

# OURGLASS

Ourglass

Student Literary & Visual Art Magazine

Community College of Denver

2018-2019



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visual art magazine



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Ourglass, now in its 39th year of publication, is the journal of the English, Graphic Design and Visual Art Departments at Community College of Denver. We are dedicated to providing a forum for the poetry, prose, drama, design and artwork of our students.

### **Submit Your Work!**

Ourglass publishes the best creative work produced each year by CCD students. To that end, we accept submissions between Sept. 15 and May 5 of each academic year.

Please submit one story, essay, set of three to five poems, or set of two to four short-short stories, as well as any interesting combinations thereof. We aim to publish a variety of styles, voices, and genres.

All writing submissions will be eligible for the Leonard Winograd Award. Now in its third year, this award, named in honor of Leonard Winograd, longtime English professor and editor of Ourglass at CCD. Finalists are chosen by the editors, and the winner selected by a faculty member. To find out more, or to donate to the Winograd Award, go to [CCD.edu/Ourglass](http://CCD.edu/Ourglass).

The link for writing submissions is located at [CCD.edu/Ourglass](http://CCD.edu/Ourglass). To submit artwork, please contact the Visual Art Department.

Due to the sheer volume of work we must consider, we can only notify the authors chosen to be published. If you don't hear from us, please do try again next year.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook | [Facebook.com/CCDOurglass](https://www.facebook.com/CCDOurglass)

If you have any questions, email: [CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu](mailto:CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu).

Thanks,

The Editors.



# artWORK

Veronica R. Peña	5	<i>Space Trip</i>	
Jazilyne Houston	7	<i>Reina</i>	
Steven Cross	9	<i>Ten-Mile Peaks</i>	
Dylan Konecny	12	<i>All is Lost</i>	
Joshua Gala	13	<i>Divinity</i>	
Shanea Stamps	24	<i>Natural Kinky Twists</i>	Best in Show
James Fladung	26	<i>Oldies but Goodies</i>	
Mason Albro	33	<i>Sad Bois in the City</i>	
Daniel Hernandez Franco	34	<i>DAHf'S Garden</i>	Juror's Choice
Austin Bennett	36	<i>The Way is Clear</i>	
Austin Bennett	37	<i>Serendipity Begets Beauty</i>	
Kaitlyn E. Sterlace	41	<i>Flowers</i>	
Joshua Gala	45	<i>Chair</i>	
James Fladung	46	<i>Inner Geometry</i>	
BK Allen/Aspartame Moustache	48	<i>Untitled w/yellow</i>	
BK Allen/Aspartame Moustache	49	<i>Untitled</i>	
Jazilyne Houston	50	<i>Bloodbath</i>	
Aidan Wright	52	<i>The Joker</i>	
Darweesh Zmily	54	<i>Cool, Calm and Collected</i>	
BK Allen	58	<i>Untitled</i>	
Dylan Konecny	59	<i>Sloans Lake Denver 2150</i>	
Rayna Stem	62	<i>Goopy Sad Guy</i>	Juror's Choice
Sena Bryant	64	<i>Love Letters</i>	
Tracy Campbell	71	<i>Moonlight</i>	
Daniel Hernandez	73	<i>Who is the Giant</i>	
Leonardo Rodriguez	75	<i>Among Us</i>	
Claire Gillmore	76	<i>Untitled</i>	
Claire Gillmore	77	<i>Untitled</i>	
Leonardo Rodriguez	79	<i>In Retrospect</i>	
Jordan Ferguson	87	<i>Crying</i>	
Alon Paul	90	<i>Birth of Alonica</i>	
Alon Paul	91	<i>Alonica Evolution</i>	

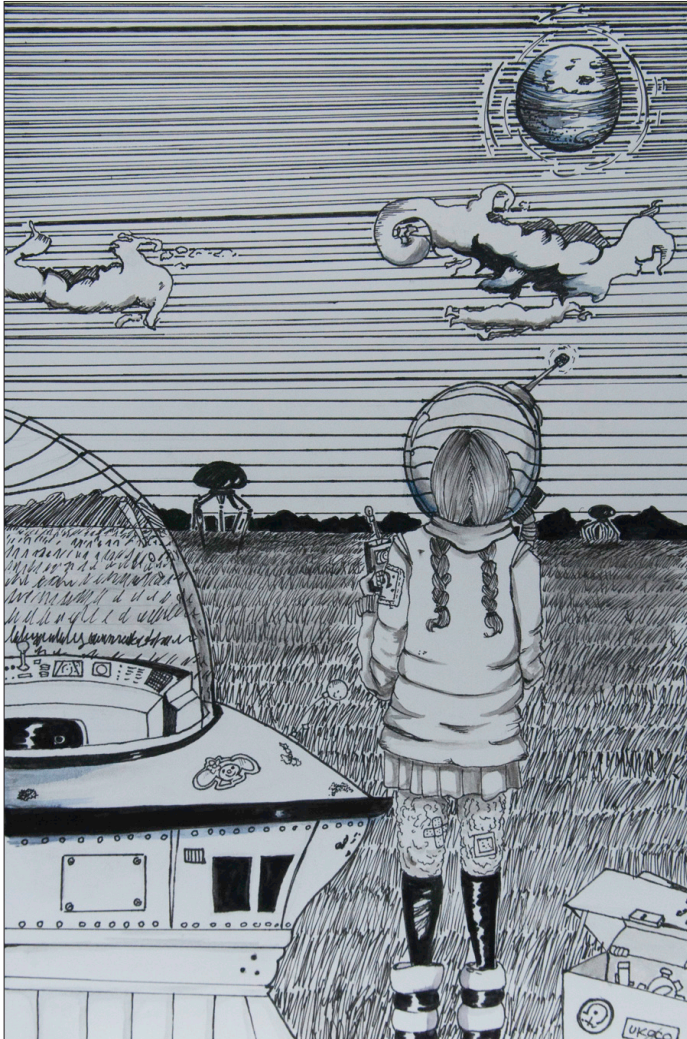
# WRITTEN

Sean F. McGee	4	<i>For Father</i>
Dulce Mendoza	8	<i>Chile Guajillo</i>
Bridgette Lamando	10	<i>Twinkle, Twinkle, Anxiety</i>
Evan Davis	14	<i>On Moving On</i> Leonard Winograd Award
Taylor Romero	22	<i>My Disease</i>
Diana Nichols	27	<i>Nice Guy</i>
Elisa Turner	35	<i>A Request to Enter the Territory...</i>
Amada Garcia	38	<i>Struggles of a Girl with...</i>
Tehya Darrell	39	<i>Sewing Needle</i>
Shreeya Shrestha	40	<i>I Saw Her on the 122-X</i>
Emma Logan	42	<i>Tell Me When You Get Home Safe</i>
Desiree Erasmus	47	<i>Indestructible</i>
Mirabel Moring	51	<i>Of Wine and Women</i>
Elisa Turner	55	<i>Woman Country</i>
Liv Montano	60	<i>Fuck</i>
Jessica Stahnke	61	<i>untitled</i>
Travis Mundt	65	<i>The Whale</i>
Liv Montano	70	<i>The Reasons I Still Love You</i>
Bridgette Lamando	72	<i>I Keep Breaking Down</i>
Emma Logan	78	<i>One-Way Ticket</i>
Bobby Bilyeu	80	<i>They May Be Strangers</i>
Kaitlyn Lafferty	88	<i>[self creation through the act of...</i>
Elisa Turner	89	<i>Archetypes</i>

## Sean F. McGee

### *For Father*

I enjoyed talking with you tonight, Dad.  
I shared the secret thoughts of my soul with you.  
You cupped them tenderly in your hands –  
Pondering them in your heart and mind.  
No, tonight we were not father and son, parent and child.  
We were two horsemen, riding along the same path,  
Sharing the same load  
Only you – sturdily afoot the beaten trail,  
While I – the rider reflected in the shimmering pool beside the road.  
So much of yourself you see in me.  
So much of me, a reflection of you.  
Only when a rock falls in or a fish surfaces,  
Do the ripples cause a change.  
So on we plodded.  
You see all my flaws.  
How could you not?  
I reflect all of yours.  
As you bend to drink from the crystal pond – our eyes meet.  
Finally, face to face, I can see your eyes.  
Take a drink.  
Let your lips touch the pool.  
I'll kiss you.  
Otherwise I know not how.  
Besides, there's a bend coming up in the road and the trail  
leaves the pond.  
You'll ride off into the sunset – turning your back to me  
I'll be left behind.  
Alone, in a crystal pond to sink or swim.  
The same pond where your father left you when he rode off.  
Take that drink.  
Let me kiss you one last time.  
I'm so grateful you taught me how to swim.



**Veronica R. Peña**  
*Space Trip*  
Drawing

**Jazilyne Houston**  
*Reina*  
Photography





## Dulce Mendoza

### *Chile Guajillo*

*Chile Guajillos are derived from Chile Mirasol. When these chilies are fresh they are called Chile Mirason, but once dried are called Guajillos. They are dark red, long chilies. They are harvested in the drier climate of north central Mexico. When you shake them, they make a rattling sound because of the seeds inside and their dried shell. They have been used in many traditional Mexican dishes. They are a bit sweet once cooked. They do not have a smell to them when dry, but once submerged in hot water they smell slightly spicy and have a sweet cranberry taste.*

My veins, my seeds, grow deep inside me

Like my people who struggle to be understood

Harvested by strong, tired and wise hands

I reflect the fire, the sweet, the misunderstood

Take me, dry me, devein me, leave only the skin

I am still strong, flavorful, and rich

I carry years of traditions, sweat, tears and history

The sound in me rattles like the music of my people

Soulful, slightly spicy, and sweet



**Steven Cross**  
*Ten Mile Peaks*  
Painting

## **Bridgette Lamando**

### *Twinkle, Twinkle, Anxiety*

He came to my daydreams when I was  
15.

Little star.  
Never conceived,  
Never aborted.

Wonder what you are.  
Dylan,  
the name of  
my first unborn son

and  
the undiagnosed  
mental health misfortune with no  
faulty prescription.

Yeah, sickly anxious since then  
Well, before then

But the Kleenex let me know you can't have no reason.  
And like, fuck that lifeless wannabe-hero tone asking,  
"so, when did this start?"  
Will always be a replaying question.  
Might as well have a page with a made up  
uncomfortable confession.

Constantly flaking into your thoughts  
like a homemade stale croissant  
while you sit at the  
breakfast table  
each morning  
stuck in  
your orange juice reflection.

No prescription for this one,  
Might get morning sickness but hey,  
a purge might clear out that poisonous introspection  
Cause this young boy's just  
    in my imagination  
        tugging on my pants  
            saying

fall in love with the world  
and take care of yourself

Something bout a kid's voice  
makes it easier to listen

and lets me think about,  
not myself.

Can't be laying concrete when there is formula to make.  
Gotta begin yesterday cause an

        actual child is always on  
        his way,  
this time, undying lifetime, sung like a  
        lovely  
        little  
        nursery rhyme.





**Dylan Konecny**

*All is Lost*

Drawing



**Joshua Gala**  
*Divinity*  
Drawing



*On Moving On*

I met Michael at a corner gas station on an early fall night at 9:00 PM after running back home to grab my ID so I could buy a pack of something, and he insisted that I call him Mike. I came through the propped doors and greeted a scruffy orange clad man whose voice was rasped and eroded from years of chain-smoking, or so I thought.

He was overtly charismatic for no good reason. This gas station was trash, his jacket was trash, and the people he dealt with every day (along with his pay grade) were also probably trash. You could tell he'd been through it, but still, he felt steady, he felt warm. But then again, so do forest fires when they're first put out.

I bought Camels and a lighter for seven dollars and I struck one up while leaning up against the rail on the concrete patio outside. Mike followed through the doors that had been prepped and propped open and grabbed a lawn chair and then grabbed another.

He had an itinerant drawl: I always keep two just in case

We sat down, I lit up and the cool of the menthol numbed and singed its way through my nostrils. Mike pulled out a cigarette from behind his ear and lit it with a beige Bic that he slipped back into his pocket through a hole outside his ratty jacket.

The smoke settled into the air—and Mike settled into the scene. You know, he said between drags, *I played APA in Vegas. Professional and all.*

*Really?*

*Yessir. Big time high roller shit, big suits, big money, rolled cigars.*

He pulled his Parliament away from his lips, rolling it between his fingers as if it were a premium presidente.

*Made it to the final round before I went all in on an Ace high.*

*Just an Ace?*

*Just an Ace. I thought the cockscucker across from me was bluffing. But he wasn't.*

*No he was not.*

*No shit?*

*No Shit. But it was crazy. I mean, Vegas man, fucking crazy! The lights, the liquor, the women! Nothing like it. You ever been?*

*Only passing through, never gambled though.*

*Ah shit, man! You have no idea!*

I mean, on that point, at least, he was right. I was 19. My family had strolled through Vegas on a road trip once at 3:00 PM on a Wednesday. We had a late lunch at a Hard Rock Cafe at some mall that was 9 miles from the strip. I didn't even know what APA was, to be honest. I assumed that it was just some kind of poker thing, I genuinely had no fucking idea, but Mike did—in many ways it seemed like it was *all* he had. I don't think I believed him, at least not his story, in the slightest. I doubted whether this 40 year old man in the 5 year old Osirises and god-knows-how-old Hollister hoodie had about as much money in his checking account as I did, let alone enough to hit the casinos.

But the feeling, I suppose the *sentiment* behind what he was saying, that felt true. Mike *really* wanted to have been right there duking it out with the big dogs in Vegas, to be something else. And in that moment, I guess so did I.

*I guess I really don't. I've travelled a bit though. That right?*

It was.

*Yeah, mostly camping, a lot of backpacking.*

As was that.

*Even took a crack at the PCT, the Pacific Crest Trail, ya know?*

It wouldn't have mattered if he did, because lord knows I didn't.

*The what, now?*

*From Mexico, to Canada, three months straight, just walking along a trail.*

*Get the fuck outta here!*

*That's what I said! Right around California, I said enough of this shit, I'll just take a plane!*

Mike laughed at that, and so did I, it felt good. At that point, someone had rolled up to pump four and began strolling towards the bodega. Mike groaned and lifted up to go greet him.

*I'll be right back.*

*Sure.*

I slid out my phone while trying to keep the Camel from slipping out of my mouth. I had never really smoked on purpose before that night, at least I'd never bought my own.

The screen buzzed on-it'd only been a week-I had yet to change my background. It felt silly, but I couldn't bring myself to do it, every time I went to I just ended up staring at the photo and tonight was no different. I remembered that day, it was late summer, cicadas were buzzing and it smelt like sprinklers and fresh lawns, but you could feel it turning in the air, school



was gonna start soon. We sat right next to each other real close and she shot me the slyest little smirk and I remember feeling butterflies in my stomach because of it. We'd later find out from her mother (whom we hadn't told at that point in time) that was what gave it away, that she knew right in that moment "what was going on." She wore black shorts and Chuck Taylors and a French tucked tee and I only remember that because she had spent a good deal of time picking at my red cargo shorts and flip flops ("Why do you need that many pockets? Who wants to see your toes!"). We had gotten ice cream and her little siblings had insisted on getting cones that they weren't able of handling at all. They started to topple down on them and she reached over to try to save them and in that moment I reached over and stole a bite of her coffee-hibiscus-vanilla combo just as her mother snapped a picture. She was mad, but not actually, or maybe just a little because it was something she teased me relentlessly about over the next two years—I don't know.

*What do you know?*

*What's that?*

*That fella's got a collectible, ya see that? Old Oldsmobile, 1960 I'd say.*

*Really?*

*Oh yeah. My father used to drive one of them.*

*That right?*

*Oh yeah! We'd go cruising for miles, he'd bounce me on his leg, sometimes he'd let me steer even.*

*He'd let you steer? How old were you?*

*6 or 7, not too bad!*

Mike lit up another Parliament, his fourth or fifth (since I'd been there) of the night.

*He moved back down here recently, I helped him build up his house. Down in Pueblo, the place was a wreck, you should have seen it, man, I mean these walls were so grimy the dirt would come off as you rubbed your finger off of them.*

*I know about that, maybe not your dad's house, but I mean this one time, we stayed at a cabin up in the mountains—I swear to God this place was haunted or something— but you walked in and the first thing that hit you was the smell, I mean goddamn it must have been a skunk den or something.*

*I fucking hate skunks.*

Plain and simple at this point there's no other way to put it, the two of us were outright lying. We were reacting, but neither of us were really listening, just waiting to see how the other could heighten. Mike played APA, I hiked the PCT, he had lived in Malibu working as a handyman on a beachfront property, I'd almost gone national playing rugby before injuries took me out. All of it was wrong, literally wrong, but it felt harmless and fun. Some stories were spurred by memory, others were fabricated entirely out of thin air. Like any drug I guess, it was a nice distraction. But it was only just that. For me, every story would somehow find its way back to her, and I'd kick myself for being so hung up on something that shouldn't have been such a big deal. It was just a breakup, man.

Mike would finish some tangent about biking cross country, and I'd wander off and there she'd be on her purple bike stopping by the house for the first time. I'd finish about the hardest hit I ever laid on anybody on the field, and there she was around the corner hanging her head sobbing as she found out that the court had given her siblings to her stepdad over her mom. I'd go off about being lost in the mountains for days on end, and there she was right next to me again, letting me know she wanted to end it just as much as I did.

I couldn't get away. But it seemed like Mike could though, and in that moment I wanted to do the same. So I took my cues from him.

*I'm telling you, I'd never seen a fish so fucking big in my life!*

*I believe it.*

*I mean, this thing could've fed all of Malibu. HUGE fucker.*

As he gestured, his wallet flew out of his jacket pocket. I reached down to pick it up and saw a photo of a little girl sitting on Mike's lap. He was younger then, he had the same buzzcut, a few less scars and a lot more teeth in his smile too. I handed it back to him and didn't think, I just asked

*That your daughter?*

*What's that?* He said, retreating back.

He clammed up, the toothy grin in the photo no longer matched the glum look that he wore now. He furrowed his brow and looked down at the photo, almost confused, trying to make sense of something and just like that he was lost for a bit.

I'd hit a nerve and I didn't know what to say or how to back out, but the silence crept up into the air and it boiled over and I couldn't take it. For whatever reason I said

*I'm sorry, I—*

*For what? You don't have to be, I um... It's been a while. A long time. I don't see her much anymore...*

He stared at the photo as he rubbed his calloused thumb over her face.

*Is she... you know—*

*No! No no no, she's just with her mother.*

He sucked his teeth.  
*With Angela...*

I saw rage wash over, and then I saw him turn towards the empty suburban road.

*She, for whatever reason, when she was little, she was just the most stubborn little thing.*

I sat back, I let him go.

*The funniest thing: I had come home one day from work, and I was chopping some lemons up for a Corona, and she comes bounding round the corner with this little squeaky voice of hers, and she just goes "Daddy, what are you doooooing!" So I told her, I said "I'm chopping lemons for me! Too sour, you won't like 'em." And boy if there's one thing she hated more than anything, it was being told what she would and would not do. And so, she looks me up and down and crosses her arms and stomps her foot and she goes "You don't know!" and I said "Oh, but I bet I do." And of course, she hits me back with a resounding "Nuh-uh!"*

He threw his arms up in the air, miming a surrender.

*And at that point, I mean, my entire argument was just done. Over. The 'great debater,' ya know? What could I say? So, I figure, fine, let's just put an end to this. I hand her a lemon, and I say "Alright, Adeline, go ahead, I'm sorry, try the lemon." And I hand her the biggest wedge on the counter. And what does she do? She shoves the whole fucking thing in her mouth. I mean the whole thing, rind and all, and she starts chewing.*

He began cracking up.

*And you could see it on her face, she fucking hated it the second it hit her tongue. But what does she do? She just keeps chewing, and chewing, and I swore she even had a tear or two running down her cheeks a little, and so I ask her. "How is it, Adeline?" and she, mouth full of lemon mind you, she looks at me all pouty faced and she goes "IT'S. GOOD." And she says "good," and lemon flies all out her mouth all over the floor. And I say, "You don't have to eat more if you*

*don't like it, no one's making you." And she goes "I do like it!" and she snatches the whole half of the Lemon I had in my hand and runs off to her room. And after a good ten-minute tantrum she comes skipping out into the hallway like nothing happened. And I go into her room and I see she's got the lemon on her pillow, and she had taken a whole three bites out of it, like it was a fucking apple!*

And he lost it. And I did too. I don't know if he made it up, but it damn near sounded like the most authentic thing we'd heard all night. Even if it wasn't real, it felt like it stemmed from a real sort of truth.

As we laughed, as it went on, it was less at poor Adeline, and more a release. All night we had been dipping and dodging the things that mattered and it wasn't till we finally took a fraction of a good look at them that either of us felt any sort of relief. It brought us back down to Earth, I suppose.

I looked at my clock, it'd been an hour and a half. I had told my family I'd only be gone for a few minutes. Or at least that's what I told Mike on my way out.

*Hey I'll see you around!*

*Sure thing, man.*

*Stop by any time you seem I'm working! Will do!*

I hopped in my car, and I looked down at my phone. I didn't change my background that night, but I found a nice looking aesthetic picture of the aftermath of a parade on Instagram. Confetti lined the streets and an old man with a broom swept it up as the floats continued on. I saved it to my phone.

*Maybe later* I thought to myself.

And then I turned the key.



## Taylor Romero

### *My Disease*

People always tell me I ought to stop eating sweets, like they know all about me, my disease  
“It’s all about the sugars”, they say.  
Oh you know about my disease?

The woman who sees me poking my finger on the airplane tells me “she understands”  
because she knows someone with my disease.  
I nod like I care when I want to scream  
“Your fat ass cousin or your grandma don’t even have my disease!”

I keep up with all my friends. Drinking a few Dirty Shirley’s and eating a BLT at the bar. Forgetting my disease...  
They don’t know and I won’t tell them how sick I feel;  
acting like it’s all okay and suffering quietly with my disease.

I don’t have time to be sick today. Running late because of my disease.  
I can’t see the whole drive to work, pulling over to puke stomach bile and sugars  
on the side of a busy highway.  
It’s not my fault, so stop honking and blame my disease.

Regaining consciousness as I wake up of the machine. I can’t believe I’m stuck in the ICU again.  
Cursing my disease.  
The doctors are all sick of seeing me here.  
They tell me I’m too young to see these complications from my disease.

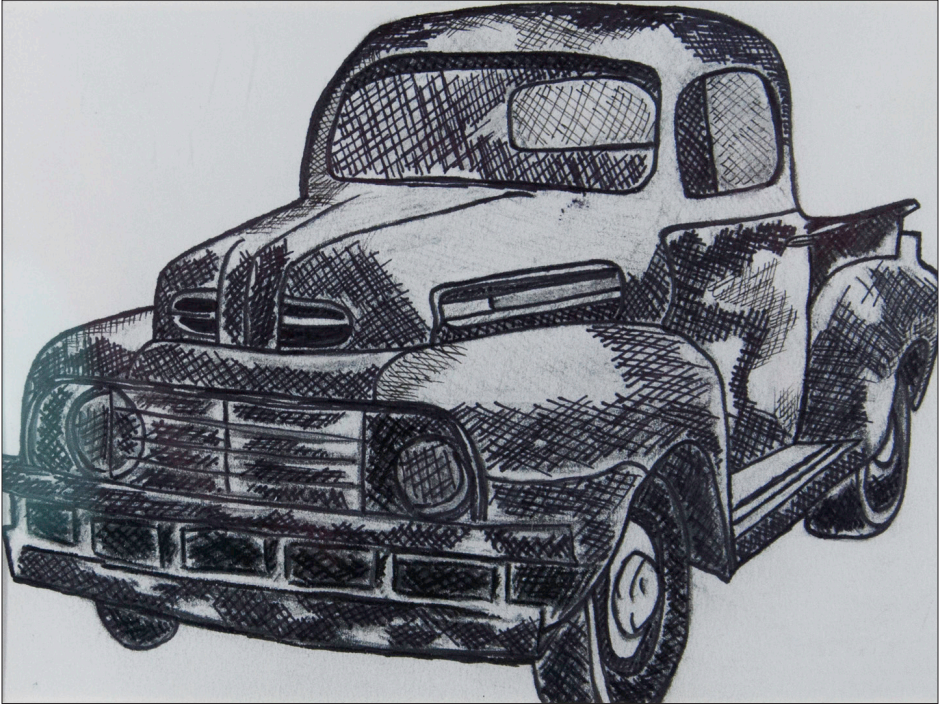
Back home and I tell myself this year will be different.  
I'm going to really try to control my disease.  
But I look at my arms, all bruised up from the IVs and I just  
want it all to go away,  
if only for a moment, but they told me I would never be  
cured. I'll always have my disease.

And so this I must finally ask myself:  
how do I accept that I will always have this--my disease?



Shawn Stimp  
#552

**Shanea Stamps** - Best in Show  
*Natural Kinky Twist*  
Drawing



**James Fladung**  
*Oldies But Goodies*  
2D Design

Your shoes have been on ever since you agreed to meet him. You check your phone what seems to be every ten minutes but soon realize it's only been thirty seconds. Your parents are asleep and your siblings have better things to do than question why you're so sweaty. You try and focus on the picture of your grandma when she was your age to distract yourself from being too anxious but your leg continues to bounce without your consent and you don't know what to do with your hands so you just keep them in your lap. You decide to go into the bathroom to check your hair and makeup for the fifth time, hands still wet from the last time you were in there.

"You need to calm down," you say, attempting to assure the nervous mess in the mirror. "Nothing bad is going to happen, you're just assuming the worst."

You roll your eyes and your phone buzzes in your hand, nearly giving you a heart attack. "I'm here :)" the text message reads, the colon eyes boring into your soul. You catch a glimpse of yourself in the finger-smudged mirror: you're wearing a cropped black and white patterned hoodie and some high waisted I eggings. These are the new clothes you and your mom bought the day before.

You smile and tell yourself one more time, "It'll be okay. He's one of the good guys on Tinder." You grab your house keys before you leave, just in case.

Outside sits a big black truck, the kind that would flash its lights at you even though you're definitely speeding and it so desperately needs you to go faster. It rumbles quietly, waiting for you to climb in, steam flowing out of the exhaust pipe. You doubt all of your choices at this point and almost run back inside and block him on every platform. "Maybe he's a real life murderer," crosses your mind at least three times but something makes you close your front door anyway.



You walk up to the truck, making sure you don't trip over your own feet and pray to a God you don't really believe in that everything goes okay. You wave and give your best smile and the window rolls down.

"Hey."

He doesn't return the smile but instead gives you a smirk that makes you think he could eat you alive. You're unsure if you like it or not, twinges of excitement erupt either way.

You climb into the passenger seat, there are napkins stuffed into the extra pockets attached to the door, some hard French fries by your feet but the back seat is oddly clean. You both sit there for a heavy minute before anyone says anything, the low grumbles of the engine helping you mask the fact that your heart is about to erupt from your chest like the thing from Alien.

"So how're you?" you ask him, pretending to be a 'cool girl who's definitely been on a date before'.

"Oh you know, just picked up a beautiful girl. Night couldn't be better," he replies smoothly, not a nervous syllable in sight, you can tell he's delivered that line before. The streetlights illuminate the dark stubble you didn't realize he had. You laugh anxiously and he starts driving, passing houses of old friends from high school.

"So where should we go hang out?" He asks and you tell him of your childhood park, your hands shaking as you give him directions. He notices. "You know I don't bite... unless you wanted me to," he says, staring at your hands, the suggestiveness of his sentence swelling in the musty car air that kind of smells like Axe body spray. You laugh, hoping to clear the weird tension and he stops his truck before you notice where you are; the park is darker than you hoped.

You climb out of the truck and you can see his full figure now, he's shorter than you expected and has a ponytail that was not featured in his pictures. He's still cute at least. You walk



down the sidewalk that leads to a playground. “This is your neighborhood, don’t feel scared. There’s help around the corner if you need it,” you tell yourself, your steps becoming more sure of themselves. It ends when you feel a pinch on your ass. You turn to him but he ignores your shocked expression and red face.

“Excuse me?” You ask, unsure how to feel about it.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he says smugly, biting his lip as he picks up his pace to wrap an arm around your waist. You tense up against him but he doesn’t notice and leads you to a bench nearby. You sit with him and ignore what he did because “it’s just what guys do, don’t be *that* girl”.

He puts arm around your shoulder, his hand playing with loose strands of your hair, a light wind blowing through the dead leaves around you. You talk about how your first semester of college is going and ask him about he likes to do but he gives two word answers, mainly staring at how your mouth moves. In the middle of one of your questions about him he grabs your chin, pulling your face to his. You realize what’s happening before his lips catch yours. “Woah-uh, I don’t want to do anything like that tonight, I just want to talk,” you say, pushing his hand away from your face.

He tries again and leans in, closing his eyes, “C’mon, we can talk in between.” Again, you push him away and repeat what you said before, crossing your arms around your chest, hoping he’ll get the hint. He gives a deep sigh and returns to playing with your hair. You try and bring it back to a conversation but soon realize that you’re the only one talking.

He sneaks his hand around your waist, pulling you closer to him, enough to the point you can feel his breath on your ear and stubble against the back of your neck. Your muscles tense up and your mouth makes a soft noise in protest but he doesn’t notice and rubs your arm. You don’t look at him while you talk about your favorite superhero and favorite artist, his arm tightening around your waist every time you try to move away.

“Oh you like Khalid? That’s what basic girls like, I can show you what real music is,” he states, trying to kiss you again, this time he’s too close to move away. You turn away right as his big face comes close to yours, his scruff like sandpaper as he kisses your cheek.

“Like I said, I don’t want to do anything tonight,” you laugh a little this time, trying not to make it a big deal even though you feel like you’re about to cry. His hand rubs your thigh now, his nubby fingers making designs on your leggings, as if he’s trying to calm you down and butter you up at the same time.

“Okay then keep talking about basic girl stuff,” he breathes in your ear, his voice laced with disdain. You shudder against him, he takes this as an invitation and he slips his hand into your leggings, grabbing your hip and holding you as if you belong to him. You sit there unable to move like a deer in headlights. Words come out of your mouth but you don’t remember what they are and it’s not like he’s paying attention to what you’re saying either. You want to enjoy the affection he’s giving you but it feels all wrong, too rough and too needy.

You imagined this night going differently. You wanted to talk all night, you wanted him to see you as this sweet girl who has so much girlfriend potential and you wanted to see that there were still guys out there that like you despite what your cheating ex-boyfriend told you. But instead he pulls down your hoodie, exposing more of your neck and shoulder, kisses them and makes a trail to your chin.

You can’t feel yourself anymore, your legs, arms, and hands are numb and you can barely even feel his lips on you but your mouth keeps moving. Your head feels like it’s full of air, your eyes focusing on the playset ahead of you, the houses past it that still have their lights on. You wonder what kind of TV shows they’re watching and you desperately want to be wherever they are.

You start thinking that you’re overreacting. That he’s just an affectionate guy and what else would you expect from

accepting to meet up with a guy from Tinder at midnight. That maybe you gave him the wrong impression when you were only texting him and that's why he keeps trying to put his unwelcome mouth on yours. But you've told him no plenty of times already, he should be taking the hint already and that you made it clear what you didn't want to do.

"I shouldn't be here, I have to get home soon," you say, his lips still attached to your shoulder.

"Mhm" he says, clearly not paying attention to you. You try and think of any excuse to leave.

"I have church in the morning, I need to go." It's a lie, it's a Thursday night, who the fuck goes to church on a Friday, but you hoped that he didn't realize.

He is still leeching on your shoulder and you repeat yourself louder, turning yourself away from him completely, enough to get him to finally stop kissing you. "Nah baby girl, I don't want you to go," he says, pushing your hair away, exposing your neck again.

"Well I'm going to leave," you say, standing up before it starts escalating again. You don't know where you found the ability to speak clearly but you hold onto it tightly.

He grabs your hand, trying to pull you back down onto the bench again but your fingers slip through his. You start walking out of the park when you feel his arms around you. He hugs you from behind as you walk up the hill into the neighborhood where his truck is parked. He stops to unlock his truck but you don't, you keep walking away. He looks at you like you're an idiot.

"Hey get in, I can take you home," he says, half in and out of his truck, scanning the area as if he's on the lookout for someone dangerous. "No I can walk, I live right down the street," you say not looking back at him as you walk away.

Your footsteps on the dried up leaves the only thing you can hear, your thoughts have gone numb and silent now.

You're almost home when you hear the low grumbles of his truck approach you. His window is rolled down, "Get in. I can take you."

"No I'm almost home. It's okay," you say, not looking at him, hoping one of the neighbors will come out to tell you to shut up.

He stops his truck abruptly and he shakes his head at you like a disapproving dad. "Really? You're going to have me drive sixteen minutes to get here and you're not even going to let me take you home?" he snaps, the growls of his truck masking his own. I nod, answering his question and he curses and drives away, out of my neighborhood.

Your breath finally catches up to you as his headlights are finally gone and you almost choke on it, tears finally starting to pool. You don't remember getting out your phone but you call your friend and explain the whole situation as you walk home, crying the entire time. Once you get there your parents are still asleep and your siblings have better things to do than question why your clothes are out of place or why your makeup looks messy. You crawl up the stairs and into your bed and cry for hours, your mind racing with what could've happened, what did happen and if you deserved it. His kisses lingering on your skin make your entire body feel like an itchy wool sweater you can never take off. You don't remember falling asleep that night.



**Mason Albro**  
*Sad Bois in the City*  
Painting



**Daniel Hernandez Franco** - Juror's Choice  
*DAHF'S Garden*  
2D Design

**Elisa Turner**



*A Request to Enter the Territory  
Where My Future Self Lives*

I want to be a person who says thank you to pain and  
means gratitude,  
then opens her hand clenched like a

cadaver's fist in rigor mortis to let hurt go,  
who can extract splinters from her

own heart—someday stop probing  
empty space like a tongue which returns

again and again and again to a bad tooth.

Ahead I can see the woman I want to be as I lurch  
behind her, dragging the sickness of who I am

like a rotting leg—propelled by the  
hope that one day she'll turn to face me,

rest her palm against my cheek.

Thank you she'll say.

Thank you.





**Austin Bennett**  
*The Way is Clear*  
Photography



**Austin Bennett**  
*Serendipity Begets Beauty*  
Photography

## Amada Garcia

### *Struggles of a Girl with an Ambiguous Face*

What's your name again?  
What does that mean?  
Am-ayda?  
A mother?  
Amanda?

*It's not that hard.*

So like what are you?  
You look pretty white?  
You kind of look Asian.  
Are you like Mexican, how do you know Spanish?

*Sure.*

*I have to change my name  
So it fits better*

*On your  
Wonder Bread tongue*

*Fuck it, close enough.*

**Tehya Darrell**

*Sewing Needle*

wri  
ting is  
threading  
your life  
thro ugh  
a ne edle  
And if  
you sew  
secrets  
you'll  
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## Shreeya Shrestha



### *I Saw Her on the 122-X*

Dimmed, sunlight imbues  
through the dark glass I see her on.  
It falls on her tender skin.  
I accompany the sun  
we chase down her swan neck  
but her dark attire bars us from going further.

So we graze her arms instead,  
fine gems dangle on her slim wrist  
my eyes descend and touch  
the valleys between her fingers.  
A different gem, her lover's halo.  
It flings the sun away from her hands  
as she raises them to tame her hair.  
And I tame my thoughts.



**Kaitlyn E. Sterlace**  
*Flowers*  
Painting

## Emma Logan

### *Tell Me When You Get Home Safe*

My voice is dimmed by his static thoughts  
determining how to reiterate the point I'm already making and  
he interrupts me with empty noise that travels through the  
polished image of what I'll never get to be and yeah.

I guess I'm not good at math.

Maybe that's why I feel powerful when I sign my name at the  
top of the page. Where my ownership of work is balanced by  
my feminine handwriting,  
yes.  
It was me.

I remember my Polly Pocket clogging the bathtub drain as  
my Momma told me no one had the  
right  
to touch me she said that if I was told it was a secret that I  
should tell her,  
I didn't have to keep it  
but, I thought good friends didn't tell secrets?  
That was 7, now 17  
I shudder walking down the street clutching my constitutional  
rights next to keys between  
knuckles as I walk home alone at night,  
I didn't get my timing right and  
I used to think I couldn't die.  
I would play outside with lightning bolts and juggle knives but  
strangers still held danger and  
milk cartons told us to survive so,

we continued on.  
Unaware of our mortality unless it was connected to our femininity  
because it all just makes us  
too vulnerable.



Vulnerable like my legs I'm supposed to keep smooth cause they're meant to be felt, just worn, not used and I still taste his cologne down my nose and throat and water pressure pounds heavy silence into my earbuds as I try to stay afloat cause the whole world is tossing me around like the dolls we know accidentally thrown into the laundry machine but I'm starting to get dizzy and just trying to get clean Oh,

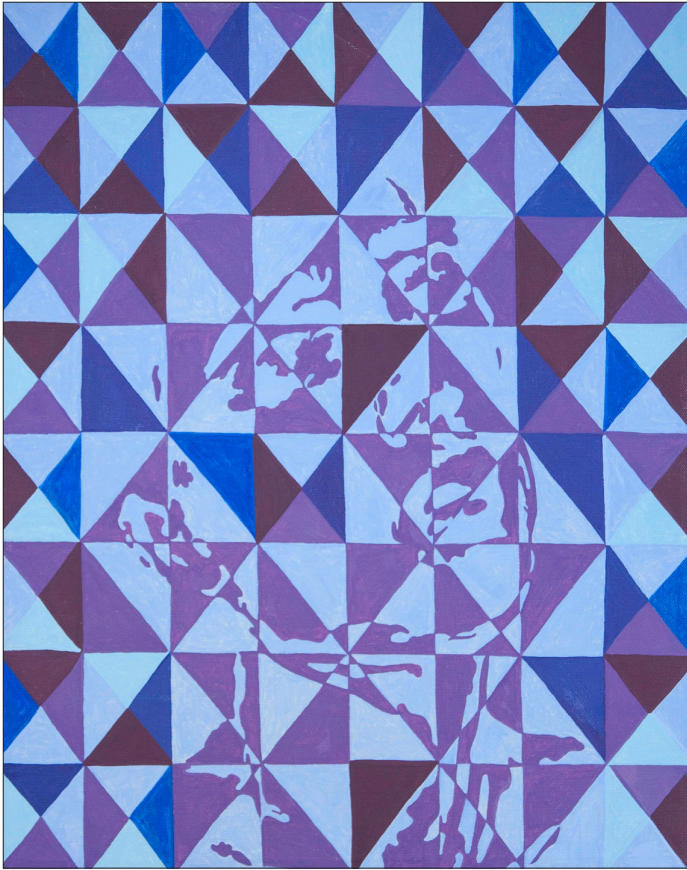
wait.

That's just my foot,  
bouncing under the table as I make it look like I was fixing  
my hair because  
I raised my hand and didn't get called on.

I'm sorry.

**Joshua Gala**  
*Chair*  
Drawing





**James Fladung**  
*Inner Geometry*  
2D Design

This is me  
sending you a royal, golden  
FUCK YOU.

You just left.  
No warning.  
No goodbye.  
And you went and took God with you.

People cannot say  
*You are better off without him anyway*  
They cannot console with  
*A better one will come one day*  
The simple, stupid fact is  
there just aren't plenty of brothers in the sea.

So I'll wait and when I join you in heaven,  
I'm going to find you  
and I'm going to kick your fucking ass so hard not even  
Michael and Gabriel will be able to protect you.  
Even Jesus will not be able to save you  
cause when I'm done kicking your ass,  
I will strangle you with the  
safety belt  
that was such inconvenience for you to wear.





**BK Allen/Aspartame Moustache**

*Untitled w/yellow*

Photography/ mixed media



**BK Allen/Aspartame Moustache**

*Untitled*

Photography/ mixed media





**Jazilyne Houston**

*Bloodbath*

Photography

*Of Wine and Women*

I try to turn my lemons into lemonade, but it tastes like disinfectant. It tastes like broken hearts in the 10th grade, it tastes like your friend calling poison control. It tastes like Ophelia, like drowning and broken trust. It tastes like regret that I didn't just

I scribbled out this line.

Ice cream melts and drips down the girls hand. She laughs before licking it from the gap between her thumb and finger. Watching the action hurts, like scratching an itch. The waves of her lavender ocean crest, and I want to drown myself in her. The girl tells me she would do anything for me as she draws her sword and points it to the heavens. She sounds like Claudius, praying for forgiveness to a crime she doesn't feel guilty for.

A rat runs loose in your daughters dollhouse. It chews up the clothes, and it shaves Barbie's hair off and wears it like a belt. It shits in her tiny plastic shoes. Your daughter has adopted the rat and named it Sappho, and she prays every night for it to return her Ken doll, crying quietly into her pillow. Barbie wipes her tears away with her perfectly posed hand, now complete with a Sharpie manicure, and tells her she doesn't need him anymore.

I told my mother I was gay and she poured herself a glass of wine. I hate her for making me cry.

The girl has a gaze that pierces into my soul, and I cannot escape the empty black behind her pupils. I bite my tongue when I try to tell the girl that I love her, and chocolate spills into my mouth. Lavender sprouts on my arms.

Your daughter turned eighteen in December and her rat has been long dead, killed and eaten by the household cat that you oh-so-cleverly named Snowball. You melt your daughters Barbies down into wine, bottle it up, and give it to a family friend. It tastes like disinfectant.



Art  
07/30/2018

**Aidan Wright**  
*The Joker*  
Drawing



**Darweesh Zmily**  
*Cool, Calm and Collected*  
Photography

Wednesday was a fine day for  
a strange reunion.

My old friend spent the first  
twenty six years of his life  
as Ben but now I greet  
her as Emily for the first time

She's free now I guess.  
I tell her I'm sorry I didn't know.

Emily says regardless of what  
the scanner of the Security Theater says  
she's a woman now

and *fuck That TSA Bitch*  
who told her male coworker  
*You have to pat this one down*

Who hasn't choked on the  
humiliation of realizing  
your body is only yours  
when it's convenient?

As long as I've known her she's  
never been one to  
*Shut up and take it.*

I can't help but wonder  
about That Bitch  
who out of two villains  
(and she might well have been one)

was the only Bitch

which is another word  
for citizens  
of Woman Country

sectioned here when the doctor says  
*It's a girl*  
and wipes blood  
from our faces

the same blood used to stamp  
Woman Country  
passports

on the only day that summer  
we wore white shorts  
and thought we were dying

When we were called  
*Pretty or sweet*  
which meant  
*Valued*  
which meant  
*Human*

The first time  
they said *Bitch*  
after we said

*No you can't touch me*

*No I won't touch you*

and understood for the first time  
that this first violation  
could signal a chain without end

Sometimes the name Bitch  
became a fist in our face  
and if it was not us (that time)  
it was a sister  
or mother  
or the girl down the street

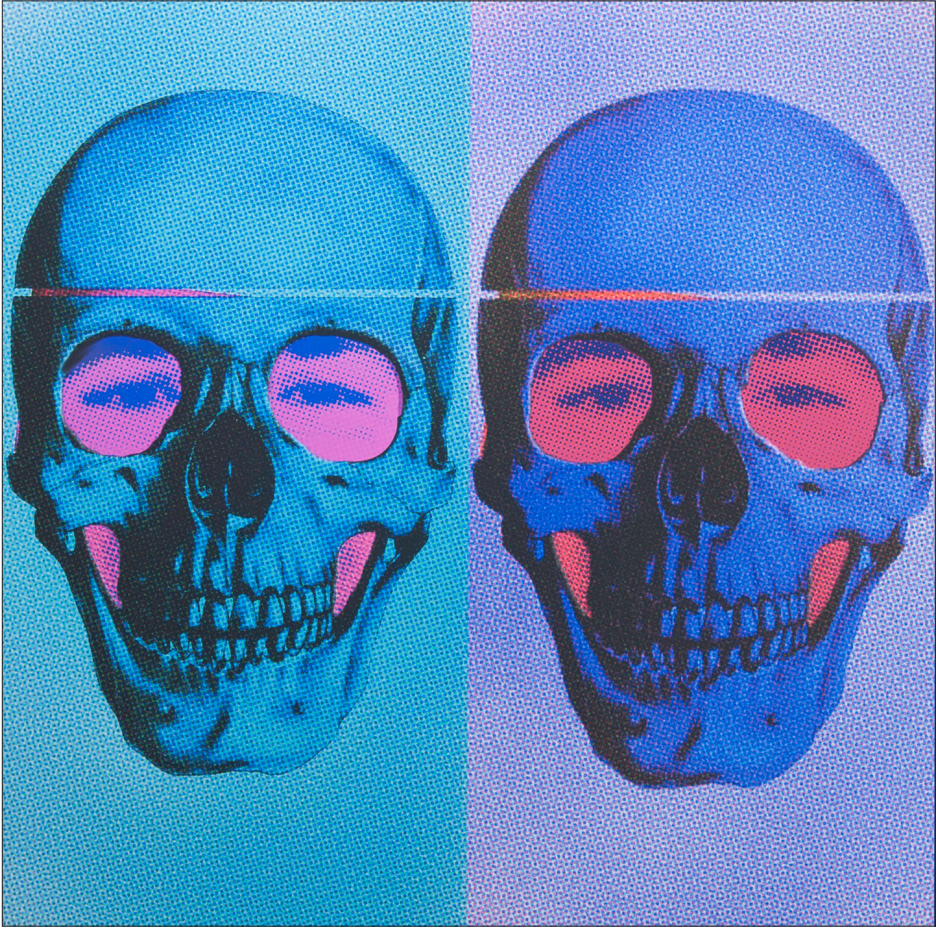


We count ourselves lucky  
the way people do  
when the neighbor's home  
is swallowed by flames  
with jaws open wide enough  
to devour the whole world  
and their home remains  
Untouched (for now)

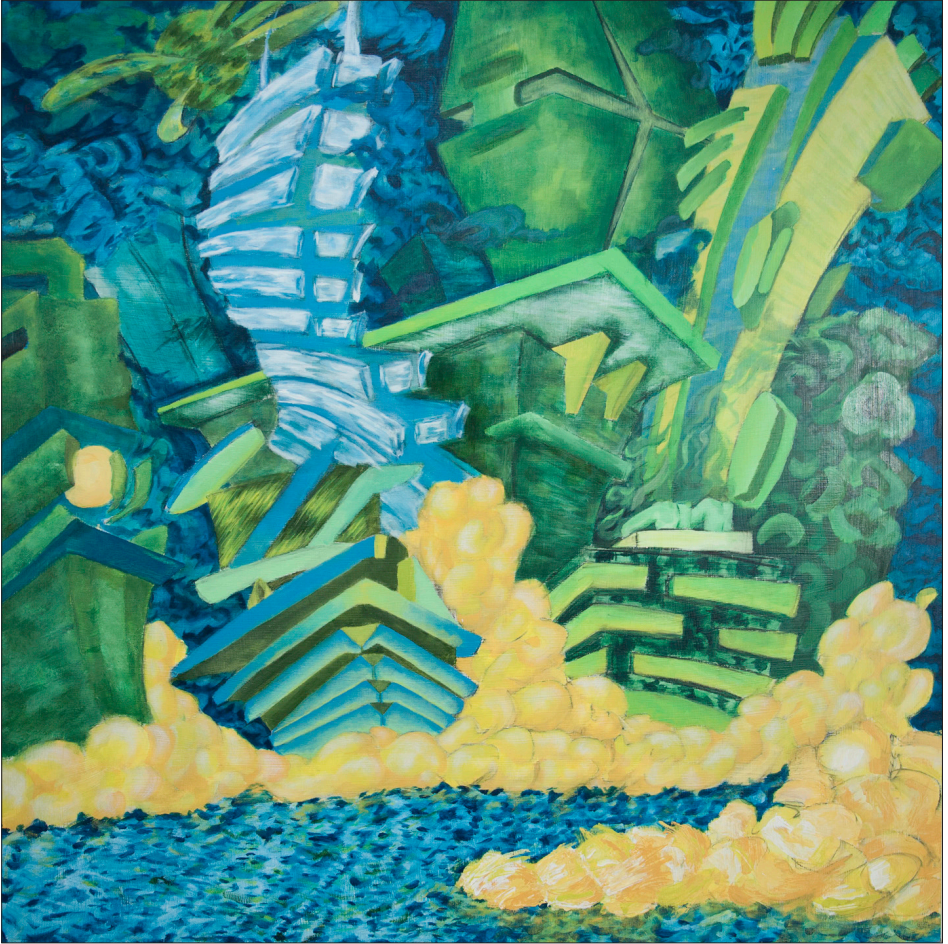
Margaret Atwood wrote that there is  
freedom to and freedom from.

In Woman Country  
there is neither.

One woman's dog collar  
is another's liberation  
and the country one risks everything to enter  
is the same so many of us dream of leaving.



**BK Allen**  
*Untitled*  
Graphic Design



**Dylan Konecny**  
*Sloan's Lake Denver 2150*  
Painting

## Liv Montano

*Fuck*

I don't have enough money in my account  
I can't believe that just happened  
I don't know where I'm going  
I left my wallet at home  
I just want to go home  
I can't find my phone  
That hurt like a bitch  
I can't find my keys  
My screen cracked  
That was amazing  
I can't do this shit  
Was that my exit  
I just lost my job  
All of that noise  
I lost my phone  
I need a break  
I'm so thirsty  
Where am I  
I'm so tired  
I'm hungry  
The police  
All of this  
Trump  
That  
This  
You  
Me  
It

Jessica Stahnke

*untitled*

Writing poems about writing poems  
is no different  
than writing poems about  
anything else.

Stare at the fireplace tile  
for an hour,  
brow in a knot.

If I were an airplane, I would...  
blow  
in  
the  
wind?

Take a walk. Slip on ice  
and fall.

That's why you're crying!  
If I were a tree, I would...  
hold  
up  
all  
the  
squirrels.

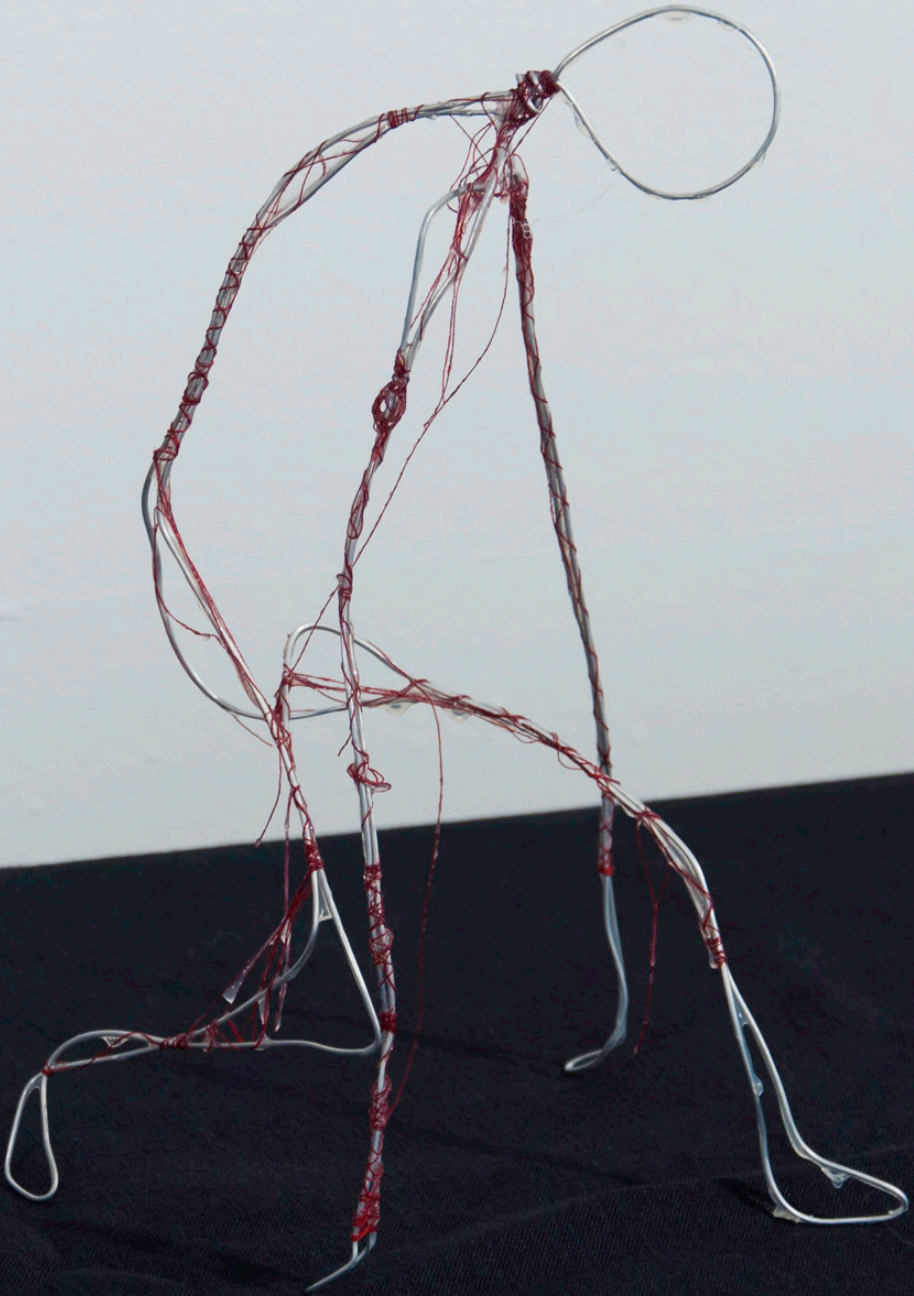
Pour a glass of wine,  
but no, not yet!

You must put pen to paper.  
pen to paper. pen to paper.  
pen to paper.

pen  
paper  
to

If I were a birdie, I would live forever.  
Is it poetry yet?





**Rayna Stem** - Juror's Choice  
*Goopy Sad Guy*  
3D Design





**Sena Bryant**  
*Love Letters*  
Painting



*The Whale*

That morning the rain soaked into the sand, hardening the beach. I reached down and scooped up a piece of pumice deep red as the core of the earth. The impression that my fingers left in the sand was licked clean by the ebbing of the ocean. The ocean reached in and out from its center and left a shining black mirror in the salted froth of its wake. In the distance water churned and danced against a red-orange sky. Waves crested in white sparkled under the rising sun. The essence of a billion souls shuddered and crashed upon one another in an endless seething of power. I threw the pumice into the vast grayness of the ocean, knowing that someday it would come back.

I looked up the beach and saw a dark blotch the size of my palm in the distance. It was inanimate but somehow I felt as if it could have been alive. It did not belong here, on the beach. Everything about it was foreign to the sand and rocks above. I walked toward the small crowd that had gathered. It was a disjointed circle of gawkers standing around the object, which I now realized was quite large. The people stood and pointed and gasped. Some covered their noses and mouths with sleeved wrists and shook their heads. A whale had beached during the night. The water giant lay on its side, one large barnacled flipper was draped over its cream-skinned belly. The mouth was agape, letting in oxygen that dried out countless fibers of baleen. The beast was lifeless and sad at the same time, its eyes awash with the alien world it could not traverse nor survive. Salt crusted the rim of the whale's blowhole and it was beginning to reek of putrefaction. A toddler stood with his parents and pressed her hand into the slick rubber flesh and squealed at the imprint left by her palm and fingertips. The toddler's mother scooped her into her arms and shoved her index finger into her face indicating that she was not pleased with what the child found so amusing and of no consequence to the mother at all.

The morning fog made its way up the bluff and into town right on schedule. It moved slow and deliberate, leaving droplets of itself on the houses and sagging buildings. Shops were opening doors that peeled paint. The shopkeepers sold stuffed lobsters and t-shirts printed with smiling sea creatures and toys manufactured in China that would undoubtedly end up in the trash by the end of the day. The town depended on tourist dollars and the people worked hard to project the image of the hard working fishing community it once was. After the storm the town lost its identity and the people lost themselves along with it. They lost direction and a way of life. They lost money and property and legacies stretching back multiple generations. They got bored and developed drug habits and suicide pacts. By ten a.m. the town square would be dotted with tourists who would soon leave the fog and move down the highway to bigger, brighter, better towns.

Gulls squealed overhead, circling and swooping and landing near the whale hoping to find breakfast in the trash cans that lined the beach every 500 feet. Their yellow claws gripped grey rocks and the rims of the trash cans. They pecked at the exoskeletons of dead crabs, not daring to challenge a live one. A mile or more up the beach I saw a vehicle approaching. It had to be Frank, the local sheriff, on her way to tip her wide brimmed hat back, scratch her scalp and say well don't that beat all or god damn it the ocean is littering all over our nice clean beach. I could see Frank's head bobbing behind the wheel of her big green Ford Bronco. Seeing Frank was difficult. A lifetime ago we were bound by friendship and later by the hip. She was the only girl who ever told me that she loved me, and what did I do? I went out with Brittany Goldwether in an act that would be the quake responsible for the unwinding of our romance. Brittany worked at Mulligan's on the Pier. She tended bar three times a week and drank away the other four around town. She smiled the way I forgot a woman could smile, and she had fun the way I forgot a woman could. I had taken up bourbon and a renewed interest in women who were not Frank. Brittany talked about easy vacuous things, who was being a bitch to who, who was fucking who, empty gossip that I could nod my

head to while staring at her spaghetti strap dangling halfway down her bicep rather than firmly on her shoulder. I could tell her all of the things that I could not tell Frank. Brittany joked and laughed and drank as much as the seasoned deckhands that guzzled their paychecks at Mulligan's. She was the breath of fresh air that I wanted. I sat at the bar with my head in the palm of my hand, elbow resting. Brittany leaned over the bar to wipe away spilled beer left by the shaking hand of an alcoholic. She stopped in front of me. She had caught me looking down her low-cut blouse, leaned over and squeezed her tits between her elbows, pushing them up. I took the little gold heart-shaped locket she wore around her neck between my thumb and middle finger and looked at her face. Her eyes sparkled hazel under a thick layer of black makeup, her bright red lips parted into a smile. Abruptly, she turned around to face the old cash register. In the mirror behind the counter I saw her scribble something onto a small square of paper, fold it in half, and when she turned again to face me she put the folded piece of paper onto the bar.

"I get off at six," she said.

To cover my ass I lied and told Frank that my best friend Ray was in the hospital, sick with cancer. The truth was that Ray and I had not spoken since I stole some money from the fire safe he kept in his garage, he hated me as much as she soon would. Frank was always too good a cop to keep anything from her for long, she had an intuitive and curious nature. It only took a few weeks for her to realize what I had been up to.

Frank eventually moved on and married a local fishmonger. I however, remained in a fog of lonesome guilt that has lingered since. Shortly before his untimely death Frank's husband gave her a daughter, a beautiful Down syndrome child named Hannah. Frank's husband was a drunk. A piece of shit. The kind of guy who swindles a kind-hearted woman into a relationship just for the perks of being the sheriff's husband. She covered for him and gave him everything except for a perfect child which he resented and loathed her for. One night he really tied one on at Mulligan's on the pier. He got

into his car and ran himself head first into a telephone pole. The accident was discovered in the morning, his body twisted across the hood, his head flattened. Through all of it Frank was still the best sheriff this town has ever seen. She forged a good and simple life for her daughter and kept a smile on in spite of the mess that so many others left for her to clean up.

Frank pulled up to the sleeping giant with long tire impressions in the sand behind her. I crossed my arms and pretended to gawk at the beached whale before me. Frank stepped down from her truck, her lean foot finding the sand underneath. Her light brown ponytail peeked from under her hat against her back, tied off at the base of her skull with a fluorescent pink hair tie. She always had it tied back during her shift, but when she was comfortable and let it down she really was gorgeous. Long ago when she was mine I could always read her mood by how she wore her hair. Tied back in a ponytail meant business. Loose and free tendrils meant I would get a glimpse of the real Frank; the Frank I loved. She took a deep breath of the salt air, stuck her hands on her hips and chewed her upper lip the way she did when. I turned and walked down the length of the whale towards the tail, my back to Frank. Then she spoke.

“I’ll be damned, Charlie Parker is that you over there?”

I stopped cold at the collapsed and lifeless tail. My heart beat its way into my throat, and my brain felt as if it was swimming in blood. I made tight fists with my hands and turned around. “Hey Frank, this sure is something huh?” I said.

“I’m not exactly sure what to think about it,” she said unzipping her thick policeman’s coat. “All the years I been sheriff of this town I never seen anything like this.”

“How does something like this happen?” I asked.

“Well shit I don’t know Charlie, I called the rangers. They’ll be here this afternoon,” she said. Frank always had a way of getting a rise out of me and I suspected that I did the same for her, although we believed there were no hard feelings. I


reached into my coat pocket for my Marlboro's and shook one into my mouth. I struck a match from a book that I pocketed the night before at Mulligan's. I drew air into the cigarette between my lips, setting the tobacco ablaze. I shook the match out and dropped it into the sand, kicked a little over it with my toe to hide the evidence careful enough so that Frank didn't see. She was preoccupied with the whale anyhow, so it didn't really matter. We stood equally perplexed at the unexpected presence of the whale, questioning nature's complexities and the cruel randomness with which it carries out its duties.

A man dressed in denim walked over, his thumbs resting on top of his oversized belt buckle and struck up a conversation with Frank. "Mornin' sheriff."

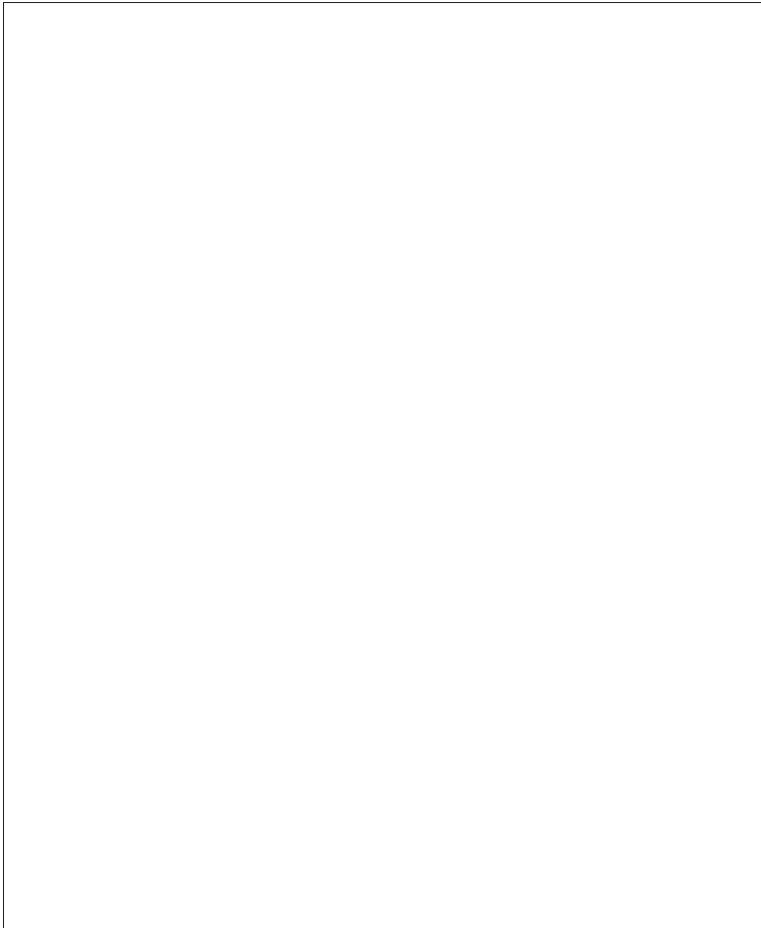
"Good morning Lou," she said. They talked about the whale and I walked up the bluff on the edge of town. At the top I sat and finished my cigarette. The smoke burned my lungs, pulsing nicotine through my blood stream and into my brain. The crowd around the whale grew and I could barely see Frank. I buried my cigarette butt in the loose sand near my feet, stood up and brushed away the sand that had collected in the folds of my pants. Frank had always been just out of reach. After the incident with Brittany she became distant. The only thing left to do was back off and slink into the shadows.

After the storm of '82 I realized that I was a sideline to her duties as sheriff. Her ceaseless need to help others at my expense sickened me. The rain and the ocean clashed and Frank and I grew apart. I ate alone, slept alone, and laughed alone. I spoke into an empty can of peas to no one on the other end of a short string.

**Liv Montano**



*The Reasons I Still Love You*







**Tracy Campbell**  
*Moonlight*  
Painting

## Bridgette Lamando

### *I Keep Breaking Down*

Brought on by anything.  
Like a bee sting.

Or reflecting on my parent's marriage  
like I ruined the whole thing.

Or silence broken by fake chit chat,  
while I admire my unnamed Siamese house cat,  
and spend the day like I'm just something to wink at.

Or a random memory  
of my dead sister,  
burnt the cornbread and  
broke that delicate blister.

Can't find parking  
And I'm three days in  
purposely starving

Brought on by anything.  
Could be daytime or bedtime  
But in no time  
I'm breaking

No ctrl key,  
Or stability,  
with the ground now beside me.

Tears,  
Reminding my tongue of the  
polluted long island

Always,  
at the surface of my eyes,  
out of nowhere like seagulls begging for fries

And  
I  
don't  
know  
why.



**Daniel Hernandez**  
*Who is the Giant?*  
Graphic Design

**Leonardo Rodriguez**  
*Among Us*  
Photography







**Claire Gillmore**  
*Untitled*  
Painting





**Claire Gillmore**  
*Untitled*  
Painting

## Emma Logan

### *One-Way Ticket*

The train platform was long and thin and pushed them up against the brick wall so they could feel the absorbed heat on their backs and elbows.

“Are you wearing sunblock?” she asked, knowing the answer. “No. I forgot.”

He turned from her and shuffled the papers in his hand to read the departure time yet again. He knew it said 4:30 but since his watch refused to speed up time he figured his ticket might. It did not.

As the bustling station waited in anticipation, she brushed her hair behind her ear and thought about how much to tip the sandwich cart lady on the way home.

When the train eventually arrived they stopped holding their breath and quickly leaned in towards one another. After they pressed lips across the other’s cheek disingenuously, both faces fell promptly back into wrinkled pouts.

He picked up his bag from between their feet and accidentally brushed it against her leg while navigating to the train door. Without saying a word, he slipped away from view for a moment and then popped back up from behind the thick glass window and waved.

He didn’t attempt to open and hang out of the window to hold her hand. She didn’t attempt to run alongside the train or stand on her tiptoes to beg for one last kiss.

They didn’t know how to do that anymore.

So she waved back and they both knew this was their last moment in one another’s lives. When the train finally began to push itself out of the station, it was as familiar as falling asleep with the other at their side.



**Leonardo Rodriguez**  
*In Retrospect*  
Photography

## Bobby Bilyeu

### *They May Be Strangers*

There's no getting around this, so I may as well save the metaphorical prose for whoever the Nabokov of my generation is, and tell you, as blunt as I can: this is a short piece about the true, real-life, non-fiction case of my grandfather's Dementia. Don't let my capitalization of "Dementia" and all-lowercase spelling of "grandpa's" trick you or give you the wrong idea- this is about *him*, not what killed him. I just did that because my capital Gs are terrible and I'm writing this by hand, and I'm pretty sure Dementia is a proper noun so I have to capitalize it. I don't know about that second part, take it with a grain of salt. But anyway, my grandfather's Dementia...

The last conversation I ever had with my grandpa, he thought I was my father. My dad's dad and my maternal grandfather (that's the one I'm talking about in the first paragraph and first sentence of this paragraph) were buddies- maternal grandpa being the stereotypical 50's greaser jock and paternal grandpa being the stereotypical weak-boned nerd with perfectly-combed hair. Long story short they became friends when Maternal tried pushing Paternal around, but Paternal put a finger in his face and something to the effect of, "You can push me all you want but I'll be the one guy that never stops pushing you back," which earned Maternal's respect. So anyway, they were friends after that, and my mom and dad actually played together on the beach once as kids when maternal and paternal saw each other across the way and caught up after a couple of years.

This is basically what my last conversation with him was about- how they met and the time they met again on that beach. What tipped me off was when he said "*Your* dad was studying to preach at the Church of the Nazarene" and again and again he'd say "*You* and Deanna" (my mother's name).

Apparently I was one of the last to know about his condition.

I didn't know before (and during the first part of) that talk, which was in the roach-heavy room that he'd die in. I pretended that I was my father for twenty to thirty minutes. Odd, that may be, but go ahead and put yourself in my blue sneakers- I bet you would've acted like they were brown, too.

It's funny. They say you don't realize how much of your parents live in you- your personality, your speech, your handwriting, all your tastes (music, etc.)- until it's too late, and you've crossed the Event Horizon into the black hole of your inescapable self. But, based on what I know of my maternal great-grandfather and my maternal grandfather, that old idea of parent-child harmony doesn't apply to everyone. Great-grandpa (Big Pa Pa, we called him) went into the Navy and fought in the war when he was eighteen; when grandpa (Pa Pa) was eighteen, he'd been put in a radio broadcasting center somewhere in Oklahoma. When Big Pa Pa had his first child, he was twenty-two and married to the woman he'd call his wife for almost exactly fifty years; when Pa Pa has his first kid, he had been married for six months. On paper they were not walking to the same beat, is what I mean.

My mom told me once that her dad told a lot of stories (which I later learned meant *lies*, but put in a light-hearted way) and was just "teasing" (lying) when he talked about serving in Vietnam and working with Frank Sinatra, and being "close, personal friends" with Andre the Giant in the nineties. Turns out, he flunked basic training (flat-footed), so they put him up in a radio communications office somewhere in Oklahoma for two months before being honorably discharged- which allowed him to pursue the Shriner's work. Turns out he worked as a communications technician (old-timer for *Guy Who Fixes The Phones*) in the same building as Frank Sinatra one night. Apparently they shared a beer after he forced a conversation about phones (but to be fair, what else would you talk to Frank Sinatra about?). Turns out, he was in New York City on the night my sister was born, and patted Andre the Giant on the back when he went with a few of his work-friends to a wrestling show.

Also according to my mom, Big Pa Pa might have never learned how to tell a lie. Rumor has it he tried lying once but he had a dry throat and by the time he took his drink of water, he'd forgotten what was about to say. We think this honesty was beat into him by a strict mother and a religious father. Nowadays, there's not much thing as strict *or* religious, so the Big Pa Pa Honesty (family term for Brutal Honesty) that we knew- or what my grandparents and great-aunts and uncles knew, rather- might not be so common today. And knowing what I know, it's hard to blame Big Pa Pa for his stories. Maybe when you hear one too many times that your wife is ugly and you're never gonna be a damned *clown* as long as you're *my* son, you start telling yourself that things are a little better for you as a way of coping. You see how there are two sides to every coin? I'm afraid Pa Pa might've gotten tails.

Big Pa Pa made my maternal grandfather into the greaser that he was in high school and college (the one semester he went). I think so because he stopped the greaser thing right *before* they cut his hair at basic training- meaning something else ended it. I reckon it was Big Pa Pa telling him that his hair was too thin to be greased back that made him cut it completely. In fact, there's not one photo I've seen between 1968 and 1986 (the latter is the year Buck's death) that shows him with hair any longer than buzzcut length.

Pa Pa was with the Shriner's for thirty years. He retired thirty days after the anniversary, and yes the *thirty days & thirty years* was intentional. He was given a Rolex and a couple other gifts as a parting farewell from his coworkers. He has a plaque up on the wall of a Shriner's office in Oklahoma, honoring him for being one of the "founding fathers" of that region. There's a guy named Carl at the top of the plaque, then a guy named Abe below him, then grandpa, then a lady named Wanda. A few years before he died, he gave me the Rolex.

He had three kids, all daughters, who were horribly afraid of clowns. And yet he put food on the table and books on the

shelf by being the heaviest made-up, most wildly dressed clown in the city. One of my earliest memories is seeing him and a bunch of his clown colleagues in uniform, walking in (what I remember being a) single-file line, with their hands on each other's shoulder like one of those Conga Lines you see at a wedding, waddling to a destination that I can't remember because I was trying to see which one of them was him. I don't think I was able to make him out of the lot, but there's a picture from that day of he and I- he's in his costume, and I'm in a dark blue shirt with a black cap that's much too big for little me. His white-gloved hand is waving at the camera, and he had a big smile on his face. I had that blank, I'm-doing-what-someone-told-me-to-do, kid-face on. He loved that job. To him, it wasn't a job. I know, it sounds cliché but indeed, he made sixty thousand a year for going to birthday parties and benefits, which doesn't sound bad to me at all. (Little-known family fact: he auditioned for the role of Pennywise the Clown in the 80's miniseries of *IT*, and even made the shortlist, but decided to drop it because his Shriner friends thought it'd make clowns even more Gacylike rather than the fun cartoonish characters they're supposed to be.)

He retired in 1999 and he did it with military benefits and a good-sized savings. Interestingly, he didn't take a single vacation that wasn't focused around some sort of family gathering after retirement. He drove to Texas a few times to see my mother, my father, myself and my older sister. He flew to New York in 2002 to see family living in the area, and to comfort them after 9/11.

He never got out of the house. He'd always be on the couch in his lounge (I never saw anyone else sit on it but him) and watch CNN or Jeopardy! or MSNBC or FOX. Towards the end, I noticed that he'd picked up the habit of talking to the television, as if he were one of those suit-wearing correspondents joining the Host via satellite. Once, my sister walked into the lounge (which was closed off by a door) and said something to him while he was doing this, and grandpa, apparently, acted like it didn't happen.



He wasn't looking good toward the end. At 65, he looked 80; at 66, he looked 85. And at 67, when he died, he had a long white beard, bald head, and round belly- all of which looked out of place on him, as if you applied them with convincing precision, using one of those photo-doctoring tools. I didn't see him in-person in this state. I've only seen a picture- the last of him ever taken, almost a month before his death- as shown by my grandma (a very likeable, hard-working, pleasant woman).

Yes, he never left the house. And when someone (grandma, aunt Jen, one of aunt Jen's three kids) *did* leave the house, because the front door was in his lounge, he'd see or hear them and inquire about where they were going. He was an old-fashioned, controlling man. He didn't want my grandma out of the house past sundown. If she had to go somewhere, it would instead be aunt Jen who went. Furthermore, if aunt Jen wanted to go somewhere past dark, he wouldn't want her going alone- this is why aunt Jen was always happy when my sister and I would visit (we were the ones who were eager to go with her to whatever gas station or bar she was heading to, under the disguise of "the store"). But grandma would be stuck in the living room, watching "Doctor Who" or one of those shows where they have some B-List celebrities and budding comedians comment on this or that robbery or stunt gone wrong. And she was in charge of keeping the young kids in bed after their bedtime (you know how little kids are--they find any excuse to be out of bed at eleven o'clock at night).

We'd be back at one in the morning; grandpa would be either asleep on his couch or helped by grandma to their bedroom; grandma would be dozing off herself, about ready to turn-in (in fact she'd be more than exhausted, but she'd be told by grandpa to stay up until we got home). But like I was saying, he didn't look good.

He had diabetes (I don't know which type) since 1990, and always either forgot or refused to take his medicine and watch his diet. As a result, he had what I call

*manic-depressive blood sugar-* grandma, every hour, would check his blood sugar; if it was high, she wouldn't have to do the finger-prick operation because he would be hollering at her that he's "fine, goddamn it" and that he doesn't "need some *bitch* coddling him" like a "god damn child." That's the mainc. But she'd be quicker than a snake on mice to get him a glass of sweet tea if he was dozed off on his couch when she'd check up on him. She'd yell at him "Chuck! Chuck! Drink some, your sugar is low" and hold the cup to his mouth. He'd slowly fade back to life. He didn't take good care of himself, but damned if grandma didn't work enough to be his wife, doctor, alarm clock, and even the meds themselves. God bless that woman.

But, in addition to his diabetes (which would also end up taking his left leg from the knee down, blind him, and cause so many operations that his left arm had one remaining vein, which I can only describe as a throbbing chord of rope), he also had the Dementia. I don't think any of us know when it began, but it had definitely taken a heavy presence in him by his early 60's- he'd call out the name of people who'd either died (Cormac, an old friend) or had long moved away (my mom Deanna) as if they were in the house and he was calling them over to ask them a quick question. When they set up the cot in his lounge, he was more-than-ever calling out these names, as well as looking at someone like my aunt Jen and asking "What are you doing here?" We assumed he just didn't recognize them, but maybe he believed that they had moved out or something. Who knows.

My grandma told me when she came to visit two months after he died that the last thing he ever said to her was "Get out of my house. I don't know you, I'm calling the police." He died surrounded by medics and my grandma. My aunt Jen was visiting her oldest son Michael in the hospital after a suicide attempt (a failed attempt, thank God) when she got a call from her youngest son James (about seven at the time) he simply said "Grandpa's dead, there's ambulance here." She called grandma to confirm, and it was true. Because Michael and grandpa were close, she chose not to tell him

that he'd died until later when he was out of the hospital. He told me later that he wasn't that sad because grandpa didn't recognize him near the end, and he was the closest person (besides grandma) to him at the time. He told me, "It wasn't like I was losing a family member after that time when he couldn't remember me. At that point it was basically like learning that someone you knew in Elementary School died. Like, yeah it sucks, that's a human life gone, but I'm not as devastated as that person's mom or siblings."

It's made me think about that saying about kids and parents (you turn into your parents). And *that* made me think about that weird genetic statistic where your mother's father, for some reason, has a pretty big say in things like your hair and health. My hair is just like my dad's (red, widow's-peak hairline, thick hair) which has left me teetering between hopeful and dreadfully pessimistic about the *health* end of things. Will Pa Pa's hold on my immune system and my brain be two-fold because the hair is where I lucked out? Will I be in my late 50s and unable to remember where I went to middle school, and then the words to my favorite song, and then my cousins' names, and then even who my wife and children and grandchildren are? Will they all be strangers?

The last conversation I had with grandpa was about how he met my paternal grandfather and how my mom and dad played together on the beach when they were kids, before they even knew each other. Twenty years later, they'd marry and have two kids and live well in the budding suburbs of Dallas. Maybe *that's* the story I should've written. But I don't really care about that all that much because... well, I don't know why. Really, this is more of an obituary than anything, because grandpa didn't get much of one in the newspaper. He left behind a wife, three daughters, five grandchildren, and a great many friends and Shriner's buddies.

None of whom he remembered.



**Jordan Ferguson**  
*Crying*  
Painting

## Kaitlyn Lafferty



### *[self creation through the act of forgetting yourself]*

self creation through the act of forgetting yourself  
is waking to a black cup of coffee  
or reading a whole book in one day

it is the act of an avalanche  
when it learns of itself  
to be snow

or the hand when its cold  
as it withers and yearns  
for blood in its connected chest

self creation is an act of listening  
to buildings of a city still settling  
into history of the present

it is the act of remembering  
the vastness of an ocean  
as a story you still live in

self creation is night sky  
it is untucking your shirt  
and plunging into ice sheeted puddles

to feel the skin under your pants  
to hear speech leave untold  
to wear a beaming only light has been told to hold

becoming a self means knowing that wind works as a system  
from the north to be interrupted by the rockies then  
tunneled to here  
to become a self is to know place

self creation is unwording a word of a name  
then rewording it as the snow  
that falls onto what your heat contains

My father's oldest friend  
is an analyst  
of the Jungian variety.

She can read dreams the way  
an astronomer maps constellations  
though I've never asked her  
to read mine.

She says each person you meet in a dream  
is a part of yourself.

There are no omens in dreams  
and every prophecy  
is a secret you already know.

In my last dream  
I let a man put his hands  
around my throat only after he had promised  
to let go if it hurt too much.

For once I woke before it did.

I could ask her what part of myself I found  
in that dream devoid of earth  
or sky

(all that existed were his hands.  
Mine.

The last seconds of air.)

Perhaps she would say  
his hands were my own

compulsion to burn down every  
house I've ever built.

I always have a match in my pocket and

I can never leave  
my own throat  
alone.



**Alon Paul**  
*Birth of Alonica*  
Graphic Design





**Alon Paul**  
*Alonica Evolution*  
Graphic Design



# OUR TEAM

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