

# Trillium

2014-2015







## Statement of Purpose

*Trillium* is for the students. We bind our creativity, our voices, and our identities into one collective body. We challenge a world where we are pressured to sacrifice what we love for what we are told will bring us success. On these pages, we provide a space solely for student expression. Through words and pictures, this magazine creates a sacred space where art, story and poetry move us from the concrete to the ethereal and back again.

Making the final selections for this project was no simple task. As the staff, we accepted the responsibility of considering each submission and how well it speaks for and represents the students. Furthermore, we want these works to provoke thought and encourage active minds. The magazine we produced will reach *Trillium's* readers on a deeper level, and inspire their own creative muses.

In this edition of *Trillium*, we hope to provide a snapshot of our generation, a picture that will be reflected on for years to come.



# CITY INFORMATION

JCDecaux



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Prose and Poetry

7	Allegory	Mary DiPasquale
7	I Only Ride My Bike When There's Trouble	Peter Sitomer
8	Coffee Break	Danielle Corcione
10	I Lose My Appetite When it Rains	Peter Sitomer
10	Word Eaters	Tarin Songsakphisarn
11	White Halloween	Heather Debel
14	A Web Slinger's Ode to Gwendolyn	Brendon Templin
16	Tales of the Inferno	Michael Meltzer
24	New Driveways	Janine Horber
24	To the Girl Walking Down East Prospect Street	Steven Aliano
25	A Rebellion Against Childhood	Ryan Johnson
26	Cotton Candy	Michelle Ritota
28	Sew-In Love	Corbin Hirschhorn
31	Unspoken	Mary DiPasquale
32	In Motus	Dylan Sprayberry
34	Because of W.H. Auden's "Funeral Blues"	Janine Horber
35	Fight Flight Freeze	Robert Carter
36	A Stolen Car Sonnet	Mark Boulanger
36	The Line	Michelle Ritota
39	House Guest	Yancarlo Rivera
39	Wet Gypsy	Corbin Hirschhorn
40	People Are To Blame	Peter Sitomer
40	Sex, Drugs	Brendon Templin
42	Sneaky Grin	Joseph Farley
44	Poetry Sucks	Richard Pasquali
45	Rocky Hills	Cassandra Krawitz
45	A Flashback on Park Street	Mary DiPasquale
46	Enemy	Steven Aliano
47	Two	Cassandra Krawitz
49	Cocooned	Mark Boulanger
49	The Naked, Unraveling Truth Poem #8	Manja Nikolin

## Prose and Poetry

49	Bobbijae
51	Ella
52	Domesticity
54	Saving Water in Your Pocket
54	Cleaning up the Wedding on the 31st Floor
56	Gravity
57	Sometimes
58	Nature: Embarrassment
59	Lost in the Forest
60	Hidden Within a Moment
63	We are the Descendants of Madness

Heather Debel
Hannah Brudnicki
Corbin Hirschhorn
Yancarlo Rivera
Heather Debel
Corbin Hirschhorn
Hannah Brudnicki
Yancarlo Rivera
Emily Hutton
Ryan Johnson
Brett Polak

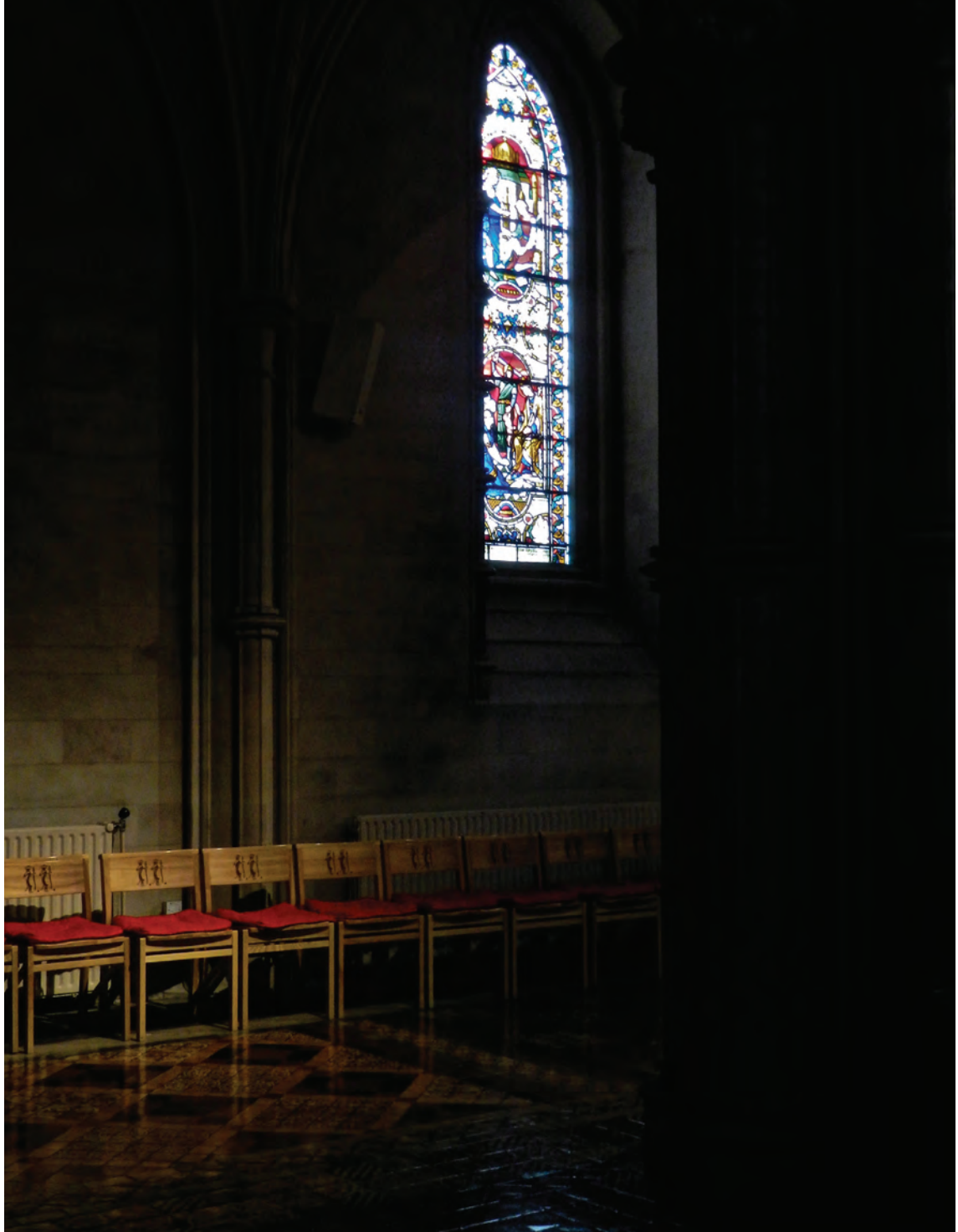
## Art

Cover	Kelsey Brentnall
1	Mike Fiorentino
3	Louis Dipaolo
5	Melissa Sukalo
6	Samantha Sproviero
9	Nicole Piper
10	Chelsea Darling
11	Chelsea Darling
12	Kelsey Brentnall
13	Hannah Brudnicki
15	Mia Ritota
16	Amy Diehl
19	Melanie Peters
20	Melanie Peters



## Art

- 22 Holly Ciocchi
- 23 Holly Ciocchi
- 25 Monica Lucianna
- 26 Amy Diehl
- 27 Hannah Brudnicki
- 29 Chelsea Darling
- 30 Sarah McGraw
- 33 Patrick Dufauchard
- 34 Kelsey Brentnall
- 35 Samantha Sproviero
- 37 Louis Dipaolo
- 38 Melissa Sukalo
- 41 Mia Ritota
- 43 Mia Ritota
- 46 Mia Ritota
- 48 Jessica Minzner
- 50 Michelle Ritota
- 52 Melissa Sukalo
- 53 Heather Landfield
- 55 Holly Ciocchi
- 56 Melissa Sukalo
- 58 Monica Lucianna
- 61 Heather Landfield
- 62 Vanessa Nilsson
- 64 Jake Kisor
- Back Kelsey Brentnall





## **Allegory**

Mary DiPasquale

Are you Eve or are you  
the apple,  
and which of us then  
gives in to temptation

at the sight  
of naked skin?

No, I think you are Psyche  
and I am Eros.

And it is almost as if  
our love is Narcissus—

so in love with its own pulse.  
I hold you close, and think  
of Aphrodite.

I will be your David  
when this world of ours  
is felled by Goliath—

and each frantic kiss  
upon your lips  
will be the killing stone.

## **I Only Ride My Bike When There's Trouble**

Peter Sitomer

She only stays at her  
father's cabin when things  
go wrong.

But this time,  
she didn't tell me.  
She just,  
went.

I rode my  
Black Harley—  
I only ride my bike  
when there's trouble.

And past each dark tree  
and dimly lit road sign  
only seen by the white  
of my headlights,  
I grow more  
worried.

She only stays at her  
father's cabin when things  
go wrong.

But I'm almost there,  
just after this tunnel.

I thought about our fight—  
the flying dishes,  
the broken pictures,  
she almost burned our  
wedding album.

Thankfully the kids  
came home,  
or rather,  
what was left of their  
home.

I pulled over  
right before the driveway  
and saw the lights  
still on in the  
bedroom.

Good, she's awake.  
Now I can say  
I'm sorry.

Sorry for the lies,  
for the late nights,  
for everything.

I burst through  
the door and  
into the bedroom.

Just like the day  
I proposed,  
she'll never see this  
coming.

And in the bedroom  
I found her,  
with another man—  
no, not her father.

## Coffee Break

Danielle Corcione

heaven is a place on Earth to be ridden of sin and stolen of  
originality  
where the murders are forgiven but homosexuals aren't  
allowed  
land of the incarcerated and home of the cowardice  
the country where you are better educated in a cell than a  
classroom

the place above I've been told about says  
survival of the fittest relies on how much money you make  
or just how many dicks you can suck to get to the top

the poor are the weak, are the ones that surrender to the word of  
God,  
that heaven is better and America is great

I don't want my father's money and it's not because he doesn't  
have any  
but because I don't need the exceptionalism to feel pretty  
I don't need success, by either of our standards, to measure my  
own happiness  
because quite frankly I don't care

if  
I'm  
happy  
or  
not

you're told you have to "make it" or else you'll fail  
when no one actually knows if they ever "make it" at all  
but what about my own expectations  
what about my own goddamn hopes and dreams?

to  
have  
none  
at  
all

you're told to become a doctor or lawyer or a profession that  
makes three figures  
or jokingly, marry one instead  
that if you "work hard," you will "make it," they told me  
"you'll find the right husband, dear"

well I've worked sixteen hour days on end before adulthood  
and have had to ask a stranger for a tampon so everyone else  
wouldn't be disgusted  
how my "hard work" couldn't buy me hygiene that one time

so I don't want to hear the story  
of how your "work ethic" got you where you are today  
that it wasn't your parents' bank account  
you're only loyal to the worth of a dollar than to any value  
because corporate responsibility is nauseating greed in disguise

you measure your own success by your personal worth on the  
market,  
defined by how widely you spread your wealth (or legs)  
while you waste away the passion you could have shared with the  
world  
and could have made someone else's life only a little less shitty  
but instead, chose to invest it in an economy that pretends to be  
fair

how  
dare  
you

while some can be loyal to their "work ethic," dedicated and all,  
the only thing I'm going to be committed to is nothing

I've had the life sucked out of me for my education, still clearly  
ongoing  
for my family's sanity at the expense of my own  
and the playtime and security every other college student and  
twenty-something gets,  
been ridiculed, too, for my silence, that can't speak any fucking  
louder

America, I've got nothing left in my pockets to give from what I  
never received  
if you try to crawl under my skin, even deep, I promise I won't  
shut up, never calm down  
I've accepted my frustration because I'll never rest until it's dead  
and I wish everyone was as bothered because maybe they  
wouldn't sit and watch  
and maybe, just maybe, this country would at least know exactly  
what was wrong with it



## I Lose My Appetite When It Rains

Peter Sitomer

Their voices were like thunderstorms,  
Whipping and turning up showers  
Of spit from their mouths.

As their cascade got bigger,  
So did the storm clouds that fit uncomfortably  
Under my eyelids.

With their saliva landing on my face  
And light tears soaking my lashes,  
Both dropped into the air  
And flooded my dinner plate.

My mac and cheese was now drenched and soggy—  
Yellow painted bricks crumbled  
Into shriveled bits of soft gravel—  
And gold rivers flowed off the plate into my lap.

Who's gonna get custody over the kid covered in wet macaroni?

They just kept arguing.

## Word Eaters

Tarin Songsakphisarn

We are eaters of words  
Finding our way through the touch of sound  
A growl, a grunt, a purr of syntax  
Translated mouth to mouth;  
Let me borrow your breath, your lips, your words  
Each utterance weighted with meaning,  
The deliberate precision of sound



## White Halloween

Heather Debel—Faculty Prize Winner

I should have seen the vulture in his gut  
head low, talons scratching at the walls,

before the driveway fight. His fist dropping  
back arching, chest opening, cracking

other kid squirming, blood splattered snow.  
We watched under yellow street lamps

while flakes fell on cotton cobwebs and skeletons.  
Earlier, sitting at the table inside

by the orange lighted cactus he told me  
he slept with the girl who drank two bottles of vodka

and was hit walking along the highway.  
No one knew he loved her. He told me of his job,

the benefits, his new truck and girl out west.  
I thought of you, how you kissed me once—in winter

under bamboo stalks. You drank too much whiskey,  
I heard, and dove into the shallow end of the pool.

I imagined your friends turning, peeking  
over shoulders into water, too drunk to understand.

Like how the crowd gathered now, how they shoved,  
spat and packed to see the breaking bodies,

the release of a starved bird. White still  
falling, covering our skin.







## A Web Slinger's Ode to Gwendolyn

Brendon Templin

Why oh why'd it have to be  
Poor Peter Parker's tragedy  
To hold the corpse of Gwen Stacy  
Issue 122, 1973

Spider senses, full alert  
Little lines of rage  
Spider gloves grasp hollow skirt  
Exhausted prior page  
While us mortals drive on by  
They're losing lovers along the sky

Both his parents, Uncle Ben  
And on this night, departs sweet Gwen  
Leave him lost, alone someday  
His unborn girl, and soon Aunt May

But psychopaths in scaly tights  
Always seem at odds  
With the radioactive knights  
And underwearing gods  
But for adventure is it fair,  
That pumpkin bombs should taste blonde hair?

Unconscious, falling, almost lost  
But caught by webbing, at what cost  
Was she murdered or merely 'napped  
He'll never know: her neck was snapped

What once was love  
And lust, is guilt  
And every waking moment's built  
Into this time that blood be spilt  
The night Gwen Stacy died

Though seeking closure  
In broken bones  
Poor Peter could not claim his loans  
Yet Norman Osborn still atones  
Glider-gored, and crucified

So true believers, if you'll recall  
Great power's never free  
It's marred by the word, quoth the first he let fall  
Responsibility





## Tales of the Inferno

Michael Meltzer

### Prologue

These be the tales untold,  
Epilogue of a bard too bold.  
A witty arrogant fool,  
Damned for his silver tool.

With great wit this Bard of old wrote,  
Of Phoebus' tragic tale did he quote.  
And as he re-wet his silver tongue,  
A foreboding knell in his head rung.

Revered Bard with hasted countenance  
Abandoned all hope in penitence,  
Prayers of parson: his moral frailty,  
A futile retraction of worldly vanity.

Twenty-four: the pilgrim's final tale.  
Now again at the Tabard, before a new  
trail,  
Travelled by Italy's troubadour  
Whom Virgil led through souls, dolor.

So when that hooded face lurked,  
A silhouette on his life's work,  
A fellow Bard found his lips, a light,  
Vivit et regnat Dante, in his sight.

*Ease your fearful heart, it beats too fast;  
I'll guide the path which your soul  
requires.  
This pathetic scene is not your last.*

*Yes! Sigh relief, but your path is dire,  
For those pilgrims of yours hold your  
fate.*

*So my dear Poet, beware their ire.*

At first he laughed, this was a jest!  
Mere tricks of a mind due for rest.  
But then a bleak epiphany,  
Engulfed in the damned symphony.

Logic dictates that Hell be without.  
So thus began a daunting doubt  
Where the pilgrims of his minds' loins  
Had with the dolent souls joined.

*Come, Chaucer to the City of Dole.  
Prepare to meet those pilgrims of yours,  
For they will judge your eternal soul.*





## Limbo

The poet awoke to earth eclipsed,  
Knees to chest and thumb to lips.  
And all around, my minion's sighs  
Were too overcome by frenzy's rise.

Besieged by starving shades of dole  
Whom craved the taste of fellow damned  
souls.

Restrained and blind, his flesh consumed  
As by perpetual souls was he entombed.

He turned his head as if to hide;  
At this I laughed, oh how he cried!  
And then he sensed my small surprise,  
His Prioress there to gouge his eyes.

He fought and thrashed, his eyelids  
clenched,  
As ravenous souls' thirst he quenched  
Dreaming of when he held the quill  
And controlled fate with a divine will.

Alas his vigor began to fade,  
His eyes exposed, she invades.  
The darkness he saw shed a light  
On his soul's inevitable plight.

Out! He cried, Out! To no avail,  
She was steady, his body so frail.  
Forced to listen, despite his howls  
A deep belch, his flesh in her bowels.

Then silent darkness to Poet came,  
Broken by his carrion aflame.  
By ashy excrement, birthed afresh:  
The bastard child of his former flesh.

This necrophilic molestation,  
Product of carcass amputation,  
Arose from his own ash knoll,  
An interchangeable damned soul.

Only then did Dante reappear,  
A fellow soul to guide his fear.  
Among poets of similar fate,  
Was he led to the next circle's gate.

## Lust

Souls lined to dark infinity  
To be judged by true divinity.  
His cavern shook with great debris;  
His serpent tail's eternal decree.

The humbled bard met King's eye  
While with deep congressional sigh,  
The souls on remand turned on cue  
To look upon this self proclaimed shrew.

They watched in awe of his divine tail,  
As it twined about his fleshless veil.  
Penetrating down his spirit throat,  
Fire shed his diaphanous coat.

In its wake was a strange spirit flesh,  
As the poet walked, he felt refreshed.  
Dante led him to a darker caving,  
Home to souls with a carnal craving.

Poets heard their lamenting cries  
And saw spirits blown about dark skies.  
Beckoning to a particular cluster:  
A spirit with five husbands mustered.

His Wife of Bath approached and  
proposed,  
*"Life is quite boring with the same men,  
You'll be pardoned for that tool exposed,  
No, not your tongue, hold still, you'll  
know when."*

With a swift tear of flesh was he maimed.  
*"Lust for you is quenched with this  
treasure,  
You may now look down and feel  
ashamed,  
But think of our eternal pleasure."*

Thus wife of so many was content,  
Back to blowing with less lament.  
Alas this new wife of now six,  
Left the Poet forgiven and fixed.

## Gluttony

The eternal freezing rain  
Is not these spirits' greatest bane.  
Tis rather, upon a sheet of ice:  
The canine demon headed thrice.

With great claws, the damned are mauled,  
His perpetual meal, widely sprawled.  
Leisurely devoured, then excreted,  
In piles where the monk was seated.

The naked monk without his furs  
Beckoned the poets with classless slurs.  
Over a bridge of souls did they climb,  
Taking quite considerable time.

*"For my crimes to you I am contrite;  
Your portrayal I wish to rewrite.  
Alas, it's set in eternal ink,  
A world away, forever, methinks."*

*"Your apology is pathetic,  
And is the last words you will utter.  
For my vengeance is quite poetic."*

Embraced for an impassioned kiss,  
Monk's teeth sunk, humanity dismissed,  
In the pink flesh of a silver tool  
Leaving him a mute, jestless fool.

Dante then led this poor fellow,  
Toward the sound of roaring bellows,  
Past the demon, with wary stride,  
To yet another of wealth and pride.

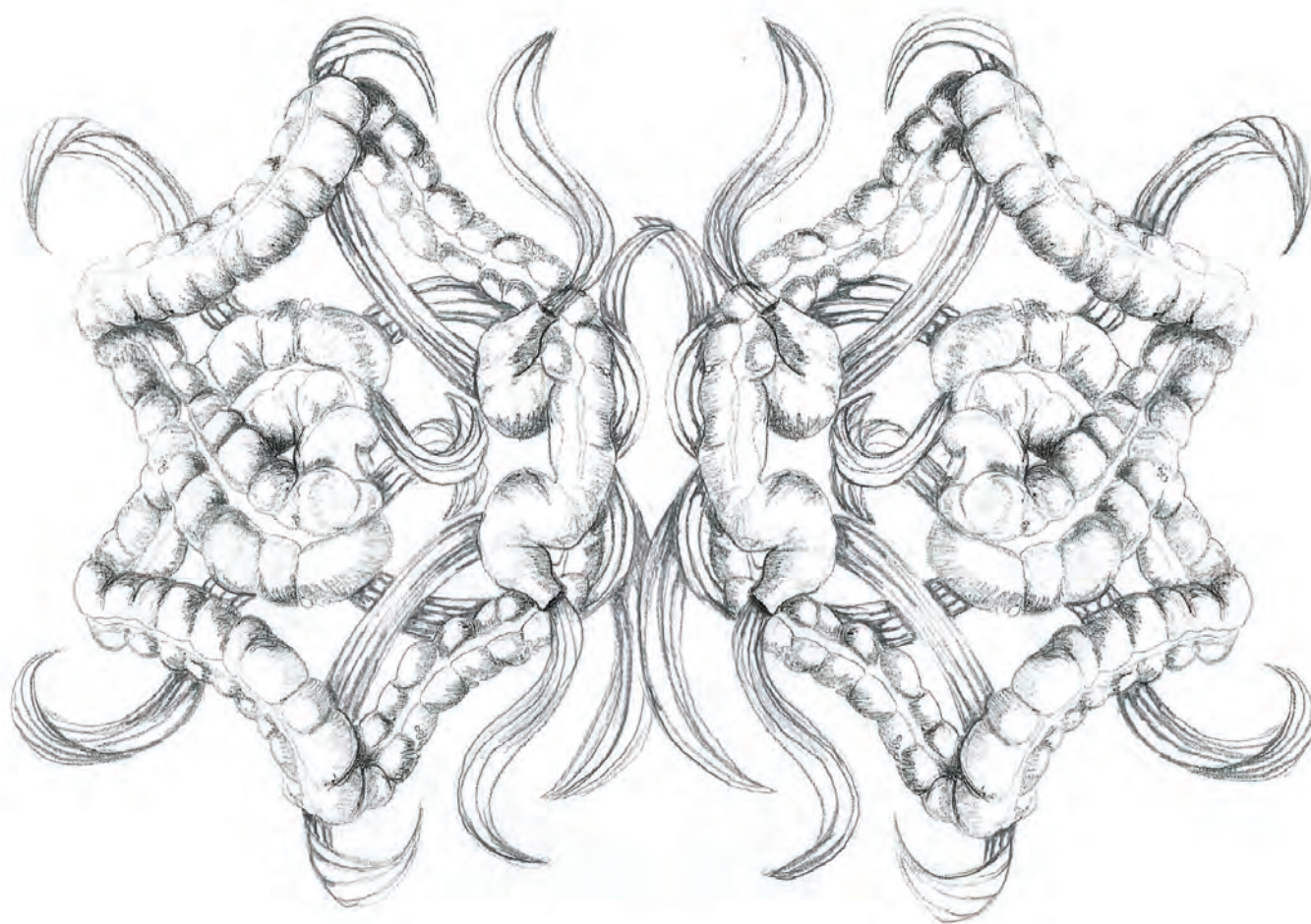
## Greed

Poets now walked among heads on pikes,  
Noticing all their faces alike.  
These souls who lived from their church  
veiled,  
Could search a mirror to no avail.

Plutus approached poets with advice:  
*"I could pick out whom you seek with  
ease,  
I do require a small sacrifice,  
You're right-handed, correct? If you  
please..."*

Fangs at the demon wolf's will  
Made certain he'd never use a quill.  
And once his hand was torn from its bone,  
To the Friar was Poet shown.





**Faculty Prize Winner**

From a distance the poets observed  
The great boulders his punishment served.  
The damned would push with all of their might,  
Just to be crushed, a merciless plight.

Taking notice of them with a start,  
*"We are quite similar, you and I,  
Though not enough to appease my heart,  
Your left hand just might it satisfy."*

With a great effort it too tore,  
And the Friar grinned at what he bore.  
He waved farewell as onward they trailed,  
But 'twas something borrowed which he flailed.

## Wrath

The poets beheld the river styx,  
Two shores with a war betwixt.  
On its surface, limbs were torn;  
Far beneath, sighs were born.

Soon appeared the son of Ares;  
Across the river his boat carries  
All of those whom do not belong  
Among the sinners vengefully strong.

In his boat halfway to shore,  
Through the surface the Merchant tore.  
Grabbing the Poet by his throat,  
He hauled his carcass from the boat.

Dragging him deep beneath the violence,  
His eardrums burst to complete silence.  
Then grinning, the Merchant brought him back,  
Forever deaf from the attack.

The poets reached the other side,  
And onward Chaucer followed his guide  
To flaming graves of all those fools  
Whom rebelled against the divine rule.

## Heresy

My passion for aestheticism  
Shows with folks of atheism.  
How funny that those without faith  
Would suffer as a burning wraith.

These souls are guarded in their tombs  
By gorgon demons, serpentine groomed.  
Tearing through a weakened frenum,  
His heart was pierced with fatal venom.

Of course Poet was already dead,  
But the bite caused yet more dread.  
This proved to be an opportune time  
For the Miller's disinter climb.

Grasping Poet and pulling him down,  
A flaming grave met his crown.  
Locus of the bard's famous face:  
A charred shadow without a trace.

## Violence

Muscl'd flesh of Minos' Bull  
Put Poet in a petrified lull.  
Dolent souls' escape was foiled  
From a river of blood ever boiled.

Looking at his pathetic maker,  
Whom out of fear was quite the quaker,  
The knight urged his centaur guards,  
To release their arrows upon the Bard.

Tearing through the flesh of his legs,  
He dropped to the ground, as if to beg.  
Crippled and damned, he looked to his  
guide,  
Whom carried him on to the other side.

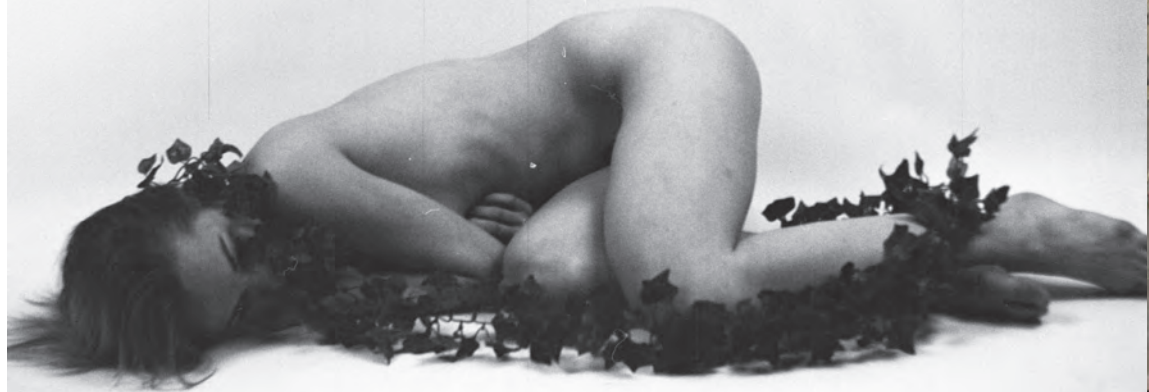
## Fraud

Sins of flesh were now left behind;  
Poets now saw the malicious kind.  
Pardoner suffered boiling torment  
In a pitch of tar and excrement.

Poet's eyes melted with his last skin;  
His last image was Pardoner's grin.  
A crippled shell of his former soul  
Was brought to the last circle of dole.

## Treachery

He came to me like all the others,  
Brought home by their poet brothers.  
The bards who try to divinely portray  
Will always be housed in my demesne.







## To the Girl Walking Down East Prospect Street

Steven Aliano

I don't know, but,  
I like pretty girls who smoke  
and when you lay  
underneath telephone poles,  
and walk past libraries  
with empty bookshelves,  
wearing slight  
tablecloth white clothing,  
sunglasses giving me a  
gamble to your glare,  
it's like I want to give you the world  
reluctantly.  
From somewhere,  
I hear a voice yell out,  
"I want to know what it's like  
to be heartbroken!  
Strapped to a chair!  
Watching cruise ships  
burn and sink to the ground!  
I want to know what it feels like  
to be you! I want to know  
what it feels like  
to be  
you!"  
Or maybe it's  
just me.

## New Driveways

Janine Horber

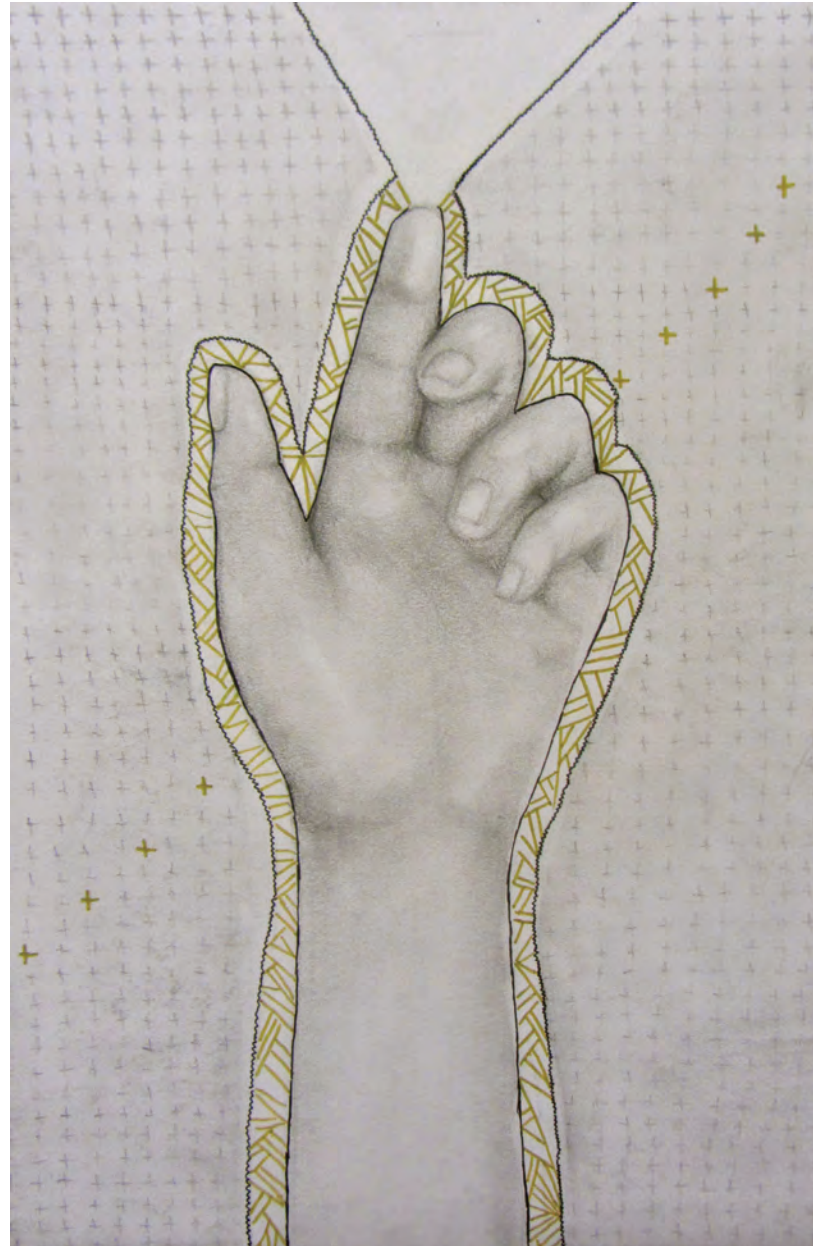
October and golden leaves  
place me back in my Civic  
hearing your voice  
for the last time  
as the voicemail repeats  
a minute-long dialogue left  
for my cowardice.  
The April rain reminds me  
of a birthday I spent  
figuring out your death,  
as my Dad eased me into knowing.  
There is not enough comfort  
to justify the time  
it took him to tell me.

To have back that minute  
as if I could bring back your life,  
driving up the gravel hill reeling,  
revealing the bumps in our lives  
the ones we took care to cover  
and drive slowly over  
never disturbing the balance  
created by the caress; a hug,  
a handshake, one more talk –  
touching each other in your death.

## A Rebellion Against Childhood

Ryan Johnson

We storm into the garage  
Like soldiers in war, we look for where our enemy is kept.  
In old plastic containers we find them,  
Covered in a film of dust and memory.  
They stare into oblivion, oblivious of what comes next.  
They are poured onto the floor and a few are selected,  
Unlucky victims about to face execution  
By stickball bat.  
We file into the street for all the common folk to see  
Our rebellion against childhood.  
The pitcher throws the toy  
The executioner makes many attempts to pass the sentence,  
Swing, miss, swing, miss.  
He will toss the damned action figure into the air himself.  
Whoosh, Crack! The motion, explosion, all happens so fast.  
Bits of colored plastic rain from the sky,  
All that remain of the once proud super hero,  
We pick up the next figure, about to face judgment  
When Mom calls from the house:  
“Stop breaking all your toys!”



## Cotton Candy

Michelle Ritota

Do you remember the spider webs we spun with our fingertips?  
The pink and blue clouds that were ripped apart amidst our tiny  
grips

But we loved the way it melted between our soft lips  
Like liquid sugar that didn't drip  
Light brown chocolate smudged across our face  
like a beard

mixed with coconut flakes  
Candy apples that sunk to the pit of our stomachs  
like a rock in a pool

Our bellies stuck out like a birthday balloon  
A strip of skin showed out from under our shirts  
"Shelly belly!" people would blurt  
But we didn't care about how we looked  
The world was beautiful from our point of view

Everyone was beautiful too  
Lights that shone down upon us  
like we were the stars in a play  
Expectations bombarded us  
and it was no longer a game

The lights cast shadows down upon our faces  
We were just people created to be graded  
We were numbered in categories of memorization not creativity  
like an assembly line

a place to slowly lose your mind  
Few kept what they remembered before  
Like how the sunset and sunrise were some things to be adored  
not times to sleep and rise  
For most those simply became times  
But those who held on for dear life  
to the creativity they kept within their original minds  
were the ones who came out on the other side

With pink and blue clouds that we ripped apart in our grips  
We still loved the way it melted between our wrinkled lips  
like liquid sugar that didn't drip  
still the sweetest thing in our lives  
when we came out on the other side





## Sew-In Love

Corbin Hirschhorn

He was in the car. No. In the living room. No. He was sitting on the ratty bench seat of a spacious 1970s automobile, perhaps a Lincoln or Buick, and beside him was someone else, a woman he figured, who had made him return her to her home in this dilapidated vehicle. Skeeved by every surface of the interior, even what he was forced to sit on, he managed to get to the house. A tickle, or perhaps even a bite, started on his leg, and peering down, out from the cracks, crevices, and tears of the seats crawled countless swarming and itching ticks, deer or dog he could not remember. He swerved, unconcerned with safety on the residential road and drove up onto the lawn, and the car launched up off of a rock on the property and crashed through the bay window of the living room. Covered with spiders, or ticks rather (maybe mosquitoes?), he lit a cigarette and tried to burn the ones which had burrowed into his right thigh, but after only hurting himself, he returned it to his mouth backwards, slightly burning his tongue and leaving his mouth dry with burnt ash. He spit and writhed in pain as nothing came out—neither the ash nor the bugs.

Everything became a little fuzzy and monochrome, and the pain in his leg

was indeed very real while the one in his mouth dissipated, but still, he raked with his dry tongue to try to get the ash and acrid taste out of his mouth. A splitting headache and pain behind his eyes made him more aware of himself on the bed. “Fucking dreams,” he thought to himself, wondering why he had had so much to drink again.

He tried to keep his eyes closed to get as much sleep as he could, but the ticks came back with bees too. He slapped his leg to kill the bugs, but instead touched another hand. Eyes closed, his hand recoiled at what felt like the work of the ticks which had burrowed into his flesh. He returned to feel the roughed and torn skin, passing his fingers lightly around the raised welts, the moisture of the sebaceous fluid, and then he touched a soft piece of flesh, which had no feeling in it. Fixated on it, he rubbed and grabbed it, tapped it lightly in order to get some nervous sensation in it, and it moved without command, pulling his leg with it. In awe of the presence of what the imaginary ticks had done, the juxtaposition of the actual and the oneiric[1], he opened his eyes to the lucid manifestation of his dreams in reality. At the first glimpse, memories of bugs and cigarettes vanished.

Beside him lay the long haired and fair girl with whom he had fallen asleep the night before, one arm behind her head

in comfort, the other hand nearing his leg, and he felt her leg against his own, soft, even through the pain of having been sewn to her. In a state not unlike that which the mind creates to accept the events of dreams, absent of logic and reason, he tried violently to tug his leg off of hers, causing agony for both of them. Nothing came to him to explain how this had happened—what to ask or exclaim, so he said the simplest thought that occurred to him. “WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED?”

Quickly, but calmly she sat up next to him, gently grabbing his shoulders to nurture the restless man stricken by disbelief of his own senses. “Shh... Honey, stop. Relax. It’s okay now.” She took his hands lightly in her own and kissed his jaw obsequiously. “Everything is fine.” In one hand, he noticed her lightly gripping a round red pin cushion, longitudinally decorated with grotesque Chinese figurines, and closer to the foot of the bed, some yellow string which seemed to be that which bound their legs together.

“WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO?”

“Sweetie, please. Relax. I just—”

“You just what?!”

“I just didn’t know what else to do.”

“Do about what?!”

“YOU WERE GOING TO LEAVE!”

The morning sun had risen above the horizon and light shown through the blinds of the windows onto the stark

white walls to create an ambience that gives the awakened a sense of the start of another day, and he looked forward at the mirror to see himself sitting up, exasperated on the bed with her beside him, melancholy and innocent, lying back on the pillow, begging him back to her with her gesture alone, hands placed gently on his abdomen and lower back. Together, he thought, bound by her ardor and sincerity, her love, longing, and of course, the foot and a half of string between them.

[1] o-nei-ric [oh-nahy-rik]; of or pertaining to dreams









## Unspoken

Mary DiPasquale

my favorite part wasn't  
the blood-rush high  
and desperate act  
of lips pulling together  
for the nineteenth time;

it was the nose-touch  
laughter,  
that close-up  
look in her eyes  
just after

we realized that  
the clock  
was missing,  
and the stars had jumped  
behind soft clouds

but we were  
here—

blissfully aware,  
without a need  
for sleep

yet dreaming.

## In Motus

### Dylan Sprayberry—Faculty Prize Winner

Clumps of wet snow dropped from branches near the bottom of the evergreen trees that lined the tracks. The train emerged from another tunnel, cut through a hill that could only be called a hill in the context of the ridge of mountains that sat on the western horizon. Michael's gaze was fixed in the direction of the massive structures that would have touched the sun at that hour of the evening if the weather permitted it. From his cabin window, he watched as they exploded out of the ground over millions of years, sped up by the cinema his mind had created, while the cup of coffee on the table in front of him grew cold and the twine-bound notebook next to it lay unopened.

On the bench across from Michael sat his only companion, a small teddy bear that was once a creamy brown color. He could hear only the constant groans of the locomotive and the waves that splashed off the front as the vessel cut its path through the white swells. As a result, Michael missed the announcement that the train would be making an additional stop for the sake of a passenger who feared her daughter could not endure the remainder of the ride with the fever that she had developed.

Once he noticed the landscape had ceased to continue flowing past him, Michael took note of the conductor's voice crackling from the small speaker set into the wall above the metallic door that separated his room from the realm of other passengers.

"...and we'll be departing again at 6:30. Feel free to use the next half hour to grab a bite to eat or stretch your legs."

Though he was mildly irritated by the circumstances, Michael stood to put his woolen overcoat on, turning the collar up and tucking his hands into the pockets before leaving the stuffy room and moving into the hallway to peer through windows on the right side of the train.

The polished marble walls reflected both the overhead lights on the platform and the ambient light from the snow, causing the station to gleam brightly against the small country town in the background. The woman with the sick child was talking on the phone and holding her daughter's hand while the attendants unloaded her luggage. Michael could not help but see his own wife in her place, holding their sleeping son against her chest with tears on her face when he swore to her that it was going to be good for all of them. He turned around quickly into the room and grabbed a backpack from the overhead compartment, then stuffed the notebook inside it and walked down the hallway towards the exit

stairway, leaving his companion behind.

Plows hadn't passed along the road in quite some time and the streetlights were beginning to flicker on one by one, which gave the town a serene luster. Rather than tramp through the snow and disturb the peaceful scene, Michael sat on a bench and took from his backpack a cell phone, which he used to dial his home phone number. It rang several times before going to voicemail. Even after accounting for the difference in time zones Michael knew that his wife was still awake. The last time they had spoken was the third day after he left. She had called to say the office was wondering why he hadn't shown up again. They had asked her to remind him that they needed the impact analysis before Friday, but she was late for work and had to get going. He dialed the number again, but hung up after the second ring, instead calling the number scrawled upon the back of a tattered business card.

"Officer Callidum."

"John, it's Michael." On the other end he could hear a chair sliding across a wooden floor and then a door closing firmly before footsteps approached the phone again.

"Tell me you've got good news for me, Mikey." The man sounded desperately eager. "Did you finally come around?"

"I'll be there before morning. Can you pick me up from the train station?"

The man on the other end sighed and Michael was unsure whether it was out of relief or irritation.

“Yeah, yeah. Around what time are you thinking? You’ve got something for me then?”

This time Michael sighed.

“Yes. I’m not sure what time I’ll be getting in, though.”

“Great, excellent! You’re doing the right thing Mikey. We’re onto something big here. I really think this is the way to go.”

The wind blew across the platform and Michael watched as an ambulance pulled up and the mother wrapped a scarf around her daughter’s face and head before carrying her down the steps towards the vehicle. An EMT hopped out of the back as they were approaching and took the little girl into his own arms. Another man who had been sitting in the passenger seat began asking the mother questions and scribbling on a clipboard, while his partner put the little girl on a stretcher and loaded her into the rear cabin. The mother then climbed in after her and the second EMT closed the doors before running to his seat at the front. The sirens and flashing lights pierced the air as the ambulance shot over the train tracks into the town, a powdery cloud following behind it.

“Hey!” the man shouted into the phone, “Are you tryin’ to play games with

me?”

“Sorry, I’m still here.”

“I asked if there was anyone who might suspect you of having taken anything before you left.”

“I don’t think so. I mean, I guess maybe it’s possible. Would that be a problem?”

“It could be, but we’ll take care of you. You scratch our back and we’ll see if we can do something to help scratch yours. I’m tellin’ you, there’s no way they can weasel out of this one. You’re making the right decision Mikey. Call me when you’re in town and I’ll send someone out

to get you.”

Michael could still hear the siren as he put the phone away and walked back onto the train. He bought another cup of coffee and set it on the table in his room before he sat back down next to the bear and took the notebook from his bag. He held it in both hands while the train whistled and jerked into motion again. It had gotten quite dark in the mean time and the mountains were no longer visible from the train. A wall of trees flew past the window and Michael looked away, opened the notebook, and began to write.



## Because of W.H. Auden's "Funeral Blues"

Janine Horber

I.

I was told they laid straw  
on the street to deaden the noise  
for the comfort of the dying.

II.

We put them in white rooms  
shoved together, fed the same  
with visits on Sundays  
or not after eight.

III.

Scraping the floor  
with worn out tennis balls  
the wheels of the walker silent,  
gliding, pioneering  
the horseshoed halls.

IV.

Through the fifth floor windows  
I could watch the nurses.  
Unable to stand, I cried  
for a chair – the walker  
not human enough to hold me.

V.

The bedpans were empty,  
food trays collected and  
the clock sung melodies  
for the insane, waiting  
and waiting for something  
to change.



## Fight Flight Freeze

Robert Carter

I'm watching silhouettes of vultures kiss on the roof in  
an evening's summer sun—  
A bright uncomfortable haze that comes before the beauty  
of thing pink and purple polluted NJ sunset.  
And I'm thinking about love.  
And I'm thinking about death.  
I'm thinking about beauty and how it always ends.

My girl is visiting her grandma in Texas.  
It's hard to get her on the phone. The phone she carries  
on her person and constantly fiddles with.  
I text. I call. She said she doesn't want to be rude.  
We talked; she decided to stay longer.  
We talk again, and she wants to move there.

She says she loves me. That she wants to still be with me.  
She is gonna go alone, for a month or two, to find  
herself in the dry Texas heat.  
What is it about uncertainty that makes the brain boil?  
That makes every cell uneasy?  
Makes every cell welcome death and decay,  
Inviting the vultures to feast on anxious flesh & worried hearts?  
And, again, I'm thinking about death.

I once learned from a Buddhist that if you're not feeling  
uncertainty, you're on the wrong path:  
To feel comfort is to be stagnant.  
The uneasiness always fades  
And I'm left with love.  
My mind fills with beauty,  
With light, good intention and the clarity of wisdom,  
Accepting the challenge that is life.

I shared the first four stanzas with her.  
I shared my feelings, too. It brought her to tears.  
She told me that she loved me,  
But for naught.  
She came home, but the distance remained.  
I wish this poem didn't exist, because  
Some girls don't deserve poetry.



## A Stolen Car Sonnet

Mark Boulanger

To sit inside a stolen car at night.  
A rush of air smooths back each fold of skin.  
A tempest from the heavens; what a fright!  
Each drop, a grim reflection of your sins.

“But what is sin? A man-made show of guilt?”  
You ask as streetlights drown the scene in gold.  
“Could these mistakes rob this world of its tilt?  
They won’t make but a difference once I’m old.”

A flash of light robs you of working eye  
while scores of forlorn shadows stalk the grounds.  
To perceive love as light still doomed to die,  
alone, and mumbling just the faintest sounds.

The engine stalls, disturbs what once was still.  
A stolen car’s no more likely to last.  
Now blinded, you’ve been forced against your will  
to flee old age and chase away your past.

A sobering reality, no doubt,  
to live in such a life with no way out.

## The Line

Michelle Ritota

A line  
A phrase  
Insignificant  
Unfazed  
Radiant  
Praised  
Left hated  
Left amazed  
Opinions that constantly vary  
and change  
A meaning unknown  
changed by each tone  
Each annunciation  
Reanalyzing  
Retouching  
Opinions clashing and bunching  
Looking at a line over and over  
until it means nothing at all  
Or something drastic  
that just hit a wall  
You see life  
and I see death  
Such different perceptions  
seen in such different depths  
Either too high  
or too low  
The meaning we will never know







## House Guest

Yancarlo Rivera

Last night a familiar house guest  
stopped by.

He asked for a room.  
I politely declined.

Just as I was about to close the door  
He slithered on in.

He took my room;  
I slept on the couch.

He brought a particular stench with him.  
At first it was confined to his room  
then it spread; around around the house.

It found its way to my clothes.  
Seeped through to my skin.

As I walked  
floating conversations of man infuriated me.  
The chorus of the world at my ears;

All that could be heard was that  
incoherent babble.

All details lost in the  
sighs, whines and groans of man.

Yes! I was the fool that did not understand.  
I was the fool that did not realize that life  
is the conversation of man.

Like a sheriff the words came to evict  
the stench.

As I now look about;  
I fling my door open wide.  
For my house will welcome  
All who stop by.

## Wet Gypsy

Corbin Hirschhorn

She comes from the shower  
a soaked-wet gypsy,  
steam surrounding, towel wrapped around  
shining black hair circling rosed cheeks.  
I see her once every day.

She is  
every woman I have ever been with.  
Even the last one was much the same, but  
she was blonde,  
and she used three towels instead of two,  
always complaining.

They all had told me,  
hands on my palms, eyes shut,  
“We will be happy,”  
and that something was meant to be, in  
Europe or Asia or Palesteen.

The future is tricky,  
even when told by towel-gypsies  
with certainty that we could go wherever  
we wanted until she was robed, and the  
mirror was wiped clean of shower steam.  
She could never see herself that way.

## People Are To Blame

Peter Sitomer

I sit on these cobblestones  
Of cold, desperate attention.

They desire my devotion,  
My money, my pride.

I ignore them and  
Watch the persuaded:

I see  
A man who kisses  
The first woman  
He sees,  
Takes her home,  
Fucks on his  
Wife's bed,  
And walks his spouse and  
Kids inside,  
Preaching the  
Glory of God.

I see  
The poor,  
Give their last cent,  
Their only cent,  
To the man.  
The priest.  
Who rapes  
Children in his  
Private prayer room.  
Preaching the  
Glory of God.

I see women,  
Hoping for their  
Soul mate,  
After divorcing  
For the fourth time.  
Preaching the  
Glory of God.

As the masses  
Shoveled through  
The doors I  
Wondered:

Who turned religion  
Into an excuse?

## Sex, Drugs

Brendon Templin

Treble bassist  
Troubled places  
House the hums of hackneyed faces  
Abstract hair  
That couldn't spare  
A coin for open 'coustic cases

I have never felt sicker  
Than the time I tasted liquor  
On your breath  
The smell of death  
And horrible old man disease  
We lived the words they sung  
Rubbing bodies, locking tongue  
Oh god bless

This little mess  
Of raging hormones, faded jeans

Rock n' Roll  
Will save your soul  
If it doesn't take its toll  
The things it wrecks  
With drugs and sex  
Paparazzi and parole

Now you're never quite as shy  
As the kid who's new and high  
Bum a boge  
You little rogue  
Don't zip your jacket, that looks dumb  
I'll borrow a guitar  
You play the drums and drive a car  
Here's the plan  
We'll start a band  
But first let's finish off the rum

So I pray I find a heaven  
Channeled VH1 forever  
That the volume breaks eleven  
Oh for Rock n' Roll's endeavor



## Sneaky Grin

Joseph Farley

Sneaky Grin rode his old, rusty ten-speed down to the liquor store everyday, sometimes twice a day. He leaned it against the ashtray in front of the sliding glass doors, entering the store like he was trying to sneak past the cashier. His graying hair contrasted against his reddened face, reddened by the wind, or more likely the copious amounts of alcohol he drank. He was a lanky man, with sharp, angular elbows, knees, and nose. He'd stride up to the register, clutching the twenty-four ounce Bud Ice cans to his chest like found treasure.

"Could you double bag that please," he said. His hand shook in a tremor-like fashion as he handed over a crumpled up bill. He had this look on his face like he was pulling a fast one or getting over on somebody; his sneaky grin showed his coffee stained incisors. He struggled his way out the door in black jeans and a stained windbreaker, the jeans were riddled with holes and tears. Oddly, he wore a pair of shiny red Nike basketball sneakers, they looked fresh out of the box. Sneaky-grin-high-tops guy.

"He will be back, just you wait," Ed snarked to the new cashier.

"Really?" The cashier said. "He's going to drink all those before we close?"

The young man was in awe; you

could say he'd just seen his first hardcore alcoholic, the first of many if he kept the job for any amount of time.

"Just before we close up, that waste of breath will be back," Ed said, with a total lack of compassion. "It never ends with these people, wait around a few weeks and you'll see."

Ed was a diminutive man, balding with an earwax problem. Ed was constantly rubbing his moss-covered ears with baby wipes. In the coming weeks he'd be terminated for slamming a woman's bottles of wine into a plastic bag, chipping one and calling her a cunt. Or was it cunty?

"Does anyone ever talk to him? He had this sort of weird grin on his face," he said.

"That's why we call him Sneaky Grin, kid, nobody knows what's so damn funny. It's probably because he's getting his treats," Ed said.

"Could be, maybe I'll start a conversation next time he's in," the cashier said.

"I wouldn't, these people are the lowest of the low, fucking scum," Ed said. "Can you handle this for a minute, I need to take a piss." Ed took off towards the back of the store.

The hour hand on the clock was stretching for ten, but it was still a few minutes shy. A shadowy figure struggled with a bicycle outside, trying desperately

to find the right angle to lean it. After a few more minutes he gave up, and instead just laid the bike down on the pavement. His red sneakers squeaked on the tiled floor. It could be only one man: Sneaky Grin. He walked past the register, eyes glazed, out of breath. Ed pointed at him from the Spanish wine section, making a "this fucking guy" face. He shook his head again, then turned and started unpacking a box of Spanish red. Sneaky Grin labored up to the register and set down the tall boys; six more ought to get him through the long cold night. He fought his jeans for the exact change.

"Could you put that in a double bag?" Sneaky Grin said. His voice sounded gentle as well as mournful. The grin, however, remained on his gaunt face.

"Sure, no problem," the cashier said. He couldn't resist the urge. "How's it going by the way man?"

"Well," he paused then picked up the plastic bag. "I worked for the post office, for over twenty years you know? They fired me. I'm too old or something."

"Shit, I'm sorry man," the young cashier now wished he hadn't asked. Sneaky Grin wasn't even listening, he was telling a story.

"I get home and there's blood all over the kitchen table," he raised his index finger and put it just above his nose, "She shot herself, right between the eyes. Right between her eyes." His voice trailed off

toward the end. His glazed eyes were now somewhere else.

Shocked, the cashier offered another meaningless apology. “I’m so sorry man, that’s just awful.”

Sneaky Grin slung the bag over his shoulder, “It really is kid. Well, I’ll see you tomorrow. You new?”

“I am, my first day.”

“First day...” he scratched at his chin, “I’ll see you tomorrow.” There was some paternal inflection in his voice, and the cashier wondered if he had a kid; if so, that kid had caught a raw deal. Ed noticed the brief conversation and sauntered over after Sneaky Grin exited the sliding doors.

“You actually talked to that guy?”

“Yeah, sure, why not?”

“Well then, what did he say?”

“Nothing.”



## Poetry Sucks

Richard Pasquali

What is poetry?

It's this:

Over and

Over and

Over again.

Isn't that lame?

When it's all the same?

Oh, look, I rhymed... now it's a *real* poem

Poetry doesn't need any rhymes—

Certainly doesn't need any structure—

I mean, look at this bullshit!

Why am I moving this way?— how does this  
make anything different!?!

Anyhow, writing poetry is easy!—

So long as you remember

To start a new line

When you *really* want to add a comma, or a period.

Cause if you put this together,

And fix the grammar,

A poem is just a *really* short story

That takes up a lot of space— I mean, look how “long” this  
is!!

You also need to be descriptive

Because somehow describing

A flower can't be as easy as saying,

“Here is a yellow flower.

It was pretty”... whatever

Back to my life.

Oh! And wording,

Don't forget the wording.

Critics will impale you on a pen

If you so much as use a word

That isn't as strong as a synonym for it.

So don't hate poetry

(Even though it sucks).

Just type out something about, I don't know

A cup of coffee or a flower

Or something controversial— just to pretend to be  
different

And put every few words on a different line.

It's art after all... right?

Now since you finished reading this— go pick up arbitrary  
“meanings” from this!

## Rocky Hills

Cassandra Krawitz

I paint the sky tonight.  
My brushstrokes lead pale blue  
into pastel yellow,  
a whimsical expression overhead.  
Swirls of red and purple  
blanket the curves  
in front of me,  
my path to him.

Twists black as night  
between the stone-covered hills  
track my climb,  
force a stumble or two.  
I grasp the rocks  
with limited strength,  
building muscle.

My sky offers encouragement.  
Blue to calm  
before red ignites passion  
that drives me through  
treacherous hills  
until the candlelit window is within sight.

I paint the sky tonight.  
My brushstrokes lead pale blue  
into pastel yellow,  
a whimsical expression overhead.  
Swirls of red and purple  
blanket the curves  
in front of me,  
my path to him.

## A Flashback on Park Street

Mary DiPasquale

The frogs swim up from the mud—  
and as if their mouths are flush with  
humming bees,  
they unhinge their jaws slowly to let out  
the sound  
of the childhood summers where I'd sit by  
the ledge,  
counting dragonflies as they flitted  
between lily pads and weeds.

The water looks half-drained—  
like something has drowned in its wake  
and kicked up enough dirt to blur the  
view  
of the bottom, rooted in snapping turtles  
and snakes.

The pond in my backyard  
was my first ocean.  
I watched the heron eat fish as if  
circling his beak around the edge of a  
plate,  
diving in only when he found the biggest  
morsel.  
I wanted to have as much balance as him  
before I could even stand on my own two  
feet.  
Back then the bird was even taller than  
me.

Today this suburban sea, though,  
belongs to some other well-off family.  
I can already imagine the bushes that  
surround it  
growing four more feet.  
The bullfrogs still sing,  
but now the bees are baritone lovers,  
getting lost with the crickets and cicadas  
in a timeless summer serenade.

I toss in a final rock and turn away,  
before I'm forced to see it sink,  
forgotten—  
sun-kissed ripples, lily-pads and weeds.  
The snapping turtle, I think, just sleeps.

## Enemy

Steven Aliano

Connor's over there, freezing in the heat  
Spooked, stirred, and shaken from the desert sun.  
Wisps of light sand caress his buckling feet.  
Toes winced, and the crackle of a drooped gun.  
She says, "You can't break him with a bottle!"  
He stands tall, emotionless with a glare.  
"He doesn't let it out." Thick like wattle.  
There's a piece of weakness and I know where.  
We drink through the night, honesty bare-boned—  
"Last day for a dance"—waiting on our lives.  
*It's later than you think*, wish on postponed  
Days hoping that the last one soon arrives.  
In my head I see you, wanting to roam,  
We'll rent your freedom when you come home.





## Two

Cassandra Krawitz

Tick

Tick

Tick

Tick

It is constant  
and should be reliable,  
yet I sit at my dining table,  
between two disagreeing clocks.

Tick

Tick

One, a black and white standard,  
visible and seemingly true,  
determines my schedule  
with its arms, short and long.

Tick

Tick

The other, a mystery,  
hidden by my blue kitchen wall,  
informs my grayed, cranky neighbor  
when to feed the cat.

Tick

Tick

I do not dare question either,  
for fear of sand thrown in my eyes.

Tick

Tick

They battle, they scream.  
A clear lie from one, a half-second behind,  
too stubborn to admit its rhythmic fault.

Tick

Tick

I am tossed between them,  
begged to pick a side  
without knowledge of Time's truth.

Tick

Tick

"Impossible!" I say,  
bursting out of my home.  
Let them resolve their troubles on their own.

Tick

Tick

I need a minute to myself.

Tick

Tick

Tick

Tick



## Cocooned

Mark Boulanger

Wrapped in layers of fabric stitched by hands I could never touch.

Awash in sounds symphonic, drones that extend into eternity. Life's frantic pulse threatens to collapse my place of growth, but the door is locked, the speakers turned up; I've nothing to fear for a while.

Feverishly insulated from such pathogenic contact, I scan this place for patterns, clandestine beneath the veneer. Or sketches in the ceiling, hieroglyphics from a time when others danced upon these floors and called this bed their own.

A dwelling of ghosts, a mausoleum of countless moments in time. So beautiful in their fragility; I couldn't hold them if I tried.

But in these layers of fabric, washed in drones that never end, I hear a sound more beautiful: a symphony of breath. A face of foreign origin upon my shoulder sleeps, with body complementary so that I may feel complete. The touch of skin, so delicate, sends shivers down my spine. The way we meet each other's gaze, our brush with the divine. Cocooned in fabric comforter; old refuge turned to bliss. The beauty of each moment serves to lend us permanence.

## The Naked, Unraveling Truth Poem #8

Manja Nikolin

What a strange phenomenon  
That the most outspoken beauty  
Can be heard through the loneliest of lips

## Bobbijae

Heather Debel

You stumbled to the mirror,  
pulled at your skin, and with your finger

traced the marks that stretch down  
your stomach. We sat on the floor,

waiting, watching. She, in my lap,  
reached out said *Mommy, who did that to you?*

I don't remember what you said.  
You should have laughed. You should

have left your answer simple.  
I think about her blonde curls

before they were cut, her face like a coin  
silver, round. In my mind she ran

from the basement, out from a thicket  
into a field that opened for her, to the tangled

oak at its center. She ran her fingers  
down the ridges of its bark.



## **Ella**

Hannah Brudnicki

It's an interesting struggle,  
Bearing the weight of the world on your shoulders  
When you brought it on yourself.  
It's even more interesting when you have no support.  
When your shoulders sink and your feet drag and your heart  
    does both  
Sitting in the corner, with your knees tucked up under your chin  
Your head resting gently on your legs,  
Your arms wrapped around your ankles  
Fingers interlaced.  
The last thread  
Holding together a mess of pieces  
A last shred of hope.  
Waiting for some small morsel of comfort  
Waiting for some measure of assurance  
But truly what remains is hopelessness.  
The only assurance is that you will grab the trashcan and  
Systematically purge your stomach of its contents  
Against your will  
And then you will systematically brush your teeth  
To systematically get rid of the taste and the burn.  
You will sit down in the corner systematically and wait  
Wait for the burp and the burn  
Wait to grab the trashcan  
Wait to hold your hair out of your face  
Wait for the taste of bile  
Wait for the heave  
Wait for the air to rush back into your lungs  
Wait for the taste of toothpaste  
Wait for the paper towel against the chapped corners of your  
    mouth  
Wait to sit back down and

Wait for it to happen again.  
And maybe  
Maybe you will wait for some comfort  
But the only comfort  
Is the warmth of your favorite sweater  
Well worn, and comfy  
But a sweater only warms so much  
When your heart and soul  
Have frozen over  
And anything meaningful  
Remains in the closet,  
A skeleton of judgment.  
It's an interesting struggle.

## Domesticity

Corbin Hirschhorn

One summer, I began to smell an odor in our condo. It was something particular, but not obvious— certainly foul. It seemed to be some kind of rot, like beef left in the garbage for too long. But I couldn't find it there. I put my nose in, and the scent was slightly more mild than it had been while standing near it. The strawberry yogurt and emptied juice container gave the trash bag a fruity aroma.

I told my mother, but she didn't notice or care. She said she couldn't smell anything, but I insisted that something needed to be cleaned. At fifteen, there wasn't much that I would be willing to do about that, and she didn't seem interested either.

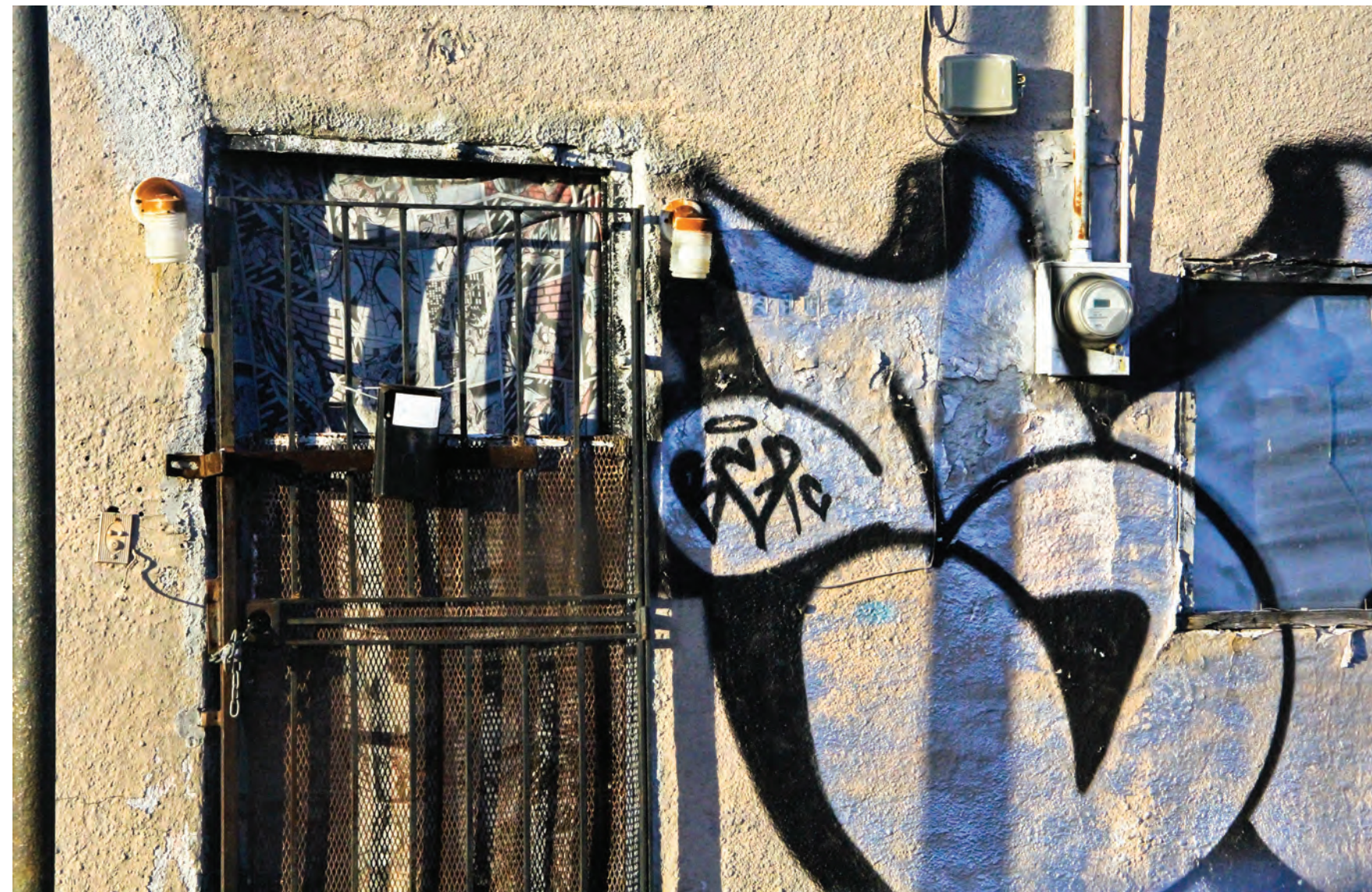
Torn papers, magazines, old plates, and laundry decorated the apartment, and somewhere was the odor, developing into a mix of old green vegetables, milk, and bread, now in almost every room. For days, I wondered where it was coming from. Something could have been left in the garbage disposal. Sometimes, my mother threw food to her dog, which it would hide behind the couch. Sometimes a bagel or a whole chicken breast, the small terrier had difficulty chewing to the point that it gave up, leaving the meal behind to rot. About a month earlier, the upstairs neighbor's washing machine broke and water leaked through our ceiling. There was still a large hole there, and I wondered if something could be decaying in it.

The only thing we had to clean with was scented disinfectant spray, which isn't really meant to be a cleaning supply. I took two cans and sprayed the sink, the garbage can, various corners, and the hole in the ceiling. My mother watched television, and I took out the garbage and sprayed the can again. She made rounds around the home, but it was not any different than her regular routine. She straightened the framed print of the *Mona Lisa* on the wall that hung next to the Thin White Duke, David Bowie. Then she went to the hallway mirror to stare. Still, the

odor remained. The condo smelled wretchedly.

One day when we left the house, we could not get home through the dozen police cars and fire trucks surrounding it. Every officer stood waiting, trying to look stoic and useful. We would not be able to return home for a few days after we opened the door. The woman above us had been dead for two and a half weeks. Inside our condo were a million green flies.





## Saving Water in Your Pocket

Yancarlo Rivera

i've done it once before  
with a friend's boyfriend

it hurt my stomach  
it was like drinking 10 of those small extra potent energy  
drinks  
kept me awake for hours  
back & forth from the bed  
to the toilet

about a year or so later  
i dig my key into a little plastic bag  
the kind you keep buttons in—  
raised the key to my nose  
finger clamping one nostril closed  
up it went my nose an overpowered vacuum hose

like a dog's wet snout in a bag of flour

two hands one bigger one smaller raced each other in  
circles  
how/one/can/look/at/every/thing/so/clear/—ly/so/neat/—ly  
\*\*\*

Once the empty little bags littered the floor,  
one wrestles the need for more.

Till the day in which  
no suspicious glances are analyzed.  
Nights are spent comfortably in bed.

What a bore  
the life of a sober boy.

## Cleaning up the Wedding on the 31st Floor

Heather Debel

A man I didn't know asked if I'd sleep with him.

I picked flowers from the centerpieces  
threw them into a yellow bin on the bar.

Purple ceiling, cheap votives, vendela  
roses meaningless without the party.

The walls glass, the ground black as sky.

In the distance, stars and headlights touched.  
He chewed on the straw from his drink,

said he was from Jersey. He hated his job, family,  
this life, *don't you?* I kept picking flowers.

With waitresses and the last drunks gone,

he said his wife left him some time before,  
said it was a bad night to be lonely.

He finished his whiskey, asked if I've ever lost  
someone. To stop thinking of you, I moved on

to another arrangement. It was quiet this high,

the night too long, job not over. He stayed longer,  
and there was no building beneath the room;

we just swayed between earth and sky.





## Gravity

Corbin Hirschhorn

A barmaid floats daintily  
to a table,  
two steins closed tight  
to keep liquid from flowing  
up.

Two men at a table  
who speak of dragons  
every now and then.

For before Newton's apple fell,  
things were less gravid.

And before Darwin figured  
an order of living things,  
Dragons burned the rags  
of men  
who wish they had stayed at the pub—  
never left, never ventured  
in hope to discover.

Magellan demeaning the world as flat,  
Franklin freezing in the Northwest Arctic.

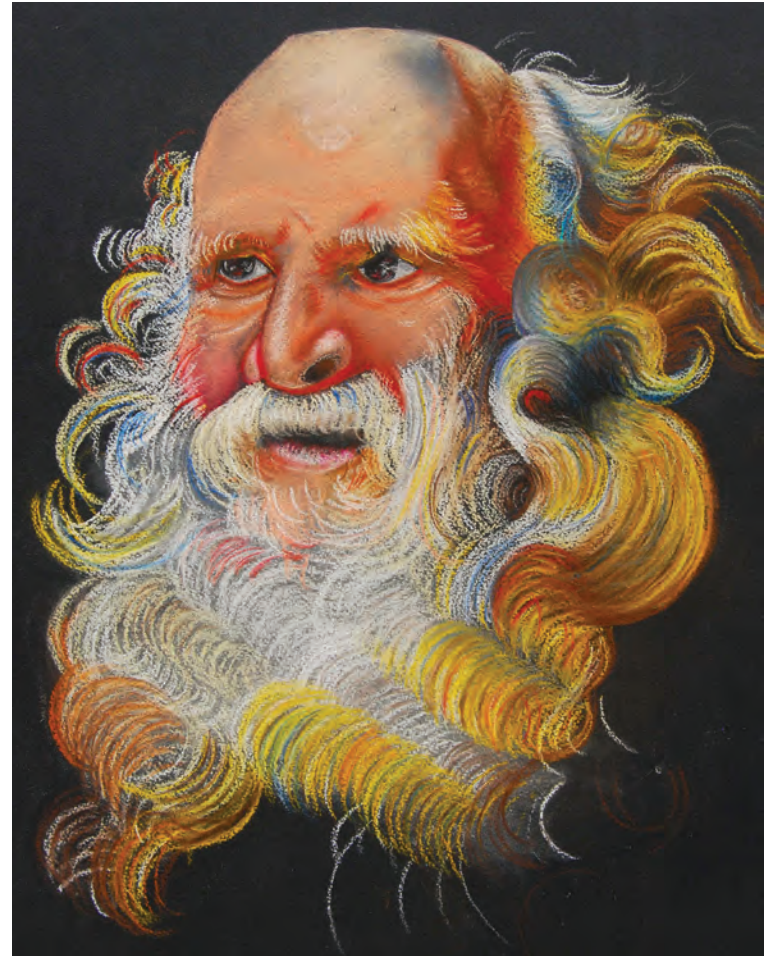
Who really cared to know?

They speak of waves  
after a fifth round  
that catapult ships  
hundreds of leagues in the air.  
And a thousand— at least—  
below.

The Kraken mentioned not just once.

But after all,  
what would they do  
if you told them  
they were wrong?

Who doesn't wish they hadn't known?



## Sometimes

Hannah Brudnicki

Sometimes I tell myself that I am normal.  
Sometimes I tell myself that I am not.  
Sometimes I could drown within the contents of that needle.  
I wonder at what time do things work out.  
I wonder how many hits or how many highs  
Could help me arrive to the place of no doubt.  
That is my destination, but traveling never seems to cease.  
The ceiling over my resting place  
Will tell you secrets, if you just remember to say, "please,"  
Because so often in this world, we just take.  
We take from whatever is there, when there's nothing even to  
give.  
We have assuredly erased the word "keepsake"  
So if you do remember to ask before you assume  
If you know that good things come to those who wait  
Go with a question and ask the ceiling in my room.  
Ask it for the needle or the tears on my pillow  
But brace yourself, "Ignorance is bliss."  
Some secrets can pierce, like an arrow.  
Ask the ceiling for me, if you would  
Because I should like to know about myself  
All the things I never understood.  
My ceiling has seen me, no doubt  
The naked me, in the purest sense,  
That will ever come about.  
Sometimes I wonder just what it would say  
"Oh that girl? She lies awake every night.  
The edges of her mind have begun to fray."  
Or maybe something quite different,  
Maybe something like, "Sometimes,  
She is very quite brilliant."  
I wonder if it might speak with a British voice

For I imagine it does, but watch, it's probably harsh  
It probably has no choice.  
Sometimes I act like the ceiling cannot speak  
Or other times I simply know it can't  
But when I believe it can, it makes my knees weak.  
But please, I beg of you, if you can  
Tell my ceiling to hide the needle  
Because my skin is tired of being the doorman  
For my brain; my skin would rather be  
Wholesome and healed,  
The bodyguard to protect my immunity.  
And if you happen to get the chance  
Throw a wink at mirror  
For it never gets more than a glance.  
Don't bother to go to my room at all  
If you can save yourself the trouble  
There's nothing there at all.  
The ceiling won't talk.  
The pillow has no tears.  
There is no needle.  
There is no room.  
In fact, there is no "she."  
Only sometimes,  
In my mind,  
Are there even words  
To define me.

## Nature: Embarrassment

Yancarlo Rivera

On and off the showers went.  
Steadily growing in ferocity  
rendering my awning helplessly useless.  
A cat's tongue upon my face.

I venture out.

Five minutes were enough to create a pond  
right where two hills meet, forming a low valley.

The center of it—I imagine—  
to be just high enough to cover that  
awkward patch of skin above my ankles.

How I long to drop this satchel and float there!  
To hear the satisfying thud  
as the weight of it falls to the ground.

Floating, ears submerged.  
Unconscious to all save for the strange song  
that all too often goes unheard.

How they were sung in the years past.  
How they have faded from memory, being.

The blunt of some cigarette flicked, by a boy,  
extinguishes in the water.

I, crumbling under the curious nature of his glare,  
Quickly gather my bag—





## Lost in the Forest

Emily Hutton

We see it every day,  
page after page of supermodels,  
nipped, tucked, and sucked,  
photoshopped to perfection.

We are inundated by others' idea of  
beauty;  
what it means to be pretty, or sexy, or  
wanted.  
How to look to "get some"  
to "be someone."

The ugly ones, aren't allowed to be  
confident  
They won't say it, but we know it  
A picture's worth a thousand words  
and I don't look like the girls in the  
magazine

yet we're told to love each other,  
I'm told to believe I'm beautiful  
just the way I am  
I have to love myself

or so they tell me

but why, after a tiring day, do I feel guilty  
for taking the elevator?  
why, after skipping breakfast, do I feel  
lesser  
for wanting pizza and not a salad

Wear nice clothes, do my nails,  
Paint my face every morning  
to be acceptable  
to be accepted

I look in the mirror,  
tell myself that I like what I see  
maybe even believe it,  
just a little

but I am not the beholder  
I don't carry that mirror with me,  
the majority decides on the definition of  
beauty  
how could it possibly matter what I  
believe

If a tree falls in the forest,  
with nobody to hear it,  
does it make a sound?

If a girl thinks she's beautiful,  
with nobody to believe her,  
does it make a difference?

## Hidden Within a Moment

Ryan Johnson

There are three boys down by the lake,  
Just boys for God's sake.  
Too young to understand the ways of the world,  
Ignorant of the inescapable hands of time and their own  
destinies  
And how these things change you, and make you forget,  
When you were a boy, one of these three,  
On the fringes of the water in a bathing suit,  
Standing on the cool sands with bare feet  
Skipping stones.

Their shoulders are all burnt along with their faces,  
Hair is still a little damp from their last dip  
(And smells of the mud they threw at each other)  
The first boy picks up a stone, an eager lad,  
Most daring of the three and the quickest to master little things,  
It is not the most ideal rock for skipping,  
It is warped and odd, nowhere near flat and smooth.  
He sends it off, with a side arm throw and flick of the wrist,  
And it skips three times before it sinks.  
He will drop out of school by the 11th grade,  
Join a band, start doing things he shouldn't,  
Consuming and smoking things he shouldn't,  
Is labeled a failure and a bad influence on your sons  
Do not let him date your daughters,  
He's not going anywhere with his life,  
Is not good enough by your standards,  
But all these bad things he's done, were done out of loneliness,  
For lack of knowledge on how to reach out for help  
To help him escape the way he feels inside,  
And it skips three times before it sinks  
Overdosed in the bathtub and buried,

They tell lies about him at his funeral,  
Things he wasn't thinking and things he'd never aspired to be,  
But he could have aspired to something  
And it skips three times before it sinks.

The second boy has a handful of rocks in hand,  
As many as he could pick up without dropping,  
He throws, it sinks  
Throws, sinks, throws, sinks, throws, sinks  
The first boy had better luck  
He shows his friend how he did it,  
The second boy, determined, tries once more,  
The stone, upon leaving his hand,  
Skims the surface and flutters through the air  
Then sinks where it lands.  
He found new friends in high school,  
Had fun, joined sports, but never forgot his studies,  
Found his niche with the culinary arts  
Went to college and it wasn't for him,  
Now he is a chef,  
But at a fast food restaurant,  
Then sinks where it lands  
Can barely afford to pay his rent,  
Is always late paying it,  
But he met a girl, who takes him as he is,  
And he is happy  
Then sinks where it lands.

The third boy had been searching,  
Scouring the ground this whole time,  
Looking for the perfect skipping stone.  
His friends, impatient, tell him to get on with it,  
To hurry up, he is taking too long, and it's his turn.  
He says hold on, their voices not impelling him to hasten his  
efforts a bit,

When he finds the rock, he knows this one will go far,  
He winds up and throws it,  
It travels up,  
Disappearing for a moment,  
In the darkening background,  
But appears again, and lands with a splash,  
His effort, made in vain.  
He will get the right jobs,  
The right friends, the right education and career path,  
He will become something, father children,  
Tell them not to talk with their mouths full of food  
And to do their chores the first time they are asked  
He will take them to the game and tend to a bloody knee  
It won't have mattered that he found the perfect stone but  
couldn't skip it!

But it didn't matter then either.  
The other two boys laughed but he was amongst the laughter,  
As much a part of it as they were,  
Then they lost interest in the game,  
As young boys often do,  
And went off to partake in something else before it was time to  
go home.  
Each one thought nothing of what they had just done,  
And none would ever come to realize, the natural beauty and  
value,  
In the little things hidden within a moment.







## **We are the Descendants of Madness**

Brett Polak

In the beginning there was Madness,  
festering in her pit of despair.  
Writhing from the depraved ooze,  
her tendrils flailed into our realm  
bringing forth seeds of destruction and chaos,  
and yet also, life.

From the primordial sludge came forth misshapen dredges,  
the first of the bastard children of madness.  
They crawled out of the blackened grime  
limping into the scorched landscapes.  
Confused and alone in the chaos of life,  
they embraced the madness within them.

Rage bubbled in spit and blood  
barely able to hold any form.  
He poured his anger into the heart of the earth,  
which pumped through its bulging veins,  
exploding through the surface,  
seething and erupting into the world.

Havoc arose violently in sudden awareness.  
She thrashed and gasped; crashing against the crags,  
a confused, half-formed mass of dripping slime.  
Her cold, chaotic and murky appendages  
acted upon their own cruel will  
covering much of the land in her cold embrace.

Mania vaporized out of the sludge unscathed.  
She laughed and cried, moving on any whim.  
Her incorporeal shape fluttered in the sky,  
subjecting the earth to her sudden impulses.  
Dangerous and mysterious, she flitters about,  
prone to sudden outbursts of lunacy.

Despair awoke and sullenly climbed from the tar,  
his body in a state of perpetual decay.  
He was a heap of rotting flesh,  
rife with disease ridden boils.  
He breathed his pestilence onto the earth  
and spread his empty anguish.

Fear sprang forth from the soil and began to multiply.  
Through all corners of the earth they rose,  
afraid of all the other children.  
They fought, they laughed, they cried,  
always in constant distress and panic,  
always in constant confusion.

We are they, and they are we.  
The final sons and daughters of Madness.

## In Memorium

This year the Ramapo Community lost two old friends: John Robert Cassidy and Pete Seeger. As we note in our 2011 edition, Bob Cassidy was one of *Trillium's* biggest, earliest supporters. As one of the founders of Ramapo College, former Vice President of Academic Affairs, and a professor of philosophy at Ramapo College, Cassidy hoped that through his teaching, he would present his students “the world... in all its complexity, depth and beauty, and [open] up their minds to the life of the intellect.” We remember his passion to question—and more importantly enjoy— everything this

life has to offer, and hope this magazine inspires readers the way Cassidy inspired his students.

Pete Seeger was a giant of American culture and a voice for peace and understanding. He wrote or popularized songs like “Turn, Turn, Turn,” “Wimoweh,” and “We Shall Overcome.” He changed the world, and to this day, his songs can be heard all around the world. As an activist, Seeger supported civil rights, marched with Martin Luther King, stood up to censorship, and cleaned up the Hudson river. He was also a friend of the college. He is pictured here during his visit in 1974, when *Trillium* was just getting off the ground, and remained a friend long after.



*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 every year across the campus.

***Trillium can be viewed online:***  
*<http://www.ramapo.edu/trillium/>*

#### **RAMAPO COLLEGE**

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include 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 Rutgers, The State University 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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