

# The Lighter

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Volume 62

Issue 1 *The Lighter Fall 2016*

Article 1

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## The Lighter Fall 2016

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# THE LIGHTER

FALL 2016





**ISSUE 62**



**VOLUME 1**



# EDITOR'S NOTE

Georges Braque once said, "Art is a wound turned into light."

As a young staff and student body--most of us struggling to discover who we are--turning our pain into positivity can be one of the hardest things to attempt, much less accomplish. Especially in the wake of the many terrible events that have transpired in 2016, pain can seem like all there is. But every piece of art in this issue--because poetry and prose are art as well--is a shining example of Valpo's students turning their wounds into something good. Even more wonderfully, some of these pieces don't come from places of darkness at all; they are just light turned into brighter light

It was hard to select so few pieces from an extremely strong submissions pool, but it was amazing to see so many people turning the negativity in their lives into art. I have no doubt these words and colors will touch you as they have touched our staff. Great art longs only to be appreciated and understood, so, if nothing else, give each piece the time it deserves. I guarantee it will be worth it. Turn the pages delicately, because within the binding there lives heart skips and breath hitches merely in want of you to affirm that they are truly beautiful, that they are real art. Because, don't you know it, art changes the world.

#### Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Professor Schuette for her willingness to always answer my questions, no matter how ridiculous. To Angela Hatfield for her amazing design skills and Emily Neuharth for her bottomless passion and hard work, and to both of them for making situations less stressful and being good co-workers, but more importantly great friends. Thank you also to all the members of the selection committee for their valuable opinions and creating a thriving writing community. And lastly, to Kate Braun who has been a support from overseas. I can't wait for you to come back so we can rock the next issue together.

All submissions remain anonymous throughout the selection process. The Lighter welcomes submissions from all undergraduate, graduate, and law students of Valparaiso University, regardless of race, gender, religious creed, or sexual orientation. The Editor assumes responsibility for the contents of this publication. The views expressed in these works do not represent any official stance of Valparaiso University.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Miners	6	Anna Styrzula
lean-to	7	Isabel Coffey
A Warm Welcome to Berg	8	Gemma Pizarek
12	9	Eleanor Chae
To My Daughter	10	Jessica Martinovic
Letter to My Mother	11	Sophia Pizzi
Joy	12	Milka Vidova
Speechless	13	Milka Vidova
Lawbreakers	14	Andréa Kütemeier
House of Misfits	15	Angela Hatfield
How Are You Feeling Today	16	Delania Byerley
Miss?		
Crisp Urban London 2	17	Isabel Coffey
Feeding the World	18	Andréa Kütemeier
The Weed's Beauty	19	Andréa Kütemeier
What Love Is Not	20	Megan McDaniel
Division	21	Regan Weber
Is It Blue?	22	Laura Whitman
Freedom Afloat	23	Laura Whitman
The Charming Home	24	Megan Jones
Abandoned	25	Gabrielle Hanks
Dewey	26	Brandy Moore
In My Room	27	Nicole Jones
Gone	28	Sarah Geekie
Moments at Taylor	29	Rebecca Pronschinske
Nicole	30	Nicole Jones
Zach	31	Nicole Jones
How to Cook a Fish	32-35	Eleanor Chae
Tall Coil Vase	36	Brandy Moore
Paper Slippers	37	Regan Weber
S.O.S.	38	Emily Neuharth
Holding Together	39	Delania Byerley
10 Minutes	40-41	Mark Young
Blackspace	42	Stephanie Pan
Jazz Underground in	43	Isabel Coffey
Monochrome		

Contemplating Dusk	44	Nellie Bonham
The Eye Test	45	Andréa Kütemeier
Rust Away Memories	46	Andréa Kütemeier
Textured Classic	47	Brandy Moore
Composing Melodies	48	Gemma Pizarek
Rhythm and Relation	49	Emma Ryan
Interpersonal Waters	50	Emma Ryan
Bottled	51	Anna Styrzula
What Goes Down in the	52	Nicole Jones
Kitchen		
Two Cities	53	Gabrielle Hanks
Converging Perspectives	54	Regan Weber
At Grandma's House	55	Sarah Geekie
Living Vegetation	56	Brandy Moore
Japanese Ponds	57	Cora Veltman
Interview with Sharon Solwitz	58-59	Emily Neuharth and Isabel Coffey
Fierce	60	Sarah Zakowski
Untitled	61	Sarah Geekie
I Don't Have to Be Where You	62	Sophia Pizzi
Are, Yet		
Stained Space 1,2,3	63	Marissa Rinas
Together	64	Jalisa Williams
Intimacy	65	Caitlyn Alario
Gray	66-67	Sarah Geekie
Dragonfly, Close and Personal	68	Sarah Zakowski
Hiking Poem 1	69	Isabel Coffey
Dia De Los Muertos	70	Rebecca Pronschinske
Lady, Life is (Inside) Out	71	Regan Weber
Spines	72	Rebecca Pronschinske
My Endless Love	73	Gemma Pizarek
NyHaven Reflections	74	Regan Weber
In Memory of Ronald J.	75	Sarah Zakowski
Wanda, Sr.		
Regrettably Yours	76	Sarah Geekie
Parade	77	Anna Styrzula
Conversation Between	78	Caitlyn Alario
Friends		
Blockbuster	79	Natalie Wilhelm
Interaction	80	Laura Whitman

# THE MINERS

**Anna Styrzula**

The mine loomed black, the sun distantly rose.  
Our pails in hand, our headlamps beaming bright,  
we green miners marched forward, row by row,  
leaving behind the world, the growing light.  
A sudden rumble made our heads spin back.  
We fell on hands and knees as crushing rock  
sealed the sunlight. Our world succumbed to black –  
inside a sooty coffin we were locked.  
Far, far away the sun will sink and rise,  
the busy earth spins, ever on its own;  
but here we watch flick'ring stars in dark skies,  
mingling with dirt and never-ending stone.  
We grey miners to charcoal heavens fly  
above, below, in the darkness we die.

# LEAN-TO

**Isabel Coffey**

it was a covered driveway  
but his mamma called it a lean-to  
and i guess it made sense.  
it leaned.

we sat under  
for a time.  
we were explorers;  
we found seashells  
of sorts,  
chalky calcium deposits  
in the caked dirt yard.

we used to sit there  
where the tin awning  
shares a wall with the house,  
one edge to contain two places.

now i stand outside where the moon  
is full  
and low  
and the shadows have edges.  
silver white conceals the lawn's green  
and one tree's shadow shares an edge with the next.

flat dark lean-tos  
cover my yard in the coy  
not quite full  
moonlight.

for a moment, i move backward.



A WARM WELCOME TO BERG  
Digital Photography

Gemma Pizarek



12  
Digital Photography

Eleanor Chae

# TO MY DAUGHTER

Jessica Martinovic

I am a seventies child,  
The offspring of restless spirits,  
Of careless indulgence,  
Of troubled and burdened souls.

I examined my existence  
Over years of aimless saunter,  
Turning to the comfort of consumption  
To smother the pain of the past.

My absorption was like diving  
Into the depths of dark waters,  
The current consuming me,  
Saturating my skin,  
Pinning me and paralyzing me.  
My nostrils burned,  
And the sting of whiskey  
Scorched my throat.

As I lay, lifeless,  
Submerged in murkiness,  
The light of your existence  
Thrust me to the surface,  
Overwhelmed by illumination,  
As though emerging from a baptism.

But it was too late  
For my fate to be reversed.  
The water had swallowed me,  
Had become me.  
And though I will sink,  
Releasing with finality  
The anguish I've longed to extinguish,  
Your life is my atonement.

# LETTER TO MY MOTHER

Sophia Pizzi

When I turned sixteen you told me of the years you spent bleeding for a textbook romance. You said your first boyfriend was large and crass and belligerent and spent his time chewing tobacco and voting Republican and cursing minorities. You told me his penis was the same way – large and crass and belligerent – and left you gravid with swollen ankles and dilated pupils. Rather than lying and saying my father is the love of your life, you told me he was the one.

You told me he was the one. You told me the nights he spent between the thighs of women unburdened with the thoughts of child were the nights you got your best sleep. You told me the diapers and onesies you bought preemptively earned you side-eyes and forced smiles at K-mart. Your belly hadn't even begun to swell but the butterflies inside it were fluttering around, musing around, making room in their habitat for your first child: Michael if it were a boy, Emily if it were a girl, although you told me you would've been happy either way. You told me you just wished they would be healthy. You told me you were going to turn twenty during your eighth month.

Your first boyfriend was named Christopher, and you told me that during the first two months of your pregnancy he had given you an ultimatum and your own mother only advised you to “follow your heart,” but didn't she know your heart was infested with thousands of tiny butterflies migrating north from your stomach? and then you told me of the way your friends wouldn't invite you out drinking anymore and you told me of the way the women you worked with complained about not having enough money for school supplies and not having enough money for gym shoes and not having enough money to buy bread for breakfast and lunches and not having enough money for the donation baskets at church and you told me that the pile of gender neutral baby clothes and binkies and bottles loomed over your twin-sized bed as you slept in your parents' house and threatened to morph into a snarling mass of condemnatory glares akin to those you'd seen at K-mart as soon as you turned the lights off.

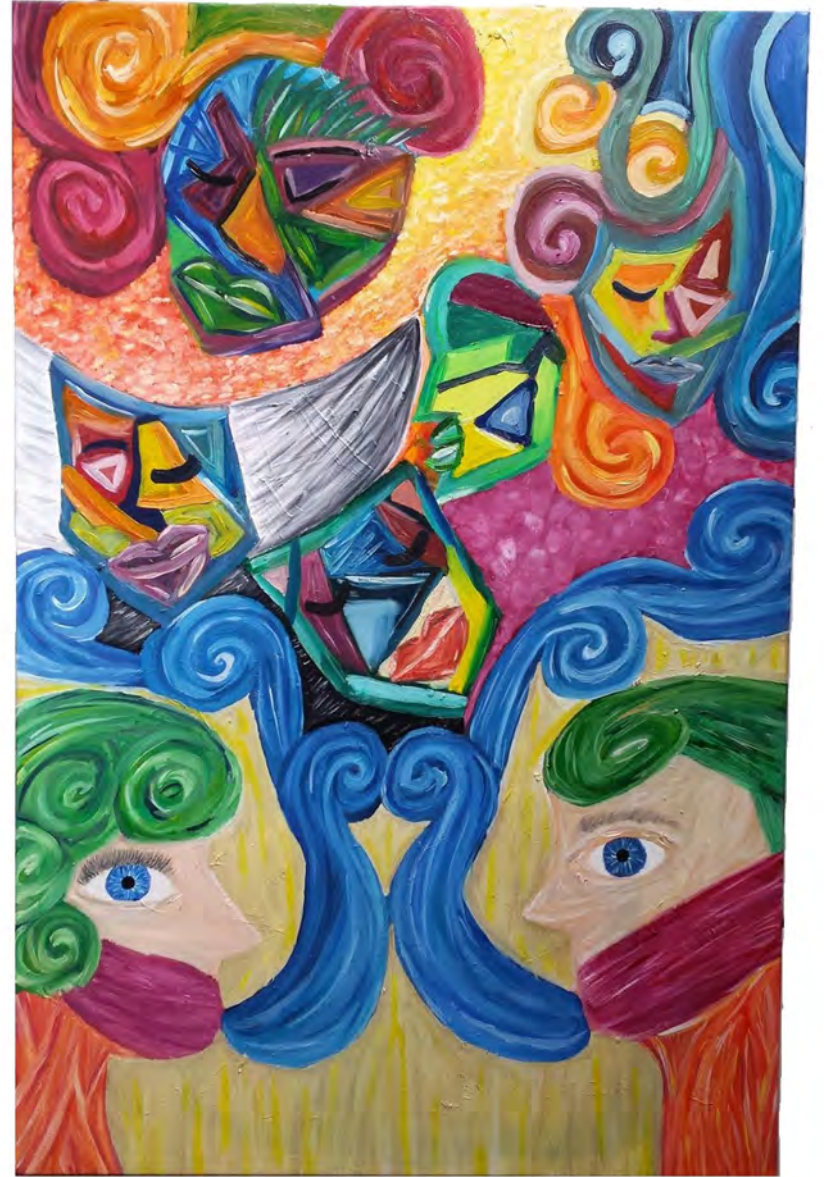
You told me you spent too long bleeding for that textbook romance and that you're still bleeding thirty years later. The butterflies migrated into your cerebral cortex and every now and then I catch you starting to call me Em— rather than Sophia. I'm the same age you were when you gave up your first child and I'm afraid of my heart fluttering away and leaving me empty the same way your unborn fetus did all those years ago.





JOY  
Acrylic On Canvas

Milka Vidova



SPEECHLESS  
Oil On Canvas

Milka Vidova



LAWBREAKERS  
Digital Photography

Andréa Kütemeier



THE HOUSE OF MISFITS  
Photography

Angela Hatfield

# HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY MISS?

**Delania Byerley**

But I never wanted to grow up the way I did, yet I guess I grew up okay. Under a black roof, between yellow siding, amongst the small cluster of middle class white families trying to ignore the crumbling remains of the neighborhood and drug deals down at the pond we used to play in as kids. I was like a new puppy to my mother; cute and adorable at first but then suddenly I grew up and made my own thoughts and didn't have big blue eyes or curly blonde hair and didn't stumble with words but instead started stumbling through life and I fell, fell fast and hard and had no one to catch me right before I hit the ground... Suddenly I wasn't wanted. Needed perhaps, but not wanted. I tried my best, believe me I did, with putting makeup on every morning to cover up the hundred-and-one spots that got focused on rather than the *A+'s* or *Great Job!'s* from teachers. Quickly I discovered what a *Lesbian! Run from the queer!* was when I showed up to 7th grade with short hair after donating it 'cause I knew how much my best friend's sister would have loved long brown hair instead of nothing. So I denied my aunt a dance at a polka party and got hit because *Good Catholic girls don't speak those horrible words...* I'm not Catholic. And I tried my best, believe me I did, to see people fairly, and treat everyone like my mother's favorite statue that I broke when I slammed a door. When you break something someone else loves it ruins them and makes you an *ungrateful child who should have never been born!* Or maybe that last part was simply my depression that people so beautifully forget when they complain to me about their life every second of every day of every month of every year; their beautiful lives -- what I would give to complain about going to Italy -- and then they call me dramatic when I talk of the violent thoughts crushing down on me from my head. I almost did it you know... And when the doctors shoved pills and needles and tests down my throat I lost sight of things, blinded by medical lights and sick from side effects as my *A+'s* turned to *C's* and looks filled with pity; *We don't know what's wrong with you and We're always going to stare at you and treat you like a freak.* Or maybe that last part was, was, was, uhmm, my an-anxiety. I'm uhmm, I'm sorry but it's all just t- t- too much. P-Please just, just- just let me go take my meds. They'll make me better. Then I can go to my jobs and my- my classes and get my mother to stop yelling that I have no friends and should work harder though fifteen hours of my day are already taken up with schoolworkalone- I- I.... I can't- I can't breathe- I



CRISP URBAN LONDON 2

Digital Photography

Isabel Coffey



FEEDING THE WORLD  
Digital Photography

Andréa Kütemeier



THE WEED'S BEAUTY  
Digital Photography

Andréa Kütemeier

# WHAT LOVE IS NOT

**Megan McDaniel**

He sits at home alone,  
wetting his lips with vodka every night.  
Young and forgotten.  
It's 2 am and he has emptied every bottle in the house  
while searching for something that will make him feel;  
anything.

Love is a word he cannot define  
because he has never had it,  
so he spends his nights searching for warmth  
throughout the liquor cabinets of his neglected home.  
But what he doesn't understand is that  
love can't be found at the bottom of a bottle.  
Love can't be served over ice.

The alcohol is merely a distraction  
to the pain that is bellowing out  
through every pore in his body.  
He does not understand that the warmth of liquor  
does no justice to the warmth of human connection.  
Love is not a one way street.

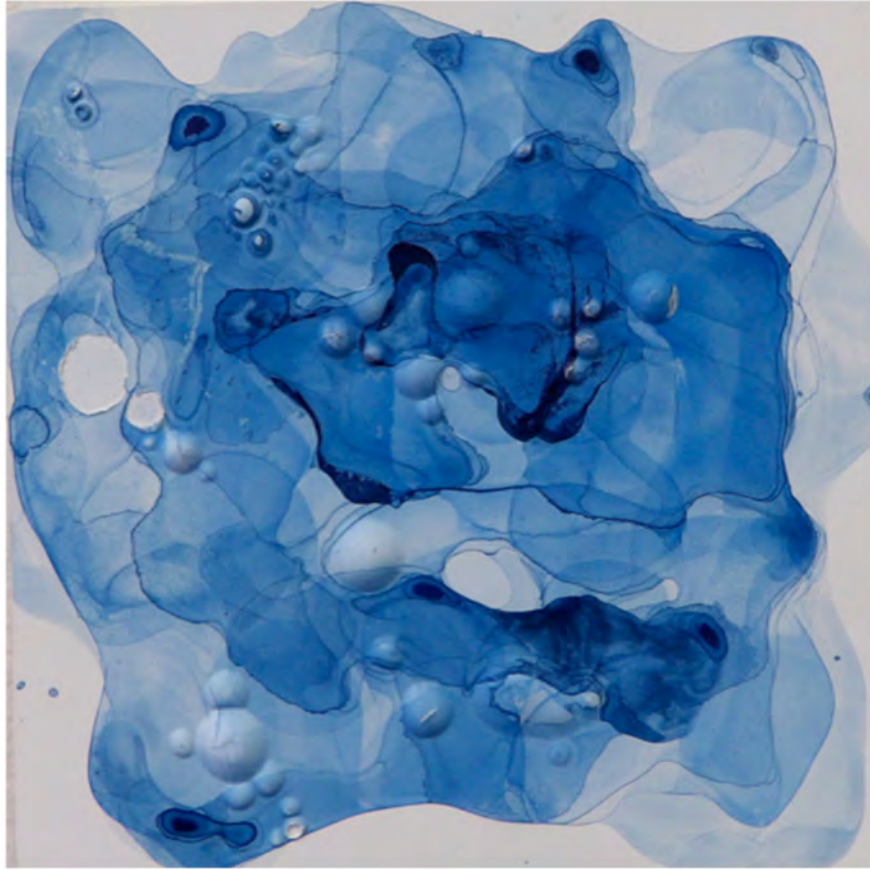
He does not understand that in order to receive love,  
you must first give love.  
So he's bitter  
and he's rude  
and he's selfish.  
He's a social thunderstorm,  
showering rain on anyone who draws near.

Yet, he is not a bad person.  
He just doesn't understand all of the things  
that love is not.  
He searches for love every night at the bottom of a bottle,  
pushing it further away each time.



**DIVISION**  
Ink on Bristol Paper

**Regan Weber**



IS IT BLUE?  
Watercolor on Paper

Laura Whitman



FREEDOM AFLOAT  
Watercolor on Paper

Laura Whitman

# THE CHARMING HOME

**Megan Jones**

How does it feel to have hope wither within you?

To have something so real and inherently pure manifest in your head.

Emotions and dreams all constructed into a relationship, a person.

You've built a home for them inside of you.

But, what happens when they haven't built a home for you inside of them?

In that split second, that charming house, with the bright paint and white picket fence is consumed in flames. The firetruck sirens begin to blare in the neighborhood that is your sensitive heart. Desperately attempting to extinguish the fire that rages on endlessly. When all is said and done, the firetruck rolls away, off to fight another's emotional breakdown. Caution tape surrounds the house, cutting off every corner, every crevice, every room in which your memories were created.

Within a few hours of the fire, you will walk out of the rubble of your once charming house, with a few scars and some valuable life lessons. And, with time, everything will be alright.

Or...

Seasons will pass by the rubble that used to be a loving home. Leaves will change, snow will fall, and then when you least expect it, flowers will bloom right in the spot that the charming house once stood.



ABANDONED  
Digital Photography

**Gabrielle Hanks**



DEWEY  
Ink on Paper

Brandy Moore



IN MY ROOM  
Graphite on Paper

Nicole Jones



# GONE

**Sarah Geekie**

She doesn't belong to him anymore.  
She's the puff of smoke he blew from his mouth,  
she's the glare of headlights in a rebel night,  
she's the lightning in his eyes  
and the drugs in his veins.  
She doesn't do the same things anymore.  
She's the late-night thought crossing his mind,  
she's the back of the car  
and the two a.m. rendezvous.  
She doesn't believe in the same things anymore.  
She's the liquor in his system,  
she's the regret of daylight,  
she's the starlight sin  
and the sunlight hideaway.  
She doesn't love herself anymore.  
She's the bruise on her eye,  
she's the scars on her body,  
she's the promise of change  
and the reality of fear.  
She doesn't stay anymore.  
She's the crispness of the fall when the heat leaves,  
she's the creaking of the floorboards,  
she's the shouting between the walls  
and the slamming of the door.  
She isn't herself anymore.  
She's gone now,  
and you better not try to find her.  
Boy, she isn't coming back.



MOMENTS AT TAYLOR  
Digital Photography

Rebecca Pronschinske



NICOLE  
Digital Media Photoshop

Nicole Jones



ZACH  
Digital Media Illustrator

Nicole Jones

# HOW TO COOK A FISH

## Eleanor Chae

You stand at her elbow and help where you can. Slicing the garlic. Slicing the ginger. Slicing the onions, the green onions, the peppers. Your knife skills are unpracticed and unsteady, slow. The slices are not always even. You were always more of an audience and spectator in the kitchen, but now you wish you had better to offer.

She stands next to you and throws the sauce together with embarrassing ease. Her hands move from spice bags to pot in swift, smooth arcs, measuring each by feel. She pours sesame oil and soy sauce straight from the bottle without looking. You know she's not looking because she's too busy smiling at you, so very pleased to have her little girl's little girl by her side.

“너무 착해,” she says, patting your arm. You don't know what she's saying. It would be so easy for her to resent you for not knowing; out of all the onion-layers of your life, this part of you, this part of her, is one you discarded too easily. You never learned to speak her language, you never wanted to learn. And now here you are: your grandmother beaming at you and speaking words you can't understand, looking happy enough to cry.

You tell yourself the sour curl in your stomach is from the vinegar, and smile back.

She spoons the sauce over thick medallions of codfish and radish and keeps spooning, standing over the stove while the sauce thickens. It deepens into a rich maroon, the color of bricks after rain. You see her take in a deep breath and follow suit, inhaling the heavy spice and sweetness of the air.

You help her set the table. No Korean meal is complete without a constellation of side dishes, and the little plates vie for space on the crowded tabletop until they threaten to topple over the edge. Squares of ashy acorn jelly topped with sesame seeds sit next to a pot of delicate egg custard. Next to sweet potato noodles with spinach and slivers of carrot. Next to green onion pancakes, marinated crabs, roasted eggplant. Kimchi. Steamed white rice. And in the middle of it all: black cod with radish, braised.

“맛있게 드세요,” she says, gesturing at the spread. One day you will learn that this is something said by the one who cooks to the one who eats. A phrase of giving. May you eat well. But for now, you just nod.

The fish comes out richly coated in sauce. Its black skin is cooked thoroughly enough that it slips off with a tap. She slides her chopsticks in

snug to the spine and twists and the fish falls open with a stream of steam, a shock of creamy white against the red and black.

You take a mouthful and it folds over your tongue sweetly subtle and sable-soft, the sauce thick with red pepper and rice wine. You taste garlic cloves and ginger slices and heavy chunks of radish, cooked slow until their sharpness gave way to rich, mellow complexity. You close your eyes and hum with pleasure.

She squeezes your hand, her grasp warm and rough and firm.

The first time you try your hand at the same dish, the sauce scabs over in the pot. You don't stir enough and it reduces too far, leaving behind black blisters and sludge. Too much pepper, too much soy sauce, not enough sweetness. You gag at the taste. No good, you say. We can't eat this.

But she grins at you over every bite, and when you lean over to clear the table she plants a garlicky kiss on your cheek, sticky with sauce that leaves a smear like lipstick.

“우리 손녀,” she croons. This one, this one you know. My granddaughter. “우리 손녀.” But then she continues on with another string of syllables and you are lost again.

You stand at her elbow again, this time armed with a food scale and measuring spoons. When she dips her hand into the pepper flakes you catch her wrist and tilt her hand carefully over the scale. You brush your fingers against the cracks of her palm to catch every last scrap. She laughs. Okay, okay, she says, one of a bare handful of English words she knows.

You write down numbers with one hand before scooping each ingredient into measuring spoons with the other, holding them at eye level and squinting. Not a single one comes to a clean or easy amount, but you round up or down, write ratios, use asterisks. The paper is a spotted and tacky mess by the time you're done, but you have your numbers.

Soy sauce, five tablespoons. Red pepper paste, two teaspoons. Rice wine, three tablespoons. Sugar, sesame oil, fish stock, water.

You can do this.

Her hand jerks, arrested in its arc from sack to pot. Grains of sugar patter across the counter, the stove, the floor.

She blinks and laughs. Eh, she says, with an exaggerated shrug, and reaches into the sack again. You sweep up the mess and press a kiss to her hand, catching the scent of sugar and onion and soy on her fingertips.

You try again, and your fish turns out fibrous and overcooked. The flesh clings to the spine instead of slipping off and you spend half your time

picking through your meal, bone by bone.

You console yourself with the thought that the sauce is almost, almost right.

She falls, and you aren't there.

You are asleep when it happens and have to be told secondhand. You search for your family at the hospital and find them bent over clipboards, arguing over health history in sharp whispers. You find them pacing corners with phones in hand, reaching out to others who haven't arrived or heard. You find them sitting, staring.

You find them with her.

Her legs are strapped to the bed, and they're wrestling with her arms. Your parents are there. There is a scrape high on your father's cheek, and from there your eyes fall to your grandmother's hands, curled stiff into claws.

Her eyes roll toward you and she burbles. Words come out, you think. Words thick with spit and indecipherable around her heavy tongue, but it doesn't matter because she could enunciate each and every last syllable with pinpoint dictionary precision and you still wouldn't know what the fuck she's saying because you don't know you don't know you don't know and you can't--

The radish is sliced too thick. You bite into one and it cuts into your tongue, bitter and undercooked. You throw out the rest untasted.

You were six years old when she first brought you to the market, a massive warehouse piled high with sacks of rice and whiskered ginseng and boxes of honey- and sesame-sprinkled treats. The aisles were cramped and crowded and she snuggled you up against her ribs, keeping you close with one hand and batting at strangers with the other.

She pulled you to the back of the building to where the fishmongers worked. A forest of dried kelp hung suspended from the ceiling, their massive leaves swaying softly under the ceiling fans. The scent of brine clung to the insides of your nose. As she talked to the man behind the counter you waged a staring contest with a tuna longer than your arm, its gaze burrowing into you with flat-eyed accusation. Piles of palm-sized crabs climbed over each other to menace you with pincers rubber-banded shut, bright blue slashes against their mottled brown shells.

She bought a paper envelope of roasted squid and divided it between you--one for her, two for you. One for her, two for you. You wrestled with each piece, tough and chewy and laden with salty smoke flavor. She

clamped a dried tentacle between her teeth like a cigar and waggled it at your nose.

The man behind the counter brought out her order: a black cod, fat and fresh and wet, black as beetles and slick from the ice. She sniffed the fish and tapped the flesh with the pads of her fingers and nodded, and the man wrapped the purchase up in heavy folds of paper.

He offered both of you samples of marinade. You wrinkled your nose and pulled away from the pungency of mustard and vinegar--too sharp for your young taste buds. But she licked the spoon clean and chased a stray droplet off the jut of her wrist with a hum, eyes squeezed shut with pleasure. That is how you will remember her for the rest of your life: salt and crowds and crabs and the sour tang of vinegar, beaming with uncomplicated joy under the harsh market lights.

You tilt the pot and swirl it gently, eyeing the color and consistency of the sauce. It's thick and maroon, the color of bricks after rain. You spoon it over the fish to keep it from drying out and check on the rice. The rice cooker clicks open with a cloud of heat that dampens your cheeks like the first step into a greenhouse. You breathe in the steam and hold it deep in your belly, clean and rich and warm.

Your grandmother is sitting by the window, nodding and murmuring under her breath. The morning sunlight spills over her and you can see the curve of her skull illuminated through the sparse cloud of her hair. “할머니,” you say. Grandmother. “식사 하세요.” It's time to eat.

Her eyes tick over in your direction. Not quite tracking, not quite--there. But there is still something. You still have time.

You set the table. Slices of tofu, crisped at the edges. Pickled cucumbers, stained red with spice. Fishcakes with slices of red and green peppers shaved thin. Clumps of crunchy stir-fried anchovies, potato salad, steamed lotus root. Kimchi. Steamed white rice. Black cod with radish, braised.

You bow your head. “맛있게 드세요” you breathe, and press chopsticks to fish.

Steam unfurls like a sigh and the fish falls open soft as petals, snowy white and pristine.



TALL COIL VASE  
Clay and Glaze Sculpture

Brandy Moore



PAPER SLIPPERS  
Molded-Handmade Paper

Regan Weber

S. O . S.

## Emily Neuharth

First, I need to apo-

*I am silently!! silently!!! Screaming!!!!*

-logize. I don't want to burden you I know it's not fair,  
but I'm upset no one can hear me.

I can tell, really I can,  
people are list(ry)ening,  
but *No One* is hearing my  
*si(gh)*

lence.

I hat(pl)e asking for h e l p, but  
only when the *hel(l)p* is for something that

I canno(!)t  
admit *is (n't)*  
a problem.

Even though I know, really I do, I can't do this on my own, and I'm sorry  
that I can't.

I'm sorry, I am living in hypocrisies. I am *so* sorry.

Si (*re*) lent (*less*)

Hypo *cr(y)* is *i(ng)* es.

If I scream(!) louder than silent,

T(*s*)hhhhhh en

I (*am*) will

*b(r)e ma(c)king*

you listen,

to my terrible disgusting *terrible*

hypocri

s(orry)ies.

I *hate*, hate that I need to be drawn out in order for myself  
to let you hold my hand.

please,

*!!!! am!!! silently!!!! screaming!!!*

pleading that you will pull me out of  
*this(o)*

*mes(o)s(orry)*.



HOLDING TOGETHER

Digital Photography

Delania Byerley

# TEN MINUTES

Mark Young

My niece was born today

May 9th 2015.

She's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen and immediately my imagination is sparked. I see myself watching her grow up from crawling to walking, from a bald baby girl to a head full of hair. From an empty mouth to chompers she'd bite everything with. I saw her playing with my nephews trying to keep up as they kick a ball around the yard. I imagined visiting her in high school, seeing her graduate, date and go to university. Where her mother wouldn't be. It's natural for young girls to want to flee, marry men and see the world, and my niece would do all of that.

If you could squeeze a full life into just ten minutes, would you do it?

Time of birth: 4:31, I've never seen anyone so innocent or new. I thought it true as my mind raced--nine months of prayer brought me to this moment. To the birth of my first beautiful niece. Analisia Karina Ribeiro. Translating to precious little one. I'd never seen anything quite like her. Both of my sisters cried as they held her taking in every moment. Not letting even one escape. I stood to the side to not interrupt, politely waiting for my time to hold her. My sister, she asks a question.

“What's that noise she's making?”

The nurse responds and, looking back, I feel sorry for her. She says

“It's her lungs losing air.”

If you could squeeze a full life into just ten minutes, would you do it?

May 9th 2015, 4:41pm. “The time of death is 4:41,” one nurse said to another.

If I could I would squeeze a full life in between 4:31 and 4:41 on that rainy day in May. I'd take every experience I could from myself to let her have

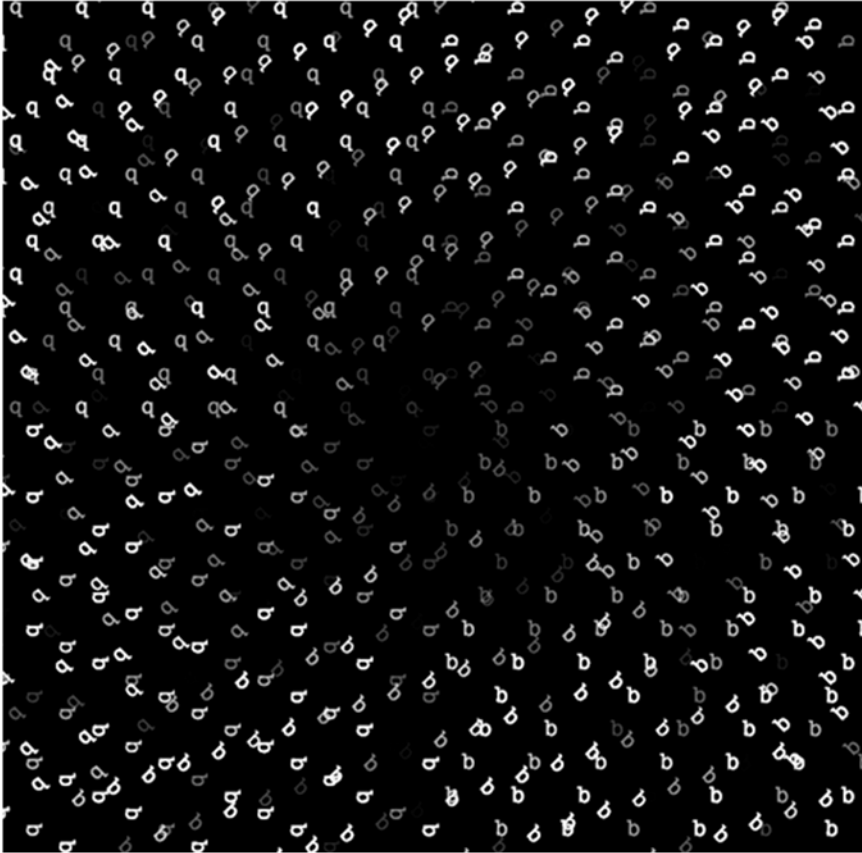
them. I'd stretch out every fleeting second in those ten minutes to watch my niece grow into that beautiful woman she was supposed to be. To see her go running off with friends, boyfriends, to see her move away to college. I'd live my entire life in those ten minutes if I could; but I can't...

Potter's syndrome, the underdevelopment of the kidneys and lungs in an unborn child. You can't

stop it only pray and I did, every day and night saying if he'd fix this one thing I'd never let God out of my sight. That day my niece was born, that day my niece died.

Don't waste your time. You have millions of minutes to spend with those you love and doing what you love, millions of minutes to help and serve others, millions of minutes to make the world a better place, cure diseases and heal the sick. You have millions of minutes to live so make sure you live every minute to its best because some, some only have ten. Analisia Karina Ribeiro, Born May 9th 2015 at 4:31. Baptized. Died May 9th 2015 at 4:41.

I'm going to miss the memories we'll never have Analisia.



## BLACKSPACE

Processing Program Language

Stephanie Pan



## JAZZ UNDERGROUND IN MONOCHROME

Digital Photography

Isabel Coffey



# CONTEMPLATING DUSK

**Nellie Bonham**

A tulle veil covers her tears; she  
sits alone. Her skin follows the  
sun, which rests center in the sky,  
surrounded by tufts of white clouds.

Kids and dogs wander the park,  
carefree. No parents or owners  
in sight. All while, she remains, tending  
to her own business. She sits with

legs crossed, and drifts away—  
lingering on thoughts of her husband.  
She, mindlessly, traces the outline of her  
bruise like the kids trace out nine

squares of hopscotch against concrete.  
They do not care about what tread there  
before them, but she does. There were  
once different thoughts and feelings

sitting, upright, in her same position.  
Digging deeper into the outline of  
the mark he gave her, “Til death  
do us part.” These words will live

in this place, forever. The kids  
carry on, paying no mind to her, and  
the sun begins to set. As night dawns,  
Happy families reunite and rejoice:

“He doesn’t love me like that.”  
She sits hoping, but knows he never will.  
When she leaves, her words do not.  
Her stomach flutters and she goes blank.



THE EYE TEST  
Digital Photography

**Andréa Kütemeier**



RUST AWAY MEMORIES  
Digital Photography

Andréa Kütemeier



TEXTURED CLASSIC  
Digital Photography

Brandy Moore



## COMPOSING MELODIES

Digital Photography

Gemma Pizarek

## RHYTHM AND RELATION

Emma Ryan

The roses find the rhythm of my home.  
They're tucked in a vase  
Observing, learning.  
They bloom together and have the sense to wilt alone.

The birds find the rhythm of my home.  
They're perched in the corner  
Bickering, singing.  
They each sing their own song and have the sense to quiet with dissonance.

You find the rhythm of my home.  
You're sitting at the kitchen table  
Listening, laughing.  
You have the nerve to fan the fire and the sense to heed the silence.

# INTERPERSONAL WATERS

**Emma Ryan**

I find it bizarre to think  
Waves belong as much to me  
As they do to any man  
Or to antiquity

Man spoke of God for centuries  
Of laws and liberties  
But flag and cross mean nothing  
Because no one owns the sea

# BOTTLED

**Anna Styrzula**

Awash in a silent sea  
the echoes of our words  
turn to broken glass  
bottles  
with illegible notes.



## WHAT GOES DOWN IN THE KITCHEN

Acrylic on Canvas

\*based on Norman Rochwell's "Freedom of Want"

Nicole Jones



## TWO CITIES

Digital Photography

Gabrielle Hanks

# AT GRANDMA'S HOUSE

**Sarah Geekie**

She would tell me stories about my mom that would make me understand her more.  
We would eat burned pizza and watch game shows,  
Before we went to sleep we would read books in bed.  
We wouldn't talk much but we wouldn't need to;  
She would understand that you can be homesick for a place you've never been  
And that you can be the way you are at the exact age you are.  
She would remind me that growing up is okay  
And growing old would never even cross my mind.



# CONVERGING PERSPECTIVES

Layered Drawing on Vellum Paper

**Regan Weber**



LIVING VEGETATION

Oil on Canvas

Brandy Moore



JAPANESE POND

Digital Photography

Cora Veltman

# SHARON SOLWITZ

## Interviewed by Isabel Coffey and Emily Neuharth

Talking to Sharon Solwitz, author of *Blood and Milk* and *Bloody Mary*, we were struck by the power of sound in language and writing. As we chatted with Solwitz, she gave us a glimpse of her writing process, saying, “I think I think about sentences the way poets think about lines. I feel my way into a sentence the way a poet feels a line.” We told her that her writing did seem almost poetic to us, and she insisted, “I wouldn’t call myself a poet, but I like to hear when people say that.” She often begins writing with a sound, and weaves that sound into a line. The sound throws you into the story, she believes.

Some writing is sonorous and smooth, even musical, and each sentence leads into the next. Solwitz quoted lines from her and others’ writings that exemplified this forward-motion. Some writers use space and sound to make you feel like you’re lost “in outer space,” she said, next—“you have to pull yourself up and move yourself forcibly to the next line.” Writing is storytelling, and the storytelling process is changed when we hear it aloud. Solwitz told us that she often listens to audiobooks, and in these readings, actors become the storytellers and supply accents or inflections that interpret the story, to an extent, for the listener. Listening to books this way creates a sonorous world that is harder to get to when we read in our minds, and Solwitz said that this audio-experience contributes to how she imagines and builds her stories vividly in her mind.

When she writes, she goes over every sentence to feel the connection and sound, editing accordingly, tapping into this sensory encounter with hearing the words. Some stories are “more sinuous,” while others are smooth. Either way, she believes attention to detail is crucial as an author chooses how to put words together. Every word Solwitz writes is deliberately placed and contributes to the story’s auditory experience.

In her writing, she uses rhythm very intentionally. She talked with us about the use of repetition, whether you’re repeating a noun, an image, a word, or even a rhythmical construction. “You can use the same word at the end of one sentence and at the beginning of the next,” she suggests, “or even use lots of short sentences with the same beat. That repetition has an effect on the reader.” These bead-string constructions contribute to a larger trajectory in work that let’s ideas and moments converge in the reader’s mind. She said “a first line of a story can haunt you.” Talking to Solwitz, we noticed a sonority even in her speech. The pitch of her voice rose and

fell as ideas she expressed arced and sidled in.

Solwitz is a creative writing professor at Purdue University, and we asked her if there is any advice she would like to give to young writers. She is certain that the key to writing great literature is reading great literature. This passion began at a very young age for her, and she said that she has always been “in love with the printed page.” She mentioned William Faulkner as one of her favorite authors, and that his writing unconsciously had a very strong influence on her writing style. Solwitz believes that once a writing rule has been mastered, the writer should then be challenged to learn how to break the rule masterfully. When she was thirty years-old her first story was published in a magazine and she said that it made her feel “real.” “You need to have confidence in yourself in order to write.”

In regards to inspiration, Solwitz urges other writers to draw from their own life experiences or lack thereof. She suggested that when trying to create characters, make them reflect parts of yourself that you don’t really like. She also warned to not fall into creating similar characters throughout different stories, describing her characters as “significantly inconsistent.” Solwitz also encouraged any young writers that “the more dysfunctional or unhappy your life is, the more inspiration you have to write about”. She explained that her stories were made up of a combination of people she has seen in passing, people and events that are completely imagined, and experiences from her own life.

Solwitz said her short story “Milk” from her collection *Blood and Milk* was her favorite story to write because when she began it “she already knew how she wanted to end it.” At Solwitz’s Wordfest event, the audience had the privilege of hearing the first few chapters of her upcoming book. This short reading captivated her audience, a testament to her love for stories as spoken word. Solwitz’s new book will be published in August 2017, and already has many Valpo students eagerly anticipating what happens next.





## FIERCE

Ink and Sharpie on Paper

Sarah Zakowski

## UNTITLED

Sarah Geekie

A kid gets shot in Chicago  
I shoot my mom a text  
Honor killings  
I write the honor code  
Blood spills on the streets  
I spill my coffee

# I DON'T HAVE TO BE WHERE YOU ARE, YET

Sophia Pizzi

I had a dream the other night that we existed in two places at once: you were in your apartment in Pilsen and I was hunched over the garden in the back of my mom's townhouse in Lancaster and you were playing a record (*The Doors, right?*) while washing your hair and I was picking weeds and you had gotten soap in your eyes and I was digging and digging and digging in the soil and I watched as you blindly grabbed for a towel and knocked it off its hook and onto the floor while dirt was building up beneath my fingernails. When you got out of the shower I found that I was choking and I was dizzy and my vision was cloudy and that you had picked up the towel to soak up the water that was left on your scalp and dripped down into the dip between your collarbone and your shoulder and I felt like I was sweating out hundreds of gallons of water all at once.

You left wet footprints on the hardwood as you walked from the bathroom to your bedroom and I watched you check your reflection in the mirror and pinch the apples of your cheeks with your pointer and index fingers, the blood rising in them as your footprints evaporated from the floor to the air and back into my pores. I found that I could breathe and that I had dug myself another hole and that I'm eighteen again and we're standing in front of a Warhol in your living room and your roommate is taking a picture of us with my camera – once the shutter goes off I can start to feel you slipping away even though your hands are around my neck and your lips are on mine and you're whispering that we're *dying in a prison of our own devise* and it's hard to breathe and then I blink. It's my nineteenth birthday. We're standing in the same spot in your apartment and it's my fault that we missed the 9:58 bus because I couldn't find matching socks but it's always my fault because I don't even own matching socks. You're checking your phone for the next bus and double-checking that you have your bus pass and triple-checking that I haven't left your side while I'm struggling to form calluses over all the parts of myself that softened around you.

I had a dream the other night that we existed in two places at once, but then my mom called my name from inside her house and I stood up and brushed my palms against my thighs and tip-toed across the garden and through the sliding glass door and into the kitchen and straight back to the sink. I scrubbed my hands until my cuticles bled but it wasn't enough — I want to fast forward and rewind time and I want to sweat my skin off and become new again and I want to forget all the things you've said to me and done to me and thought about me (*but I can't do that if you keep shoving your dick down my throat, huh?*).



STAINED SPACE 1, 2, & 3

Code

Marissa Rinas

## INTIMACY

Caitlyn Alario



It wasn't so much a flicker  
or a glint; more like the dizzied daze  
from spinning round and around,  
when you can only keel over and wait  
for the world to catch up,  
fall back into focus.  
Nose at your knees, you can't see  
anything but everything blurred  
together, an upside down  
finger painted masterpiece. It wasn't so much a flicker  
or a glint; more like the dizzied daze  
from spinning round and around,  
when you can only keel over and wait  
for the world to catch up,  
fall back into focus.  
Nose at your knees, you can't see  
anything but everything blurred  
together, an upside down  
finger painted masterpiece.

## TOGETHER

Pastel

Jalisa Williams

# GRAY

## Sarah Geekie

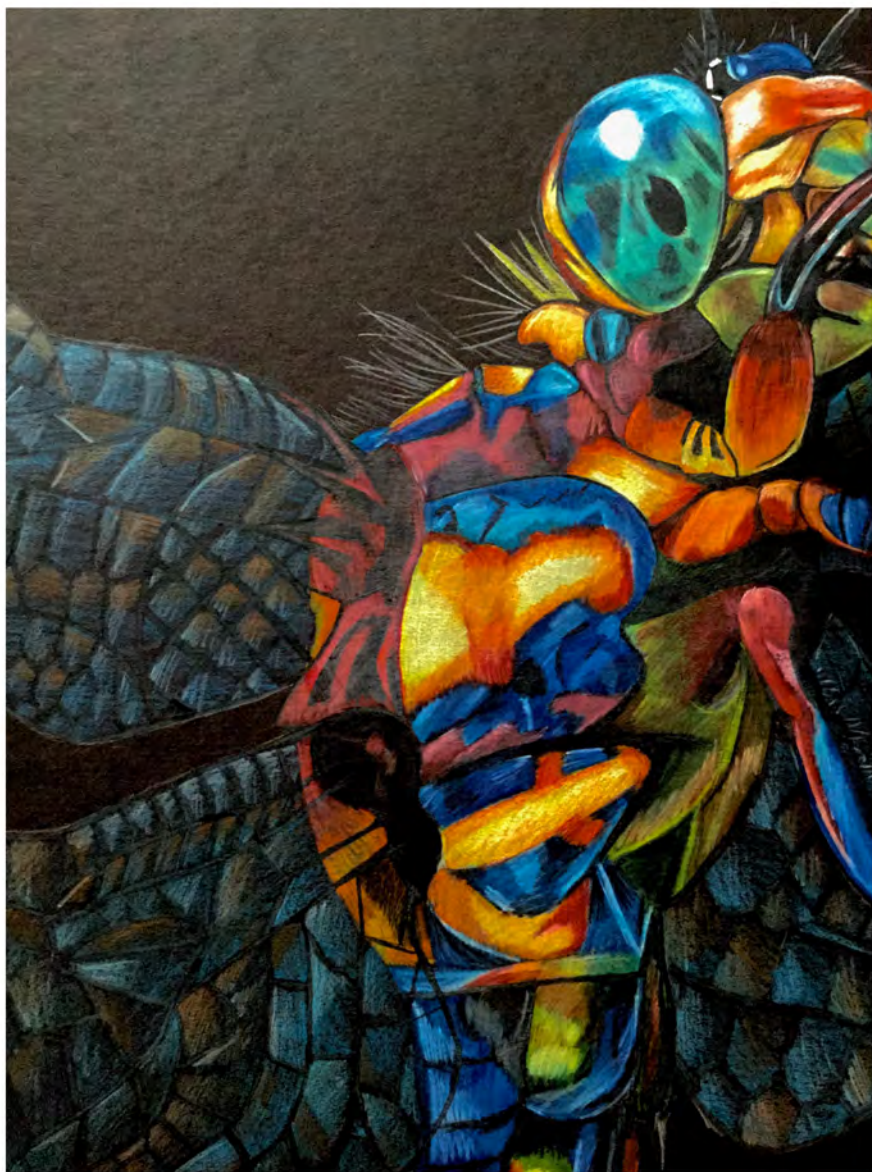
My boundaries have been stirred,  
have been marred,  
have been blurred,  
my sights set on things unseen,  
my heart set on feelings unfelt,  
my conscience set on  
nothing.

Where reason had dwelt  
now lies the forbidden taste of sin,  
intoxicating and enrapturing,  
begging me to let it in.  
To let it fill my mind and blood  
until I do not remember how it felt  
to know black and white, how they knelt  
before me to give me lines,  
to give me safety of mind,  
to give me peace and security  
the way it should be,  
no guessing or fumbling or mistakes.

Or are the chances I take  
worth the pain of knowing  
I could have done better?  
I was not going  
to go this far  
but it's too far now  
and I'm too far gone  
and I don't know how  
I will ever get my colors back  
into their rightful places,  
or how to let them fill up all their spaces  
in my mental picture portrait of  
myself.

Innocence was on the highest shelf,  
never tampered, never misplaced,  
all I could taste.

But some days and some nights  
I have to blow off the dust  
and pick it up off the dirty floor  
and try to remember  
where it was before,  
and why it tumbled down the shelf  
and why it has lost some of its shape  
and why it is no longer black and white  
but gray.



## DRAGONFLY, CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Colored Pencil on Black Paper

Sarah Zakowski

## HIKING POEM 1

Isabel Coffey

I think about what to think about,  
but I'm distracted by the lines,  
like ancient runes,  
in jutting tips of shale  
as my leather boots  
grip and push skyward.

Heat has dried the air, and dust  
upset by hikers like me  
settles on the horizon,  
enrobing the trailhead.

Burning muscles recall  
my mind from mindless wandering.

Then, I have pushed to the summit—  
I see the city below,  
kicking up dust.

On the way down I let the sultry heat  
engulf me in its hazy lull.  
Dust sticks to sticky skin.  
Desert haze obscures my destination.  
Sweat catches in my lashes.  
Cicadas chatter continually,  
rattling my brain,  
pressing the haze inside me.

Pavement hits my boot,  
too kind after rolling gravel  
and jagged-slanting shale.  
The time is past.



DIA DE LOS MUERTES  
Acrylic Paint

Rebecca Pronschinske



LADY, LIFE IS (INSIDE) OUT  
Collage on Bristol Paper

Regan Weber

# SPINES

**Rebecca Pronschinske**

Did you pick me up and skim me  
Turn me over, read my spine  
Did you listen to the whispers  
of a living human life

Or did you set me down and leave me  
by my diction or my truth-  
Or did you just glimpse the cover  
without even glancing through.

But I know there's a forest  
'neath my living breathing words,  
where the roots are strong and bearing  
though my voice remains unheard.

So you can judge me harshly  
by the words along my spine  
just so long as you remember  
that the final judgement's mine.



MY ENDLESS LOVE  
Digital Photography

Gemma Pizarek



# NYHAVEN REFLECTIONS

Digital Photography

Regan Weber



# IN MEMORY OF RONALD J. WANDA, SR.

Charcoal on Paper

Sarah Zakowski



# REGRETTABLY YOURS

**Sarah Geekie**

It's hard to cleanse the people from your life  
When you're still a little attracted to the dirt



PARADE  
Digital Photography

Anna Styrzula

## CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

Caitlyn Alario

*i don't even like him*, i choke.  
my lip curls a millisecond too late.  
*oh I don't think that's true*  
she crackles, each word a log tossed  
on to the blaze behind her eyes.  
my silence is lighter fluid  
coaxing flames to leap  
from her sockets, singeing  
the tips of my ponytail.  
i will my skin to become a fireproof  
blanket instead of the thick coat  
of oil reflecting and refracting  
fractured edges of her rage.  
*i think i love him*, i whisper.  
love splinters under its own weight.  
suddenly the flames stop  
clawing at my face just long enough  
for my lips to feel cold; then like a bomb  
dropped from the Enola Gay,  
she erupts into a blinding storm of fire;  
i am dust once more.

## BLOCKBUSTER

Natalie Wilhelm

I am sitting beside a café window, exposed  
to the street like some fucked-up art exhibit,  
not at all hidden behind the glass windowpane.

I watch as people walk by: a group of girls  
splashing scummy rain water onto the curb,  
An older man wearing a blue baseball hat.

Part of me thinks for a moment that it's them,  
and another part of me imagines for a second  
that they'll come in and say hello,

And we'll pick up right where we left off:  
I'll tell a joke and they'll all laugh,  
even though we all know I'm not that funny,

Then, in the midst of the joy of seeing  
each other again, after so very long apart,  
I would go back to feeling how I felt before.

I wonder if people notice me as they walk by,  
or if I am as blank as the boarded-up windows  
of the abandoned strip mall down the street.

I wish that I could go back to before it all happened,  
that time could be rewound like a Blockbuster videotape.  
Then I remember that even those aren't around anymore.



INTERACTION  
Watercolor on Paper

Laura Whitman

## CONTRIBUTORS NOTE

Emma Ryan

Emma is a freshman studying Creative Writing. Her family and green tea notwithstanding, she loves stories more than anything in the world. Her primary obsessions are middle-grade fiction and fairy tales. In her free time, Emma works with Chapter One Young Writers Conference and St. Genesis Productions. Emma's other interests include *The West Wing*, arguing, and petting cats.

Megan Jones

Megan Jones is a first year English major who has a passion for literature and writing. Her favorite authors and poets include: Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Emily Dickinson, and Robert Frost. Megan is a pianist and plays at many different locations and events around Indiana and Illinois.

Megan McDaniel

Sometimes my mind fills up with so many arbitrary thoughts and emotions that there is nowhere left to spill them than onto a piece of paper. No matter what I try, I find that the greatest form of therapy is to write down my feelings. Thank you for taking the time to believe in poetry.

Caitlyn Alario

Caitlyn Alario is honored to be a part of this magazine and hopes that its readers consume it charitably. She fell in love with words when she learned how to write and realized she could string them together however she wanted. She thanks her parents for supporting her, her sisters for teasing her, and her roommates for always complying when asked, "Wanna read this poem I wrote?"

Sophia Pizzi

Sophia Pizzi is a sophomore English major and art minor. When she isn't writing angsty poems she can be found drinking overpriced coffee, scouring the aisles at Michael's on her lifelong quest to find the Greatest Pen on Earth, or petting nearly every single dog that crosses her path.

Delania Byerley

While I've been writing stories as a freelancer for years now, this was the first year I dabbled in photography. I don't consider myself an artist with photography, but instead I use it as a form of therapy, allowing me to show others how I both feel and see the world around me. My writing has been my form of coping and understanding myself, along with figuring out our own human nature. Both of my pieces truly show where I've come from and how I've felt while climbing to the solid ground that I stand on today. I'd like to thank my father for constantly encouraging me to chase after my inspirations, Delanie for listening to my ideas at four in the morning, and anyone who's ever encouraged me to push through and strive for my dreams.

Stephanie Pan

I am a graduate student in my first semester of the Digital Media master's program. Making people smile, laugh, and be entertained through digital mediums fills me with satisfaction that every bit of effort was worth it. I've delved into web design, sports broadcasting, social media management, video production, and a bit of graphic design. Producing digital media is what I am passionate about and aim to do in life, which is why I am honing my set of skills at Valparaiso University. Thank you to Professor Yeohyun Ahn for being such an inspiring teacher and leader. "Believe in the me who believes in you!"

Andréa Kütemeier

Andréa Kütemeier is a freshman art major with a focus on photography and an entrepreneurship and fundamentals of business double minor. She draws much of her inspiration from her childhood growing up and working on her family's farm with her three brothers, two sisters, mom and dad, and her grandmother. She has always been competitive and energetic playing multiple sports throughout her life as well as violin in the symphony orchestra. She wants to thank everyone who has supported her throughout her life and loved her through all of her endeavors with a special thanks to her family and her boyfriend and his family. She also thanks God and all of the blessings she has been fortunate enough to receive.

Eleanor Chae

I made a deal with myself, and the deal was this: get a piece in the Lighter, get a cookie. So this, this right here? I earned this cookie. This is a well-earned cookie. Mmm, chocolate.

Brandy Moore

As a studio art major, I have dabbled in several different forms of art-making with no specific focus medium as of yet. I have always loved making art and being creative because it lets me express myself in a more enjoyable and hands-on way. I always loved going above and beyond with my work, and to try and stretch the limits of what I can accomplish. I love this opportunity to showcase my art in the form of a book that can be obtained by anyone on campus. I hope you take the time and enjoy everyone's talent!

Nicole Jones

Nicole is a freshman Digital Arts major. She has taken numerous art classes throughout high school including AP studio art her senior year focusing on painting and digital art. She has designed numerous t-shirts and posters for her high school and has gained recognition in various art competitions. She hopes to continue her education and continuing designing and creating art for others' enjoyment.

Gabrielle Hanks

I have always enjoyed capturing images and looking at things with a photographic eye. When I see a field of trees, or a busy street corner, or a small part of the human form, I try to envision how I would frame and capture that moment if it were a photo. I also know the value of putting your work out there in order to receive feedback from other artists. My goal is to continue to hone my skills because I have such respect for the craft.

Isabel Coffey

For as long as I can remember, I have loved quiet dusks and sultry sunrises. These in-between times compel me to reflect on anything, everything, and what's between. Over the years I've lived so far, my perceptions have changed again and again, and I have written about different aspects of the reality I experience. Revisiting my older work reminds me of what has passed—who I was—and reminds me that I have progressed. I write and take photos because I want to tell a story through captured moments that might otherwise be lost.

Jessica Martinovic

Jessica Martinovic is a graduate student in English Studies and Communication. Jessica is inspired by the loveliness and simplicity of country living. She lives with her husband in a small town, and she loves to write, bake, spend time with family, and watch I Love Lucy and Little House on the Prairie. She works as a Communications Specialist at a local non-profit, and she aspires to be a writer. Check out her blog at [fieldsandfrontporches.com](http://fieldsandfrontporches.com).

Emily Neuharth

I am a Secondary English Education major; I aspire to make education more accessible to every type of learner and to emphasize the values of self-expression through reading and writing. All I could ever want for my poems would be for someone to relate to it or be inspired by it. I hope that my art can embolden another's desire to create.

Sarah Geekie

Sarah Geekie is a senior English major in her last semester at Valpo. She would like to thank the Lighter for publishing some of her work throughout her time here. After she graduates, she plans to not try to dwell on the fact that she has no plans. Her other hobbies include listening to and making music, eating chocolate, and stalking people on Facebook.

Gemma Pizarek

Gemma Pizarek is a 20 year old Church Music major who is also going for a masters in Music Therapy. Her passion is to bring comfort to people through the healing powers of sacred music and expose them to beautiful music that has been forgotten over the years.

Angela Hatfield

I have always loved how you can capture a moment in time with a photograph. Photographs are like windows of time that help you put pieces of a memory back together. The moment when you see your favorite band perform on stage is a special moment for any music lover. I am so happy I could capture the emotion of the crowd and raw energy from the musicians on stage in one photograph. I am thus a misfit, in a House of Misfits.

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