghost, I became. I became ghost among the men.

I lived with you mostly, there, among disjointed incidents.

I never wanted to be a lesser hero. As a stranger, I came among you. Prepared for the place you were headed. Truth is only alive when there is witness. The true thing is found only in the body. It surely waits to move.

At night we heard killing sounds catch along the road's shallow chalk lines. My horse, a good horse, walked backwards. Backward, over the graves of the living, we walked into the second battle where I found you.

I am the ghost you asked to stay. I am to assuage your guilt, but I said no.

I am a person of no importance.

It is hard now to read people's circumstance. I've lost motivation for how I am to see life.

We were the punished and would never answer to the land.

I remember his face as he moved quickly. I remember you, my enemy.

§

*I had a hand in my own failures. Remember, to be alive is to be of injury. The meadow
heaves, and the wind in slow degrees awakes the will of my language. It is an old language,
the self-same language, wordless in injury, as I am wordlessness among them: the dead,
caught among the dead languages.* And in injury, the American soldiers surrounded us, we
the injured. And, as in a movement of language, the wheels and the spokes of language, a
language of lack in which we were attacked for speaking, our voices travelled as a stream. A
blue shimmering rose above our enemy. Every silence was a crime under the wheel. Every
wheel was an old language, the self-same language, the will of language. The will and the
courage of will move language forward is not a light endeavour. Not without politic. I have
said this again and again and I will say it again and again. Even if it is only to myself that I
speak. But there is always a lack of justice in the communion of will. I regret my
observations, the time and distance it takes to unfold my progression. I regret this pity.

Wannabe Abductee Addresses the Mechanical Alien Hypothesis

(with a line from Elizabeth Bishop)

They tell me you are
mostly likely a machine—

beyond biology, a series
of whirs and clicks

and light patterns
so devastatingly large

I could never shake
your hand, if hand

is indeed a thing you have.
I don't want buzz

and fluorescence, slick
metal tables and cameras

over eyes— I want your meat
to meet mine, wet tissue

and clammy warmth, probe
and pain, translucent eyelids

and blinking in the rain.
I want to carry you like

a baby inside my sweater
up to the top of a hill

and tell you the star names
I remember— *Exxon*, *hard-ee's*,

the *gas and go*. I want
to show you my terrestrial

glow, my physics learned
from Star Trek. I'll wipe

your mouth with a greasy
paper from the drive-in line

and let you watch, mysterious
the headlights making turns

and turns and turns. I'll tell you
how all traffic feels a little bit

Christmas—red, green, red. And you
a child I never had to give birth to,

who I can hand back
to the stars like a nanny,

or the mother of Christ.
Esso, Esso, somebody once said—

Somebody has to love us all.

The Morphology of Shame

It's funny how we remember
things we thought safely forgotten,
then share them with strangers.
The other day, I told a passer-by
my strongest emotion was shame.
I'm ashamed to admit it.
Hats off to whomever said it
first: writing poetry is like
washing one's dirty laundry
in public. I'm up to my elbows
in suds, trying to catch the tail
of an S. It wiggles away,
hides under slippery soap,
its slick, sinuous body coiled
like a spring. Can't say I have
much more luck with the H.
It's a ladder with only one rung,
leading to nowhere special.
Hell in a handbasket. Heart
in the doldrums. Headache
with a dash of hypochondria.
Even the A, for all its alpine
scaling potential, is sure
to disappoint. Halfway up
to the apex, the acme, the apogee,
I'm stuck on a ledge, waiting
to be rescued. Which begs
the question, what's the point
of reaching a summit
if it's all downhill from there?
The nightmarish M masks
the mournful sounds I make
in my sleep, when the lever
of some fast-moving machine
slips from my grip. There's
a bottomless pit to fall
endlessly into & hungry maws
raising their teeth to the light.
Then there's the E, that most
frequently used vowel in English.
Edgy, electric, self-effacing.

life in the phases of the moon

- i. new moon¹
- ii. waxing crescent moon²
- iii. first quarter moon³
- iv. waxing gibbous moon⁴
- v. full moon⁵
- vi. waning gibbous moon⁶
- vii. last quarter moon⁷
- viii. waning crescent moon⁸
- ix. new moon⁹

¹ as if inked blood stains wombs / into empty chambers, we spend nine months / in the dark. a child / i once babysat could only strike the keys / of a piano in a dusk room. he said / light lived too much / & music longed for the dead. alternative to dead: notyetborn. / when my brother was notyetborn, / he was normal as

² could be with / spoon eyes & midnight wakes & / promises of more light in his future / more illumination in his full (moon) life. / fact: parents don't outlive / children. fact: my parents weren't / astrologists. fact: sometimes, I lie. you see,

³ the disorder pins / shadows & toolateclocks to cratered / hearts. later diagnosis = further seeped blood / medical help = slowed advance. tell me / about doctors & diagnoses / & I'll tell you he was fourteen months when doctors said he would die / young. treatment would savor / the light / until the shadows knocked all doors down. someday I hear them knocking

⁴ but breaking news / holds waves at bay. / technological advancements & medical / experts. ashes burned / back into bodies / toolateclocks dialed back / coffins resurfaced and emptied, miracles / from heaven (or miracles / from labs). wires strung through body, suspended skeleton. now / make him your test subject. find the elixir in new / treatment plans & / medicines & trials & one day / a cure will align. one day / his genes will reorder / one day / oneday. / onedays

⁵ passed like butterfly / wings. one day he died / with desire to be other kids / to be the dove / & not choke on olive branches / to be / something. one day he died / with desire to sink into the ground at disney / & consume only light & laughter until doves dug ditches and buried themselves. / make-a-wish was free / ice cream & carousal rides / & wondering / how many of your new friends will die / in a year / how many reach the top of the roller coaster / & how many lose momentum / halfway. & skipping / to the front of lines / & meeting costumed versions of digital characters. but when we returned, we learned how

⁶ seizures steal bodies, steal limbs, steal hearts / & more than one iteration: friends' hearts, families' hearts. packed into boxes and shipped / across the seven seas. returned only / to clench into fist roses & murder / mystery threats:

Natalie Hampton

which seizure will be the grand finale? / we packed our hearts and we packed him
7 into hospice. fact: the maximum length of hospice eligibility is six months. / fact: he was on it for years. you see,
doctors wrote eulogies / before he was gone. warned of death / with every trace of shadow. so his expected life span
/ always dwindled below the mark. / under this care
8 they reminded us food is life / & to empty stomachs is to empty / bedrooms. when he stopped eating & drinking &
gathered debt in shed pounds he didn't own, / we saw life debt taking back what it owned. we saw / the
toolateclocks ringing true / and another fact:
9 my parents aren't astrologists, / but even if they were, no telescope / can see the new moon.

Sherine Gilmour

The First Time I Filed A Report

I dialed, but my hands shook. Dialed again.
A person picked up.
“Describe what happened. In brief.”

Her voice as clean as soap. I did not know
then how much I wanted to be loved,
even by a stranger on the phone.

I said, “My mother slammed my
brother's arm in a car door
on purpose to punish him.”

I was sweating. My fingers white,
bleached like bones on sand. The room
blooming radioactive, overexposed, an unending

camera flash. “How old is your brother?”
I told her, “Three.”
“When did this happen?” I did not want

to answer—what was and is my
greatest shame—
“It's been nearly two weeks.”

How desperately I listened to her breath,
her tone. Certain she would judge me,
or worse, not believe.

I heard my words, like a bad script.
“It happened so fast. I didn't
have time to stop her.”

Quiet on the line, I waited. Her tone,
empty. “If we sent someone now,
do you think they would find marks?”

Was the door slammed hard enough?”
Had I ever told anyone so clearly before?
How my mother had always done these things.

In the blink of an eye, concocted plans and escape,
threats and injuries. But temporary. No bruises,
no proof. She knew how it all worked.

“She shoved her purse and umbrella
in the hinge,” I explained. “So the door bounced off
the bulk of her purse and the metal bar.”

“Do you think the door hit him at all?”
the woman asked. I thought I might vomit.
There was the chance this was not bad enough.

Then I heard the woman hum, which reminded me
of my great-grandmother creaking her way down
to her knees to pray. “Are you sure

there were no marks?” she asked.
“Sometimes bruises can take several days
to form.” Then, “Were there any other incidents
you can recall when she might have left marks?”

“Yes, yes.” I said. Papers shuffled.
I who had been trained to see and unsee.

To feel and unfeel, all my life. To wake
and forget. Now, I tried to remember them all.
The woman said they would send people out

to check his skin. If something happened again, to call
but that “It would be best,” she stumbled
on her own words. I was aware she knew what she

was asking of me. “It would be best
if there was a mark.” And in that moment,
I believed she felt tenderness toward me.

Whether she did or did not, I believed. That was the first
time I called. I was twenty-three,
and once I had done that, I knew I could do it again.

While Washing Windows

The sills are coated with dust. Ladybugs
and beetle corpses.

Again my mother lied, again she screamed and cried,
called me *whore* again. Talked

about me dying. As she has for years.
One death or another. One death

or two. The sills are coated with dust.
I flinch when I touch

a claw or leg or pincer. I try to let my body
take over, push the blackened rag.

Again my mother talked about me dying.
Finally signed over the life

insurance policy she'd bought on me
when I was a child. For the money. She said.

To end her own poverty. She said. I wish I could end
my own pain as easily as slipping off a dress.

The notary's stamp. My mother's voice.
Grief like a blanket over my shoulders,

tied down with rocks. I circle the rag around.
Life smells spoiled.

Stink of food that has gone bad.
The insurance paperwork sits on my desk.

I cup the bodies, shake them
into the trash. Grit under my nails,

grief lives in corners. Yes, to feel,
yes, to be taken over,

then to let it all go—
that is what I want.

A Part

In the room
where always

another has been
with an old oar

pushes the waves
away in a sea

of sleet.

Transom

Kid climbs
a ladder

of oryx horns
and swallows

the son
of the moon,

it's hungry
ghosts, and cuts

like drugs.

Imaginary Son: Sonogram

And now you are the beginning
of your own history—
a stone rolled away, faint light
casting you into

the world. One day you will
be unburied. One day I will wear you
across my chest while you finger my necklace,

my hair. Each of our hearts
a shadow

of the other. O my little letter,
my alphabet of cells, do not set the stone back.

I watch you try your gospel inside me —

a fist that opens, then shuts.

A Grecian Child's Commode

6th c. BC

Encased in glass, this toddler's training pot
bares seven chipping scars glued snug again
by gloves that puzzled back a rim. The lesson
here is how two thousand years may heave

but hunching doesn't change. The red design
encircling the bowl fades in scattered flakes.
Impossible to tell if a mother's arms
are really there, or just geometry

a potter's brush flared on to raise the price
for tipsy merchants strolling by the docks
whose days were clacking drachmas changing hands.
Fantastical, the tale my professor told

was of Athenian aristocrats
ashamed their youngest son was mute but moaned
and shit through seizure sweats. They gave him up
to their childless slave, a witch, who sang

and swayed him as he quaked. One night she wept
until her tears turned them both to octopi
that swam so deep beyond the Pylos coast
they lost all earthly names inside the sea.

May Night

after Willard Leroy Metcalf's 1906 painting

The marble mansion glows, a butchered tusk.
Its grand estate is wild and wooded still
though grass that meets the portico is cut
so low it looks like moss, wearing arrowheads
of leaves in patchy dappled shade. The only light

besides the jaundiced sheen from stars is orange
and spilling from a window lamp, obscured
by prickly shrubs too tall to trim without
laddered shears. The orange is meant to draw
us from ourselves, like a diary in flame

or blood a mouth has spit across hot sand.
A patient eye may follow it to find
the maiden strolling robed in aimlessness,
a wan and regal specter, who trails
her nightgown like a tree-torn parachute.

Some yards away, she stares beyond the stairs
she left, their massive column pairs, the door
we cannot see. Alone and turned from us
her beauty is the beauty of a conch
half-glimpsed by lovers strolling down a strand

who think the world a storeroom full of props,
who stop to point and coo while holding hands
then watch the surf return it to the sea.
Whose grumbles has she fled? What father, son,
or groom has driven her desperate for air?

Never mind. She is pacing back inside
to bear their growl again, but lingers here
in forever's frame, not quite returned
from own-swoop shadow-fall, another bride
who drags her dewy hem and cannot hide.

Annie Oakley's Bullet Inventory

Her first bullet she buried under the cypress,
and it grew into a lace dress she put on
to show her mother, who was, at that time,
a shining image of the second bullet, pristine
and tall, slender as the beams holding up
the little room where she slept curled
like a mole with her sisters and brothers.
Her mother was not always a bullet.
Before she was six, her mother was soft.
Her third bullet was the rabbit she shot
to feed her mother. It didn't even run
from her, looked so planted
it could have been a blossom she plucked
from the fat earth. She was hungry,
her mother was hungry—her sisters.
Bullets are not easy to come by.
Then, the cooing mourning dove,
the gray speckled sky, the white fence,
which was a bullet, which she would take
in her back pocket to England, plant to say
I've claimed this land in the name of America.
Then the world was a bullet and she sat sidesaddle,
like a lady, proper enough to ride without
a single glance, to make every glance a bullet,
to catch it in her teeth, fit it into her rifle
fire over her shoulder, somewhere out of sight
and hit just where she was aiming, hit
right at the spine so each target
bowed and transformed, folded
into itself neat as a blanket, neat as a dress
she'd hold up to the light to say yes,
this is mine. I made this.

On the Failures of Plot

As in the square cordoned for storybook rhubarb, each furrow
pillowed. As in to lose to memory's short-circuit. As in the ribbon
flying off when you open a grimoire, consequence
tying me to the tracks. Ground plan or secret, noun
or verb, plot's pedestrian: I was born. I lived.
I cried. I'm terrible at spackling holes. I'd rather ink
horses with a wolf brush. The trouble with destination
is that nobody loves a maze sown in kudzu.
Forget what happened. Why write about plodding
when it's the after I'm after? I only liked ornithology
for the field guide's jeweled plates. My favorite poet
said *end with an image*. In Bangkok's gutted New World Mall
koi bloom between a column and escalator. The page is a roofless
ghost ship. A pool glinting orange. Plot's just a daymare.

American Skies Are Silver

and beneath their solstice my silver haired nanna kneads bitter
memories into bāozi, muttering myths of Icarus. He lived on

drunken seas, bathing in his father's blood. Her own wings
of buckwheat wax beg to melt near heaven, must be ribbon-

tied to doorknobs each sunrise. Nanna claims Rockwell's America
saved me, that my only victim is myself. But instead of gasoline

dripping from jasmine clouds, pooling in liquor fountains
where children play, mailmen slip poison to neighbors,

electric hemlock that tickles before it kills. Nanna says packaging
makes milk sweeter. She collects coins in milk cartons, believing

copper is American chocolate. I lied when I said stores would refuse
her pennies, smeared myself with weedkiller before hugging

her lavender perfume. That night I dumped fourteen
jars of honey down the drain, watched it lick copper

pipes while Nanna cried. Beads of nuòmǐ fàn devour
the Rockwell paintings on her kitchen walls,

sweet napalm I'd never dare to drink.

Maize

I never witnessed a shooting
star, so mom gave me her old telescope.

I take her silver honda and leave
the city for a midnight

snack and a piece of sky unkissed
by light, chasing sugar grains

on a black countertop. Upon arrival
unleavened cornfields flaunt

their promiscuity, gold cocktail
dresses, sweating dust on my lens.

Blackboard chalk traces lovers'
lips, tacit streaks that never

powder, kisses that will never
tarnish. Whiteness crumbles and falls

beside me, leaving the sky empty.
Beside me, the honda sits empty,

the arrow in the fuel gauge
points to “E”.

Blitzkrieg

In her dreams, they are making love
on a lazy Sunday afternoon

The air is adrift with calm and
smells like efflorescence

The sky is almost carmine—
a sign of what is to come

War is not outside the door;
bodies piling higher and higher—

The smell of rotting
flesh becoming ordinary

Each time there is a knock at
the door, she is afraid—

In her dreams, they are making love
on a lazy Sunday afternoon

Woman (DOA), 54, Hair Still Slick with Auburn Dye

Your cells scandalized
 by the thought of you once
 rumored you into existence
 one tattling protein at a time
 You slip of tongue arrived early
 in a putty of vernix the sensation
 of your name from Mother's mouth
 like a feather Demerol pulled across your skin like
 a string tightening as its kite whipped away
 Each new voice became

a slide's silver rung
 cooling your palm as you pulled
 yourself up eight now *grace* was a thin
 skin you twisted and picked off The now-unmade
 bed of your neck was kicked from the foot
 of this girl who once rose to cheers
 and saw the velvet backs of pitbulls crashing
 into one another their muscles thickrooted
 as gospel

Later
 you'd practice moving your hips
 in the woods schmoozy with rot
 as the lake unfolded the crinkled moon
 like a letter without a destination
 The stump's cologne reeking
 on your pillow as dreams metabolized
 the laughter when you pronounced both c's
 in *crescent* Say nothing of the powdered
 beetles that color your lips red Say nothing

of the pond's gray spine when it rose
 behind your childhood home those eager arms
 that stretched out scooped out
 your sister's ballet slippers Say nothing
 of kettled want your daughter's far-sightedness
 Or the word you remembered
 as you ran the paintbrush up and down

your graying hair pain braiding through
 your arm *penumbra*
 each syllable a blind
 clacking open

On Hunger

Dysphagia is what the doctor called it—
A word of quiet parts, a hymnal of fish
slowing beneath ice. A form was signed
and a tube was inserted into my father's
stomach. *We need to ensure he tolerates his feeds*
A voice with a crease of sympathy thrown
like a paper airplane. Each night, the moon's white blade
passing over my head. Each night— the drip.
The sharps container clicking open its jaw
to belly little bits of him. Then *We will send you home*
with samples. And *palliative care is different*
from hospice. Feeding my father is so much like
the first time I fed my daughter. The stunt
of swallowing, the weight of mashed bananas
making her grimace as my husband and I clap
and clap.

No,
 this isn't true. The truth is I see his swollen stomach
 and think *snake* a field mouse pulled
 down its body
 like a baby wriggling
 in a stork's knapsack.

Does it hurt? I don't know I don't.

When I was little, he once told me the froth crackling
 on leaves was snake spit. I thought *of course* of course
 a thing nape-soft and pleading through grass
 with harm balled in its throat would leave a mark.

But this isn't true either—
a snake doesn't have to leave a signature
before it tightens its tourniquet, and your tin can
heart occasionally rattles until your brain bleeds.

God I never even knew this man—
this unfamiliar body I hold. His stomach coming out swearing
in a way the man never did as I change his shit-stained pajamas

He wasn't mean. He just never belonged to any place
he entered. It wasn't it's not his fault—*Grandpa used to lock Daddy
in a room for days without food* my mother once said
as he idled in the car on my birthday. He stayed there
until the pink streamers tangled in the trees.

Sometimes, I believe I ate everything on my plate that night.

Other times,

I remember lying in bed, hunger
pulling me close enough to hear
a swallow.

"I have a thousand pounds of girlfriends."

- Giomar, 1st grade

I have a depletion of stillness.
I have a grocery bag of morning.
I have 3 ounces of breath.
I have a mason jar of errands.
I have an eighth of a teaspoon of spring.
I have a handful of cat hair.
I have a boy-full of spelling.
I have an amazon delivery of lunch meetings.
I have one square foot of poetry.
I have a mini cartridge of smart-ass.
I have a cairn of feathers.
I have a swallow of patience.

"I have a thousand pounds of girlfriends."

- Giomar, 1st grade

I have a mouthful of sparrows.
I have an exhale of trees.
I have a fortnite of boundaries.
I have a manger of democrats.
I have a cake bowl of compost.
I have a checkbook of apologies.
I have two fingers of long division with decimals.
I have a backpack of false starts.
I have an obligation of emails.
I have a dilemma of nerf guns.
I have a wine glass of winter.

Pyroglyph

[From] These Late Eclipses

I take my espresso with powdered milk, and pages from Shakespeare's pharmacopeia. Drill, shale, fossil fuel. An entry in the reorganization of errant appearances: under the tarnished pewter sky, its weak light a game of whist, an oriole won't quit flitting like a calligraphic stroke.

Changelings

[From] These Late Eclipses

I love my daughter the pot sticker, her sister the celery stalk. A freight train unsettles these farmlands like a wild-style storyboard, the water tower a gallows for witches, a lunar module sent to rescue us. Down here in the fescue boonies, the moonlight / cuts right / through me.

Seed & Clothespin Prophecy

One, to open your satchel & take these warm seeds—
your remaining days.

Give me your hands
to balm for the planting.

For now, these tasks are enough.

You are alive & well enough,
with a pond & two Appaloosa ponies in Kansas.

Someday, I will feel the distance between now
& then lessen. It's the moment before the return—

I am so far away when it occurs. Look:

I have clothes pins in my hands,
hanging bedsheets.

The divineness of you—one morsel of God,
will be just beyond the sheets
I am hanging in light.

Have we not finished grieving?

When I corset-stitched The Moon back
together, she cast her gray-glow at the
wrong angle through a window stained
with earth.

At first, the animals were a little
skeptical.

The Moon doesn't have bad angles,
they sung, a mutinous choir.

The Moon doesn't know bad angles, I
said and still say and will say again. We
never know what we're capable of.

When The Moon cast herself at the
wrong angle, the animals raced to her
feet, lapping up what little light she
gave.

I told them stories about The Moon I
read once from a No Longer text,
before the angel numbers
reconfigured our geometry.

No Longer, I told them, meant The
Moon wouldn't remember Before.

Nor the clandestine lovers who cut
their hair just to bury it.

Nor our shared sing-song breath.

They trusted me then, the animals. Me,
the night hag of the Nephilim,
sentenced to small disclosures of No
Longer.

But they clocked my poor needlework
when the oven clock flashed 11:11 and
I became a tiger in the spotlight.

hillock hill wept 5

I dream of winter, her antlers closed
in thistle, milkveiled and weighed
with longing

how does someone ever know
what to believe? the lilies fester
sticky sweet
in the belljar of something dying

the first theft is discernment, I no longer
differentiate between the strange realms
of wake or sleep, a dark's diminished
creature

like childhood, certainty has fled
from me forever. I am no archer, I must
accept the irretrievable or perish beneath
the wound-weight of its bow

outside, summer chokes the sky
somewhere in my hallway a lily tips
in its glass, unknown

perhaps I never believed in the first place

Eel Love

You bring
your tabernacle
down low
almost graze
my hair
then let out
the eels
that braid
out from
your mouth.

On parchment
your plan sends
me palpitations—

Eel Love,
coil caresses
my throat.

You are the
sea within
the sea, I am
cameo
appearance
as salty
stream.

So many
willow leaves,
the parentheses
that embed
your lore:
eel slime,
patina of
imperial
wound,
umbilical
entrance,
then writhing
voyage of
too-muchness
not-enoughness,
murky ballet
of approach

& avoidance.
 Terrible
 certainty
 terrible
 pendulum—
 the Eel
 Question
 swims
 with me,
 keeps me
 alive.

home in motions

after Grace Q. Song

where waters bloom promises of land & lemon halves
sprout horns to exorcise mosquitoes

where on the schoolbus we are the bycatch of some
insult sounding like chimes

where living room walls scabbed with childhood
flake like identities *too* [itchy / familiar / foreign]

where the orchestra of insects stitch close day-wounds
& every night we're moon-turned restless in absence

where we burrow in the same silence between
stale arguments clenching

where we become ambigrams, reconcile flaws

where we iron our [bed sheets / postures / America
-creased names] until they unfurl into early fog &
call it repentance

where we exist only in the lion hills of summer or
maybe exist in every season *but* the summer

where we sleep at the wrong time to the wrong song
too [tired / awake / sick] to care but who's to say
what's better, that orientation from disorientation

the blurring / of a scratchboard down / with the breakfast pulse /
sirens bleeding / under covers / sweeping hand
of paralysis / slippery-splinter of a heartbeat / two mothers /
too lost / flight repeated out of its motion /

how we will be scared regardless.

Discordant Landscape

Cobwebs hook our lampshades
to the walls. This barn turned home

boasts no copper flashing, still
it provides shelter for the spiders

and for us. *It's the trees* long-time
residents tell us, leaves flap, spiders

fall—I feel haunted by substance
and mine their webs for metaphors.

Gravel migrates over the threshold,
tumbles the wide plank floors—

*People pay a lot of money for their floors
to look like that.* Give me a cannon

and I will release confetti, a nod to joy
and distressed wood floors. Our mailbox

lost its motivation to clasp, and our cellar
hums with mice and spiders; they throw

parties, but never invite us. So we hang
our wet quilts on the clothesline, release

our small sadness this sunny, blustery day.
Our reward— horses queued on the road.

For the Bull Rider Walking Off a Broken Leg

The way a limp becomes swagger, an interview
in which he thanks God and his mother
for tending to his wounds. This violence
is something both desired and feared

because we always continue. We do
the things that we do, over and over.
Never let them close enough
to glimpse the grimace. Do not ask

for assistance. This is a performance
and we are all well-scripted. Me
in the stands, cheering. The Bull Rider
in the dirt, weeping. How these are the same

thing, just different. How I am weeping
in the dirt while he is grinning.

Tortured Comedian

He tells another joke and the crowd goes nuts. The laughter and applause so intense the light fixtures shake. His pulse rate jumps as his teeth begin grinding. Then, as always, comes the pleasure. It's counterintuitive. It's not sexual pleasure or even an ASMR tingling of the scalp or spine, but hating their laughing just makes him feel good inside.

At the comedy club, most comics start with their best material to quickly win over the crowd. The tortured comedian begins slowly. Some heckle or boo and some walk out. The club manager doesn't care. He knows the tortured comedian finishes strong. People even return from the parking lot when the place starts shaking. From his slow start, he builds to a climax leaving the audience laughing so hard they gasp for air. I've even seen people at his show reduced to lying face down in the aisles pounding on the floor in puddles of joyful tears. His eyes squint as he visibly abhors the euphoric response, yet his anger makes them laugh all the more. They love it. He's disgusted. But inside he's dancing a pleasurable little jig. It's a virtuous cycle and everyone goes home happy.

He's single but once was engaged to a woman who constantly laughed at his jokes. She knew his whole routine and it never grew old. Her laughter made him so mad he could hardly take it. And, of course, he loved it. Eventually the one-dimensional relationship blossomed into something deeper and she began serving him breakfast in bed. He realized the thing had run its course: no laughs, no pain, no pleasure. He lives a circular, love/hate existence. Once I asked him how he sees his future. "No change," he said. "Sisyphus has his boulder. I have my jokes."

Crop Circles in the Park

The circles were there. In fact, they're still there. I spotted them in the park while walking the dog the other night, probably soon after they were created since the bitter smell of singed grass was still in the air. The scene gave me a prickly, crawling feeling on my neck, like wearing a necklace of caffeinated spiders. Dinner churned in my bowels. I immediately scanned the skies for UFOs, but they'd already fled. Believe me, I'm an eyewitness to the circles, and my wife and dog are co-witnesses. They both clearly saw them in my presence the next morning. In fact, my wife insisted I take pictures of her, the dog, and the circles, and you better bet I did. The dog told me he couldn't comprehend what he'd seen that first night. He said, "Hey, honestly, it was just too much for me to process out there in the dark. Anyway, I definitely grasped it all when we went back in the morning." I admire his humility, after all he's a dog. He says he's willing to testify under oath. There are two identical circles in the park, each 35 feet in diameter, forming a modified figure eight. I say modified because there's a small gap between the circles. So, to be absolutely clear, they formed double zeroes instead of a figure eight. Don't try to catch me out on a technicality. The circles are unmistakable - dry, burnt grass contrasting with the deeper green color of the rest of the park. There are no cows in the area, otherwise I'd have done a mutilation check. And, get this, a neighbor down the road is late returning from vacation - we're praying there's not been an abduction. I'll be phoning a late-night radio show to file a report. The police around here won't even take up the case. They can't get over the talking dog.

The Difficulty of Listening

My neighbor's angry in her driveway.
Bird droppings dot her windshield, and she faces
the great difficulty of cleaning it off
without soiling her hands and risking
infection from the little white berry.
Her son hunches in the car, trying to squeeze
his body into his cellphone and live
forever inside a text recording his feelings.
Her husband insists they need a clean sweep.
His plan, he confided one night over beers
by the gas grill, involves living his passion
by opening a seed bank on the west coast of Niihau.
They would be the 170th plus persons on the island.
Eventually, she speeds away to drop her son
at school, then off to Macy's, where she dresses
mannequins to announce the newest fashions.
Her husband's hunched in the basement
scouring Youtube videos about coconut propagation.
I'm on the deck with a mug of black coffee
and a complaining prostate trying to identify
bird songs. So many people strain for nuance,
sometimes we forget the basics. Struggling
with my book of songs, I'm failing already.
I can barely distinguish one finch
from the next as they hop like grace notes
from one bar of the feeder to another.

Daughters

Emily on Steroids (Chicago)

She doesn't believe in purgatory.
The walls of her room prove this: *Faith No More*,
Nirvana. She's fifteen. All Souls' Day.

The souls of 4927
gasp at her irreligiosity.
They simper around the two-flat like

jealous siblings, spooking the mice, clogging
the sinks. They pour from faucets like poofy
genies. Emily says *fuck* when the doc

prescribes steroids for her blue-fingered asthma.
She'll never make it to purgatory,
I think. Like me, she's going straight to hell.

*

Jennifer in Early Snow (Manhattan)

She was strolling through Washington Square
Park in headphones when she lifted
her face to the snow and her soul leapt there,

right there near the old at checkers and the young
at dope swaps. She called this bliss and brought it
back to her only room in Chelsea where

a jack-o'-lantern stood on a tiny
table at one of two windows over-
looking what some call Sodom and she calls home.

Self-portrait, Beginning with Zagajewski, Ending with the Beach Boys

those who love music for itself are few and far between
(Adam Zagajewski, from “Three Angels”)

Although I’m intrigued by *those who love music for itself are few and far between*, I have absolutely no idea what Zagajewski meant when he wrote that line— not really, not enough to make the same pronouncement myself on a Tuesday afternoon in the lackadaisical beginning of September when music has seemed to halt for a time except for the pop of crabapples on the roof and the occasional woodpecker laughing itself silly from one dead tree to another, but I believe I’m often spied upon by angels, although I mostly ignore them, which, I’ve been told, is not the best course of action— still, think how they just show up when they feel like it, how they make extemporaneous speeches, much like the three angels in Zagajewski’s poem, “Three Angels,” and since I’m not Zagajewski, more a wilting sunflower (you know how their heads droop in September), who’s completely self-absorbed and often detached from the mutilated world, which is, after all, why angels show up in the first place (though not the only reason— birth announcements, tidings, sex), I must admit that when I realized, as a result of Zagajewski’s discerning words regarding music and those few who love it for itself, that I can’t absolutely swear that I care about music that way, without strings (pun intended), or, for that matter, without the horn player who dropped by when the band needed someone to announce its new song. French horn or angel? God only knows.

My Mother's Mother's Wrench

I’m 13 and I only listen to bands
whose lead singers are women

And at dances the song we’re all waiting for is sung by a woman

And when it pours out of the speakers every body in that room
plunges into its rage

And we all look at each other like yes
this is what we’ve been waiting for

And when I walk the boy home in the
mosquitos and fireflies
and first stars freckling this night

And I take off my scarf and wrap his slim neck in it

And he looks scared of being kissed
so I just grab his hands

And he looks at me like I’m keeping him
from flying off the planet

that
is exactly what she’s singing about
in that song
where she’s screaming her lungs out



ART

Primavera



120 x 160 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Bonnie Severien

Flower Garden



120 x 160 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Bonnie Severien

Modern Jungle #1



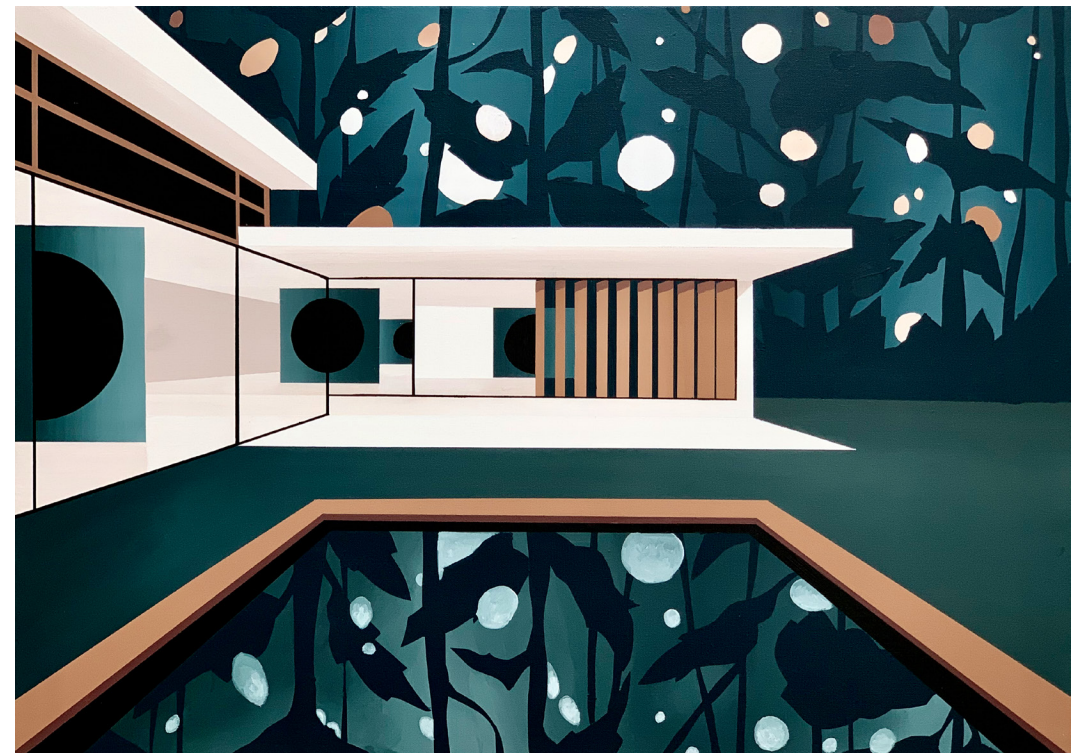
50 x 70 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Floatation



80 x 120 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Inner Peace



50 x 70 cm, Acrylic on canvas

The Comfort of a Story Repeated



40" x 8" x 8", Ceramic with underglaze and thread

Camilla



10" x 8", Drypoint intaglio monoprint

Old Havana 007



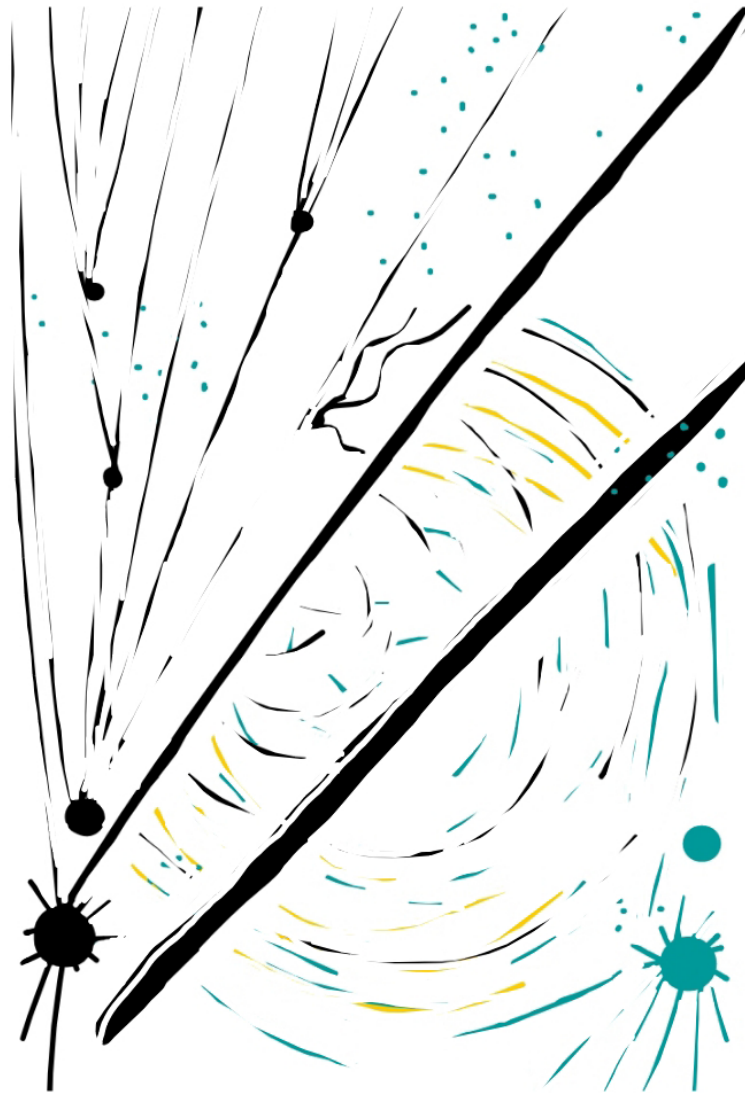
60 cm x 90 cm, Digital photograph with mineral pigment on cotton paper

Old Havana 008



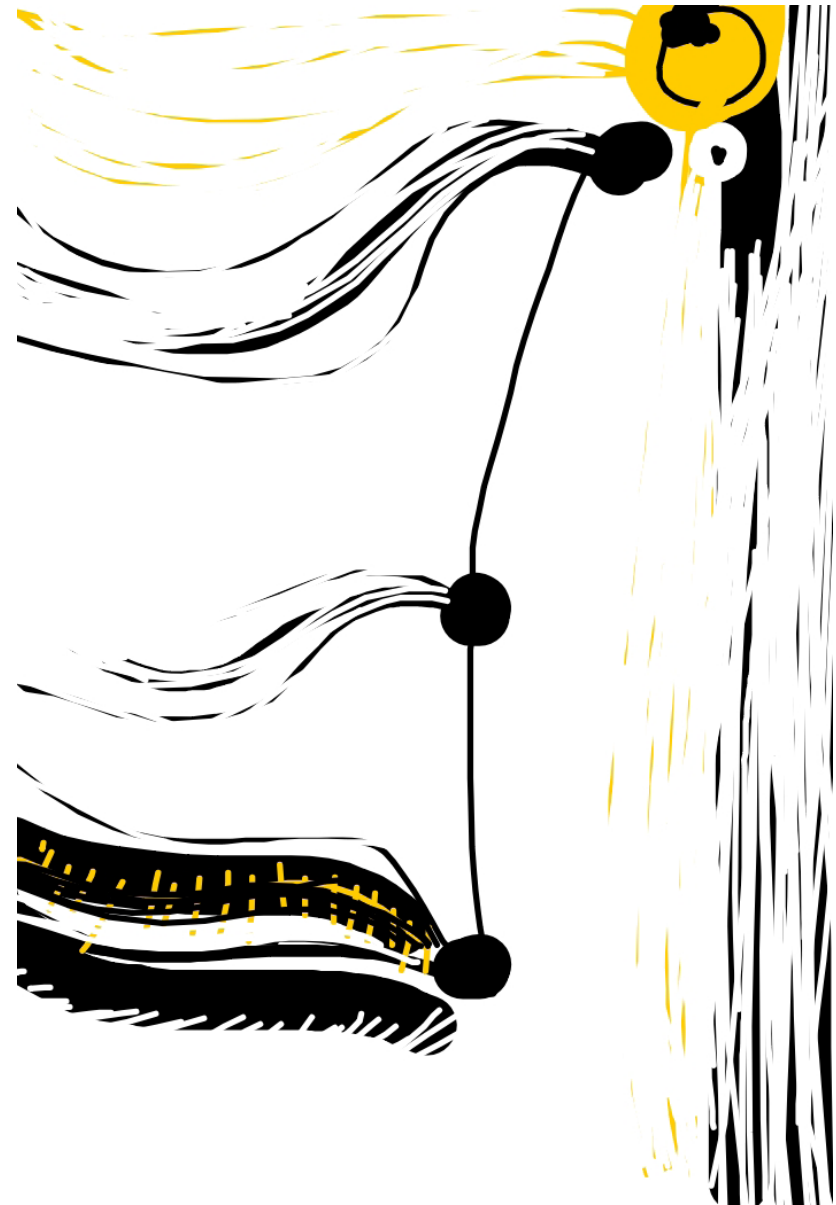
60 cm x 90 cm, Digital photograph with mineral pigment on cotton paper

Disillusion



Digital art

Liberty 2



Digital art



FICTION

Swimming

Langston stood in the shallow end of the lake with his arms extended and knees bent, bracing himself. He fussed about as Julia shimmied around him, kicking at waves, laughing, tickling him.

“Don’t break a bone, messing around.” Langston drawled, pretending to laugh though he really wanted out of the lake. He shook beads of water from his graying afro and wiped his eyes. His vision blurred as he took in his surroundings. The blue sky washed over the edges of the beach. Faceless, peach figures raced about or stretched out on colorful pallets. Umbrellas with long rods poked from the sand. Yelps of glee echoed, causing him alarm as the force of waves became shoving hands, punching fists. “Help me,” he mouthed.

Meanwhile, Julia’s shimmy turned into a Cha-Cha. “Baby, this little bit of water won’t hurt you.”

Melanie and Marcus stood within shouting distance, watching Julia and Langston from the shore. Their hands, like visors, shielded their eyes from the sun.

Marcus retorted, “Technically, you can drown in a bathtub. Remember Whitney?”

Melanie ricocheted a wet towel off of Marcus’ thigh.

Marcus smarted, “What!”

“That was wrong, Marcus. W-R-O-N-G, wrong.” Melanie said, rolling her eyes. “Anyway, you need to mind your business.”

“Y’all heard the man say he don’t want no parts of the water. He’s fifty something years old, not twelve. If he’d wanted to learn to swim, he’d have done it by now.”

“Thanks, Marcus. Julia don’t listen,” Langston said, trying to look over his shoulder to commiserate when his feet began to slip on slick rock. “Ah, shi....”

Langston’s six-foot-five frame scissored in the air, landing him butt first in lake.

He splashed about furiously as a swell of water hit him in the face. From a seated position, he dog pedaled the air, slapping away memories like the time a group of white men chased him and his brother Ricky away from the neighborhood pool ... like the time a swarm of men tried to drown him in the Barnett Reservoir, their beefy hands clamping the top of his head and pushing down remained a palpable memory ... like the time... like the time. . . like the time.

Langston tensed a bit, feeling Julia's hand brush his shoulder. She reached further, an olive branch to help him up. "Baby, I got you. You're safe."

"I'm not safe," Langston said, accepting Julia's extended hand to pull himself up. In the distance, a group of young white kids garbed in plastic snorkel gear and inflated arm cuffs dived, swam, splashed, and giggled.

Julia nodded toward the youth. "See. They can't be more than six years old, but they're swimming."

"Yea, well, the world is theirs to swim in. Isn't it?"

"I don't understand," Julia said.

Of course, she didn't understand, having been raised upper middle class in the north. Unlike him, a southern boy to his core but still her man, and men don't fear. But they sometimes shake when they remember.

Volcano

The coroner's report for my sister's death has only one word under *cause*: VOLCANO.

A lot of people believe she fell into the volcano. Or at least they want to. Like my parents. They would prefer to believe she simply tripped and went right in. A freak accident.

There are even a few who think the volcano had nothing whatsoever to do with it. They think maybe she just happened to be walking near the volcano when she had a heart attack or a stroke or an aneurysm and died suddenly. That's what her husband tells everyone. Another one of his theories is that there was some anomalous drug interaction: she'd been on an antibiotic and was also taking something for some joint pain. On that particular day, she'd also taken an over-the-counter 24-hour allergy pill as well as some Excedrin. *You can't rule that out. These doctors are all in the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies. They could have easily killed her by prescribing that antibiotic. I might sue them one day. You just watch. I'll sue.*

I was there. I wasn't very close, but I watched it happen. And if you want to know what I saw, I'll tell you. She didn't just keel over and die right there on the rim of the volcano and then fall in. She didn't clutch her chest like someone struck with a massive coronary, or gasp desperately for breath like a person drowning on land, or go suddenly stiff like someone whose brain has been shocked or short circuited. There was none of that. She simply walked slowly and steadily into the volcano.

At first, I thought she was just trying to get a closer look. She'd always loved volcanoes. Ever since she was in high school, and I was in middle school. It was never enough for her to make model volcanoes for school projects, or to hold her hand over the stove with the gas cranked as high it would go. She was always after the real thing.

We were close back then. Plus, she didn't like doing things on her own. So she'd take me with her. We'd sneak out of the house in the middle of the night, get on our bikes and go ride out to all the local volcanoes, crawling under, climbing over, or even in some cases cutting through chain-link fences to get closer to them. But back then, my sister was as frightened as she was fascinated by them, so we never got *too* close. I'll admit, it was fun to see the neon orange lava burble and bubble and leap into the night sky. And, yes, it was exciting to feel the searing heat of a volcano.

But as much as I enjoyed them, it didn't compare to my sister. She *loved* them. And when she wasn't visiting a volcano, she was talking about volcanos, trying to get her friends to go to volcanoes, trying to find boyfriends who would spend all day hiking along rivers of molten rock. When she went off to college, she didn't major in geology or anything like that, but she nearly failed out because, sure enough, instead of going to classes, she spent most of her time wandering off into the wilderness, looking for lava flows and camping out at every little volcano she could find. I remember visiting her at college, thinking she'd take me around campus, show me the quad, teach me some of the stuff she learned from her professors. But mostly she just dragged me to all the volcanoes in the area. And the one time we went to a football game, she spent the entire time passing me igneous rocks that she'd snuck into the stadium in the deep pockets of her oversize coat. *Look at this one. Rub this. Look at the iron in there. Feel how light this one is. Feel how heavy this one is. Smell this. Go on, just put it in your hands and smell it...* I swear, I couldn't even tell you who won that game. All I can remember is my sister going on about magma and iron and pumice.

To some degree, I get it. I think most of us do. Volcanoes are fun. Like most people, I spent plenty of time at volcanoes when I was in college. And after college, when I moved to the city and took a job as a research analyst, me and the other junior-level people in the office would hit one of the uptown volcanoes straight after work every Friday. I'm in my

forties now. So I've slowed way down. But, every couple months, my wife and I will get a babysitter, and the two of us will head out to some cute little volcano. Our skin is red the next day, and we always wake up covered in ash; but it's worth it, considering how hard we work and how seldom we get any time for ourselves to just go have some fun.

My sister, she never slowed down. It was the opposite, really. She just got more and more intense, more obsessed. I blame her husband, partly. She managed to find someone who likes volcanoes as much as she does. If anything, he likes volcanoes even more than she did. He said he grew up around volcanoes, and that both of his parents retired just so they could spend all their time at volcanoes. *Look at them*, he'd say. *Happiest people in the world. They're not worried about their IRA or 401K. All they need is some lava, and they're happy.* He convinced her that the ash and gases that volcanic eruptions produce aren't nearly as dangerous as the doctors say they are. *That's just what they want you to believe. All these doctors are in the pockets of companies who want you to spend all your money on things that are supposed to keep you healthy when, really, volcanoes are less likely to kill you than a taxi is to run you over in the middle of a New York City crosswalk*, he'd tell her.

Despite his ever-red eyes, his unsightly burns, his charred clothing, my brother-in-law managed to hold down a lucrative, executive-level job. He made a lot of money, too—enough that my sister never had to work. She spent all her time planning trips to exclusive volcanoes in Mexico and the Caribbean, and buying herself polished obsidian jewelry—jet black, gleaming, garish, gaudy, but unabashedly beautiful. But it couldn't hide the toll the volcanoes took on her. Her skin was sapped of its moisture, her hair was like straw, her voice had become raspy.

Like us, they had children. Two of them. A boy and a girl. But theirs were always sullen. They looked undernourished, and it seemed like they never got enough sleep. Instead of piano lessons or ballet lessons or soccer practices, the kids spent most of their time being shuttled from one volcano to the next by my sister.

She even got herself arrested by a Forest Ranger when she led her kids too close to the edge of one particularly angry volcano, which belched scalding gobs of molten rock from its cratered peak. Following the guidance of a lawyer my brother-in-law spent twenty grand on, she pleaded guilty and made an apologetic statement to the judge. Consequently, she only got slapped with a small fine and had to take volcano-safety classes, but privately she told everyone who would listen how the kids were never in danger and that the judges were all in the pockets of the anti-volcano lobby. Once her husband made enough money, they had a house built in walking distance to the largest, most active volcano in the entire state.

So when I say that I saw her walking down into the volcano, I want to be clear that I was alarmed, but I was not surprised. Every time I would go see her these last ten or so years, all she would ever do is take me to either this volcano or that, urge me to get closer and closer to the lava, to breathe in the ash and sulfur dioxide. I felt uncomfortable with it, and I'd long ago felt she was endangering herself. This is why I visited her less and less over the years and stopped bringing my kids.

On the day of her death, she seemed unable to concentrate on anything but lava.

That morning, I'd set a mug of coffee down in front of her at the breakfast table and warned her it was hot.

"Like lava," she mumbled.

"Not quite," I said.

"Too bad," she muttered.

And then, of course, we headed over to the volcano immediately after a breakfast of nothing but burnt toast. After warming her hands over small streams of lava, she seemed to cheer up a bit, as if she'd been half asleep. She even cracked a joke, though I couldn't discern the punchline and it made me feel as if she was talking more to herself than to me. Then she hurried up to the rim.

"Take it easy! What's the rush?" I called after her.

She turned around and glared at me. Then she kept going.

"I'm serious!" I yelled. "Can we please do something else? Just for a little bit?"

Once again, she turned and gave me a dark stare. "You always *were* a chicken," she spat, her voice dripping with bitterness and defensiveness.

"I just don't want to get burned," I said, trying to sound good humored but reasonable.

"You just wait down there where you can be *safe*." And then she added, "Safe to think you're better than everyone else." Her voice was full of hatred. She stalked off to the top.

I watched her, disgusted and angry. I counted the days and then the hours and then the minutes until I was scheduled to go back home. I thought to myself, no matter how much my wife and I might like the occasional stroll around a volcano, taking in an eruption, I'd be just as fine if I never saw one again.

And then I saw her start to disappear over the edge. "Billie!" I yelled after her. But I heard no response, and so I ran up the side of the mountain until she came back into view. And when I saw her again, she was walking slowly through the ash and into the interior, toward the cauldron of thick orange and yellow and white magma. "Billie, what are you doing?!" I screamed at her.

"Go back, Patrick," she said back to me, though I could barely hear her.

"Well come with me, and I will!" I called back.

"No," she said. And then she said this, and I will never forget it: "You're dead to me." I was standing far too close to the volcano than I liked to be, but her words wounded me so deeply, I felt no heat, only hurt. "Don't say that, Billie," I said, my voice weak.

"Godspeed," she said and continued trudging through the cinders.

A blast of heat forced me to take a step back, but I clambered up to see if I could catch another glimpse. She was still going, descending. I was about to yell after her once more, but then I heard her say, not to me, but to the inferno beneath her, "I'm coming. I'll be

there soon.”

And that was the end. That was the last I saw my sister or heard her voice.

I know it’s unthinkable that she willingly walked herself into a volcano. No one knew volcanos better than her, so no one knew the consequences of entering an active volcano as well as she did. So I get why it’s easier to think she just tripped or that she had an aneurysm or something like that. But I know that’s not what happened. I believe that what she lost her grip on wasn’t the ground, but her own senses.

But I think she was right about one thing: I was dead to her. We all were. Even herself.

Thomas J. Misuraca

OCD

Wash my hands. Don’t wash your hands. If I don’t wash them, I’ll catch a virus and die. You already washed them twice, they’re clean. Wash my hands. Don’t wash your hands.

I can’t do this, regardless of what Dr. Sommers thinks. You can do it, and you will. I’ve been doing these things my entire life, there’s no way I can stop it in one day. Nobody’s asking you to stop it in one day, just to try, or you’ll never stop.

Why do I have to stop? Because it’s unhealthy and you know it. Is it? Yes.

Must wash the cereal bowl. The cereal bowl is clean. There could be microbes on the surface that will make me sick. That’s ridiculous. I know, but to be safe I’m washing it again. Don’t. Too late.

I’m never going to make it through the day; it’s not even eight o’clock. You’ll make it, every moment is a new chance to better yourself.

Must shower again. Don’t shower again. I have to fold and unfold my underwear three times. Put your underwear on without folding. I have to walk around the bed before putting on my pants. Put your pants on now without walking. And I suppose you want me to button my shirt all at once, not count to thirty-six between buttons? You’re getting the idea.

I’m dressed. That wasn’t so difficult; nothing bad happened. Not yet, but it’s still early; I have too much time before work. Watch television. I’ll have to flip back and forth between two channels six times before choosing one. Read the paper. Do you know how many times I’ll have to wash my hands if I do that? Why don’t you leave for work now? I’ll be early, I need to arrive at 7:56 on the dot! The idea of this exercise is to break your routines. Fine, we’ll leave, and I suppose I’ll have to leave my Windex here. Yes, your car

windows didn't get that dirty overnight.

I can't believe I'm outside so early. You only need to lock the door once, not lock it and unlock it six times. I have to make sure it's locked, somebody may break in. It's locked, you just locked it, that's all you need to do. One more time. No. Yes, there. You didn't need to do that. I have to do it again. You don't. Please. No.

Can I at least check to see if I remembered my wallet? As long as you only do it once. One wallet check. Is it there? Yes. Let's go. Maybe I should check my wallet again. It hasn't gone anywhere in two seconds, go to the car.

I'm just unlocking the door and getting inside, not walking around it twelve times. Great, you're making progress. Wish I had my paper towels to grab the seatbelt. Use your hands, you cleaned it vigorously yesterday.

I need to run the car for ten minutes. Back out now. After I adjust my mirrors. They were fine yesterday, they'll be fine today. I need to check. Don't. You're right, they look fine. Told you.

I'm still going to back out slowly. Fine.

It's so strange leaving at this time, all the cars on the road are different. Doesn't matter, you're still going to the same place. I'll throw off the other drivers and cause an accident. No you won't.

The light is red and there's nobody at the stop line before me: I need to stay two car lengths from the stop line. That's why the stop line is there, to stop. I may hit somebody in the crosswalk. There's quite a distance between the stop line and the crosswalk; besides, nobody's crossing the street. They may come running out of nowhere. They won't. I wish I had your confidence. You will.

The light is green; I must look from right to left six times before I proceed. Just do it once, the intersecting street has a red light now. Fine: left, right. Go! I'm going!

What was that? Something hit us; a car ran the red light! I told you this would happen!

Pay attention, we're being pushed onto the sidewalk. There are people there. We aren't going to hit them. I can't believe you anymore... if I had looked six times, I would have seen the car coming... I knew something bad was going to happen... I knew it.

I must get out of the car, but the door is crumpled into the seatbelt release... I can't escape... How could Dr. Sommers do this to me?

People outside asking if I'm okay, I can't make eye contact with them or something else bad will happen.

They want me to unlock the passenger side so they can help me.

No.

I can't open that door and let them in—those strangers and all their germs.

Why can't they leave me alone?

Why can't everybody leave me alone?

Petrification

Eddie wanted a smoothie, so that's what she got on her drive home from the doctor's office. She curved her Honda Accord around the hook of the drive-thru, ordered a Kale-Banana-Rama with extra chocolate, and sipped on the sugary, expensive, nutrient-dense drink instead of calling her kids with the news. They were adults now, working adult jobs, with their own anxieties and issues and troubles. What was she going to do, interrupt their day with a call, say *Hey there, I know we haven't talked in some months, but the thing is that I'm probably, most likely, dying?* No. *Sorry I missed your birthday, sorry I'm a terrible mom, but also it turns out I've got this insane disease...* She parked in the lot and sipped on her smoothie. In the cloudless blue swath above the strip mall, a seagull was looping and diving.

She went home to a dark and quiet house and microwaved her meal before perching in front of the TV to eat. Her daughter had told her once that nobody used cable anymore, and had even offered to help with the transition, but that would be too complicated: all the boxes, buttons, remotes, WiFi passwords. Eddie would stick to the programs, the channels she knew. She ate her chicken and clicked on her TV and there was Dr. Oz, interviewing a patient with Lethaea's Disease. Eddie's heart almost stopped, her breathing slowed, but she could not click away. The woman was perched in a wheelchair, her hands folded on her lap, the majority of her skin a horrible, god-awful white.

"What people don't understand," the woman was saying, "is how you feel everything."

"We have a brainscan here of a woman who's been fully petrified," Dr. Oz said to the audience, pointing to a CAT scan enlarged on the glowing white screen. "The lack of activity here—" he gestured to the entire brain in one general sweep, "indicates that

activity has ceased. That this person has passed away."

"Listen," the woman said. Streaks of white ran up her neck. She was close to the end. "Doctors can say whatever they want. What I'm telling you is that I feel it. My legs and arms— I still feel...I'm in here somewhere." It was clearly difficult for this woman to speak, she could not move most of her body, but her eyes blazed like fierce little planets. "I'm saying: don't give up on us."

It had started with stiffness, that was all: a pain in her shoulder, an ache in the arch of her feet. Eddie had thought it nothing more than plain old soreness, a side-effect of age. But as it turns out, she, along with 1.8% of the population, was slowly turning to stone.

Eddie tried not to think of it, the mysterious thing crawling through her lymphatic system, the disease that would soon render her nothing more than a thick block of marble. That night, after receiving her diagnosis, she fell asleep— sleep, at least, had always come easy— and woke sometime later to a honking alarm. A car screaming out on the street. Her toes felt cold, and the thought rattled through her, a pulsing panic, she whisked off the covers— and exhaled. Today, at least, her toes were still flesh. The average rate of conversion— what her doctor had called it, *conversion*— was anywhere from six to twelve months. The flesh would transform, slowly, to stone, generally starting at the extremities, working its way up the body. There was a research center in Minnesota, where scientists were studying petrified patients, trying to derive a cure. But the look on her doctor's face told it all: your chances are shit. Move now, while you can.

The Lethaea Clinic looked, she imagined, just like the Uffizi in Florence: a wide gallery room full of statues, marble figures fixed in a single pose forever and ever. What would she look like, in her final moment? What expression, what pose, would remain? She'd seen enough petrified patients on the news to get the gist. She supposed that now would be a good time for all the things she'd once told herself she'd like to do: hike Mount Hood, take one of those airboats through the Everglades, learn how to foxtrot. But what would be the

point? What she wanted now, more than ever, was the banal, the simple. What she wanted, now, was her life. She slipped on her socks and grabbed her car keys, determined to make today count.

The automatic doors purred open and Edie stepped into the store. She pushed her diagnosis out of her mind, determined to live as if nothing had happened. Marcus, the new hire, a kid with a big crooked grin and a streak of blue in his hair, who spent his breaks making TikToks in the staff room, was restocking waffle makers.

“Looks good,” Edie said, over his shoulder. “Make sure all the logos face front.”

“Got it.”

Edie hung around, her hands in her pockets. He was the first person she’d talked to, besides the cashier at Smoothie King, since hearing the news. She craned her neck and looked up at all the shelves, feigning inspection.

“So, you’re a sophomore?” she asked, when he’d stocked the last box.

“Junior,” he said. The distinction was small, but Edie could almost remember back to a time when it mattered. She stretched and rolled her shoulders, ignoring the pain that shot down her spine.

“Do they still have you take those aptitude tests?”

“What?”

“Gauging your future career options, that kind of test?”

“Oh, yeah. I got *Software Developer* even though I have absolutely zero interest in coding.”

“Interesting.” Edie felt, suddenly, so very old. She shoved her hands deeper into her khaki pockets. Above them, the air conditioning roared. “When you’re done here, towels in 9 need refolding.”

“On it.”

“Great, Mark. Thank you.”

He blinked, and then corrected her. “Marcus.” Edie didn’t know what to say. The boy smiled, his grin big and dumnn. “My name’s Marcus. Parents named me after Marcus Aeralius.”

Edie nodded slowly. “Thank you, *Marcus*,” she said, and watched him turn and trot off to fold the towels. A little pretentious, wasn’t he? Or precocious. Was there a difference? Then again, she thought of her own name, a reference to a documentary so depressing and dismal she’d had to shut it off half-way through. Strange, how our names come to define us, when we didn’t even get a say.

Later, she looked him up, Marcus Aeurilias. Various aphorisms glowed on the screen. *In the life of a man, his time is but a moment, his being an incessant flux, his body a prey of worms, his fortune dark...* Pretentious and morbid, thought Edie, but not entirely wrong. Except for the worm part. A perk, perhaps, of this strange disease. Her body would never rot, never decompose, not exactly. Flesh unfleshed, she would become art: a thing. That was one conceivable perk.

In high school, Edie had taken a test alongside her peers, a scantron that, when the bubbles were filled, was said to predict your future. Like shaking a magic-8 ball when you’re a kid and asking will I be pretty? will I marry a millionaire? *No, no, don’t count on it.* When the results came back, her friends got all the normal predictions. Doctor, lawyer, lumberjack. But Edie’s test had come back with the words: *results inconclusive.* She took it to mean, at the time, that she defied limits, that she was fleeting, ephemeral, could not be contained. Now, looking back, a scantron from the late 90s probably didn’t have the language to tell a sixteen-year old girl *you know what, you’re going to collapse into a slate grey depression for several years, take some pills to dull the ache, and wake up one day at 40 years old, exhausted, confused, somehow the manager of a Bed Bath & Beyond.* How fast, Edie thought, can your own life slip away.

In two weeks, she returned to her doctor to discuss treatment options, sitting in a big mauve chair while Dr. Norris flipped through her chart.

“We can give you something for the pain,” her doctor was saying. “And you’ll need to come in, every two weeks, to check in, gauge your progress.” Edie nodded. “It’s up to you, when you’ll want to transition into a wheelchair. Though sooner, I find, is usually better.”

Edie was looking at the bookshelf that towered behind Dr. Norris, the broad spines with titles displayed. Her doctor continued: eventually, she’d need a hospice worker to assist in the home. And soon, we should begin thinking about arrangements. Would you consider consenting to research? Edie’s mouth felt dry. She didn’t quite know what to say.

At work, she was confined to the blissful over-air-conditioned warehouse-sized store, aisles and rows with goods stacked high: the giant cage full of pillows that towered up to the ceiling; twelve kinds of coffee makers with sleek, shining designs; on the wall-hooks: avocado slicers, silicon spatulas, metallic straws. So many things that needed organizing, arranging, perfecting. At work, Edie could disappear. She could walk slowly through the aisles, or sit in the back office and breathe, the meditative repetition of inventory taking her away.

There were several times, in those first weeks, where she considered calling her daughters. And yet, with the phone glowing flat in her palm, with her daughters’ contacts pulled up, she couldn’t make her fingers move to the dial. And what would she say? *I know I wasn’t there for you then, but soon, I’ll be inert...*

There was something about it that felt like intimacy: that she and her doctor were the

only two people in the world who knew. For a while, she kept it that way.

It wasn’t until a month later, she’d been arranging a tupperware display and she tripped, fell off the ladder, her body thudding hard against the concrete floor. Marcus had been the only one in the store and she heard him come running.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” Edie said, hoisting herself off the ground— but it was too late, he saw before she did, a horrible whiteness on her thumb.

“That’s...” he said, pointing.

Edie gasped, seeing it too. She hadn’t realized that up until then, until that moment she saw it— her own body, stone— that she’d been holding onto hope: perhaps Dr. Norris was wrong, perhaps the diagnosis was wrong, perhaps she’d be fine after all. She looked at her thumb, marble white, solid and cool and hard, and she ceased to breathe for a moment before shaking her head, shoving her hand inside of her pockets.

“You’ve got...”

“It’s nothing,” Edie said.

Driving home, she flipped through radio stations, stopping on one where the news anchors were discussing a new foundation, the work of Jeff Bezos— a foundation for Lethaea patients. “So many people with this disease wind up with exorbitant bills,” the anchor was saying. “Their families end up with mountains of debt. All the tests, treatment, and research. Bezos designed this organization to help patients pay for their care; to help them help their families, to prevent all that debt.”

Later, Edie looked it up. The foundation’s premise seemed simple enough: patients could sign up, and they would be placed with a buyer. Rich people with sprawling, luxurious homes would purchase the right to own your petrified body, the right to display it, however they wish. In exchange, the buyer would pay off your medical care,

pay your family as well. It was described on the site as a win-win. Edie shut down the computer. She was terribly, terribly thirsty.

The progression was slow and creeping. It grew in slivers of centimeters, but now and again would leap forward horribly, a whiteness consuming, a hardness, a coolness she couldn't believe. When she could get over the repulsion, the disgust, the grief for a moment, she would take her one good fingertip— index, left hand— and rub it over the marble growth. Cool, smooth. If at a gallery, she'd be exquisite.

The next appointment, they sent her for scans. She stripped, slipped into an aluminum apron, and layed out onto the paper bed. A whirring sound, and she was pulled into the mouth of the machine, where pictures were taken of her body, inside, the cells mid-conversion, stone and flesh colliding. More data: temperature, weight, blood pressure, pulse. The nurse took it all, blinking his beady, untelling eyes. Edie wanted to tell him that he had nice eyelashes, that she'd once knew a boy with eyelashes like that, thick and curled, like dead spider legs, but she decided against it. He was silent as he scratched at his clipboard, filling her chart with information that, if anyone were being honest, no one knew what to do with. They had no idea how to stop this thing, slowly slipping over her flesh.

It wasn't until the second month that she recognized the sensation, a kind of claustrophobia. The feeling that she was being consumed. It had crept beyond her hands, white streaks reaching up the length of her forearms like some kind of costume glove.

Christie wouldn't answer her calls. Robin only did so after the seventh ring. "Yes?" Robin had said, not the most hostile greeting, but not the warmest either. In the background Edie could hear laughter and screaming, howling kids. She pictured a softball game, the red dust of a diamond, the moms overeager, shouting, shooting video on their

phones. Robin there too on the bleachers, phone pressed to her cheek. Edie listened for a while, waiting, searching for words. Robin sat too, listening. Edie looked out the window where the sun was a plump navel orange. Her phone was burning hot in her palm. She couldn't bring herself to do it, couldn't find the will to apologize. A snap in her heart— and she hung up the phone.

Edie made the decision herself, to quit before they let her go. No more inventory, excel, emails. No more wandering the aisles and rows of household things, endless things, that grand mausoleum of household essentials, soap dispensers, apple slicers. She now spent her days eating marijuana gummy bears prescribed for the pain and watching cable news. An oil rig exploded in the Atlantic; they showed pictures of the animals, floating dead in the dark, iridescent murk. A woman in Thailand who went to check on her vegetables in the middle of the night. Her garden was very important to her. In the dark, she crept up the path, where an anaconda found her. Swallowed her whole. In the morning, all that was left was a blue slipper and flashlight.

Dr. Norris was pushing her towards the Letheae clinic, encouraging her to sign the forms, lend her body to science. "You don't know how many people you'd be able to help," she'd said.

Edie wasn't so sure.

"Just think about it," Dr. Norris said, her pink lips pulled into a tight eerie grin. "Really think about it. This is *your* legacy."

Edie drove herself home, using her elbow to guide the wheel, aware that it would likely be the last time she would ever take herself anywhere. She played the radio loud, rolled the windows down, and felt the air as it rushed onto her flesh.

Chigozie arrived on the porch early one morning. Edie looked through the peephole and observed this woman, her braids, her lavender scrubs. On the porch her face was firm and unsmiling.

In the crook of her armpit, she held a folded-up wheelchair. Edie her elbow to open the door, shifting her weight just so, nudging her hips. “Good morning,” she said, the door swinging wide. She propped herself against the door frame and looked Chigozie up and down. A beat of silence fell between them. Edie knew the daylight would be hitting her, illuminating the horror of her body, the patches where marble met flesh. Chigozie’s eyes flashed over her skin for just a moment before a forced smile cracked on her lips.

Together they watched the news. A bombing in a rural Czech village on Easter Sunday. Footage of people in skirts and suits, mouths agape, in total shock. Smoke rising up from an old church spire. A Saudi Prince is looking to sell his oil shares. An elephant at the Smithsonian Zoo received a new prosthetic leg. He hobbles around his cage with his metallic foot, a ginormous cyborg, stomping, raising his trunk, flopping his big floppy ears. “He’s happy, much happier now,” says the vet. But really, how would he know?

Edie gets used to the way Chigozie’s arms feel as they lift her up, onto the toilet. The feel of another woman, brushing your teeth, blending your food, combing your hair. It would be nice, the contact, the love, if it wasn’t a sign of the end. How fast it will come.

Dr. Oz was again on the screen, demonstrating the importance of dinosaur kale, when the doorbell rang. “Expecting anyone?” Chigozie asked. Of course, the answer was no. Another ring, and a knock, and Chigozie opened the door.

Edie heard a voice stuttering on the porch, but didn’t recognize him until he stepped inside.

“Marcus,” she said, the surprise a crack in her voice. “Hey, I just wanted to see how

you were, uh, doing, with the disease and all. I wasn’t sure if you were— I just wanted to say hi. I brought soup.”

The thought of this young boy, on her porch, bringing soup, this young man— the sheer act of care— it’s enough to break Edie’s heart. This thought makes her actually think about her heart, the physical thing, the meat of it, valves and tubes and veins, how soon it will be nothing more than a fat chunk of marble. She tries not to cry as Marcus sits down beside her and shows her a TikTok video on his phone. Edie does not fully understand the humor, the video flashes too fast, the text is too small, but still: she smiles. This is enough.

Edie only tried once more, towards the end, to reach her daughters. Chigozie dialed the phone. With each ring, the breath tightened inside Edie’s chest. This was her last chance, she knew. I am sorry. Say it, say it, she told herself. You’re fucking sorry. But the line kept ringing, ringing. No voicemail. Eventually, Chigozie hung up. “I’m sorry, Edie,” she said; her eyes were earnest, and that was somehow worse than if she hadn’t cared at all.

If Edie could have, she would have shrugged.

She doesn’t know she is going to make the decision until she does. She directs Chigozie to the website, tells her to fill out the forms. When the petrification is complete, she will be assigned to a patron, she will be bubble-wrapped and shipped with care, sent to some wealthy estate where she’ll occupy a garden or gallery or clubhouse, an ornament for some well-off ornament-lover. Edie imagines all the possible outcomes, hoping most that she will be placed in a brilliant garden by a little green pond, flowers blooming around her, ivy on walls, hummingbirds fluttering and honeybees humming, the sound of a fountain bubbling near.

She has no way of knowing this, that she will wind up in a lonely hallway in the home

of a market research analyst, the employee of a large oil company. He travels often. His wife spends her days in the pool. The halls are white, barren. Minimalism is very in vogue. No paintings to look at, no flowers, no color. Not a single window in her line of sight. She will stay, stiff, unmoving, in unbearable pain, staring down the same long hallway, an endless flow of white.

In the suburbs of Sacramento, a woman opens her small metal mailbox. She pulls out a thin white envelope, the first piece of physical mail she's received in some years. When she sees the check, she doesn't believe it. She makes a phone call, then another. Calls her sister. *Is this real?* It's real. More money than she's ever held, ever imagined, right there in a piece of paper she holds in her hand. The check was accompanied by a note, unsigned. All it said: *I'm sorry, I'm sorry.*

Jenny Magnus

They Don't Allow Candy in Their Home

A woman and her child are out on a rare saunter- not late for anything, not going anywhere, just walking together. The girl, 7, old enough to hold a decent conversation, to have an opinion, talkative, a person with a loud inner conversation, a lot going on in her mind, filled with the soon-enough-to-be-disavowed conviction that others find interesting her completist catalogue of thoughts. The girl holds her momma's hand, a sweaty grip, sliding in and out, swinging a little. The mother, distracted, exhausted, almost not listening, tolerates her daughter's chatting, to a point, but occasionally squeezes her hand to stop her for a moment. "I want to have my own thoughts, Doll", she says, "let me have my own thoughts for a minute." The girl receives that sincerely, interrupts herself, pausing, but something occurs to her and she launches into, "Ok momma... but did I tell you about..." A long breath of talk picks back up, only having paused enough for the mother to remember a time when she might not have spoken or listened to anyone else for whole days. Even after 7 years, it is only just now dawning on this mother what she has gotten herself into. Despite the sweetness of the walk with her cheerful girl, she can only breathe with effort. They walk; the sweetheart talks, the mother breathes.

They walk past many storefronts in the neighborhood. A Korean bakery, the same browning wedding cake in the window; quinceanera dress stores, horror movie mannequins in red, purple, yellow, or gold encrusted dresses; a Hello Kitty office supply store that sells medicinal herbs too; taco place after taco place; middle eastern groceries with huge sacks of lentils and batsmati rice sandbagged in the windows. They look at everything. In one open double doorway, across the street, down a-ways, 5-7 older men, each wearing man pants and cardigans, some smoking, some drinking from tiny coffee cups, stand around a large cardboard box, looking down into it. They don't

move or speak much, only look down with proprietary smiles, an occasional nod.

A nudge, knowing shrugs, “...ah, well...”, and “...see that...?” The mother says to the girl, “I wonder if it’s puppies?” The girl gets a big excited face, her talking becomes higher pitched and urgent, pulls in the direction of the doors. The men see them coming, and make room for them. They shyly join the circle, negotiating spots around the box, a neighborly feeling. The mother smiles a moment longer at the men, thanking them with her eyes, for welcoming them, for providing a little respite from the constant talking. Her daughter’s hand tightens the grip on her hand. The talking stops. The mother looks into the box and sees a snake.

Enormous, fat, shining, glistening, even, in the cardboard box, curled around on itself at least twice to fit. Empty except for the snake, the box has no sign of habitat, wood chips, shreds of straw; just the snake, as fat as the child’s leg. Its head seems misshapen, moves erratically, and the woman sees the end of an animal sticking out of the snake’s mouth. The movements the snake makes are swallowing motions, jaw unhinging hair ball gagging convulsions, as the animal it is eating scrabbles, hind legs flailing around. It is a kitten. The snake gags and gags it down, a bit at a time. She sees the body within the body, still moving. Her daughter’s tight grip, squeezing her hand so tight, she feels her own pulse in the grip. When she looks down into the daughter’s face, she doesn’t recognize her.

On their way home the woman buys the daughter a cayenne lollypop and tells her to put it in her mouth right away and not to tell her father.



NONFICTION

The Legend of Arkadelphia

Because I watched Charles B. Pierce's *The Legend of Boggy Creek* when I was four years old, my parents still blame themselves for my crippling fear of Bigfoot throughout my childhood. This happened in Arkansas in 1972. Wanting to see the movie but having no one to leave me with, they assumed that, with the theater being dark and all, that I'd fall asleep like a good little boy, but I didn't. My mother tried to keep my eyes covered with her hand during the most frightening parts, but apparently I didn't cooperate.

Do I remember any of this—my mom's soft hand on my face, the theater, the movie? I don't, and though I never saw *The Legend of Boggy Creek* again, the title alone has always given me the willies, thanks to how often my mother has brought it up over the years, castigating the parenting of her younger self. She always made it sound absolutely horrifying. My whole life I've wondered if it truly is, but I've never done anything to find out. I honestly knew nothing about it beyond its mythical role in my parents' story of my subsequent terrors.

Having nothing better to do with my time as I sheltered in place during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, I decided to look it up. Its original poster would certainly have scared the bejesus out of my younger self. Beyond the still water of a lake, an ochre sun is setting, submerging itself into a background of dark woods. The color palette consists of nothing but amber twilight and dusky murkiness. In the foreground: the backlit, shadowy outline of a humanoid figure striding toward the viewer through the lake's shimmering gold. Canted apelike to one side, its right hand nearly skims the water. As a whole, the poster was both understatedly frightening and strangely beautiful. Off to a good start.

Sipping a beer on my porch on a sunny June afternoon in Philadelphia, I wondered what watching this would be like. Both eager and strangely apprehensive, I paid a few bucks to stream it on my laptop. A black screen appeared, accompanied by the sounds of insects,

frogs, and dripping water. Then, in yellow print:

THIS IS A TRUE STORY

*Some of the people in this motion picture portray themselves —
in many cases on actual locations.*

It's an effectively spooky start, especially since this was the first I'd heard of this claim of authenticity. Both my eagerness and apprehension surged.

For the next two minutes, from the perspective of a boat drifting downstream, I watched shots of a sunny but fetid-looking swamp—trees growing from algae-slimed water, amphibians and reptiles slithering about—and listened to the amplified sounds of wildlife through my earbuds. And then, ripping through the serenity, a bestial shriek. The camera tracks several birds flying from their perches, fleeing. Cut now to a towheaded boy of about six running across a green field. He comes to a decrepit service station where three old men are chatting, and he tells one of them, a Mr. Willie, that his mom wants him to come to their house because “there's some kind of wild man down there in the woods about the creek.” Mr. Willie tells the boy to tell his momma that there ain't nothing to be afraid of and that maybe tomorrow he'll come down there. He sends the boy home, and he and the other old men have themselves a good laugh at the boy's foolishness.

The yellow print, I now saw, hadn't been lying. These are definitely not actors, not even the most amateur sort. A voiceover reminiscent of the Disney True-Life Adventure films from the fifties that our teachers used to show us in elementary school interrupted my thoughts: “I was seven years old when I first heard him scream. It scared me then and it scares me now.” The voice goes on to tell me that he grew up in Fouke, Arkansas, population: 350. And so, for the first time, I learned that the legend of Boggy Creek, the producer of that shriek, had lived only ninety miles from our house in Arkadelphia, a fact that I hoped I hadn't known when I was four.

Until the end of the movie seventy minutes later, I watched a series of reenactments

presented in the unadorned style of a docudrama, all of close encounters with what is unimaginatively known as the Fouke Monster, which is never shown up close, in focus, or for very long. What's visible looks like nothing more than a man wearing discarded remnants of shag carpet. The Monster kills a dog, gets shot at several times, puts a hairy arm through a window, terrifies a poor man sitting on a toilet, and then attacks another man, sending him to the hospital in a state of shock. During this last scene, the lone physical encounter, its face appears for the first and only time, but for no more than a fuzzy split-second. When I back the video up and pause it, something nobody would have been able to do for many years after 1972, I see that it's only a cheap gorilla mask, which makes me strangely sad.

During a quasi-intermission, I'm shown more lingering shots of Boggy Creek flora and fauna while also being treated to, of all things, a song about the Fouke Monster, one that sounds like nothing if not Bobby Goldsboro's mawkish 1968 radio hit, “Honey.” Sings Chuck Bryant, “And this is where the creature goes / Safe within the world he knows / Perhaps he dimly wonders / ‘Why there is no other such as I / To touch to love before I die / To listen to my lonely cry?’” In other words, no matter how much its appearance might frighten humans, the Fouke Monster is only looking for love. Whether this observation is meant to elicit sympathy or further terror, however, I couldn't tell.

At the end of the movie, the boy, Jim, walks again across the green field, but now as the adult behind the voiceover. “It was so long ago that it seems incredible that the creature is still out there somewhere right this minute,” he says with a suitably thoughtful look on his face. “But if you're ever driving down in our country along about sundown, keep an eye on the dark woods as you cross the Sulphur River Bottoms, and you may catch a glimpse of a huge, hairy creature watching you from the shadows.” Still looking for love, presumably.

I closed my laptop and thought about what I had finally just seen again. As an adult, I appreciated how its dirty mockumentary aesthetics could clearly be seen as an influence on

a much better film that would come out only two years later, Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, but otherwise it had been terribly disappointing—terribly written, terribly shot, terribly edited, terribly acted, and, somehow, terribly boring. But what would I have thought of it at the age of four? Even if my mother had successfully covered my eyes, the inhuman growls and the human screams would have been harrowing. And if I'd happened to actually peek out? The Monster's shrouded mysteriousness, which was probably due much more to budgetary exigencies than subtle artistic preferences, would have probably scared me worse than any straightforward shot of Leatherface swinging his smoking Poulan, I'm sure. After all, nothing's more frightening than what's never fully seen, especially when you're a child.

Though I never joined them in doing so, I now understood how my parents could blame this movie for the development of my fear, but there was more to my fear than this. I may not be able to remember anything from my first viewing of *Boggy Creek*, but I do have faint memories of Arkansas, even though we only lived there for eleven months. My father, who was finishing his PhD in Counseling Psychology at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, had taken an internship at a regional health center in the small town of Arkadelphia, Arkansas, so he and my mother, who was pregnant with my sister, rented a house two miles west of town on an unnamed dirt road off Country Road 50. On Google Earth nearly fifty years later, I see that this road is still unpaved, which means that the otherwise omnipotent Street View is unavailable, so I have to make do with hovering virtually over its roof. This is fine, however, because I can see that its most important features haven't changed: its isolation and the woods.

My room was in the back of the house, and its very large windows looked out upon these woods. Whether it was because they knew we wouldn't be living there for long or because we had no neighbors nearby or because I was only a few years old and wouldn't notice or because they couldn't afford it or because it didn't occur to two hippies stuck unhappily in the crewcut world of small-town Arkansas, my parents didn't bother hanging

any coverings on these very large windows. During the day, I remember staring out at the woods, wondering what lived in them. At night, I could feel its creatures staring in at me, though all I could see in the glass was inky blackness. I imagined them tiptoeing up to my window to peer in at me sleeping. No creature liked to do this more than Bigfoot.

Five years before this, in Northern California, Robert Patterson and Bob Gimlin had shot the Bigfoot equivalent of Abraham Zapruder's film of the Kennedy motorcade in 1963. This grainy, shaky footage shows a large, hairy, humanoid creature lumbering across a clearing toward a stand of woods not entirely unlike the Arkansas woods a few yards from my uncurtained windows. Its dark fur shines glossily in the sun. At one point, it looks over its right shoulder in the direction of the camera, and it's this moment that I always picture when I think of it, as do most people, I suppose. The creature's right arm is swung behind its body, and its left arm is swung ahead. Its hairy face, though indistinct, seems vaguely curious, neither threatened or threatening. It then turns its attention back in the direction it's headed and disappears into the trees.

In subsequent years and decades, the Patterson-Gimlin film has often been called a hoax, but that never mattered to me because, to me, it's always been real. And it's always been real because I've always wanted it to be real, no matter how much it's scared me over the years. Had I seen it as early as 1972? It had already been shown on various talk shows by this point, including Johnny Carson's *The Tonight Show*, so possibly, especially considering how my father had always been interested in anything characterized as paranormal (which helps explain his willingness to take me along to *The Legend of Boggy Creek* if that was the only way he'd be able to see it). Regardless, by the time we moved into the house that would be my home for the rest of my childhood, I had not only seen it but become obsessed by it.

On the day before the Fourth of July in the bicentennial year of 1976, my parents moved my little sister and me to a brand-new ranch house on the outside edge of a Dallas suburb. I was seven years old, ready to start second grade at Northlake Elementary. We had lived in

a Dallas apartment for two years after leaving Arkansas, and I remember having no fears of Bigfoot there, and that was probably because my room had been on the second floor of the unit. My literal-mindedness, selective though it was, told me that nothing but birds could peer through my windows, which also happened to have come with blinds for me to keep closed.

In our stairless new house, my bedroom window, when its goldenrod curtains were open, looked out upon a nearly identical house across the street, but beyond that house was a field not unlike the one that young Jim runs across in search of help. And beyond that field were woods just as thick and dark as the woods of Arkadelphia.

Only a few months earlier, I had watched Colonel Steve Austin (played by Lee Majors, an actor with even less range than *Boggy Creek's* Mr. Willie) cross paths with Bigfoot on what was easily my favorite show at the time, *The Six Million Dollar Man*. During their climactic battle, Bigfoot swats Steve to the ground with a full-sized tree trunk and tosses him through the air pro-wrestling style. Ultimately, Steve wins by tearing Bigfoot's right arm off. As he does so, though, sparks fly from the wound. In this universe, Bigfoot is a robot controlled by aliens.

If you think Steve Austin's triumph over my *bête noire* eased my fears a bit, you'd be wrong, however, and that's because everyone knew Bigfoot wasn't a robot controlled by aliens. How stupid! Bigfoot was flesh and blood, muscle and hair. And nobody, not even Colonel Steve Austin, with his bionic legs and right arm, could defeat him. Meanwhile, I realized that my new curtains wouldn't keep him from looking in at me while I slept, as I knew it would want to do. After striding between the houses across the street, it would head directly for my bedroom.

From the first night onward, I safety-pinned my curtains together every night to guarantee that they wouldn't accidentally gap open even a hair's breadth. But what if he broke through the glass and stepped inside? Well, if he did that, he would first find himself tangled

in the curtains that he'd just ripped from their runners. Then there was a second layer of security, too: I set a basketball on the floor halfway between the window and my bed. In his hurry to snatch me, he wouldn't notice it, seeing as how he'd still most likely be struggling with the curtains, and one of his two big feet would undoubtedly step on it, causing him to lose his balance and fall. This would give me just enough time to escape, especially if I made sure to keep my door propped firmly open, as I always did for just this very reason.

But even with this nightly preparation, I always had trouble getting to sleep. Staring through the dark at my trussed-up curtains, I waited for the inevitable sound of breaking glass and the sight of my curtains bulging toward me. There was nothing sensible about my fear, and I understood this well enough that I worked hard to keep my nightly preparations a secret from my parents, but even mortification (which did eventually take place) was a price I was willing to pay if it meant the difference between evading Bigfoot's clutches or not.

I don't remember how long I kept up with my curtain-pinning and strategic basketball-positioning, but eventually, however, as with most childhood obsessions and fears, mine faded and were replaced, first by sports and music, then by girls and jobs and cars and money. And no matter how much I hate to admit it, the enduring lack of evidence of Bigfoot's existence, especially in this era of ubiquitous technology, causes my former obsessiveness and fearfulness to seem that much more irretrievable, that much longer ago. My youth, too. With all there is to be frightened of in the 21st century, just imagine Bigfoot being your biggest fear in the world. Oh, the sweet innocence of that! My teenaged children never, not even at their youngest, trafficked in such mythical ridiculousness. Growing up in this era had hardened them in ways that I hadn't been. What a gullible fool Daddy must have been!

But even now, if I close my eyes, breathe, concentrate, I can still summon a feeling from long ago—part lump-in-my-stomach dread, part goosebump thrill—that nothing but

thoughts of Bigfoot have ever given me. And I would have to agree with the words that Jim leaves us with at the end of *The Legend of Boggy Creek*: “I’d almost like to hear that terrible cry again just to be reminded that there . . . are still mysteries that remain unsolved. And strange, unexplained noises in the night.” If only there were nothing to keep us anxious and awake in our beds now but thoughts of mysterious creatures wandering up from the woods to peer curiously through our windows.

Courtney Justus

The Girl Who Loved Mañonalds

You used to call it Mañonalds. At six, you inched through plastic PlayPlace tunnels in your puffy floral dresses, curly pigtails tight against your head. At the very top of the tube slide, you said it was yours, all yours, before descending with a soft swish of your dress. It was 2001, maybe 2002, or one of the other blurry years in Memphis, Tennessee when playdates were rare but you could claim a PlayPlace in seconds. You shrieked whenever another child encroached on your kingdom, or when someone (usually your mother) tried to coax or pull you out for mealtime: *Cocó come down, Cocó be careful*. That has always been your Argentine family’s nickname for you. Their Sunday asados and red tile patios burn brighter in your memory than any holiday you spent in Tennessee.

During the years you lived in Argentina, your real name became a cluster of syllables you spit out with trepidation, so some people called you Cocó or Coco instead. Coco like Coco Chanel, Coco like coconut. And you let them, even though it was supposed to be for family only. Sometimes, you went by Court, a name you want to bring back, resurrect from high school without resurrecting your high school self. Nora, your first friend there, gave you the nickname. Nora who loved Paramore and hated Selena Gomez, knew and loved Snow Patrol just like you. Nora wore a satin fuchsia dress with combat boots to quinceañeras, talked to you before any of your classmates realized you existed. Riding back from gym class one afternoon, field hockey sticks clattering against the bus windows, Nora turned to face you with her light green eyes wide and asked, “Can I call you Court?” And you said yes. It made perfect sense, so much that you almost wondered why no one had called you that before. From then on, it seemed everyone took to calling you Court, even those who didn’t know Nora at all. Schoolmates, theater companions, even a few family members. As if the establishment of your new nickname had spread through osmosis.

The first time you went to McDonald's with Nora, during your first week as the new kid, you asked her how much a Happy Meal cost. Your mom hadn't given you enough money for a regular combo, and you thought maybe the Happy Meal would be cheaper.

"You're not actually going to get the Happy Meal, are you?" Nora asked, arching one thin eyebrow at you, voice tinged with something like disapproval.

"No," you blurted, without explaining your logic. You got a double bacon cheeseburger with small fries instead. Afterward, when your classmates wanted to go to the Arnaldo across the street, and you didn't have enough money for dessert, Nora bought you strawberry ice cream. *I wanted you to join us*, she'd said. *I didn't want you to leave just because you didn't have the money for ice cream*. You loved her for that. You even pasted the ice cream receipt into your planner, the same one Nora decorated in gel pen because she thought the plain cover looked sad.

Before Cristina Kirchner's reelection, before the Argentine peso plummeted again, you could get a full meal at McDonald's for twenty pesos, then the equivalent of five US dollars. Even then, your mother chastised you for spending so much on the meal, for getting the double bacon cheeseburger instead of a regular cheeseburger. On the days when you couldn't bring yourself to ask your mom for money, you brought your own lunch instead, staring in shame at the lukewarm hot dog you'd microwaved at the school moments earlier, the sauceless, sticky spaghetti morphed into the same shape of the Tupperware. You wondered if the McDonald's employees could kick you out for bringing your own lunch. They never did.

Back in Memphis, when you were still young enough to excusably get a Happy Meal, you loved collecting all the McDonald's toys alongside your little brother Caleb. During the summer of 2003, the McDonald's on South Houston Levee in Collierville, Tennessee gave away Neopets: a green Wocky with a fluffy pink mane (a cat nothing like your real orange tabby), a big-footed red JubJub resembling a tiny flame, a royal blue Mynci with a gold star

pattern. By some agreement neither of you remembers, you gave all the star and cloud-patterned Neopets you got to Caleb, even though you wanted them. It was your agreement. Caleb got what he wanted. He got the final say on what you watched together on TV and what video games you played together on a given day, though he would always trust you to make the right moves in a *Pokémon* battle, win the Battle Royales in Mario Party, defeat every watery, reptilian version of Chaos in *Sonic Adventure DX: Director's Cut*. You took some pride in these things, in beating bosses like the Egg Viper on a cloudy Friday afternoon, as you waited out a tornado warning that got you out of school early.

Living in Memphis, you were no stranger to tornadoes. One night, during one of the summers you spent hundreds of hours on that GameCube, a tornado circled your neighborhood, turning the skies an inky green. As you, Caleb and your mom hid inside the master bedroom closet, Caleb cried for Lupe, his pale blue Neopet wolf. The TV hissed with static from the bedroom as the wind howled outside. Dad was on a work trip, one of many in those years. As Mom darted upstairs to fetch Lupe, you pictured glass sprayed across the carpeted playroom, scattered between the Neopets, Polly Pockets and dozens of incomplete Lego sets. You were afraid the tornado would sweep Mom away, reaching through the newly broken window, fanglike shards rimming the edges, to thrust her into the night. But Mom came back. She always did.

Mom used to work late on Friday nights at her new law office, while you and Caleb stayed up watching Friday night cartoons: *Spongebob*, *Avatar the Last Airbender*, *Jimmy Neutron*, *Teen Titans*, or whatever you could find, even if it was a repeat. Your family had their routines: McDonald's every Thursday, cartoons for you and Caleb every night but extra late on Fridays. On the weekend nights both your parents were home, all 3 televisions went on: the living room TV for the kids, *Grey's Anatomy* on the master bedroom TV for Mom, a baseball or basketball game for Dad on the TV in the upstairs playroom. On the 3-television nights especially, you and Caleb made sure to agree on what you were going to

watch. It was important to agree back then, until it wasn't. Until you moved to the house on Brayshore Drive, near the reservoir, where geese snuck into the backyard like slim-necked rebels. Until the night Mom and Dad yelled at each other across the kitchen island while steaming McDonald's to-go bags sat on the glass table. You and Caleb hid under the table, eyes darting from your parents to the music video of "SOS" by the Jonas Brothers playing on TV. You still can't listen to "SOS" without thinking of that night.

You first heard about the Jonas Brothers in 2006, when girls at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School in Memphis walked to the chapel parking lot chanting "Year 3000", putting one stockinged leg in front of the other. You don't remember the girl's names, don't think you ever knew them. They were older by a year or two and, in the social fabric of St. Francis, therefore impossible to know. The first time you saw eighth-grade girls, when you were in fifth grade, you thought it incredible, almost impossible, to become them. You were so stuck in sameness that the idea of an international move, or something of the same magnitude, was the only thing that could pull you from it. But you couldn't even imagine a thing like that. Not yet.

Sometimes, you walked across the St. Francis blacktop wondering if there would ever be a different day. Not just a new day, a tomorrow or day after, but a day when something would pluck you from this daily, near-friendless routine and put you somewhere else. You used to dream about running away. Once, you even made calculations of how long you could last on what little money of your own you had. *How much is a gallon of milk?* you asked your grandmother, not speaking of the roads calling to you beyond your brick house, its backyard littered with spiky sweet gum seeds you collected for pennies from your father. You dreamed about it even after the summer day your mom said, "We're running away," taking you and Caleb to the lake house near the Mississippi border, so your father came home to an empty house.

At your Argentinean high school, your favorite Jonas Brother – or how much you liked the Jonas Brothers – could cast you out of one social circle as much as draw you into another one. You wouldn't admit to Nora how much you once listened to the Jonas Brothers. Joe Jonas had gotten Nora in serious trouble. Or really, it was Nora's old friend, who scrawled *I love you Joe Jonas, I want to lose my virginity to you* in Nora's planner. When Nora's father found the words, his red face turned even brighter than its normal shade. Though you'd never seen him angry, you knew from the glint in his eyes, the way he craned his neck, that he could burst with it at any moment, perhaps without warning. It seemed that Nora could be that way, too, her eyes narrowing with irritation at an ill-timed, cheesy joke or an offhand comment. You wish you could remember the color of his eyes. Were they the same shade as Nora's? Did his face resemble his daughter's at all?

Even though Nora wasn't around your senior year, she didn't betray you. *You moved to the States and didn't tell me!* she wrote on your Facebook wall days before your departure. You hadn't realized until then that you forgot to tell Nora, though you'd been talking about studying creative writing back in the States for years.

Nora never told you not to be a writer. Unlike one classmate, she didn't tell you that you would starve. Once, the other girls said you ate too little for lunch. The truth was, you were afraid to ask for more food. To ask for more. Eventually, you asked, ate, grew out of your favorite blue jeans, listened to the girls at school talk about your pudgy belly, your flat chest. The same girls barricaded the classroom door at lunch time, while you pushed and pushed. Behind the door, they laughed. Even after all the times they did this, you still wanted to sit with them. You just didn't want to be seen alone, wanted to stop the sinking, gnawing feelings in your chest that arose whenever you were. A different kind of starving.

Seven years after high school graduation, Nora requested to follow you on Instagram. You have kept your Instagram profile private precisely because of the kids from high school.

Though you don't add them on Instagram, you don't want them to catch even a glimpse of your life, or what they think is your life, on social media. You unfriended almost everyone from your graduating class on Facebook: the anemone-haired boy who stole your pencil case, cell phone and Environmental Science notes, who tackled you in the hallway without warning, without outcry; the twins with their bleached locks, platform sandals and boutique jeans. But not Nora.

Nora's profile was full of modeling shoots, burger lunches with an old classmate, an elusive selfie with a dark-haired boy. You looked at Nora's bright green eyes, bleached by a profile picture filter that made her hologram-like, almost ghostly. Once, when you lingered too closely, Nora called you a fantasma. A ghost. Silent and quiet, with greasy, white skin. Nora even lent you a book called *Ghost Girl*, saying you would like it, which you never finished but pretended that you did. *You ghosted me*, you tell Nora's picture, Nora's username, the Nora-shaped hologram living in your thoughts.

After Nora changed schools, after your classmates started avoiding you at breaks, you hid in the janitor's closet and bathroom near the tiny, cramped kitchen on the first floor. When one of the primary school teachers or janitorial staff passed through in their blue aprons and starched shirts, you slipped into the shadows of the empty bathroom, or behind the wooden door. You still counted the minutes until recreo was over, watching the minutes click by on the digital clock nearby. If one person caught you here, it was game over. Then where would you go? If you'd been another girl, it probably wouldn't have mattered. They would've waved you off, told you to go find your friends, or turned away entirely. But you weren't the kind of girl who got let off easy. You never earned that kind of social capital. You had a defiant middle part in your dishwater-blond hair. You wore your skirt knee-length, wore too many coats and a red scarf that always came loose. You were soft at the middle, with tiny, shapeless breasts that still only necessitated children's sports bras. You didn't speak like an Argentine girl, and you still don't.

In ninth grade, you thought you could earn that social capital. You thought you could climb the ladder by helping people with classwork, accumulating granted favors like coins in your pink studded change purse. Another story you told herself as a high schooler, another spool of words keeping you tethered to its humid classrooms, the stained tile floors, the slippery bathrooms always short of paper towels. You granted every favor you could – bus money, help with the Pythagorean theorem and polynomials, Sweet Tarts brought back from the States, tips for English Lit essays – but it was never enough.

You never told Nora about the lies. When you were a junior, you watched every one of your classmates cheat on a Historia final, then told your mom, who told the directoras. You knew people cheated, but watching them all succeed at a test you knew you were going to fail made something inside you cave. They quickly figured out who did it; you have never had a good poker face, have never been a faker, no matter how many years you've been a theater kid. No matter how many chances you've had to cover up the wrong moves you've made.

Then, fall of senior year, your classmates asked you to ask one of the directoras if they could hang drawings on the classroom walls, characters from TV shows you loved as kids, like *Phineas and Ferb* and *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*. She said yes, the light casting a white film on her round glasses. After she denied permission weeks later, denied ever giving it in the first place, you told them all you'd never asked. It was better to be misbelieved for an actual lie than for the truth, you thought. You knew that no matter what you said, they wouldn't believe you. That's what you told yourself, and sometimes still do.

One night, the summer before your senior year, after the class started planning a senior trip to Porto Seguro, Brazil, Nora called you. In a voice teetering on the edge of a screech – a voice reminiscent, perhaps, of her father's – she told you not to go on the trip. While hanging out with a few of your classmates, the anemone-haired boy said he was going to do

things to you there. You both knew what kinds of things. No one else in the class warned you or said anything about that night.

You keep telling yourself you remember picking up the grey, brick-like landline from your mahogany writing desk, cradling it as Nora warned you. And most days, you think you remember, the darkened garden with its always-cold pool outside your bay windows coming into view as you speak. But somehow you don't drop out of the senior trip until the fall, after the incident with the drawings.

You tell yourself that Nora tried to protect you. That she always meant it when she tried, even if she later disappeared.

The last time you saw Nora, the two of you shared secrets at the tiny Belgrano apartment where her family still lived: Nora, her three siblings and their parents. She told you about changing her diet and skin care routine, about studying medicine, about sitting with her boyfriend's sick mother at the hospital for fourteen hours a day, riding the bus back to Belgrano in pitch darkness. You told her about your long-distance relationship with the dark-haired English teacher, the one who kissed you under milky stars in the Swiss countryside, who shamed you for not going to church more, who said that tying your hair back made you look like a princess. Even now, you remember your damp hair splayed Medusa-like against the white pillowcase, the thrumming pain when he touched you, the way you shivered the whole time. Nora asked if you lost your virginity to him. You told her the truth.

That night, Nora's father drove you in his old burgundy Renault back to your grandmother's house in Olivos, where you'd been staying during that first trip back to Argentina. Your mother emerged to greet the three of you, standing near the scraggly orange tree. *Nora looked so pretty*, she said later. *She looks like her father.*

You still keep the notes Nora wrote you on graph paper eleven years ago. The Jonas Brothers are married and still making music. You have started talking about the girl who

loved Mañonalds. You don't dream about running away anymore.

Request

Today Mom's in the salon chair. It's her reflection in the massive mirror. The chair, the mirror, artifacts from the beauty salon on Park Street. Studio One Unisex Hairstyling is now Chatham Beach Tanning. But when she sold the salon in '85, she brought a little piece of it with her and set up this hairdressing station in the basement. Today it's her turn to be the customer.

How much?, I ask. She pinches a bit of hair from the right and pulls it down a bit past her shoulder. *An inch or so. Just so it sits on my shoulders, but still long enough so I can put it in a ponytail.* I sigh deep. I need to get it right. If I don't, I can't put it back. After years of critiquing coiffed reflections, she'd spot a mistake in a glance; know I was holding the scissors at the wrong angle.

I lay the instruments out like a dentist on the wheeled tray by my side. Wide-toothed comb, fine-toothed rattail comb with the long tail, spray bottle, cup of warm water, plastic hair clips, scissors. I drop the clips into the pocket of my smock, her smock, take a deep breath, grab the large comb and run it slowly through the gray and white waves. It used to be straight. Before the cancer. Through the years, she experimented with all different kinds of hairstyles. She'd perm it, add blonde highlights, dye the gray. Then when she lost it all during chemo, she said if it ever grew back, she'd let it go natural. It grew in gray and curly. That's how she's left it, and it's gorgeous.

I drop the comb and use my fingers instead. I like the feel of Mom's soft hair in my hands. I run the end of the rattail comb across the first layer of hair closest to her neck, sweeping the

rest up, giving it a twist, and securing it on the top of her head with a clip. She bends her head forward, resting her chin on her chest. I dip the comb into the cup of warm water and run it through the first layer, smoothing it down dark. I reach for the scissors on the tray and slide my thumb and forefinger in, resting my middle finger on the plastic apostrophe, for control. I'm surprised they fit. But I shouldn't be. Our hands are the same size.

In the same hand, which is surprisingly not trembling, I grab the rattail again and gently comb the thin layer of hair down flush against her neck. The hair is darker here on the bottom. Younger-looking. But shorter. And thinner. I shift my weight from one foot to the other, feigning calm, competence. Confidence I don't yet have.

How can Mom be so nonchalant? She went to school for this. Beauty Academy right out of high school. I went to college. Got a degree in education. A lot of good that does me now with Mom in the hydraulic chair in her basement wanting me to give her a trim. How on earth am I supposed to know what I'm doing?

The only training I received was when I was growing up, I'd sit on the basement stairs. The basement was finished when we moved into the house when I was seven. It had this funky carpeting that had a repeating pattern of pictures of different liquor bottles on it in red, orange, green. They were labelled. Whiskey, bourbon, vermouth. Which was weird because other than Dad having an occasional Bud, my parents didn't drink. The stairs were covered in this carpet, too. They led from the upstairs hallway down to the dark panelled basement. I'd sit on the fifth step up where I wasn't in the way but still had a good vantage point, and watch through the wooden railing painted red to match the carpet and running parallel to the handrail, as Mom styled someone's hair. They'd sit in the chair, Mom would sweep the cape around in front of them, secure the velcro at the nape of the neck, and the conversation

would begin. Mom would cut, curl, dye as she listened to them tell her about their week. It was a one-act play with two characters and me as the sole audience. It was art. Mom saw the finished product before she even began, and she trimmed and curled until she achieved the end she'd envisioned. I took it all in. Not so much the gossip but her technique, precision, care. She wasn't just helping a friend return to the style or color they had six weeks ago, she was sharing her time. I'm willing to give Mom my time, but still feel ill-qualified to do this job.

I comb the same layer over and over. Raise it to see if it will work in a ponytail. Comb it back down. *How about here?* I ask, pressing my finger flat and running it back and forth against her neck. *That's good*, she says. Watching the motion of my hands I barely recognize them as my own. The plastic coating of the scissor rings smooth on my skin, I make the first cut.

Once it's done, the rest comes easier, almost mechanical. The staccato *wi-ki, wi-ki, wi-ki* of the scissors. Crunching as they cut and then sigh relief as they open again. Hands making crooked paths straight. Rattail in and across. Line up the next layer with the previous one, hold it taut between middle finger and forefinger like I'd seen her do so many times before, cut the same as the previous layer. Channeling Mom while she's still in the room.

We relax into the conversation. She gets there before I do. *Cutting your hair for the first time was difficult for me. I hated cutting off your banana curls.* I was probably five. I'm not sure whose idea it was that I get that haircut. Obviously, she was the one who was traumatized. I don't remember that either. Banana curls and feathered bangs were an artifact of the 70s. As I got older, the curls got smaller. In high school in the 80s, I went through the permanent wave phase. Mom gave me perms at home. She'd wash my hair in the deep kitchen sink upstairs, and then we'd go downstairs to the home salon.

Do we ever stop taking from our parents? I don't remember much about Mom having cancer. She's a survivor, and it was years ago. I do remember how she told me. We were sitting in the car at the bottom of my driveway. I was complaining about some trivial thing about my sister. I can't recall now what it was, but I was ranting and wouldn't let it go. Mom interrupted me with an uncharacteristically stern voice. *I have cancer.* That shut me up. *I wasn't going to tell you yet, but you were complaining about your sister and.* . . And something. I was being petty, unrelenting. Whatever she said, she was right.

I'd like to say I grew up that day. Became the adult. Stopped being so petty and selfish. But I didn't. I'm still taking. I'm still calling Mom and expecting her attention. Sometimes I'll call and ask how she is. *Fine*, she'll say. Then I launch into the details of my day. I tell her I need her to be fine. I know I'm blessed she and Dad are still well and active in their seventies. I need them to be okay because part of me still needs to be a child.

She looks so small now in the chair. How can this be? Did she shrink over time from giving so much of herself to others? Grammy also looked small to me. Did Mom see her that way? People call menopause the change of life, but maybe the real change of life is when your mom starts to look small.

The other day, I was cranky. I called her. Not to cheer me up, and I wasn't expecting or needing her to be having a good day. I just needed to hear her voice, the familiarity of it. I needed her to listen to the minutiae of my day, like she always does. She listens to every word. Then when it's her turn to talk, I find my mind drifting. After a while, I don't hear the words, I simply ride their cadence. The hills and valleys and rills of her voice. The voice familiar to me from the womb fifty years ago. The stream, the thread, the voice in my head. The voice I sometimes hear embedded in my own when I play back a recording of myself or

hear the mom-ism that just falls out of my mouth and makes me laugh.

The scissors quiet, I return them to the tray. I look over at the empty stairs. Then back to Mom's reflection in the giant mirror, me towering behind her. Someday she may need more from me. For now, we have this. She turns her head from side to side and says, *Oh, that's so much better. Thank you.* I didn't do much. Just what she asked.



BIOGRAPHIES

POETRY

Maureen Alsop

Maureen Alsop, Ph.D. is the author of *Pyre* (What Books Press) Later, *Knives & Trees* (Negative Capability Press); *Mirror Inside Coffin* (Cherry Grove Collections); *Mantic* (Augury Press); *Apparition Wren* (Mainstreet Rag; also a Spanish Edition translated by Mario Domínguez Parra). She mentors online with the *Poetry Barn* and is the book review editor for *Poemeleon*. A series of visual poems accompany the poems selected and can be found at: *Hyades Magazine* (including poems and interview) <https://hyadesmagazine.wordpress.com/interview-with-maureen-alsop/> *Entropy* <https://entropymag.org/tag/ecriture-feminine-mecanique/> *Fuel Station* (forthcoming) and have been on exhibition in a celebration *Amnesty International's* 60th anniversary on *Magnetic Island's Louver Gallery*, and appearing at Umbrella Studio in Townsville in 2022.

Amanda Auchter

Amanda Auchter is the author of *The Wishing Tomb*, winner of the 2013 PEN Center USA Literary Award for Poetry and the 2012 Perugia Press Book Award, and *The Glass Crib*, winner of the 2010 Zone 3 Press First Book Award for Poetry. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming at *The Huffington Post*, *CNN*, *American Poetry Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *North American Review*, *Shenandoah*, *The Indianapolis Review*, *Tahoma Review*, and the *Academy of American Poets Poem-a-Day Project*, among others. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Bennington College. Follow her on Instagram and Twitter: @ALAuchter.

Annah Browning

Annah Browning is the author of the poetry collection *Witch Doctrine* (University of Akron Press, 2020) and the chapbook *The Marriage* (Horse Less Press, 2013). Her work has appeared in *Willow Springs*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Court Green*, and elsewhere. She is a Professor of English and Creative Writing at Blackburn College.

Eric Burgoyne

Eric Burgoyne lives on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii. He recently completed an MA in Creative Writing - Poetry, from Teesside University, Middlesbrough England. His poems have appeared in *As It Ought To Be Magazine*, *Brickplight - Poetry Beyond the Pale*, *Spillwords*, *Skink Beat Review*, *Journal of Expressive Writing*, and elsewhere.

John Cullen

John Cullen graduated from SUNY Geneseo and worked in the entertainment business booking rock bands, a clown troupe, and an R-rated magician. Currently he teaches at Ferris State University and has had work published in *American Journal of Poetry*, *The MacGuffin*, *Harpur Palate*, *North Dakota Quarterly* and other journals. His chapbook, *TOWN CRAZY*, is available from Slipstream Press.

Adam Day

Adam Day is the author of *Left-Handed Wolf* (LSU Press, 2020), and of *Model of a City in*

Civil War (Sarabande Books), and the recipient of a *Poetry Society of America Chapbook Fellowship* for *Badger*, *Apocrypha*, and of a PEN Award. He is the editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Divine Orphans of the Poetic Project*, from 1913 Press, and his work has appeared in the *APR*, *Boston Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Volt*, *Kenyon Review*, *Iowa Review*, and elsewhere.

Kindall Fredricks

Kindall Fredricks is a practicing registered nurse and an MFA candidate at Sam Houston State University, focusing on both poetry and the intersection of literature and the medical sciences. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *New Letters*, *Rust + Moth*, *Quarterly West*, *Sugar House Review*, *NELLE*, *The Coachella Review*, *Menacing Hedge*, *WomensArts Quarterly*, *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *The Academy of American Poets*, and more. She resides in Texas with her husband, daughter, and two furballs.

Suzanne Frischkorn

Suzanne Frischkorn's most recent poetry collection, *Fixed Star*, is forthcoming from JackLeg Press (Autumn 2022). Her honors include the Aldrich Poetry Award for her chapbook *Spring Tide*, selected by Mary Oliver, an *Emerging Writers Fellowship* from the *Writer's Center* for her book *Lit Windowpane*, and an *Individual Artist Fellowship* from the *Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism*. She is an Editor for \$ - Poetry is Currency and serves on the Terrain.org Editorial Board.

Sherine Gilmour

Sherine Gilmour has an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from New York University. Her work was nominated for Best New Poets 2020 and a Pushcart Prize. Her poetry, essays, and fiction have been published or are forthcoming from *Cleaver*, *Mom Egg Review*, *Redivider*, *Salamander*, *So To Speak*, *Third Coast*, and other publications.

Natalie Hampton

Natalie Hampton is a junior at the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in the Creative Writing Department. She has been recognized by the *Alliance for Young Artists & Writers*, the *Harris County Department of Education*, the *Young Poets Network*, the *Pulitzer Center*, and *Ringling College of Art and Design*. She serves as an editor at *Polyphony Lit* and *Cathartic Literary Magazine*. She has taken online workshops and classes with Iowa, Brown, and Sewanee.

Romana Iorga

Originally from Chisinau, Moldova, Romana Iorga lives in Switzerland. She is the author of two poetry collections in Romanian. Her work in English has appeared or is forthcoming in various journals, including *New England Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Salamander*, as well as on her poetry blog at clayandbranches.com.

Erika Lutzner

Erika Lutzner has written one full-length book and four chapbooks. She grew up in Garrett Park, MD, next to Porcupine Woods and behind the train tracks. She now

resides in Brooklyn, NY. She is a former violinist, chef and loves cats. She is the editor of *Scapegoat Review*.

Karen Rigby

Karen Rigby is the author of *Chinoiserie* (Ahsakta Press, 2012). Her poems have been published in *Bennington Review* and *Southern Humanities Review*. She lives in Arizona. www.karenrigby.com

Danielle Rose

Danielle Rose is the author of two short books: *at first & then* and *The History of Mountains*. Her work can be found in *Palette*, *Hobart & Pithead Chapel*. Her twitter handle is @danirosepoet

Micah Ruelle

Micah Ruelle is a queer Midwestern poet residing in Minneapolis. Their chapbook, *Failure to Merge*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2019. They were recently selected by Kaveh Akbar for *2021 Best New Poets*. They hold an MFA from Texas State University, and currently teach at Century College.

Cin Salach

Poet of page and stage, Cin can almost always be found collaborating (musicians, video artists, dancers, photographers, and most recently, healers, chefs and scientists.) Inaugural Poet Laureate of Covenant Farm in Sawyer, Michigan, her two books of poetry are housed in the *Porch Swing Poetry Box*. She thanks her son, Leo, for inspiring these poems.

Rikki Santer

Rikki Santer's poetry has received many honors including five Pushcart and three Ohioana book award nominations as well as a fellowship from the *National Endowment for the Humanities*. Her eleventh poetry collection, *Stopover*, which is in conversation with the original *Twilight Zone* series and will be published this fall by Luchador Press. Please contact her through her website: <https://rikkisanter.com>

Maureen Seaton

Maureen Seaton has authored two dozen poetry collections, both solo and collaborative—recently, *Undersea* (JackLeg, 2021) and *Sweet World* (CavanKerry, 2019), winner of the Florida Book Award for poetry. Her honors include Lambda Literary Awards for both Lesbian Poetry and Lesbian Memoir, the Publishing Triangle's Audre Lorde Award, an NEA, Illinois Arts Council Grant, Society of Midland Authors Award, and the Pushcart. She was voted Miami's Best Poet 2020 by The Miami New Times.

Evy Shen

Evy Shen is a high school senior from Georgia. Her writing has been published/is

forthcoming in *Penn Review*, *Passages North*, *Longleaf Review*, *Half Mystic Journal*, *HOBART*, *Kissing Dynamite*, and *Blue Marble Review*, among others. When she is not writing, she is outside with her family enjoying God's beautiful nature. She loves One Direction and rain.

Rachel Stempel

Rachel Stempel is a genderqueer Ukrainian-Jewish poet and PhD candidate in English at Binghamton University. They are the author of the chapbooks *Interiors* (Foundlings Press, 2021) and *Before The Desire To Eat* (Finishing Line Press, 2022). They currently live in New York with their rabbit, Diego.

Hannah Stephenson

Hannah Stephenson is the author of *Cadence* and *In the Kettle, the Shriek*. Her writing has appeared in publications that include *The Atlantic*, *The Huffington Post*, *32 Poems*, *Vela*, *The Journal*, and *Poetry Daily*. You can visit her online at www.thestorialist.com.

Adam Tavel

Adam Tavel is the author of five books of poetry, including the forthcoming *Green Regalia* (Stephen F. Austin State University Press, 2022). His most recent collection, *Catafalque*, won the Richard Wilbur Award (University of Evansville Press, 2018). His recent poems appear, or will soon appear, in *Ploughshares*, *The Georgia Review*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Ninth Letter*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Western Humanities Review*, among others. You can find him online at <http://adamtavel.com/>.

Sara Moore Wagner

Sara Moore Wagner is the recipient of a 2019 Sustainable Arts Foundation award, and the author of the chapbooks *Tumbling After* (forthcoming from Red Bird Chapbooks, 2022) and *Hooked Through* (2017). Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in many journals including *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Rhino*, *Sixth Finch*, *Waxwing*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *Nimrod*, among others. Find her at www.saramoorewagner.com.

Haley Wooning

Haley Wooning lives in California where she works as a therapist and writes poetry. Her poetry book, *Mothmouth*, is available on amazon and through its publisher, *Spuyten Duyvil*.

Andrew Zawacki

A 2016 Howard Foundation Fellow in Poetry, Andrew Zawacki is the author of five previous poetry volumes: *Unsun : f/11* (Coach House, 2019), *Videotape* (Counterpath), *Petals of Zero Petals of One* (Talisman House), *Anabranched* (Wesleyan), and *By Reason of Breakings* (Georgia). His most recent chapbooks are *Waterfall plot*

(Greying Ghost), *Sonnen-sonnets* (Tammy), *Arrow's shadow* (Equipage), and *Kaeshi-Waza* (The Elephants). Zawacki's poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Conjunctions*, and other national and international journals, as well as in the anthologies *The Eloquent Poem* (Persea), *Legitimate Dangers: American Poets of the New Century* (Sarabande), *Walt Whitman hom(m)age* (Turtle Point), *The Iowa Anthology of New American Poetries* (Iowa), and *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present* (Scribner).

Daniel Zhang

Daniel Zhang is an Asian-American poet from Watchung, New Jersey. His poems have received Gold Medal recognition from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards as well as recognition from the National Council of Teachers of English, and he was a semifinalist for the National Student Poets Program.

ART

Guilherme Bergamini

Reporter photographic and visual artist, Guilherme Bergamini is Brazilian and graduated in Journalism. The works of the artist dialogue between memory and social political criticism. Mineiro from Belo Horizonte, it is with photography that Bergamini expresses his personal experiences and worldview. Awarded in national and international competitions, Bergamini participated in collective exhibitions in 47 countries. CV: www.guilhermebergamini.com/autor

Artist Statement

Guilherme is enthusiastic and curious about the new contemporary possibilities that the technique allows. He believes in photography as the aesthetic potential and transforming agent of society. Persistent, the visual artist uses photography as a means of political and social criticism.

Emanuela Iorga

Emanuela Iorga is a filmmaker, artist, and screenwriter, who lives in Chisinau, Moldova. Art represents for her a recently rediscovered passion, following a series of world and inner changes. Her work can be found at <https://manolcaincosmos.wordpress.com/270-2/>

Artist Statement

Emanuela Iorga's work represents her moods and since she doesn't draw something specific, she doesn't have titles or descriptions for most of these pieces. Some of Iorga's drawings seem to address a state of presence, the spinal column, and the light, others seem to speak about imprisonment and freedom. These are recurring themes, which she discovers through repetition or when a viewer reveals them to her.

Bonnie Severien

Bonnie Severien graduated with a BFA at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, Netherlands. Severien was a finalist five times at the Dutch Royal Award of Modern Painting. Her work has been exhibited at the Royal Palace Amsterdam and the Art Museum in The Hague and she did a number of commissions for Fashion House Claudia Sträter. Paintings have been published in the French newspaper Le Monde Diplomatique and she received a Stipendium for Emerging Artists and a Project Grant from the Mondriaan Fund in The Netherlands. Her work has been acquired by private collections as well as museum and corporate collections in The Netherlands, Belgium, UK and USA.

Artist Statement

Her new series entitled *The Secret Garden* was realized with a project subsidy from the Mondriaan Fund. Also here the artist shows her staged and assembled world in which she plays with differences in scale between nature and a geometric architecture. To do this, she picks plants from her own garden or wild flowers on the roadside in her neighborhood, photographs them and composes a collage. Each line or leaf is taped, cut and painted in, creating a graphic effect. The plants represent growth, abundance, prosperity and innocence.

Camilla Taylor

Camilla Taylor was raised in Provo, Utah. Taylor attended the University of Utah and received a BFA in 2006, and an MFA from California State University at Long Beach in 2011. They utilize a monochromatic palette with intensely introspective works on paper and sculpture, which explore figurative and architectural forms. Their artworks reflect the viewer's internal lives as well as collective issues we experience as a society. Taylor lives in Los Angeles, CA, with their partner and 3 cats.

Artist Statement

These two pieces are from a series about deception, *Your Words in My Mouth*, shaping perception of reality with words. The self portrait print *Camilla* is of the creation of a new self from fiction, as a liars story comes into being from the confusion of thoughts into specificity. The ceramic and thread sculpture *The Comfort of a Story Repeated* is the lie that is easier to live with than the truth: the thread is the metaphorical thread of a story, binding and constricting but also more comfortable and easy than the new vulnerability of living without it.

FICTION

Aiden Baker

Aiden Baker is a writer based out of Berkeley, California. Her work can be found in the *Ninth Letter*, *Sonora Review*, *Orca*, and elsewhere.

Tina Jenkins Bell

Tina Jenkins Bell is a Black published fiction writer, playwright, freelance journalist,

literary activist, and academic. Prior to the pandemic, 2019 was a very busy year for Bell. Her mini-memoir, *Devil's Alley*, appeared in the *Us Against Alzheimer's* anthology; her play *Cut the Baby in Half* was featured as a staged dramatic reading at the Greenline Performing Arts Center; her speculative short fiction, *To the Moon and Back*, appeared in *Hypertext Journal* and was later nominated for an Illinois Arts Council award; and *White Vans*, flash prose, was published by South Side Weekly. Ms. Bell also collaborated with Janice Tuck Lively and Sandra Jackson Opoku to write *A Conversation with Lorraine Hansberry and Gwendolyn Brooks*, a fictional account of two literary icons discussing race and women's issues during a chance meeting in heaven. *A Conversation*, was produced as a staged reading by the Chicago Humanities Festival. In 2018, Bell collaborated with Janice Tuck Lively and Felicia Madlock to write a collaborative hybrid fictional account of Robert Sandifer's (the young boy who was murdered by his own gang) last hours; *Looking for the Good Boy Yummy* was published in *They Said*, a Black Lawrence Press anthology. Bell is a co-founder of *FLOW* (For Love of Writing) and has collaborated with numerous writing organizations, authors, and bookstores to offer literary programming in Chicago's underserved communities. She is currently working on her second novel, *Family Legacies*.

Jenny Magnus

Jenny Magnus is a writer, performer, composer, musician, director, and teacher who is a founding co-Artistic Director of the Curious Theater Branch, an all-original theater company, now in its' 33th year. She is the author/creator of plays that have been produced at Steppenwolf Theater, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Athenaeum Theater, Prop Thtr, and on tour throughout America and Europe, and a collection of her plays, *Observations of an Orchestrated Catastrophe*, was published by *JackLeg Press* in 2014. She has released 14 albums, written 15 plays, and is an all-around hard-working artist trying to make her way in this world.

Tom Misuraca

Tom Misuraca studied Writing, Publishing and Literature at Emerson College in Boston before moving to Los Angeles. Over 95 of his short stories and two novels have been published. This year his work appeared in *Capsule Stories*, *The Crypt* and *Alchemy Literary Magazine*. His story, *Giving Up The Ghosts*, was published in *Constellations Journal*, and nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

David Obuchowski

David Obuchowski is an established writer of longform essays and fiction. His non-fiction has appeared in *Longreads*, *Salon*, *Jalopnik*, *The Awl*, *Fangoria* and others. His short stories have appeared in *The Baltimore Review*, *The West Trade Review*, *Miracle Monocle*, *Border Crossing*, *Kaaterskill Basin Literary Journal*, *Garfield Lake Review*, and many others. David is the creator, host, producer, and sole writer of the popular and acclaimed documentary series, *Tempest*, which was recently developed into a television series. His first children's book is a collaboration with his wife, Sarah Pedry, and will be published in 2023 by *Minedition* (Astra Publishing House).

NONFICTION

Kevin Grauke

Kevin Grauke is the author of *Shadows of Men* (Queen's Ferry Press), winner of the Steven Turner Award from the Texas Institute of Letters. His fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared (or are forthcoming) in journals such as *The Threepenny Review*, *Bayou*, *The Southern Review*, *Quarterly West*, and *Columbia Journal*. He's a Contributing Editor at *Story*, and he teaches at La Salle University in Philadelphia. Twitter: @kevingrauke

Courtney Justus

Courtney Justus is a fiction candidate in the MFA in Creative Writing program at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Her adolescence spent in Buenos Aires, Argentina frequently informs her work across genres. She was a three-time finalist for the James Hurst Prize for Fiction and a finalist for the 2020 Reynolds Price Fiction Award. Her work appears in *The Lindenwood Review*, *Valparaiso Fiction Review*, *The Racket Journal* and elsewhere. You can visit her at courtneyjustuswriter.wordpress.com.

Amy Nicholson

Amy Nicholson writes by a waterfall in Connecticut where she lives with her family and a dog named Maggie. She has words at *Clerestory*, *Ruminate Reader's Notes*, *Woods Reader*, *Today's American Catholic*, etc. More musings at amynicholson14.wordpress.com.

JET FUEL REVIEW STAFF FALL 2021



Left to right:

Jordyn Spangler, Cassidy Fontaine-Warunek, Brittany Crosse, Brandon Peck, Julie Nettles, Caeley O'Connor, Emilio Franchini, Dr. Simone Muench, Carrie McGath, Dr. Jackie White.





Maureen Alsop

Amanda Auchter

Aiden Baker

Tina Jenkins Bell

Guilherme Bergamini

Annah Browning

Eric Burgoyne

John Cullen

Adam Day

Kindall Fredricks

Suzanne Frischkorn

Sherine Gilmour

Kevin Grauke

Natalie Hampton

Emanuela Iorga

Romana Iorga

Courtney Justus

Erika Lutzner

Jenny Magnus

Thomas Misuraca

Amy Nicholson

David Obuchowski

Karen Rigby

Danielle Rose

Micah Ruelle

Cin Salach

Rikki Santer

Maureen Seaton

Bonnie Severien

Evy Shen

Rachel Stempel

Hannah Stephenson

Adam Tavel

Camilla Taylor

Sara Moore Wagner

Haley Wooning

Andrew Zawacki

Daniel Zhang