



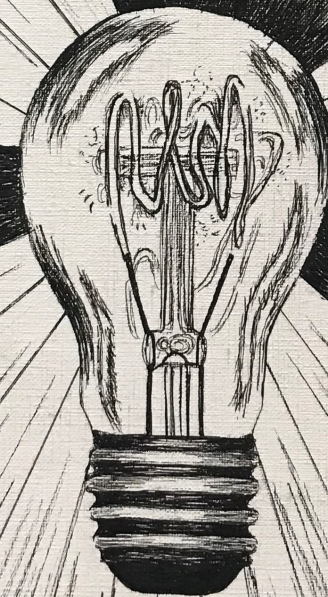
TCU Journal of the Arts

eleven4oseven

Fall 2018 Volume 14.1

# eleven4oseven

*tcu journal of the arts*



[1147.tcu.edu](http://1147.tcu.edu)



# eleven40seven

*tcu journal of the arts*

**Fall 2018**  
**[www.1147.tcu.edu](http://www.1147.tcu.edu)**

*©copyright 2018 Texas Christian University*

**VOLUME 14.1**

**FALL 2018**

“

**CREATIVITY TAKES  
COURAGE.**

”

– Henri Matisse



# CONTENTS

Only Light Can Do That	6	Joshua Witkop
I Will Remain a Sinner for the Fors- eeable Future	7	Joshua Borders
38 <sup>th</sup>	8	AJ Rangel
Portraits	10	Ally Bailey
Unbalanced	11	Nicole Medina
Forest of the Battle of the Bands	12	Chip Fankhauser
Village Idiots	13	AJ Rangel
Mental Health	15	Sarah Calvo
The Old Man in the Mirror	16	Suzanne Yost
My Moon	24	Sydney Peel
In a Place We Call Eden	25	Shawna Dyer
DIVORCING ARTHUR	26	Catherine Forte
Sandy Bridge	27	Nicole Medina
The First and Final Waltz	28	Jasmine Dairymple
Evening in Georgetown- Acrylic on Canvas	30	Nicole Medina
Can we Hold Hands	31	Zachary Mills
Nature	33	Nicole Medina
The Chase	34	Taz Turner
limited time only	36	Madison Palica
Left Behind	37	Melissa Countryman
Creative Photography	41	Abbey Dean
Monster	42	Julie Winspear
White Raven	43	Kahla Watkins
ASAP Forever	44	Daria Jones
what is this person's ethnicity?	45	Sarah Calvo
Heaven on Earth	46	Kayce Patterson
clean your bugs	47	Laura Fuentes
My Friend in the Graveyard	48	Beth Potts
HOIAN	50	Minh Nguyen
The Eternal Daddy-Daughter Dance	51	Suzanne Yost
Creative Photography	52	Abbey Dean
limited time only	53	Madison Palica
this is the truth	54	Kiana Giddings
Look Up	55	Nathan Little
a letter for a restless one	56	Laura Fuentes
Mental Health	57	Sarah Calvo
Hero	59	Grace Backus
The Inside	63	Sydney Peel
Penning Poetica	64	Melissa Countryman
Stand Tall	66	Ethan Mito
Darkness of a Man	67	Erin Hill
Drought in the Hill Country	68	Abigail Jennings
Jack Black	70	Ryan Hinchcliff
Your Grasp	71	Vicki Lozano
What I Wish I Knew Then...	72	Alexa Shaw

# EDITOR'S NOTE

From the very beginning of the semester, we as an editorial team have worked hard to give you the Fall 2018 edition of eleven40seven. I've served on the eleven40seven staff now for three semesters and could not be more proud of the work we've done to create this journal. This semester we received one of the top amounts of submissions and sifted through a lot of incredible content. Being a creative writing minor myself, I know how hard it can be to feel as though a piece is good enough to submit and I commend every person who submitted. In my opinion, it takes an incredible amount of bravery to write about life experiences, let alone submit them for others to interact alongside.

This journal is raw and honest. It spans both black and white and color photography, poetry, and prose and is continued online at [eleven40seven.org](http://eleven40seven.org). There is an overarching theme of making the most of a situation and finding happiness in pain. I am so incredibly proud of the team effort, members, and what everyone brought to the table week after week.

I want to thank Dr. Rode and Dr. Carlson for their guidance throughout the entire process and helping us all along the way. I am extremely grateful for this experience to be able to serve and guide a great team of editors throughout the semester. I want to commend Nicole Medina on her piece titled, "Evening in Georgetown – Acrylic on Canvas" for earning the Helen Hamilton Award for Excellence in Creative Expression. Congratulations! I've enjoyed this opportunity to grow and feel extremely rewarded to be able to learn from this experience. Read, enjoy, and thank you.

Lucy Mariani

Editor-in-Chief, Fall 2018

# Only Light Can Do That

## Joshua Witkop

Go sit out at sunrise  
And let your heart become your eyes  
As darkness retreats into its shadows  
And day  
Is  
Born

Go sit out at sunrise and see  
The thing light does to you and me  
As fear becomes a morning's yearning  
To know the world and why it's turning

Feel darkness stop you in your tracks  
Each creak and snap behind your back  
Waiting for dawn to come remind you:  
You really aren't afraid

Know peace that comes with understanding  
Night gives way to dawn  
Though wretched cycle is commanding  
Sit back, relax, and yawn

Let detail after distant detail  
Become apparent to your soul  
As your body blends with nature  
You see yourself in full



# **I Will Remain a Sinner for the Foreseeable Future**

## **Joshua Borders**

And it is just one regret  
that my sparkly wings were assembled  
from the discount bin at Hobby Lobby.  
With each flap, I remember a squiggly sunset  
off the starboard side, drunken curlicues of light.  
Remind me, are you a sabremetrician or a prostitute,  
shall I call you my friend, would you let me  
gargle & puff in your hotboxed heaven?  
As the son of Adam and eve-  
ning, I believe in reciprocity. I suppose  
you can ask me about Wins above  
Replacement, though I have never been replaced.  
Ask me how I shake and stir  
my body into such a victorious boogaloo, and I'll say,  
I drink champagne every morning, for I am an optimist.  
What about this – you ask me  
if I will inherit the earth, and I'll let you in  
on a little secret: I am in love  
with the evil I call my own.

# 38<sup>th</sup>

## A.J. Rangel

I once met a man whose favorite number was 38. He never knew because things weren't always so; by the time he realized it he was far too late, the grasp of his woes having made black tar out of his soul.

He grew up with inner city delirium, the heated streets scorching any hope there was for him and his peers. They bypassed boredom by first thieving then scrambling, heading back home and drinking beer. This was their practice from a very wee age, but this man would still go home shedding tears. He never understood why this was his life to live, why he was destined solely for this career. He had a prominent spirit, his path to (the gates) clear, but when (the pastors) came to preach he acted as if he didn't hear. This was the process every aching year, until finally, they decided he wasn't valuable enough to try stuffing (the word) into his ear.

From there forward his misfortune would only get worse. He would find himself on 38th street, where his body stayed, but his mind wandered the earth. Clueless that his adventures here would follow him 'til his body lie in a hearse, he started a family and let them take burden under his hideous curse.

His partner herself was the child of a wicked art. She was a sacrifice, and in exchange her family received a few packs of cigarettes to spark. Much like her male counterpart she tried looking for a future past the stealing and scars. But alas, there is no end to the suffering when two people meet, both bearing a (pagan's mark). Together they bore 4 spawn, each an involuntary ransom to their parents' gruesome lark.

Their only gift before they were left to scavenge catacombs kissed by Hades himself : a resilience within their hearts that once made their father stand apart.

Beyond what anyone could muse, the quartet of children born to a man of 38 (damnations) and a few bullet perforations pulled their weight through the labyrinth to create their own (salvation). They obtained a rare success, but only stoked the fires that fed what was now one of the world's most fiendish creations. Coinciding with their journey was the further deterioration of the man I'd come to know, now gnarled and wise to his life's equation. His children, even his wife, may have had a future beyond their current designations, but there was nothing left for him but aging and canned fermentation. Decrepit and lonesome, he had reached

for the (almighty hand), but no (Samaritan) was coming along to heal his lacerations. Refusing to leave a legacy as dormant as the world had lined up for him, he gathered the strength for one final conversation. One where he and the (imps of terror) would finally have a confrontation.

Everyone who saw the battle would like to say he reversed his fate. In no shape to race, his only option was to wrestle the vehement spirits in enraged embrace. How many he defeated in the end is unknown, the final eyes turning away for humanity's sake. An ugly, guttural cry was the last anyone heard from the crooked and toothless mouth on his pulped face. Whether he left the Earth in anyone's graces is hard to say, but he assured his legend in making his final stand one that no memory could erase.

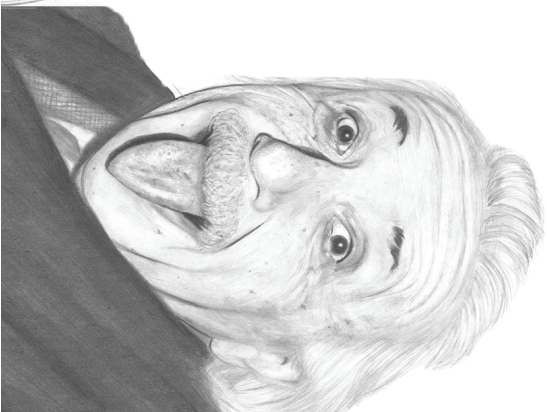
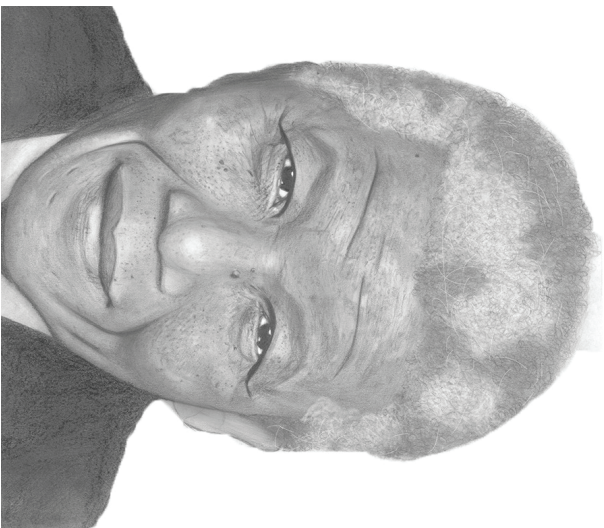
There was no escaping, no turning astray. He scrapped, but there was no end to the fray.

It was timely, when the man passed away. It was his birthday: he had turned 38.



# Portraits

## Ally Bailey



# Unbalanced

Nicole Medina



# Forest of the Battle of the Bands

## Chip Fankhauser

*The bony blackberry bush basks,  
An echo of a forest's final breath.  
It laments its barrenness,  
Baroness of brokenness.  
The bear Honest walks by, stomping in the  
Graveyard of her crawling grounds.  
She hums her past; fond memories sung  
Down the river of fickleness.  
Their tones clash as they cross,  
Dissonance. She knows to stay away,  
But can't help screaming her song  
Against the blackberry's ballad,  
For she knows her song is true.*

*If you cannot serenade yourself  
While passing the blackberry bush,  
When can you?*

*The cacophony of their tunes  
Fades with the thought.  
But they both stand proud,  
The bear and the bush,  
Their psalms sung.*



# Village Idiots

## A.J. Rangel

Take me with you. Down those stagnant streets that I walked for nearly 2 decades. Past the houses that look like they were drawn up by a kid with crayons. Trying to ignore the panhandlers, making sure to get home before dark. No the streets weren't dangerous, but you always liked to see the sky just before dusk, to watch the sun and moon fight for supremacy.

You always liked that I was there for you by evening and through the night, and when you awoke, there was another man waiting.

All I'll ever be known for is chasing a genuine living. A boy trying to one day become the true light in a woman's life, never succeeding in being brought out of the shade. I suppose that's where I belong, in those small moments when the day is waning and the night waxing. My talents, ambitions, the very way I carry myself should only be admired when the village lights are dimmed. To gaze in admiration is easy when what you see is more silhouette than flesh and bone. But you danced with my silhouette, knowing that I was only capable of life as a shadow.

Maybe I should've known that when you took my hand- actually grasping it, unlike the others who only took swipes at the darkness in front of them- that you were as transparent and opaque on the inside as I am outside. That there were layers of you that the slightest glance could unveil, but others that even the deepest wound would never penetrate. If I had known, I would've never spun you around, holding you until we stood on the fringes of my dwelling. I wouldn't be standing here, staring at the abyss where the hazy blend of faded sunlight and lingering gloom meets total obscurity.

Now pondering just how far my fall would be into the void, I try holding onto the moments that define what my life has become. The dances, those walks through the village where lives die young and hearts die younger. I now only faintly resemble the ghost of a man I already was. Even ghosts have souls, but somehow I was stripped of that, only to be left with what my mind can recall. And I recall when we skipped down those narrow and beaten streets, waltzed past abodes turned graveyards, all in the spirit of livelihood and beautiful sunsets.

But I was only half-alive to begin with. And you never enjoyed the sunsets: they just reminded you that the sunrise would be coming soon. We were two broken souls, locked arm in arm. But, broken by choice, you decided that being fragmented wasn't fun anymore. So you mended yourself, knowing that I was the only person incapable of ever doing the same.

You continue your walk as it slopes gradually downward, heading toward the same ending as the ghouls surrounding you. And eventually you will reach the point where you run out of sunshine. The point where I stand now. You'll begin a new life, pirouetting through the purest shade of nightfall, past the resting sites of those who came by choice, until you find your bedding and lie down, watching others as they walk the same path as you.

And oh, how I would be delighted if, on that day, you could take me with you.

# Mental Health

Sarah Calvo



For the rest of the series please visit our online edition: <http://1147.tcu.edu>



# The Old Man in the Mirror

## Suzanne Yost

Around the ages of five or six, I developed a habit of hoping. I would hope to the point of belief, even if it was for the impossible. Before going outside, I'd ask Mama to tie my hair into two brown plaits with little blue bows on the ends. Then I'd walk along the sidewalks of my neighborhood, watching the concrete slabs intently, hoping that if I looked carefully enough I would see a flicker of gold. When I'd finally lift my gaze, I'd almost expect to see a gleaming emerald city, like the one my father read to me about, reflecting in my eager sapphire eyes. For a brief moment, I'd actually see it—a blissful, magical Oz—before reality would rub its way back into view and I'd blink and be left staring at a brown brick home with dozens of lookalikes populating the lane.

Tonight, I'm walking, too. Mama's terrier is strewn out before me on a leash, belly almost brushing the ground. I'm watching my boot-clad feet smack the pavement in their metronomic beat. All I see is the same monotonous suburban wasteland that set the stage for my childhood—thirty-some years have left it with only a few more cracks in the sidewalk. I don't lift my head until I sense a change in scenery: I've left the shielding canopy of my neighborhood and have reached a patch of road unguarded by trees. And here the horizon is unclogged and I can see the stars. I live close enough to Milwaukee that the light pollutes the farther reaches of the night sky, but there are always some constellations I can see, like Orion's Belt and one of the Dippers (I'm never sure which). Craning my neck, I admire the ghosts in the sky, the remnants of the bright stars that died closer to the beginning of time than the end of it, their light reaching me only now. I want to find comfort in those stars, in their familiarity, in the assurance that the same sky is looking down on my father. But tonight, I'm left cold at their sight. My heart is not warmed by those balls of blue and orange gas lightyears away.

My cellphone buzzes in my pocket and I reach for it. It's illuminated by a number I can't ignore and my heart starts to flutter back to life—pounding, frantic life. I deglove and swipe to answer while my feet don't miss a beat. didn't look like her. My skin was brown and hers was not.

"Hi, is this Ms. Lucy Piper?" I'm affirmed by the man's voice I knew I'd hear. Davis from Meadowhill Assisted Elderly Living asks how I'm doing tonight. I skip pleasantries and ask:

"Is everything OK?" I think he hears my panic; it's late to be getting this call.

"Uh, yes, your mother is doing alright at the moment. She—well, she's been having some trouble with short-term memory. But she keeps asking about your father—" I cut him off, asking what he needs from me.

After a pause, he continues, “We suggest scheduling an appointment with her neurologist and that maybe you stop by soon. We think she’d benefit from seeing you.”

“Yes, yes, OK,” I stammer. “I can take off work tomorrow morning, I think.”

Short goodbyes and we both hang up.

A warm phone in a cold hand, I find myself stopped outside Sally’s Place, the ‘50s themed diner that dominated my high school years, but even before that, was the setting for a slew of late dinners with Mama after she finished work. Among the red booths and checkered floors of Sally’s Place was where she looked happiest, and I don’t think it was because of the food. I think it was just because Mama loved the ‘50s. And I mean she really loved the ‘50s. She had a cherry-red 1958 Ford Mustang in the garage that was even old when she drove it in high school. Coming inside from my outside playtime, I’d sometimes catch her in there, sitting on the hood of her soccer-mom SUV, staring at it almost like she stared at me. Occasionally, I’d even find her sitting in the driver’s seat, getting dust on her clothes. She would rub the leather of the steering wheel between her fingertips with her eyes closed as she listened to a soundtrack only she could hear, feeling the ghost of decades old wind toss her hair. Mama loved the ‘50s so much she named me after one of its most famous sitcoms: “I Love Lucy.” I think she liked the timelessness of it.

The dog begins to yap at me. It is shaking in the cold, its fur coat thinner than it seemed. I realize I’ve been loitering on the sidewalk for a while, dazed and rolling the pearls around my neck between numb, never-re-gloved fingers; some of the Wednesday night regulars enjoying their midnight milkshakes have begun to peer at me out the window. I shake the dusty memories out of the forefront of my mind and avert my attention to my phone. I tilt it to find that it’s cold and lifeless in my hand. Without the screen illuminated, it just reflects back at me before I quickly look away, jamming it back into my pocket. It’s useless. I pivot on the balls of my feet and begin my retreat back to the brown lemming of a house that my mama left me.

\*\*\*

I never understood Dorothy’s incessant desire: her need to go home. I think if Glinda gave me those ruby slippers, I’d chuck them in a bright green sewer somewhere. It strikes me now how shrouded in naivety she—Dorothy—was. But my father read the words from the pages in this voice that sounded like he forgot

where he was, and I remember wishing I knew where he was going in his head. Each morning before I open my eyes, I stare at my dark eyelids and think that perhaps the light that will greet them upon their opening will be otherworldly. I'll have escaped Wisconsin, my Kansas. This morning, I'm waking from the haze of both a memory and a dream, warm and familiar.

*"I love you, Lucy," Mama crooned, sing-songily. She cradled me, her forearms against my head and neck and side, skin softer than my own. I could feel the beat of her heart reverberating throughout my entire body. Somewhere behind her was the presence of a man—my father. I felt him, but I couldn't see him beyond her face that I stared up at with eyes disproportionately large for my head. I ogle at the polka-dot print of her dress and the pearls strung around her neck. I feel her words wash over me like silk sheets and lilac that furls itself into your nostrils and right up into your brain. There it spreads and covers and flourishes and there is nothing wrong with the world...*

*...but the sunrise.*

Today my eyelids are a pinkish orange: I forgot to close my blinds, so the sunrise wakes me along with the chirpings of irritating early-birds outside my window. (Why they chose to stay for the approaching Wisconsin winter is lost on me.) Sitting up, the first thing I reach for is the pearl necklace, clasping it with ease so it settles into place on my collarbone.

The morning moves at the rate of my own lethargy as I wander about the house that fluctuates between phases of neurotic organization and undisciplined chaos. Today I wake to a mayhem I know well, expertly stepping over piles of books, placing laundry in the dryer I'd forgotten was waiting in the wash, pouring dry food in the dog bowl, and sifting through the dirty dishes for a "clean enough" bowl and spoon. The sound of cereal—and dogfood—crunching is the only thing I let soak in the drain of my brain, empty of all the fuzzy morning dreaming. As the Cheerios I've been eating for thirty-six years meet my taste buds, I finger the crows' feet imprinting themselves into the skin of my temples, turned the wrong way, and daydream that maybe the next time I look in a mirror I'll look like I did ten years ago. These thoughts are interrupted by the dog who begs to be let out into the fenced backyard; I oblige.

8:40 hits and with the clock, the dog returns to the warm indoors and I step into the garage occupied by two cars—one that works and one that doesn't—and the miscellaneous clutter from the house after Mama left it that I'd put in haphazardly stacked boxes.

I pause, staring at the Mustang I have yet to figure out what to do with. Once I asked Mama why she kept it. She could get it fixed up and sell it for thousands. I rarely saw Mama get mad, but that day her blue eyes filled with dark gray and I saw what she looked like unhinged for a moment. She stormed off. She didn't speak to me for two days before I apologized. She sat in the car a lot those two days. She broke the silence at the dinner table, launching into a memory of my father and their first date: how she picked him up for the milkshakes at Sally's Place, how he complained that having the convertible top down messed up his hair, how she laughed at him and his vanity but thought he was charming nonetheless. I understood, then, why she was always sitting in that car, pretending to be driving, pretending her high school sweetheart was still in the passenger seat. I think she was hoping that maybe one day she'd step into the garage to find him there, still waiting for her.

Pulling myself out of the memory, I turn to face the other car in the garage. Then I'm off.

\*\*\*

I greet Davis at the reception desk, take off my hat and gloves, and sit in the lobby of the nursing home for about ten minutes. Those ten minutes feel like two years as my mind wrestles with reality: maybe Mama wasn't as bad as I was thinking she was. She couldn't have been that different from when I saw her a few weeks ago. Mama had been doing alright. She'd been forgetting some things—OK, a lot of things—but she still had her short-term memories. She didn't always remember me, but she remembered her doctors and her friends at Meadowhill. I just hope, I just hope, I just—I'm rolling pearls between my fingertips when I am approached.

"You must be Ms. Lucy Piper; how are we doing today?" the overly-cheery woman says to me. She is peering at me in her nurse's scrubs dotted with small hearts, wrinkled where she's bent over, making our faces level. I supposed this was how she talked to the residents.

I stand up. "I'm doing alright. I'm ready to see my mother." The nurse introduces herself as Cynthia, hands me a visitor's pass, and proceeds to lead me down the pristine, white tiled hallway to the left of the reception desk. The walls are peppered with Valentine's Day decor as the pink and red holiday is approaching. Mama's room has a heart-shaped doily on it. Cynthia knocks but begins to slowly open the door before waiting to hear a response.

She then calls Mama by her first name, which startles me. Hardly anyone ever does that. She is always Mrs. Piper. Even when Mr. Piper skipped town.

Mama is sitting in a pink lounge chair by a reading lamp, flipping through an old magazine. A landline is on a small table next to her. She is wearing polka dots and I'm not surprised to see her room the way it is: covered in prints of Audrey Hepburn. It seems right that the one thing dementia can't take from her is her obsession with the '50s.

"Are you training one of the new nurses?" Mama says to Cynthia, peering at me through her thick glasses. I feel my bottom lip start to tremble. This never gets easier.

"No, darling, this is Lucy. Your daughter. Do you remember her?" Mama squints harder at me. I step forward and kneel beside her chair the way a child might. I even wore two braids today.

"Mama, it's me," I say, trying not to choke up.

Brow furrowed, Mama says: "I don't have a daughter. I'm too young to have one. But that's a very nice necklace you have, there." Cynthia picks up the conversation and my brain barely registers their words: Mama is sixteen; she's waiting for her boyfriend, Nathan, to call. Cynthia starts talking about a game night they had at Meadowhill a few days before that Mama swears never happened.

There's a lull and I enter back in: "Mama, I wanted to ask you about your car: the red Mustang. Do you remember?"

"Of course, I do. After Nathan calls I'm going to go pick him up in it. We'll probably go to Sally's Place. We love sharing the chocolate milkshakes."

"That's nice," I say with a soft, pitiful smile. I'd been planning to ask her about selling it. But she's looking at me with big eyes and I can't shake the memory of the last time we had this conversation. So instead I say: "I was thinking about figuring out a way to bring it by here sometime. I know you used to like to sit in it, even though it can't drive anymore."

"Dear, it's just in the garage. I'm going to go pick up Nathan in a while after he calls." I smile again, say nothing. She looks back at her magazine. I wonder if we'll ever be able to find her brain again or if perhaps we're too far along the yellow brick road. I quietly excuse myself to go use Mama's bathroom.

Propped on the medicine cabinet is a small, plush lion braving the height so as to peer down at me. I feel his judgement

searing into me, so I lower my head and stand, staring at the sink. I begin to sway, so I reach out to grip the edge of the sink, hoping it will keep me steady. My hands tighten around the rim, as if my grip alone could tether my fleeting hope to me.

Who was I kidding coming here and thinking two brown braids and a pearl necklace could reboot her memory? Mama hadn't had a lucid day since the Thursday after I began noticing signs of the encroaching dementia. And it consumed her quickly. Within a month, I was checking her into Meadowhill to leave her in a place she didn't know with people she didn't recognize. But then again, she didn't always recognize me either. I think the only person she might've recognized was the man my DNA knew better than my own memory.

In an instance of bravery or cowardice (which, I'm not sure), I look up. For a moment, my breath is stolen from my lungs as I catch a glimpse of the reflection staring back at me in the bathroom mirror. He is haggard. He has sagging cheeks and weather-worn skin, almost to the point of appearing bruised. He has a gnarly nose, pointed and almost witch-like. Wrinkles shroud his forehead and deep crows' feet turned away from laughter caress his melting, glassy eyes. A gray beard drips from his chin like a half-melted, upside-down ice cream cone in some flavor I don't recognize. Veiled by the beard, I spy a string of pearls, taut against his skin, choking him. His face is familiar to me: inhabited by emptiness like Mama's, age like that I never saw my father wear, and blue eyes full of budding fear, just like my own.

I retreat my gaze.

I reach for the long beard under my chin I saw only a moment before, but my touch is met with air. My eyes rise slowly, and I am looking at who I thought I was: older than I'd like with wispy brown hair, and eyes caught somewhere between retreating and resigned. I fight against my mind, trying to repulse the images it is putting into my head. But I am a mere face in a puddle, though it is not even my face I see but the face of the person I harbor within me, masking him with my own deceiving body. And I am not my father's daughter. I'm my mama's. I try to shake the feeling of the old man living inside of me, using my body to disguise his own, but it clings to me, a death-grip on my fragile skin.

As I stand here, weight against the sink, there is pain. I feel the pearls, smooth against my neck, but they feel as if they're choking me. I fumble with them, trying to take them off. They felt



too much like a collar I've let strangle me for fifteen years.

One of the only living memories I have of my father is of the day he gave Mama the pearl necklace. I was maybe five or six-years-old. I was sitting in the living room flipping imaginary pancakes in the play kitchen my parents had gotten me for my birthday. My father presented Mama with a velvety box and she squealed like a schoolgirl.

*"Nathan, you shouldn't have!"*

*"I saw it and I had to." She opened the box with a pop! and audibly gasped. My father pulled the pearls up out of their bed and stood behind her, clasping them in place.*

*"They must have cost a lot," Mama said, looking down at her new accessory.*

*"Worth every penny," he said, his voice oozing like Wisconsin cheese as he spun her back around to face him, planting a kiss on her forehead. Mama smiled so big.*

That was only three weeks before he left us.

Mama re-gifted the pearls to me for my 21st birthday and I wore them every day after that, thinking that they'd make me feel closer to my father, thinking that maybe if one day he came home, he'd recognize me as his daughter. What a waste it's been: fifteen years and three months spent wearing what was his. And nearly twice as long since his pearls had to replace him. Mama's been hoping for almost three decades that he'd show up again one day. That he'd have some story that would have made the sleepless nights, the private investigator bills, the trips to the police station, the gossip that spread around town and all the tears it caused, the years of single parenting, the weeks of double shifts, everything—all of it would be worth it, just to have him back.

I look at the pearls in my hand and the longer I stare, the more my heart starts to feel like tin. These glossy rocks on a string are so redolent of her love for the '50s. I think I somehow managed to follow in her footsteps without even realizing it: she lived reminiscing about a time she'd never existed, and I lived wishing I was somewhere that didn't exist. Now Mama had no more memories and I didn't exist at all.

I exit the bathroom. Mama looked up at me from her chair, confused. "Now who are you, dear?" she says. I walk up to her, pearls in hand.

"I found these in the bathroom, Mrs. Piper. I think they belong to you." Her face lights up as I clasp them around her neck.

Suzanne Yost

"They must have cost a lot," she muses.  
"Worth every penny."

# **My Moon**

**Sydney Peel**



# In a Place We Call Eden

## Shawna Dyer

I've loved you a thousand  
lifetimes. Pearls wrapped  
around my neck, tightly.  
I feel each of them rub  
against my skin

as I breathe deeply,  
awaiting our next life.  
How will I know you this time?  
I clasp pearls in my hand, hold  
each one for a little while.

A Hail Mary to the god of repentance.  
Blasphemy finds no fault here.  
Only you and I are sacred.  
When there is no God,  
is love enough?

We live here, together, a thousand times.  
Wrecking each other, always.  
When will we learn the apple  
is sweetest when it is left  
not eaten?

# **DIVORCING ARTHUR**

## **Catherine Forte**

It should have been a red flag to me.  
Silver tongued and charming  
Like a snake in the grass  
Slithering between his lies.

Cock and bull stories  
Ever the norm.  
But leopards just can't change their spots.

Not a spark of decency and  
Actions speak louder than words.  
This wolf in sheep's clothing  
Will never have the last laugh.

He doesn't play with a full deck and  
That cat is out of the bag.  
Should I let this sleeping dog lie?  
I think not.

There's a method to my madness  
And this ain't my first rodeo.  
To make a long story short.....

Elvis has left the building.

# Sandy Bridge

Nicole Medina





# The First and Final Waltz

## Jasmine Dalrymple

*"To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love,"* was the favorite Jane Austen quote of Sibby's as it always brought back memories of those winter days—long ago.

December days were the most prosperous for the dance house; the temperatures had everyone seeking warmth even if it meant to Jive and Waltz. Though not everyone was interested in dancing, many would smoke cigars, have a drink or even sit at the bar reading as Sibby did. Sibby was a regular attendee at the dance house, but she never danced nor had she ever been asked to dance. Instead, she would dwell herself in a book at the bar with a nice hot cup of cocoa, waiting for her time to come along.

A gentleman sat his peaked cap down on the counter of the bar and claimed a seat next to Sibby, "Cocoa please." He said to the bartender. Sibby hadn't taken notice to the gentleman beside her and kept reading. "Jane Austen?" he muttered. Sibby's eyes wandered off her book to the handsome man sitting beside her in a service uniform. Her eyes were mesmerized by him and his knowledge of literature.

"Yes, how did you know?"

"I noticed the cover is just like the one I have at home."

"You read?" She said quite flattered. The gentleman chuckled, "I've been known to crack open a book from time to time. It helps keep your mind off things." He said as the bartender gave him his cocoa. "Thank you," he said kindly as he placed a dollar on the counter, "Keep the change." He added. Sibby smiled at his courteous manners and watched him gulp down his cocoa. He put the mug down and glimpsed to Sibby as he extended his hand out to her, "Care to dance?"

Sibby's eyes grew delighted even though hesitation hid behind them, it was her first dance with anyone, and she didn't want to make a fool of herself. But she nodded her head and took his hand as he led the way to the dance floor. Sibby followed his lead and grasped the Waltz quicker than she ever imagined. She grew fond of Waltzing and danced till the night dwindled.

"When can I see you again?" Sibby asked as the gentleman opened the cab door for her, "They'll be sending me away tomorrow for a few days, but I will surely be back Friday." He said with a charming smile. Sibby returned his smile and began to get in the cab.

“What is your name?” he asked.

“Sibby.”

“Sibby,” he muttered to remember it, “Very pretty.” Sibby blushed, “And yours?” Sibby asked. “David—Lieutenant David Crawford.”

“David,” she said as she admired his face one last time. She sat inside the cab and smiled at David through the window as he watched her leave. She couldn’t help but blush, David made her feel loved, as any lady should feel.

There had not been much going on in the dance house after a tragedy had struck the nation a few days earlier. The news had left people fragile and scared to step out of their home. But that didn’t stop Sibby from sitting at the bar waiting to be back on the dance floor with David. She pressed on reading her Jane Austen book and glimpsed with hope every time she heard the dance house door open, but every being who came in was not David.

Sibby read the last page of her novel and closed the book, the night was nearly over, and there was still no sign of David. Sibby decided to wait a little longer and grabbed a newspaper that sat near her. The headline of the paper was of the December 7th attacks, Sibby flipped through a couple of pages and saw a section dedicated to the fallen heroes of Pearl Harbor. There in black and white ink was a picture of David, with his name Lieutenant David Crawford.

Sibby couldn’t move or say a word, the only thing that spoke her feelings was the tear that ran down her face and splattered onto his.

# Evening in Georgetown - Acrylic on Canvas

**Nicole Medina**

*Recipient of the Helen Hamilton Award*



# Can We Hold Hands?

## Zachary Mills

If she hang up  
Don't get hung up

"Never trust a big butt and a smile"  
Are the words of BBD  
But I was not ready  
For her eyes that I wanted to see  
Me and that charming giggle that fills me  
With glee  
And that dark hair that takes after your esprit  
And currently  
I want her love to be for me  
And only me

What a fool

If she hang up  
Don't get hung up

"So what if she likes another dude?  
I'm okay with just being friends!"  
Have you ever lied  
And then tried  
To convince yourself?  
I tried so hard, but  
Satisfaction in inaction  
Became an envious attitude  
With a magnitude  
Of eleven  
Or even higher  
The product of unrequited desire

Catching feels  
Holding Ls  
Drop the fees  
Of a bee's  
Honey

*Can We Hold Hands?*

If she hang up  
Don't get hung up

Because in what universe did she owe me her attention  
And in what world did she owe me her affection  
And in what fantasy world of mine did she owe me her time  
None, right?  
And though I might  
Understand in my mind  
My heart pays no mind  
But instead the toll  
Of the ache of my soul  
Is the price

You must be hopeless  
You set yourself up for this  
You knew it would come to this  
But to become obsessed with this  
With her

For your so-called feelings of bliss  
To miss  
The mark so bad  
It hurts

And so she hangs up  
and I'm...  
Still hung up

# Nature

Nicole Medina





# The Chase

## Taz Turner

I was bound to my desires  
And I pursued them into shame  
Allowing others  
To set my innocence aflame  
And in my horror  
At the things that I had done  
I scorned my passion  
And in fear, I began to run.

I ran in anger  
At situations I was in  
And I was scared of  
My capacity for sin  
I may have claimed that  
My flight was all for God  
But deep inside I knew I was a fraud

But there's a beauty  
In a God who will forgive  
He bought my freedom  
So that in freedom I would live  
His word reminds me  
That he's the giver of good things  
I am washed clean  
And can receive the joy he brings

So I can chase him  
Where before I would have fled  
And there is white where  
My soul was once stained red  
There is no crevasse  
That's beyond the reach of God  
For is mercy is as deep as it is broad

Now when I'm tempted  
To think that I am all alone  
I will remember  
Jesus who called me as his own  
He lights the darkness

*continued, line break*

Within and surrounding me

And from his great heart I have no need to flee Within and  
surrounding me

And from his great heart I have no need to flee

# limited time only

## Madison Palica



For the rest of the series please visit our online edition: <http://1147.tcu.edu>

# Left Behind

## Melissa Countryman

As I walked into the waiting room, I could swear the room itself was hostile. The chair was hard and uncomfortable, the air cold and musty, but it was the feeling of repressed grief and anger that hung in the air that tipped the scale. It was everything I could do not to wiggle around. I tried to sit there patiently like you're supposed to in waiting rooms but I was failing miserably. The Petty Officer behind the counter finally called my name, "Recruit Countryman? You can go in." I got to my feet and focused on the closed door.

I had no idea what was waiting on the other side. I took a deep breath, bracing myself, and walked in to the Chaplains office. "Have a seat," he said absently as he continued to write on the paperwork on his desk. He looked up for a second. "Recruit Melissa Countryman?" he asked. "Yes, sir." He handed a piece of paper towards me with my name and division number on the top. I refused to take it. I knew what pieces of paper like that say. As long as I didn't reach out and take it, it wasn't true. Not yet. He shook it at me like it would somehow shake away the fear that had gripped my heart. I had no choice but to take it and read the words. My world fell apart as I took in the letters that form the words on the paper. Suddenly I was transported back to a few short months ago.

It was the summer of '98. My best friend Misty and I were cruising down the road. The windows were down and we were taking turns between talking about boys and singing with Verve Pipe and Matchbox Twenty at the top of our lungs. I'm surprised we were able to hear the thump, thump, thump of my first flat tire. "What IS that?" Misty asked me. "What?" I answered in confusion. It wouldn't be the first time I was confused that night. I turned down the radio and there was that inescapable sound; thump, thump, thump. We pulled over and took a look. "Yep, it's a flat," we both said with identical looks of disgust.

It was a typical weekend night for a small town. A few cars drove by. A few of the locals stopped to see if we needed any help. The early summer evening air had just a slight chill to it. You could hear dogs barking in their yards and smell the dinner cooking at the neighborhood barbeques. We were sitting there on the curb waiting for my dad when Misty blurts out, "I don't think you should go." I stared at her in shocked disbelief. I was leaving for boot camp in just a few short weeks. Everyone knew I was

going, including her. No. Especially her. Another set of headlights appeared down the street. We looked up to see if it was my dad. It wasn't. I glared at my flat front tire wishing it would magically inflate itself so I wouldn't have to hear anymore. "Why not?" I barely whispered.

Misty was a year younger than me, but I looked up to her. She was the boisterous red head who always had something witty to say and a smile on her face. Honestly, it was usually more of a smirk. She always had this way of getting into trouble without ever being IN trouble. She got away with everything. The boys instantly fell in love. The girls always wanted to be her friend. I, however, was the quiet, shy, mousy brunette who wanted nothing more than to shed my shell. We were the M&M twins, Missy and Misty. Aside from a few mutual friends we didn't have a lot in common.

"I just don't think it's a good fit." I had a very hard time understanding where this was coming from. Here we were sitting on the side of the road, laughing about my tire and she suddenly announces that my career choice isn't a "good fit". Confusion swarmed around in my head. I was trying to digest her words and find some comprehension. Part of me wanted to scream and yell, "NOW! You pick NOW to tell me this. What about when I got sick and couldn't go last year? Now!?" Another part of me just wanted to cry.

"Don't be mad Missy. It's not that I think you CAN'T do it. I just think....well.....you're not made for it. You're too sensual. No. That's not right." She shook her head and paused while she tried to find the words to say. "You're too sensitive. I mean you cry at Hallmark commercials for Christ's sake! I guess, I mean..." She hesitated for what seemed like forever before she sighed out, "I think you should do something with your art. Or something where you help people, you know?"

I suppose she was right on the sensitive point. I used a whole box of Kleenex the first time I saw "My Girl". But what could I do with my art? What could I do to help people without my degree? I was trying to hold back the tears and disappointment from my words as I practically yelled back at her, "What can I do? We don't have money for college, and I have to do something. I can't stay here! I'll end up working at The Barn or being a nanny with nothing left of ME!" It was a moment or two before she answered in an unusually quiet voice, "I don't know."

We sat in silence for a while until my dad showed up to change my tire. Eventually we turned the music back on and in no time at all we were laughing out the words to “Barbie Girl”.

We never talked about it again. We crammed as much of the summer as we could into the last few weeks before I left. We cruised the whole 4 blocks of downtown, went swimming down at the lake, and hung out at parties we weren’t supposed to be at. She gave me a going away party filled with music, laughter, secrets, and loads of ice cream. We all fell asleep in a pile on my bed. The next morning we got up, said our goodbyes and hugged each other really tight. On the 26th of May, 1998, I left her behind and headed off to start the rest of my life.

Boot Camp was not easy. I hadn’t really expected it to be. There was drama from ninety different girls. There was Ricky Crud (recruit crud) that never seemed to go away. In short, we were a messy gaggle. Almost a month into it though we were starting to become a unit. We started working as a team and cheering each other on. The weeks went by easier. What kept us all going was Mail Call. Those precious envelopes that held word from home were balm to the soul. I got some from family, some from Misty, and even some from an ex-boyfriend that I normally would have thrown away. Then a few days went by with nothing, then a few more, until a week and a half had passed with no word from anyone.

We were lining up for morning physical training when the Recruit Division Commander (RDC) tapped me on the shoulder to pull me out of line. Instantly the girls moved up and filled in the gap I left. I was confused but my training held out, and I didn’t say or ask anything. Everyone filed out of the room, and I was left alone with my RDC. He said, “A message came in for you this morning. You need to go see the Chaplain.” There was only one reason Sailors were given messages in person.

I couldn’t make my feet walk. My RDC sat me down in a chair for a minute until I could get them back under me. I got up and I walked to that Chaplain’s Office, the one with that waiting room. To that uncomfortable chair previously occupied by people who got bad news. I wondered if they called it the “Bad News” chair.

When they called me into the office, I marched in like I was trained because training was the only thing moving me forward. I know the floor was covered in medium brown, cheap,



fake, Berber carpet. The walls were institutional off-white filled with the mandatory letters and posters of all government offices. The room smelled of cheap air freshener covering up the musty smell you can only find in humid climates. "Recruit Melissa Countryman?" I heard my name through the rushing of blood in my ears and the rustle of the paper as he shook it in front of me. I could feel my hands tremble as my numb fingers took that dreaded paper from him. It was a Xeroxed copy of a telegraph. Those black words on the white paper said, ""SVCWMN parents request SVCWMN be informed that close friend Misty D Stratton was killed on 18 July 1998 in a car accident. Information verified by Red Cross on 22 July 1998." I was folded in half in the chair, crying, my heart broken and sobs escaping my throat. "Why did I leave? Oh God. It's my fault. I shouldn't have left you behind." Those words played on an endless loop as I made my way back to my division. They kept me company that night and many more. I could hear her voice, "I don't think you should go." But I did go, and I left her behind.

# Creative Photography

Abbey Dean



# Monster

## Julie Winspear

I did not ask for pink sheets  
Or plush carpet. I tolerated,  
More than welcomed, the  
Dolls, dinosaurs, and doodads.

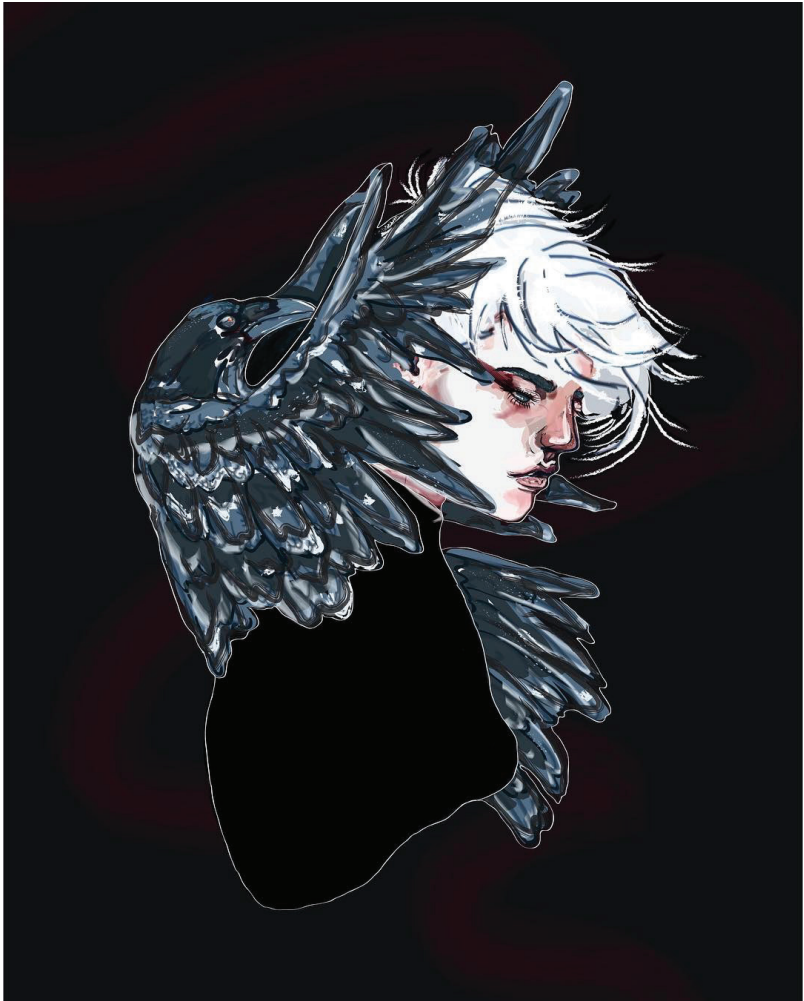
It started with the whimpers,  
Soft shivers in the night.  
Then came the flashlights,  
Their beams bright and glaring.

Maybe it's a lava lamp,  
Or a glowing dolphin that you  
Plug into the base of your wall.  
Maybe it's a bulky trundle bed.

But you've done it, chased me out.  
I can't live here anymore.

Just remember this place was mine  
Long before your bed was here to live under.

**White Raven**  
**Kahla Watkins**



# ASAP Forever

## Daria Jones



# what is this person's ethnicity?

**Sarah Calvo**

(select only one box below that best matches the description – information provided will not affect your application status)

I learned in school that colored people weren't good enough to study with white people: work, play, go take a piss. not even love – we shouldn't or at least that's what we're told. we couldn't because we were afraid of a bold decision to not hide behind our melanin, but now here we are. came a long way through blood and tears and now here we are – but where are we? now everyone is equal, at least that's what they say, and black lives are being recognized on every news station, but only after they get shot. but all lives matter. we've come a long way to see this happening today, but someone please tell me how being colored back then means being black today? I thought I was colored because I am not white, my parents from Costa Rica – beautiful country, a third world country. a colored country. but everything here is black or white – so where are my beautiful caramel people? mis hermanos y hermanas? all lives matter but I know they sweep the floors of the rich, build American's homes as big as their Spanish families, serve junk food to earn minimum wage for los hijos – where's the medical doctors from Dominican Republic? show me the American author born with Chilean blood. I used to have dreams so big my pencils broke, but does my life matter? but we've come a long way – never ending nightmare while Susan B. Anthony, Bruce Lee, Tupac, and Obama spoke their pain, mi familia still has no representation for generations. do our lives matter? different races on screen, off screen - I will scream if I have to hear another white person talk about their agony of not getting what they want, as if white privilege isn't a thing. but I can't say anything on this matter, for I am in no power to speak. Those keeping the stage from me, from us, will always exist, and until real change happens, we let the world intimidate us as we wash away the sins from their clothes and quietly dust their trophy cases in silence.



# Heaven on Earth

Kayce Patterson



# clean your bugs

Laura Fuentes



# My Friend in the Graveyard

## Beth Potts

I could see her, barely. A mist still hung about the air from the rain the night before, so all I could make out across the cemetery was a bit more than a silhouette. I had no doubt that she was wearing the same thing as always: those dark blue skinny jeans with a slight tear above the right knee, the faded grey The Hunting Party t-shirt, and the slightly oversized black zip-up hoodie that always had the hoodie string on her right a couple inches longer than the one on the left. And I also had no doubt that she knew I was here, like I felt that she normally did every time she popped up here.

I suppose I could stop coming to the graveyard if I really didn't want to see her; she'd never appeared outside of the rusted iron gates that outlined the property. But something kept drawing me back here. I wasn't scared of her, I don't think. Her demeanor wasn't frightening, and I never felt like she had an intent to do any harm. There was a feeling of... sadness? Almost as if she radiated an aura of it, and anytime I got nearer to her, an emptiness in my chest got deeper and deeper, but inexplicably so.

I'd tried talking to her, but she never responded. At first, when I first saw her, I thought she might just be... confused. Like she'd forgotten who she was or why she was there or how to speak at all. After I'd realized that she didn't just have some kind of disorder or something, I figured she maybe could understand what I was saying, but couldn't respond.

After a while, I'd started just kind of talking at her. The customary "hey" and "how are you" were always thrown in there, though I knew she wouldn't be answering. I guess it just felt right, felt polite to do it. By the time that I'd been seeing her for a couple weeks, I was even having halves of conversations with her, talking about my day, or my problems, or whatever came to mind.

Today I was following up on my promise to inform her about how my interview at a newspaper went. I strolled on through the dewy grass, crisscrossing through the headstones towards her. She didn't always appear in front of the same gravestones, so I didn't have a guess as to what her name was. This fine morning, she was standing in front of a Daniel James McDonnards granite angel, at whose feet the pedestal told me that he was born January 23rd, 1977 and died March 2nd, 2009, was a loving brother, and would always be remembered.

She was looking at the angel, I would say wistfully. But that was her usual expression, so maybe not. As I walked up beside her, she didn't acknowledge that I was there, but I knew she knew.

I gazed at the angel, too. "Hey. I went to the interview, at the newspaper, like I said yesterday," I said, taking in the stone-faced statue. It

had an appropriately mournful expression. "I think it went pretty well. The editor I was talking to seemed to like me. He even laughed at a joke I told. Don't know why I tried to tell a joke. In hindsight, that probably wasn't the best idea. But he said he'd call me in the next couple days with an update on the job."

I looked over my shoulder at her. Her eyes were still drifting over the statue, but she'd heard.

"If I get the job, I'd probably be starting out with small, local stories, you know? About the library's new construction or high school football game scores or something. But a job's a job, and I like to write. At least this way, I'd be forced to keep up a daily writing schedule. And I was thinking about it and I could bring my laptop or my notebooks out here whenever I need to write. It seems like the right kind of place, you know? Quiet, no distractions, a certain kind of aesthetic..."

She looked over at me then. I could see my reflection in her eyes, they were so glassy. They were light blue, as I'd noticed the first time I'd actually gotten up close to her. I don't know how I knew, but I swear I felt that atmosphere of sadness lessen just a bit. Her face remained the same, though.

The next moment, I heard a loud bang from behind us. I whipped around, searching past the yards and yards of stone. Just past the fence at the side of the cemetery, I saw that it was just some sedan that had rear-ended a pickup truck at the stop sign at the intersection. I turned back to Daniel's angel, but she was gone, and with her that hole I felt.

"Time to go, then," I said to the open air. To Daniel and the granite statue. I headed back to the front of the cemetery. Walking along, past the different stones and markers and names, I thought about Daniel McDonnards angel marker, and I realized something.

Stuck fast in one place, watching people go by as they mourn, being unable to comfort them... She kind of reminded me of my friend in the graveyard.



# HOIAN

Minh Nguyen



# The Eternal Daddy-Daughter Dance

## Suzanne Yost

There's the raw pulsing muscle,  
beating rigidly in my chest,  
thumping threateningly against my bones.  
What a curse it is to feel so much,  
to be trailed by clinging empathy I just can't shake.  
As I watch, the man releases a beast from his throat;  
its claws tear at the air, shredding the space between us,  
echoing—  
a horrific symphony marring sanctuary walls.  
It's a sound like red splattered on the black garments  
of the masses and the black bows on aisles.  
The rabbi pauses his eulogy to gulp  
down the dry lump we all have lodged in our throats.  
I know there is more noise: sniffles, moans,  
insignificant eyes rolling to the backs of heads  
as sweaty palms clasp shuffling handkerchiefs,  
but the man is all I can see, all I can hear.  
An unseen icicle trails up my spine; my body  
shakes into a frenzy of goosebumps.  
But I feel the fear rattling my organs as his wails wrack my body.

I hold a lot of fear in me, I've realized:  
this aching, crackling feeling settling in my chest,  
seeping into my fingertips, crawling up my toes,  
escaping in a cold, foggy breath.  
The embers in my temples sear in unbearable,  
reaching, s t r e t c h i n g pain.  
I bite down and the taste of iron prickles on my tongue.  
His anguish internalized and I can hardly breathe.  
What if I had been babysitting that night?  
With the raw mourning of a man  
reverberating in my eardrums, I stay standing, knees quaking,  
watching the family follow the child-sized coffin down the aisle.



# Creative Photography

Abbey Dean



# limited time only

## Madison Palica



# this is the truth

## Kiana Giddings

"What are you thinking about?"

lie

"Nothing much, just thinking about the rest of my day."

I lied.

"How are you today?"

Lie

"I'm great! How are you?"

"Doing great!"

We both lied.

"Are you okay?"

LIE

"Yeah, I'll be fine. Don't worry about it!"

Don't forget to smile!

My smile lied.

"Why do you always lie? I know you do."

"I've never trusted anyone with the truth ever since..."

You should've lied

**Look Up**  
**Nathan Little**





# a letter for a restless one

## Laura Fuentes

I'm a mattress in a forest  
but what am I doing here?  
I've tried to suppress and I've tried to forget,  
the reason that brought me  
as I'm only used for unrest

and yes, it's absurd,  
where a mattress ends up  
crawling with moths and spiders that fidget,  
once there's no use for me,  
throw me away with no reward

I once was an empress  
dazzled in linens and lace,  
until you gritted your teeth, rattled his bones, and made him  
upset,  
and I'm always there  
when he makes you undress

the bulging spot where  
a body in distress found comfort,  
but tossing and turning turn to a target,  
"why are you still awake?"  
further you sink in despair

but worry not my dearest,  
for glass will grow from your mouth,  
you will attack at twenty, the age you will no longer be quiet,  
worry not that you were used,  
in my eyes, you are the purest  
your body was not a burial ground  
for the person you couldn't uplift,  
so, take off my sheets and find  
I'm still made of something soft,  
lay down and let him laugh and laugh and laugh

# Mental Health

Sarah Calvo





# Hero

## Grace Backus

Henry looked at himself in the mirror as he straightened his black tie. He looked sad and tired and hungover. He hadn't been able to sleep since that night, especially in the bed that they used to share. He felt so alone there. Last night he eventually passed out on the couch after drinking two bottles of wine. Jordan had always loved wine. In drinking himself into unconsciousness, he was both drinking to remember and forget. It was something he chuckled to himself about. Henry thought Jordan would have found it funny too.

"This would go a lot faster if ya' just drank some Nyquil." He saw Jordan standing over him with her hand on her hip, the way she used to do when he did something funny yet stupid.

"Ah yes, I could do that," he said. "But Nyquil was never your drug of choice." Henry wagged his finger in the air at nothing then rolled over and passed out.

These small images of Jordan were keeping him going. He had seen her eight times since she died. Henry knew that they weren't real. Jordan was dead. He was on his way to watch her go into the ground. There would be a viewing, a funeral, then the burial.

Looking in the mirror one last time, Henry looked past himself and onto the perfectly made bed. Jordan had made it last. He never wanted to destroy those perfect folds, the lack of wrinkles. I'll have to buy a new bed, he thought as his brother honked his horn in the driveway. Time to go.

Henry walked out to his brother's SUV and got in the car, debating whether it was worth it to bother with the seatbelt.

"Hey Henry, how are you doing?"

"Well, Sam," Henry looked over at his brother with disdain, "the love of my life is dead, and I have a headache, so not great."

Sam leaned over to give Henry a hug. With a sniff, Sam moved away and said, "Jesus, Henry, you reek. When was the last time you showered?"

"The shower smells like her," Henry mumbled looking out the window as they turned onto Greenpoint Avenue.

"What?"

"The shower. It smells like her. I'm not about to mess that up."

There was a long pause as Henry watched Sam consider this fact. He knew Sam would never understand what it meant to need Jordan's smell. Shampoo and lavender with a little bit of sweat. He would never be able to get that smell back.

"I just don't get why you don't come stay with me and Sarah for a while. It's not healthy being cooped up in that house. Have you even

cleaned the bathroom since it happened?"

Henry watched the trees pass by. He thought about how quickly they disappeared as they merged onto the highway. They would still be there when they drove back.

"Henry? I asked you a question."

"I wasn't listening."

"I asked if you have cleaned the bathroom since it happened?"

It. That bothered Henry. Say it like it is. Jordan died. She overdosed in the shower. Don't dance around death like a coward.

"I dumped the needles if that is what you are asking." He hadn't, but it would get Sam off his back.

"That wasn't what I was asking, but that's a step in the right direction. Do you need Sarah and I to come over and clean it?"

"No."

"It really isn't that much trouble. I just hate that you are living in that house with..."

"No! I said no, damn it! I don't want you two coming in there and fucking everything up! It's perfect in there right now. Perfect! It smells like her, and I'm fucking keeping it as it fucking is!"

"Jesus, Henry, I'm just trying to do you a favor."

"No, you aren't. You are trying to make yourself feel better. You never liked her anyways. Don't need your pity or your favors."

"Henry, I just didn't like to see you suffer with her. Just how I don't like to see you suffering now. I'm worried about you."

"Well, don't be."

As Henry said this, they pulled up to the funeral home. Sam put the car into park and looked over at Henry. "Are you going to say something?"

"Yeah."

"Want to run it by me?"

Henry sighed and looked at his brother. "I don't know what it is yet."

With that, Henry got out of the car and slammed the door behind him. Sam didn't know shit, and the whole little brother thing being more together than him wasn't sitting well with him on an already miserable day. He walked into the funeral home. Friends and family greeted him with hugs and condolences. Henry didn't care. He wanted to see Jordan. He moved pass the mourners as quickly as he could while not being a complete ass and made it to the viewing room. Sam had caught up to him and as Henry walked into the small room, Sam quietly moved the few mourners out and

closed the door behind him, leaving Henry and Jordan alone. Sometimes Sam knew what to do.

Henry looked over Jordan's body. They had done a good job making her look life-like. The makeup they had used gave her some color. She looked healthier as a corpse than she did at the end of her life. They had washed her hair and parted it correctly. He had even given them her favorite lipstick to put on her. She looked like she was sleeping and Henry wanted nothing more than to wake her up.

The one thing that bothered him was her clothes. The mortician had told him that despite his best efforts, he wouldn't be able to cover up the scars and track marks on her arms. He suggested burying her in something with long sleeves. Jordan never wore anything with long sleeves. There had been a reason she had wanted to move to Florida, where it was always at least 70 degrees.

"Sleeves just want to make sure I can't reach my full potential." She would laugh, waving her arms in the air, wearing a tank top. "They hold me down."

Henry had actually needed to go out and buy a long sleeved dress for the occasion. Jordan had no long sleeved clothing. He found a long sleeved, bright red dress at a department store. He looked at her leaning against a rack, "What do you think?"

She tilted her head and smiled. "Hmm. Red. Nontraditional. I like it."

"Burn, baby, burn." Henry laughed, and as quickly as she appeared, she was gone.

She looked good in the dress. It fit her perfectly. It wasn't her though. If Jordan had it the way she wanted, she would be wearing shorts and a t-shirt. Everything attire, she would call it. Henry bent down to smell her hair. Formaldehyde. This was why he was never washing the shower. "Why won't you wake up?"

Henry stood back up and walked out of the room. Sam had been guarding the door. What a good guy. Henry walked into the chapel to sit until the service began. No one bothered him. On some level, Henry knew no one there really wanted to talk to him. He hadn't been home when she died. They had gotten in a fight about her using again and he left to blow off steam. Alone in that chapel, his face burned in embarrassment and anger. He got up to help carry her into the chapel and then the service began.

Henry wasn't really listening. He was suddenly nudged by Sam.

"Hm?"

Sam sighed, "Time to speak."

Henry got up and walked over to the podium. Jordan's brother, who

had just spoken, patted Henry on the back as he walked off the stage. He had just finished a story about their childhood together, something about Christmas morning. Henry knew he was supposed to mention the good times. That's what he tried to do.

"Thank you all for coming today," Henry paused, as if he was a comedian waiting for applause. "I'll start with the obvious. I miss Jordan. She was joy within the confines of a human being. She was always making me laugh. Even when her troubles were dangerously close, she made us feel like they were far, far away." Henry stopped and looked at all the people there for her. He saw their uncomfortable shuffles as he mentioned Jordan's problems. It hurt. He continued. "This doesn't feel real and I'm not adapting well. I can't stand being home without her, but the outside world with her not in it isn't any better. But, this isn't about me. We have been listening to great stories about Jordan and I have my own. Back when Jordan and I first started dating, she would call me on my way home from work whenever she was feeling down and ask me to bring home chicken wings for dinner and pick up a pack of cigarettes. I would always comply. I would burst through the door and scream 'Your chicken has arrived, m'lady!' She would scream, 'My hero!' and jump into my arms, nearly knocking her precious wings out of my hand. It always cheered her up. She never got tired of those wings. Sometimes, she would just text me 911. 911 meant chicken wings." The little congregation of sad people chuckled. It was so like her to want something sloppy. She was never the dainty type.

"The night she died, we got into a fight. I had found a needle in the bathroom. She had been doing well, and I was disappointed. We were both pretty upset, and I left to go cool off. Just drove around with my phone off for a couple of hours. I didn't think she would use while I was gone. I didn't think she would take that much. As she was laying in the shower, she knew something was wrong and dialed 911." Henry started laughing. He looked down at his hands then back up at the awkwardly silent mourners. He looked at Sam who was shaking his head in disappointment. Screw him. Wanting his approval is useless.

"She was so confused though. Jordan forgot who she had called. So, she asked the 911 operator for chicken wings and cigarettes. Can you believe that?" He laughed again as a single tear rolled down his face, followed by others. "She asked the operator to be her hero and bring her chicken wings. She needed me... and, and I was driving around. With my fucking phone off." Henry began to break down. There were uncomfortable gazes. People shuffled in their seats. The silence was deafening. Eventually Sam got up and led Henry back to his seat. Some uncle got up next and told some funny story about how Jordan got stranded on the side of the road in college and called him in a panic. Henry wasn't laughing.

The ride back from the funeral was silent. Sam didn't even try to talk to Henry. Thank god her parents weren't there to see that. She was buried next to them. Probably for the best. Exiting the highway, Henry looked out his window again to see the trees. Yep, still there.

Henry got out of the car without so much as a goodbye. He walked into the bedroom and looked at himself in the dresser mirror again.

"You look like shit," Jordan said, lying on the bed.

"You would not believe the day I had." Henry crumpled into the armchair next to their bed.

"You need a nap, babe. Come on." Jordan patted the spot next to her on the bed.

"You're so right." Henry got up and fell into the bed. He looked into her amber eyes. She was so fucking beautiful.

"I liked what you said today."

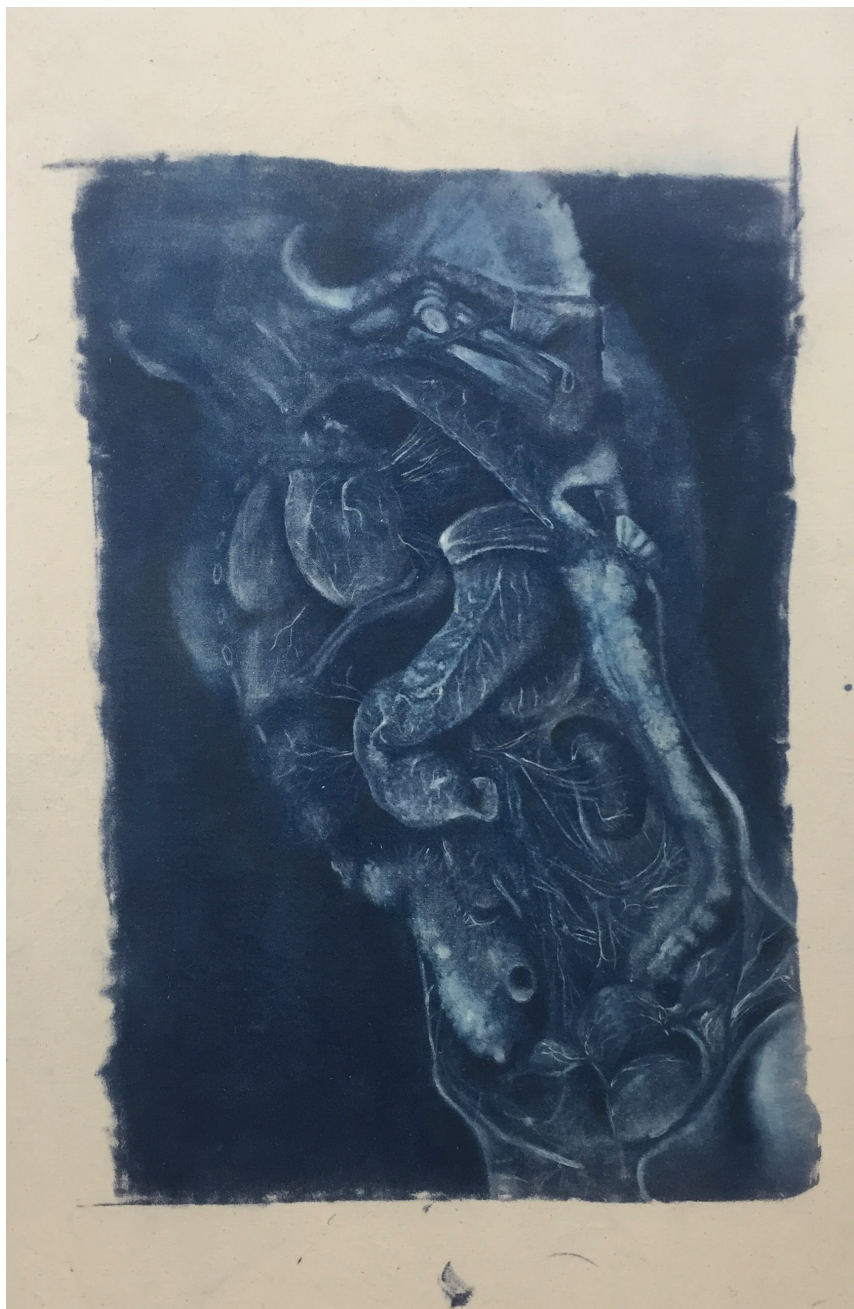
"Yeah?"

"It was real."

Henry grabbed a pillow and held it in his arms. She was there. Still there. He fell asleep.

# The Inside

Sydney Peel





# Penning Poetica

## Melissa Countryman

Pen to paper,  
Ink flows,  
words form,  
gently emerging,  
onto the page.  
Then adjust, expand, collapse,  
and take pause.  
Search for lyrics  
as if you are searching  
for inner truth.  
The blank page  
whispers its lonely humanity  
into your ear;  
you translate it into  
poetry.

Stories told with  
well placed words  
and diction,  
giving form to thought.  
Transform them to  
visible symbols  
read by eyes that  
hear its voice  
crying out from the  
depths of its white rectangular  
cage.  
Synonyms, antonyms, homonyms.  
Step Back.  
Close your eyes  
and say it out loud.

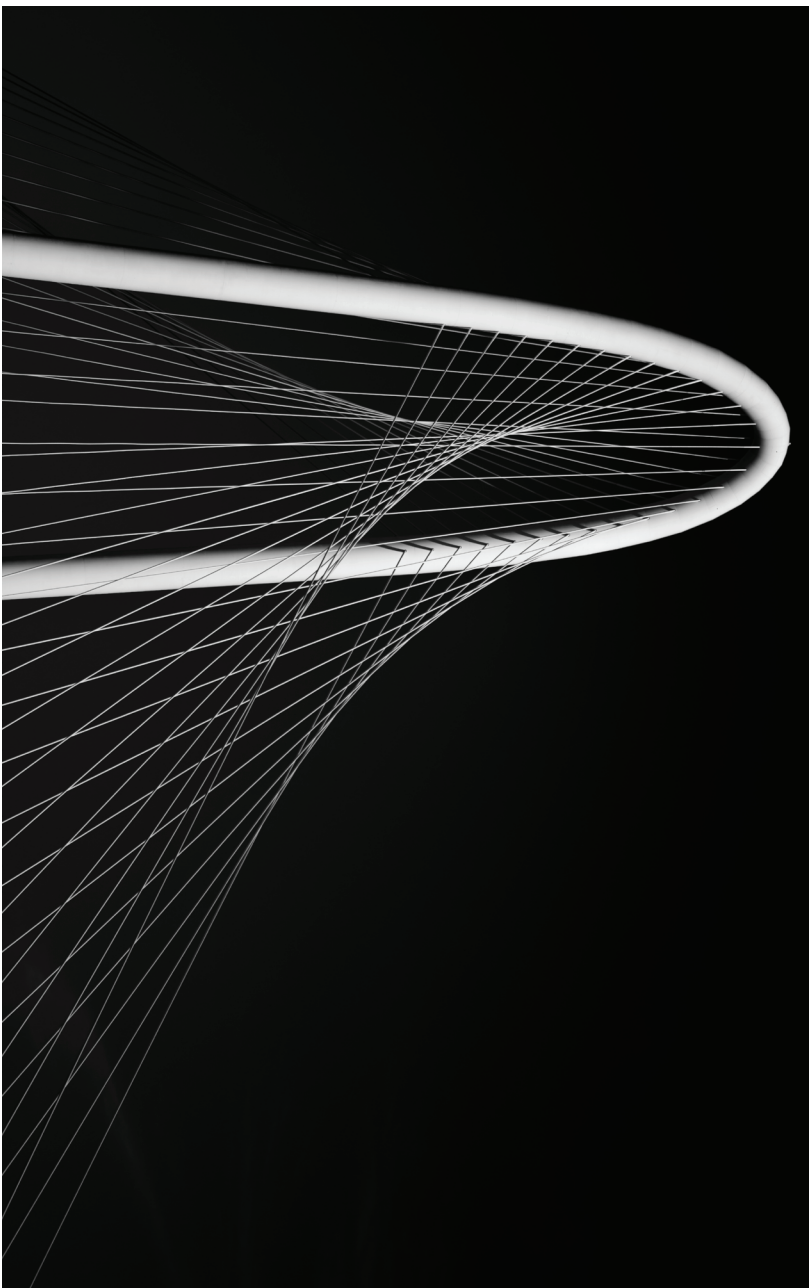
Pen to paper  
Ink flows.  
Rough. Fast. Tense.  
Slow. Melodic. Relaxed.  
Pen slides, sloops, swishes.  
Fever pitch, slow melody, halting chaos.

Life begins to form.

A single joyful cry rings as  
the image materializes on paper.  
Like a new born babe,  
scrawny and rough around the edges.  
Still in need of nurture and growth.  
Ever changing,  
shape, sound, soul.  
Formed inside of your mind.  
Spewed out on napkins,  
notebooks,  
receipts,  
old menus.  
Born of creativity and  
depth of heart.

# Stand Tall

Ethan Mito



# Darkness of a Man

Erin Hill



# Drought in the Hill Country

## Abigail Jennings

I remember when the bluebonnets  
bloomed, a sapphire sea in the pasture.  
We children ran through the flowers, a wake rippling  
in the kaleidoscope that glittered under the golden  
sun. The crests broke at the bales by the roadway,  
where we scrambled up to be Kings of the Hay.

For our Elysium playground was also a hay  
field, fenced off, though not to cultivate bluebonnets;  
our cows relied on a winter store and tried anyway  
to stretch their tongues through the wires to greener pasture  
just as lush as the turf beneath their hooves. The golden  
round bales waited for the November air to ripple

with bitter gusts and frost that shriveled and rippled  
the munched, green stubble like hay  
so that the rolling hills turned golden  
like a sepia photograph of bluebonnets  
sprinkled over the carcass of a verdant pasture  
crisscrossed with cattle-trodden pathways.

Until warm rain revived the shoots withered away,  
all heaven's water showering in rippled  
sheets and running in rivers in the worn pasture,  
we would deliver, with the tractor and hay-  
rack, baled ghosts of grass and bluebonnets  
for our amiable beasts, enough to last 'til the golden

season of rainbows. Then one spring, golden-  
brown our world stayed. The rain kept away.  
There was no blossom of bluebonnets.  
The cows' moored in mournful ripples  
through summer, and the dry stalks crunched to hay  
dust under our soles in the hot, cracked pasture.

(continued)

Year after year, nothing grew in the pasture.

Wildfires flared up in patches, a terrible golden

flash, then black. And one day, we had no more hay.

The cows' ribs showed through as they wasted away.

I scrounged handfuls of vegetation, but the pond's ripples  
were fossils in mud and my offerings petite as bluebonnet

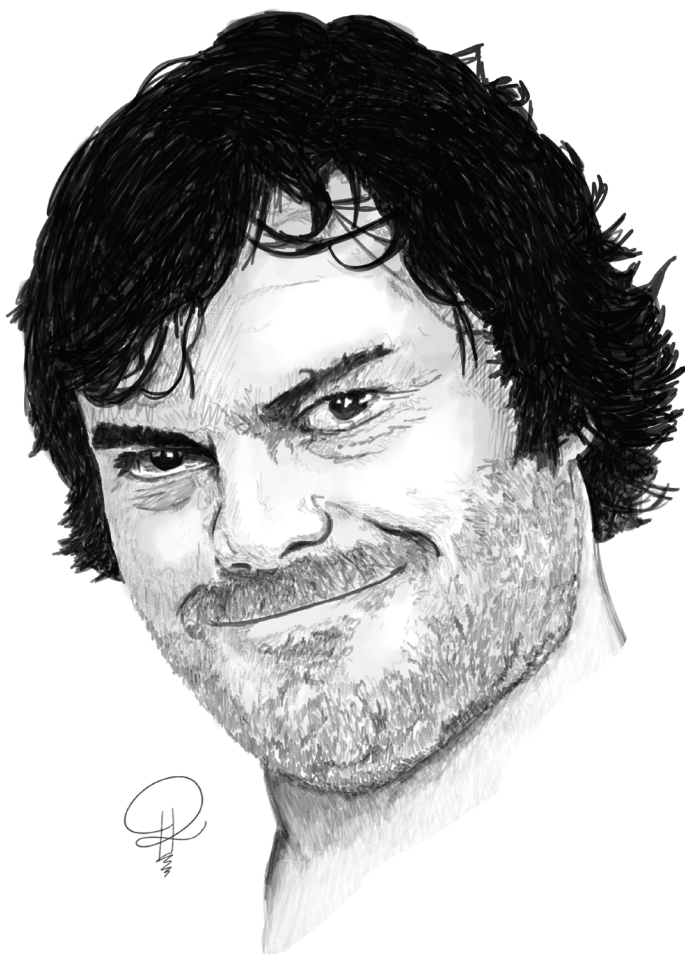
bouquets. Golden tomorrows shimmered too far away.

We sold the pasture, our cows for slaughter. A searing ripple  
in my precious memories... the hayfield ruffled with bluebonnets.



# Jack Black

Ryan Hinchcliff



# Your Grasp

## Vicki Lozano

Gridlocked, solidly standing;  
powerless against the current.

The sea of words and people rushing by,  
the ever-shrinking hallways of my mind  
confining me in the aura of you.

Trapped in the vibrations closing in,  
I suffer from my own insignificance:  
the way you make me feel.

My arms, quivering with the distinct recognition of  
inability, instability.  
On the brink of that precipice  
I can neither jump over nor back away from.

You hold me on the edge with your cold grasp,  
and there is no release, no relief.

The words do not come—  
but you will not have them anyway.

No release, no relief,  
no means of getting out,  
no calamity to distract.

Just the permeating intensity of you  
strangling me softly  
in your metallic clutch.

No release! Oh, no relief!  
Not a moment to pass without your presence.  
Inescapable, you dwell in my conscience.

You dwell in my world,  
a phantom harboring my body,  
interlocking your long, wiry digits with mine,  
wrapping your shadow around my chest—  
and tightening.

# What I Wish I Knew Then...

Alexa Shaw

**If I were a kid...** I would tell myself to enjoy those moments playing in the front yard with your neighbors. I would tell myself to relax when it came to school and listen to your mom when she would say, "Relax, you don't need to get straight A's." I would tell myself to not be nervous calling your best friend's home phone for a playdate. I would tell myself to live a little and eat a honeybun from the red cart. I would tell myself to not worry about having hairy arms and being called "gorilla." I would tell myself to keep playing every sport. I would tell myself to keep being involved and broadening my horizons. I would tell myself dream and keep dreaming.

**If I were a teen...** I would tell myself to take more drives down PCH. I would tell myself that my convertible bug isn't the best car to be incognito while dropping off notes to my pen pal. I would tell myself to not take for granted those mornings talking with my mom over bagels and coffee. I would tell myself to relax on thinking boys distracted me from soccer. I would tell myself to keep being you. I would tell myself to keep wearing sparkly tape and a big bows on the soccer field. I would tell myself to enjoy time after school with friends and family. I would tell myself to not stress about getting into college. I would tell myself that everything pans out how it's supposed to. I would tell myself dream and keep dreaming.

**If I were a first-year college student...** I would tell myself you're not alone. I would tell myself everyone is feeling the same thing as you. I would tell myself relationships take time. I would tell myself to be open to meeting new people. I would tell myself balancing school, friends, and life for the first time on your own isn't easy. I would tell myself being homesick is normal. I would tell myself to find happiness in the little things. I would tell myself to keep in touch with those you love and put effort into the relationships you want to flourish. I would tell myself keep taking on challenges because that will make you stronger. I would tell myself apply for that internship because you never know what will happen. I would tell myself just ask because the worst they can say is no. I would tell myself to stay true to yourself and your journey. I would tell myself to know every minimal job has a greater purpose. I would tell myself dream and keep dreaming.

**If I were a senior in college...** I would tell myself it will never get harder than this. I would tell myself nineteen hours plus two jobs is a lot to juggle. I would tell myself “life” on the horizon is scary yet exciting. I would tell myself enjoy these last moments living with your six best friends because life will never be the same. I would tell myself to enjoy the last bit of living in the bubble of TCU. I would tell myself to take advantage of every last opportunity you have. I would tell myself to not wish away these times. I would tell myself to live in the moment. I would tell myself to embrace the unknown of what’s to come. I would tell myself that the long distance relationship is temporary. I would tell myself how proud I am of freshman year you for sticking through the hard times. I would tell myself you did it! I would tell myself these three and a half years have been the best of my life. I would tell myself to reflect back on how much you’ve grown. I would tell myself to dream and keep dreaming.

**And in all these stages...** I would tell myself to live in the moment. I would tell myself to not take anything for granted and to let the journey of life flow. I would tell myself that no one person is the same and our differences make us unique. I would tell myself that who I was as a kid is who I am now, just with more life experiences. I would tell myself to embrace where you come from but enjoy where you’re going. I would tell myself to dream and keep dreaming because that’s what keeps the next stage exciting. I would tell myself that what I know now is what I wish I knew then.

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Grace Backus**

Senior, English and History, Frisco, TX

**Ally Bailey**

Freshman, Speech Language Pathology, San Diego, CA

**Joshua Borders**

Junior, Economics, Kaufman, TX

**Sarah Calvo**

Senior, English, Waco, TX

**Melissa Countryman**

Senior, Writing and Combined Sciences, Monstrose, CO

**Jasmine Dalrymple**

Junior, English, Fort Worth, TX

**Abbey Dean**

Junior, BFA Graphic Design, Friendswood, TX

**Shawna Dyer**

Junior, Strategic Communications, Quincy, MA

**Chip Fankhauser**

Sophomore, BS Mathematics and BA Writing, Atlanta, GA

**Catherine Forte**

Junior, Strategic Communications and Writing Minor, Little Rock, AR

**Laura Fuentes**

Sophomore, Film, Television, and Digital Media, Fort Worth, TX

**Rachel Funk**

Junior, BFA Graphic Design, Abilene, TX

**Kiana Giddings**

Sophomore, Undeclared, Murrieta, CA

**Erin Hill**

Senior, BFA Studio Art and Criminal Justice minor, Fort Worth, TX

**Ryan Hinchcliff**

Junior, BFA Graphic Design, San Antonio, TX

**Abigail Jennings**

Junior, Writing, Dallas, TX

**Daria Jones**

Senior, News and Media Studies, Visalia, CA

**Nathan Little**

Freshman, Pre-Business, Aledo, TX

**Vicki Lozano**

Freshman, Interior Design Pre-major, San Antonio, TX

**Nicole Medina**

Freshman, Pre-Business, Great Falls, VA

**Zachary Mills**

Freshman, Writing, Cambria Heights, NY

**Ethan Mito**

Sophomore, Pre-Major, The Colony, TX

**Minh Nguyen**

Sophomore, Computer Science, Hanoi, Vietnam

**Madison Palica**

Senior, Strategic Communication and Studio Art minor, Orem, UT

**Kayce Patterson**

Junior, Graphic Design, San Antonio, TX

**Sydney Peel**

Senior, Art Education, Colleyville, TX

**Beth Potts**

Freshman, History, North Richland Hills, TX

**A.J. Rangel**

Freshman, English and Writing, Fort Worth, TX

**Alexa Shaw**

Senior, Sports Broadcasting and Journalism, Valencia, CA

**Taz Turner**

Junior, Nursing, San Marcos, TX

**Kahla Watkins**

Senior, Graphic Design, Prosper, TX

**Julie Winspear**

Senior, Writing and French, Alamo, CA

**Joshua Witkop**

Junior, Biochemistry, Colorado Springs, CO

**Suzanne Yost**

Junior, Writing, Northbrook, IL



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **Cover Art**

“Light On” by Rachel Funk

## **Editor-in-Chief**

Lucy Mariani

## **Creative Director**

Lauren Truong

## **Managing Editor**

Carl Ray Richardson and Morgan Williams

## **Editorial Team**

Olivia Bernstein | Brittany Bunzey | Courtney Langston  
Kendall Litzsinger | Saraisabel Perez | Kayla Rose | Ariel Zinkan

## **Helen Hamilton Award for**

## **Excellence in Creative Expression**

“Evening in Georgetown - Acrylic on Canvas” by Nicole Medina

# SPECIAL THANKS & SUPPORT

**Dr. Emory & Mr. Frederic Hamilton**

The Hamilton Family eleven40seven  
Endowment Fund

**Dr. Curt Rode**

Department of English  
Center for Digital Expression

**Dr. Chantel L. Carlson**

Department of English

**Dr. Joddy Murray**

Department of English

**Dr. Andrew Schoolmaster**

AddRan College of the Liberal Arts

**Grace Backus**

Bryson Arts Society



Printed thanks to our friends at



C E N T E R   F O R  
— D I G I T A L —  
E X P R E S S I O N

**“ AN ARTIST’S  
ONLY CONCERN  
IS TO SHOOT FOR  
SOME KIND OF  
PERFECTION, AND  
ON HIS OWN TERMS,  
NOT ANYONE ELSE’S.”**

— J.D. Salinger