

eleven40seven
tcu journal of the arts

Spring 2023
www.1147.tcu.edu

©copyright 2023 Texas Christian University

VOLUME 18.2

SPRING 2023

“

**EVERY TIME
I HAVE HAD
A PROBLEM,
I HAVE
CONFRONTED
IT WITH THE AX
OF ART.**

”

- Yayoi Kusama

CONTENTS

The New Silencer	6	Isabella Perez
Skin Deep	7	Angelina Leonardi
The Seasons of My Heart	8	Angelina Leonardi
Let it Pour	9	Dania Kreisl
Fish-Eye Bling	10	Micah Matherne
O Entrancing Eyes: Brown	11	Mark Rose
The Cry of a Transgender Soul	12	Cole Crawford
Ephemeral Ties	14	Kaylee Meyer
Make a Wish	15	Makayla Lockard
Mirrorball	16	Leah Marut
Slow Dancing On The Sea	17	Mary Bowling
The Residue We Leave	18	Roxanne Odiorne
Blink and You'll Miss It	19	Leah Marut
Unwrapped	20	Kaylee Meyer
Drowned	22	Quynh Nhi
Skeletons Wear the Clothes in My Closet	23	Lily Margaret Greenway
Portrait of a Noble Woman	25	Micah Matherne
Lessons From The Deep End	26	Roxanne Odiorne
But I Will Go Into It Laughing	30	Peyton Duffett
Apple Tree Blues	36	Ellie Evans
High Tops	37	Lydia Welling
In Vain	38	Emily DuBose
And the Greatest of These is Greed	39	Brianna Harkins
Portrait	41	Ellie Gonyea
An Introvert Unleashed	42	Emily DuBose
You Met a Girl in August	43	Christina Phillips
Bad Hair Day	44	Madeline McCormack
Alcatraz	46	Brandon Isensee
Alcatraz	47	Brandon Isensee
Ode to My Southern Baptist Upbringing	48	Brianna Harkins
Blame it on the Red Jacket	50	Ellie Evans
Germany Daydream	51	Corinne Green
Artist's Canary	52	Deanna Chukes
The Hart	73	Savannah Childs

EDITORS' NOTE

Barbara Corcoran once said: “You can’t fake passion.” This semester has truly shown us this statement is, in fact, very true. We saw passion in the beautiful and exquisite works that were submitted. We saw passion in the staff as they grappled with new ideas and different viewpoints. We saw passion in the finished journal— a compilation of the hard work of the artists and authors and that of the staff. From the many thought-provoking conversations to the many laughs and good times— there was a profound amount of passion. This passion is what shaped the Spring 2023 edition of eleven40seven.

As Co-Editors, we strived to embrace this deep passion and worked to portray it in the Spring 2023 edition. We leaned on each other when things got difficult and found ways to support each other when needed. Even though we had each other, we could not have done it with the astounding staff. We are both so eternally grateful for the opportunity to lead a brilliant and dedicated team of students in creating a journal that embraces diverse voices and minds. This journal allows for a space for creative voices to be heard and recognized. It has truly been such an honor to work together to help organize a journal that displays such expansive talent.

We want to thank each and every staff member for their dedication, patience, and enthusiasm throughout this semester. We could not be more proud of each of you. We also want to thank Dr. Carlson for her incredible guidance and advice throughout this semester. We will miss our post-class meetings. And lastly, we want to thank each and every individual who submitted a work of art to the journal. We would not be here writing this note if it wasn’t for each of you. This experience has been extremely rewarding and we are excited to share the hard work of so many with you.

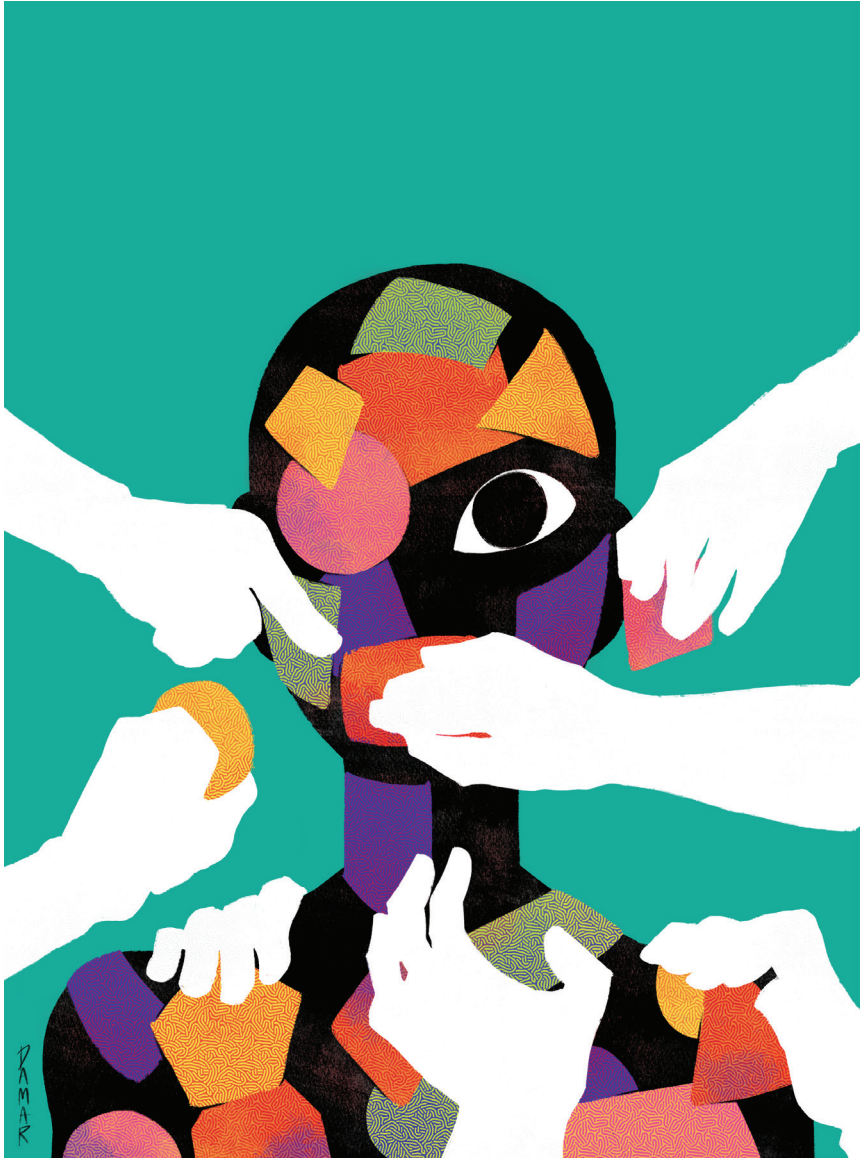
Sincerely,

Raegan Lane and Jessica Schaffer

Co-Editors-in-Chief, Spring 2023

The New Silencer

Isabella Perez



Skin Deep

Angelina Leonardi

Looking in the mirror
she would smile at her image

*there stood a skeleton
disgusted with what she saw*

tracing the curves of her body

enthralled by the dips in her ribcage

She was sixteen
told she was pretty

*a child
wanting to be prettier*

and admiring those magazine models
who told her to change

*as she praised skeletal forms
who told her she was worthless.*

The mirror reflected
of that wholesome girl who
found relief in

*the ghost
gave parts of her soul,
and craved acceptance in*

superficial love

The Seasons of My Heart

Angelina Leonardi

In summer's bright lights
I'm swimming through slick heat
and resting under a tree full shade
marveling Mother Natures green garden.
I ask Her: Was his love a lie?
My heart like yellowish leaves
being blown from the treetops
and piled upon the dirt
crushed in sickening glee;
I wilt and wither and Fall.
Again, I ask Her: Will this last forever?
My heart sharp, like icicles
dangling from the tree branches
ready to drop
every tear that slides from my cheeks
stains the white snow a glossy blue;
I freeze into this numbing feel.
I ask Mother Nature: Does he ever comeback?
My heart small, like a seed
buried beneath warming soil.
A lotus begging to sprout
soaking in the softest caress of the sun
and watered by every tear;
I blossom in Ruby glory.

Let it Pour

Dania Kreisl

I've been denatured. My dignity has been stripped from me as I stand alone in the street praying for the rain to wash my body clean of these sins committed against me. My fingers pruning, no longer plump and round, now shriveled and deflated. Who I once was before the attack has so quickly disappeared with the evidence down the drain. It's only been a few days, but I already miss her. She has been stolen from me, and I hope she is given back. But till then my soul will be standing naked in the street pruning as the rain attempts to keep me clean, waiting for myself to return.

Fish-Eye Bling

Micah Matherne



O Entrancing Eyes: Brown

Mark Rose

What do I see that I must stare
When those beautiful brown eyes grace my sight?
It is not a lone matter of what I see, but feel, as well.
I see splendid spheres of rich chestnut,
And feel welcomed to, beckoned to, delve within.
I see forests of strong oak and textured teak,
And feel safe in their towering, awe-inspiring, refuge.
I see acres of silky wool, of luscious fleece,
And feel enveloped in their warm comfort.
I see a field of rich, velvety coffee,
And feel invigorated by its nourishment.
I see perfect globes of the most fertile soil,
Cultivating Nature's most prized designs
Of aesthetic perfection.
With such a special view to cherish, why would I not stare
When those beautiful brown eyes grace my sight?

The Cry of a Transgender Soul

Cole Crawford

This body of mine
is a lie,
clinging to false
life, while the
real me atrophies
on the inside.

It yearns to
emerge and
rise like bread,
but I have no
flame to make this
form surge.

Help won't come,
I'm on my own;
a firefly against
the midday sun;
I'm invisible.
And yet I still run.

I pray for the day
they realize
this flesh is rough
but should be soft;
don't harden me,
please pardon me.

Spare me the burden
for just one day.
I'm real,

The Cry of a Transgender Soul

I'm alive;
please relieve my
tears tonight.

I ask that you
see past the
facade, to the
real me.
Welcome my wishes,
indulge my desires.

Break the mold,
break this chokehold
and then,
at last,
peace will know my
soul.

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

Ephemeral Ties

Kaylee Meyer



*Helen Hamilton Award for
Excellence in Creative Expression*



See the rest of the collection online at 1147.tcu.edu

Make a Wish

Makayla Lockard



Mirrorball

Leah Marut

Dizzying
proportions from up here
gleaming hands reach refract into glass
edges swaying above the crowd I cut up the years
and what is left? Irises that recall how the world looks
when you're still stumbling to find land in the shifting
sands crystal words the blood still runs deep scarlet after all
these years regret is bitter on my tongue sinking into old wounds
dissolving my halfhearted stitches I fish out forgotten melodies trace
murmured notes recognize these tangled blossoms can I mourn faces
flickering past? Are they still for me to remember? This visage is not
wholly mine the reflection shifts I realize the corner of my mouth
hides a love of laughter gifted from my father that warmth that
care pooling in these eyes is an inheritance a final kiss from
my mother lifetimes stored in this mosaic of features
distorted views on the ground overblown I'm
not so sure I could pick out my face in
passing *mirrorball* Do I want to
see every version of
myself?

Slow Dancing On The Sea

Mary Bowling

Gentle waves and gentle sways
Accompany me and my trusted dance partner
For our daily dates
Slow dancing on the sea

Even after our decades-old love affair,
She still dresses in her finest whites, her brightest fiberglass
All for me
Isn't she lovely?

She has a habit, my dearest, of whirling me in her arms
I lean into the crests and fall back with the troughs
Up and down and up
And down

We spin and twirl across the floors
In our radiant routine
The colorful schools applaud our skills
Splashing gifts of turquoise to dwell about the deck

The brine is my heart's hydration
On my sailboat, my beautiful sailboat
Her devotion swallows me whole
Like the estuaries of our quarters

She is forgiveness, a joyful adornment on my soul
Send my correspondence back to my beloved
I'm never going home, no
I'm never going home

The Residue We Leave

Roxanne Odiorne

Standing at the counter at work,
I hand the wearied man his beer,
Still lukewarm and unbothered
By the chill of the fridge.
“Can I get you anything else?” I say.
“Can you tell me the meaning of life?”
He chortles, proud of his little joke
Before walking away without tipping.

Later, as I wipe down the wooden surface,
Sticky with spilled drinks
And drunken memories,
I think of the question he asked me.
What is the meaning of life?
Is it our lost, abandoned dreams,
Like the ones swirling around me, slipped
From the lips of past guests?

Or is it our accomplishments?
Is it the clinking of glasses
And pouring of wine
By celebrating customers?
Does what we’ve done
Equal who we are?

Or is it the lost loves recounted?
The friends gained and gone?
The birth of a family member,
Or the death.
Is the meaning of life the connections we share?

This room is filled with the ghosts
Of people’s lives.
Their laughter, their sorrows, their stories.
Perhaps the meaning of life
Is not what lies ahead,
But what came before.

Maybe our meaning is the residue we leave,
Like the remaining droplets
From empty drinks.

Blink and You'll Miss It

Leah Marut

The flower bed I pass every Thursday
on my way to the grocery store was already
withering. Seven days ago I'd stopped
to send a picture of the lone tulip waving
in diesel slipstreams, of pink gerberas spotted
across a makeshift meadow of white, because
for the last ten walks I had only known it
as a brick eight-minute marker. Dull but safe, plain
but present— never something with potential
to burst into vibrance. This must be
a promise, I thought, same as the shower
of cherry blossoms scattered in my hair. But
I should've known it was an omen to bloom
only a gate away from a cemetery. Fading as fast
as it unfurled, would anyone believe me if I said
I knew it could be something beautiful?

Unwrapped

Kaylee Meyer

I couldn't recognize my face. Staring into the bathroom mirror, I had a momentary thought to unwrap myself. It began slowly as a simple idea that spread, transformed into a thought, and then engulfed my conscience until all 100 trillion cells of my body were in agreement.

I became aware of the parts of my brain to access, to realize the atoms and molecules that made up my skin. So I, began to separate them. I let my pores grow and the skin loosen around the grip of my face. I allowed them to have more room. Until eventually they grew far enough apart that my skin was no longer skin. Just molecules that I grasped at, gently pulling away like clay.

I reached for my mouth that had sung both hateful and loving songs. I let these rhythms transfer, and they danced into my heart who happily held the memory of the pattern. I opened my mouth and plucked out my teeth then pulled out my tongue. Lovingly, I peeled away my smile. No more language to bound my thoughts, or to try and control, or to tell them, I loved them.

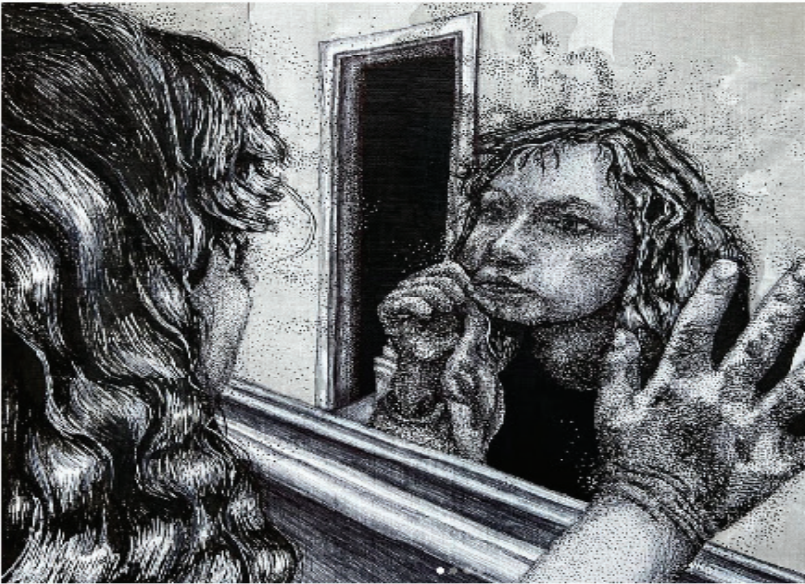
I next went for my ears that had heard empty words, and words that made my heart overflow, and my eyes well up. Lastly, I reached for my eyes, these were the remaining realities that made the world solidify by forcing a set scenery, and turned fluidity to rock.

I gently let the molecules separate till a blurred world turned dark, and I existed inside myself. I began reaching for my organs and separating them out. One by one, I let the molecules free, to dance away from their grip, and the organic matter, charged with memories of their relation to my body and all their bodies before dispersing out to exist elsewhere. I was beginning to recognize this new feeling, the absence of space- darkness-openness- the start and end of creation.

I breathed in, and let the gentle push of air disperse me everywhere.

Finally, at home in the infinite of everything, my memories and all memories dispersed to travel through the leaves, the Earth, "new borns," and lakes and oceans alike. Unpacked, here I was, everything that I had previously known as nothing.

Unwrapped



Drowned

Quỳnh Nhi



Skeletons Wear the Clothes in My Closet

Lily Margaret Greenway

I don't own a single item that isn't
woven through with a memory of you.

My shirt you stole on the night we met.
It traveled back and forth between our
closets like a child we shared custody of
and its threads grew thinner
as we grew stronger.

The hat with the logo of your favorite team
that you bought me from a pop-up stand
at the first game you took me to.
You told me it would help me fit in.
I had never "fit in" anywhere before.
That night, I learned that I "fit in" in two places...
the bleachers of a football stadium
and the crook of your arm.

The heels that I danced in at that tiny bar
on our one-year anniversary.
With four mojitos between the two of us
and a jukebox of songs older than our parents,
you wrote on the bottom of my shoe,
I am happy because of you.

The black dress that we tied with the laces
of your dress shoes after the straps broke on
the dance floor of your cousin's wedding.
With champagne smiles, we ran into the bathroom
and you fixed it up, like you fixed me up.
For the rest of the night you danced barefoot.

I flip through every hanger in my closet and every item in my
drawers,
desperate for something that isn't worn by a skeleton of who
I used to be when I was with you.
But all I see is you.

Skeletons Wear the Clothes in My Closet

I see you staring back at me in my sunglasses
you always wanted to wear when you drove.
I see you weaving your arm through the strap
of my purse to tickle my fingers with yours
until our hands connected like two halves of a whole.
I see you matching the pairs of socks on my
bedroom floor as I lie curled up with food poisoning
after the first and last time we ever went out for sushi.
I see you sliding notes into my jeans pockets
as you caught me on the sidewalk walking to class
when our paths would naturally cross every Wednesday.

I see you in everything.
I see you so much that I can't even see myself.
Two became one, and now I can't even put on
a dress without the weight of a memory
of you while I was wearing it.

Portrait of a Noble Woman

Micah Matherne



Lessons From The Deep End

Roxanne Odiorne

I'm drowning.

My entire life, I've dreamed of being ten. Ten is the age of status and prestige; of no longer being seen as a child, but as a tween. Ten is the time where you're the oldest at school, when you're finally in the fourth grade and a top dog. Ten is when you officially grow up.

I'm nine years old, three months away from reaching the sacred age of double digits, the milestone that will finally classify me as a "big kid." At nine and three-quarters, I'm practically an adult, yet I'm still offered the kids' menu at restaurants. Just wait though - once I reach ten, everything is going to change. Once I'm ten, I'll no longer feel like I'm stuck underwater.

Stuck underwater is now where I am.

It's summertime: July. My days off are spent at the indoor pool of the Amarillo YMCA, an oasis from the dry summer heat and blazing winds. Every time, I'm welcomed by the humid air, the pungent aroma of chlorine and wet socks hitting my nose. My breath slows, and I become at peace. The large pool is no longer just a pool, but an ocean that I can explore, swimming various strokes and pretending to be a mermaid. (Not that I would tell anyone that. Playing mermaids is for little kids. I'm nine now.)

I wish I were a mermaid. Mermaids can breathe underwater. I can't.

While I always go with my family, the pool is typically only occupied by us at this time of day, giving me freedom to conquer its entirety. My four-year-old brother has to stay in the shallow end, safely tucked into a lifejacket and within arm's reach of my mother. But not me. I'm allowed the whole place, including the deep end. Another sure sign of my breach into adolescence.

Slipping out of the shallow end where I've been playing, I pull myself from the warm water into the dank air. The cool tile

tickles my toes as I make my way across the room, while the slapping sounds of my feet echo off the dishwater-colored walls. A trail of water dripping from my brunette ponytail marks my path behind me. I'm in pursuit of the deep end, anxious to practice my recently acquired skill of diving. The scratched and worn "9-Foot Deep" sign gleams before me, a beacon to my daredevil heart. Nothing screams "big kid" like knowing how to dive. None of my friends do yet - I'm the first.

Why did I want to grow up so badly?

Since the birth of my brother four years ago, I'd been lurched back into babyhood just as I was escaping it myself. Now that I wasn't the only child in the family, I was constantly lumped in with "the kids," removing my individuality and leaving me excluded from all the grown-up things I wanted to be a part of. Ryan being five years younger than me meant that now I was almost regarded like I was four too. All I want is to be seen as older. I'm tired of being treated like a baby. I'm tired of the kid's menu.

Curling my toes over the edge of the pool, I peek to my left, looking for my mother. "Mom! Mom! Watch me, Mom! Mom, are you watching?"

Over in the shallow end, she plays with my brother, twirling him in the water till he squeals. Her dark blonde hair is darkened by the water; her freckled arms lift Ryan into the air. "Just a second, Roxy!"

Frustration fills me. I may be nine, but that doesn't mean I'm patient. I don't want to wait a second. I want to dive now. So, like my mother taught me, I bend my knees, straighten my arms, and with a fearless leap, take the plunge.

Immediately, I realize something's gone wrong. I've arched my back more sharply than I usually do, flipped more than I intended. With a startling speed, I've hit the bottom – but not with my hands. With my head.

A sharp sensation fills me upon impact. Scrunching my face from pain-but not crying, because big kids don't cry about bumping

their heads-I turn my body to push myself off from the floor of the pool, swimming upwards towards the surface.

I can't find it.

I keep swimming up, but up isn't up. My mind is disoriented, and I'm lost within the pool. I try to open my eyes underwater, but the chlorine burns, forcing me to squeeze them tightly shut again. Usually I wear goggles, but I didn't today. It felt like something a little kid would do, something I've outgrown. Now I'm paying the price for it.

I'm drowning.

Panic sets in as I frantically flail my limbs. The direction I think is up only leads me into yet another sea of water. I'm swimming and spiraling and turning and trying to find the surface and I can't find it.

Help help help help help help help hel-

My head bursts through the surface, and I'm above water. I thrust my eyes open, gasping for air, using the last of the strength in my trembling limbs to paddle to the side of the pool. Once I reach it, I clutch the wall, thankful for the lifeline it provides me. My arms are shaking, struggling to hold onto the edge as anxiety pools in my veins. Air rattles in and out of my lungs as I gasp like an infant drawing its first breaths.

Suddenly, the head of my mommy appears above me, her brows furrowed, mouth puckered. "Roxy girl, are you okay?"

The sound of her voice breaks me. Big kid principles forsaken, I begin crying, distraught and overwhelmed. My mommy gets to her knees and pulls me out of the pool, her blue eyes full of love and concern. She hugs me to her chest, her arms soft and warm. In her grasp, I'm safe. I can breathe again.

My mommy strokes my wet hair, soothing my anxiety. My tears turn to hiccups, and hiccups to natural breaths. "I'm so sorry,

my doll girl,” she whispers. “You know I’m always here to protect you, right? I wouldn’t have let anything bad happen to you.”

I nod into her chest, hugging her tighter. In this moment, I feel more like a small child than ever—but I don’t mind it. I like feeling cared for. I like feeling protected. I like feeling little again.

Maybe I’m not really ready to grow up.

With that, we’re done with the pool for the day. I dry off with my Disney Princess towel that no longer seems so childish. Holding my mommy’s hand, I walk with her and my brother out to the car. The sky is tinged with gray, the air scented with the prospect of rain. In a puddle outside the YMCA entrance, my brother leaps and splashes, just as he did when we arrived. On the way in, I ignored him. Now, I join him in his play.

Once we’re back in the car, my mother turns from the driver’s seat and smiles. “Why don’t we get McDonald’s for dinner?”

“Yeah!” My brother and I cheer in sync, each of us grinning. My terrifying moment is nearly forgotten in the promise of a fast-food treat. Now, safe with my family, I no longer feel fear.

As we drive away from the pool, I can’t help but feel a lot more grown up than when we arrived. Despite that, I also feel glad that I’m not a grown-up – not yet, at least. Someday I will be, maybe when I actually turn ten. But for now, I’m nine. I’m a kid, and I’m finally okay with that.

And at dinner, I’m definitely getting a Happy Meal.

But I Will Go Into It Laughing

Peyton Duffett

I woke up on the cold pavement this morning. Again. Like every day, I wake and notice the distinct pain in my hip and ache in my shoulder. A reminder that I am in fact, not invincible but rather humbled by the cement poured ten years ago.

It's cold in New York, but not like it usually is. A crisp 21 is much nicer than the usual negative temperatures. Yet I still feel the chilly bumps rising on my arms, the blue showing on my fingertips and under my nails. I found a piece of cloth on the street last night and was able to find some semblance of warmth and comfort in that. It's a plaid, tan piece of cloth. Smells of old paint and has the slight undertone of urine. But when I closed my eyes, I would snuggle in, pretending it was the old quilt my grandma had made for me years ago. And for a second, I believed it. For just a moment, it smelled like her house. The simple scent of pine and laundry, with a hint of old mahogany and a candle she had been burning for far too long. I fell asleep like that.

Reality woke me up with a kiss on the cheek and the smell of the piss blanket in my nostrils. Good morning. The sunrise was prettier than most this morning. As it rose, it hugged the scrapers close, and it made the sky flush. I sat up from the concrete and moved to the ground vent blowing up hot air. I leaned against the wall of the building and watched the sun rise and rise until it was fully bright. The bus would be running soon.

I got up and gathered my piece of cloth and backpack as I began making my way to the bus stop. Miss Martha, the bus driver, was always very kind. She had bright red hair that curled in the front. She was balding at the top, but we don't mention that. Miss Martha loves to read, despite her inability to concentrate and her poor eyesight. But don't worry, she wears glasses.

I grab the morning paper from one of the newsstands I pass on my way. It's thick today, with the front-page detailing something about politicians fighting and what latest scandal a celebrity is involved in. Riveting.

The bus is pulling in front of its stop as I walk up. Miss Martha sees me from the windshield and waves. I hold up the paper and she smiles wide.

“Hey there Miss Martha, how are you today?” I say as I hand her the paper.

“Oh you know sweetheart, I have had quite the morning. But seeing you is always a treat,” she says as she winks, waving the paper in my direction.

“You know I love you Miss Martha, but don’t you be flirting with me now,” I say as I begin making my way to the back of the bus, a smirk overtaking my face.

“I mean look at you sweetcheeks how could I resist?”

I roll my eyes at her as I take my seat on the bus. The special seat reserved just for me, the spot in the way back by the heater. I pull out the piss blanket from my backpack and lay it over my legs. The world slowly begins to move as Miss Martha steps on the gas, and I watch as people are walking on the streets. I like to imagine what worlds they live in. I give them names.

Today I’m watching Miserable Mike. Miserable Mike walks too quickly and is always talking angrily to the Bluetooth in his ear. Waving his arm frantically, trying to get his point across, his other hand clutching a briefcase. He’s in a suit that looks nice, but he probably bought it at the outlet mall. The sleeves are fraying on the ends and it’s just enough to break the mirage that Miserable Mike is a rich man. Miserable Mike is just that, miserable.

He’s walking to the same office building he walks to every day. One of the big, tall buildings with a revolving door and lots of windows. He’ll climb to the top and sit. For hours. Working on meaningless work and thinking about how he hates his life. But at least he’s getting paid for it, right?

I long to be more than miserable with a capital M. And while the world hasn’t necessarily dealt me the best hand, I can say I will live this life striving to be remembered for more than being mediocre. I fidget with the frayed ends of the cloth and watch the bus slowly come to a stop.

“Alright baby, it’s your stop,” she calls.

Every day I take the 15-minute bus ride to the public library. It's my favorite place. It smells like old paper and it's warm and there are so many things to look at and read.

"Thanks Miss Martha, I'll see you at 5."

"Read something good for me," she winks at me and shuts the bus doors.

The world seems so much smaller in the library. People are quiet and content and willing to fall into a different life for just a few hours. I walk to the middle of the rows and rows of shelves, searching for the name I know oh so well. I find it sitting where I left it last, propped between the last names "Mann" and "Morrow."

I have read and re-read *Moby Dick* more times than I can count. The pages are worn and old and I've torn them a few times. Some of them are wet with spit from where I've licked my fingers to turn the pages. I take the book and curl up at the bottom of the shelf, leaning up against the books with the last names of "Ns" and begin reading.

"I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing."

And I will go into it laughing. I have read this line countless times, but I must remind myself I will go into this life laughing. Despite the hand given to me, I will smile back. What is life but a little smile in the face of suffering?

I spend the afternoon reading and watching as others do the same. My fingers covered in papercuts from dragging the pads over the edge of the old paper. The paper is yellowed now, the letters smudged from old ink. But I know it by heart now anyway. When I finally look up again, the sun is setting. I'm one of the few left and the librarian is wiping down the counters. It'll be closing time soon. I reshelve the book and stand to go see Miss Martha again.

"You keep that," I hear someone say.

But I Will Go Into It Laughing

I turn around and the only person left looking in my direction is the librarian.

“I see you in here every day, all day always reading that book. You keep it. Take it home with you. Read it all the time.”

Take it home with me? I don't know if it's the home she's thinking, but it can live between my arms as I rest.

“Thank you, ma'am, I appreciate that very much.”

She smiles, almost solemnly, and nods. I'm not sure if she's solemn because she knows there isn't a home for me to take it to or if she's sad to give it away. I like to think it's the latter.

The bus ride home is quieter than usual. Miss Martha hasn't said much and I'm the last stop of the night. But that's okay, sometimes she has longer days and doesn't want to talk all that much. I clutch *Moby Dick* close to my chest and pretend that I'm back in the library. I'll be there tomorrow. A comforting thought.

I fall asleep in the same place I did last night, over the heated vent with the so-called blanket pulled under my chin. It's colder than last night and my body is shivery all over. My teeth are chattering, and I can feel my lungs breathing in sharp air. I hug the book closer and wait for the sweet sounds of morning.

I'm awoken by the smells of gasoline and the sound of honking. Good morning, big city! I gather my things, excited for the new day. I don't have time to stop for the paper today, but I think Miss Martha would love to hear about *Moby Dick*. I don't tell her about the books I read too often, so I think she would like the change of pace.

As I round the corner, she's already there waiting for me. The bus is stopped, and I see her bright red hair. I wave. She doesn't wave back. Instead, she smiles at me. Like the librarian did. I grab the book tighter as the doors swing open.

“Hi, sweetheart.”

“Hi, Miss Martha, I have so much to tell you about toda-“

“Sweetie, I have some bad news.”

I can feel my heart beating a little faster in my chest and I wonder what she could mean.

“The city has made up some new rules. I have to charge everyone per bus ride. Something with budget cuts or some politics shit. I’m so sorry baby.”

“But Miss Martha, I don’t have any money.”

“I know, baby.”

It clicks suddenly and I realize I can no longer ride the bus. No more library trips or warm buildings or ways to pass the time. Just cement sidewalks and loud cars and too much movement and the frank invisibility cursed to me by a society who refuses to recognize their faults.

“Thank you, Miss Martha.”

She’s crying now, and I think maybe I am too. I step off the bus and watch as she wipes her face and pulls away. And I stand on the edge of the street with nothing but my book and piss blanket. I wipe my tears and begin walking back to the heater, contemplating what to do next. The tears keep coming, though, and I wonder if it’s because I can no longer go to the library. Or maybe it’s because I can no longer see my friend. Or maybe it’s because I have never been more invisible than I am now. I can protest and fight and cry with all my might, but no one will hear me. Or care to hear me for that matter.

I sit on the vent the entire day, lost in my own thoughts. I don’t pick up the book once. I let my thoughts spin in circles until I’m lost in them, draining away what could be considered rational.

But I Will Go Into It Laughing

I hear the bus brakes squeaking as the sun is setting. I'm not thinking much anymore, only circling thoughts. I pick up my book and begin walking towards the bus. Then I'm running. Then sprinting. I'm running for it head on. I throw my head back into a cackling mess of laughs.

I know not all that may be coming, but be it what it will, I'll go to it laughing.

Apple Tree Blues

Ellie Evans



High Tops

Lydia Welling



In Vain

Emily DuBose

My faith has always been more
of a “just in case.” I’ll pray,
just in case He’s listening. I’ll go
to church, just in case it matters.
Sure, I’ll curl my fingers and close my eyes –
I promise I’ll only peek once. Or twice.
I’ll go to church, sit on a hard, wooden
pew. I’ll only nod off once. Or twice.
Jesus, I promise it’s not you. It’s me.

I was always looking for proof
that true believers do not need.
They do not need to see a sign
after every demand, do not need
a giant in the sky to appear on command,
glowing and golden and proof. So
“just in case” was never good enough,
wasn’t worth it for me to keep it up.

Believers talk with shining eyes about
how they feel Him with us, how He always
has a Plan. But the only Plans that ever worked
for me were my own. I could not be reassured
with words I didn’t write and didn’t feel.

My stubborn brain prefers the ink
on my hands, the bruises on my
legs, the taste of ravioli from a can,
the tapping of my laptop keys.
All things I can make myself.
No just in case. Just me.

God became a scoff in my mouth.
I take his name in vain more often than it rains.
And in my head, it rains every day.

So I’ll doubt religion once. Or twice.
Maybe for the rest of my life.

And the Greatest of These is Greed

Brianna Harkins

I cried for more.
 More manna.
Skies of sweetbread

To land on
 My tongue
Like hot, flaky

Krispy Kreme
 On a Sunday.
I can't refuse

A cheat day,
 Hands stuffed
With should nots.

Gluttony is
 Greed of the
Teeth, of taste—

A lapse of
 Judgement
On my part—

Not God's.

Ghandi got it
 Right, right?
"Earth provides enough."

Yet we were born
 Out of greed,
Two, wanting three.

Robbing ribs and
 Holy breath,
Drunk on serpentine lies,

And the Greatest of These is Greed

We rejected eternal
Satisfaction
For greed's seduction.

Now we is I,
Wealth thumbed
By one man at a time.

One for one, and
All for None,
Want for more—

Not God.

Portrait

Ellie Gonyea



An Introvert Unleashed

Emily DuBose

A cold drink melts a colder exterior.
And suddenly
I sing louder, smile wider, dance weirder.
Unfiltered exuberance;
insecurities have no place
in a hammered, hammering heart.

I only know how to be happy.
I am a toddler shoving a rock in your face
simply because it looks cool.
I am a dog, bounding back inside,
covered in mud, loving your attention.
I am a buzzed bee, buzzing in your ear,
telling you my silly sober secrets.

Sloshed and satisfied,
inebriation is elation,
an introvert's jubilation
allowed to leave the mind
one sip at a time.

Drunk joy,
I hope you never change.

You Met a Girl in August

Christina Phillips

She was freckled with Saturday night starlight.
She was shaking and she was new.
Do you remember how you wanted her?

Do you remember how she liked to wear sundresses in the rain?
Do you remember how she listened to your music
Whenever you weren't around? Oh, she hated it
Almost as much as she loved you.

Do you remember what it was
To reach for her fluttering pulse in the morning,
To trace her birthmarks late at night?
Do you remember the way her nightgown swayed

As she cleaned the bloody sheets,
And told you not to feel guilty
Because it really hadn't hurt that much at all,
And then she kissed you instead of meeting your eyes?

Tell me you remember
the look in her eyes as you bent her
And you broke her
And you made her into me.

I remember there was a girl who stargazed city lights,
A girl who was a girl and not a cynic.
I don't remember what it was to be her,
To be whole and not a patchwork of

This bitterness you stitched me up with.
The blood is on my hands now,
Not between my thighs.
Do you remember how it got there?

I hope you remember the girl you met in August
Because she does not live on in me.

Bad Hair Day

Madeline McCormack

At the end of the day,
I'm surrounded by
fragments of my halo
ripped apart bit by bit by
my own delicate fingers.
I sweep up the mess,
reposition and disguise
darkened patches
created from lost pieces.
The threads which
adorn my skull
have undergone
tremendous abuses
yet the remaining light
never fades.

It feels soothing to pull
strand upon strand,
the tension relieves
the stress until I look—
look at what I've done,
the damage, the holes now
devoid of light and life.
The pain that left with
each thread weaves its
way back into my follicles,
into my head and mind.

Bad Hair Day

I can feel the spiral begin,
the tireless work of my nerves.
I pull.
It feels good, calming.
My fingers twist in their grip.
What if someone sees?
Grasp and tear again.
I am like a lightning bug
twinkling in the air,
suddenly held hostage
then released
again and again
for a lifetime.

There is a familiarity in the cycle
I do not wish to give up
but know I must.
Despite the ever-present
empty spots I attempt to conceal,
there is comfort knowing that
as I work to control
the minds of my fingers,
the light will still be here
to guide the shame
out in swarms,
letting radiance fill the gaps.

Alcatraz

Brandon Isensee



See the rest of the collection online at 1147.tcu.edu

Alcatraz

Brandon Isensee



See the rest of the collection online at 1147.tcu.edu

Ode to My Southern Baptist Upbringing

Brianna Harkins

Innocence and naivety are the same
when churches teach us
what to fear, what to say.
Wrath is justice, judgment is blame
when pastors fail us
no matter how hard we pray.

*If you were really a Christian,
If you were really saved,
distorts disagreement
to damnation. Doubt—
the lukewarm sin—boils
with lowly prostration.*

“Sin is anything you think,
say, or do that displeases
God.” But repentance
begins with the feet,
the tongue, the thought
Dear God.

I paid penance with soap
in my mouth. Stuffed
rags in my trousers
to soften swinging
hands. Being cleansed,
being held, should not
bring about eternal fears.

My father wrote a book
The Wrath of an Angry God—
but I saw it every day
in the pamphlets, in the pews—
so I never read it.
I already knew.

Ode to My Southern Baptist Upbringing

How many altar calls must I answer to thaw
eternal winter under White Witch rule
when The Lion, O' The Lamb,
gifted me blood, fur, and fleece—
the promise of his side,
the promise of his feet,
the warmth of his hands?

How do I ask Jesus to live
in a broken heart? Give me
thread and needle and glue.
How many baptisms must I hold
my breath for, to answer,
“What the fucking hell would Jesus do?”

Blame it on the Red Jacket

Ellie Evans



Germany Daydream

Corinne Green



Artist's Canary

Deanna Chukes

1 INT. ART STUDIO - NOON

The scene opens with shots of an empty classroom for art, sunlight filtering in through the windows. The distant sound of college students lingering in the halls and heading from place to place is heard faintly in the background

In a lone corner, LILA (21) sits quietly, drawing something hidden from the camera in her sketchbook. She is so engrossed in her work that she fails to notice the figure approaching her until the person plops unceremoniously at her side.

CAMERON

Finally got over your artist block?

LILA jumps, sketchbook snapping shut in her hands. She turns a visibly agitated look at her best friend. CAMERON (21) only gives her a silly grin in return.

LILA lays the book flat on her lap, scowling at her friend further.

LILA

Would it kill you to not sneak up on me like that?

CAMERON shrugs.

CAMERON

Forgive me! I couldn't help myself. I can't remember the last time I saw you sketching. You used to love that, you know?

LILA

Stalking me now, huh? I told you I'm not into men-

CAMERON rolls his eyes, reaching over to give her a light shove.

CAMERON

Shut up! I know what you're doing.

Artist's Canary

LILA

Please, do mansplain my actions to me Cameron Day O'Connor.

CAMERON sighs at her antics, smiling fondly despite her antagonism.

CAMERON

You're deflecting, loser. What changed?

LILA

Huh?

CAMERON

You're drawing again. Finally found a muse?

LILA

Wouldn't you like to know-

CAMERON

Yes. I do. That's why I'm asking, you know.

LILA shifts where she's sitting, turning fully to face her friend. The sincere expression on his face unnerves her slightly.

LILA

Why are you so nosy today?

CAMERON

I can't be a caring and compassionate best friend for my dearest Lila?

LILA gives him a deadpan stare.

LILA

Malik and the rest of the boys' team are practicing indoors today, aren't they?

CAMERON visibly pales. LILA begins to laugh at him.

LILA

Not even I'm this gay.

CAMERON

Pot calling the kettle black. Have you seen the way you look at our stats professor? Because I have.

LILA

She's the only reason I can make it through that class! Don't blame me.

CAMERON

Anyways!

CAMERON claps his hands. She scoots closer to his friend.

CAMERON

You're deflecting again. I'm curious because whatever's brought you back to art. I'm immensely thankful for it.

LILA

Cameron...

CAMERON

I mean it! Chastise me all you want. I'm happy for you. I missed seeing you do what you enjoy.

LILA

I'm allergic to affection. You know this.

CAMERON stands up from where he's sitting on the ground. He turns and extends a hand to his friend, smiling still.

CAMERON

Yeah, yeah. I think the whole dramatic-heartless-queer-artist-in-pink thing you have going on really suits you. God bless whoever has to put up with it one day after me. Now are you coming with me to get lunch, or what?

LILA rolls her eyes, but accepts his offered hand, and lets herself be pulled up from the ground.

LILA

Yeah, yeah, let's go. I just have to head somewhere after, though.

CAMERON

When do I get to find out what's made you open that sketchbook again?

LILA

Hmm... maybe when you finally muster up strength to do more than stutter in Malik's face whenever he says hi to you?

CAMERON audibly splutters.

CAMERON

Fuck off, Lila!

LILA laughs as the two of them exit the classroom together.

2 INT/EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSIC BUILDING OUTSIDE PRACTICE ROOM - 2 EVENING

LILA makes her way to the music building on campus. Shoulders set, a bit tense, she stops short to pull out her phone and

check the time first. The numbers “5:03” on her screen shine brightly back at her.

LILA continues her walk, making her way down the row of practice rooms until she stops just outside the last one. She takes great care to move quietly, sketchbook and pencil already in hand, and settles on the floor outside of the practice room, leaning against the wall, preparing to draw.

LILA

(Quietly to herself)

What do you have for me today,
Canary?

LILA leans her head against the wall, waiting in silence. Eventually, the soft sounds of a piano can be heard, carrying through the wall and into the empty hallway. LILA closes her eyes, exhaling quietly and enjoying the music. After sitting like that for a few more minutes, her eyes open, and she lifts her hand, letting whatever comes to mind spill onto the blank pages.

LILA sketches freely like that for the remainder of the hour, content as she listens to the pianist on the other side of the wall. The way that LILA goes about her routine gives the impression that this scenario is habitual for her.

Once the piano music stops for longer than a minute, LILA knows her time is up. She quickly gathers her materials, making haste as she briskly exits the hallway and the building.

LILA moves around a corner of the music building, far enough away from the entrance where she can still see it. And waits.

Eventually, a girl walks out of the building, a dark satchel slung over her shoulder and a black music binder under her

arm. She has dark hair that frames her face delicately, bouncing lightly with each step she takes. LILA watches her leave the area, sketchbook gripped tightly in her arms.

LILA silently marvels at the sight of her canary before heading home.

3 INT. LILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 3

Scene opens with LILA taking a seat at her desk, the room only illuminated by her desk lamp and wall lights. LILA opens her laptop, sketchbook and pens littering the space beside it on her desk surface.

Several cut-aways of her room play, including a picture frame of two young girls, art hanging on the walls, and the empty easel that sits in the corner.

LILA puts in her headphones, easily opening a music app and turning something on to listen to. The same song she'd heard the pianist perform earlier begins to play.

LILA clicks somewhere else, opening a folder on her laptop simply titled "Letters Unsent." She opens a new word document, and begins to type

LILA (V.O.)

Good evening, Mei. I've made it through another day and would like to tell you about it.

LILA sits still for a second, expression fond as a memory from earlier that day resurfaces.

LILA (V.O.)

Cameron is still the world's biggest dumbass. But I think I'm really glad

to have him as a friend. I didn't
expect him to notice so quickly.
Enough about him though. I think you
know why I'm here.

Scene cuts to a flashback from LILA outside of the music room, though this time, the inside of her sketchbook can be seen, which depicts a girl at a piano bench, expression focused yet serene.

Match cut to inside the practice room, where the girl at the piano bench can be seen.

LILA (O.C.)
I got to listen to Willow again
today. Willow Kim.

Scene cuts back to a content LILA listening to Willow play.

LILA (V.O.)
My new muse.
As the scene changes, LILA's voice over continues.

**4 INT/EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSIC BUILDING OUTSIDE
PRACTICE ROOM - 4 EVENING**

(FLASHBACK)

LILA (V.O.)
Today in particular reminded me of
the first time I'd heard her play.

The scene changes to LILA on her way to the music building exit, when she hears faint music in the distance. Curiosity carries her closer to the sound, where she peeks inside the room, and sees a girl with dark hair bent over the piano, playing beautifully. WILLOW's (22) hands fly over the keys with unparalleled grace.

The same song from earlier can be heard playing.

LILA cannot help but stare.

LILA (V.O.)

It was odd, the way that my hands
felt compelled to move.

LILA in the flashback sits, and begins sketching wordlessly as she listens to the girl play, entranced by the music.

LILA (V.O.)

But I couldn't help it. I've always
chased beautiful things. There's
something about the way that she
plays that makes me want to draw her
every movement.

More scenes of LILA sketching over various periods of time play out. Some outside of the practice room, some in other places.

LILA (V.O.)

I wonder silly things like, what
kind of expression does she make as
she learns? What draws her to select
the music that she does? Why does
she play like she has the greatest
stories hidden in her song?

Scene of LILA sketching in a garden.

LILA (V.O.)

I've taken to sketching her whenever
I happen to see her now. Her smile
reminds me of her music.

FLASHBACK ends. VOICEOVER continues.

5 INT. LILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 5

LILA continues to type. She glances at her open sketchbook on the desk. The open pages are filled with various sketches of flowers, instruments, and one particular dark-haired figure.

LILA (V.O.)

I'm not sure what it is about her,
Mei.

LILA sits still for a moment, contemplating.

LILA (V.O.)

But I wonder... would you be proud
of me for picking up my charcoals
again?

LILA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I do not know this girl, but I feel
as if I could. I think that's the
beauty of strangers, Mei. She has no
idea who I am, but I followed her
sound. I followed it all the way
back to my art.

LILA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She doesn't know it, but she made
art beautiful to me once more.

**6 INT/EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSIC BUILDING OUTSIDE
PRACTICE ROOM - 6 EVENING**

LILA is heading to her usual spot to listen to WILLOW practice for the day, sketchbook in hand, when she notices that she already hears the familiar music. Pulling out her

phone, she checks the time, and notices that it's only about 4:57. She'd arrived earlier than normal, and yet, already heard music playing.

LILA hurries to sit down as quietly as possible, settling against the wall to listen in as usual. There's something different about WILLOW's playing today that LILA immediately picks up on: The tone is heavier, more solemn, and overall feels more melancholy than her usual lighter musicality. LILA isn't sure how she feels about the new development, but is drawn to WILLOW's music nonetheless.

LILA opens her sketchbook and begins to draw. She lets the sad song carry her strokes, and gets lost in the mix of art and music.

Suddenly, the melody cuts off with a loud and abrupt clang of the piano keys. The sound is so jarring that LILA jumps where she sits in place, her charcoal pencil slashing across the page and leaving an ugly mark against an otherwise pretty picture. The sudden stop of the music is followed by the faint sound of someone's deep breaths. LILA leans closer to the door, all sorts of confused, concerned, and curious.

WILLOW (O.S.)
(choked up/frustrated)
This isn't working.

LILA feels as if her heart may stop.

WILLOW (O.S.)
I should quit.

LILA gasps quietly, WILLOW's words sitting uncomfortably on her conscience.

LILA
(whispers)
No..

The sudden sounds of movement coming from inside the room startle LILA out of her shocked stupor. She listens and can distinctly pick up the sound of a zipper being pulled, a binder being shoved somewhere, and footsteps making their way to the door.

Panicking, LILA gathers all of her things as quickly as she can, and rises to leave. As the footsteps grow louder, she begins to sprint down the hall, desperate to remain unseen.

Unbeknownst to her, her sketchbook happens to tumble out of her bag before she can leave the hallway, and lands with a gentle thud on the ground in the spot she'd just vacated only seconds earlier.

7 INT. LILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 7

LILA (V.O.)

Mei, this might be selfish, but for the first time in a long time, I feel really scared.

LILA settles quickly down at her desk that night, needing to vent her thoughts immediately.

LILA (V.O.)

I don't understand how someone with that much heart and talent could quit. Does she realize what she's doing?

LILA (V.O.)

Her music is incredible. When I listen to her play, I feel many things I have not in a long time. I can't find the words to express the beauty in her notes.

LILA's hands still over the keyboard for a second.

LILA (V.O.)

Was that also why you stopped, all those years ago?

LILA sits quietly for a few heartbeats, eyes drifting over to the picture frame. She shuts her laptop after several moments, feeling mentally fatigued from the events of the day. It's as she's scanning the desk that she realizes her sketchbook is not sitting there, out and open, as it always is.

LILA freezes.

LILA

No. I didn't.

She frantically stands and grabs her tote bag where she usually keeps her sketchbook, dumping all of its contents onto her bed unabashedly. Her sketchbook is nowhere in sight.

Moving around with tense, wild actions, LILA searches every inch of her room, her hope of the sketchbook being there dwindling with every passing second.

LILA sinks to the floor, staring into space.

She realizes that there's only one place she could have left it.

LILA

Oh, fuck me.

8 EXT. OUTDOOR TABLES - AFTERNOON 8

LILA plops down next to CAMERON at their favorite table outdoors. It's sunny, and the weather is nice, but LILA has the worst expression on her face that CAMERON has seen in weeks.

CAMERON

Jesus. Why do you look like that?

LILA

I'm really not in the mood today
Cameron.

CAMERON frowns, but nods in understanding.

CAMERON

What happened, Lila?

LILA

Global warming. I lost my sketchbook.
We had an awful stats quiz today, I'm
breaking out-

CAMERON

Roll that back. You lost your
sketchbook?

LILA sighs, laying her head down on the flat surface of the
table.

LILA

Yeah. I already went and checked the
last spot it could have been in, and
it wasn't there.

CAMERON

Damn, I'm sorry Lila. It's the one
Mei gave you, right? I'll keep an
eye out for it.

LILA looks up at him at the mention of Mei. She'd forgotten
about that.

LILA

Oh. Yeah. Mei did give me that...

CAMERON

Hey, we'll find it okay? It's definitely not lost and will find its way back to you.

LILA just nods in bereaved silence. With Mei on her mind, she thinks about recent events.

LILA

Cameron, why do talented people quit at the worst possible times?

CAMERON gives her a side-eye. LILA pretends not to see it.

CAMERON

I could ask you the same question, Lila. I've been wondering.

LILA

Keep wondering then, I suppose.

CAMERON

Well, let's look at it this way. Why did you quit doing art last year?

LILA

You know why.

CAMERON

I want to hear you say it.

LILA rolls her eyes in frustration, but sits up, giving into the conversation.

LILA

I've never really been very good, anyways. And it just... it didn't feel right after Mei...

CAMERON

After Mei died, right?

LILA is silent. She doesn't understand how they got here.

CAMERON

Why didn't it feel right?

LILA

We were always supposed to create together. I felt better about my art when she was there... something about her brought my best out of me.

LILA (CONT'D)

I felt a little betrayed when she stopped. I wish I knew what she was feeling then. Maybe it was because her condition made it more difficult to create things she liked. I have no idea. I miss her skill and wisdom.

CAMERON watches her quietly.

CAMERON

Whoever it was that got you to draw again must be really special, right?

LILA startles. She looks up at CAMERON with wide eyes before sighing.

Artist's Canary

LILA

I should have known better.

CAMERON

You wouldn't be talking to me about this otherwise, you know.

LILA simply stares back at him.

CAMERON

Everyone has their reasons at some point. I know you did. But I never forgot how at peace you were with a paintbrush between your fingers and a sketchbook on your lap.

LILA

Is it selfish if I'm scared to lose that again?

CAMERON shakes his head.

CAMERON

I don't think so. But if you're afraid to lose that, I think you should do something about it.

LILA

Just what the hell can I do to stop her from quitting?

CAMERON

I'm not saying you can stop her from quitting. But whoever it is, her work was enough to move you back to something you parted with on heavy

Deanna Chukes

terms. It was enough to inspire you to return to something happy that once brought you pain.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

And I think that if she can do that, she's pretty special after all, and deserves to be told that she is capable of such a thing.

LILA feels her eyes begin to well with tears.

LILA

I never got to tell Mei that.

CAMERON rises from his side of the table, and walks over to where LILA sits. He opens his arms in invitation, and LILA leans over and allows herself to be hugged by her best friend.

CAMERON

I know you carry that regret with you. It's okay. I think Mei would be proud of you right now.

LILA

Yeah?

CAMERON

Yeah. She definitely knew how much you cared. You're not as unfeeling as you'd like the world to think. She'd be happy just seeing you create again. She never wanted you to stop.

Artist's Canary

LILA just nods. She sits there for another moment before leaning out of CAMERON's grasp and turning to face him.

LILA

I just think it would be really sad
if I never got to hear her play
another song again.

CAMERON

Then I think you have something you
need to go do now, Lala.

LILA sighs.

LILA

When did you become so wise, idiot?

CAMERON

One of us needs to carry the brain
cell, you know?

LILA punches his shoulder while CAMERON grins, their laughs filling the warm spring afternoon.

CAMERON

Go. I'll keep an eye out for your
sketchbook.

LILA

Thanks, Cam.

LILA rises from their table, taking deep breaths. She steels herself to head in the direction of the music building.

CAMERON

Lila!

Deanna Chukes

LILA turns at the call, cocking her head to the side in question.

CAMERON

Praying for an LGBT win in your court.

LILA throws her uneaten muffin at his head, the plastic wrapping making a loud sound after making contact with the center of his forehead, drowned out by his cackling.

9 INT/EXT. UNIVERSITY MUSIC BUILDING - EVENING 9

LILA arrives outside the music building, bracing herself for the events to come. Tense, nervous, yet filled with resolve, she forces her hands to come up to the handles to pull the doors open to enter.

The sight of WILLOW on the other side of the door causes her to freeze in her tracks.

The girl stares at her impassively, though vestiges of concern can be gleaned from her expression. LILA had not anticipated seeing her this early and feels parts of her brain shutting down.

WILLOW

Are you okay?

As if things could not get any worse for LILA, when she looks down, she sees her sketchbook in the pianist's pretty hands, looking as if it has been opened. WILLOW seems to put two and two together before LILA's brain can finish forming coherent thoughts.

Artist's Canary

WILLOW

Oh, does this belong to you? I was looking for-

WILLOW doesn't get to finish, because at that moment, LILA turns and bolts. She moves without thinking, but she's moving incredibly fast, desperately trying to get away.

LILA ignores WILLOW's calls, and continues to run.

10 INT. ART STUDIO - EVENING 10

LILA sits crouched in her usual corner, though the room is fairly dim, cast in a dark orange glow as the sun begins its descent. Her breaths come quickly, and her mind is racing a mile a minute.

LILA

Fuck. She saw it. Fuck. Fuck.

Sitting with her knees bunched to her chest, LILA silently waits for the world to swallow her whole. Anything at that point would have been better.

LILA

It's all ruined. I can't do this.
She'll think I'm crazy.

LILA is so caught up in her hysteria that she doesn't notice the sound of the door creaking open. A voice speaks then, quietly, gentle, ringing like a clear bell tone in the air.

WILLOW

I don't think you're crazy.

LILA jumps, feeling her heart leave her body. Her head shoots upwards, gaze locking with WILLOW's. She's standing there, in the flesh. Her studious, gorgeous muse for all of these months.

LILA is reminded that her muse is now aware of her antics.

WILLOW takes a step forward.

WILLOW

Please don't run again. Please?

LILA can only give a short, terse nod. WILLOW sighs at that, seemingly in relief.

WILLOW

(softly)

Is it okay if I sit?

FADE TO BLACK

The Hart

Savannah Childs

The frigid air burned the inside of Charlie's nostrils as he looked at his car sitting in a ditch. He was lucky there was little damage other than some scratches and dents, but he couldn't get the car out on his own. It was a dark night, and the only light was from his headlights. He could see some light in the distance though, probably Coushatta. The road was empty and would likely stay that way since he was in the middle of nowhere. The only sound was the gentle hum of his engine.

Charlie pulled out his phone and called his mom. She picked up on the fourth ring. "Charlie? What's going on, it's late. Are you okay?" Her voice was heavy with sleep.

"I'm sorry, I crashed my car. I don't think I damaged it too badly but it's in a ditch and I can't get it out. Can you come pick me up?"

"Are you okay? Where are you? Dan, wake up. Dan. Charlie crashed, we have to go get him." He heard rustling on the other side of the phone and the deep raspy murmur of his dad.

"I'm on Highway 371. I can see Coushatta. Uh, oh and I'm by the cross." There was a small white cross on the other side of the road, with dead flowers at the base. It had been there forever, and sometimes fresh flowers would be left by it. Charlie thought he was lucky that he didn't end up another cross on the side of the road.

The Hart

“Okay. We’re coming. Stay on the phone.” He listened as his mom jostled the phone and heard his parents’ indistinct voices talking with one another.

Charlie looked around. He had made the drive home many times, but only now did he realize how ominous the highway was at night. Thick trees surrounded the road, and the lack of streetlights made the night pitch black. Even though he was far from any big cities, Couthatta was a small nothing town, he still couldn’t see stars. Only the moon looked down at him, but she withheld her gentle moonlight, allowing the black night to engulf him.

He waited patiently as his parents got in their car and began driving towards him. They didn’t ask him any questions, like how he had crashed and what happened. It didn’t matter. What mattered was getting Charlie home safe.

As he listened, he saw eyes staring at him from the woods. The headlights reflected in their eyes, making them glow. It was a deer. He had large twisted antlers that stretched towards the sky. His eyes bored into him, observing him with a calculation too human for an animal. Neither moved a muscle.

“Ok, we’re on the highway now. Your headlights are on, right? I think we should probably see you first, but if you see us let me know.” The deer bolted back into the woods, and Charlie sighed.

“Okay, I’m watching for you. I’m right near that cross on the road.”

“Good, we know where that is.” Charlie heard tinny laughter and spun around. Nothing.

“Did you or dad just laugh?”

“Huh? No. Okay, I see the cross. Where are you?” Charlie looked around.

There were no headlights, and no rumbling of a car down the road.

“I don’t see you. I’m across the street from the cross.”

“We’re at the cross. We’re parked right next to it.” Charlie looked at the old cross. His parents weren’t there. His stomach sank. The laughter came again.

They tried for thirty more minutes to find each other. His parents drove up and down the highway with their hazard lights on, but Charlie remained in the pitch black.

“Look, I see Coushatta, I’ll just start walking and then we’ll meet up there.”

The Hart

“Son, that’s dangerous. You will stay put right where you are until we get you.” His dad replied.

“I’m an adult, Dad. I can handle myself. I’ll call you when I’m in Coughatta.” Charlie hung up. He was an adult now, with a life. He didn’t need to take orders anymore.

His phone rang. He didn’t pick up. He reached into his car to grab his keys and turn off the engine, then he started walking.

Without his headlights, the night was pure black. He turned on the flashlight on his phone and trudged on. He still heard that laughter. It made his bones feel cold. A warm breath hit the back of his neck.

He swung around, but no one was there. His stomach was churning. He kept walking.

Sweat started to bead on his eyebrows. He shook off his coat. It hit the dirt, and he didn’t bother picking it up. Gooseflesh dappled his skin, and a feverish heat consumed him. He ripped off his shirt. The air was suffocatingly hot. Each breath was laborious as he inhaled the scalding air. He fiddled with his belt, and shed his pants. The belt buckle made a soft clang as it hit the ice on the road. His socks were soaked with sweat, so he removed his shoes and socks as well.

Charlie walked down the highway naked, but even as the heat from his breath fogged the cold air, he felt as if he was on fire. His heart began to twinge. He held his hand to his breast and trudged on. Were the lights getting any closer? Would that laughter ever stop? It was louder now.

He buckled as his heart skipped and squeezed inside him. It felt as if all the blood in his body was rushing into his heart, filling it to the brink of bursting. The gooseflesh on his arms began to tingle. Coarse brown hair pushed from every single pore.

Charlie screamed as the laughter circled around him. Loud, loud, loud. He couldn't decipher what was the pounding of his heart and what was the boisterous laughter. His hands and feet became leaden and he could no longer bear to stand upright. He crumpled down to all fours as his bones began to crack and break inside him. His heart was exploding.

His head was filled with pressure, and sharp, twisting branches pushed out from his skull. He could no longer scream. He had no voice.

Amy's foot bounced up and down as she watched the highway intently. Dan put a hand on her leg to stop the tic.

"He's okay, it's just gonna take him a while to walk here." Dan had forgotten his anger at his son's disobedience as he watched his wife writhe with worry.

“We should’ve kept driving around. What if he passed out from the cold?”

“Look, if you wanna keep driving, go ahead. I can wait here and see if he shows up.” Amy looked at her husband lovingly, and wrapped her arms around his neck.

“Thank you.” She left and went back to the car to continue searching.

Charlie could easily have gotten turned around in this darkness. It wouldn’t hurt to continue looking for him. She drove up and down the highway, flashing her lights and calling her son’s name out the open car window. After an hour, she parked at the white cross on the side of the road.

She pulled out her phone and texted Dan. *Any luck?*

No, not yet. You?

Nothing. I’ll keep looking. She got out of the car, shivering as the chill hit her skin. Maybe Charlie had crashed a little into the woods, and that’s why they couldn’t find each other? She knew it made no sense, since Charlie described seeing the cross and being in the ditch which was right next to the road. But she had no other ideas. She walked in circles around the area, rubbing her arms with her hands.

She stared at the empty ditch. Where are you?

Rustling came from behind her. She turned on her heel, “Charlie?!”

Two deer with branching antlers stared at her. Soft laughter came from the woods, and the deer turned and disappeared into the trees. Amy turned back around.

There was Charlie’s car. In the ditch where she had just looked. She ran to the car, cupping her hands around her eyes to look into the windows to see if her son was there. All that was in the car was study abroad pamphlets and his suitcase. She huffed and stepped back.

Looking around again, she saw Charlie’s red jacket on the ground. As she walked towards it, she saw more of his clothes scattered about the icy dirt. What happened to her son? More laughter came from the woods. She shivered, but was unaware whether it was caused by the cold or not.

As she looked around once more for her son, she began to feel herself burn and her heart burst. The two deer watched her from the woods as the laughter once again filled the night.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mary Bowling

First-year, English, Bristol, TN

Savannah Childs

Junior, English, Shreveport, LA

Deanna Chukes

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

Cole Crawford

Senior, Writing and History, McKinney, TX

Emily DuBose

Senior, English, Austin, TX

Peyton Duffett

Senior, Strategic Communication, San Antonio, TX

Ellie Evans

Sophomore, Studio Art, Atlanta, GA

Ellie Gonyea

Junior, Graphic Design, Eugene, OR

Corinne Green

Junior, Graphic Design, Yorba Linda, CA

Lily Margaret Greenway

Junior, English and Religion, Little Rock, AR

Brianna Harkins

Senior, Writing, Fort Worth, TX

Brandon Isensee

Senior, Mathematics, Arlington, TX

Dania Kreisl

Junior, English, Euless, TX

Angelina Leonardi

Sophomore, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, San Diego, CA

Makayla Lockard

Senior, Writing, Mansfield, TX

Leah Marut

Senior, Biology, Sugar Land, TX

Micah Matherne

Junior, BFA focus in Painting, Waco, TX

Madeline McCormack

First-year, English, El Paso, TX

Kaylee Meyer

Sophomore, Studio Art, Fort Worth, TX

Quỳnh Nhi

Sophomore, Graphic Design, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Roxanne Odiorne

Senior, Psychology, Georgetown, TX

Isabella Perez

Junior, Graphic Design, New Orleans, LA

Mark Rose

Junior, Political Science, Midwest City, OK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover Art

“Everything You Can Imagine Is Real” by Corinne Green

Editors-in-Chief

Raegan Lane & Jessica Schaffer

Creative Director

Lonyae Coulter

Staff

Kennedy Bigham | Lonyae Coulter | Pati Carlos
Maia Gonye | Raegan Lane | Anthony Lucido | Skylar Mavar
Maggie McLaughlin | Jessica Schaffer | Caroline Whitley

Helen Hamilton Award for Excellence in Creative Expression

“Ephemeral Ties” (Green) by Kaylee Meyer

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

“The Cry of a Transgender Soul” by Cole Crawford

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. Sharon Aronofsky Weltman

Department of English

Dr. Sonja Watson

AddRan College of Liberal Arts



ADDRAN
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Printed thanks to our friends at

ONE|STOP
PRINTING

CENTER FOR
—DIGITAL—
EXPRESSION

“

**A WRITER IS A
WRITER BECAUSE
EVEN WHEN THERE
IS NO HOPE, EVEN
WHEN NOTHING
YOU DO SHOWS
ANY SIGN OF
PROMISE, YOU KEEP
WRITING ANYWAY.**

”

- Junot Diaz