



eleven40seven

tcu journal of the arts



Spring 2021
www.1147.tcu.edu
©copyright 2021 Texas Christian University





VOLUME 16.2

SPRING 2021





**“YOUR LIFE IS
ALREADY ARTFUL
- WAITING, JUST
WAITING FOR YOU
TO MAKE IT ART.”**

- Toni Morrison





CONTENTS

Our Playground	6	Victor Torres
El Jale: Abuelito	8	Julio Argueta
Soul Searching	9	Cassandra Garza
Orange Oregon	10	Jack Moraglia
Imperfect Metals: Macro Coins	12	Kline Koegeboehn
Imperfect Metals: Macro Reel Ring	13	Kline Koegeboehn
Selene	14	Leah Marut
Etch	15	Emma St.Clair
Honey	16	Deanna Harper
You Never Wanted to Know	17	Leah Marut
Quiet Reflection	18	Audrey McMullen
Helpless	19	Jack Stevens
Balloon	20	Bailey Cockerham
Unpacking	32	Emilie Burnham
Senescence	33	Alexandra Josephine Ameal
The Battle of Hoth: Dak Down	35	Jack Wallace
Photo-Realism in Movies and the Real World	36	Jaden Gaskins
Familiar Faces	37	Erica Harkins
Ethereal	38	Liz Delapaz
Playlist for the Turn of Earth	39	Jack Moraglia
Cicada Love Song	42	Julie Papaj
In The Shallow	43	Emma St.Clair
Golden Hour on the California Coast	44	Audrey McMullen
Sunset on the Coast	45	Audrey McMullen
Assassination of my own Body	46	Alyssa Mariel Gutierrez
Cancun	48	Julio Argueta
Mirrors	49	Nick Sangalis
apathy adjustment	50	Cassandra Garza
light carries on	52	Elissa Tatum
Welcome to the Bread Bank	63	Sergio Xocrates Gonzalez



EDITOR'S NOTE

We did it, everyone! This year has been full of new, challenging experiences for all TCU students—mandatory mask wearing, online classes, and trying to pretend we're not in the middle of a massive, scary pandemic. Despite all of the change we've all had to accept, adapt to, and overcome, it's been an inspiration to read so many creative and innovative works this semester, and I'm truly honored to present the Spring 2021 issue.

Our staff worked tirelessly to select student pieces that are stimulating and relatable. More than ever, I've observed that both written and visual content is serving as an outlet for student struggles. We hope that this journal includes expressions of everything new you've experienced this past year, from triumphs to failures and everything in between.

I had the pleasure of leading our team this year and can say that this edition was cultivated with extreme care and respect. From day one, our staff brought all the energy and passion for art we'd been saving for the past year, which I hope comes across in our journal. Our advisor, Dr. Carlson, could hardly get a word in before we dove in to planning our vision for this semester's journal. Class discussions on student works were engaged, thorough, and enlightening, as we were constantly inspired and challenged by our unique student submissions.

The submissions for this journal may be some of the bravest eleven⁴⁰seven has ever seen. Creativity in the face of uncertainty is hard. With our routines constantly in flux, finding any way to be generative is a battle. To all creators, both prolific and stuck alike, I encourage you to celebrate the survival of your creative spirit. Against all odds, we stand in a new age with our imaginations intact and ready to explore. We hope you will join us in celebrating the pieces we've selected for this journal, both in print and online, and take the sentiments and inspiration within this issue with you into your next adventure.

Sincerely,

Chip Fankhauser

Editor-in-Chief, Spring 2021





Our Playground

Victor Torres

I passed my own shadow three times today.
Back where the sun shined brightest, retreading
where the green grass meets woodchips in decay.
My old soles remember these soils well.
Bracelets and crayons peak out like fossilized
Heirlooms, and like monuments, the slides stand
Tall. Still solid plastic. Nothing rusts here.

But silence in the breeze shows what's missing.
The scurry of small shoes on the pavement
nowhere to be found, the secret language
Of children forgotten. The wind howls now
As I touch the gates, and my foot stumbles
On a lone, blunt, pencil. Broken in two.

I can still feel the warmth of that deep blue
Infinite ocean above me, the bell
Unleashing us to play on warm spring days.
Grass sighing. Summer buzzing. Friends laughing.

One time we came upon a dead rabbit,
Twitching in the dirt. We circled around
Like buzzards. With a stick, I turned over
Its decrepit body - maggots and worms
Oozed, as did a red river. We bolted
Back to our world, hiding from that other.

Those faces are fuzzy now. The faded
Paint on the fence shows splinters. Suddenly
A creak catches my ear, then a shuffling
In the leaves. I creep through grass, its shadow
Flickering in the distance. Past the slides
And across the swings, we meet. He is small.
Fluffy. Our eyes lock. His hind leg twitches,
Addressing an itch in his ear. Forward
He springs, like a grasshopper. Farewell, friend.

As orange fades to black, I gaze beyond
At that familiar horizon, shadows

continued, no stanza break





Victor Torres

Swallowed by dusk. Yet moonlight shined not on
A burial ground, but on a garden,
Slides shimmering like seashells, swings squeaking
Like its hare inhabitants. The crayons
Sprout as dandelions. I leave footprints
As I slowly depart, the gate unlocked.
May this home always be mine.



Second Place Winner of Sustaining Places We Love Poetry Contest





El Jale: Abuelito

Julio Argueta



Second Place Winner of Sustaining Places We Love Art Contest

El Jale collection featured online

Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>





Soul Searching

Cassandra Garza

What is love
but the recognition of one's soul in another?

Indeed, as I rest my gaze
upon a meandering stream,
I find myself wandering along with it...

Deep into the neighboring forest,
where leaves crackle under my bare feet—
I close my eyes,
shading myself,
not unlike the great trees towering overhead—

Sweeping into the mountains,
where the air is thin—
I stand atop the peaks,
all the better
for appreciating the depths—

Raising my eyes to the sky,
where a war of dark and light
is endlessly waged—
I yearn to crack like lightning,
for my strength to be witnessed—

Yes, there are bits of my soul
scattered about this place we call Earth.
Or is it Earth
who scattered bits of Her soul in me?

Third Place Winner of Sustaining Places We Love Poetry Contest



Orange Oregon

Jack Moraglia

*Drain the pressure from the swelling
The sensation's overwhelming
Give me a long kiss goodnight and everything will be alright
Tell me that I won't feel a thing
So give me Novocaine.
— "Give Me Novocaine [sic]" by Green Day¹*

Oregon is on fire and it doesn't seem to matter.

Events that used to dominate consciousness and control the news cycle, have fallen to the wayside as we navigate a world where abnormality dominates. I can barely remember the hurricanes from two weeks ago. I can't seem to recall the last time wildfires ravaged California at apocalyptic levels.

It was three weeks ago.

Unrest over racial injustice. Climate change. The pandemic. The election. Hurricanes. Unemployment. Wildfires.

It's like getting punched in the arm, repeatedly with an iron fist: the first blow hurts, bad. The second punch adds to the pain. A welt grows. Bruising begins. The third strike draws blood. The fourth. The fifth, and I can't feel anymore. Novocaine.

My internal processor is running on Windows 95. My neurons fire at double-time just to catch up to the present, until they crash and are forced to restart.

The teacher blew through the slideshow, and now I can't take notes. Pages flip forward in a book, and I am lost. I caught a few words somewhere, but they just as easily slipped through my memory like sewage water down a corroded grate.

Have I ever seen a sunset as beautiful as Oregon's orange sky? Stunning pictures capture destruction with inconsiderate romanticism. Do the flames dance on purpose to distract us—to keep us standing still, staring? With their beauty, flames freeze us, water buckets in hand soon forgotten.

But how can you forget something you never committed to memory? Newsworthy happenings seem to loom less large to begin with now. They're sent to the back page, next to Dilbert. Outliers become perfect graph-plots, fitting the trend line precisely. We will hear hurricanes Alpha, Beta, Gamma each year, and we will begin to forget when the English alphabet was enough to hold the destruction.



Jack Moraglia

There's a term called "shifting baselines" or "generational amnesia". Ever adaptable, humans get used to the situations they are in. Hurricanes used to be fewer and happened later in the year. Now, they are many and happen earlier and earlier. Next year, when they happen early again, we will think, "Yeah, that's what happened last year." Our baselines for alarm have shifted, and a new normal has been created.

"New normal" has been a buzzword during the pandemic, a favorite of corporations and commercials trying to sell tank tops to sick people. But, the rhetoric of the "new normal" is harmful. Making abnormality normal sacrifices any desire to win back the old normal. During the next public health outbreak, if we must wear masks for only a couple months, we might think, "Hey, this is a lot better this time. We've really got public health crises under control." When we get used to disastrous living situations, we don't realize we must take action to change them.

Vox's David Roberts writes that climate advocates have always relied on the assumption that eventually, when the environment gets catastrophically bad—floods, hurricanes, fires—lawmakers and citizens will finally act. It's hard to care about something that will happen far in the future. Pleasure today is worth pain tomorrow. When the pain finally comes, we'll do something to fix it, right?

Well, Roberts makes a scary proposition: "We might not wake up in time."²

An old fable says that a frog, when placed in boiling water, will jump out quickly. But, if the frog is placed in lukewarm water, and the temperature slowly raises to a boil, the frog will boil alive, inattentive to the rising heat. In truth, the myth does not hold up in real life. The temperature escalates; the frog jumps out, no matter how gradually the mercury rises.

Humans, on the other hand, burn their skin off—it floats up with the evaporation. Their heat sensors, their perception messengers float away. And we sit in the killer hot tub, blissful to the impending death sentence.



Imperfect Metals: Macro Coins

Kline Koegeboehn

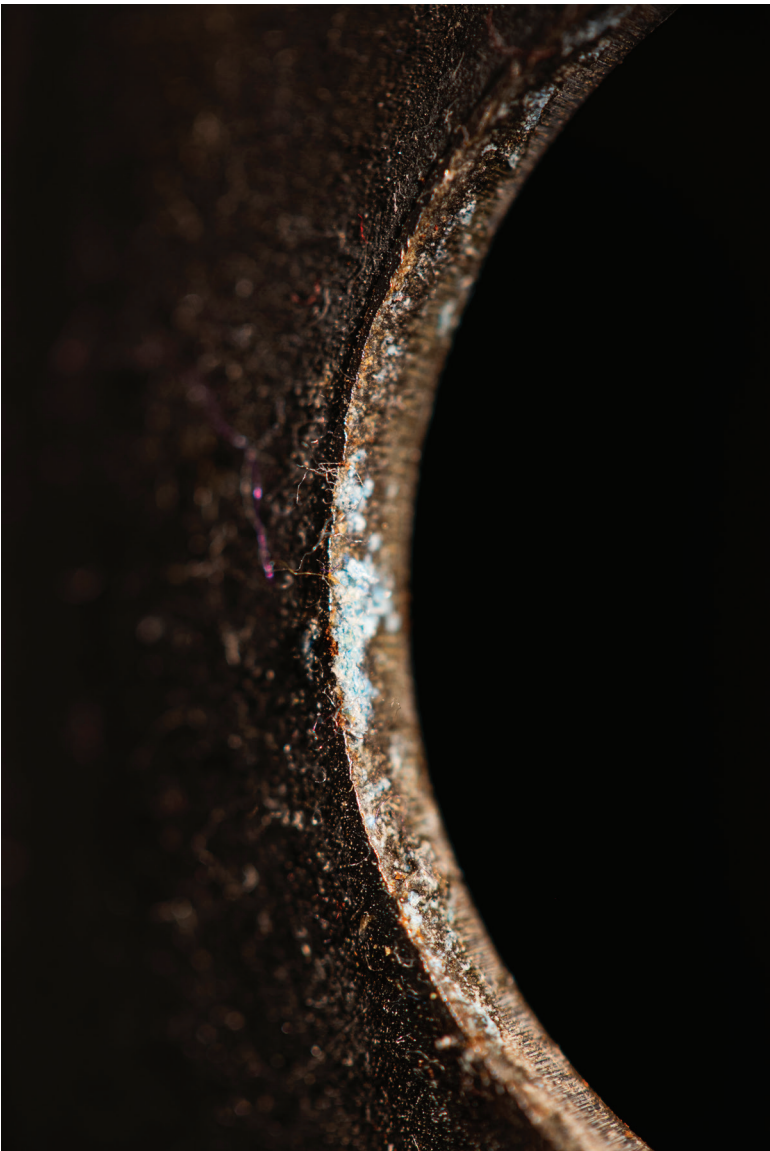


Imperfect Metals collection featured online
Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>



Imperfect Metals: Macro Reel Ring

Kline Koegeboehn



Imperfect Metals collection featured online
Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>



Selene

Leah Marut

What love can we say that she has not heard?
Porcelain crystals border her craters, luminescent—
time is lost and she smiles at our tender words.

She guards the horizon until the world begins to stir,
and wonders if she will ever be remembered past the present.
What love can we say that she has not heard?

Mi amor, ma petit lune, mi luna; syllables between lovers are slurred
but she understands it all the same, as if it is she for whom they were meant.
Time is lost and she smiles at our tender words.

We are mere humans bathed in the forgiving light, *le clair de lune*, of she who prefers
to wait for the night— does she know the beauty bestowed in her iridescence?
What love can we say that she has not heard?

She has heard our wishes beating in hearts of hummingbirds,
our shadows are not strangers to her gaze, for even as she begins her descent,
time is lost and she smiles at our tender words.

Romance was born underneath her veil, lavender touches blurred
between warm hands and sealed by careful lips. When have we thanked the goddess crescent?
What love can we say that she has not heard?
Time is lost and she smiles at our tender words.



Etch

Emma St.Clair





Honey

Deanna Harper

When the light shines in your eyes,
they remind me of honey.
Sweet, but hard to get.
I actually find it funny
how their golden hue lures me.
Sticky- clutching onto your secrets.
Mysteries I can't solve
are truly my biggest weakness.
Clear, but not enough,
as my mind tends to wander.
The images in my dreams are
warm; they make my feelings grow stronger.
The day you called me beautiful-
I'll never forget the sensation.
Thick waves of emotions
fueled my temptation
as the words dripped, from your lips,
like honey.



You Never Wanted to Know

Leah Marut

But I'll tell you what it felt like:
all of the cracks in the seawall followed
your lead and gave up. My heart slammed
against ribcage walls, all air
gone and saltwater flooding in. Caught
in a whirlpool and a riptide all at once, the only
direction was down and your words were anchored
to my wrists, their bruises marring bone. Ice seeped
into my arteries yet I still reached for you. You shrunk
to a wavering speck of light, watching your work sink
to the cold depths before you flicked your cigarette
over the torrent of gasping bubbles and turned
away. Iron froze to skin and time s l o w e d.
Crystals beaded underneath my eyes and I finally
hit the sea floor, struggled once more for the sun
out of my reach. My legs were already buried
in sand, scavengers were lurking for dinner. I swallowed
one last marble of sunlight, closed my eyes, and let
myself d

r
o
w
n.

Quiet Reflection

Audrey McMullen



Helpless

Jack Stevens





Balloon

Bailey Cockerham

PLACE:

A bus stop.

TIME:

Now.

CAST:

BEEBOW

LILLIE

DESIGN NOTE:

There are to be absolutely no props. Every prop mentioned is to be mimed by the actors.

LIGHTS UP ON:

BEEBOW, an aging clown, sits on a bench at the bus stop with a battered suitcase at his side. His clown suit is no longer the pristine white of his youth. His makeup is also no longer sharp and clean. It is fading and cracking from having it on for several days and simply not caring to redo it. But it is still clearly clown makeup. He looks offstage, into the distance, waiting for a bus to come. It is still not in sight. Sighing, he pulls out a flask from inside a pocket on his suit, takes a swig, then leans back and closes his eyes.

Enter LILLIE, a young clown. She wears a newish female clown dress, holds a red balloon in one hand and a suitcase in the other. Her makeup is sharp and clean, clearly still put on with care and dedication. She looks offstage for the bus, as well. She sees BEEBOW, but does not sit next to him, knowing to be wary of strangers although the extrovert in her tends to get the better of that fear. She taps her foot and looks offstage again, expecting the bus to be here any moment. Finally her anxiety gets the best of her.

LILLIE
(to BEEBOW)

Are they running on time?

(Silence.)

Excuse me. Sir? The buses. Are they running on time?



Bailey Cockerham

BEEBOW

(Without opening his eyes.)

Woulda been here by now if they was runnin' on time.

LILLIE

Right. Sorry. I just- want to make sure I get Out, ya know? The buses are getting fewer each day.

BEEBOW

Shoulda been on one of the first of 'em then if you was wantin' to make sure ya got Out.

LILLIE

Right.

(Beat. She is still anxious about the buses.)

Have you been waiting here a while?

BEEBOW

Don't know. Don't gotta timekeeper.

LILLIE

Right. Well, mind if I join ya?

(Beat. Without opening his eyes, BEEBOW pulls his suitcase off the bench and sets it next to him on the ground. LILLIE perches next to him and also sets her suitcase on the ground next to her. She sits still for a moment then braves a good look at BEEBOW, then looks off in the distance again. She begins to pull on the string of her balloon in a pattern of three tugs, clearly a nervous tick. The noise attracts BEEBOW's attention finally.)

BEEBOW

(Looking at LILLIE and the balloon for the first time.)

Where'd you get one a those?

LILLIE

(Taken aback by BEEBOW's sudden interest.)

Huh?





Balloon

BEEBOW

(With growing earnest.)

The balloon. Thought they's gone extinct. 'Specially a reddun' like that.

LILLIE

Oh! Right. It's a...family heirloom. Been passed down for a few generations.

BEEBOW

(Beginning to rise and reach for the balloon.)

Do ya mind if I give it a feel?

LILLIE

(Yanking the balloon further from him.)

No!

(This seems to break BEEBOW's dazed infatuation with the balloon. He sits back slowly, regaining composure. He shakes his head and pulls out the flask again.)

LILLIE

I mean-no. You cannot. It's very...fragile. Sorry.

BEEBOW

(Taking a swig from his flask.)

No need. Sorry 'bout that, I jus' ain't seen a balloon since Then.

(He eyes the balloon greedily once again, then catches hold of himself and takes another quick swig from the flask.)

Shouldn't be paradin' it around like that. 'Specially if it is fragile.

LILLIE

(Relaxing a bit.)

I know, I know. Can't really shove it in my suitcase though, now can I? I could deflate it, I guess, but I just heard on the radio that the last bit of helium was used up, so I don't know how I'd ever get it floating again.

BEEBOW

No. No, you's right. Don't deflate it. Just keep an eye on it, s'all. There's still some folks out there who'd do...things for a piece a Then like that.





Bailey Cockerham

(LILLIE tenses at the idea of what could happen to her and her balloon. Beat. BEEBOW realizes he's just scared LILLIE once again.)

BEEBOW

(Extending his hand and attempting a smile.)

Name's Beebow.

LILLIE

(Warily, but desperately wanting a friend.)

Lillie.

(She finally takes his outstretched hand with her own and they shake. Attempting small talk again.)

So, you're also getting Out?

BEEBOW

(Making a stronger attempt to be friendly.)

Seems to be the right thing to do, 'specially since most a the kiddos is gone now. Not much use for a clown when they're ain't no kiddos to entertain.

LILLIE

Right. I'm hoping to get Out to the children. Not the same here without them.

(She tugs the balloon three times again, lost in her own thoughts. Beat.)

How long have you been clowning for?

BEEBOW

Oh, most a my life, I guess.

(Teasing)

Hopin' this old clown'll spin his yarn for ya?

LILLIE

If you'd like to. Doesn't seem like we'll be going anywhere soon.

(LILLIE looks off into the distance for a bus. She tugs on her balloon three times.)

BEEBOW

Well, Ma n' Pa were both clowns, so's it was only fittin' I joined the family business. Clowned 'round the city on corners for a while, but work picked up for me the closer we got to the Fall. Got into



Balloon

some of them high-rise parties n' corporate offices. 'Pon reflection I know it's cause clowns was a startin' to go into hidin'. I was too busy tryin' to make it in the world to get some sense an' hide. Miracle I wasn't on the corners no more. Woulda never lasted. Then the Fall happened an' Now began, an' a few clowns started to come out an' work again. But mostly they just started leavin', 'specially once the kiddos started leavin'. No point clownin' when there's no kiddos to clown for. Got a gig at the hospital n' stayed 'till it got emptied. Then realized I had nothin' left here. Ma n' Pa passed long time ago, long dead n' gone, an' I had no Missus to care for. So I figured Out was the next best thing.

(He fiddles with his flask before taking a long, slow pull from it.)

I'll be honest, I thought I was the last one. Clown, I mean.

LILLIE

Right. I, uh, I didn't start clowning until recently, actually. After the Fall. Clowns were my sister's favorite thing to go watch, and when they started fading, well, I guess you could say she started to, too. We tried everything to cheer her up, books, plays, food, art, but she just got too heartsick, I guess. It wasn't until Now that I was able to scrounge up enough material to piece a suit together. And she loved it. And I tried my best to make her happy as I could.

(Beat. She tugs the balloon three times.)

I'll bet she loved you, too. You probably met her actually. She was in that hospital that just got cleared.

BEEBOW

Oh, was she now? What, uh, what was her name?

LILLIE

Rose. Momma always loved lilies and roses. She said Daddy got a bundle of them for her on their first date. Daddy, uh, left before I was born. Rose doesn't remember much, just that he was tall and dark. But, Momma whispered about him in her dreams, so that's how Rose was able to learn more about him for us. Momma never talked about Daddy unless she was sleeping.

(Tugs balloon three times.)

She passed before the Fall. Thankfully, I guess. Didn't have to live through this chaotic mess of a world we have now.



Bailey Cockerham

BEEBOW

Rose, I think I may a met a Rose. Skinny, red hair? Looked out the window a lot?

LILLIE

Yes! Yes, that was her. She never was pulled from that window unless a clown visited or the orderlies had her in their grips. I tried to visit as often as I could, but the orderlies always wanted something...

(Tugs balloon three times.)

Momma's death really pushed her over. Rose. And the clowns leaving. It was all too much for her. The hospital tried to fix her, but pain meds can't fix a broken heart, I guess. I didn't realize the hospital was up next for clearing, until I got there and it was empty. I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye.

BEEBOW

So you're hopin' you'll find Rose once you get Out?

LILLIE

(Tugs balloon three times.)

Right. She's gotta be there somewhere.

BEEBOW

(Pauses and thinks. Raises flask to LILLIE.)

To findin' Rose.

(He drinks then offers some to LILLIE. She looks hesitantly at the flask then accepts. She takes a strong pull then spits it out immediately.)

LILLIE

What is that stuff!?

BEEBOW

(Chuckling and taking the flask back.)

Good Stuff! None of the Best Stuff is left, so I've been makin' my own at home outta what's left. I'll admit it's not...great. But it does the job.

LILLIE

Well, it's awful. But if it does the job...

(She holds her hand out for another swig and





Balloon

BEEBOW gives the flask to her. This pull is painful but finished, and so is the flask. It does the job.)

LILLIE

(With more confidence.)

Beebow, you've been clownin' your whole life. Show me some of your stuff.

BEEBOW

Aw, nah. You don't wanna see this ol' clown work. 'Sides I'm feelin' rusty since I ain't had work for awhile.

LILLIE

Oh, please, Beebow. I haven't been able to watch anyone to learn from, so I'd love someone to teach me new stuff. I wanna be able to really show off for Rose.

BEEBOW

(Warily)

Alright, I guess.

(BEEBOW rises from the bench and stretches a bit. He looks at LILLIE one last time, sighs and chuckles, resigning to his bit. He bends down and flips open his suitcase. A dove flies up into his face and he falls back. He clammers to his feet and tries to catch it. It flutters around the bench and lands on the bus sign. He points at it and then the suitcase, clearly saying "Get back in!" His frustration increases until, exasperated, he turns his back on the bird. He crosses back to his bag and reaches in to pull out a rope. He begins to pull out the comically long handkerchiefs. Once he has finally pulled the entire thing out, he ties one end into a loop and begins to swing it around his head. He has created a lasso and plans on lassoing the bird. He throws it. Short. He throws it. Misses. He throws it. Loops the bird! He yanks, but it's a bird and it takes flight. He now has a bird on a string pulling him around the stage. Finally he trips over his suitcase in this encounter and drops the rope. He watches the rope fall from the bird and it flies back



Bailey Cockerham

to the bus sign. He gets up, angrily looks at the bird and mimes slitting its throat. He turns his back, widens his stance, places a hand on each hip over imaginary gun holsters, and takes three steps forward. He spins around and fires with both guns as if in a comical spaghetti Western. Once the smoke has cleared, he sees the bird gone, and blows the smoke from his pistols. He turns to return the pistols to his suitcase and hears a fluttering. He looks around then up and gets pooped on by the dove. Exasperated he throws his guns down and sits down on the bench with a huff. BEEBOW carefully looks at LILLIE, hoping for a positive reaction. LILLIE has been laughing and enjoying the set from the beginning, a wonderful audience member. She now begins to clap and BEEBOW grins.)

LILLIE

Beebow! That was amazing! Bravo! Bravo! Oh wow, Rose must have adored you! You are phenomenal.

BEEBOW

(His smile beginning to fade.)

Thank ya. Thank ya.

(Beat.)

Lillie, do you have a picture of Rose?

LILLIE

(Taken aback.)

Uh, yes, I do actually.

(She reaches over, unbuckles her suitcase, and pulls a photo from one of the inside pockets. She holds it out to BEEBOW. He frowns.)

LILLIE

(Admiring the photo.)

She's beautiful isn't she? She was always the prettier one. Looked most like Momma too. I guess I turned out more like Daddy-





Balloon

BEEBOW

Lillie-

LILLIE

(Tugging balloon.)

Though I guess that keeps me close to him in some way, especially since I never met him-

BEEBOW

Lillie-

LILLIE

(Tugging balloon.)

Would've loved to meet him. But no, the sorry bastard had to leave his girls behind to fend for themselves. Momma never recovered, and Rose always tried to be the strong one until she couldn't anymore-

BEEBOW

Lillie-

LILLIE

(Tugging balloon.)

Looks like I've gotta be the strong one now. Rose always told me I could be-

BEEBOW

(He grabs LILLIE and shakes her.)

LILLIE!

LILLIE

(Stops tugging balloon.)

Wha-what?

BEEBOW

(Releasing her and pulling back.)

There's-there's somethin' ya need to know. 'Specially 'fore ya leave. Rose. She, uh, she- I saw her before she left. And she wasn't doin' too well. They'd already started clearin' the hospital-

LILLIE

Right. Beebow, I know. She was sick and they couldn't fix her. But they cleared the hospital, so she must still be with them.





Bailey Cockerham

BEEBOW

No, no, that ain't it. She wasn't doin' well at all. She was one a the last on the schedule to be cleared. An I was workin', tryin' to cheer up the kiddos 'fore the big journey. I watched em all get on the buses. 'Cept Rose. I went lookin' for her. Got to her room and there she was. 'Cept she wasn't. Not really.

LILLIE

She never was fully there, you know that Beebow. She stared out a window her entire time there!

BEEBOW

NO! Lillie, no! She wasn't THERE. She was gone! They killed her! She was in her bed with a sheet over her. Them orderlies knew she couldn't make the journey, so they made sure she didn't. They grabbed me soon as they saw what I'd seen. They hit me over the head, an' I woke up a few streets over. It was dark, but I made my way back to the hospital. I was able to slip into one a the windows. I wasn't gonna let her rot in there. But she was gone. The sheets was gone, too.

(He chokes back a sob.)

I started wanderin' to a few of the other rooms where the patients was doin' poorly. Their sheets was gone too. They killed 'em all.

LILLIE

(Beat. She begins to tug the balloon again. Slowly but then the speed increases as she continues speaking.)

No. That's not right. She-no! She wasn't doing that badly. She was starting to get better. I was trying to make sure that she got better! I was- I- the orderlies- they told me that she was doing better. They told me! They promised me every time I tried to visit! She just needed more time with them and they needed more time with me. She can't be!

BEEBOW

She's gone Lillie, she's gone.

LILLIE

Because she's Out! She got on the bus and got OUT! And she NEEDS ME!



Balloon

(LILLIE gets up to walk to the bus. They've got to be on their way so she'll just intercept it. BEEBOW gets up and grabs her arm, pulling her back.)

BEEBOW

She's not Out, Lillie! She's still in the city somewhere, but she's gone Lillie.

LILLIE

(Struggling to get away.)

No-

BEEBOW

She's gone!

LILLIE

NO!-

BEEBOW

(Trying to pull LILLIE to him.)

She's not Out, she's dead! Dead an' gone!

LILLIE

NO!!!

(LILLIE, sobbing, struggles against BEEBOW, dropping her suitcase. She slaps him and he reaches for her again. She then shoves him once with one hand, twice with one hand. She shoves him once more, this time with both hands. Open handed, she lets go of the balloon without realizing. Beat. They both stare at each other and realize what has happened. LILLIE cries out and jumps to grab at the balloon, but it is already too high. BEEBOW jumps too but LILLIE follows faster. She climbs on top of the bench and reaches desperately for the balloon that rises further and further into the air. It is too late. She stands breathless and broken. Beat.)



Bailey Cockerham

BEEBOW

(Looking offstage.)

Lillie.

(No response.)

Lillie look. The bus. The bus is here.

(He runs to his suitcase.)

Lillie c'mon. Let's go!

(LILLIE does not look. She climbs off the bench then sits down where she had originally been sitting. Defeated.)

BEEBOW

Lillie? C'mon. We can still get Out. Start new. Find the kiddos. It was just a balloon. We can try to find more.

(He bends down and grabs her hands)

We can-we can clown together! We can do anything once we get Out!

(Rising, trying to pull LILLIE to her feet.)

C'mon there's nothin' left here! This city is dead and gone! We just gotta get Out!

(LILLIE does not move.)

BEEBOW

Lillie, please. The bus is gonna leave soon. We gotta go.

(LILLIE does not move. BEEBOW looks sadly at the bus, waves it on, then sits next to LILLIE)

BEEBOW

It's alright, we'll catch the next one.

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)



Unpacking

Emilie Burnham

The first night in a new house always
leaves me numb to the change.
I sit in the window, watching the last
light of day slip beyond my sight, the fields
of grass on fire. The wind shudders
the house around me, the unfamiliar
sound leaves my blood lightly frosted.

I've lived in more places than I can count.
I cannot remember being afraid
of a neighbor's gnarled tree,
or his hound that would howl in the night.
I never avoided those creaky, dusty
attics, or basements dripping with old mold...
Because there were none.

Instead, I learned to hold my cup with two
hands so that I wouldn't spill the ruby red
juice on the freshly vacuumed white carpet.
I never poked a hole in those bare, unpainted
walls; clean and pristine for those new owners.

At no time did I have anyone
on our street that recalled my birth with fond
words, or a friend to hide within the bushes
with pink popsicles upon our lips.
There was only ever a darkened veil
between what was, and what was hoped.

It's time to unpack what little I have.
An old painting I made, a book I wept
over, and the faded pressed blue flowers
plucked from my last garden. It's all delicately
heaped in the corner, never far from the stiff,
stained, cardboard boxes I know all too well.



Senescence

Alexandra Josephine Ameal

Little did I know
that
at 22
I could still be
homesick
for my mom
for tomato sauce with tortilla chips
and canned chicken noodle soup
for the water cooler and cable tv
and the inability to fall asleep
before 11pm.

I'm crying
surprising no one
and I think of my friend
who hasn't cried in 8 years
or since the dog died
and then I think of how
I can confidently say that
I haven't gone a month
maybe even a week
without crying,
for as long as I can remember.

I don't want to get older.
I want to throw a tantrum
and bang my limbs against
the sheet-covered mattress
and flail about with tangled hair
sob, cover myself in a blanket,
and ask my mom to wash my feet
like I've done since I was a child
even though she'll notice the
cracked skin of my heels
and pester me to use lotion.
I'll promise to, but we both know
I won't. I'm beyond repair.

continued, stanza break



Senescence

I don't want to get older,
yet I know that, in a few years,
my twenties will finally take off
 its disguise
and I'll smack my head for thinking
that I'm older *now*, that I'm *old*.

I don't want to get older
and miss out on my chance
at foolish love
at recklessness
at living with my parents
 with no need for
 an explanation
 other than

I was young.

People aren't as forgiving
when the years keep adding up.
What's my excuse now?
For falling in love with someone
 terribly wrong for me.
For my lack of a "real" job
and a car of my own.
For being a little bit impulsive.

I don't want to get older
and feel lost like Alice
with a broomdog brushing away
 my footprints.

Little did I know,
that growing up
wouldn't be as fun
as they made it seem.

I'm 22,
I miss my mom,
and all I want is
 to go home.

The Battle of Hoth: Dak Down

Jack Wallace

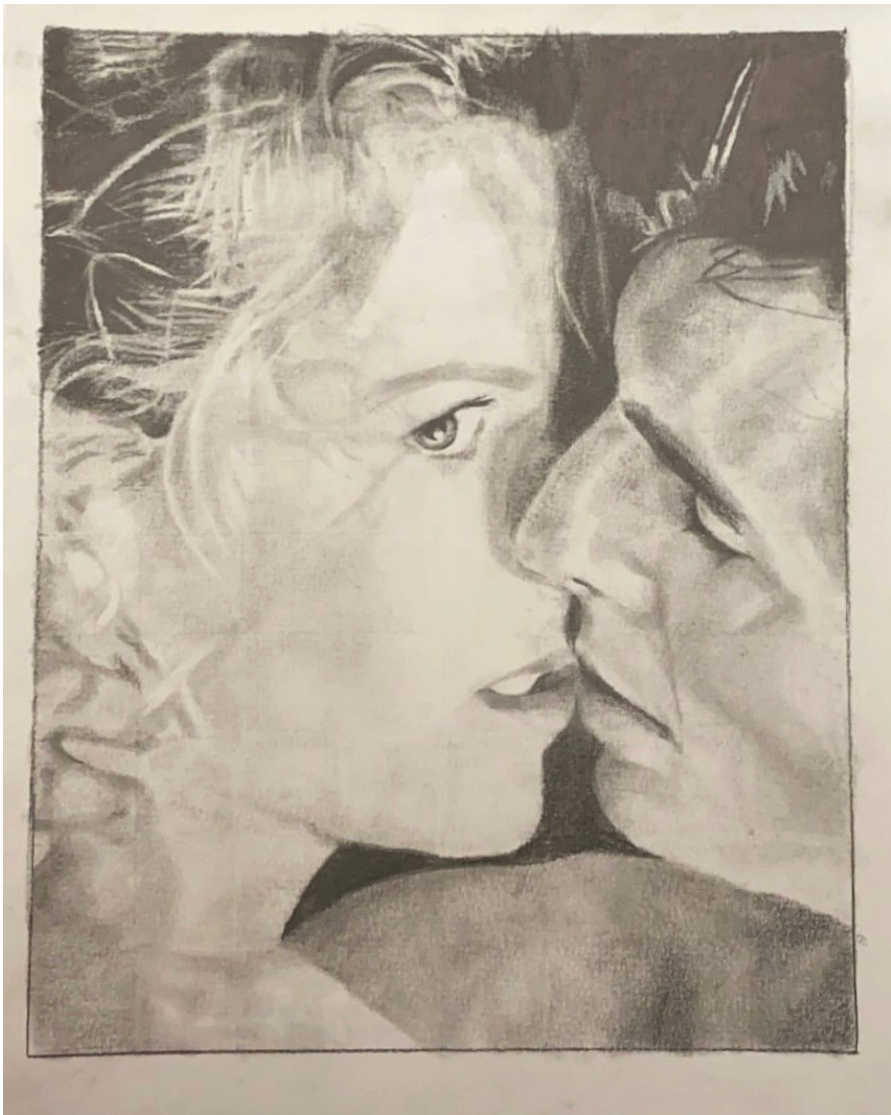


The Battle of Hoth collection featured online
Visit <http://1147.tcu.edu>



Photo-Realism in Movies and the Real World

Jaden Gaskins





Familiar Faces

Erica Harkins

You remind me of someone.
Someone I saw once.
When I was in the middle of a party,
crammed close enough to smell
each alcohol-tinted breath.
Shoes cemented to the floor
by sticky spilled drinks and teenage sweat,
Arctic Monkeys' guitars pulsing in my chest,
whiskey I wasn't old enough for
burning my throat,
head spinning like the *Lasso Whip* fair ride,
I grasped desperately at sobriety,
sinking down to the sticky floor.
When I saw her
halfway out the back door,
as the whiskey pulled me back under,
she raised a red-tipped, manicured
finger to her lips,
and disappeared.

Next time I saw her,
on the evening news
the next Monday,
"Girl kidnapped from teenage party after illegally drinking"
in between a segment
on puppy adoptions and traffic pile-ups.
Her junior yearbook photo
blown up on Fox 4.
"Serial kidnapper finds another victim in local pro-sex teenager"
Some perfectly polished blonde anchoress,
Her manicured fingers matching
the girl's from that night,
expressing empty grief to the family,
while she parrots out accusations
"Girl kidnapped due to underage drinking and provocative behavior"
People said the length of her skirt was an invitation,
whispered that she deserved it.
I wonder if they ever found her?
Because I see echoes of her face
everywhere I go.



Ethereal

Liz Delapaz





Playlist for the Turn of Earth

Jack Moraglia

Helen Hamilton Award Winner

Estate.

Hozier makes warm-weather music. I imagine Andrew Hozier-Byrne recording under a thick Irish heatwave, the sun bleeding on metal instruments so hot to the touch he can only pick individual notes. The music has summer so baked in, that to listen in the cold causes a wild distortion. Muffled by the dense winter air, the chords ricochet off my ears. Only in summer can they settle inside my inner ear canals.

The heat from the speakers is dry. Makes me feel I'm traversing a desert that slowly rolls under my steps with the turn of the earth. Makes me feel the hot wind of a convertible in summer—air batting my face so hard, I could pretend I was chilly. The sun refracting through the windshield shines a spotlight for the buzzards high above.

I have never known hunger, like these insects that feast on me.³

Sweltering Texas summers when the pool even can't quench my blistered skin. The soles of my feet, charred from coal walks across the wood deck. My damaged hair floats in chunks like wood chips sprouting from my scalp. Hozier's long ponytail must harden like clay on a day like this. And the vultures and cicadas pounce, mistaking it for a decaying animal. But his melting voice wards them off.

Autunno.

The leaves don't change like they used to. I honestly don't know if fall still exists in Texas. But, if it did—if it still does or returns—The Lumineers and The Head and the Heart would play on repeat amid the fluttering of red-yellow leaves, and from the mouths of rotting jack-o-lanterns.

My senior year of high school, shortly after I saw The Lumineers, I made a playlist called, "YES-vember", in a semi-performatory attempt at changing the connotation of the month that holds my birthday. Only two artists were on the playlist: the entire discography of The Lumineers and The Head and the Heart.



Playlist for the Turn of Earth

*The world's just spinning a little too fast. If things don't slow down soon we might not last. So just for a moment, let's be still.*⁴ If you see me repeatedly streaming "Let's Be Still", send help—my head and heart need calming. The soothing voice saturates my not-yet-restless heart in the fall. I'm the jack-o-lantern rotting out on the balcony, only vitalized by the autumn lyrics.

*If You can always find me where the skies are blue,*⁵ a cloudless Thanksgiving is X-marks-the-spot. I long for a Big Parade like Macy's: every Autumn song on floats of red-orange-brown rolling by with fanfare, while I sit on the curb with my jeans rolled up to capture some wind up my shins.

Inverno.

What qualities do bears have that allow them to hibernate? Just one winter, I'd like to try. Haul up in my room and grow a thick layer of fur. *I've got all the time in the world. Don't you want some of that?*⁶

Most music would sound good here, my consciousness numb to the effervescent soundwaves knocking around my dormant skull like a bullet in a metal coffin. In my respite, I'd listen to Bahamas: a band whose name suggests warm tropics and coral reefs, but whose music unknots the muscles from their chilly state.

I saw Bahamas with Luke in winter—front row, staving ourselves off from glancing at the setlist on the stage floor, not wanting to ruin the surprise. The singer, Afie, stepped out right above us, and his gruff frown and deadly eyes frightened us to take a step back. He looked awfully like a bear awoken prematurely. But he strummed his first note, and the mood eased like snowflakes melting against my tongue.

The calming smooth guitar and mellow harmonies are almost imperceptible above soft drip-drops of melody. Both hover over me like a trance while quenching my hands of frostbite by a gas-lit fire. I could sleep like this for three months in a den somewhere in a nook of the Rockies. Only the sweet notes floating around the cave like a '00s desktop screensaver.



Jack Moraglia

Primavera.

And when the flowers come out, Maggie Rogers rises with them, her uplifting love-beats crying, *I'm gonna love you for a long time.*⁷ I'm gonna love her too. She sings straight to me from a sunflower field a thousand voices loud, each of the flower's faces a smiling speaker.

I want to wake up from that deep sleep with her, when it's not unbearable to spend a day in the sun. When A/C feels rude, and I come inside only to refill my water bottle. Maggie Rogers flies around in my head like a dragonfly. Hope rings from each pigtail falling at her overall straps. When I listen in spring, the subtle wind carries the hope of *If you keep reaching out, then I'll keep coming back.*⁸ Keep coming, spring. Keep coming, the seasons.

Spring, wake me up from my slumber. Buzz my head and shave my scruffy face. Give me butterfly kisses and praying mantis dances in the garden. *People change overnight.*⁹ So do the dancing petals after a long winter's nap. I want to dance there too when the time comes, only a wisp like the air released by the snap of my fingers.



Cicada Love Song

Julie Papaj

Standing *there*,
I could not see them –
they blended into the trees.
bulbish green bodies
and armored hearts,
hidden just underneath my nose.

Their serenade snuck up on me
and it began to grow,
bursting through the trees
with a deafening echo
the symphony, finding sweet
harmony through the chaos.

The rambunctious rustle
drowned any semblance of silence,
swallowing it whole
in a single stroke. A heartbeat
consumed by the electric hum.

Standing *here*,
the steady crescendos
rushing through my veins,
as if they already belonged
I cannot see them –
But I know their song.



In The Shallow

Emma St.Clair



Golden Hour on the California Coast

Audrey McMullen



Sunset on the Coast

Audrey McMullen





Assassination of my own Body

Alyssa Mariel Gutierrez

Honorable Mention for the Helen Hamilton Award

****Trigger Warning: Eating Disorders****

My slender fingers gracefully wrapped around my wrists and biceps. Delicately squeezing my fingertips together -- exhorting them to overlap.

I gaped at the coffee maker while it dripped its tenebrous, rich brew into the fragile glass pitcher. Habitually wishing my life depicted the dripping brew and in one sudden moment – the dripping would stop. The scars would no longer bleed. The kitchen in my sleeves would vanish. *I would be free.* Oh, how I desperately wished to be free.

But anorexia was my confidant;
a mentor who praised me
as I assassinated my own body.

My sleeves became a dumpster for food:
every piece of toast was crumbled into disappearance, cereal found its way into the depths of my sleeves,
dinner was exquisitely wrapped in a napkin
and tucked away in my sweater.

I screamed at the mirror when my hands would not easily wrap around my thighs.
I wickedly smiled when my index finger was cut by my sharp, protruding collarbones.
I filled myself with ten cups of water and one carrot
and tied the measuring tape around my stomach
with such force that permanent red marks were strayed behind.

continued, stanza break



Alyssa Gutierrez

I could not exceed my 100-calorie intake
because,
if I did,
the toilet would receive the outcome of my purges:
a well-mixed, thick version of my food.

Perhaps,
I became numb to the sensation of hunger
because my stomach was no longer shrieking for food.

However,
I, now, continuously choose recovery to neglect the girl.
Because, for so long,
I nourished my body with self-destruction when it was pleading
for tenderness.
The eluding from purgatory soon turned into a self-revolution.
A
*self-
revolution.*



Cancun

Julio Argueta



Mirrors
Nick Sangalis



First Place Winner of Sustaining Places We Love Art Contest



apathy adjustment

Cassandra Garza

there's nothing quite like city lights in the night
fabricating an artificial sort of paradise
human-made, energy-sustained
there's no limits to this game we like to play

until the lights go out, no stars, no sun
only then can we see the kind of place we've become
not a home, not a haven, or a harbor for all life
more like the sad reality of a blunt-edged knife

we thought we could cut corners,
change the rules, skip borders
turns out the game wasn't rigged
we simply forgot that it lived

how do we begin to right all those wrongs?
we've made such a mess, not sure any of this belongs
can we crank down the temperature in the land and the sea
for those species that waste away with no reprieve?

this place we inhabit isn't just some toy
that we can use and reuse and accidentally destroy
there are consequences for our actions, like it or not
so let's discuss this together, give it some thought

do we turn off a light every now and again
or not charge our laptops to a hundred percent?
do we petition against pipeline projects along the coast?
can I sign it right here, on my couch, and make a post?

I'm no expert, so I can't speak to all that
what I do know is that our future is up to bat
those decades of smoke and gas that we disavow
pushed the problem to the future, but the future is now

we won't get anywhere pointing fingers at one another
so let's start from square one, consider our Earth Mother
the people that came before us long ago got it right
love the earth for all its harvests, all its storms, all its might

continued, stanza break





Cassandra Garza

we can't stay flippant and dismissive and cool
while our world devolves into a giant cesspool
begin the conversation, really take it to heart
whether we agree on it or not, our world is falling apart

don't forget the game we've been playing all of this time
even while I distract you with some verse and some rhyme
think of this silly poem if you ever start to doubt
the lights are still on, but time is almost out

First Place Winner of Sustaining Places We Love Poetry Contest





light carries on

Elissa Tatum

At eight years old, Murph and Jean are seasoned adventurers of summer vacation. The patchy asphalt between their houses on Newbern Road wears calluses into their bare feet. When the black soaks in too much sun, they explore into the grass and come out with clothes stained chlorophyllous green. Each day brings a new chapter of their quest. Today, it's cloud racing.

The breeze is slight enough to cool the air pleasantly, yet strong enough that white wisps blow across the sky and scatter shadows down on Newbern Road. Murph and Jean wait on the grass. Their toes wiggle in the dirt with anticipation.

"There's one!" Jean, buck-toothed and brown-eyed, runs to stand in the center of the street to get a better view. She points and Murph looks up. He pads onto the road to join her. Where Jean is fluid and wild, Murph is soft—a boy with limbs meant for someone bigger. He cups his hands over his eyes to shield himself from the July sun. Sure enough, a cloud bank approaches. Murph looks into the distance and spots the shadow it casts, a long line creeping over gabled roofs and porches and the hills behind the neighborhood. Aided by a breeze that blows the bangs from Murph's forehead, the shadow advances.

"Ready," Jean says. They get into position—a lunge, hands planted on the asphalt for balance. Jean's pigtails hang upside down as she watches the shadow between her legs. "Set." Murph's heart thuds with potential energy. He curls his hands into fists. Cool shade hits his back leg first, then climbs up his body to his thighs and his spine and then—

"Go!" Jean shouts as the shadow meets their hands.

Together, they run. Arms pumping, skin tearing on gritty asphalt as they race down the middle of the street with no regard for anything but each other and the shadow of the cloud rapidly outpacing them. Jean manages to keep pace with the shadow longer than Murph. Soon, he's running behind rather than beside her. He sucks cool air into his lungs as his chest burns. He glances behind him. The rest of Newbern Road is already back in sunlight and—just a moment later—Murph's skin is warm in the sun once more.

"Jean—" he gasps. He slows to a stop. "We lost." He puts his hands on his hips, his heartbeat carrying on though his body has stopped the race.

With a primal yell, Jean pushes into one final leap until she too is back in sunlight. The shadow disappears behind the next row of houses, oblivious of its victory. Jean flops to the ground.



Elissa Tatum

She's breathing hard as Murph wanders up. "I thought for sure we'd win that one."

Murph sits at her side. The asphalt is warm through his shorts. "We'll get it next time," he says. He picks up a little asphalt pebble and tosses it at her face.

Murph is fourteen and on his way back to Newbern Road when his father drives the car into the highway median. The burgundy sedan flips over its nose, spins, lands upside down into oncoming traffic. Murph hears glass shatter and wakes up two days later to a beeping alarm and too-clean air blowing into his nose. The doctor tells him not only are his parents gone, but so is his right arm, all the way to his shoulder. His entire right leg is encased in plaster. A dozen other injuries scatter his body like splatter paint art. The doctor says he's lucky to be alive. That it could've been much worse. Looking at the empty space on the bed where his right arm should be, at the vacant chairs at his bedside, Murph doesn't feel very lucky.

Grandparents he halfway remembers claim him. He leaves the hospital with a wheelchair and a number for a physical therapist, which his grandmother tucks safely in her purse. He's in the backseat of their car—blue, a minivan—before he notices the doodles up and down the cast on his leg. There is a sketch of a dog, sketches of flowers in improbable colors, an apple with a bite out of it—and a cloud with a stick figure underneath it, waving. The letters J-E-A-N occupy the center, his knee, in big, swooping script.

His grandparents worked hard while he was out to make the house on Newbern Road welcoming to him. He can't climb the stairs to his second-floor bedroom, not with his cast, so he stays in the bedroom on the first floor. Though his grandparents changed the sheets and closed the closet and replaced the toiletries with Murph's own, trying to hide who once lived here, all Murph sees is the absence of his parents. He crawls into bed at night, off balance with one arm gone, and hugs the pillows close, breathing hard and trying to find the smell of his mom's lavender shampoo in the pillows.

When he's fifteen, Murph's grandparents find him sitting on the sill of his open window and wondering how much damage a fall from this height would do. He swears to them he isn't jumping—he's only looking, promise, but then he's crying and he





light carries on

doesn't know why, the kind of crying that makes his legs weak. Missing one arm, he can't quite catch himself on the wall and he crumples to the carpet. His grandparents take him back to therapy, but not for his body this time.

"What were you thinking about?" the therapist, Tom, asks him. He's asked it a dozen times in each of their sessions, apparently dissatisfied with Murph's answer. Mostly, they spend the hours in this boxy, beige office talking about nonsense—mythology, recently, after a book Murph has been reading. Today they're talking about Tantalus, the man cursed to spend eternity surrounded by decadent food and drink yet forbidden even to taste. Tom listens well. When he nods, the bald spot on his head shines under the office's naked fluorescent bulbs. He wants to know what finally convinced Murph to open the window, what made him sit there with one leg out already.

"I don't know," Murph admits. He wraps his arm around his stomach, curls in on himself. His nonexistent right arm reaches out and grasps nothing. "I just—I wanted to stop."

"Stop what?"

"Hurting."

Tom nods. They talk for a while longer and schedule an appointment for the same time next week.

Jean visits often, now that Murph doesn't go anywhere besides therapy. Sometimes, she's the only reminder that Newbern Road is still outside. And sometimes it's *annoying*. Like a cat that brings a rat to its owners, Jean shows up on his doorstep again and again, grinning around a stack of homework for him. And, of course, his grandparents take her side and make him do it. He's been working on it for hours today already and he's getting nowhere. He glares at his left hand. It shakes around the pencil and he hates it—hates the way his hand grips tightly and yet not tight enough at the same time. His handwriting is the equivalent of toddler squiggles. He's not even a paragraph into his history essay (Ancient Greece) and he's been at it since lunch.

Quite suddenly, Murph finds he's had enough. He throws the pencil down and declares, "I give up." The pencil bounces off the desk, ricochets and hits the wall straight back at him. He flinches as it hits him harmlessly on the chest. It clatters to the floor. He pouts. He goes to cross his arms—and he gets halfway through the motion before he remembers he can't, not without two arms, which only makes him fume even more. He yanks at the hem of his shirt as a poor substitute.





Elissa Tatum

“Throwing a tantrum isn’t how you get better at something,” Jean says. Lounging on his bed, she rolls from her stomach to her back. She looks at him upside down. Her brown braids just barely brush the carpet. Her eyes go up—down, from Murph’s perspective—to the pencil that has come to rest against Murph’s right foot.

He glares. “Maybe I don’t want to get better. Besides, don’t you have better things to do with your day than ruin mine?” It’s a petty thing to say, but he feels like if he’s going to be forced to write like a toddler, he’s allowed to act like one if he really wants to. Besides, it feels good to pout.

But Jean doesn’t look amused. She glowers, the expression made darker by the shadows the angle of her head casts on her face. “Is that how you really feel?” she says.

“I—” Murph’s skin flushes. “I think—”

Jean rolls herself off the bed, to her feet, and to the door in one smooth motion. The walls rattle as she slams the door behind her. Murph sits there, eyes darting uncomprehending around the room, feeling guilty and angry all at the same time. He’s allowed to feel—Tom tells him so. Tells him it’s *healthy*, as long as it doesn’t overwhelm him. He’s been doing better lately about recognizing changes without going into a spiral. Now, he sees his desk, how his pencil jar has moved from the right to the left. In his closet, half his shirt sleeves have been tied off, courtesy of his grandmother’s neurotic overprotectiveness. There’s a roll of gauze still sitting on his bedside table, lingering unused now that his arm is healed.

Healed. Murph huffs and slides down in his chair, fully committed to the pity party now. They’d called him “healed” and let him go home, out into the wild. As though his arm would ever be healed. As though *he* would ever be healed.

The door flies open. It thuds into the wall. Murph startles, overbalances, and nearly topples out of his chair as Jean storms in the room, braids flying behind her. With one hand, she slides his notebook essay draft away. She drops a stack of books to replace it with the other hand. “Go back to kindergarten and practice staying in the lines.”

Murph splutters. “What, *coloring books*?” He grapples with the topmost book, doing a careful balancing act with his one hand, and looks over the cover—black and white turning to color in a vertical gradient. “Come on, I’m not *five*!”

Jean flops down on the bed, leaning against the headboard this time. She has her notebook in her lap. Murph sees his essay draft next to her on the quilt and a fresh sheet of paper in her



light carries on

hands. His anger falters as she begins to copy over what he's already written.

He glances at the coloring books. "I don't have any crayons."

Jean fishes around in her backpack for a moment, then tosses a box of crayons at him. Murph yelps and brings his arm up to block his face. He succeeds, but only because the crayons end up hitting him square between his lungs. They fall harmlessly into his lap.

"There," Jean says. "Crayons."

"I have dreams, sometimes," Murph says to Tom in one session. It's winter, yet the potted plant in the corner is as green as springtime.

"About what?"

"My parents. They're like memories, so *real* that I wake up thinking they're there. Except when I roll over and I feel—" He clutches his right shoulder. "I find out they're gone all over again, like it happened yesterday even though it was *years* ago." He slumps in his seat. "I hate it. I just want to forget already and get better and move on."

"Forgetting isn't healing," Tom says. "Memories are tricky. They're always going to feel like yesterday, and they'll always feel like tomorrow."

"So I'm just supposed to feel sad forever? I can't. I won't make it."

"There will always bad moments that catch you off guard, Murph," Tom says, gentle. "You will never be completely rid of them, but they don't have to be the only kind of moments you have. Flashbacks—your dreams—are just the result of the past interfering with the present. Worries, anxieties... those are the present being interfered with by the future." He tilts his head, smiles. "The secret to handling both? To growing, moving on? Stop beating yourself up for feeling bad and learn to live in the moment. When the good times happen, let yourself enjoy them."

The years start to pass. Murph goes back to school, finishes on time and in the top ten of his class, just two spots away from Jean in the ranking. Murph walks across the stage with a smile on his face. The principal has to do a little shuffle to switch to a left handshake. Murph nearly drops his diploma. He sees his



Elissa Tatum

grandparents in the audience a few rows back, beaming.

The neighborhood Newbern Road runs through throws a block party for all the graduating seniors. Jean, her family, Murph, and his grandparents attend. It's warm out, even this early in June, so it quickly turns into a pool party. Murph wears a shirt while he swims. He's not comfortable enough yet to go without, not with the scars littering his right shoulder and torso. Jean wears a shirt, too, in solidarity. The zebra-stripe pattern of her swimsuit shows underneath the soaked white shirt.

For a while they have fun. At some point, though, Murph's smile grows forced, and he stops laughing. Maybe it's the coolness the shade of the house throws over the pool. Maybe it's because the worry people are staring at him hasn't really gone away. Maybe it's seeing his classmates and their proud parents. Maybe it's watching the effortless way the others do dives into the water, their bodies spinning and tumbling in the air in perfect proportion. Whatever the reason, it has Murph climbing out of the pool. He wanders away.

He finds an old purple swing set some distance from the water. He sits on one of the swings. He wraps his arm around the rope, kicks himself back and forth, back and forth, letting his mind roam. His swinging is crooked without a right arm to balance with, and he can't be bothered to try to correct it. He's not here to swing—he just wants to sit, to think. There's still sun back here, a little left before the shadow of the house reaches him. He watches the line of it creep closer as he sways.

Not long after, he hears footsteps crunch through the grass to him. The swing set creaks as Jean sits on the swing to his right. She grips the ropes and waits for Murph to fill the silence.

"I didn't think anybody noticed I left," he says.

"I noticed."

He stares at his feet, pocked with mud he'd picked up between here and the pool. "You can go back to the party. I'm okay."

"Nah." She kicks off with her feet and begins to swing, higher and faster than he had. "What's got your mind so far away?"

"Just—you know."

She looks back and forth at him as she swings by. He watches her until his eyes get too tired of the repeated pendulum motion. "You don't want to swing?" she asks.

He shrugs. "Can't seem to swing straight. I guess you need two arms for that."

She kicks the dirt, sending clumps of grass up as she drags





light carries on

herself to a stop. Then she grabs the rope on his right. With something like mischief glinting in her eye, she begins to swing again.

"Oh, no," he says as he begins to swing, crooked, against his will. "No, no, no."

"Come on!" she says, swinging higher. He's being tugged along and he can't really stop her—it's Jean, and nothing ever stops her. He can do nothing but follow her lead, so he kicks out and pulls on his left to try and match her tempo.

It's tricky, but for a while, it works. Jean uses her elbow and hand to put force on both her rope and his, and they each use their other hand to pull hard on the outside ropes. They find a rhythm together, of kicking out and in, until their toes align with the peak of the house. Sunlight hits them in the face over the roof every time they hit an apex.

Murph starts to laugh. Jean kicks his leg with hers and he tries to kick back. It quickly knocks their rhythm out. Murph yelps as he swings sideways into her. The ropes get tangled. On the downward swing, they both fall out and hit the ground, landing in a pile of uneven limbs where swingers have dug canyons into the dirt over the years.

"Ow," Murph says. Jean is still laughing, too full of mirth to get words out.

Murph rolls over in the grass and looks at the sky. The house's shadow is cool on his legs. The dirt is warm on his back, the grass ticklish on his skin. Now, right now, there is neither past nor future. Tom had said there would be bad moments that catch him off guard. But now, watching clouds whisk by overhead and feeling Jean laugh beside him, Murph realizes there will be good moments that catch him off guard, too. He breathes in the smell of mud and barbeque and chlorine and Jean's sunscreen and lets himself live the moment as it is—breathless and warm, comfortable on the hard earth with Jean nestled at his right—and he feels content for the first time in ages.

They go to the same college. At Halloween of their freshman year, they know very few people well enough, so they go as each other's plus one to an off-campus party. Murph convinces Jean that going as a costume duo will be the most fun, and, inspired by the novelty of his major, he insists they go dressed like the ancient Greeks.

"It's corny," Jean complains. But when Murph shows her the artwork he has in mind, her face slips into an expression of



Elissa Tatum

complete focus and commitment. She decides to be a Greek goddess and fabricates a *kolpos*-style dress out of a white bedsheet. She uses yellow string to thread her hair with fake gold. When she finishes hers well in advance, she starts to take over Murph's costume, and he teases her for not wanting to do it at all at first. They use a brown throw blanket to make a *chlamys*, what men in the military would wear. It typically fastens over the right to make movement easy, but Jean assures him that one-armed men in Greece likely swapped the shoulder if they happened to be missing their right arm like he was. He decides that historical accuracy is not as important as being able to use his arm.

The party is loud and muddy and cold, and Murph keeps losing where he puts his drink, but the company is good. He may be biased, but he and Jean have the best costumes. Murph walks tall, shoulders back, feeling like a man straight off the set of a documentary—which, admittedly, was probably something only he would find cool.

"Oh, I love your costumes," says a princess—a girl dressed as one. She wears the classic conical hat on her head, the *hennin* that became so popular across Europe in the Middle Ages and might have been inspired by the headdresses of Mongol warrior queens. This girl's hat has no semblance of authenticity, though—he spies a tag sticking out at the base of the semi-anachronistic purple fabric.

The princess beams at Murph and Jean, nearly sloshing out the contents of her cup. Murph smells the sickly-sweet of the punch. "How long have you two been together?" she asks.

Murph and Jean laugh. "We're not together," Murph assures her.

The princess's forehead wrinkles on a delay as she processes Murph's words. The punch, Murph notes, already gumming up the works. He won't be drinking any. The princess blinks at them. "You're not?"

Murph shrugs, then fumbles when the movement nearly sends his blanket-*chlamys* sliding down to his feet. "We aren't together," he repeats, crossing his left arm over his chest to keep the fabric in place. "We're just friends."

"Oh," the princess says. "Okay." Then she wanders away, the fabric on her *hennin* swaying behind her.

"That hat is not historically accurate," Murph says.

Next to him, Jean is nursing her own drink. She doesn't seem to hear him, or she doesn't care, which is also possible. Her lips are poised on the plastic rim. Her eyes have gone unfocused, fixed on some point across the room—a beefy guy dressed as



light carries on

Tarzan, loincloth and all. But Jean doesn't seem to be looking at him, or anything.

Murph nudges her with his good arm. "What's got your mind so far away?"

At first, Jean doesn't react. Then she takes a gulp of her drink. Her throat bobs as she swallows. Just when Murph is about to prompt her again, she tears her eyes from Tarzan and asks, "Murph, why *aren't* we together?"

"I—" He drops his hand from his *chlamys*, scratches the back of his head instead. "I don't know. I guess I never thought about it."

Jean watches him. Her eyes go from each of his, to his mouth, back up to his eyes, before finally settling on her cup again. She takes a long swig and *ahhhs* as she swallows. She loops her free arm through his. "Come on. Let's go see what kind of snacks they have."

They're nearing the end of their twenties and living in their first apartment together in the city when they hear about the *aurora borealis*. The news anchors talk all day about the rare opportunity and perfect conditions that will give the area the chance to glimpse such a spectacle. So, like so many others, Murph and Jean load up in the car for an adventure into the countryside, away from the ever-present city skylines. Jean drives them out to old Lookout Point—a scenic overlook that isn't actually very scenic, but is high enough to see over the trees, flat enough to park the car, and far enough from the city to see the stars.

They talk for a while about this and that—her job, his job, her coworkers, his students, their families. A chill sets in the air as the moon climbs its starry ladder. Jean drapes a blanket around their shoulders and curls into his side. When the conversation fades, Murph lets himself enjoy the silence. Jean's gentle breathing and whispers of wind through the trees are music in the key of night, one he so rarely gets to hear living in the city.

"Do you ever think about the future?" Jean asks.

"Sure. Doesn't everyone?" Murph puts his arm around her shoulder, pulling her closer. The chill is enough that he is starting to feel it even through the blankets and his coat.

"No," Jean says, "I mean really think about it." She tilts her chin up and looks at him, brown eyes like shadowed trees in the starlight.

"I guess I don't know what you mean."



Elissa Tatum

“Think about it. All these stars, these lights—they’re all in the past. Some of them just minutes, but some of them—they’re so far away that we’re seeing light thousands, millions of years old. And those stars, some of them are looking at an earth so ancient, we didn’t exist. Life didn’t exist.” She gestures upward. “Here I am looking at them, and they’re looking at me, and yet neither of us sees what is truly happening. And in the future, when the stars finally see us right now, at this moment? We’ll be long gone by then. It’s lonely.”

Murph leans his head back on the truck window. He doesn’t respond at first. He lets his thoughts gather, like clouds on the horizon, measuring them before speaking them. “I didn’t expect to live this long,” he admits. “Not with—all that happened. I was so young, just hitting my twenties felt impossible. And those stars up there. Some of them, probably, have already burned out, and we just haven’t seen it happen yet. Gone and we don’t even know it.”

He pulls her hand into his lap. Runs his fingers over her knuckles. “Now, I turn thirty in a few months. And somewhere out there, gravity and time are molding dust and gas into new stars, right now, as we speak. Neither of us will get to see them. But it’s happening all the same.”

“How can you be so—*content* with it?” Jean says.

He spins the ring on her fourth finger. “I guess it’s like something Tom told me. You take it one day at a time, and if you can’t do that, you take it by the minute. Take enough minutes and before you know it, you have a life.”

Murph looks out at the stars. “I suppose that’s all there really is. Minutes, moments in time. If you think about it, we’re all just bits of dust and gas being shaped by time. Just like all those stars. We’re stranded by time, our place in it. Our inability to see beyond ourselves. But they’re still there. We’re still here. Alone, together. All just—twinkling.”

They watch the sky for the *aurora borealis*, but by midnight, an unexpected cloud bank rolls in. The moon and stars fade in and out behind the sluggish creep of dark cotton across the sky, a color so thick he can hardly see Jean next to him. A cold wind blows right through their coats. Murph and Jean close up the bed of the truck and climb back in the cabin. They consider driving somewhere else to try and outrun the clouds. Another overlook, another hill high enough to see beyond. But the clouds roll in thicker, the wind colder, and they decide to go home. Jean turns the ignition. The truck rumbles down gravel as she navigates back to the main road, back towards the city, holding Murph’s hand in



light carries on

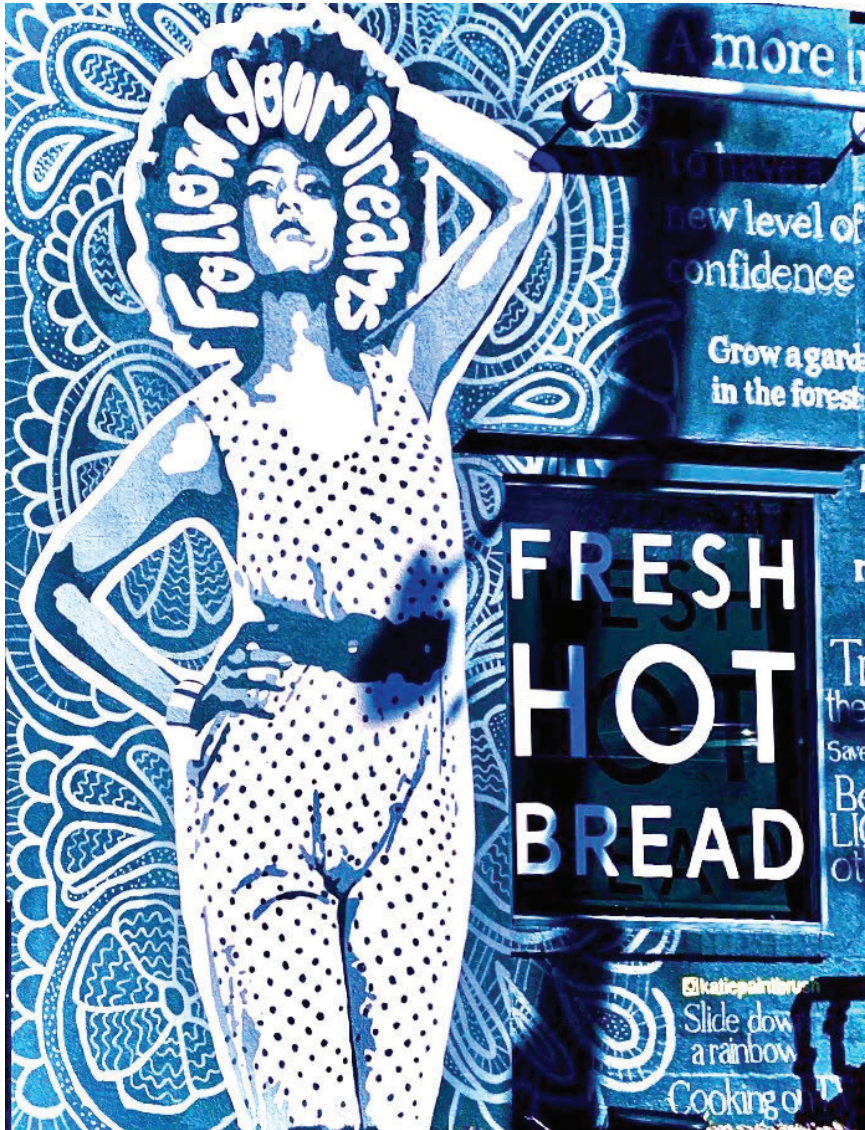
hers over the center console. Murph is disappointed, a little, that they won't get to see the *aurora borealis*. But Jean's hand is warm in his. He can hear her smile as she hums along to the midnight radio. He sees himself reflected in the window. For a moment, it's like the entire universe is contained within this truck, within his reach. Murph smiles. Under the cover of clouds, the headlights cut a path through the night, two beams shining onward, and they carry on.





Welcome to the Bread Bank

Sergio Xocrates Gonzalez





CONTRIBUTORS

Alexandra Josephine Ameal

Senior, Electrical Engineering, Austin, TX

Julio Argueta

Senior, Political Science & Graphic Design, Fort Worth, TX

Emilie Burnham

Sophomore, Physics & Astronomy, Georgetown, TX

Bailey Cockerham

Senior, Theatre BFA, Overland Park, KS

Liz Delapaz

Junior, Graphic Design BFA, Arlington, TX

Cassandra Garza

Junior, Biology, Fairfield, CA

Jaden Gaskins

Freshman, Sociology, Orange County, CA

Sergio Xocrates Gonzalez

Senior, Accounting & Finance, El Paso, TX

Alyssa Mariel Gutierrez

Freshman, Neuroscience, Omaha, NE

Erica Harkins

Junior, Musical Theatre, Fort Worth, TX

Deanna Harper

Senior, Psychology, Dallas, TX

Kline Koegeboehn

Senior, Film-TV-Digital Media, Boerne, TX

Leah Marut

Sophomore, Biology, Sugar Land, TX

Audrey McMullen

Senior, Theatre BFA, Omaha, NE

Jack Moraglia

Senior, Writing & Film-TV-Digital Media, McKinney, TX

Julie Papaj

Sophomore, Political Science & Writing, Colorado Springs, CO

Nick Sangalis

Junior, Finance, Denver, CO

Emma St.Clair

Senior, Social Work, Ankeny, IA



**Jack Stevens**

Freshman, Economics, Auburn, AL

Elissa Tatum

Senior, Writing, Willow Park, TX

Victor Torres

Freshman, Film-TV-Digital Media, Fort Worth, TX

Jack Wallace

Senior, Journalism, Atlanta, GA





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover Art

“Ethereal” by Liz Delapaz

Editor-in-Chief

Chip Fankhauser

Creative Director

Mariah Gomez

Managing Editor

Theron Abell

Editorial Team

Amy Behrens | Brenna Fitzsimmons | Luna Martin
Michaela McCready | Ashley Parks | Queen Spurlock
Anna Wilcox

Helen Hamilton Award for Excellence in Creative Expression

“Playlist for the Turn of Earth” by Jack Moraglia

Honorable Mention for the Helen Hamilton Award for Excellence in Creative Expression

“Assassination of my own Body”
by Alyssa Mariel Gutierrez

Sustaining Places We Love Poetry Contest: First Place

“apathy adjustment” by Cassandra Garza

Sustaining Places We Love Art Contest: First Place

“Mirrors” by Nick Sangalis

Sustaining Places We Love Committee

Dave Aftandilian | Elaine Lysinger | Reece Harty

Sustaining Places We Love Contest Judges

Nick Bontrager | Chris Powell | Scott Russell Sanders
Sonja Watson





SPECIAL THANKS & SUPPORT

Dr. Emory & Mr. Frederic Hamilton

The Hamilton Family eleven40seven
Endowment Fund

Dr. Chantel L. Carlson

Department of English
Women and Gender Studies

Dr. Curt Rode

Department of English
Center for Digital Expression

Dr. Theresa Gaul

Department of English

Dr. Sonja Watson

AddRan College of Liberal Arts



ADDARAN
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Department of English

Printed thanks to our friends at



CENTER FOR
—DIGITAL—
EXPRESSION





**“THERE IS ALWAYS
LIGHT. IF ONLY WE’RE
BRAVE ENOUGH TO
SEE IT. IF ONLY WE’RE
BRAVE ENOUGH TO
BE IT. ”**

-Amanda Gorman

