

# The Lighter

---

Volume 58  
Issue 2 *The Lighter Spring 2013*

Article 1

---

April 2013

## The Lighter Spring 2013

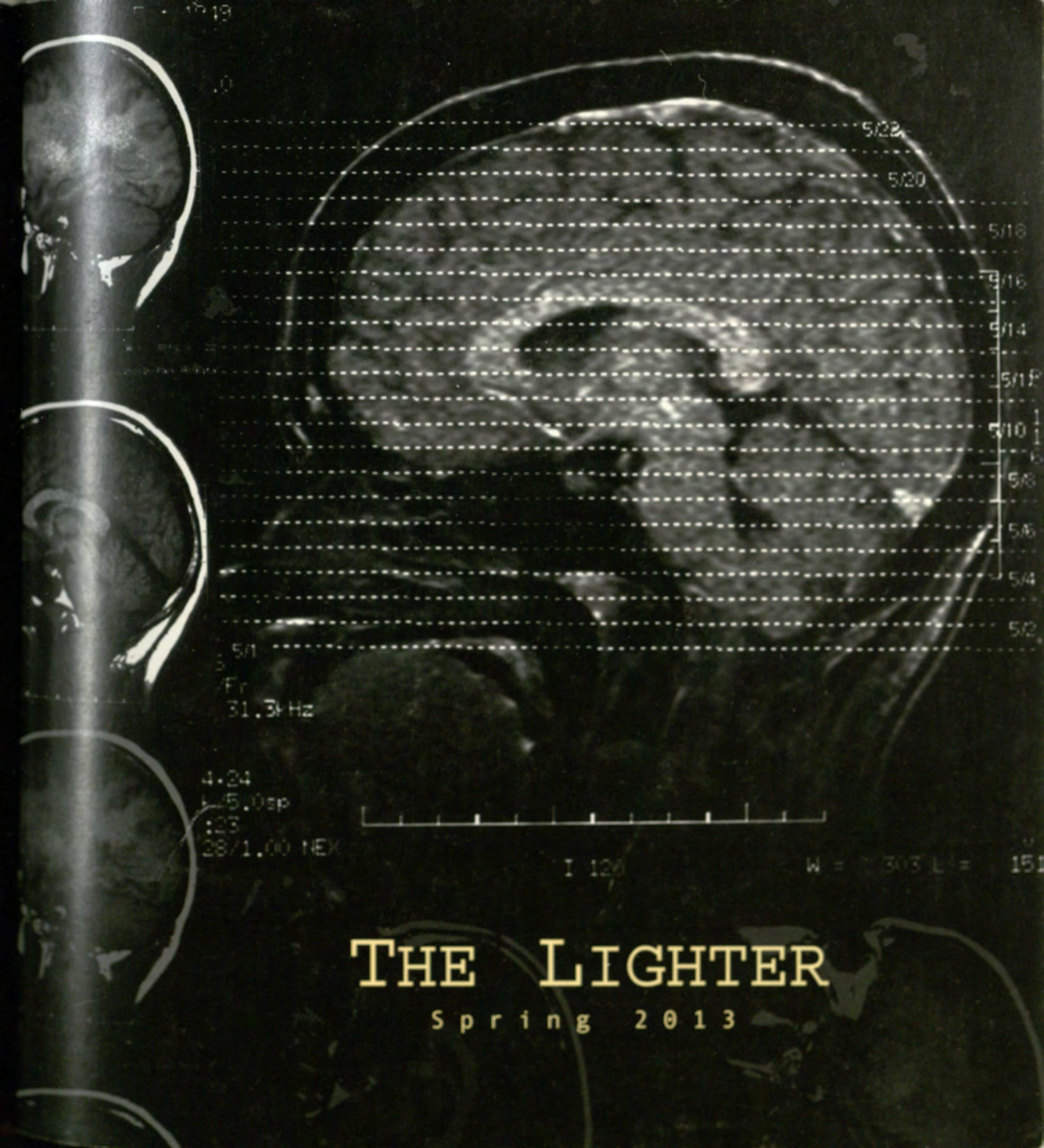
Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter>

---

### Recommended Citation

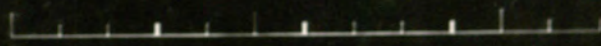
(2013) "The Lighter Spring 2013," *The Lighter*: Vol. 58 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter/vol58/iss2/1>

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](mailto:scholar@valpo.edu).



4.24  
L=5.0sp  
:23  
28/1.00 HEX

Fr  
31.3kHz



I 120

W = 303 L = 151

# THE LIGHTER

Spring 2013

t h e  
**L i g h t e r**

Spring 2013  
Volume Fifty - Eight  
Issue Two

Part of this publication may be reproduced in  
any way without written permission of the editor

The Lighter 2013  
Mountain Printing  
Paraiso, IN

# Acknowledgements

The Lighter staff would like to once again thank Allison Schuette for putting her best foot forward as an excellent faculty advisor. Thanks to Gregory Maher for his sharp ideas and assistance moving into this position after a semester in France, and to Michelle Zolfo for her artistic vision and long hours spent putting the issue together. A big thank you to our literary and art selection committees, and all the essential work they put in reading and critiquing the submissions we received. Thank you to all of our submitters, for that matter, as well as to Liz Wuerffel, for allowing us to pick her brain a little for the cover design.

---

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 Staff

Ian Roseen, Editor

Gregory Maher, Assistant Editor

Michelle Zolfo, Graphic Designer

## ART SELECTION COMMITTEE:

Abigayil Coffing  
Madison Conces  
Corwin Leverich  
Lauren Nickodemus  
Stefan Roseen  
Kyle Smart  
Lindsey Smith  
Sarah Tiemann

## LITERARY SELECTION COMMITTEE:

Abby Accettura  
Kayla Belec  
Carl Colvin  
Lysa Fisk  
Kate Guidera  
Angela Nickels  
Hannah Scupham  
Rebecca Szabo  
Joseph Weil  
Rebecca Werner  
Taylor Wiese  
Sierra Willett  
Travis Wittmann

# Table of Contents

| PAGE | CATEGORY  | TITLE                                                         | AUTHOR            |
|------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 6    | Interview | An Interview with Dinty W. Moore                              | Caitlin Carter    |
| 11   | Art       | Inkling                                                       | Andrea Zuniga     |
| 12   | Poetry    | Grass: the good stuff                                         | Rachel Shore      |
| 13   | Art       | Spoiled                                                       | Daniella Tipod    |
| 14   | Art       | Carnival                                                      | Andrea Zuniga     |
| 15   | Art       | The Dancer                                                    | Haylee Westendorp |
| 16   | Poetry    | National Bagmen                                               | Joseph Weil       |
| 19   | Art       | Who Turned Off the Telly?                                     | Andrea Zuniga     |
| 20   | Poetry    | A blackwhite woman in a black/white place                     | Mia Vivens        |
| 21   | Art       | Staring                                                       | Alanna Reid       |
| 22   | Art       | The Hunter                                                    | Brenda Brown      |
| 23   | Art       | A Self Portrait                                               | Mallory Swisher   |
| 24   | Prose     | He's Just a Boy                                               | Hannah Bauer      |
| 27   | Art       | The Lighthouse                                                | Aaron Wegner      |
| 28   | Art       | Titans                                                        | Kevin Fedde       |
| 29   | Poetry    | Greyhound                                                     | Gregory Maher     |
| 30   | Poetry    | Ana                                                           | Caitlin Carter    |
| 31   | Art       | Untitled                                                      | Michelle Zolfo    |
| 32   | Prose     | Red Hands                                                     | Lauren Nickodem   |
| 38   | Art       | Ruins                                                         | Kyle Jackson      |
| 39   | Art       | Near the Portal                                               | Kyle Jackson      |
| 40   | Poetry    | Yellow Rain Boots                                             | Samantha Wilgus   |
| 41   | Art       | Self Portrait                                                 | Lindsey Smith     |
| 42   | Art       | Florid Fusion                                                 | Marcus Mues       |
| 43   | Poetry    | The Blues                                                     | Carl Colvin       |
| 44   | Prose     | A Family on their lawn one Sunday<br>in Westchester, NY, 1968 | Ian Roseen        |
| 47   | Art       | Man of Meat                                                   | Meredith McKay    |
| 48   | Poetry    | The spring and summer before basic<br>training, 2004          | Joseph Weil       |
| 49   | Art       | You Are Always On Our Minds                                   | Juliana Kapet     |

|         |                                      |                   |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Poetry  | Awake with Clovis                    | Gregory Maher     |
| Art     | Darkness                             | Kevin Fedde       |
| Poetry  | To Encompass with All My Might!      | Alexander Uryga   |
| Art     | Millie                               | Michelle Zolfo    |
| Poetry  | Resistance                           | Lauren Nickodemus |
| Poetry  | Creaks and Breaks                    | Carl Colvin       |
| Art     | Black Leather Shoes with Fading Rose | Aaron Wegner      |
| Prose   | The Restaurant                       | Hannah Bauer      |
| Art     | 3D Me                                | Marcus Mues       |
| Poetry  | Part the Foam                        | Juliana Kapetanov |
| Poetry  | Edwardsburg                          | Joseph Weil       |
| Art     | City Connections                     | Andrea Zuniga     |
| Prose   | #friends                             | Hannah Bauer      |
| Art     | Whisper                              | Alanna Reid       |
| Prose   | Wraith                               | Madeline Bartsch  |
| Art     | Golden                               | Kevin Fedde       |
| Art     | El Hombre                            | Lydia Hawkins     |
| Poetry  | On the Changing of Day, Time         | Gregory Maher     |
| Art     | Baby Snatchers                       | Aaron Wegner      |
| Art     | Hellen                               | Brenda Brown      |
| Poetry  | Possession                           | Kelsie Dykstra    |
| Art     | Necessary Now                        | Angelica Jackson  |
| Art     | Pointe                               | Mallory Swisher   |
| Art     | On the Edge of Destruction           | Corwin Leverich   |
| Poetry  | Room of Dreams                       | Lauren Nickodemus |
| Wrap Up | Contributor Notes                    | Lighter Personnel |

# An Interview with Dinty W. Moore

CAITLIN CARTER

Dinty W. Moore is the author of many books, including the memoir *Between Panic and Desire*, *The Mindful Writer*, and the craft book *Crafting the Personal Essay*, along with textbooks and other nonfiction titles. He has been published in *The Southern Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Harpers*, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Utne Reader*, and *Crazyhorse*. He also is the head editor for the magazine *Brevity*, which publishes very short creative nonfiction pieces, such as personal essays, along with craft essays and book reviews. He lives in Athens, Ohio, and currently teaches and directs the Creative Writing program at Ohio University. Moore did a reading from *Between Panic and Desire* at Wordfest this spring. Before this event, he did an interview with students Caitlin Carter and Ian Roseen.

**Caitlin Carter:** On your website, you mentioned you had some interesting-sounding jobs, like being a zookeeper. Could you tell us a little bit more about that?

**Dinty Moore:** I was a zookeeper in high school and one of the summers in college. Really what I was was one of the kids who got hired to paint fences at the zoo as a summer job, but they hired about ten kids that summer and nine of them went off in the woods and smoked dope all day, and I actually painted fences, so the director of the zoo said, "Wow this kid's actually reliable, he shows up on time and he does the work," so he gave me a little more responsibility. Then the following year when I got hired

on again I was sort of the substitute zookeeper. There were two zookeepers who took care of the big cats, so when one of them went on vacation I filled in for him and was the assistant to the other big cat zookeeper and when the zookeeper who took care of the monkeys and the primates went on vacation, I would cover over. I got to spend a lot of time around the animals and learn a lot about how the animals behave, especially when people are around. The zoo is a very different place in the morning and at night than it is during the day when all the kids are running through with popcorn boxes and balloons.

**CC:** Do you have any good stories from that time?

**DM:** There was a female gorilla that fell in love with me, *laugh*. Literally. I mean, I don't understand human love and affection. I certainly don't understand gorilla/primate love and affection but most of the zookeepers were like old men and I was a 19-year-old high school or college kid, whatever that means in terms of animal chemistry. It got to the point where the head of the department had to say I couldn't go in that building any more because the monkey would go crazy when I walked into the building in whatever seemed like an affectionate way. Her name was Samantha.

**CC:** Did this job or the other jobs you mentioned online affect your writing at all? Have they shown up?



**M:** Yeah. The honest answer is that when I was between the ages of 22 and 30 I thought I was the biggest loser on earth because I couldn't figure out what I wanted to do. I kept bouncing around and I used to mock myself for being sort of good at a lot of things but not really good at any one thing. Those are angst-ridden years for a lot of people, but it was especially for me, and I know that. I was failing by doing this thing for eight months and then that thing for a year and a half and something else for a year and then this for three years. But as you get older and wiser you look back, and I'm really glad I did this with my 20s because it was interesting, I learned a lot, I had a lot of experiences other people didn't have, and as a writer I have all that material. I just wrote a piece about being a zookeeper a few months ago, even though that was 30 years ago in my life.

**C:** When did you start getting into and experimenting with creative nonfiction?

**M:** It was the mid 1990s, when I was 30, when I got serious about writing. It was about 1995 roughly that I started to hear more and more people talking about this thing called creative nonfiction. I tried my hand at it and to me it's the same thing as fiction, it's shaping a story, solving a narrative puzzle. But you're using very different puzzle pieces to solve that narrative puzzle if you're a nonfiction writer, so I kind of enjoyed that process. The puzzle was fascinating to me, and one thing led to another and I do that almost exclusively, that nonfiction part. It just seems like the puzzle I wake up in the morning wanting to solve.

**C:** Do you miss fiction at all?

**M:** I don't miss it. I'm the sort of person who'd like to do everything. (laughter) I'd like to have my own radio show, I'd like to own a restaurant. If I didn't have to sleep, or the day were longer, I would write fiction and nonfiction and probably learn how to

write poems better. I'm a curious person, and I love figuring new stuff out. So, I miss it in the sense that it was enjoyable, but you can only do so many things in your life, and I'm getting plenty of challenge thrown at me from the nonfiction writing so I'm happy with it.

**CC:** You kind of touched on this earlier, but is there anything you really like about the genre of creative nonfiction that other genres don't do, or is there anything you don't like about it?

**DM:** I don't like the name. I think creative nonfiction is a problematic name, because people are always saying, "Do you make it up? How can it be nonfiction?" The best answer I've heard is from a fellow named Phil Gerard who said the nonfiction means it's true and the creative is how you arrange it—where do you start the story, which parts of it do you tell in what order, where do you end the story.

**CC:** (laughs) I have trouble explaining that to people all the time. Why would you say creative nonfiction is important?

**DM:** Because creative nonfiction tells true stories, whether it's something that happened to the author, or something that the author learned about. There's a certain power in a true story that's a different kind of power than a fictional story. But they're both very powerful and I don't know that you can ever decide that one's better than the other.

**CC:** Last semester I was in a creative writing class with Professor Schuette, and we had a section on creative nonfiction in which we read parts of your book, *Between Panic and Desire*. I was wondering what prompted you to keep switching formats for each chapter. Was that tough to keep going, or did you ever get stuck in the middle?

**DM:** Yes, yes to both of those. *(laughter)* It was tough to keep it going, and I got stuck repeatedly, but of course that's part of being a writer—you get stuck and you just work it, work it until you get out of that stuck place. I had written some more conventional books and essays of nonfiction and I just got fascinated with experimenting with form. Poets and fiction writers do it all the time, but there was a movement of experimental fiction in the 1980s and 90s exploring can a story be told in a laundry list, can a story be told in a recipe, as a police report, so I sort of saw the fiction writers and other nonfiction writers starting to play and I thought, "let's play with how can a true story be told." I played with what can you do with a true story to make it to change the bottle, the shape of the bottle the water is in (the water being the story) but still holds the water, so I started playing with that in the essay form the shorter form and then got a bunch of them together and said maybe there's a book in here. I started putting the book together and then a challenge I gave myself was to come up with a different form for just about every chapter in there.

**CC:** You have a couple threads running through the whole book, like Richard Nixon, and the relationship with your father. Those are really useful because they make the book cohesive even though you're always flipping formats. Were those conscious threads in the beginning or did they come together on their own?

**DM:** I was conscious of very little at the beginning. To me, writing, whether it's a ten-page piece or a book length piece, you start with a few questions—things you're going to explore on the page. The word theme is a little too heavy, but the themes and the questions change over time. As you start to write you discover, "I thought this was interesting but actually this other thing over here is actually more interesting; I didn't even realize I was going to write about that but it is actually more interesting than what the chapter was suppose to be about." So to me it's always a process of changing your mind and saying, "Well, this fits and this fits and

this fits, but now *that* doesn't fit anymore." I think I knew from the outset that the relationship with my father was going to be an important part of the book, and I knew popular culture was, but I don't think I realized till part way through that Nixon was going to be a recurring character of sorts. Once I realized I was writing about that period of my life—1960s, mostly the 1970s, 80s, and 90s—Nixon, Watergate, and the Beatles were part of the fabric of my life, and I discovered that in the writing process.

**CC:** Any advice for aspiring nonfiction writers?

**DM:** My first bit of advice is that you have to be really curious about things. Wake up in the morning and say, "I'm curious about things. I want to learn more about..." There's not enough time to learn about everything but if you're the sort of person who, as you're wandering around Valparaiso University and you hear stuff going on in classrooms, says, "Huh, I'd like to learn some more about that someday," even if you never get around to it, that's sort of the writer's engine—curiosity. My other piece of advice which many, many writers will give you is write some things, learn from your mistakes, write some more things, learn from your mistakes, keep trying to get better, read other writers and try to learn on the page what they're doing and when you see something that really works well, ask yourself, "How did that writer do that what did she did?" If you see a writer do something that really didn't work, think, "What did that writer do that made that not work? How can I avoid that?" Then write some more stuff and send it out to magazines when you think it's ready. It's old advice, but it's true—you put one step in front of the other and you keep trying new things and eventually something pops. There's no magic bullet or easy answer. Which is true of all things in life that are worth doing.

**CC:** What writing projects are you working on currently?

**DM:** I've got a couple of shorter essays I'm working on. I'm always hesitant to say I have a book because maybe I'll get halfway through it and realize it's not going to work. (laughter) But I'm working with a book right now called *Dear Mr. Essay Writer Guy*, which is a series of questions from other writers posed to me, mostly tongue in cheek, about what is the essay. I either respond directly to the question or with an essay but the book itself. The book is exploring the different ways an essay can go. I did an essay on Google maps, I'm working on a video essay. I'm trying some additional formal experiments with how can the essay be pushed in this direction or that direction. I have a long range project that's a book about religion and how those concepts have shaped not just religion but really society. Most everything in our story is sort of shaped by religion, but religion is sort of shaped by these ideas of heaven and hell, and I'm sort of fascinated how that acts as human beings because of what I think is a myth. It's a religious story that's very powerful but I'm not sure there's really a place called heaven or a place called hell that you could drive to. I think the universe is much more complicated than that. But there are such powerful shaping forces. I don't know if I can ever finish that book. It sounds like a very serious book, and I'll probably end up having some fun with it—I tend to write about serious things with a comic edge. I don't know if I'll ever solve that one, but I've been playing with it for about four years now. I've written some pieces of it and I want to finish it, but I keep getting distracted by other things. Or maybe I'm afraid of it because it's such a complicated story to tell.

**Roseen:** I know you've also written textbooks on writing. So, for you, how does writing a textbook on writing differ in terms of style from writing other nonfiction?

**DM:** Writing a textbook or a craft book is very different. In a textbook or craft book you still discover things, but the questions are more set in place from the beginning. When I wrote *Between*

*Panic and Desire*, for instance, I kind of knew I was going to talk about my life, and how the things that happened in my life shaped me, but that's a pretty wide-open idea. That's what all memoirs are about. But I discovered things along the way. In a textbook, you kind of know you're going to begin with defining the genre ("What is nonfiction?"), and then you're going to look at the various elements, like how does characterization work, or what persona is. So the structure, where the book is going to go and what it's going to answer are pretty set in stone. But it's still in the writing of it I discovered and was able to articulate things about how the writing process works that I didn't know I knew or couldn't articulate previously.

**CC:** In *The Mindful Writer* you talk a little bit about the relationship between Buddhism and your writing. Could you tell us more about that?

**DM:** I was raised Catholic, I went to Catholic school for 12 years. But I became a lapsed Catholic, didn't know what I believed for years, and got serious about Buddhism about 15 or 20 years ago. There's a lot of debate about whether Buddhism even is a religion, and I'm not sure that it is. It's a series of ways to think about your life and your problems, and if you learn to think that way you can reduce the amount of suffering or dissatisfaction you have. You can't control what life throws at you, but you can control your reaction to it, and in controlling that you end up spending less time struggling. It's not clear how it's affected my writing. One of the themes I came with in *The Mindful Writer* is that I don't know that Buddhism changed me so much as a writer as the writing and the artistic process opened me up to the idea of Buddhism, which is about asking questions. If somebody says something and it sounds true, then what an artist does is say, "Well, it sounds good and it sounds true, but is it really true?" Then you explore things, so there's a connection there between Buddhism and the artistic process that I tried to talk about in that book.

**CC:** So you'd say it's more like a dialogue, Buddhism and your writing?

**DM:** Yeah, definitely.

**CC:** Are you still discovering ways that they interact?

**DM:** Yeah. First of all, I'm still discovering things about writing. It's not something you spend three years learning how to do and then you're good at it; every time you try to write something different it's another problem to solve, so you have to relearn or learn something new or find a new way of approaching it. So I'm still learning a lot about writing and a lot of Buddhism. I'm still learning a lot about life. It's a really complicated thing, being alive. It's fascinating and complicated and a real puzzle.



Inkling | Andrea Zuniga

# Grass: the good stuff

RACHEL SHORE

Sweater vests climb poles  
Yellow crayons die old  
Kangaroos lack thyme  
Here is a magic rhyme!

Books flap jackets brown  
Pancakes on the ground  
Zebra cakes by the pound  
A rhyme you have found!

But terror and tea kettles lurk in the curtains  
And widgets and waggets are always uncertain  
So brissle your bracket  
And frankel your fracket  
Type out the prodock  
And fane the modock  
For tomorrow we must and we will!

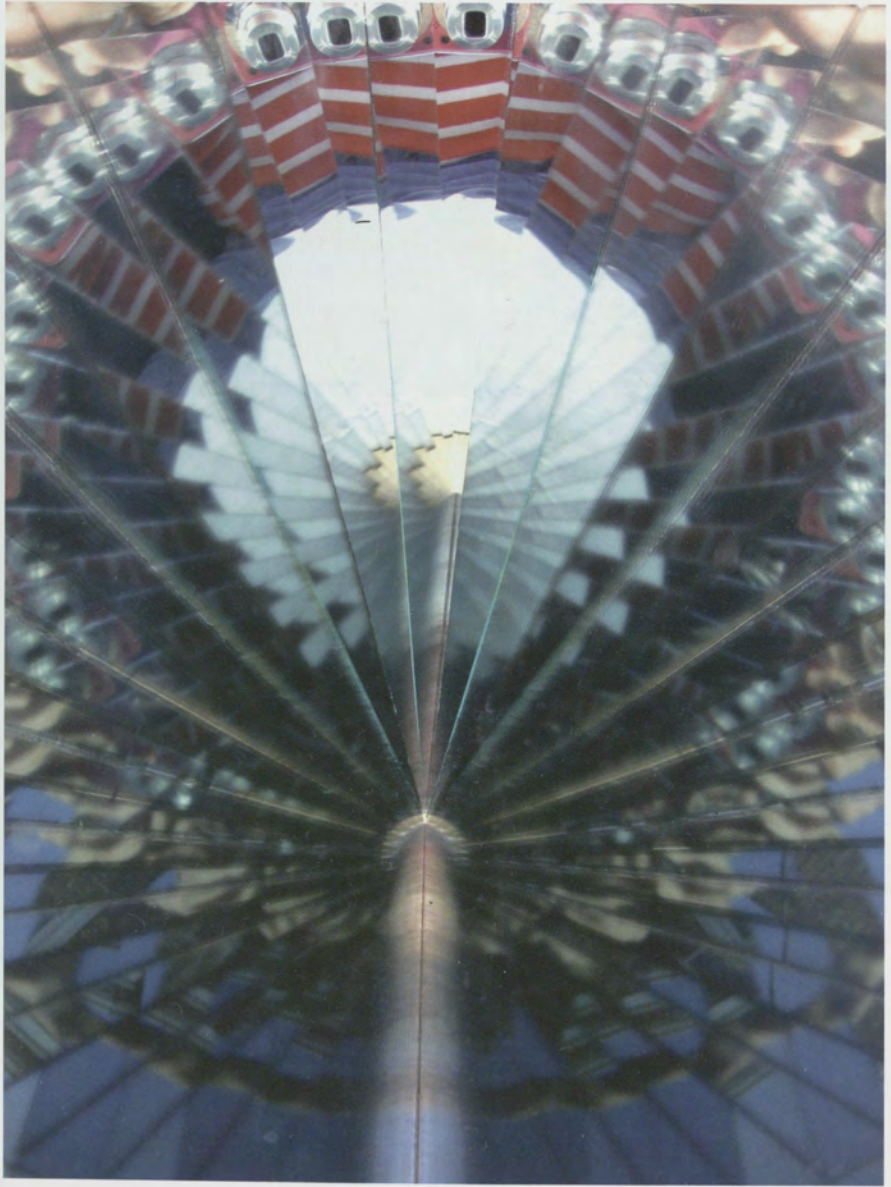
Clocks bend finger -  
(Discovery! all things are pliable)

Light

Luminous kite  
Soft wind and a flight  
I love you, goodnight!



Spoiled | Daniella Tripodis



Carnival | Andrea Zuniga





The Dancer | Haylee Westendorf

# National Bagmen

JOSEPH WEIL

Fuzzzzzzzz.

Alone with the tv on mute.

We are the bag boys

The night school guys

Watching Black Hawk Down

At home

With the homeboys

And again in basic

With the squad bros

Our hair is chopped

Our civvie clothes

Bagged in plastic

National bagmen

We the few

Tip of the spear

Finger tips

The broken fingernails of society

Paid a penny in the harbor

Shipping out

A penny in Benning

It's a choice

Crime

To maraud in the desert

So we're ready

Loaded

One million marching

In training

Ready for poison gas

Ready for germs

Ready for nukes

Ready for readiness

Duffels packed

Waiting for

Our ghost dance

In Iraq

We the bagmen have come

To collect

Yet we do

Not know what

You owe us

No one here is good at his job

We take our cut

And stare at full bloody sacks

With dry empty sockets

Bagmen

Hammered on

Pass in El Paso streets

We are lustful like our wives and exes  
Who sleep around when we die  
Or don't die  
Marriages are armored joint bank accounts  
We tell our girls to bring home  
Whatever  
Or whomever they like  
We say unwrap your toys  
We're glad you're all happy  
Girls  
Glad you  
Bagged those  
Boys and toys

We are flat  
Like our grocery bags once were  
Flat as Anbar  
Flat as the near-beer  
Flat as hajji bread  
She's flat, no tits  
The desert fox  
Caught the flat trajectory of a bullet  
A flatliner  
Flat and stiff as a board  
Laid up  
Bagged up  
Boxed up on the C-130  
Dead and alive wait dead en route  
We all die on military time

Bagmen on the fob  
We have come to collect  
Stalking a bad guy  
In Sadr City slums

The demigod does the drift  
The Angel of Death of the Digital Age  
Our one-eyed bird nailed him in his car  
He was an average guy in sweats and Asics  
Good in Iraq  
Bad in America  
A Hellfire tore him apart  
Like an atom in a particle collider  
We bagged our first kill with Windows 2000

Bagmen in the streets  
Driving fast  
That lady in the black hijab is gone  
Those pretty eyes are gone  
Black eyeliner  
Blue eyeliner  
Long lashes  
The lady with the almond eyes  
She must have been something under the hijab  
Long legs and so fine  
She blew herself up  
Or got blown up  
She blew up  
Her clumps of naked in a shovel  
There were not enough body bags  
She was tossed  
Into a trash bag

National bagmen  
Shipping back  
Back to the harbor  
After bagging unknowns  
All the unknown Iraqi dead  
We know our dead

We brought them all home  
Bagpipes for our dead  
We have five-hour long dinners  
And doggie-bag it all  
We can't eat the burgers  
The burgers are the same  
The meat is not the same  
We bag girls at the bar  
And drive home half-in-the-bag

We unload our duffel-bags  
And drink malt liquor  
In brown paper bags  
We watch Black Hawk Down  
In empty barracks  
In empty houses  
We are dead men and  
Boys growing older  
Alone with the tv on mute.

Fzzzzzzzz.



Who Turned Off the Telly? | Andrea Zuniga

# A blackwhite woman in a black/white place

MIA VIVENS

i know sometimes in my walking  
my talking & my touching & my breathing  
that there is something about this place that isn't right

"so you're like white, right?" she asks  
and i SCREAM  
i SCREAM out to my brother--  
take me back across the water- please!  
i am your daughtersdaughtersdaughtersdaughter

my brother, he refuses  
and so i dive desperately off the edge  
and when i reach the other side  
i am washed white  
white-washed and my people  
--they don't even know who i am  
save a white woman from across the water  
I carry light-skinned (white) privilege on my back  
like a burden

i am you! i beg  
don't you know me?  
i am your daughtersdaughtersdaughtersdaughter  
no- i know i don't look like you  
but don't you see:

this is where my skin was to be dark, like you  
where my lips were full like yours  
my hips, love, like yours  
my hands, worn, like yours  
i am you- i promise my sister  
and you- you are me  
"you don't see?"  
"no?" "then i'll go."

I wade back into the water  
but now that I've gone,  
i can't go back  
so i float--naked  
and think OH! With a sharp pang in my chest

OH! (pang) my skin, neither here, nor there/  
OH! (pang) i don't belong anywhere  
OH! (pang) i belong to the floating place

yellow skin  
on blue water  
blackwhite woman  
whiteblack woman  
yellowbrown woman  
floating on the water, with no where to go



Staring | Alanna Reid



The Hunter | Brenda Brown





A Self Portrait | Mallory Swisher

# He's Just a Boy

HANNAH BAUER

## Aaron

A memory that may be a dream, in the church playground, while our parents were off learning Biblical matters, I fell. I fell—or maybe I jumped—from the top level of the large play structure. You didn't catch me, but you did kiss me.

## P.J.

You told me that girls were not as good as boys, so I held your arm behind your back until you said that wasn't true. On the playground, with the multi-colored rocks shades of blue and grey and purple, beneath my feet, beneath your knees; by the multi-level bars where my brother chipped off half his tooth, there you knelt until I let you go. You ran away, my friends snickered.

## Chase

We sat by one another in the risers for the Christmas play. It was fifties themed and I wore a pink, felt poodle skirt with saddle shoes. I don't remember what you wore, but I remember we sat close to one another. When the dress rehearsal dragged on as the older kids said their lines you leaned forward, resting your head in your hands, your elbows on your knees. As daring as a little girl could be, I draped my arm over your back and leaned on you, resting my head. You didn't flinch or move. However, we were quickly told not to slouch during the performance. The next day P.J. teased us, saying we had had sex. I hit him and pretended to be offended, but really I had no idea what he was talking about.

## P.J.

We played with scooters that day in gym, you were wearing a black t-shirt. Someone, probably one of my friends, had told me that I liked you. It was true, of course, but I was still furious. Then you asked me out, whatever that means, but I thought you were teasing me. Preparing to laugh when I said yes, so I said I didn't believe you. You asked again, asking what you could do to prove you were serious. I instructed you to yell it across the playground. You took off, running past the swings, past the brightly colored plastic slides, past the old metal slide with the chipping paint, all the way to the basketball hoops. I stayed, huddled in the wooden play structure as I heard you yell, as loud as you could, "I LOVE YOU HANNAH BAUER." So when you got back I told you yes, you beamed.

That night I told my dad. He told me I was too young to date. I "dumped" you the next day.

## Aaron

They were selling flowers as a fundraiser. You spent your dollar on one. Then you handed it to me. It was the first flower I'd ever received from a boy. Too embarrassed for my family to see, I broke the emerald stem off; leaving only the red rosebuds that had not even begun to open. I put it in my pocket and smiled the whole walk home. I dried and framed it.

## Brian

You said you were going to call me at 7. At 7:23 I was too upset to bear being in the quiet house, where the phone sat in

its cradle. I went outside, into the cold October air to swing on the small swingset in our front yard. I may have cried, I don't remember. But I wasn't out there long until my mother stuck her head out the front door, "Hannah! Phone for you!" I ran, hard, as fast as I could, to the front door. We talked for hours, it felt like magic.

Six weeks later you told me we didn't have enough chemistry. I sat by the pine green power box outside the cafeteria and cried.

### **Aaron**

You came with me to my Sadie Hawkin's dance. I'd known you longer than anyone else. We ran up and down the dimly lit hallway, butcher block paper covered the lights and crepe paper decorations dangled from the rectangular ceiling block. I showed you my locker, my classrooms. Then we danced in the old gym of my high school, as new couples made out around us, we just held each other close and talked. Your hands were on my waist, resting on the top of my jeans, my wrists clasped one another behind your fuzzy neck. I looked at you closely, examining the semblance of a beard, the already receding hair line, your always red cheeks.

You told me that you liked me, but that you didn't want to date in high school.

You said that you would wait for me, and when you were ready, we would be together.

### **Aaron**

You asked her out, I guess you were ready. She showed up a day after Sunday School, in the hallway with the blank white walls and the unflattering fluorescent lights. She was in her Sunday finest, you were in whatever. You kissed her right there in front of me. My throat dried and no words could escape. I turned on my heel and walked down the hallway, not taking my eyes off the teal checkered carpet.

### **Ethan**

If you hadn't been six years older than me, maybe it could have worked. We talked on IM into the wee hours of the morning. You wrote me poetry that made me blush to read it. When you asked me on a date, I answered honestly, "I would love to, but my dad would kill me. Or more likely, he would kill you."

### **Aaron**

In the back seat of the white fifteen passenger van, in the seat designed for four people, we lay together unbuckled as the leader drove us through the night. You let me pick the movie and then you drew me up against you, your hand on my thigh.

At the next rest stop you held my hand as we leaned up against the van. "How long have you guys been dating?" one of the freshman asked.

"We aren't," you responded. You dropped the subject and I slipped my hand out of yours as I rolled my eyes, and went to use the bathroom.

### **Aaron**

"I like you, I've always liked you," you said, as I relaxed on your bed late at night, or early in the morning, depending on how you look at it. And as I laid sprawled there, in the silence that stretched between us like ten long years of heartbreak. I waited for you to make a move, thinking our feelings were aligned. Instead of doing anything, you decided it was time for bed. Longing for more, I resisted leaving and giggled as you tried to pull back your covers. "I don't want to have sex with you tonight, Hannah," you said, matter-of-factly. My jaw dropped and I left angry and confused.

### **Unknown**

My brain felt scratched of ideas, concepts, emotions. They used to pour from me, but after they came too often, my mind was sucked dry. Empty nights wet the mind temporarily, until

the nights disappeared from my memory, and I learned of them second hand, often from my friends the morning after. I didn't know you, any of you, but sometimes I get flashes. A room with many couches. A lot of people on a dance floor. A bedroom floor. Empty kisses, just kisses, taught me to let go.

### Aaron

Your lies ate at me for years. They kept me from letting in anyone else, for fear of what they would find when they opened me up. The biggest mistake I ever made was believing anything you said.

You said you were waiting for me.

You weren't.

You never were.

You will always let me fall.

Now I'm letting go.

### Zach

"You know, Hannah, Zach is a good Lutheran boy..." Jason had told me. I ignored him, knowing that my brother's set ups usually don't go so well. So when I went to the graduation party of twins in my brother's youth group, I was surprised to find you there. The log cabin reception hall held the majority of my brother's congregation and music played, nondescript, in the background. Your black t-shirt hung off your back and your green eyes followed me around the room. You snapped pictures of my niece sitting on my lap.

### Zach

You came to church the next day, even though it was pouring; but being the pastor's sister, you knew I would be there. We waited for the rain to let up, so we chatted in the narthex. You tried to ask me to coffee, but couldn't get the words out. Luckily, Jason invited you over. When you didn't see much of me then, you had Jason ask me to a Bible study. I said no. But you came

over anyway, to try to convince me to go. When I still said no, you stayed and we played Mario Party. A few days later you asked me to go hiking, I said yes.

### Aaron

Eventually Zach told me he loved me. And he told me his secrets. So I told him about you. I told him about the way you hurt me, how I wasn't sure I'd be able to love right with my heart as abused as you had made it. Zach didn't say anything, just pulled me closer to him, and kissed me. Suddenly I thought of the wooden playground at the church nursery, where I may have fallen, and I may have kissed you. Then I remembered my last visit home, when I saw they had torn it down, and in its stead stood a much smaller, green, plastic set of slides, with barriers around the top to keep kids from jumping off. Zach held me in silence while I remembered the play structure, he held me as I finally began to rebuild.

### Zach

We spent the summer in the water, jumping, diving, jetskiing, tubing, boating. We spent the summer on the beach, competing to see who could count the most shooting stars. I always wanted to see the most, even though I knew your wishes were for me. At four A.M. we would finally fold our blankets and I'd drive you home. You'd kiss me and tell me to drive safe.

### Zach

I remember the first time you caught me. From the bottom step, I jumped onto your back and you immediately hooked your arms around my legs. You carried me to my bed and set me down, gently. I know your embrace so well, the anticipation lingers in my veins as I go to bed alone tonight. The memories of me in your arms, on a couch, on a hard dock chair, on a blanket atop millions of grains of soft sand, the memories become my dreams.



The Lighthouse | Aaron Wegner



Titans | Kevin Fedde

# Greyhound

GREGORY MAHER

I've never seen one of those  
ancient steel shuttles,  
pounding through winter deserts  
like some dark angel,  
snow turned slick-grey-brown  
under mile-weary treads

in the window, I would sit,  
peering  
through squared-off  
ports, fixated on  
a desert black, obsidian  
softened by 2 grainy lights

And we'd thunder on  
through the night,  
snow tingeing the sky, melting white  
into the darkness, brushing  
down along the graceful  
petals of sand, nebulous  
in the gaping twilight

# Ana

CAITLIN CARTER

*Ana-noun*

*1. a collection of miscellaneous information about a particular subject, person, place, or thing*

*2. an item in such a collection, as an anecdote, a memorable saying, etc.*

The little facts about you

pile up.

Frankly,

I've become a hoarder

of details: miscellaneous,

meaningless,

mesmerizing.

The milk in your tea;

the scar on your temple;

your wealth of trivia, in itself

an ana of ana.

I concentrate,

putting the facts into file folders-

mentally, of course-

steadily building

a picture. A puzzle.

But there are holes.

Points on a plane

with no graph,

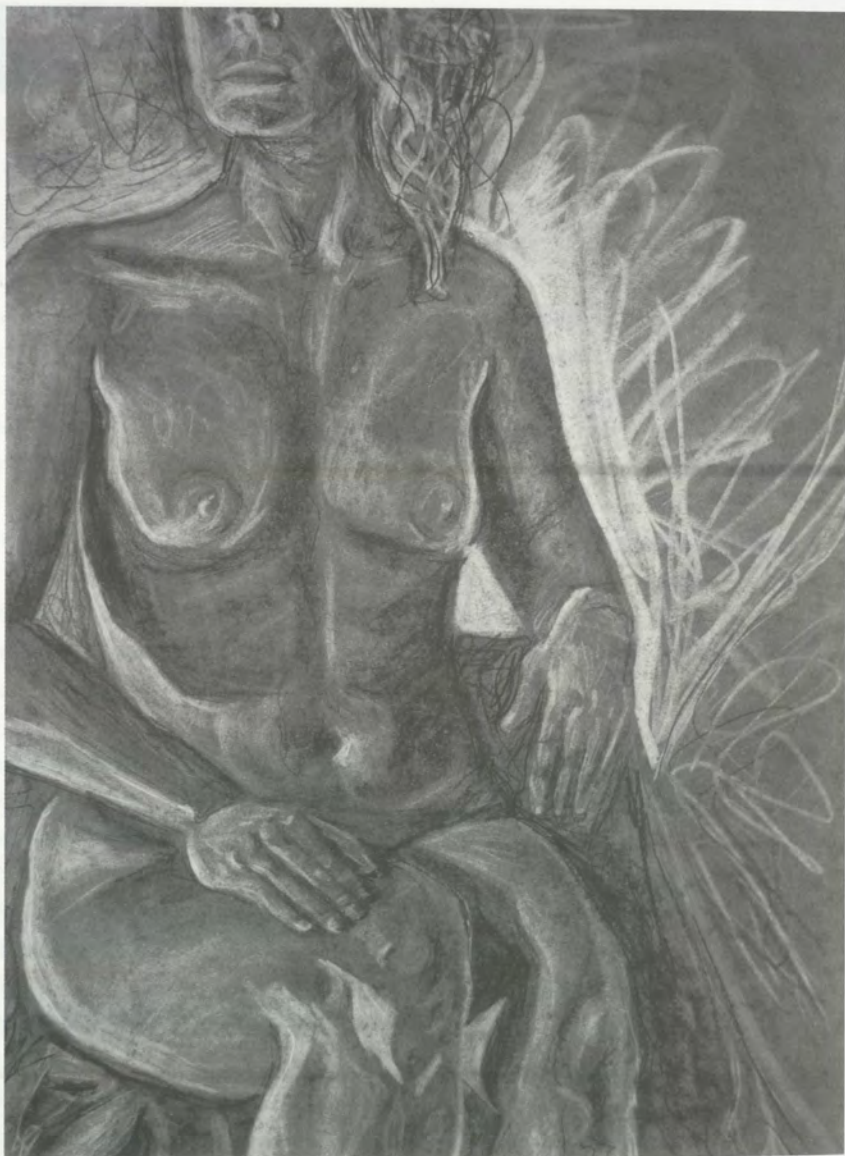
or graph-er.

Just you,

collected.

Ana.





Untitled | Michelle Zolfo

# Red Hands

LAUREN NICKODEMUS

Evie gripped the baseball bat tightly inside her small, balled fist, knuckles glowing ghostly white as the rough old wood chafed against the flesh of her palm. Her arm hung loose at her side, thumb twitching, and she stared emptily at the bruised, swollen face of the man on his knees in front of her.

So this was him. The murmurs around her, simmering and electric in lilting hints of Irish brogue, hit her ears dully as she studied his chin, his nose, his lips, his eyes. The harmlessness, neighborliness, turned her stomach; everyday symmetrical features, not handsome, not ugly, just sickeningly normal. He shouldn't be so much like everyone else. Killers shouldn't be like everyone else.

Evie swallowed, throat dry, wooden bludgeon burning in her hand. She trembled faintly, goose bumps rising, like twenty wet ice cubes were sliding across her bare skin. Twenty, for Jimmy, who never got to see that number. She exhaled and scanned the unassuming jaw line, the unkempt eyebrows, the mouse-brown hair with the slightest wave. Blood trickled down from a cut by his eye; her gaze latched onto that blood, that crimson tear curling down his cheek, the reflection in its droplets of the fluorescent top lights in the unfinished basement. One bead fell to the cement floor in a miniature, rippling splatter. He didn't look at her; he stared blankly at his hands, tied in front of him. The burly figures looming behind him barely had to grip his shoulders, he wasn't struggling yet. Maybe he thought she wouldn't do it, she was too young and pretty and—

"What're you waiting for?"

Evie flinched at the voice, a break in the murmur circling around her, watching her, everything up to her. Life, death, pain up to her. She opened her mouth, tongue heavy, closed it. "I can't."

"The fuck you can't—"

"Fuck you, Donovan," she spat, the tension in her arms flaring in a sweet, sour burn of nerves. The speaker, dark-haired, tattooed, sneered hyena-like as the sweat broke out on her forehead, dripping like the bead from Jimmy's killer's face and— She bit hard on her tongue.

"Wait."

One word, one syllable, and the humming mutter dropped, chided childlike; Donovan studied the wall and Evie's ears pinned, red. *Casey*. She turned to him, locking onto the solid narrow face, wisped with stubble, the smooth dark hair just beginning to gray—but most of all the deep, rocky granite eyes, shining from within like two siren lighthouses, beckoning, daring to come closer and see if safe harbor or splintering hell lay ahead. He stepped closer, the scent of sweat and cigars and musky soap lingering on his shirt, his sinewed arms. Evie's fingers burned again, scraping against the splintery wood. He had handed her that bat minutes ago, no words except the ones in the gray eyes: family takes vengeance. This is who you blame.

She tensed as he stood next to her, straightening her jaw and steadying her breath, the warmth of the taller presence over her shoulder overpowering. As her arm fidgeted nervously she felt the light roughness of Casey's calloused hand close over hers.

gripping the baseball bat in a double grip. A steady, serious, unwavering gaze met hers, lips pressed into a firm line, and through all the weight and truth that he felt pierced into her and she understood: *For Jimmy.*

"What'll it be, little Evie?"

Her chest rose and fell. Eighteen months ago she would have been in his face and run...not anymore.

*For Jimmy.*

She gripped with both hands and stepped forward.

\*\*\*

"Jimmy, where the hell have you been?"

Eighteen months ago Evie perched defiantly on the bottom step of a rickety wraparound porch. The wide, time-stained oak door ahead of her hung open despite the late fall chill chewing through her jacket; she crossed her arms and ignored the cold, conveniently cursing it for the growing redness of her cheeks and nose, the watery itch in her eyes. "You can't just run off and expect us not to look for you, damn it, you gotta come home."

The young man glued stubbornly to the top step, curly chestnut hair wafting over dark-rimmed eyes; he gripped the side railing and leaned forward, glaring. "I told you, I live here now, I'm not coming back. Get out of here, Evie!"

She stamped her foot, the childlike motion in sharp contrast to the raw harshness of her voice, the furious crease on her forehead. "Jesus Christ! You don't belong here Jimmy, you're not a gang-banger, you're not even Irish!"

Jimmy bristled, gritting his teeth, spouting the undeniable, irrefutable facts: You didn't have to be Irish to be a Red Hand, it was about honor, strength, brotherhood, fighting the system, and other lofty things she didn't understand. He couldn't leave, he'd promised Casey, he wouldn't betray him.

Evie sputtered, fidgeting wildly as she turned away, turned back again, swearing. "Casey! You can't betray Casey, what about us? God, he's not fucking Tyler Durden, Jimmy, he's just a washed up thug, and he's going to get you killed, you hear

me?" Her voice reverberated across the hollow windows above, three stories; to the sides, nothing but empty road and abandoned office buildings. The low ambient drone of men talking, moving, eating inside the compound house oddly receded as the anger echoed—and in the next moment, when a new figure appeared in the open doorway, it was like an angel descending, quieting the noise, superimposed on an earthly scene. Suddenly, gravity stood on the threshold of the Red Hands.

Jimmy furrowed his brow as Evie's needle-like gaze zeroed in over his shoulder; turning, his face lengthened in reverence and his head tilted in subtle salute. "Casey," he whispered.

Casey Dunn's eyes, the color of stormy gray waves breaking over open rock, glinted silent acknowledgment at the teenage boy but focused, meticulous, on the girl at the bottom of the steps—*his* steps. The sound of a female voice was curiously startling to him, incongruously out of place; gunshots, men brawling, music blaring in the makeshift barracks, bullets loaded into clips loaded into jury-rigged semi-automatics, these wrote the tune to which life at the mansion danced. Here was the glaring off-note in the flesh, and she looked like hell and a headache in vintage purple Converse.

"Who's this, Jimmy?"

His newest boy shifted, opening clenched palms and wiping them on his jeans, heavy boots tapping tentatively on the wooden porch planks. "She's my foster sister, Evelyn."

Evie's jaw only tightened at the introduction. Sullen, embarrassed, burdened, he was ashamed of her—but she still loved him. "He's coming home with me," she told Casey Dunn, withering, accusatory.

Jimmy denied it firmly, quick to appease his new hero; she was just worried, she didn't understand what being here meant. She was just a kid. Casey subtly ignored him, never taking his appraising, calculating gaze off Evie. He raised an eyebrow then, subdued sonorous tenor channeling the barest ghost of Irish roots. "You don't think Jimmy belongs in the Red Hands?"

he asked the stubborn little strawberry-blonde below.

"He belongs with people who actually care about him," she spat, fiery. "We were getting our lives together and now you're tearing them apart!"

The master of the Red Hands cocked his head, resting his hands on the porch railing, frowning. "Jimmy's life or yours?"

Evie paused at that, lips parted and tongue suspended. Something predatory lurked behind Casey's thin smile as he addressed her hesitant, off-guard squint. "Are you here 'cause you fear for Jimmy's life or because yours is empty without him?"

It was a simple question, she knew the answer—of course she knew the answer. God, the bastard thought he was some kind of Messiah, gathering his little disciples and teaching the world a lesson. He didn't know anything about her, about Jimmy, how dare he try to play with them? Her eyes slits, she gritted her teeth and stood straight. "Look, jackass, I don't answer to you. Jimmy, you coming or not?"

He said no, he meant no, he wanted her to leave. She chewed her lip as her brother turned away and Casey only stared, silent, inscrutable. Cursing breathlessly, Evie shook her head and stepped down from the porch staircase. "I'm not letting this go," she promised both of them as she tromped away, shoes crunching over the lightly frosted grass of the mansion lawn.

"Sorry," Jimmy exhaled audibly as his shoulders slumped and he blinked hard.

Casey Dunn shrugged and stepped back from the railing, hands in his pockets, pensive. "Nice sister," was all he said.

\*\*\*

She came every week after that. Every Saturday morning at nine thirty, Evie stood on the porch and Jimmy came out and told her to leave, and they argued for ten or fifteen minutes; he never left with her, and she never left him alone. The heated confrontations were a given now, almost a tradition, just another part of the rhythm of the Red Hands dance. All the boys knew Evie, knew the girlish voice with its harsh curses, the purple

shoes and the thin black wool jacket. She learned their names and their faces, but she never saw Casey again until several months in.

A thin layer of grungy, stained snow slicked the edges of the porch as Evie climbed up, balled her fist, pounded raucously on the doorframe. Half the men were still sleeping, but she'd be their bellicose little alarm clock. Calling her brother's name she jerked and blinked when this time Donovan answered at the door—one of the lieutenants, with clipped black hair and hooded eyes, glinting teeth, pale face. She met his eternal glow and asked him where Jimmy was.

"In hell with the rest of us Irish bastards." He slammed the door, a staccato bang that made Evie flinch. Baring her teeth in a feral hiss, she assaulted the wooden paneling.

"Listen, Flogging Molly, I don't have time for your bullshit—"

The door gave way again but suddenly in Donovan's place was Casey Dunn, calm and collected but with the same coiled, calculated energy that made Evie tighten and tense all over; she felt strangely naked, disarmed, under those sharp eyes.

"Jimmy's out this morning. On assignment." His quiet tenor crept sinuously through the thin, chill air; aerodynamic, sleek and subtle. Silvering strands in his hair echoed the hard, glossy granite eyes and Evie remembered again why no one knew how old he was. He stood there, one arm balanced against the open door, thick boots verging just over the threshold, toes, she suddenly realized, just two inches from hers. Her eyes darted up to his warm body heating the space between them, shoulders broad and leaning over her, swallowing her up. She took an instinctive step backward but not before she inhaled and caught a tinge of musky, spiced soap. He wasn't all grease and beer and uncleanness like the streets she grew up in; Casey smelled like what she somehow always thought a man would smell like, up close.

"Assignment, huh?" Evie tossed, squelching down the nervous twitter in her core. "What, you got him shooting up a

venience store or something?"

Casey's lips twisted into a regretful half smile, almost disappointed. "I don't think you understand what the Red Hands are about, little Evie."

She balked at the diminutive, taking another step away, snapping at him. "Don't fucking call me that, you don't know me and I don't care what you're about. You're going to get Jimmy killed—he's not even nineteen, he shouldn't be here."

His steady form finally shifted and stepped toward her, eyes narrowed and arms crossed over his chest, gaze frigid and unreadable. Evie's toes twitched but her purple sneakers held their ground on the sodden porch.

He approached her, unnervingly close, lips pressed. "Jimmy's eighteen," he restated, challenging her, daring her. "How old are you?"

She could've lied; she'd passed for older before. But somehow her lip trembled and under him she was too frightened to lie and at the same time brave enough to throw truth in his face. "Eighteen," she proclaimed.

Casey smiled cynically, barest hints of crow's feet crinkling. "And you think you know better?"

"I know better than to believe *you*," she rejoined, holding his gaze, fingers lacing with thrilled adrenaline as she stood there an inch away from Casey Dunn and told him with her eyes to go to hell. She almost liked this, this playing, this teasing war.

He regarded her, studying, a hint of confusion and a hint of pleasure like a cat that's found a new toy and isn't sure yet how it works. "Wait and see, little Evie," he warned her, but she was already stepping back from him, turning with a rebellious, mad-dancing, exhilarated smile.

"Tell Jimmy I came by. I'll be seeing you next week."

He watched Evie as she marched away through the powdery snow and found himself wondering how far she walked to get here, to argue with her brother every Saturday, a brother who was never going to leave, because Casey's Red Hands

never left. But she would keep coming, every week, pounding on the door and waking up his men and getting in the way. Little Evie... little nuisance. But for some reason he couldn't say he was entirely minded.

\*\*\*

A year later, Jimmy was dead.

The ground was too frozen to dig a decent hole for his coffin, so when his old foster family claimed the body from the police and cleaned it and dressed it up in a suit far more lovely than he'd ever owned in life, they put it into a sepulcher, a little stone cave in the middle of the graveyard. Evie's unaccustomed heels sunk into the snow and the flakes melted on her thin black tights, black like the shoes and the skirt and the jacket. Her short frame shivered as she stood watching long after the undertakers had pushed the coffin into its gray granite home for eternity. Her and Jimmy's foster parents left and she told them not to wait for her. He'd been shot, and she'd seen the bullet hole in his chest as he lay clammy and white on the table in the morgue. The cops had theories, some evidence in blood and residue, but she had something more: a suspect, the truth, an endless *I told you so* that would never stop echoing in her head.

"Sorry I missed the funeral."

"Me too, I could've boxed you right up in there with him. Wouldn't Jimmy like that, to be with his hero forever?"

"Jimmy knew what he was doing."

Evie made herself turn around and look at Casey, standing close behind her, eyes the same granite gray as the heavy sepulcher and presence just as looming, just as powerful. The barest flaw of tiredness lined his features, a fraying edge, new since she'd last seen him—good. But he still trod half on the snowy ground and half above it, like a twisted demigod.

Her voice hardened and the frigid breeze burned the whites of her eyes, trying to freeze the liquid in them. "I think he loved you too much to know anything, Casey. That's how everyone is with you," she indicted.

His jaw shifted, stubbly chin lowering as he looked away, back to the tomb where the boy's body lay. His wiry frame thrummed taut under the long wool coat and Evie knew the way his muscles would tighten, how the veins in his arms stood out when he clenched his fist, the sinews shifting under rough skin as his broad shoulders straightened—the flesh under the skin under the shirt under the coat, warm and hard and moving as he breathed. She wondered, treacherously, if Jimmy ever knew as much about Casey as she had learned in an hour every Saturday.

He exhaled and the condensation washed over her, clouding her vision in the second before it faded. "You blame me," he stated, quietly.

"Of course I do, Casey, who the fuck else should I blame? He did everything for *you*," Evie hissed, voice breaking. She blinked hard and shook herself viciously to escape the strange tearing sensation in her gut, stomach falling and heart rising.

"What if I show you who to blame?" There burned that same challenging, daring look in the stormy gray that had grown so intensely familiar, like a divine conviction, a test, a rite. "We're going to find him and you should be there."

Her insides twisted like angry serpents, cannibalistic, eating at each other, but she straightened, clenching her abdomen and breathing in. "No." Ankles trembling on the unsteady ground, she took a step backward, toward the distant parking lot. "Do whatever you want, I'm done with this shit, okay?" Before he could speak she broke into a trot; the awkward heels and small black skirt slowed her, and she cursed them, cursed the snow, cursed her cheeks for burning as she felt his eyes lingering on her.

Casey watched Evie walk away, like all those times from the porch, watched the stray strands of strawberry blonde hair fall in waving wisps around her neck, the short but strong legs marching like a rebel child soldier, a defiant yet self-conscious, angry stride. Little Evie, girlish voice, mannish curses, woman's body, all contradictions. Jimmy was a brother but he had fifty

brothers. There was only one of her.

About ten yards away she froze, and Casey straightened as she about-faced to regard him, brow creased and jaw tight. "Tomorrow's Saturday," she said simply. "You won't be seeing me."

His longer stride covered the ground between them almost as quickly as she told him goodbye, and he took her hand in his rough calloused ones and held it; he held it and she didn't pull away. "You're a part of this, Evie," he murmured gently, curving his shoulders over her as she looked up at him, her lips parted unsteadily.

"I don't want to be a part of it. I don't, and you shouldn't either," she told him plaintively, at the same time thinking what a coincidence it was that she didn't have black gloves along with everything else, that her hands were bare and now his skin was touching hers, his warmth colliding with her frigid fingers. She breathed through her mouth and swallowed, finally letting tears form, nodding toward the sepulcher where frost already glistened in thin sheen over the block cement. "Jimmy's dead."

Casey's mouth pressed thin, and the hard rock of his eyes was frozen too. He gripped her fingers tighter and stared, adamant and unmoving.

"You're going to go the same way someday," she whispered in warning, but she didn't pull her hand away.

\*\*\*

They'd found Jimmy's killer. Some nothing hitter from the other side of town, the Seven Sins or the Hades Boys or whoever ever tried to rule that rotting hell of a neighborhood. She'd been sitting on her bed with her feet on the ground, not knowing what to do because it was Saturday morning again and she promised she wouldn't go back—but she didn't have anywhere else to go. Donovan brought her the message, scowling on her doorstep, and he thought she'd be afraid, but Casey didn't; he had faith in her, and so here she was standing in the basement of the Be Hands mansion and somehow there was a baseball bat in her hands.

Evie knew the tradition. She knew most of their traditions, just from watching, listening, the times on the porch when more and more her brother was gone and Casey came to talk to her instead. He taught without teaching, lessons unspoken like so much of what went on behind the gray lighthouse eyes. They'd thought out the man, bound, already beaten, set him on his knees in front of her and Casey had handed her the bat, silently. Next of kin had the right, the honor; they could have done it themselves but Casey had recognized her, as the sister, Jimmy's sister, their sister. It was her gift to him to take revenge.

How had she gotten here? The sweat dripping down her forehead, the splintering wood scratching her palm, encircled by Jimmy's brothers, *her* brothers, and Casey standing there behind her, she didn't even know. The weeks were empty without this place, without him here, not just on Saturdays because now every day was Saturday to her, and every day was the day when she couldn't see him anymore. So she came back, one last time, for Jimmy. Yes, Jimmy.

"What'll it be, little Evie?" His hand had pressed against hers, she could feel the veins pulsing under his skin and she breathed more quickly, her flesh prickling as she swallowed down her dry, empty throat. He asked her, he pushed her, he dared her... he touched her. He told her the truth without words, that Jimmy deserved this. Blame, revenge, justice: what Jimmy and the Red Hands believed in.

So she swung. She took two steps forward and swung with all the muscles in her small frame, and as she did, it was like a thread snapping, and the anger, unfairness, grief and loneliness surged, so she swung again. She didn't even count how many times, but she swung until the heat and nerves and twisting inside had cooled and steadied, and suddenly there was a still emptiness there, cold and calm like the gray waves behind Casey's eyes.

Evie blinked and realized she was standing still, fingers stiffly stretched around the bat like a death rigor. She looked down

at her feet at the crumpled form prostrate in a growing pool of sticky liquid and half of her wondered how it had gotten there. She was staring at his face just a minute ago and now she couldn't recognize it.

The circling brothers murmured and nodded at her, gazes solemn with a new, sacred, binding respect. The stillness broke and they started to pick up the body but they moved slowly, reverently, and even Donovan inclined his head as he passed.

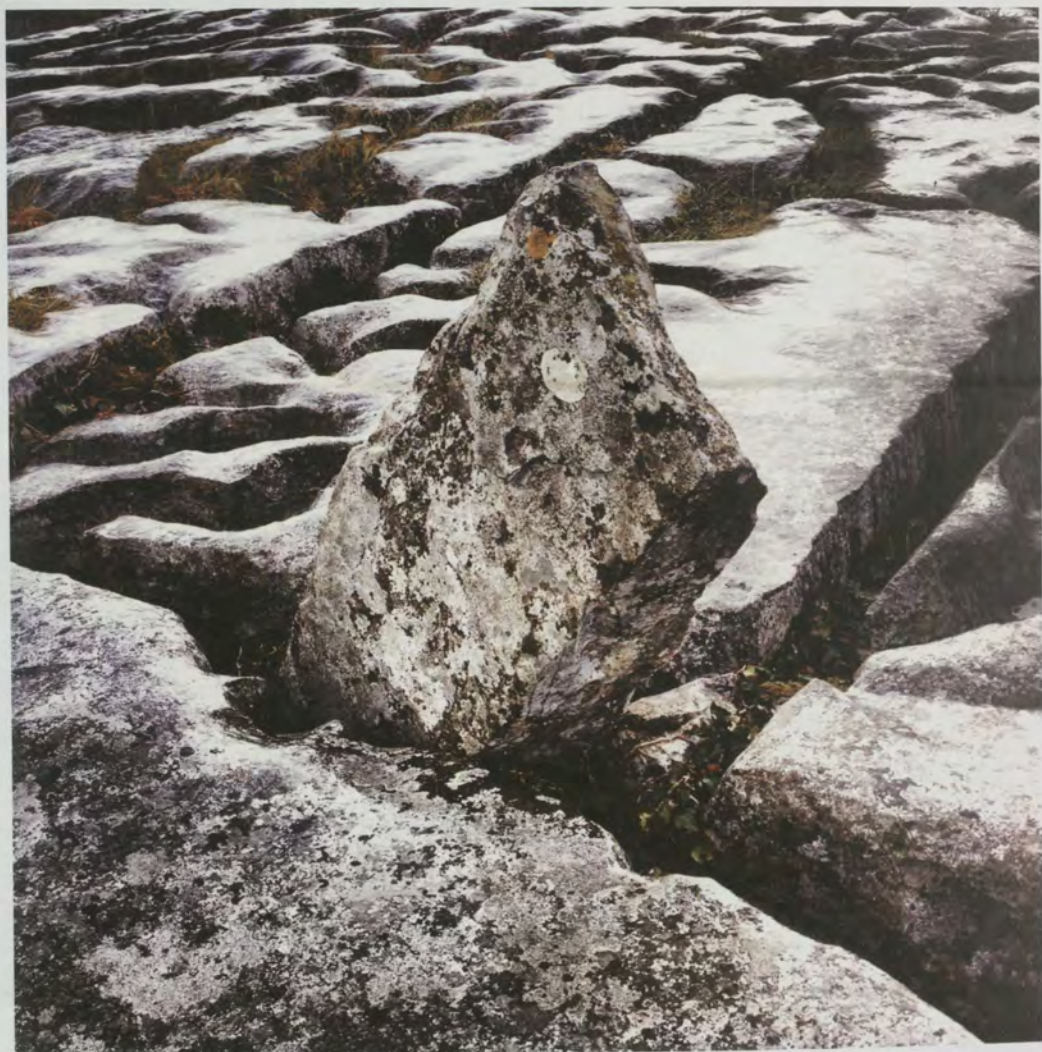
There was a soft pull on her grip as Casey carefully took the bat from her, and as the last stiffened finger reluctantly gave way Evie finally looked down at her hands. They were curiously stained, wet, sprinkled with crimson droplets in sprays and spurts like avant-garde art. She felt Casey's gentle touch on her shoulder like a benediction.

Bloody hands. Red hands.



Ruins | Kyle Jackson



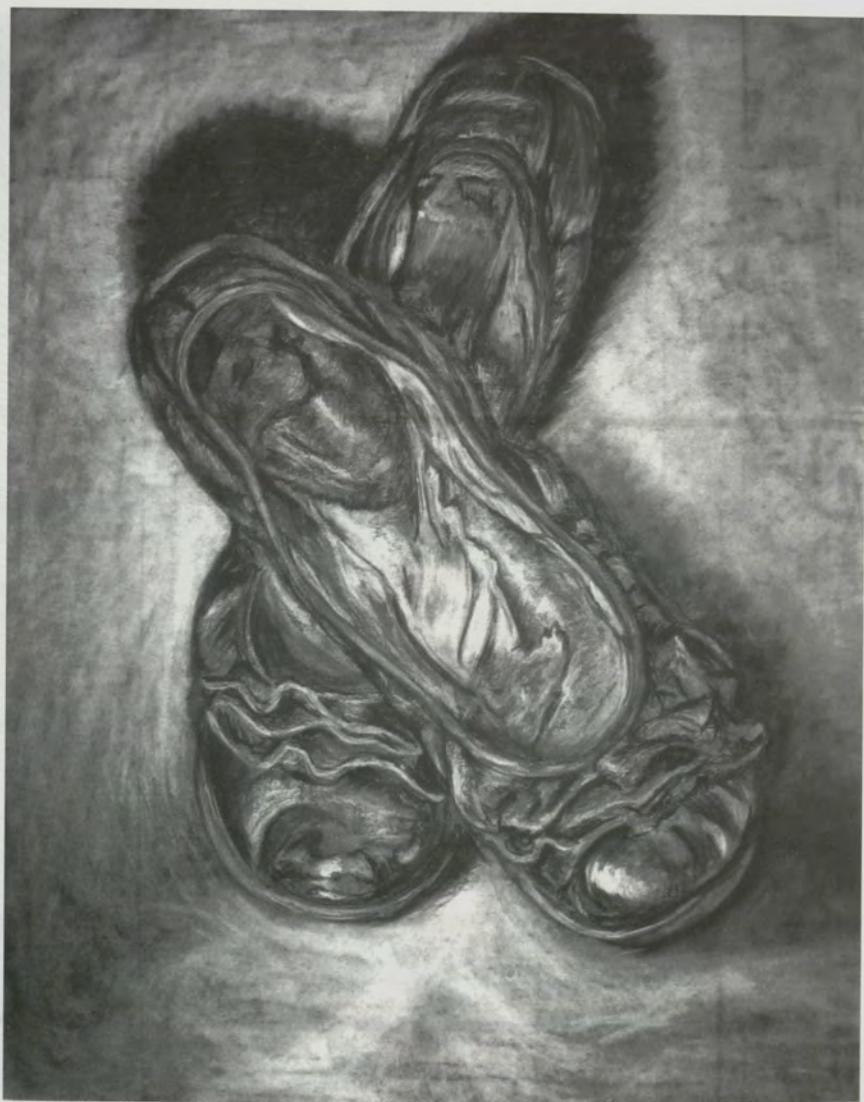


Near the Portal | Kyle Jackson

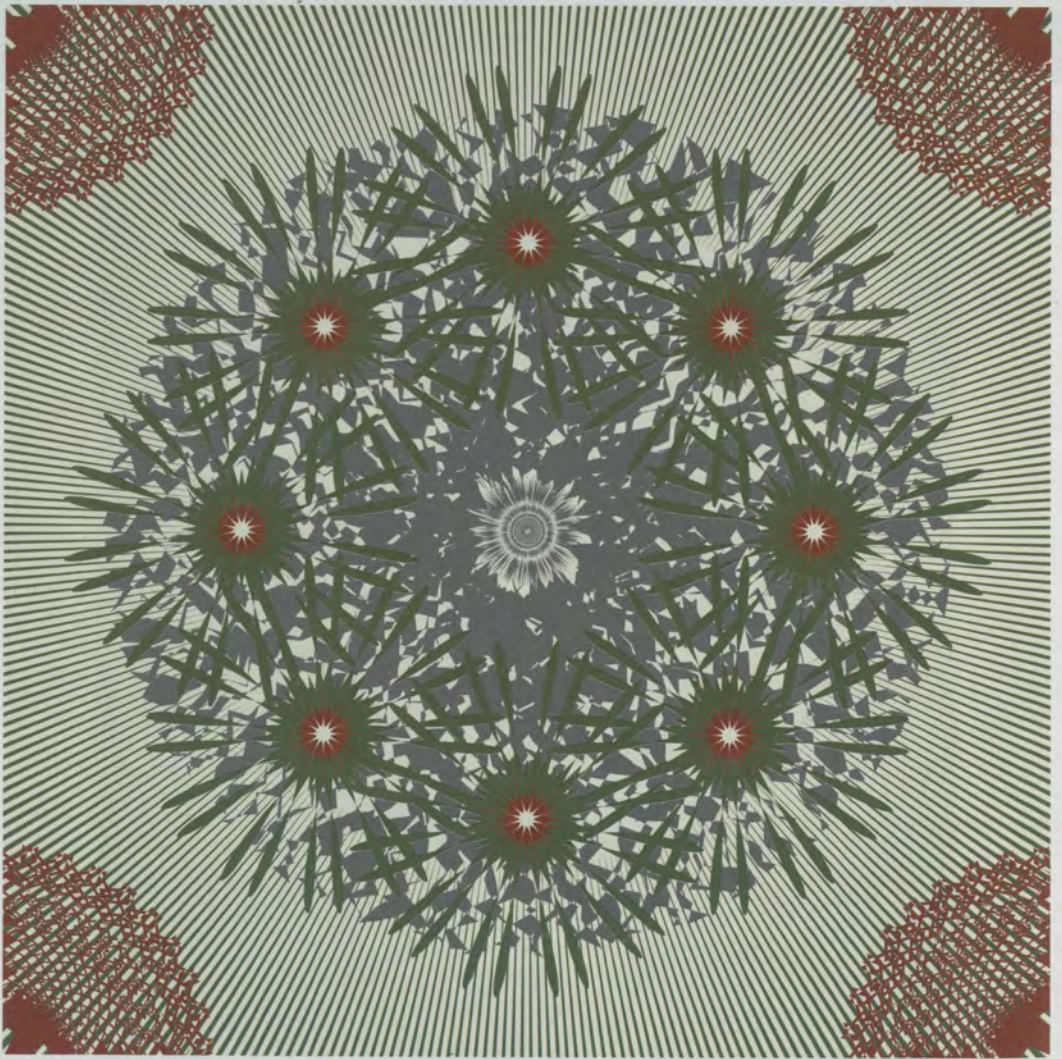
# Yellow Rain Boots

SAMANTHA WILGUS

A rainy night sky streaked an aged grey,  
heavy rainclouds, pregnant, promising bellies  
just out of my reach. Static air thick, teasing  
a cure for this drought dried, dying land.  
Pebbles of thunder, flashing lightning forks,  
ripe bellies rip open spilling weeks and weeks of  
pent up prayers placed on hold  
Windows are thrown wide, screen doors slam,  
as townfolk excitedly exclaim "rain, it's real rain!"  
acres of brown grass  
sigh in relief as sheets of water quench thirsty fields  
Some run for cover ducking inside houses or  
kissing under walkways, clothes and skin slick  
romanticized by rain  
People shout, they cry, others cheer,  
most pray  
The children, the children they quiver with laughter  
thumbs shoved in mouths, jackets forgotten.  
older siblings little ones in tow,  
and many, many, many sets of yellow rain boots  
stomping their thanks.-



Self Portrait | Lindsey Smith



Florid Fusion | Marcus Mues

# The Blues

CARL COLVIN

Dim lights of a smoke-filled room  
seep through the gloom to a man

in a ragged coat sitting on a stool,  
looking into his glass of Limoncello.

Another drink appears and he drops  
his last few dollars on the bar top. Piano

chords shuffle through the bar as a man  
in a suit drags up his own stool and looks

at his new neighbor. A sneer appears  
across his lips as he sees the other man's

coat. Dissonant harmonies of painful blues  
puncture the air, each bobbing his head

to the beat, thinking of hurts and troubles.  
They down their drinks, nod to one another,

and depart separate ways, leaving the tunes  
of the blues to resolve to sweet harmonies.

# A Family on their lawn one Sunday in Westchester, NY, 1968

IAN ROSEEN

*(Thanks to Diane Arbus, for the photograph.)*

Larry and I are laying outside on the chaise lounges, eating frozen orange slices. Well, Larry's eating them, not me. I don't care for frozen fruit, have never heard of such a thing, but he's been taking all the oranges and berries I buy from the store and throwing them in the freezer.

"They'll keep better," he says. "We can make smoothies, cool off a little. It's hot this summer."

"All right," I say, and I tug my sleeves down over my wrists. Larry keeps the air-conditioning turned up awful high, too.

Except it's busted this weekend; got overheated from running it so high. "Fine, then!" Larry said yesterday. "We'll keep cool and do our grocery shopping today, as a family." And so we spent all day wandering around the supermarket, our son Kevin knocking boxes of Cheerios off the shelves as he ran down the aisles, Larry glaring at me when I didn't stoop to pick them up. I just kept on walking. That night we slept like two dried-out starfish, side-by-side. We didn't bother with the sheets or anything. Larry kept fussing, but I was quite comfortable, staring up through the skylight till I fell asleep.

It was my idea to take advantage of the sun today and lay out in the backyard. While Larry was inside lathering up, I dragged the kiddie pool out of our garden shed for Kevin and plopped it in the middle of the yard.

"For pete's sake, Karen," Larry said when he wandered out

with his bowl full of frozen fruit. "You couldn't've filled it up for the kid?"

I glanced over my shoulder at Kevin. He was sitting scissor-legged in the pool, dry as a bone, setting out plastic food. "Well, he seems kind of big for it now, doesn't he?" He's eight, almost nine. I don't know why this was a question. But Larry trundled over to fill it anyway, holding the hose out in front of him like a sleepy child taking a midnight leak.

He's getting soft around the middle already, thinks snarling down all that frozen fruit is gonna prevent that somehow.

But see, I walk places. Ever since Kevin was born, that's how I've stayed in shape—I walk everywhere.

Last week at the supermarket, for instance, there was a new young gentleman doing the bagging, didn't know me from Adam. "You need help carrying your bags to your car, ma'am," he said. I might have told him that I didn't have a car, but I wasn't in no hurry. We poked around the parking lot for several minutes, pretending to look for my vehicle when finally I said, "Oh, here I am!" and we stopped in front of an ugly brown station wagon. There were fancier cars for my choosing, but I suppose I wanted him to think of me as vulnerable; I noticed how he kept looking at my arms, flexing as I held the bags one on each hip like two babies, so I wasn't doing a very good job of it. But if he was trying to seem able-bodied and strong, he wasn't doing such a good job either. You should have seen how red the tips of his ears turned when some pale old woman scuttled into the station

wagon instead and drove away. As I took the third bag from him, I had to laugh. "Come, now," I said: *Allen*, his nametag read.

Larry won't stop fidgeting in his seat. I can see him out of the corner of my eye, which I am keeping almost all the way shut, just a thin slit. He's irritated with all the noise Kevin is making—tap-tapping the rim of the plastic pool with his toy spoon—and that frozen fruit isn't doing much good in helping him beat the heat. I can imagine the pool of sweat accumulating in his shorts, seeping through onto the cushion.

In the second that he tilts his head back and squeezes his eyes shut against the sun, I take a slice of orange and toss it down my swimsuit for a quick cool-off. Larry would never know to look at me, breathing and keeping my arms very still on the armrests, how icy the orange really is, skating across my skin like a flash. "Would you tell him to keep it down?" he asks.

"Keep it down, Kevin," I say, but I don't think he can hear me.

As a baby, he never used to scream or cry or anything. He'd jump around, is what he'd do, knocking over god knows what. It wouldn't matter if my friend Lisa would finally be over,

filling me in on all the school gossip I'd outgrown, you'd hear him—just down for his nap and already clanging around again. "What's that?" Lisa would ask, widening her eyes and whipping her ponytail in my face. "Are you gonna check on him, Karen?"

Or, "Karen," my mother would say, stopping in the doorway with a basket full of laundry. "Go check on your son, Karen."

"He's perfectly fine."

"I think you should check on him, Karen."

*Fine, Lisa, I'd think. Be that way, you can stay here with mother and tell her your stories about Mr. Jensen catching Steve and Delia in the parking lot by the baseball field. It's the same old stuff.* And I'd slip right out the kitchen door and take Kevin for a walk, while Lisa would be sitting on the couch, flipping through the TV Guide.

"I can't stand this heat," Larry announces.

"Just enjoy it while you can," I tell him. "Flip over. Work on

your tan."

But, "*For god's sake Kevin, keep it down!*" he yells, without hardly even moving his face. He reaches for an orange slice and sighs, louder than Kevin's tapping. "You're gonna be home tomorrow morning for when the repairman comes, right? If you're going to have your hair done, you gotta do it in the afternoon, hear?"

I roll a little bit on my side to look at him. He's got his eyes closed, scratching his knee, which is for the better because the frozen orange slice slides around, sending a chill through me all over again, and I widen my eyes to keep from gasping.

At the store yesterday, I broke off from Larry and Kevin around the seafood, knowing Kevin would be demanding cocktail shrimp and that Larry would say no. I pretended to be looking at the tower of canned tomatoes just off to the side, and then started walking. I went very fast because all I had was a loaf of Wonder Bread swinging in its bag from my fingertips, smacking me in the leg. There was no particular direction I was following, just bouncing around like a pinball, away from a blur of Rice Krispie boxes, Palmolive bottles, and Gerber jars. I stumbled past the dairy and frozen sections, turned left into the aisle with the Spanish rice and stood smack in front of Allen.

"Can you help me?" I said.

"Miss?" *Miss!*

"I need a lift out of here. Someone's stolen my car."

And he leaned back, peered at me through his deep-set eyes. Hardly more than a high school boy, this Allen. "Now, I thought you didn't have a car, miss."

"Well, that's true..." I told him, and at that moment you wouldn't believe: Larry and Kevin appeared at the other end of the aisle, Larry staring straight ahead and pushing the cart, Kevin kicking it—sharp, angry little jabs—and hissing, "How come all we ever *get* is sliced ham? Why not shrimp, just once? How come, Dad? How *come?*"

"It just seems that I've been left without a way back home," I continued, but Allen wasn't paying attention.

"Can you believe that?" was all he said, twitching his head in the direction of Larry and Kevin. "Some families you can't bring anywhere anymore."

"Indeed," I said, "now listen, Allen—"

Although by that point it was too late, Larry moving in beside me with his big spotted hand cupping my shoulder, and Kevin grabbing at my skirt, tugging me down, down. "Mom," he said. "*Mom!*" So I laughed, which didn't make a bit of sense to a single person standing there. I didn't know what else to do, and neither did Allen. He just watched me with his mouth wide open, holding a can of Spanish rice in midair, as if waiting for it to spill out of his hands.

Larry is kicking Kevin's pool over with his long white foot, so he can fill it up again with fresh water. "Come feel this, Karen," he says. "It's like bathwater. It's like a bucket full of *pee*. We need a system, here."

I look at him and at Kevin, holding onto his plastic tools while the warm water rushes around his feet and drowns the grass, and I decide that I have settled down far too soon today. The tan that I was looking forward to early on has turned bad and is starting to burn my skin. Even the orange slice must have thawed, because I can no longer feel it; just look at how the ice has melted clean away in Larry's glass.

"Can I go inside, Mom, and get my garden toys?" Kevin asks.

"Get him a towel first, Karen," Larry says.

"Mom? I wanna water the garden, Mom."

"Karen, I also set a grapefruit in the freezer; you might want to grab that, too."

"Why aren't you going, Mom?"

"Karen, what is *wrong* with you?"

They're replicas of each other, those two: Little Larry and Big Kevin, frowning at me over their doughboy guts. Old men. They've never been young. Not the way some of us have, at least.

I realize that I've been grinning at them for a while. Maybe it's the heat, after all, that's made me feel so muzzy and vague. As I swing my legs over the side of the chaise, I figure I'll just let them watch me drift all the way back to the house, I don't mind. And I really don't, until all of a sudden—there—the orange slice bursts inside my bathing suit. I can feel it breaking all over, and even if neither of them notices, it is absolutely impossible to do anything but sit perched on the edge of my chaise, staring at the back door of the house I live in, remaining so still, with my hands on my knees.





Man of Meat | Meredith McKay

# The spring and summer before basic training, 2004

JOSEPH WEIL

Once  
The prom tux  
Is returned;  
Once night school is done;  
Once nights at  
The liquor store  
Are fewer and fewer;  
Once the spine  
Is checked for scoliosis,  
And your piss is clean  
(no drugs);  
Once the wiry captain,  
The eloquent guy,  
Asks you to take  
Of the Constitution,  
The country, and  
Work hard  
For Bush;  
Once you and your girlfriend  
Watch the fireworks  
And fool around  
While the tornado  
A mile away  
Chews up  
A neighborhood  
Not yours;  
Once you can

No longer sleep,  
And you get sick before bed,  
Every time;  
Once you feel  
It coming;  
Once you hear  
The clippers,  
The boots,  
The cadence,  
The rifle shot,  
And reveille;  
Once you know it's coming,  
And you're going;  
Once you are done,  
Cooked,  
She changes from blonde  
To brunette;  
Once she starts  
Purging, for her  
And for you;  
You know  
That "once,"  
Six years long,  
Is forever (it's not forever),  
And it is too long.  
So long.



You Are Always On Our Minds | Juliana Kapetanov

# Awake with Clovis

GREGORY MAHER

These are times,  
when you feel the violet  
heavens open, the wood-root  
skies delving to the very  
heart of the city, and beneath  
the tears and sweat (dry cold upon  
our faces, backs), blackened  
sidewalks, men bearded  
and clean-, there lies the great below,  
an inconstant flow of dark  
and young graffiti. But  
night never ends here, no,  
melded like sugar to ice  
it remains, crystallized, in  
the hearts of us, the young  
to morning, as dawn flakes its soft  
pink vale to hide the city from  
fault, to touch our minds  
with smoke and ancient stone  
until again, we  
sink  
into  
the  
dream



Darkness | Kevin Fedde

# TO ENCOMPASS WITH ALL MY MIGHT! (to be read from the bottom up)

ALEXANDER URYGA

coming from that fire in the center of your vision  
sphere of smoke in the color of orange and yellow  
forget to notice the smoke behind me; it is a  
a hint of blue is lofting away... yet you cannot  
gray or black, but some white smoke with  
smoke coming out of me are mainly  
the image you see... The clouds of  
to death! So my job is to produce  
intoxicating that it can put one  
nap; the air I produce is so  
be inclined to take an afternoon  
and I do not mean that one will  
that the air makes one sleepy,  
feel drowsy, and there is no doubt  
Such despondence makes you  
soul and that puts you at peace.  
piece, but you feel it in your  
this is not the color of the entire  
gets used to all of the gray, yet  
but after years of being up, one  
dreary view, I would have to say,  
have food to eat. It is quite a  
they may wear rags, they still  
employed by me... even though

near the telephone pole, are all  
are walking the streets, standing  
symbiotic, for the people who  
Yes, our relationship is quite  
because my smoke does billow.  
folk know not to open them,  
their windows, but the towns-  
one see light emanating from  
nearly all times of day, will  
housing a family or two. At  
they will serve their purpose,  
colors of brown and blue, but  
They are not the prettiest, in  
or are trying to smother me.  
could say they either love me,  
me, in such a fashion, that one  
Houses sprawl out underneath  
stature. I can see everything:  
does not take away from my  
be in the foreground, but that  
am more prominent. I may not  
I prefer the second, because I  
There are two paintings of me.



Millie | Michelle Zolfo



# Resistance

LAUREN NICKODEMUS

What's left  
Once all the duty's done,  
The piles of loveless paper pressed  
Into godlike, red-inked hands,  
And lettered with commanders  
Of alphabets that calculate  
To give me holy fours?

Left, after eyes  
Cry sand and grain, all scarred  
With veins like teachers' scribbled marks  
From poring over pallid prose,  
Fatigued while body twitches—  
Thrusting, thirsting—thrilled  
To paralysis of soul?

Left, when never-ending  
Trifles end, and slowly suffocated  
Self remembers who it hoped  
To be when words ran wild,  
Whirled alive and painted love?  
Now quivers in the core a restless  
*Résistance*, of which a *pièce*  
I've none.

# Creaks and Breaks

CARL COLVIN

Naked tree branches  
outside my window bend  
and brace against winds  
from the west. The music  
of their struggle lulls  
me to a doze, my mind

drifting from moments  
ago of my brother walking  
into my room, his tears  
trailing on the creaky floor.  
I sneak downstairs to see  
my mom by the stove,

crying as well. The worn  
wooden front door groans,  
swaying to and fro  
in the wind, but I sulk  
back upstairs, for nothing  
new has happened here.



Black Leather Shoes with Fading Rose | Aaron Wegner

# The Restaurant

HANNAH BAUER

- Tajine Alami, 10 Old Man's Trail, Manitou Springs, CO
- Family Owned and operated
- Pronounced All-a-me, does not rhyme with Salami.
- Open Tuesday-Saturday with belly dancing on the weekends.
- Couscous is a traditional North African staple, served in a variety of ways.
- Her mother used to make me couscous whenever I came over, my favorite way was with cinnamon and powdered sugar. She insisted I take leftovers.
- At her house, I always ate with my hands.
- We always ate with our hands, while sitting on cushions, at a table just barely a foot off the ground.
- My father never much liked the way she danced, although I didn't understand why until I was much older. But I was entranced by it, the way she moved, balancing swords or chandeliers on their head. The golden coins hanging from her hips tinkered as she shimmied to the music.
- I watched Titanic at her house, even though my parents told me not to.
- Mohammed is the most common name in the world.
- She doesn't have a middle name.
- If she were a Disney princess, she was always Jasmine. I was a different one each time. But never Jasmine.
- One time her mother, Leila, took us to the pool, we slid down the slide and ate grilled sandwiches in the sun. When we got home we sun bathed in our underwear until her older brother

walked in on us in the backyard.

- She was my best friend.
- She tied for Valedictorian of our Senior class, with three of my best friends.
- I did not tie for Valedictorian, in fact, I was tenth in my class.
- We took ballet together, but her gift for dance was when she danced in her parents' restaurant, where she glowed.
- Whenever she thought about quitting ballet, I begged her to leave me.
- She didn't quit.
- I got my period first.
- She got her first kiss first.
- We shared each other's crushes and friends. It usually didn't end well.
- Her mother was close friends with my mother. Her older brother used to be best friends with my older brother. They don't talk anymore. But they are still Facebook friends.
- The summer after graduation I saw her one time. That was the last time I saw her.
- We used to talk about how we were best friends, how we would stand at each other's weddings, how we would visit Europe together.
- I went to Europe.
- She went to Europe.
- We didn't even talk about it.
- I remember what the rugs felt like between my toes. The rug

the restaurant and all over her house.

You don't wear shoes at Tajine Alami.

You don't wear shoes at the Alami's personal residence.

Amongst our friends, we referred to Tajine Alami as The Restaurant.

No one ever had trouble understanding what we meant.

The first time I had scallops was in spicy Moroccan Spaghetti,

they were delicious but Leila had to get me milk to relieve the

burn from my tongue.

She cried once, telling me about the harassing calls her family

received because of her father's first name.

We used to exchange stories, mine from the Bible, hers from

the Quran. Many times they were very similar.

She believed we had the same God.

During Ramadan she would not eat from sunrise to sunset. I

would often forget and offer her food. It always made me feel

like a jerk.

She did not pray five times a day, her father prayed for the

whole family.

She and I communicated an average of 10-100 times a day

from 3rd grade to 12th grade.

Since high school graduation, we have spoken exactly three

times. One: post-graduation summer party. Two: A Facebook

birthday wish. Three: She texted me to ask if my house burnt

down in the fire.

Although the fire came within one mile of my house, it did not

burn it down.

Sometimes I look at her pictures on Facebook. She looks

about the same.

Sometimes I look at my pictures on Facebook. I think I look

very different.

Saffron is my favorite Moroccan spice.

I still have a bag of Saffron she brought me back from Mo-

rocco.

We are still at war in the Middle East.

I am still not Valedictorian, but I may graduate college with

honors.

- I had never paid to eat Leila's food before, but it cost my family \$184, plus tip, to eat at Tajine Alami when we went before graduation.

- Tajine Alami is the only Moroccan Restaurant in Manitou Springs, CO.

- I no longer know anyone who works at Tajine Alami.

- A pas-de-deux is a dance between two people, a partner dance.

- A solo is danced alone.



3D Me | Marcus Mues

## Part the Foam

JULIANA KAPETANOV

Downtown in a crowded café,  
college friends sip coffee together  
mid-morning while across the way,  
a couple long-married reads  
the daily paper as they wait  
for a shared cappuccino.

A tray of food behind the counter  
slips from the waiter's hands.  
Orange juice soils his apron  
and glass smashes on the floor,  
mixing with scrambled pieces  
of an old man's breakfast.

And finally the cappuccino  
arrives for the married couple,  
celebrating their anniversary.  
He warns his wife of the heat,  
*to blow on it first would be better,*  
but she blows lightly to no avail.

*Blow harder,* he tells her,  
*you've got to part the foam.*  
So, she blows with force  
on the foam which flies  
from the cup and into his face.  
She laughs like crazy; he dabs his shirt.

# Edwardsburg

JOSEPH WEIL

You would go past the post office on the gravel  
Along tracks by the road north.  
Pass by the rib shack with pine, painted fading cherry red,  
And you are there, in the piece of land  
With its brown bark, low hills, salt licks and  
The sunset marked by rail schedules.  
Missy couldn't come.

You would see these manmade troughs of frogs  
And Water. Always water.  
These towering blanched oaks,  
These sapling birches.  
Never old amid the downward spike of orange frost  
Of the a.m.

You would hope for bacon in the dell  
With the cadet-gray smoke and songbirds,  
As your friend's old man, calloused in black jeans,  
Brought more firewood  
To cook the coffee.

You would have slept with a heavy farmer's coat and been stung  
By hundreds of brownish-red mosquitoes  
In the soppy basement of a half-built house  
Set in the hill of the dell.

Your mind would've have swirled with the train  
That cut through the Edwardsburg country that past night.  
Your fleshy cupboard, dripping with the fascination of Missy  
That made you tip your cup of hot black in the shocked a.m.  
And see that  
The world felt as such...  
The midnight pond was  
Still a trough, and you're there.  
Warm and bubbling like a broth as the train came again.  
The train was full of Missys.  
Finally.





City Connections | Andrea Zuniga



**Hannah**

[View my profile page](#)

**19**

Tweets

**140**

Following

**19**

Followers

Compose new Tweet...

#### Who to follow



@Harry&Ron



@ThreeMusketeers



@Spongebob&Patrick

#### Trends

#bffls

#frenemies

#blessed

#certifiablycrazy

[2012 Bauer](#) [About](#) [Help](#) [Terms](#) [Privacy](#)

[Blog](#) [Status](#) [Apps](#) [Resources](#) [Jobs](#)

[Advertisers](#) [Businesses](#) [Media](#) [Developers](#)

#### Tweets



@Donna

Playing Connect 4 in front of the fireplace at 1:30 in the morning. I kept losing but you kept playing anyway.



@Kayla

Remember when you and @Laura3 used to always talk in third person? Hannah remembers that. She thinks it was kind of lame. #hypocrite



@Kipps

Black hair, all 8 of you, running around like ants. The 7 of us could not compete, but together we were a force of 15 not to be messed with.



@Christine

The shadow against the wall crouched from behind the bookcase to beneath your bed. We screamed and refused to move from under the blankies.



@Laura2

I remember you hiding the ugly plastic light up heels of the girl who was a bitch to me. #thatsfriendship #thanksbarbie



**Hannah**

View my profile page

19  
Tweets

140  
Following

19  
Followers

Compose new Tweet...

Who to follow



@Harry&Ron



@ThreeMusketeers



@Spongebob&Patrick

Trends

#craycray

#lol

#insidejoke

#secrets

2012 Bauer About Help Terms Privacy

Blog Status Apps Resources Jobs

Advertisers Businesses Media Developers

Tweets



@Laura3

@Kayla, you, and I were the Three Musketeers, the Bubble Butt Brigade, or who knows what else people called us. #bubblebutt? #really?



@Jenny

Under your homecoming dress you wore a tank top to cover any sneaky cleavage. You still looked beautiful.



@Madi

@MADI-son, now you wear shoes with holes for each toe.



@Bradley

You were dating @Kayla, but sprayed whipped cream all down my front. #friendsdontshareeverything



@Mari

You studied before school. You studied during prime time. You studied after school. #harvardbound



@Cody

You gave yourself a hickey with an eraser. #impressive

#friends | Hannah Bauer



Whisper | Alanna Reid

# Wraith

MADELINE BARTSCH

She wakes up unable to open her eyes.

It must be another sickness. They're crusted shut, the lashes twisted and stuck together. She debates opening them for a minute, and then turns on her side.

She can hear Sarah, her roommate, getting ready across the room, monopolizing the sink, as usual.

She continues to lie in bed.

The bouncy pop music begins to play. She hates Sarah's music.

Sarah sprays her hair exactly 49 times with product. Always between 49 and 51 times each morning.

Sarah drops 3 objects today.

Door slams. She should get up eventually to email her teachers. She rolls onto her back, hands on her chest, breathing in.

Rap music playing down the hall.

Door slams across the way. Must be about 9:55. She's missing her first class.

She peels her eyes open, wincing as several eyelashes pull out, and she stumbles to the mirror. Both eyes bloodshot. Great. Now

her professors will think she's high, or a weeping mess. No class today. She pulls out the laptop and sends another email. This is

her third this week. She should probably go to class eventually.

Probably. She runs her hands through her hair. When was her last shower?

Shuts her eyes. Too much to think about right now.

Door opens.

"You're still sick?" It's Sarah again. She throws down her bag, sorting through her giant pile of folders. She throws three in, pulls out one, and throws a blazer on.

"I have a fever." She glances at her alarm clock. The numbers are an annoying neon green. Too intense of a reminder that it's only 1:46.

"Again?"

"Yeah." She toys with the thermometer.

The movements pause for a minute. Sarah sighs and pulls on her shoes. "Well, feel better, I guess. I'll be back late."

Click, clack, click clack.

She turns to face the wall to avoid seeing Sarah's shaking head.

Door slams.

She should really get around to cleaning her half of the room. Sarah and Landon had come in earlier that day, and she saw that look of disgust Landon gives her when Sarah's back is turned.

"I think your goldfish is dead," the deep voice is Landon's.

"I know." She examines the crack in shelf her father gave her.

"It's lying at the bottom of the tank."

"Yeah." Her eyes are burning. Probably redder today.

"Well, you should take care of that."

"I know." She'd been through four goldfish already this semester.

"I think the other one is starting to eat it."

"I know." She rolls onto her side again and can't avoid the Sarah sigh this time, even with her headphones turned all the way up.

REAP REAP REAP alarm clock wakes her the next morning. Her eyes were glued together again. Ow. Ow. Ow. Can't really focus as she glances at the green numbers reading a wobbly 8:45.

She sits on the bed. Her socks don't match. They never match.

She can't bring herself to move before Sarah beats her to the mirror. 50 sprays of product today. 2 dropped objects. More bouncy pop music. Takes Sarah awhile to put in one of her contacts.

She pulls on her ex boyfriend's sweatpants and a t-shirt. It's been a year. She should probably mail those back. Jeez, she really should take that shower.

She didn't know whose turn it was to take out the trash. She and Sarah had a sort of unspoken system of alternation, but they both had no idea when their turn actually was. They'd let it pile up to 4 bags now, two still in the bins and two outside, leaning against the fridge, the fishtank sitting on top.

She should really take care of that goldfish.

Door opens. Click, clack, click, clack.

"Hey...there's a group of us going to dinner at the Union. Lauren, and Natalie, and Landon. You're welcome to join us if you want."

"No thanks." She gestures to the pink plastic plate to her left with two crackers and a thin layer of the last of her peanut butter. "I'm set."

Door slams.

The goldfish is staring at her. The dead one.

Its body is arched now, curled so its stomach is raised, the

head bent sideways, blank eye watching.

And watching.

She runs her hand through her hair, feet tapping. She stands. She should really clean something.

There's mold growing in her tea filter. It looks and smells like a bizarre science experiment from hell. She sets it down next to the fishtank--nodeadgoldfishintheredefinitelynot--and puts away a dirty mug.

That was exhausting.

WEEP WEEP WEEP WEEP WEEP it takes her a good 20 seconds to turn her clock off today. Sarah rolls over and sighs.

Eyes open on their own today.

She finally takes that shower. The water's too cold, too hot, too much. But she's clean.

She has a presentation today. She should probably wear something other than ex boyfriend sweatpants. Probably. Not that it would matter with bloodshot eyes and this ridiculous cough. Probably tuberculosis.

Bouncy pop music. 49 sprays again. Nothing dropped.

"Do you need a belt?"

"What?"

"Those pants don't seem like they're fitting you. Do you need a belt?"

"Oh. Okay."

Sarah hands her the belt. "You've lost weight this year."

"I know."

"How much?"

She shrugs. "Don't know. A couple pant sizes."

"Well you don't need to lose any more."

"I know."

"And that goldfish is still dead."

"Yeah."

Door slams.

The goldfish had floated around to the front of the tank by now. Its blank eyes stare out, its mouth frozen in a gasp and its distended stomach rising to the surface of the water. Its smaller counterpart, seeing its owner standing over the bowl, rushes forward the front hoping for a morsel. Its tail shoves its brother deeper in the tank, still curled sideways with its stomach bulging up.

She watches as its gasping face slowly floats back to the top, the body rocking side to side before the stomach finally settles at the surface.

Its counterpart nibbles on its brother's fancy tail.

She opens the lid to the tank.

A blank eye stares at her. Open mouth.

Nope.

Can't.

She puts the blue net back on the shelf, lays back down, and closes her eyes.

Her eyes fly open. It's dark now, her body and her sheets are soaked in sweat. Thunder rolls outside, and she can see a Sarah jump in the bed next to her. She's pulled the curtains shut.

Green clock, its nose snobbishly upturned, reminds her that it's 4:37 in the morning. She ignores it.

Her half of the room is covered in stuff. All over the counters, all over the tables. In the dark of the room, it's nothing but shapes. She gets up and runs to the window, throwing the curtains open, gasping and shivering, wrapping a throw blanket around herself. Can't see much with all that rain outside.

That damn goldfish.

Rain is drizzling now. She looks out the window numbly. Her eyes still burn.

There's a break in the clouds, a rift of black between the gray. Three stars and a big moon tonight, not full but almost. Hard and yellow.

Don't look behind, she reminds herself. No goldfish.

She should really ask Sarah about that trash. But her eyes burn so badly, they just want to close...

She curls up, hands around her ankles, blanket over everything but her feet, head on her knees, breathing in yellow moonlight.

Eyes shut.



Golden | Kevin Fedde





El Hombre | Lydia Hawkins

# On the changing of Day, time

GREGORY MAHER

on and on and on  
with love gnashing at my heels,  
heart throb-bing, my ears red  
and sun flickering orange beams  
through car-window-surface-panel  
Lord! how the nights crawl on,  
to a different beat, song, than  
summer's heat haze that fades  
with eventide- to fleshy tunes-  
rising from soirees below, nights hung  
pulsing from lip to lip,  
my arms and legs scream  
*wild*, they dance  
the vibrating, the humming, the  
foom-foom-boom! which  
awakes inside, my limbs  
and surges out, tongue  
hung low, my face, aglow-  
the life - fury, now  
succumb



Baby Snatchers | Aaron Wegner



Hellen | Brenda Brown

# Possession

KELSIE DYKSTRA

i want to enfold you  
to tear you apart  
and sort out the pieces  
color by color  
crisp and clean  
to place them carefully  
into a scrapbook  
and laminate the edges  
to slam the book shut  
and hold it close to me  
fingers tracing the edges  
like frost patterns on a window

i want to become you  
to slide inside your being  
and open my eyes as your eyes  
and move as you move  
to slip into your brain  
and ride the flow of electrons  
to feel the consonants and vowels  
as they trip past your tongue

i want to contain you  
to pin you behind a sheet of glass  
neat and sterile  
posed just so  
like the prize in a lepidopterist's collection  
with a label reading "MINE"  
in stark black lettering  
even though you never were



Necessary Now | Angelica Jackson



Pointe | Mallory Swisher



On the Edge of Destruction | Corwin Leverich



# Room of Dreams

LAUREN NICKODEMUS

A quilt retains impressions of a curled and cuddled form,  
The Oriental threads embroidered in a swirling vine  
Rubbed with idle fingers, twisting tangled as they wind  
Beneath the saffron satin pillowcase. The stitching echoes  
On a tapestry above: a great gold elephant on a lush plum field

Striding like a standard borne by royal retinue,  
Held by henna-tattooed hands. There lingers still perfume of spice,  
Wrestling with the hollow yellow harshness  
Of dank mildew crawling from a ceiling crack.  
An entourage of camels clamors in rich orange;

Strange perching parrots sing ancient mysteries of the East.  
To the left their anthem fades as French Impressionists stake claim,  
Covering the sickly whitewash drab, long stained with time.  
Dali reigns as stoic neighbor, blood-red rose rising  
Over endless deserts, stretching their imposing distance,

Further than the four cloistered walls could ever reach.  
Van Gogh's skittish stars swirl in whimsy up above  
A creaking air conditioner that spews a musty fume.  
The gleaming Eiffel tower stands sentinel in shadow, guard  
To a dwarf refrigerator humming in a drone.

The bedstead sports a soft collage, each piece handpicked and pasted,  
French beauties, British sirens flashing Mona Lisa smiles,  
All frozen in eternity and peeling at the edges.  
Sparrows twitter by the air vent, Audrey smokes on the closet door;  
Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers share their last kiss by the mirror,

And a classy blonde by Big Ben perches on a tissue box.  
Amidst it all, sweetly scribed in cool colors, curling letters,  
A certain quote, a clear summation—something about the World,  
About its Beauty, about Dreams; it covers a coffee stain  
And the steadily seeping mold of a small, old room.

# Contributor Notes

**Madeline Bartsch** is, in reality, capable of removing dead goldfish from a fishtank. Love to Ponyo, her surviving adopted goldfish, for his love, encouragement, and inspiration throughout her writing process. She also sends unlimited gratitude to her friends. Their continual support and light makes life easier every single day.

**Hannah Bauer** is a graduating senior with majors in Creative Writing and Digital Media Arts. She hopes you thoroughly enjoy reading about her personal life here, because we all know that *Lighter* readers flip through them looking for something juicy written by someone they know. Or to look at the pretty pictures. Either or. Anyway, Hannah has no solid plans for after graduation, so if you know of any awesome employers tell them to hire her because she will bake them cupcakes.

**Brenda Brown** I was inspired to create "The Hunter" after reading a book on the Bauhaus Project and its contributors. I kept seeing this image in my mind. Sooner or later it had to come out. "Hellen" was created one day when I was extraordinarily angry. A visiting manager threatened to fire me from my store. It was later explained to her that I was doing my job according to our store's policies and they had no authority to say such things. In short, anger can be a great inspiration if used properly.

**Caitlin Carter** is a sophomore English major who still wishes she had more time to read, despite the large quantity of time she

spends reading for class. She would like to thank her friends for always making her laugh, and apologize to them for all the times she gets snarky while writing.

**Kelsie Dykstra** is a sophomore and one of the rare American Studies majors found on campus. She can be found in just about every classroom of Mueller, often fiddling with her phone and mumbling about presidents. She is quite pleasantly surprised to be published in *The Lighter* and would like to firmly reassure Anna that the poem was not written about anyone in particular, least of all her. Shout-out to the Shiba Inu lovers in the world. Sass on, my friends. Sass on.

**Lydia Hawkins** I am a currently a junior studying psychology. But art and literature I have always enjoyed, / I've been accepted here because of my photography- / Perhaps my poetry will someday also be employed...

**Angelica Jackson** has set a goal for herself of breaking the world record for "Most Years Spent Trying to Earn a Bachelor's Degree" and has the Guinness World Record offices on speed dial for when it actually does happen. In the meantime she will continue to snap photos for your viewing pleasure with much support from Bill, Adam, Kyle, Rachel, Olivia and Michael. She wouldn't have it any other way.

**Kyle Jackson** is a junior Computer Science and soon to be Digital Media double major. The pictures that I took on my trip are some of my favorite and I will never forget taking them. The number of times people have thought the one looked like a Quidditch field is almost too many to count. But, I had an amazing time abroad and I made so many new friends, met so many people and I will miss it. Enjoy the photos!

**Juliana Kapetanov** "Sometimes I am convinced that triangle is another name for stupidity, that eight times eight is madness or a dog." —Julio Cortázar

**Corwin Leverich** Bob said he wanted to be in the lighter.



**Gregory Maher** Words to Consider for Addition to the OED:  
[garelous] Alas the colonel, garelous he! Overstayed his welcome, made off with a tree!  
[banasque] What lovely curtains, are they . . . banasque?  
[festerling] Watch yer step, miss. Theys some mighty festerling buddles out there!  
[lapsadaical] Darling, the heat is giving me such lapsadaical dreams! It's dreadfully tedious.

**Meredith McKay** Where's the beef? Oh, yeah, it's on page 47.

**Marcus Mues** is a senior studying Geography, and minoring in American Indian Studies. He loves a good map, and the clean lines and illustrations are what he likes to see in artwork as well. His choice of medium has expanded since his last Lighter piece, *Abstract One*, into the realm of Adobe Illustrator. *Florid Fusion* and

*3D Me* are both results of Marcus' exploration into this medium for digital media, and he hopes to continue creating more exciting and detailed works in the future utilizing the art forms seen in these two pieces. He is thrilled to have his work accepted for a second issue of *The Lighter*.

**Lauren Nickodemus** is a local folk legend in her native area of mid-Michigan. She has already lived in three countries and studied five foreign languages. Amidst the demands of academic brilliance and training in sharp sarcastic wit, she found time to hone the crafts of fiction and poetry writing, which are her true passions. She has recently decided to devote her time and future to them much more actively. Her favorite color is burgundy. Her freakishly blonde hair is natural. The only time she has broken a bone is when she fell off a fence in Paris while trespassing.

A self-professed nomad, **Alanna Reid** was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, but calls Laramie, Wyoming home. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Wyoming with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies in December 2011. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Comparative Global Inquiry at VU where she attempts to combine her love of traveling, art and social justice. *Staring* was created after a recent trip to India and *Whisper* chronicles part of her experience in Life Drawing class. When she is not reading for her thesis, she enjoys hiking, creating enormous drawings, midnight bike rides, reading classical literature, making messes in the kitchen, and snowshoeing.

**Ian Roseen**, who is graduating in a few days, would like to say thanks, in particular, to all the people and spaces around Valpo that have ended up cementing themselves in his life somehow, while he was looking the other way. Thanks, also, to the Learys, the Tulls, and the Grinsteeds that've been following him all along.

**Rachel Shore** loves coffee, nature, imagination, and you.

**Lindsey Smith** is a junior psychology and art major with a minor in theatre, who is brand new to *The Lighter*. She has been doing art ever since she can remember, finding much comfort with charcoal and other graphite media. She plans to become an art therapist in the future, hoping to continue with her artwork. She feels very honored to have her work selected and would like to thank those who made it happen. She would also like to thank her family and friends for all of their support and love! Without them, well, she isn't sure where she would be!

**Mallory Swisher** is a sophomore Theatre major with a passion for trying her hand at photography. She is honored to be featured in *The Lighter* once again, and would like to thank the selection committees. She also would like to thank her loving and patient boyfriend, Michael, for helping her choose which photos to enter after an hour's worth of panic and indecision on her part.

**Daniella Tripodis** There's something exciting about catching a candid expression on camera. It's not posed or staged -- it's raw emotion. *Spoiled*, I think, becomes relatable to its viewers in that sense.

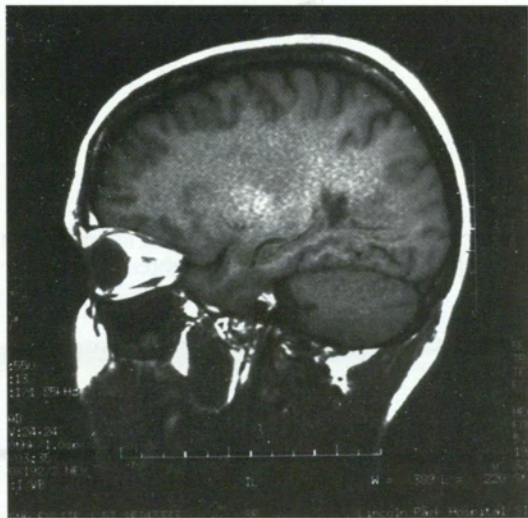
**Mia Vivens** is a senior political science and theater major who likes to write and is one step closer to actually calling herself a poet. Much thanks to *The Lighter*, Lizz, Allison Schuette, my family and my friends!

**Aaron Wegner** Art has many different functions. I personally find it a powerful vent for sorrow, a safe empty field to exhaust one's lungs screaming. This cleansing property delivers me catharsis and ultimately, hope. In its larger context, Art in all its forms (Studio, Graphic, Music, Theatre, Writing, Poetry, etc.) allows us to ask one another not 'what do you do?', but rather 'what do you make?' This opportunity to participate in the act of creation, to be a maker, a sub-creator, is one of life's great transcendent gifts.

**Joseph Weil** "With purpose. Whatever we do."

**Haylee Westendorf** I am a freshman studying graphic design and communications. I love my family, pillow pets, pink, boots, the smell of Sharpie, bagels, the History Channel, fake grass, the word meow, country music, and art. Oh, and I have recently fallen in love with hot tea and orange juice. [Meow]

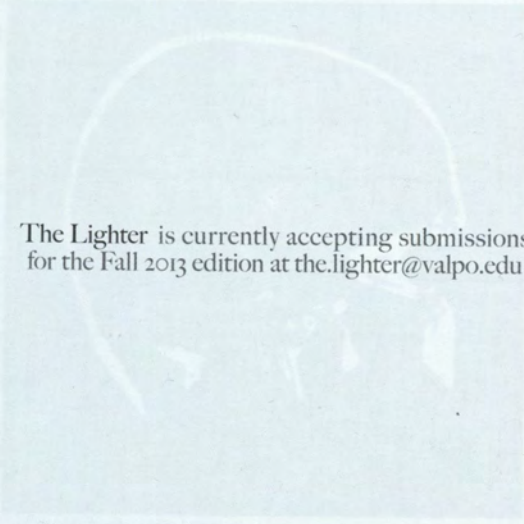
**Michelle Zolfo** As Ian likes to say: Live, Love, Lighter. Here to a great year.



Lindsay Smith is a first-year student and is currently working on the editorial board of The Lighter. She has been the managing editor of The Lighter for the past two years and is currently working on the editorial board. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on her thesis. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on her thesis.

Joseph Well is a first-year student and is currently working on the editorial board of The Lighter. He has been the managing editor of The Lighter for the past two years and is currently working on the editorial board. He is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on his thesis. He is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on his thesis.

Michelle Zeff is a first-year student and is currently working on the editorial board of The Lighter. She has been the managing editor of The Lighter for the past two years and is currently working on the editorial board. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on her thesis. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and is currently working on her thesis.



The Lighter is currently accepting submissions for the Fall 2013 edition at [the.lighter@valpo.edu](mailto:the.lighter@valpo.edu)

1900

