

The Lighter

Volume 57
Issue 2 *The Lighter Spring 2012*

Article 70

May 2012

The Lighter Spring 2012

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter>

Recommended Citation

(2012) "The Lighter Spring 2012," *The Lighter*: Vol. 57 : Iss. 2 , Article 70.
Available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter/vol57/iss2/70>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Lighter by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.

the lighter

spring 2012
volume fifty - seven
issue two



© the Lighter 2012
Home Mountain Printing
Valparaiso, IN

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any way
without written permission of the editor.



acknowledge- ments

The Lighter Staff would like to thank Allison Schuette for her guidance and support this year. As well, we would like to thank Home Mountain Printing for leading us through the printing process. The three of us would like to thank Wordfest and the English Department of Valparaiso University for bringing authors to campus every year to read, speak, discuss, and be interviewed.

For all of their insightful comments and giving of importance to the discussion of the submissions, we would like to thank all selection committee members for the attention and care they gave to the selection process. Thank you to all the students who submitted their work this semester and who continue writing, reading, drawing, designing, painting, and taking photographs.

Cover Image: The Lighter Staff 1969, The VU Beacon. Left to Right: Larry Neal, Bob Leeb, Marty Pelikan, Larry Kintz, Bruce Bitting, Bill Day, John Redick, Pam Lang

All submissions remain anonymous throughout the selection process. The Lighter is an award-winning university journal of literature and art that 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.

the lighter personnel



Jeremy Reed	[editor]
Ian Roseen	[assistant editor]
Jacob Just	[graphic designer]



Zachary Alexander	[art selection]
Emily Bahr	[poetry selection]
Nicholas Burrus	[art selection]
Elizabeth Dibley	[art selection]
Taylor Drenzyk	[art selection]
Lysa Fisk	[poetry & prose selection]
Manuel Garcia	[art selection]
Kate Guidera	[poetry & prose selection]
Heather Harris	[prose selection]
Adam Jackson	[art selection]
Ariel Jamison	[poetry & prose selection]
Juliana Kapetanov	[poetry & prose selection]
Gregory Maher	[poetry selection]
Kristen Menke	[art selection]
Claire Mueller	[poetry selection]
Maggie Rivera	[art selection]
Emily Royer	[art, poetry & prose selection]
Justyna Rybka	[art selection]
Marissa Schmidt	[art selection]
Rebecca Szabo	[prose selection]
Alexander Uryga	[art, poetry & prose selection]
Cate Valentine	[prose selection]
Joseph Weil	[poetry & prose selection]
Rebecca Werner	[prose selection]
Michelle Zolfo	[art selection]

table of contents

Page	Category	Title	Author				
6		An Interview with Thomas Montgomery Fate	Rebecca Werner	47	poetry	Gemini	Ethan Grant
11	art	The Web	Olivia Stemwell	48	art	Power Shift	Olivia Stemwell
12	poetry	La Mujer (The Woman)	Juliana Kapetanov	49	art	Scales	Adam Jackson
13	art	Morning Light	Laurie Kenyon	50	art	Untitled	Kristen Manski
14	art	Reclining Nude	Maggie Rivera	51	art	Inside Out	Angie Jackson
15	poetry	Sandhill Cranes	Jeremy Reed	52	poetry	Antipathy of a Form	Gregory Maher
16	art	With Light Divine	Austin Hill	53	art	She, Fondly	Liz Powers
17	art	Study Room	Kathleen Parilac	54	art	Brighter Day	Kyle Smart
18	art	Spring and Sea	Nicholas Burrus	55	art	Fly Like Paper	Abbey Meyer
19	art	Whiteout	Olivia Stemwell	56	poetry	Gospel of Mark	Ethan Grant
20	art	May the Force Be With You	Austin Hill	57	art	Reclining Nude	Elsa Rosenfelder
21	prose	Of Whiskey and Snobs	Derek Schnake	58	art	After the Dream	Emily Royer
23	art	Seeing the World with an Open Mind	Margie Herzog	59	art	Cold, cold, cold	Katie Mattmiller
24	art	Memoriam	Cate Valentine	60	prose	Symphonie Meta: Music in Seven Movements	Rebecca Werner
25	poetry	Comedy Divine	Ethan Grant	63	art	Foundations	Alison DeVries
26	art	Grandpa's Barn	Justyna Rybka	64	art	The Spark of Inspiration	Elyse Estes
27	art	Chunky Tomatoes	Justyna Rybka	65	art	Christmas Cheer	Abbey Meyer
28	art	Pelides and the River Xanthus	Nicholas Burrus	66	art	Josh's Shoes	Justyna Rybka
29	art	Athena and Hera Leave Olympus	Nicholas Burrus	67	art	Untitled	Kristen Manski
30	art	Being the Black Swan	Mallory Swisher	68	prose	Second	David Sula
31	art	Beautiful, but Deadly	Justyna Rybka	73	art	Square Up	Olivia Stemwell
32	poetry	A Flower Holds	Jeremy Reed	74	art	Sit On It For Awhile	Abbey Meyer
33	art	R and R	Maggie Rivera	75	art	Uptown Folk	Abbey Meyer
34	art	Self Portrait #7	Adam Jackson	76	art	Bottoms Up	Margie Herzog
35	art	Paul	Emily Royer	77	art	I Can Dig It!	Margie Herzog
36	art	Slaughter	Emily Royer	78	art	Round-a-what?	Dannie Dolan
37	art	Drops on a Hat	Adam Jackson	79	art	Pink Raindrops	Justyna Rybka
38	art	Reposer	Alison DeVries	80	art	African Wisdom	Laurie Kenyon
39	prose	The Knowledge of Not Knowing	Ethan Grant	81	art	Memory	Aaron Bueltmann
44	art	The Glacier Realm	Derek Schnake	82	art	For Corinna	Alison DeVries
45	art	Ancient	Alison DeVries	83	art	Sculpture by the Mountain	Krista Schaefer
46	art	Atticus	Adam Jackson	84	art	Through It Dimly	Aaron Bueltmann
				85	poetry	Held Here	Emily Bahr
				86	art	Subconscious	Nicholas Burrus
				87	art	Untitled 13	Luetta Curtis
				88		Contributors' Notes	



an interview with thomas montgomery fate

rebecca werner

Tom Montgomery-Fate was widely read across campus this year in anticipation of his appearance as part of the Wordfest series. He has written five books of non-fiction, including his most recent collection of essays *Cabin Fever* about his time spent between a cabin in Michigan and as a professor and father just outside of Chicago all framed by his interaction with Thoreau’s works, as well as pieces for The Boston Globe, The Baltimore Sun, National Public Radio, Chicago Public Radio, and many other publications across the country. He graduated from The University of Iowa’s Nonfiction Writing Program and from Chicago Theological Seminary. He has a wife and three children, and still travels to his cabin in Southern Michigan. Valpo student Rebecca Werner interviewed him while he was on campus this spring, giving readings and meeting with creative writing classes.

Rebecca Werner: I feel like a lot of people may not have a complete understanding of the creative nonfiction genre. I was wondering if you could talk about what the genre allows you to do and what attracted you to the essay form specifically.

Thomas Montgomery Fate: I view it as applying fictional strategies like creation of character, thematic metaphor, figurative language—all the things you use in fiction—to nonfiction. To me, that’s all creative nonfiction is. I first became interested in the essay when I was in undergraduate school and started reading the works of E.B. White and Joan Didion. I saw the essay as this kind of elastic, circular structure that allows for a lot of creativity and tension between the ‘I’ and the ‘eye’: you’re always looking out at the world and looking at yourself simultaneously. That was attractive to me.

RW: You’ve probably answered this question a lot, but I was wondering if you could talk about Thoreau’s influence on your writing.

TMF: He’s someone who had a remarkable capacity to look out at the world and at himself simultaneously. He saw the ‘I’ as part of the ‘eye’, so he was able to understand himself as related to the natural world and captured that in *Walden*, *Cape Cod*, and in his journals. You get this sense of the relatedness he captures by constantly going back and forth between self and world. I think

a lot of people in college are attracted to his stubborn resilience and anti-establishment thinking. I read “Civil Disobedience” in my intro to Political Science class in college and I was very involved in Central American solidarity work. I took a lot of strength from his writing and his sense of the social conscious. And then later as I got more interested in environmental writing, I started reading his journals, *Walden*, *Cape Cod*, *The Maine Woods*, and all of his books.

RW: In *Cabin Fever*, your passion for activism comes through very strongly. What role or responsibility do you think a writer has, or should have, in addressing global issues?

TMF: I think there’s two ways to think about it. I think there’s the artist and the activist. You may be referring to the chapter in the book which deliberates between the two. I think the artist teaches himself and the beholder or the reader how to pay attention to the world and that in itself, from my perspective, is also a political act because attentiveness leads to political action. Activism, however, in terms of taking on particular issues and policies in your work, whether overtly or more indirectly, is also important. I don’t think one is more important than the other, or that every writer has to be an activist or push towards activism. I think we need all kinds of writers and I think good art, like good activism, teaches the reader and the beholder how to be more human which is what I see as my task. It’s what I’m most interested in.

RW: In terms of your own activism, I was interested in your experience with the die-in. Can you talk about that experience and why you chose to include it in *Cabin Fever*?

TMF: Thoreau was someone who lived on the membrane between activism and artist, and he was trying to decide which mattered more to him. I think he sided with the artist side of things, even though he wrote “Civil Disobedience” and was very involved with

the abolitionist movement. If you read his journals, that was primarily because he understood all people as part of one great whole, one great enterprise. That’s what I wanted to explore there, the relationship between the artist and the activist. I’ve been much more of an activist in earlier days. I change the world by teaching; I don’t go to Washington as much as I used to.

RW: And you try to do that through your writing as well.

TMF: And I hope through writing too. That’s a means of prompting change.

RW: Besides the environment, what are some of the other issues you’re interested in writing about?

TMF: I did a book about the war in Nicaragua and the split of the Catholic church. I’ve written about the state of Native American culture i.e. impoverishment and alcoholism, and the plight of the Native Americans in modern America. Lately, I’ve been writing more about environmental issues. I’ve evolved as a reflection of what is happening in my life. It all interests me. I’m not a specialist.

RW: What drew your attention to the Nicaraguan War?

TMF: In college, I found out that I could go to Nicaragua, so I went there for a summer. When I understood the situation and my Spanish got better, I got very engaged and saw it as representative of other kinds of problems in the world where the United States was forcing its political will on developing countries to a bad end.

RW: In terms of post-college career options for English majors, I’m curious about the relationship between teaching and writing. How has writing influenced your teaching? Or how has teaching influenced your writing?

TMF: It's made me do less of it. [laughter] That's a good question. I think the question inherent in that is "are you a better teacher if you're a writer?" If you do the art you're teaching, does that make you a better teacher? I don't think it necessarily does because I think teaching too is an art. If you're able to use your skill and the craft you have as a writer, or are able to talk about it and teach it in a way that engages your students, then I think it's a really good thing.

RW: This next question is kind of related to education, I guess. I saw that apart from your bachelor's degree in English and your master's in writing, you also have a master's in religion. What do you do with that degree?

TMF: Both of my degrees are almost meaningless unless you're lucky [laughter]. When I was in Nicaragua working on that book about the split in the Catholic church, I got very interested in the relationship between religion and culture in the developing world. That was why I went to this particular seminary, because I wanted to study something called la teología de la liberación, or liberation theology, which is about the relationship between politics and religion generally. That was my connection to it, but I'm also the son of a congregational minister; I've always been interested in religion. It's influenced what I write about. I don't teach anything related to religion now, or theology, but it's useful to me personally. Both of the degrees I got are terminal degrees that don't technically lead to a job. A lot of it's luck and staking a claim as a writer and trying to get your work published.

RW: I came across some references to segments you've done on NPR and the Chicago Public Radio. Can you talk about your involvement with radio in general and the work you do for that?

TMF: One way I have written books and essays is that I started doing these 400-500 word radio essays which tend to be boiled

down stories or snapshots of some experience. The good thing about them is they have a place they start and they have a place that they end and they have a clear thesis or idea. What I've found is that a lot of times the rest of my writing doesn't. [laughter] And so, if I start with that and build it out as an essay, it really helps me. I like reading my work because it really strengthens it. I think reading's important.

RW: Do you still contribute? Have you contributed lately now that the book is finished?

TMF: I do. I think last year I did a couple pieces from the book and I'm going to do some pieces this April because May 6 is the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's death. I mean, who cares?

RW: That's an interesting celebration!

TMF: Well, who cares, other than me, but it's a news peg, so it gives them a reason to have me on. I'd like to do more, I just don't have time. Chicago Public Radio asked me to do a show once, but I just haven't had the time.

RW: I'm always curious to hear about others' writing processes. How do you get yourself in the writing mindset? Do you have any writing rituals?

TMF: I don't have very much time, so the last three books I've written the core (about half of them) during a sabbatical, which is the only time I've had enough focus, energy, and writing time to get something lengthy done. Oftentimes, when my life is going well (right now it's very complicated because my daughter's getting ready to go to college and I've got three kids at home) I like to write early in the morning when I can for several hours. Coffee and quiet.

RW: You mentioned that you did a lot of your writing while on sabbatical. What advice do you have for writers who have to balance either a job or classes? How do you find the time for writing?

TMF: One thing I've done is traded money for time. I've gone to half-time so I can teach less. Another thing is to focus on kinds of writing that fit in smaller compartments like the radio essays. I can complete one in six hours, instead of writing something really long. Fit the kind of writing to the kinds of time you have and then slowly construct something bigger.

RW: What do you hope readers of *Cabin Fever* come away with?

TMF: I hope they see themselves in the book. I hope they feel that when I talk about balance, religion, and nature, they feel like the book is an invitation to them to find themselves in the writing and to process how they deal with some of those issues through my shared experience. That's the hope.

RW: Have you gotten feedback about that?

TMF: I have. Much more on this book than any other. It's been very positive, so I'm hopeful about that.

RW: Where did your passion for writing come from? Did you always want to be a writer?

TMF: I've always liked art. When I began to understand that writing is an art too, and that the writer is using different tools to create the same kind of palette of color and meaning, that's when I started to get more excited about it.

RW: Do you think that's a unique viewpoint?

TMF: Not for literary writers. I teach it that way because I want my students to have some passion about it. A student will come out of my class and know that some sentences sound like popcorn, some sentences sound like a slow moving river. I want them to know that; I want them to hear that in the world, in conversation, and in other places. I don't want them only to process and access information. This distinction between information and meaning is what matters to me and I think that's what the artist sees.

RW: You write a lot about your wife and children in *Cabin Fever* and I was curious how they feel about being cast in a book.

TMF: The first reading I gave was at our public library. They were all there and they brought their friends, so they seemed to be pretty positive. Of course, I invite them to respond to things before they're ever published.

RW: That's probably a good idea.

TMF: Yeah, so they know what's coming. They're not surprised. I need to be sure they're happy with how they're portrayed. One time I did a feature for the Chicago Tribune on parenting, and in it I mentioned that Tessa, my oldest daughter, snored. She thinks it's funny now, but at the time, she was twelve and really worried about what her friends thought. She got really upset with me. I would never have dreamed that she would have even cared about that. So you do have to be sensitive.

RW: I'd love to hear more about the cabin you built with your family and friends. What was that experience like? It must have been a source of personal satisfaction for you.

TMF: It was, but if you read the book carefully, you realize that somebody else framed it in. We did a lot; we laid the foundation and dug the piers. We don't work with our bodies anymore, and

I think that's why Thoreau is attractive to so many people. We're so disconnected from the natural world that anything like this is a great feeling of connection, not accomplishment. When we go to the cabin, the windows look the way they do because of how I cut that wood. I like to know that the floor is still level because of how we dug those holes and poured those piers. If things are a little off, it's because of how we did it. Of course, having your kids get engaged is great too because there's nothing more countercultural today than physical labor.

RW: Were they enthusiastic about it?

TMF: Sometimes. [laughter] When my daughter was twelve, I convinced her and her friends to scrape the back part of our house and paint a quarter of the house. She teases me, "How did you convince me to do that?" I tell her, "Well, I paid you." They actually had a great time.

RW: Where did your love of nature come from?

TMF: I suppose things like that come from your parents and from sensitivity. When I was in seminary, I spent a fair amount of time on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Lakota spirituality and the whole idea of relatedness, that you're a part of all that is, had a big influence on me. And then I started drawing botanical art and seeing differently; when you start seeing differently, you see the complexity and the beauty in the natural world.

RW: What advice do you have for writers?

TMF: Write. [laughter] Talk about writing, share your writing with other folks. Get in a writer's group, search for a voice that you feel comfortable with, so you can hear yourself on the page. Decide for yourself what you want your writing to do. What is it that gives you meaning and pleasure as a writer? Are you interested in more issue-oriented writing, or personal essays, or is it lyrical essays? Experiment and try a lot of different kinds of writing.



The Web

Olivia Stemwell

la mujer (the woman)

inspired by graciela iturbide's "mujer angel"

juliana kapetanov

Wilted roses, crimson, shade fractured
ground, where remnants of yesterday—
senseless slaughter, misogynistic
massacres—sink into damp patches
of murky mud, and sand-covered carpets.

La mujer que lleva blanca y negra,
blares ballads of sorrow and sadness
throughout the desert; drags wagons
de sus cosas preciosas, sus memorias.

Shattered promises of better tomorrows
en la ciudad. Las mujeres y las niñas
lost and found—the tragedy unspoken.
Crows pass by their graves, small crosses
staked in infertile land, pink and plastic.
Though he waits around the bend
to grasp straying strands, veiled
in dusk, while the eternal stereo
with soul speakers, pleads for mercy.

Cry, cry beloved mujer, madre de millones,
voice echoing in the desert of your destiny.
Tomorrow, the dreaded time will arrive
when bodies drift silently across el Rio,
a la tierra de los muertos, de los ángeles.



Morning Light

Laurie Kenyon



Reclining Nude

Maggie Rivera

sandhill cranes

for my sister sara

jeremy reed

They come in Spring when grass is green again,
Grey bodies but the Sun transforms them white.
The smell of lilies strikes my nose just when
I remember Sara covered in light.
We stood there children in children's clothes
Waiting for parents' prayers to ring like bells.
The birds had come. They'd flown and sought and flown
Anticipating an end not quite themselves.
Wings beat the water as the birds come down,
Two children looking out and away.
A branch breaks and memory echoes out,
The memory of those not forgotten days:
The pebbled path between us has not strayed;
Sara, I'm still beside you waiting for cranes.



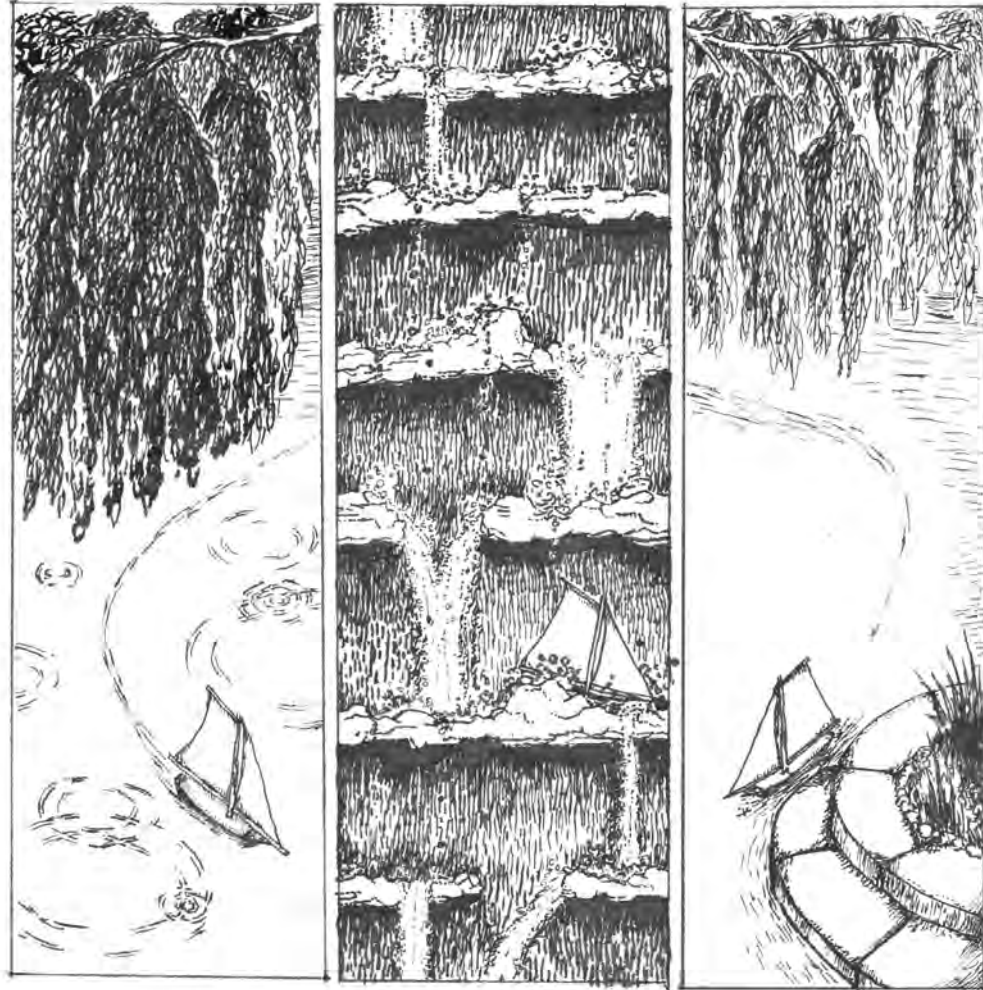
With Divine Light

Austin Hill



Study Room

Kathleen Parilac



Spring and Sea

Nicholas Burrus



Whiteout

Olivia Stenwell



May the Force Be With You

Austin Hill

of whiskey and snobs

derek schnake

In front of me stood three tumblers of Scotch whisky. From left to right was a Talisker ten-year, Cragganmore fifteen-year, and a Glenkinchie twelve-year, each poured into a tulip-shaped whisky glass. I had cut thin slices of cucumber to cleanse the palate between tastings. Before sipping, I sniffed the aroma of each glass—first the Glenkinchie, with its light, floral aromas; then the honey and peat of the Cragganmore; then the Talisker’s spiciness.

I lifted the first glass, finally ready to explore the flavor profiles of these fine Scottish spirits. Just before the whisky met my lips, my roommate exploded through the door, allowing winter winds of Cambridge to howl and bluster into the dining room. With a roaring slam of the door, he stormed his way along the corridor and into the room.

“Goddamn! It’s cold as hell out there.”

Before I could return the greeting, he took three swift strides to the table, picked up the Talisker ten-year, and in a sing-song voice asked, “Whatcha drinkin’, buddy?”

“That one is a Tali—”

“Cheers.”

I stopped in cold horror as he lifted the dram to his mouth and took down the whisky as if it were a shot of cheap rum or cough medicine. He recoiled from the glass, winced from the bite and declared, “Hoo-ey! That’ll put hair on your balls.” And then with three more swift strides, he was in the next room with a tall can of Foster’s, watching TV.

* * *

By the time I was twenty—er, twenty-one—I knew how to drink well. I could break down flavor profiles of finely aged Scotch and properly pair a wine with an entrée. Ask me on

a whim what my favorite microbreweries were and I’d give a comprehensive list of ten from any region of the continental United States. My vocabulary included phrases like “full-bodied” and “oaky notes”—which usually either passed through both sets of ears of my peers or clear overhead.

And quite simply, nobody cared. As much as I tried to convince my Coors-drinking college friends, very few seemed swayed that good English beer is best served just below room temperature (“My mountains best be blue,” they’d say), or that the shape of the wine glass actually does matter. I did my darnedest to impress people with my thorough knowledge of how the regions of Scotland produce different flavors of whisky—or that only in Scotland, there is no “e” in whisky. Only in a small circle of two other friends could I argue about how rye whiskeys are much more appealing than bourbons.

Still, I banged the drum of snobbery over my friends’ heads while we threw ping-pong balls into plastic red cups and drank practically frozen piss-water called Keystone. *These people don’t drink because they like it. They just want to find the most economical way to get drunk*, I would think to myself, my nose pointed skyward. Don’t get me wrong, though; I was right there in line, ready to take that shot of generic gin with the rest of the obviously-twenty-one-year-old, binge-drinking college students.

Of course, alcohol was only a part of my snob streak. I preached about fine foods and the processes of the top chefs in the world. I knew every cut of meat and the best ways to cook it. Coffee became a brief obsession. No longer content with a standard filter coffee maker, I invested in a French press to make my morning Joe. (Anecdotally, coffee enthusiasts are by far the worst snobs. Possessing neither the prestige of

vineyard owners, nor the popularity of beer brewers, coffee connoisseurs are very defensive about their passion.) I passed up cheap taco stands and pizza joints for well-reviewed Cuban restaurants and Italian bistros. Beyond the realm of food, my reading habits changed. I insisted on *The New York Times* instead of the *Chicago Tribune*, though I lived in Chicago. I had *The New Yorker* and *The Economist* whispered to my Kindle.

Flirting with refined habits hurt my wallet also. It ain't cheap being a snob. A six-pack of my favorite microbrew rings up at nearly ten bucks, and a Scotch older than twelve years can cost upwards of fifty dollars. My favorite cut of steak weighed in at twelve dollars a pound—more if I went for grass-fed beef. Would I pay nearly \$30 for the fresh catch of the day? If I were to keep up appearances, I'd have to.

* * *

One sangria-soaked Saturday, I sat watching through episodes and episodes of *Mad Men*—a booze-laden, period drama about Madison Avenue advertising executives in the 1960's. In every scene, these dapper fellows drank like the Earth would stop turning if their glasses ran empty. They imbibed with complete swagger, confidence and disregard for consequences. They took rebellion, gave it manhood, dressed it in a three-piece suit and taught it how to make a proper cocktail.

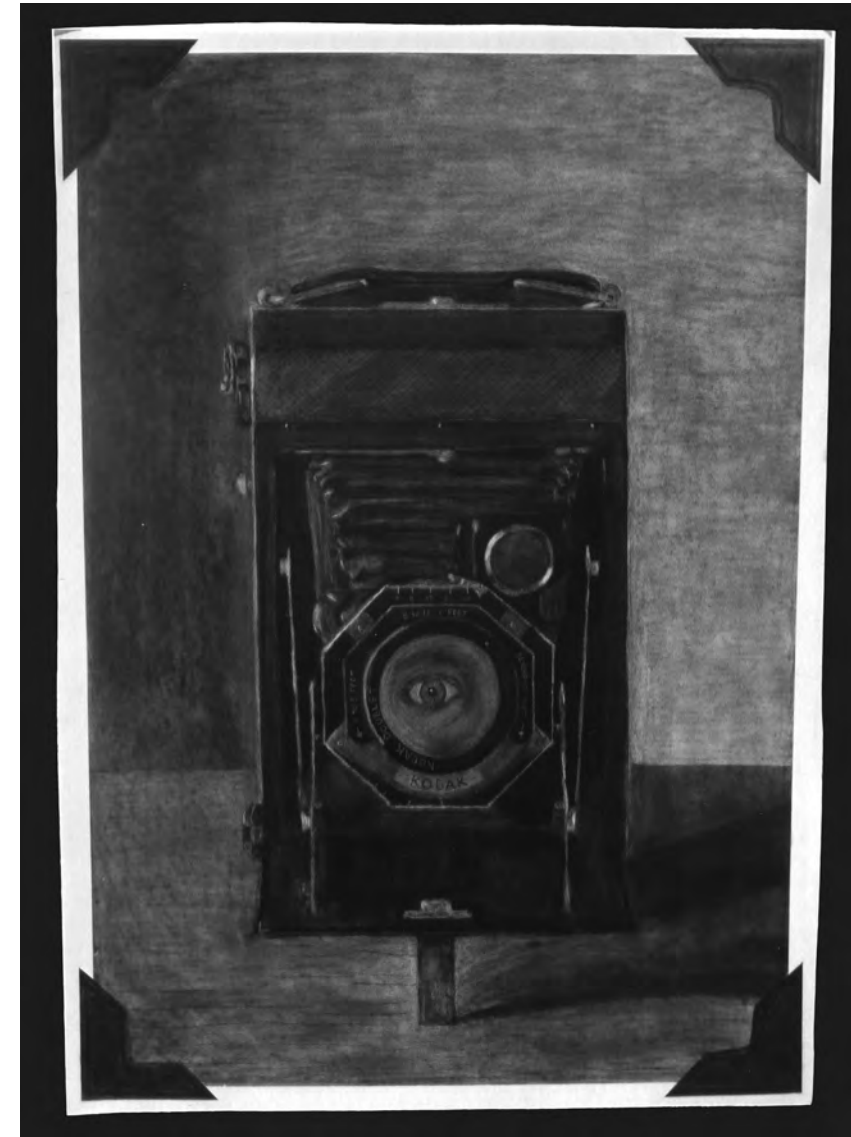
In one scene, two friends, a full generation apart, sit mulling over that episode's dilemma while pouring themselves nightcaps. As the elder of the two stares into his crystal glass of bourbon, he surmises to the other, "You don't know how to drink. Your whole generation, you drink for the wrong reasons. My generation, we drink because it's good, because it feels better than unbuttoning your collar, because we deserve it. We drink because it's what men do." Is that why I drink the way I do? Is my alcoholic erudition a means to validate my coming age and my status as man?

The truth is I really do like the art of imbibing fine liquors, spirits and beers. I yearn to know what the ingredients are, why they taste the way they do, and what makes them different from each other. I find it fascinating how a Riesling wine will pair well with spicy food, and that Christian monks operated some of the oldest breweries in the world because the streams were too infected with bubonic plague. In my quest for connoisseurship I discovered a passion, which had its genesis in the ambition to be better than others.

Moments of snobbery often sneak their way into attitudes of the passionate: when musicians sneer at pop music; when the seasoned traveler shuns the resort dweller; when a photographer judges you by the size of your lens; when our college degrees fuel our sense of superiority; when the iPhone user scoffs at your internet-incapable dumb-phone; when the politically opinionated scold you for not knowing the finer points of the most recent United Nations resolution; when literary critics deny Harry Potter entrance into the ivory tower; when the writer ostensibly uses grandiloquent verbiage to prove his or her own edification.

With clear heads and earnest hearts, aficionados everywhere must hold in balance the conflicting feelings of sharing what they love and protecting it. Every enthusiast feels the instinct to protect against the dilettantes of the world. But when protection becomes exclusion, enthusiasts become snobs.

On that blustery Cambridge day, when my friend gaucheely disturbed my flight of Scotch, I wished to deliver a swift punch to his stomach and slap that Foster's can into his face. But instead I laughed, picked up the remaining glasses and joined him in the living room. I told him that a bottle of Talisker costs fifty dollars, to which he replied, "Why the hell does it cost so damn much?" I smiled and gladly began to explain.



Viewing the World with an Open Mind

Margie Herzog



memoriam

Cate Valentine

comedy divine

ethan grant

Déjà vu strikes me mostly on stairways.
It's that sense when winding through half-space
from landing to landing, wood worn bare
by footsteps, curtains smothering daylight
as rain prattles at the window-glass
of another gloomy Sunday.

You told me stories once around the winter hearth.
You wove legends through coals, glowing gold
and smelling of black, of cracked leather bellows.
Misty moorlands stretched along the mantelpiece
and witches flew down chimney flues, soot
streaking brickwork, swords in stones,
the rocky laughter of green horsemen
echoing ominously in earthen chapels.
But now you've grown so old.

We have walked coastal streets, cool mornings
at dawn, when fog on the harbor hung low
in heavy autumn atmospheres,
hovering like zeppelins moored at mastheads
before sinking, breaking, dissolving in space.

We should stand on a hill some midsummer night,
with a sea of Monopoly houses stretched
dark green through the valley below us.
You'll tell me of fields your grandfathers turned,
but I'll speak of nothing I claim as my own.
And a smile-shaped moon sinks low on the west,
sick and yellow at the hill-crest's rim.
One by one the houselights blink black—
and should I say we've been here before?

Maybe crickets will cease their whine for a while,
and the locusts' dry croak grow still;
and we'll scream at the sky because we're still young,
and laugh as dead stars stream down.



Grandpa's Barn

Justyna Rybka



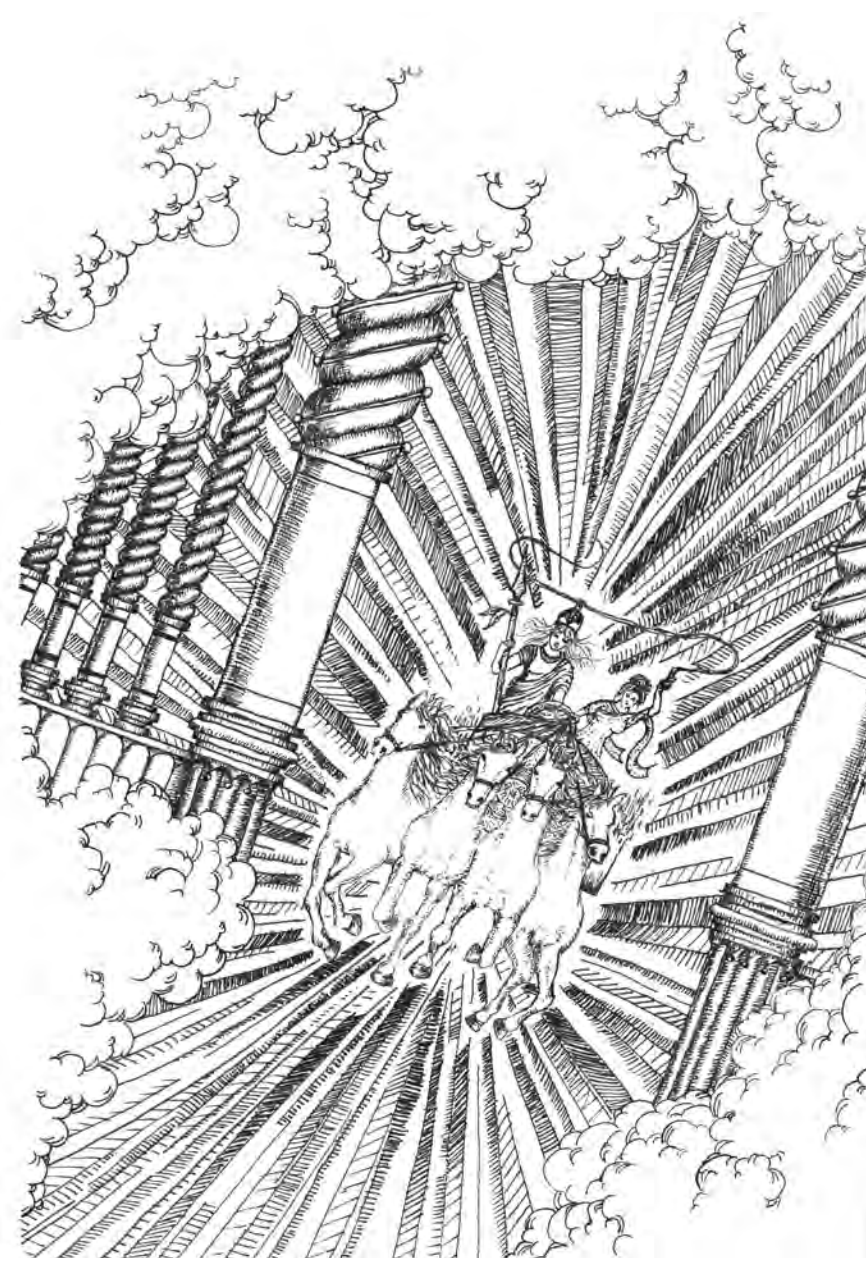
Chunky Tomatoes

Justyna Rybka



Pelides and the River Xanthus

Nicholas Burrus



Athena and Hera Leave Olympus

Nicholas Burrus



Being the Black Swan

Mallory Swisher



Beautiful, but Deadly

Justyna Rybka

a flower holds

jeremy reed

A flower holds itself
Up on its stem: delicate,
And strong, and grace
Filled like a cup full of tea,
The rich smelling liquid cupping
The brim so closely
That if your hand, or breath,
Or maybe just the tilt of the table itself
Were to be a part of the image,
Then, well then it wouldn't be
Like a tea cup not dropped,
The could-be cracks hinges
To doors never opened before,
Like a book that doesn't fall
From the head of a child
Praying to have balance
Because she wants
To be a ballerina, a book
That doesn't fall open
Revealing haphazard words.



R and R

Maggie Rivera



Self Portrait #7

Adam Jackson



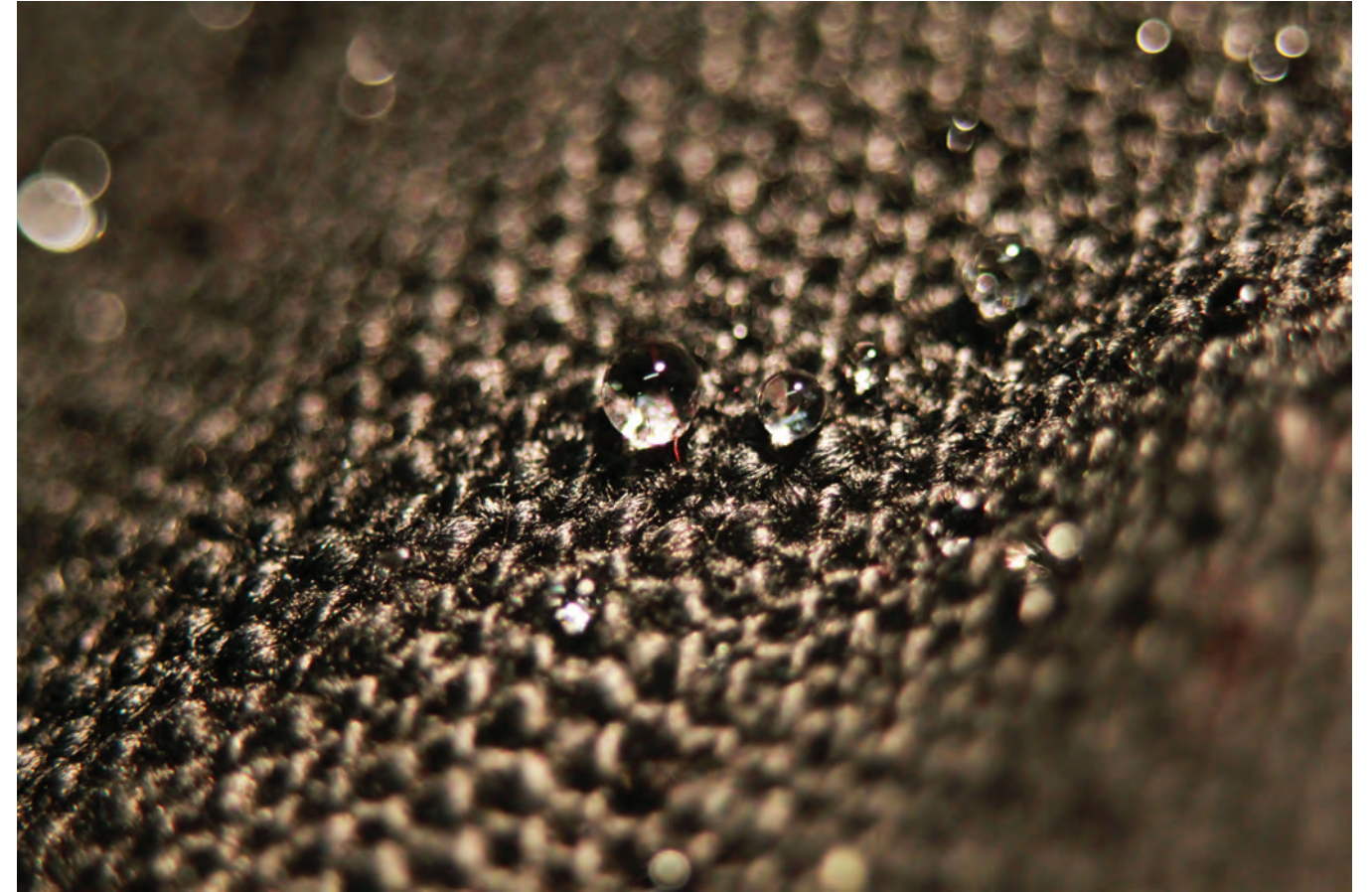
Paul

Emily Royer



Slaughter

Emily Royer



Drops on a Hat

Adam Jackson



Reposer

Alison DeVries

the knowledge of not knowing

ethan grant

1.

The calendar tells me it was springtime, the second Sunday of May, when my sister and I sat watching television in the silver dusk, waiting, too long it seemed, for Mom to return home. But my memory is not impressed with the palette of spring: I can still see through the living room window the trees in the ravine, and beyond them the sun as it set and set dully ablaze the sky with violet-gold and russet hues. In my mind they are the trees of winter, clad not with fresh leaves and white

apple-blossoms, but gnarled knobs and stony grays. That is my impression; but it was springtime all the same. Megan and I were watching *Rugrats*, the Mother's Day special. So it would have been Mother's Day, 1998, when Mom fumbled at the screen door, coming inside from the gray May-winter evening, crying, it seemed, just a bit too candidly. She gathered us onto the sofa, and I could feel her warmth against me, smell the lavender bouquet of her perfume as she sobbed, "Daddy is dead." Those three immortal, clumsy words. Sounds without meaning and meaning without gravity, rattling through the brain of an eight year-old boy.

2.

I now know that Dad died on the tenth of May. Only recently did I learn the date, having found an old Polaroid of his headstone tucked away in a desk drawer. May tenth had been that Mother's Day Sunday, that winter-like night beyond the liturgy of the seasons. The camera had been mine, so I must have taken the photo. Yes. In the summer following his death we had driven down to Texas in order to settle affairs with his blood-relatives in Snyder, the barren heart of that empty state. Impressions of that day are scant. I know of anger: Mom and Aunt Linda were angry, disgusted even that Dad had been brought there to be buried, so far from his family, his life—buried next to a highway no less, in Texas, the home in which he had never found happiness. And there we stood, graveside in the late afternoon, a sterile wind wafting off passing cars, the ceaseless scorched shadow of an irrigation pipeline paralleling the road, the sun stretching gold across the grass, green and gold, a splash of scarlet peonies at his grave.

That was a dry day, heavy and oppressive, a Texas July. No, I do not recall taking the photo, but here it rests, verified and incontrovertibly realized in my hand: green-gold grass, scarlet petals: *December 26, 1953 – May 10, 1998: BELOVED FATHER.* Always the highway droning forever, a hum of blood coursing hot through my brain.

3.

The nature of memory frightens me. The strongest memories burn themselves onto the brain like a heliograph on copper. But even such plates, these strongest of memories, slowly fade with time. Edges blur, detail disappears, and in this corrosion the mind rearranges in order to restore, in order

to explain: memory wanes to vague impression when one imposes conscious thought upon it. Any attempt at retrieving a memory serves as well to modify it, to render falsely a sense of order and meaning. Each recollection is a revision by which we shave away the fractured truth.

In my mind those trees are the trees of winter, bony and forlorn. And yet I have read the headstone, I have seen irrefutably the characters hewn into rock: *May 10*. So my mind betrays me. That was the season of flowers and full-blooded life, but I have denied this truth: the blithe spring blossoms wither at the touch of that night's clumsy words and cold emotions, impressed with darkness and death. That night in May, that cemetery in July—yes, they both happened. Both once were. But now little of objective fact remains. I have shuffled and reshuffled, diluted and revised, and find but two undeniable truths: I know that the seasons changed, and that Dad is in the ground.

4.

My great aunt died in 1999, and it was her death which led me first to experience a funeral. I bore unwilling witness to her lying embalmed in a coffin: the sister of my grandfather—dead. That Sunday afternoon in March we drove down some highway I didn't recognize toward some town I had never heard of, to a funeral home I would never see again. She lay like rubber in the box. The viewing room bled with the foul odor of roses and plastic perfumes over-saturating the beaded necks of frail old women. They sat together, backs to the wall, on wooden chairs or floral-patterned settees book-ended by low-wattage table lamps. They talked quietly, feigning laughter and dabbing damp tears from their cheeks.

We later drove home as night approached. I remember gazing out the car window, exploring with my eyes a

land of wights and goblins. Spindly black trees, like upturned witch-brooms, loomed over sullen winter fields. A sun hovered, swollen and dirty and red upon the horizon. Mom and Aunt Linda stayed silent on the subject of death, but the radio played the psychedelic guitar riffs of The Turtles' "Grim Reaper of Love," and in my mind I have colored that night with the Dorian ostinato of "Eleanor Rigby." The dismal sight in that room had infected the evening in part and in whole. And I watched the sun, thinking my anxious thoughts of school the next day, of the texture of rubber. I felt sickness in the blurred and graying dusk.

So that woman was dead, I thought, and the word *DEAD* wavered in the air, yellow and bombastic like a piece of 1960s pop-art. *Grim reaper of love*. And how would they all get on, I wondered, with that as their final memory of her, soon to be their final impression? Their last glimpse before the coffin-lid closed was not of the woman they loved, but of some ghastly woman-sized doll. That smile which creased the sticky corners of her mouth carried no import of kindness. I saw instead a mean-spirited smirk from beyond the grave. Her one hand held the other in some lurid mimicry of tenderness, like a cradle-robbing changeling mocking a mother with her infant's stolen cry.

Why then, I wondered, did death compel us to hold these services in memory of the dead? Why should one's final impression of the deceased amount to a satin-lined casket, an unpersoned person prone within its shell? Through these means we seek to rekindle the memories of life, but we succeed only in substituting them with new ones, new memories and grim impressions of rubber-faced, rose-smothered death. As we traveled down that twilight highway in March of 1999, darkness soon swept away the last shade of dusk. The night was clear and electric with stars, and slowly my thoughts crept their inexorable course toward my father.

Mom and Dad had divorced in October 1994. After

living alone in a series of cheap rentals and halfway houses, Dad had come to settle in Indianapolis, letting a four-room basement apartment. There, stretched out in sleep upon the living room sofa, he died. Before we even had time for a funeral service, his Texas parents rushed his body south and sold his belongings away. Suddenly, inexplicably, my world was without a father; without a word, life had changed. I was left with no final memory of funeral or wake to miscolor my impressions of him. My final impressions were neither of life, nor unlife, but of neutral detachment and distance. At least I never saw him tanned and rubbery, laid out in a red cedar box.

5.

A profound mystery surrounds the thought of my father. Not two decades ago he walked this earth a man, a mortal, breathing the same atmosphere now filling my lungs. I cannot see him, nor can I hear his voice. In photographs he is a younger man than I ever knew him to be, dark-skinned and gaunt, his hair long, black mustache bowed around his mouth. And I have impressions of a head of black hair, thick as my own, touched with specks of gray. I recall the sensation of sitting with him on a La-Z-Boy chair, smelling his aftershave, his prickled beard stubble scraping against my child-smooth face. I had known that one day my flesh would sprout the same roughness of stubble, of age. I saw my father both as man and as prophecy.

Sensations of warmth and security emanate from his thought. Megan and I would visit him routinely, spending every other weekend in his basement apartment. There was an overwhelming assurance of closeness in that subterranean living room: rust-orange light of standing lamps with upturned shades, a play of light and shadow, its cast light cream-like and sallow upon the walls and white ceiling. His home was like a cave in which we dwelled together, drawn close by firelight and

warmth, some prehistoric tribe hiding from the rain. He was the bringer of fire and light. We sat one night on his blue leather sofa, nestled in a corner by the green rotary telephone which rested on the glass coffee table, reading diligently together an *I SPY* book. A robust aroma of cigarettes and cologne hung in the air, and the television flickered and chattered unheeded. Brass unicorn figures pranced upon his sideboard, bearded unicorns and white tigers were stitched across his scratchy woolen blanket. He provided for us, bringing light and cave-like closeness and warmth. He cooked bacon some nights, filling the space with its thick and jolly crackling scent. We slept on his king-size bed by a thin window facing the parking lot. We slept soundly and completely, and at some late hour he would slouch off to the living room sofa to take his rest. He spoke to us words of evening benediction, but I cannot hear his voice. They are words without sound and sounds without speaker, stripped of all meaning and worth.

A painting I see hanging from his living room wall. Two fishermen cast their seaward lines at sunrise. Both have their backs to me, both facing the sea, the reddening clouds on the predawn horizon. They wear rubber boots, long and glistening with foam, their overalls strapped heavy and sopping over big shoulders. The man nearest to me draws back to cast his angle to the waves. The man farther off stands with his rod, serene and motionless in the sea-froth and shadow. I imagine the air between them to be fresh and misty, the wind a salty incense. I wonder if they speak together, if they have lungs enough to shout above the billows forever surging at their knees. This painting captured my imagination as only a child's imagination can be caught. This was my painting, my thought.

I suppose one weekend had to have been our last. One weekend we must have left that apartment, that painting, that living room and bedroom and bed, and once more set off on our journey homeward. Then the journey was over. And we never saw him again. Only from grown-ups talking grown-

up talk did we learn the truth: that Dad had been dropped into the earth in some strange southern land among strange, unwholesome people whose blood was his and my own. That time of my life has clouded into impression. I see the painting in my head, but its details are suspect, perhaps the products of my own searching mind. His painting, his unicorns, his couch, his sideboard, his bed—all were sold away. Now only memory retains their ever-reforming shapes. That apartment, too, has been wrested from the dimensions of reality. Still I strive to see it, though I've not laid eyes upon it since.

6.

No clear memory exists of the last time I saw my father. Would it have been April when we last stepped out of his brown Ford Bronco? Did spring-birds sing when we stood waving goodbye as he drove down the gravel driveway, a plume of blue smoke trailing behind? Would the silver maple by the porch have been red-tipped and restless, the front yard a marshy bed of mild green shoots, the sky watery and gray? Rage for objective experience claws at the back of my eyes, forever unsatisfied. It's the knowledge of not knowing, of knowing such knowledge can never be known. Not in this life, anyway. Not at this time.

But there is comfort in ritual. The paschal moon yearly draws closed the season of Lent, and the red flame of Pentecost forever sends us careening into summer. So does my past ebb and flow at my wake, ceaseless, protean, ever-morphing and ever-returning. It is springtime again. Lilywhite blossoms still sing to the world their promise that there is no death. The years flow onward, the past cycles behind. The first truth rests somewhere beyond the wheeling of the seasons and stars, and memory alone must sustain those who still walk the earth. Such ritual holds the planet in place. Would I be any more complete, my life any more realized, were I

somehow able to apply date to memory, objective fact to subjective impression? The ritual is enough. The impression must suffice. I feed on the substance of memory, of childhood peace and security which time can never wholly erase.

As I lie in bed in the ocean darkness, in the wide and echoing stillness of night, a mere thought will again send December stringing its ivory lights along the Indianapolis streets. My father is here; Dad is here. He drives us through the downtown night as green and scarlet traffic signals dimly wash across our faces. I cannot see his face. I could not even extend my hand to touch him, yet I know he is there. He is only a vague presence, but I feel him, returned to us, raised to the quick from the dead once more. Thin frost has glazed the windows. The heater struggles to overcome it, stirring the air, dispersing the black winter cold. City lights flash along in dazzling swirls of amber and white, and we know we are safe, both Megan and I. This hazy form with black hair and checked flannel jacket

scented of tobacco and *Azzaro pour homme*, he will keep us warm and sheltered from the alien vastness of night. He tells a quiet story about lions as sleep creeps gently into the car. In this stillness we feel intimations of things yet to come, the promise of rest in that basement bedroom, in that bed. I will sleep tonight in that peace, unaware of time fast passing, of memories forming and fading. I do not know the terminus a Texas headstone will place on this time of half-sleeping, half-waking, always half-aware of passing cars projecting headlights fleetingly through the window-blinds, wafting along walls, the protracted and wavering white shadows of blinds: transient, ephemeral, fading in their upward rise along the wall, up the ceiling, up and up and out of my world forever. Cool darkness falls again: sleep falls again: I have reached the bourn of fugitive impressions, the extravagant wandering of memory's ghosts.



The Glacier Realm

Derek Schnake



Ancient

Alison DeVries



Atticus

Adam Jackson

gemini

ethan grant

Sometimes it takes a change in perspective
for us to consider scales of distance anew,
to see stars above not as ensigns or tales,
but luminescent dust hung about the heavens
like motes stirred from curtains some August afternoon.
It's true these parallactic pictures live only through us,
inspired by our senses, our cares; yet even in this
enlightened age we still peer up on cloudless nights
to trace the lofted points of universal patterns
rising on the pastures and frost-strewn fields.

From there we draw comfort, and there I find
in Gemini the shape of two unabashed lovers
stretched supine upon a black bedspread of sky,
knowing that somewhere, beyond these measured
hours of earth, she sleeps—that soon she too may rise
and stare up at this same starry pair, alone
with her own secret, skyward thoughts.

And so I feel love: love for her, for the night,
and perhaps it is love which drives us to maintain
our gaze on these glistening planes of collective kinship
above earthbound mankind, to know that while
the mortal creature sleeps, our twin lovers embrace
on their bed of blue darkness, heedless to time,
and stars may die a thousand, ten thousand years
before their light ever fades from the face of our sky.



Power Shift

Olivia Stemwell



Scales

Adam Jackson



Untitled

Kristen Manski



Inside Out

Angie Jackson

antipathy of a form

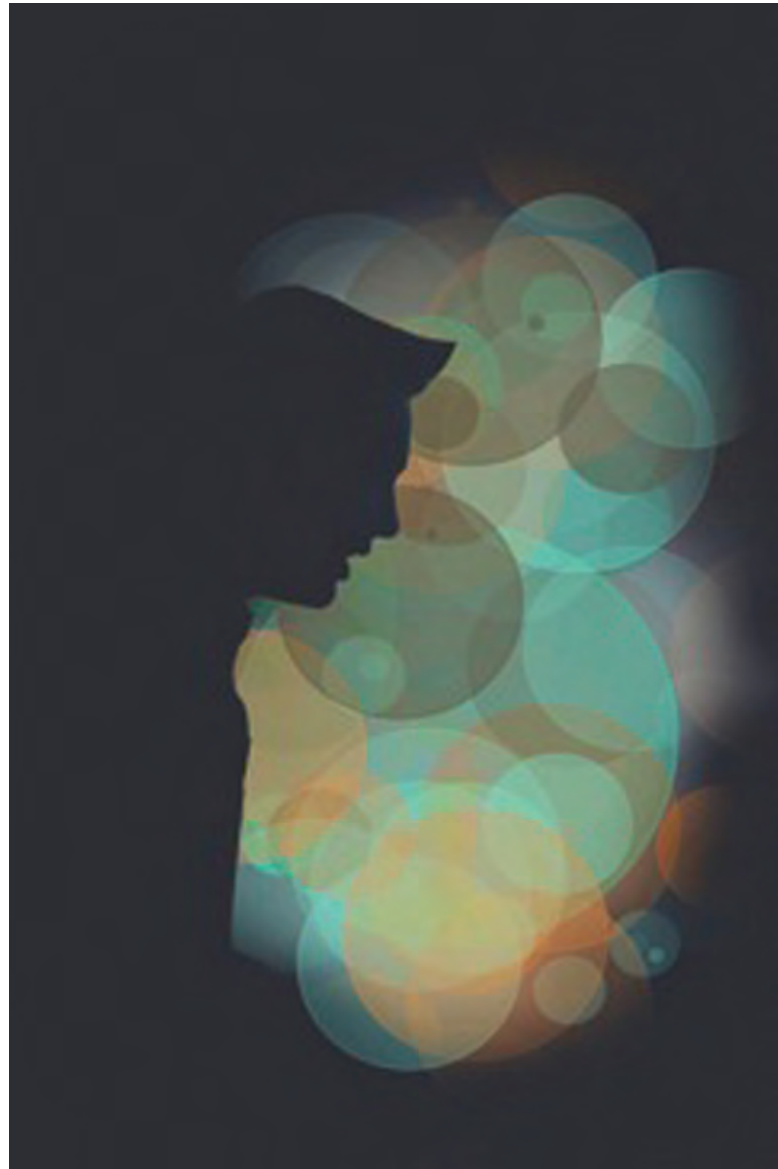
gregory maher

“The sleeping female is divine,
no?”
- said he-serpent, scale-encrusted
dim-eyed crawler of the deep
responding I
quote the Romantics: “She walks
in beauty/ like the . . . “
“Nay!” said he, sneering
creature, his lips
voodoo masks:
“Her soft curve, the just-moistened
lip, each
limb, pulsing, pulsing, pulsing
with the rich
crimson of life
Her dark lashes, fern-branches
fluttering in primordial
gust
Dreaming, her eyes
flash with a bright world,
enscreened
Her veins, blue, snaking
through her flesh
Roots deep as her heart, focused in on
her slow, pumping heart . . .”



She, Fondly

Liz Powers



Brighter Day

Kyle Smart



Fly Like Paper

Abbey Meyer

the gospel of mark

Ethan Grant

I suppose I should find in this a moral,
a miracle—the rumor of good news.
But all I can see is a man, an uncanny
blur of men, like trees walking.
Then he wipes stinging spit into
my eyes, rubbing roughly
until stars burst on my brain, teary
light breaks through, and I learn
what to make of light—figures
walking: rootless, gangly stalks.

As the story goes, he once withered
a fruitless fig tree, screamed at storms
and demon-men in boneyards, howling
to white Arabian suns. Now I see
him, dark-eyed and gaunt before me,
a dooming glare sunken in sockets.

My sight failed to wake me. Unmoved
by this inconceivable deed, I stood
babbling like a fool. Then he led me
strong-armed from the crowd, whispering
words from a black-throated mouth:
Tell no one. Return to your village

no more. So I told no one, and dared not
return, not even when he wandered away
with a throng of fifty in his thrall,
cloaks billowing, kicking dust to the sky.
We heard he came from the wilderness,
from nowhere, to beat through Galilee.
So in Jerusalem, they say, he hung
from a tree, there to writhe beneath
this merciless Arabian sun.

Still I see, but my world seems smaller
than before, when simple darkness ruled.
Men, untreed, cross my threshold nightly
as I lie awake in starlight, plucking
lice from my bedding, wondering
what fear has kept me quiet so long.



Reclining Nude

Elsa Rosenfelder



After the Dream

Emily Royer



Cold, cold, cold

Katie Mattmiller

symphonie meta: music in seven movements

rebecca werner

I. *Vivace (poco a poco)*

Pulse? Weak. Breathing? Shallow. Diagnosis? Numbness. They'll have to work fast to save me, to jolt some life back into my body. They attach the leads to my ears. It's charged and ready; they press play. *Beeeeeeep...flatline—* they switch tracks and turn it up. *Beep...beep...beep...beep.*

You can't live without rhythm. If your heart gets off beat, then you're diagnosed with a medical malady, heart arrhythmia, which can lead to death. The heartbeat, life's ostinato, repeats over and over again. The heartbeat, life's ostinato, repeats over and over again.

As humans evolved over the centuries, distant relatives of the modern *Homo sapien*, hominids, developed symbolic thought which manifested itself in prehistoric cave drawings. Self-awareness and symbolic thought led to self-expression. What to do with the rhythm encapsulated in each individual, pounding against the rib cage, begging to get out? Thence music. We need it.

II. *Andante molto appassionato*

This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. I hate that poster, the one that represents the brain as an over-easy egg sizzling in a frying pan. It hung on the wall in Prison Cell 232, the calculus room, but it didn't scare me half as much as my grade in that class.

This is your brain on music. Who needs drugs when you've got music? The limbic system is the part of the human brain that processes pleasure. Scientists discovered that listening to music activates the same areas of the limbic system that are stimulated during sex and recreational drug use. Nucleus accumbens (NAc), dopamine, opioids, the ventral strintium, the amygdala. These descriptions are too technical and clinical, like reading about sex in a biology textbook. Can we just talk about how it makes us feel?

III. *Moderato patetico*

The conductor raises the baton and slashes it downward like a whip. The piece starts slowly, gaining momentum as the call and response wends its way through the sections of the ensemble. It's all building up to the climax, the point where each individual's ostinato will meld into a single unified melody. I let it wash over me. My trumpet catches the stage lights as I bring the instrument to my lips. Building, building, building.

When the ancient peoples tried to reach the heavens by constructing the Tower of Babel, God scattered them and confused their languages to punish their arrogance. Music recalls the time of perfect unity, a time when there was a single universal language, and offers a fleeting return to Paradise. I want to live in this moment forever.

Somewhere between measures 168 and 179, everything makes perfect sense, like finding the thousandth piece of the jigsaw puzzle under the couch and snapping it into place. The wall is falling so that we are one, wholly connected to the music, to each other. It's right, it's right, it's right. Breathe here in unison. We're no longer playing what's on the page, but what's in our hearts.

IV. *Adagio Eroico*

Music offers a truce between the old crotchety neighbors Left Brain and Right Brain, trading shotgun-enforced border disputes for hospitality and cold beer. The brain blends its ostinato with those of the greater nervous system: the spinal cord, neurons, axons, myelin sheaths. Without this system, we would be sacks of meat. Music is a backbone. It makes us more than a bundle of nerves.

Music gives us courage to face mortality. For centuries, terrified soldiers have marched straight-backed to war, the sharp cadence of a battlefield snare drum acting as the only expression of their emotion. During World War II, when radio reached the masses for the first time and music became a source of nationalism, the Allied forces liberated Beethoven and used the first three notes of the famous *Symphony No. 5* (which in Morse code form a 'V' for 'victory') to promote their propaganda and boost morale.

Music acts as a powerful social force: when the Berlin Wall fell, famed composer Leonard Bernstein conducted a symphony and choir in Berlin comprising musicians from East and West Germany, America, France, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. Amidst the broken rubble of the Wall, humanity celebrated its unity.

Music pushes us. Athletes listen to music to get psyched up before their events. Michael Phelps was rarely seen without his earbuds nestled beneath his swim cap during the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. I tried out different genres of music while walking to my daily doom (calculus), though I wouldn't necessarily have said no to a hit from Phelps' bong.

V. *Presto*

During my first performance at Severance Hall, I was hyperaware of irrelevant details: the water cooler in the mini cafe backstage, the eighty-eight fans on the Art Deco ceiling, the instrument cases that lay strewn on the floor of the warm-up room. I don't remember how I got from that room to the stage; it wasn't a conscious decision, but my feet knew what they wanted.

I sat next to a water cooler on one side, and a fan on the other. An instrument case sat in the french horn section in front of me, blocking my view of the conductor. Metronome marking for Presto: 168-200 beats per minute; my heart rate: 168-200 beats per minute, right on cue. But the collective breath before the first note slid everything into focus. The water cooler, ceiling fan, and instrument case transformed into hearts beating in sync with mine.

As the downbeat fell, we had nothing but everything in common. And then, when the last note resonated in the hall and the applause died down, we went our separate ways as if nothing unique had even happened, as if we hadn't just shared something intimate. Later we'll try to sort out the ineffable paradox of music's simultaneous personal and universal natures. We met once a week for rehearsal, for our fix.

VI. *Allegretto agitato*

What's in it for them — the audience? They're dressed for a night of culture and high society. Is attendance an unspoken obligation of the *nouveau riche*? Something for the ladies to chat about over their tea and biscuits? Perhaps the desire to get their names out in public as "patrons of the arts?" I want it to be something more. I want them to be feeling what I'm feeling onstage.

It's concert etiquette to hold the applause until all movements of a song are complete and the conductor has lowered the baton, otherwise the snobby rich man in the box seats shoots you a dirty look over his program and his snobby rich wife examines you through her lorgnette as though you are a disgusting fleck of pond scum. It doesn't seem natural, though, to hold it in; it might even be dangerous, like holding back a sneeze.

VII. *Rubato*

Music demands perfection, but I am far from perfect. Every mistake I make breaks the harmony of our fragile relationship.

I've been pressing too hard today. The emptiness, the numbness, threatens to resurge and I need to fill it. I beg Music for another chance; if we break up, I'll break down. Music agrees to counseling, listing the same old complaints: I'm afraid of commitment, I'm emotionally distant, I never have time. I interject, but the director tells me I came in too early, that I have to go back to measure forty-six and wait for my cue. He finally turns to me and asks How does that make you feel?

The music wells inside me, begging to be released. The more I pour out, the quicker I fill my emptiness. Like water bursting through a cracked dam, the music breaks free and rushes towards the climax. Cue *Cutis anserina*. The fine hairs

on my arms leap up in a spontaneous standing ovation. When the final note fades, I know it's time to come back down from my heart-pounding, pupil-dilating, mind-altering high. Music's still ringing in my ears, satisfied for now.

The audience eyes each other, waiting for someone else to react first. We're always watching each other for our cues, checking to make sure it's acceptable to express emotion. The world drains the body's battery; we need to jolt the brain's prefrontal cortex, the monitor of correct social behavior. Attach the leads to the ears and prepare the charge: end the repressive regime, break down frivolous social inhibitions—Tear down this wall!—so we can mimic those arm hairs. But music's release is temporary. That's why I have to keep going back for my fix.



Foundations

Alison DeVries



The Spark of Inspiration

Elyse Estes



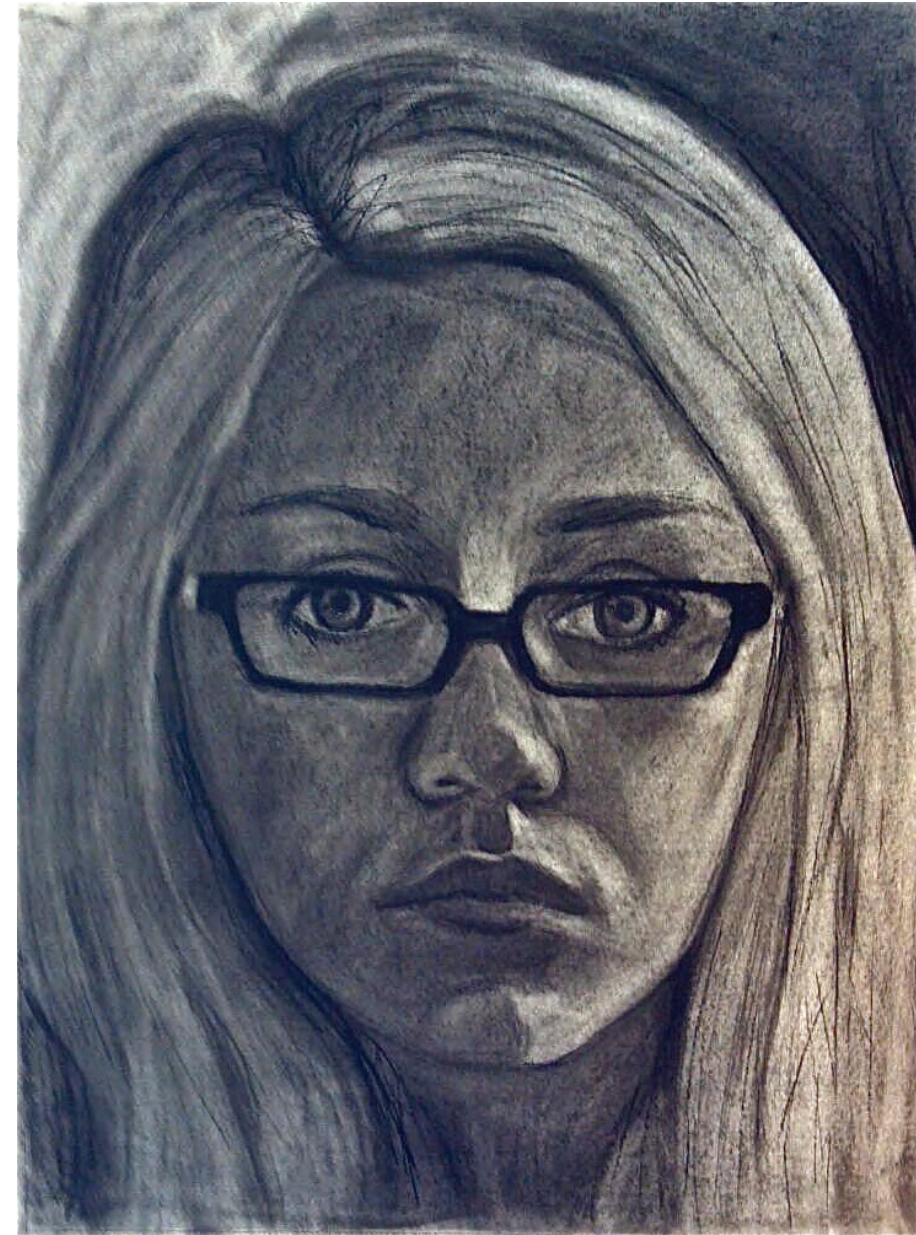
Christmas Cheer

Abbey Meyer



Josh's Shoes

Justyna Rybka



Untitled

Kristen Manski

second

The coarse wooden stocks cut off circulation to your wrists leaving your fingers to dangle numbly. You have about a centimeter of radial leeway from the dark red crisp around the hollowed out circle. A hooded man the size of a rhino yanks a lever. You hear a *creak* from the rusty mechanism followed by a *whoosh* as the sharpened blade begins to drop. Your eyes roll all the way back into your skull as you try to watch the blood-stained razor race towards you. It is beyond your field of vision though. The massive cutting edge rattles dully in the wooden slats that guide it swiftly to your neck. You have about a second left to live. You could repent, scream, or curse the man with his gloved hand on the lever. Instead, you can think of nothing more than how you got into this situation...

Until a week ago, you would not have thought anything was amiss. You sat in your cottage living room by the fire and listened to the *cracks* and *pops*. Sparks danced over the growing mound of ashes. The flickering flames threw shadows of your furniture, cat, and husband in chair rippling across the far wall. The cat batted a small red ball of yarn around. Your husband read silently. The look on his face conveyed nothing as usual. The book could have been a heart-wrenching tragedy or a satirical comedy. His face would not reveal any emotion, as if the words on the page had no effect on him.

You finished rolling another ball of yarn and set it in the basket to the side of your chair. It tumbled off the pile catching the feline's hungry eyes. Your cat pounced on the

new bigger orb leaving the other one he had spent so much time chewing at alone. It had a new toy to play with, so the old one no longer mattered. You sighed and reached for another floppy batch of yarn to rewrap in a tighter form.

After a few hours, your husband snapped the book closed over a ragged silk ribbon. He set the book aside on a rickety table and stood up. He arched his back which produced a *crack* louder than anything the fire had mustered all evening. He snatched his pocket watch off the mantle, put on his long coat and bowler hat, and departed. He never told you where he went, most likely to the tavern down the road for a pint or possibly for a night at the boxing ring gambling away his small professor's salary.

You crossed the room and grabbed the book he had just been reading. You leafed through it until you found the page where you had last left off. Then you sat down and munched away the time, lost in the words of the author. A few chapters later, the fire began to die. The cat, by that time, discovered the whole basket of yarn balls and assailed them with his teeth and claws until they all laid scattered about the dusty floor.

Late-night laziness settled on you. Rather than rekindle the flames, you set the book aside in its original position, snatched a quilt off the back of your husband's chair, and fell asleep. When you awoke the next morning, he was kneeling at the foot of the rocker. His hands were under the cover holding yours and stroking them tenderly. In unison, you stood up letting the colorful quilt cascade down to the floor, and you met him with an embrace. Neither of you said a word, and you never did find out what time he finally stole home.

Before long, the bells of the local university tolled ten times. Your husband once again donned his coat and hat over his best suit. Stuffing his graded papers under one arm, he left for work leaving you with a quick kiss on the cheek. You do not have a relationship with him of so many words, but just

feeling his lips on your smooth cheek is enough for you. That warmth that surged through your body when you felt his hand stroking yours to be the first sensation of the morning made you unconditionally fall for him every day.

After dressing, you headed into town with a few shillings and a list of groceries. You bought as much as you could for as little cost possible. As a professor, your husband does not make much, but money has never been an issue for the past ten years, and it was not problematic now.

The bustle of the market swept you away from your own reality. Like a cat burglar, you snuck into others' conversations, and when appropriate joined in with a casual, "I couldn't help but overhear. What's that you say?" At one point in the day, you eavesdropped on a romantic tale told by a voluptuous young woman. She stood outside a dress shop, that you never went into—you could never afford anything sold there anyways. She had bushy brown hair, and an angular face. It was practically perfect except for a large beauty mark on her cheek. Her slender frame seemed to melt into the breeze rocking this way and that like a willow tree. Her long red dress with gold embroidery was far too ostentatious for a marketplace, and it was *far* too V-shaped at the top to constitute decent attire to *ever* wear in public. In one word, a tramp, but the tramp had a good story. You looked past her physique and put your focus into her words.

She was in a heated discussion with who must have been a sister. The natural resemblance and similar wealth showed in her as well. "And so I said, 'I already own more wealth on one hand than you do in your whole bank vault. What could you possibly offer me?' And he replies with a kiss to my hand, 'I can offer that which money cannot: class, affection, and a life of endless romance.'"

You leaned against the window on the opposite side of the door pretending to count the wares in your bags that you had purchased. There was not much in there, though, so you

david sula

had to constantly be checking the same things so you could eavesdrop on the tramp's entire story.

You listened intently as she recounted her tale. "Last night, he climbed all the way up the lattice outside my bedroom window. I would have gladly answered the door, but he just adores romantic concepts. I was in my room enjoying the warmth of a new quilt I had bought. My heart raced when he tapped the window. He caught me off guard, and then I just laughed. I let him in, and he spent the whole night with me. We talked for hours, until I fell asleep. When I woke up this morning, he was gone, but he left a beautiful red rose on the pillow he had been using. He's just such a wonderful man with such an acute sense of romance. He knows how to make me feel special."

Before the tramp could continue, your head drooped, and you sauntered away. You knew that your husband never surprised you with any chivalry or romance. You were lucky to receive that kiss that morning. You thought back to this morning when you woke up with your hands in his. Surely that would have counted, but there were no words accompanying it. Over the last few weeks, the two of you barely spoke at all. For the longest time, just being together sufficed, but now you felt like this was nothing more than two people indifferent to each other living in the same house.

Fresh nagging doubt began to worm its way into the back of your skull, like Satan whispering pessimism into your ear. You could not recall the last time your husband even said, "I love you." What had your marriage come to, if even those three short words had become as rare as a star in the day time? The stars are always there, but during the day, you just cannot see them. Maybe, the love was there, but after ten years it was just being buried under the normalcy of life, and it just could not be seen. You hurried home and stored the things you purchased. The cat had gotten all tangled up in the new ball of yarn. You sighed and gently unwound the knotted

string. Eventually, you had to cut it off with a knife from the kitchen. The dumb cat stretched out each limb and scurried away. You dumped the remains of the wasted yarn in the trash bin, and stowed the knife into your apron pocket.

After an hour or so, your husband returned from teaching his classes. He nodded his head, more than he had acknowledged you in a while, and your heart sank. You wanted to wrap your arms around him and stroke his thin bony back, and kiss him, and tell him how much you loved him, but something held you back. The vocal estrangement, now that you noticed it, glued your feet to the floor. A selfish instinct took root, and you wanted *him* to come to *you* and prove his love to you. Instead he shuffled to his study to begin grading papers.

You started to cook dinner, grumbling in the silent room. Not even the cat would come near you. In fact it went back to what remained of the new ball of yarn. That yarn had gotten him all tangled up in a web of misfortune, and it went *crawling* back to it. You ate a tense meal with your husband. The only sounds were the clinks of silverware, glasses, and plates. The smells of the food did not reach your nostrils. If you had not made it yourself, you would not have known what you had eaten. You stared fixedly at the man across the table as he stared down at his food. A resentment builds. "Talk to me!" you wanted to scream, but instead you just clenched the handle of your fork tighter and jammed it into the roll on your plate. You thought, *Even that tramp at the market has romance in her life, why can't I?*

Your husband finished his food and excused himself. He mumbled briefly about a meeting with one of his students, and departed. You reached over across the table, grabbed his empty plate, and hurled it across the room. The ceramic dish shattered against the bricks of the fire place and rained white shards down on the lazy cat. You did not bother to check if the cat was alright. The stupid feline could have been dead,

or it could have continued clawing and nibbling at the ball of yarn not having noticed the plate pieces that cluttered around it. You grabbed your coat and followed your husband out the door.

Turning around on the dimly-lit street you spotted his form quickly disappearing around a corner. You picked up the hem of your dress and ran after him. You tried to call out to him, but your throat closed shut. Instead you followed the fleeing man always keeping a twenty foot distance from him. He twisted and turned along the cobble-stone streets. You wondered briefly, why he had not heard your clip-clopping footsteps, but he had been apparently too preoccupied with his destination to notice. At one point he stopped at a small stand and bought a large bouquet of red roses. During the transaction, you pressed yourself against an inlet to a shop doorway. You could not discern when following him became spying on him.

Finally, you came to a gigantic mansion. You followed him up the walk, taking huge strides in the grass as silently as possible. You ducked behind a thick tree, and he knocked on the front door. Peaking around you saw a young woman answer the door, and he handed her the bouquet. Your heart froze, and all your extremities went numb. You leaned against the tree to support your body of jelly, and you could barely catch your breath. Tears obscured your vision, which you wiped away with your sleeve. You heard the door close slowly. Then after a few minutes, you peaked around the tree again.

The entire house was dark except for one lit room on the first floor. Right in plain sight, in front of the window, you saw your husband and the woman in a tight embrace. Their faces were an inch away from each other. Then they kissed. You tried to scream, but you made no sound. Your legs gave out from under you, and you collapsed in the grass. Through the screen of rage and heart-wrenching despair, you attempted to rationalize this, but now you had heavy doubts

that this woman was a "student". But as you stared, there was no doubt that this was your husband, and the woman he held and caressed was none more than the tramp you overheard earlier today. You felt as though you were about to fall apart at the seams, and you wrapped your arms around yourself as if that would hold you together. One hand slipped through your unbuttoned coat and into the pocket of your apron, and your fingers tapped the handle of the knife from earlier. You grasped it, and drew it out. The light from the house reflected off the blade which made a light triangle dance on the trunk of the tree.

As if possessed you charged the front door and threw it open. You ran through the house until you found the only lit room, and you saw them on top of each other on the couch. Startled by the noise, they broke away and looked up in fear. The tramp glowered at you aghast. "Who are you? How dare you barge in here like this!" She stood up and approached you with a fist raised, but you shoved her against an expensive grand piano.

The cheating scoundrel wobbly rose to his feet. He put up his hands as if he were innocent. His face burned red, and he started babbling some excuse. You did not know what he said. You did not need to. The words did not matter anymore. All you had wanted were words, a simple conversation with the man you gave vows to, but now they held no meaning. For a few seconds you were no longer aware of your actions. The first thing you heard was the tramp's screams. Then your eyes pinpointed the red gash in his chest where his blood flowed out. You raised the bloody knife and stabbed again and again. Every pain he had inflicted on your once-honest heart you now matched physically to him tenfold.

By this time, the tramp was on the ground screaming and crying, completely hysterical. If she said anything, it would have been incomprehensible. You left your ex-husband's blood-drained corpse on the ground and leaned over the

woman who helped take him from you. This tramp had taken his romance, his words, his very essence from you. Your eyes were most likely wild now, and nothing in your field of vision registered anymore. You only saw red. Judging from the wide slashing motion you made with the arm and hand holding the blade, and the fact that her screams stopped suddenly, you were able to deduce what just happened.

You did not even realize you left the mansion or how much time had passed, but you looked up and saw the full moon in a different place than it had been when you left your home. Your fingers still firmly gripped the knife. Blood trickled down your hand, but it shook so much that it did not stay there long. You were a wreck, and you could not even remember your name or the name of the man who hurt you. Nothing registered...

Your second is nearly up. No matter how hard you concentrate you cannot remember how you ended up in prison. You do not know when you were apprehended, or who alerted the authorities about you. Everything from looking up at that full moon and half a second ago is just a blur. You wonder if your cat is still alive, or if you killed him either from the plate or afterwards. Is it still fondling that new ball of yarn while the old one rots in the basket? You look ahead at the throng gathered to watch the execution of a murderer. They all gaze with mad lust in their eyes. You give a quick smile, and your eyebrows contort to slants. This last second leaves you feeling oddly content with your revenge. You know that he deserved it. You would never be a man's second choice.

With your second up, the blade of the guillotine adds to the cut in the wooden stocks. All feeling in your body is zapped away, and all senses fade to black. Your ears will never hear the cheer of the crowd as your head tumbles down into a basket of red straw.



Square Up

Olivia Stemwell



Sit On It For Awhile

Abbey Meyer



Uptown Folk

Abbey Meyer



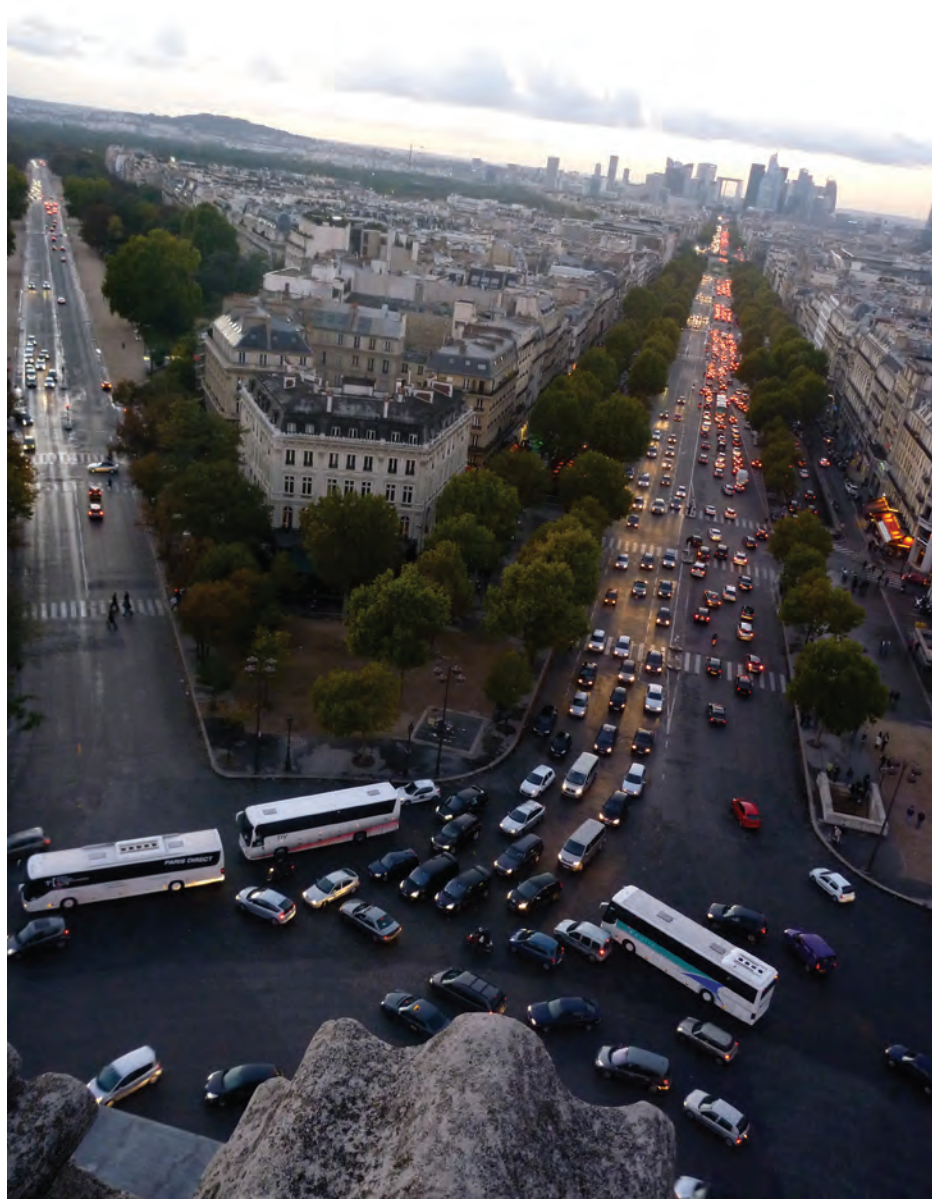
Bottoms Up

Margie Herzog



I Can Dig It!

Margie Herzog



Round-a-what?

Dannie Dolan



Pink Raindrops

Justyna Rybka



African Wisdom

Laurie Kenyon



Memory

Aaron Buelmann



For Corinna

Alison DeVries



Sculpture by the Mountain

Krista Schaefer



Through It Dimly

Aaron Bueltmann

held here

emily k. bahr

Blades of grass sprout between my toes
as I stand where the hill meets the ground.
I grow with the grass because I cannot move—
give me time, dirt will root me to this spot.

As I stand where the hill meets the ground,
sod and soil cascade, collect at my ankles.
Give me time, dirt will root me to this spot;
I need days to stop the avalanche after me.

Sod and soil cascade, collect at my ankles,
more falls and I'm held here holding it behind.
I need days to stop the avalanche after me—
To let anything go bodes badly. I'll be buried.

More falls and I'm held here holding it behind,
bigger and broader grows the load I cannot leave.
To let anything go bodes badly: I'll be buried,
I will. Make a change, lift one foot, run—where?

Bigger and broader grows the load. I cannot leave,
I grow with the grass. Because I cannot move,
I will make a change. Lift one foot, run, where
blades of grass sprout between my toes.



Subconscious

Nicholas Burrus



Untitled 13

Luetta Curtis

“ contributors’ notes

[**EMILY K. BAHR**] is a senior Creative Writing major from Bronxville, New York who isn’t exactly looking forward to leaving this place called Valpo, but yet she puts on her super suit when she has to. Unlike Superman, however, she bruises quite easily. Therefore, she will surround her life with words for they are much safer than things such as sticks and stones. As to her other abilities, she lacks super speed and heat vision. Her ability to fly is currently awaiting testing.

[**AARON BUELTMANN**] is a senior theology major.

[**NICHOLAS BURRUS**] is a senior Art and Harp Performance major. He has no idea what he’s doing this summer, but what he does know is that it shall involve a terrarium, a boat trip, growing arugula, collecting beetles, and probably a banjo. A steady job would be nice, too.

[**LUETTA CURTIS**] is a sophomore Art major with a focus in Photography. Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes, Art is knowing which ones’ to keep.

[**ALI DEVRIES**] is not Laurie Kenyon, contrary to popular belief. She is a senior International Service and French double major, a scarf enthusiast, francophile, and occasionally a taker of photographs. She is looking forward to being an expatriate and getting lost in as many countries as possible, since that’s how the best stories come about.

[**DANNIE DOLAN**] has the study abroad program, beauty of Europe, and Valpo’s incompetence with round-a-bouts to thank for her inspiration. Thanks for picking it :)

[**ETHAN GRANT**] : well you know the way an’ so I’ve come to the place where time must be movin’ along. How fair’s the farin’ forward. And still I’ve to find the finest thyme. I have mine, my daze and eye, and we’re but a motley few. What then. What dately words remain for me. The dusk is whydening shorely. April May June. And may October too. With himself the second month’s second. But bide me my mind on March, with mine

the second week and four. It does me well, I will it so. And saycred still that third week and two. Of one score: twelve. O yes, O hlafig lord. And however you sing, spring robin or wren, sing forever downward. Lead me there, away, away. Get on with you then. Scatter your bonewhite ash and ride. There are other worlds than this. Dawnward: There. Early: Ere. Away. Wafting. Where: ●

[**AUSTIN HILL**] is a distinguished crew member of the S.S. Salty Vessel. He is thankful for his friends and all the great times at Valpo over the past four years and is anxious to see what the future holds!

[**ADAM JACKSON**] : “Hello Lighter gang! I know I’ve said this at least 3 times, but it is official, this is my last contributor’s note. It has been a long 6 years here at Valpo but I wouldn’t change a thing, it has all been worth it. So thank you to everyone that chose my work, thank you to the Lighter staff, who I have seen change a couple times, and thank you to my wonderful girlfriend Olivia, you are my greatest supporter and inspiration, I love you. Goodbye Valpo, I bid thee well.”

[**JULIANA KAPETANOV**] is a junior studying English, with minors in Creative Writing, Spanish, and Classical Civilization. Her most valuable source of inspiration is everyday life experience. She wishes for her readers to know that “La mujer (The Woman)” was written for the hundreds of victims of female homicides in Ciudad Juárez.

[**LAURIE KENYON**] is full of wonder. She likes to tell stories about anything and everything, although they sometimes rank low on the Jeremy Reed scale. She is a senior International Service and Chemistry major who specializes in never sleeping, drinking coffee and using sarcasm very poorly. If you ask her about structural adjustment, she will talk really

fast and wave her arms around. As like most everything in her life, these pictures came about because something went quite wrong- like near-death hospital visits and fogged in early morning mountain peaks.

[**GREGORY MAHER**] : Onward, the road “thick with grit and dust and flies,” passing on and on and on, a stale word: “What is it to be at home Mr. Todd? -A lingering disillusion” echoing through my head. That is my purpose, onward ever; “never tranquil, seething out of my . . .”

[**KRISTEN MANSKI**] is a sophomore psychology major who enjoys playing soccer and being artistic.

“I’m [**ABBEY MEYER**]. I’m a photographer. I’m somewhat troubled by the fact that I don’t know how to calculate the shutter speed of my eyes when I blink. The contents of my camera bag are worth more than my car. The image library on my computer contains 230,000 photos of friends, family, and clients... and zero photos of me. When at a car dealership, I translate the price of a car in my head to ‘six Canon 5D Mark II’s.’ I watch the Sports Photographers more than the Sports. I am frequently greeted with, ‘What are you taking a picture of?!?’ instead of ‘Hello.’ My carry-on is heavier than your checked bags. Number of lenses > Pairs of shoes I own. When performing daily duties, I adjust the angle of my head or change my line of vision for a more interesting composition. I look at a desk full of homework assignments and wonder how I could photograph the stack. The images taken as a visual memo with my phone have a sophisticated composition. I have a camera strap tan-line. I think in f-stops and iso’s.”

[**KATHLEEN PARILAC**] is a senior Psychology major. When in the library, she has a habit of studying people instead of books; hence, the photo “Study Room.”

[**LIZ POWERS**] : People who have had only good experiences aren't very interesting. They may be content, and happy after a fashion, but they aren't very deep. It may seem a misfortune now, and it makes things difficult, but well - it's easy to feel all the happy, simple stuff. Not that happiness is necessarily simple. But I don't think you're going to have a life like that, and I think you'll be the better for it. The difficult thing is to not be overwhelmed by the bad patches. You mustn't let them defeat you. You must see them as a gift - a cruel gift, but a gift nonetheless.

[**JEREMY REED**] began both of his poems while studying in Mexico a year ago. He is now finished with his time at Valpo and as part of the Lighter. He would just like to give a big thank you to everyone.

[**MAGGIE RIVERA**] is excited to be welcomed back to the lighter for her second time. Hopefully you will be able to see her work again. Enjoy, and again, thank you.

[**EMILY ROYER**] might be any number of places next year. Wherever she ends up, there will be coffee, and that's enough stability for now. In the meantime, she's going to take a nice, long walk with some great people. Buen Camino.

[**JUSTYNA RYBKA**] is a senior psychology major from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She will be going to graduate school in the fall for Art Therapy. Things she enjoys are photography, painting, road trips, stars, animals, NES games, and McDonald's Coca-Cola.

[**KRISTA SCHAEFER**] is a senior who loves two subjects. Mountains. And Math. They both derive an infinite space on a steep slope with seemingly no upper bounds.

[**DEREK SCHNAKE**] hails from the world of journalism and only recently made his first forays into the realm of creative writing. His creativity comes from a drive to make beautiful things, regardless of medium or style.

[**KYLE SMART**] is a freshman Art/Psychology Major who wears bowties and thinks comic books are cool. They are cool.

[**OLIVIA STEMWELL**] is a senior who believes that the hippies are right. I also love Adam Jackson. Hope you enjoy my photos!

[**DAVID SULA**]: I am a creative writing major who thinks up ideas for stories and carries them out, and I've been doing this all my life. The idea for my short story "Second" was based on an idea that popped into my head that made me wonder, "How many designations of the term 'second' can I fit into a single story?"

[**MALLORY SWISHER**] : When I grow up, I want to be a dinosaur. A T-Rex actually. With a sunhat and a pet human named Kate.

[**CATE VALENTINE**] is only creative or funny by accident. This is why her contributor's note is disappointingly brief and dull.

Program Notes:

About Symphonie Meta:

"Perhaps it is music that will save the world." —Pablo Casals

About the Composer:

[**REBECCA WERNER**] *is a creative writing major. She has no authority or credentials to recommend herself other than her love of music.*

the lighter is currently accepting submissions for the fall 2012 edition at the.lighter@valpo.edu

