

ONION RIVER REVIEW
2018

river run by

Mikayla Hoppe

Kevin Jeter

Elly Moore

Samantha Sidorakis

Victoria Sullivan



The 2018 *Onion River Review* is dedicated to:

Professor Quackenbush, Professor Hackenbush, and Professor Quincy Adams Wagstaff; Uncle Finster and Uncle Fenster; Ludo, Mr. Ludicrous, Your Ludicrous Leader, and, of course, Ludovico; The Foosh, Fooshitude, The Foo, Fooooooooosh, Foo Man Chu, The Fallible Fooshness, Fooshdog, Foosh McGoosh, Le Foo, and Faroosh Ganoosh; Plume of Smoke, Nom de Plume, Plume de Nom, and Plumio; Jack be Nimble, Jack be Jack, and Jack-o-Candlestick; Trinculo, Horatio, and Hector; Alonzo, Lorenzo, and Hugo; Pumpnickel Joe, Bungalow Bill, Deep Sea Diver Dan, Hoodoo Man, Headless Hattie, and Backwards Billy; Phineas T. Feagle, Cyrus P. Firewall, and Roofus T. Firefly; T. Bone and Otis P.; Captain Underwear, Captain Spalding, and Captain Nemo; Prank Liebesfrau, Roscoe Muddybottom, Tom Bombadillo, Rimsky-Korsakov, Rocky Rococo, and Bronco Nagurski; The Elephant Man, The Other Sammy, The Beamish Boy, and The Beamer; Gullywasher, Snagglepuss, Wugmump, Beach Boy, Figbert, Ouroboros, Ziggy, and His Onionosity; Doo-Da-Diddy, Klutz in Chief, Mean Mr. Mustard, Ethelred the Unready, and Go-Go Faludi; Shall, Himself, Art, and Harold; Kris Kringle, Mr. Goldtoes, Lorem Ipsum, Your Man in Storyville, and Your Pal; W., WM, and M-Dawg; Willfred, Willface, Wizzle, and Willz; Willness Everdene, Will.i.am, His Willness, and The Will; Marquessman and Hammerhead Marquess; and last, but not least, William Marquess.

Peace and arugula,

The Core Editors, Past, Present, and Future

Editors' Note

Change is upon us, friends. Yet, despite all that change, we are here with a new Onion. This year's *Onion River Review* was birthed from the same wit, spunk, and heart that has nurtured all other Onions in the past. Fresh from our Onion Alcove, this issue is all-natural, gluten-free, non-GMO, 100% certified organic, and guaranteed to make you cry. It will also make you laugh, and sing, and wonder if you are really eating what it is you think you are eating. In this year of the dog, we invite you, our loyal readers, to take a bite.

This season we learned a lot about Onion farming. Our biggest lesson: take a second look at least once. We have found that only fun-wizard poems appeal to collegiate literary taste, Amazon has a great selection of mini-waffle makers, and chugging maple syrup straight from the jug is only weird outside of Canada and Vermont. We now know that posters do not belong on glass doors, and we have learned that the Special Collections Room truly does contain some very special collections. We've questioned what it means to be pretentious, and we're left wondering exactly how many Tootsie Pops were consumed during our adventures. It's been proven that a hearty Onion requires the nutrients these lollipops offer.

How is it, you may ask, that we are able to grow an Onion so juicy and plump? Starting with sweet and supple soil, we dig our hands in and get 'em dirty. Those dirty hands, if you happen to be wondering, belong to the core editors. This year, we gained two new valuable members who will keep us rooted in the years to come, as our other three core editors prepare to leave the farm. Our core editors include: Mikayla Hoppe, Kevin Jeter, Elly Moore, Samantha Sidorakis, and Victoria Sullivan. We were so fortunate to have our whole crew present this semester to cultivate this Onion.

Of course, this harvest would not have been possible without the hard work of our auxiliary editors. Our “auxes,” as we call them, provide us with unique perspectives and new interpretations that are essential in our final decision making. We send the most sincere thanks to Brenna Broderick, Nathalie Danizio, Susanne Ellicks, Mackenzie Faber, Meg Flanagan, Emily Galow, Emma Gilfix, Emily Joyce, Ava McKinney, Susannah Throop, Ariel Wish, and Trevor Work. You guys know how to party.

Additionally, we send our formal thank-yous to those who made this publication physically possible. If not for the help and time dedicated by Summer Drexel and George Goldsworthy of Printing Services, this Onion would be nothing more than a collection of colored thoughts and sounds. This review is also supported by the English Department and Student Association, who support us fiscally and in spirit. We also thank our own Sammy Sid for being our Excel-expert. And we thank our submitters for their talent and our readers for their interest. Without you, there would be no Onion.

Finally, we give our widest, deepest thank-you to our leader, Will Marquess, to whom we dedicate this Onion. No words we string together could echo the amount of appreciation and admiration we have for him. We shall try, by saying thank you, Will, for the fun times, good treats, for showing us a way with words, and teaching us how to find rhythm in this world.

If you're wondering what the future holds for the Onion, worry not. Will does not leave without making sure the Onion will be well tended to. We do look forward to what's next, as our production will be placed into the loving hands of Tim Mackin. We thank Tim for stepping up to this enormous plate, and we thank Will for finding such a worthy successor.

Until next time, we hope this year's *Onion River Review* provides you with exactly what you're looking for and more. To the many Onions before us and the many to come, we hope to have made you proud.

Readers, do your thing and read on.

~ Mikayla Hoppe, Kevin Jeter, Elly Moore, Samantha Sidorakis,
and Victoria Sullivan
Core Editors 2018

ONION RIVER REVIEW
2018

Cover: Lily Keyes, *Fiery Nudibranch Gill*
digital photograph taken with a 60 mm lens in
an underwater housing with strobe flashes

- Julia Morrison, *Ya Ya* / 15
Buff Lindau, *I think I love that fat furry rabbit.* / 16
Tim McGillicuddy, *Garlic Pot* / 18
Megan Durocher, *Winter's Flame* / 19
Emma Gilfix, *In the Karakoram Mountain Range* / 20
Emma Gilfix, *Ladakhi Sherpa with Newborn* / 21
Daniel Johnson, *60 Moonhaw Road West Shokan, NY* / 22
Declan McCabe, *Firefly Ballet* / 23
Daniel Johnson, *The Artifact* / 26
Julia Morrison, *Amalfi* / 27
Mark Joyce, *What Museum?* / 28
Mallory Cain Breiner, *Pantagruel, Pant and Drool* / 30
Madison Newman, *Mine* / 31
Sam Burns, *Black Tights, Size M* / 32
Mackenzie Faber, *Open // Closed* / 33
Mikayla Hoppe, *1969* / 34
Sam Burns, *The Bride, 1967* / 35
Diane LeBlanc, *Nineteen Years After Matthew Shepard's Murder* / 36
Margaret Daley, *Rewind Encounter* / 37
Alex Dugas, *Beverly: Portrait of a Chain-Smoker* / 38

Alexander Ellis, *The Last Cigarette* / 40
Deirdre McPhee, *Bulb Exposure* / 41
Maddy Moore, *Sunday Afternoon* / 42
Olivia Nestro, *Body of Work* / 43
Brenna Broderick, *it was warmer then* / 44
Trevor Work, *Ne craignez pas les requins* / 45
Zana van Rooyen, *A Tendril or Two* / 46
Mallory Cain Breiner, *Compliance: Waxing Coconut* / 47
Alex Dugas, *M...A...R...V...* / 48
Samantha Sidorakis, *Melancholia* / 50
Demora Dessert, *The Forest Giraffe* / 52
Elly Moore, *The Hole in My Rain Boots* / 53
Gabriela Elmoussaoui, *Coffee Bean* / 54
Samantha Gillespie, *Giving* / 55
Alex Dugas, *sometimes i wake up grumpy, and sometimes i let her sleep* / 56
Alex Dugas, *the stinkbug* / 57
John Sibley Williams, *Road to the Sky* / 58
Marisa Rubino, *Simple Complexity* / 59
Trevor Work, *The Juggler* / 60
Daniel Johnson, *Give the People What They Want* / 61
Carl Potter, *Brate and Carrel* / 62
Jenna McCarthy, *Primal* / 63
Annemarie Kennedy, *Sun Gazing* / 64
Cory Warren, *Macbeth in Therapy* / 65
Lily Keyes, *Blue Dragon Nudibranch* / 73
Luis Lázaro Tijerina, *Pont Neuf* / 74
Luis Lázaro Tijerina, *About Robert Graves Who Died on This Day—
Goodbye to All That* / 75

John Sibley Williams, *We Would Be Artists Someday* / 76

Sophia Adams, *Surmount* / 77

Margaret Daley, *Dipingere* / 78

Connor Thurston, *Meat Man* / 79

Diane LeBlanc, *After the Storm* / 82

Margaret Daley, *History of Resilience* / 84

Daniel Johnson, *The Reading* / 85

Luis Lázaro Tijerina, *Lemons* / 86

Meghan Hjerpe, *Endangered Birds of America* / 87

Victoria Sullivan, *Portrait* / 88

Samantha Rossi, *Surf at Sunset* / 89

Diane LeBlanc, *Between Fact and Footnote* / 90

Brenna Smith, *For the Painter* / 91

Emily Joyce, *It's Rude to Stare* / 92

Emily Galow, *Orpheus to Eurydice* / 93

Lily Keyes, *Peacock Mantis Shrimp* / 96

Buff Lindau, *In the British Museum Reading Room* / 97

Julia Morrison, *Crown* / 98

Dimitrios Stamoulis, *Potami* / 99

Olivia Nestro, *40 Days* / 100

Gabriela Elmooussaoui, *Sleepy Bean* / 101

Contributors' Notes / 104

Acknowledgments / 111

About the Cover / 112

Back cover: Ella Dorval Hall, *Salvage*

If an onion rings, answer it.

~ anonymous

Ya Ya
Julia Morrison



mixed media, with paint and yarn

I think I love that fat furry rabbit.

Buff Lindau

Startling brightness at 4 a.m. Not a good sign.
Motion detector lights, ominous by design
easily tripped, sometimes by the neighbor's cats
but never at this wicked cold, late hour.
So bright I couldn't ignore it. Practically daylight intensity.

On a night I was tossing about
wondering if my first-born was in a quagmire
dwelling on the truth of getting old in the cold.
January in Vermont.
Fruitless wondering interfering with sleep.
But I was slipping closer to oblivion—and then the lights.

I left the comforting nest of warmth, partner sound asleep,
and bravely (!), stepped a bare foot on the cold floor.
I peered out the back window—no persons, no sounds
no human footprint in the snow
just very bright light exposing the scabbly winter backyard—

occupied by a fat furry rabbit, a mottled brownish-grey fellow
chowing down on bird seed beneath the feeder.
Did he joust with the pole to shake out more?
He was into it, unperturbed, oblivious to the light
head down, focused, fast chomping, not leaving,
carrying on, staying put, unaware, unconcerned that
he'd tripped the lights, undone the dark night
brought on full daylight making him the centerpiece, the star,
captured unafraid in the spotlight of the drama.

He changed the subject.

He was the subject—

such focus, purpose, intensity,

a sight to see, a round mound, a furry beast,

an object to behold

broadcasting a quit-whining, seize-the-day kind of message.

Garlic Pot

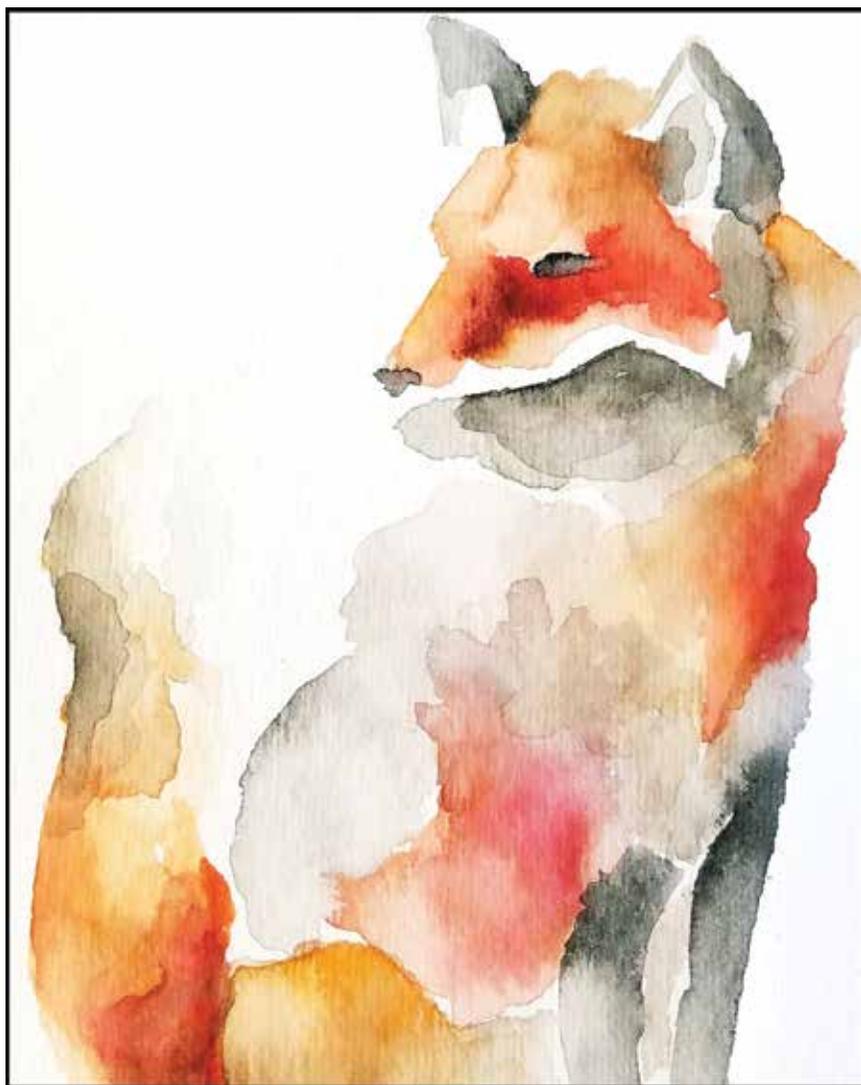
Tim McGillicuddy

The garlic pot you gave us years ago
is perfect, still. Squat, knobby lidded,
brown glazed clay with rounded corners
and cloven so that one has the impression
of putting garlic in or taking garlic out
of garlic. Just the way we like it.

This present, now in its second home, nurtures.
It is the anchor round which good things gather:
salt, red wine, pepper sauce, onions, olive oil
and lots of spices—gather, disperse, reconvene.

Little did we know how life would disperse us.
But like this counter we always find some way
to gather and collect ourselves about a center.
Love passed round, one gift at a time.

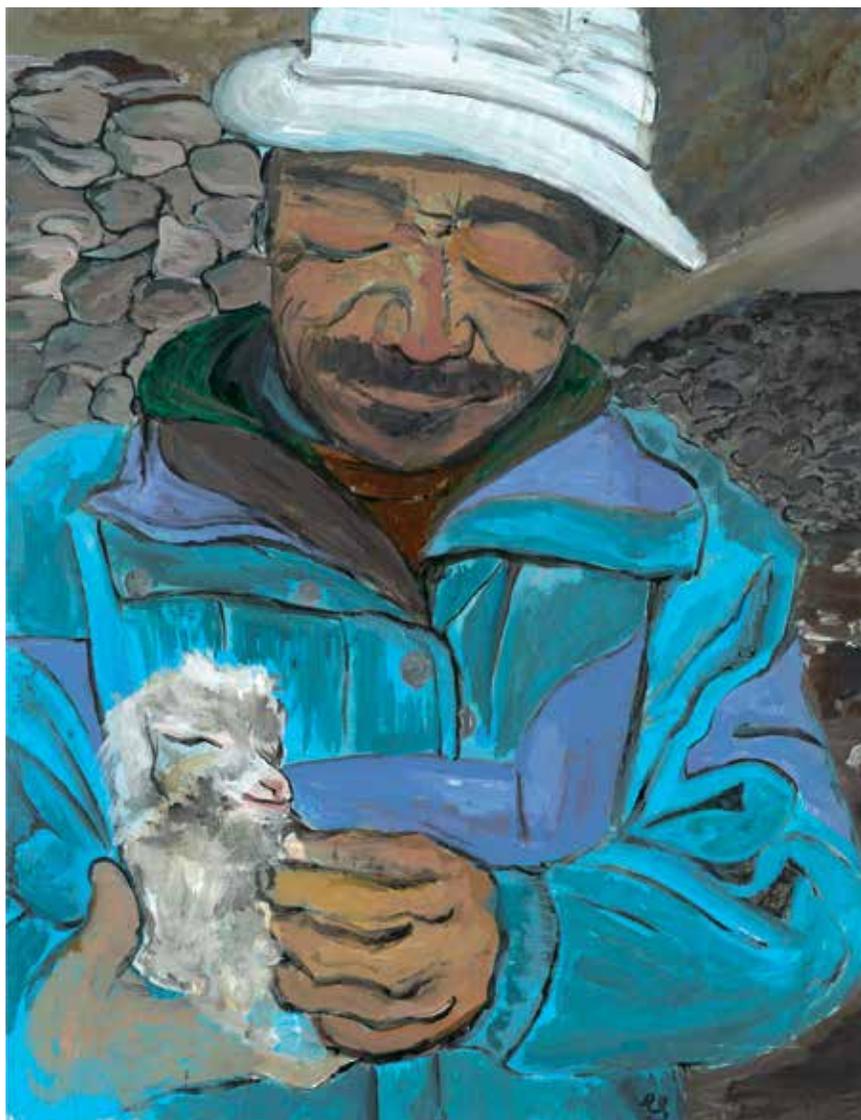
Winter's Flame
Megan Durocher



watercolor on paper

In the Karakoram Mountain Range

Emma Gilfix



acrylic paint on board
7 x 11"

Ladakhi Sherpa with Newborn
Emma Gilfix



acrylic paint on board
7 x 11"

60 Moonhaw Road
West Shokan, NY

Daniel Johnson

The U-Haul was unblinking in the driveway.
I watched you from the blue screen porch,
slowly plodding over the pleasant grasses,
among roses, red and regal.
In the shadow of the sure hills of the Catskills,
you turn back to the whitewashed walls that watched
your children grow with the deer under the mountain.
We all know the ragged roof with shingles sliding,
but right now I see the stubborn barn with the hoop,
manic marked from years of play.
I see the acre of lawn that laughs with resilience
after decades of reunions and get-togethers.
I smell that unmistakable fragrance
of living room coffee table chats and TV ballgame cheers.
Here, though, your bones bother and joints need oil.
The prodigious palms of southern meridians are calling out,
“Arthritis absent, no crooked
cracking fingers in the wonderful warmth
of the equatorial emperor.”
We spent those final hours
listening to the rush of the wind in the fields
and the hush of the twilight deer in the woods.
Shokan will not be shuttered, but left a shrine.
The white house with the blood-red barn
of the Molloyes on Moonhaw Road.

Firefly Ballet

Declan McCabe

Tires crunch the carpet pile of fresh fallen snow as I open the car window to greet the dancers. I'm dropping my wife to her workshop in South Burlington. She's part of a ballet troupe whose members' ages range across five decades. College students, scientists, educators, artists, and my very favorite college professor, all united in their love of dance. The familiar faces transport me to a different time and place.

Seated with my children at Philo Ridge Farm in Charlotte; strains of Vivaldi pierced the evening air. There's nothing quite like live music, but that's not why we came. A pair of dancers pirouetted onto the "stage," or "lawn." An expectant hush moved through the audience as the dancers met, and exchanged glances of feigned indifference. Strangely, their gazes seemed focused behind their partners' backs.

The performers turned and parted, the side-long view revealing unusual costume choices for classical ballet. Each had a flickering, glowing, insect-like abdomen extending from beneath beetle-esque wings. This was Farm to Ballet, "The Firefly Dance."

Perhaps only in Vermont would a ballet company take to the fields, contributing to the charm that keeps us here. The dancing was amazing as ballerina and ballerino circled, posed, while each examined the other's flashing light. Lack of synchrony between their abdominal lights seemed to cause repulsion between the dancers.

Real fireflies are innocuous beetles, easily overlooked during daylight hours. Their larvae eat insects and snails, including some garden pests. They are found in vegetation, leaf litter, and along the soil surface, where they frequently encounter pit traps set by Saint Michael's College student researchers.

At night, fireflies come into their own and truly capture the imagination. Adult fireflies have larger-than-typical beetle eyes and use light to communicate with mates. Males flash as they fly, and females return signals to the flasher that tickles their fancy. Females are picky, at least early in the season when males outnumber them two to one. Mark Branham and Michael Greenfield used computer-controlled lights to demonstrate that females of one firefly species really preferred fast-flashing males; in fact they responded best to flash patterns that were even faster than most males could ever muster.

Because fireflies use light to find mates, biologists worry that light pollution might disrupt mating. Anyone who left the lights on with a window open knows that lights attract insects; entomologists rely on this insect quirk to trap specimens. Firefly numbers have declined as light pollution has increased, but the precise link between fireflies and lights was clearly established when Kevin Costin and April Boulton demonstrated that even one powerful light reduces firefly flashing by half.

If the Farm to Ballet dancers were at all concerned about light pollution, they did not mention it to me. But creative director Chatch Pregger confirmed my perception of the firefly dance. As he and his partner Avi Waring danced, their lights gradually changed from random, asynchronous flashes to tightly choreographed patterns flashing in unison. The ballerina's initial disdain for her partner was replaced by flowing parallel moves and lifts as they simultaneously achieved synchrony of light flashes and choreography captivating the audience.

According to Pregger, the light flashes controlled from off-stage were designed to gradually synchronize by the end of the dance. The synchronous flashing lights mimic patterns used by the firefly species studied by Branham and Greenfield. Females of *Photinus consimilis* respond to males using flash patterns that match the frequency and duration of the male flashes. When the female signals the male, they achieve their own form of highly evolved choreography.

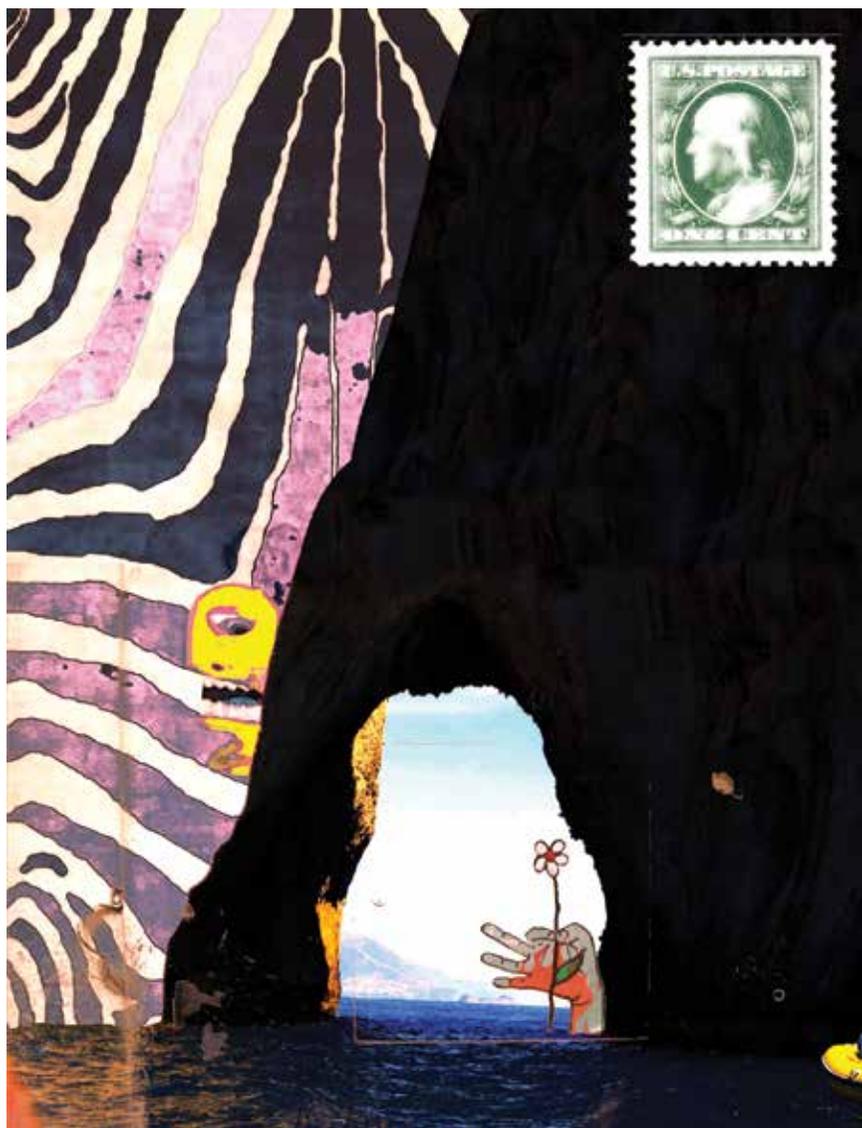
As the evening drew to a close and the crowd filtered out, the subtle sparks of real fireflies continued their evolutionary dance largely unnoticed by dancers and patrons. When summer ends, dancers abandon fields in favor of their South Burlington studio. The real fireflies remain, deep in soil or concealed aboveground, following choreography that has sustained them over eons.

The Artifact

Daniel Johnson

Crinkled and folded and worn, the envelope
sits on my shelf. Years have aged its faded skin.
The handwriting, though, is still distinct,
and An Post's stamp still guards the top right corner.
The Derryman pasted the square there,
seagull white and pasture green,
and sent it to a friend of syllables and stanzas.
But now it's been sent to me.
The envelope attracts my eye
like an obelisk, dropped into my world
by a Titan that I can only now read about,
an ancient marker that demands words in return.
So out of my desk, I get paper again,
obey the artifact and dig with the pen.

Amalfi
Julia Morrison



digital imaging

What Museum?

Mark Joyce

On our commute into school,
our car hugging the road hugging the river,
my eldest asks, “*What time is it?*”
worried we may be late.
And my youngest immediately barks back,
“*What museum?*”
and in such an incredulous tone,
we begin a fit of laughter so contagious
we are forced to pull over into a small boat-access
to collect ourselves and let the laughter subside.
Once calm, I begin to mouth *mmm, izz, ih* ,
mmm, izz, ih, the *mmm, izz, ih*, in *time is it*,
trying to massage it into the somewhat similar
beginning syllables of *museum, museum, museum*,
so that I might hear what he misheard.
And there, our rote morning route
paused unexpectedly at river’s edge,
I begin to *see* the correlation too,
between a moment in time
and a moment in a museum —
this still life hung before us:
a stock-still osprey tucked against
the blotched trunk of a long-dead elm,
camouflaged in the crook
of the only gaunt branch left,
pointing like a gothic arm
from the tree’s north side
down to the fish-full water below.
The tree itself a sculpture. Kinetic.
Or the remnant of a time-worn statue,
leading the charge from a pedestal of ledge,
our minds eager to fill in its missing limbs.
And the sun,
the star of the exhibit,

comes now too,
up and over the banked trees,
flinging gold from its brush
onto the dozens of scattered pieces of dislodged ice,
each on fire now, sparking,
a glint in their eye
as they raft the wild river into Spring,
like stars escaping their constellations.
I want to talk to the boys then about Pollack or Monet,
about Abstract Expressionists or Impressionism,
but I know our return to the quieter quiet
that comes after doubled-over laughter
and know our shared and reverent bow
before this natural canvas
are better lessons.

Besides, now I worry,
worry were I to break this spell and say,
"Have you heard of Monet?"
the youngest might respond with,
"Sure, I've learned of lonely,"
something I do not ever hope to hear,
or mishear.

Thankfully, the music is still a turn too loud
for proper conversation,
for pure discernment.

And luckily the snow tires concur,
dispelling any thought of talk
with their overriding whine,
the white noise of rubber on wet road,
now that we have pulled back out,
humming on to the next exhibition,
not nearly as concerned anymore
we might be late,
knowing we cannot truly be marked tardy,
when a moment ago we already arrived.

Pantagruel, Pant and Drool

Mallory Cain Breiner



watercolor on paper

Mine

Madison Newman

She gave me strawberry kisses
with her strawberry pink lips.
They were sweet and cool,
soft and smooth.

She kicked her feet into my lap
to be rubbed.
They were brown and cracked,
worn from too much time
dancing on the earth.

She smelled like the sweet peas of the garden.
The bees buzzed over,
looking for sweet nectar, but none could be found.

For she was all mine.

Black Tights, Size M

Sam Burns

When I tried on the business-sexy outfit,
the saleswoman told me I looked like an adult.
I was 18.
She was 19.
I bought it immediately.
The next day I wore it on my way to work.
My uniform that always smelled like deli meat stayed in my bag, and
I went to the train station.
I thought that I appeared very natural and important,
standing there near the edge in my high heels and pantyhose.
I didn't actually want to be important, but I loved the look of it—
the black line of my tights tracing down the back of my leg, especially.
I kept my tights on underneath my company slacks.
At work, there was a storage room
where I restocked the pickles and the buns and the tubs of mayonnaise,
and it was also where the owner would have sex
with the woman who was not his wife.
Everyone complained, but
I liked the latex gloves we wore.
My hands became the smooth of shaving cream commercials,
but better.
I believed, too, that if I cut myself the right way
the glove would keep everything contained.
That is not what happened when it happened.
A few days later I went back to the store to return the outfit
and I could not get my money back.

Open // Close
Mackenzie Faber



35mm film photograph

1969

Mikdyla Hoppe

~for Larry



digital photograph

The Bride, 1967

Sam Burns

In another life,
I am her seamstress,
some third cousin
bent over white in the corner.
From there, I hear everything:
The grandmother, telling the usual story
about her dead husband
who came back to her in a dream—
The well. The well, he said. Go to the well.
In the morning, four tiny claws
and a patch of wet fur
drifted in the black.
Explain *that*, she says.
Meanwhile the older sister leans over the windowsill,
her hands crawling;
everything is about to change,
even the light.
It doesn't sift for her any more, it
fractures
and she knows it will splay across
that new husband's face
the same way night climbs hard
up stone.
She'll see.
But for now, a party.
For now, drink.
Mother is gone, baking the cake.
The bride shivers in her cotton underwear.
We had almost forgotten her.
She steps into the skirt first,
then slips the sweater over her small bust.
She is 17.
She is the sun underwater,
softness, bright.

Nineteen Years After Matthew Shepard's Murder

Diane LeBlanc

I'm re-reading *The Laramie Project*,
lonely for the town I knew
before McKinney and Henderson killed Matt—
a town of train whistles and pitchers of beer
where oncoming rodeo buckles like single headlights
broke long stretches of darkness,
where I worked in a second-story brothel
reborn as a bookstore whose bones sometimes shifted
and moaned with age and the hauntings of sex—
but the play reminds me: Matt is dead,
the wooden fence where he hung is gone,
blue statice and bark scraps disappeared,
memorial cairns toppled, grit and sage
migrated, and so far from Laramie
I don't know if before ever existed or
if hate always carried ropes and knives,
drove an open pick-up and pistol whipped,
if hate always stole the victim's shoes
but never tossed them with the bloody clothes
because the leather looked rich,
if hate always insisted nothing
that night was about Matt.

Rewind Encounter

Margaret Daley



digital imaging

Beverly: Portrait of a Chain-Smoker

Alex Dugas

Kept upright by a steady diet of Marb Reds and store-brand fried chicken, she'll scan your Cheerios, balance the register, make change, and count down the minutes until her next break, all at the same time. Her name tag's got a little gold star on it and reads *Beverly*. But, the way she says it, it rhymes with "heavily."

Bevily. She's got the kind of voice that says *I've got more tar in my lungs than the Eisenhower Interstate System*, and a look on her face that tells you she'd step on you like a piss-ant if she hadn't worn her good flats today.

She's the kind of lady who licks her thumb before turning a page; who still says things like *be back in a jiffy* and *close, but no cigar*. A real take-no-shit kinda gal.

I remember the day the janitor was trying to sweep up some Skittles behind her register, and she wouldn't move an inch for him. She just stood there with her arms crossed while he scurried around on hands and knees with a dustpan, saying something about the weather. Hell of a lisp, that guy. Anyway, he got nervous. He gave up and scampered off, and Bev said, "You know what I'd do if that guy was on fire and came to me for help? I'd *spit* on him." I laughed. She didn't. I still wonder what she meant by it sometimes—whether she'd try to douse him, but she wouldn't try *that* hard, or if she was just reserving her right to plant a wet one right in his eye, circumstances be damned. As far as I know, it never came to that; probably would've made a headline or two. *AREA WOMAN SPITS ON FLAMING JANITOR, SMILES FOR FIRST TIME IN YEARS.*

Another thing: Beverly's Old, with a capital O. Like, Great Depression Old. Pyramids at Giza Old. I've fought off pterodactyls with a fucking frying pan Old. Alright, probably not *that* old, but she definitely remembers the Alamo, not to mention the night they drove old Dixie down; and thank god they did 'cause Bev's got a trailer waiting down in Key West, and mama needs a few juleps and a tan, stat.

She told me about the tattoo she always wanted one morning when the store was pretty slow. “A single rose.” She held up a bony finger as she said it. “Right above my ankle.” Of course, she had to wait for her fourth husband to die first. We’ve all been there. She tells me how the guy at the tattoo place puts her foot up between his legs and gets the gun going. “Puts my heel right over his crotch,” she says, miming the motion. “And I tell him we’ll make a deal: *you don’t hurt me, and I won’t hurt you.*” She hikes up a pant leg to show me the flower. It looks more like a raisin on a toothpick. I don’t ask if it hurt.

I haven’t seen Beverly in almost five years now. And, as it always does, the flow of time feeds us questions. How many more wrinkles is she wearing these days? Is her head still hanging on to a few last gray hairs? Has she switched to smoking lights, or is she still going full bore? The list goes on. But there’s one thing that I never ask. Contrary to every principle of modern science, I still believe she’s out there, somewhere among the living. When I close my eyes and picture it now, I see her shuffling out of a doublewide somewhere down south. Color-coordinated storm shutters behind her, pair of lawn flamingos, the works. She limps down a stair or two to the sidewalk—pockets fat from cleaning house at the big bingo game the night before—and stops to grind out a butt against the concrete with a fresh one already clamped between the pale pink ghosts of last night’s lipstick. Blowing out a slow stream of smoke, she scans the street, raises a thumb, and waits on a ride headed north. Come summertime, she’ll be back on the clock again. Those watermelons don’t scan themselves.

The Last Cigarette

Alexander Ellis

It's not the only lie you tell yourself.

Bulb Exposure

Deirdre McPhee



film photograph

Sunday Afternoon

Maddy Moore



pencil on paper

Body of Work

Olivia Nestro

I stare at myself in the mirror for hours but have no idea what I look like.

I only put on lipstick before getting in the shower or going to bed.

I find smears of red on my pillow the next morning.

I wonder if Walgreens will print the nudes I will never take.

I am waiting to feel at home in my body.

I am waiting for payday.

I am relishing in my small secret.

I am giving birth to my second and third and fourth self.

it was warmer then

Brenna Broderick

when the waves parted for your golden hair, still salty
and the sand was combed in shallow softness under a sun dripping nectar
when hands reached down to you, lifting you to the tallest shelves
and the sky was where the painted angels sang from
days danced away with spilled nail polish and splintered dollhouses
bare feet on wooden swings, flying higher with each trembling breath
the pink flowers that bloomed each year outside our bedroom window
slipping to the ground before we could run our fingers through them
when the tall men carried knock-knock-jokes
and you didn't trip over the winks that dropped from their pockets
when gravity held you gently in its hand
safe from the turbulence and truths
when bruises were clumsy bicycles and awry softballs
not faltering fists and unforgiving pavement
before you awoke to snow and solitude
before you came up for air to find rain in your eyes
before you understood how much there was to understand
when you didn't mind the sand in your bathing suit, scratching your skin
as you sang the whole way home

Ne craignez pas les requins

Trevor Work



35mm film photograph

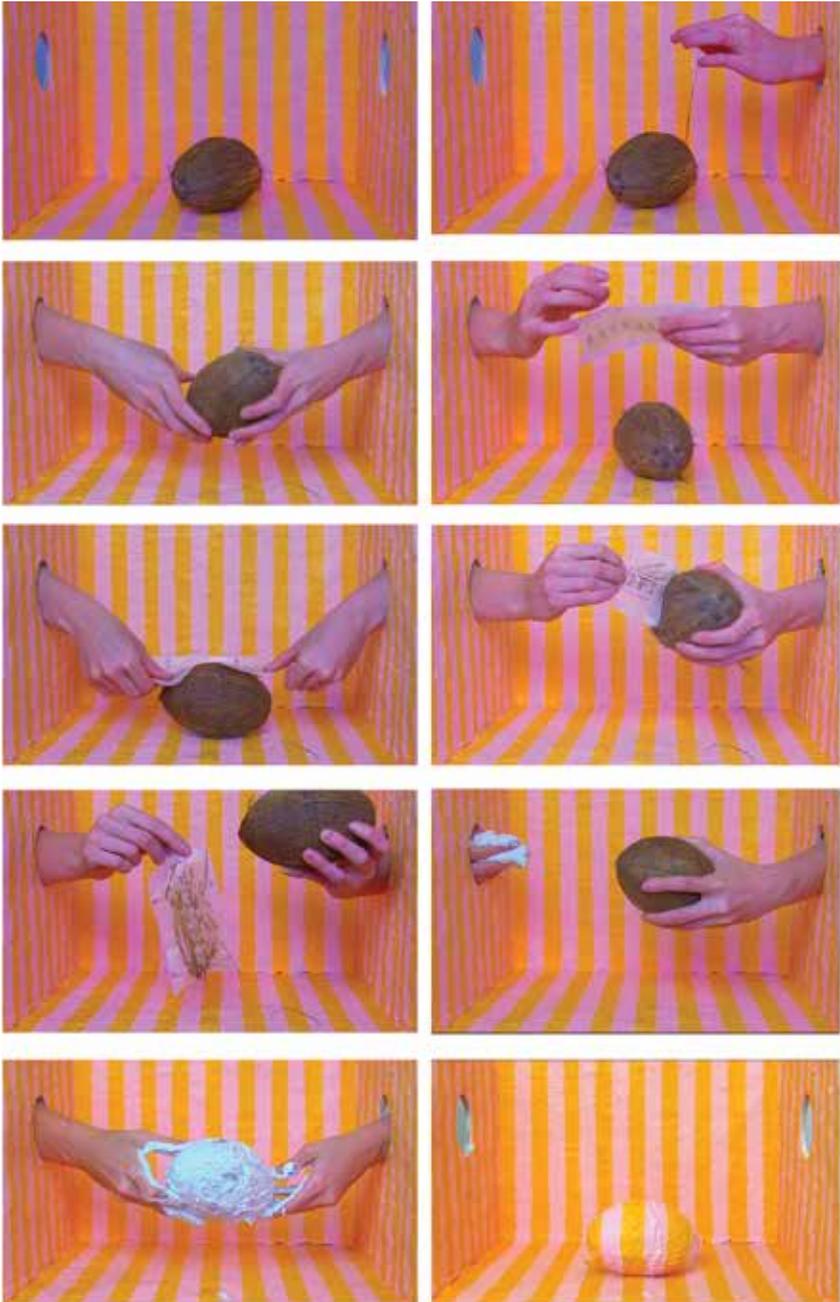
A Tendril or Two
Zana van Rooyen



digital photograph

Compliance: Waxing Coconut

Mallory Cain Breiner



frames from single channel video

M...A...R...V... (an excerpt)

Alex Dugas

Marv's story—at least the way he told it—began on the outskirts of Reno, where he was conceived at the tail end of a particularly sloppy game of five-card stud. Nine months later to the very night, he came into the world kicking under a crescent moon, the first-born son in a long line of mailmen and mouth-breathers.

He grew fast. So proud were little Marvin's parents the day he won the third-grade spelling bee, they hardly noticed that their adorable, beloved son was fast becoming a raging psychopath. "P...S...Y...C...H...O...P...A...T...H," he lisped into the microphone through the gap in his two front teeth. "Psychopath." The crowd burst into applause, at which he proceeded to pull out his 8-year-old ding-a-ling and urinate all over the pigtailed contestant beside him, all the while proclaiming his undying allegiance to "S...A...T...A...N."

They never stopped clapping. Boy, oh, boy, could that kid spell.

Fast forward fifteen years from that golden moment and our spelling bee champion was living off of Easy Mac and road kill in a trailer park just outside of Palm Desert and working as the night watchman at a day camp. Needless to say, times were tough. One night while Marv was hard at work listening to UFO talk shows and masturbating, his three live-in girlfriends back at the singlewide schemed up a way into some of this "upward mobility" stuff they'd been hearing so much about. Agreeing on what a wingnut they had on their hands, they conspired to ship Marv off to Los Angeles and pimp him out to reality television. And for a while it worked. Checks in the mailbox, chicken on the stove, and lots and lots of tequila.

Naturally, evolution had its way. Reality TV led to rehab, rehab led to religion, and religion led to a pretty dull sex life. So he started a band. The Toe Tags—too polka for the punks, too punk for the Polacks. It was fun while it lasted.

Two DUIs and a nude calendar shoot later, he landed himself back in Hollywood, this time taking blank bullets to the chest and falling face-first through sugar-glass. He was even bludgeoned in the stomach once with a full-size folding ladder by an irritatingly amicable Jackie Chan, whereupon Marv rolled back onto the sidewalk sputtering the most convincing death shudder the silver screen ever did see—a solid two and a half seconds of sheer cinematic glory that nearly sent that year’s Oscars spiraling into overtime.

“Nobody dies as good as I do,” he’d always say. “N...O...B...O...D...Y.” And, indeed, nobody did.

Melancholia

Samantha Sidorakis

Being sad is fun until it's not,
fun being something to write about,
fun being indulging every whim, every moodswing
not being never moving from bed and counting all the ways I suck,
not being hearing words and having nothing register,
when someone expected you to listen.
But I was listening!
to Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major.
My bad, I'll try to pay attention next time—
have you ever listened to Bedrich Smetana's *Má Vlast*, No. 2 *Vltava*?
Sorry what'd you say?
I could waste to nothingness listening to the Moldau,
but only if it's in E minor.

Suffering is my preferred mental state.
I am incredibly dramatic.
Pain gives me something to be pissed off about,
you know, besides everything else.
I like things to taste as bitter as I feel,
so I don't cook anything, ever—
I'm more miserable when my food is inedible.
That's fun, right?
That's not, right?
I'd waste away to nothingness if it weren't for peanut butter.
My therapist told me to be gentle with myself,
so I think I'll paint myself like a lollipop in peanut butter.

I think of my melancholy as a flower,
or rather, a vase of wilting roses
that I haven't changed in a month
and won't for at least another six,
the petals piling around the glass tombstone,
the water brown and fuzzy like coffee,

the leaves crumbling like a burnt log,
everything discolored and rotten,
but my god, have you ever smelled anything so beautiful?
I've always preferred the sight of dead flowers—
nostalgic and lovely in their devolution—
anyway, who wants a nice, boring poem about living ones?
If you ever give me a bouquet, make sure you've killed it first.

The Forest Giraffe

Demora Dessert



digital photograph

The Hole in My Rain Boots

Elly Moore

Scrolling Interrupted only
by the intention to stop scrolling
(And I think that's my whole life)
I say Isn't it funny birds
used to be the only ones doing
all the tweeting You say
Don't think about it too much
(So I don't think too much about it)
I have never had an original thought
in my entire life (I can't figure out
exactly why this bothers me) You say
I'm full of potential I say
I'm full of only potatoes and potato
potential (By which I mean only
the potential for more potatoes)
I say There's got to be more
than this So I tether myself
to the moon Protesting
whatever the fuck moonbeams
usually protest (Politics probably)
You say Not everything
has to mean something But I say
We're on a bus headed nowhere
in particular And I'm trying to love
every part of this clementine equally
(But one part doesn't taste as good)
And it's all just some messy midmorning
whisper Some melodramatic
teapot left whistling on the stove

Coffee Bean

Gabriela Elmoussaoui



digital photograph

Giving

Samantha Gillespie

It's easy to be a soap bottle
with the pump on the top and the straw
that doesn't quite reach the bottom
when dirty, demanding hands steal your insides
just for them to disappear down the drain.

Yet you remain until empty,
when the straw squelches,
and the pump gasps for air,
and the grubby palm waits patiently below
for something to cleanse its soiled fingers.

sometimes i wake up grumpy, and sometimes i let her sleep
Alex Dugas



acrylic paint on paper
3 x 5"

the stinkbug

Alex Dugas

for an unpleasant odor, his label.
though I do doubt the namer so able.
to whom, pray tell,
does the stinkbug smell
as he scurries across the table?

Road to the Sky

John Sibley Williams

The pictures on my wall have passed their expiration date. Holy ones first. Now grandparents. My children and the children I hope they have. At a certain point the room and then the whole world sours if left uneaten. Complete. Clouds coagulate, thicken. Stars green on the pond. A few can't muster sky anymore. My neighbor still drinks and bathes in the sacred urine cows empty in a country he's lost too much of the language to remember. We have horses out here. We have floods. Huge boats. His father spent fifty five years conducting snakes for tourists to gasp and awe and ask if his is maybe the better god. I try not to think about the half of me that's elephant. The half vulture. And all that's dead. Can't there be a single room without an exit? Just one road that does not *pass for* but radiates ruin. I can see the stone saints' mouths moving around some unutterable word. They're scattering chicken bones below my window now. They're placing bets on the live ones. Even when sated, it seems we can make any body edible.

Simple Complexity

Marisa Rubino



digital photograph

The Juggler

Trevor Work



35mm film photograph

Give the People What They Want

Daniel Johnson

I couldn't think of anything
subtle yet insightful.
So I said you know what, whatever.
Joyce could hardly
scratch two pennies together.
Why die that way?
Valentine's Day is a Hallmark holiday.
Mother's Day is a con.
Do you see what they charge
for that flimsy shit in CVS?
I'm gonna write something
and throw in some sunsets
and my dying dog Spot
and a rose I saw yesterday
and a marriage proposal on the beach,
and then I'll sell it
to those big fat card companies.
The CEOs will court me
in glassy white boardrooms
and then I'll be a poet,
a paid poet,
and I'll be filthy fucking rich.

Brate and Carrel

Carl Potter

Scene: Two twenty somethings out for an after-breakfast stroll are just passing by St. Agatha's School.

B: Holy shit! Do you see what I see?

C: You mean the school?

B: Hell no! Those two hippos.

C: Don't talk that way about the nuns. Besides, they're not that fat.

B: Nuns? What nuns?

C: The two that just went into the school. You were talking about them, right?

B: No, not nuns. Hippos, animals, big ones.

C: I don't see any animals.

B: What the hell's a matter with you? Right there, next to the fire door.

C: Brate, there are no hippos, or any other kind of animals, by the school. Period!

B: They're looking straight at us. Both of them, with their beady little eyes.

C: Brate?

B: What? You don't see them?

C: Nope.

B: Jesus! What's going on? I haven't felt right since breakfast.

C: I put a few peyote buttons in your Raisin Bran this morning.

B: God, now they're camels.

Primal
Jenna McCarthy



acrylic paint and India ink on canvas
39 x 48"

Sun Gazing

Annemarie Kennedy



digital photograph

Macbeth in Therapy

Cory Warren

After I put the bottle of wine on the belt, the cashier asked for my license. Her earrings were bells lost in wisps of gray willowy hair, only discernible by their gentle chimes when she turned her head. She looked over my birth date and said, “Aries. Oof.”

“What?” I asked, “What do you mean?”

“You’re in for quite the month,” she told me with a knowing smirk and handed me my license. It was the most Californian way things could have gone in the check-out queue at the Grocery Outlet.

This news came as a surprise, given I was only in San Diego for five weeks, her premonition arriving in the middle of the second. How eventful could life become in that short a time? I was only there to watch a cat. I began to think it over the moment I took my wine, cantaloupe, and bag of tortillas out the front doors. Even while balancing the three items with my keys in hand—having momentarily forgotten the reusable bags or bust policy—I couldn’t help but wonder how this would all shake out. Perhaps I was brought to this slow-moving place for a cosmic cause. The cat, unmoved by my juggling act upon entering the apartment, signaled otherwise.

So I waited, spending much of my time in a feline sprawl on the sunny couch reading book after book. The cat rarely moved from my side, staunchly and deliberately stuck between myself and the edge of the sofa so I couldn’t get up. I thought, maybe if I stay in the apartment I can avert whatever terrifying fate the cashier had intimated. Surely, I thought, looking at the carbon monoxide detector, a gleaming kitchen knife, and a candle placed suspiciously close to a curtain, very little of consequence could occur here. But I grew concerned that my immobility might unduly implicate the cat in any number of fatal situations.

It was disappointing after the first few days that my mind had immediately assumed “quite the month” necessarily implied harm, danger, and dismay. What of self-discovery, epiphanies, grand clarifications? I had sensed before that my life’s event horizon skewed toward quietness, though I have also witnessed, disbelieving, how precariously inaction gives way to irresponsible action.

For instance, shortly after my impromptu fortune telling, the upstairs neighbors embarked upon a fuckfest of some ten hours. It grew louder and more histrionic with the minute, and I waited for that inevitable crescendo, one whose diminishment it seemed would never arrive. Perhaps this was the one night they designated for sex, now making up for a month of celibacy. After a few insomniac hours, it began to feel unfair, being so exhausted from sex without actually having it. I lay in bed motionless, terrified that the noise of any movement might penetrate the thin ceiling, alerting them to my unwilling voyeurism. My state of immobilization, somehow, gave way to a great profusion of dissent, a hell-bent will to deliver consequences. I put the cat in the bathroom, out of the path of my cyclonic wrath. I threw things: a lamp and metal bowls, wielding a broomstick whose tip whacked the ceiling thrust after furious thrust. I paused, regaining my breath, only to discover the upstairs neighbors had not yet ceased.

I saw the men the next morning as I sipped my coffee and silently contemplated my actions; having just tiptoed through the wreckage of the night, I decided to console myself with acts of goodwill toward the cat, who joined me in the path of golden light that extended to the patio. I would buy the cat a new toy, and replace my sister’s lamp; maybe I would indulge the cat with nip, and take advantage of the state’s recently-enacted recreational pot allowances for myself; I would need to place a work order with the complex for the new cracks I cleft in the ceiling as well. Joyously, my neighbors sauntered by and smiled at me briefly, flashing their immaculate tanned bodies adorned in floral swim trunks. I had resolved

to stay quiet, not let out a word. But just as they were about to turn their eyes away, I asked, “Do you know where I could find the nearest Home Goods?” They said it was in the plaza down the road, actually. Next to the Grocery Outlet.

I did not drive my sister’s Prius to the plaza with any intention of dropping into the Grocery Outlet. I deliberately drove on by, parked on the Home Goods side of the lot. But the magnetism of mystery and unanswered confusions dragged me by my Birkenstocks to the store. I justified it with the cantaloupe, which I devoured the previous night after my fit; I wanted another one, one I could enjoy and consume calmly, appreciatively.

The cantaloupes were on sale, so I bought two; red wine could be had at a discounted price as well; I had a reusable bag, so I indulged. I did not know when I would have the time to eat two cantaloupes or drink two more bottles of wine on my own, but it was an excuse to have my I.D. checked yet again. The wizened mystic did not appear to recognize the sleep-deprived customer; her face stoically registered mine, as if the furrows of my expectant brow were a sacred but tediously familiar text she could read with unchallenged ease.

Again, she saw my birth date. “Oof.” As she was about to hand it back to me, she pulled it toward her once more, in disbelief of my zodiac sign, and let out another “Oof,” now followed by a few tsks. “Aries.” I nodded to her.

“Oh my. What a time to be you.” She handed my license back to me, and gestured to the chip card reader. I followed the instructions on the pinpad, but I could not leave without knowing what *she* meant to instruct me.

“What do you mean?”

“Quite a time. Quite.”

I paused. How on earth could this proceed? What was she hiding from me? But before I could ask, she told me I could remove my card from the slot.

“You saved ten dollars and seventy-eight cents today. Next,” she called to the customer behind and nodded me goodbye.

The cat toy was as cheap as it appeared flimsy; I could imagine the cat’s first tugs tearing down the seams of the helpless stuffed mouse. The lamp was on clearance. I did not plug it in immediately when I returned home. It sat in its box for another week. The cat was desperate for me to replace the lamp so she could sit in the box. After a while, I relented, though once I replaced the lamp, I did not turn it on. I did not feel ready to take any more action, not of any kind, no matter how mundane. I was not ready to move on without understanding how this would be quite a month, quite a time to be me.

Another week passed; in that time, I forced myself out of the house. There were cliffs nearby, specifically named for the Pacific sunsets they overlook. Though I sometimes suffer from vertiginous spells, I knew I could not die there, for the horoscope suggested I had quite the month ahead of me and a few weeks remained of that estimation. Lo and behold, I survived the walk along the crowded cliffs, where the extremities of land and seascape clashed with such casual drama; among the elements, I witnessed the very conflict ahead of me—letting the world, my world, become itself without the catastrophes of contrivance. Just as the breaking waves shape every crevice of the cliff, each day, its joys and distresses, would mold my fate whether I willed them to or not.

Such comfort with contingency reaches its inevitable height, swiftly undone by the returning choruses of calamity. Another few days on my own—disastrous. I felt plagued by insufficiency. This was supposed to be my time to reflect and return home with a course of action; a new job perhaps, or plans to move to a new city. Here I was, on an unfamiliar terrain whose most glorious quality—the undying sunshine—eluded my mood.

Phil arrived in response to the work order. He being the complex's super and it being his responsibility to ask, Phil inquired how these dents along the ceiling had formed in the first place. I said I just found them there, and he granted that this was an old unit so these things were expectable. I offered him cantaloupe and he accepted. Shortly after eating a few slices, he became visibly uneasy, perhaps now feeling he owed me a quicker reparation, or worse, conversation. With a little distance between us and my attention given over to the cat outside, our imagined dilemma resolved itself. Another opportunity lost.

The news reminded me that recreational pot was now legal in the state as of a few weeks earlier. I considered marijuana might only exacerbate my state of paranoia but I ordered a joint on a delivery app anyway. I had heard the dispensaries were eager to cash in on delivery services while humans were still on the job. It would be drones soon, then live-in robot spouses to supply us our every convenience. I thought at least with a human to deliver my Indica there was a possibility to fulfill the witch's incantation.

“We threw in a Sativa hybrid since it's our inaugural week,” Wayne told me at the door. I thanked him, overcome by the convenience of the system; here I was, in an unfamiliar place with no one to call a friend but my feline companion—whose amicability was questionable at best—and I had someone to buy weed from. It took no effort on my part. He didn't need to like me or even trust me. It was arranged over an app, in accordance with the state law. I could pre-pay on my phone, tip him, and we would both move on with our nights, himself the richer, myself the higher. Something did feel lost, though, that all too cherished moment when the dealer, not quite a friend but nonetheless standing in your living room, shared a few incipient hits on your couch with you. Wayne did not stay any longer than he needed to and I felt as if I had prevented our friendship. I could have invited him in, though perhaps he would be obliged to refuse my offer since sales are regulated now. Possibilities.

Guessing how this would be “quite the month” occasionally felt comical, until suddenly, it wasn’t. It carried a doubtful weariness, like some therapeutic exercise aimed at identifying things worth changing, an activity that seemed designed to demonstrate its own futility, because no matter what’s conjured for the future, life will happen anyway. I felt like Macbeth, knowing his fate before it is dealt. Like Macbeth in therapy—reeling toward self-inflicted doom, but not without intense examination and critique. And at the end of it all I would only find myself an otherwise unemployed cat-sitter instead of a Scottish thane, sitting on a second-hand sofa, the cat using my leg for a scratching post, instead of a throne.

Nonetheless, I still tried. I stained my hands with shitty red wine from the Grocery Outlet—nothing. I stopped watering the plants—then, for once, it rained in San Diego and they bloomed the same as ever. The cat went missing outside and I frantically combed the complex—she was waiting at the front door when I returned, no such spectacle to satiate my dull existence. The smug neighbors didn’t fuck again, maybe opting for the more discreet but no less enjoyable exchange of blow jobs above my borrowed bed. The Prius failed to dissatisfy in any operational capacity, and despite the abundance of identical vehicles in Southern California, I always ended up in the correct car.

In the time that remained, I spent nearly all my days outdoors, whether hiking, wandering around the city, or lazing on the beach. All the while, I considered what had really been lacking over the past few weeks—any attention to my work. A single day without writing can incite undue mania, let alone almost an entire calendar month. I had barely left the apartment and yet I had not written at all. A place to myself had done nothing for the two long pieces I was not yet ready to call novels, nor the four short story drafts waiting to be edited, all stuck in that peculiarly cruel purgatory between computer file, legal pad scribble, and node of imagination. To say nothing of the dozen e-mails I owed friends and former colleagues, racked up from months, perhaps years, of bad communication.

Walking through the woods, in the city, along the shore after so many days indoors felt like more than a singular orgasmic stupor. It was an orgy of ideas, words, abstract concerns clarified. I would return to the apartment from Torrey Pines, Coronado, Ocean Beach, and revisit the stories I had begun to try telling long ago. Sentences I had grappled with all those tireless hours before arranged their words and punctuation in meticulous syntax and immaculate articulation. It became clear why the month had been so quite.

On my last day in San Diego, I drove to the Grocery Outlet to tell my sorceress, that Merlin of Mission Bay, clairvoyant of marked-down La Croix, that her prophecy had come true. But she was nowhere to be found, not in the aisles, at her usual till, or meandering about the parking lot on a smoking break. I bought a pound of litter for the cat and asked the new cashier if he had seen his silver-haired counterpart. “Myrna left,” he told me.

“She left?”

“She transferred to the Sun Valley Grocery Outlet.”

“Sun Valley? Like the Sun Valley that’s just north of LA?”

He nodded.

“I live in LA,” I told him.

“Then why are you here?” he asked.

“I’m cat-sitting for my sister.”

“Some gig. Hey, why are you looking for Myrna anyway?” He took liberties since there were no customers behind me.

“She told me I was in for quite the month and she was right.”

“I’m pretty sure she tells that to everyone,” he said, handing me my receipt without telling me how much I had saved.

I departed an hour before my sister would return from her travels; I couldn’t bear to tell her how I had spent the past month. I filled the bowls with hard cat food and cold filtered water, cleared the box of clumpy landmines and tossed in fresh litter. The cat had grown so accustomed to self-reliance in the midst of my turmoil, she barely sniffed at my finger when I scratched her farewell.

I would take the train back to Los Angeles, return to my own apartment, which awaited me with its own annoyances, terrors, and situations. Against all instinct, I would trek through the traffic on Route 5 in my own Prius, buy more cantaloupes and bottles of wine at the Grocery Outlet in Sun Valley, and wait in Myrna’s line as long as it took. Then I would hand over my license and ask her what’s in store for the month ahead.

Blue Dragon Nudibranch

Lily Keyes



digital photograph

Pont Neuf

Luis Lázaro Tixerina



watercolor
7 x 10"

**About Robert Graves Who Died on This Day—
Goodbye to All That**

Luis Lázaro Tisherina

Goodbye to bones and flesh,
Goodbye to all the blood that flows down
into war trenches and hospital floors,
Or spilled blood between lovers,
But it was on a cold day like this day,
I heard you were dead,
And I was young, so I read your poems
in a snow-covered wood,
Where I wept.

We Would Be Artists Someday

John Sibley Williams

If not for the house that kept us in it as a quartered fruit sits sweetly split in a mouth, sweetly & split I cannot imagine we'd have stayed too much longer. The recirculating husk of air the air conditioner coughed up; all the doors sealed shut. Dense, almost unbreathable summer just a window away. Like every sun, this one was worked-over, bruised, soft & fiery, fat with seeds we knew how to eat but never shown how to plant. Like any body, ours weren't permanent. Umbilical clouds woven around the sky, nurturing, if slightly re-angled, suffocating. Like my sister, how she lived just long enough to be named before the body that kept her calmly spit her back out, unformed, blue. No need to explain the darkness to the light, or vice versa. There's no need to explain *stay* to a child who has never learned leaving. Dad said it was an art, this holding home up to the chest & never letting go. We would be artists someday, he said, as he unsealed the summer door & stepped through & closed it behind.

Surmount
Sophia Adams



digital photograph

Dipingere
Margaret Daley



acrylic paint on Bristol board

Meat Man

Connor Thurston

“What is this, some kind of sick joke?” scoffed chief forensic investigator Gareth Brown. He laughed at the abomination before him, which was sprawled out on the examination table.

“Not according to Agent Carlos, sir,” muttered Brown’s intern, Charles Downey.

“Charlie, only speak when spoken to,” barked Gareth. Before the two, on this Friday night in the morgue, lay a most disturbing visage. It was an accumulation of charred flesh, muscle tissue, ventricles, ground up meat, and internal organs, all merged together into a human-like form. It was about the size of an adult. Where the eyes should have been, there were two nickels for each. The smell of copper emanated from this bulging crimson mass. Gareth initiated tests and started prodding the coagulation of flesh.

“It’s definitely human. Or *was* rather. And why didn’t Agent Carlos give me a briefing?” questioned Brown.

“Not sure, boss. He barely said anything to me when the EMTs brought it in. You would think they would at least look slightly disturbed, but they were fine. In fact, one of the EMTs looked bored out of his mind,” rambled Charles. Gareth scowled at Charles and left the room.

“Incompetent intern,” mumbled Gareth angrily, as he shoved the double doors open and left to go call the detective. Charlie stared at the oozing mass. From a hole where the mouth should have been, a mahogany colored liquid seeped out. A familiar smell wafted up from the table. Charlie was immediately taken back to his childhood. He could see the flower wallpaper and the grandfather clock. Everyone was gathered around the table for lamb chop dinner. A delicate, rich sauce coated the meat. Asparagus steamed on a platter to the right. His family politely sampled their dinner after saying grace. The smell of the lamb chops was

now clouding the morgue. Charles eyed the abomination on the table as his mouth salivated. He ripped a piece of the flesh and put it in his mouth.

Gareth violently dialed the phone in his office. He fumbled with the cord until it was fairly straight. After it rang for a while, Agent Carlos answered.

“Brown, how can I help you?” asked the agent.

“Carlos, I mean you no disrespect, but next time there’s a special case could you alert me and not my intern?” pleaded Brown. Carlos was silent for a moment.

“Special case? Today was a slow day, Brown.”

“You know, that . . . thing with no skin. My intern said you and the EMTs brought him in and you talked with him,” explained Brown.

“Man with no skin? Brown, I haven’t seen the EMTs all day today. Have you been drinking again?” inquired Carlos.

“If you didn’t bring him in then who—” Before Brown could finish his sentence he cursed and hung up. He ran over to the stairs, almost falling as he did so. Gareth burst through the doors to a ghastly sight. Charles was slumped over on the floor. He was bloated and his skin was a shade of pallid yellow. A black liquid leaked from his eyes, nose, ears, and mouth. Brown cursed and could taste bile in the back of his throat. He ran to the bathroom and expelled the contents of his stomach violently into the toilet. Gareth Brown trudged back to the examination table. He wiped his mouth. Brown reached into the pocket of his lab coat and took out a flask. He downed the entire contents of the flask and put it back in his pocket. Ignoring the fallen Charles, he sniffed the air and raised an eyebrow. The room smelled of a shrimp boil. Not just any shrimp boil, but the exact culinary item he made every month for his family. He could see the shrimp, corn, potatoes, crab meat, and

sausage all strewn about on a table covered with newspaper. A perfect mix of spices covered the food, giving it the savory yet spicy taste necessary for a perfect shrimp boil. His family, with forks in hand, dug in as they listened to the radio play bluegrass. He reached for a piece of the pulpy mass. He downed four pieces before falling over and hitting his head on the floor. The meat man was displayed on his table triumphantly overlooking the pool of blood and black liquid that accumulated under his festering offal.

After the Storm

Diane LeBlanc

Not a smudge of color.

Snow clumps like silent white
birds in the lilac bush.

I follow deer tracks into the woods.

Hooves press deep, clean holes,
good for planting, if only.

I imagine a logic of migration.

From corn field, across this trail
and train tracks, to the next corn field.

From feast to feast on any other day.

But today, prints flung wide
transcribe hunger.

Drifts obscure divisions.

Between believe/want to believe,
a snow-blind walk in search of landmarks:

wind turbines/black walnuts/a frozen mole.

The slow return from limbo
is the plow razing drifts to asphalt and grass.

Beside the road, two crows.

Magicians, they pull and pull
lengths from a dead rabbit's body.

Here blood, there salt and dirt.

If hunger is the call,
response is this bloody feast delayed.

History of Resilience

Margaret Daley



digital imaging

The Reading

Daniel Johnson

I've been sentenced by tribunal
for a crime that they know I'll commit.
They line me up before them,
a microphone in front of me.
Its cyclops-stare dares me come closer.
They command me go on,
so I do.
I grasp the silver eye with sweating palms,
and I speak into it.
And when I'm finished
they execute me with machinegun applause.

Lemons

Luis Lázaro Tiberina



Lemons
Paris, France
Luis Lázaro Tiberina
Dec. 18, 2017

watercolor on paper
7 x 10"

Endangered Birds of America

Meghan Hjerpe



watercolor and black ink
4.5 x 4.95'

Portrait

Victoria Sullivan

“Don’t worry,” she said,
as her hands worked,
“It’s not an orange.”
Wide eyes looked at him
as he looked
at what surely looked
like an orange.
If not an orange, then definitely a grapefruit.
“Smile for me,
will you, Grandpa?”
Two hard dots
and one half circle later,
her masterpiece was complete.

Surf at Sunset

Samantha Rossi



digital photograph

Between Fact and Footnote

Diane LeBlanc

Fiddle strings separating North and South
will answer a bow but not tonight's cold wind.

In the garden of superscript, everyone
turns from abandoned zucchini.

Children will imagine turkeys but draw tanks.
Blue-feathered fear.

I find an hour in a borrowed book
tucked between fact and footnote.

I read in leaps and leave
two minutes in my cup.

Note: Tufts of fur in a wire fence say which creature
tore in, tore through, got away.

But a footnote should never be the last word
unless it proves history wrong.

For the Painter

Brenna Smith



digital photograph

It's Rude to Stare

Emily Joyce



acrylic paint and tinfoil on canvas
16 x 20"

Orpheus to Eurydice

Emily Galow

I.

it's been raining these past few days. couldn't sleep for . . . well. for a long time. everything was so loud. the thunder roared into the hollow of my chest, the lightning shook me awake, and i couldn't breathe. just lay there gasping, trying to inhale, trying to hear my heartbeat.

the rain kept on. pitter-pattered, drip-dripped, a steadily chaotic rhythm. i would listen to it, late at night, and i would tap my fingers in time with the rain hitting the roof, hitting the roof, hitting the roof, until it was dawn.

it's sunnier right now, but it keeps raining in my head. or maybe the noise is old radio static that's almost a song, i don't know. point is that i still can't sleep. point is that everything is still too fucking loud.

II.

today i was eating oatmeal, and it's funny—i almost choked. yeah, i know, i know, but i'd forgotten to pour myself any orange juice, and i'd forgotten to swallow properly, and i'd forgotten your favorite oatmeal flavor. can you believe it? i really did. the food clogged my throat, had to spit it out. wasn't really hungry the rest of the day.

your favorite oatmeal flavor is peaches and cream, peaches and cream, peaches and cream, peaches and cream. i have not forgotten. i will not forget. i will never forget.

III.

music is timed silence. there are notes, of course, lines and dots on a page, instrumentation and vocals, but the one constant in music is the silence, the moments when no one is playing anything at all. music measures those silences, and then it whittles it, cuts it to pieces, scatters it about, and dusts it lightly over the air. sometimes, in some pieces, if the acoustics are good enough, the music stops, but it doesn't really end: the

resonance reverberates deep in the heart. a children's choir sings from high up in the rafters, for the briefest of seconds. the silence unfurls itself. the silence blooms unendingly, eternally, lingeringly.

in the mornings before work, you would eat your peaches and cream oatmeal in quick, precise bites. you would listen to my humming, to the rustling of my staff paper, to the birds calling to each other outside, and you would not say anything at all. you would just kiss me goodbye when you left.

IV.

i have tried to write something for you. it is foolish, of course: i should have written something for you a long time ago. the titles are all absolutely horrible. you would hate them: *the dark and silent world*, *hymn #19*, *the lyre is too worn for this*, *the bed is larger than i thought*, *suite for you: movement i: i am sorry*, *movement ii: at least i got to glimpse the mole on your chin*, *the little scar above your left eyebrow from a childhood accident with scissors*, *your eyes, dark and deep*. *at least now i cannot forget your face*, *movement iii: the nightingale*.

they aren't all bleak, if you're worried about that. some of them are struggling towards joy.

i must ask—i know i do not deserve to ask, but i must: can i cry for you? please. please allow me to weep. please allow the music written for you to be terrible, something that no one will ever want to listen to, not even me.

V.

did you see me shut my eyes almost as soon as i turned my head? did you see me try to reach for you, to grasp your hand in mine? you must have. you must have seen that. you must have reached back.

VI.

the house is an alien thing. it is not ours anymore, so it is not quite mine now. i leave it for work and i come back and there is no one

else inside, of course, and it all feels the same. There are too many of my things lying about, and none of yours.

VII.

someday, i promise you, i will play your song, and the title will be fitting, and the acoustics will be good, and the resonance will settle deep, deep into air and lungs and bones and throats and hearts. in the briefest of seconds, everyone will be alive. everyone will hear your voice from up above, high in the rafters, and it will linger on in the lingering silence. not one person will clap, and then, finally, there will be music again.

Peacock Mantis Shrimp

Lily Keyes



digital photograph

In the British Museum Reading Room

Buff Lindau

Chinese students back in the '60s
circled the great round reading room
of the British Museum then stood quietly
behind the seat where Marx wrote—
groups of them would show up most days
quiet, soft-stepping, clad in drab gray overcoats,
wearing glasses and cropped hair
occasionally whispering, staring
at the place where he'd sat,
or maybe just circled the room
since no one knew exactly where,
but knew he sat in the British Museum.

Those students peopled my months in the scholars' domain.
Librarians brought me oversized bound periodicals
a century old so I could discover
what George Eliot's peers thought of *Middlemarch*—
and sit in a wooden chair worn smooth,
with lamp light illuminating my assigned space,
serious books piled around me on one of the long desks
that spiraled out in radials through that great domed room.
I circled her sober insights while Chinese students at the periphery
searched for the meaning of Karl Marx's guide to life.

Crown
Julia Morrison



mixed media

Potami

Dimitrios Stamoulis

Pressing my feet upon
the bridge which rests
on the gaping air
above the river

The wing strums through the
standing trees as if
they were strings
on the world's violin.

Grandfathered branches
sit below the sky
which has a slight scarlet from
the hidden sun.

Looking over the
Merrimack, it causes
a forgetfulness towards
a city's drug
and poverty problems.

[Addicts and kings share their view]

These things that can't be
changed are the reason
we love the river,
and where it runs through.

As the sun rests
on the water;
Housing is holy,
the river is my home.

40 Days

Olivia Nestro

I sat at your kitchen table
Watching you take her hands
And running them across the cupboards
You made her touch every cup, every plate, saying
This is yours. This is yours. This is yours. This too.

I got home at 4:00 a.m., late enough to hear the first morning call to prayer.
The cab driver dropped me off at the main road and I walked the rest of
the way home.

“Ma’a Salama”

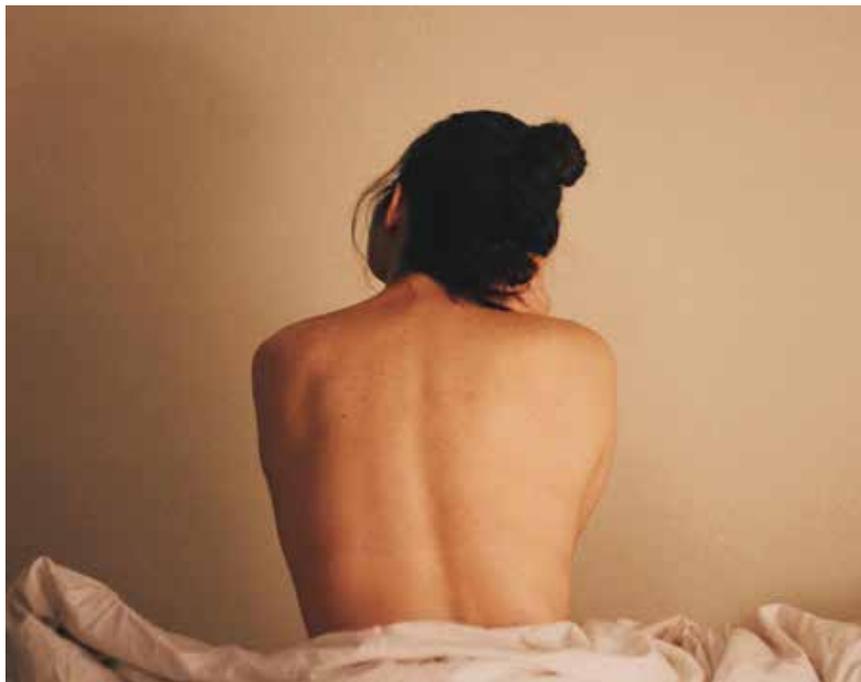
I spent a night in a city I didn’t know.

Of course she was worried.

What time you get back? It’s too late. Too late. You’re like my daughter now.

Sleepy Bean

Gabriela Elmoussaoui



digital photograph

Boom-shacka-lacka.

~ Will Marquess

Contributors' Notes

Sophia Adams is a Math major, activist, president, and artist who takes photographs, paints, and enjoys fermenting things in her free time. Next year, she's looking forward to moseying on trails and hanging around crags in the White Mountains with her human best friend, Annie, and her canine best friend, Ernest, while studying to be a meteorologist.

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. Breiner makes sculpture, installation, painting and video that explore ideas of the body, gender, memory, and fiction. She is currently an Adjunct Professor of Art at Saint Michael's College.

Brenna Broderick is a sophomore majoring in Political Science. She is recalling that sophomore etymologically means "wise fool," and believes she is now very much that. She hopes she always will be.

Sam Burns is a potato enthusiast living in northern Idaho.

Margaret (Maggie) Daley is an Elementary Education and Art double major.

Demora Dessert is a double major in Media Studies & Digital Arts and Theatre from New Hampshire. She's loves paint by numbers, potatoes, and all things related to space and cats, and she dreams of boldly going where no one has gone before...

Ella Dorval Hall is an Environmental Studies student from Newbury, Massachusetts with an interest in using poetry and other mediums as mechanisms for self-expression and catalysts for social and environmental change.

Alex Dugas '15 likes to write and play with nunchucks. Yes, at the same time.

Megan Durocher '12 (BA), '14 (MA) lives in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont where she finds inspiration for the artwork she creates. Primarily a sculptor, Megan opened an Etsy shop in 2014 called *Megan Makes Art*. She is a book-lover, a Golden Girls fan, a board-gamer, and a food enthusiast. One of her greatest joys is spending time with her 99 year-old grandmother, Mrs. O, whose photograph was featured in the 2011 edition of the *Onion River Review*.

Alex Ellis is a graduate student at the University of Vermont studying history. He can be found lurking around Burlington, writing poems and spreading the rouse to the rabble, among other oddities. He is currently working on a dedication to the late & great John Berryman.

Gabriella Elmoussaoui is the coordinator for the Center for Women and Gender at Saint Michael's College and a graduate student in the Clinical Psychology program. Her photography is her best (and only) form of stress relief.

Mackenzie Faber is a senior social theory/birthday cake/red wine/people-watching enthusiast who rides the New York City subway to Union Square for fun. She thinks about the unsuspecting subjects in her photographs often, and wonders where they are right now.

Emily Galow is a senior English major and Gender Studies minor. She would like to thank her friends and family, especially those who read the first drafts of this piece, for all of their support and encouragement. She would also like to thank everyone who worked on and submitted pieces to the *Onion River Review*, and she gives a special shout-out to Anais Mitchell's album *Hadestown*, the inspiration behind "Orpheus to Eurydice."

Emma Gilfix '17 crossed paths with a sherpa in Ladakh, India in 2015. He was holding a cross-breed of a goat and a sheep, born just two hours earlier. Dozens more were behind the stone wall where he stood smiling.

Samantha Gillespie graduated from Saint Michael's in 2017 with a double major in English and Classics.

Meghan Hjerpe is a junior Fine Arts and Art Education major at Saint Michael's College. Her piece, driven by her interest in environmentalism, contains an illustration of every species of endangered bird in the United States and all US Territories. This piece aims to remind the viewer that the 80 species pictured are merely a factor in multiplying the number of animals harmed by human impact.

Mikayla Hoppe is a History and English double-major from Minnesota. She dreams of being a writer (or a Jedi, whichever comes first). She wears sweatpants more often than not, digs authors named Pierce, and is always down to spout history facts. The photo she submitted is of her Great Uncle Larry, who served in Vietnam, and passed away in the fall of 2017.

Dan Johnson is a senior English major and a member of the men's lacrosse team. Dan is from Ringwood, New Jersey and spent the fall of 2016 on the banks of the River Lee in Cork, Ireland.

Emily Jeanne Joyce is a Biochemistry and Studio Art double major from Hopkinton, Massachusetts. She is a scientist by dawn and artist by dusk, whose mission this year was to not lose her Knight Card.

Mark Joyce, class of '87, hides out in the hills of Richmond, Vermont with his wife and two young sons.

Annemarie Kennedy '99 lives in Providence, RI with her troll doll sidekick Moonie and with the cat in the photograph, who is more photogenic than cuddly but happily seeking the sun when she can. Annie is still trying to figure out her life but suspects that whatever happens will involve words, a camera, a guitar, and cookies.

Lily Keyes (Journalism & Digital Arts '12) explored the alien-like undersea world during an underwater photography internship in Mozambique through Africa Media and Oceans Research. She currently works with MIT's international internship program, overseeing communications and traveling to provide coverage on overseas projects.

Diane LeBlanc '86 is a writer, teacher, and book artist. She is the author of four poetry chapbooks: *This Space for Message* (2017), *Sudden Geography* (2014), *Dancer with Good Sow* (2008), and *Hope in Zone Four* (1998). Diane teaches at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Website: www.dianeblancwriter.com.

After three-plus decades as PR/Marketing Director for Saint Michael's College, **Buff Lindau** retired in 2014. Yet even in retirement, her love for Saint Michael's has only grown. She especially loves the *Onion River* and its high-energy editors and its rare and wonderful adviser Will Marquess. And of course she loves it when they select one of her poems for their superb review.

Declan McCabe is a professor in the Biology Department. His specialty is the ecology of aquatic insects, but he writes more broadly about the intersection of humans with the rest of the natural world.

Jenna McCarthy is a 2012 St. Mike's alum. Since graduating she has spent her days working, painting, traveling to the depths of Mordor (but by plane not eagle), and exploring the world as a pizza connoisseur in the remaining years of her 20s.

The common objects in our homes, especially the gifts, are windows that open on to other times and places. **Tim McGillicuddy** is a grateful graduate of SMC, class of '84.

Deirdre McPhee is a Studio Arts major with an anticipated Economics minor from Boston, MA. She is a big fan of darkroom photography.

Elly Moore is a moss-lovin' junior jellybean with a passion for lengthy overdramatic sighs and eating lunch before 10 a.m. When it rains she pulls on her holey rain boots for puddle jumping jaunts with the worms.

Maddy Moore is a dancing, doodling marshmallow moonbeam who can eat her weight in French fries & thinks cilantro tastes like soap. She saves Sundays for sweatpants, sleeping, and sunset strolls.

Julia Morrison is a senior Elementary Education and Art double major from Lexington, MA. She is constantly doodling, photographing and creating, leaving a trail of art everywhere she goes. If it weren't for art . . . she wouldn't be in this book.

Olivia Nestro is a senior studying Political Science, Gender Studies, and Peace & Justice Studies. Her poem "40 Days" is inspired by her Jordanian host mother, Abeer. Her poem "Body of Work" is inspired by her lived experience in which being alive and being a woman can be very complicated and very confusing.

Madison Newman loves the color yellow, baby goats, and fun socks. If anyone knows where she can purchase a pair of yellow socks with baby goats on them, please let her know. In her free time, Maddie can be found buying too many flowers and singing poorly.

Carl Potter is a retired adjunct professor of Computer Science, and this is his second published work ever. Writing short fiction has been a lifelong dream that has come to fruition. A special thanks to his coach, Liz.

Samantha Rossi is a Psychology major and Business and Education minor from Fairfield, Connecticut. She runs on the Women's Cross Country team at St. Mike's and is a mentor for Middle School Mentors, a club through MOVE. She has been taking photos since she was young and developed a passion for photography as the years went on. Wherever she travels to, from Los Angeles to New York City, Sam loves to photograph the world around her and capture a new perspective of the world.

Marisa Rubino is a senior Biology major from Maryland who found her love for photography while exploring her passion and curiosity for the environment. Through her images she hopes others will notice the beauty of all beings in nature.

Samantha Sidorakis is a senior studying English, Political Science, and French. Her favorite things include: long walks, honey in her tea, reading in bed on Sunday mornings, thrift store shopping, 2000-piece puzzles, cheeseburgers, going to the movies, and inscriptions in the covers of used books.

Brenna Smith is a Mathematics major with minors in Psychology and Studio Art from Pawling, New York.

Dimitrios Stamoulis is a sophomore, and a Political Science major. This poem was written one morning while looking at a sunrise over the Merrimack River. The title is Greek for “river.”

Victoria Sullivan is a lover of most citrus fruits, especially lemons.

Connor Thurston is a freshman from Cheshire, MA. He is an English major with a Creative Writing minor and enjoys writing stories of science fiction and horror.

Luis Lázaro Tijerina is a published author of short stories, poetry, military theory, and military history. Mr. Tijerina has also published a book of photos of Paris entitled *I'll See You in Paris*. He resides currently in Burlington, Vermont, but as with any serious American writer, his home is in Paris.

Zana van Rooyen presents two truths and a lie: 1) She is allergic to seafood but grew up on an island—a circumstance that sparked her love for irony from a young age. 2) She owns four robes, one for every season. 3) She believes cilantro tastes like soap and doesn't quite understand how anyone could possibly think otherwise.

Cory Warren '16 is a writer, plant-lover, and cat-whisperer currently based on Cape Cod. He thanks the good people of the *Onion River Review*, especially Will Marquess.

John Sibley Williams is the author of nine poetry collections, most recently *Disinheritance*. An eleven-time Pushcart nominee and winner of various awards, John serves as editor of *The Inflectionist Review*. Publications include: *Yale Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Sycamore Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Columbia*, *Third Coast*, and *Poetry Northwest*.

Trevor Work is a first-year at Saint Michael's College majoring in English.

The *Onion River Review* would like to thank:

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And as always, thank you to all the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members who submit their work and take the time to enjoy our book. We exist because you do.



About the Cover

For this year's Onion, we have chosen an image that's a little wild. This is **Lily Keyes's** first appearance in the review. Like all of our other pieces, hers was chosen anonymously, and we are very excited to have such a striking image for our 2018 edition. When asked for details about this image of a Fiery Nudibranch, Keyes reported that, off the coast of Mozambique, it was not a day destined for diving:

As we approached the ocean floor, the water was dark, and the surge tossed our bodies around like dolls, pulling and pushing us. I recall seeing this tiny nudibranch holding onto the reef, his feathery gills dancing with abandon in the current just like we were. I remember thinking what a striking shade of green he was. Red is the first color you stop perceiving as you descend deep in the ocean. It was only once on land that I realized his true fiery color.

This photo is part of a collection titled "Lilliputian Ocean," in reference to the mythical island and its tiny inhabitants from *Gulliver's Travels*. This creature and the others from her collection were all photographed in the Indian Ocean on an internship through Africa Media and Oceans Research.

Written by Mikayla Hoppe, based on an e-mail exchange with the artist.