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**“ART REVEALS THE
INNER PSYCHE OF
THE ARTIST. IT TAKES
A CERTAIN TYPE OF
HARDINESS FOR A
CREATIVE PERSON
TO SHARE THEIR
WORKS TO THE
PUBLIC.”**

- E. A. Bucchianeri

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I came into the role of Editor-in-Chief for *eleven40seven's* Spring 2019 issue having only worked on the previous issue. By about the third week of working as Managing Editor, I realized I had thrown myself into the kitchen without knowing how to cook. But, each instance in which I feared my inability to act as Editor-in-Chief was countered by reminders for why I chose to do this.

The part that was most “worth” taking on the daunting role of Editor-in-Chief was the staff for this issue. These members were so passionate, creative, intelligent, quirky, and so many other adjectives. The more I got to know them, the more I wanted to work with them. I even began to enjoy handing out flyers and tabling for *eleven40seven*. They always encouraged students who were interested in submitting. What I admired most though was their response to skeptic students. Students would often say, “I’m not very creative.” This staff did not write this off as lost cause for a potential submission. They responded to these students’ doubts with encouragement. I often heard members telling students, “Everyone is more creative than they think,” or, “I bet you have an old poem, drawing, photograph, etc. from a creative writing class or an art class you took your freshman year.” These responses pay homage to what I believe *eleven40seven* is all about which is offering a chance for any student to share his or her creative work.

This journal is not just for Liberal Arts or Fine Art majors. For this issue, we received submissions from Nursing majors, Neuroscience majors, Business majors, Communications majors, etc. The Spring 2019 issue serves as proof that no person is limited in their creativity.

I would like to congratulate all the students who submitted pieces to *eleven40seven*. Every one of you should be proud of the courage it took to share your creative work. Thank you to the submitters and the staff for making the Spring 2019 journal so unique. I would especially like to thank Dr. Rode for guiding me through my experience as Editor-in-Chief. You have an evident love for this journal, and your commitment continuously inspires the students you work with.

Morgan Williams

Editor-in-Chief, Spring 2019

The Goldilocks Principle

Laura Fuentes

Goldilocks makes herself at home,
finding extremes & a ready-made solution for each;
yet her adventure for comfort finds no resolution.

Is it destructive when Goldilocks finds what's just right
at the cost of Baby Bear?

Extremophile organisms live where most don't
survive. Freeze & fire & radio resistant.

Are they extraordinary if biology made
them just right?

Planet Earth falls at an ideal to support life.
Simply a narrow range of perfection;
by accident, it is just right.

We jump between doses waiting to hit
the sweet spot of stability.
One that makes the doctor think, just right.

Is it ungrateful I consider it coincidence,
to find existence in the middle ground?

Finding my personal direction,
Bears a burden on individuality
I reside in adaptability.

Is this where I survive, in the Goldilocks Zone,
simply within the middle of extremes?

Until the clock strikes midnight, Shawna Dyer

it's easy to forget the demons dressed
in skin of our kind, who make it hard
to overcome obedience to family.

Easier still to forget no matter what she does
to please them, regardless of how many mice
or birds or men, it may never be enough.

I wish I knew what it was like to have that
unwavering help, anyway. No amount of tulle
or rhinestones or even magic could cover up

the parts of me that are damaged, could not make
them more beautiful. In the same way
as Cinderella herself, girls like us – we get

lost in the heat of the moment. Forget
the impending mundaneness lurking
around the corner. Praying for men to save

us from shattering ourselves like when the other
shoe drops, glass all over marble floor. But,
no dukes came looking for me when I left.

After Sleeping Beauty by Nick Flynn

Do You Bleed?

Brad Ramsey



Victory or Death

Ian Townsend

Bullet shells rattle,
ricocheting off metal and brick
—*every second dangerous.*

Hot shrapnel makes me
crouch low.

The helmet sags over my eyes,
this rifle is too heavy.
I long to take off my armor,
to escape this war.

Each moment in this alley,
another man dies
—*I will die as well.*

There are no victors
here.

I hear a buzzing in the distance.
Death comes
on metal wings.

Burn me away
with napalm.

Scour this hell of souls
left behind.

Self-Destruction

Meghan Maloney



Lost Time

Minh Nguyen



Stranger

Amanda Smiley

he spat into his plastic cup,
his teeth caked dark with black.
beside him, I kept my mouth shut,
the sight then took me back

to days with you, your passenger,
sitting right behind the glass,
behind your lip you put the dirt
then spat into the grass.

“Don’t spit anymore,” I said.
You cast your eyes in shame.
“I swear, no more,” your black lips read,
but still
the habit remained.

no more a child, I know the signs
of you still stuffing gums.
No longer for an end I pine,
for words do not defeat black crumbs.

the stranger, that day, spitting his stuff
had no appeal to me.
In him I saw you with your snuff
your empty promise you did fluff,
and
your faithful consistency.

Absentee

Alejandra Lopez



Up Above

Emma St. Clair



Falling

Liam Evans

You know when people talk about the stars aligning?

I spent a lot of time looking up at the stars,
Reaching for wisdom, for knowledge;
Searching for a flicker that I couldn't understand.

I extended my limbs upward, too,
Fixed my gaze at the night sky,
Let my feet lose touch with the ground.

I was floating—not upward, but stagnantly,
Stuck in the space between the sky and the earth.
Losing my sense of touch.

Then, with the lights dimmed and the curtains drawn,
I inhaled,
And I exhaled.

My body released,
Folding effortlessly toward the ground,
My limbs yielding to what was below them.

I allowed the weight to travel through my body;
It poured through to my hands, to my head,
And it fell back to my feet.

I stood, no longer fixated at the sky,
And saw the stars reflected on the ground.
They had always been there, perfectly aligned.

Then, with the lights on and the curtains open,
I embraced the earth
And the earth embraced me.

Since I Last Sedated Myself

Polley Poer

I

counted cracks in the sidewalk
so my brain wouldn't itch
said my prayer in threes
so no one will die
found a bra in my car from a long night
in Oklahoma
crushed on nice guys who I didn't want
to fuck
shot cheap whiskey on New Year's Eve
and then switched to older stuff
mixed it with pills I take
just for saving myself
spared the tequila from my tongue
at least until midnight
turned down a rum & coke
to trade it for wine
drank the whole bottle and puked
for the first time
got drunk in my hometown to prove
that I could
took a key to my thigh in the bathroom
and screamed
heard red and blue lights
whine across the street
let my brother teach me how to smoke
a dark wooden pipe
passed out on his couch and listened
to lost coyotes
stole a jacket from his dryer so I'd stop
feeling cold
stopped asking how I'll die
because I already know
wrote it all down because I

am alright.

Cloud Lung

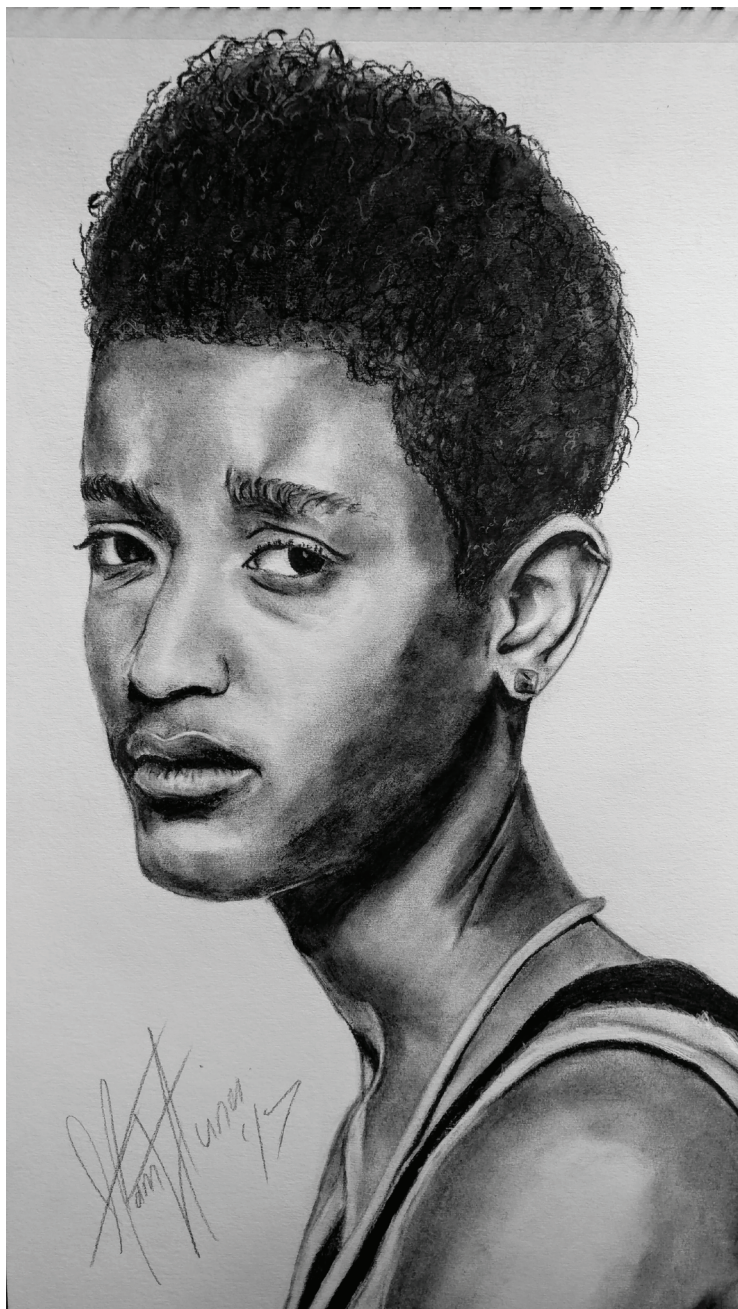
Annie Brenkus

There are no lonely walks, so
I steal puffs in bathrooms
and empty elevators. I exhale
into a denim sleeve
or flannel pocket, and
blue-gray menthol fingers
drift over the faded fabric.
Its warm palm heavies
my collarbone. The light
at the end of the little vape
flickers—we both are dizzy.
I wish I could hide
in a pocket
from icy eyes,
seeing only the quietest places
in the cold, crowded world.

Drawing of Syd

Lead Vocalist of The Internet

Afamefuna Onyebadi



Jimi

Peter Trevino



Unwritten Obituaries

Rachel Brooks

“Benjamin Bradley Baker III was well loved by his friends and family. He was always ready to help, he loved volunteering in the community, and he always had a good joke ready. He is survived by his parents Lily and Benjamin Bradley Baker II. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in memorial to the Baker family charity “From the Streets to the Trees” which Benjamin founded to bring city kids into nature.”

Seventy-two words. Twenty-six years. Four dogs. Five charities. Three great peaks climbed, and four planned. And they summed him up in seventy-two words.

They didn’t mention how his loft would start to smell like singed hair and burning leaves if no one was there to put out his incense. They didn’t mention how someone needed to take his dogs in because his parents wouldn’t want them. They didn’t mention his almost-fiancé because she wasn’t really family. But that’s not all they didn’t mention.

They didn’t mention that his jaw was never fully shaved because he always had too many other more fun things to do or how he never wore suits like Mr. Benjamin Bradley Baker II because the sleeves were too restrictive and the collars made him choke. They didn’t mention the way his green eyes lit up like the forest canopy on an Amazon peak when he was out on a hike or how he lived in a small loft in the city instead of on his family’s estate uptown because he wanted to always be at the center of action. They didn’t mention how his boyish smile was crooked on one side because of the scar that ran across the right side of his lip from falling into his box of model cars as a child or how he was only ticklish in the exact centers of his palms despite the rest of his hands being hard and callused from camping and climbing. They didn’t mention how his dimples were deep from overuse or how he made the best blueberry pancakes and had the worst Bocelli impression but was equally proud of his cooking and singing. They didn’t mention how he always smelled like cinnamon.

Beni knew everything about the world of man and machine. He studied world geography and history, international politics and economics, Mandarin and Arabic. He could tell you the capital, topography, and first historical record of every western nation. He could draw diagrams of the court systems and charts of the employment rates of every city who recorded the data. He could converse easily no matter what part of the world he was in because he knew the languages of different cultures. He

was brought up with all the tutors and texts his father's money could buy—the education of a prince—but his heart was never in the work the education was meant to prepare him for. Benjamin Bradley Baker II made sure his son knew everything a businessman could, but Beni wanted to know other things. So he studied botany and biology, map-making and fire-making, mountain climbing and tree climbing. He could smell the air with his eyes closed and tell you what kinds of trees the woods you were in were made up of. He could look at two leaves and explain why one would kill you if you ate it and the other, if chewed up and spread on a wound, would act as a salve. He knew which rocks made the best fire pit borders and which sticks made the darkest smoke for signal fire. He took what his father had taught him and what he had taught himself and made a life of it, founding his nonprofit From the Streets to the Trees, where he would lead camping trips and field adventures for low-income families and troubled kids.

I would put all of that into his public obituary if I could. I would try to show the world just how important he was and just how much we needed him. But in my diary at home, I would write a different version. I would try to show just how important he was to me. And how much I needed him.

Beni knew how his kisses affected me if they were on my hand versus my forehead, and he would always make sure the mornings of weekends involved his lips brushing my brow while the nights of my period involved a soft peck on my nose and no more contact. He knew to get rid of bugs in the apartment before I saw them because he wanted to release them and I wanted to smash them. He knew that the pitch of my scream would change based on if I was screaming about a bug or a scary movie and would only come running for the one that meant I was about to murder something smaller than me. He knew I was ticklish only on my upper ribs, but he would never dare touch me if my hair was in a ponytail because he knew that meant I was working on something. He knew I was allergic to cucumber and pineapples and latex, so he made sure his mom's country club had different sandwiches, his friends' beach parties had different snacks, and our dentist had different gloves because he knew I hated asking for myself. He knew the scent of my favorite shampoo was apple and would ask me what was wrong if I smelled different because he knew I didn't wash my hair when I was in a bad mood. He knew how many pairs of hiking boots I owned because he was with me when I got them all except the ones he got me as gifts.

We went hiking together all the time. He could use his father's boat or the family's jet to take us anywhere in the world, but we would just take his jeep and see what we could find. We always ended up deep in the woods. I loved the mountains, the sleek rocks, and the way I had to jump like a Billy-goat when the ground broke up under you. Beni loved the trees, the way the light played through the branches and finding all the hidden caves and nests of the creatures.

That's another thing they didn't put in the newspaper. We were in the woods that day. Beni knew I loved the woods, so, that Saturday, we were in the woods.

We had walked for hours, crawling over downed trees, sliding down the sides of ravines, and clawing our way up and out the other side. We stopped to watch the squirrels skitter across the trail or the deer freeze a few trees away from us. He was in his old brown hiking boots; I was in the soft tan ones he had bought for my birthday last year. Our jackets matched, two tone green and brown weatherproof monstrosities with a dozen pockets.

We came to a cliff and I smiled, sliding my backpack off my shoulder and stepping up to the edge, looking out on the tree line. When Beni didn't join me, I slid my sunglasses off my face, setting them up on my head, and turned to him. I almost fell backward off the cliff.

He was on one knee. He had taken his bag off as well, also turning his sunglasses up into his hair. His right knee was already soaking wet from kneeling in the mud, and I knew his cargos were getting heavier with every second of absorption, but he only smiled dumbly up at me with that stupid perfect crooked smile. I held my breath as he held his hand out to me, palm up. "I have a question for you."

I bit my lip, trying to keep from squealing aloud even as I smiled from ear to ear. We had been together for two years now. I had never wanted anything but him. I wanted to live in his apartment where he already kept my favorite tea in stock in his kitchen. I wanted to be part of his family that consisted of one bipedal pure-breed and four quadrupedal mutts. I wanted to wake up every morning to him flipping pancakes in his Batman boxers and singing to opera with his broken off-key tenor. I squeezed his hand tightly in mine, already nodding.

He reached down, unbuttoning one of his cargo pockets and sliding his hand in. He squeezed my left hand in his as he raised his right hand. Pinched between his index and thumb was a shining silver band on which was perched the most beautiful diamond. I didn't know how many carats it was, or what the

name of the cut was. I didn't care. I did know it was his great grandmother's ring, though. He told me that much. It was the witness to three long Baker marriages, and he thought it would be good luck. Well, three generations of Bakers must have been its limit because that rock refused to mine. And its good luck flipped me the bird as it fled.

It's probably still in the woods somewhere. We were far off the trail, and with the cliff right there, the rain probably swept it away since last month. The Bradleys weren't too angry about the ring; they had plenty of insurance, and Mrs. Bradley had plenty of rings. They weren't angry at Benjamin; he couldn't have suspected his romantic but shortsighted proposal would go awry. They weren't even angry at me. I barely registered on their radar anyway except for obligatory Christmas and Thanksgiving meals where my dress was never the right shade of red and my hoop earrings were always too big or too small for my face shape. Really, they were angry at the park rangers. No one could get it into Mrs. Bradley's head that her son had gone off trail. No one could get her to believe that her wonderful, compassionate, intelligent, perfect specimen of high-class blue blood son could have been hiking off marked trails. But he was. And no one would put any of this in the newspaper. So, I'll put it here.

If they won't say how the mountain lion had been unusually far south for the season, I will. If they won't tell you that when they found us, Beni was torn up beyond recognition, then I will. No one would tell you it was my fault he died. But it was.

Beni knew so much. He knew that the lion would focus on whichever of us seemed a threat. He knew if he pushed me into the mud and threw a rock at the lion, it would attack him instead of me. He knew that when he told me to run, I would run as fast as I could because he knew how I hated animals, and he knew I would do whatever he asked because he knew I trusted him, and he knew how to hold his own just long enough that I could get a safe distance away. He knew he wouldn't survive and I would.

So, there it is. The obituary he deserved. The one no one will ever see. The one that I'm going to light on fire with his damn incense candles and throw into the fireplace with all the wedding magazines I had already collected and all the hiking brochures he had drafted his proposal in and left on his desk. And as I watch it burn, I'm going to curl into a ball and cry and inhale as deeply as I can. I won't smell apples; I won't have washed my hair for this very purpose. I will hold his superhero pajamas to my face and smell cinnamon.

The Overlook

Brad Ramsey



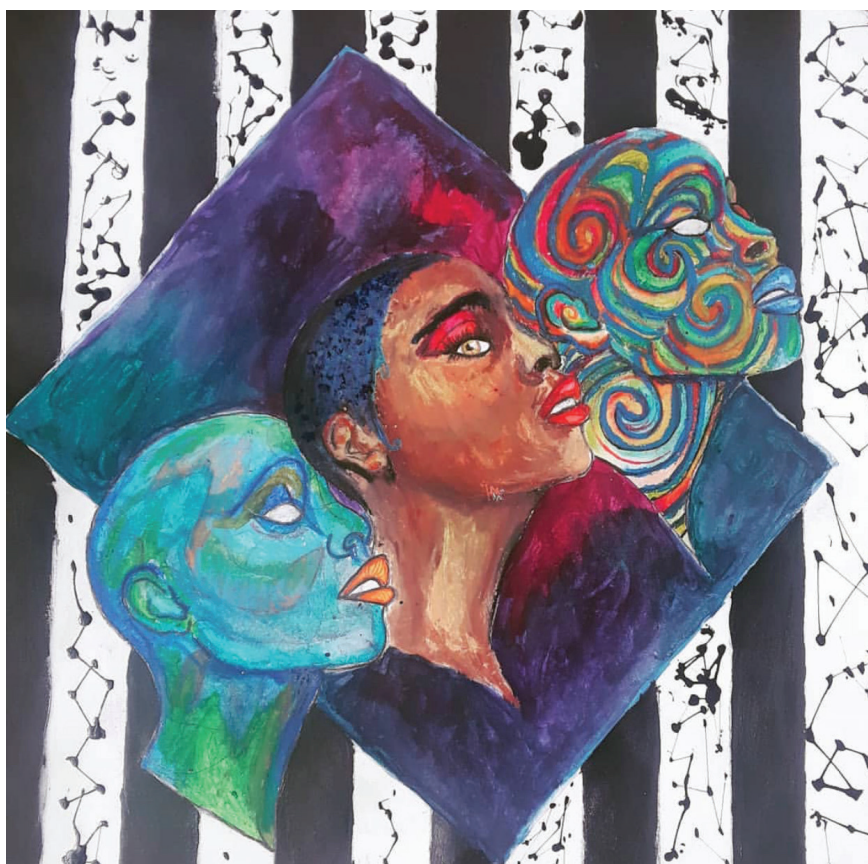
Pills

Carlyle Rascoe



Baduthang

Brian Dickson



Sleeping Without You

Shawna Dyer

I dreamt your painting
hung above my bed
in a gilded frame,
started melting.

Paint
dripped
down onto my forehead,
slowly

like Chinese water torture. The frame
left bleeding gold pooled
around me.

I wondered if you
hadn't already driven me mad
with your ghost whisper
in my ears.

After Bag of Mice by Nick Flynn

The Unfilled Whole

Shawna Dyer

Last summer in Paris, I stood
engulfed by Monet's *Water Lilies*—
felt a sense of longing
to be in that marsh, too.

I couldn't explain my body's hum
to disappear into the deep
blues and greens and purples
back then. But — I could drown

in them now. Sinking myself
to the bottom, I had nosedived
into the pool of promise.
Had watched your eyes

light up as I tried to explain
the massiveness of it all to you.
L'Orangerie describes the lilies as
"the illusion of an endless whole."

Thank you, for keeping up
the illusion that made me
feel whole for just long enough.
I felt it filling up my lungs.

Blue Haze

Rachel Brown



Night Flying

Abigail Jennings

As you cling, knuckles white, to the ash
bough, each of your delicate bones

casting twilight shadows, think back
to our game, our school for the blind.

Sweaty hand in sweaty hand, one
pair of eyes. We never peeked,

over strewn branches, up the kitchen steps,
trusting each other's guiding arm.

Never a stubbed toe, a bruised shin,
a bloody nose, just chocolate

war paint from our tug-of-war to lick
the brownie spatula. I didn't know then

that the batter wouldn't taste as good
when you let me eat it myself—

now that your stomach grumbles at night
and your hands are frigid and dry,

each tendon showing through translucent skin,
like the wings of bat. You beat through the dark

with hunched shoulders and a sad smile,
nursing scars that no one can see.

We never taught ourselves echolocation
to safely release each other's grasp.

Yet at some point, we let go. Now eyes blurred,
I strain to find you in elusive obscurity.

To a scared creature you taught me to
extend the back of my hand. But you,

continued, stanza break

you know these lines, these calluses.
So to you I extend my open palm.

We may have nearly forgotten
the assured contentment when our hands were clasped,

but they left an imprint no wound can efface,
tingling, tactile. Close your eyes.

And fingers once again intertwined
we will guide each other, laughing, to the sunrise.

SKULL

Taylor Cuzzo



In my dream, I am Medusa

Lutie Rodriguez

& you won't look at me, my gaze
too captivating.
You are afraid of my power
while all I want is connection—
to see, be seen.

When you chop off my head,
I turn to stone: stiff nerves and spinal cords
petrified like Cellini's sculpture
& when I try to scream from
my perforated throat,
you trample my crumpled body.

I wake up stunned, gasping,
the hair on my pillow
curled into serpents, their reptilian heads
snoring alongside me.

When did this turn mythical?
A collection of fantasies weaved
in my mind that will crumble in the morning.

Next to you, I feel like I'm trying to sleep
for the first time, imitating
your breaths and twitches,
hoping I don't catch your gaze.

Missing

Meghan Maloney

She was gray when I found her
Lying in the dirt
Like a blue-lipped angel
Blood caked into her skirt

The trees did nothing
To her fluorescent eyes
She warmly stared through me
Stiff with mild surprise

Her pink nail polish was chipped
On her badgered freezing hand
That rested on the
Stale hair blending with the sand

Her clothes were sprayed on
Painted like sheets
Gravel stuck in her foot
Weary from the blackened streets

Memories trapped in her head
Were a stranger to me
She slept, still
Drifting next to the sea

I remembered the well-known flyer
And dialed the number
Posted three months ago
By a crying mother

The waves crashed, gray
As I sat alone
The missing girl from pine road
Had finally returned home

The Last Knight on Earth

Brad Ramsey



Canine (Canis Lupus)

Ian Townsend

Ragged and hungry, the wild
wolf starves—

prowling
 hunting
 stalking

the forests. Each day a struggle,
its belly scraping and chewing

at its backbone. Its hunger
like the fires of my creation,

are a driving force for me
seeking to find my place
in this world.

Unlike the dog that lays
fat and fed, on the porch

 pampered
 sated
uncaring

all its days. No moment
ever truly troubles

this creature. Its laziness
is devoid of the passion

I seek. It lives a spoiled,
empty life. It is happy
in ignorance.

I see the untamed
spirit in the wolf's
eyes.

continued, stanza break

Ian Townsend

I see the chain
that chafes the dog's
throat.

I yearn to be free.

Based on the Aesop Fable "The Wolf and the House Dog"

Got an Idea

Ming Nguyen



FREEDOM

Taylor Cuozzo



BALLOONS

Taylor Cuozzo

Honorable Mention for the Helen Hamilton Award



The Tower of Kerain

Ian Townsend

The hills and fields were torn by battle. The screams of the dying pierced the air, and the clash of steel and the frightening sounds of destruction still echoed after the fighting had long passed. The once verdant and lush land was now scorched grass, blood-soaked mud, broken trees, and shattered rock. The sky itself seemed damaged by the strife—filled with iron gray clouds that blocked out the sun and unleashed torrential storms. The air crackled with unleashed tension and power; the violent side effect of the opposing forces of life and death raging against each other. The cities and towns were in ruins. Entire populations were wiped out. Only the channelers of the Sorcanum remained stalwart against the blackness sweeping the land.

Lord General Garin stood alone atop a fractured ridge of stone and looked out across a destroyed valley filled with broken wooden contraptions and thousands of corpses. Despite the biting chill of the wind, he only wore a dark leather coat and pants. Bearing the hallmarks of once being finely cared for, they were now torn and cut in several places and were bloodstained and mud-spattered. His brown hair and beard were shaggy and unkempt. As Garin stood silently, his hand gripped the long hilt of a sword at his right hip. The sword, like his clothing, bore the hallmarks of fine work; however, the care in maintaining the weapon was evident as the golden pommel and hilt shone brightly in the dim light.

“Lord Garin, the men are ready,” a voice said from behind him, and he turned to face the source.

A wiry man in dirty woolen clothing knelt several feet from where Garin stood, his head bowed. His clothing hung off him, and the signs of hard campaigning were taking a toll on this gentle man.

“Thank you, Fen,” Garin said. “Please send Arik to me.”

Fen hesitated before rising, his eyes lifting slightly. He swallowed, and he wet his lips before speaking.

“My lord, do you think this is a wise plan?”

Garin simply stared at the kneeling man, his eyes flashing dangerously. His hand tightened on the hilt of the sword, and the leather creaked. Fen cringed back under the glare, his limbs shaking.

“Do not question my orders,” Garin said, rage heating his words.

Fen nodded vigorously and crawled away, only standing back up when he was out of sight. Garin sighed as he turned back towards the valley, and felt the anger drain out of him. Anger came easy to him now, and that was the most dangerous of emotions when you were a Sorcai. Much of the ability to control elemental powers came from the ability to master your own emotions, and anger made control almost impossible. Garin knew this was the chaos of war at work. The dark emotions that made the power hard to control strengthened his enemies. Every moment he spent fighting himself, he was losing the war. His men were dying by the score, and he knew that other Sorcanum commanders were suffering the same damages. If the Sorcanum and the what was left of the kingdom was going to survive, they would need to force one final confrontation.

<><><><><><>

Crunching footsteps sounded behind Garin, and he tensed despite knowing who approached. His unease continued to roil as a stocky man moved to stand beside him, his breathing the only thing that broke the stillness on the hilltop. Both men stood silently, peering down on the killing field below them.

“How many?” Arik asked, breaking the silence.

“Ten thousand, at least,” Garin replied, his voice stony. “Darium’s men killed three for every loss they took, but they were still overrun.”

“Bloodfire,” Arik swore, placing a fist to his chest in salute to his fallen brothers.

Garin looked at the man beside him. Arik did not look like the typical Sorcai channeler. A son of outlander farmers, Arik was a rough and uncultured man that came to his power later than most. The outlanders had nothing but contempt for nobility, and Arik’s sudden insertion into their ranks riled him. His lack of respect for authority and foul temper saw him demoted several times before he finally ended up under Garin’s command. Garin immediately saw his potential and promoted him to commander. The move paid off when Arik led a successful raid against rebels outside the southern outland districts. Together, they led the best battalion in the Sorcanum.

Arik was of average height, but he was almost a foot and a half shorter than Garin. His heavy frame was thick with muscle, yet he could move like a lithe cat. Still refusing to adopt finer clothing, his garb was simple— battered leather jacket and worn woolen pants— and he carried two long daggers on his hips.

"Are we joining the rest of the Sorcanum?" Arik asked.

"We cannot waste any more time," Garin said. "We must move now."

Arik ran his hand over the short stubble on top of his head before speaking. His dark eyes still focused on the destruction in the valley.

"This war has been going on for five years now," Arik replied. "Why the rush now?"

"That is the point. Tarum is bleeding us dry."

"What will one last bloody stand accomplish? Have we come up with new tactics that I don't know about?"

"It is not about tactics. It is about doing something bold."

"Bold?" Arik asked, perplexed. "Like what?"

"Going into Kerain," Aidan said coolly.

"What in bloodfire do you mean going in to Kerain? That's suicide."

"Do you have a better idea?" Aidan asked.

"You're the one in charge."

Garin's eyes hardened as a flash of anger— white hot— seared through him. He quickly smothered it.

"That is not what I asked," he responded, his voice tight.

"No, for flame's sake, I don't," Arik stated, heat entering his voice. "It doesn't stop this plan from being madness."

Garin gripped the hilt of his sword, his knuckles turning white from the pressure.

"This is our last chance before he wears us down to nothing. We are the last group within strike distance of Tarum."

"Then why are you sending the men north? If we are going to Kerain, shouldn't they be heading east?"

"A diversion."

"What are you talking about?"

"You and I will go to Kerain alone."

Arik turned to face Garin, astonishment on his face.

"How, in bloodfire, do you plan on pulling that off?" he asked.

"By doing exactly what he expects."

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Garin and Arik walked through the valley, being careful of where they stepped. Bodies littered the ground all around them, gore and blood coating the ground. Arik held an arm across his face to ward against the foul stench rising off viscera, but Garin's

expression remained impassive as he moved nimbly through the battlefield.

"It makes me sick seeing them like this," Arik said, his voice muffled by the sleeve of his coat. He carried a large axe in his left hand, which he hoped he would not have to use.

"You know why we have to do it," Garin responded with a tight voice, trying to not breathe too deeply.

"By the blood, it still makes me want to burn something."

"Me as well, but you know what happens if we do not cut the heads off."

Arik began swearing under his breath as Garin stared down at a headless body. Amongst his other atrocities, Tarum used necromancy to bring the dead back to life, swelling his ranks and turning fallen Sorcai against their allies. It was this practice that earned him the moniker, The Carrion King. After several engagements that looked like sure victories turned into stunning defeats, the practice of decapitating the dead became standard practice. Only a whole body seemed affected by the Tarum's taint, and severing the heads stopped them rising.

"I'll watch the sky," Garin stated.

Arik nodded. Tarum's necromancy and dark powers also had a strong influence over vultures, and the vile creatures had feasted well during the war. Both men walked on with their hands firmly gripping their weapons, their eyes scanning. With the amount of carnage that occurred here, bodies could have been tainted by Tarum's vultures. Arik kept his eyes firmly on the ground around them, searching for bodies that remained whole, while Garin scanned the horizons around them. Vultures infested the entire land, and one scratch or bite from them could infect you with Tarum's influence.

A far-off screeching brought both men's heads up towards the west. Their eyes scanned the horizon, searching for the dark specks.

"There!" shouted Garin, while pointing at a far-off point.

Arik's head snapped up towards the direction Garin was pointing, his eyes widening when he saw the massive cloud of darkness below the clouds.

"Run!" Garin yelled.

Both men turned and began sprinting east, dodging the decapitated and mangled bodies.

"Get to the trees!" Garin shouted back over his shoulder, as he began to outpace Arik.

The screeches closed at an alarming rate, and both men ran harder. The broken line of the dead forest loomed close, but dark shapes began to swoop by overhead. Garin was fifty yards from the jagged trees when he heard a shout from behind him. He spun around, hand flying to the hilt of his sword. Arik lay face down in the blood-soaked mud, a swirling mass of black vultures roiling above him. The axe was several feet away, and Arik tried scrambling for it, but swooping vultures caused him to flatten back down and he dug at his belt for his long daggers instead.

Garin ripped his sword free of the scabbard and felt the smoldering heat of the power fill him. The gleaming length of deadly steel began to glow with fire as he channeled power into it. The mass of vultures reacted instinctively to his use of the power, convulsing towards him. He swept his sword in a wide arc, projecting fire out of his blade. The blast of fire ignited the vultures along its path, carving a long swath in the boiling cascade crashing down upon him. He seized more of the power and focused it on the fire in the air, causing it to rip through the vultures like wildfire. The power continued to surge through Garin like a torrent, and he felt the strength of it trying to rip him apart. His vision began to glow white hot, and he felt like he was boiling from the inside out.

Suddenly, there was nothing left of the ravening cloud except for a choking cloud of ash and feathers. Garin felt the air sucked out of his lungs and he stumbled to his knees, nearly blacking out. The power and heat inside of him was suddenly gone, and he felt hollowed out. His vision was black. He struggled for several moments to suck in a breath, choking on the ash in the thin air. He felt exhausted and empty. Slowly, his vision returned from darkness, and he saw that the blade in his hand was no longer aflame.

Coughing and spluttering came through the ash still swirling in the air, and Arik stumbled into Garin's view. He was covered in reddish mud and ash, and he was moving with a slight limp.

"What just happened?" Arik asked in a wheezing voice.

"I burned the vultures," Garin said after several moments. He was still finding it hard to breathe, but the ash was starting to clear.

"What?" Arik asked, looking dumbfounded, despite the muck coating his face. "All of them?"

"Yes," Garin replied simply, pushing himself to his feet.

"How in bloodfire did you do that?"

"I do not know, but it almost killed both of us."

Arik pulled his sodden coat off, exposing a somewhat clean shirt underneath. He untucked it from his pants and wiped his face with the hem of it.

"What do you mean?" Arik asked, his voice wary.

Garin paused before he spoke. He inspected his sword and then sheathed it.

"I grabbed fire already in the air and—I expanded it," Garin replied, his voice unsteady.

Arik stopped trying to clean himself off and stared at Garin.

"You can't do that. It's not possible"

Garin held his hands out to encompass their surroundings. Arik continued to stare at Garin. Garin's hands dropped back to his sides, and he swayed slightly.

"What's wrong?" Arik asked quickly, his eyes tightening.

"It must have taken too much power out of me," Garin replied quietly. "I will be fine in a moment."

"No channel or projection has ever tested your limits," Arik said, walking closer.

Garin held up a hand, halting Arik.

"I will be fine. It was just too much too fast. We need to move."

Arik did not reply, but he kept his eyes on Garin as he picked up his coat and followed him towards the dead forest.

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Garin and Arik sat near a small fire sheltered under a rock overhang. The broken trees around them looked ghostly in the dim firelight, and the forest was eerily quiet. The only sounds were the intermittent movements of the two men and the crackling of the fire. Arik watched Garin closely, as the flames from the small fire danced in tall man's eyes. They had not spoken since entering the forest, and Garin's powerful attack on the vultures still bothered Arik. He knew that asking Garin would possibly bring out the anger in his friend, but he had to know how it was possible.

"What you did today—" he began but cut off as Garin looked up to meet his eyes. Something in them looked haunted.

"What do you remember about learning to channel?" Garin asked quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"About limits. About power. About what you can do as a Sorcai."

Arik blew out a breath, remembering his first channeling experience. He had burned down a barn on accident. Cast out of his village, he wandered for several months before being found by a Sorcanum patrol.

"I learned that everyone has a limit," Arik replied. "We are all different, but we all have an upper limit. There are things we can and can't do. Most can deal with elemental powers. Some can control spirit. None can do both. No matter how powerful you are, there are some things you just can't do."

"What about emotion?"

"The stronger your emotions, the harder it is to control your power."

"So, you want to know how I could do something impossible?"

"Yes."

"I do not know."

Garin waved his hand and the fire flared up, and a tongue separated away, floating in open air. Arik felt power radiating from Garin, and the small wisp of flame grew into a fist size ball.

"I cannot control my emotions anymore," Garin stated. The ball of fire began to flare randomly as the channeling coming from Garin fluctuated.

"I am losing control of my ability to focus."

"Why are we on this death march then?" Arik demanded. "If you are losing control, why are you driving us head first towards Tarum?"

The flame began to burn white hot, and Arik had to shield his eyes.

"I swore I would see him dead for what he has done," Garin replied. "If it is with my last breath, I will kill him."

The white-hot ball of fire winked out, leaving the area much darker than it was seconds before. Arik slowly lowered his hand from in front of his face and looked at Garin, who was breathing heavily.

"I've followed you all over this kingdom, and I've followed every order you've given without question," Arik said quietly. "Some of them have been pretty bloody stupid, but I've done them."

Arik leaned forward and looked directly into Garin's eyes.

"For flame's sake, give me one bloody reason I should still follow you."

Garin looked back, his gaze unwavering.

“Because this is the only way I know to beat him.”

Arik sat there for several seconds, then reached out his hand across the small fire. Garin’s mouth set in a firm line of determination as they grasped forearms and nodded to each other.

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Garin and Arik stood on a ridgeline above a ruined city. The once beautiful buildings were now crumbling wreckage, overgrown with rotting vegetation and poisonous lichen. Every building in the wide expanse was torn down to the ground or a single level save one— a massive monolith of black stone that brushed the rolling clouds. The screeching calls of vultures sounded from all corners of the ruined city, but a constant swirl of them circled the tower like a vortex. The restless birds seemed to be the only inhabitants of the city once known as Kerain.

“By the blood,” Arik muttered, “not more of those foul creatures.”

Garin did not respond. His hand rested on the hilt of his sword, gripping the smooth leather.

“It looks empty,” Arik stated quietly, while rubbing at the short stubble on his head. “Are you sure that Tarum is still here?”

Garin nodded before replying. “He was a battle commander like me. He will see this plan for what it is and know what I am up to.”

“Why would he face you this way? He could’ve kept his whole bloody force back and killed you that way.”

A grin tugged at the corners of Garin’s mouth, but it quickly faded.

“His pride. He can kill me himself, and then wipe out our forces. He knew I would come here eventually.”

“Why?” Arik asked.

“Because Tarum is more than just a fellow Sorcai General that turned against us,” Garin replied as he turned to look Arik in the eyes. “He is my son.”

“Your... son?” Arik said, his voice laced with astonishment.

“Yes. He is the product of a relationship I had when I was young. I did not know he was mine until his mother visited him in the Citadel several years ago.”

“How did he take learning about it?”

“Not well. He always detested me, and now he had another.”

Garin turned back towards the tower, with a mix of emotions playing across his face.

"Bloodfire," Arik cursed. "Is that when he became what he is now?"

I do not believe so. I believe there is much more behind it, but I cannot help but think that I have my own hand in making him into the monster he is now."

"So, you have to kill your own bloody son." Arik said, realization dawning on him.

"I have to," Garin replied in an emotionless voice. "I believe he has gone past the point of redemption."

Garin started walking down the slope leading towards the city, and he heard cursing behind him followed by heavy footsteps.

"For blood's sake!" Arik yelled as he caught up. "Where are you going?"

"To end this."

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Vultures circled everywhere. The smell of decay and death pervaded the entire city. Garin and Arik slowly crawled through the rubble and crept down the narrow passageways, both watching the sky for signs that they had been spotted.

They were more than halfway to the tower, and it was getting harder to find passages to move in that kept them out of sight from the circling creatures overhead. As they continued closer to the middle of the city, they were forced to duck behind a broken wall with the jagged remains of a ceiling just before being spotted by a large swarm of vultures passing by. After the swarm passed, they slowly continued forward.

The passage suddenly widened into a large plaza that stood before the huge tower. Garin had his sword out of his scabbard in the blink of an eye, and flames were dancing along the steel as it swept forth. Vultures erupted from everywhere. Garin projected a fireball into a mass of them and stepped forward out of the passageway.

"Wait here," Garin said to Arik.

"What?" Arik replied as he pulled out his daggers.

"I have to do this alone!" Garin shouted over the screams of the vultures raging around them.

"Burn that!" Arik yelled back.

Garin turned back and faced the other man. "Arik! I command you!"

The two men's eyes met, both staring hard and trying to impose their will. After a long moment, Arik finally nodded and backed down.

Garin turned back towards the plaza, pulling more power into himself. He unleashed another streamer of flame with a slash of his sword. The fire burned across the waves of vultures and pushed them back, allowing him to move forward. He continued to draw more power, and channel fire at the swarming creatures. The vultures finally backed off and allowed Garin time to rest. His sword continued to glow with a white-hot heat as he gathered his strength again.

Garin knew that his plan could fail at this point, but the vultures here at the tower meant that Tarum still waited within in the fortress. He still felt a shiver of fear when he thought about the massive firestorm he created. How did he do that, and could he do it again? He might need it if he hoped to kill the so-called Carrion King. Garin raised his sword in front of him, and marched forward across the plaza.

Arik crouched behind a pile of rubble at the edge of the plaza and drew power into himself, feeling the icy chill fill him like a freezing wind. His breath billowed out like a condensed fog, and he gripped his daggers tightly in his hands. He watched Garin lash fire and push back the vultures. He hated watching his commander fight alone. The swarms of feathers and talons were making it hard to see Garin now, but Arik could still catch flashes of fire through the tempest. Finally, the vultures drew back, still circling in masses, and he saw Garin striding towards the tower, sword ablaze.

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Garin moved cautiously forward as he neared the tower, but a wall of vultures flew in to block him from going any further. A man seemed to flow through the vultures, blending with them and almost absorbing them at times. He was tall and bone-thin and was dressed in dark close-fitting black leather. His skin was a pallid white that sharply contrasted with his clothes and his stringy dark hair. Deep set eyes stared out of a narrow face accentuated by a beaklike nose. His mouth was set in a vicious leer.

"Finally," the man stated, his voice a harsh rasp.

"It has come to this, Tarum," Garin replied, still holding his sword at the ready. "You and I ending this."

Tarum laughed. "You watched thousands of your Sorcanum brothers die. I slaughtered them like sheep. Now you come here and want to face me yourself?"

"This was always going to come down to a battle between you and I. You know that."

"Do I?" Tarum asked, a slightly manic grin on his face. "I left the trappings of my old life behind me when I took up my new mantle. You mean as much to me as any of the fools who call themselves Sorcai."

Garin took a slow cross-step to the right, forcing Tarum to rotate with him.

"Is that why you murdered your mother?" Garin asked coolly, his face composed.

The smile slid away from Tarum's face, and rage etched the harsh lines even deeper as his eyes blazed. "Do not speak of her to me," Tarum screamed.

"You killed her in cold blood," Garin said, still moving slowly and carefully. "Just like you've killed all of your brothers and sisters in the Sorcanum in cold blood."

"She stood in my way as all of you do," he hissed, his face contorted in fury. "I will not let any ties bind me to this world. Not even those of a son to a father."

Garin stopped moving and his blazing sword seemed to dim slightly. The calm look on his face remained, but his eyes hardened.

"You are tapping in to powers that you do not understand, Tarum. You put us all in danger with your actions."

"What do you matter to me?" Tarum asked, his voice returning to its manic, breathy rasp. "I will remake this world how I see fit."

"You bloody fool, listen to me!" Garin shouted, his patience finally cracking. "You cannot control these forces you are unleashing! You must end this and come with me, I beg you!"

"I am not the fool, Garin," Tarum replied, contempt filling his words. "You know nothing of me or what I do, yet you come hoping to bring me down with some broken connection to me? I will kill you and wash your memory from this world. You will be but a stain in my boot print."

Garin pointed his sword directly at Tarum, and it flared brighter than ever. "Let us end it, then."

Tarum screamed a battle cry that echoed through the entire city. A swirling darkness filled his left hand and the black haze shimmered into the form of a long sword. The obsidian blade radiated a coldness that left vapor trails through the air.

Tarum brandished the blade and attacked. Garin quickly parried, and the swords met in a shower of sparks and hissing steam. The two men traded blows, each strike punctuated by sparks and steam. They danced back and forth through thrusts and counters, attacks and parries, and slashes and deflections that almost struck home on the opponent several times. Each man was an expert swordsman, and this was their masterwork.

The fight wore on for what seemed like hours. A quick riposte from Garin sent his burning sword sliding up across the shoulder of Tarum, searing as gash in the muscle. Tarum screamed in pain and rage. A deft backhand from Tarum landed a stab to Garin's thigh that caused the skin around the wound to blacken and putrefy. Tarum attacked with renewed fervor. Garin stumbled and sank to one knee.

The side cut meant to take Garin's head off missed by inches, and Tarum was pulled off-balance by the force of the mistake. Garin exploded off the ground and slammed into Tarum. Tarum was knocked back on his heels, and Garin struck with lightning quickness despite his injured leg. Tarum tried to bring his sword back around but was too slow. Garin's sword neatly severed his arm at the wrist, cauterizing it, and Tarum's hand and sword tumbled to the ground.

Tarum howled in agony as he grasped his charred stump. A boiling rage filled his expression, and he turned towards Garin, spittle dripping from his lips. The vultures that had been circling high overhead dove down onto Garin in a flood. Tarum screamed again as he watched the vultures swarm over Garin, pure madness overtaking him.

Suddenly, the vultures burst away from Garin in a flash of light and heat. He stood in a swirl of ash and dust facing Tarum, his sword held high. Tarum backed away in panic. Garin was covered in numerous bloody wounds and his clothes were torn to rags, but he moved purposefully towards the retreating man. Tarum sent wave after wave of vultures down upon Garin, but each one was burned away until Tarum finally called every vulture he had left in the city to crash down upon both of them, burying them in a massive horde of the creatures.

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It was then that Arik sensed it.

He watched the entire battle between Garin and Tarum, hovering near the edge of the plaza. He watched as Garin stalked the maimed traitor and was swallowed under by the enormous weight of thousands of vultures. Arik was about to leap out and

start tearing his way into the mass when he felt the tremor.

It was not just a physical sensation. It was the power on a scale he did not know was possible. Suddenly, Arik could feel a heat building like a raging fire. He began pulling in cold power around himself and ducked behind a wall. He layered himself with as much protection as he could, feeling the heat continue to build. Suddenly, the world shook.

Everything went white-hot around Arik. He latched onto the power he held, feeling the fire burning away at the outer layers of his defenses. It was over in a matter of moments, but it seemed to last longer than anything Arik could remember. When he finally let go of the power, feeling his body thaw, he saw the destruction around him.

Nothing remained of the broken city of Kerain. Nothing. The entire land was scoured clean down to the bedrock, except where Arik stood. Arik looked up to the sky and saw a hole in the thick cloud cover. Stars shone through on the land for the first time in more than five years.

Tarum's power was broken. He would no longer poison the world with his evil. It took the sacrifice of thousands of Sorcai, but one man finally ended the war. Garin destroyed Tarum and himself so that the world would be cleansed of the Carrion King's taint.

Arik sheathed his daggers and knelt to pick up the sword. It was gleaming brightly in the starlight, and flickers of dying flame still played along its blade. As they died out, Arik felt an emptiness settle inside of his heart. They had defeated the greatest evil the world had known but lost the greatest Sorcai in the process.

Arik looked again to the stars shining so brightly in the night sky. Tears rolling down his cheeks, Arik clutched Garin's sword to his chest and smiled as well.

Recycling

Olivia Chambers

Hand-me-down words—
Syllable after syllable, clause after clause.
The words pour out of your mouth
With attraction and eloquence—
You make me feel special.

Yet I am gifted recycled love,
That seems great for a while,
But withers and crumples not long after.
And every time you voice those recycled words,
It is like I am gifted a favorite book of someone's.

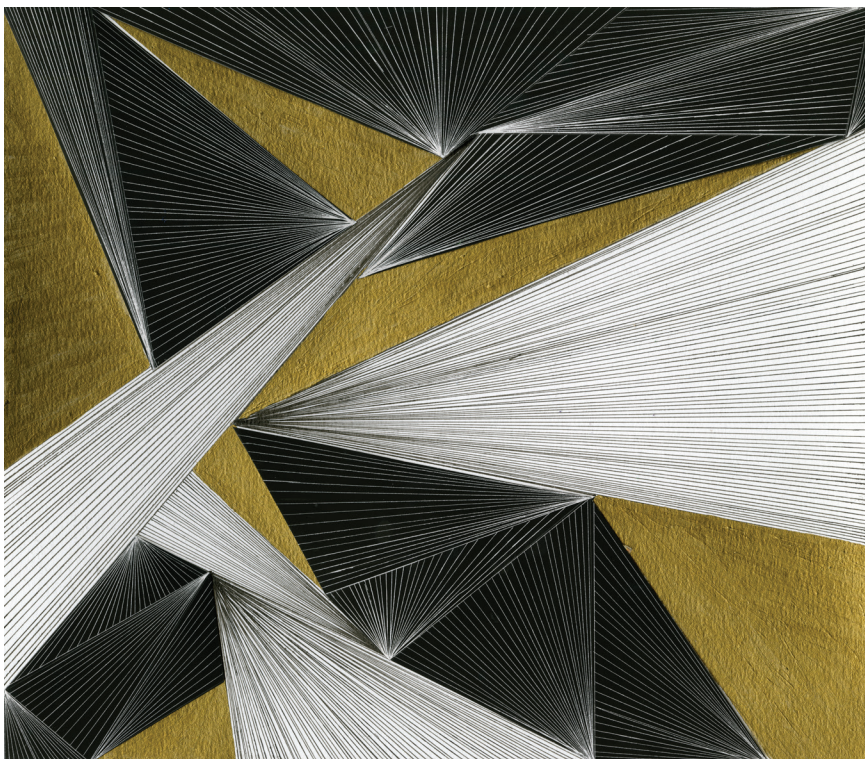
I can appreciate the literature,
But the ink is starting to fade
And the binding is loose. The pages are close to falling out
And there's notes, someone else's notes, written fervently in the
borders.
I can't read the lines without glancing at the margins
And noticing the devotion that someone had once before;

And how just as the words are fading,
So has the affinity between
Those past lovers.
Your now lover.
Someone's old lover.

I loathe the ones who get my hand-me-down words.
When in reality, the words were never mine to begin.
They belonged to another before
And another
And another
And I lay just another scribble in the margin.

Bronze Angles

Faith Langenberg



To Fall in Love with You, Bob Dylan

Lutie Rodriguez

I fell in love with a girl
and this song is all I hear
when I see her there is this
touch of sadness in the beauty
of it all, a bit of hope in the
sea of doubts.

This song is all that

I imagine myself
dancing to with
you barefoot under
a starry night & I'm
quite sorry for that.

Only Bob Dylan
can sing a song I don't understand
& make me feel like maybe
life will be okay.

I am from Libya.
My country war
everywhere
but
when I listen to you,
BoB dalyn,
I feel you love.

Naked angel he is
to me in this song like
I'm not there it's too
raw must be kept hidden.

continued, stanza break

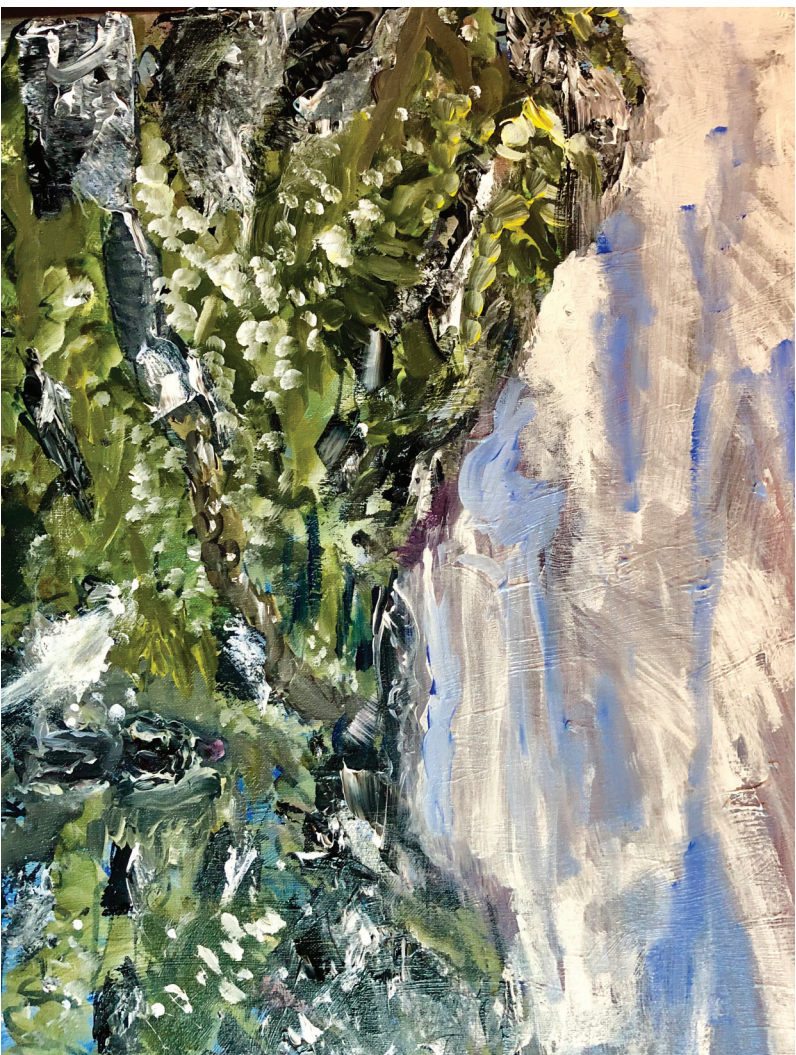
We're all so gentle inside.

Alone on a Saturday night
sipping some wine and
eating some dark chocolate,
getting a little hazy.

Who's cutting onions?

*a found poem based on the YouTube comments from
"Bob Dylan - To Fall in Love with You"*

Bonsnos #3
Daniel Kleveland



Gaustatoppen #2

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“OTHERS HAVE SEEN
WHAT IS AND ASKED
WHY. I HAVE SEEN
WHAT COULD BE
AND ASKED WHY
NOT.”

- Pablo Picasso