

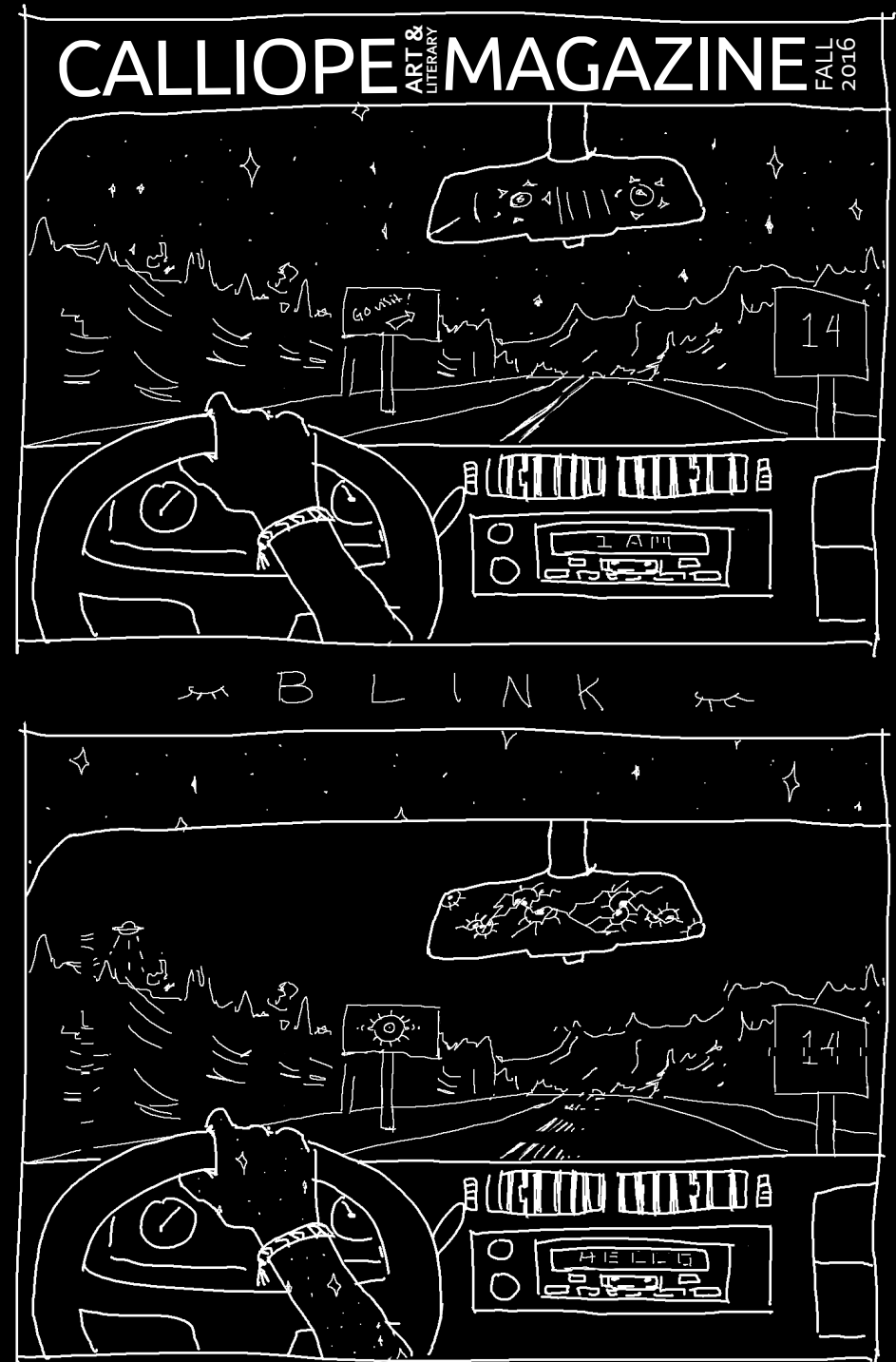
CALLIOPE

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CALLIOPE ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

FALL 2016



The logo for Calliopo Art & Literary Magazine features a large, stylized, black, calligraphic letter 'C' that curves around the top and left sides of the text. The word 'Calliopo' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with the 'C' overlapping the first few letters. Below 'Calliopo', the words 'ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE' are written in a smaller, black, all-caps, sans-serif font, enclosed within a thick, black, horizontal bar that spans the width of the text.

Calliopo
ART & LITERARY MAGAZINE

prose, poetry, and artwork by members of Chapman University
fall 2016 | One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

It was in my first semester as a freshman that I was published in *Calliope Art & Literary Magazine*. At the time, I didn't know much about Chapman, *Calliope*, or even myself as a writer, but I knew that I wanted to write and I wanted to publish. More importantly, I knew the importance of sharing creative work between friends, colleagues, and strangers. *Calliope* gave me that opportunity, and I hope it can give you that, too.

This semester, the work students have submitted to our small, student-run publication has been phenomenal. I am grateful to each and every student who was brave enough to put their work out there. I would like to congratulate all of the students whose work we've had the pleasure to publish in this edition of *Calliope*. Your work has made this magazine great. To the students whose work we've regrettably rejected: I encourage you to continue to write and to submit. The path of the writer isn't a smooth ride, but the journey is what you make of it.

There is much gratitude to be expressed. To Melinda, my managing editor, thank you for all of the hours you've spent organizing and crunching numbers, and thank you for letting me know when my stern wasn't stern enough. To Heather, our wonderful publicity manager, thank you for helping to expand *Calliope*, your logo designs, and for all of your production experience. To all of the editors, each and every one of you, thank you for a seamless review process, all of your insight and special talents, and your willingness to dedicate your time and hard work to our magazine. I would especially like to thank the English Department at Chapman University for the tireless support, kudos, and enthusiasm.

Finally, thank you, reader, for picking up a copy of this magazine. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Robert J. Schumaker, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief
Calliope Art & Literary Magazine, Fall 2016

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High School French Is Not A Romance Language

David Astrofsky

Your father works at the post office
and your mother tells stories at barbeques
about the time she blew the bassist for the Stones

Your neighbor's not your friend
but he drives you to school because
his mother's forced him to

She touched you once
at a birthday party when you were twelve
You thought she was drunk at the time
but now that you're a senior
you've started to consider the possibility
of sleeping with her

Your girlfriend wears a claddagh ring
that bruised you
the first time you ever got a hand job

She's the most beautiful girl you ever saw hold a tennis racket
and you're still a virgin
because every time it's raining out
and you and her get naked
she laughs and says
it wouldn't be worth it

You lie in bed at night
thinking about smelly football pads
and alarm clocks
and the time you saw your older sister changing

She said nothing
and neither did you
and lately
the thought of it all
is sometimes frightening
when you're forced to realize
you've been acting out
every fantasy and nightmare
you've never had

Rooftop Pool Party, Las Vegas, Nevada

Amanda Gourley



Disposable Camera

I Was Young When I Left Home

Simone Gabrielli

I was young when I left home. I knew that. The first time, a child, a mere stripling headed out for sweet, sun-drenched California. My energy had been boundless, the sky exploding in bright, bright, bright excitement and hot pavement and sand pounding on our feet. The ocean sparkled bright, my eyes were bright, my smile was bright. Children of the orange glow of the southern California sun, where the light is heavy and thick and envelopes you in warmth and for a while you don't think you've ever known what winter was. I was young when I left home, my faith in the world limitless, too happy to start testing where those limits might stand. Happy for no reason other than sunny days and salty hair long, long, long, decorated with feathers, darkened by sea water and wet, heavy lashes on shining eyes that knew nothing of pain or harshness. I was a child, and the earth treated me as such. Gentle, the world kissed me awake, in a town so old California, full of bungalow houses low on the ground and porch swings and Spanish foods and language and *Chiquita, Angelino let me look after you*. Cocooned in summer, cocooned in safety and heat I let myself float, float, float, riding on the giddy high of amphetamines and stranger's cars and poetry and words tumbling through windows through lips and then-oh. Suddenly I was very lonely in a very wide world.

LA has two skylines. I know that. I would sit up on Sunset Strip to watch them both bathe in that spit-fire orange of the setting western sun, the pink dips in the sky of the dusk settling between buildings, lights slowly coming to life, spreading their limbs out over the twinkling canyons of the city. Pretty city. Lonely city. My feelings still deep and intense as those a child has, prone to nights of kneeling hands, curling in my hair a pain so pulling so heavy in the expanse of my ribs. Loneliness so profound, so demanding, so debilitating. I was a child. I didn't think about my family, didn't look at pictures, didn't want the reminder. Los Angeles was a sleepy city. It was quiet at night. The voices were hidden in houses high on the hills, behind windows and only meant for certain ears. LA is not a selfish city; the beauty of valleys and hills, trembling, mighty, mystical canyons, a sun that is happy to see you, happy to see the palms, children frocking about in the water. LA does not hide the wonder and beauty of its landscape. The people are selfish. Exclusive, they hide in houses and do not have time for children on the streets at night. Children walking in the warm night, imagining a mother's arms in the sweet, smooth, velvet breeze and a sky that is never quite dark, and never quite blue, but a twinkling hazy purple from lights and ocean

fog. LA does not have time for a starving teenager. LA drifts in and out of sidewalks and cafes and roads and cars and a feeling of profound isolation.

I dressed myself a gypsy; all short crochet dresses and bell sleeves and colorful scarves trailing down to the sharp bones of my hips. I wore tights that were torn because I didn't have any others and boots that were falling apart. I wore mascara to make my eyes look large and vulnerable. I wore red lipstick and sometimes would sprinkle glitter on my cheeks upon the flush that settled there amongst the liquor and heat of clubs. The only people who had time for starving teenagers were men much older than me, 25 or 38, who, by a remarkable show of the faith I entrusted to the universe, never did anything bad to me. This would change in time.

But for now, I was a child and was not treated as such. They would take me to speakeasies hidden behind closets and attics and rod iron staircases that led to large wooden rooms filled with people and sparkling champagne overflowing from their glasses, popping into somebody's else until a pink faint rosy glow of snappy, bubbling wine licked and flickered a sweet film across the air. Fire from Cuban burlesque dancers lit up the dim old boxed in club, fed by Latin music and jazz saxophones and sequined burlesque dancers and older men in tuxedos and women in cocktail dresses and sharp heels clicked across the iron stairs.

Heads turned when I walked in, always. Everybody knew I was underage. I trusted that somebody had an eye out for me, watchful from a distance who might intervene if something happened. When bands came in, musicians were always quick to invite behind the stage. Quick to touch, softly, quick to card through my hair, quick to look and admire and I learned. I learned to flirt, to stretch a smile so demanding and so coy I could just about get anything I so desired. I got by. Until one night, a beautiful boy with large, sloping eyes like a woodland creature took me aside. In the backroom of a venue, he held me so close that I rested my cheek against his collarbone and closed my eyes as he hummed. He said: *Come with me. New York City has time for hungry kids like you.*

I went.

And I was no longer a child.

The Albatross

Jon Dadgari

For my mother.

It was late in the evening when Harry found him sitting in his father's armchair.

The night had run itself weary. It was the later hours of the day when the warm drunkenness of the dusk had resolved into a dull throbbing in the head, when the fire that once popped and crackled over logs and warmed the dark corners of the barrooms had fallen into smoldering ashes, when the full-bodied and talkative retired and left the quiet and hollow ones, filling the void with drink. The night was finished, but continued to trudge on into the cold blackness.

Harry saw him through the window, a black silhouette sitting on the gray, dusty chair on which his father would often sit and tell stories about his time out on the sea and about his dear old friend, the albatross.

The steamboat, bound from New York to Belfast, was bound by the cold Atlantic on all sides. But the bird found its way aboard the ship, or so the story went.

"Every morning, there he was. Right atop the crow's nest. Or as I called it, the 'albatross's nest.'" He told this joke that quickly became offensive to the ears every time he told Harry and his older brother the story. They used to sit with wide eyes at their father's feet as he recited this old memory.

"One time I took a whole pocket full of corn from my dinner. Threw it up one kernel at a time and ol' Albi caught every last one!"

"All of 'em?" George would shout.

"Hand to God."

Often times, on a day by the shore, the boys and their father would call out "Albi! Albi!" to the gulls swarming over the sea. Their father promised that if they called out his name enough, he would come. He had to.

Later, he told about the fog.

"Three days. Nothing but still and quiet. All you've got is yourself, stuck in that blue darkness. You don't have any idea which way is what, but you know you're moving." He told this tale to his sons, and he told it well. But they were somewhere else, far removed from the wonderment of youth to notice.

"In that bleak nothingness, we knew there was something ahead. Just not what. That infinite unknown." His eyes were wide and glazed over, unfocused, as if he was still looking into the fog. He gripped his armchair tight.

"And then I saw him!"

He knew it had to be him, the very same bird.

"The same bird? How do you know that?" George snapped from across the room. Harry immediately looked at him. It was as if some piece of him left untouched had finally been disturbed, like a boot dropped heavily in the snow. Harry's dad looked on into the fog of his memory.

"Can't know. That's the thing. It's something you just know is true because it's got to be."

George left later that year. He was off to New York or Chicago. He always talked about leaving the old place for somewhere else. A better place, one where he could stretch his wings and see the world.

"Stocks and bonds, Harry. That's where the money is," he would say, fixing his perfectly combed, greased hair with his fingers in the mirror. "Stocks and bonds."

Harry often sat up in his room, away from his father and older brother, away from all the shouting and fussing about nothing.

"We all leave eventually," he thought, "in a car or in a casket." He looked out the window, into the black night. He tried hard to see the white albatross that would never leave his side, that would always be just over his head, but saw only black. "We all leave eventually."

On an old and tired night, much like the night Harry stood outside his window, George walked down the cobblestone path and took a town car down the street. George and Harry's father had been talking—at first about nothing—then it quickly came to a boil. Words, accusations, insults boiled out of them like scalding steam until there was nothing left. All had been said. He left with a handshake.

On this weary night, Harry stood on the same cobblestone path fifteen years later, peering into his window.

The night before George left, Harry had asked him about the albatross. George sat up on his bed, the silvery moonlight washed over his face. The room was blackened by the thick shadow of night, but Harry never saw his brother clearer.

"I don't know why the albatross stayed. Maybe it was the corn."

"Maybe he had nowhere else to go."

George was silent for a long while. The two sat there next to each other, imagining that in some wharf somewhere, there was an old, rusted ship with the skeleton of an albatross lying in the crow's nest.

"He lived and he died," Harry thought. "Exactly where he wanted to be."

The day drudged on. Harry looked up at the stars. He thought about how they looked the same, whether he was at home or in New York or in Chicago, and about how no matter what happened to him, three days of fog or his own brother walking out the door, they would always be there. The white, selfsame snowflakes seemed to float over his head.

And there, the shadowy figure sat in his father's armchair, blending into the bleak fog of night.

Harry opened the door.

Scalene

Mark Hausmann

The world's best architects
assure us we can collect everything,
from corner windows and diamond lanes,
to sodded hatchways in our front lawns,

all while the planet's newest priests
wrap us in geodes of lightness and incenses,
away from the likes of the new ways
and the knotted bed sheets from our balconies

—but ten installments of the cosmos
convince us we're here, tied in seatbelts
waiting for air raid sirens or higher knowledge,
for the lifeboats, escape pods, or a life in ice.

Yawning and smiling, our friends help
slow us down, they help us get up
and hang questions in our living rooms,
digging passageways behind our paintings

while the furniture remains silent—thank god—
our bedroom lamps and toilets don't laugh
like blenders blend or wind chimes chime,
everything waits in place staring off

—but glass on the floor changes things,
the thin curtains blow out the window
as everything you've earned escapes
in a rush of unforeseen speed and drama.

Kids

SoIYe



art

iPhone

Superhero Sam

Sydney Druckman

Bang! Thwack!

Evil Villain goes tumbling to the floor. Good Guy Hero stands mighty and strong above him, his feet hovering off the ground.

"You have defeated me!" Evil Villain wails.

Good Guy Hero points his super-finger at him. "You get what's coming for you, foe. Your days of reckoning are over!"

Evil Villain wails again, cowering away from Good Guy Hero.

"Any last words?" Good Guy Hero asks, his mighty cape flapping heroically in the wind behind him.

"Yes," Evil Villain says, a wicked smile creeping onto his face. "Take this!"

Evil Villain whips out a Krypto-Gun, and shoots it at Good Guy Hero. Unable to protect himself, Good Guy Hero takes the hit and falls, his flying ability and super powers diminishing instantly.

"That's cheating," Good Guy Hero says weakly. "You can't take my powers away!"

Evil Villain stands and grins, cocking the Krypto-Gun in Good Guy Hero's direction. "I didn't cheat; I'm the *villain*."

"Stop right there!"

Evil Villain and Good Guy Hero turn towards the booming voice and are startled to see a little boy with golden hair and piercing blue eyes: the greatest hero of them all.

"It's Superhero Sam!" Good Guy Hero shouts, a relieved smile appearing on his face.

Superhero Sam stands before them with his hands on his hips, wearing his red superhero mask, blue cape, and light-up sneakers. Evil Villain watches in horror as Superhero Sam jumps high into the air, soaring over buildings and trees and houses before he lands in front of Evil Villain, knocking the Krypto-Gun out of his hands.

Evil Villain falls to the ground in surrender. "Please don't hurt me."

Superhero Sam helps Good Guy Hero to his feet, before he turns to Evil Villain. "Only bad guys hurt people."

Police arrive a moment later and Evil Villain starts to cry, before he is escorted away and driven to Villain Prison. Good Guy Hero's powers slowly return, and before long, he's hovering above the ground again.

Good Guy Hero places a hand on Superhero Sam's shoulder. "Thanks so much for saving me. You're my hero!"

Superhero Sam places his hands on his hips. "All in a day's work, Good Guy. You'll get them next time."

"How did you do that super jump?" Good Guy Hero asks. "Can you show me?"

Superhero Sam smiles and nods. "Stand back."

Good Guy Hero hovers a couple paces away as Superhero Sam

bends his knees, building up his power and—

—Sam hears the shrill of the recess bell just as he is about to jump from his perch on the Jungle Gym, startling him out of his daydream. His classmates rush towards their classrooms, forcing Sam to take the slide down and run after them. He is glad that the bell rang when it did, because if it didn't he would have done his super jump. If he did his super jump, everyone would know that he's a superhero.

For months he's been trying to keep his powers a secret, his mother the only one who knew about them. She was the one who told him about his abilities. She said that when he was a baby, she would find him floating on the ceiling, and that she had to tie string around his ankle and attach it to his crib so he wouldn't float away. She told him that he couldn't tell anyone about his powers because it would make his classmates jealous. Sam understood that; he didn't want anyone mad at him.

Sam ran to his desk and sat down, panting wildly. He is always the last one back from recess.

His first grade teacher, Miss Melanie, gives Sam a small smile before she addresses the class and begins her lessons. He feels someone tap his shoulder: it's Sally. She has brown hair and blue eyes and she lost her first tooth last week so she has this huge gap right at the front. Sally is also his girlfriend. They've been dating for two days.

"People are saying you tried to kill yourself at recess today," Sally says, matter-of-factly. "They said you were on top of the Jungle Gym and that you were going to jump."

"I wasn't going to jump," Sam says to her. "I was just playing pretend."

"That's not a nice thing to pretend about." Sally turns her face away and looks up at Miss Melanie, jutting out her chin.

Sam sighs and spins to face the front of the class. She's the prettiest and most popular girl in his grade, but she's so moody. It makes him like her a little less sometimes.

When school is finally over, he walks Sally home. They live in the same neighborhood, and their moms said that they have to always walk to and from school together. Sam only does it to protect Sally from villains, especially from Burt.

Burt is mean and big. He has a million freckles on his face and red hair. Last week, he stuck a beetle down Sara Johnson's shirt. She screamed and screamed until a teacher had to help her get it out, and Burt just laughed the whole time.

Sally is still mad at Sam, so he reaches into his backpack and grabs his Three Musketeers bar. He was saving it for when he got home, but he gives it to Sally instead.

"I'm sorry."

Sally glances at it for a second, before she takes the bar out of his hands and puts it in her pocket. "It's okay."

Sam thinks about what it would be like if he could sweep Sally up and fly away, show her his super jump and his super strength. That would make Sally feel better; that would make her happy again.

But then Sally smiles at him, showing the gap in her teeth to tell Sam that she has really forgiven him.

Suddenly Burt and his goons appear alongside them, riding bikes without training wheels. Burt is also in third grade, so he's a lot better at riding bikes than Sam is. Sam grabs Sally's hand and tries to walk faster, but Burt corners them.

"Look what we have here," Burt says, scrunching up his face in a twisted smile. "It's the love birds."

Sam frowns as Burt's goons laugh at him, making Sam's blood boil.

"*Sam and Sally, sitting in a tree,*" they chant, giggling. "*K-I-S-S-I-N—*"

"We are not!" Sally shouts, stomping her foot.

"Go away, Burt," Sam says, taking a brave step in front of Sally.

Burt jumps off his bike and stands close to Sam, taller than him by a few inches. "What are you going to do about it?"

Sam could imagine grabbing his shirt and throwing him into a tree, or flinging him on a roof so he couldn't get down. But instead, he pushes Burt backwards until he falls onto the bikes, making Burt and his goons topple over onto each other. Sam grabs Sally's hand and pulls her down the street, and he could just hear Burt say, "You're going to pay for this!" as they run faster, giggling until they reached their houses.

His mom is home when he opens the door, and he runs over to give her a hug. She asks him about his day, and he tells her that it was okay, that he almost gave his superpowers away. *Almost?* she asks him and Sam says to her that, yeah, he was fighting Evil Villain again and that he almost used his super jump. She tells him that she's glad that he didn't because the other kids would be very jealous and we wouldn't want that. *No, we don't*, he tells her and then she tells him to go do his homework and so he scampers off to his room, grabbing his colored pencils and his Reading Notebook. Sam flips to tonight's homework page, and looks at the pictures of the words he learned today. He writes *hat* in blue underneath the baseball cap and *cat* in red where the picture of an orange tabby is. He is writing the word *mat* when he hears the front door open. He knows that Dad is back, but Mommy said that if Daddy comes home after school that Sam should leave him alone and not come out of his room, because Daddy is The Beast and Mommy is Belle and she has to use her special powers to make him human again.

Sam writes *ring* in yellow as Mommy talks to Daddy softly downstairs, like she's casting a spell.

Sam writes *sing* in purple as he hears Mommy and Daddy start yelling at each other.

Sam writes *swing* in brown when he hears something crash and he hears Mommy make a funny sound.

Sam writes *king* in green when he hears Daddy talking softly to Mommy, and Sam knows that Daddy is human again because there's no more beastliness in him, and also he can smell dinner being made and Daddy always helps Mommy cook.

The next day, Burt and his goons come across Sally and Sam again as they're walking home from school. Burt jumps off his bike and approaches Sam, an angry frown on his face.

"Leave us alone," Sally says.

Burt looks at her briefly before saying to Sam, "You're going to pay for what you did."

And then out of nowhere Sam is being pulled forward and Sally is being pinned back by two goons as Sam is pummeled into the ground. Sally is yelling at them to stop as Burt and his friends kick into Sam's sides, laughing and calling him names. Sam tries to get up but he can't, and Sam tries to use some of his powers, but it isn't working.

They do this to Sam until the neighbors start to come out, where Burt and his goons jump on their bikes and speed off before anything could be done.

The next day Sam runs home. He knows he could use his super speed, but he's afraid someone might see him do it. He knows he should be walking with Sally, but they're broken up now. She's afraid of Burt and doesn't want to be around Sam now because of it.

When he reaches home, he sees something funny in his driveway. He moves closer and realizes it's a squirrel, but the squirrel isn't moving. Sam looks closer and can see that the squirrel's chest is moving up and down, so he knows that it must be hurt. He runs inside to tell Mommy, and they both go to the driveway to look at it.

"Can we help it?" Sam asks.

His mom puts her hand on his shoulder. "I don't think so, honey. It must have eaten rat poison."

Sam shakes his head, and keeps telling his mom that we have to save it, 'cause he's Superhero Sam, and he can't let people get hurt. He keeps telling her this as she gets a box and helps the squirrel into it, and Sam is crying when she takes the squirrel into the woods behind their house and puts in a place where it can't get hurt anymore. His mom says that it's okay; the squirrel is just going to sleep. But Sam knows, and he feels really angry and sad that he can't do anything to make it better.

After lunch Burt and his goons find Sam and lock him in the janitor's closet, and won't let him out. Sam bangs on the door and yells, but no one can hear him. He tries to use his super strength to break down the door, but he can't do it. It's dark in the closet, and it's making it hard for Sam to breathe. He has to keep banging his light up shoes on the floor to see the walls again, so he doesn't feel like he's stuck in nothingness.

They don't find him when the recess bell rings, and they don't look for him when school is over. He finally gets out when the janitor opens the door, and it's already dark outside.

Sam runs home, worried that his parents will be upset with him, so he runs up the steps and throws open the door and says, *Mommy, I'm home! I'm back!* but then he notices that Daddy is home, and that Mommy is on the floor and she is crying. But Daddy doesn't look beastly, so he must be human, but then Daddy turns to Sam and he notices that Daddy's eyes are red like the devil. Daddy throws a bottle at Sam and screams, the bottle missing Sam's head by a couple inches and shatters against the wall. Mommy is yelling at Daddy to stop, and tells Sam to go to his room, but Sam is too scared to move. Daddy is yelling at him in a different language, all sluggish and lazy like, and Sam can't understand what he's saying. Mommy grabs Daddy's hand and talks to him softly, and then Daddy is crying too and goes to his knees, and Mommy hugs him. Daddy keeps on saying, *I'm sorry, I'm so sorry*, as Sam runs to his room and shuts the door. A couple minutes later Mommy comes into Sam's room and pulls him onto her lap, and tells him that it's okay, that the beastliness is out of Daddy. But Mommy's cheeks are covered in black tears, and when she smiles it looks like it hurts. They sit together until the smell of dinner wafts up from under the door.

Sam is on the Jungle Gym when Burt and his goons find him.

"Did you have fun in the closet?" Burt asks with a smirk.

Sam ignores him, and goes to climb up the Jungle Gym, but Burt grabs the back of his shirt and pulls him down.

"I'm talking to you, squint." He spits.

He tries to shake out of Burt's grip, but he wouldn't let go. Burt scrunches his face up into a smile, pulls back his fist and—

"Burtrude Miller!"

Burt freezes, his face going all white, and he lets go of Sam's shirt. Miss Melanie places her hands on her hips and gives Burt a scolding look. "What do you think you are doing?"

"Nothing," he stutters, bringing his hands to his sides. "We're just playing pretend."

Miss Melanie raises an eyebrow. "I'm sure your parents would love to hear of this little game of yours. Principal's office, now."

Burt's face goes so red it matches his hair. He hangs his head low before he turns and trudges towards the school building.

"You alright, Sam?"

Sam looks up at her and nods. Miss Melanie stands there a little bit longer, before she gives Sam a small smile, squeezes his shoulder, and follows in after Burt.

At recess Sam sits alone on the Jungle Gym. Burt got in big trouble and isn't coming to school anymore. Everyone says that Sam is the hero, that he defeated Burt, but he didn't. Miss Melanie did.

Sam runs home, worried that his parents will be upset with him, so he runs up the steps and throws open the door and says, *Mommy, I'm home! I'm back!* but then he notices that Daddy is home, and that Mommy is on the floor and she is crying. But Daddy doesn't look beastly, so he must be human, but then Daddy turns to Sam and he notices that Daddy's eyes are red like the devil. Daddy throws a bottle at Sam and screams, the bottle missing Sam's head by a couple inches and shatters against the wall. Mommy is yelling at Daddy to stop, and tells Sam to go to his room, but Sam is too scared to move. Daddy is yelling at him in a different language, all sluggish and lazy like, and Sam can't understand what he's saying. Mommy grabs Daddy's hand and talks to him softly, and then Daddy is crying too and goes to his knees, and Mommy hugs him. Daddy keeps on saying, *I'm sorry, I'm so sorry*, as Sam runs to his room and shuts the door. A couple minutes later Mommy comes into Sam's room and pulls him onto her lap, and tells him that it's okay, that the beastliness is out of Daddy. But Mommy's cheeks are covered in black tears, and when she smiles it looks like it hurts. They sit together until the smell of dinner wafts up from under the door.

Sam is on the Jungle Gym when Burt and his goons find him.

"Did you have fun in the closet?" Burt asks with a smirk.

Sam ignores him, and goes to climb up the Jungle Gym, but Burt grabs the back of his shirt and pulls him down.

"I'm talking to you, *squint*." He spits.

He tries to shake out of Burt's grip, but he wouldn't let go. Burt scrunches his face up into a smile, pulls back his fist and—

"Burtrude Miller!"

Burt freezes, his face going all white, and he lets go of Sam's shirt. Miss Melanie places her hands on her hips and gives Burt a scolding look. "What do you think you are doing?"

"Nothing," he stutters, bringing his hands to his sides. "We're just playing pretend."

Miss Melanie raises an eyebrow. "I'm sure your parents would *love* to hear of this little game of yours. Principal's office, now."

Burt's face goes so red it matches his hair. He hangs his head low before he turns and trudges towards the school building.

"You alright, Sam?"

Sam looks up at her and nods. Miss Melanie stands there a little bit longer, before she gives Sam a small smile, squeezes his shoulder, and follows in after Burt.

At recess Sam sits alone on the Jungle Gym. Burt got in big trouble and isn't coming to school anymore. Everyone says that Sam is the hero, that he defeated Burt, but he didn't. Miss Melanie did.

Sam is no hero; he couldn't save anyone. He couldn't save Mommy from the Beast. He couldn't protect Sally from Burt. He couldn't help the squirrel that ate the rat poison. He couldn't save himself.

Sam feels someone tap his shoulder. It's Sally.

Sally sits next to Sam, and hands him something. "I'm sorry."

Sam looks down at her hand, and sees the Three Musketeers bar. He takes it, rips open the packet, and splits it in two. He gives one half to Sally.

And as they sit there, eating their halves of the chocolate bar, Sam doesn't care he's not a superhero anymore. Good Guy Hero can handle Evil Villain on his own. After all, Sam taught him how to super jump.

art

Chrysanths

Christopher Santiago



Digital Photography

Liar's Springtime

Avery Cardosi

The flowers had just begun to push themselves up from beneath the softening soil the first time I asked my father where she was. Poppies, splashed with crimson sun, melted the snow around them, and sugar white daisies, waiting to be plucked and woven into crowns, sprouted in their shadows. With all the sweetness carried on the spring breeze, it was never enough to mask the bitter edge that clung to his every word.

"She drank a potion that turned her mind into a cage and drove her mad."

I took this answer, along with all the flowers I picked that spring, and buried it between the pages of heavy books. I collected every explanation he gave me, no matter how wild, how fairy tale they became.

"She was carried off by an iron bird that flew into the sky and never came down."

"She went in search of happiness and got very lost."

"She was captured by a paper man in a kingdom far away."

I never became tired of hearing his answers, even when I grew to understand they sang no sound of truth. My father is a poet, a storyteller, and I have never expected him to give me anything more than the seedling words he planted in his unconscious. My existence was created entirely out of the tales my father told me. As far as I knew, I was stolen from the shelves of libraries, mixed with the magic of my father's mind, and born by the ink on his typewriter's keys. I was more a character than a daughter, more of a thought than a child, but I never minded existing in his book. Someday, I know, he will grow tired of writing for me. Tired of crafting story after story for a not-so-little girl who can't stop asking question after question. Someday, I know, the cogs in his head will become rusted and cobwebbed, and tiny slivers of veracity will begin to slip through the growing cracks in his mind and out his mouth.

Will it be,

"She loved the bottle more than she ever loved me?"

Maybe,

"She met a man with a different tongue who spoke words sweeter than I ever could?"

Or,

"She feeds the poppies, splashed with crimson, and the sugar white daisies waiting to be plucked and woven into crowns?"

Uncle John and Savannah Rose

Jimmy Evans

The struggle of the postmodern condition is the struggle to locate yourself within a theory based on non-truth. To see the world in permanent moral grays and shades of falseness means rewiring something. It seems to work at odds with a healthy happy human existence. Jean-François Lyotard would say that fragmentation leads us to smaller, more specific truth – local truth that more honestly expresses the ways of the world through plurality (11). But if the ethos of it lives in the fragmentation, then stopping the hammer seems antithetical. So you keep smashing the bits; don't you just end up with dust?¹

The postmodern condition sounds like depression. Regardless of how Lyotard spins it, the qualities of unrelenting distrust and chaos read more like symptoms of a mental disorder than anything else. Trapped in an infinite series of language games, the true disorientation resides in the fear of playing a game where you don't know the rules, only that you can be ejected from the game at any time should you break one. It is a state of uncertainty, a condition of anxiety. Thankfully, Facebook has stepped up to make the rules obvious. It makes the hidden, unconscious dialogic regulation of language games that Lyotard talks about fully visible in cute “thumbs up” buttons and less cute “report inappropriate content” buttons. It is a system of affirmation and discipline.² The real-time status updates, breaking news trends, and plastering of your friends' faces and acquaintances' faces everywhere evoke a panopticon-style system of surveillance activity. So now that we all know the name of the game, everyone on earth with a Wi-Fi-connection and Facebook profile is happy, right? Obviously not, since most of life still happens outside of Facebook. When it comes to big, comfy metanarratives like the one I just described, the postmodern relationship status is “it's complicated.”

I want to be wary of sounding like I'm hanging moral pretensions on the debate between metanarratives and plurality. My questioning of happiness³ is more about questioning the doctrine of uncertainty, which above all else seems the truest definition of postmodernism. Happiness is a tool in this paper, along with the language game interface known as Facebook. The subject is death.

15-year-old Savannah Rose White was hospitalized for psychiatric treatment multiple times in the summer of 2009. She had been taking medication for erratic moods and behaviors for most of her life, diagnosed with trichotillomania, a compulsion to twist and pull out her red hair. Marissa Viramontes, a peer at Troy High School, notes how “she was emotionally bullied throughout her life” and that “some of her friends turned away from her just to be accepted by others.” Her parents were divorced. On December 29 she was with her dad and brother and she stepped out of the car for “time

to think," walking a quarter mile or so to a gravel patch near the railroad tracks. A train struck her and killed her in an apparent suicide (Hardesty).

Death is certain. Whether that means a transformation or just the decay of the body, the act of death is certain. What may or may not come before and after is irrelevant for this paper, because it only needs one certain fact to test postmodernism. The fact is that life ends; it has a moment of ending. Savannah's Facebook page has existed as an encasing of that moment for seven years now and we can examine the document to better understand how social media has affected the way we mourn and therefore our understanding of certainty in a postmodern world.

The day of her death⁴ Savannah posted "rawr.....me eatz u @(^o^@ monkey!" to get a single like. It has one comment, a friend reflecting on how it was her last post. A dozen others commented on her page the next day telling her to rest in peace, apologizing for wrongs, offering up prayers and memories they shared, all exclusively written by kids her age. Gradually, the day of death becomes a less frequent time to post in memoriam than on her birthday, presumably because Facebook notifies friends of that anniversary, but posting overall dwindles until the most recent reflection: one single friend on the day of death. A group page called "RIP Savannah Rose White" has much more activity, with almost 120 posts⁵ total, around 90 of them from the weeks just after her death, many from adults and acquaintances. It is a space for community⁶, helping to organize a memorial⁷ at a park, but like the personal page the posts dwindle to almost nothing; the last five in a row are from her father over the years.

It is curiously uncomfortable to talk about the data here. Part of the decorum of funerals is a sense of positivity, and the fact that almost all the posts say they will never ever forget Savannah while the page activity would suggest they have all forgotten feels like the most clear takeaway from a glance at the document. Their sentiment becomes numbers, and the numbers drop off. One aspect of postmodernism is sweeping away the comfortable lies⁸ inherent to a metanarrative, revealing the falseness of simplicity and holism. Anyone being realistic about loss understands that to live you have to forget the absence every once in a while, but to have that articulated so obvious in the visual of the Facebook pages feels almost macabre. It takes away the option to lie. The finality and certainty of death seems more of a fact on this wall of perpetual mourning than say a traditional one-day funeral, which allows people the option to lie about their feelings, or more accurately, lie about the feelings they will have in the future.

There are all sorts of regulatory apparatuses visible on the page. Each post has a similar word count with a similar sentiment, and the sheer number of these almost identical posts create an echo-chamber of condolences. Not many break from the accepted form. There are clear trends: announcing the last time they saw her, detailing the specifics of their relationship, "rest in peace," "god bless," "can't believe it," etc. Who are they writing for?⁹ All are addressed to Savannah and, without getting into spiritual territory, she has no way to read their letters. The addressee paradox seems more muddled when considering that the posts are half-directed at each other,

searching for legitimization in the group by reporting the specifics of their connection to Savannah, as if knowing her from a middle school Washington DC trip gives them authority to speak. Once again, the visual organization of the Facebook page seems to give us a more insight into the ancient act of ritualized mourning. The ritual is for the mourners, not the mourned, but vital to the act is the lie of it being for the mourned. For many, distancing³⁰ the spiritual from the funeral makes no sense. But still, the language of the funeral that the group page lets us investigate reveals something about psychological motives beyond simple answers of religion.

There are only two real distinct posts of condolences on the page, striking for their length and vulnerability. The first one starts "i will be honest," which is the universal refrain of defensiveness³¹ before saying something the speaker believes will sound unpopular, "the last time she tried to talk to me, i told her i didnt want to talk to her again....i wish i couldve just been mature and forgiven her. maybe we didnt have to be friends after that, but itd be better than being so cruel to her. we both made simple mistakes, every elementary kid makes them"(Strain). It is interesting to think if these grafts of real intimacy would be much different if uttered aloud in private rather than written for an audience. Would this teenager have felt comfortable enough to speak otherwise?

At the least, the difference affords one the opportunity to organize thoughts before display, deleting and shuffling word-choice, edited by those subtle systems we internalize thanks to knowledge of an audience. The second distinct post has neat paragraphs of specific memories and correct grammar. It does not appear as spontaneously written as my first example. One detail stands out: "we talked a lot on Myspace about loads of things, mostly the unfortunate things that were getting us down, though. It made me very sad to hear that Savannah wasn't happy with a lot of things, and I wished that I could see her more" (Spring). Here we get the reminder that the Savannah we see on Facebook or in news articles is not the real one, but a simulation, a refraction of her life built from details selected by others. Her Myspace page was a place to share more personal thoughts. It is inaccessible, locked away from public view. The difference between Myspace Savannah and Facebook Savannah expresses the difference between language games, and the falsity of thinking that one single interface could make the rules of the game simple and explicit.

It would be dishonest to avoid discussing my own involvement with this artifact. Savannah was my age. She lived in my town and died near my house. Her death was a shock to the community at the time, the kind of tragedy that happens in other places. I didn't know Savannah beyond the story of her death. I didn't truly mourn. But something happened when I clicked through these pages and clicked on the profiles of the grieving. I felt deeply for her. I realize that this is the most dramatic shift in mourning caused by Facebook; it makes connective tissue visible. An obituary in a newspaper can list a few names of loved ones, but the public group page preserves moments of obvious significance ("your 21th 'B'day is in a few weeks and in Oct. Benjamin turns 18, yes I said 18, where does the time go. Father's Day tomorrow. I love you Munchkin" [Don]) besides moments we might not traditionally see as significant ("i met her over summer during a

health class and she was really helpful and nice to everyone when we did a group project. i didnt know her that well, but im going to miss her" [Policar]). It provides us with the little narratives. It is fractured and fragmented, an appropriately postmodern grieving.

Nothing in life prepares us to process death besides direct experience of it, and the result is confusion and constriction, the fear of saying the wrong thing, looking too emotional, looking not emotional enough. This is the postmodern condition. It is a theory of displacement. If a feeling of displacement fueled the despair behind Savannah's suicide, how are we supposed to live in a postmodern world without destroying ourselves? A friend posts a link to an article on the page. I click and read a journalistic account of the memorial. Savannah's mother reads a note written by the young girl months before her death. "Even if I only touch¹² the lives of a few people, it'll still be a difference.^{13,14} You never know, maybe a person I will help will live on after me, making an even bigger difference. It could cause a chain reaction" (Hardesty). It is a chain that leads me seven years past her death to a place where I hear Savannah speak, where I can imagine I hear her speak.

What "RIP Savannah Rose White" reveals to us as an artifact of postmodern theory is the idea that fragments are still shards of a whole. Lyotard concedes this point himself: "A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island, each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before" (14). The idea is to look away from the metanarrative of the whole, to look away from even the pieces and see instead the breaks between them, the jagged edges. This artifact shows us the intersectionality of fragmented truth. Savannah's "truth" is still locked away. In the Internet age where Lyotard says knowledge is just a commodity for exploitation and exchange, it is the preservation of the acts of exchange within visual interfaces that create bridges, highways, and links of human experience.

¹I'm hiding in my bedroom while grandma rattles off about the latest disrespect from Uncle John, her voice punching through the walls with my mom's neutral affirmations. Grandma cried earlier. Merry Christmas, am I right?

²John is dropping the people's elbow on my lounging brother's back, giggling each time he stops a foot or so away from actual contact. My brother rolls over into his phone and smiles in a tight frown. Everyone else ignores John. I don't know what it is but I just don't want to look at him. It feels disrespectful to watch someone embarrass themselves. And cruel to feel embarrassed for someone.

³I tell myself that John is making stupid racist jokes and wrestling with my brother because he's high. Which is more comforting than the idea that he's trying to connect to us. Somehow, if he's high, then it's not my fault when I ignore him, the way I've ignored him my whole life.

⁴Wen I think about John, I think about the story I'd tell at his funeral. And I hate that about myself. I turn his pain, the suffering of his whole life, and flip into an opportunity to nail a speech. That's repulsive. Selfish. That's who I am, though, at my filthiest self. Because the whole scenario is just a fantasy where I look honest and smart and soulful.

⁵I stand at the podium and take the mic and pause.

⁶I step down and weigh everything I say.

⁷“When I think about my Uncle John I think about this one story. I’m in 3rd grade maybe. Whatever age it is that you start feeling self-conscious for running over the jungle gym, spitting gun noises at imaginary aliens. The age you stop making action figures fly in your hand. I’m young and it’s my birthday.”

⁸“My dad calls me out of my room with serious expression and we walk outside to our driveway where my Uncle John has a surprise for me. I can’t remember much, but I can see him standing in that way he stands. He doesn’t talk like the adults I know. He has something behind his back. Maybe he’s smiling. Maybe he’s adapting the serious look of my father, the one he seems to flip into after a bad joke.”

⁹“He gave me stickers. I’m too old for stickers, I think to myself, and it’s the first or second time in my life that I’ve thought that I’m too old for something.”

¹⁰“I have to lie to him to protect his feelings, I have to pretend to be happy because you shouldn’t hurt someone when they give you a gift, especially so. It’s like a final exam for all the values my parents instilled in me. I feel shame and guilt and empathy. I’m 9 years old. Those are the gifts of my parents.”

¹¹I don’t know what I did with the stickers. I remember keeping up the façade with my mom when I walk back inside and under her waiting nervous gaze. She smiles and frowns. I put the stickers on the mantel beside the cards, or maybe I put them in my room for some private display. Sometime later, years maybe, I realize the importance of the stickers and I wish I’d put them on something dear to me or on a notebook or the side of this pen.”

¹²This is the part of my speech when it all comes together:

¹³“You have to accept these gifts and cherish them. You have to smile at the stickers because people give what they can and it’s the qualification, the smallness, that gives it meaning.”

¹⁴Or some shit like that.

¹⁵The actual important detail of the story is the setting. John never came inside, remember? I like to think my dad offered cautiously and John refused but that might just be me trying to re-write. No, My dad didn’t let John into the house because John was high.

¹⁶Or the other unthinkable reason, where John gives my dad a gift and stays outside because he knows he’s not wanted.

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Info-aerobics

Mark Hausmann

In seconds it rises out of place
and adds another way away,
altering what's come before.

A word or angle of a body
paints another tiny mustache,
meandering strange all purpose.

But don't apologize. You were
listening to something more important
than what I can give you in this moment.

Be even more distracted
and look past me. See a lighthouse
and see it revolving like a siren.

All the claps in your face and air horns
are trash in your way into the mountains,
through brushfire and out of gravity.

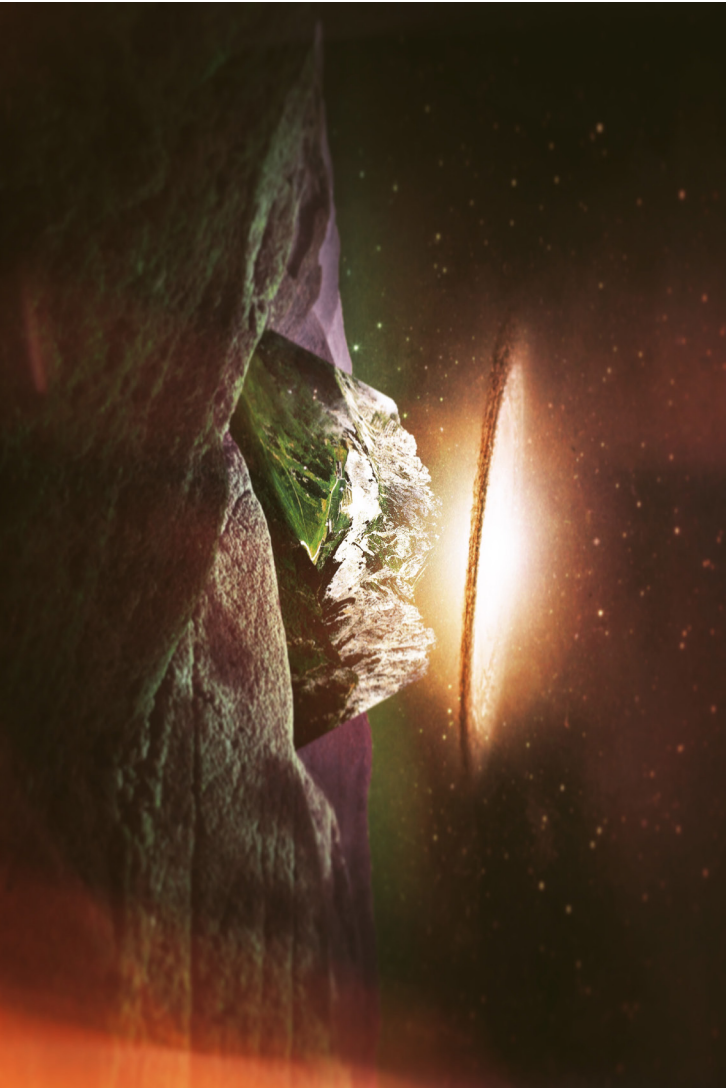
But even our star to some degree
burns daydreams from our eyes,
encouraging the palms to sway.

So I don't know what
I want you to see next, just see
what errors arise from this tin can.

art

Far Away

Jakob Ziemann



Digital Art

Adam Wittgenstein

Nathaniel Heely

In the beginning, the Word descended upon me. I made memories soon after.

The World was Wordless and void. One thing, one event, blended in to all those around it, and I have termed this the Oneness.

There is a World. All that is not me. And there is me. All that is not the World.

On the first day of memory, I gazed at the sky expecting to see myself. I turned over and saw a river of moving water and inside it, I found myself, still.

I did not inhabit the self that was in the water, however. So I have deemed that it is not me. It is part of the World.

The Words, like the water, came flowing out of me, and I could see them as I formed them in the void of my mind, and I understood how to record them.

And the Words came to me, apart from me, but lived in me and are now one with me. To write them down is to see them again, distilled, separate.

Since the Word descended, the Oneness has hidden itself from me. Or else, language has hidden it by its very nature. What should clarify ends up obscuring.

Who is? I am.

I have divided the known times into the Ante-Word and the Word.

I named the World and all its constituent parts. There were other creatures that came unto me, and when I named them, the creatures and the name of the creatures married into one.

I shall note that I am not any one of these creatures. I believed that perhaps they were like me, but they had no way of naming me, or of reciprocating my language. My language, the names I have made for them, separate me from them.

I share similar characteristics with these creatures. Many of us share eyes, limbs, shadows, mouths, breath, noses, tongues, but every observed creature exists in multitude. I exist alone.

Perhaps it is language that killed those that looked like me. Perhaps I used the language to kill them.

I have termed these creatures that look like me—whether hypothetical or real, imagined or concrete—Others.

I do not have any memory of killing an Other.

An Other must have a language.

I mirror, like the water, the World that is not me. So that when it is dark I seek to make my eyes dark with my lids and that when the great light is out, I seek to open my lids. The great light I have termed the Sun. The Sun does not have language. I doubt that it is even a creature.

It is wrong to say “in *the* beginning the word descended upon me?” Perhaps it is better to say, “in my beginning.” I thought this would be

understood, as I was the one writing it, so it could not be anyone else's beginning.

"In the beginning" was an attempt at some kind of Truth, but as I reflect upon it now, it seems deceptive and fraudulent.

Deception was not my intent.

It is proof that words are alive, independent of me. They can change their meaning long after they are out, and they likely had a much different meaning before they came upon me. Assuming that they were somewhere before they came upon me.

Because of this last assumption, I thought it was proper to use "in the beginning" in my first sentence of this record. Those three words understood when the Beginning was and did not need me to explain to them that there was a time before them since the only way in which I could record them was if the two of us were joined in one mind.

I have made friends with the creature I have named Dog. It follows me around when I walk, and it is next to me when I lie sleeping, when I close my eyes in correspondence with the sun disappearing beyond its own lids.

I am trying to conceive a light brighter than the sun; a light that does not exist.

That is to say, it does not exist in the observed World. However, every word I conjure lends existence to both the thought and the word. And therefore that word and thought exist.

I am trying to wordlessly create this light.

I need to sustain myself in a similar fashion to the creatures. I need to drink water. I need to eat the fruit from the trees. There is an abundance of both everywhere I walk.

Trying to remember the Ante-Word feels blurry and unclear. As though I have gone in for a drink and forgotten how to come up from the water. Things move in slow-motion and their reality is questionable.

I have postulated that an Other may in fact already exist, but I have not seen them.

Neither have I seen the limit of my inhabitation: the World. There are many points which I perceive to be ends, but this is, in fact, the limit of my sight.

I am a limited being living in a limitless World, so it seems.

I may, perhaps, be the only limited thing. I cannot count the blades of grass, the drops of water, the breaths of air, the number of trees, the multitude of creatures. However, I can count myself. I am One.

Supposing of course, that an Other does not exist. Which I have no confirmation of nor denial.

Where would an Other come from?

To answer this question begs asking, Where did I come from?

My first memory is of the Sun. I was watching it while supine.

Perhaps I am part of the Sun. I am what happens when the Sun concentrates in a spot for a very long time. In this way, perhaps the Sun is actually a creature, I the offspring: the son.

I sat in the shade of a tree the other day with Dog. While he licked me, I stared at the lighted earth. There were clouds overhead and the light was inconsistent. It could not concentrate. I do not know if there were clouds in

the Ante-Word. If there were not, and if I am a piece of concentrated Sun, then perhaps there were very many Others created.

Perhaps the clouds are the sources of the Word. And in order to continue my relationship with language, I require their presence. A consequence is that they disturb concentration of light.

There are many days when I am tired and do not feel like speaking, and I note that there are no clouds in the sky.

But there are also days when I am tired and do not feel like speaking and there are clouds in the sky.

Suppose the presence of an Other requires that I lose my language? Would I agree to such terms?

With whom would I bargain for this?

There are nights when I am full of energy and wish to explore.

A new World is created at night. Shadow creates a new reality. The order of objects and place is consistent, but there are new creatures that only come out during the night. I feel less safe with these creatures and with the night in general.

There are days when I only want to lay down in the sun and sleep. It reminds me of my first moments, and I am happy.

Since the descent of language, all of my thoughts have been mediated by words.

There was a time when this was not so, I believe.

I can, of course, conceive of such a time, but not without words. I thought that language was once an endless expanse much like the World has proven to be. I have since found that there are limits, boundaries—such as the prominent one described above—much like what I hypothesized the physical World would be like.

I cannot see endlessly in all directions around me. What exists out of my sight could be anything.

Perhaps an Other only exists out of my sight.

Perhaps I exist only out of an Other's sight.

This would mean that my actions are, at least somewhat, dependent on an Other. Or else they are in coordination with their actions; that my agency is not my own.

Sometimes I get the sense that the creatures are watching me. Many of them for the first and last time.

I turn around unexpectedly, spontaneously looking for proof of this. So far, I have found none and have only managed to scare a few creatures off by my sudden movement.

Dog follows me wherever I go. It tilts its head when I speak to it as though it expects to understand what I say.

Dog can differentiate between words and notwords.

Dog has made a companion. They are both dogs, but I refer to the second as Dog's Friend.

Dog's Friend is fat in the belly.

I have noticed that the other creatures have a dichotomy, often between their legs. Dog and Dog's Friend have this dichotomy.

Dog's Friend's belly only became fat after the conjoining of the dichotomies. I have observed other creatures conjoin dichotomies, and it is

not rare to see one of them fat afterwards.

I have not noticed a creature like me, with or without the dichotomy.

I have considered the idea of having a companion likewise to dog. I think I would enjoy it, but only if my companion too, had language descend upon them.

I say the word "descend" because in my first memory I was staring upwards. The words, like rain, did not fall. They are not physical. It is a case of saying something that is not necessarily true in actuality but *feels* true.

That is to say I cannot actually feel it, say, on my skin or fingers coming from the outside. It is internal. A warm rush of blood in my heart, a lightness in my head. But somehow more than that.

This is a case of the limitation of my language. Sometimes language cannot describe itself.

Dog's Friend's belly has opened and produced many smaller dogs. I do not know what I will call them just yet. Or if they need to be called anything.

In relation to the creatures, I consider myself as a greater being because of my language. I have named each one of them. They do not name each other.

While Dog's Friend attended to her children, I concentrated on them and tried to produce one in their likeness, to use my thoughts to bring forth physicality. My attempts have failed.

I attempted this because I thought that perhaps I was their creator in the Ante-Word.

If I did not create them, then who did?

How does one create anything without words?

To whom are these questions addressed?

To an Other.

If an Other even exists.

Did an Other create me?

This question is, again, addressed to an Other. Perhaps it would be better if phrased, "Did you create me?"

Though suppose an Other did create me but that is not the Other who will read this.

I have not discussed how I intend anyone to read this. It seems futile, though, because if they are reading this how will it matter that they came upon it?

How, for example, does it matter that language descended upon me?

I confess that some of these questions are addressed to myself and not to an Other. Sometimes to both of us, if an Other exists.

I have widened my walks and ventures into the World, whose bounds I still haven't seen. There is a certain fruit I have found from a tree whose taste and pulp swims through my teeth and cheeks. I will continue to try and find new fruits.

The sensation of taste is one of the highest pleasures that I get.

When I say "highest," I do not mean in relation to its altitude but in an order of magnitude.

Language is not perfect. I find that some of the things I want to say, still somehow elude me. It is only through practice of use that I have understood this fact.

Even there, how would language “elude” me? I am speaking as though language were an active force independent of me. Hiding from what I want said.

If I say that fruit tasting is a “high” pleasure and that language “descended” I am exhibiting a relation. The relation is that of magnitude. I hold fruit tasting and language to a great magnitude, by which I also mean a “high” magnitude.

The fruit’s pleasure diminishes over time. It is better in smaller quantities.

If I were to find an Other, I believe the pleasure would be greater than eating the fruit.

Somewhere out there, in the Oneness.

The Oneness is not an Other. The Oneness is everything and I am the Oneness, but I am not the Oneness entire, nor is a tree the Oneness entire, nor would an Other be the Oneness entire.

The Oneness is everything.

I do not believe this is a redundant sentence. Else, all definition is redundant.

What evidence, outside of my thoughts, my language, do I have to give that an Other is possible?

No doubt I will leave more questions than answers when this is all written out. Suppose an Other discovers this, will this ratio of questions to answers seem inordinate? Will the questions seem more like a joke? Will an Other understand my words? Perhaps this Other is the absolute opposite of me. Their World will be filled with more answers than questions.

Perhaps there was an even before the Ante-Word. A bodilessness. A non-ness.

I fall asleep and conjure up a light in my head. It is not a light of the World. The light exists inside me, which is distinct from the World. It exists. It is. It is still becoming. In the beginning, I tried to construct it with words. I failed. I had to conceive of it as a picture. But I did not want to construct a replica of the light I had seen. I wanted to create a new light. Something all my own and distinct from what I experienced.

What Beingness do my words generate?

Given: My words exist. Given: The light I am trying to conceive exists. Therefore: My words and the light exist. The Beingness is separate from their existence, however.

Hypothesis: Only an Other can confirm my existence. Only I can confirm an Other’s existence.

How could one prove oneself?

Through words.

I am trying to conceive a light brighter than the sun.

I am waiting for an Other.

Static

Matt Garcia

To almost touch is to be bursting
and to touch is to hardly feel at all

Alluring knot of the mind that binds the static between our fingers
like the lock of a door not yet secured
which fastened brings satisfaction to stickler reaction
the lure of the undone to finish inaction

Today we kissed
or, at least, almost did

Even lights danced around us
urging us in

The fonder the heart, the stronger the wound
not every almost feels euphoric

. . . or new.

Like a stomach that groans
the *almost* of flavor on the tip of your tongue
to be grasping that burger with mouth wide agape
and that burn deep inside, too full, yet not sate

Last night, almost cried
head sunken in pillow, breath fresh out of air

Grasping at sheets to cut off the feeling
almost, I blacked, but turned over reeling

Just a little too hot
the cup in your hands, filled just under the brim
Hot by the handle, not quite burning the skin
almost too hot, not too hot to take in

We almost ruined dinner
You rose in a rush

People were staring
I sat with eyes down

Your steps echoed like lead on my ears

The check had come early, just for the appetizer

I had no heart to tell the waiter I had no money

I found you at the park bench, watching the fountain

You told me you missed it, the feeling of having yourself and no one else

The fountain sounded so loud, you kept talking but I couldn't hear

You gave me a hug

You were gone.

Almost, we made it
those tracks led to a wall
I prided myself with deep resentment
everything I had done wrong, if anything at all
Almost, I felt like we would be fine
but were we . . . ?
I guess,
we wasted our time
Your *almost* was static
charring the skin where I hadn't been touched
Now no other *almost* will feel as alive
As the *almost* I felt

when you and I tried.

Eagle Hunters

Ryan Trumpler

The seasonal rainfall had brought a renewal to the dried grasses of the prairie, their yellow-brown blades restored to a natural vibrant green, only to be choked by the winter's frost. Traversing the fields of mud and icy grass was an obstacle, and the sun's rays would melt the frost to worsen the condition of the mud. The two hunters, young and old, marching away from the rising morning sun, had to be swift in their journey.

The wizened old hastened along towards the mountains to the West, scolding his young to follow close, lest he be seen by the Eagle they hunted or become lost in the tall reeds. The young would obey, but briefly, enticed by his inexperience in this foreign land, gazing at awe to the sight of each mouse that scampered between the blades as the two marched and at each fish that concealed itself just beneath the water's surface as they passed through the streams. His eyes darted towards the towering stone monoliths and rusting spires of metal, their soot-caked skins chipping away to reveal the inner colors. As the old attempted to restrain his son, he found himself unable to quell the boy's insatiable curiosity, but answering his endless questions would grant him rest from chasing his young through the fields.

"I had once met another hunter while traversing the deserts of the East. He told me that the Eagles stole their name from a different creature—a great bird. They flew among the clouds many years ago. But they went away. Where to—no one knows. Perhaps they had to flee from the Eagles we hunt. Or perhaps they died out."

As the old began to weave his tale, scraping together the memories of his younger self, the boy drew closer, eagerly gripping to each word that slowly paced from his elder's wrinkled mouth.

"I traveled with this man for a short while—we had both been hired to slay the Eagle flying above the dunes. The hunter and I had approached from the East, and it was dawn—the glare of the sun blinded us. The beast struck when we were unprepared—I was very lucky to live past that day."

The young was taken aback by the story. "I thought only humans could hunt like that."

"There are few with the cunning required to slay an Eagle. It is as much our hunter as we are its."

The mountains the Eagle nested within, jagged monoliths rising from the blue of the westward horizon, came into the view of the hunters. The young, even with the new uneasy sensation from the pit of his stomach, continued to pry on. "So they think like a man?"

"No—people have to think about hot, cold, happiness, sadness, sores, itches, old age, right, and wrong. People have to breathe. Eagles don't feel the hot and cold. Illness is unknown to them. Time does not impede them. They don't care for the air they soar in. Attention to such things is distraction."

"From what?"

"Hunting."

"So they are not of this world?"

"Indeed—Eagles are creatures of those that brought about this world. They live for ages, always soaring above— always hunting."

At one point, a lifeless settlement seemed to rise from the desolation. The son, once again falling to his own curiosity, explored through the ruins, climbing atop the heaps of charred rubble, then descending into the rounded holes scattered through the abandoned village. His father, eyes darting across the sky, wary of the beast, hollered to his child. Those who had called this place a home had seen the fury of the Eagle defending its territory. This was a burial ground.

"What happened to the hunter you traveled with?" The old held his tongue. As the two hunters paced from the ruins, a great silence grasped the field, save for the breeze as it whispered through endless tall reeds. It hummed through cracks in collected piles of rubble.

"Why do we hunt with bows?" The boy returned to his father's side, his curiosity poking through the blanket of silence. "I have heard stories of men who held the weapons of the gods. Some hunted Eagles."

"Yes, once we were graced with the weapons of the gods. To appease the gods, we must strike with the weapons of man."

"Does it make a difference?"

"I don't know, child. Eagles are not creatures which I can explain. Nor are gods."

For a great time, both were quiet. They marched onward, across the vast emptiness of the field toward the colossal peak to the West. With the morphing valley emerged a field scorched to a black, smoldering crisp, staining the earth beneath it. Scattered trees that had been roughly severed as a bolt of lightning shot through. Half of a large thigh-bone protruded from the earth, possibly from a bear passing through, the other half of the bone dusted in shards across the dirt of the plains, mixed with handfuls of steel arrowheads from hunters passed. The dirt path they tread upon itself was marred with craters. Each fragment of macabre devastation marked a new warning sign, a new suggestion to turn around, perhaps escape with their lives. And so the boy began to wonder.

"Why do we choose to hunt the Eagles?"

"It pays."

"No—why do we hunt? If they are the wrath of the gods, why are we supposed to slay them?"

"We must."

There was a whirring from above. First soft, like the humming of a gnat. Then louder, like a beehive as it was smoked. Then louder still—the skies themselves seemed to scream in horror at the being which approached. The winds howled against the hunters, trees shaking, bending, and twisting against the invisible force. The young looked to the sky.

The sun dipping behind the mountain gave the beast an aura of orange light, contrasting its hide, abyssal black feathers covering all its body. It flew like a massive arrow, its skull piercing the clouds as it weaved around

the valley, its arrow-like body trailing behind. Even the rays of the evening sun receded in fear, the four massive wings of the beast casting a blanket of darkness upon the ground below. The beast encircled the pair of hunters—the range of mountains surrounding them, forming a mammoth arena and the sovereign lord of this valley sizing up the insect-like men below. As the black contour cut through the azure sky, its roar echoed a final warning, a death knell.

The youth, drops of nervous sweat cascading from his brow, raised his weapon, retrieving an arrow from the quiver on his back. He would not wait for the beast to strike first. The old pulled the arrow from his child, trying to avoid a panicked shot. The Eagle diverted from its circle, roaring towards the pair of hunters in the valley below it. It whistled a single, piercing note and the earth erupted in fire and smoke, hurling stones and dust across the landscape.

In the moment, time began to blur for the young hunter. All clarity in sight and sense was lost to the emerging chaos of the surrounding eruptions and choking pillars of smoke emanating from each point of impact. The screeching of the beast drowned out the snap of bowstrings, as the hunter took aim at the Eagles' silhouette through the sulphurous fumes. The world around become fire and rubble. The valley quaked at a final, tremendous impact, and there was silence. An arrow had found its mark.

The hunters observed the corpse of the Eagle, stricken down to the valley below. From its wounds, it bled out black, oozing blood—more like fat than the blood of an animal. Two wings, the longer frontal set, had fractured from impact. The neck had cracked along its skin, with rigid fragments chipping away to reveal silvery entrails, and the silver-tipped arrow protruded from the spherical growth on its chin. It clicked and growled in frustrated desperation, unwilling to surrender its soul drive to hunt—even in the moment of death.

The boy observed the whirring beast, running his fingers across its frigid body. Unlike the small birds he had caught, the fallen Eagle was void of feathers and blemishes. Its eyes and beak were notably absent from its colossal head. For such a fierce monster, it had no razor talons, but pairs of rounded feet on each stub leg. The boy, without prying his eyes from his fallen prey, inquired to his father: "Does it still live?"

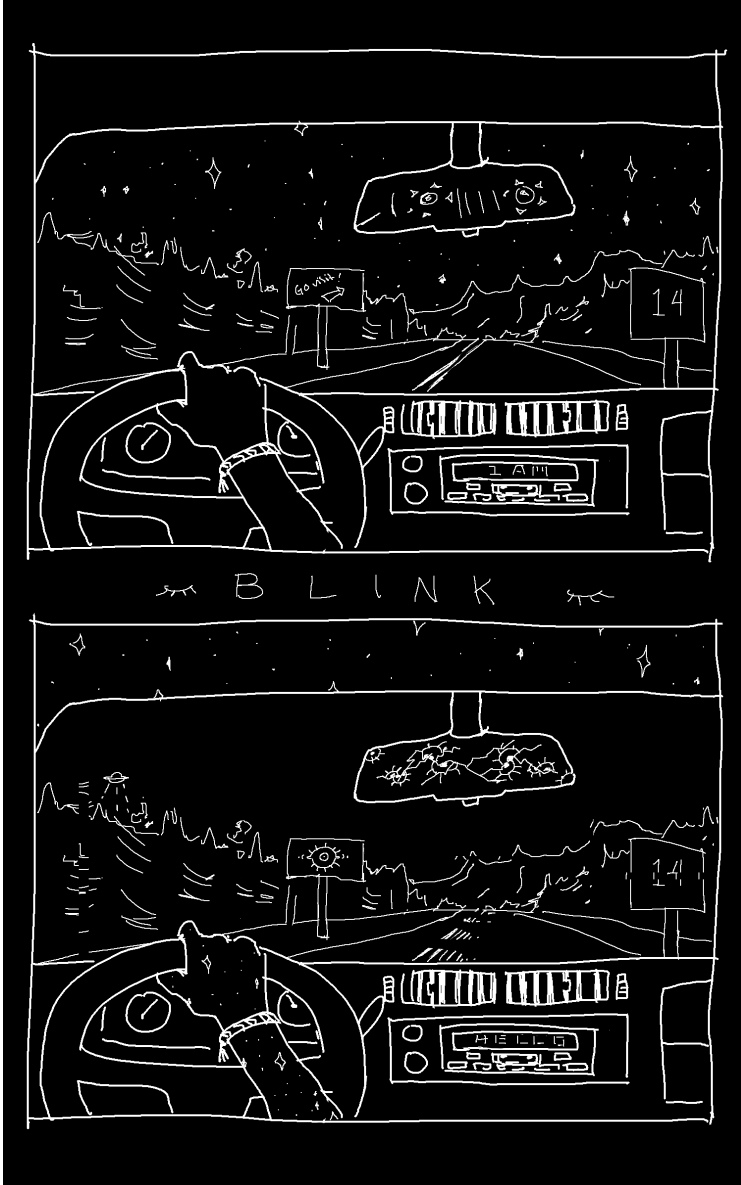
"Maybe, but not for long. It will bleed out soon."

As the father reached for his knife, moving to cut away a prize from the Eagle, proof of their successful hunt, the young noticed a series of markings etched along the creature's side. The symbols had no meaning to him—it was of a language long forgotten. As they turned and abandoned the dying beast, the blood emptying out from its wounds onto the soil, poisoning the earth with its liquid darkness, he could only wonder their meaning:

"MANUFACTURED BY LOCKHEED MARTIN 2/17/29"

Night Driving

Hannah Frye



Art

She Breaks

Ellen Chapman

She breaks daylight, swiftly sweeping
Covering the glowing, translucent leaves,
green plains, quiet fields, lit windows, wide rivers
All vast, brave landscapes blown out like candles
And thrown into blackness
even the painted blushes of orange, yellow, and pink
are poured away and hushed out
left to sleep
and
to rise again

Unanswered

Pippa Russell

You're old and you're sick
and you live in the hospital more than you live with me
and you've always liked the sea, my love, so I left home to be where
you wouldn't cry when you thought I couldn't see.

"Do you ever miss Saturday afternoons?" you ask me,
and I remember the radio-filled hours.
"No, no, this song is my favorite," you'd say, and I'd sing
and you'd hum, and you'd call me half crazy
and we'd make dinner together, dancing as we went.

"You're too quiet," I say now, watching as you stare
off at the wall, never at me anymore.
"I'm sorry."
I don't want you to be sorry, never that.

You're old and you're sick
and you can hardly sit up to see the sunrise.
"Keep faith, my love," I'd like to say,
but I never had faith. I only had quiet mornings
telling you your caffeine addiction was going to
get you into a world of trouble one of these days.
I only had your smooth writing, adding numbers
until the total came out just right.

"What did it mean?" you ask me. "What did it all mean?"
But that's not the question, my love. That was never the question.
Driving for days on end without a care in the world
or holing up at the edge of a city and learning its insides
until we'd been sick from half of the cheapest places
we could find food.
Or when we did what we thought was most dreadful in our youth.
We settled down
and lived in a house with a garden you loved
to fill with roses.
There wasn't a point. There was just us.

I'm old and I'm tired
and I've learned to sleep sitting in chairs
because I can't manage it away from you anymore;
I try and am filled with fear that I'll miss your last breath.
When you wake up in the morning and see me dozing there,
you wake me, too, saying, "Haven't you given up on me yet?"
and I sigh wearily and say, "Don't tempt me,"
and you break into that old grin, the one that first drove me mad.
That smile on your face is half of what I live for now, my love.

The Wishing Well

Kelsey Parrotte

A blue-cloaked boy follows a winding river southbound, spinning a shiny, greasy coin in his fingers. To his left, the hills spread outward towards infinity, where the sun yawns, thankful for his impending sleep. To the boy's right, tall evergreen trees guard an abandoned installation. But the boy does not pause to observe, and continues following the calm water until he reaches a stone watering well. The stone is cool, smooth, and gray. Around the base of its circular frame, the grass is damp from the afternoon rain. Two wooden beams reach upwards, holding up a burgundy-thatched roof like Atlas, keeper of the world. A wheel and chain hug a third wooden beam, prepared for a bucket to rise and fall into the depths of the well. The boy places his hands on the rim of the well, leans over the opening and whispers a secret, releasing the coin from his palm. He tilts his head, searching for the *ding* or *clink* that would ensure his wish's fate. Unsure but satisfied, he turns and marches northbound, away from the
wishing well.

As he walked away,
the coin fell and fell,
until it landed on a hatted head
where a sitting man did dwell.

His face wrinkled in anger as he watched the coin bounce onto the ground. Wells are for water, he mumbled, just 'cause there's none here doesn't mean you can throw wishes at me. He hunched over and picked up the coin. How'd you like me to throw these up there and wish you'd all stop wishing? He cursed and added the coin into a tin can. Hopeless nobodies, he muttered. He looked upwards, removed his hat, and bowed low. It's a pleasure to sort your wishes, he hissed. He scoffed, collecting the mucus in his throat and then spitting at the tin. He paced the tight space, knowing that his shift would soon be over, that the sunlight would sink well behind the outside of his hole in the ground hell. He squatted against the stone, fanning himself with his oversized captain's hat, a gift from the drunkard sailor who went overboard, landing flat inside the well, right beside his feet. Nearly killed me during my doze too, dumb animal, he grumbled. Not much longer now and he'd

be free.
Free to silence the selfish
the ones who wish and plea,
who throw their worthless coins,
believing it the fee.

By now, he was sure the sun had abandoned its post. He found it difficult to be patient. As a young boy, he had been more accepting, more naïve of his undertaking. Now middle-aged and obligated to fulfill high demands, he was bitter and resentful, ashamed of his foolish hopes. Of course, he blamed the Wish Giver, after all, it was he who had convinced him, enticed him, with the allure of a wealth greater than gold. Teaches me, he

muttered, nothing is greater than gold. A tumultuous rumble emanated throughout the well and he welcomed it by saying: finally, about time, took you long enough. The inner structure of the well began to crumble, forming an archway that was accompanied by streaming light. After the broken pieces gracefully settled on the ground beneath his feet, he sauntered into the open, underground space where he followed a wooden dock that rested beside a narrow river. Fastened to the dock, a rowboat bobbed delicately, like the childhood game of apples in a barrel. Seated at the forefront of the boat, Vi waited for him, her hands

politely crossed.
Silently she sat,
her face bright like glistening frost.
She was too young, he thought,
her hope had yet to exhaust.

Quickly, they exchanged hellos. He clamored into the boat, seated himself at the stern, and retrieved the oars from beneath his feet. The splintered wood welcomed his grip and warmed at his touch. Vi reminded him of his sister's dolls, primped and always smiling. She accurately depicted his eagerness from ten years ago. He wondered what she thought about when she wasn't obeying the Wish Giver. The people she left behind because an old man convinced her, tricked her that there was something better underground, something magnificent about collecting useless coins? He briefly recalled his own stupidity, and his rage quickened with each stroke into the water. The boat sped forward. Unlike before, when she lowered her gaze, Vi watched him as he rowed. This isn't worth anything, he said to her. Overwhelmed with anger and frustration, uncomfortable with the realization of the last wish of the day, he dropped the paddle and stood up in the boat. It rocked violently, and still, Vi stared speechless. He seized the tin can from the ground as if it were a throat, thrust it upwards, and like a waterfall, the coins gushed out.

Sinking into the depths,
fated for one route.
He watched.
Vi did not shout.

He sat back down, and told Vi to paddle. Afterwards, the only conversation was Vi's delicate paddle strokes meeting the water. They passed beneath the arched willow tree that concealed the pearly granite dwellings, with columns encrusted in silver and gold. Slowly, Vi guided the boat towards the right where the Wish Giver sat cross-legged on the dock, eyes closed in concentration. His beard was trimmed and his greying hair was tied back in a ponytail. The boat glided smoothly and, with a gentle bump, the Wish Giver was alerted to their presence. "Ah, Darius, Vi, you're back." He smiled and stood up, extending his arm to assist Vi from the rowboat. "That's a lot more coins than I was expecting today," he said. Darius finished securing the boat to the dock and glanced back, where the tin can waited.

Vi laughed, pleased,
while Darius grew irritated.
Everything down here,
was always somehow fated.

Frustrated, he marched down the dock, soon followed by Vi and the Wish Giver, who were chatting pleasantly about some person and some wish and some thing Darius didn't care to hear. The trio gathered beside a well where the Wish Giver gently tilted the tin, allowing the coins to spill into the water. As it did so, images of every person who had wished that day appeared, accompanied by their whispering, wishing voices. There was a boy who wanted Willy to survive a venomous snakebite. Two sisters who sought revenge on the boy who had told them he loved them both. An old woman pleaded for youth and a man cried, hoping to be reunited with his son fighting at war. As they listened to the streams of wishes, Darius slumped against the well and yawned. "I think the sisters' wish is selfish," Vi interjected. "I agree," the Wish Giver responded, "remove it from the pile."

Vi cupped it in her hand,
there was no more trial.
Darius walked away,
knowing it was futile.

He passed a fountain where water spouted out of the mouths of fish. He paused, looking into the shallow water that was full to the brim of all the coins that had been wished upon in the last year. Five steps further and another fountain stood, this one with water rolling from behind a herd of galloping stallions. Behind this one, was a fountain of angels. The row extended further than his eye could see (or than he cared to walk). Each fountain chronicled another year, another time, another wish. Although it irked him to acknowledge it, he knew his coin was in there, somewhere way back, fifteen years ago, in a fountain of nymphs and flowers. Now he knew why it remained there, forgotten and desolate. It was not good enough, not true enough, not the one that deserved to be granted. It was tainted, Darius thought, and he had been daft to trust in it. "It's okay to resent it, Darius," a gentle voice said. Darius continued forward, I don't want to talk now, Vi. "We are not Vi," she replied. Turning, Darius was stunned by the presence of a stranger. Atop her head was a laurel of leaves and her auburn hair was parted perfectly down the center. Her blue eyes were a startling contrast to her bronze complexion and there was something mischievous in her smile. Around her neck, she wore chunky stones and a deep emerald gown clothed her, accenting her slender curves. "It's okay to resent him," she repeated, "after all, he is the reason you're trapped here." How did you get here? He questioned, who even are you? She drew nearer to him, "Old friends to the Wish Giver, and there's a way out of here, you can follow us if you want." Darius gaped at the elusive figure. She smiled, taking another step closer to him and clasping his hand. A familiar sensation ran through his body, and when he looked down, he held a silver coin in

his hand.
After all this time,
fifteen years had spanned,
now here was his coin,
more useless than sand.

Darius stood paralyzed, watching as the woman turned down an aisle of fountains. He glanced behind him, but curiosity itched his body to move forward. Vi was far more helpful than he had ever been. Why should he stay? He followed, turning onto the aisle as the woman mounted a horse inside

one of the fountains. "Come on then," she said, stroking the stone mane of the horse. He raised his eyebrows. This is ridiculous, he said. She only smiled, waiting for him to relent. Although he felt silly, he stepped into the fountain, heaving himself onto one of the horses. And how, he muttered, are these inanimate horses going to take us away from here? She winked and whispered something Darius couldn't quite understand. The stone reins beneath his fingers softened into smooth leather. The horse's back, although still sturdy, sprouted brown fur. The hooves began to move, then the legs, and as Darius shouted, the horse leaped outside of the fountain and sprinted down the aisle. Ahhgg slow down! Stop! Darius clung to the reins and his hat flew backwards. He tried to stop the horse, recalling that he had not ridden one since he was boy. "Onward!" The woman laughed, urging his horse forward. Together they exited the row of fountains. "Woaahh!" The woman cried, and both horses halted beside the wooden dock where the Wish Giver stood, calmly with the tin in

his hands.
"Hello, Atrius," she greeted
"sorry to spoil your plans!
My friend and I were just leaving,
We'll leave you to sort the cans!"

The Wish Giver stiffened, "Darius won't be going anywhere with you." "You can't keep him prisoner forever, Atrius," the woman hissed. The Wish Giver stepped closer to her and the horses pulled back, afraid. With every step, his body grew taller and more menacing, until he loomed over them like a giant in the sky. "YOU WILL NOT DEFY ME," he bellowed. He flicked his hand and a wind threw her off the horse. "I assure you Darius, you do not know these temptresses. And because of them, you cannot stay here." I don't want to stay, he snapped, I'm tired of collecting your wishes and watching as *you* determine who is good enough. Shrieking, two crumpled figures huddled on the ground, attempting to stand, but as they were attached, they continued to fall down. "There are two sides to every story, Darius, I hope you choose the right one." Darius opened his mouth to retaliate but a monstrous wind began

to swell.
The next he knew,
somewhere he fell,
outdoors, all alone,
beside a wishing well.

At the Beach

Gaby Fantone



Photoshop

Photography



art

Unidentified Wave Formations

Garret Hill



Nos Sumus Auditorium

A Ten Minute Play

Nathaniel Heely

Cast of Characters:

Lenin: Man in late 50s. Wearing hospital gown. He is president of the United States. Is in the hospital with a case of amnesia.

Rorschach: Man in mid to late 40s. Physically resembles Lenin. Also in hospital gown. He is a professional actor. Also in the hospital with a case of amnesia.

Setting:

A hospital room with two beds facing toward the audience. Between the beds sits a night stand with a lamp on it and a morphine dispenser—a cylindrical object about the size of a pen attached to the back of Lenin's bed via coiled cable.

Time:

Modern day: Beginning of the 21st century.

(Open on two men in a hospital room in separate beds in hospital gowns. The man on the right, RORSCHACH, is awake and is flipping through TV channels staring up at the corner to his left, and LENIN, the second man, wakes and looks confused. Upon seeing him awake RORSCHACH speaks.)

RORSCHACH
Lazarus, arise!

LENIN
(Groans)

RORSCHACH
Finally awake.

LENIN
Who? Me?

RORSCHACH
Yeah, you. I'll be honest, when I realized it was you, I started turning the TV up. Hope it wasn't too loud, but, I mean, it was my intention in a way . . .

LENIN
Who are you?

RORSCHACH
Probably not a great question to ask. Can't remember. But, I have to say that looking at this . . . *(Points to the TV)* I get a good feeling. A lot of people look familiar, so I can't be too far gone.

LENIN
You don't know who you are?

RORSCHACH
But ain't it the funniest thing. I knew exactly who you were when I saw you.

LENIN
And who am I?

RORSCHACH
You mean you . . . ?

LENIN
I don't . . . I can't remember who I am.

RORSCHACH
(Under his breath) Son of a bitch.

LENIN
I feel sick.

RORSCHACH
Hmm. Probably the same meds I'm on. You got that feeling in your stomach . . .

LENIN
No, no. I mean sick of this. *(Gestures with hand at the air)* This what did you call it?

RORSCHACH
This? But you don't even know what "this" is!

LENIN
I know. I've had enough of it.

RORSCHACH
But it's all new to you.

LENIN
Just as well.

RORSCHACH
What's the last thing you remember?

LENIN
What remember?

RORSCHACH
The past.

LENIN
Is this the past?

RORSCHACH
No, this . . . this is the present. But it'll be the past soon enough.

LENIN
Does the present always look like this?

RORSCHACH
Looked this way as long as I've been here.

LENIN
Well, what's the last thing *you* remember?

RORSCHACH
I was swimming.

LENIN
Swimming?

RORSCHACH
Yeah, you know. (*Mimics the motion of a front stroke, still saying on his back*)

LENIN
Right. I know swimming.

RORSCHACH
That's what I was doing.

LENIN
(*Sighs heavily*) Is it over yet? This present?

RORSCHACH
Which present?

LENIN
There are more than one?

RORSCHACH
You mean that one?
LENIN
Do I mean that one?
RORSCHACH
The one's that past?
LENIN
So it has passed?
RORSCHACH
Well, it's always the present. But most presents are in the past.
LENIN
So when does the past start?
RORSCHACH
The past starts yesterday.
LENIN
When did yesterday start?
RORSCHACH
The day before that.
LENIN
I feel sick.
RORSCHACH
Call the nurse. *(Points to a cylindrical object with a button on the end).*

(LENIN presses the end of a cylindrical object that he assumes is the Nurse Call button.)

LENIN
(Wearily) So how do we know each other exactly?

RORSCHACH
(Stares with mouth open looking at Lenin as though he's trying to decipher letters on an eye test) I mean. You're you. You are . . . How do I tell you who you are? What if you don't like it?

LENIN
(Still obviously confused and very tired) Hand me that mirror, maybe I can figure it out.

(RORSCHACH hands him a mirror. Lenin looks in, adjusting, getting the full view of his head and looking at himself from many different angles. He then looks back at Rorschach. Then back to the mirror. And then back at Rorschach.)

Am I crazy to say . . . I feel like we look like each other.

RORSCHACH
But that's not unusual. Here look . . .

(Rorschach switches channels on the TV.)

You see those last three? They all look vaguely like us . . . Here . . . and look at this guy again. Bit younger but you can kind of see our face in him.

LENIN

Christ, I hate this feeling. *(He presses the button a couple times.)* Where is the nurse or doctor or . . . ?

RORSCHACH

Feeling sick again?

LENIN

I'm starting to think I can't feel anything. What's the word? Helpless. I can't be helped. Even, I fear if somebody came. Have you seen anybody else? Has anyone come in here? Doctor, nurse?

RORSCHACH

No. No one.

LENIN

How long have you been awake?

RORSCHACH

Not long. Only a few presents longer than you.

LENIN

And you say no one's been by?

RORSCHACH

No. No one. *(They both lean their heads looking at the window, in effect looking at the audience. They stare for a ten, maybe fifteen seconds in silence.)* You see? Nothing.

LENIN

Well. What now? What do we do?

RORSCHACH

Suppose we should go look for someone?

LENIN

Now why would we do that? We're in a hospital for a reason. Perhaps it was searching that got us here in the first place. Let's just stay here and wait for somebody.

RORSCHACH

I haven't seen any nurses. Or doctors. Or people.

LENIN

But the nurses will come, right?

RORSCHACH

Is it possible that this is a . . . *(pointing to the window and snapping his fingers trying to come up with the word)* a double mirror? You suppose they're just watching us on the other side just bickering like this?

LENIN

That's ridiculous. You can see clear through the other side. Why don't we just sit here? I'll push the call button again.

RORSCHACH

I'm going to take a look. The other side could be an illusion. You never know when people in authority are playing tricks on you.

LENIN

Will you just sit still?

RORSCHACH

(Rises and walks to the window. Peers out.) Come over and look with me.

LENIN

I don't want to.

RORSCHACH

Don't you want to know what's outside?

LENIN

I can see it. I've seen it already.

RORSCHACH

Just come take a look. It'll only take a second.

LENIN

Fine.

(LENIN lifts himself to the side of his bed but his legs are paralyzed. He wobbles trying to move him but just ends up sliding out of the bed and falling on the floor.)

Ow!

RORSCHACH

What's a matter. What'd you do that for?

LENIN

I didn't do it on purpose.

RORSCHACH

Well what's wrong with you?

LENIN

I can't move my legs.

RORSCHACH

(Incredulously) What?

(RORSCHACH moves away from the window and walks towards LENIN. He bends down and presses on his legs.)

Can you feel that?

LENIN

No!

RORSCHACH

It doesn't hurt?

LENIN

I told you I can't feel.

RORSCHACH

So. Neither good nor bad?

LENIN

How could it be good? How could anything in this situation be good?

RORSCHACH

So . . . bad? I'll call the nurse again. Where's the clicker?

LENIN

Why couldn't you just let me sit? Why couldn't we have just sat and waited for the doctors?

RORSCHACH

Here's why you're not feeling anything. This isn't a call button. This is morphine.

LENIN

Morphine?

RORSCHACH

Yeah you know Morphine. Opiate. Pain reliever. Maybe the one nice luxury you give our boys overseas.

LENIN

Our boys over . . . What are you talking about?

RORSCHACH

That's right you don't know who you are.

LENIN

Who am I?

RORSCHACH

Well you're . . . You're the Commander in Chief. Leader of the Free World. The Eye and the Beholder. The President of the United States.

LENIN

(Visibly upset) President?

RORSCHACH

Sorry.

LENIN

(Hyperventilating) Well, if I'm the President than why didn't you do what I said?

RORSCHACH

What did you say?

LENIN

To just wait for the nurse or doctors.

RORSCHACH

What if there are none?

LENIN

There are always nurses. Always doctors. There are always other people

RORSCHACH

Have you seen any?

LENIN

(Agitated, and with a hint of sarcasm) No. All I've seen is you. There's only ever you. *(Pause)* What's my name?

RORSCHACH

Huh?

LENIN

My name. Who am I? What do people call me?

RORSCHACH

(Quietly) Lenin. They call you President Lenin.

LENIN

And what's your name?

RORSCHACH

I don't know.

LENIN

Check the clipboard. The end of your bed. It should tell you.

RORSCHACH

(Moves feebly over to the end of the bed and reads aloud) Rorschach. They call me Rorschach.

LENIN

(Pause for five seconds in solemn silence) Well, Rorschach, could you possibly help me up?

RORSCHACH

Yes, sir. *(He gathers the limp legs of LENIN together and lifts him up by the knees and back and places him on the bed and then places the covers over him.)*

LENIN

And maybe hand me that remote.

RORSCHACH

Yes, sir. *(Hands it to him and then sits on the side of his own bed nearest*

LENIN.)

LENIN

Okay, let's change this. *(LENIN raises the remote and begins changing channels. After five clicks he stops, transfixed at the scene.)* Do you see that?

RORSCHACH

See what?

LENIN

This, on the screen. *(The both stare into the upper corner where the TV is.)* That's you. That's me.

RORSCHACH

What, are we the same person?

LENIN

Don't be ridiculous. It's a movie. An illusion. None of it's real.

RORSCHACH

But that's me. Being you.

LENIN

(Brief pause.) Let's change the channel. *(He raises the remote and after a few clicks he seems satisfied with his choice and sets it down.)*

RORSCHACH

I think I'm gonna go out there.

LENIN

Let's just wait for the nurse. Here, I'll call her again.

RORSCHACH

That's not the call button.

LENIN

Well, there's got to be a call button around here somewhere. Help me find it.

RORSCHACH

I'm going to go out there.

LENIN

Why? What is so important about going out there?

RORSCHACH

I need to see what else is out there.

LENIN

Then just watch the television.

RORSCHACH

I'm getting up now. *(He gets up.)* And I'm leaving.

LENIN

Don't leave me, Rorschach. Just stay here. I can't be here by myself.

RORSCHACH

Neither can I.

LENIN

It'll be any minute. It's probably late anyways. Someone will be by any second.

RORSCHACH

It'll just be a quick peek.

LENIN

Please don't leave me.

RORSCHACH

I'll let you know if anything's happening

(RORSCHACH gets up and walks to the door, which is the same direction as the audience. He steps off the stage and out of the lights. He pans his face from shoulder to shoulder. He takes a seat in the front row and looks in at where Lenin is staring back at him. They watch each other for a brief period, maybe ten seconds. LENIN then turns back to the TV and raises the remote, makes a few clicks, and then lays his head back and watches the TV.)

Diseased

Danielle Shorr

Remember when they thought I was dying? My white blood cell count was so low I was certain that I could fit each one into the palm of a hand and name them. I pictured my soon-to-be bare scalp reflecting against every light in every room it walked into and wondered if you could still love me like that. Of course you said yes, laughing, my hair wasn't what drew you to me in the first place, it was my writing, but that terrified me just as much because what if one day I just stopped and never started again? I figured that if I was ever happy enough, that I wouldn't need to anymore. When I say happy I don't mean it in a momentary sense, but that raw kind of happiness that just about makes you forget every bad thing in this world. When I'm that kind of happy, the words that feel like they constantly need saying will find comfort in silence.

You barely knew me when I was sick over Thanksgiving, but yet you spoon-fed me soup you made from scratch full of vegetables you cut except for onions because I hate the texture of them. The pads of your fingers pulsed the ache out of my lower back and my upper back and my ribcage until I finally fell asleep against your chest, rhythmic and warm. You tipped shots of orange DayQuil through the base of my lips and kept your hand on my stomach at night because it was the only cure to quieting the waves. I often find myself with my own fist splayed open against my abdomen when needed in hopes it will know the same magic as yours.

I cursed you for pulling my cuticles out of my teeth and for trying to stop my bad habits that I've never had the audacity to try to stop myself. I said, I used to be worse you know, and you asked what that meant. I said it's funny because I hate having my blood drawn at the doctor, it's the worst thing in the world I swear, but I could sit on the tile of my shower for two hours straight with a flood pouring from my veins and call it therapy. You were quiet for a moment and then said don't you dare ever do that again and I said it's been two years and also that it would ruin my tattoos and I've spent too much money on those to risk it.

But you knew what you were getting into because I make a hobby out of passing out my trauma to people for entertainment. That's what art is, isn't it? When you asked if I wanted to talk about it, I said yes, but no, but yes. I said sometimes at night I could still feel him kneeling on my chest and then my gut folds itself into one of those origami swans I learned how to make in the fifth grade. I said I'm embarrassed because I don't want to seem weak, but sometimes it takes me four hours to fall asleep or sometimes I just never do at all and that I'll get out of bed four times just to relock the doors if I can't remember whether or not I did already. You nodded softly, but I think the actuality of it really only hit you after that time you came on my hair by accident and I started crying. I didn't even know why I was, but you did and you understood without me having to. Three days after we were laying in bed and I laughed and then cried again and then laugh-cried and you said shh, it's alright, I'm sorry, and I said don't be sorry, I'm okay, just realizing, just realizing.

You don't understand mental illness and I don't really either, but I've learned that you don't have to understand something to live with it, so

I figured you could too. The depression is bearable enough, so there was never a reason to warrant it a deal breaker, although I did get mad that time I told you I was feeling depressed and you told me to be more optimistic. You learned very quickly that it doesn't work that way and I learned very quickly that you learn very quickly and I liked that.

I warned you about the mania, but that means little to someone who has never seen it and by that I really mean someone who has lived it. It doesn't matter if I told myself early on that I'd never let myself call you 87 times in a row because I did it more than once and more than once I've said I wouldn't do it again but still have. More than once it has been three in the morning and my hands have been eager to pluck the follicles from my head and I've been recycling my tears and the snot is foaming above my upper lip and it's such a sight to see. It's not the thought of my fingers sheering my scalp or the mucus crawling down my face that is shocking, but the onset of the disaster I expect but can never quite prepare for. I said I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry and you said it's okay it's okay it's okay and I wondered how you could ever last the instability long-term. I ask myself the same question but choose to not answer because I don't have the choice of leaving and still being alive and also how many times can we repeat this cycle until you stop picking up the phone?

How can such a pretty girl be so ugly? As a child, my mother would ask me this when I was misbehaving. One time you said I was a mean person when we were fighting and I swear that pulled my stomach so far down my body I thought it would fall out of me entirely. But I'm not mean. I'm not mean, I'm not. I hold the door open for strangers and drive my roommate to get her car fixed when I have things to do and if I think someone looks pretty, then I tell them they look pretty. I can be selfish and demanding and sometimes I avoid eye contact with homeless people asking for money, but I'm not mean. When I told you I hated you that time, it wasn't a meanness, just another way of me saying I hate who I've become and also a fraction of who I've always been and probably always will be. I hate that it started showing with you, I hate that I couldn't keep it under control long enough for it to pass, I hate that regardless of how well I was doing in one way, a different part of me was always going to be sick in another. My mother asked why you were with me, how could you love such a crooked thing, and how long until you leave and then, of course, what did I do to finally make you go?

You stopped asking me to read poems. I could feel the patience slipping from your grip as we held hands. You used to grasp onto me like a hurricane might arrive at any moment and sweep me up and away from you right then and there. But then it was spring and I had walking pneumonia and you were too busy to stop by that week, so I took myself to Walgreens in search of aspirin and fainted in the candy aisle. You gave just one attempt to get me to stop biting my nails and then no more. When I asked if we could keep the light on while we slept, you said that you were tired and it was late and to just go to bed already. Our arguments ended with silence rather than sorries. You let the phone ring longer before picking up. You didn't answer after the fifth call. You didn't answer.

I still use your toothbrush head you let me borrow because I have small teeth and it's easier to get to each one individually. I know that you're supposed to change them every couple of months, but it reminds me of how we stood side by side in front of the mirror brushing in unison. I keep your box of Lucky Charms, too cloying and stale, in a safe place in my cabinet just in case you decide to come back for a bowl of it. Even though I hate the taste of them, now and then I'll put a few marshmallows on my tongue and let them dissolve. There's always a bad aftertaste. Your sweatshirt smells like my dog but I keep it on the right side of my bed in your absence. It's a bigger bed for one person that I remember it being.

The hair on my head is intact and my blood cells are at normal levels for now, but I am still writing. I'm not sure I'll ever stop.

Elephant Portrait

Elissa Title



Photography

Sundays

Summir Wilson

Sundays were always the best days —
the sun was barely up any other days —
not for us,
that is.

She would always say
it was hard to have a
son these days
because a lot of
sons have been shot these days.
And she would always say
how she hopes that her
son wouldn't fall on one of those days
where the sun was barely up that day.

Because some of these days,
people forget that
black women have
sons each and every day.
And each and every day that son
walks may be for the last day.
And the last day,
I heard her son was shot — his last day.
Who is she?
She is every black woman
who has a son whose days aren't lasting.
Because black lives aren't meant to last these days.
And too many sons aren't lasting these days.
And the last day,
I heard her son was shot — his last day.
And the last day,
I heard her son was shot — his last day.
And the last day,
I heard her son was shot — his last day.

Tell me to
stop
repeating myself and
I'll tell you to
stop
repeating the bullets that
targeted
her son,
and her son,
and her son
on any given day.

Xolo

Liz Walcher



Digital Painting

Like Animals Do

Zipporah B. Smith

The woman on the bus was engaged with a person who was not there. The passengers on the bus either ignored her or condemned her behavior with narrowed glances. The woman didn't mind. She laughed and slapped her thighs. Her partner must be extremely engaging, thought Mr. Winthrop. He sat across from her, trying to distance himself from his wife who snuggled into his side, pervading his comfort with the cold flesh of her shoulder. His wife had a face like a painted skull with large sunken holes for eyes that still glittered with remnants of her past beauty. At her current rate of dilapidation, Mr. Winthrop was sure that she would soon be nothing more than an upright skeleton in designer jeans, serving waffles and omelets from morning to midafternoon at the local diner.

"You have to work," she said. "What if we had children? Have you thought of that?"

He wondered if this was how animals asked their respective mates for children. He wondered if they took their mates between their jaws and talons and hissed questions at them about fertility and the future. Humans weren't so different from animals after all, except for their dreams. Mr. Winthrop did not have dreams. Not anymore. He felt nothing but a need to be free and wander.

The bus stopped and Mrs. Winthrop dug her fingers into his shoulder. "Come along, William! Our stop!"

"How can you kill a man and not get caught?" Mr. Winthrop asked.

"What?" Mrs. Winthrop said.

"It wouldn't matter what I did. How I did it. They'd know it was me, wouldn't they? There'd be no escape for me, but for him—"

The vagrant laughed and interrupted them. Her eyes were filled with tears, and her face was distorted in a strange pull between mirth and agony. Mr. Winthrop forgot his question and stepped off the bus. In his right pocket was a pack of cigarettes that he yearned to smoke. He caressed the cardboard top and imagined that he could smoke them inconspicuously with the tips of his fingertips, so as not to damage the frail sensibilities of his needling wife. He would breathe in with one tap; the smoke would curl up under his nail beds and make its treacherous journey through the maze of vessels in his forearm, until it reached his neck where it would begin an opposite downward fall into his eager expanding lungs. Then came the problem of exhalation. How could he possibly get rid of that smell without Mrs. Winthrop noticing? There was no answer that was reasonable so he would simply have to keep it stored within him, probably somewhere in the cavity where his heart lay, until the time came when he departed from his wife and he could vomit the exhale in isolation.

"Are you even listening, William? Say something!" Mrs. Winthrop said.

A cat rushed out into the middle of the street with its scruffy gray and white hair fluffed in its excitement. Cars honked and traffic stopped as it rushed ahead, its long gray tail curved into the top of a cane as it leaped in affectation onto the sidewalk. It sat there catching its breath and giving its paw a congratulatory lick before it looked up and peered at him with keen green eyes.

Have you ever seen such courage? The cat asked him arrogantly with a high pitched meow before it turned and ran.

"I never have," he admitted with admiration.

"What was that, William? What did you say?"

Mr. Winthrop woke as the bus jerked over a pothole. He yawned and complained to himself about the curdled milk smell of a passenger next to him. As the bus stopped in front of the gray, indistinct building for Mr. Winthrop's next interview, he noticed the large white whiskers curving out from underneath his nose with an exasperated huff. He pulled sharply at one and winced.

"They're whiskers alright," he said to himself, "I hope they don't affect my chances of getting a job."

If they did, nothing was ever said. His interviewers looked over his resume and asked him questions with unencumbered expressions. If they noticed the large curling white whiskers they were polite enough not to comment. They probably had many come in who spilled coffee on their white collar shirts or orange juice on the crotch of their pants. Such appearances were probably much more distracting than whiskers.

His sister Clara died last year. It was unexpected and he hadn't been prepared. She was a high school graduate, a valedictorian going to college. On her way home a stray bullet from a robbery ripped through veins, tissue, and spongy gray matter before shattering her skull. The shooter was never caught. He got away with sixty dollars from a cash register.

Mr. Winthrop did not understand how easy it was to kill, but he had seen documentaries of animals in the wild, animals that ripped other animals apart and were not deterred by the mysterious, bloody pluck that came from severed innards. Mr. Winthrop understood the simplicity of killing to eat and defend, but he was unsure how to respond to the destruction of a capricious bullet.

Above Clara's grave stood a tree unaffected by the misery of gravestones underneath. Mr. Winthrop wished he could be as unfeeling as that tree, but he was angry and bitter. He prayed for a lack of feeling and for the demise of a man whose face he had never seen.

The next night Mr. Winthrop developed a thick, itchy patch of fur on his right forearm. His eyes were reflective greens and yellows, and when he woke that night his ears were on the top of his head. In the kitchen he searched the back of the cabinets and found a bottle of white milk and a can of tuna. An excellent snack before he went out. The light turned on and Winthrop hissed with the bottle of milk halfway to his mouth. Mrs. Winthrop stood in the doorway dwarfed by a large, fluffy blue robe.

"What are you doing?"

"Getting some milk," Mr. Winthrop said.

He did not have the time to argue. He thought the milk would steel his nerves, but he decided he didn't need it if Mrs. Winthrop was going to begin a tirade.

"Where are you going? Where?"

"Just wandering."

"It's twelve a.m. Who wanders around at twelve a.m.?"

She licked her lips and stepped forward. Her face was contrite instead of enraged, and the expression confused him enough that he stepped back.

"I've had trouble with the bills, and work, and everything, but I should have remembered yesterday was the day your sister died. I should have--"

"I'm going out for a stroll," Mr. Winthrop said cheerfully.

"I've just thought about myself, and about money. I've never really thought about you, not really. I didn't think. Why don't you ever talk about Clara?"

"There's a full moon tonight, I think."

"You act like you don't feel anything. You can pretend all you want--"

"You don't pay attention!" Mr. Winthrop snapped and slammed the milk carton on the table, unleashing white droplets onto the black countertop.

"I'm above this-this stupidity! Always feeling, always trying to explain!"

Winthrop left his wife in the middle of their kitchen. She called after him, but his ears, now changed to feline musculature, flexed away from her calls. As he walked outside he was not entirely sure where he was going, but his whiskers tugged him along, weaving him through alleys and streets until he appeared in an area unknown to him. On the sidewalk sat the gray cat, looping its tail into question marks back and forth. As the cat spotted him its tail lengthened into an accusing exclamation point, and its ears twitched to the side.

Across the street a young man in a ski mask ran from the sounds of screams. Money fell from his pockets, leaving a haphazard trail behind him. He grunted in surprise when he saw Winthrop, and the gun in his waistband gleamed.

"What you looking at, eh?" the young man called out.

He's threatening you, said the cat, licking its paw. *He killed a guy for sixty dollars out of a cash register.*

"I said what're you looking at? Huh?" the man called out again, this time walking forward.

Now he's done it again. He'll kill you. And he won't eat you either. Wasteful, said the cat.

The man was closer, close enough to see the red veins of his eyes.

Winthrop leaped forward. His hands were awkward paws that failed to grip the young man's neck. The man swung his fist and Winthrop's head snapped back. His claws unsheathed and came down, scratching at the young man's neck. The man's mouth opened in pain. His teeth were white and sharp and spit frothed above the gleam of his twisted lips.

"What're you doing?" the man snapped.

Winthrop squeezed his neck until he felt it pop underneath, and the young man's mouth opened wide like a wet grave. Winthrop let go, and the body smacked hard pavement. It was too difficult to hold anyway-his thumbs and his fingers had crumpled into small paws that itched as the fur began to flourish. Winthrop was sure that if he turned to look behind him he would see a tail. He slumped down onto the curb. There was blood on his forearm. Winthrop licked it clean with a rough tongue covered in backwards papillae. The gray cat was silent. Her question mark tail unfolded and thumped back and forth against the pavement. Close by the sun was beginning to rise, its yellow orange light spearing the blue darkness and spilling forth morning from its incursion. The cat watched the sunrise, her little face turning grim as she gave her paw one last, decisive lick.

Did you get what you prayed for? she asked.

Mrs. Winthrop waited for six weeks, but Mr. Winthrop did not return. Instead a cat began to follow her. It was a black and white feline with a quivering pink nose and sleepy eyelids that seemed familiar. Sometimes it waited for her when she came back home from the bus stop. It followed behind her dutifully until she got to the front door. When a little Chihuahua growled at Mrs. Winthrop on her way to the door one day, the cat hissed and swiped in her defense until the dog ran in the opposite direction. Mrs. Winthrop called him Bravo and gave him bowls of milk.

Sometimes a gray cat with intelligent eyes and a feminine air languished on her doorstep with her belly exposed as if to sunbathe. She was a clever, arrogant thing, and Mrs. Winthrop called her Clara. Clara preferred canned tuna instead of milk, or a dollop of cream when she was particularly snobbish. She liked to sit, or nap, or watch from a high perch. Mrs. Winthrop adopted Clara and bought her a bed and collar.

She tried to adopt Bravo, but he did not enjoy the confines of a home. He preferred to wander, sometimes appearing with a bloody mouth and the head of a squirrel at his feet. Mrs. Winthrop let him do as he pleased.

EPA Crop

Brenten Brandenburg



Digital Photography

Tell Me

Mary Howard

did the iron of my blood sting when you used my veins to sew shut my mouth? keep the darning gourd in my cheek, let my skin bloom with violent violet bruises and just leave me here to petrify. I can't tell one time from the next was it you who pierced each stitch or have you shared the burden with all the others who plucked my words from the air to use for their own intention?

you say you're gracious oh fucking gracious as you make me/let me be your lady-like chimerical fairy tale collapsed into herself while you spread out to claim your patrilineal civic-given right why be compact why leave room for me when you can conquer, dominate, control it like you control the conversation let the words dribble from your patronizing lips let them crust with your damned entitlement

you own my voice by divine holy lies so tell me how I shouldn't choke at the smell of cologne when it pierces the sensory part of my frontal lobe releasing the last shard of my unvarnished childhood shattered under the leather soles of a size twelve tell me how not all men are like that but then forget to tell me how to know who are the ones I don't need to lace my hands for, prepare a keyring to choke my middle finger, form makeshift silver claws with the teeth of the keys sawing into my calloused skin *you tell me*

tell me to let them take my autonomy and use it at will for I am obviously not of sound mind to decide so tell me how no one knows women's bodies better than the ones who commodify it and sell it on wavelengths across nations tell me how it's patricide to defy you and all like you oh martyred crusader tell me how skin will provoke you because women's limbs are dangerous and that is why you must indoctrinate girls to be ashamed of their bodies like I was taught and tested to be of mine

and please, tell me this while you consume all the space in the room because that's what you expect let the girl make herself smaller—I can't stop you, my lips are sewn shut and I don't know how to break stitches

Federman

Alana Freitas

I am sitting next to me sitting next to him, we are boy girl boy girls
 aren't supposed to play basketball is what he told me a girl I am learning
 what it means to be
 me I guess it means to be a girl girls are pretty and
 hyperfeminine and quiet and don't ever speak long enough to use words
 such as
 hyperfeminine his basket
 ball is rolling a lullaby into my head I am a dancer with the wrong-
 size feet and I can't tiptoe past the rhythm of that penetrating
 dribble of being jack-hammered
 into my place I should know my place my place
 in these cracks in the world but they're too sizes too small but
 dribble shoot three pointers are days when my father tells me I look pretty
 and my mother doesn't redo my braids because braids are loose morals
 (dribble dribble dribble) my mother tells me to pass
 the ball to someone who can dribble better than I am
 launching paper airplanes from half court I am
 still sitting next to me next to him wearing tight braids and taking notes on
 positions and "FOUL"
 "SHOOT" "DRIBBLE" everyone's sprinting suicides my hand is up because I
 am
 no longer sitting next to him there is no more dribbling because I am
 shouting from the sidelines bellowing from the bleachers boy
 boy boy girl boy boy girls' concealer can't contain cracks on the court that
 Dylan dribbled he dove down and Evan eventually
 forgot how to float and graduate but giggled to
 hoes like Hannah hated Harry's hiccups he
 isolated Isabelle in
 jails with jesters who
 kiss kitchen girls their
 lazy
 mamas
 never
 order or
 preach
 righteous
 saving
 testimonies
 unto
 voluptuous
 (WHISTLE) witches
 Xcited &
 yearning (for)
 Zorro who is sitting next to him sitting next to me I am
 dribble dribble dribble

Piano

Lana Sarkisian



Ink

Biographies

David Astrofsky is a filmmaker, actor, and writer of short stories, poetry, plays and screenplays. He is a sophomore Screenwriting major at Chapman University.

Brenten Brandenburg

Avery Cardosi is currently a freshman Creative Writing major and Italian Studies minor. They particularly love writing realistic fiction and fantasy stories, and are notorious for turning in papers with “too many commas.” This piece was inspired by and written in a poppy field in the author’s hometown.

Ellen Chapman was born in the United States but has grown up around the world. Ellen has been composing poetry and short stories since she was 12 years old. Now a sophomore at Chapman University, she is majoring in Creative Writing with hopes to pursue a career as a poet and author.

Jon Dadgari is a freshman Screenwriting student and has been telling stories his entire life. His writing is inspired mainly by the hardship associated with losing his mother at the age of nine. He writes as a way to reconcile his feelings and anguish, and discover truth and meaning to give to a largely meaningless existence. His favorite writers include Eugene O’Neill, Ernest Hemingway, and D.H. Lawrence to name a few.

Sydney Druckman is a sophomore at Chapman, majoring in Creative Writing (and highly considering either a double major in Screenwriting or a minor in TV). Her favorite things are: books, movies, records (she would specify which ones but there are too many to count), fuzzy socks, FRIENDS (specifically Chandler), Fall, Sea Salt Caramel ice cream, and Chai Tea. She has her other works published on Wattpad.

Jimmy Evans is a Screenwriting and English major. He enjoys sentences.

Gaby Fantone is a freshman in the Digital Arts major. She enjoys observing the world around her and translating what she sees into her art.

Alana Freitas is a Junior Creative Writing major from Honolulu, Hawaii. She spends most of her time planning, reading, hiking, working with kindergarteners, and singing. She loves dogs, avocado, BuzzFeed quizzes,

customized notebooks, her family, and writing poetry.

Hannah Frye

Simone Gabrielli is a sophomore Public Relations and Advertising major. She has no particular place she calls home, but she does speak three languages. When not in class, she writes for Crossfader Magazine's music section and interns at a fashion public relations firm in Hollywood.

Matt Garcia is a college senior who obsesses over inconsequential musical bits, like that one bass line or that drum fill or how that singer squeaked a little, but you know, still sounded good. He wishes he were playing guitar to his cat, but he's not, so he writes with words instead.

Amanda Gourley is a sophomore Business student who has a passion for expression through music, photography, and words. She has had the fortune to be able to travel to many different music events and capture the zeitgeist, while enjoying herself as she dances all night. Amanda has a great family and is from San Diego, a place she considers her forever home.

Mark Hausmann is a dual MA/MFA graduate student. He likes electronica and science fiction. In the near future, he hopes to have not one, but two corgis, because, as he puts, "What's the use of having just one?"

Nathaniel Heely is a graduate of the University of Arkansas. He is currently an MFA Fellow in Creative Writing at Chapman University. His work has previously appeared in Full Stop, decomP, Burrow Press Review, MARY: A Journal of New Writing, theNewerYork, and several others. For more visit nathanielheely.com.

Garret Hill is a photographer with a deep appreciation for the ocean. These photographs are an attempt at conveying the moments in nature where Garret feels most "connected" with what is around him and with the natural rhythm of the elements.

Mary Howard is a full time economics nerd working on her major and MS in Economic Systems Design. She sometimes likes to write poetry. Her hobbies include forgetting how to spell restaurant, researching the history of American slang, and pretending to know what she's talking about at dinner parties.

Kelsey Parrotte is a junior studying Creative Writing and English Literature. She aspires to write books for children and teens, and she hopes to work in

publishing. She does her best writing at night, and she can often be found reading a book and drinking Dr. Pepper.

Pippa Russell is a freshman majoring in TV Writing and Production. She enjoys writing poetry and short stories.

Christopher Santiago is a Public Relations and Advertising major student at Chapman University. He transferred in on his junior year. He is also a fashion, portrait and commercial photographer. Prior to transferring, his photographs have been published in numerous fashion magazines. More of his work can be seen on www.christophersantiago.net.

Lana Sarkisian is a freshman pursuing a Business major. Delving into the world of art has always been a personal outlet for Sarkisian to escape everyday stress. Having taken art classes throughout middle school and high school, the act of drawing and painting is made indispensable to a calm center founded upon the effects of a rigorously frenetic academic and extracurricular schedule.

Danielle Shorr is a spoken word poet and published author. Her book of poetry, *Beyond Existing*, was released in August 2016. She is a junior Creative Writing major and the president of the Chapman Poetry club.

Zipporah B. Smith is a MFA Screenwriting major who loves storytelling, walks on the beach, the smell of coffee, and Free Comic Book Day.

Elissa Title is a transfer Graphic Design major. She should be a senior, but is considered a junior due to the two year residency rule. Through her extensive travels to all seven continents, she has found great joy in photography. One of her greatest pleasures has been being a conservation photographer in Africa, where she spent time helping researchers document lion and elephant behavior. Wildlife conservation awareness has been something she has focused on extensively, raising issues about global warming, declining animal populations (poaching, human/animal conflict) and loss of habitat just to name a few.

Ryan Trumpler is a freshman Digital Arts major trying and failing to manage his time wisely and continue with his creative work. As a member of his high school's writing group, he picked up a knack for writing decent science fiction stories under the pressure of needing something to show the group during the meetings. He enjoys self-deprecating humor and relentless sarcasm.

Liz Walcher is a Digital Arts major and Game Development minor! Liz is very fond of dogs, the sky, bones, video games, and cute plants, and these things frequently find their way into her artwork. She loves to illustrate vibrant animals of all sorts, especially those with interesting teeth and soulful faces. More of Liz's artwork can be found at www.lizwalcher.weebly.com.

Summir Wilson is a freshman at Chapman University majoring in Creative Writing. She has hopes of double majoring in Screenwriting in Dodge, as well. Summir's passion for writing can be traced back to her early years as a young girl, writing pages upon pages in her oh so secretive diary, of which she soon switched out for a laptop with pages upon pages of realistic fiction and poetry. Though Summir has typically written within fiction, she has recently chosen to expand her horizons, dabbling with poetry, as well. Regardless of the genre, Summir is in love with the power of words as they can either uplift and depress, heal and hurt, encourage and discourage; and the way they are used are ultimately in the hands of the writer. Therefore, Summir hopes her use of words will be able to shed light to new perspectives, inciting an awareness of the plethora of stories people from various backgrounds have to share, allowing room for a deeper human connection.

Sol Ye is a senior Creative Producing major. Her life goal is to watch the Criterion Collection at home while eating Sushi all day.

Jakob Zieman is a filmmaker, a digital artist, and a sensitive guy who likes puppies, cuddling, and comforting people when they get emotional for no logical reason. Sorry ladies, he's taken. Not taken in the Liam Neeson sense, taken as in he's madly in love. Madly in love with his girlfriend, and madly in love with digital art. When he makes art in Photoshop, it's like taking a digital journey to the realm of creativity, where space and time are irrelevant and anything is possible. It's his safe place, his happy place, his place of integrity. He will continue to make digital art for as long as he lives, and when he dies, He'll make digital art from high up in the stars.