



TRILLIUM 2012-2013





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CENSORED

Statement of Purpose

On April 10, 2012, an anonymous group of students used art to speak their minds, covering the campus in chalk poetry. Although they were anonymous, through their art they said, "We are here." Classes gathered to study the poems. Passing students, staff, and faculty stopped and read. Some smiled, some scratched their heads. Some complained about graffiti. Within hours, the art was washed off with hoses and scrubbed with brooms.

But art is identity. Though we may try to hide our identities, the masks we create eventually name us. From the half-obscured man serving food on our front cover to the *Watchmen*-inspired illustration on the back, *Trillium's* writers and artists express how art creates and conceals identity. Ramapo students try to establish themselves as individuals through creative arts, including our creative writing and visual art programs. It was not the editors' initial plan to have this magazine tackle the issue of creative expression among the student body. However, it is our responsibility to accurately represent what matters to Ramapo's students. The students who submitted their art to the magazine determined the theme of this year's *Trillium*: Identity. This is us.

Can't wash this off with a hose.

Biblically

Antonio Regalado

you've been known to reinvent yourself
and i've known you every time
in the writhing sweaty sort of way
they euphemized for king james, to appear
tasteful. i've known you through genesis,
the beginning and the storm, and corinthians,
when i touched you tenderly until you screamed
out for me, or god, or whomever you saw
in the light that moved you. you kept your religion,
and me, the two things you loved the most squared off
in your head or heart or whatever you use to love
when you love like that. you believed your religion
enabled you to love, and i believed love
was the religion, and i believe you
would've died for urban under the desert sun,
while i would've died for helen
under achilles' heel. i would've died
for you, if you asked. instead,
i boarded a thousand ships bound for Troy
and found another you to know,
another you to die for.

An Ugly Thought

Bobby Texel

As the elevator lurched to the 5th floor
you looked at me
with a nervous smile.

I grinned back at you.
I was comfortable with the
compartment's commonplace
moaning and groaning.

"We're not going to die,"
I said.
"I promise."

As we stepped off the elevator,
I realized that my statement
was false,
a lie,
a slip of the tongue.

We're all going to die someday,
and I can't even promise you
that it won't be because
of the elevator
in our building.

Sorry.



Deshauna Dunn

Deshauna Dunn



Abductees

Graig Mihok

The next name on my list of abductees was a man named Opus Grime. The drive was wet and took me just under forty-five minutes. The windows of his house were boarded up and the shingles were cinnamon in color. The word “beleve” was misspelled in faded orange spray paint across his front door while a screen door was suspended ajar.

I knocked on the door. A skinny man with long, greasy, salt and pepper-shaded hair opened the door and leered at me.

“You Nathan Bryar?” he asked. His teeth were all a different color.

“I am. And you’re Mr. Grime? Good to meet you,” I replied, dismissing the thought of extending my hand to him.

“You can come in. Watch your step around the floor here,” he said, already turned around and heading down a dimly lit hallway.

Fairly large holes lined the right side of the hallway and through them you could see into an illuminated basement. Mr. Grime had stopped at the end of the hallway and was waiting for me. Making my way to him, I did my best to ignore the heaping piles of garbage and assorted pieces of wood that filled both the kitchen and a room

I had passed.

“You can sit right here,” he said, clearing a shirt and a stale sandwich off of a metal folding chair.

“Thank you,” I said. Sitting down, I noticed the sunlight seep through the cracks around the boarded window to my left. Mr. Grime left the room momentarily. It was during this time that I noticed the space around me was full of old radio parts and the tops of large pots and frying pans. He reentered the room with an empty fifteen-gallon bucket. He turned it over and sat on it in front of me.

Noticing my eyes inspecting the contents of the room, he spoke: “Been trying to make some of those radio antennas. You know, pick up some signals.”

I blinked and nodded. Then, remembering the pad and pen in my inside coat pocket, I took them out and armed the pen with my thumb.

“So let’s, um, start here. Can you tell me about your abduction? Start anywhere you feel comfortable,” I said, painfully making eye contact with him.

“Okay. Well it started back--” he said, before being cut off by another voice.

“You gonna look at the boiler today ’er you going to be slinging pans

'round makin' a racket?" shot a tired female voice with a thick southern accent from down the hallway.

Mr. Grime looked at me for a half-moment, then closed his eyes and clenched his teeth. His face was much uglier in this shape and I could see tufts of grayish hair shoot out his nostrils.

"How about you shut the fuck up!" he said, each word exponentially louder than the last. "I got a guest here! Why don't you put on some fuckin' clothes and make some coffee or sum'in!" When he opened his eyes back up they were fixed on the ground between us but not focused on anything.

He looked back up to me, his teeth still clenched, and said, "But don'tcha worry, she ain't gonna make nothin'. She never cooks nothin' anyway!"

The voice from the hallway returned, this time more animated. "How mah supposed to cook anythin' when you got all my fuckin' pots in there?"

"I ain't got your fuckin' pots in here! I only got the tops!" His head was twisted around to the hallway so he could better deliver his message.

By the time he turned back around, I was noticeably uncomfortable in my chair. When he saw this, he too showed discomfort in his face. Leaning forward a bit, he said, "Never

mind her, she's a non-believer. She doesn't believe in nothin' less it's got chocolate syrup dripped all over the top of it."

I faked a smile and tried to laugh but swallowed instead. I took a look at my pad and shifted my weight on the chair.

"So, let's talk about your, um, implant. You mentioned over the phone that it was undeniable, solid proof of your abduction. Could I see it now?"

"Yeah, lemme turn around to show ya," he said excitedly, spun around, and sat backwards on the bucket. "Right up there where the shoulder meets the neck, there's one of them. I found another above my knee just yesterday."

There was a small scar covering a bulbous protrusion on the lower part of the back of his neck, near the collar bone.

"No doubt them bastards put a trackin' device or some kind of homin' beacon there," he said with a surprising level of confidence.

"So there is another above your knee? I need to record that. That's the first case of an implant around the knee I've come across," I stated, marking my findings down.

"Yep. They're probably getting smart about it. Knowin' the spots we look at. They're changin' it up, to throw us off." He was talking with

something in his mouth now. I assumed it was his finger or a cigarette.

Looking back at the mark on his neck, I asked, "Have you ever tried to remove any of these? To see what they look like?"

"I'm too afraid they're going to be one of those implant bombs. Blow me up if I take anything to it. Heard they got more power than government grade C4. Blow my ass clean in half," he said while his lighter scraped over and over.

"I have never heard of that," I said.

"Read it on the internet," he replied.

At this time a woman moved into the doorway. Her pink faded blouse was too large for her and her zebra patterned pants were too short. Her hair was thinning in spots on the sides of her head, and the expression on her face and look in her eyes told me that she had trained herself not to care about it.

"What'er you doin' in 'ere? Who is that?" she asked, inspecting me and my position in relation to Mr. Grime, who faced her from the bucket.

"I already told you. You can't remember shit. I said a journalist -er...reporter, was coming to get my story, you know, about my experiences," Mr. Grime said, pausing for a drag on his cigarette.

The woman, still looking confused, stepped over a small heap of old radio parts and walked around the other side of Mr. Grime.

"What are you lookin' at on him?" she asked, moving in on the back of Mr. Grime's neck. He saw this and jerked away.

"Wait, this bump here?" she questioned, her finger softly prodding the little lump.

"Yeah, that one," he said, staring at her but expecting her to say something unfamiliar.

"This ain't nothin' special, it's a BB. You got shot by a BB here. Like, ten or fitt'een years ago."

Mr. Grime's face was struck with confusion. He looked at her, who was looking back on him with some concern, then swept his eyes over to me. I could offer him nothing.

"No. No, it was... it was... the abduction. They put it in me," he said as his words stumbled to cross the finish line.

The woman stood there with sympathy in her eyes. "No hun, it was a BB from an air rifle. Don'cha remember? It was my birthday party, behind Pit Boss Bar-bee-que. You and the guys were shootin' things, and ya'll got real drunk, and y'all wanted to start shootin' each other?"

Mr. Grime sat in silence while his eyes crossed and uncrossed a little at a

time. He asked, "Was brother Earl there?"

"I think so," she replied. "But Ronald was the one who shot you," she added, putting her hands on his shoulders.

"Why'd...he shoot me?" he questioned, slowing down to the speech of a boxer at the end of a long, disappointing career.

"You shot him first hun," she said, brandishing a hint of pity.

"Oh," he replied, surrendering and sputtering, then finally blowing a mental gasket.

I shifted my weight again, then put my pen and pad away, realizing that this was the end of the interview. I was preparing something to say as an excuse to get up and leave when the woman spoke.

"He gets confused sometimes, about things," she said.

"It's quite all right. Maybe I could come back another time?" I said, knowing full well that I wouldn't.

"Yeah, sure. Maybe next week or some time," she said in a very inviting tone.

"Hmm, yeah, you come back here. I need to...remember things first," he said slowly, as if he had hit his head on some pavement.

On cue, I stood up, and smiled at both of them while nodding my head. Making my way to the hallway in

front of Mr. Grime, I mistakenly kicked a small pot lid which slid into the molding of the doorway. He didn't react to the sound of it at all, and I excused myself from the room. Exiting the house, I walked to my car, wondering if this strange instance would be repeated in another boarded-up, dark, house. I sat in the driver's seat of my car, took out my pen and pad, and crossed Mr. Grime's name off the list.



Yingjie Hu

Prufrock Over the Harlem River

Katie Attinello

I have measured out my life in coffee spoons,
In things to take from my room,
In footsteps to the bus stop,
In miles over the blacktop,
In sedentary minutes in the tunnel,
In shoves through the turnstile funnel,
In cheap metro card swipes,
In tattered subway musician types,
In swaying motions on the train,
In every blackened sidewalk stain,
In rock-set stairways down, then up,
All to share a day--a cup--
with you.

Trapeze Artist

Ruby Corman

if I could stand on a bright red platform

dozens of feet up
my palms, dry
my teeth, unclenched
my heart beating steady,
calm

squinting my eyes through a halo
of light, listening for the drum roll,
to tell me to jump,
unable to see the outstretched hands
waiting to catch me

there's no net but
I won't spare a thought
to consequences
trusting gravity, physics,
building up momentum

the children
in the audience
holding their breath
in their tiny lungs
as I fling myself into the open air

dissolving into that white light

Leftovers

Brendan Flanagan

The world we could have shared
ended over reheated pasta
because the sight of the thoughtful meal
made it too hard to do the first time.
I learned that while awkward slips
of *we* and *us* will pass
with sad looks from old friends,
the true meaning of lonely
is a cooling dish and scraping
the bottom of the tupperware.

Seeing Through

Brendan Flanagan

When I got home
Mom sighed at me
and although I fixed
my clothes outside
in the hot and black night,
I knew I couldn't hide
what had happened.

I sat down in my place
at the table, blushing,
but she reached for Dad's mug,
handed it to me and shared
the coffee she had made.

Philophobia

Ruby Corman

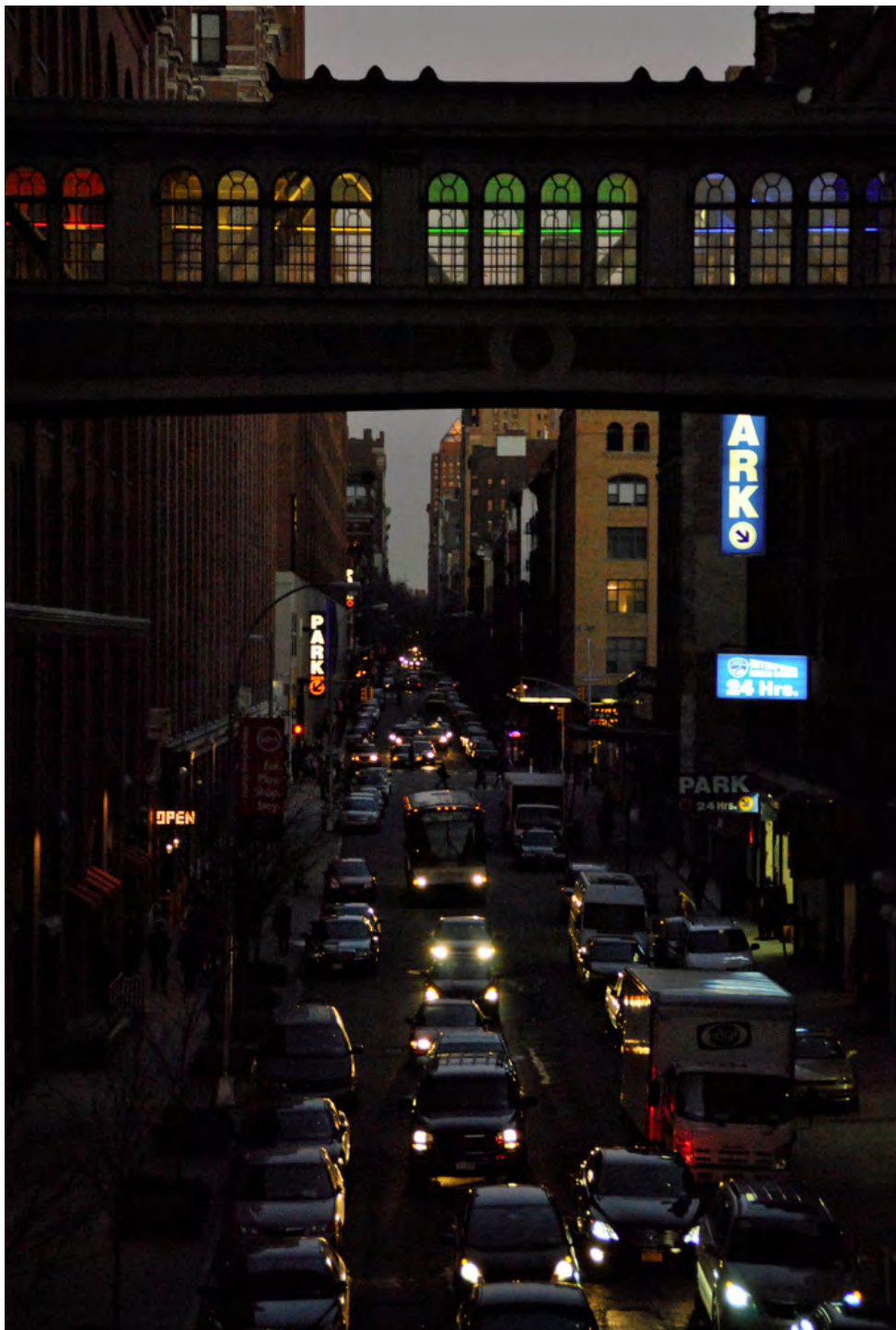
There's a prefix which has been chasing me around;
I pore through pages and pages and find
the philarchaist in love with ancient history
the philogynist swooning after all forms female
the philometrist quietly collecting envelopes
the philharmonic chasing after every pleasing melody
the philocubist rolling his dice between his fingers
and the philalethe,
who only wants to crouch and drink from the Lethe,
and forget life aboveground.

I've loved family,
Loved animals, friends,
but I've never loved a single man I've touched
and I love to forget.



Deshauna Dunn

Kristen Smith



The Richest Men

Chloe Dougherty

“Adieu! Adieu!”

He bids to a stranger

Sloshing his bottle of sewage champagne

He stretches his soul

Across his throne of a stoop

His wife beside him reads last week’s newspaper.

They savor scraps of bread like bonbons

And create stories of each hurried passerby

And he tells anyone with an ear

That the richest men

Sleep on the streets of Paris.

Where I'll Be Waiting

Ashley Beaton

Woke up looking for you again
half asleep, cold and aching for
the warmth of your body pressed to mine.
But you were gone like always
the smile on my lips from a lingering dream
slipping away as I breathed in the scent of you
pulling the blanket tighter, hiding from
the reality of another day without you
pretending that *I love you* whispered
in the darkness of stolen hours is enough.

for you, brother

Stefanie Mauro

surrounded by the presence of death in the desert or
wherever you go you will find it, or something like it
the lack of limbs or a shattered mind, a gun for you
like so many who went before you. do we call it fate?
when one is simply following footsteps or orders.
is that what you see? a duty to some imagined ideal
do they teach you that in school or church? that when
you sign up you feel the weight of the years in the pen
I fear, you choose your fate too soon. there are so many ways
to die, so many ways to teach a peace that you may never find

humility

Armond Speck

I would never try to write about death

death is too big, too much
and to write anything is to conquer it—
the pen is a penis (let's face that), and even
a keyboard's got to be groped—and

I could never conquer death because no one has yet,
not even God's kid, Jesus, who had to wait three days
for it to even let its guard down
long enough for him to sneak out

death would see me lacing up
a shiny pair of boxing gloves
like boils about to burst at the end of my arms,
reservoirs for cold sweat from clammy hands
and death would laugh so hard, I'd have to smile, too

I would never try to write about death

death is too clean
death is never covered in blood
 or the stink of festering
 or rotting flesh
 that teems with writhing maggots—
 that's the territory of Living. no,
I would never try to write about death



Christina Lee

desire

Antonio Regalado

i came here to forget
long legs and smiles, the kind
that stopped my world.

it's a long way from home
to the desert. i-95 to
the sky. few thousand

doubts later and i'm all
geared up and ready
to almost kinda maybe

die, every day. there's no
threat of death between
central and main, no

bombs on the way
to the bowling alley.
our first date. i miss

the dog, neighborhood kids,
even the taxes that remind me
i'm home. i miss your smiles.

here, women don't smile.
their faces are beaten
by weather and time, all lines,

thin lipped mouths and hungry
eyes, agape and wishing
for the return of a lost

generation. for a while,
i longed to return to
your arms; now, i know nothing

of longing. i know only of hopeless
need. i came here to forget,
but i don't think i ever will.

symmetry

Stefanie Mauro

they say we're just a bunch of atoms
fizzing together and that there really is
nothing solid separating us from the air
we breathe. we were once children simmering
on the brink of knowing that everything they
taught us in grade school was wrong and it
would change the way we see the world.
how in learning more simplified nothing
no one taught us how to do our laundry
or balance a checkbook or how long it takes
to boil dumplings but they gave us color-
coded notebooks and told us that our bosses
would care about our GPAs until we looked
the same, so blended, so boring.

Based on an Imagined Story

Stevie Lynn Rand

You had me at abstractions.
Love, loss, hope, survival.
I can't make poetry out of that,

but for you, I'll try. So
I'm weaving a tapestry:
that time at the diner

where you glowed when your
girlfriend's basketball game
ended up on the TV screen,

on a blurred small-town channel
that we wouldn't receive from
a town away, while I wished

we were a town away, woven in
with the dinner that went down
like Elmer's glue, entwined

with you, looking at me, you
telling me that you're sorry,
that this isn't a choice, but

I'm not your choice. I'm
still pricking myself with
the needle, trying to weave

us into this story that could be
love, if the fabric was just
a different color, or if I found

a better metaphor altogether.
But it's not done yet. I'm not
done yet. Some days, I imagine

finishing it, wrapping it around
you, or me, or you and me, gladly
smothering us to save us from fire.

Springfield & Clinton

Rosa Gomez

In between Exits 143 and 144
on the Garden State Parkway,
there's a steel overpass
where that first phone call
after we'd met up for coffee
remains, breathing.

It's been marred since of course--
years of motor exhaust, weather, and
urban graffiti. But, darting under it
now, in the driver's seat,
I can hear our voices from
that November afternoon
bouncing off
of the orange-tinged, tunnel walls.

*I haven't been able to stop--
When can I--
--thinking of you...
--see you again?
I've been so busy--
I could help--
--with everything...
--I could be
your little secretary...*

I linger in these echoes
long after the overpass fades.
But they soon become thick--leaden,
and I'm forced to wonder
if there's any place you frequent
now, with her,
where you still hear us
even in a whisper?



Anna Richter

When Snow White Wakes Up and Speaks for the First Time

Sarah Galo

I didn't really die, as everyone assumed. The apple wasn't really poisoned with cyanide, or whatever the hell will do you in. Just a heavy dose of Xanax, or was it Lunesta?

Something to relax the body and the mind. You know I was in an awful tizzy all the time. Running around, manically singing to the birds, while scrubbing the floor, washing the dishes, making the dinner—

Working my ass off for these poor helpless men. They couldn't live, could hardly breathe till I came along. How or why I got here isn't of concern. I was sent, you may say.

God's gift to men, to cook, clean, make everything pure again, modeled after my own virginal self. I was tired, damn tired, when the old lady came by. I needed a break. And she offered the apple, a beautiful shiny apple.

They, the men, had warned me before, *Don't eat the apple. That's why Eve fell, and Adam too. If anyone strange comes along, ignore them, keep on with your work (for us), they're after you. They may want to steal your soul.*

I nodded and smiled, the bobbed black curls bobbing, my nearly translucent skin blushing. *Take care, Snow White.* Why the hell they called me that, I do not know, but when this old lady came, all cold and tired, with this beautiful apple,

that was supposedly the cause of the fall of my kind, and I was promised eternal beauty and the like, well why the hell not? I thought. I took the apple, more than took it. I ripped it from her hand,

biting the crisp fruit, my lips puckering from the tartness...and I felt tired.
But wonderfully, peacefully tired. *Good night, sweet girl*, said the old lady. As my body settled into a new state,

I realized my opportunity, sleep, sleep, sleep. Free from the chores, the obligations and assumptions...I don't remember how I ended up in a glass coffin or how I was kissed awake by a strange man,

who lifted me from my resting place, and tried to help me onto his horse. What is this? I said, speaking aloud, my voice strangely soft and whiny—Is this what I sound like?

Good Lord, help me—who are you? Why are you taking me to your castle far away? Where's the old lady, with her beautiful apples sugar-coated with Xanax or Lunesta, whatever the hell it was? I don't want to work.

No more scrubbing dishes, no more singing with the birds, no more of this bobble-head mentality. I won't go with you, or back with those old bastards. Find me the old lady, I just want to go back to sleep.

after dark

Antonio Regalado

you went down to the pier where, in hours,
striped bass would nibble at worms.
but bass don't dance in the moon like you,
you, there even before the gulls,
there more silent than the fishermen.
there you waited,
your sweet doe eyes and conniving smile
waited for the sun to rise
so you could swoop and catch it unaware,
stuff it in your big black sack
and write my name on it.

i came in, stumbling and sweating gin,
and you came to me and held me up
and laid me down and said you had a present,
and you gave me the sun.
i, then, most wanted to tell you,
open my mouth and come out with it,
and i tried, but the room,
the air went out and i felt it rush back in,
i felt it crush me, and all i could say was i
need water.

and so we would be, for years,
you giving me the sun
and i asking for the rest
of the world.

smith

Antonio Regalado

my words come from encyclopedia brown.
my words come from things my parents yelled at each other,
things my parents yelled at me. they're from
textbooks k-through-twelve, though i only read
half as many as i was assigned to, and half of that
shit was just incorrect anyway. they're born of
shakespeare and rowling, but americans too,
minorities and gays and children. a few came from the girls
i've loved, a few more from the girls i said i loved,
a handful from fanfiction during dark times
in eighth grade, the insides of bathroom stalls
and outsides of warehouses, words as big as a man,
bubbled and bright greens and pinks and oranges.
the print media has gotten to me, as have syllabi
and subtitles for foreign films, microwave directions
that i always always *always* fuck up, mapquest directions
i somehow get right, powerpoints, spreadsheets,
the warnings on the side of the box from
the surgeon general himself, comic books,
and tags in shirts at kohl's. they never have my size,
but i make the words fit, make them my own
or just make shit up. i want to be the guy that names
new game shows, to find the unspoken thousand
that every picture's worth, create new ones
or bring back the old.



Chris Puglise

Chris Puglise



Home Repair

Stephen Sorace

The sun's electric beams swam in the bay and danced on the shore, but failed to make an impression on the beachfront bungalow. The old man was over the stove cooking, in the dimness—four scrambled eggs, as usual. But this morning was not usual. He lost a pound somewhere during the previous week and took offense. Another egg was cracked and added to the frying pan. Now there was one egg left alone in the carton. The old man picked it up and cradled it in his coarse hand before cracking it. Breakfast was six eggs that morning—enough to renew his strength for the day.

Once breakfast was finished, the empty egg carton was placed on top of a stack of eleven other cartons standing next to twelve more. Twenty-four cartons that morning. He looked over them with a frown and knew there could have been more if he had been younger. He walked by a pile of pizza boxes that were home to a group of mice. He always left them alone and he expected them to do the same.

He continued into the hallway—clogged on both sides with dusty newspapers—under the black mold that slowly crept toward his bedroom. He carefully followed the maze in the living

room through boxes of old mementos and collectors' items to be sold when the time was right. The old man was rich in rare coins, stamps, plates with Indians, plates with Presidents, comic books, art books, and more buried too deep to be remembered. Their worth had sunk too low to sell now, so the old man would wait until they became valuable again. He finally made it outside to the veranda. He had intended to spend the day working on his home, but the cold and dampness still lingered from the morning, so he sat in his steel chair, lit a cigarette, and waited for the afternoon sun to warm up the wood.

"Hello neighbor. Heard it was going to be beautiful today," said the man from next door.

"Oh, hello there," the old man replied, looking at the bay. "Yes, I've heard. I'm going to do some repairs on the house today."

The man from next door looked the house over and smiled.

"Have a good day," the old man said as the neighbor continued on his way.

The house was not what it had once been. The exterior's white paint was peeling and the veranda's wooden boards were loose. He looked over to

his neighbor's new two-story house—solid, with a fresh coat of paint—and began to nail the boards back into place. The oldest and weakest board needed five nails to secure its place among the newer and sturdier ones. On both knees, he continued to hammer.

A car pulled up to the driveway and a younger version of the old man hopped out. "Hey Pop," he said.

"Hello son. You're too late. The girls in bikinis played volleyball yesterday." The two laughed.

"I actually came to cut your hedges."

"It's alright. Your brother should be coming tomorrow. He can handle it." The old man smiled and patted his flexed arm.

The son looked back at his parked car.

"Have you heard from your siblings?" he asked. He had four other children. They gave up on the house and the old man years ago.

"Yeah, they're fine," the son guessed.

"Good. Next time you all talk, tell them to send some money."

The son looked the old man's work over. The boards weren't lined up. Two of them looked alright until, at one point, they started to overlap. The surrounding boards had gaps big enough to stick a fist through. "Are you sure you don't need any help?"

"It's only some hammering and painting. Don't worry, I go slow. My heart can handle it if I go slow."

The old man never noticed the roof. It was too far out of his sight to see the sunken hole that allowed the black mold to creep in. Its poor condition confirmed there was little hope for the rest of the house. The son knew this. Once the roof goes, the rest follows.

"I have something for the boys," he said. "They're one of a kind. Collector's items, you know? They'll be worth something one day."

The son followed the old man inside, through the maze of boxes and newspapers to his bedroom. "Don't you think it's time to get rid of this stuff? And this house. I think it's time to sell and move back to Brooklyn," the son said, sliding open the closet door. The air was thick with rot and neglect.

"It's my house."

The son took something from the closet: his mother's mink coat. The coat was now just a rag breeding mold. The old man stopped his searching and took the coat in his hands. First, he held it up, then brought it close to his chest. For the first time the old man noticed the coat.

"I've ruined it, haven't I?"

The son watched the old man from the doorway.

"I'll start on the hedges Pop."

Star Barkman





Star Barkman

Sausalito

Chloe Dougherty

We had only slept together twice when the phone calls started. The first time I answered to hear Anna's tearful drivel, I rushed from my bed holding the receiver against my ear with one hand and fumbling to pull my pants up over my boxers with the other.

"No, no, no," she blubbered, "Talk to me, please just talk to me."

After the third phone call, I began to realize that this was Anna's only purpose of calling. She was a girl who felt too much, who could only keep her feelings in check for a few days at a time before they began spurting out like an active geyser. We met at a coffee shop on Thursday and she sat in front of me looking as stable as anyone else there. Her eyes moved dully across the pages of the paper, taking sips of her latté without looking up. That evening she called me; fighting between breaths and sobs, I couldn't get any words out of her for almost twenty minutes. Her cry didn't seem to be for any reason in particular, and it wasn't the sort of cathartic cleansing many women say helps them to clear their minds. Her cry was more of a sudden and violent regurgitation, a frantic purging of the overwhelming sorrow that plagued her.

During the first call I struggled to calm her, starting out with the cut-and-dry Hallmark sentiments: "everything will be okay in the end" and "I know she's strong enough to get through it." I was still unclear as to what I was comforting her over. Around the fourth phone call, I had exhausted all of my usual comforting words. I began rambling about my life and family, searching for the words to stop her tears. I talked about the news, the weather, anything that came to my mind. I felt helpless as her crying continued. As I wracked my brain for something to say, I tried to think of the most peaceful memories I had. I began telling Anna about the time I spent after college working on a houseboat in Sausalito. Anna was now crying silently and her end of the line was quiet, save the occasional hiccup and gasp for breath. I talked about how I would wash the decks and watch the surrounding boats bob in the soft waves of the Pacific. I told her about the fishermen who would wake with the sun to sit in the soft light of dawn for hours with nothing but a fishing pole and a cup of wriggling, purple worms. As I talked, I listened. Anna's breathing grew shallow and I could tell she was focusing on my words. I talked about how when the tide rolled

out, the dock rose to just beneath my chin and I'd have to hoist myself over the ledge, often needing to fling myself across it and tuck like a rolling pin. By the time I hung up the phone there was no sound at all but a soft nasally snore.

Each time Anna would call, she begged me to tell her about Sausalito. Each time I hung up the phone, wondering whether she or I needed these phone calls more. I sat in the muted grey space of my cubicle waiting for the phone to ring and thinking of the girl with the restless mind. Her apartment was a disordered contradiction. Bookshelves stretched from ceiling to floor, stacked with books, candles, and matchboxes from every restaurant she'd ever eaten at, in meticulous chaos. Pillows and blankets of all colors and patterns covered the floor and sofas. And there was Anna, being swallowed up into the middle of it all, sitting there not looking amused. She was thin past the point of beauty: Knees, shoulders, hipbones and ankles all jutted out like foreign objects from her pale body.

Sometimes after we made love she wedged herself into the crook of my arm and I combed my fingers through her long, dark hair, talking about the seaside town until she fell asleep.

Laying there in the darkness, my

sickest fantasies found me. Often, I dreamed of her suicide, both late at night and in the heavy haze of afternoon. I imagined myself driving down the crooked streets of Chicago with wild abandon, parking my white Jetta in the fire zone outside of her apartment complex. Not bothering with the elevator, I would fly up the three flights of stairs to find her door ajar and no sound from within the hollow apartment. I'd fling the door to the bathroom open and find her still body with deep vertical slits in each wrist. I imagined her silk nightgown billowing around the porcelain in water clouded with blood. Her eyes rolled back and lids parted to expose terrible, white half-moons. I would pause to admire her haunting beauty before noticing the slow rise of her ashen chest. Lifting her frail body from the water I'd carry her dripping half-corpse to the couch as I called for help, all the while talking in a slow, soothing voice about houseboats. I would awake horrified at the pleasure I got from this, at the pride I craved at any expense.

Anna's phone calls grew less frequent, and I sometimes found myself picking up the phone to call her. I told myself that it was important to check on her because something could be seriously wrong. She answered sounding aloof and distant, often with the buzzing of a television or chatter of

friends in the background. I asked her both hopefully and hopelessly if she wanted to hear about the sunset over San Francisco. I was terrified that her need for me might be waning.

The less Anna called me, the more I called her. Sometimes, in a fit of emotion, I called to hear her voice, each ring of the receiver quickening my breath. I tried to explain my pain to her, to tell her about the stresses of my life. Often my calls ended up in a tearful, wordless fight as I tried to find comfort in knowing there was someone on the other end.

“Everything will be okay in the end,” she cooed in half-hearted comfort.

“That doesn’t make it better,” I told her between sobs. “That’s never made anything better.”

Filth

Stefanie Mauro

you give me pristine things like words
on white paper or clothes unwrinkled
i smear them like paint across canvas
bending and peeling away at the facade
breaking them into seven billion pieces
the world under my dirty fingernails
in the cuts and bruises of my skin
unlike you, I have neglected to clean out
of my mind the filth of so many bodies
breathing on such a small planet.



Nicole Busanic

Nicole Busanic



Nicole Busanic





Nicole Busanic

If I Was

Stevie Lynn Rand

If I was a GPS, I would get people lost.
On the car ride, in the five star safety van,
with its passengers all wearing headphones

to escape the silence, I would start a conversation.
I would ask them nicely to turn off SpongeBob, to
turn to each other. I would have the temper-tantrum

that the little boy was cajoled into not having.
I would tell them to take exit 155P, and see
how long it would take them to get back

on the right track themselves. I would sit
in the awkward quiet of the drive home from
the first date. I would ask them the questions

they each are dying to know about the other,
to get answers like “I say it car-a-mel, not car-
mel. I got this scar when I was eight, from

knocking my knee into the bed frame after I fell. Yeah.
I had a really good time tonight, too.” I would want
someone to ask me these questions, instead of

begging me to help them, to tell them where they
need to go. If I was a GPS, I would never lie – never
tell anyone that they have reached their destination.

Sharks Matthew Smokowski

“Look at this guy: he’s so dead,” I say as I watch the fin circling a wading man on the screen. Every Sunday, I sit with my girlfriend and we watch a shark movie. There are tons of shark movies: Deep Blue Sea, Sharks in Venice, Shark Night, Sand Sharks... I could go on. Sitting in the dark with a blanket draping our knees, we root for the shark while sipping beers. She jumps as a great white bursts from the water, tearing the poor swimmer in half.

“The comic relief guy always dies. Sharks are attracted to two things: blood and comedy.” I smirk at her.

“I’m trying to watch this.” She stares at the screen. Her eyes fix to each person as they speak their poorly planned lines. Each film has two star-crossed lovers with some expendable friends. I don’t think it takes much to tell who is dying first. I shut my mouth anyway.

“This one’s pretty scary,” she says. The camera zooms in on a shadowy outline just below the water. Both her hands cling to a beer. She leans in towards the screen.

“You’d like to think that there is a shark waiting in the ocean for each of us. Waiting out there with those doll eyes like Quint describes. But the truth

is there isn’t one,” I explain, swinging a beer bottle between my fingers.

“And even if there was one waiting out there, he wouldn’t charge right at you and take a bite outta you. He would wait, have a look, swim away.”

“Did you ever stop and think that it is just a movie? It’s boring if no one gets eaten. Besides, people get attacked by sharks all the time,” she says, slightly annoyed.

“Four people per year die from shark attacks. This movie has already killed six,” I say. All those have paid off.

“Just watch the movie!” She folds her arms and chews her cheek.

“What I’m saying is, a twenty footer weighing over two tons stares right at you and turns tail. It doesn’t make sense. On some level, we want that shark to take a piece outta us. Because if he didn’t...” My attention is turned towards the T.V. The shark swims to the boat, then away again. The passengers look frightened. Its fin splits the water as it circles. I point.

“This guy, he won’t make it past the next scene.”

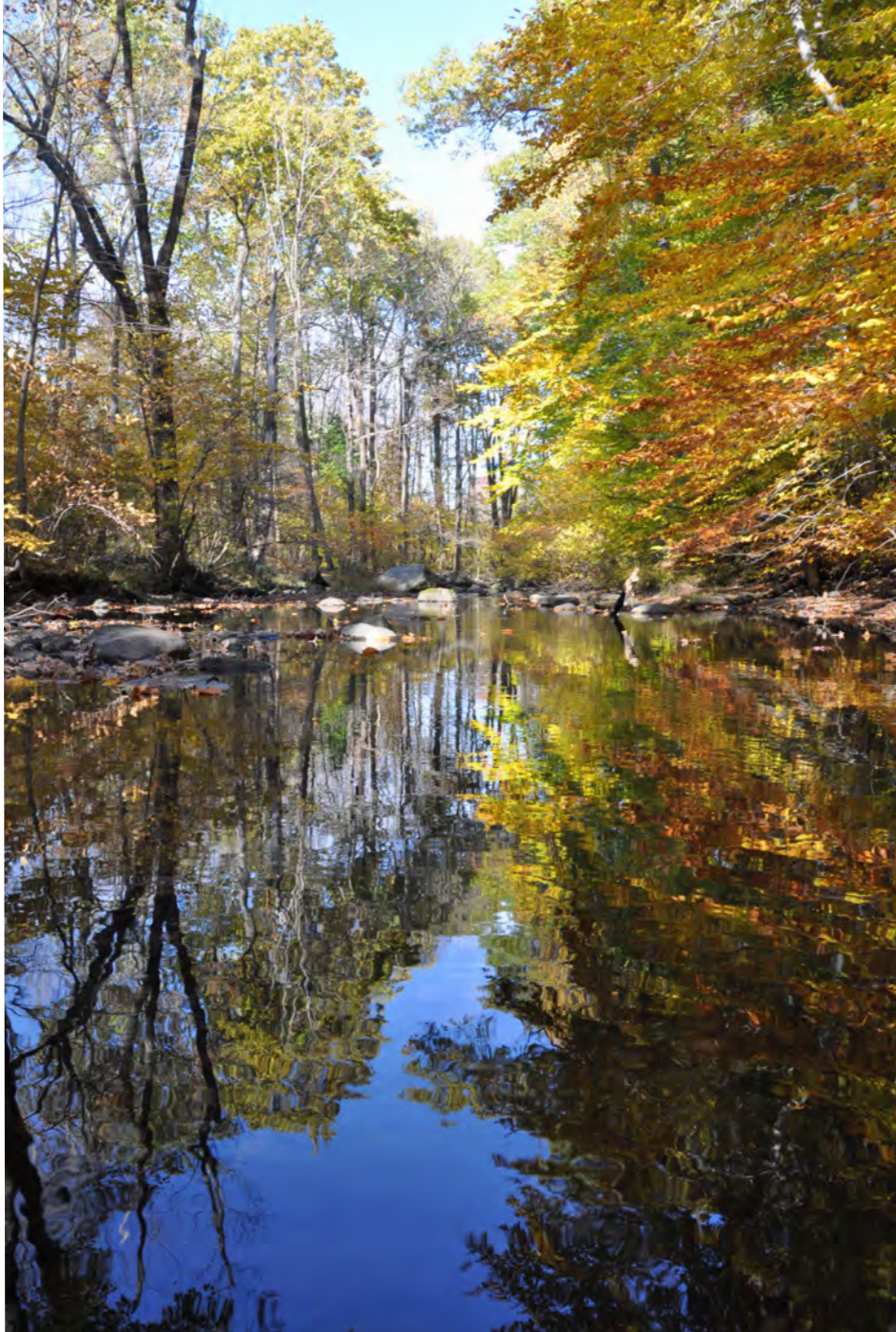


Ian Mauro

Ian Mauro



Ian Mauro



H

Ruby Corman

I take life
in fits and starts,
propelled
forward,
from idea
to idea,
transitive, always,
anxiously pushing.
My obsessions,
my hatreds,
slipping away
from me
day by day,
moment to moment.
The words drifting
inside,
twisting and turning,
dissipating and gathering
like smoke,
curling in upon themselves.
And if you knew that you could bring this entire engine to a sputtering
halt—
but I won't even commit
myself to these
words on this page.

Pinball

Joseph McCue

50 cents is a steep price,
But you decide it's worth it
So you take two quarters and
Slam them into the machine
Making it come alive with lights
As a booming voice shouts

"Welcome to The High Life!"
The High Life, with all its
Cartoonish rich people covered
By gaudy ramps, pits, lights,
Bumpers, flippers,

And the grime of age.
You pull back the lever
And send the mercury sailing
To the top of the board,
Striking up conversations
For 300 points each.

But gravity takes its course
And the ball falls down
To the bottom,
The Dumps a picture labels it,
But you're ready for it this time
And you use the flipper to
Send it crashing back into high society.

Again and again this repeats,
But you're a master of recovery
And you send the ball back
Every time until bad luck
Causes it to roll unto Sinner's Alley,

The defenseless path
To the left of the flippers,

But your hard work paid off,
You earned enough points
And a safety net propels
The ball upward once more
As it wines and dines and dances
For all its worth,
Netting 63,900 points.

Then a miracle happens,
It bounces up the ramp on the left
And luck is on your side for once
As it lands on the jackpot
And now you're up to six digits,
Now somehow seven,
Annihilating the old high score.

But then it dawns on you,
This streak must eventually
Come to an end.
You can't win in pinball
After all,
And too late you remember
How this bar
Resets the machine every Monday.

The ball fell between the flippers.
You should've been paying more atten-
tion,
But there's no point,
Yet you slam the machine before

turning away.

Yet you don't leave,

There are three balls left,

For you to get a few more points.

So what if it doesn't matter?

So what if you

Can never win?

For now you can blaze,

Live it up in The High Life

And, what the hell,

You have plenty of

Free time anyway.

Joseph Tarr





Joseph Tarr

Always Growing Up Bobby Texel

My twentieth birthday was a rather peculiar day. It had been three weeks since I transferred to a four year school, and so it was the first birthday I had ever woken up in a place that was not quite my home.

I got out of bed around seven, performed my daily morning rituals, and made my way down to the college radio station to put on my first radio show. Then, I went back up to my room and put on a suit and tie. My parents picked me up and we all went together to my grandmother's wake.

I wasn't angry or upset that her wake fell on my birthday; I actually felt bad to have been born on her day. A person celebrates their birthday every year, but their entire lives are only celebrated for about a week after they die. From there on out it's how long they are remembered, then it's how long the photographs last, and then how long their works are celebrated, until their bodies are nothing but matter reclaimed by nature. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

That's what her wake really showed me – how little time we have. She was born on April 16th, 1932 and died on September 26th, 2009 – that's only 77 years. When she died I was 20. If I were to live as long as her, that meant that an entire quarter of my life

had passed by thus far. I looked at my other grandparents and knew that eventually their time would come, and then my parents would go, and then it would be my turn – and that order wasn't a guarantee. Anyone could go at anytime.

That's the memory I'll always remember – watching my mom, her four siblings, and my grandfather leading us all in the "Our Father" as they stood by her casket. That's when I felt the emptiness – that's when I began to feel incomplete; seeing a family of six separated for the first time. Things were changing quickly. Grandma would no longer be there when we visited... I wouldn't always wake up in the same bed every morning... I would never be a teenager again. Hell, at that time my dad was putting a hardwood floor in my room – even THAT change bothered me.

I think what was most poignant about her death for me, though, was that when my birthday fell on her wake it reminded me that no one lives forever. Whether you believe in heaven and the great pearly gates, or nothing but decay and eternal loss of consciousness, there's a certain finality about death – a period at the end of our statements, or rather, what we

stood for. For us to give her a fond farewell on the day I was born was the most naturally appropriate lesson that I could have ever been taught.

I didn't learn the lesson easily, though. Death bothered me for a while after that. It still does a little. I kept expecting a phone call to come through any day, like the one that rang the Saturday morning she died. It was another one of those poetic moments. I was on the toilet when the phone rang. My mom answered, she screamed, there was some crying, and my pants were around my ankles the whole time. Life tends to catch you with your pants down.

But it went on like that, even after we laid her to rest and said our goodbyes. I kept waiting to find a roommate dead in the shower like my cousin found my grandmother in her bed, or my sister to have an aneurism and gravity would slam her face into a bowl of spaghetti at the dinner table. The sick part is she hates spaghetti, yet she probably would love to go that way – she's quite the fan of irony. I'm a fan of it in everything but death, but oddly enough it took a bit of irony to swallow the grief and make it somewhat more palatable.

For a long while, before I would fall asleep at night, I would press my ear against the pillow and hear my heart beating in my chest, knowing that

at any second something inside me could go terribly wrong and it could stop, ending me whenever nature or God or whatever it was decided, decided. I didn't get much sleep back then.

It wasn't until a full year later that I started to come to terms with mortality. It took just one bad day, as it often does, to turn on the waterworks. Dad, like any good parent, sat me down and asked what was wrong. I told him I felt out of control and at first he didn't understand, but eventually I explained that I was upset because until Grandma died I thought I was done growing up – that I had everything from life to death completely down pat. I used to be the one people came to for support and answers, and now I had questions that no one knew the answer to.

That's when Dad told me one of the most important things I've ever heard anyone say to me. He said, "The truth of the matter is that you learn something new every single day. Every morning you wake up a new person. Everyone is always growing up."

I try to remember that.

Suburbia

Ruby Corman

I go home,
and finding another swath of trees gone,
to make room for another plaza,
with another bank,
a chain restaurant,
a pharmacy,

I catch myself looking for
any other alteration,
anything at all really,

a blink and
every single person I ever knew in high school

suspended in amber

some pregnant (or is it knocked up?),
married,
or just attached,

(while I can't even maintain
the most casual affairs)

and they're no different for their
pretending,
no more mature,
no wiser,
no secrets to offer,

no meaning of life to whisper
down, muffled, to my ear,

and their heads above water
while I exhale bubbles

Immortalize

Katie Attinello

You've become old men.
I don't want to see the change,
the old man's clothing
Where are the nudes?
the beards?
the long hair of the era
for the lens to frame and freeze?
Quickly, now.
Dip, wash, immortalize
in the ancient baths of the darkroom.

Special Recognition

Poetry: Antonio Regalado, "Biblically"

Prose: Stephen Sorace, "Home Repair"

Art: Jonathan Bonacolta, "Time Keeper" (Contributor's page)

Editorial Staff:

Katie Attinello

Ericka Berg

Kimberly Eskin

Allison Force

Dan Gagliardi

Myisha King

Renata Krach

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Ian Mauro

Jerry Pachtinger

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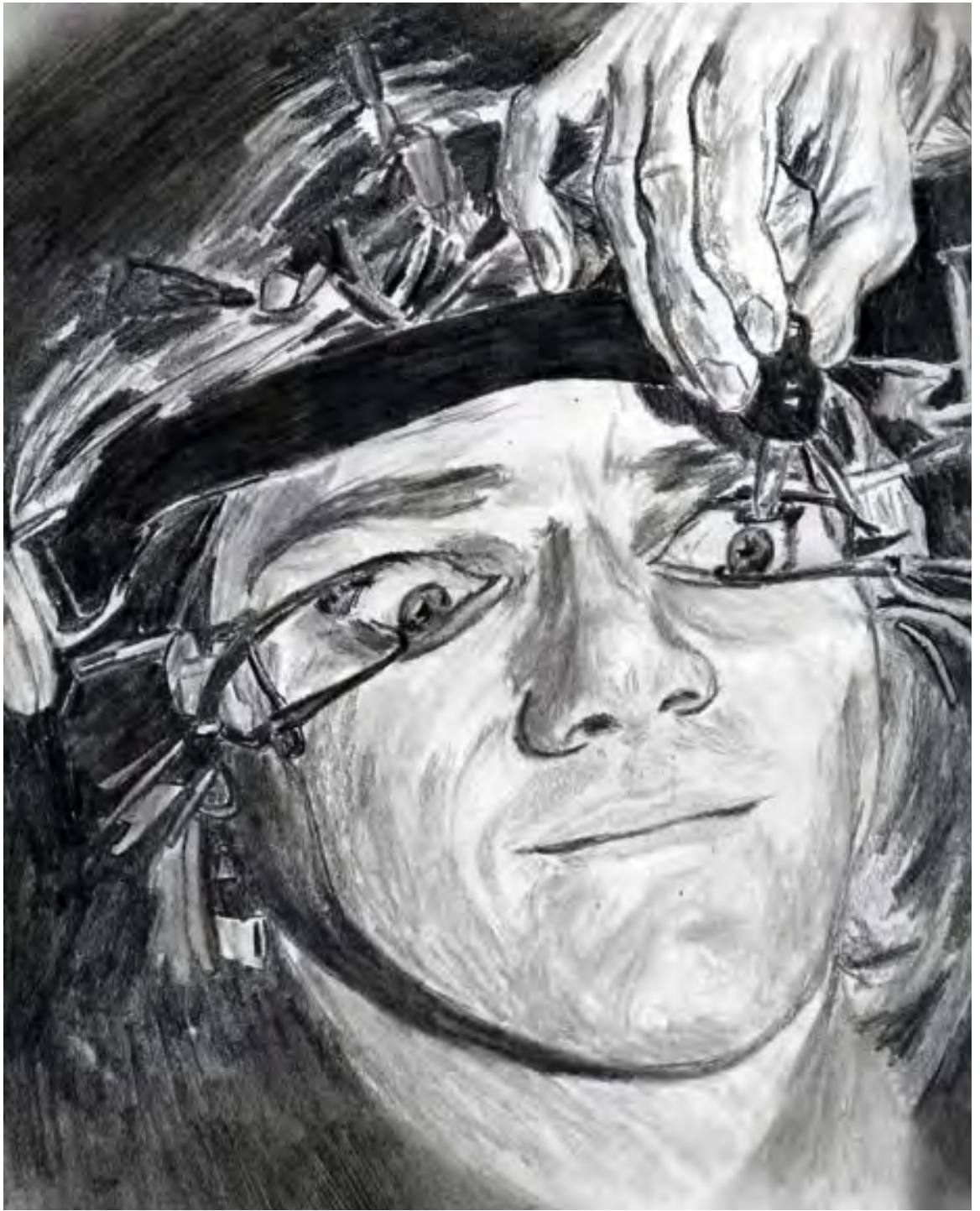
Faculty Advisor:

Edward Shannon

Remembrance



The *Trillium* staff offers this publication as a commemoration of the faculty and students the Ramapo College community lost this year. With this art we remember Anita Branddini, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, and undergraduates Jacob H. Halle and Corporal Kevin J. Reinhard.



Steven Filippi

Trillium has been Ramapo College's Literary and Art Magazine since 1971. *Trillium* is edited by and features the poetry, prose, and visual art of Ramapo College students. The magazine is published every spring and is available free of charge all year across the campus.

Trillium can be viewed online:
<http://www2.ramapo.edu/studentmedia/trillium/index.aspx>

Ramapo College

Established in 1969, Ramapo College in Mahwah New Jersey, offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, including nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.

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Trillium
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