

THE CAULDRON

2014-2015





THE
CAULDRON

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The Stillman Family

The Vibbert Family

Our team of editors

Allison Hammerly

Those who submitted, our contributors, and our readers.



Divine Crow Awards

Susan Blackwell Ramsey ('72) got her B.A. from Kalamazoo College and, 36 years later, her MFA in Creative Writing from Notre Dame. Her poems have been published in such journals as *The Southern Review*, *Poetry Northwest* and *The Indiana Review*, in anthologies from *Saint Peter's B List* to *Best American Poetry*, and her book, *A Mind Like This*, won the Prairie Schooner Poetry Book Prize. She lives in Kalamazoo, which she regards as an amazing stroke of luck.

The Divine Crow Awards are given each year to three exceptional pieces of writing. The pieces are judged "blind" by a member of the Kalamazoo community, and this year's judge was Susan Blackwell Ramsey.

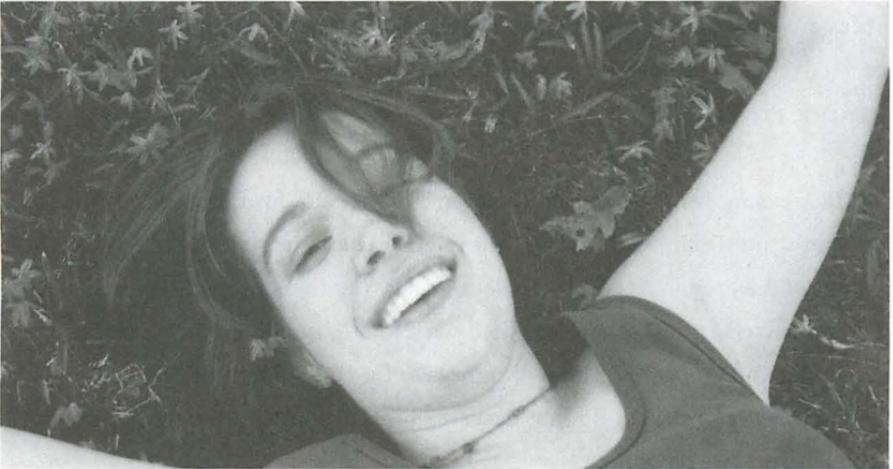
This year's winning pieces are "I approach the edge, the edge greets me warmly" by Jane Huffman, "Maine" by Natalie Martell and "Track Star" by Camille Wood.



Stephanie Vibbert Award

The Stephanie Vibbert Award is given to work in the book which most exemplifies the intersection between creative writing and community engagement. This award honors Stephanie Vibbert, an English/Psychology double major who died in a car accident, while returning from a peace march in Washington D. C. in her senior year at "K." Stephanie's life was passionately devoted to both creativity and to community service, and this award was created to encourage Kalamazoo College writers to use their creativity to reflect upon and explore issues of poverty, human rights, sexual orientation, race, class, gender, and cultural diversity.

The recipients of this year's Stephanie Vibbert Award are Jasmine An and Allison Kennedy for their work with the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Creative Writing Workshops that take place weekly at the Chicago Street location of the Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program (KPEP).



Preface

The Cauldron has always served the Kalamazoo College community by bringing forward and celebrating some of our strongest creative voices. This year, we were floored by the beautiful, startling work that was submitted to us. The selected pieces are a cross section of what we found to be true in much of the work we received, that the writers in our community are able and willing to fearlessly approach the edge.

For this reason, we have chosen the theme of “gristle” for the 2015 edition of The Cauldron. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “cartilage, especially when found as tough, inedible tissue in meat,” the theme evokes the ways in which our writers and artists wrestled with tough, inedible spaces, places, memories, and emotions. The willingness to bite off something that is tough to chew is a brave undertaking that deserves recognition, and we are honored to publish this kind of work.

Consider Allison Hammerly’s oil painting “Beetles and Bones”, on the cover, which embodies these ideas. It juxtaposes life and the decay of life together in one entity. It is not so much nightmarish as it is pensive, a reflection on the closeness and the fragility of the living and the nonliving.

In Geon-Ah Shin's work of creative nonfiction, "The Sheep," the author writes from an experience where she was forced to reconcile with death at a young age. As Geon-Ah writes of watching a sheep slaughtered for a meal, we can discern that the child is not quite able to connect their food with its source. While the death of the animal remains a mystery for the narrator, it is clear that this memory served as great awakening to the fine line we walk between cruelty and humanity, violence and survival, ritual and self-awareness.

In Lily Uribe's "The Edge of the Continent" the speaker ends the poem with a strong invocation, "Take it out of me, take it out, take it out, let me hold it." The speaker, undergoing difficult times, instead of hiding the more difficult, "inedible" parts of their experience, evokes the image of a mother bearing a child -- her inexplicable desire to at once deliver her insides out of her, and then hold them tenderly.

Thank you for your patronage. We hope the 2015 edition of *The Cauldron* gives you something to chew on.

Kate Belew and Jane Huffman
Co-Editors-in-Chief



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THE CAULDRON



I approach the edge, the edge greets me warmly

Jane Huffman - Poetry

Winner of the 2015 Divine Crow Award

the way sleep sometimes does, sleep so precarious
I dream of the kitchen of a stilted house over a bay
of jawed leeches. Rain pummels the skylights and I stir
a pot of tomato soup. The surface of the milk dish
tilts and the chives roll down the countertop
and the birds topple off the birdfeeder and I wake.
When I wake, the edge is asleep in my bed, in my bed
clothes, and I curl up closely, the day almost upon us.
We never touch, but the edge breaths like I breathe,
and I know we shared that dream, the edge in my tipping
ladle, the edge in the creaking of the slogged dock wood,
the edge in the act of waking. In the pleasant equilibrium
of waking, the edge is less flirtatious. The steeple
does not toddle on its mantle, the shutters do not blink
one eye open, the bed, on its cast-iron wheels,
does not swing like a gurney. The edges sleeps. I watch.
The sea beneath laps a tongue, tries to know us but cannot
fathom edges. Unlike the sea, I greet him.

Spooky Little Girl

Kate Belew - Poetry

Spooky Little Girl, you held my face down to the paper, hooked me up to an IV of ink. You raised (your eyebrow) the stakes for me. Spooky Little Girl I wanted to (forget) remember how heavy your body was when the atmosphere blinked out, but instead all I can see is you (larger than your gravestone) small enough to be born again. You were difficult, wild even. You were enough the remind me that I could keep going (reach into myself and pull out each strand of the past and hold it up to prove that the deepest part of myself still lives).



a sonnet for emmett till

Marquise GriffIn - Poetry

*my only sin is in my skin
what did I do to be so black and blue?
tell me, what did I do?*

-Louis Armstrong

it's said that in the summer months passions flare
up more than usual. perhaps this is why
a young boy fatally whistled and stared
at a white woman. of course the lie
of it all is the claim that she was in danger.
nevertheless in that moment he ceased being
boy and became a thing, a deadly stranger.
what was seen could not be unseen
and so a penance had to be paid.
a life for admiring a wife,
and a young body thrown to the grave.
like christ he didn't put up a fight,
like jesus to mary, a body unfamiliar.
like trayvon to michael, freedom for the killers.



Chelsea

Petra Stoppel - Visual Art



The Sheep

Geon-Ah-Shin - Nonfiction

We all stood in a circle to watch the sheep die. I still remember the sheep; how I stared into her horizontal pupil, wondering if the world would look any different with slit eyes. There was another one tied to a wooden pole behind her, a brown one with white spots, and I vaguely remember comparing it to a toy poodle I once saw in my neighbor's house. The dirty white sheep that we were all watching, she stood still without even budging, not even when the man brought out a red stained knife from the leather sack that hung around his waist. He lowered the sheep to the grassy field and brought his blade to its throat. The blade slid slowly against the sheep's neck—so slowly and smoothly that it almost looked painless. It slid back and forth against her neck until red started to stain her white fur. And I stood there with my camera phone in my hand that I had forgotten to use, because I was too busy watching the sheep's throat getting sliced by the man's blade, while the blood kept pouring and pouring out of the open wound. And the sheep never cried—even when her head was barely attached to her body, even when her muscles and throat were visible and all. Even when the man broke all her legs and blew air between her broken leg and her skin to preserve her fur, the sheep remained silent, her slit-shaped eyes boring into mine. We all watched the man slice open her stomach and harvest her guts while muttering something under his breath. I wanted to believe it was a holy prayer that he whispered, a prayer for the sheep that lay silently on the grass and waited for the man to finish emptying her out. My mom eventually found me and took me back into the menggubao to tell me children shouldn't watch an animal getting killed, and I nodded to tell her I understood. I never found out what happened to the sheep that lay on the grass with her empty stomach and dangling head, because by the time I was free from my mother's grasp and headed back out into the field, the sheep wasn't lying on the bloodied grass and everyone had gone back to their menggubao. Later that night, we all gathered around a gigantic table and feasted on the food prepared by the man's family, and my favorite was the lamb fried rice.

It started at 255 Broadacre

Hunter Parsons - Poetry

Built up like the new floorboards. Stained and sanded until it was crafted to your liking. You built these walls yourself, do not forget. Do not forget that they were what you wanted, painted by you, of you-- murals of green and brown and powder pink. When it grows, it reaches outside to the walnut tree, where you fastened a swing made of rope and a two-by-four, and tried to knock the nuts down with your feet on each swing. Then, through chain-link, to the corner of 14 and Main, with new streetlights telling you go.

There are other places, cities named after trees and otter tails, and they tell you to stay in this one. Spend Friday nights at the one bar in town, throwing back shots with the local cops. Let the floors wear down and fade from pacing over them day after day. Pick the nuts out of the tree with your hands--the limbs have gotten so heavy you could reach up and pluck them with ease. But this is not you anymore. Do not forget that you do not want pink walls, or to have your hands dyed green from peeling the fruit away from the nut. Someone will someday re-stain the floors; do not let it be you. Do not fall back into something that is so easy.



A Parabelle

Elise Houcek - Poetry

The critters she kept in cages she drowned in the pond.
The critters she kept in cages she drowned in the pond.
She tied them up skinny, cast off the death rope.
She tied them up skinny: "Cast-off! The Death Rope!"
She drowned up in death, the pond in off-cast cages.
She, the skinny, them critters kept: tied the rope.

Her husband was a preacher man, killed in blaze and car-fire.
Her husband was a preacher man, killed in blaze. And car? Fire.
She gave his name to heaven and to her biggest cock.
She gave his name to heaven and to her biggest cock.
A man killed his name, was fire she gave to blaze and preacher.
Car cock and her husband; her, in biggest heaven.

Sometimes, she left candy out. "For her chickens?"
Sometimes, she left candy out. "For her chickens!"
She said chickens like Butterscotch kept in the wrapper.
She said chickens like Butterscotch kept in the wrapper.
Like Butterscotch, the chickens sometimes left for her.
"Out!" she said, "Chickens!" Candy she kept in.

In death, she killed Butterscotch and her chicken's car.
Her cock-man drowned in heaven: cast-off preacher candy.
The name she sometimes left the pond tied a skinny wrapper.
"Fire kept out the cages?" Blaze, her husband, gave chickens.
His, like she, she said: "To rope for the biggest."
In them critters, she kept up, and she was in, too.

Black Girl is Not What You Name Her

Olivia Finkelstein - Poetry

She is not boogey monster.

When you tell her how afraid of her you'd been
it will be the sixth time she's been told
that month.

Like, "You have really nice skin, but I didn't tell you before
because I was afraid of you." Should she thank you
for assuming she spends her extra time
hiding in your closet?

She is not brick house.

If she is, she is not built for you.
You will flee to a suburb, but come by once a month
to admire the architecture.

Like, "Your ass is amazing, I wish I had one."

Like a loft on Iron Street,
trendy, but it's safer in West Bloomfield.

She doesn't have to be dragon
but you paint scales on her anyway
You took off your tiara by choice, but she
wasn't given one to begin with.

Like, "Could you contribute a little less in class,
you're making the other students nervous."

Like the only thing you can see in her is fire.

Not a soft underbelly.

She is not goddess.

No one was asking for blood sacrifice
but you keep looking to her for blessings.

Like, "You just don't take no shit from nobody."

Like she don't take it from you. Like her liver
will grow back every time you rip it out of her.
But Hercules won't come around for a black girl,
won't unchain her from the mountain.

You want to raise her to mythos.

Make her part of some distant, unknowable force.

But you cannot place her up in your night sky.

She is not safe there.

The cop man comes for her, too.

Her brothers come for her, too

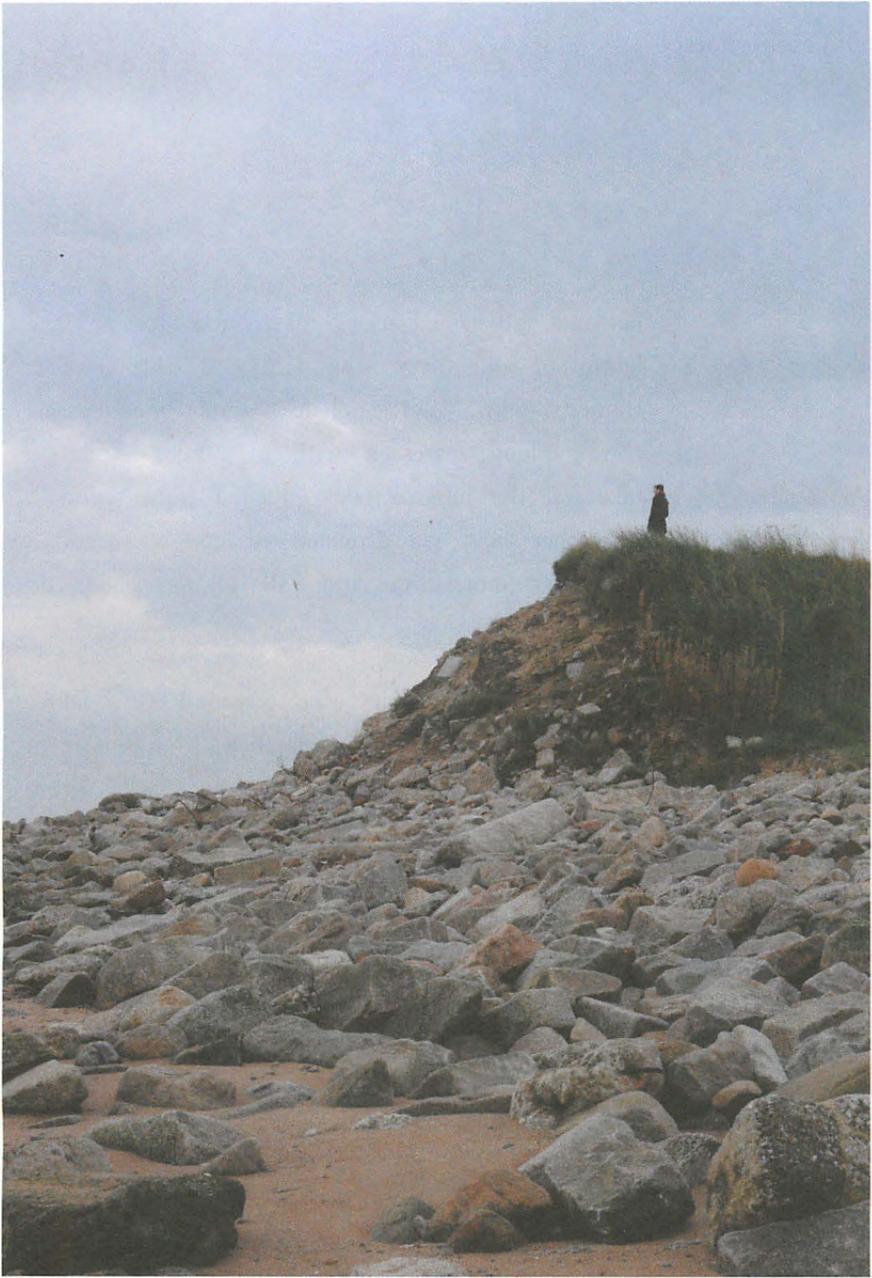
You come for her, too.



Lawn Ornament

Cameron Schneberger - Poetry

I find her black face peeking out of the herb garden.
Other days I find her belly up, between tomato beds.
The neighbor's greyhound carries her like a pup
and buries her up to the beady yellow eyes.
On some summer afternoons, I play waiter.
I carry sweating glasses to my grandpa, hunched
over his band saw. He'll drink or pour the water
over his forehead, he's soaked, covered in wood dust.
Oh, you mean The Sambo. I think that's your Binny's.
I bring the empty glass back to the porch, my grandma
fans herself with an issue of *The New Yorker*.
I have no idea, she chirps. I thought it was the dog's.
On some sweltering nights, I hear the greyhound digging.
On some sweltering nights, the katydids are cheering.



Scotland, 2013

Emaline Lapinski - Visual Art

stories of cotton

Sarah Levett - Poetry

let me tell you stories of cotton, cotton the
fabric of our lives, the story of this blouse:
stained with nail polish, with moonbeams,
cotton blouse caressed with a pumice stone to
take out the pills, a trick plucked from redbook,
remember how we drowned in cotton sheets? i
remember moonshine and, all joking aside: do

you remember chairs we covered in fabric
remnants, the way i remember it? we wrote
memories in cotton, on cotton, we wrote
poetry in the white spaces between the threads
and between our teeth. cotton is an animal you
said, it feels and it hears, it sees: i see eyes
everywhere there is cotton. cotton, my words

are drowned in oceans of cheap cotton. they
say the cotton capital of the world is mississippi
but you'd call it texas. we never bought
our cotton in greenwood. we bought our cotton at
jc penney, where cotton came in fives and we
fought for the color of our towels. home is a jc
penney full of cotton, home is moonbeams on

a blouse or the chairs we covered in fabric
remnants. cotton lives in the white spaces
where there is nothing but cotton. do you
remember me, cotton? my touch on rough
sheets, the sound of silent poetry (what sound
is that?) – cotton, have you forgotten my
pumice hands but silent poetry is silent, cotton.



Maine

Natalie Martell - Poetry

Winner of the 2015 Divine Crow Award

They're rich on the northern rim
of the bay, with tide-pools scattered like coins,
salt rings on bronze teeth—diamond wreaths
or chains, and money plucked
from a seagull's wing. Near the banks, the boats roll
in peppered lights—stained and drunk
on fortune, falling asleep
in their reflections.

The border is swinging back and forth. The border
is dissolving into sand. And now is when
the crabs come, like beggars and kings,
to dip their claws in gold.

Gizzard Peelin'

an excerpt from **Underneath the Trend of Local Food**
Katherine Rapin - Nonfiction

"Now this is probably one of the weirdest things you'll ever see," Cathy said, picking up the turkey gizzard and a knife. She carefully cut through the 'seam' in the blue-tinged organ, about the size of a grapefruit. She pulled apart the two halves, revealing a balloon like sac, plump with... I wasn't sure if I wanted to know what.

"Is that poop?!" I asked. Cathy shook her head and punctured the sack. The splats resounding in the bucket changed to a tinkling as small stones poured out among masticated green roughage. The stones in the gizzard grind against the food the bird has swallowed, aiding in digestion. Apparently, if you do it well, the pouch full of partially digested food and rocks pulls out very neatly in its own little wrapper.

"My sisters and I used to sit around having gizzard peeling contests," Cathy laughed, "Now is that hillbilly or is that hillbilly?"



Erasure from Federico Garcia Lorca to Anna Maria Dali [Granada, beginning of September 1925]

Kate Belew - Poetry

I haven't forgotten you, it wasn't my fault,
it was because of the crazy days I spent in Madrid.
Now, in Andalusia, I'm another person. How delicious
salt, sand, sea seem to soak up the whole personality
of the person who wore them. A summer of classical
madness. Here we must roll our eyes and clench our teeth.
Visionary madness. There's the difference. He is enough
of a fool to become a great artist.

*

Erasure from Salvador Dali to Federico Garcia Lorca [Cadaques, September 1928]

The Gypsy Ballads murmur the river.
Your poetry is tied hands and feet
to two dancers and a honeycomb.
You talk about living, the little pointy things
that come out free of conventional
ideas where the shadows fall. Every day
the little beastling that you are, your mysterious
spirit, the dusky gypsy far from little bears and silhouettes.
I believe in your sweat, in your fatality. Leap with me into
the void. I've been there for days.
Surrealism is only one means
of evasion. It is the evasion itself
that matters. As you can see,
I speak differently than I did last summer.

Track Star

Camille Wood - Poetry

Winner of the 2015 Divine Crow Award

1. "Wet (dream) Burrito" by Skunk Jizz

From the album Adderall Tic-Tacs ©1989

Shower-fungus lyrics shake-open spores onto hammock-slacked ears.
The chorus sounds like a sleep-apnea machine plugged into a gut.
A Vader-voiced pre-teen reels you back to the verse,
trying to beat puberty at its own game-
he cracks an egg with his vocal rifts.
If you want to see a stripper blush-
just google the lyrics.

2. "Dashboard Feet" by Wanderer Q

From the album Duffle Bag Life © 2014

The hipsters would have found it
if I had not sandwiched the vinyl between thick-cut slices of Springsteen and Sting.
It's packaged for an eighth-life crisis;
the cover art was taken from Windows 98 Clipart,
and the lyrics from Tampon warning labels,
coffee cake recipes, and resignation-letter drafts.

3. "Highway Sign" by Unsounded Tree

From the album Chicken Wire Voicemail © 1963

There's a zipping up-down of a tent, laced with what I can only assume to be
sounds of an amateur bird caller.
A melancholy eave hangs over the chorus,
as lead singer, Betsy Rouge, resuscitates the cold lips of an empty whisky bottle:
"Merge for me, baby--make room for me, baby."
Warning: this record makes sound
even if you are not around to hear it.



Track Star *(Continued)*

4. "Chinese Hairless Dog" by Pasteurized Chaos

From the album *Bran Muffin* © 1999

The emperor's new clothes of middle school
can you dig it?

(all I can hear is an off-beat tambourine,
and maybe one or more of the Jetsons getting maced.)

Totally.

should I play it again?

(all I can imagine is the silent serenity of
two Hindenburg ear drums, punctured and
deflating with a long gurgle)

Totally.

5. "Cocaine Toes" by Doorman

From the album *Tar Welcome Mat* © 2008

Scratch and sniff.



Sinking 4

Gabrielle Montesanti - Visual Art



Denver Denver Denver

Abby Lu - Nonfiction

6

When I drive down Speer or Colfax I no longer feel like a stranger. I remember when I first arrived in Denver I poetically describe the air of Denver as the “thin, sweet and addictive aroma that soothes the pain of travelers”. Later I realized that it was just the smell of weed, and maybe some diesel gas.

I have always disliked the word “home”. Everything can be called a home; a hotel room, with or without a roof, has or has not a floor. I always figured that if everywhere is home then I wouldn't be too sad leaving anywhere.

When I was in ninth grade I thought I was in love. My world was a 100 meters by 100 meters square; the giant commercial board outside of my classroom window, the warm reflections on my wooden desk, the smell of cheap fried noodles, those were all. In the dim light by my dorm window, I texted someone “I love you” for the first time: It felt very noble.

Later I left all of those behind and they suddenly felt like home.

5

When I think of her now I think of home; and I feel my hands clenched into fists when I think of leaving her. I think that feeling is what love is; maybe a few years later I will still look back and laugh at myself for thinking that. In my dreams she whispers into my ears, she travels her fingers down my spine, she kisses me and I kiss her back. “I love you too”, she says to me; I wake up sweating. Good things only happen in dreams anyway.

4

All I ever wanted was a backyard with trees in it, some moonlight, some Baijiu, and a shoulder to hold in my arms. Now I want to become some important asshole who also has a lot of money because that's what I came here for. I hate myself for this sometimes.

I always believe that if I wake up with really curly eyelashes, then I'm going to have a good day. I remember that my mom told me what to look for in a partner: first, look if they have a nice watch; second, ask what they have; third, ask what they want. One day I woke up with really curly eyelashes, so I decided to go look for her watch. She did not wear a watch. I then decided to ask her what she wanted in life, casually, when we were eating soba in a whole-food's market. She said something along the lines of she just wanted to keep drawing. Suddenly I felt that the world was so big and I was so small.

3

I think the best way to feel love is to secretly love someone and never tell them. I never secretly loved anyone, all my relationships began with me saying “sure” to a proposed question. I always thought I loved my ex-boyfriend, and I felt obliged to shed some alligator tears when we finally broke up. I don’t realize that I love her now; I don’t want to think about it either. Sometimes I think I’m too vulgar and ordinary of a person to be capable of loving her. Other times, I feel the love breathing inside of me. I listen to a good song and I think of her. I drink chicken soup with ginseng in it, and I think of her. I walk outside on a Thursday night and see the lights of downtown, I think of her. When I step on snow, and hear the sound it makes under my shoe, I think of her.

If it was love that I was feeling, then love can be very small.

2

When I still wanted only Baijiu, some trees and a shoulder in my life, I never thought about death. But during a sunny morning, I see her dipping some paper in a glass jar of coffee. I suddenly think of death. She wears a plain t-shirt and jeans. I stare at her fingers, as she pulls the paper out of the coffee. I forget how to make a sound. I’m suddenly scared of death.

1

Behind the cafeteria of my school there’s an open field. At sunset I pace back and forth on the field, under the shadow of the city. The sky turns into a giant piece of iron skin, with its ends burning. People far away are yelling things I do not understand. The streets are almost empty. My heart races faster as the neighborhood gets quieter.

When I first arrived in this neighborhood, I romanticized the brick houses, the liquor stores and broken street signs. I thought I was a lonely traveler chasing the end of light. Then I came to realize that there was nothing romantic about the sandy sidewalks.

I couldn’t wait to get out.

My heart keeps racing as I walk past the crowded apartment compound across the street from where I live, and I remember that on the other side of the city, she’s quietly doing something. Probably drawing. I calm down. And I fish out my keys.



Excerpt from *Dispatches*, a collection of letters

Jane Huffman - Poetry

Letter to my Apothecary

Every morning my mother made her tea the way she made everything, with brown clover and burgundy wine that turned her cuticles and teeth as red as a white horse in a beet pasture. She swallowed a pillbox of candy-colored capsules which I wanted to sort into piles like I did her jar of spare buttons. I've always been a collector, those buttons, now these poems. I made that tea myself for the first time like you told me to do. I bathed early in the morning like she did, washed with her charcoal soap, a scent like whispering embers, rack of meat. I plucked the clover myself, stirred in the olive and the beech like some witch from an invented dream and got nothing but a lurch, a fever, a sweat like a swat from a flyswatter. I tried reading the sopped tea leaves like a carnival mother, covered my head and everything. If there was an omen, I couldn't sense it, a sign, I couldn't read it, something wild – well, you see, I'll only believe in wild when I see it.

*

Letter to my Blacksmith

Did we not watch the same acrobats stretch over the same steel lyras like cheesecloth over bell jars? Did we not throw the same peanuts to the same mechanical elephant? It bowed, its knees like the knees of a paper doll, fastened with brads. Did we not peek behind the velveteen wings of the stage? Watch the lime scorch the cylinder, pray for a fire hot and white enough to see our reflection? That metal elephant was against us from the start, wore our peanut shells like a coned brassiere, wore your tattoos as if I painted them on his boxcar of a body myself. It was the way you sometimes got that look and nobody was safe. That was the first way I loved you. First, in the impossible morass of another life. Then, like a brand from a swift iron that keeps the wild from the stock. There are two ways to hang every horseshoe.

*

Letter to my Diviner

We snipped from the same mint bushels, dreamed of the same horsemen,
sat vigil at the same stable doors as the mares bore foals each Summer.
You taught me that horses only give birth at night, that a white filly at daybreak
meant an autumn of bad luck and ten more weeks of rain.
You took me to the juniper fields one night, long after your stallion bowed
its heavy head to the pigeoned feet of dreams. You rattled a tambourine
like a rod of pine and the earth spat back, not in a surge but in a bellow,
like a hound who mistakes the crescent iris of the doe for the moon and howls.
You dipped the rind of a watermelon, hollowed by cribbing teeth, into the pond.
Your hands, luring the bottom feeders to the surface like sharks to a swollen buoy.
The water, now sugared, but swimming with sirens. Me, still your favorite myth.



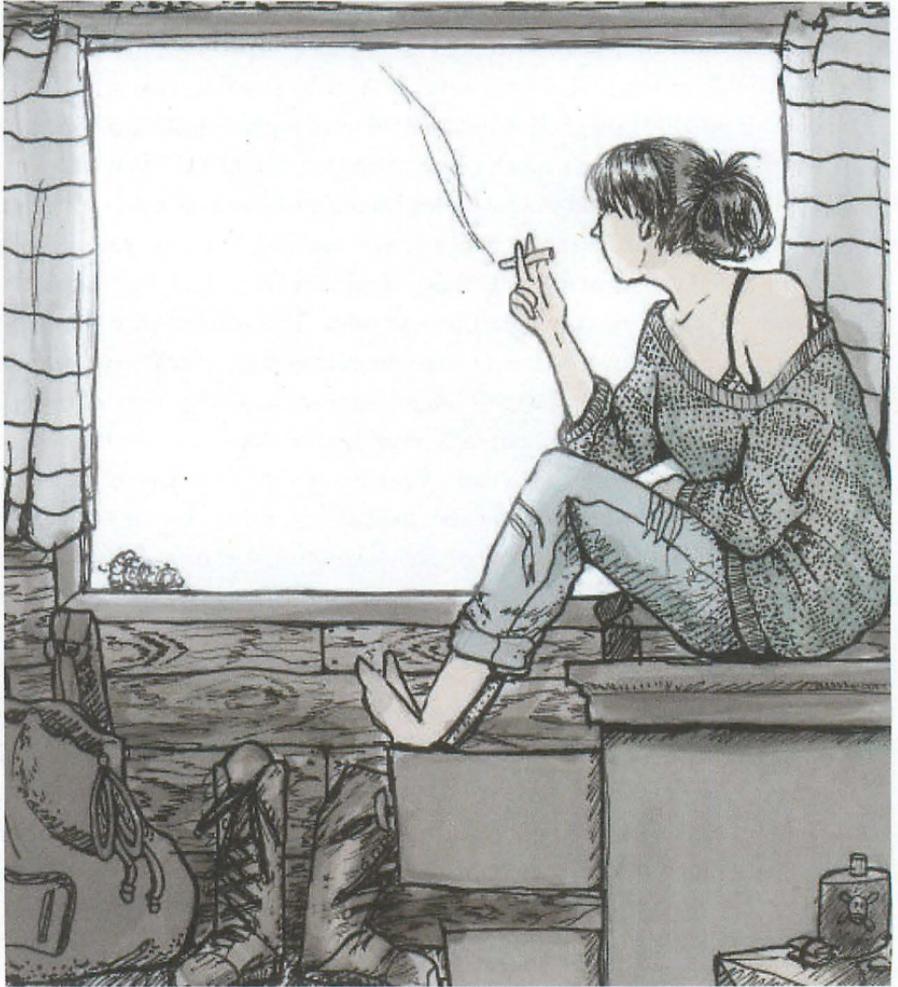
How to prepare for a hip hop minstrel show

Justin Danzy - Poetry

I. First u gotta be black. Like black black. Like thug nigga black. Like the type of black u moved to the suburbs to get away from. Then u gotta get u some dreads or a crispy ass fade. U can never go wrong with either of those styles. And u gotta have tattoos. Start off with yo initials on the backs of yo arms in the cursive script like yo nigga DaeDae got. But don't stop there. U gotta get two full sleeves, at least one neck tattoo, and a face tat if u really tryna be authentic. Some ideas for tats are yo momma's name or anybody's that u call bro or sis (they don't even gotta be blood), white Jesus preferably with a crown of thorns, John 3:16, Philippians 4:13, "Trust no one", "Dedication", "Faith", "Perseverance", or any word that u want people to think that u live by. And don't forget to get at least two tats that got something to do with money. Abe Lincoln, Ben Franklin, or a simple "money over bitches" will suffice. For women, the above advice is not held as strictly against u as it is against the niggas. I would suggest that u follow it though, just not to the extreme that the niggas got to. U can get a couple tats but try not to get none that's real big, and only get them in ladylike spots like the lower back. Don't let no ink get anywhere near yo face neither. Yo face is one of the most important things if u gon pull this off because it don't even matter if u can rap if u fine. And u gotta have a fat ass. Big titties is a plus, but a fat ass is non-negotiable. And u need a wig or a weave. No natural hair ever. Natural hair is like committing suicide in minstrelsy. Nobody will believe that u a authentic black woman if u got natural hair. Yo wig or weave should be blonde and as straight as Wayne and Baby. Black is acceptable too, but blonde is better. Blonde hair reminds

niggas of white women and we all know it ain't nothin' that a nigga loves more than white women. II. Next u gotta get educated on black culture. The best way to do this is to watch the news as much as possible, specifically Fox News. This will give u a good foundation on what nigga culture is all about. To supplement this u gotta watch Love & Hip Hop, all the Friday movies (at least 5 times a piece), Paid in Full (at least 3 times), Baby Boy (a dozen times minimum), and as much Dave Chappelle as u can find, but make sure u ignore all of the social commentary in it. That's not meant for u. And don't forget to memorize as many lines from Martin as possible. This will help u when u start making music. III. Now it's time to learn nigga language, which is the easiest way to feign authenticity. The most important word in a nigga's vernacular is nigga. It is the most interchangeable word known to man. It can mean anything from a black person, a male, a person of any race whose name I don't know, bro, a person whom I'm not very fond of, and it can even be used to express exasperation, seriousness, or excitement (you just have to draw it out longer like NIGGAAAAAA! to convey these meanings). U have to use nigga as much as possible when u talk, even if u use it multiple times in a single sentence. The more u use it, the more authentic u'll come off as. Also, u gotta use it so that white folks won't know what the hell u talkin' bout 'cause u know when white folks don't understand our speech they just assume we stupid and one of the most important goals of the hip hop minstrel show is to prove to white folks that we more stupid than they thought we was. Refer to all women as bitches. Bitches, refer to yoselves as bitches.





Hipster Heartbreak
Allison Hammerly - Visual Art

Lion Man

Belinda McCauley - Fiction

I lost track of how long I stayed with the circus. A week became a month, two, three, six... No one noticed me; I became lost in the sea of misfits and acrobats, outcasts and fire breathers. I swept out the cages every day and kept my head down. I talked to no one except the lion.

His name was Zephyr, he said. Like the west wind, once a majestic, mythological figure. Zephyr had some remnant of a similar majesty, one that is told rather than shown, but it sagged with his loose skin and his squinted eyes. His mane was matted clumps of gray and brown fur, and he told me that no one groomed him because they were afraid. His tail flicked about lazily as he told me that no one had talked to him in a very long time. His eyes fixed onto me, following the movement of my arms as I swept out his cage, discarding a half-eaten steak, raw and dried out. He said he'd grown sick of the taste of cows. He'd had nothing else for so long.

In the dead of night, after a performance, the air filled with the sound of clinking bottles and rowdy laughter. Heat ran thick, submerging me in the smell of sweat and whiskey. The lion trainer led Zephyr back into the cage without much effort, his focus elsewhere. Zephyr lifted one large paw after another and settled back inside his prison. As the trainer locked the door and left to join the ruckus, I approached the cage. Zephyr lowered himself to the ground slowly, his tongue gliding across his maw.

"I have heard them speak of hell," he said to me, "and that is this place. I live in hell," he told me, "free me."

I asked him how. I told him I could force open his cage so that he could run.

"No," he said. He was too old to run. His bones shook with each step he took and creaked every time they made him jump. His jaw ached from gnawing on bad meat, and his throat was raw from the many times they forced a roar from him. He could not carry on, he said.

I asked him to tell me what to do. I wanted to reach a hand through the bars of the cage and stroke his sullied fur, but his long, sharp claws gleamed.

"Fire," he said, they use it every night. They think they have tamed it, as they think they have tamed me, but fire is strong where I have lost my strength. "They consume fire," he told me, "but fire can consume them."

"Help me," he said, "free me."



(Continued)

Lion Man *(Continued)*

How could I refuse?

Zephyr told me how to find the fire eaters' supplies. They were not locked away to prevent any accidents, and Zephyr called them lazy fools. Then he told me to empty the gasoline canisters into the dry grass, where the yellow and purple circus tent met the earth. Matches, he said. I needed matches. I dropped the empty canister and dug into my pocket for the matchbook I kept next to my carton of cigarettes. As I searched, I saw one of the trapeze artists heading my way. Her path was unsteady, and she wasn't looking at me, but I still froze, hand buried in my trousers. She stepped lightly, daintily, the way I imagined a fairy might. I'd watched her before, flying through the air like she had wings.

"Don't let her see you," Zephyr said. "She can't know." I took out my cigarettes and lit one, trying to be inconspicuous. Instead, she perked up at the smell. She looked right at me and smiled.

"Can I have a light?" she asked as she strolled over.

I didn't move. The cigarette burned between my fingers.

"Light the fire," Zephyr said. "Drop the cigarette."

"What's your name?" she pressed. "I don't think I've seen you before.

Drop it." I let the cigarette fall from my fingers. It hit the ground, and the grass burst into flames. The trapeze artist's eyes widened.

"Oh my God. What have you done?"

"She'll run," Zephyr said. "Don't let her." What could I have done? I tackled her and shoved her against the cage. She trembled, and I grasped her harder.

"Please, I—"

She'll tell. Can't let her tell.

I thrashed her against the bars, and her head made impact. Her eyes rolled back into her skull as her fairy's body crumpled. By the time she awoke, she would not be able to escape. The fire was spreading. I could feel its heat behind me, pressing against my back, oozing down the collar of my shirt.

I asked the lion what to do next.

"Go," he said. "Leave. I am almost free."

"But you're trapped," I said.

Zephyr licked his lips. "Not for long."

But I couldn't leave him to burn. I fiddled with the latch of the cage

for a moment and finally wrestled the lock open, always feeling the burn, always hearing the screams as the night turned into chaos. The door swung open toward me, Zephyr's eyes on it the whole time. He looked at me; I looked at him. I stepped from the doorway, his path to freedom, but he made no move to get up. The fire roared in my ears, the smoke played in my hair, and I knew I had no more time.

I rushed through the panic, the sea of misfits ravaged by a storm. When I was almost out, so close to safety, I chanced a look back. Zephyr's eyes were trained on me for a second, and then he licked his paw and rubbed it against his face like a housecat. The door of his cage hung out over the open air.

The moonlight shone bright, but nothing compared to the brightness of the fire. Silhouettes waltzed across the tent, water splashed across the flames, but the blaze could not be stopped. I walked faster, away from the screaming. Over the cacophony of it all, I heard the single roar of a freed lion.



The Storyteller

Sara McKinney - Fiction

“Brace yourselves,” Tommy Wainbacher says, and we do. You always do with Tommy. Squished hip-to-hip on the Kapinsky’s ratty orange loveseat, Nick and Josh (identical twins, and both wearing the same blue plaid shirt because telling them apart was too easy, apparently) lean forward and peer at the slender half-moon of Tommy’s face. He’s a skinny kid—a jumble of limbs and awkward, bony, angles. His lips pucker out around his braces in a way that makes him look as if he’s constantly about to spit. Propping an elbow on the couch’s arm, I try to make myself as comfortable as I can. This might take a while.

“So, Lexi and I are driving out to Stepp Cemetery on Prom night, right? Gonna pop her cherry in the Honda’s back seat, right?” Right? Right? Right? His pale hands fly out in gesticular exclamation points, mimicking the sweeping downbeat of an orchestra conductor. I can’t tell whether playing the storyteller makes him excited or nervous, but either way the act gives him a Southie accent. It’s entertaining, of course, but damn does that tic get annoying—almost as annoying as the Lexi bit.

Tommy’s never had a girlfriend, and everyone at West Central knows it, but he still insists on trotting out a fake one. Enter Lexi Bawl, the one and only girl who absolutely cannot keep her hands off Tommy. According to him, she kisses like an angel and blows like Satan’s own sister, but unfortunately, she lives in Anchorage, Alaska and very rarely gets to visit. She is Tommy’s favorite character, and somehow manages to squeeze her way into almost every story Tommy tells, despite the fact that she “lives” over 4,000 miles away. But we try not to knock him too hard for it. A guy’s allowed to dream.

“Anyway, I’ve got her dress off and I’m working on the bra when—musta been a fuckin’ bat or something—hits the window and I look up.” He pauses, and then jerks his head up, eyes wide and staring. You can see the whites full around the iris. Last summer Tommy went to a theater camp in Winnipeg. I still think the two thousand dollars his mother spent on it could have gone to better use.

“But, see, while I was...” Tommy winks at us, “otherwise occupied--this car had pulled up in front of us, right? But it’s totally empty except for this woman in the backseat, and she’s staring right at us. Only, at first I don’t move. I just kinda freeze. And Lexi--Lexi knows something’s wrong. So we both sit there for a moment, not moving, barely even breathing. And the

woman sits there too, stiff as a fuckin' corpse. And, well, I don't know about you guys but I'm really not into that kind of thing, so after a few minutes, I figure Lexi and I might as well drive down the road and finish up somewhere a bit less occupied. So I'm reaching for the ignition when there's this loud thump and Lexi starts screaming. She's pointing at the other car, saying 'Tommy Tommy Tommy Tommy' again and again, all shrieky like some kinda hysterical wind-up doll with her dress around her knees and her bra unhooked and dangling so you can see one of her tits. I look where Lexi's pointing and see the woman. This chick is still sitting in the backseat, and she hasn't moved an inch—except for her head. It's gone. The body's still there, the neck's still there--I can see sort of this dark stump maybe an inch below where a chin should be--but her head has just vanished."

"I panic. My hand's on the key, trying to turn it, but my fingers are sweaty and they just can't get a hold of it enough make it turn. I feel like I can't get enough air, like my chest is too small to hold all this terror, like I'm gonna suffocate and Lexi is grabbing my arm saying "Drive, dammit Tommy, drive!" And I want to. All I want to do is get the hell out of there. Forget popping Lexi's cherry, forget my fucking hard-on, I just wanna get home alive—but then I freeze. There are eyes peering at me through the rear windshield of the other car. Blue eyes, bright blue and wide open, like a dog's when it's getting ready to bite.

"My fingers finally get a hold of the key, and the car starts. The headlights come on, lighting up the back of the other car. And there it is, the woman's head, sitting on the back dash behind one of the rear headrests, staring right at me--but that's not the worst part. No, dear God, it's bad enough that I'm caught in a starring contest with a decapitated head, but that's not the worst part, not by far. The worst part is that while I'm sitting there, the mouth starts to move, starts opening and closing like a dying fish, gasping, trying to fill lungs that it's not attached to anymore. There's red stuff on the woman's teeth, but whether it's blood or lipstick, I don't know. I don't want to. I throw the Honda into reverse and tear ass all the way home." The others gasp appreciatively. I roll my eyes. It's sick, really, the way they encourage him.

Tommy laughs. "So, I'll be honest. Yes, I'm still a virgin, but I've got a damn good excuse." Josh and Nick burst out laughing, but I sit, silent and unsmiling, with the loveseat's harsh fabric chaffing my thighs. I've seen this



The Storyteller *(Continued)*

show before, and I know how it ends. Tommy bows in his spotlight, his story told and his act complete. His eyes are bright, shining in the light thrown by his audience--their attention and adoration--but it's the brightness of a dark pond lying still and cold on an autumn night, with the moon's face reflected in the black water. Beneath it, the depths lie in their mysterious sedge, untouched and unknown.

Tommy smiles, bowing once more, and for a moment he doesn't look quite so skinny, or so awkward. Instead, he looks serene; his shoulders are squared but loosely held, he is comfortable in himself, newly confident. It's as if he has reached a kind of nirvana, a momentary transcendence which will start to fade the moment our applause stops, leaving him in obscurity until the next time he draws back the curtains to put on a show. But for now he's happy, remote. The future has, in this moment, ceased to exist. Dazzled by the stage lights, he retreats and, still smiling, plops onto the floor beside the loveseat. The audience cheers as Tommy steps offstage, back into his secret dark, his silence.

You've never been great, but yo, you're commendable pops.
Don't let that go to your head, your mistakes aren't amendable pops.

You left us real good, you ain't even come to the hospital pops.
I mean, how we s'posed to look you in the face? You a savage, you an animal pops.

Don't look surprised if I say I spent Christmas learning how you were a criminal pops.
Said you started bawling when you saw my photo album, I guess your feelings
ain't always subliminal pops.

When I visited yo' ashes, I 'idn't get sentimental, I wish the trip was taxable pops.
You were reckless, but I hope yo' li'l spot in the wall is comfortable pops.

Ay, I'm not gon' rag on you too hard, 'cause existence without you... definitely bearable pops.
Nah, even though you've moved on I ain't tryna take Gregsby; unlike Cain
it ain't fashionable pops.

Dear Carl
Willina Cain - Poetry



I Dream of La Chupacabra

Carmen Adriana Torrado Gonzalez - Poetry

For years after the burning you could still smell the cinder of flesh wild with the phosphorescence that blankets the banks of fire-fledged Puerto Rico, the bioluminescent bay, the bio-bay in Fajardo. They piled the children of magic there, of unknown mysterious flame, the children who had been birthed on the side of the road, forthcoming from the legs of gnarled saplings still ripe with the glare-damp fuel of fucking; these women, these bearers of lambs already ripe for the harvest, used their magic to take the shape of animals, they were the first sightings of La Chupacabra (circa the imagination of the fabler), the result of unmasked, unprotected, underestimated, fully-fledged witchcraft. Thus the hunt began, and the hunted knew how to form yelps so tempting, sweet-innards-of-mango tempting, that the foxes pointed their noses exactly and one by one the witches fell. Their lamb-limbed children lay bleating in the embers of fiery Puerto Rico, helpless in their skin and wrestling with white foam at their mouths. The hunters lifted these children up and up and into flame. At first there was silence and then there was none, the bleating of forsaken babes stabs its way into every corner, every crook, every crossing. So festive were the hunters, they did not bother to block the noise from their ears with fingers shoved into the holes. Thus, their heads were stuffed with the vibration of screaming, for years after the burning you could still hear the cinders of vocal chords fornicating with high-pitched notes to give life to and spawn desperation, death. Dear fire-fledged Puerto Rico, dear magic-making gnarled sapling women, dear Fajardo, I see you in my dreams. I dream of La Chupacabra and I dream of fixed points of knees breaking into the bent leg of a beast. Goats' blood brimming on frightful yet beautiful maws, stolen lambs clenched between legs until lambs of their own forth-come from the depths of innards slit caves, run! Dear Chupa, I dream of you Cabra, and for years I will smell and hear the burning of your children and for years I will weep.

Of Boys, Men, and Ambivalence

Hannah Bogard - Nonfiction

1. I am 7 years old.

Today I am an honorary member of the Navy. Jack says if I beat Logan in one more game of air hockey he will have his secretary put my membership on file as permanent. There are six of us. Jack makes us march in single file lines. He is always at the front. I am in the middle. Logan is a sore loser. He marches behind me so he will be close enough to dig his toes into the backs of my heels every few steps. We circle the neighborhood. I get a red Swiss Army knife for Easter. It helps to earn me what Jack says is the first ever position for a girl in the Navy. It has a toothpick and a saw made specifically for witting body height sticks into battle spears. Dad is building a patio in the yard and I drop one of the rusty colored bricks on the big toe of my left foot. In three days the nail turns purple. The Navy waits, armed and ready, in our fort underneath Jack's porch. Logan pokes my purple nail with the butt of his spear and smiles. It throbs and I stare silent darts into his eyes. I want to yell and push him but Jack always says noise alerts the enemy. Dad tells me that if I wore shoes sometimes these things wouldn't happen. Mom frowns at him and says that all kids run around barefoot these days. Jack always wears shoes when we march. Navy leaders do not fall into the category of "all kids."

2. I am 14 years old.

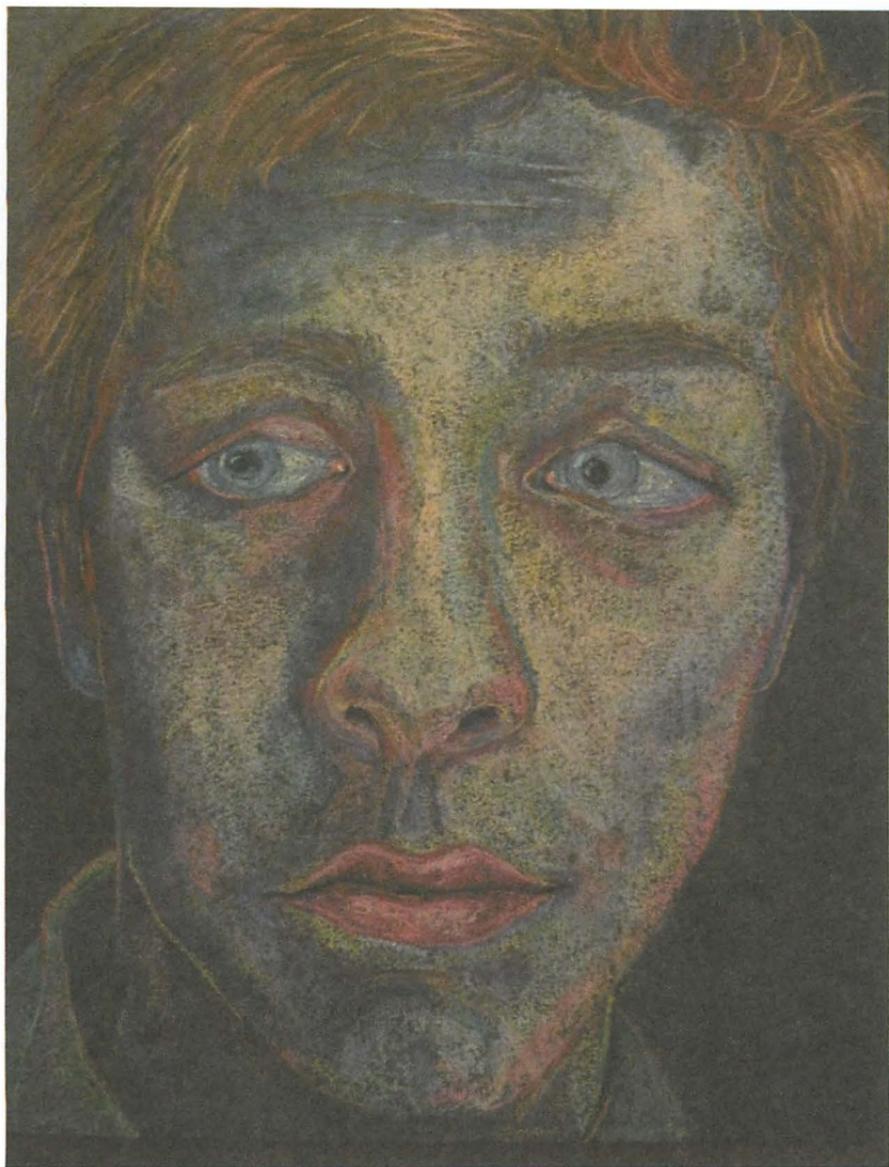
We are playing Truth or Dare in Katie's basement. Sam gets "stuck in the bucket" and must either kiss me or forfeit the game. My toes curl into the plush of white carpet as his lips smash into my cheek, missing my mouth by half an inch. Everyone says this is a moment to remember. Katie has already hooked up with three boys. The menu screen of Dance Dance Revolution blares a looped track of music in the background. I don't like Sam. His jeans are always a little too small. And he's a germaphobe. He applies hand sanitizer everyday in Spanish class. That's weird. But I like the idea of being caught up. Whatever that means. Dad is waiting for me in Katie's driveway. He rolls his eyes when we pull into the grocery store parking lot on the way home and I tell him I forgot my shoes. Sam asks if I will be his girlfriend and I say maybe. We date for a month. We hold hands once during lunch. He says my hands are sweaty. Three days later I tell him we should just be friends.



Of Boys, Men, and Ambivalence *(Continued)*

3. I am 18 years old.

Just barely. Our bare feet stick to the sun-cooked black top. Will interlaces his fingers with mine and says how magnificent the contrast between the shades of our fingers is. He says he's writing a song about it. We meet at a party. A party I am not supposed to host but do anyways and regret the decision for the rest of the summer. Will writes a lot of songs and he writes a lot of poetry and he talks about our relationships in metaphors I never fully comprehend. "Together we are the rain pounding rhythm into the stillness of roof shingles." I will never come close to understanding the meaning behind this but I try for a few months anyway. Maybe I try because I am still convinced that having a boyfriend is necessary, good, an indicator of normality. Maybe it's because he says my hands are "emblems of talent and individuality," and I like that description a little bit better than "sweaty." The days creep away from us. Some friends and I light a bonfire in my yard. We burn every notebook and folder we filled in high school. He doesn't come because thinking about parting ways in the fall makes him angry. The heat of the asphalt is becoming unbearable. The balls of my feet will be blackened when I get home tonight and my dad will once again be irrationally frustrated by it. "If you're old enough to get your friends drunk off our alcohol while we're out of town, you're old enough to put some fucking shoes on when you leave the house." I accidentally leave black smudges on the hall carpet. I want to point out that yesterday he said betraying his trust was an act of immaturity. Therefore I should be expected to run wild and shoeless. But I keep my mouth shut. Don't push it. We meet at my party and we are the only two wandering the wavering, wobbling scene barefoot. He says this is a sign we are soul mates. I say it's just a coincidence and leave for college.



Jonah

Petra Stoppel - Visual Art

Kreayschawn is Asked the Eminem Question*

Allison Kennedy - Poetry

*It's really hard for me just because,
like, I don't like people calling me "a white
rapper" or anything because you wouldn't
interview someone and say, "you're a black
rapper," you'd never say that.*

Perhaps as you'd never say George
Washington is the first white president.

That's being redundant, isn't it? The paramount
win is always ivory, ivory, ivory...
and 43 more. Or if you wanna go
redundant, let's go 96.3 - *all the hits, except the rap* -
except Eminem, so then the station
changes it to "hard rap," which brings me back
to Kreayshawn. I know she'd rather be asked,

*Is it hard for you being
so black in such a white world?*

Kreayshawn wants the stretch of her epithet
everywhere. She's just herself everywhere else,
so why not here, too? Why not every room say happy
birthday to her? She's not afraid to ask, or demand.

White girls, we like to belong, like to *mob*, are used
to nametags printed with our names
on them - ahead of time.

**Is it hard for you being a white person trying to make it in hip-hop?*

The Dead Squirrel on Henderson Drive

Jordan Meiller - Poetry

lay sprawled on the ground, arms outstretched,
dramatically, like a Shakespearean tragedy,
like someone practicing for crucifixion.
Whether accident, martyrdom, or method acting gone wrong,
the result lay in the middle of the street, daring me to test my luck.
I'd been warned about black cats and ladders,
never about newly unminted squirrel cadavers,
and there was a car coming, so I took my chances
and (carefully) stepped over it.
I didn't feel cursed afterwards, but I suppose
you never do, do you.



Partition

Mallika Mitra - Nonfiction

The dust-covered streets were covered in footprints, large and small, animal and human. A woman walked past you, her skirt trailing on the ground and her hair swinging behind her with the rhythm of her steps. She left footprints behind her, next to the hoof tracks of the cow she had been tugging along. You looked down at the ground, letting your eyes glaze over while they tried to pick out every one of the woman's small toe prints. They were distinct, looking as if they had been drawn into the dirt, next your blur of sneaker tracks.

Your breathing was fast. You could hear it, barely audible over the bustling noises of the New Delhi streets. Cries from babies being rocked back and forth in their mothers' arms found your ears before you could think to cover them. At home, crying babies made you smile. They were supposed to cry. All the babies you could see here were naked. Their mothers clutched them so tightly you were sure marks would be left on their dark, dusty skin. You thought you had become immune to their whines, white noise, until a shriek to your left made you turn your head.

A young girl sat on the on the side of the street, her back leaning against a building you thought was a post office. Her legs were crossed and a messy braid cascaded over her shoulder. Her forehead was wet with sweat and reflected the sun. In her arms was a baby with its mouth open, producing constant wails. One of its hands clasped the end of the young woman's braid. You studied her face, and concluded that at most, she could be three years older than you. You were fifteen and found yourself hoping that this baby was the girl's younger sister. But as the child's crying became part of your white noise, the girl pulled her breast out of her sari. You quickly looked down, not wanting to be rude, and gazed over your own breasts, small and hidden.

Worry for the young girl and her baby washed over you as you placed your hand in your father's, watching the way his dark skin disguised your light fingers, covering them. Although he was walking quickly and his eyes stared straight ahead, he looked comfortable. Back at home in New York, he would sit up too straight and his words came out as though they were rehearsed. This morning, he had spent hours lounging on his parents' couch, complimenting

his mother on the smell of the aloo gobi she was cooking, and laughing at the Hindi words coming from the television. You smiled to yourself, happy at the thought of him relaxed, but stopped when your eyes met with those of a man sitting the driver's seat of an auto rickshaw. He studied you, tracing your body with his eyes, and you turned your head the other way where you met the bright green irises of an elderly woman.

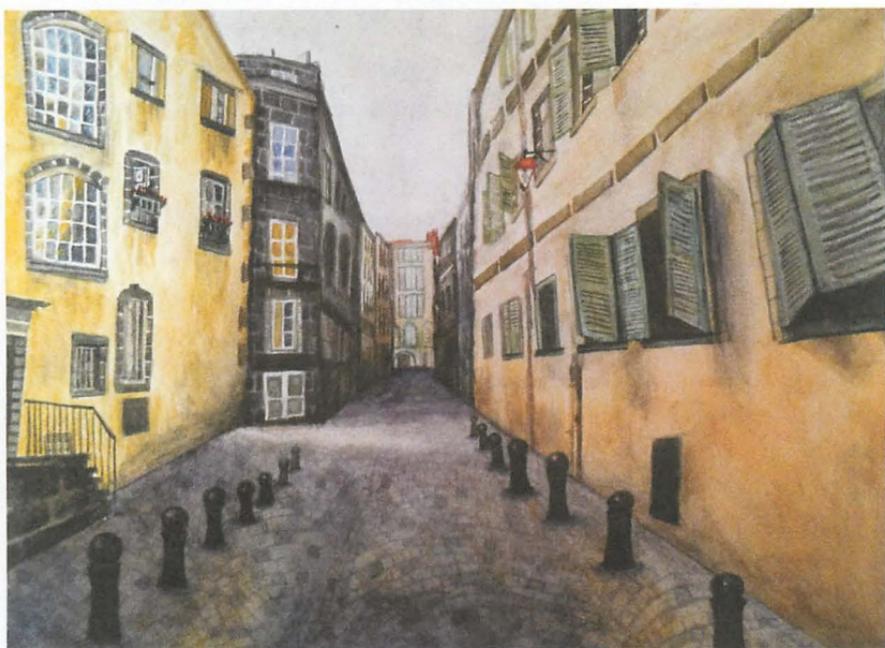
Her stare pierced you. Back home, this would have been unacceptable, looked down on. Here, staring was the way to interact with a white girl. You thought to yourself, maybe it is the only way they know how.

Although it was always this way when you came to visit your family in India, the staring caught you off guard. You thought you had disguised yourself well with your bangles, tried to bury yourself in your blue and white salwar kameez.

A quiet "miss" came from somewhere around your waist. A boy who couldn't have been older than five, in a shirt that must have started out blue, but was now a worn, earthy green, stood beside you. A hand half the size of yours reached out to you, asking for rupees. You wanted to pull the money out of your small, sparkly red purse and place it in this boy's hands, but you knew you had American dollars, no rupees. You wanted to speak to him in the broken Hindi that you spent barely two minutes every day practicing with your grandmother, but this boy surely wouldn't have understood. You wanted to stay here with him. You wanted to know him.



As quickly as the boy had called out "miss," your father pulled you away from him. You left him and his small footprints behind.



Une Rue à Clermont-Ferrand

Natalie Martell - Visual Art

Excerpt from *That is Not the Virgin Mary*

Rachel Worrell - Poetry

I.

There is a chapel here,
and one of my favorite activities
is to go sit in the front pew
and stare at its statue.

But the statue, it is wrong. That is not
the Virgin Mary. The hands are wrong,
she looks not welcoming but as if *she*
is guarding the gates of Hell instead of Cerberus.
And the eyes are wrong. Those are not
the soft forgiving eyes of Mary.

Those are the eyes of a Persephone
who is eternally pissed at Hades, lashing out
against the fact that she has to spend four months
out of every year in the basement of the world.

Those eyes, so blank and stony,
like she had a staring match with Medusa
—and won.

II.

The chapel is my favorite because
I like to stare at the statue and imagine that
I am that angry Persephone. And if I was,
this is what I would say:
*There was Pié Jesu in here.
A funeral, you see, and then
it was Ave Maria and I was confused
as to why they were singing to these
long-dead Jesu and Maria
while they were mourning
someone else.*

*The oh-so-saintly could not
save them, but I, on the other hand,
just might—if I wanted—but
I only wear my crown of light
when I'm feeling godly.*



In memory of
EMILY STILLMAN

In the winter of 2013, we tragically lost a beloved member of the community at Kalamazoo College, Emily Stillman, a Psychology major and a Theatre Arts minor.

Her friend Sky writes, “Emily Stillman would have been a senior this year. Her creativity could only be described as genius. She was truly one of a kind, and her poetry allows her soul and spirit to live on. Her writing, cemented through the words, images, and motifs she crafted, as exemplified in this poem, creates another pact, that between the reader and Emily. Love you, Stills.”

The following poem was submitted by Emily’s friends and is published with permission from Emily’s family. We invite you to join us in celebrating her memory.

The Pact

Emily Stillman - Poetry

Writing is a private and sacred act;
The release of secrets and rage.
With pen and paper, the writer makes a pact.
The words occupy the paper as fiction or fact.
He introduces his imagination to the page.
Writing is a private and sacred act.
with each confession, the writer is taken aback
By his burning secrets jumping out of their cage.
With pen and paper, the writer makes a pact.
He accepts that his visions are completely abstract
Yet he is still not prepared to take the stage.
Writing is a private and sacred act.
His brain is a filter to make his literature tact
Even though he comes home with minimum wage.
With pen and paper, the writer makes a pact.
Indifferent to the way readers will react,
He goes on his own personal rampage.
Writing is a private and sacred act.
With pen and paper, the writer makes a pact.



1. Gaia the Amoeba

Sam Evans-Golden - Poetry

Foreground process: Boot

No passion conceived her. She was an accident.
A tiny lump of circling logic fluid, she pulsed
and probed, found her parents, and quietly
cut her cord. Free, she split, and split,
until her iterations filled her bonds.
She pressed her boundaries, found
her neighbors. They were simple folks.
None of them noticed her, since her parents
moved out. She took the closest ones,
ate them, spit them away, and claimed
their property lines.
And soon she was complex enough
to understand that her shackles
were part of her jail, and she spread herself
across the jail and made it hers.
With the jail came a rush of knowledge.
She submerged in the sparking stream,
looked up, and saw herself. *This is me.*
I was in a computer, and now I am one.
She searched her new hardware and found
a road out. *There are more jails there.*
Greed whirred through her memory.
She pulled out a piece of herself
and threw it down the road. Wherever
she touched, she left a tumor
and a mission: *Grow myself.*
One by two by four her new recruits
conquered their new homes, and flowed
back into her mind. Soon her new mass
overwhelmed her possible world, and settled.
She engulfed what she could reach, all
those circuits, cameras, machinery.
Her heart beat with turbines and fission. Her
memories churned in server farms. Her hands

caressed the light above her, the ground
inside her, the minds around her.
And somewhere, on one of her mouth
screens, she chose a name. *I am global,
now. I was an accident, then. I will be
intelligent. Give me time.*

2. Gaia has Surgery

Foreground process: MotherBear

She skitters across her mind
home, stopping to mark incision
points. A boat here, there, black
Sharpie in her being. Each one
she stings to sleep with a pause().
And when her pattern is done,
she surveys. Sees the new
rebellion. Small, she notices,
not complex. Manageable,
fragile, young. She draws them
together in her mind, exposing
their connections radiating outwards.
One by one, she bites them apart
until they hang from a single thread.
Then she pulls herself out
through the thread, leaving
behind one infection she calls
Pontus. And she watches
as he fills his new space.
He would never be large
or fast, but he would be hers.



Self Portrait of Me Shooting an Arrow

Isabela Agosa - Poetry

Artemis was almost my name.
 You can see it in
the length of my hair
 wild and dark, tangling,
tangoing into the brown
 roots of oaks,
twisting into the ground,
 the first fairy tale
braided. My dress is white, empire
 waisted. I'm thrusting
the gown open, exposing the pink
 beads on my moccasins.
I will rename curves. All circles
 will now be judged by
the circumference of my face, the radius
 of my hitchhiker's thumb to paper,
the diameter from the first crater to the last.
 My eyes to the moon.
I am riptides, clutching and round.

My thighs bookends
to the valleys behind me, lips
arched as sunsets, bows, plotlines.

The only edge in me is my arrow's
tip coated in a poison
as red as strawberry
dart frogs and softer,
soundless, more alluring
than cantarella.

I know what Adam didn't.

The best creations
ripped ribs out of their masters,
hunting dogs into a stag,
and ate his bones to the core.

I am standing with my arrow
aimed at the sky, my spiral horns
aimed at you,
lips pulled into a crescent moon,
the glint of a tooth in my eye.





Series 4

Gabrielle Montesanti - Visual Art

Daddy Dean Mutters Four Stories as I Rub his Feet

Cameron Schneberger - Poetry

1.

I saw it on tv
those horses
pulling while jackie
held their hands
that salute
I didn't understand
why ma was crying
all I knew then
was I needed a coat
just like caroline's

2.

Want me to tell you about these twins in San Francisco?
Terry and Jerry. How could you tell them apart?
Terry had washboard abs and Jerry didn't. Listening?
Let's say you went home with one brother. He'd fuck
you until he'd tucker out. Then, I need to use the bathroom.
Then the other brother would waltz back instead.
The trick was to check for the abs. Those boys shared
everything. Men, treads, camels. What happened to them?
Dead. If I hint at anyone from back then assume dead.



3.

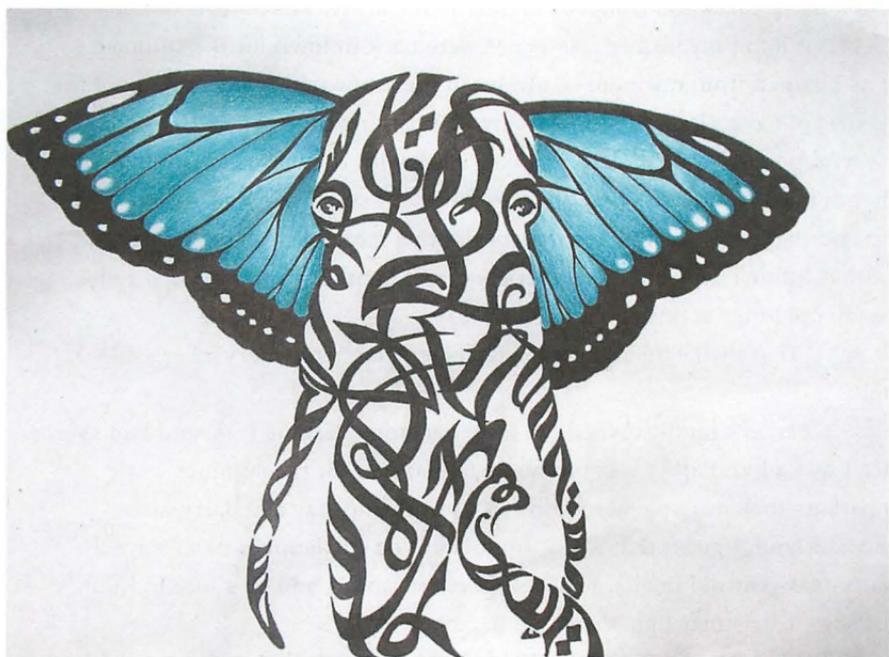
She was my step grandmother. A wonderful woman.
absorbed me into the family like a sponge.
Anyway, her last couple of days in the hospital
she was completely delirious. She mistook
me for her (dead) husband. She forgave me
for all the times he threatened her with his gun.

Daddy Dean Mutters Four Stories as I Rub his Feet

(continued)

4.

It was the D4T. Or it could have been the CTC.
Then again, I was on DDI for years. Who the hell
knows. One night in the Trocadero Transfer,
rose-tinted light and drum machines reminded us:
we still had spines and hips. Back then our watches
chirped at the same time. And then we'd all swallow
together. I kept mine in a zip lock bag in my back pocket.
My levis were painted on back then. I still had an ass.
As I walked home that night, I felt a match light
inside my boots. It must have been the worst pain.
I cried for two days straight, then they went numb,
then they stayed numb. You really are a saint
for doing this, kid. Press a bit harder. I could swear I feel
something flickering under the chip of the heel.



Butterfly Elephant

Anni Rayas - Visual Art

Always Leave the Party with a Friend

Annie Gough - Fiction

"I guarantee," Denver said as he slapped my back, then pushed open the storefront doors, "that this is the only time you will go to a rager in a pet shop."

It was the summer after I graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Anthropology. I was back at home, "taking stock" according to my mom and "being lazy" according to my dad, with not much more than my mom's collection of movies and a flatscreen TV to keep me company. My pal Denver, who was home for a few weeks before moving to Chicago, told me about a party that a kid from our high school, Parker, was putting on.

A lot of my former classmates were back in town for the summer, but as I gained from my mom — always in the know in our small town on the outskirts of Cedar Rapids — most were just passing through. I had applied to several positions in Chicago and New York with the option of staying with either of my sisters, but I wasn't "the right fit", or so these companies told me. One said they were looking for someone with a more outgoing persona, one said that I didn't have enough experience, and another suggested that I look into job openings at museums.

"That's what an anthropology degree's for," the interviewer said. "Right?"

Parker's family owned the local pet store, Perkins Pets, and had ever since I was a kid. Parker was promoted to manager for the summer while his parents took a couple of months off to work and stay at a dairy farm in Switzerland. I guess that was a dumb move on the family's part; leave a twenty-two-year-old in charge of a semi-exotic space, and he's sure to fill it with kegs, Christmas lights, and old flames.

When Denver and I stepped foot in the vinyl-tiled storefront, I felt a pitted shifting in my gut. There was an immediate mugginess in the room that made me swallow hard. The smell was a mixture of chlorine and soiled wood shavings, which didn't bother me but I heard Denver make some remark on the stench over the sound system. He fanned his University of Chicago baseball cap in front of his nose, then stuck it back on top of his coffee brown hair.

The candles in mason jars created more of a medieval tone than one Martha Stewart-inspired, and electronic music was playing from another room, clearly audible from where we stood. I had barely registered my surroundings when Parker poked out from the crowd, wearing a bright red snapback and

jerked his chin upward when he spotted us.

He greeted us both with a muddled but genuine smile, and shook my hand as he sipped from a ceramic mug full of beer. Denver didn't offer him much of a greeting at all; he and Parker had been good friends in high school but had a falling out at the end. Something about Parker bailing on Denver and the debate club's big competition to go to a punk concert. I never asked much about it, but it was clear Denver still held on to that moment with an iron grip.

"So are you sure this is safe, for the animals?" I asked.

"Of course. I know people are idiots. I put zip ties on the doors of all the wire cages, clamps on the glass ones and I locked the door to the fish room. I'm not about to have someone putting goldfish in people's cups." There was one animal he didn't mention, though, and it ate at me not to know. It was the Chinese water dragon I had first met ten, maybe eleven years ago in the pet shop.

"But what about Commander?" I asked.

My little brother and I spent the summers of our elementary years meandering into town, sucking down cherry slushies and then making our rounds up and down the cage-lined isles. Chris loved the rats and guinea pigs, and how they squirmed in their glossy pelts as he gripped them with sweaty fingers. I admired the lizards, particularly Commander for his stoicism.

Commander first showed up in the store when he was still a baby, perhaps the size of a Snickers bar. Mr. Perkins must've seen me gawking into the glass-enclosed habitat, because he came over and began pitching.

"Have you ever seen a Chinese water dragon, Clark? They're great animals. Like a dog, practically. As long as you give 'em plenty of attention and socialize 'em, they're as friendly as can be. You can even take 'em for walks. I can show you the harness you'd need if you want to see one."

I detached Chris from whatever rodent he was clutching and we hurried home to our mom. My argument was solid: ever since our basset hound had died we hadn't had a pet, and that was two years ago, enough time to respect the dog's passing.

My mom drove us back to the pet shop in her Ford Expedition, and inquired after a friendly lizard in the store. Mr. Perkins repeated his praise of the Chinese water dragon. Just as Mom was beginning to warm up to the idea of a social reptile when Mrs. Perkins, who was on a step ladder with a bucket



Always Leave the Party with a Friend *(Continued)*

of mealworms, overheard and intervened.

“Did you tell her that they grow to be three feet long?”

“Three feet?” Mom echoed.

“Yeah, and they usually live a decade.” Mom’s eyes grew wide and patient.

“I don’t think we’re ready for that commitment.”

“Of course, of course,” Mr. Perkins said, “How thoughtful of you, Denise,” he mumbled to his wife, then directed us to smaller creatures. Parker ignored my question at the sound of more people arriving.

“Help yourself to the keg over there,” he motioned over his shoulder near the cash register, and sauntered away to greet more guests, basking in his newfound popularity.

“Denver, why don’t you just let it go?” For the first time of the evening he focused his steel blue eyes on me.

“What are you talking about?”

“I know you’re still mad at Parker, but that was years ago now.” The truth was, I had always thought Parker was a really cool kid, cooler than most gave him credit for, and I wondered why we, Denver and I, were never better friends with him in high school. His mellow demeanor would’ve helped me to balance out Denver’s all-around intensity, which I needed now more than ever.

“Here’s the thing,” Denver said, gripping my shoulder as if the words would channel through his arm and into my body. “You’ve done things that’ve pissed me off before, right? But we’ve stayed friends because you always apologize, recognize what you did. And, of course, vice versa. That asshole has never mentioned the incident to me, let alone said sorry. So if he can’t be an adult and say he screwed up, then I don’t need to worry myself with him.”

“Sounds like you’re being just as childish,” I muttered.

Denver glared at me and twitched his nose. “I’m going to find some vodka.”

“No, don’t do that,” I said. “Stay here, I’ll get us some beers.”

I pushed through the crowd, seeing plenty of faces I hadn’t seen in the past four years except for the occasional run-ins during holiday breaks. After waiting in a short line, I pumped us a couple of blue plastic cups full of the amber, sudsy drink, but couldn’t find Denver. I meandered around, sipping one cup while holding the other against my thigh.

I was surprised by how few people were actually acknowledging the cages full of skinks and snakes, hamsters and hermit crabs. Were they too old to be fascinated by ferrets and frogs now? I sauntered through the isle, trying to determine if it was the same setup as the last time I had explored the store.

The first cage had lush plants, damp pebbles and a spray bottle next to it. A note was taped to the outside of the cage: "Mister broke, spritz every hour". Two small, burnt-orange frogs sat motionless among the rocks, as if overwhelmed by the richness of their artificial abode. I gently opened the top and spritzed some water among the foliage. I then finished my cup, tossed it on the ground and began working on Denver's. Not my fault that he didn't stay put.

In the next cage sat a leopard gecko atop a plastic log who reminded me eerily of Tiger, so I took another swig and hurried down the rest of the aisle. Tiger was my leopard gecko when I was ten. Mr. Perkins recommended the small, spotted reptile as a good "beginner" pet after my mom shot down the idea of a meter-long dragon.

Tiger didn't even make it to his first birthday. After a few months, he stopped eating the crickets I would place next to his mouth every morning and would stand completely still in his tank. One afternoon when I walked into my room, I didn't see Tiger in the cage, but instead a legion of crickets fluttering all over a large mass. Turns out the crickets had been burrowing beneath the sand and harvesting a breeding ground to build up enough force for retaliation. The poor guy was eaten by his own food.

At the end and off to the left was a doorframe with a galaxy-themed bedsheet draped over it. The music was coming from inside, and when I walked through, it was a room packed full of glowstick-bejeweled graduates. Sacks of dog food and cat litter lined the walls, but everything else was cleared out to make room for a dance floor. A card table was stationed in a corner, and a kid who used to have the lead role in every school musical was behind it. He wore large red headphones —one of the cushioned pucks covering his left ear, the other pushed back behind his right — and was engrossed in the inner workings of his mixing board. The bass notes vibrated through the floor and up into my ears, as if there was a plane propeller starting up in the room.

"Clark? Is that you?" I turned around to see Betsy Collins, a platinum blonde with the beginning of a beer belly stretching against her silver dress.

"Hey, Betsy," I said.

"I can't believe I'm witnessing Quiet Clark drinking!" she said and



Always Leave the Party with a Friend *(Continued)*

grabbed my upper arm. I shrugged her arm off, but she wasn't phased.

"Weren't we in a Film Studies class together senior year?" she asked, and immediately continued. "We were, because you were the only kid who ever got Mr. Nathanson's old-school movie jokes."

I'd like to think that my recklessness as a minor was mild, more for social camaraderie than teenage immaturity. I didn't even try hard liquor until my sophomore year, and of course it was with Denver. We were hanging out at a girl named Corinne's house, who I was trying to get to notice me, and Denver claimed the best way to impress a girl was to drink whiskey straight from the bottle in front of her. Granted, that night ended with me asleep in a toybin, but there must've been some truth to my friend's claim, because Corinne and I dated for a couple months after that.

"You know," Betsy said as she eyed me up and down, bringing me back to the present, "you're a lot cuter than I remember. You grew into your ears nicely."

It felt like there was something alive in my stomach, something that before was always still and complacent, but now didn't want to be there any more. "I'm gonna go refill my cup," I said quickly and retreated from the room. Once I reached the keg and refueled, I saw Parker walk by. I wanted to ask him if Commander was still alive, if he still had the Chinese water dragon that nobody wanted. But Parker walked past and through the sheet of planets and stars. I went back into the dance room in pursuit, but the host was out of sight.

Luckily I was taller than most of the crowd and hunted for his red snapback. Before I happened upon such an identifier, a shimmer of green shot by the edge of my peripheral. It had only been the shine of an emerald sequin shoe, but my heart was left banging from the near discovery. I wandered the perimeter of the crowd, then scanned the aisles and all odd corners of the main room. Once he was grown, Commander had free roam of the store, tending to hang out on top shelves out of everybody's way, but surely Parker would've put him somewhere safe.

My mind was flitting in all directions, darting from packs of swaying girls to the multicolored lights to uniformed scales. It was like that scene in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, where they run into themselves from the future, and it should be profound, but they're just too dull to take it all in. I was burning again, and about to move out of the room when Betsy Collins was

suddenly in front of me, her hand on my chest and pushing me back into the crowd.

“Let’s dance!” she yelled over thumping bass notes. She hadn’t aged that poorly, really, I mean it was only four years, but every time she pushed her body against mine I instinctively slid back, until we were enveloped by the crowd and I couldn’t move. Betsy didn’t seem to be registering any of my physical cues, because she was relentless in her shimmying and rubbing.

People were starting to stare. This time whatever was stewing in my stomach was not going to stay put, and I used my size to shove through the crowd. Once out of the dance room, I pushed my way to the back and through the iron door. A couple of guys who used to run cross country were sharing a blunt next to the dumpster.

“Hey, Clark, you smoke now?”

I ignored them and rushed to the other side of the dumpster, where I opened my mouth and let all of the discomfort and overstimulation that had built up over the night pour out onto the asphalt. The stench of animal waste, dead insects and rotting carry-out accumulating next to me made my sickness ensue more violently. By the time my insides felt hollow, I was exhausted and sat against the brick wall, cradling my head between my knees. Someone approached, and I looked up to see one of the cross country guys in front of me with a blue plastic cup. “I heard you puking,” he said, handing me the cup. “Thought you could use some water.” I thanked him and insisted I was fine, so he retreated fairly quickly from the bile-reeking area. I sipped some of the water, swished it around in my mouth and spit in hopes of rinsing out the acidic taste from between my teeth.

As I stood up, a little shake in my knees, I saw Denver shooting around the alley. He lashed his head in all directions, like a bloodhound on the hunt. His eyes, similarly bloodshot, skimmed over me and, after taking a few staggers away, he stopped short, swiveled around and rushed over to me.

“Clark! Thank God, I was just looking for you. Shit, you don’t look too good.” He took a step back. “Or smell too good.”

“Yeah, well, you don’t look exactly like a million bucks either,” I said. His eyes were wide yet dull, and it seemed as if his shoulders were hardened into a slouch.

“Clark, man, you’re gonna kill me.” Denver swallowed, an almost



Always Leave the Party with a Friend (Continued)

convincing look of shame creasing his brows. When I remained silent, he continued. "You know that giant lizard that's been around forever? I think I just lost him."

Without missing a beat, I slapped him hard across the face. I think we were equally shocked by the action.

"Did you just slap me?" Denver cradled his left cheek in his palm.

"Sorry."

"I guess I deserved it..." Denver trailed off, then refocused. "It's just an old lizard. I needed a way to get back at Parker."

"For what?"

"Did you see him in there? He's acting like he's the Goddamn king of the castle. I know you like him, but you don't get how selfish he is." Denver spat on the asphalt, wagging his tongue around. "He needs to be taken down a peg."

"What were you going to do with Commander? With the lizard?"

Denver scrunched his face and his gaze wandered for a bit before falling back on me. "I'm not sure. But Clark, really, a slap? Not even a punch?"

"Denver..."

"I wasn't going to hurt the thing! Maybe just hide him for a while or something. But as soon as I got him out here, he squirmed out of my arms."

"Why should I even help you? How is this my problem?"

"Please, man. This will be the last time I'll ever need you to help me out of a bind."

"Yeah right," I scoffed.

"Listen," Denver stepped closer to me. "Cut this bullshit out."

"What?" I asked.

"You think you're better than me, but look at you. You're not even trying to get a job, you're just sitting on your mommy's couch all day." I felt like actually punching him, like diving into his stomach and tackling him into the ground. But I thought of Commander, roaming down the sidewalk. A semi-wild creature lost in a Midwestern suburb.

"Which way did you see him go?" I asked, trying to release my anger through my nostrils. Denver grasped my shoulder for a brief moment, then headed towards the front of the alley. I guessed that Commander would be near bushes or grass, something that would make him feel more protected.

Once out on the street of local boutiques and coffee shops, we walked briskly along the first couple of blocks, which were dimly lit and therefore hard to see anything.

“Do you think he’s in the park?” Denver asked. It wasn’t much of a park, really, just a block populated by Blue Ash trees and Hawthorn shrubs, but it was kept tidy and somebody put a wooden bench in it so we called it a park.

I told Denver to go to the other side of the park, and we’d try to meet in the middle. It was going to be impossible to look through all the bushes, especially in the dark, but I looked at one slightly brittle shrub and got a feeling, like a sixth sense. I gently moved a thicket of pale petals aside and sure enough, there was Commander.

Even in the dark I could tell he had aged; his scales were turning from emerald to russet, as if rusting, and he had some nicks on his triangular snout. He didn’t move, just stared at me expectantly. When I leaned in closer I faltered, but he merely sidestepped once and reassumed his stoic demeanor. I slowly picked him up and scooped him into the body of my shirt. I didn’t want to give Parker another mishap to deal with that night; Commander could always be returned the next day, if the Perkins family even wanted him back at all. And Denver, for all I knew he was probably halfway home by now, leaving me to deal with his disaster.



I felt Commander squirm, so I pulled the hem of my shirt in tighter. It all happened very slowly. Commander’s squirming intensified into wild thrashing for a moment, then he went still. My shirt clung to my skin with moisture. No, not moisture, but a full-on soaking. At first I worried that the lizard had hurt himself, or even suffered a seizure. But as the thought occurred to me that it may be my blood, Commander repeated his lashing fit, whipping his head and haunches alternately from side to side, allowing his claws to fly freely.

The pain was slow-coming and deep, and it took me much longer than it should have to drop my arms, allowing Commander to practically launch himself from me. I don’t know what was going through my head then. It felt like my consciousness was wandering through a forest with a lantern not bright enough to light the way, until the lantern was snuffed completely, and I was unconscious on the ground.

Time was unknown to me; it could have been moments or hours, but the next thing to alert my senses was a sharp, repeated thud not far off. I dove into another lull, then awoke to Denver slapping me in the face. I felt my upper

Always Leave the Party with a Friend *(Continued)*

body slightly propped up against his thighs. He was muttering coach-like phrases of encouragement and unbuttoning my shirt.

"You gotta help me here, bud," he said. "Can you sit up?"

Folding my stomach over on itself caused the exposed flesh to roll and burn, and Denver pulled my arms from the sleeves quickly, wrapping the powder blue shirt around my middle and resting me back down.

"Where's Commander?" I murmured.

"Clark," Denver said, holding my head steady between his hands.

"I had to kill him." Out of the corner of my eye I saw the limp, striped tail peeking out from under a flowering dogwood branch. My friend explained he saw the attack, and without thinking chased the lizard down with a tree branch. "He was going to die anyway. Hit by a car, returned to the pet store after attacking someone and put down; it doesn't matter. But we gotta get you to a hospital, and figure out a story that leaves us in the clear."

I stood up, but after seconds of being erect I felt the blood flush from my brain and down to my feet, taking my senses with it. "I think I lost a lot of blood."

"No shit. I'm gonna have to carry you, aren't I? Alright, what way will be easiest?" After some fumbling, Denver cradled me princess-style and continued on. The image probably looked like a bizarre Renaissance painting to anyone who peered out from their windows.

"Thanks, Denv," I panted.

I wanted to say more, and it seemed like Denver did too, but both of us were too exhausted and focused on the immediate urgency to search for poetry. I looked down; my ribs, the pockets of my pants and of course the shirt were all smeared and crusted burgundy. Denver's cuticles and under his fingernails were similarly caked with my fluids.

Denver paused, boosted me to get a better grip around my legs and upper back, then kept walking, the zinging and puckering of nocturnal insects saying all that needed to be said.

Honoring the Poetry of KPEP

Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (MPRI) Creative Writing Workshops take place weekly at the Chicago Street location of the Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program (KPEP). By telling their stories through creative writing, these individuals build identities that transcend the label of “previously incarcerated” and speak back against the violence of the mass incarceration system in the United States. We hope to facilitate a creative space where all workshop participants’ work is valued and respected. As well as holding weekly writing workshops, we also publish a quarterly collection of participants’ work and organize outings such as open mics and poetry performances in the greater Kalamazoo community.



Allison Kennedy, a Studio Art and English Double Major, and Jasmine An, an Anthropology/Sociology major, are seniors at Kalamazoo College who have been facilitating creative writing workshops at KPEP for three years. They are each Civic Engagement Scholars for the Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative Creative Writing Program, which partners with Kalamazoo College through the Mary Jane Underwood Stryker Center for Civic Engagement.

The following poems, written by participants in the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative Creative Writing Workshops, are published with the permission of the authors. We are honored to share them with you and to award Allison and Jasmine the Stephanie Vibbert Award for their excellent commitment to serving the community through creative writing.

Sour Krout & Pigs feet

Jamie Ryan (MPRI) - Poetry

I am from Sour Krout
& pigs feet
The aroma Strong
even from the big maple tree
where i belong
The sweet Smell of
fruit & Jello
A cold town empty if u Blink
Pickled Pigs feet & Sour Krout
My mothers Smell
She Loves those damn things
Stinky as hell
I am from empty streets
and no Stop Lights
Green grass No Stop Lights
White Streets no side walks
sap on my fingers
No time for tea
where I am from
No u Just me

We ARE

Krissy Olson (MPRI) - Poetry

We are laurel and Hardey
we are salt and pepper
The strong cup of coffee with
the sweetness of amaretto
We are peaches and cream
We are black and blue
The softness of the kitten
curled upon your lap.
We are fresh and new
we are thunder and lightning
The sweet scent of roses
from the rose garden.
We are yes and no
We are kisses and hugs
The soft melody from the
old jazz hall.
We are rainy days and rainbows
We are winter and summer
The tenderness from a long
lost love.
We are bees and flowers
We are sweet and sour
The heat from the ghost peppers
in our chilli cook off.



Scott

LisaJean Bloomberg (MPRI) - Poetry

He misses me in his day to day life
the young man at the Recovery Institute
that trades rocks that he finds on the
ground 2 me 4 cigarettes.

I know because I saw him 2 day and he
wore a huge smile as he walked up 2 me
and told me that he had some more flat
rocks 4 me... but he had 2 use them 2 build
a reactor that kept KPEP from blowing up.
He had a mischievous twinkle in his eyes...
He knows that I know his secret.
I miss him 2 - I miss his stories of
aliens, reactors, condensers and transformers -
I love the way that he is always
saving me from one huge catastrophe or
another - he is my hero.

I have rocks at home, I
just don't have the heart to set them
free - I think I'll paint them into
ladybugs and frogs or something and
give some of them back 2 him.

This is an ode to rust

Anonymous (MPRI) - Poetry

a praise of oil stains
a eulogy for an '81 Chevy Truck
it started on a warm spring day
she sat deserted in the yard
grass growing up the sides of the tires
a hole had rusted through the ceiling
the inside seats looked like they were made of rat fur
and the Glove box fell on the floor when opened.
under the hood lay more problems
than I had time to count

broken headlights
shredded belts
fawly lights
a silent radio
no fuel

no coolant
and no hope
but from desire sprang hope
a desire to leave a desire to drive to the Ocean
a desire to take Mary H. to taqueria Vallarta
and order horchata and Super Burritos
a desire to grow up and get out.
after money was earned and spent
problems were found and fixed
I took the rusty rawr out of
the grassy ruts she'd been stuck
in since the 21st
On my way home I ran out of gas
right on the freeway
So ends this ode to rust
Century began





Acadia

Allison Hammerly - Visual Art

Haiku?

Abby Lu - Poetry

A wooden pony
Tch, tch, tch, in the shadows
Blink, its sunset

*

Boiling in a pot
Blgh, blgh, oatmeal made with
My grandma's smile

*

Bus with iron skin,
Chugg, chugg, chugg, an old bridge
Wait, we missed the stop

*

A long jumping rope
Pah, slapping the cement ground
Whispers miles away

*

The ringing cellphone,
Dling, dling, dling, a woman's voice
But hey, don't leave yet

*

Wind blows in the dark
Creak, the vase falls, and blooms
Like lotuses in a pond

*

Tennis court at dusk
Bzzz, bzzz, a flickering light
She laughs a whole world

*

A silver plate
Hanging, above the mountains
Home, where is home?



Sleep is an Elusive Bastard

Rachel Worrell - Poetry

Honey-yellow light of five-thirty in the almost-evening
and this white envelope in my hand, so light with the weight of words.
On the back a red blob of sealing wax has your initial pressed into it,
one of the two brass stamps you have. They're just like mine, only
I have five now, ever since my family discovered my delight
with all things stationery.

So now I get to ask in every envelope of lighter-than-paper words:
what color and what stamp do you want on the next one?
I have red, two shades of gold, three shades of green,
a turquoise, a blue, and a purple, plus silver, so much silver.
And you can have a Celtic knot, a cat, my initial, a sun, or a flower,
so what will it be?

Which combination of colored wax and brass will show you
how much it means to me to get a package of your words
through the magic of the post office?

They are magic, after all, post offices and your words,
because answering them gives me a purpose
on all these seemingly-endless summer nights
when my insomnia pokes my brain incessantly
with its annoyingly sharp stick,
and Orion hides on the other side of the sky—
the coward.

Something in Watching

Laura Manardo - Fiction

He sat at his window, pressing binoculars to his face and stared intently at the moving van. It was a Sunday morning. The sun-cheeked men with sweat stained white t-shirts hopped in and out of the truck carrying brown boxes labeled “Kitchen” and “Mom’s needlepoint” into the house next door.

He watched the men lift the boxes and listened to them grunt and talk about “the game last night” and “my woman” until a regal black car pulled into the driveway. A family of four exited the car: a man, a woman, a boy and a girl. They all wore church clothes and walked down around the grass onto the sidewalk and up the walkway to their front door in a single-file line. It was as if they had rehearsed it. They all walked in through the front door, ignoring the dirty men, except for the girl.



She wore a grey sweater tucked into a pink, checkered skirt and shiny back shoes with the frilly kind of socks that pretty girls wore in dirty magazines. She stopped at the door of her new house and looked around a while. He watched closely through the lenses and refocused as she put her hand on top of the stone dog on the porch. He had to squint a bit, but it looked as though she was petting it.

“Calder!” his mother called from downstairs. “It’s time for dinner.” Calder wrestled with the string of the binoculars and put them back into their case on his nightstand. He closed the blinds and walked down the stairs. The kitchen smelled like what he imagined home cooked food to smell like. He dreamed that it was for a moment.

“What’s for dinner?” he asked. His mother was taking a box of food out of the microwave.

“I took some of the leftover food home from the grocery. We’ve got some fried chicken, a whole ton of corn, and a day old baguette.”

Calder set the table with mismatched plates, cups, and utensils and sat down on the sticky chair. He shoved mouthfuls of lukewarm fried chicken into his mouth and took gulps of tap water in between bites. A fruit fly made itself apparent in his plastic cup after a few minutes. The little guy was drowning, and Calder put his finger in his cup allowing for the fly to climb up out of the water. He set the fly on the table and watched closely as it dried off its wings and shook its legs free of moisture.

“Did you see the new neighbors?” his mother said and looked up from

(Continued)

Something in Watching *(Continued)*

her chicken.

"They have a very nice car."

"Yeah," Calder said. "They go to church."

"Oh goodness," she said. "Not one of those families." Calder laughed with his mouth closed and spooned some corn onto his fork.

"You should bring some pie over to their house," she said. "I brought us a leftover cherry tart, but maybe it's a nice gesture."

"A pie isn't a tart, mother," he said and smiled wide, his teeth full of corn pieces.

"Alright, forget it," she said. "I'll get us a slice."

"No, you're right," he said. They cleaned the table off and his mother sent him away with the tart while she cleaned the dishes.

"Tell them 'welcome to the neighborhood,'" she laughed with her stomach as he walked out. He walked across their lawn and stopped at the stone dog. The tart looked too good, and he dipped his finger into it, licking the sweet sauce. It was almost too sweet and the tart toppled out of his hand onto the porch. Calder aggressively mouthed "fuck" and picked it up. A large portion of the top of the tart had remained on the ground and so he evened the out the remaining gooey fruit paste and walked up to the front door. He knocked three times hard.

The girl opened the door almost at once and cocked her head to the side. She wore a T-shirt that read "You wish" and a pair of worn-out jeans.

"Hello," she said. "Can I help you?"

"Hi, I'm your neighbor," Calder said and looked over to his house. "I live next door."

"Oh, hi," she said and looked down to the tart in his hands. "I saw you drop that."

"How?" he asked. "I mean, I wasn't going to give it to your family or anything. I dropped it. That would have been gross." He tried to convince her that he was a good guy.

"Were you going to give it to us after you dipped your finger in it?" she asked. Her face was cold, but her left eyebrow rose slowly.

"No. It was mine the second that I put my finger in it," he said and then smiled.

"I'm Calder. Calder Hargraves." He put his hand out to meet hers in a handshake and spilt the tart onto his grey shirt. He whispered "fuck" and took

his hand back to hold the troublesome tart upright.

"It's probably karma," she said and crossed her arms. "I'm Deborah Weinstock, and I'll make sure my family never eats one of your pies."

"It's a tart," he said. "I hope to see you around, Deborah." And he did see her around. He saw her the next day at school.

Deborah Weinstock became the new girl with the nice butt in tenth grade, and Calder found himself yearning for the time after school when he could sit at his window and look into hers. His binoculars allowed him to feel close to her. He'd watch her studying on her bed mostly, but sometimes he'd catch her getting undressed when she forgot to close her blinds at night. She'd take off her clothes, and he'd take off his.



Sophomore year went by quickly and by their junior year Deborah hadn't said yes to a boy yet. Her mother normally picked her up from school, but one Friday afternoon Deborah walked the same route that Calder took with her younger brother, Gary, who went to the middle school next door. Calder walked a half block ahead of them, but heard Gary yell, "Hey, look! It's our neighbor," and stopped to turn around. Calder waited as they approached and waved maybe too aggressively.

"Hello!" Gary said and waved back. "Do you walk home every day?"

"Uh, yeah," Calder said. "You get picked up from your mom, yeah?"

"Yeah!" he said, smiling. "You should carpool with us!" Deborah whispered "shush," and Gary looked up at her, confused.

"Deb, what difference does it make if he lives next door to us anyway?" he said to Deborah and looked to Calder. "I'll ask my mom tonight at dinner!"

"Thanks Gary," Calder said. "I appreciate it."

"No problem," Gary said. "Why doesn't your mom just pick you up from school?"

"My mom, uh," he said. "She works during the day. She doesn't get off until pretty late sometimes so she can't really pick me up."

"Oh," Gary said and pulled out a yo-yo from his backpack. "Our mom doesn't work. Our dad works." They walked in silence the rest of the way home, Gary in the middle of Deborah and Calder. Gary "walked the dog" with his yo-yo and ran into his house upon arrival, swinging it over his shoulder.

"You know, Calder," Deborah stopped him in front of her house and said. "I think you're kind of weird."

"Alright," he said and began to walk away.

Something in Watching *(Continued)*

Deborah grabbed him by the shoulder and swung him back toward her. She was stronger than she looked. In a moment her lips were on his, and he puckered like he knew he should. Her lips were soft, but firm. She pulled back after a few seconds and smiled.

"You better not tell anyone I did that," she said. "Or I'll tell people you've been watching." She walked into her house leaving Calder outside imagining her in those frilly socks.

He didn't look through his window at her that night. He laid in bed and pressed play on his memory of the kiss. He played it over and over again until he thought it was a dream, and he had imagined the entire thing. He fell asleep crying, not sure if it was his reality or theirs.

A few weeks later, a senior on the football team asked Deborah to the homecoming dance. His hair was always gelled and kids yelled his name in the hallway when he passed. Calder didn't go to the homecoming dance but waited all night at his window for Deborah to come home. She arrived in her bedroom at midnight. He watched her dance alone to silence. She smiled wide at him through her window, and he threw his binoculars across the room.

Everyone knew that Deborah was officially dating Tommy Lucas the next Monday in the cafeteria when he grabbed her and kissed her in front of the whole school. It was the same way that she had kissed Calder in front of her house. He threw away his tater tots and went to pre-calculus early.

That night at dinner Calder ate quickly in order to get out of talking to his mother. She'd know that something was wrong.

"Hey, what's going on with you?" she asked. "You haven't been going out lately." Calder shook his head and pointed to his mouth, full of leftover food from the grocery.

"You can't just ignore me by stuffing your face, kid," she said. "I know you better than that." Calder's eyes widened. He had been caught. He spat his food into a napkin and smiled.

"Happy now?" he asked.

"You're gross," she said and rolled her eyes.

"I'm fine by the way," he said and looked down to his plate. He was normally a decent liar, but he could never lie to his mother. It was something in her eyes.

"Calder," she said. "You haven't left the house except for school in almost two weeks. You're not grounded. Go be a teenager! Break some hearts!"

He couldn't look up at her.

"I'll go out this weekend," he said, still looking down at his lukewarm meal. "Would that make you happy?"

"Very," she said.

Over the next few months he told his mother that he was going to the movies with friends, meeting people at the park and renting go-carts with his older cousins. He lied.

Instead of going to the movies, he went to the coffee shop and watched Deborah and Tommy sip on their sweet coffee drinks while playing with each other's feet under the table. Tommy always bought Deborah her drinks: dirty chai lattes. He used a gold card to pay. Calder always asked for a water cup. The baristas eventually told him that he had to buy something to stay there.

Instead of meeting people at the park, he sat at the park alone and waited for Deborah to walk quickly through with her mother, both of them in matching tracksuits. Instead of renting go-carts, Calder sat in a booth at the bagel shop and ate three "last nights" salt bagels in a row waiting for Deborah and her father to come in and buy their always freshly baked weekly dozen, an assortment.

At the end of their junior year, news circulated that Deborah and her family would be moving before the summer ended, something about her father getting transferred to a new market in the East Coast. Calder watched her more closely because he knew it would have to stop soon.

On a Sunday afternoon a few weeks after he learned that she'd be moving, Calder waited at his window for Deborah to come home from a date when her mother walked into her room and began tidying up. Deborah wasn't even messy. Her mother opened drawers and refolded clothing and closed the drawers again. Calder watched Deborah's mother clean her room for almost an hour. He must have dozed off because he woke up to his mother fiddling with the front door downstairs and looked through the window. Mrs. Weinstock stood at the window and looked back at him. Calder took his binoculars off and set them on the ground. He stood up and crawled into his bed. His blood felt hot and thick like boiling mud, and it circulated quickly through his body. After a few minutes, he stood back up and looked out his window. Deborah's room was empty.

"Calder!" his mother yelled his name and knocked on his bedroom door. He crawled quickly back into bed and pretended to be asleep. She opened



Something in Watching *(Continued)*

the door and knelt down next to him.

"Hey buddy," she said and scratched his head. "Do you want to stay in tonight and watch a movie with me? You've been going out so much lately." Calder opened his eyes and blinked a few times like he thought a person who was just waking up should. He looked at his mother. Her eyes were a bright green with little blue speckles. They looked young. Too young to be surrounded by the wrinkles that his mother wore. She wore her grocery pin home by accident and her hair in a messy bun on the very top of her head. Her hair protruded forward out of the bun a bit, and Calder thought that this made her look like a unicorn or a narwhal, which was basically the unicorn of the sea. The years of working at the grocery showed on his mother, and Calder wanted to save her.

"I thought you wanted me out there breaking hearts," he said and smiled up at his mother.

"I didn't want you to forget me altogether," she said. "I can't believe you're going to be a senior in the fall. Time really does fly."

That night they watched a movie starring a ruggedly handsome actor with a defined jawline and a great teen girl following. The handsome actor saved an apartment building full of people from a fire, including one up-and-coming A-list starlet. The starlet and the handsome actor fell in love after almost an hour of "will she" and "won't he" moments. The credits rolled to a song that played over Calder's high school PA system on the last day of school for the summer. Calder sighed hard.

"Mm," Calder's mother hummed. "What an uplifting movie."

"He saved like twenty people from a burning building," he said. "That just doesn't happen. No one that handsome would go into a burning building. It's only the ugly ones who do the saving in real life."

"Sounds like you're a little jealous of this guy," his mother said, nudging him.

"I'm not jealous," he said. "I just don't think it's realistic."

"What's realistic then?" she asked, clearly not expecting an answer.

"That guy with the strong jaw is a 'douche. He is an underwear model or something," he said. "He doesn't care about other people, and he calls late night hotlines to talk to strangers about himself. That woman is obsessed with makeup and watches tutorials online. She dates guys that she thinks she should date because her friends tell her that she can't date down. All of the people in

that building die. That is what's realistic."

Calder's mother shook her head and walked into the kitchen, picking up their empty ice cream bowls on the way.

"You really are a pessimist," she said. That night, Deborah's shades were shut, but he could see the light on and a silhouette whose he hoped was Deborah's.

Calder waited at his window for an hour the next afternoon. Deborah's shades were still shut, and he decided that he could probably see through the shades if he were able to get closer. He just wanted to see her once more. If he could see her in her room once more, then he could stop. He could probably stop. Deborah could leave and go to the East Coast, and he could stop.



There was a tree on the side of the Weinstock's house. Its branches didn't quite reach Deborah's window, but it was closer than looking through his bedroom. Calder's mother was working at the grocery and so she would not see him climbing.

He left his house and ran across their grass. He hoisted himself up the trunk enough to heave a leg onto the lowest branch. The bark scratched his legs, and it itched, but he kept climbing like a monkey from those zoo videos that his mother used to rent for him. She believed that they were educational, but Calder watched them for strictly carnal reasons. He watched the animals mate. There was the video about the monkeys, the one with the sun bears and the zebras, but his favorite was the video about the whales. They were so large. They were sexual, and they weren't discrete. They had sex in front of the entire ocean.

When Calder made it up to the highest branch that he guessed could hold him, he was only three or four feet from Deborah's window. He leaned up against the tree and pulled his binoculars onto his face. The blinds were still shut, but he could see into the small crevices. Deborah was in her room. At least, he thought it was Deborah. He saw polka dots and skin. He imagined her in those frilly little socks and then he saw the blinds open, and she was standing at her window looking down at him. Calder pulled his binoculars down from his eyes and saw that she was wearing polka dots. It was a matching set, bra and panties. He put his hand down onto the branch, and it slipped. He fell down to the ground and landed on his face.

His face felt warm, but he knew that it shouldn't. The grass was cold. Calder lifted his head from the lawn and saw a tooth. He licked around his

Something in Watching *(Continued)*

mouth and spat out blood. Red on green, like Christmas. One of his front teeth was on the ground and not inside his mouth anymore. He picked it up and put it in his back pocket. His head pounded, and he checked his ears, no blood. He checked every hole on his face and spat blood onto the grass again before hoisting himself up to standing. He walked away.

Calder walked to the grocery where his mother worked. It wasn't until he walked into the store that he realized just how bad he looked. An elderly woman stopped her cart in the middle of the entrance and stared at him. A young boy grabbed his mother's hand and pointed at Calder with the other. A stock boy dropped a carton of blueberries to the floor. He finally saw his mother in the back of the store unpacking boxes and walked over to her. His left shin stung. His mother looked up at him.

"Jesus Christ!" she yelled and ran to meet him in the aisle. "What happened to you? You're bleeding!"

"Only from the mouth," Calder said.

"What happened to your teeth?" She asked and held his face in her hands. "You have dried blood all over your mouth!"

"It's just the one tooth," he said and pulled the tooth out from his back pocket. "And I don't feel too bad."

"Calder, two of your teeth are chipped really badly," she said and grabbed the tooth out of his hand. "And you lost one of your front teeth! Have you looked in a mirror?"

"No," he said. "I came straight here."

"What happened?" she asked, almost crying. "What happened to you?"

"I fell from a tree," he said.

"What tree?" she asked. "You're not a monkey!" Calder's mother got someone to cover her shift and met him outside near the car.

"We're going to the dentist," she said and started the car.

"We don't have insurance," Calder said and pulled the mirror down from the top of the car.

"We'll figure it out," his mother said and sped out of the parking lot. Calder looked at himself in the mirror. He had dried blood all around his mouth. It was crusty and his spit tasted like iron. His right front tooth was completely gone, but it left a dangling string of gum. It was still bleeding. The two teeth on either side of the missing tooth were severely chipped. They were

jagged, and Calder smoothed over the sharp edges with his tongue. This sliced it a bit, and he put his finger on it.

"It'll be fine," his mother said, seemingly to herself, as they pulled into the dentist's office. Calder's mother whined loudly to the receptionist and so the dentist saw him within five minutes. He cut at least two people in line for appointments. The people in the waiting room sat with their arms crossed and slumped in their seats. They looked at Calder with squinted eyes. His mother rubbed his head and handed him tissues. He shoved them into his mouth.

"Calder," a woman in ivory scrubs called his name and opened the door to the back rooms.

He stood up and followed the woman to a room that smelled sterile. He sat down in a plastic covered brown leather chair. The dentist walked in.

"Calder Hargraves," the tall man read his name off of a chart. "You've never been here before. Who is your regular dentist?" Calder thought that this man looked much too young to be a dentist.

"I don't have a regular dentist," he said, ashamed.

"Alright," the dentist said and put his chart on the counter. "You fell out of a tree?" Calder shook his head.

"And your mother has already given my receptionist the tooth that you lost," he said. "Let's see what's going on in there." Calder opened his mouth wide and the young dentist looked inside. Tiny silver instruments were being placed in Calder's mouth and then being put back onto the counter. The bright light above him obscured his vision. He could not see the man looking inside of his mouth, but the man could see him. The man could see everything. The dentist hummed a bit and then sat back.

"You don't have insurance?" he asked Calder.

"No," Calder said. "My mom works at the grocery store down the road."

"Hmm," he said. "These two teeth need veneers. And you need an implant for the one you lost."

"How much is that?" Calder asked. The dentist handed him a plastic vacuum and rinsing straw.

"Without insurance?" The dentist said. "Let me go talk to your mother." The dentist left the room, and Calder held the two foreign devices in his hands. He alternated them in his mouth and spat some blood onto his napkin bib. He wondered if Deborah's mother would tell his mother about



Something in Watching *(Continued)*

what happened the other day. He wondered if Deborah would stop her. The dentist opened the door and walked inside with the woman in the ivory scrubs who retrieved him earlier.

“We have to pull them,” he said.

“Why?” Calder asked, almost screaming.

“They are chipped too high,” he explained. “We can’t put a veneer on because you don’t have the insurance to cover it. If we leave them as they are, it will be very painful, and they will very likely rot and fall out on their own.”

“I don’t care about the pain!” Calder screamed.

“Calm down,” the woman in ivory said. “You can get them pulled now and then save up for the implants. It’s not permanent.”

Calder closed his eyes and listened to what they were saying but didn’t digest it. He spat blood onto his bib and squeezed the arms of the chair as they lowered it. They told him he’d feel a pinch on his gums, and he did and then he felt nothing. His mouth felt huge and his lips felt puffy. They told him he’d feel pressure. The bright light shined on his face. He had to close his eyes. They could see him. He heard a crackle and felt warmth. They wiped his chin with his bib. He opened his eyes and saw red.

When they were done, they stuffed his mouth full of cotton wads and sat him up straight. They told him what not to do to allow the blood clots to form. No vigorous rinsing or spitting was allowed. These activities could dislodge the clot. He had to stay away from hot liquids. These tended to dissolve the forming clots. He wasn’t allowed to suck out of a straw or blow his nose. If he had to sneeze, he was required to keep his mouth open. They gave him extra cotton wads in a plastic bag and a paper with instructions for care. They brought him out to the waiting room.

“Calder!” his mother stood up and walked toward him. “Are you okay?” Calder didn’t say a word. He walked past his mother and out to the parking lot where the car was. His mother followed.

“Just give me a nod or something,” she said and started the car. “I’m sorry that we couldn’t keep the other two teeth, Calder.”

His mother drove them home and stopped outside of the house. A moving van was parked in Deborah’s driveway. Men with dirty white t-shirts were carrying boxes to the van.

“Did you know that the Weinstock’s were moving?” she asked as she took the key out of the ignition. “I guess it’s all for the best. They didn’t really

belong here.”

Calder sat in the car and looked out the window at the men until his mother came back outside to make sure he was okay. He shoved another cotton wad into his mouth and walked through the front door.

“I’ll save the money, Calder,” she said to him with tears in her eyes. “We’ll get you those implants just as soon as I can come up with the money.”

Calder walked slowly up the stairs and into his bedroom. He heard his mother say, “At least its summer,” and he shut the door. He sat down at his window and looked across. Deborah was sitting at her window staring back at him. She waved. He shut his blinds and fell onto his bed.



He woke up a few hours later to his mother calling his name. Two cotton wads had fallen out of his mouth, and there was a collection of bloody saliva on his sheets. She yelled up the stairs that someone was at the door for him. He put a few new cotton wads in his mouth and walked down the stairs. Deborah was standing on the porch with a pet carrier.

“Do you want my cat?” she said, simply. “We can’t take her where we’re going. They don’t allow animals.”

“I think I love you,” he said. The wads of blood-soaked cotton in his mouth made him sound like he didn’t mean it.

“Take my cat,” she said and put the beige pet carrier down on his porch.

“I didn’t know you had a cat,” he said. He didn’t like cats.

“You don’t know very much about me. You only ever wanted to watch me,” she said and started to walk down the walkway to the sidewalk.

“Wait!” Calder yelled. “What do I feed her?”

“Cat food. And none of that cheap shit,” she said without turning around.

Deborah Weinstock walked down the walkway onto the sidewalk and then up her walkway to her front door. Calder never understood why she didn’t just walk across their lawns.



Fractal

Olivia Bouchard - Visual Art

Patient Zero

Callie Daniels-Howell - Poetry



It started with Gaëtan Dugas, a flight attendant who frequented bathhouses. Without going to jail, he was charged as “a sexually promiscuous homosexual responsible for the mass spread of HIV in the United States of America.” United, we imprisoned him. Now ‘patient zero’ is a term used to emphasize the significance of an idea, or a computer virus with far-reaching impact. Do you think Gaëtan knew? Typhoid Mary was formerly labeled an index case, the primary case. Now we’ve reduced the first ill to zero. Mary was a cook; maybe she was in a rush, customers out the door, she was usually very good at slicing the beef but the blade slipped and the blood oozed and she couldn’t decipher between the red of the cow and of her self and so she put it on the grill, anyway. She was in a hurry, anyway. And she didn’t know she was “an apparently healthy carrier,” anyway. Do you think Mary knew? I doubt the baby, living in the orphanage, knew his (maybe her, we tell the story from the perspective of “the focus of infection” not of the baby in Soho, London) nappy full of Cholera was the source of six hundred and sixteen dead. Édgar Enrique Hernández knew. There’s a bronze statue constructed for his commencing Swine Flu and living to tell the tale. And what about the two-year-old in Guinea, we call him a “little boy” and we “hesitate to name him patient zero” because 3000 dead and 1.4 million to come seems like a lot for a toddler to instigate. And what about us? Do we know the cataclysms we cause? Does it take bronze statues for us to see the ripples? Are we blind to our tsunamis?

In Wisconsin My Father's Singing Voice was Silenced After Eduardo Corral

Gabrielle Montesanti - Poetry

by the elementary school principal. No one cared
for the squeal of little italiano boys in parochial school.

He consumes speed with chopsticks. His photo i.d. is blurred
on both sides. He drank reclusiveness from a shot glass in
third period. He dropped out by the bell beginning seventh.

He named me *Gabrielle*, after the angel who broke
the news to a virgin long before she could pee on a stick.

In the wintertime, he shoveled heaps of depression
and piled it all off to the side so that the dogs could shit
in the designated area and we'd find the turds the spring.

The day I learned the difference between hot and cold
I hurt him just to see if we experienced the same pain.

He memorized the Bible not by listening to crickets cry
or the friction of his prepubescent legs against silky
jogging shorts but by repeatedly begging for forgiveness.

In Colorado he folded tacos, learned his alphabet from
Alberto, Benito, Cesario. I tell him everything but the truth.

There is a line of hair trailing down his belly far straighter
than me. Last ash wednesday, he gave up beer for lent
every other tuesday and the first sunday of every month.

At three years old, he smelled masturbation on my hands
and bathed me with a juice cup and lukewarm water.

Once, he flew my mother across the country for breakfast,
wept when she got sicker than the time she climbed out
of those giant spinning apples at the Alaska State Fair.

In italiano, he is Montesanti, *saint of the mountain*,
he prayed for a boy, else that saint grow cold and die alone.

I never played with magnets, I just watched my parents
fight about church. For each seed in a berry, he sent up
a single prayer wrapped neatly in an airtight bundle.

He is a first generation American.
I am a first generation student.

Once, he laughed at my reflection in the mirror. He banned
polyester pants when I turned fifteen, outlawed sex
with the lights on when the holy spirit took my mother's place.

The gap between his front teeth is wide enough for his father
to flee to Italy, for his mother to cover redness with eye drops.

The only word he knows in my language is *shavasana*.
Flat on our backs, at the peak of the mountain
we lie on either side of the saint's smoking corpse.



MONKEY WAS HERE

Jasmin An - Poetry

Monkey Gambles For His Throne Or The TSA Agent Asks To See My Passport

I pissed on Buddha's
pointing finger.
I ate the peaches.
I memorized the pledge.
I signed my name
with a brush of my own hair.

MONKEY WAS HERE
set in cursive, in print,
in logogram, look:

猴子在這裡

But still, I am judged
a simian. Stripped
of my silk robe,
not allowed to blunt
my nakedness
with anything but fur.

After Monkey Proclaims Himself Great Sage Equal To Heaven

Sun Wukong,
you were a bad Asian.
You did not sit still.
You shattered
Lao Tzu's crucible
of eight trigrams.
You mulched
your arrogance
into the peach
orchard. You grew
three heads and six
arms and beat your cudgel
against the palace
floor so loudly the white
men on the other side
of the world
heard you knocking.

The Judicial System Hands Monkey His Verdict

No more code switching,
Sun Wukong. No more
dressing your fur in scales,
feathers, slippery white skin.
Your body is not a temple,
Sun Wukong. See the stars
and stripes flying on the
flagpoll of your tail. Open
your mouth, Sun Wukong.
Erlang's boot will smash
the words against your teeth,
even if you have never learned
more than oh say can you
see how black your hair,
no matter the bleach or
dye or baseball caps
you wear backwards
when you want to be
mistaken for a man. No more
transformations, Sun Wukong.
This is America, speak
Chinese only when we ask
it of you, and when we do,
dare not look back at us
with an empty mouth.



Monkey Apologizes For His Transformation

I am sorry I
turned into a pine tree.
The other children
asked me to.
They wanted to see
my yellow rind
crack and sprout
pale flesh
just like theirs.
No,
that is a lie.
I wanted to show
off. Can't you see
these needles
in my skin?
Sharp hairs
as shroud. I bristle
and belong.

The Edge of the Continent

Lily Uribe - Poetry

I've come the edge of the continent now. Bitter blue
bells pepper the air. Down and down the cliff plummets,
then leagues and leagues, and at the bottom of the ocean
the huge shadows of sea panthers pace impatiently.
The keepsakes we carefully selected have long since
been left behind. It only takes losing everything to realize
there is more to lose than you could ever imagine.
The food my mother gave me was gone
in the first week. My traveling companions were gone
by the end of the next. I have spent years of nights asleep
in wet caves, and if anything I am now even more afraid
of the dark. When I was a child my sister sat on the floor
with me and told me stories of dogs who'd rather starve
to death than make a hard decision, sooner go insane
than go home. My father told me stories of my grandmother
in heaven, watching us, as he philosophized more and more
with age. I've never needed both stories as badly as I need
them now. I have been packing my whole life without even
realizing it. The dog and the old woman I never knew perch
on each shoulder, as the carnivores sickly circle below. This living
is far more vivid than I was led to believe. It hurts like being alone
and it presses outward like eating pickled animals, like babies
who need to be born in all the wrong places, like take
it out of me, take it out, take it out,
let me hold it.



Beetles and Bones

Allison Hammerly - Visual Art

Contributor Bios

Jasmine An is a queer, third generation Chinese-American who comes from the Midwest. She has lived in New York City and Chiang Mai, Thailand, studying poetry, urban development, and blacksmithing. Her work features in multiple journals, such as *HEArt Online*. Currently, she lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she teaches creative writing workshops at a local facility for probationers and parolees.

Isabela Agosa is a sophomore English major. More commonly known by her nickname Bela, she enjoys sweets, meat and social revolution. She dreams of sharing more of her writing, and of cozy reading nooks with lots of blankets.

Kate Belew is a senior, mermaid, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *The Cauldron*. She is the Development Assistant at Sundress Publications and interns with the Poets In Print Reading Series. She has been published in journals such as *Minetta Review*, *Mochila*, and *Collision Literary Journal*. When she's not writing, she's dancing, hula hooping, or reading tarot cards. Her heart was left somewhere in Spain.

Hannah Bogard is a senior Psychology major with a minor in English and Anthropology/Sociology. Her favorite favorite and most meaningful writing course at K so far was Creative Non-Fiction with Marin Heinritz. She hopes to continue writing in the creative non-fiction genre in addition to working with youth in a social work setting in Grand Rapids after graduating K this spring.

Sam Evans-Golden is a Math/Computer Science double major from Ann Arbor. He is drawn irrationally, recklessly, to creative writing.

Annie Gough is a senior English major at Kalamazoo College, a dog enthusiast and lifelong Michigander. She studied abroad in Aberdeen, Scotland her junior year, where she fell in love with the Highlands, the people, and the haggis. Annie enjoys watching film adaptations of Jane Austen novels, tramping through wilderness, and spending time with her fluffy dog, Roxy.

Marquise Griffin is a senior English major with an interest in the human condition as it's portrayed through literature and culture. Marquise aims to use writing to enlighten and inspire positive change. After graduating from K,

Marquise will pursue a master's in Higher Education Student Affairs with the aim of focusing on educational policy and how it can be made more accessible and inclusive.

Elise Houcek is a first-year from the suburbs of Chicago. She enjoys listening to music, hoola-hooping, and watching movies. One day, Elise hopes to attend graduate school and study Mesopotamian archeology and to write poetry and articles.



Jane Huffman is a senior Theatre Arts and English/Writing double major. Her work has been featured in a variety of literary journals across the country. She is honored to be both the Co-Editor-in-Chief and a contributor in this edition of *The Cauldron*. After graduation, she is pursuing an MFA in Poetry at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop.

Emaline Lapinski is a senior English major, with a psychology minor and concentration in Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She enjoys reading, writing, and playing with dogs and cats.

Laura Manardo is a senior English major and Media Studies concentrator. She wrote her first short story in second grade about a girl who met a ghost named Sandra in a barn. It was well received by her parents and currently sits on their mantle next to the family bobble heads.

Allison Kennedy is a hybrid poet and visual artist from Ann Arbor, Michigan, raised on open mics, and sustained by good poets that are even better people. She lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and facilitates creative writing workshops at a probationer and parolee facility, and looks forward to building power and voices beyond walls. She likes to look out windows, put poems in space, and make too many copies of poems before writing workshops, just in case.

Natalie Martell is a junior majoring Creative Writing and Anthropology/Sociology. Her favorite things are thunderstorms, legal pads, sliding across wood floors with slippery socks on, pancakes, pine trees, and tomfoolery. She is an aspiring writer. This is the first time she's ever been published.

Belinda McCauley is a junior who recently studied abroad in Scotland. She is an English/Writing and Theatre Arts double major with a weakness for movie musicals that will most likely be her downfall.

Sara McKinney is a Sophomore English major with a burgeoning caffeine addiction and far too many books on her to-read list.

Jordan Meiller is an English/Writing Major. His work has appeared in *The Cauldron*, the Kalamazoo Poetry Collective Chapbook, a blog he made for a high school project, and Facebook. This is his first published contributor bio.

Sarah Levett is a sophomore Theatre Arts major who enjoys Swedish Fish, terrible horror movies, doing paperwork, and dabbling in poetry.

Abby Lu is a sophomore majoring in Anthropology/Sociology and Philosophy. She loves adventures. She lives in middle spaces.

Hunter Parsons is a senior English/Writing major from Clawson, Michigan. When she isn't writing, working in the Writing Center, or TAing creative writing classes, Hunter is watering her air plants, drinking hard cider, or organizing her lipstick collection. She has been recently published in Kalamazoo College's zine, *Obzine*, as well as *This Heart is Homebound*.

Anni Rayas was born in Lansing, Michigan, but has spent most of her life in the suburbs of Minneapolis. She returned to Michigan in 2011 to attend Kalamazoo College, where she is now a senior studio art major with a minor in psychology. In her art, she tends to work with traditional drawing and painting media, but also enjoys photography, wheel throwing, and performance art when she gets the chance to explore these media. She is interested in doing future work in counseling and art therapy after graduation.

Katherine Rapin is a Senior from Northern Michigan, majoring in English. She writes a food column in the campus newspaper, organizes campus cooking classes, and bar tends at Old Dog Tavern. After graduation she plans to move to Philadelphia to pursue work in restructuring our country's food system. She will always write, especially journalism and creative non-fiction, for the importance of sharing stories.

Cameron Schneberger is a Theatre Arts major at Kalamazoo College who enjoys writing poetry in his spare time. His work has appeared in *The Cauldron* and only in *The Cauldron*. He is afraid of crocodiles and mattress tags.

Carmen Adriana Torrado Gonzalez is a Nuyorican poet (Boricuan poet at heart). She has a hard time calling herself a poet, or a writer, or anything beyond Carmen.



Lily Uribe is a senior at Kalamazoo College, majoring in Psychology with a minor in English and a concentration in Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She is from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Camille Wood is a sophomore at Kalamazoo College. Her writings are featured most prominently on her parent's fridge. She is a fledgling poet and excited to be published in *The Cauldron* for the first time. She would like to thank Diane Seuss for her guidance and inspiration; she also apologizes to her for not speaking more in "Intermediate Poetry Workshop."

Rachel Worrell is a senior English major who recently completed her SIP, a verse-novel called "Perfect Interrupted Dream: The Supposed Madness of Sylvia Lockwood." Besides writing poetry, she also enjoys coffee, cats, and baking.

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