

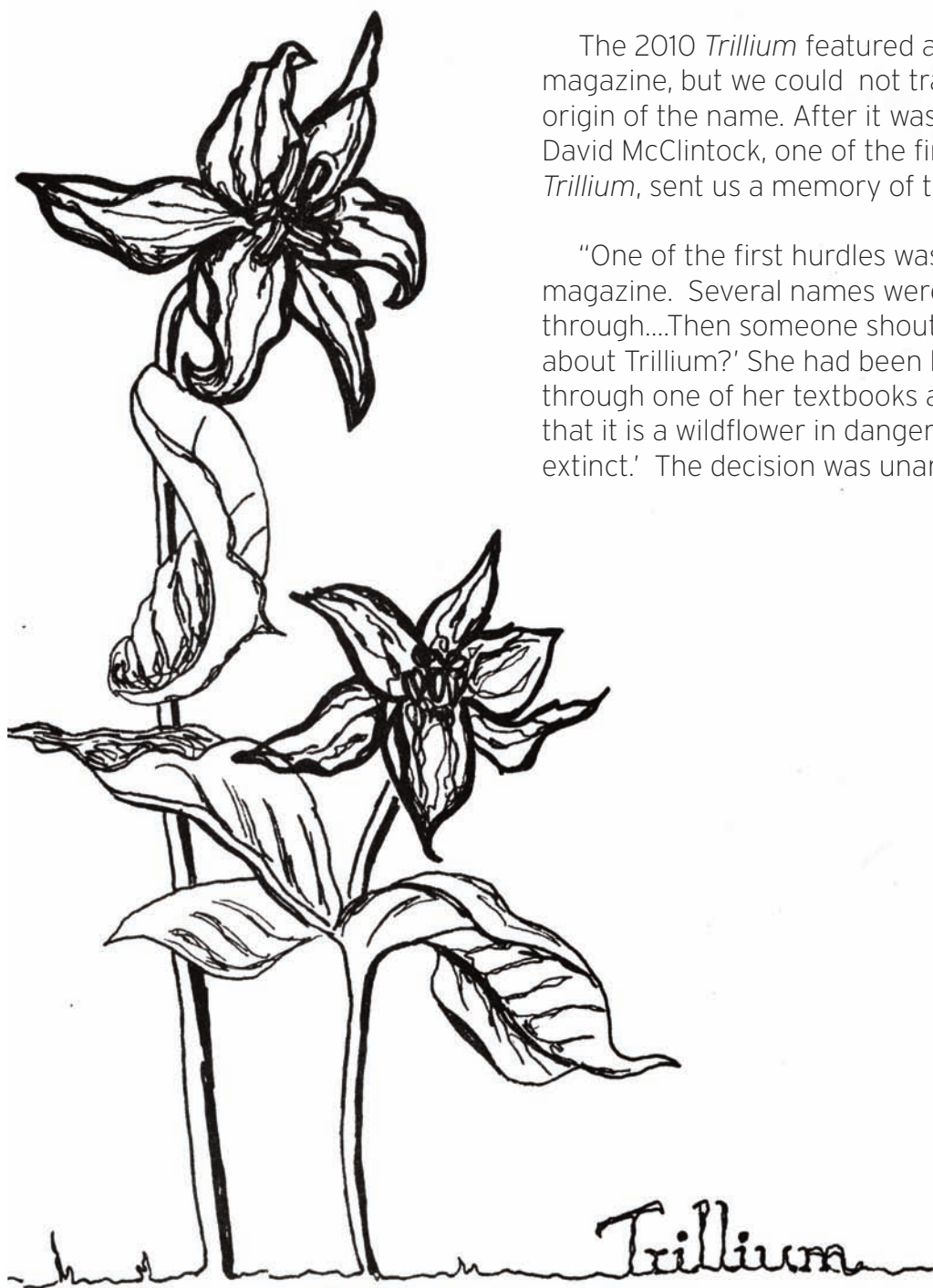
Trillium 2011







trillium 2011



The 2010 *Trillium* featured a history of the magazine, but we could not track down the origin of the name. After it was published, David McClintock, one of the first editors of *Trillium*, sent us a memory of the early 70s.

“One of the first hurdles was a title for the magazine. Several names were run through....Then someone shouted out ‘How about Trillium?’ She had been looking through one of her textbooks and explained that it is a wildflower in danger of going extinct.’ The decision was unanimous.”

dedication

As the 2011 *Trillium* was being prepared, events in Japan reminded us of Ramapo's long commitment to sustainability and the environment. We also recognize the tremendous efforts of the late Henry Frundt, a Ramapo professor who helped create our sustainability program. Prof. Frundt's strong emphasis on the environment reflects the spirit of Ramapo that's been alive in *Trillium* since the beginning.

editorial vision

The editorial staff of *Trillium* 2011 aimed to assemble a magazine that was aesthetically attractive as well as compelling in content. Included are works of art, poetry, and fiction by students of Ramapo College. The included pieces were selected based upon originality of content, theme, and tone, as well as their ability to elicit emotion and thought. We wanted to create a unique compilation that was reflective of the Ramapo cohort.

We began the semester with specific criteria for accepted works. The editorial staff sought a simplicity and directness in poetry and prose. We wanted the pieces engage the audience without sweeping or heavy-handed themes. We wished to avoid flat works of visual art, opting for those rich in narrative and bizarre in nature.

When we began going through submissions, we were pleased to find that a multitude of them satisfied and exceeded our expectations. Many of the works provided a unique irony and disturbing and fantastic imagery, both literally and figuratively. These characteristics merited many of this year's inclusions. We, the staff, are proud to present the 2011 edition of *Trillium*, Ramapo College's Art and Literary Magazine, to the reader as one of refreshing and distinctive creativity.

Loving the earth, seeing what has
been done to it,
I grow sharp, I grow cold.
Where will the trilliums go...?

Mary Oliver
"Why I Wake Early"

oetry

pat kelley, ryan sollers, eileen ramos,
vincent luizza, christine lundquist,
glenn early, miranda wyatt, michelle
henry, kristen moledo, brendan
flanagan, sarah midboe, scott laudati

falling into a
volcano

These boots no longer
serve any purpose.
Weightlessness and
groundlessness,
as it appears to me,
my wife, in bed,
no gravity, in space.
I'm a spaceman,
my wife, us,
gettin' astronauty,
boots cumbering, now,
heat softening the leather,
the laces silently shrieking
up, while falling, now
down
deeper
into the volcano.

ryan sollers

business school

As I laid between your knees I told you
I'd go searching for your soul.
You called me a silly poet and
laughed at my dirty fingernails.

As I laid on your chest I told you
I could hear your heartbeat.
You told me the average heartbeat per
second and went outside to smoke a cigarette.

When I told you I loved
the fucking shit out of you,
you slid rocks into my pockets
and told me to stay still—don't float.

kristen moledo

acoustic
neuroma

When radiation failed, the wave-toothed saw
 peeled back bone, revealed
the inky tumor moored
against my mother's brain.
A ripened pear wrapped in a sheet of blood.

"We got it all," the doctors said, leaving
in their wake ruined connections,
--

 frayed nerves, neurons shredded
like blood red beets,
 one deaf ear,
 the left side of her face a rumpled ruin.

Now her world has shifted,
 a cloudless sky tumbles and rolls.

Now her days turn in upon her
as she gazes each morning in broken-hearted wonder
 at that divided face in the mirror.

She leans against walls to stop the spinning.
In her head,
 God has chosen
 to do this thing to her.

glenn early

in response to
rothko

Are you a
happy man?

your red teemed with
orange alongside yellow
makes me think so.

but there are
no people- sitting at a mart
 one hand on knee
 as a waiter
 takes an order
no sounds- owl hooting by
 an Indiana lake
 just as night falls
 on a waterfront

only light and a sense of
joy you took in coloring
within the lines.

michelle henry

awake

You never stood a chance
at being Robert. I've no room for
a self-centered Creole in my life.
I already know how to swim.

We haven't the time to suffer,
to be torn apart and break into the earth.
Our lives have merrily abided -
evolving in synch, along the greeny hill.

I'll allow the sea its beauty. Maybe it's a flaw
we are able to say I love you.
Hardest and sharpest
love. The love that attunes to

every day. The love of nightly
talk show TV. We are comfort.
Familiar. Alike. Easy.
I can be your Edna.

michelle henry

diatribes

I've tried to define my voice:
my poetry
my prose
my choice
but, I keep getting hung up on
the fact there's too much talking
whispers here or there.

I guess that I'm just scared.
I'm looking for...another word that says about me,
what I feel, the truth in art is what's real.

A writer I know
wears all black
lives outside in his little shack
he writes long poems about his death
his swan song
his "anger is in his living"
this "pathetic life he's been given"
he's got words I never thought of
diatribes he coughs up
like a disease
he's sick from
being a voice that is never heard.

sarah midboe

for next
time

It's hard to tell someone:
take this piece of me,
I'll take this one of you,
we'll go out into the world
away from each other
but I promise to come back,
return it safely,
and take one exactly like it.

pat kelley

the day

A shaken jar full of bees, whirring.
The stain of light in closed eyes, glowing.
Pages tattooed by imprisoned art, being.
Static on the TV screen, snowing.
Cars in neutral roll away, coasting.
Puns, papers, and magazines, trending.
A tender muscle straining, burning.
Exhaustion rushes days, blending.

Today has seen enough, ending.

ryan sollers

guilt

Crowding and growing
down your sore throat,

A scum moss built-up
from the unsaid.

Careful, it's leaking
out of your mouth.

Just sear your tongue.
Let it subside.

And when it returns,
recall your burn.

eileen ramos

impulse

There is a moment,
awkward, at best,
when you pass by
a couple, saying goodbye
in the streetlight
or a hallway.
You cannot be small
or quiet enough,
you are taking a third
of a world of two
halves: walk faster.
Walk faster.

brendan flanagan

missing

See me
in the clothes I slept in and
drank too many cups of coffee in
driving to your house,

windows down, my voice tracing
over the words of a poet I fell
in love with today.

See you
dressed in a tight red skirt,
angry your nails hadn't
dried before I honked.

On the way to see a romantic comedy
so straight my head might explode.
See you watching James Franco.
See me trying not to consider your thighs.

See us driving home.
You missing me.

pat kelley

mold

It was late winter, I think, when my mother asked me what I saw when I looked in the mirror. She was in her second semester of community college, and her first sexual identity class. I told her I saw us and went on my way, shirt tucked, hair slicked, no bumps. I asked her if I could put pens in my pocket or make a paper wallet. She grabbed a stapler, scissors, scotch-tape, and sat down at the kitchen table. She asked me why I picked the wooden boy to go under my name for attendance in school and I asked why she cried.

kristen moledo

1940

I don't care if the door frame
draws a line between them.
The door between them
is only screen.
I don't care if one of them is
in a button-down shirt and vest
and the other's in a sundress.
They're both still asking
the same question.
I don't care if they don't know
their hands are six inches apart.
They're both still reaching
for each other.
I don't care if it was 1940.
I just want them to tear the door
open and kiss.

pat kelley

half empty

When the color box quiets
he takes another swig,
or gulp from the half-full bottle,
while we lay there listening
to his belly swish around.
I bet the people on tv
can smell the stench
from the half-full garbage
that sits next to the cracked window.
But he's too busy to care,
or notice his two joys
tiptoeing to bed while he
nods in and out of sleep
with his half-empty bottle still in hand.
We're not worried though,
the people on the color box
are watching him.

miranda wyatt

hoarders is not entertainment

Our love died during
season 3 of Weeds,
right around the time the show,
went for mass appeal.

The writers knew that this
sellout
would be a goodbye to the old
and a new, cheaper, instant,
kind of satisfaction would be
written in.
They erased the theme song,
changed locations,
burned the town down.

I thought this new Weeds
would tank,
ratings drowning the show
in its own arrogance.
That they would pay
for trading substance
for viewers. As usual,
I was wrong.

That show that I loved,
that started off as something
original
and beautiful,
that I cried with, called my
mother over,
wanted to be a better person
because of its honesty
and insight, degenerated

into a hour of stupidity
complemented by shallow
jokes and retarded characters.

I've seen more integrity
in movies with dogs playing
hockey.

But I stand alone,
because Mary Louis Parker
gets fucked
from behind, and her tits age
better than a \$100 bottle of
wine,
she shows her ass, and the
morons tune in.

Our love died during
season 3 of Weeds, but
sometimes
I'll think back to the show that
gave it's all
every episode, and wonder
if she still tunes in.
Tricked by bright lights like a
drunk moth
searching for a bug zapper.
Or is she thinking about our
love, and how
eventually,
everyone sells out?

scott laudati

the package

My terrier barks-
a familiar someone's at the door.
I pull back the curtain,
glance at my watch-
it's 3:30, he's right on time,
so handsome, so punctual.
With cool graceful steps he
approaches my door,
completely oblivious to my love.
I pull back the knob
and wait with longing eyes and
outstretched arms.
I welcome his embrace,
waiting for him to sweep me off
my feet.
He passes me my usual package
and I sign his clipboard,
knowing already exactly what's
inside the box-
a pair of old shoes I mailed
myself.
I hesitate before I release his
pen...
It's still warm from his touch.
He winks at me!
My heart leaps.
He says with such sweet tones,
"see you next week."
Breath still caught in my throat,
trying to reign in my
passionate feelings threatening

to expose me,
I manage a nod accompanied
by a cheesy smile.
By the time I recover from my
love struck stupor his brown
chariot is
carrying him away.
I walk back inside and sink to
the floor with my back against
the door,
still slightly high from his
presence I think to myself,
"I love a man in uniform."

christine lundquist

Small good to anything growing wild,
They were crooking many a trillium
That had budded before the boughs were piled
And since it was coming up had to come.

Robert Frost
"Pea Brush"

rose

c.m. gabbett, deshauna dunn,
courtney brach, samantha
wolfsandle, jake strasser,
danielle stansfield

sweetiepie

They stood over him, looking down. They looked at him with curiosity; his color was of a bleached piece of driftwood. The slits of his eyes were delicately made. He opened his eyes and saw the world around him for the first time. He had to blink- one, two, three times until his dewy eyes became accustomed to the bright light of his world. His untrained eyes swirled around sporadically; he didn't know what to take in first. The world was mostly white. Here and there was some color, but only muted pastels. He noticed a large window directly in front of him and tried to look and see what was on the other side. This was a difficult task, however, when lying on your back. The ceilings white panels were the color of fresh snow.

"We should leave before it sees us."

"But he smells like cherries."

"Oh come on, there are plenty of cherries in the fridge."

She snapped her fingers and he followed, sulking. "But we don't even know his name."

He could hear the two voices speaking. And then, he saw them. She was of medium height, slender, and the color of ebony. He was taller than her but stout, he was a chalky white. He didn't know who they were but somewhere inside his simple mind, he knew he belonged with them. He struggled to follow them, flailing his limbs. He pushed himself onto his side and eased his way onto his thin legs. Once he gained his balance, he stood still for a few moments; then mimicking the way they walked, he started to make slow and steady progress in their direction.

"I don't even know why we came."

"Just to say hello."

"You know what's going to happen, it isn't the first one."

"Well I'm not the first one either."

"Yah, but at least you have until the 18th."

The carton frowned and tried to look down at his feet, but was obstructed by his body. They turned the corner around the coffee machine and there, drooling, stood the pie. He was much taller than the hairpin but the same size as the carton. The hairpin spun on her heels and began to walk away; the carton became excited and immediately grabbed the pie's hand to introduce himself. Consumed with giddiness, the carton wildly shook the pie's hand. The hairpin only made it a few steps before she heard her name and realized she was trapped.

"Pies are stupid," she muttered under her breath. She sighed, and approached the pie, the

look of annoyance clear on her face.

The conversation was awkward and mainly one sided. Freshly cooled pastries rarely have the capacity to hold a complete conversation, a fact the hairpin was well aware of. However, she managed to smile and nod as the carton spoke slowly but excitedly to the pie about his friends in the fridge while the pie just tried to form coherent words. The carton told him about the apple ripening too quickly and how the butter just couldn't stop gossiping. After what seemed like five minutes, the hairpin became anxious to get back to her life and leave the pie for what she knew was coming. The carton however, was still just excited about having a new friend outside the fridge. After all, most of the fruit they had met last week had either rotted or faced their fate.

"Well, well, well, we really must be going...uh...whatever your

name is."

She gave a weak smile to the pie, grabbed the carton and tried to pull him away.

"Waaaiitt. I was just telling him about the time the bird flew into the window. So tragic."

The pie stared back blankly in response.

"No. Really. We have to go. Now."

This time she gave the carton one good shove to start him on his way. The carton looked back over his shoulder and saw the pie once again following them.

"Can't he come with us? He does smell like cherries."

The hairpin was about to explain why the pie was baked in the first place but the thunder coming down the stairs made her freeze in place. They both ran behind the toaster for coverage from the thing approaching. The hairpin and the carton both watched the thing walk into the kitchen. It opened up a compartment and withdrew its deadly device.

The pie was swept up with a smile on his face. He had never seen the thing before and he wanted to hear what it had to say about the bird.

"Be brave!"

The carton was too busy sobbing to speak. The pie was placed flat; he watched the light reflect off of whatever it was the thing was placing between his delicate eyes. With minimal effort the thing split his face and a thin layer of red oozed out. The pie, incapable of speech, let out a piercing cry. The hairpin watched stoically and the carton cried into his hands. Again and again, the thing mercilessly mutilated the newborn pie. Eventually, he stopped screaming.

-samantha wolfsandle

charlotte's camelot

The snow covered arch in Washington Square Park was visible from the MacDougal Street apartment window. The stark blinds had been pulled upward, and the curtains were lifted and tucked over each other to reveal the park's cobblestones blanketed in white. The benches and tables that housed chess competitions in the warmer months were empty except for piles of snow one may have mistaken for an oversized white rook or bishop. The central fountain was no longer spewing water, but the city's fear of ruptured plumbing did not stop two young lovers from perching themselves on its stone edge. With the exception of these two lovers huddled in the cold, the park was devoid of visitors. Not even a brazen gang of folksingers dared to challenge the public's conscience on such a morning.

The view into the park was offset by the light strum of an acoustic guitar from the apartment next

door. Had it been two months prior, Charlotte would have smiled at the opening chords of "Blowin' in the Wind" or a melodramatic rendition of a Joan Baez song, but now the songs drove into her ear canal like monotonous drones. All the great lyrics had been written. All the great songs had already been sung. The hordes of singers that rambled about town in faded denim jeans and work shirts purchased from second-hand stores had paled in appeal since the November assassination.

It was now January 1964. The cruel autumn had bled into an even crueller winter, and as Charlotte gazed out of the window at the Washington Square arch, she questioned her presence in the city. She was not a folksinger. She had no liberal-minded agenda, nor was she bent on changing the subconscious of the nation. She had no intent of imitating Bob Dylan's rise as "the voice of a generation." Despite this, she was here—a twenty-six

year-old married woman with three children straight from her parent's home in Carmel, California.

Carmel was, as her mother called it, a "lovely" place to spend summers, and Charlotte was no stranger to this assertion as she had spent many summers during her teenage years lounging on balmy Pacific beaches. In June of 1959, at barely twenty-one years of age, she had driven north to visit a few girlfriends in San Francisco at their suggestion that she quarter in their apartment for a few weeks of reacquainting, dining and shopping. Charlotte had accepted the proposal out of the sheer delight that this trip would most likely yield a new summer dress, and within an hour of receiving the telephone call invitation, she was on the highway headed north to the Victorian-style apartment in Pacific Heights.

The bay area's climate was chilly and moist in comparison to the pleasantly temperate

Carmel. Upon her arrival, she realized that she had not packed appropriate clothing for the drop in temperature and the cold maritime breezes that gusted from the bay. As she stood shivering on a street corner beside her parked Buick, she glanced up and down the road for a clothing store; a grumpy looking elderly man with a briefcase in hand walked by. Two young men who stood on a stoop a few doors down chortled childishly. As she headed in the opposite direction, she absently evaluated their nearly identical outfits of worn slacks and grey sweaters in her distress over not packing warmer garments.

An advertisement above a store caught her eye. Charlotte sighed thankfully as she glimpsed the smiling face of a woman modeling a pill-box hat and a string of white pearls on its front. It was positioned to direct passerbys down a thin alleyway. The shops veered to the left and merged into the alley and as she stepped onto the side street, she collided with another person turning the corner.

"Oh, gosh!" she gasped. Her heel had

wedged between a large crack in the pavement and as she bent to release her shoe from its concrete confinement, her purse tumbled to the ground. "I'm so sorry," she pleaded and glanced at the man standing above her. "I wasn't looking as to where I was going."

He was bent forward slightly, cradling a guitar that had gone askew across his body from the impact. A folksinger. She had read about them in some magazine...

"Don't worry about it," he replied earnestly. "Do you need help? You really look like you're stuck." He smiled sheepishly at her as he gathered her fallen purse and placed it in her upturned palms. His blue eyes timidly shifted toward the street as he lifted one hand from his guitar and combed the fingers through his blond curls. Although Charlotte's heel was still trapped in the pavement and her chest remained pinned uncomfortably to her knees, she reciprocated the expression willingly in an unexpected state of bliss.

* * *

Rhys and Charlotte married seven months later. In the following nine

months, Charlotte carried and then bore their first daughter Grace in late October 1960, just three months shy of President Kennedy's inauguration. Charlotte, who had been enamored with Kennedy all throughout his campaign and had even once exclaimed to her mortified mother that she wanted to volunteer for his political team, secretly wished the child had been born during his tenure. She would come to bestow upon Rhys two more sons very early in the marriage.

In the midst of the early matrimonial bliss, Rhys had been so loving and gallant in his behavior toward his wife and Charlotte even drew marital parallels to the seemingly noble marriage that existed within the Camelot-like White House. She yearned for the stolen moments over morning breakfast as Rhys readied himself for work. She would sit across from him, splattered in oatmeal and reeking of milk and infant formula as her three babies babbled and spat food into her lap. He would peer over his coffee mug and copy of The San Francisco Chronicle.

"You are beautiful," he would whisper gently

each morning as he scoured the front page for the latest social injustice as inspiration for a protest song. His blue eyes pulled away from the tiny black print and came to rest on her. He looked tired; dark shadowy crescents fell beneath his eyes in a stark distinction against his porcelain white skin, but his expression was of complete adoration. It was an expression that Charlotte had never witnessed in response to her presence by another human being, and it was this expression that deceived her into believing him.

She was not beautiful. Here she sat smelling of milk with three infants around her in a suburban kitchen. Her hair was a tangle of dark knots and her complexion had not come into contact with a lipstick tube or a smear of blush in months. And yet, she believed him.

His deception fooled her for two more years, and so in 1962, when Rhys announced that he wanted to uproot the family to the east coast to settle in Greenwich Village—the Mecca of the folk singing scene—in New York City, she willingly obliged. She gathered her

daughter and two sons and trekked across the country in vain pursuit of her husband as he chased his musical and political aspirations.

The family settled at No. 92-94 MacDougal Street, a three-story complex that overlooked Washington Square Park to the northeast. Rhys had studied all available real-estate in the area before he proclaimed that he wished to purchase only the grandest of homes for his beloved wife.

“Isn’t this place magnificent?” he beamed as he stepped through the edifice’s front door, Grace in his arms. The building’s brick façade featured a green door that led directly to the street and several rows of windows clustered in three. “As soon as I saw it a few months back, I immediately thought of you, Charlotte.” He turned to look at her. Charlotte struggled against the door frame with the two babies.

“Oh, yes. It really is a lovely place. I can just imagine the children’s nursery in here, can’t you?” She blew a loose strand of dark hair from her face and smiled at him.

“Can you imagine yourself here, Charlotte?”

he asked gently. He gazed at her affectionately, and she basked in his adulation. “I want you to be happy with our new life.”

“I am happy,” Charlotte murmured. “I am very happy.”

Their happiness continued for the next couple of months in their new Greenwich Village home. By spring, the children had adopted Bryant Park as their own private playground, and when Charlotte was too busy to tramp through Manhattan and insisted instead on going to the much closer Bleeker Street playground, Grace would often throw a tantrum. Even through the children’s tears, temper tantrums, spilt milk, uneaten oatmeal and lost toys, Rhys’ presence never faltered. The folk scene and political injustices on minorities never impeded on his devotion to his three children and wife, and “Daddy” was often the one to parade the tear-streaked Grace down to the carousel in Bryant Park.

At sundown each evening, once Charlotte was certain the three children were sleeping contently, she would sit on the porch outside of the

green front door and watch the passerby on the street. Most of the pedestrians were folksingers on their way to Café Wha? or Gerde's Folk City to play a venue, girlfriends in tow, and their passing made Charlotte thankfully question her husband's commitment to his art. His income was sufficient enough as a music teacher, and he often attended events that, as he insisted, "would raise the public's awareness through song," but he had yet to abandon his role as the stable breadwinner to pursue his musical desires. She knew he was an ambitious man. She knew that the motive for his own musical development was veiled under the claim that the move to Greenwich Village was for her happiness.

It was at sundown on the porch outside of the green door that Rhys would join her in her reverie as the foot traffic ambled past their home. She would sit with her forehead in the crook of his neck and he would sling an arm around her shoulders in silence. A young boy, wide-eyed and whistling a tune he no doubt had heard somewhere in the Village, walked by with his

hand clasped in that of his father's.

"What are you thinking about?" Rhys' voice sounded distant and guttural. "Tell me."

Charlotte shifted against him. "Hmmm," she muttered. "I'm not really thinking about anything." She paused. "I mean...well, I don't know."

He chuckled softly. "You don't know what you're thinking about? C'mon, tell me."

She lifted her head from his neck and stared at him. Half of his face was blanketed in shadow, the other half bathed in the porch light. The shadows poured pools of black into his handsome features and constructed fleshless cheeks and hollowed eye sockets simply from the interplay of conflicting light. Even the sapphire irises were not recognizable.

"Why are we here, Rhys?"

The inquiry was met with no vocal answer. His arm slithered away from her body, and his hands were drawn into his lap. A muscle tremor twitched momentarily in his forehead as he threw his neck back and stared at the portico overhead. A

rush of breath billowed from his parted lips in clouds of evanescent vapors and mixed with the cold night air. He snorted softly, as if he meant to laugh at her question, as if she had been joking in her curiosity. His upper lip curled over his teeth in a sneer.

Charlotte turned away from him and stared back at the street, now empty of people. A dim street lamp blinked across the street and then extinguished itself entirely. Rhys' motion to expel his body from its sitting position rattled the railings of the porch. She did not turn to watch him go, nor did she call his name into the night. The green door slammed, and somewhere far off in the Village, the opening chords of a song drifted through the streets.

* * *

The deterioration of Rhys' role as husband and father did not occur immediately. He still spent his nights at Charlotte's side and strolled down to the Midtown carousel with Grace, yet Charlotte sensed his actions were no longer motivated by his desire to alleviate housekeeping pressures on his wife. His mood had not changed,

but in the ensuing months, his words became few, and his explanations as to what he was doing during his working hours became vague. He was often gone for long periods of time that stretched long beyond his daily occupational hours. On one too many mornings, he would leave with his guitar before the sun peeked over the horizon and would not return to MacDougal Street until the small hours of the following day.

October 22, 1962 found Charlotte and her three children huddled before the small black and white television set in the sitting room. An old blanket smelling of mildew that Charlotte had dug out from the mahogany chest in the kitchen enveloped them like a cocoon, but their emergence from its fibers instead signaled a transformation not into beauty but a descent into a nuclear nightmare.

"...Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established that a series of offensive missile sights is now in preparation on that imprisoned island..."

The middle child wailed and clung to Charlotte's breast. Grace

had ceased her weeping hours before, but now sat rigid and silent beside her mother. Thin rivets of dried tears streaked the curves of her cheeks. The President's morbidly calm face stared at them through the set. Despite the circumstances, his reassuring words sounded less false than those of Rhys. A solitary tear slipped from the corner of Charlotte's eye and landed with a soft "plop" on her youngest child's sleeping forehead. The television's grainy screen flickered.

"...The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere..."

The three-story apartment on MacDougal Street had not seen its patriarch for three days.

* * *

Neither a dinner table dispute, cheating spouse, nor any other isolated event had marked the demise of the marriage. Rhys had simply chosen the music of the people and was now awaiting a cataclysmic event to stir the nation's conscience.

On the afternoon of November 22, 1963, he walked through the

archway of the green door for the final time.

Charlotte had prepared a late lunch for the children. She had hauled the television from the sitting room into the kitchen simply for the company of a newscaster's voice, but she had paid no mind to the day's headlines. Grace gleefully shrieked "Daddy!" as he strode through the door and stood up on her chair at the dining room table, a mouthful of peanut butter and jelly smeared across her lips.

"Grace, please sit in your seat," Charlotte ordered quietly.

Rhys said nothing. His denim pants sagged loosely from his hips. The button-up work shirt he had clothed himself in days before now hung in wrinkled folds on his frame. The toes of his boots were encrusted in mud as if he had tramped through a landslide in the rain. The blond curls had grown long and wild and framed his face in grimy ringlets of gold. A dirtied guitar was strapped across his back in a hastily done and unstable fashion. It swayed to and fro as he shifted. Its stringed neck grazed the carpet. The blue gaze flashed in his wife's

direction; the eyes were numb and unblinking.

Grace tipped her chair backward and grinned in her father's direction. Walter Cronkite's televised voice washed over the clanking of utensils against porcelain bowls and plates. Had Rhys shallowly returned home to catch a humdrum news bulletin? Had inspiration run dry in his inner circle of folk singing comrades? Charlotte twisted a wet dishrag until the friction of its ringlets made the flesh of her palms raw. And that child refused to listen...

"GRACE, SIT IN YOUR SEAT!"

The three-year-old turned abruptly to her mother. An expression of shock disfigured her usually carefree visage. The television buzzed.

"...From Dallas, Texas, the flash apparently official: President Kennedy died at one o'clock p.m. Central Standard Time..."

Charlotte turned from the table and set the dishrag down on the nearest counter. She clutched at her throat absently. The marriage was dead. Walter Cronkite removed his thick-rimmed glasses on the screen.

"...Two o'clock

Eastern Standard Time, some thirty-eight minutes ago..."

In the end, it was just another inequality, just another subject for a song's refrain. The lonesome creak of door hinges fastening shut resonated from the foyer.

-courtney brach

when we were sisters

Blood trickles down my face as I struggle to look out onto the crowd. I want to see a sympathetic face, anything that can help ease the misery and pain that I'm feeling. A pair of brilliant blue eyes and neatly combed back blond hair catches my attention. The female's pointed nose and full petal lips are accentuated by doll-like porcelain skin. It takes a moment to recognize her and see through my blood-clouded vision. It's Vanessa, my older sister. Sadly, I'm not surprised to see her yelling with the mob; or to see her pounding her fist furiously against the gravitational pull. I cannot hear what she's yelling, and I'm not so sure I want to.

As I stand here naked in the bone chilling cold, I wonder what I did, and what brought all this on. They won't tell me, and I can no longer ask them. They removed my tongue amid the other punishments and tortures they bestowed upon me. I

can't even cry out for help or even tell my now enraged sister that regardless of it all, I still love her.

I can see a glimmer of the hidden sun reflect off my sister's smooth white forehead as it reflects against my tattered and exhausted rust colored frame. It only seemed to remind me of the racial divide that had ten years ago taken its toll on our relationship.

Our father, a white man by the name of Thomas Ruford, had loved my mother secretly, although he was married to a white woman named Melinda. I was the product of their love, and also a curse. Although it was easy to tell that I was a Negro due to my rust colored complexion, my blue eyes leave little doubt that I am of mixed race.

I am uncertain as to how it came about, but I remember that I was introduced to Vanessa when I was four years old and she was six. We immediately took a liking

to each other, regardless of the racial barriers. It seemed that our father had gone to great lengths to see that Vanessa did not harbor a hatred for those of a different race. So our sisterly relationship blossomed, to the point where we were inseparable. It was this very attachment that caused our father, and my mother's secret to come out.

My father passed away when I was eight years old from heart failure, and as a result, the visits from Vanessa stopped. However, I was greeted with a surprise visit from her and a woman that I had never seen before. It was my father's wife Melinda. My father had left us a majority of his estate, and Melinda had questioned Vanessa on who this beneficiary was. She had proudly proclaimed that I was her sister and Melinda had set out immediately to investigate.

Needless to say, after that short visit and a multitude of angry words

exchanged between Melinda and my mother, I was pulled away from Vanessa and we never saw each other again. I remember that I cried for months and would beg mama to let me go see Vanessa. The answer was always no, and if I were persistent I would get beaten.

Now here I stand in front of a crowd with only one recognizable face. A face that did not or didn't want to recognize me, even though I had seen her only yesterday at my mistress' banquet. She was one of the guests at a banquet that my mistress held annually. My sister and I share the same blue eyes and one of the patrons had made a remark on the similarity of our eye color while I was serving dinner. She had looked at me with a scowl on her face, and stated that she was insulted that she would be compared to a Negro.

That night, I found myself being jerked from my bed and carried by strangers outside to the front yard. In the yard I was beaten mercilessly for an unknown crime. En route to the jail, my left eye had been taken out

by a member of the mob while another one had been allowed to remove my tongue. I was sickened even more when I heard that my appendages were going to be kept for souvenirs.

They now begin to read off the charges, and I struggle to make it all out. From what I can gather, I am being accused of stealing my mistress' silver. They say that they discovered it underneath my bed and that some choice pieces were still missing. But I never took anything. Out of the five years that I have worked for her I never took anything; not even a table scrap. Then they mention my name, Laura Chestin, and I can see my sisters face drop in shock, horror, and amazement.

As they ready to move the stool that has been holding me up thus far, I can see Vanessa hurriedly push her way through the crowd. Tears are running down her face and I can see something metallic glinting in her left hand. She is almost to the front of the crowd when the stool is swiftly removed from under me. My air passage is crushed, and I

can feel my eye bulge from its socket. My body squirms around aimlessly as my feet try to level themselves on the stool that was once there.

All of a sudden I can feel something wrap around my waist and I am lifted up ever so slightly. The air rushes back into my lungs and it burns my throat. I can hear a voice yelling that I didn't do it, and proclaiming that I am her sister. Vanessa! Vanessa saved me. But for how long? I can already feel my head floating into a sea of unconsciousness as I hear the clank of metal hit the hard earthen ground.

Vanessa admits to framing me because of the comparison that the patron had made. She admitted to being angry at being compared to a negro, and that she had no idea who I was at the time. I can't see what's going on, but a rush of silence overtakes the crowd and I wish that I could look around to see.

The undertaker is saying that there is no way I am going to survive now. That it would be pointless to stop what has already begun. He tries to

read the fine print

reassure my sister by saying that I will go to Heaven with a clear conscience since the silver has been returned, and that I am not a thief. She demands that I be taken down anyway, and that she will take my place. The undertaker yet again refuses, and tells her that she has done nothing wrong that he sees punishable.

I can feel her hands being removed from my waist as the rope tightens around my neck once more. I can hear her screams of protest when they refuse yet again to cut the rope that bounds death and I together. With the little strength I have, I force myself to look down and I see her tear-stained face looking onto my own. As I look into her eyes I can see what we used to be and the love we once held for each other, when we were sisters.

-deshauna dunn

They say to never buy a house sight unseen. They say that you should never sign a contract without reading it completely first. I have absolutely no idea who "they" refers to, but whoever "they" are, my father clearly didn't heed their warnings.

It was one of those too-good-to-be-true scenarios. My rather eccentric Uncle Walter had died and left us one of his homes. A five bedroom, three and a half bath manor in eastern Maine, only ten minutes from the beach.

Absolutely free. The only stipulation was that we were required to move in within ten days of the reading of the will, or else the offer would be voided. At the thought of leaving our cramped, three bedroom townhouse, my father whipped out his pen immediately.

"It's the chance of a lifetime!" he assured us, signing without bothering to read the

fifty-some-odd page contract. "Your Uncle Walter was filthy stinkin' rich! Just imagine it! Alicia and Sara can each have their own rooms, I can have a den, your mother can have a space for her "quiet-time" (my mother's loving term for when she needed a drink). It's absolutely perfect!"

None of us argued. Mom was so desperate to get out of Camden that she would have accepted a cabin in the woods. Alicia and Sara, ages twelve and fifteen respectively, had been at each other's throats for months and were sold instantly on the promise of separate bedrooms. I had been turned down by virtually all of the moderately attractive girls in my current school, so a new batch of options seemed promising to me. Perhaps in a school where none of the girls knew me, one of them might be willing to go to

Prom with me. We packed everything we owned within a week, rammed it all into a moving truck, and drove up to Maine. Upon arrival, I stepped out of the car and stared up at the

massive house. My father put his arm around my shoulder proudly.

"Well Adam," he began, "Wha'da you think of your new home?"

"It's big," I replied, "really, really big."

My father chuckled and began to help the movers carry in boxes. I followed suit, shuffling in and out of the house with boxes for the next few hours. My clumsiness only reared its ugly head once during the entire endeavor. Naturally, it was while carrying a box of mom's absurdly overpriced dishes.

"You broke my fine china!" she hollered, infuriated. "What do you have to say for yourself young man?"

"Um...I have successfully proven that gravity still works?" I joked. Mom glared at me intensely. Perhaps a snide remark had not been my best idea.

"Go...to...your...room..." she growled menacingly.

I threw up my hands in defeat. "Fine!" I yelled. In an immature manner I stomped up the nearest flight of stairs. When I got to the top, I suddenly realized that we hadn't picked out our rooms yet,

making it rather difficult to locate mine. After peering into four different rooms, I found one with boxes marked "Adam."

I flopped down on my unmade bed, far too tired to be angry at Mom for yelling at me. Using my arm as a makeshift pillow, I closed my eyes, listening to the sounds coming from around the house. Mom was complaining about the broken dishes downstairs. Someone else, probably Dad, was unpacking the intact dishes, clinking them together as he put them in the kitchen cabinets. I heard a door open nearby and heard soft footsteps. They stopped near my bed. I could hear light breathing just a few feet from me.

"Alicia, go away," I muttered. "I'm tired."

"Who's Alicia?" replied a husky male voice. My eyes snapped open immediately and I jumped out of shock. Whipping around, I suddenly faced a man I had never seen before. He was short, no more than 5'3", with a stocky build. He wore a tattered jacket over a decrepit looking undershirt. His pants were full of holes

and he was barefoot. A scruffy beard on his chin implied that he had not shaved in quite some time. The fine layer of dirt covering him from head to toe implied he had not showered in some time either. He tilted his head and stared at me, almost as surprised to see me as I was him.

"You Walter's kin?" he asked in an oddly innocent and childish manner.

"Yeah..." I replied slowly. "I'm Adam...his nephew...and you are?"

"Name's Steve. I live in the closet," he replied nonchalantly. "So, do you have my toast?"

I stared at him for a moment, unsure of what to say. The announcement that this dirty man lived in my closet was bizarre enough, but the sudden demand for toast was so unexpected that I temporarily forgot all of those PBS after school specials about what to do when you find a strange, possibly deranged man in your house.

"...Toast?" I asked in confusion. "Huh?"

Steve seemed equally confused. "My toast!" he exclaimed.

"Walter said if anything ever happened to him, his family would come soon and they would bring me my toast!" He announced this with such confidence and authority that I felt strangely obliged to fulfill his request.

Without a word, I exited the room and marched down the stairs to the kitchen. Mom had finished cleaning up the broken dishes and was off unpacking in another room. Dad was at the sink, getting himself a glass of water. He noticed me in the doorway and smiled.

"So what do you think of the house, now that you've been inside it for a little while?" he asked cheerfully.

I must have been in shock still from my encounter with Steve. Completely ignoring his question, I asked "Which box is the toaster in?"

This caught him completely off guard. "The toaster?" he asked. "What on Earth do you need that for?"

"To make toast."

"Yes, but why?"

"Because Steve wants toast."

"Steve?"

"Yes. The strange

man who lives in my closet."

My father stared at me silently for a few moments. "Adam," he began, "in health class, did they happen to show you any videos about the negative effects of marijuana?"

I rolled my eyes at him. "I'm not on drugs, Dad."

"Then why are you making up such stupid stories when you can clearly see that I'm busy?"

"Because I want my toast!" declared a voice from behind me. Steve stepped out from behind the door. My father gasped and dropped his glass.

"Adam, what'd you break now?" I heard my mom shout from another room.

My father stared at Steve, too frightened to say anything at first. "I demand to know who you are and what you are doing in my house!" he exclaimed, once he had regained his ability to speak coherently.

Steve sighed. "Did you not read the contract?" he asked my father. Dad's face went white. Steve sighed again.

"I guess not," he concluded. Melodramatically, he reached into his coat and produced a thick stack of papers, another copy of the contract. He flipped to one of the middle pages. "I helped Walter write this before he died," he explained. "You see, I used to be a lawyer." Clearing his throat, he began to read aloud.

"Section V, Subsection III. To my dear family: Over the years I developed a soft spot for those who were unable to care for themselves. My estate is home to several such beings, for whom you will be responsible, should you move in. There is Steve, my faithful legal assistant. He isn't entirely capable of taking care of himself, due to his irrational fears of utensils, cars, shoes and sunlight. Simply provide him with toast, water, and the occasional additional snack and let him stay in his closet during the day. Additionally, there is a young man with one eye who inhabits the basement. His name is Charles. He is completely harmless and will be happy to help take care of the others. He is not

allowed to leave the house, however, as the government keeps declaring him a mythical creature and therefore demands that he be deported along with all other mythical creatures to a strange place known as New Zealand. This has taken a nasty toll on his self-esteem and has caused him to become quite self-conscious, so try not to remind him of his birth defect. Lastly, there is Gerald, the self-proclaimed "fish-man" that lives in pond behind the house. He startles easily, hence the "No swimming" sign."

A shrill scream suddenly erupted from outside, followed by a terrified cry of "Monster!"

"It sounds like somebody found Gerald," Steve guessed.

"Oh God, Sara!" cried my father. He ran outside frantically to find her, leaving me alone with Steve. We stood silently for a few moments.

"Well," Steve finally said. "Make me toast."

bottledup

Ramapo College of New Jersey has instilled a new drinking policy in a continuing effort to restore the peace on campus. Only one month after issuing a new alcohol policy that banned the increasingly popular beverage, 4 Loko, Ramapo's guidelines now state that water is an illegal substance to consume on campus.

According to a notice sent to undergraduates by the Board of Trustees, if a student is caught with possession of water, they will face legal consequences. "It's just a risk we're not willing to take right now," replied one member on the board who, when approached about the situation, requested to remain anonymous. "The business school may soon receive accreditation. We have a reputation to uphold. We're trying to run a school here. When you mix those many students with a drink as volatile as water, the results could be catastrophic."

The anonymous board member gives partial credit for this recent decision to information that he and other chairmen discovered on a

website designed to enlighten society of water's dangerous consequences. According to HYPERLINK "<http://www.H2nO.com>" www.H2nO.com, over 99% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 drink water on nights that they engage in binge drinking.

Adam Costesnik, a junior at Ramapo, informed us that on most Tuesdays and Thursdays (the big party nights at the college), he sees his "roommate come back from class, feeling tired and grumpy. After a glass of the banned substance from their apartment's Brita filter, he's revitalized and ready to begin drinking."

This concerned student isn't the only one who's worried for his own wellbeing. One Ramapo College security officer states, "these kids get real rowdy on that stuff. We busted this one party about a week ago. Took 17 kids to the hospital. Turned out the sink had been running the whole time. Now, I don't need to connect the dots here; I think its pretty obvious what was going on."

In an alarming study conducted by a focus

group on campus, it was discovered that 100% of people who wake up with a hangover have a cup of water with breakfast the next morning. Also, over 75% of students who pour themselves a glass of water offer one to their roommate as well. To this staggering discovery, the Board of Trustees' member responded, "It was only a matter of time before it became the cool, new social trend. These kids think that if you're not doing it, you'll be an outcast. We just want to stop things before they really escalate." Ramapo's policy makers see the abolishment of water as the first step to a safer, more prestigious campus.

When asked about the rumor regarding intentions to ban napping on Tuesdays and Thursdays, which is scheduled to take affect by the beginning of the spring semester, the security officer agreed, "this legislation couldn't come soon enough. You ever try chasing a kid on a night that he's had a powernap? It's like going after Superman out there."

-jake strasser

first day of training

“You would be surprised how many people seriously consider selling their souls. Even more surprised to find how many go through with it, and the things they want in return. Fame and fortune, of course, are in the top five, along with love and/or devotion (they’re the same category in the Soul Registry), freedom and fulfillment.

You can’t live without a soul. So, in giving up your soul, you’re essentially giving up your life; a fact clearly stated in the contract that everyone signs, but few actually read. Did you read it before you signed? Of course not. You were probably too nervous about meeting the Devil in person. Am I right? Or maybe you didn’t believe you were actually signing over your spirit to Lucifer, Fallen Angel Numero Uno. It doesn’t really matter, though, does it? You’re here now and there’s no going back. Chill out a little, it could be worse. You could be dead. I’ve been in this line of work for a few decades now and you get used to a certain routine: the disbelieving attitude, the uncertainty, then the

look of horror when you whip out that contract signed in blood and they jump straight out of denial into the other four stages: yelling, cursing, bargaining (in which they forget they’ve already made the ultimate bargain), sobbing, and finally that blank expression of acceptance where they’ve given up hope and you’re ready to pop open an empty vial and relieve them of their misery.

What are you moping about, anyway? What did you sell yours for, money? Of course it was money. Me, personally, I sold mine for fulfillment when I couldn’t bear the emptiness anymore. But most of my charges die with the big bucks in their bank accounts. So, you were rich beyond your wildest dreams for how long? Ten years? Jesus, you’re one of the lucky ones. I only got seven. So you spend a whole decade wanting for nothing and instead of meeting a fiery, brimstone, lake-of-fire-for-eternity end like you were supposed to, you got picked to live the glamorous lifestyle of an agent


of Satan; and that’s not good enough for you? You better buck up, kid. Maybe you’ll get a spring in your step once you see your new apartment. No, you don’t get a car. One snap of your fingers and you can will yourself anywhere in the world and you want a car, too? Psh, you’ve got a lot to learn.

What? No, I don’t know what he does with the souls. And you better not ask. Come on, we have work to do. We gotta go take care of a CEO of a major corporation. Those are always fun, almost always make you happy to see the life drain from his eyes after he spends the better part of an hour calling you ‘honey’ and ‘sweetie’ and saying, ‘Do you know who I am’ and expecting you to bow down in front of his piles of money. I like you. I think you’ll take nicely to this line of work. Ready? Let’s go.”

Snap.

Wake-robin trillium
in dapple-shade. Violets,
landlocked seas I swim in.

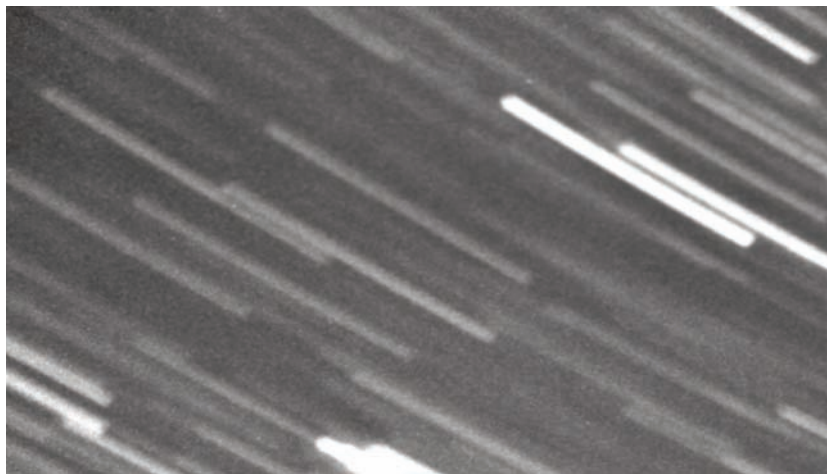
Maxine Kumin
"Where I Live"



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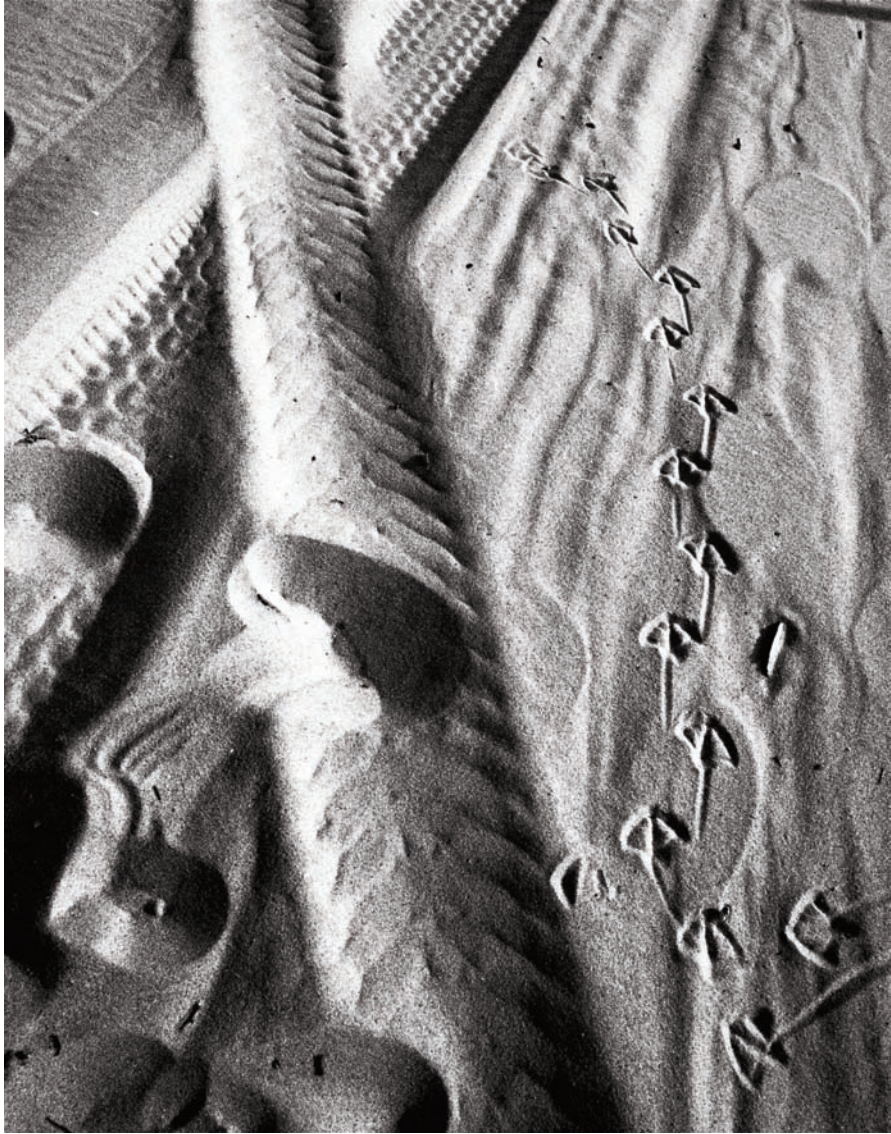
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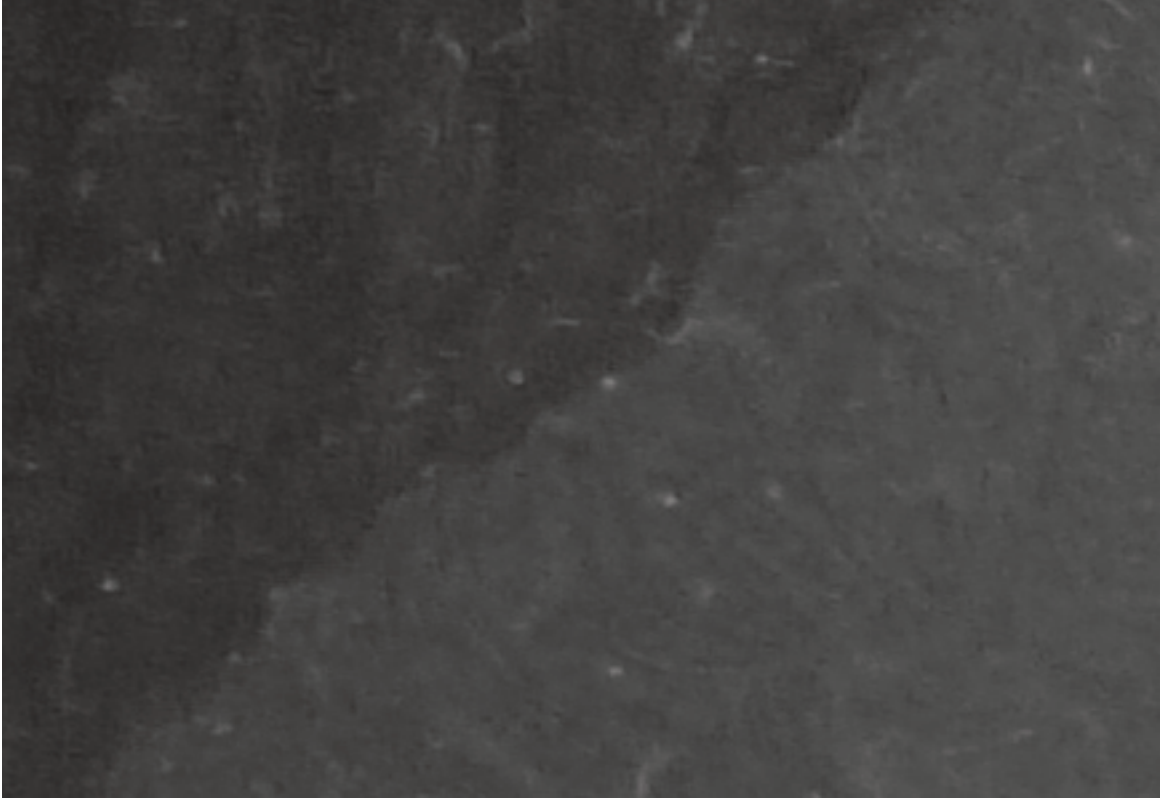
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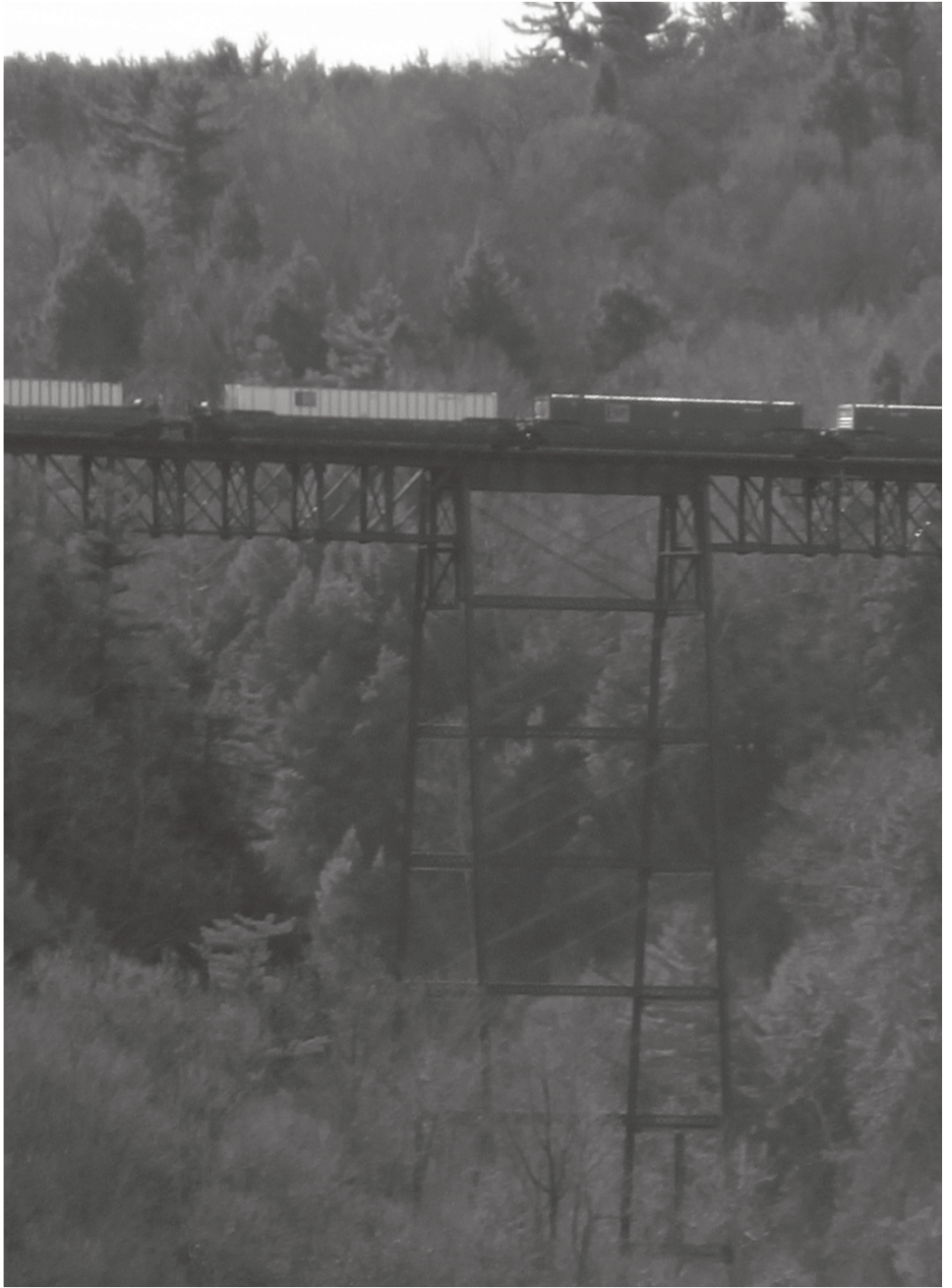
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award.
winners

poetry

hoarders is not entertainment

scott laudati

prose

when we were sisters

dshauna dunn

art

criminal pallet (front cover)

christina coviello

Correction: In last year's *Trillium*, the poem titled "A Victim" was credited to Roneesha Smith. It should have been credited to Ryan Sollers.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding several pieces of fruit and flowers. The hand is wearing a silver watch and a silver bracelet. The background is dark and textured. The text 'editorial staff' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

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