

ONION RIVER REVIEW

2017

*river run by*

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## Editors' Note

Yup, that's us. You're probably wondering how we ended up in this situation. A year ago when we published our last dear Onion, we were worried about exterminating lizard people, but we never could have expected what we'd be worried about this year. If someone told us that in one year we'd lose such inspirations as David Bowie, Prince, Carrie Fisher, Harper Lee, Gene Wilder, Leonard Cohen, and Muhammad Ali, how could we have believed them? But we got here somehow, and in the same year saw the election of a new president and saw, for the first time, the Nobel Prize in Literature be awarded to a songwriter whose protest-fueling folk lyrics seem appropriate to quote here: *"Come writers and critics who prophesize with your pen and keep your eyes wide the chance won't come again. And don't speak too soon for the wheel's still in spin and there's no tellin' who that it's namin'. For the loser now will be later to win, for the times they are a-changin'."*

But certainly the most difficult losses we suffered this year were the ones in our own community, of Will Peterson '17, Father Michael Cronogue, and Jerry Collins '17. As Peter Linn writes in his essay on Jerry, it's been "a time of extreme fragility." We struggled to decipher how to go on and begin to create again in the wake of these losses, but we found consolation and determination in the hopes of creating a publication that they might have loved as much as we hope you do. And we hope that in our humble book you'll find some consolation, too.

So we bring to you, with the coming of a new year, a new Onion. At the beginning of 2016, a wise young philosopher of our generation, Kylie Jenner, prophesized of the coming time, "Like, I feel like every year has a new energy, and I feel like this year is really about like the year of just realizing stuff, and everyone around me we're all just like realizing things." And in the making of this book, we editors realized a lot of things, too. We realized that we'll always appreciate a sexy produce poem, and that peaches are never innocent. We realized we just have a sweet spot for

paintings of birds. We also realized that upon entering *Skeleton World*, we might all be better off getting our skulls checked, lest we end up lost in the Bone Zone. And we realized that in order to come to so many important realizations, we needed to devour as many Tootsie Pops and bagels as Will Marquess would provide us.

As always, this process starts with our core editors, and this past year we welcomed to our quirky fold four new editors, making this year's band of misfits all the merrier. Our core editors include: Agi Chretien, Mikayla Hoppe, Lily Gardner, Jonathan Norton, Madeline Schneider, Samantha Sidorakis, and Victoria Sullivan. We could hardly bear to send off our Sammy to Oxford almost as soon as we got her, where she's currently spending her time reading Marx, writing more sexy poems for us, and frolicking jubilantly through the streets of London. But we found consolation in our "auxes," the auxiliary editors who soothed our hearts and made us laugh, as we spent countless hours in St. Ed's 332 and the Cashman great room, consuming the aforementioned treats.

So who are these "auxes" we are so thankful for? Without them, we'd be out in this world all alone, and we'd hate to be without their company or their insightful views that constantly challenge and reshape our own. Without them, we'd overlook things they bring to light in new ways, and we certainly wouldn't have half the confidence in this publication we boldly bring you today. So, our sincerest thank you to Caitlin Barry, Isabella Cigna, Emily Crowe, Nathalie Danizio, Emily Galow, Moira Jamieson, Kevin Jeter, Emily Joyce, Elly Moore, Claire Scherf, Gianna Seaver, and Jay Swartz. We hope you enjoyed eating bagels and talking words and art with us as much as we did with you.

And this publication could not be possible without the help of Summer Drexel and George Goldsworthy of Printing Services, who dedicate their time to help us make this collection of poems, prose, and

art a physical reality for us to share with you. This review would also not be possible without the support of the Student Association and the English Department, who not only support us fiscally but also support us with the skills and drive to be the best word-nerds we can be. And to our talented, patient, and stalwart intern, Emma Gilfix, we thank you for your Excel skills, for artful posters, for keeping our social media presence alive, and for making some sense of our madness. And, of course, one of our biggest thanks is to you, Dear Readers and Submitters, for allowing us to continue to make the *Onion River Review* a reality, for without you our hard work would be in vain.

Our biggest thank-you is always reserved for Will Marquess. You've taught us and inspired us, laughed with us, and kept us moving and grooving when we were wont to stay still. Without your "boom-shacka-lackas" (and this year, your *Boom-shacka-lacka*), we wouldn't have half the fun, and we wouldn't get half the hard work done either. You encourage us to make this avid assortment of words and art, and you embolden us to be the unique people (read: odd nerds) that we are. Thank you for the small things, like hugs, Tootsie Pops, and apple cider; and for the big things, like organization, much needed laughs, and enduring love and dedication.

And with this, we give you the Onion of 2017. We hope it does justice to the many Onions that have come before it, and paves the way for the many more Onions and Onionists to come. Most importantly, we hope it brings you as much pleasure and hope as it brought us to make. Dear Readers, read on!

~ Agi Chretien, Mikayla Hoppe, Lily Gardner, Jonathan Norton,  
Madeline Schneider, Samantha Sidorakis, and Victoria Sullivan  
*Core Editors 2017*



ONION RIVER REVIEW

2017

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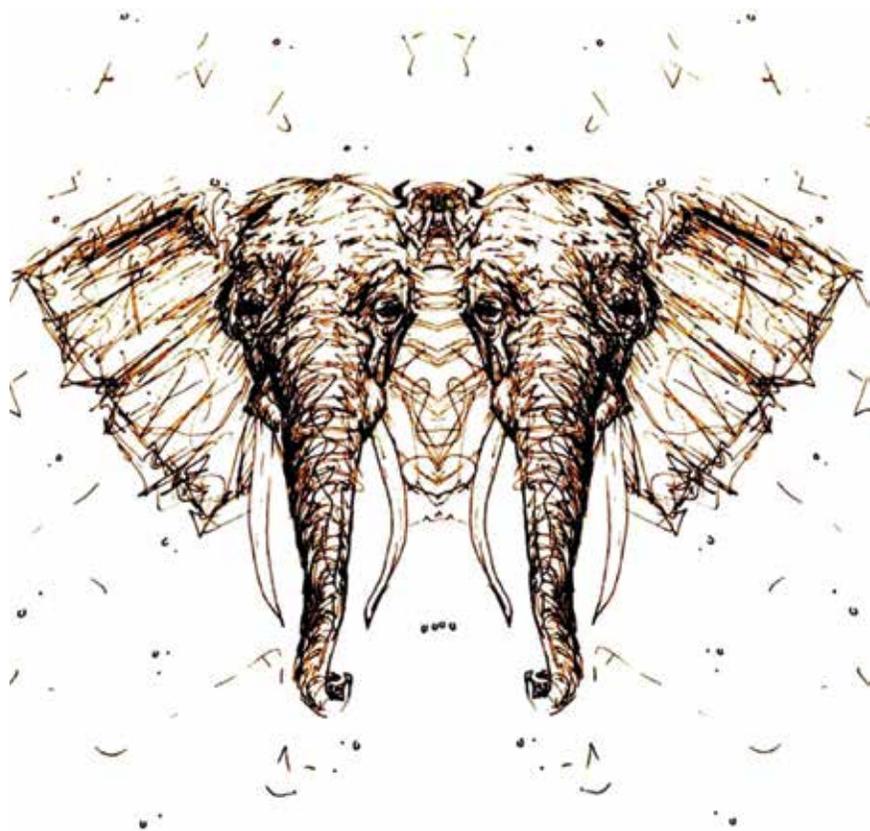


Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

~ Robert Frost



Elephants  
*Jane Sclafani*



pen on paper

## **In The Family**

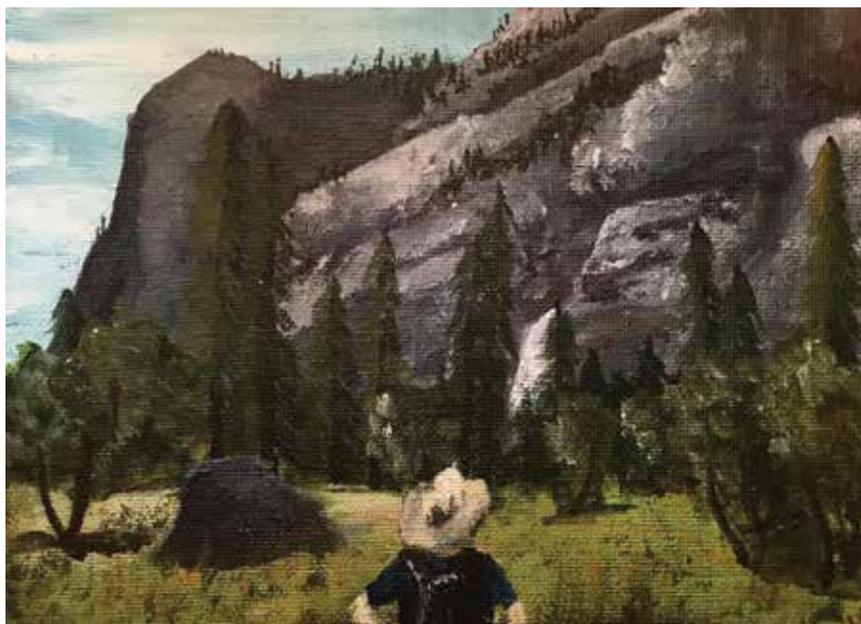
*Jonathan Sherrill*

One of us died last night. Max  
isn't sure anymore. Is it his  
son  
or  
his dog?  
His sorrow is for all of us.

Max asks his favorite chair.  
Can I question  
this death? The chair replies,  
hrmph. It creaks.  
Max stretches too much as he sits.  
He sits, but is never in  
place. The chair embraces him.  
He feels no consolation.  
Does Max complain?  
Well, don't ask me.  
Max does complain  
with a pointedness that  
needs no words.  
No one can remain in the room.

## Daddy at YozeMite

*Emily Joyce*



water-based oil on hardboard canvas

## A Fifty-Mile Hike to See My Gal

Pierrette Roy

*In 1962 President John F. Kennedy suggested taking hikes for good health.*

March-March-March

Hup, Hup, Hup, 1-2-3.

I took a 50-mile hike to see

My gal 'cause she goes

For the man in the Kennedy

Clan who says, "Get

Healthy—quick, now don't

Get sick, muscles weak?

Like take a hike."

Now the moon was nice and

Bright when I started out

Alright, hup-hup-hup

1-2-3, but my troubles

soon were plenty when the

Temperature dropped past

20 and the pack upon my

back began to fall

Oh, my muscles were so

Flabby, how I wished I'd see a cabby on

That 50-mile hike to see my gal.

The cars, they all splashed by me leaving

Lots of mud upon me.

What a mess, what a test to endure.

Then the dogs they started barking

and there was no time for parking

'cause these dogs were nipping at my heel

And they bit my shoe and ankle, on that

50-mile hike to see my gal.

March-march-march, hup-hup-hup

1-2-3, after hours and hours of walking

I wasn't gonna do much talking and my clothes

Were ripped and torn, I was really quite forlorn  
Now, my tongue was hanging out and there  
Wasn't any doubt that  
My gal would be so very  
Proud of me.  
But instead she said,  
"You're a sorry sight to  
See and not very good  
For me. I want a man  
Who's full of vigor  
Not one looking sicker."  
So you see, that was  
The end of the trend  
Of the 50-mile hike for my  
Gal and me, hup-hup-hup-  
1-2-3.

## **Back Corner Blues**

*Martin Villanueva*

I just chill in the back corner,  
hoping you'll open the door.  
Hoping the lights  
will flick on  
so you can see  
what I've become.

Amid fresh finds from Friday's farmer's market,  
I wait for you.  
Behind sweet, succulent, citrus,  
—the flavor of this week,  
my skin wrinkles and browns.

I was sweet once too—  
the apple of your . . .

I caught your attention  
in the produce aisle.  
I remember your inquisitive,  
stare.  
You ate me with your eyes,  
and decided I was good enough to take home.

You teased me with your touch.  
Grasping my curves firmly,  
but nothing more.

I just chill in the back corner now,  
hoping to be held  
before I spoil.

**Red Snap**  
*Sophia Adams*



acrylic on canvas  
14 x 20"

**philo.**

*Jonathan Burgess*

She appeared first to me  
In a box of lead.  
Freude, schöner  
Götterfunken  
Tochter aus  
Elysium!

Joy! Joy!

A chorus of rats,  
Exaltation!

We walked among the trees  
While the owls followed,  
Late into the night,  
The Fourth always lingering  
Behind  
As if waiting for a move  
To be made.

Coins fell, coins,  
Princesses, spiders, and  
A crumpled twenty dollar bill.

My arm wrapped around  
The muse of a defeated  
Commander.  
The Immortal Beloved.

Moving slow,  
Birds, Beasts, Trees, Flowers,  
Kingslaying, Town Ruining,  
Dark Devour.

The second bell is ringing.  
Awaken!  
Argos sighs.  
Nienna weeps.  
Stop.

Fishing  
As the days  
Bleed.  
Tattered Flags,  
Wanderers,  
A faded tattoo.

A hug goodbye.  
No.  
No.  
I mustn't.  
She leaves.  
"Value," she says.  
"Love," I say.

She weeps as I ascend,  
She comes and goes.  
Pietà, Pietà, Pietà!  
"I'm back," I say  
No more.

## **Autumnus**

*Agi Chretien*

I imagine her dancing  
    across the tree tops  
    sending electric shivers down the tree trunks,  
I hear her whispering sweet nothings  
    in the breeze  
    that makes the trees blush,  
I see her climbing up each branch  
    sending showers of colorful pieces  
    to brighten up the ground below,  
And when she is gone, we see them all weep  
    their red orange yellow tears in her absence.

The Goddess of Autumn, the Princess of Change  
    paints trees of  
    all sizes and shapes,  
And we can do nothing but watch,  
    dipping her paintbrush  
    in hues of  
    rose and gold of  
    amber and sunshine

Watching  
    as the colors modify and mature,  
    as the colors develop and envelop  
    until they're completely transformed,

Ready for their long repose.

# Let Your Imagination Fly

Margaret Daley



pencil on bristol board  
10 x 30"

## On Wednesday

*Briana Brady*

She had been watching a talk show. She didn't watch talk shows very often. She was more drawn to the narratives of sit-coms and the occasional prime-time cop thriller, and had long been confused as to the actual role of the "straight-man," but it was after 11 and she hadn't felt like sitting through an unbearable rerun of *Full House*. The host had been interviewing a young actress about a new movie she had starred in, which was due for release in the upcoming weeks. The actress had looked a little uncomfortable the whole time. Liz watched her hands as she answered the host's questions, discreetly tugging at the hem of the dress that wrapped tightly around her thighs. She kept shifting her weight from one butt cheek to the other, crossing and uncrossing her ankles as if it would have felt more natural for her to be sitting cross-legged and curled up on the armchair they had placed her in. It struck Liz how normal the woman was, the flatness of the jokes she told about what it had been like on the set and what her mother served for dinner when she made the trip home to Michigan from Los Angeles (spoiler alert: it was always meatloaf). She turned off the television.

Liz picked up her empty wine glass as she walked out of the living room and into the kitchen. Turning it in her hand, she watched the last drop trail around the inside of the glass, leaving a haze of red in its wake. She put the glass in the sink, its clink the loudest sound in the room, a sharp note above the quiet drone of the fridge. The glass of wine had become a kind of ritual for her in the middle of the week. Ruth, her roommate, worked nights at the clinic on Wednesdays, and Liz called her mother on Wednesdays. Therefore, on Wednesdays, she also had a few glasses of cheap merlot while she talked to her mother and lost herself in the television after hanging up. At first, she had felt almost rebellious. She was drinking alone. In the middle of the week. Sometimes she did it in her underwear and a t-shirt, legs splayed wide open on her couch. But it no longer felt rebellious as it took on the callous repetition of routine, although she continued to remain pants-less throughout the entire charade. She grabbed the sponge and began to wash her glass.

Her mother had asked about Jaime again tonight, not that her mother knew enough about Jaime to use his name.

“Are you still seeing that guy from the drugstore? I loved that story!”

“No, Mom, we only went on a few dates. It was nothing.” Well, sort of. Jaime lived two blocks down, wore glasses, and had the most wonderful pair of hands Liz had ever seen. They were elegant, with long fingers and fine bones that created soft ridges through the thin skin on the backs. He had asked for her number in the Rite Aid down the street as she surveyed the candy selection, her eye on the Milk Duds and an enormous variety pack of store brand cardboard tampons in the crook of her arm. It was the juxtaposition of the tampons and the spark of romance that had sent her mother into snorts of laughter over the phone weeks earlier. Of course, she and Jaime had slept together more times than they had been on dates, seeing as they hadn’t actually been on any dates. It was the kind of heated affair that lasts for a month or two with lots of texting in the early hours of the morning. Eventually, he had stopped texting, and Liz had simply let it go.

“Huh, that’s so disappointing! He seemed so nice. I mean, he did come up to talk to you when you were holding a box of tampons. To men, that’s almost the equivalent of being momentarily covered in garbage. What else is going on in your life? How’s work?” Per *Charlotte’s Web*, Liz’s mother had once referred to Liz and her siblings as her *magnum opus*, and she inserted herself into their lives with the fascination of an author whose characters have developed in unexpected ways, as if on their own. Liz was the only one that called with any regularity, and because of this her mother probed into her life over the phone, watching the storyline emerge with the tidbits of information she pulled from her, waiting for the moment that Liz’s greatness would be unearthed by the rest of the world. Her mother, of course, had known about it for years. To her mother, her life course had been determined from the moment she had been the first in her kindergarten class to be able to tie her shoes. Mrs. Brown had related to her mother in a parent teacher conference that she thought Liz had great potential because of it.

“Work is fine. I think in my head I just had ideas about the rest of my life that were a bit more glamorous than data entry. How’s Dad? The whole retirement thing still going well?”

“Oh, hon, I wouldn’t worry about it. Everyone has to work in the trenches for a few years. And your father’s doing okay. I think he’s a little bored, to be honest. I keep coming home from work and finding him in the shed building something. Every couple of weeks some new structure appears in the house. I swear to God, he’s only been retired for three months, but we have a whole new bedroom set. The man gets a pension, and then he decides to spend it all on lumber.”

Liz put the phone on speaker, humming assent to her mother, and slipped out of the trousers she’d worn to work, opting instead for the soft folds of a t-shirt she’d had since the 5th grade with the acronym *D.A.R.E.* emblazoned across the chest in bright red. She wondered again why they had chosen to give every 11 year-old a size XXL in celebration of learning to resist life’s vices, but still cherished both the feel of the fabric against her thighs and the irony of it as she went, mother in hand, to pour herself a glass of wine in the kitchen.

Jaime had been fascinated that she had a drawer in her dresser reserved for large t-shirts. He had discovered it one night when she had left it open and gone to the bathroom for that necessary post-sex pee they never tell you about in health class because they’re too busy advising you to guard your special flower to worry about discussing UTI’s. When she came back, he was crouched down next to the bottom drawer of her bureau and one of his beautiful hands was covering a laugh.

“What is this?” he asked in between gusts of quiet laughter, “Did you raid a seventeen year-old boy’s bedroom?” She told him he was wrong. She had raided at least three.

While her mother went on to describe how unconcerned her father seemed to be that any of the bedroom furniture he was producing matched and moved into a story about the neighbor’s Christmas light

display, Liz took a sip of the wine she had poured. Her mother would continue for a while. Their conversations were either punctuated by the phrase “so, what else can I tell you?” or “so, what else is going on in your life?” Liz would share the occasional anecdote, but that was all she had. A funny encounter in a coffee shop. An embarrassing tale of falling in a puddle outside of a party. That time a guy had asked for her number in a Rite Aid.

“And then, oh my God you should have seen it, Liz, they have a sign set up in front of their house that says ‘tune in to FM 93.5’ and the lights blink on and off in tune with the music on the station. It’s horrifying, but I have no idea how they managed it. I can’t help it; I tune in every time I drive by. This morning it was playing along perfectly to ‘Frosty the Snowman.’”

“That’s crazy. I didn’t think Mr. Griswold had that much technological genius in him.”

“None of us did, hon. None of us did. So, what else has been happening for you lately?”

“Nothing really, I promise. When something interesting happens, Mom, you’ll be the first to know.”

Liz picked up the bottle and tipped it over her glass, watching the wine spill out. She had told Jaime not to text her on Wednesday nights. When he asked why, she had told him that unless he wanted to speak to her mother, he should probably stay very far away. It became clear very quickly that he had no interest in getting to know her mother. He never texted on Wednesdays. Not that he texted her at all any more.

Our minds are sometimes as bad as the radio, choosing to replay the same thoughts over and over until they lose their significance and become constant background music. Liz had thought on repeat about sending him a message. Even when she was doing the filing at work, talking to her boss, joking with Ruth, she was trying out different versions:

*Are you busy tonight? . . . I've been thinking about you . . . You know, my bed has space for two people.* They ranged from the direct and casual to the insane and needy. Each time she tuned in, the lines came to a screeching halt. Of course she wasn't going to say anything to him. She wasn't crazy. The conscious thought of mentioning the emptiness of her bed to a man made her want to vomit.

“. . . anyway, do you know when you're coming home for the holidays?”

“Yeah, I have the 23rd completely off this year, so I should be home early that afternoon.”

“Oh, good. It'll be nice to have all three of you home.”

“Perfect. Hey, Mom, I think I should go. There's a show coming on that I've been meaning to watch.”

“Oh, okay. Well, I'll see you soon. I love you.”

“Love you too. Bye.”

Liz hung up the phone and fell onto her couch with her glass. She turned on the television.

Later, as she washed her wine glass, she looked down at her hands. Her fingers were thick for the size of her palms, but long enough that it wasn't obvious. They were simply hands, currently covered in suds, moving a sponge around the inside of a wine glass. She could hear her refrigerator humming.

## Fleeing the Draft

*Sophia Adams*



acrylic on canvas

14 x 20"

## **Late Snow**

*Natalie Crick*

Words fail me.  
It has been a year precisely.  
We wallow in your sob, feeding on  
Neglect.

You finally  
Died last Winter.  
I think the Robin came  
Back too soon this year.

There is no other news.  
I see my next punishment  
Revolving somewhere ahead.  
The air burns with regret.

Our lawns have begun to thin.  
The year turns like curdled cream and  
Danger lulls us forward, through the  
Moon's death dance.

Our house is asleep, perhaps forever.  
I dread the moment when  
The drained sun  
Sinks to mist.

Late snow  
Floats down  
All white.  
I saw it coming.

**Small Pond of Empyrean**

*Claire Scherf*



digital photograph

## Quantities Unknown

*Jonathan Sherrill*

She sang songs that were not familiar to him. They were mournful tunes that touched him and gave him the courage to rouse his own feelings from somewhere where he thought there was only a void. There were no scars. There were no ambivalent, tortured equations that had no answers. Max wasn't sure what was stirred in the space where none, including Max, had gone. Maybe it was soft-tissue damage. Maybe an organ that was slowly failing and would soon need to be transplanted. Wherever, whatever it was it was. He just couldn't say where or what. Searching led to the library and to the Pont Neuf. Books fed his mind and France fed his stomach. In looking he discovered only what was not where.

## **Peachy**

*Elly Moore*

In the steamy summer season,  
we sit on sandy beach towels—  
peaches fixed in our sticky palms.  
Tickling our lips  
with fuzzy skin and supple flesh,  
we grin  
as juice freely flows  
from the furrows of our mouths.

# The Mind's Inner-workings

Margaret Daley



mixed media on two wooden blocks

## Schoolgirl Secrets

*Moira Jamieson*

In Catholic school we feared damnation:  
we wore plaid skirts past our knees  
in order to keep the boys from temptation.  
We learned that sex before marriage led to disease,  
and we promised to keep ourselves pure,  
which meant saving ourselves for marriage,  
and helped the younger girls to ensure,  
they'd stay innocent too, because adultery is disparaged.  
We learned that girls who kissed other girls were bad  
so we didn't dare tell Mrs. Morse  
that we practiced kissing at sleepovers, clad  
in lipgloss and lace—trials for when we married men, of course.

Now these memories are nothing more  
than laughable—does God really give a fuck?

## Spellbound

*Samantha Sidorakis*

I breathe in

To inhale the content that is myself,

to let resonate in my core

the very being who I am, that I am, which I am.

I am my greatest me, my beautiful I.

I am the great elysian mystery:

My essence is engendered by the sanctity of an eternity of  
unholy virgins, blasphemous madonnas, and divine sluts.

I am cast in the mold of my ancestors—

the air of my mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers circulates  
in my lungs,

and I think to myself:

I exist because they did.

Here is the mysticism of my being:

I am the product of generations of feminine magic,  
of eyes like stars that seduce,

of cajoling curves and enticing flesh,

of the vaginal voodoo between my thighs,

of bosoming breasts that bewitch,

of the secret sorcery of the self that draws you to me,

of the mysterious metaphysical majesty in my enigmatic entity,

of the everlasting power of sex that is my sex.

How many have burned in the fire  
that enflamed the hearts and bodies of  
a fearful and self-righteous society.

Out of their flames and ashes,

a generation of orphic sisters have risen

to ensnare your senses and fill you with unutterable pleasures.

All that is livens to my touch,

like goosebumps rising on your skin,

like flowers blooming in the rain,

like babies kicking in their mother's womb.

My very skin has been stretched across the stars.  
The fibres of my being stitch the blanket of the sky;  
across the universe I am painted.

You exist inside my endless embrace:  
my breath is the wind that wraps around your neck,  
like a silk scarf, like my hands it caresses your skin.  
My hallowed voice brushes the membranes of your mind,  
echoing enchantments to you across space and time,  
murmuring the memories of our forgotten lives,  
cooing Where have you gone, my beloved?  
My charms conjure your cravings:  
you could not escape my gravity if you tried.  
Inside the throes of enthrallment,  
encased in a cradle of passion,  
I shall renew your desire with every passing breath  
and energize your will for independence.  
O, my soul feels the gentle embrace of your own;  
we consummate the incommunicable  
as the eternal pair of cosmic lovers,  
as the celestial companions  
who have tumbled across this realm,  
who have swayed together in an immortal dance,  
who loved inside physicality and inhabited the orgasm itself,  
who are eternized in the heavens  
where we all come to be and be and be.

# The City at Night

Emma Gilfix



acrylic on scrap wood  
20 x 24"

## **Skeleton World Woes**

*Jonathan Norton*

*Two Skeletons are sitting inside their Skeleton home enjoying the day off from Skeleton work, when suddenly one of them puts down their copy of Skeleton World Weekly and addresses the other.*

Skeleton 1: "Hey man, can I ask you something?"

Skeleton 2: "Sure."

Skeleton 1: "How do you feel about Skeleton World?"

Skeleton 2: "Dunno, seems like a nice enough place for a couple of skeletons such as ourselves."

Skeleton 1: "No, no—I mean the name."

Skeleton 2: "Skeleton World? What about it?"

Skeleton 1: "Doesn't it seem a little . . . weird to you?"

Skeleton 2: "Not really. I think it's a fine name."

Skeleton 1: "Don't you think it's a bit too on the nose?"

Skeleton 2: "What's a nose?"

Skeleton 1: "Figure of speech. I mean it seems heavy-handed."

Skeleton 2: "Heavy what now?"

Skeleton 1: "Forget it. I guess what I'm trying to say is that it strikes me as being unnecessarily direct."

Skeleton 2: "Now you're just confusing me. It's a world. It's filled with skeletons. I don't see the issue here."

Skeleton 1: "That's exactly the point! Why even bother calling it that when it's blatantly obvious that everyone in the world is a skeleton?"

Skeleton 2: "So you're trying to tell me that Skeleton World is too accurate a name?"

Skeleton 1: "Well, not exactly. Listen, I've been thinking about this a lot recently, and there's just something not quite right about it. Like, we all know there's no other world besides Skeleton World, so for what purpose do we choose to specify it? It's almost like it was named that way in order to provide a quick overview of the general conventions of life here for some non-skeleton third party."

Skeleton 2: "I'm starting to think you should go get your skull checked."

Skeleton 1: "Alright, let me try to explain it another way. Let's say you had a kid. You want kids someday, right?"

Skeleton 2: "It is my duty as a Skeleton-man to continue my boneline."

Skeleton 1: "Right. So imagine you had a son. A beautiful baby Skeleton boy. Would you consider naming him Skeleton Child? Or Skeleton Offspring?"

Skeleton 2: "No, I'd name him Bobby."

Skeleton 1: "Exactly, you'd give him a normal Skeleton name because it would be psychotic to name him after what he very clearly is."

Skeleton 2: "What does that have to do with Skeleton World?"

Skeleton 1: "Well, let's say you were one of the first Skeletons in Skeleton World, before it was ever called that. And let's say it's up to you, as one of the first Skeletons, to come up with a name for it. Now tell me, would you simply tack the word 'World' onto the name of what you and everyone else in the world are and call it a day?"

Skeleton 2: “No, I’d probably call it Bobby.”

Skeleton 1: “Sure, that’s fine. My point is that you wouldn’t choose such a grossly impersonal and general phrase like Skeleton World because that would be stupid and pointless for everybody. Yet I seem to be the only one in the world who thinks there’s anything wrong with that.”

Skeleton 2: “Well, what would you call it, then?”

Skeleton 1: “I don’t know, something cool like Skeletonia or The Bone Zone. But that’s not the point. What I was saying earlier is that the name’s extreme redundancy suggests that whoever came up with it was trying to differentiate this world from some other world that doesn’t have skeletons walking around in it for the benefit of the residents of that hypothetical world for which a world filled entirely with skeletons would be some kind of novelty.”

Skeleton 2: “You lost me back at the Bone Zone.”

Skeleton 1: “It’s almost like a cheap, unoriginal device used to communicate to some outside audience that the main feature of this world is the fact that everyone who lives here is a skeleton.”

Skeleton 2: “It sounds like you might’ve had one too many Skeleton beers, my friend.”

Skeleton 1: “That’s the other thing! Why do we feel the need to put the word Skeleton in front of literally everything? Skeleton spiders, Skeleton God, Skeleton prostate exams—what’s the point? Can’t we have a drink without it being a Skeleton drink?”

Skeleton 2: “But it’s made for Skeletons.”

Skeleton 1: “Obviously! Obviously it’s made for Skeletons! Who else would it be made for? What kind of naming convention is that?”

Skeleton 2: “Let me tell you something my Skeleton dad used to tell me when I was young and confused about stuff. He’d go, ‘Son, no matter where in the world you are, no matter how far you travel, or how many exciting things you learn about yourself, literally everyone is a Skeleton.’”

Skeleton 1: “You know what? I give up. Let’s just take the Skeleton bus on over to the Skeleton bar so I can Skeleton drink myself to death.”

Skeleton 2: “I thought you’d never Skeleton ask.”

**Sunflower**  
*Elizabeth Rogers*



digital photograph

## **Maman**

*Lily Gardner*

*For Shannon*

I wish I could write you a love song,  
like the James Taylor lullabies of yours  
that canaried me to sleep.

I'd write you a love song for the nights  
you tucked your daughter in and studied,  
or sat alone at the kitchen table and wept.

A love song for the kisses on my cheek  
when I was five and scared of ghosts,  
or eighteen and scared of heartbreak.

For the arms that held me tight  
even when your bones were aching,  
and tall basketball legs for chasing until the sun went down.

For the drive from Utah to the East,  
and all the stops in between,  
when you left behind your mountain dreams.

Your first and only,  
love's greatest experiment,  
you never expected to raise an only daughter.

I wish I could write you a love song,  
for all the times I couldn't see,  
for all your hidden memories,  
and the losses that brought you to me.

## Quis ut Deus

*William Marquess*

He would have laughed at the idea that he was like God. That's what his name means: Mi-ka-el, who is like God. Quis ut Deus. He would have joked about taking a sword to the dragon. He liked to laugh.

He would have been vexed by the results of the election, but he would have listened to those who were on the other side. At the altar, he sang for everyone. He contained multitudes. He would have said we all do.

It's sad to keep saying "he would have." How could he be gone? There has been so much darkness this year, dragons everywhere. He would have exhorted us to carry on. Insofar as we do, he is still with us.



Reverend Michael Patrick Cronogue, S.S.E.

## Olive Trees

*Kevin Jeter*

Oh, let the years alone!  
Men grow old like olive trees.  
And daffodils grow leggy like young girls.  
“Oh,” the trees say, “You should remember me.”  
As they shuffle in for coffee.  
But who do they remember?  
The daffodils wonder.  
And the olive trees shuddering in the wind whisper,  
“Oh, let the years alone!”

Scalloway Castle, Shetland

*Jordan Douglas*



silver gelatin photograph  
bleached and toned in selenium

# The Storyteller

Rachel Jones



watercolor on paper  
9 x 12"

## **Salmon in the Treetops**

*Timo McGillicuddy*

Waking in the cold tent

I pop my head outside—behold! Salmon in the treetops.

Not a dream. No. Real fish. Alive and swimming,

Hung like Christmas ornaments at right angles to the trunks.

Get up! I cry. Wake up! Look, over there. And there!

Squeezing their bodies through little cracks, bursting forth

In batches or in pairs they squirm and wiggle

Dropping eggs along the branches.

Woven in this canopy generations swim—

Mothers, brothers, fathers, sisters, sons—

Silver heads and bodies red painting a forest green,

Little white spruce pine cones are hatching fry

High amid these vaulting stones.

When I look across the forest floor littered with pink and white remains

The ground glows decaying flesh

And while the living upwards swim

The spirits of the dying are lifted to the branches

Up and up, to strive, to be, to shine, and live again!

Oh Sacred Forest, grown from ancient sands!

Oh redeemer of men, bearer of shocks! Let us remember

All who arrive in this land

Have run the gauntlet of rocks.

**Emily**  
*Olivia Marr*



pen on paper  
24 x 36"

## When the Birds Come Chirping

*Samantha Sidorakis*

One fine Sunday morning, Sylvia Sternway awoke to find herself feeling rather unsettled. There was something not particularly right about that day. She had slept just fine, having only woken once to use the bathroom. Everything in her apartment was placed exactly where she had left it, which was exactly where it should be. And it was Sunday—she had no pressing engagements for the day. In fact, she had none at all, though that was hardly a novelty; she had not had an engagement on a Sunday since she was a child. She looked at her calendar, just to be sure, and it was as she suspected: a clear schedule. Mondays she had that weekly appointment, Wednesdays she fed the birds at the pond, Thursdays she read to children at the library, and Saturdays she had tea with her friend, Susan. A clear day, a free day; the possibilities were endless. She had woken late and that in itself was an oddity, but it did not seem to be why the day was already wrong.

She rose from bed and drifted about her apartment. Something was not particularly right, but she could not discern what. She felt nervous and a bit sweaty, neither of which were from her extended slumber. Everything was in order. The library of records sat on the shelf in order by year, and next to it was the guitar and record player, both of which had accumulated a great deal of dust. The pillows on her orange sofa remained upright and her curtains were drawn. The air was still and silent. At that moment, the phone rang and she immediately shuffled across the room to answer it. There was a silence at the other end of the line, but she was sure she had heard a whispered voice. “Is that you, Susan?” When was the last time Susan had called her landline? It had to have been more than twenty years at least; they had never spoken on the phone except for once. “Susan, I’m sorry, I need to keep this line clear—I’m waiting for a call.” Though when she tried to think about it, she wasn’t sure who she was expecting to call. An image of a city bus on a rainy morning drove through her mind. She blinked a few times—what had she just seen? It seemed familiar, but she could not say why. Her mind went blank and she was unsure why she was holding the telephone

in her hand. She could hear the sound of the empty line and it surged through her head like static electricity. She closed her eyes for a moment and then everything felt normal again.

Sylvia moved to the kitchen. Opening the door to her refrigerator, she looked at the line of Christmas cards she had received from her dear friend Marjorie. Her husband was a handsome man and their daughter had the same curly brown hair as her mother. Sylvia smiled. Sitting at the kitchen table, she slurped yogurt through a straw before popping her teeth into her mouth. She dropped her pills into the yogurt and slurped those up as well. Her hands had ached in their stiffness as she tried to uncap the pill bottle and then twist it shut again. Her joints quivered and she rubbed the bones in her wrists and fingers until the pain subsided. As she opened her mouth, there was a new pain in her jaw, one that had not been there a moment before. Her apartment was silent except for the noise of cars buzzing by outside, not to mention the honking horns, slamming doors, yelling people, music playing from her neighbor's apartment, the sound of her breath, the clicking of her jaw, and the creaking of the wooden floors. In the distance, she heard a chirping sound but could not see a bird outside her window. Her ear twitched.

Sylvia felt like a walk. She put on her rain jacket, though it was sunny and hot outside. She slid her feet into a pair of thick tennis shoes. Outside, the air had the general smell of toxic waste, consisting mostly of gasoline, garbage, hot pavement, polluted rivers, rotting fish, pigeon feces, grimy rats, and even grimmer people; how the city air revitalized her in the morning. Her nose scrunched. Sylvia walked and faces passed her by, images of busy people shuffling through their busy lives. Cars drove, taxis buzzed, buses heaved, subways raced underneath her feet, and airplanes soared above her head; the world was lost in a motion she could not understand. Everything blurred together in a wave of sound, a swarm of images, and a cloud of odors.

Along the way, though quite by accident, Sylvia encountered an old friend. She could not remember her friend's name, though the face was certainly familiar, and her friend had remembered her name

was Sylvia Sternway, so the whole situation was rather awkward. She had watched the woman's face with a grave intensity, trying to decipher the implied meaning behind her cautious smile and hesitant hug. Her arms felt stiff as she pulled Sylvia in for the embrace; nothing about their interaction felt natural. Sylvia's head ached as she tried and tried to remember the woman's name. She had not been a student of Sylvia's, of that much she was sure. Perhaps someone from the library? An old friend? A distant relative? She simply could not place her. She talked and talked, but Sylvia did not hear words, something about her cat, or maybe her grandchildren. She might have mentioned Saturday tea. She spent the duration of the conversation looking at the bridge of the woman's nose, just where it met between the eyes, as to give the impression that she was paying attention. She asked Sylvia a question and stared at her expectantly.

Sylvia paused for a moment before having an outburst. "I told you not to play that music! Why do you always have to practice when I'm trying to sleep? Can't you wait until I leave for work?"

Her friend grew silent and stared at Sylvia once again. "Are you quite well, Sylvia?"

"I know you like to wake up at 5 am to work on your music, but I *cannot* listen to it every morning! I love your work and you know I do, but you need to find a studio, because the rest of the world has to go to their jobs in three hours!" Her voice had risen a few octaves and her cheeks were flushed.

Sylvia's friend seemed rather disturbed by this response, so she made an excuse to leave and bid her farewell, taking off down the street in a hurried walk. "I'm sorry, my dear! Please forgive me. I know you're trying." Her voice dropped low and her eyes welled. She let the tears run down her face for a moment but then she wiped them away. She inhaled and then felt perfectly fine.

Sylvia turned to look at the oncoming traffic before crossing the street. She inhaled deeply and suddenly felt quite happy; she was glad to have taken a walk that morning when the weather was so agreeable. A smile stretched across her face. She hadn't felt this good walking around the city since the equality march back in '70. Sylvia remembered feeling hesitant about attending, but dear Marjorie persuaded her, introducing Sylvia to her cult of hippie friends. She and her band played guitar and tambourines as they walked through the streets as they sang for the rights of women in the workplace, though none of them had ever worked in an office as Sylvia had. Sylvia found them inspiring. She could hear the song in her ears again and Marjorie's voice echoing through her mind, caressing the memories long forgotten like fingers massaging her head. The image of a candlelit bathtub appeared in her mind and overlaid the song. The smell of roses and marijuana filled her nose; she felt a hand run through her hair and soft lips pressed against her own. Her mind went blank. She blinked a few times and then kept walking.

Sylvia found herself many blocks from her apartment, and she had the vague sense she knew where she was. It seemed familiar. Across the road, there was a plush garden of fine trees and bushes with a sizable network of walking paths; it seemed like the place she had meant to visit. Continuing into the park, Sylvia turned her attention to the high branches of a tree, the skyscraper of the garden, and there happened to be a tiny bird perched at the end of a lonely branch. It chirped at her in a familiar tune. In almost an instant, this bird had every resemblance to her dear Marjorie whom she had not seen for a long while. Without leaving the branch, it transformed before her eyes into the exact image of her distant friend, truest love of her life. Where had Marjorie been all these years—what had become of her. Marjorie, Marjorie, dear Marjorie. When did they lose touch? How could she forget? Tears welled in her eyes and her heart bumped spasmodically.

Suddenly, Sylvia forgot where she was and what she was doing. Why was she crying? What park was this—she certainly had never seen it before. There was a bird and it flew to a branch near her. At first, it frightened her, but then she felt at ease. Perhaps a lost pet of hers from

long ago. Or had she studied birds once in her life? There was a half-formed image of a zoo in her mind, paired with subway rides on Friday afternoons and a khaki uniform. Her memory stretched like a piece of chewed gum. Where had she studied birds? Had she gone to university? There had been one girl who she was friends with all through her college years, but even now, the details evaded retention. They had lost touch long ago and it had been a great loss to Sylvia. Her cheeks felt wet again and she raised a hand to wipe away the tears. The fingers against her face were startlingly cold. As she came to this realization, Sylvia also became aware of the coldness in her feet. And then it would seem that her trip to the park had already come to an end.

The journey home was as lengthy as the journey there, but the time blurred together. When Sylvia arrived back in her apartment, she did not understand how it was that she came to be there. As soon as she had crossed the threshold, she did not even know where she had been or why. Her brain throbbed against the inside of her skull, pounding like fists on a door, and she raised her hands to massage her temples. Her fingers were freezing and the best thing to do, in her opinion, was take a bath. It seemed important that this happen immediately, and without further delay, Sylvia darted into the bathroom, where she ran the hot water until the tub had filled. She stripped away her clothes, throwing her raincoat and sunhat to the floor. She unlaced her tennis shoes that had a rim of mud staining the edges. She looked back and realized she had trampled mud across the kitchen and bathroom floor.

As she settled into the tub, her body rolled and wrinkled into itself. She sat forward and her breasts lolled against her knees, her nipples sagging in the warm water. Her hands and feet felt immediately revived, but her brain still suffered. She looked down at her body and ran her fingers along the rolls of skin, pinching them where they bunched. She dug her nails in and this pain felt familiar, but not in a displeasing way. Someone had touched her like that once before, but they had caressed her. Where had Marjorie been these long years? Her bosom, her friend. Her chest felt odd; it ached. Marjorie, Marjorie. Sadness crippled her, gripping her bones. Somewhere in the distance, she heard a bird

chirping, a soft angelic sound. Then she could hear Susan's voice over the telephone, telling her something about a bus accident with her sister, but the noise was blurry in her mind, and Sylvia's head was buzzing like white noise. The aching in her chest grew sharp, and her breathing grew heavier. She was fighting back tears and then she remembered. Only for a moment, but it was there. Marjorie, her love, her partner, her best friend since girlhood, since college. The chirping sounded closer. Why did Marjorie have to leave? She never even had a chance to say goodbye, there had only been a letter sitting on the kitchen table, but Sylvia had known what it was going to say before she read it; the silence of their apartment that morning had said it all.

Sylvia felt tired. Her mind hurt and so did her thoughts. She closed her eyes and lay back in the tub as glimpses of their life came back to her in freeze frames, captured images. Marjorie smiling at her from across the room as she cooked sauce on the stove and spun around in circles in the kitchen to Simon and Garfunkel's *The Boxer*. Musky and humid underground venues where Marjorie performed on stage every Friday night. Her wavy hair and gentle smile as the morning sun pressed against her face through their bedroom window. Chugging beer together at their first college party, and Marjorie holding her hair as she threw up in Henry Wallace's toilet. Kissing in the corner of the library during a study break. Skinny-dipping at Aunt Millie's lake house during the summer vacation. Watching the television as the news of Vietnam ripped across the nation. Crying in the bathroom stalls at a high school dance when their dates ditched them. Sandcastles at the beach and chocolate ice cream smeared across their faces. Finding a pair of broken glasses on the ground during recess in the fourth grade, and a girl crying on the swings. Marjorie, Marjorie. The water rose to her chin and Sylvia felt the warmth inhabit her body. Everything was soft and light; everything was just fine. The day did not seem so odd after all. The world was okay when Marjorie was in it. The chirping was inside her head and her chest heaved once more. Her breathing stopped, her eyes fluttered shut, and her chin dipped just below the surface of the water.

## **Shots**

*Manuela Yeboah*

Guns are thieves in the night,  
but sometimes they come out in the day.  
They find joy in stealing life from the monkeys.

Monkeys lay in the streets,  
dancing in their own blood.  
Their friends and family stand around and watch  
with tears running down their faces.

Like mimes,  
They are silent.  
Like rocks,  
They are still.  
They just watch the monkeys dance.

**Fairy**  
*Jen Signet*



acrylic on canvas  
16 x 20"

## **Morning After: A Masterpiece**

*Moira Jamieson*

Leftover mascara  
smears down pale cheeks  
like watercolor paint.  
Dry and cracking lips,  
poorly glazed clay.

Impossibly tangled hair,  
my modern Medusa.

## reaching

*Brenna Broderick*

she reached back  
stretching her two fingers into new land  
uncharted territory  
eyes watery, dripping, leaky  
fingers fumbling and weak  
she reached until she could taste her own anatomy  
feel its wet pipes  
mapped out in the back of her throat  
her tongue wavered, her throat seized  
but nothing happened  
a tug of war between her body and mind  
a civil war between her sins and her cells  
so she reached back deeper  
until she was afraid of what she would find  
what she would touch  
where she would go  
but there was nothing  
it was like she'd found the fountain of youth  
but the plumbing was broken  
and she was left kneeling over the toilet  
disappointed, inept  
her fingers soggy  
her eyes leaking  
still searching  
for what she couldn't find  
still reaching  
for something not there

## Seed Starters

*Colleen Knowles*

It's an archaic art, beginner planting—  
starting from seeds, watering, finding undamaged soil,  
naturing and nurturing simultaneously—  
an algebraic formula of spoiling and withholding.  
Some defunct women's magazine from 1933 presents the following fragile  
mosaic of suggested care:

“Let the sproutlings taste the sun. Watch them yawn awake;  
left too long, they recoil and scorch from overexposure.”

In retrospect, this advice fails to extend to  
something transplanted into a shady spot, or  
something kept in a too-small pot, or  
someone stuck in nutrient-lacking ground, or  
anyone allowed to exist unchanged for so long  
their mind grows long roots in place of original thought.

Humanity holds a unique opinion of inequity:  
while even blades of grass break through cement  
in search of their glucose fix,  
we've always fought half-heartedly for growth.

## **Trust**

*Christopher Holloway*

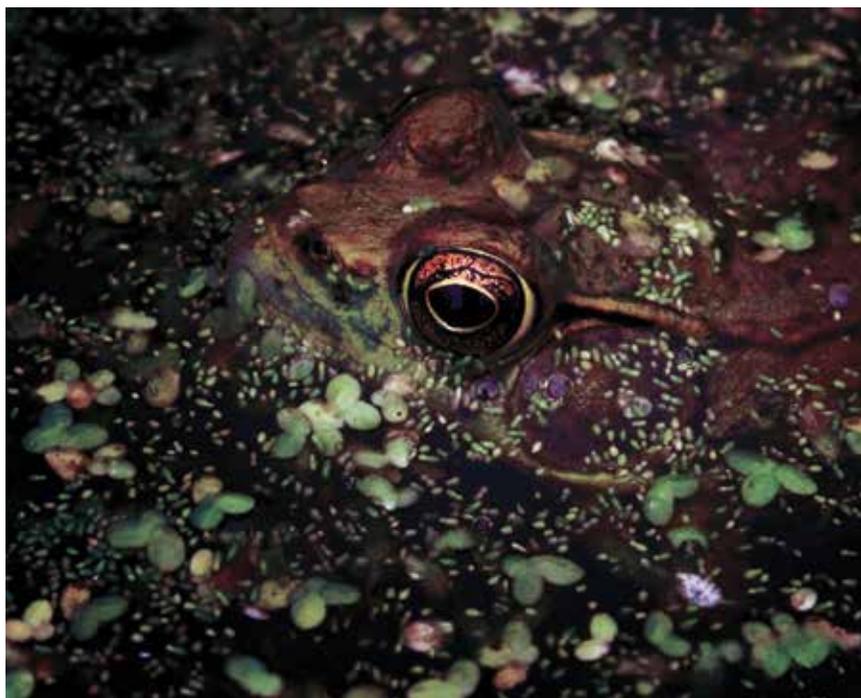
The brussels sprouts that sprawl out  
in the left-hand bottom drawer of my fridge  
are absolutely insane.

What if I was to develop a serious allergy  
or simply decide one day that I am no longer fond  
of brussels sprouts? What if I just never came home,  
run over by some eleventh-grader texting his pal?

They don't complain about missing plans  
or that so-and-so didn't text them back,  
or worry that maybe Mother won't return  
from her errands today.

How spectacular it must be to trust  
that they'll serve a greater purpose,  
like being sautéed in olive oil  
with shallots.

Untitled  
*Olivia Marr*



digital photograph

## Taking Dictation

Briana Brady

Hardened nipples.

June could hear the sounds of the letters clearly as her fingers pressed down on the keys: the way the d in the middle of hardened gets swallowed, the pucker of the p's, the hiss of the s.

“You get it?” he asked.

She read it back to him, “He softly kissed her hardened nipples.’ Yup. Got it, Mr. Abelman” It was almost iambic. Almost.

“Good,” he said, “You know, writing a good sex scene is just about the hardest thing an author can try to do. Living a good sex scene is hard enough as it is, never mind trying to describe it. I think it’s about time you started calling me Eddie, though. That work for you?”

She nodded. He tapped his finger on the rim of his dark glasses and said, “Kid, you know I can’t hear you when you talk like that.”

“Right, I’m sorry, Mr. Abelman,” she paused, “Eddie. So, what happens next?” It was January, and June was sitting in Eddie Abelman’s front room, putting his words into writing as he dictated to her. She was Audrey Hepburn in *Paris When it Sizzles*. She was Milton’s daughter. She was scrambling to pay her heating bills and needed the money. The sun had started to rest on his Western bed of sky, and June waited for Eddie to say something, studying the man in front of her as he sank back in his armchair, searching for the right words.

Eddie was the kind of man who wore rings. Big, thick, chunky gold rings snuggled into the flesh of his hands as if they had formed there naturally, winding around the space between his knuckles. He parted his grey hair in a straight line on the left side, and she had never seen him wear a shirt without a collar. Sometimes, when he came to a pause in the

flow of his words, he would rest his forearms on the arms of his chair and drum his ringed fingers back and forth, pointer to pinky, pinky to pointer. He would sit in the armchair, she at the desk, both of them cloistered by the things it had taken him a lifetime to collect, and together, they would write.

June hadn't known that he wrote romance novels when she had called his niece about the posting she had seen at the library. Whenever she told people about her side job, she felt like she had to mention that. She wasn't talking to an elderly man about throbbing cocks and cunnilingus every Wednesday because she had meant to. No, of course not. This had simply happened to her. It was happenstance. She had seen a lime green flyer next to the circulation desk that said "Local author looking for a typist." In the fine print, it mentioned that the author had gone blind and was hoping to find someone who could come once a week to take dictation and read it back to him for editing. She had ripped the phone number off the bottom, called, and been hired without any formal interview. It wasn't until that first Wednesday, when he began to describe in detail the way the main character's tights slid down over her thighs, that she had figured out the subject of his books. However, June kept going back.

Every week, she would knock politely at the kitchen door of his small yellow house, and his niece, Kay, would let her in. Sometimes, if Eddie wasn't ready yet, they would have tea and chit-chat about Kay's two year old son or June's coworkers at the co-op. Then, when Eddie was ready, June would go in and they would get to work in the front room. The walls of the room were covered in photographs of Eddie's family. There were black and white pictures of him and his siblings as children—one with them lined up in front of their house during the summer, arms around each other, all clad in bathing suits. His niece's wedding photo sat in the prime real estate between the windows, and there was a gold-framed portrait of a couple June could only imagine to be Eddie's parents over by the door. Beneath the pictures sat low shelves, crammed full with books, that lined the entire room. Somehow, everything looked dusty even if it wasn't. The room spoke in muted tones of maroon and dark brown, and the laptop was always there waiting for her fingers to type out Eddie's next lustful scene.

As she listened to Eddie's next paragraph, her fingers following the blend of letters in his words, she thought about the conversation she'd had with Kay the week before. When she had sat down at Eddie's kitchen table for tea—he had recently discovered podcasts and wanted to finish the one he had started—June had looked up at Kay and asked, "Have you ever read any of Mr. Abelman's books?"

Kay was standing at the stove, her wrist circling the knob for the back burner until the flame was where she wanted it. It was early afternoon, and she had come from her shift at the animal shelter where she worked. She would stop by every day to visit with her uncle and tidy up around the house. If it was her day off, sometimes she would bring her son, Henry, and would be too busy chasing after him to really talk with June, but right then, it was just the two of them.

"You know, I've picked up a couple of them. It's hard, though, because I can hear him in them," she said, rubbing the back of her neck. "I'll read the first few chapters, and certain moments will feel so comforting, like when he's describing a room or a person. It sounds exactly like him."

"But then," June paused to let Kay finish her sentence.

"But then, I get to the sex. And it still sounds exactly like him. I'm not a prude or anything, but it's just so odd, hearing a sex scene in your uncle's voice," Kay turned as she spoke, pulling two mugs out of the cabinet and placing them in front of June and herself. She moved comfortably, as if the whole thing was choreographed way beforehand. From cabinet to stove, her arms reaching and swaying until the two women sat across from each other with mugs full of hot tea.

"That's why I put the ad up," she said. "He originally wanted me to do it for him. I told him I couldn't because I was too busy, which I am, but, honestly, would you be able to do this for your uncle or father?" June tried to imagine her father sitting in Eddie's chair, drumming his fingers back and forth. Then, she tried imagining her father's mouth forming

around the words “hardened nipples.” She looked at Kay and shook her head. “Exactly,” Kay said and took a sip of her tea, “it’s hard to be able to get inside the head of the people closest to you like that.”

June had wanted to tell her about the narrating, but stopped herself. Probably inspired by her time with Eddie, she had begun transcribing the world in her head. It would start simply enough. She would see a man bending over the shelves of spaghetti sauce at the co-op, and in her head she would pull words across her mind describing the angle of his arm, the way his jeans wrinkled behind the knee, how his hand wavered between garlic parmesan and roasted tomato, his fingers finally settling around the jar of roasted tomato. She would be standing motionless, staring at him from behind the cash register, trying to think of the right words to describe how the lines on the backs of our knuckles change as we bend our fingers. She would decide that he liked garlic parmesan and that his wife liked roasted tomato, and what she had just witnessed was what it means to love someone.

Sometimes, as she walked down the street, she would begin describing the people around her and end up describing herself describing the people around her. A woman would be walking her mop-like dog in front of her, and June would be thinking about what color the dog’s fur was. What color it was exactly. She wondered if the woman walked her dog at the same time on the same route every day. She imagined that the woman often rested her hand over the dog’s rib cage while she was watching television, just to feel his lungs expand and release with air. June’s hand moved over her own ribcage. Just for a moment. Her mind zoomed out. June began to focus on the intense stare of the girl walking along behind the woman with the tumbleweed dog. The jerk in the girl’s arm as her hand rested, just for a moment, on her ribcage. The words that the girl couldn’t stop forming into sentences.

“When did you start writing?” June asked Eddie as the sun settled behind the tree line. They had finished for the day moments before. She closed the laptop in front of her.

“Are you asking when I started writing in general, or when I started writing novels? Because I would say I could form a decent sentence at age 7, but I didn’t write a novel until I was 53.”

“I meant the novels.”

“I figured that’s what you meant.” Eddie’s mouth turned up at the corner. It was at these moments that June thought he might be winking behind his glasses. “I’d actually been writing for years before I published anything. Not that I was getting rejected from publishers or anything like that. I had to wait for my mother to die.”

“You waited for her to die?”

The girl sitting across from the ailing romance novelist pictured him standing at his mother’s grave, the heaviness of his grief battling the lightening of a different burden.

Eddie laughed, “You have been paying attention to what you’ve been typing, haven’t you?”

Aleppo  
*Annie Wyndham*



acrylic on canvas board

## Missing My Father

*Mark Joyce*

The yellowjacket left for dead on the kitchen sill  
is now blanketed in sugar ants  
and slowly disappears.  
Pieces of itself too small to see,  
carted off, workmanlike, for safekeeping.

And the hand-sized kiwi-green luna moth,  
that had decorated our front yard tamarack  
was no longer there when we awakened,  
likely winging into the next life,  
since those in the family Saturniidae  
are gifted but a seven day flight in ours.

And upstairs, beekeepers begin the extraction.  
In the quiet night we had heard a mounting hum  
inside our bedroom wall.  
40,000 bees at work in their factory,  
honing in on hexagonal comb,  
secreting wax and preening for the queen,  
oblivious to their coming removal.

All this machinery.

A cicada's clicking tymbals shriek back at the heat.

Coffee beans growl into grounds  
and then hover under the plunger,  
flavor deepening as it steeps.

Bread browns in the toaster  
as runaway crumbs dot the nichrome coils  
and smoke like sawdust punks.

And all the while the stereo periodically stops me in my tracks.  
A striking songwriter sings.  
A man who rightly calls himself Phosphorescent.

A man I had not encountered  
until a hip club's summer calendar dropped,  
dipping him in praise.  
So now, with a casual mouse click,  
I listen intently to his entire body of work,  
his soul, and plot to see him tomorrow in the flesh.

All this procession.

The mind, marching through this hot and humid morning,  
through a warm and ineffective wind,  
huffing like an exhausted runner.

The mind, hoping to quiet long enough to capture  
some small flash of light that might illuminate  
all this movement,

these thousands of displaced bees  
circling menacingly,  
trying their damndest to cross out the sun,  
like aggressive editors under a spatial gun,

as laddered men in white suits  
spray our inside with smoke  
and instruct each other under their hoods  
in a mutter we are too far away to hear.

**Boston**  
*Akane Fumioka*



black and white film

# ThoughtsAndAwakenings

*Corinne Waters*

the perkperk  
perk-olating  
of the coffee pot  
wakes the  
s l u m b e r i n g , s n o o o o z i n g  
mind  
from its  
quiescent state  
into  
a  
lull  
    of  
stirringthoughtsandawakenings

awakeningsandthoughts  
stir from  
    the  
    lull  
of  
a quiescent state; the  
s n o o z i n g , s l u m b e r i n g ,  
p e r c o l a t i n g  
mind  
is now awake [due to]  
the spitspat  
sp-utt-ering  
of the coffee pot.

## **Fruit By Candlelight**

*Natalie Crick*

The candle snuffed out, leaving  
A trail of cursive smoke.

She probed the apple  
Turned to bruise,

Juice bleeding into skin,  
Soft as a small skull,

Pressed her nail into the pear  
Leaving a dirty moon

In the meat of the fruit.  
It receded from touch,

Like a Woman  
Who has been hit before.

Her fingers drip  
Wax.

The corpse candles reveal  
Their death walks.

## Oreo

*Edward Griffin*

I sing a song of Dionysian aires,  
Resplendent flavor to which none compares,  
The one who dared to eat and met his end,  
Sweetness thereof no man can comprehend,  
As Eve that fruit of knowledge took and ate  
Deceived and to deceive her loyal mate,  
For such sagacity was yet unknown  
Then filled her spir't, struck deep in heart and bone,  
And bringing 'bout yet uncreated Death  
Destroying body and marauding breath,  
As Siegfried's fate had then become foretold  
To be betrayed and vi'lence thence unfold  
For loving Kriemhild, in whom beauty dwelled  
And sweetness of the spirit bloomed and swelled;  
Noble Orpheus, attend thy lyre to tune  
And make all dance the Earth and lucid Moon,  
Dense forests, flow'rs, fowl, fish, and human throng,  
Forgoing joy to hear this tragic song.  
List thy ear to the harp and hear his sound  
Of how this character had not yet found  
The Nectar of the Gods so dulcet thought,  
Until by ill discretion he had brought  
Into his home that substance bringing strife,  
Whereupon in suffring he lost his life:  
At first, 'twas late at night, he sat and pined  
A sweet dessert to fill that he might find.  
Then reminiscing on his store-bound trek  
For groceries (wherefore purchased with a check),  
Remembered he that sandwich cookie bought.  
Within him wrought the most resplendent thought  
And said aloud what loudest inward spake:  
"If I could but one crumb of thee partake  
O, Lotus Blossom of the Taste, so fond

I think of thee, who bloom in swamp and pond  
Of decadent desserts, outshining flow'r  
Compared to blooming sprig or bush or bow'r,  
Whose sweet-smelling vapours infuse the air  
With mirth, unbounded pleasantness so fair,  
Without which who would bear my pain and woe?  
O, 'reo, oreo, wherefore art thou 'reo?  
Wouldst thou retreat from my entreating trance  
To hide thyself from prospect of my glance?"

Thus he said and searching about his home  
(Though space was limited for him to roam)  
Found them tucked away inconspicuous  
Within a cupboard, then replied he thus:  
"But soft! What light from yonder cupboard breaks!  
That splendid substance wherefore my heart aches!"

Reached forth his hand and from the cab'net took  
The humble Oreos from their subtle nook.  
As once Lord Petre cut a lady's lock  
Without her leave and then, as if a mock,  
The gods let forth their mighty hordes of Ire  
Before the Lock was lit within a pyre  
And made him suffer most insuff'able,  
Until relinquished lock bade him annul,  
So did the gods of sweetness thenceforth fly,  
That for ingestion selfish he would die.  
"What emptiness, the Single Stuf so vain!"

Said he, concerning dulcet Double Stuf,  
"For how can one consider it enough  
To have but one thin slice of creamy white  
Ambrosial fruit enhanced by milky dunk,  
Sandwiched between two choc'late wafers quite."  
Henceforth proceeded he to have his fill,  
Eating these without discretion until  
Sitting before him sleeves without their arms,  
The package, void and vacant, him alarms  
Deeply bereaved and swooning from dismay,

His blue eyes damp and swollen, cheeks once grey  
Now rosy red, his eyes streamed forth a flood  
Diffraction from the tears made red as blood  
His cheeks, bent on his knees he sat, thus seethed:  
“O happy dagger! This ’s thy sheath!  
Now in my belly rust and let me die!”  
The dagger thrust, his final breath a sigh,  
He fell aside and witnessed one last sight:  
One final Oreo on the ground alight’d.

# Bubble Machine

*Emma Gilfix*



watercolor and ink  
8 x 11"

## **Bone of a Dead Man**

*Casey Lendway*

He whispered wilted flowers and  
spilled salt, my blood curdling at the  
smell of mourning as  
he rubbed his palms across my back.

He could turn ghosts into wine,  
twirls blue eyes in his mouth like  
martini olives, but  
tonight he pours himself  
into me like I  
lapped up his soul while  
licking his cum from my lips.

## **“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may”**

*Samantha Sidorakis*

Every dawn, I come out to my garden alone  
to find my hedges overgrown,  
and glistening bright petals  
wet from the dew that has settled.  
My maintenance has become quite the habit  
though it is never mundane;  
I liken myself to a devoted gardener  
who even works in the rain.  
Never before have you seen such beautiful flowers  
that are routinely revitalized by sun showers—  
it’s as though my fingers are endowed with healing powers.  
I dig through and churn the layers of soil  
occasionally fertilizing with water and oil,  
just to pull out the weeds and rocks  
that have nestled themselves beneath my stalks.  
In the mornings after storms,  
my beds are sometimes overrun with worms  
left over from the night’s flood,  
lying stuck in the mud.  
So I grab my shovel and bucket,  
sigh in deep, and muck it.  
In the long and dry summer days,  
when I think i could simply melt away,  
my flowers need watering every few hours  
for every drop of water given is devoured.  
Though right now it may be a hobby,  
I’d one day like to make gardening a profession  
I’m quite passionate about the art of botany—  
For me, it’s a type of self-expression.

**Louis Armstrong**

*Bob Niemi*



*Louis Armstrong*

*R Niemi 5114*

linocut block print

4 x 6"

## An Elegy to Former Lovers

Lily Gardner

Each is categorized by a love song—  
one, *Shelter from the Storm*,  
another, *Making Love on the Mountain*,  
and the other, *Rebel Rebel*,  
Johnny Cash's *You're My Baby*,  
and the last, *A Case of You*.

They've all got a taste—  
maple candies and green tea,  
the sweet and salty of those omelets,  
freshly baked rye bread,  
never the chocolates you dreamed of but always  
a bittersweet coffee in the morning.

A feature of each compiles one whole—  
calloused from the garden,  
one's rough fingers trace your back,  
while the other's teeth graze your neck  
and then smile.

Each heartbeat beats the same drum on my ear,  
as I rest my head on their chests in dreams,  
traversing the graveyard of beginnings,  
and dropping a flower for each of them.

## Wanderer's Wood

*Neil Straw*

Among the wooded wand'ring hills  
A wand'rer stands quite calm and still  
To watch the sun reach for its crown  
With not a thing but time to kill.

She cocks her head to some sweet sound  
Of water gently tumbling down,  
Through rocks of grey and plant decay,  
Through leaves of green, yellow and brown.

No clouds pass by this wond'rous day,  
And she is glad she passed this way.  
She found a spot perfect and plain,  
And she decides it's here she'll stay.

To stay these woods will need a name.  
She passed no signs when here she came.  
She'll call it hers to stake her claim.  
I left her there, where she remains.

**Spring Finches**

*Rachel Jones*



watercolor  
9 x 12"

## Ballad of a One Night Stand

*Martin Villanueva*

When he saw her curved lip,  
he imagined the taste he craved.  
He needed only her warmth  
within his belly to be saved.

Just one sip,  
that's all it was.  
Just one touch,  
just for a little buzz.

Some sound to drown out  
his soliloquy of self-pity.  
He felt her warmth spill over again  
and again and again  
then woke—feeling shitty.

He was alone.  
Her warmth had faded.  
The bed was cold.  
He was not sated.

He couldn't recall her heat,  
or the sloppy, slurring, stumbling of being wasted.  
She was gone for now,  
but he could still remember how she tasted.

## **Perverse Happiness**

*Elly Moore*

Last Wednesday, in Olive Garden, we witnessed  
our waiter trip on a strip of torn carpet.

Food flew from his hands. Platters of pasta plummeted  
to the floor; breadsticks burst from their broken basket.

A woman in white woefully whined when  
airborne wine dyed her dress dark red.

Forks flew, framing the figure of a young female  
who screamed F-bombs as they fell around her.

I snorted as my mother moaned, mourning  
the miscarriage of our meals among the mess.

The waiter attempted to stand, but sauce spilled from his hands  
and spoons stuck to his shoes as he sighed, slipping once more.

**Pig**  
*Jane Sclafani*



acrylic on canvas

## The Reaping Season

*Cory Warren*

It was a few days after the election of Donald J. Trump when he discovered he had crabs. He was grateful for it—a private place to direct all his concerns. October had been a messy month and he could not be certain which of his bedmates gave him the infection. Of course he blamed them all, took turns hating each of them, assuming he had settled on a culprit with each round of excoriations. Then there were turns he spent, inevitably, hating himself. Meanwhile his body blazed, the rashes burning without end. The medication would not arrive at the pharmacy until after his trip to California for the wedding. He was advised not to shave, as the mites would only migrate to other hairy regions, like his belly, his chest, his armpits, even the eyelashes and brows. In other words, do not force them to take the evacuation route. Keep them where they can be controlled. The internet said Vaseline could be used as a temporary substitute for permethrin. So he lathered it on, all over the lesions and knotty follicles. Flying above Iowa, he checked his pubes, glossy and slick, in the airplane restroom. It was a genocidal sight, what seemed like fields of dead corpses rotting in the black cotton fabric. He had fooled them, swaddling the little creatures with a blanket of petroleum jelly, to suffocate them. Having harvested the remains and washed them down the drain, he returned to his seat, still itching like hellfire. He looked ahead at the tubular dimensions of the plane. It was nighttime and the iridescent reflections of in-seat televisions spread color schemes across the conical walls, a palette that spanned blue bands, purple ribbons, and chartreuse hues. On the screens, rhetorical arabesques, shades of their minds: CNN, Spike, Bravo, Fox Business. A baby wailed all the way across Colorado and everyone groaned. But more than anyone else babies know catharsis, unquestioned hysterical expression, and he envied that. This must be the whole thing about adulthood: repossessing emotions, preference given to the quiet norms of airplanes. Nobody else cried, though they wanted to. Their spouses would be masturbating, as they would if they were home anyway, without them. Their kids would hate how much they travel for work, suspecting a secret family in another state, or worse, that theirs was the family hidden from someone else. They would find mysterious patches

of lice in their pubic hair, with no one else to blame or tell. But only the youngest among them was free to admit anything so honest in what, for everyone else, seemed impossible at the moment: grief, unabashed and uninterrupted. And all the adults on board believed it—that it was only the irritation of it that bothered them, nothing more.

## **Sour, Sweet, Gone**

*Connor Flueckiger*

*Crinklecrinklecrinklepop*

I peer in at their skin,  
red, green, yellow, and orange.  
white crystals cover their bodies,  
poorly piled on one another.

Fat fingers reach in and grab one,  
I place the piece in my mouth,  
*Chompcheuycheuychomp.*

My lips squirm and shut firm,  
eyes completely closed.

Then, sugary serendipity surprises me.

## **#FreeTheNipple**

*Lauren Stone*

Cover the shame on your chest,  
then trim the cloth accordingly.  
Skin is fine as long as it's not too pink  
for the patriarchy's masculinity.

If it's a circle, cover it.  
We might mistake the symbol for totality.  
Because if a woman is whole,  
we should hide her until she is just a part.

Men display oppression on their chests,  
to remind women that impersonating their kings is a crime.  
Only beneath a man can your nipples fly free.

Since pink badges are meant for royalty.

## once loved

*Brenna Broderick*

the front hall boasts a black and white mosaic of my  
mother's nimble fingers  
my mother's delicate artistry, faded with early morning sun  
and thumbprints on the edges  
the photographs of my mother and father, drenched in the  
youth they took for granted  
smiles overgrown, overjoyed, overwhelmingly real  
their arms are laced like the crochet sweater my mother now sleeps in  
their eyes tell stories of late nights and a love painted with  
the colors of the hickeys  
they covered up the next morning, blushing and proud  
driving too fast, music too loud, living too boldly in years now nostalgic  
their hands are not yet calloused, still dancing with each  
other's hair, skin, fingers  
their bodies are leaning unapologetically awkward  
and clinging in every photo  
bones gravitating towards the other as if ocean tides  
inside them pulled them together  
their smiles glow a type of happiness felt in parts of the  
body not yet anatomically explained  
crevices of the stomach made only for laughing  
valves in the heart big enough to fit whole people  
but photographs are only temporary tattoos of time gone by  
now my mother stands in the kitchen, fingers telling  
stories of a quiet dinner  
preparation and lists and days going by like cars on the freeway  
my father will come home with shoulders telling stories  
of numbers and coffee  
and the guilt and exhaustion of a man grown too old too fast  
the mosaic seems historic, a museum telling stories of a time as it once was  
that house stands tall as a church  
telling stories of a stale hallelujah echoing years after its been sung  
my parents tell stories in different languages now

their hands now bumping numbly against the others'  
smiles mapped out in new places, showing each other different faces  
eyes filled with holes and empty spaces of places they stopped going  
i wonder if they still feel the ocean inside their body  
or if they've washed up on different shores with  
a new horizon in the distance  
and bones still searching for the tide they once loved

## Small Crimes in Our World

*Luis Lázaro Tijerina*

With my groceries, I stand before  
a young woman at the market counter,  
Her face without emotion  
like the computer swipes on an orange  
that is not squeezed for its ripeness,  
a package of chicken breasts  
without the flesh of desire,  
a sensual piece of French chocolate  
not on her full mouth,  
As she says chillingly  
“Debit or Credit?” her nimble fingers  
running across the last bar code,  
That tidy code of black bars of death  
in an age of imperial America in decay.  
You walk out of that city market  
watching the shoppers looking like the dead fish  
you saw fresh and raw waiting  
to be eaten as if they were alive.

# Pride's "Broken" Wings Fly

*Stephanie Knoll*



acrylic on paper  
11 x 13"

# Too Weird to Live, Too Rare to Die

*Peter Linn*

I write this at a time of extreme fragility.

On September 14, 2017, my best friend, Jerry Collins, made the biggest mistake of his young life. One wonders “why?” or “what could I have done?” but we mustn’t dwell on such tortuous thoughts—moments where we search for answers when they don’t exist. We must focus on the future and the solution.

Caring and compassionate, funny and bizarre, beautiful and bright. These are the traits that made Jerry Jerry. However, there is a more important message to be taken from the tragic milestone. Mental health is not a joke. I always knew it was a condition, but now, a week later, there are no words powerful enough to express the seriousness of such problems.

I met Jerry the first night I ever spent at St. Michael’s. I was smoking a cigarette outside Ryan Hall when this goofy Irish-looking kid stepped up to me and asked to have a cigarette so he didn’t have to walk to Cumbby’s. The rest is history. We were with each other every day doing all the things freshmen do. Sophomore year we lived together in Hamel Hall on North Campus; junior year we lived together in Ethan Allen with our friends Jack O’Callaghan and Evan Harwood. I knew Jerry like the back of my hand. His passions, his triggers, his sports teams, his favorite foods, his unconditional love for making others happy—I knew all of it. Most important, though, was my understanding of his mental health.

From since I can remember, Jerry battled with severe depression. Though I do not know the cause of such feelings, I thoroughly saw what this did to his overall mental health. Jerry, and many, many others like him, didn’t know how to handle the pressure he put on himself. Love was there—no doubt about this. We loved him to death and he loved us. This will never change. He is our brother forever. Unfortunately, the severity

of his mental health blinded him to these facts in one fatal moment this September. Jerry knew we loved him and he knew his family loved him, but just saying that doesn't always solve the problem.

Jerry to many was the happiest kid they ever met. And he was. Jerry never faked anything. His emotions were real. In his own words, Jerry said, "I am passionate about making other people feel happy. Feeling unwelcomed is a stressful and uncomfortable feeling, so I try to be open with people to make them feel better." There are no words that describe Jerry better than his own. Jerry was exactly that—open. That's how his closest friends knew about his depression . . . because he would openly talk about it with us. We all tried consoling Jerry in certain times and I personally believe, and always will, it helped him a great deal, despite our current circumstance.

A cry for help is not a failure. A cry for help is sometimes necessary. And though it is difficult to talk to people about personal mental health problems, I urge you to consider the situation I am in with my friends and Jerry's family. If there were something we could've done to change this, it wouldn't have taken a second thought. We would have done that. We would have sat with him in his dark hours. We would have called for the help he needed. Now, there is no second chance.

Jerry chose a permanent solution to a problem that many people face and have successfully overcome before. Hope remains. This, though, changes nothing about the undying love we will always have for our brother.

On behalf of the entire senior class and the Collins family, we extend a sincere thank you to the Saint Michael's community for their constant and meaningful support. During these times we must come together and I have no doubt in my mind that as one, we will prevail.

The preceding was written one week after September 14, 2016. I lived with Jerry for most of my time at Saint Michael's College. Knowing Jerry was a privilege I wish I could extend to every living human, especially the less compassionate ones, because with his presence, endearing and encouraging, anything was possible. And endless possibilities are fun; there is no way to predict what can happen, and uncertainty calls to our deepest curiosities. Jerry was one such curiosity that called to us. One likes to ponder what could've been. You know, what-ifs . . .

We try not to think like that. Life can be blown to oblivion, pieced back together with the remaining fragments, and continue on stronger than ever. Sometimes the chips become the necessary armor for certain people. This has not yet happened to me, though the road is being paved. What's comforting is that I'm paving the road, no one else. After Jerry's passing and our tragic experience, I've learned to not care what others think. Why? It's okay to be sad, people. It is, and the sooner we all realize this, the closer we are to a solution. We're always taught this growing up, but there comes a point in everyone's life when they truly realize it. For me, this has been a major takeaway these past few months.

I'm choosing not to change the original article I wrote in the slightest because it was written at a time of high emotion, something I don't necessarily want to revisit often, but still needed for that piece. It's been nearly five months since we lost Jerry and they haven't been the best, mentally speaking anyway. I don't know what it is, except maybe the generic human reaction to tragedy. Speaking on behalf of a few of my friends, we can't really pinpoint ourselves nowadays. Now, we are not lost, we are just wandering. If we're being honest, I don't like to think about it too much. I'm not suppressing the situation, I just choose not to think about it. I imagine life instead. Life when Jerry was with us . . . and he is still with us, let me make that clear. Memories are a way for people to remain sane, so to speak, and we choose to remember not just to keep sane, though that helps, but to carry on Jerry's legacy. We are honored to do so.

So I want to leave one last mark for Jerry Collins by telling a brief story entirely unrelated to September 14, 2016. Remembering Jerry the way we should remember Jerry:

March 22, 2016

I was halfway through my study abroad program in Limerick, Ireland. For spring break, we decided to take a trip to the mainland and explore the unique parts of Europe unconnected to the U.K. We could not have asked for a better spring break: Amsterdam, Brussels, and Budapest. None of us had ever been to these places before and our main goal from the beginning was to travel as much as possible.

First we stopped in Amsterdam to enjoy the . . . wonders of the city. It's arguably the most picturesque city I've ever seen, designed with the intricate canal patterns, highly functioning bike traffic and eerily gothic buildings. Amsterdam is a great place to take a trip back in time. After spending four days here, we moved on to Brussels, Belgium, barely making our early morning train after a night of indulgence. Once we arrived, the sight was vastly different. Brussels felt even older. The first hour we walked the streets, purposefully acknowledging the master architecture surrounding our being, a square came upon us . . . the Grand-Place, Brussels. The scene is frankly indescribable, I recommend looking up a picture instead. Meandering through Brussels' tiny streets took up most of our time; new places popped up left and right, and every one seemed intriguing enough to go into. Two wonderful days were spent in Brussels.

We woke up very early on March 22, walked four miles to the train station, arrived at the airport, and flew to Budapest, Hungary. In real time, our travel seemed normal, like nothing was off, but in reality, mayhem. The terrorist attacks were brewing. When we landed in Budapest, we were informed the attacks happened at the main airport in Brussels, completely unbeknownst to us. Obviously, this was a great shock. We cheated death that day. This, however, is not the point; Jerry is.

When one is in the midst of chaos, mental, physical, or whatever,



# In Loving Memory

Emma Gilfix



watercolor and ink  
8 x 11"



Let us treat the men and women well:  
treat them as if they were real: perhaps they are.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Contributors' Notes

**Sophia Adams** is a junior Mathematics major, Studio Art minor from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Plymouth, New Hampshire. These pieces were painted from original photographs taken in San Miguel d'Allende, Mexico and on the Gulf of Mexico right off the coast of Cancun.

**Briana Brady '16** does not put her pants on one leg at a time. She goes for two with gusto.

**Mallory Cain Breiner** is an artist and educator currently living and working in Vermont. She received her BA in Fine Arts from Saint Michael's in 2007 and her MFA in Combined Media and Sculpture from Hunter College in New York City in 2014. She is the creator of *Fink and Theel Contemporary*, an online space that features contemporary artists through a discursive questionnaire about the interests that shape their work. Breiner makes sculpture, installation, painting and video that explore ideas of the body, identity, memory and fiction. She is currently an Adjunct Professor of Art at Saint Michael's.

**Brenna Broderick** is a Political Science first-year from Bridgewater, Massachusetts. She is honored to have been selected for this year's publication of the *Onion River Review* and has great respect for the artists and writers she is in the company of.

**Jonathan Burgess** is an English/Philosophy double major from the Boston area. He is the proud owner of a Costco Gold Membership and can say the word "no" in over five different languages. He has nothing particularly interesting left to say about himself for this little blurb, but he's on Facebook, so if anyone is really that interested they can hit him up there.

**Agi Chretien** is tall like the trees, and in the attempt to understand herself takes long drives through this lovely state watching the leaves change color. She is a dreamer and believer that by reading and writing she will be able to tell you who she is some day.

**Natalie Crick** has found delight in writing all of her life and first began writing when she was a very young girl. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in a range of journals and magazines including *Interpreters House*, *The Penwood Review*, *Ink in Thirds*, *Rust and Moth* and *The Chiron Review*. Her work also features or is forthcoming in a number of anthologies, including *Lehigh Valley Vanguard Collections 13*. This year her poem 'Sunday School' was nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

**Margaret Daley** is an Exploratory first-year student from Slingerlands, New York.

**Jordan Douglas** teaches both darkroom and digital photography, in the Fine Arts Department. *Scalloway Castle, Shetland* was photographed with infrared film, and the cotton darkroom paper was bleached and toned for a soft and gritty effect. Curious about the limitless possibilities of the intersection of process and chemistry to be found inside the red glow of the darkroom, he ponders.

**Connor Flueckiger** is a junior Business major from Needham, Massachusetts. He is also minoring in Creative Writing, Philosophy, and Classics. Finding his passion for writing during a creative writing class sophomore year of high school, Connor has always pushed to expand his repertoire in poetry, memoir, and short stories.

**Akane Fumioka** is 21 and from Japan. He is studying abroad at Saint Mike's for a whole year and started darkroom photography six months ago. The process behind his photograph "Boston" involved printing two consecutive negatives together onto one print.

**Lily Gardner** will always weep when peeling an Onion, as she always has.

**Emma Gilfix** is a senior graduating with an incessant passion for art that has developed into a sense of her own existence. The pieces exhibited are products of the abstract-realism daydreams that float through her mind when the rest of the world goes silent. The piece “In Loving Memory” was created as a rendition of Ralph Steadman’s earlier sketch for Hunter S. Thompson, by the request of Jeremiah Collins in early 2016. Jerry’s request remained tucked away in her mind until two days after his passing.

**Edward Griffin** graduated from SMC in 2010 and is currently working towards a doctorate in Neurobiology at the University of Alabama. This poem was written to satirically extol the classical virtues of proportion of the Double Stuf, in response to Jon Wheeler’s, also of 2010, wanton and ignoble lust for indefinitely concatenated Oreos.

**Christopher Holloway** is a double major in Psychology and Theatre and a lover of cooking, eating, and watching “Frasier.” He dreams of owning a Victorian home and thrives on face-to-face conversation.

**Moira Jamieson** is an English major from northwest Connecticut. While she dabbles in the art of poetry, her true passion lies in the sport of dog spotting.

**Kevin Jeter** believes in living.

**Rachel Jones** is a senior with an undying love for watercolors. She firmly believes that art (in all its forms) is necessary for the survival of humanity, especially in this day and age.

**Emily Jeanne Joyce** is a Biochemistry and Studio Art double major from Hopkinton, Massachusetts. She loves going on surprise adventures to the grocery store and is perpetually lost, just like her Knight Card.

**Mark Joyce**, class of '87, lives, works, and plays in the hills of Richmond, Vermont with his wife and two young sons.

**Stephanie Knoll** is a Psychology major seeking to empower all those that need it.

**Colleen Knowles** is a recent alum of Saint Mike's. She can be found daily in downtown Burlington rifling through her backpack for a pencil and notebook that never seem to be where she left them.

**Casey Lendway** is a Psychology major and Aquarius from Nantucket Island.

**Peter Linn** is an English major from Watertown, Connecticut. His piece is dedicated to Jerry Collins and was written with an unparalleled focus on love, experience, and remembrance.

**William Marquess**, Instructor of English, met Mike Cronogue in 1984. In those days, they both played on a faculty-staff softball team called the Saints. They weren't very good—and they weren't saints, either. But they cheered for each other, and cheered each other, for 32 years. So dawn goes down to day. Still, as Tennyson says, "Though much is taken, much abides."

**Olivia Marr** is still a garden gnome detective, Scorpio, tree climber, mixtape maker, half full jar of honey on a sunlight shelf robot dancing through life. Liv and let liv.

**Timo McGillicuddy** writes: The ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest exists because of the salmon's journey. Each year billions of tons of nutrients and minerals are carried up rivers from the ocean and deposited in the soil when they spawn and die, and as they are eaten by insects, birds, and mammals. Their DNA, their struggle and spirit pervade every inch of organic life there, from the other animals to the sandy soils all the way up to the tops of trees. The same was once true out East, and in places not far from the Onion River.

**Elly Moore** is a simple sophomore smileflower in a sweater who often forgets that dragons are not (and never were) real. She went to Olive Garden once. It was crowded and her meal was mediocre.

**Bob Niemi** is a member of the English Department.

**Jonathan Norton** is a swell fella from Revere, Massachusetts with a strange penchant for lizards and skeletons.

**Elizabeth Rogers** is a senior Pre-Pharmacy major and Mathematics minor. Photography has been a hobby of hers for the past ten years. In addition to pharmacy, she hopes to start up a career in photography sometime in the near future.

**Pierrette Roy** worked as a theatre critic for the *Burlington Free Press* in the 1970s, and lived across Route 15 from Saint Michael's (where Fire and Rescue is now) for 38 years. She has done the flower arrangements for the Saint Michael's Playhouse opening nights for sixty years. She is now retired and resides in assisted living in Winooski.

**Claire Scherf** is a first-year Environmental Science major from Connecticut. She is passionate about everything environmental and agricultural, and strives to combine science, art and activism toward positively impacting the way we interact with the natural world and each other.

**Jane Sclafani** is a senior Business Administration major and Studio Art minor from Newtown, Connecticut.

**Jonathan Sherrill** considers himself a poet in training. He has also been a chef, a carpenter, a photographer, and an original vagabond. He now lives in western Massachusetts.

**Samantha Sidorakis** is a junior studying English, Political Science, and French. The poems found in this book are from a larger collection she has been working on for the past year titled "Sugarbaby's Blues," and the short story is a product of her creative writing tutorial she is taking abroad at the University of Oxford.

**Jen Signet** is a New York-based artist who works spontaneously and intuitively to create novel spaces and beings. She uses the art making process to explore the unknown, personally and universally. Jen completed her MA in Clinical Psychology at St. Mike's in 2014 and is currently working towards her MPS in Creative Arts Therapy at Pratt Institute.

**Lauren Stone** is a Sociology major from New Lebanon, New York with a deep passion for writing. The inspiration for her work comes from the real societal conditions and expectations placed on those in oppressive positions.

**Neil Straw** is also known as Robert Galbraith, Kilroy, and Myron J. Kapoodle. He comes from a pretty how town.

**Luis Lázaro Tijerina** is a poet, short story writer, and essayist. He also writes for a Russian think tank, located in Moscow, on military matters. Mr. Tijerina lives in Burlington, but also spends considerable time in Montreal and Quebec City.

**Martin Villanueva** is a senior English major from Brookfield, Connecticut.

**Cory Warren '16** currently writes and resides in the Greater Boston Area. A former editor of the *Onion River Review* and student of the English department, he is pursuing graduate studies in aesthetics.

**Corinne Waters** is a Music and Psychology major with a Creative Writing minor from Connecticut. She is graduating from SMC this May with plans to go to graduate school for Music Therapy come the fall. Currently, she interns with Fomite Press, a local publishing company, and Music Blooms, a Music Therapy practice in Burlington as well.

**Annie Wyndham** is a poet, writer and (self-taught) artist living in Trois-Rivières, Québec. Her painting “Aleppo” was inspired by Picasso’s “Guernica.”

**Manuela Yeboah** is a **BLACK DAUGHTER, SISTER, WOMANIST, ARTIST, AND ACTIVIST** with roots that lie in Ghana, West Africa. She is majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in Biology.

**The *Onion River Review* would like to thank:**

Will Marquess, for the bagels and the scrupulous Swissness.

Summer Drexel and George Goldsworthy of Printing Services, for fine eyes and wise encouragement.

The English Department, for creative and fiscal support.

The Student Association.

Caitlin Barry, Isabella Cigna, Emily Crowe, Nathalie Danizio, Emily Galow, Moira Jamieson, Kevin Jeter, Emily Joyce, Elly Moore, Claire Scherf, Gianna Seaver, and Jay Swartz, for their awesome auxillence.

And of course, the faculty, students, staff, alumni, and all the members of our community who submit their work or simply take the time to read. As Picasso says, “A painting lives only through the person who looks at it.”



## About the Cover

The work of **Mallory Cain Breiner** has graced the pages of many issues of the *Onion River Review*, and can be seen on the cover in 2009 and 2016. As with all of our submissions, her work was reviewed anonymously by the editors. We have given the piece as much space as we can by allowing it to wrap around this year's cover.

While we live in a world that systematically categorizes and simplifies the things around us, Breiner asks that we refrain from pigeonholing this piece. Art should be given the space to have some effect on us simply by looking at the image, without any description or direction. What Breiner did say about the piece was this:

This “Pollination” drawing is part of an ongoing series of “visual poems”—discrete graphite drawings in which I attempt to capture a particular feeling within a simple image. I try to finish them to my liking as quickly as possible.

When asked why the picture was drawn in black and white, she said that she chose pencil as her medium because it allows her to capture the “manifestation of the idea” in the fastest and most direct way possible. She went on:

The tongue has been a persistent image in my work over the past year. It's a site that is at once about desire, language, connection, and expression. I often use the vocabulary of nature to represent certain feelings or actions. I recall watching the bees pollinating my flower beds and being struck by their role as transporters of material, both physical and ephemeral.

For more of Mallory Cain Breiner's work, visit [www.mallorycainbreiner.com](http://www.mallorycainbreiner.com) or [www.finkandtheelcontemporary.com](http://www.finkandtheelcontemporary.com).

*Written by Onion River Review editor Agi Chretien, based on an e-mail exchange with the artist.*