

ONION RIVER REVIEW



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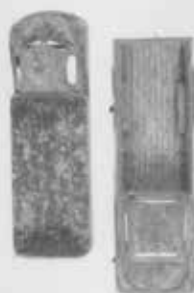
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The *Onion River Review* is the literary and visual arts review of Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. Edited entirely by undergraduates, it has been published at least once a year since 1973. Full text can be found on the databases of EBSCO Publishing.

The review welcomes submissions from anyone in the Saint Michael's community, including alumni. Submissions should be sent to onionriver@smcvt.edu. For further information, go to <http://www.smcvt.edu/onionriver/>.

ONION RIVER REVIEW 2022

river run by

Rosemary Marr
Faith Morgan
Addie Bigelow
Cito DeNegre
Camie Rediker
Alyssa Bonaro



The Onion River Review

Camie Rediker

Man, I love *The Onion*.
Hands cut on bagel knives,
alien robots taking lives.

Wow, I love *The Onion*.
Blinking, flashing neon signs,
unrequited parking ticket fines.

Really, I love *The Onion*.
Cross-eyed at a spreadsheet,
never having enough to eat.

God, I love *The Onion*.
Infamous first-page typos,
somehow, always lack of prose.

How I'll miss *The Onion*.
From Will to Tim,
to Greg and beyond.

Yours in Onion-hood,
Rosemary Marr, Faith Morgan, Addie Bigelow, Cito DeNegre,
Camie Rediker, & Alyssa Bonaro

“And once the storm
is over, you won’t remember
how you made it through, how
you managed to survive. You
won’t even be sure, whether
the storm is really over. But
one thing is certain. When you
come out of the storm, you
won’t be the same person who
walked in. That’s what this
storm’s all about.”

~ Haruki Murakami,
Kafka on the Shores

ONION RIVER REVIEW

2022

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A Hike in the Hills

Chase Schomp



Stowe Pinnacle, VT
Kiernan Pinto



How Many Summers?

Jim Hefferon

My father thought of himself as the young man, first job,
with the grocery box to deliver on his shoulder
in the picture we had on the sideboard.
Or as the executive at the nineteenth hole.

So when it happened,
and his cardiologist's office wouldn't make an appointment for next month
he couldn't understand.
Call again, he said, tell them it's me.

Trying Season

Amy Watson (*née Wilson*)

This trying season
Is part science, mostly prayer
And I have never come to terms with that second part.

At the dentist they ask, is there a chance you could be pregnant?
I want to say
Oh, I hope so.

I feel our friends watching when we are out, wondering
Until I order a glass of wine and their faces say
Oh, not yet.

I had never thought to doubt my body
Until one day, under the glow of an ultrasound machine the technician said
Oh, it will be difficult.

Two surgeries and several doctors later, I've reclaimed some sense of control.
Still, this hollow feeling – hopefulness? helplessness?
– Is not something I know how to hold.

Instead, I imagine you, bundled in my arms.
I knit tiny things and gather them in the cedar chest
While your father worries that I am breaking my own heart.

His anticipation is quiet and still
Like the stack of cherry wood milled and drying
For the cradle he will build.

Those patient boards chart the seasons of his parents' land
Where he played as a boy and where we were married.
They carry a deeply rooted hope.

Like us – scrying for a sign of you,
Praying for a line of you –
They wait to be transformed.

忘记和记
Ethan Li



忘记和记

Willow Schaefer

The ghost in the sky
That used to be the ghost in your walls
Knocking on your doors
Opening your attic
Finds a home in a tree next door
But maybe it will come down too
And disintegrate into the ground
And become part of the Earth
Maybe the ghost will go with it
Or maybe the ghost will go back
Into the bricks laying on the ground
That were once a part of the walls
His home
Or maybe
He will sit behind the fence
And pretend that he's still inside
Knocking on your doors

Living in your attic (or opening?)

Living in (opening) your attic
Opening your attic
Living in your attic

Salvelinus malma
McKenna J. Poppenga



Vanessa cardui
McKenna Poppenga



LAMPS FOR SALE

Elizabeth Inness-Brown

Counting those commonplace ones that light up desks, there are sixteen. Not counting ceiling fixtures of course; counting only those that can be sold. Sixteen lamps all in a row at a garage sale would bespeak a house full of light, a house where light was once important.

But what a ragtag assemblage! All told, only two lamps make a pair, and they themselves came from another garage sale. They are wrought iron, with large white shades. Not unattractive, but without character, or at least without any recognizable character. They inhabited the den, that room which, when the futon was folded out, served as a guest room. With the futon open and one lamp on either side, they were bedside lamps. With it folded up and serving as a couch, they could serve as reading lamps, though not very good ones: neither bright or adjustable. Still, they served their purpose, sentinels at night.

Better for reading was the floor lamp, also wrought iron, that stood behind the overstuffed chair, in winter there in the same den/guest-room, but in summer! In summer on the screened porch, chair and lamp moving there together, making a little reading nook. The chair—inherited from a neighbor—came with an ottoman. How wonderful it was to read outside in summer, day or night, in chair with lamp beside it, the little sill beneath the screens serving as a place for a cup of coffee or a glass of iced tea or even the occasional cocktail or glass of wine, and one's feet upon that ottoman!

That lamp has seen many shades, but at this moment it wears one covered in burlap. Suitably rustic for the screened porch, and acceptably plain for the den/guestroom. The lamp itself was purchased in an antique shop, one of those shops with many "stalls," each stall owned and overseen by a vendor. That particular vendor made a speciality of finding and restoring old lamps, giving them a new coat of paint, as needed, or a new shade, but more important, new wiring. So this lamp has very fine wiring, and a classic round plug, unlike any other lamp in the house. It is also adjustable, able to move up and down on its post, making it an idea reading lamp.

Another lamp similar to it came from the second upstairs bedroom. Also wrought-iron, also adjustable. Its provenance has been lost to the vagaries of time, but it is also an excellent reading lamp, though has not been used that way for many years. Its shade is green cloth, a nice green, neither olive or kelly, but more kelly than olive, and soft, as if faded....

From that room, there is also a small desk lamp, very modern—LED bulb, touch switch, adjustable brightness. This one was often used. Bought online, no doubt.

From that room, also, on the oak head board/bookshelf (which never contained books) is another lamp, this one very heavy, made as it is from some kind of manmade stonelike substance—concrete? Out of a thick, irregularly shaped base covered with prints of faux fossils (shells and the like) rises a neck, meant to represent perhaps the skeleton of a brontosaurus (apatosaurus?), with thick vertebrae around a flexible center column where the wiring runs, culminating in the top half of a “skull,” which serves as the shade for the bulb within its bony, toothy mouth. The switch for this lamp hides cleverly in the base, disguised as another fossil. The light itself is hardly strong enough to read by, though it has seen that use more than a few times, because after all, what greater pleasure is there than reading in bed, except perhaps being read to in bed?

From the other bedroom upstairs have come three utterly mismatched lamps, to be discussed from least impressive to most. The least impressive is a cheap, dime-store lamp, small and light weight, that sat on one of the dressers, so insubstantial that it could be pulled down from its height with the slightest accidental tug of the cord. Its shade, too, is inconsequential: columnar and white and cheap. The shade does have nice blue velvet trim at top and bottom, giving the lamp’s pretend brass body a small touch of class. It was given away for free at another sale, and free will be its price here.

Next comes another small lamp, from another dresser. This one has a real marble base, square, and a real brass body rising out of it, as shapely as a water nymph rising from a pool. Yes, the brass is scratched

and no longer shiny, but still. The shade is pleated blue fabric over brittle plastic, and doesn't really fit, but sits on top of a ring, often lopsided. It's the kind of lamp one becomes very fond of, the way one is fond of that hole-in-the-wall eatery with five tables and a sad but attentive waitress. On the dresser where it sat, it sat on a pile of old books, volumes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Great Short Stories. Who knows what happened to volume 3, or even where 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 came from? And who cares? Their combined height and their antique appearance were all that mattered to the person who placed them there.

Last from the master bedroom comes the queen of all the lamps. Seemingly carved of wood, but in fact molded of some kind of ceramic painted to look like wood, its shape is that of a rooster crowing, its head tipped back and beak open to the sky, meeting its exquisite tail, disproportionately large, and swirling like a conch shell—not feathery at all. On this lamp sits a shade made specifically for it: a parchment shade trimmed with maroon velvet at top and bottom, with a hand-cut border of leaves and flowers that, when the bulb is lit, seem three-dimensional, with bright outlines and shaded centers. This lamp's provenance, too, is unknown, but it was cherished enough for the shade to be requisitioned, once upon a time.

There are but five more lamps to be described, quickly: from an office, two small wooden lamps with stained white shades and one more modern desk lamp, LED, adjustable brightness. From the living room, a classic table lamp with a ceramic base which in some lights seems off white, in other lights yellow or even pale, pale green. Large, off-white shade.

And the last lamp of all, a floor lamp bought in some flea market a thousand miles away. Brass base and stem and an upfacing milk-glass bowl rather than a shade. One imagines it in its original setting, a funeral home; imagines it standing behind a coffin, its light cast upward to wall and ceiling, and below, more softly, onto the face of the dead beloved, smiling as if in the middle of a pleasant dream

The Artists Hands

Jordan Douglas



Queer

Nick Lemon

It is ridiculous to imagine us,
giggling schoolchildren in the closet
sniffing a Mr. Sketch cocktail,

uncertain in ourselves but sure
that we were sheltered together

in the dim light,
among the safety scissors
and construction paper.

Vintage Knowledge
Celia Durgin



[May meant I'd marry my mischief with yours]

Faith Morgan

May meant I'd marry my mischief with yours
and mend the maturity our minds seemed to
lose in one another's company.

We'd often make a mockery of men
who meddled in the matrimony of a woman's desire
and another's willingness to meet it.

May meant we'd melt in the middle of that lake,
it's body pricking precise pinches of pain
in our limbs and our toes,
so frozen with the pins and needles,
the lick of that chill.

The sky felt vaster then,
it's arms open and scooping our bones into child's pose.
I'd swallow the sand that the lake threw up to have May again,
I'd marry men who meddle in the matrimony of my desires.

A Wretched Little Thing For Vulnerable Hearts

Rosemary Marr

Down in the cracks
between sixth and seventh
or maybe eighth and ninth street
grows a wretched little thing.

It forces its green tongue
up
through the pavement

devastating the infrastructure
the plans they worked so hard

to draw up
to build out
knowing the expenses
the labor

they it out
stomped

tore it up
dug their claws into it
and yet

it survives the loafers
the free loaders
the LOUDCROWDS
the cigarettes
the strays
of the city.

It kept growing,
and if we started
to like it there,
well,
that was our business.

Modern Venus Genetrix
Nika Mitchell



Finding My Way
Hannah Bishop



Behind Fanny Allen Hospital

Anonymous

Just across the street, a little to the east, is a garden where Sisters are planted.
They no longer blossom, nor bloom, only neatly trimmed grass grows there.
A stroll round this green is a spiritual journey through time and devotion.
Amongst the stones, you can rest and find solace.
Close your eyes and feel the Sisters' presence.
For Sisters planted there have departed, not gone.

Penance Song

Cito DeNegre

The bells ring clear for the sweetest sin
 inside the jars where the flesh ferment,
 sits my brain under sunshines glint,
this is the rest I represent.

Hanging from the oldest bough,
 of a young tree, oaken, a burnt-in kiss.
Surrounded by a searing crowd,
 my floating body- a will-o'-wisp.

She knows pain but no purity.
I know not sacrilege nor security.
She saw terror on the torpid tree,
 I saw her in her harrowing.

A burning bush blocks the mountain view,
my body's veil is the vortice smoke.
Hymns are hummed from the putrid pew,
 an oriel omen is an honest cloak.

To shade me from a warren weather,
 to know we were the best together,
 even when the air boils each tear-
 you're still queen of the atmosphere-

the ashen, ashen atmosphere.

October 2021

Sunshine Over Stowe

Kayla Riordan



The Feminine Essence

Celia Durgin



Soup

Hallie Benton

The soup was only supposed to take
fifteen minutes to warm up

but you cooked it for fifty-one minutes
because you're dyslexic

and you thought that's what I wrote.
At home, we sat together, swapping spoonfuls:

an inch of soup left in the bottom of the pan.

Confusion

Ainsley "A-Dawg" Fowler



Apollo: color study

Anonymous



To Rumi, Love Shams

Sophie Fenimore

Rumi is my soulmate,
my lover imam, my foolish beloved
who uses the eyes of a child
to know God.

I find myself below a golden tree,
backpack prepared with him,
a small apple, firm and excited.
I set my mask aside and fill myself with autumn.

the apple no longer deceives me;
I know the truth of its flesh:
crisp-sharp tang disguised by sweet-soft skin,
a secret knowing between us.

my eyes flutter,
juice floods my mouth.
I hold it with my tongue for an eternal moment,
savoring its weight, cherishing our ecstasy.

when I finish
I set the empty core on the ground
so that the ants may feast
and open my heart to Rumi.

he shows me the frog and the mouse,
*kept separate by the glassy chill
of a pond, clear and alive.
despite the impenetrably thin barrier,
nothing can keep them apart*

*for they are in love:
a love more pure than friendship,*

*a love longer lasting than romance,
a love between their very being,
stretching through eternity.*

but as I read the wind reproaches me
*“don't distract yourself!
you've been called here for a reason;
put away my foolish poems
and give yourself to Me.”*

Reaper
Maria Lacroix



Poems in Trieste

Allison Donahue

walking a thousand meters above the sea
i am completely unconvinced of time moving faster
up there insects buzz, bees chase
deeper and deeper into the forest
a yugoslav highrise, a pile of abandon cars
the coven of light drunk banshees
their liquor plumped lips

ovi duri
eggs and secrets
something to suck on
the scratch of a plastic chair
on the cement
but mostly between the cracks
there are grasses growing
snails slurp on by
who would ever know if
there is time for this
space or knowledge
fullness as a concept
as nothing left to tell
laid out on the shower floor
waiting for water
like a mortal sign

tucked away like dark chambers of this heart
i didn't say mine and let's be clear
the sea opens cold and rough
to deep forests and silent caves
a torchlight flame extinguished
before it can breathe to light
under the branch burnt chlorophyll
i try to buy our way with coins
in the pockets of my pockets
and faces stare from the
angles of angles no light
but a ledge, something cheap
osmiza after a field and a snake
dividing walls low and mossy
like home in the months of
no home

Slice
Hannah Bishop



Vermont Thunderstorm in Summertime

Jackson Greenleaf

It was almost exactly 4:30 a.m. when the boisterous crackling erupted, shattering the dim hum of dusk. Breaking through the hushed atmosphere with shocking force. Bewitching energy shredded open the darkened morning sky with unthinkable speed, filling it with electric shades of silver and blue, if only for a mere second. This spectacle was followed perhaps half a minute later by the booming, whip-like crack of thunder that was unleashed directly overhead. The aftereffects of which seemed to cause tremors throughout the surrounding area, as the incessant honk of a car alarm became audible outside the window. After a notable delay, approximately two minutes in length the rains did come. Cascading down in even, rhythmic patterns as it struck against the collection of trees with thick newly matured leaves and Subaru outbacks parked underneath, a short row of buildings arranged close behind. The sound of the rain was tranquil, almost therapeutic; part of me wished it would carry on perpetually. However, after another two minutes, the rhythm ceased altogether, ending almost as quickly as it had begun, leaving minimal physical evidence in its wake, no clues of the atmospheric jolt it had caused, apart from the streaking remnants of water and dew the rain had imprinted upon the vehicles down below. Destined to disappear in a few short hours as the outback owners mobilized to drive their cars to work that morning, unaware of the transcendent moment that had occurred during their slumber.

The 50 Configurations
Christianna Bostley



Water
Ethan Li



Twosday's Zeitgeist

Sophie Fenimore

My passport, my proof of vax
and six caps of magic mushrooms
are all that's stashed within my ever-ready
"Shit Gets Real Bad" go-bag.

Bedtime

Emily Schule

We lost power around 1:36 AM.

I stared as my alarm clock flipped minutes
then blinked off.

My gaze drifted to the window, following a dim stream of moonlight
along the floor

over the desk

through the curtains

and out the window.

I got up out of bed,

opened the curtains

and unlatched the window.

It was too cold

but I wanted it open.

I wanted to lay the wrong way on my bed

and watch out the window until I fell asleep

like I did when I was small

but old enough to wash myself

but not old enough to know not to get dirty in the first place

and I'd spend an entire summer's day imagining a world throughout the
woods in my backyard

and when I'd come inside my mother would forget to tell me to take a shower

and I'd run up into bed as the street lights turned on

and I'd throw a thin sheet over my entire body

because it'd be too hot for anything else

and I could feel the sweat sticky-dry on the surface of my skin

and I could see the dirt beneath my bitten fingernails

and the window is open

and there is a breeze

and the raw scent of dirt and grass seeps into the fabric of my sheets

and I could feel that smug sense of getting away with something

that hurt no one and nothing.

The fish tank's filter spurts on behind me.

1:38 AM.

Gavia immer

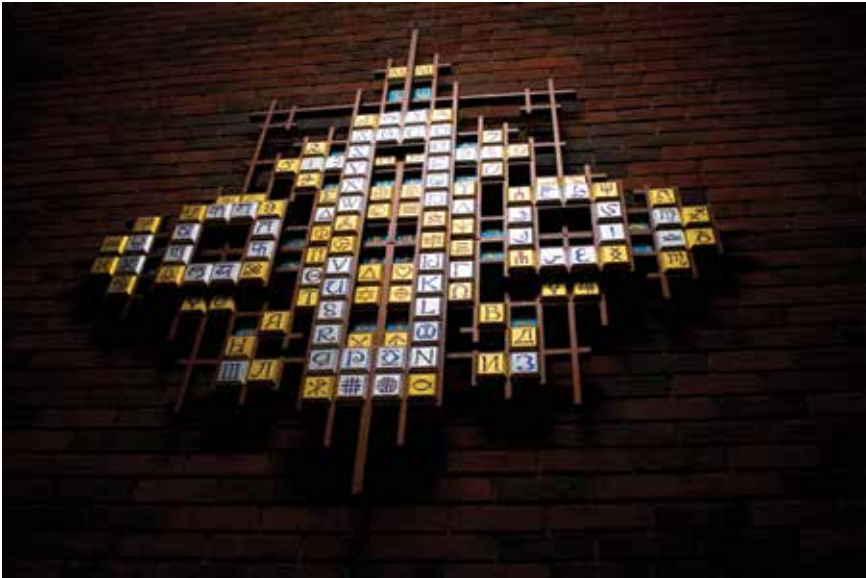
McKenna Poppenga



Self Portrait
Hannah Muse



Symbols
Celeste Gonzalez



Hills

After Patrick Kavanagh

Dan Johnson

No – I have my hills,
my soft, deer-brown
hills, rolling hills.
Indeed, no foothold
for genius hills.
I've simple hills,
unambitious hills
changing on the whim
of the seasons,
learning again and again
by rote. These are my
none too spectacular hills,
unnamed, helpless hills.
I am among you
there, your easy death
and quiet rebirth, always,
slave to your gentle,
unsurprising curvature,
quite comfortable
and safe. O hills,
yes my hills, I fear I climb
you now forever.

Carrot Love
Carly Broome



Ice

Alyssa Bonaro

I think of my father when I look at you. He used to take me to the lake just down the long, winding road in the dead of winter, when the water froze over in thick sheets. Snow atop the ice crunched when I would timidly put pressure against it, cautiously stepping forward, my father's hand in mine, until I reached the middle. Brushing away the snow, I could see the ice, the frozen water a deep, dark blue. I used to press my face against it to see if I could spot any fish, or a glimmer of light catching on their scales. I never saw any fish. My father would laugh and laugh, sweeping me up in his arms and twirling me round and round. He had great, large, strong hands that held me firmly. I was safe in his hands. He smelled of coffee. His beard sometimes had lingering crumbs from the toast he had for breakfast.

You sit on a rickety wooden chair my father made. The black paint is chipping, paint I watched my father coat on in the smooth strokes of a soft-bristled brush. He made it out in the old barn, and the place smelled of woodchips and drying paint during the weeks he spent there, with me crouching in the hay and dirt beside him.

As I look at you, sitting in that old chair by the window, your face shadowed by the curtains, your eyes are the same color as the ice I once stared so intently into, searching for signs of life only to find something that was empty and barren.

You lean back in the chair, and I cringe as the wood creaks.

"Can I get you anything?" I ask, only in an effort to be polite. You do not belong here anymore. The kitchen is behind me, flooded with the morning sunlight. Deeper within the house, a clock ticks steadily.

You shake your head, looking down at the sad, worn shoes resting by the chair legs. The plastic aglets on the ends of the shoelaces are chipped. One lace is already beginning to unravel.

I stand in silence as you sit in my chair, unmoving. I can just faintly hear the uneven rhythm of your breaths, matching the soft rise and fall of your chest, over the ticking of the clock.

“Maybe you should leave,” I whisper.

That gets you to look up. “I...don’t have anywhere else to go.”

I turn away, going to the kitchen just to throw open a cupboard and slam it shut. The cups inside rattle.

“Please,” you say. You are sitting in that chair, my chair, still.

I clutch the edge of the countertop. “Why should I let you?”

You have no answer for that.

I pour myself a glass of cool water from the tap, drinking it slowly, shuddering as I feel it go down. When I shut my eyes, I see the two of us standing in this very kitchen by this very sink. How long ago had that been now? I can’t remember; all I know is that we were children, youthful, innocent. We had nothing to fear then and we got along so perfectly well. I rarely remember fighting with you; maybe it happened just once or twice. There was that one time, down by the lake. I don’t even remember how it started—I just recall you lifting a smooth, polished stone from the bank and dropping it as hard as you could into the water. It landed with a loud plunk and splashed water and mud across my khaki shorts, and I trudged home, fuming, while you trailed along behind me, stabbing the dirt with a long stick.

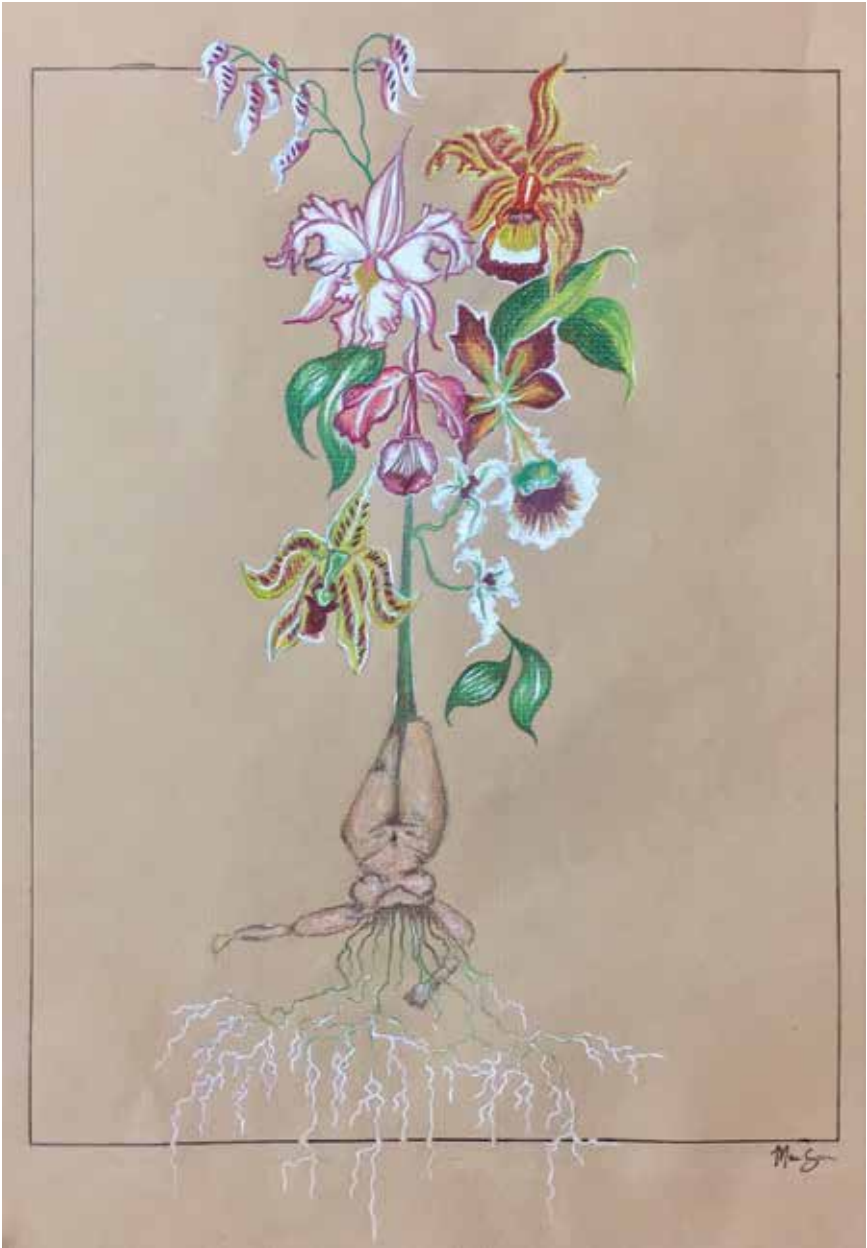
We didn’t even fight on that horrible day five months ago. You merely stood on my doorstep on that hot, muggy morning, while the cicadas sang, a piercing shriek of nature that echoed through the still, humid air. There were tears in your eyes that morning and you didn’t dare step over the threshold, and I stared at you from inside my home.

There were no words exchanged either. You opened your mouth as if you wanted to speak but then you clamped it shut, chewing on your lower lip. You held your hands out and looked down at them, clean and pale, before shoving them into your pockets and turning away. I waited for you to come back, but you did not. You never did. Not until now.

You are getting out of my chair, creeping into the kitchen, standing hesitantly, poised to turn and flee. “You have every reason,” you say, “to kick me out right here and right now. But you forget what I did for you.” Your voice is smooth, even, unfamiliar. You're not the one I danced with, twirling round and round this kitchen under the humming lights, with the cool air blowing in through an open window. You're not the one who, as a child, sat on my father's lap and listened to him tell his stories, who held his hand just as tight as I did. You are someone different now.

Or maybe this is who you have always been—and I was just too afraid to let you go.

Growth
Magnolia Sinisi



I Waited For You All Night

Maria Lacroix



Hormone Therapy

Sophie Fenimore

Two tablets,
twice a day,
taken under the tongue
to let dissolve
two decades of wrongness,
congealed beneath my breath
like thick phlegm in twin lungs,
at last alleviated by
two tablets,
twice a day,
transmuted under the tongue
to a moonly sand of teal euphoria.

a friendship's love

Anna McNulty



Shipping Skis

Buff Lindau

The family household is losing its grip.
Skis taking up a new home
have moved the center of gravity out the door.
I wrapped them and entrusted them to UPS.

Now all will be empty.

The beds and chairs, the remote, the TV,
all will sing a lonesome song of absence. Empty,
like the desk where homework waited,
frisbees and notebooks, dusty, abandoned,
along with paint boxes, books, CDs,
furry beasts, mute, no longer nestled
in single beds with scruffy boys.

I'm rattling alone in this 'father-knows-best,'
1940s style house, without skiers or scholars.
Over-sized hibiscus plants bring too much
red-and-orange brightness to the scene.
A lone cat nestles in his favorite comfort spot,
flaunting his perfect ease, while my pretty ones
on their own in one dicey locale or another,
have no one to find them comfort spots
or ease them into new worlds.

So I send the skis out west
packed up with bubble wrap.
I'll envelop and cushion the boots
whose scuff-marks speak stories
I'd rather not know of bashing into icy obstacles
in air jumps on back-country unmarked trails.
I ship them off for expert skiing and new adventures,
since I can't wrap my boys in soft protection,
and hope only snow and speed and good luck intrude.

Freyja
Hannah Muse



Infestation

Faith Morgan

Those fruit flies in my kitchen take their turns
whispering fleeting promises in my ears.
Often, I swat their little beads of bodies
away but they always buzz back to my
shoulder, settling on my skin, asking
to stay just another day. I often mistake their
persistence for loyalty and offer them
the cold side of my bed but
they're always gone by morning.

Wilder Than Moonlight

Katie Koziatek



The Ladies
Magnolia Sinisi



Shadow and Reflection

Carly Broome



Praise All Redwall Beasts and Foebeasts

Buff Lindau

It's gotta be the intoxication of all those woodsy critters—
reading with Max on Skype during school lockdown
day by day for an hour or so for more than a year now—
I'm hoping it goes on and on with my eight-year-old grandson.

I'm holding fast to our youngest family member
while drifting further and further from my roots:
my southern background, religious upbringing
two distant sisters, one in LA, one in DC, brother gone, parents long gone
(our boys remain central of course but working in DC and Seattle
and unlikely to spend hours listening to me read animal adventures).
So, I'm seizing this bonus of the pandemic—
me and grandson Max and untold beguiling critters of the book.

A reader himself, Max still tunes in for hours of Redwall adventures
though he sometimes turns off his video and becomes invisible.
Remote schooling cancels socializing, negotiating, interactions.
Maybe he's losing those skills. He has no knock-about playmates.
But still we read! Sometimes he tumbles about with feet in the air
yet he can always explain the doings of characters I forget:
an important fox or otter or weasel or mouse
a hawk or mole or shrew or hedgehog—hedgehogs are the heroes,
and the bad ones, Cluny the Scourge or Ublaz or Nagru or Blaggut
oh boy, they send shivers. Max knows them all—baddies, dibbuns
(youngsters)
sages, jokesters (the hares), tricksters, ne'er-do-wells.

I'm dwelling in this unexpected gift—since he lives too far away
for us to make cookies together or plant a garden or kick a ball or hike a trail.

The missed connections, birthdays and holidays apart, time passing in his
young life—
until the windfall gift of Redwall, brought by the pandemic lockdown,

the daily, weekly, monthly reading brings us a world we did not have until in-person school and outings with buddies were slammed shut. I'll embrace Redwall as long as I can (now deep into volume ten of the series) and we start-up again, mid-volume, with Pearls of Lutra, at 1:15 today.

A Bike Ride in Burlington

Chase Schomp



A Consultation with the Hunter Constellation

Rosemary Marr

History made its own renditions.
There are Gods in most. Titans in some.
At times there is a scorpion
or a princess.
Or

Artemis takes him as a lover
and his head is pierced by her arrow.
The end is the same.
Orion's fist clutches a lion's throat
His other arm is raised
a club in hand
to beat
to batter
to bludgeon the creature.

The man cannot loosen his grip;
the lion's mane has tangled
around his fingers.
His nails are pressed too far into its throat.
To relent
is not an option.

His fingers never catch a pulse.
It is cold. And his hands are tired.
There is no battle here.
No war. No heroes.
The lion is not alive.
It never was.

Study
Camie Rediker



My Rock

Laura Hardin

There we sat at the kitchen table,
white linen cascading down as the seams caught the end before it hit the
ground.

Weary and tired eyes, burdened with the weight of sight,
just a mere “two sips” before sunrise, you’d say.
Soft murmurs were shared until the time came
to spend six hours away.

There we sat at the kitchen table,
but not until the age of sixteen did I go from watching the
white ribbons dance their way through the fragrant brown background to
consuming my own.
With your mug filled, dark as the rocks we collected that day at the beach,
mine gave my lips a taste but matched the color of sand.
We’d feed on the warmth and share our goodbyes,
before navigating on to our days.

There we sat at the kitchen table,
marking the last time that the bitter aroma would be a part of our sunrise
rhythm.
A feeling presented when my heart began to race and awoke the wraiths of
my mind.
But like the coffee that helped the weight of our eyes,
your soft murmurs gave comfort and soothed my dreary soul.

Now I sit at my own kitchen table, reminiscing the times of sips before
sunrise.
Your warmth towards the morning left a mark
just as dark as the brown ring on the white linen.
The miles between us don’t interrupt our rhythm,
my cup is filled, black as the rocks we collected that day at the beach.

The Day Before
Terry



In Motion
Celeste Matte



“Untitled”
Magnolia Sinisi



Pinstripe Lampshade

Sophie Fenimore

Pinstripe Lampshade
I slept under
the goldenrod sight
of a pinstripe lampshade,

found comfort in the
baby blue star that
hangs below your light,

learned the timbre
of your chain
meant safety.

Even now, hours away
from the dusty shelves and
yellowed carpet we called home,

even now, I'm watched
by the same mildewed eyes
of a pinstripe lampshade

To the Stars
Roark Thomas



Winter Tree
Jordan Douglas



[Written on Print-Out]

Cito DeNegre

parts of our
whole &
we shared them
together. now

women come &
go, barefoot
servants too. they
take their

little piece &
go. now &
then i'm
gathering up my

stomach &
spleen; intestines &
andromeda; appendix &
argo; babylon,

liver... & i
forget -

a few
things, here &
there. so
long. so long.

Mrs Ma

Jim Hefferon

Does Mrs Ma say
oh, I get it.
You can't tighten this faucet nut because of sacred cello fingers.

Or maybe she's a natural fix-it type,
in overalls, oil filter in hand when he comes home.
Yo there!
He gives a resigned chuckle.

Or maybe they hire someone.

It Smells Like Nap Time

Mackenzie Moore



Underlying

Emily Derrick

I still can't believe I was left
broken by something so small,
a bone-cyst that existed
where it never belonged.

Does it even matter that the break was accidental?

Two years have passed now, and
where pinky meets palm, this
phantom-like pain persists there.

Must you insist on haunting me, still?

In all of my break ups-and-downs,
I'm reminded of that summer where
fragility turned to fracture, and for the
sake of my aching heart, I have to ask:

Just how long had that cyst been there, waiting to burst?

Today

Lauren Best

Two people,
on either side,
a thin barrier
between them.

Two stories,
full of anger,
neither of them right.

All that divides them
is wood on hinges
with a knob that twists,
a lock that keeps
them apart
and the truth separate.

Lake Champlain

Kiernan Pinto



Burdens Borne

Anonymous

Burdens born of earth and mud
No different from immortal rays?
Cast out by some obscure source
Deep in the primordial mist

Clouding round the dimming light
Still yet as bright as in garden days
But receding down the winding path
As congregants march to find a fate

The stones are worn by shuffling feet
These curious gawkers drink deeply here
Of our little brook, this muddy creek
And praise it as a boundless sea

“Trials, tumults, oh this tempest’s sea!
Reaching, Grasping, but to embrace
The rocky shore but to find some means
To bind, to measure, oh but to finally fix!”

It laps along to the foot of the perch
Where the players and propmakers meet
To give them some glimpse of beauty yet
While still, that faint archaic light emits

But that I could tell shadow and mist
A whirlwind from a will o the wisp
Olympian chains of highest duty from
Burdens born of earth and mud

Fading Pines

Grace Norris



Night

Alyssa Bonaro

She's sitting in a chair on the street corner where her father died. The chair never used to be there—her mother said it appeared just a few days earlier—a green wooden thing abandoned on the curb and left to the mercy of passerby. The armrest on one side is broken, half of it gone, while on the other, the initials *HT* are carved into the wood.

It's an impractical chair. But maybe, she thinks, she likes it anyway.

No one is giving her a second glance, as if they're all perfectly used to seeing a girl sitting in a broken chair on a Brooklyn street corner. There's a group walking across the road, sharing a bag of chips. A woman is running with her phone strapped to her arm. A taxi is whizzing past.

She needs to leave. It's dusk—and her mom won't approve of her being out alone in the dark. Yet she's clinging to the armrest and a half, staring at the cars and the people and the windows she's beginning to be able to see into. Snapshots of people's lives. She doesn't know them and they will never know her.

They will never know—or remember—how an ambulance once rushed to this corner where her father laid sprawled. A taxi that didn't stop—too careless, too fast, too late. They will never know how her mother stirred her from sleep and whisked her away to the hospital, where her father died in a white room and a stranger pressed an ice pop into her hand in attempt to soothe her.

That's what she remembers most. The popsicle, raspberry, sweet red juice dripping down her palms.

She shakes herself, running her fingers over the cold wood of the broken armrest. Brown slush presses against the edge of the sidewalk by her feet. Car horns are honking. The sun is dipping further, the city beginning to twinkle with lights, a sight she always misses when she's been gone too long.

A woman is dancing in one window above a still open bookstore. A man is feeding a dog. A child is pressing his nose against the glass.

It's an ugly corner. Or maybe it's a beautiful one.

Her dad took her to Dumbo—a Brooklyn neighborhood—once, close to dusk. She was small enough to sit on her father's shoulders as he walked to the place where tourists flocked to see the Manhattan Bridge between two buildings. She never saw that iconic sight before that evening, and she was giddy, scanning the crowd and laughing, not yet comprehending that all those people were visitors in a place she called home. Her dad held her ankles as she wrapped her arms around him and they stood in the middle of the road, surrounded by tourists and the clicking of cameras. The bridge was lit, and between two pillars, the Empire State Building shone, its antenna a glowing beacon.

Sometimes she wishes she had a photo of that night, one of little her holding onto her father with one hand and waving with the other, both of them smiling before their illuminated city. But she only has the memory.

It was a week after that night that her father died. A Saturday when he was meant to be off, but he volunteered for extra hours. A wrong place, wrong time. An accident.

A year or so ago, she was lying on a wooden floor, staring at a tapestry of constellations that hung from the ceiling of a girl she loved. This girl was sitting cross-legged beside her, taking a paintbrush to a ceramic pot, coloring it a sky blue, listening to the story of her father and the sidewalk and the raspberry popsicle.

Actually, she said that day, and that girl put down her brush. *Actually*, I don't want a photo. What good would it do? A picture is not a memory.

Maybe she feels that way still.

The woman in the window above the bookstore is no longer dancing.

She's cradling a baby. She could be the age her mother was when she became a widow far sooner than anyone would've expected. Her parents made vows at an altar, till death do them part, made vows to bring their daughter up with love. They thought they had time, like everyone always does.

We have all the time in the world, her father whispered once. He was reading her a picture book he bought from the bookstore across the street. There was a small pile of them and she wanted to dive into each page.

We don't have to read every book tonight. It was a bedtime story. She begged to hear more. *Tomorrow night*, he promised, kissing the top of her head.

And the night after that?

Of course. He laughed. *And the night after that, and the night after that, and all the nights after that, my moon.*

Her nickname. *My moon*. Her mother was his sunshine. Because they were his bright, beautiful girls. Because he needed both. Because he loved both.

Tears burn her eyes as she stuffs her hands into her pockets, getting out of her chair. A man switches the bookstore's *Open* sign to *Closed*. A car rounds the corner and she watches it until the taillights disappear. The woman above the dark bookstore is closing her curtains. Her mother will be getting worried. The sun is dipping too low, the moon a tiny sliver in its place.

But dad, she thinks, *look how many nights we lost.*

Dancing at Lughnasa

Department of Fine Arts



Play title: Dancing at Lughnasa, by Brian Friel

Director and Costume Designer Peter Harrigan

Scenic and Lighting Designer John Paul Devlin

Performers: left to right Mckenzie Rowbotham '24, Gabe Kelsey '24,

Madeline Shanley '23, Sadie Chamberlain '25, Yamuna Turco '25

Photo by Andy Duback

04/19/2021

Marcus Mallows

Sitting hunched over mathematical text
A cool, wild breeze billowed down my shirt,
Making me feel lawless too.
In the midst of mild sunshine,
A cloud gifted me its glorious excess.
And knowing it was just a passing shower,
I sat in bliss.
Only when it had passed did I uproot myself
And return to stabler climate.

Magnolia Perfume

Kaylee Sayers

The woman carries the frigid winter wind with her into the small liquor store, imbuing the air with magnolia perfume and a whiff of cigarette smoke. The bell above the door clinks as she steps inside, transferring bits of snowmelt from the sidewalk to the wet tile floor. She unsticks her dark curls from her glossed lips and glances at the digital clock mounted on the wall. The bespectacled store clerk has yet to glance up from a worn copy of *The Scarlet Letter*. Satisfied with the time, she begins wandering through the short, narrow aisles, the click of her heeled boots stifled by the sticky film on the floor.

The lights inside the coolers wink as she peruses the contents. She pauses, her gaze passing over the beers and ciders before she turns her attention to the dusty wine shelves. She reaches for a bottle of pinot noir on the top shelf, the elegant diamond on her ring finger clicking against the glass.

The woman makes her way to the checkout counter and sets the bottle down. While the store clerk scans it, she edges the ring off her finger and slips it into her purse as she glances out the window in anticipation. She rubs at the red markings the band left behind, avoiding the clerk's gaze, before reaching into her wallet and pulling out a twenty-dollar bill. She pulls her shoulders back and shakes the hair from her face as two blinding headlights shine through the glass doors, arcing across the liquor store's rear wall. The blare of a car horn interrupts the florescent lights' incessant buzz.

The woman flushes and turns towards the corner mirror mounted behind the counter. After swiping at the mascara under her eyes, she deems her appearance satisfactory, even desirable from this angle, and quickly makes her exit with the wine. Her change lies forgotten on the counter.

As the car accelerates away from the store, sweeping the woman away with it. The clerk scoops the abandoned change into a colorful tip jar. He turns the page of his book, faintly aware of the lingering aroma of magnolia perfume.

Night Collage
Nika Mitchell



Birthplace

Kai Hines

An old man sitting
With his back to the tree
That holds up his spine
While he struggles to breathe

With his hands he can feel
The softness of the moss
That holds him safe in his spot

He no longer panics as he cannot catch his breath
The primal urge of panic has no place once fading is a certainty
Yet he can still feel its flare in his chest
Knowing, hopelessly, that it must still fight
Knowing, desperately, that he will not survive the night

Pushing it down, calmly, he'll hope
To see one last sunset in these branches he knows so well
A good place to go, he thinks
Almost a home, if there ever was one to have

Again he'll feel the softness of the moss
Still so valiantly holding his spot
And as the sun nears the ground
And the evening birds become sparse and unfound
His soul will begin to sink into that brave moss on the ground

As the sun flames orange into the clouds
He is thankful for his last breath
With weathered eyes and battered hands he lets go
Giving his last exhale to the branches and the sun
And to the moss
Who held him so gently.

Deconstruction

Dan Johnson

Everything I see this morning
is me and you, me and you. It's 7:42
above the South Gate Bridge
across from the construction
on the old brewery which means
I will begin the delicate work

of deconstructing every bit of it.
The green god-arm of the crane
swings around to remove the stacks
of timber and linkages
of scaffolding, hammers

come up, nails rise out of planks,
and swears enter mouths as men
in high-vis walk backwards.
I must undo something if it can't be

our meeting, if it can't be your leaving,
if it can't be the belt around your waist.
Across the river, the finishing touches:

toolboxes are reorganized; safety
vests are folded and stowed away;

the long arm of the crane rests.

Emily Dickinson as Markov Process

Clayton Cafiero

The following is a by-product of demonstrating Markov processes to students in CS111 (introduction to computer science) at Saint Michael's College in the fall of 2021. A Markov process is a stochastic (probabilistic) model which describes a collection of states (here words in a poem) and transitions between states. That is, given that the current word is X_i , our Markov model gives probabilities for the next word in the sequence, X_{i+1} . You've no doubt seen a similar process at work when you start typing search terms into a search engine, which then guesses the next word or words based on what you've typed so far. Markov processes have no "memory" so the probability of each next possible state depends only on the current state. How do we arrive at the probabilities? We read through a corpus (in this case a subset of Emily Dickinson's poems) and calculate the frequencies with which one word follows another. A Markov process is used here to generate a very crude approximation of Emily Dickinson. The choice of words is determined using the observed frequencies in a collection of Emily Dickinson's poems. With apologies to E.D. and her devoted fans.

Because I could give them early
Such a swelling of me
I wonder if they choose between.
It would not guess the gale is heard.
It asked a stolid ear pipe —
The sweet birds in the storm
That could not guess the date of want,
And never in the fashions
Of nerve enlightened
To note that hurt them.
Any balm or did it just begin?
I meet with feathers that kept so many warm —
Light that perches in ignorant cadence.
Ah, what sagacity perished here!
Don't tell!
The ground, the haze, a pair of the storm.

“Why *you*? Why us for that
matter? Why *anything*?
Because this moment simply
is. ... here we are, Mr.
Pilgrim, trapped in the amber
of this moment. There is no
why.”

~ Kurt Vonnegut,
Slaughterhouse-Five

Editor Bios

Addie Bigelow is a junior English major with Creative Writing and Environmental Studies minors. She is a part-time deer whisperer and full-time tomato lover. She can often be found hunting for mushrooms and wild berries or wishing she had a pet snail. She shares a birthday with Allen Ginsberg and McLovin.

Alyssa Bonaro is a senior Greek and Latin major with an English minor. When not in the library, she can often be found searching for the campus rabbits or drinking a warm cup of green tea. She is the proud caretaker of three succulents that decorate her dorm.

Cito DeNegre (English major, French minor 24') isn't sure why his last name is spelled differently on various legal documents. He should probably look into that. In his free time, he enjoys looking at books on shelves and taking showers. He is looking forward to retirement, where he intends to have goats and finally learn how to play the mandolin.

Rosemary Marr is a junior with a major in English and a double minor in Creative Writing and Philosophy. She is also this year's editor-in-chief of the ORR. Last year, it was mentioned how one may be able to summon her to Gilbrook. She would like to ask you to stop, the trees are getting angry. And you wouldn't like them when they're angry.

Faith Morgan is a junior Business major with Creative Writing and Literature minors. When not scribbling down sappy poetry, she may be found singing to her golden retriever at home, pirouetting in the Saint Mike's dance studio, or reading a Sally Rooney book. She drinks more iced coffee than she'd like to admit and enjoys doing so while hammocking on campus with a good book.

Camie Rediker eats peanut butter, honey, and banana sandwiches. She is a senior Neuroscience major with Philosophy and Chemistry minors. When not found in the lab, she is usually complaining about dairy or studying the photography of Kyle Jeffers intently. Her comfort movie is *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*.

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