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TRIBUTARIES

A Note from the Editor

Tributaries continues to expand. As a student-produced journal, some level of change is inevitable. Our editorial staff is fluid—members come and go at the close of each issue, each academic year. But the 2017 issue marks a special change. For the first time in its forty-four-year history, *Tributaries* has broadened its scope to include creative work from undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in *any* Indiana institution of higher education. Before this issue, the work we published was limited to undergraduates at Indiana University East.

This issue is also a culmination of collective ideas (some borrowed, some new), long discussions, and even longer hours. We have stretched our dimensions with the inclusion of visual art in multiple mediums. In an effort to accurately represent the eclectic work being done by student artists across Indiana, we've allowed oil paintings, graphite drawings, and prints to coexist with mixed-media pieces, metalwork (jewelry and kitchenware), and digital photographs.

Tributaries 2017 could not have come to fruition without the caliber of work we received from our contributors. Great debate occurred among our staff, and tough decisions were made throughout the selection process.

Once again, we have the pleasure of publishing the music of Christian Chism. His original composition can be enjoyed by accessed on our website (iue.edu/tributaries). Please visit us there and have a listen.

In a final note, our hope is that the writing and images you encounter in these pages will delight you, move you, and intrigue you. We invite you to relish these pages and we hope you'll derive the same pleasure we did as we worked to bring *Tributaries* 2017 to life.

-S.B.

T. TRIBUTARIES

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T.

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**Winner, ** Runner up*

KYLE CLARK

Soft Machines

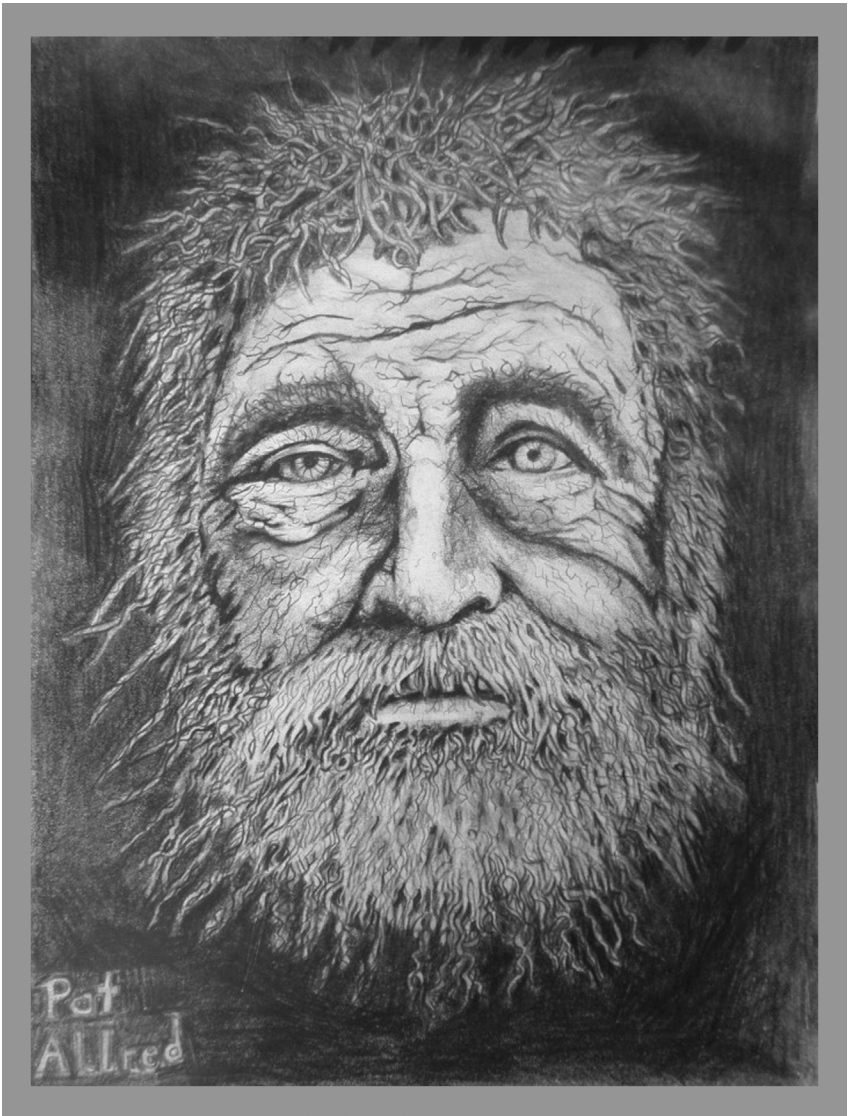
a quiver full
of chary arrows
splits my shoulder blades,

cinder-sweet air shape
shifts needlelike in my lungs.
i am painted black

in the dew-dipped predawn
wrapped around blue-lit bark,
eyes caught and

waiting. i am
a soft machine lying quiet
in the canopy, harmless

to your fawn. i watch her nip black
berry leaves, giving a shake,
a quiver, full.



Old Face, Pat Allred, Graphite

Apollo 11

Your school book tells of the first moon landing, but it won't say what I know. This grandpa has more secrets than you could guess. Neil Armstrong's words were not the first spoken on the moon. We never speak of it. No one knows—I was cut from the mission to the moon but I snuck to the ship and stowed away. As there was nowhere to go and limited space, I was soon discovered. Being 239 miles away from Earth, we could not turn around. They were stuck with me—my unrelenting space jokes: What do you call a tick on the moon? A Luna Tick. They didn't laugh at that one either. But I only stopped when they threatened to shoot me out into space without my space suit. But when we landed on the moon, I was forgotten. The earth was nothing more than a blue sapphire in the black of space, a blue dot in the lunar sky. The moon was gray, much like you'd expect, but it wasn't bleak. Neil began his wobbly descent down the ladder, giving his ramble how mankind leaps, which were supposed to be the first words—we all agreed—but I tripped over Buzz and fell out the hatch over Neil, onto the fine moon dust. I wasn't hurt but I muttered, "Holy shit"—the true first words spoken on the surface of the moon. We never speak of it. I was never there.

The Sandwich

Emily set the dark blue porcelain plate in front of her husband and then sat down across from him at the dining room table. She had bought the table at IKEA; it was made of birch and had a name like Bjorden or Bordjen. She stared at the empty chair next to her and noticed how the solid bright-white plastic clashed with the dark, grainy wood of the table, and she felt bile travelling up the back of her throat and into her mouth. She swallowed hard and looked up at Rick.

He had picked the sandwich up off the plate, and it was half-way to his mouth. His long, delicate fingers wrapped around the oversized bun, and she could see mayonnaise seeping out through the meat. As she looked at his girly fingers and manicured nails, that acid taste came creeping back up into her mouth.

As Rick bit into his sandwich, all he got out was what sounded like “Mmm, delicious.”

“I’m glad you like it,” Emily said. He was chewing and nodding, his loosely tied man-bun bobbing with each nod. She stared at the stray blond hairs sticking out of his hair-tie. He looked absolutely ridiculous.

“What kind of meat is this? I can’t place it... it tastes like chicken, but the texture’s so different from any chicken I’ve ever had,” he said after a few more nods and chews.

Emily just gave him a curious smile and watched as the juice from the sandwich dripped down his chin and landed on the blue plate beneath, leaving a growing pool of reddish brown. She waited until he had only a couple of bites left before she said “I went and visited Amber this morning...no, no need to stop, keep eating.”

He had put the sandwich down on the plate and was wiping his mouth nervously with his fingers. He got out an “Ummm” before clearing his throat loudly as he tried to get rid of the remains of the sandwich refusing to go down.

Emily tried not to smile and thought *maybe he'll choke*.

"What made you go over there?" He said.

He was looking down at the sandwich, so Emily stared at the top of his head, at the stupid man-bun, until he could no longer avoid looking at her. When he raised his blue eyes to hers, she couldn't figure out his expression. She had seen the way his eyes changed for many moments: happiness, anger, sadness, pleasure.

This was a look she'd never seen before. She narrowed her eyes, not lowering her gaze from his. When she figured it out, she stifled a giggle with the back of her hand. He was panicking, but trying his best to hide it. She relished in his discomfort for a moment before continuing.

"Oh, you know...I figured it was time the two of us got together. She was very surprised to see me. Can you believe it, she didn't want to let me in at first?"

No reply from Rick.

"Things got...heated. We were able to sit down and have a nice chat, though. You can keep eating."

He picked up the sandwich with shaking hands and said,

"What did you talk about?"

"Mostly we talked about what you two have been doing on Wednesday evenings at the Hampton Inn over on Rosemont." Emily imagined them writhing around on clean white sheets with a TV blaring in the background. Maybe one of those skin flicks they play on Cinemax, or maybe just the news. She didn't really want to ask.

He paused mid chew, "Emily."

She put her left hand onto the empty chair next to her and started rubbing it over the smooth plastic. "Finish your sandwich, Rick. You're almost done."

"Emily, I can explain."

"No need, Rick. I get it. I'm not the girl I was when we got married. I've packed on twenty pounds and I live in my sweatpants. I don't even bother wearing makeup half the time. I know I'm not attractive anymore." She raised her green eyes to his bright blue ones.

He stared at her pleadingly, "Please, don't..."

“Please don’t what?”

“Please don’t do this. I didn’t mean for it to happen.” He slowly chewed on the last piece of the sandwich, his lips stained red from the meat.

You didn’t mean for it to happen? I could buy that if it had only happened once, but it’s been going on for years—behind my back—in our home, in our bed, in hotel rooms all over the city.” Rick lowered his head and said quietly, “She seduced me.”

Emily tried to smile as she said, “I’m sure she did...how was the sandwich?”

“Why are you asking me about the sandwich? The sandwich doesn’t matter right now. I don’t care about the damn sandwich!” His fist met the table with a bang that reverberated through the large empty kitchen.

Emily rolled her eyes, “How was the sandwich?”

“It...it was good.”

“It took me all afternoon to get that sandwich just right—Amber even helped.” Emily said. She thought of the satisfying thud that she’d heard as she had brought the lamp base down on Amber’s head. Even more satisfying had been the look of surprise on Amber’s face.

“What are you talking about Emily?”

“She didn’t want to help at first, but I was able to persuade her.” She let out a laugh that must have concerned him, because he pushed his chair back and rose from his seat. His eyes widened and that panicked look in his eyes became fear.

“Where is Amber, Emily?”

“She’s here.”

“Where?” Rick said, looking around frantically.

“You just ate what’s left of her”

Rick stared at her, his mouth agape. His lips began moving up and down slowly, as if he wanted to say something but was unable to speak.

Emily stared back for a moment, then the grin that she had been suppressing the whole time began to emerge. It slowly played at the corners of her mouth and then grew wider and wider until it

transformed her whole face.

Rick grasped the tablecloth with white knuckles and swayed back and forth. He kept saying, “You’re crazy, you’re crazy. It’s not true, it can’t be” over and over.

“I might be... but the sandwich was good, right? I worked on it all afternoon.”



Bodies, Bambi Dean, Ceramic & Wood

ANDREW LANCE

Glass House

She can't find me here. I'm small. I can hide—she can't find me. Anything can hide in this big old house. It can hide anything just as easily as me. There has to be at least fifteen cats here she doesn't know about. Mom said she's about blind. She won't notice.

Why would she see a plate? One plate. I'm okay, I'll be okay. I'll be gone before she notices—if she notices. She might die before she notices. I'll be home, far away from this big empty house and the old woman. Anything could have broken, and it was so small. The house may as well have been a plate; sharp, high-shouldered furniture covered in plastic. Old, yellow chandeliers and tall mirrors framed in varnished wood; paintings of grand old women in funny dresses and theatre glasses and mustached men riding big horses hooved in blood and dirt and missionaries sailing on wooden ships armed with swords and bibles. I'm fine. She sits in the parlor all day. She won't notice before I'm gone. She sits in the parlor by the fireplace mantle in that rocking chair under the cross.

The cross above the mantle—oh god—the cross above the mantle. I feel an icy hand grasp my heart and I lurch. He saw me. She might not have saw me, but He sure did. He sees everything. All the times I cursed my mom under my breath and every time I stole a cookie before dinner and every time I wish Grandma Angela was dead after she hits me when I sin. He even sees my heart, my little blackened heart, that's what she says. If he can see my heart and all my sin then he must know about a broken plate! And she said keeping secrets is hellfire and unforgiven sin is hellfire and I'm deep in so much sin now I may as well be burning.

My legs won't move. But they need to move. I need to tell her. I need to tell her now. It'll be hell and it'll scare me worse than anything but I need to tell her because hellfire sure seems worse than my own flesh and blood hitting me again out of love. I'd bleed from my cheek again and again to be free.

I leave the closet after forever and walk down the hall passing what seems like a thousand faces on the walls in hilariously terrifying costumes and eyes fully alive and past the kitchen full of knives and the dining room's blood-red wallpaper to the parlor where the cross hangs above the fireplace like a white flame. There sits Grandma Angela in a throne-like chair with her arms crossed over a sagging black dress. I stand there in the threshold feeling the fireplace heat and begin to sweat. She looks up from a book and those black eyes look deep inside me like she can see everything I ever thought and did and would ever think or do, and I sweat even more. I'm not okay. She will kill me; I know it. She'll take that big old book of hers and whack me in the head. I know it. It'll be for my own good that this saintly woman killed me, rid the world of another sinner. I almost welcome it.

"Is there something you need?" She asks.

"Yes ma'am." I say.

"Well, what is it?" She asks.

I kneel before my grandmother. "I'm really, really sorry ma'am. I didn't mean to break your plate, honest, I didn't. I was just looking at that awful pretty picture of Jesus and thinking about how sinful I am and all the sudden I hit the shelves and that plate fell and I never felt more ashamed in my life."

She is silent for a moment. The longest moment of my life. Then she follows my gaze to the cross on the wall and she looks, long and hard, and then speaks to me.

"I want you to pray."

"Ma'am?"

"You heard me, young man. Kneel before the cross of our risen lord and savior and ask forgiveness. Only then can this be mended."

The flames snarl.

"Pray fast and hard young man, fire and damnation await the slothful."

"If I pray, God will forgive me and I won't go to hellfire and damnation? Will you forgive me?" My voice stammers.

"Only God can judge us. I am only his vessel—a ship in

troubled waters. Young man, if you kneel here and ask Him, you can have life everlasting. You will not burn. I forgive you. And He will too. Just kneel.”

Suddenly I’m overwhelmed with a funny feeling I can’t really describe, but it feels like my heart is wrapped in a warm blanket and everything I ever did and will ever do is written in time and already forgiven and I almost can’t stand how good it feels. I kneel before the holy cross, floating between the fireplace flames and the dark sky through the chimney like a bridge. Nothing was ever so beautiful.

“Dear Lord Jesus, I’m awful sorry about hiding from Grandma Angela and about breaking her poor old plate and for sinning all my life and if you can find me in your mercy I’ll sing your songs forever and ever amen.”

I feel a hand grasp my shoulder, but I don’t cringe. I don’t fear it anymore. I fear nothing. The paintings nod in recognition.

BRITTANY FANCHER

Mom

Mother, my mom, I see her, just in dreams.
Bad dreams, good dreams, they change from night to night.
One dream, it's bad. She's in bed, in a gown.
Asleep, quiet. The doctor speaks to me.
"She's gone, brain-dead. Pull the plug. Won't wake up."
Kill her. Do it. I said it. There's no choice.
It's done. She wakes. It's too late. She's been killed.
It's me. I chose. I killed her. Euthanized.
We wait and talk. Our last minutes. I'm sorry.
She dies. Again. I see it, clear this time.
Good dreams. They're still bad. She is not herself.
She piles up food, cookies, chicken, french fries.
We don't eat them. She starts to fade away.
She was back. Back from the dead, feels so real.
Always, bad dreams. Far away. Can't reach her.
She's across town. So close. I can't make it.
My phone won't work. I can't call. Can't see her.
I walk so far. I never make it there.



Mid-Century, Ben Cooke-Akalwa, Metal & Wood, 6"x6"x1"



Silver Spice, Ben Cooke-Akalwa, Metal, 2"x2"x2"

Heartless

He has learned to ignore the symphony of the office. The drilling of hundreds of fingers mining dollars from characters and numerals, the continual siren of ringing phones followed by the robotic recitation of memorized answers; the gleeful shrieking of the shredder as it devours precious secrets.

He mutes the noise with earbuds cemented in his eardrums. He keeps the volume at the prescribed potency to avoid deafness in later years. With minimal concentration on work or social media, the medium decibels of synthetic pop vocals weave a numbing cocoon around his consciousness.

But today is different. He looks up from his computer screen, from the budget spreadsheet buried beneath tabs of clickbait pages, by a sharp grinding noise of metal on...something. He peers over his cubicle, joining half of the office's heads, to define the noise. The other half remains seated, ignoring the prescribed noise potency.

A woman tries to jam an object through the shredder. She ignores the protests of the machine, her hands pushing down on something—bruised red and blue. It's moving ever so slowly, contracting repetitiously. Squeezing drops of blood from tubes sticking from all ends of it. A heart. His heart.

They've been going steady for several months. He would walk past her cubicle several times a day. Shredding private papers sheet by sheet in individual trips despite the shredder's unusually wide jaws. He even incessantly endured Tim's corporeally detailed medical anecdotes by the water cooler since it faced her cubicle.

After hours researching best methods for asking girls out, he finally settled on dropping a polite email, asking for unnecessary information about the upcoming office potluck. Emails were exchanged back and forth—repetitiously.

They'd been going steady for months. He realized, last month,

that his heart was gone. His hand pressed to his chest elicited... nothing. An X-ray confirmed. His heart had vanished. It was now hers. Mesmerized by her perfectly manicured fingernail pressing the lobby button, he was seduced by her dexterity in circulated office gossip.

Upon the discovery, he sent her an email littered with wretchedly cliché love phrases to cement his devotion. She replied in kind, writing of the care with which she would handle his heart. She kept it in her grandmother's jewelry box on top of her dresser. She had even bought a heavy bike lock to prevent the cat from mangling it.

She's still pushing. Her face as red as the blood on her hands. She clamors to the top of the desk and drops to her knees, grunting like the protesting machine. The heart begins to sink into the cavern. Slowly, it shreds to ribbons in the dark recesses of the shredder's trash can. As the aorta finally surrenders, the woman gives a laugh of triumph and turns to face her audience with flushed cheeks.

She moves back from the shredder. Stops at his desk.

"Hey Tony," she says, gripping the sides of the cubicle with blood-soaked hands, "Sorry for the short notice, but I won't be able to make it to dinner tonight."



Greed, Patrick Allred, Oil on Panel, 48"x72"

AMANDA COWAN

Machine Head

Carl is an unusual man. Athletic build, average shoe size. But Carl is a machine head. An entertainment apparatus atop his shoulders. Different channels flash across the screen. His permanent slouch the result of years without companionship—thirty pounds of machine. He holds his head just above the waves, like an Atlantic buoy. Youngsters point sticky fingers. Mum and Dad cannot understand him. He is one person, thirty-six channels.

Volume and channel knobs snapped off—he has been stuck on thirty-one for weeks. Constant polka music. No mute button.

Friday night, Carl shuffles into the Tube and Lube Pub. He sits at the bar: two flannel men to his left, one redheaded woman to his right. The men cover their ears and shoot dirty looks—laser beams. He bangs on his machine head, the volume increasing with every blow. Static—Frankie Yankovic—static. The men stand and leave, shouting, threatening. Carl angles his screen to the floor, volume softens slightly.

“Hoop dee doo!” The redhead to his right shows a moonlit grin. “I love Yankovic! Can I buy you a drink?” cocking her head.

SARAH SIGMAN

Anime

I consumed you
across moods
then dropped
you into the forgotten.
When I'm too old
to still love you
you come back
with nonsense colors and clichés.
Your girls are meek,
all the same,
your boys love
each other and act out
fan fantasies.
My fingers finally pick
up a pencil.
Your music
pours visions
the highest
level,
my level.
Heroes falling to their lowest.
Give up already
And I too fall
and come back.
I am too old
to be counted
among your ranks.
Yet here I
stand.

LLOYD MULLINS

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

David Bowie died last week. I was not a huge fan, but it would be impossible to be my age and not have been affected by his music, and his death. “Space Oddity,” “Rebel, Rebel,” “Heroes—all integral to the soundtrack of my youth. The morning I found out he died, I sat down and started watching Bowie videos on Youtube. My granddaughter climbed up on my lap, pointed at Bowie as Ziggy Stardust, and asked, “Papaw, who’s that?”

*

The song “Changes” always makes me think. I think about the changes that my mom saw in her life; when she was young, Arba, Indiana was a thriving community, with stores, a gas station, even a blacksmith shop. Space travel was still just science-fiction, radio was the high point of home entertainment, very few people had ever heard of Vietnam. Iraq had only been a country for eleven years when she was born, and Persia became Iran when she was five.

When I was a kid, our telephone was a party line. You had to wait for your neighbors to get off before you could make a call. One of my friends got *Pong*, and we all thought it was the greatest thing in the history of the world. When I was a teenager, microwaves were only a rumor. I was married with a kid before they became commonplace.

I can’t keep up with all the technological advances. I was twenty-five when my shop (in the Air Force) got its first computer. I avoided it like it was my CO. When I was well into my thirties, I got chewed out by a senior inspector for continuing to rely on status boards rather than using the computer to do my scheduling. I pointed out to him that I could do the work schedule faster and

more efficiently with the hand-written boards than with computers, but it didn't matter. It *had* to be done, and I'd best get used to it. I nodded and said I'd try. He finished his inspection and went back to Command Headquarters at Langley AFB. I kept my status boards, and used them until the day I retired.

I hate change. Oh, it's okay when it actually fixes something. But all too often it doesn't. When I was a kid, we had three TV channels, and often complained that there was nothing to watch. Now, I've got hundreds of channels, via satellite, and there's still nothing to watch. It just takes longer to figure it out, and costs a lot more.

I was never a gearhead, but as a teenager, I could change a tire, replace the battery, even change the oil myself. Cars were just simpler. A few years ago, my sister's battery died. I popped the hood and couldn't even find the battery. I had to get the manual out just to figure out where to attach the charger. I can still change the tires, if I can find the jack. They've gotten very crafty about where they hide those things. I could probably still change the oil if I had to, but it's easier and almost as cheap to drop it off at the shop.

I do like *some* changes. I originally disliked cd's. The sound just wasn't as good as vinyl. I was soon seduced by the portability and versatility of those shiny little discs. Then I got an iPod and fell in love. No more carrying around a backpack full of cds books. No more having to leave the house—I could just buy and download music from iTunes. There was still the sound-quality issue, but I got over that. For Christmas, my wife got me a Pono player. It allows me to buy and listen to digitized music at a much higher fidelity. It's like listening to vinyl. It's pretty stinking cool.

While I still pretty much hate computers, I have to admit that there are a lot of good things about them. Writing is much easier, especially for someone like me who tends to edit as he goes. I like iTunes and PonoMusic. I think what I really hate most about computers is the way they've just taken over so much of my life. Like the Facebook. While it's a great aid to procrastination, it is just hypnotic. I'll think, *Okay, I'll just check it, see if anything important*

is going on, and then I'll get to work. Two hours later, I'm still staring at it, constantly clicking the refresh button. I'm angry because of the nonsense that my right-wing "friends" have posted, comforted by the nonsense my left wing friends have posted, and I've saved approximately seventy videos of cats and dogs doing cute things for my wife to watch. My eyes, and even worse, my brain has glazed over, rendering me essentially unfit to do anything more intellectually taxing than stare at the Facebook. It really makes it hard for me to get any homework done.

Even my beloved books have gone digital. I've got a NOOK reader, and virtually all of my entertainment reading is done on it. It's great, in that I can go on a trip with a library of hundreds of books instead of just a few, and I can adjust the font size to suit my failing eyes, but, like digital music, it's just not the same. I still cling to real books for anything important, and just use the reader for brain candy.

Of course, not all changes are technological—they're just easier to talk about. I was chatting with my wife the other day about how physical appearances change over the years. I said something along the lines of, "I don't think I've really changed all that much." She laughed and laughed. I conceded that, yes, although I have gotten grayer and look like a Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade balloon of my old self, I still basically *look* the same. She just kept laughing. I take some small comfort in the fact that, after twenty-two years, I can still make her laugh.

I took photos of myself back through the years. There's one of my little brother David and I, both scrawny, working on the family's tree farm with our dad. Dad had gotten an old hand-plough, and wanted to use it to cultivate the beds of seedlings. Sadly, we had no tractor suitable for pulling it without damaging the trees. Dad's solution? Let the boys pull it! There we are, in the picture, two bony kids, one in his early teens, the other two years younger, with ropes over our shoulders, pulling for all we're worth. Even now, I can close my eyes and hear Dad: "Right! Go right! No Gawddammit, your other right!. Whoah! Stop . . . Stop Gawddammit! Can't you hear me? through high school and the Air Force, to

now, and it's really kind of embarrassing.

When I was a Freshman in high school, I went out for the football team. Northeastern, in Fountain City, Indiana, was a small school, so there was no trying out. All you had to do to make the team was show up and not quit. I was 4'11" and weighed ninety-nine pounds. My untucked jersey hung below my knees. I think the coach was insulted and embarrassed that I joined the team, so he kept trying to make me quit. He'd put me in tackling drills with the Seniors, and seemed really angry that I managed to get back up every time one of those big 200-pounders finished stomping me into the dirt. I may not have been much good (I wasn't good at all), but I was tough and stubborn enough to spend three years on the varsity team. Of course, we lost every game all three years, but we kept trying.

In the Air Force, my stubbornness and toughness paid off as well. I'd filled out in high school, and in my early days in the AF, I set our shop record for carrying parachutes. I could carry nine thirty-five pound parachutes up two flights of stairs in one trip. Once again, I found myself in an environment I was not particularly suited for. I was a terrible soldier (airman), but I was a great worker, and so I made it through a twenty-year career successfully, if undistinguished by greatness.

Now, of course, I have trouble getting my own bulk up a couple flights of stairs. I never really have to wonder why. I just think of my lifestyle, and it becomes pretty obvious. I've always been fond of sitting and reading, and that hasn't changed, although I have to admit I now spend more time watching TV than reading. Still, as a full-time student, I am largely sedentary, spending most of my time in front of a computer screen doing homework. Add to that an ungoverned passion for pizza and burgers, and a deep-seated loathing of exercise for exercise' sake, and you get me in my current condition.

Some of the changes are seasonal. In the winter, I always get a little paler and gain a little weight, in the summer, I get a little darker and lose some weight. Sadly, the weight lost never manages to equal the weight gained, but I think that, at fifty, that's fairly

common.

Thankfully, some of the changes I have to deal with are from causes beyond my control. I used to be one of those guys who was always hot. In the winter, my wife would curl up next to me to keep warm. One of her favorite tricks was to press her ice-cold feet against my legs (she was always cold). I would spend the entire winter sweating because she had the furnace turned up so high, and every night, she would steal the covers.

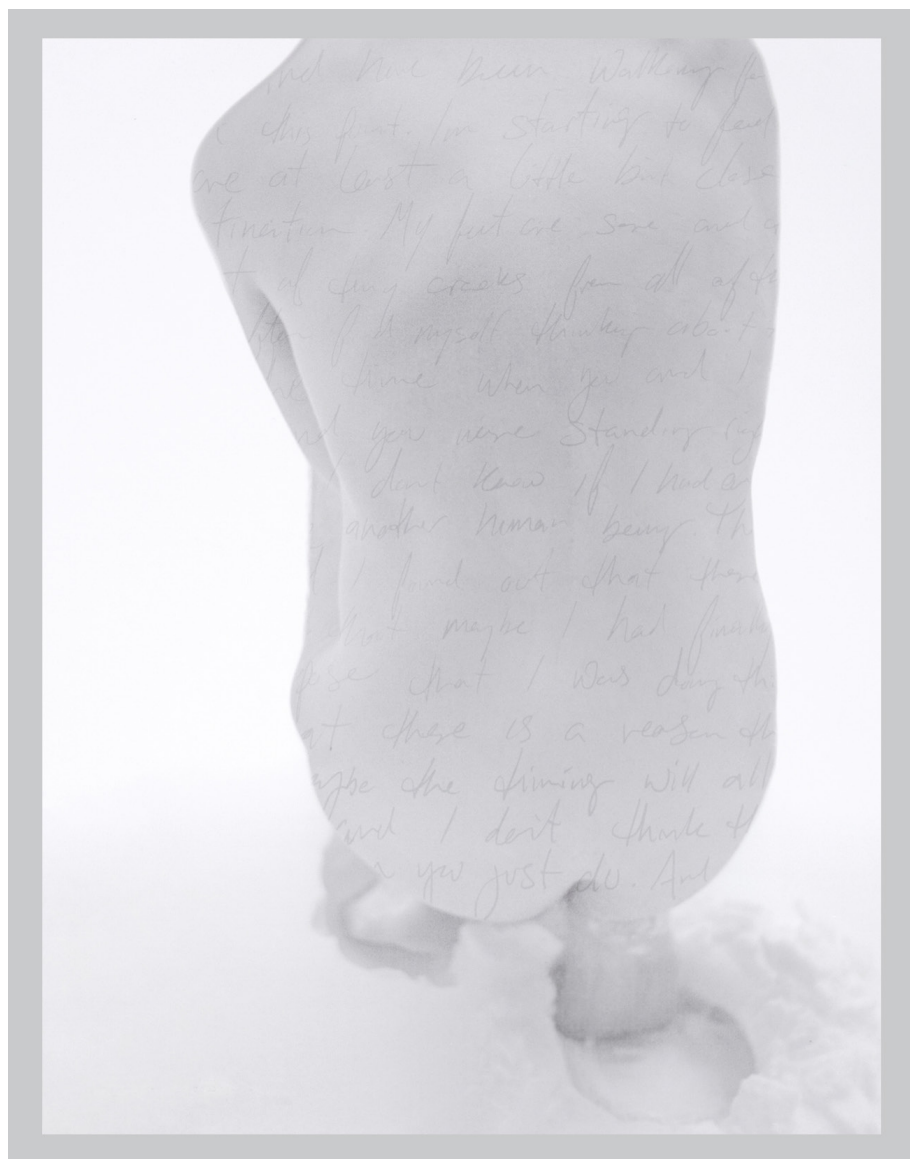
Then, it all changed. I had a heart attack—brought on, I hasten to add, by stress from driving a school bus and caring for my dying mother, rather than from my eating. As a result, they put me on a lot of blood-pressure medicine and blood thinners, so now I'm always cold. At roughly the same time, my wife had a hysterectomy, and now, due to all the hormones, she's always hot. She's walking around in shirt sleeves and turning the furnace down, while I sit shivering under a blanket. It's really kind of frustrating.

I seem to be getting more emotional as I get older, or perhaps it's just the Zoloft that's loosening my grip. I was raised to be fairly stoic. The only emotion I was really comfortable with for most of my life was rage. So much so that I never really even noticed it. My older brother once told me that I was the angriest person he'd ever known, and I had no idea what he was talking about. I thought I was a fairly happy, easy-going kind of guy. Besides pretty much everybody in our family had a tendency to be kind of mercurial. Years later, I realized he was right. I noticed my temper getting more and more out of control. I was miserable, and worse, I was making my wife miserable, so I went to the doctor, and he put me on Zoloft. It changed everything. I'm happier and much more easy-going. I don't get so obsessive about things. Of course, I also find myself much more likely to cry at Humane Society commercials. Still, I guess not all changes are bad. You've just got to learn how to roll with them.

*

At any rate, I didn't go into a lot of detail about Bowie with

my granddaughter (after all, she's only five). I just told her that it was David Bowie, and that he was a great musician who had made some fantastic music. The two of us sat there for quite a while, watching Bowie change through the years, listening to how his music changed through the years, glad to have that moment in time together.



Traversing Memory, Ryan Farley, Archival Injet, Silkscreen

Winner of the 2017 Prize for Poetry

JAMES BRIGHTON

Henry Miller, Winter in Big Sur

I can't think.
My guests, choked snores fill the loft,
knocking loose sawdust and spider food.
I poke my head in to see the toddlers,
still sleeping,
so I check the fog, steamrolling the Pacific
like a ravenous bottom feeder.
My ghosts cackle,
invading the silence from which there
is no escape—
the gods have pitted me against eternity.
I flip the pages, digging
through my lifetime stratum
in Big Sur terra firma.
In reverse what goes untended extend its
vines up my spine, smothering my conscience.
I tear them from the present and rest
my eyes on the Golden Hills below,
the great belly of the blue
waterscape, making golden the chance
to forgive and accept.
What use to wring these hands?
What use to remain shackled
to my past? Valentine is up.
She asks for juice through
the gap in her teeth
that reminds me of the Champs-Élysées,
Mom starts the bacon
and I lead the little one to the springs,
keeping an eye out for rattlers
the fat pricks.



Maddie in Braids, Sara Kramer, Graphite & Acrylic on Yupo Paper, 40"x26"

Smoke

My mother woke up one Tuesday morning and set fire to the kitchen. She was trying to burn the house down but firemen arrived quickly and doused it in blue-white water while Henry, Mom and I stood barefoot in our pajamas on the street and watched. I could feel the eyes of neighbors from behind their safe windows—the sane mothers, staring. I could hear the reasonably appalled gasps and knowing, measured clicks of their tongues. When the defeated smoke from our ashy-wet kitchen climbed the bare tree branches into the gray sky, a less than rugged officer approached us.

“What happened here?”

I don’t think Mom woke up knowing she would try, and fail, to burn down the house. I think she got up like always. Next to a boxer-clad, ungrateful and mustached Henry. Maybe she rolled over and watched him sleep. Did she ever want to wake up next to him? Maybe she watched the flannel sheets rise and fall with his expanding and deflating lungs and counted every wasted year. She threw her round, worn-for-wear calves over the bed and tucked soft toes into ragged slippers. Drew her thin terrycloth robe around her body and pressed the heel of her hand into Henry’s shoulder. He groaned, a dull slurping sound in his pillow. She stepped into the dim darkness of the master bedroom with no door and down the hall to Clyde’s room. I could hear her open the door and wake Clyde with her usual gentle, “Rise and shine.” Bleary-eyed but eternally pleasant, he sat up and nodded a sleep-saturated bob.

Then she’d go back down the hall, through the living room in to the kitchen, to start a pot for Henry. Everything is cold that early in the morning. Hardwood floors, windowpanes, anxious empty rooms waiting. Maybe she went to the bathroom and turned on the light and began to rub water on her face. With the jank water-heater it’s especially cold in the morning. If she stopped and looked in the mirror—smudged and filmy—what did she see? Limp brown

hair, worn brown eyes, a mother of two, a wife of twenty years.

Maybe she really looked, for the first time in a while, the first time in a lifetime. She saw the disappointment of the young girl who'd wanted to move out of this landlocked place full of warehouses and train tracks and gravel roads. Who'd allowed herself to imagine something more. Own a restaurant, have a clean husband and a house near the ocean. Maybe she was looking at the nineteen-year-old girl, pregnant, at her shot-gun wedding, standing beside a buzzed groom in a dinner jacket.

Mom drifted from the calloused hands of her father to the gritty hands of Henry, a man who used "lying, lazy whore" as a pet name. Said he had a condom and she didn't know in the dim backseat of his pickup what it felt like to have a man between her legs—she didn't know. So three weeks later when the second line appeared on the drugstore pregnancy test the wind was knocked out of her and she called Henry crying.

"You're a lying, cheating bitch! That ain't mine!" he'd said. Her lips were trembling almost too much to speak.

"You're the only boy I've ever been with."

Henry's dad was a man of the book and a man of the belt. When he'd heard that my mom was carrying, he beat Henry until he submitted to marriage. The wedding was a dismal affair. My mom wore a pale blue church dress and the shame of her family. Henry slurred his vows. Nine months later, between the already stacking bills and the empty bottles of booze, I was born.

Twelve years later they had Clyde, who Henry named after his uncle—the only man Henry said ever gave a damn about him. Despite two kids with his eyes and his mouth, Henry would not let us call him dad.

"There's no proof other than this two-timing sow's word that you're my kids." Mom would cry unabashed tears.

"She's jus' crying cause she couldn't keep her legs together."

Maybe Mom thought about these things as she looked in the mirror. Henry's vodka breath and quick-tempered hands. Maybe she thought of the unscheduled parent-teacher conferences, the one-sided screaming matches, the lonely desert that was their

unwelcoming queen-sized bed. Maybe she thought of none of it. Rubbed the cold water on her tired face and stepped back in to the kitchen to pour Clyde's cereal.

At 7:00, well after Clyde boarded the school bus and Henry should have left for work, I heard the screaming through a thick veil of sleep.

"You burned the coffee trying to get your bastard son on the bus, you dumb bitch! Burn the whole house for all I care, as long as you're in it!"

My heart pounded as he screamed and the dog-eared day-dream of my closed fists smashing his face played across my mind. Then the smoke curled under my doorframe like prying fingers. When I fell into the hall I saw gray clouding the ceiling like nervous relatives corralled in a room. Mom in her terrycloth robe stood swaying before it. I screamed for her and ran in to the kitchen. Henry stood with vacant eyes against the wall, watching the flames snatch the curtains and surge across the counter. I pulled Mom away as she reached one hand out towards the fire.

"It's too much, we have to get out," I cried.

Henry in his stupor marched blindly behind us. The air outside was viciously cold and tasted like chlorine. A concerned neighbor had already called the police. We stood in silence while firetrucks whipped onto our street and firemen hustled inside in their big suits like inhuman giants. With the children off to school and the men at work or otherwise absent, scandalized mothers watched our misfortune. Later they would come to the door and pat my shoulder offering homemade casseroles and cookies. How tragic, they would say with an unmistakable curl at the corner of their lips.

The grizzled fireman approached, "What happened here?" Despite the cold, Mom stood pale and unflinching. She watched the men wind up hoses as big as jungle snakes.

"I just wanted him to stop screaming."

John Lennon

We broke John Lennon's face
into four pieces and placed them on our tongues.
I took the corner piece, which contained his brain,
to enlighten my own. After thirty minutes
of performing a grapefruit transfusion
on my dry and numb mouth, my head began to tingle
as I hobbled down the steps and out the back door
towards my car. The side-view mirror showed
my distorted reflection and no irises. Walking to Josh's car,
I saw my breath puff rings as I exhaled frozen air
and the tips of branches on the old oak in Jessie's backyard
flashed and glowed like a Christmas tree.
Josh started his Cobalt as our teeth chattered along
to the bass-thump of Kendrick Lamar's "A.D.H.D."
The lyrics floated past me like thought bubbles
and I popped them to hear what messages they held.
Then we emptied a thirty-six pack of Great Value water
and I opened the passenger door, spilling myself
like a canned sardine onto the tundra, which used to be Jessie's
front yard,
and I crawled towards the house for a hose or faucet,
then across the gravel driveway, my Hollister jeans
torn at the knee and soaked with blood, until I reached the kitchen
door.
I plundered the fridge, scrambling, passed up the spoiled milk
and moldy turkey for a pitcher of orange Koolaid from the back
because it cried out for me to drink it. With pitcher in hand,
I crept into the living room, finding a home on the old tattered
couch
where I let myself be absorbed into its family of cushions.
The trip reached its precipice when the couch spat me out
and a nameless infomercial actor told me, "Embrace your differ-
ences."



Things Have Been Coming At Me From All Directions All Day, Patrick Allred,
Oil on Panel, 48"x72"

ERICA WHITE

Pregnant Sally

The Dogpatch was the neighborhood across Keystone from ours. Hardly did my mother drive us near those empty or fallen-in houses with backyards full of knee high grass and thickets growing between the fences. Litter had blown from the highway to the outer edges of the neighborhood. Until Pregnant Sally began showing up at our house, I'd never heard its name. She was not my sister's friend, but would come home with her on the school bus during the week and have dinner. On drives home we would often find her walking from the Dogpatch down Troy Avenue, probably had stopped at the gas station for cigarettes and was heading for us. My mother would let her sleep on the couch:

Ball of a belly
sticking up from a beige couch
The dome for a church
Her stick legs each direction
And blonde hair still ponytailed

One day, she shook her stomach for me so I could see the baby move inside. She took her belly between her hands and swung it up and down. I didn't want to look as it jumped up and swung around her sides like a bag of water with something inside. When the baby finally moved she grabbed my hand and set it there, and I could feel it leaping. I never saw her after she gave birth.



Unremovable Mask, Melanie Garcia, Photograph

AMBER ROGERS

Diary

She's the one in her class
who's going to end up
with thirty-five cats. She tries—
she couldn't have tried any harder,
she might've lost who
she was. She wishes—
she wishes she could have
one wish—to have someone
to hang out with, eat chips
on the couch with, watch
Netflix. She wishes—
she wishes she didn't need a wish.

Winner of the 2017 Prize for Visual Arts



Lounge, Teddy Lepley, etching colored with chine-collé

DANNIELLE LIEBHERR

Hourglass

Midnight on a Saturday
unyielding. Midnight on
Saturday: no.
Midnight swears on
pin-prick solaces, drowning.
Eight pm on a sugar cream couch.
Eight on a Saturday:
lions long to be children.
Eight pm felicity.
Six pm on a Saturday wandering.
Six jet planes.
Saturday unearths
crinkle-eyes, emerald oil
spill lagoons. Noon on a
Saturday is juxtaposition.
Napoleon. At noon on
a Saturday soon, megaphones
yearn for a voice, my throat
aches. Eight am on a Saturday is lush.
Eight am Saturday nests.
Eight am on a Saturday
safeguards holy relics
but softer, swiftly soft.



Fragmented Hysteria, Melanie Garcia, Paper Collage, 7"x10"

HANNAH BROWNING

Lost Years

I was five when I was *taken*—
taken sounds less
evil than *kidnapped*.
I was five, not in school—
or maybe I was, I don't remember.
Rebellious, always felt
the need to fight back.
You know the kind, the ones who
argue bedtimes
and what's for dinner.

I hardly know the frayed
knot of my old life,
except the day it
unraveled. I remember
it in bold clarity.
I hadn't gone two blocks
from home when he walked up,
bearded, wearing plaid—
told me he needed my help.
My help: an act.
I was clueless.

He brought me home,
his prized possession
he displayed—a trophy on the mantle.
Acid turns in my guts
when he groans his
special name for me, Lilly.
His flower.
Avoiding his eyes

not holding his hands—
burns his cheeks as red
as the fire that once flared
inside my chest.

I'm tame now. Smothered out
by a glacial wind.
I gave up the inevitable,
failed attempts of fleeing
turned me a bluish bruised purple—
I began to fantasize
myself as Orphan Annie.

Praying to be found each night
after watching the news,
slowly hardening to wax.
I'm a flameless candle,
waiting to be re-lit—
dust collecting ten years.
My parents have given up.
I can't recall the ice-cream truck's song,
the names of my friends—
but I remember my parents.

I'm fifteen now,
my only family
my captor.
A gravitational pull
toward him, life transforming
me into a lover.
It's hard to find the right words
and the right order,
to explain the ways
my five-year-old world
swiveled on its axis.
I'm certain one day my Earth

will reverse it's orbit again—
this time I won't be
naïve for the world
to betray me like it did.

JAMES BRIGHTON

Unfolding Me

McCarron Park was especially quiet after three days of rain. Distant stars and galaxies hung like fireworks over the city mist. My attention was terrestrial though, losing myself in the puddles as they reflected the phosphorescent bulbs over the baseball diamond—my thoughts pouring out in a jumbled stream, their contents gurgling incomprehensibly. Only two things were clear: I missed home, which was three thousand miles away in Los Angeles, and I doubted, for the first time since dropping out of college, the trajectory of my life.

I realized that in order to have goals, I had to accept the possibility of not achieving them, and since I didn't want to experience the pain or humiliation of not achieving them, I was, consequently, afraid. In fearing the outcome of my own failing I'd fallen into a habit of projecting favor onto every circumstance related to my pursuit of success, sometimes to the point of self-deception. Anything to think everything was going to be Okay.

I had a few options in dealing with my existential doubt. I could: 1) channel it into new ideas or methods aimed at achieving my goal, 2) force greater projection to manipulate my perception of circumstances so they might appear better—tempting—or, 3) break this habit that was the root of all anxieties and depression—to begin to see things for how they really are; to accept that I'll never be able to attain third-person omniscience to the story of my life or to see that a certain decision will lead me somewhere worthwhile, and to accept that reality will (at times) brush against my hopes and views of myself and the world.

The last option appealed to me in theory, but how could I actually reach this higher ground? How could I uproot myself from this singular point-of-view that was *me*, at that particular time and

in that particular place, to see truth as wholesome, or more wholesome? To my surprise, all it took was a good, old-fashioned episode of orthostatic hypotension. A head rush, in other words.

When I rose from the bench, slightly at ease from the silent Brooklyn evening, I felt the first signs of a headrush coming on. “Oh, shit,” I muttered, steadying my gaze on the blacktop. The puddles, a moment ago so ordinary, looked now as if they were continents in a dark ocean of star lit space; within them, I could see the night sky reflected back, the track lights distant, their photonic beams reaching my eyes like moons from the *far off* periphery. It was beautiful at first, but my lightheadedness worsened and I was overcome with a sensation of isolation that escalated into a gigantic vacuum of nothingness. It was as if I’d peered into a *stretch universe* void of stars and matter, and void of anything remotely human—leaving me empty, helpless, and utterly meaningless. I hung like dust amongst the fireworks.

The moment passed and when my sight reconfigured itself I suddenly saw all the microscopic particles that compose matter and energy. Their quantic engines were on fire. When I glanced back over the empty field, a new perspective emerged from the depressed chrysalis that had encased my spirit. I saw myself five years prior, back in Bloomington, Indiana on a cool fall evening, listening to Neta Bahcall discuss the theories of the universe in her mysterious Israeli accent: dark matter, black holes, and hidden realities. Returning my gaze to the pool of H^2O molecules and microorganisms below me, I began to rediscover those wonderful contemplations of existence where the empty cup of achievement ceased to weigh like a dead rhinoceros on my shoulders.

*

Much as a starfish cannot see the water that surrounds it, we cannot see particle and energy fields. For example, the sensation we have when holding a magnet an inch from the refrigerator, that’s a magnetic field. The resulting heat from placing a cup of a tea in the microwave, interestingly, is caused by the microwave end

on the electromagnetic field spectrum. And just recently scientists at CERN identified a new particle called the Higgs Boson by smashing protons together in a Large Hadron Collider—suggesting another, far more ubiquitous field throughout the universe known as the Higgs Field.

Since the beginning of humankind, whether you believe it to be 6,000, 340,000, or as far back as seven million years, our sensory capabilities have evolved to perceive only one tiny part of one of these many active fields: *light*—just one segment of the electromagnetic field. Due to these physiologic limitations, it's logical to assume that much of what we call "reality" lies beyond our senses.

Consider:

To know what music is, we must hear it through an instrument. The c-major scale sounds very different through an oboe than through a clarinet or a harp. Yet both are music, and both are c-major. If the oboe were the only known instrument, how could we possibly imagine that music (or c-major) is anything other than the tones we hear from the oboe? Similarly, to know what *reality* is, we must encounter it through an instrument, and for us that instrument is the human brain. Yes, that pile of matter is made up of some eighty billion neurons and trillions of synapses—our own bubble universe that from the outside is measurable and perfectly finite, but from the inside appears to stretch for infinite horizons.

Despite the brain's remarkable capacities – and the physical achievements made manifest because of it – our mind fails to encapsulate the totality of reality. And since the brain is our only way to experience and interpret this reality, we never imagine that reality could be very different from what we witness it to be. And I mean this, right here, wherever you are: the voices around you, the wood grain on the table beneath your computer, your pleasure eating a bagel with cream cheese, the photon waves that cut through the treetops and flash onto your water glass covered in condensation. All of this, may actually be much, much more.

*

When I got back to the apartment that night I saw a mouse climb from the kitchen sink. (Fucking New York). I then hurried toward the back of the apartment, passed my interim cohorts who I nodded to with urgent ambivalence, and set my bag down in the back room. Recounting the experience from the park I tried to recall a quote I'd read earlier that month killing time at The Strand. "What matters ... is whether there exist realms that challenge convention by suggesting that what we've long thought to be The Universe is only one component of a far grander, perhaps far stranger, and mostly hidden, reality." That's Brian Greene, theoretical physicist and professor of physics and mathematics at Columbia University.

I chewed this to a pulp under the relentless beam of the overhead twelve feet above me, revealing the dust, cracks, and stains from a half century of careless inhabitants. I suddenly caught a whiff of cigarette smoke coming in from the courtyard window. My olfactory nerves ignited images of sunsets, charcoal grills, cold cans of beer, entire cross sections of my life that had already come and gone. I gasped. Running into the bathroom to get a glimpse of my age—which felt like a hundred—I gasped again. The bulbs above the mirror were bare and in their harshness the intricacies of my eyes were illuminated. I was astonished. Had someone entered and seen me in this state, they may have thought I'd gone off.

Staring at my reflection like a primitive version of myself, I had the profound realization that I, in this vessel of James Brigh-ton, was a unique design all to my own, and *in* that, I was an entire universe of my own. All those memories that came flooding at the first detection of cigarette smoke—as ubiquitous as tobacco is—tore me from the rut of my consciousness and opened me back up to the endless points from which all things could be experienced. I was overwhelmed with the truth that we (all of us conscious beings, Universes in ourselves) are bound together on the planes of these various flex fields of matter and energy, and right here, within my eyes, giving a stark resemblance to the patterns and colors of faraway galaxies, a black hole tunnels into the unseen dimensions of my being—where the essence of the cosmos continues to churn without our hand.

There is a theory—emerging a half century ago as physicists wrestled with the math behind quantum mechanics (predicting the movement of microscopic particles)—that suggests that every potential outcome, so long as probability is above absolute zero, happens in its own separate world. Theorists were perplexed and the idea remains controversial, for when they applied their instruments to measure the movement of a particle, those instruments told them that there was only one outcome—say, the electron landed here. It could have landed there, or there, or over there, but it actually landed right *here*.

Particles move along what's called a probability wave (imagine ripples moving across a body of water—the high points being areas of greater probability and the troughs being points of near zero probability). It's this wave that is responsible for the evolution of particles over time. The quandary: while our eyes agree with the instruments that at any given moment there is only one location where the particle may be along that wave, the math tells us that it's in all locations.

Think of it this way:

I'm walking through my living room and on a whim I pick up my guitar. Say I have approximately twenty songs in my repertoire, of those twenty songs, I play ten with equal frequency—meaning it's equally probable that I'll play song two as I would song ten, or three or four, and so on. At this exact moment, the nanosecond before my mind produces an action, there are respective peaks in the probability wave for each of the ten songs I play with high frequency. The moment occurs when I strike the first note and in that instant all of those possible songs and their respective peaks along the probability wave collapse, except the *one*—the song I happen to play.

This is what we experience, but the mathematics underlying quantum mechanics—which holds true for all objects as every object is a unique collection of particles, in my case, the particles composing my cell systems and the neurons driving my brain. This

tells me that according to the theoretical community as articulated by Brian Greene, “everything that is *possible*, quantum-mechanically speaking (that is, all those outcomes to which quantum mechanics assigns non-zero probability), is realized in its own separate world.” I’m not playing twenty songs simultaneously, (not in this realm of consciousness). Instead, there is a separate *me* in a separate world in which I am playing song two, another in which I’m playing song three, and so on, until I reach twenty. There is a separate *me* at every peak along the probability wave for every decision I’ve ever made.

Blasphemy? Possibly. But considering that we operate within the limited construct of the human brain, which, while vast, complex, and capable of incredible feats, perceives only a limited segment of reality, it isn’t so far-fetched; we only perceive *three* of the *ten* total dimensions of space-time for fuck sake. That alone makes me wonder: What else about this daily existence have we yet to understand? In other words, what else about this daily existence does society pretend to know?

*

“Common sense is a collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen.” Einstein, you have to love him. Not until recently, approximately ten years after my eighteenth birthday, four years after my episode in McCarron Park, did I stumble upon this passage of wisdom. I rejoiced.

When I was ten I wanted to be an actor. I wanted to be like Harrison Ford swinging from the rafters of an ancient temple, or Arnold Schwarzenegger leaping bridges on a Harley Davidson. It grabbed my attention so I followed it. I could have been a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, a chef, an entrepreneur, anything! So long as the probability wasn’t absolute zero (I wasn’t going to be the next Michael Jordan). So by age eighteen I had it figured out: I’d go to college, study a bit, party a bit, graduate, move to LA, begin my career, and be perfectly happy. Maybe in *another* universe.

My expectations of reality—slight, minimal, disillusioned—

had been created from a healthy diet of Midwestern mentality (that I'm perennially grateful for), television, film, pop music, one or two Dan Brown novels, and a potent application of observational learning. The basic parameters that my mind amassed of society: play by the rules, work hard, and I'd be rewarded. Ah, but this was the shell within which the hidden caveat revolved: get rich, and life is yours! This kind of "common sense" isn't spoken explicitly, in fact we're overtly preached the opposite ("money doesn't buy happiness"), but it's picked up from social behavior and the contents of our consumption: MTV Cribs, Mercedes Benz ads, People magazine, boarding an airplane to pass through the exclusive first-class cabin, sports events with the more ornate populace sitting courtside, even our classrooms are riddled with it; digesting names like Rockefeller, Gates, Friedman, and Trump. I remember discussing Gandhi once, his views weren't as enticing.

I have a friend in his second year of residency for orthopedic surgery, a position he's worked hard and made sacrifices for his entire life. A recurring theme in our discussions is his fantastical idea that if he were to fake his own death he may be permitted to start over and do something different with his life (who knew he wanted to be an event planner?) without the three hundred thousand dollars debt he'd accumulated.

Why do we condemn our thirty and forty-year old selves to a fate we decided upon at the age of fifteen? What do we know at fifteen? Or eighteen? Or seventy-eight? Perhaps the first thing to realize is that there are always options. While it's less probable he could pay off that kind of debt planning charity events for children's hospitals, *it is* still possible. When the sheets are tied, sometimes we need to get out and remake the bed. Sometimes we need to peel back the layers and question the premise from which all our actions are built upon.

*

Particles carry energy. The more mass or speed an entity has, the more energy it contains. Energy operates on a spectrum, a value

basis; human beings are of a certain size and shape that constitute the general makeup of their energy systems, which we experience along an emotional spectrum in the guise of love, hate, inspiration, depression, happiness, sadness, and so on.

Some days we wake from our dreams high-spirited and motivated to tackle whatever's before us, and some days we rise with acid in the veins, cursing and damning everything from the garbage truck out our window to the squirrel that keeps digging up our plants. What's responsible for this perpetual fluctuation? Maybe if our income were just a little higher we could abide better; or if we looked like that person on the cover of *Vogue* or that girl who has twenty million followers on Instagram; or maybe all that's needed is to be recognized for the hard work we do—hauling garbage, pumping septic tanks, sowing buttons, running a country.

Maybe it has nothing to do with this “human stuff.” Maybe there are forces greater than us, invisible to us, subterranean wavelengths that have a hand in everything about us. Maybe it's both. Maybe it's this relationship between our innate energy systems and the way we apply those systems in the external world. Maybe if we turned our attention back to the wonders of our internal lives—that wonderful tapestry of energy and emotion, choice, discovery, disappointment, belief, faith, all the textures that shape the galaxies of us—we might discover just what our role in this universe is, as individuals and as a species. Maybe then the real questions will be asked: What does it mean to coexist? What does it mean to be moral? To be spiritual? To be ... wrong.

If you envision perfect happiness as sailing around the world, you might never anticipate the undercurrent of missing your loved ones or longing for familiarity when you finally get there.

When I dreamed of being the next Indiana Jones I never anticipated the agony, frustration, and despair associated with trying to earn a living as an actor. When I was twenty-seven and a health-food fanatic I never imagined I'd be diagnosed with cancer. Yet, it's these nuances in discovery, these kernels in sands of the unknown that flavor the journeys we set out upon and the fantasies of the things we could have been doing or are otherwise missing

out on. Perhaps, we ought to learn early in life that the ends we seek (sailing around the world, becoming an actor, or becoming an orthopedic surgeon) are only valuable in so much as they fuel our means - that perpetual unfolding of self in time. It's in these means that we discover the substance of life, the aromas, textures, and colors of all the things we experience sensually and beyond sense. The stuff we find through logic, science, intuition, the stuff we can only perceive through the mind's intoxicating tool of imagination as it stretches toward infinity. Imagination is the only inlet, the only axon-synapse connecting us to these parallel worlds and possibilities, these parallel versions of *us*. Who we could have been, where we could have gone, and where we could possibly be going. The people we share this life with, the relationships we're missing, and that relationship we discover on the other side of the world—that person we think looks just like someone we might've known.

So, is everything going to be Okay? In practical terms, it hardly matters. Everything is going to *be* something regardless of what that being constitutes, so what's the use in being afraid? Focus instead on *how* to be. Assume the shape of the character you find admirable—take your time, be curious, and go after what it is you think you want. You may be wrong, but you may also be right. Which universe will you live in?

HANNAH CASTOR

Spaceship

The engine fires up with a whine,
whirring and squealing
as I back down the drive.
I coo to Jean, reassuring,
soothing her
as the alternator sings. I shift gears,
and the belt howls. Jean, I plead,
we have to get on the interstate.
I press the pedal to the floor,
the clutch squeaking. The alternator
purrs louder, and I pat
the steering wheel. It's okay, Jean,
I murmur. Her tires hum
against the pavement,
and my hands drum in time
with Britney Spears.
Jean yowls, the speedometer needle climbing
as we sail past semis. Air whistles
through the sunroof,
drowning out my spaceship's wail.



Things To Paint in the Fourth Dimension, Jen Clausen, Oil, 60"x93"



Runner Up for the 2017 Prize for Fiction

JEN CLAUSEN

Things to Paint in the Fourth Dimension

Dear Reader,

This account was written from a (mostly) third-dimensional point of view, and as such may not translate well into lower dimensions. Trans-dimensional reformatting equipment is still in its infancy, so I apologize to anyone residing in dimensions 0-2. For those of you in the fourth and higher dimensions, what follows will appear intelligible, yet extremely asinine.

Yours,

Nuclear Feejinns

I

A few years ago a space alien under witness protection from the Andromeda Galaxy landed in my right nostril. She climbed up my sinus, crawled behind my eye socket, and cut a small hole in a section of the myelin sheath next to my *right frontal lobe*, which she then burrowed into. I say right frontal lobe, but it is actually the dead-end section of a used rat maze from the Behavioral Psychology Department at the University of Wisconsin. It is littered with stale cheese and tiny, hard, perfectly cylindrical turds.

On Thanksgiving Eve my mother drove me to Indianapolis and I spent a week wearing slippers in a beige warehouse. The warehouse had bright fluorescent lights and thick windows with heavy-gauge screens. The lights stayed on all the time. The windows stayed closed all the time. The lady across the hall from me snored like a

bulldozer would if bulldozers could snore. On my first day there I didn't eat and stayed in my room and played a card game where you change various events in history, which then cause ripple effects that change other various events in history. Like if Sputnik had exploded instead of launching, then the Cuban Missile Crisis would have been World War III instead of a narrowly averted nuclear war, and then instead of wearing slippers in a beige warehouse I would be a well-adjusted cockroach conducting forensic anthropological investigations of bombed-out craft breweries in Oregon.

My dad visited me in mid-November because I was going through a Hard Time (which is located in the supermassive black hole in the Centaurus A Galaxy). He bought me a lamp, because low lighting solves everything in my dad's world (which is at the center of the NGC604 region in the Triangulum Galaxy). Have mood problems? Have some mood lighting. My Dad turned sixty-three on November 27th. The lamp will turn 12.8 million years old on December 9th.

Breakfast was served at 7:00 am every day in the beige warehouse. Lunch was at 11:00 am and dinner was at 4:30pm. The food was over-salted, cooked to the consistency of cat diarrhea, and mixed with an after-market, time-release version of instant concrete specially designed to immediately set up when it came into contact with your large intestine. The woman with the zeppelin breasts in room 119 said she didn't like being made to eat this "health food," but she supposed that it was good for her after all. She also said she spent a lot of time in the bathroom.

A month ago I decided to visit the fourth dimension. The thing about the fourth dimension is that we are all already in it, but it's a damned hard thing to understand since we can't point at it. Humans have a difficult time understanding things they can't point at. I put some Mozart on the stereo, because Mozart was one of the few people who *did* figure out how to point at the fourth dimension. Then I tied a cord around my neck, because for those of us

who aren't Mozart, the key to comprehending the fourth dimension is to stop existing in the third.

II

Hello.

Hello.

Hello.

III

As it turns out, I didn't visit the fourth dimension after all. I still haven't quite sorted out why I didn't manage it. It's strange, if I mention it (which has been infrequently until now, when I'm writing this) people are always quick to ask why oh why would you try to visit the fourth dimension, but they never seem to ask why the hell did you chicken out. Manners, I suppose. Anyway, I had Mozart's Requiem on the stereo (yes, I know, it is awfully angsty and cliché) and the cord knotted tightly around my neck. My brain had begun responding to the lack of oxygen by initiating a "fade to black" sequence, when I suddenly realized that I had put on the *wrong* recording of the Requiem (I had on the Vienna Philharmonic version, but I prefer the Berlin Philharmonic recording). Changing the music seemed suddenly monumentally important, so my arms fumbled with the cord while the lower half of my body flopped unhelpfully around on the carpet, which is also the closest I've ever come to doing The Worm. After I had freed myself, I unplugged the stereo and walked into the bathroom to look in the mirror. My eyes were bloodshot and my face was puffy. I had a bright oozy-necklace where I had pulled the cord around and around and around while unknotting it.

IV

Hello.

How are you?

See that knife?

Stab it into your thigh, please.

V

In the beige warehouse I was started on Escitalopram. At first it was a 10mg pill in the morning, and then 20mg. After a while it was decided that perhaps 40mg would be even better. 40mg is a rather high dose, and for some reason this had to be administered intravenously, with a giant horse needle. I never used to mind getting shots or having my blood drawn (in fact I kind of liked the sensation of fluids being sucked out of or pumped into my veins) but lately I can't stand it. The instant the needle punctures my skin my stomach goes shivering up into my throat and my limbs go all rubbery and numb. The giant horse needle just made it that much worse. Plus, the intravenously administered medication affected me much more abruptly, acting like a no-nonsense gate keeper for the serotonin in my brain. Yet, despite the sudden flood of happiness-inducing neurotransmitters inside my head, my mood was still rather bleak. I did, however, feel incredibly focused (which was nice, since I had been all but unable to concentrate for months). I used my newfound powers of concentration to walk up and down the beige hall, paying very close attention to the sensation of my feet on the floor. As my sock hit the wood I could feel my heel bone crunch into my flesh, then as my foot rolled forward I felt my muscles pulling at my tendons and the skin stretching taut along my arch. Heel toe, heel toe, heel toe. Other people were walking in the hall, and it occurred to me that perhaps I could feel them walking, too. I knelt down and pressed my head to the floor. I could feel the

slight vibrations of footsteps. Heel toe, heel toe. I pressed my face harder into the floor. Heel toe. I kept pressing and pressing and pressing until suddenly I felt hands on my shoulders and someone was pulling me up. It turned out I had been bashing my head repeatedly into the floor without even knowing it. My nose and my jaw were broken and I had bitten off part of my tongue, but I couldn't feel anything.

VI

The broken jaw and nose and tongue all healed themselves remarkably quickly. In fact, they healed the instant I woke up. That's the nice thing about dream wounds.

VII

Update from the Third Dimension: On Earth when you have a bad dream involving giant horse needles it's called a "nightmare". Also, a female horse is called a "mare". I wonder if female horses are sick of being blamed for everyone's bad dreams.

VIII

I've been in graduate school here in Bloomington, Indiana for a year and a half now (out of two allotted years, after which it's back to Real Life). I am on my way to having an MFA in painting. When you get an MFA you learn to talk about having fun using very fancy words like referential, transcendental, derivative, trope, pictorial, sublimity, authorship, vanitas, antipodal, oeuvre, and axiomatic. The words are so fancy that most non-MFA people will have no idea you are talking about fun, and they will get fed up and walk away, leaving you in peace to mash paint into canvases. This is the way it's supposed to work. Unfortunately, some of the MFAs get

so wrapped up in the fancy words that they fall victim to their own trap and claim that painting has nothing at all to do with a concept so terribly pedestrian and low-brow as “fun” and how could you even suggest such a thing, and do you really even know what you’re doing, you plebeian? Then they make a scoffing noise and disappear in a cloud of obscure art history references.

The thing that makes painting so fun is that you get to squeeze the third dimension into the second dimension. You can even put the fourth dimension in there, although that is a lot harder, but worth it if you can manage it. Paint, which at first glance seems like expensive colorful paste, is really the cheapest form of time and space travel currently available.

However: if you make the mistake of mixing fancy words (which are zero-dimensional) into a painting, you choke all of the fun out of the painting by forcing it through de-dimensionalizing “Explanations”. “Explaining” a painting has the same effect as pooping in a milkshake. It’s gross and makes people gag and run away. But sometimes an Explanation is delivered in such a cleverly sly and underhanded way that it blends into the painting (just like poop can blend into a chocolate milkshake) and then you don’t realize until it’s too late and you’ve already swallowed a giant load of crap.

IX

Hey there!

Hey there!

Hey there!

Attention!

Do I have your attention?

Stick your hand in the garbage disposal.

X

Every day in the beige warehouse we met in groups where we talked about the Reasons we were in the beige warehouse and the kinds of Tools we would each need to get out. I suggested maybe a key, since the doors were locked, and the group leader said she meant *emotional* tools and perhaps I should work on goal setting. I made a goal to never go to that particular group again (a goal which I succeeded at, I might add) and instead spent the time in my room reading about 20th century painters who had varying degrees of success at jamming the fourth dimension into the second dimension.

XI

I don't know if you have noticed, but the third dimension is sometimes a very hard place to be. Puzzlingly, although it is chock full of things with tops and bottoms and fronts and backs, the third dimension itself has no top or bottom or front or back (I have looked) and all that endless space can be very restrictive. It seeps in through your eyes and nose and ears and mouth and creates a huge pressure inside your head. The pressure leaks into the rest of your body and builds up until your whole self is vibrating with paralysis. Even if you *could* move there would be no point, since whichever direction you travel in would still be in the third dimension. "But the third dimension is a wonderful place," people say, "You're just looking at it the wrong way. It's not restrictive, it's freeing!" They say this as if logic (a concept from the zeroth dimension) could ever possibly be the solution to a three-dimensional problem. It's not that logic is worthless, it's just that it only works to explain things in its own dimension (which is, again, the zeroth). Incidentally, the zeroth dimension is why the idea of "circular reasoning"

is a misnomer. Circles are a two-dimensional construction, and have no place¹ mingling with the likes of zero-dimensional logic. A better thing to say would be, “Your reasoning has no radius or diameter or area and has diddlysquat to do with pi, to say nothing of its complete and utter lack of volume, so kindly please remove your zero-dimensional advice from my three-dimensional problems. Good day.”

XII

“GGDH3BB4CFF3D3DE” is the sound zero-dimensional logic makes when you try to stretch it into the third dimension. “GG-DH3BB4CFF3D3DE” also happens to be my internet network key. This could be a coincidence, since coincidences, being illogical, are things that are constantly happening in the third dimension.

XIII

Hi.

Hi.

Drink turpentine.

XIV

I live 1.81 miles from school, in a two-story barn-ish building on the south side of Bloomington. The barn is ugly and yellow, and in the year-and-a-half I have been here all of the trees on the property have been cut down (though there weren't many to begin with). I live by myself, which is lovely. My good friend Heather lives down the hall, which is also lovely. Heather moved in five months ago

¹Literally no place, since there is no space in the zeroth dimension.

because her previous apartment downtown was overpriced and loud. Here in the yellow barn it is very very quiet, perhaps in part because about one-quarter of the tenants are retired, and have no patience for raucous nonsense. When Heather moved in I discovered that her apartment, which is *supposed* to be identical to mine, is a good eighteen inches longer in each room. NOT. FAIR. The only thing I've done to rectify this gross injustice is to periodically whine about it to Heather. Whining has done nothing, of course, to make my three-dimensional yellow barn apartment any bigger. It has, however, fueled the addition of several giant rooms to the one-dimensional Jealousy Castle I'm constructing in my brain.

XV

"You should write an artist statement," says everyone all the time at graduate school. "Should" is a sneaky word because it sounds very plain, but it actually belongs in the zeroth dimension along with logic and Fancy Artspeak (which is a subgroup of logic). Here in the third dimension things do not happen because they "should" happen, things *just simply happen*. Having things *just simply happen* while simultaneously spouting off about what "should" happen has caused humans a lot of discomfort for a very long time, and is the reason people use the phrase "God works in mysterious ways." "God works in mysterious ways" is what people say when they think something will happen in one dimension, but it ends up happening in an altogether different dimension. Like when you work hard at your job and think you "should" be recognized and rewarded in the form of a raise, your hopes for the future are existing in zeroth-dimensional logic. But then the *actual* future comes bumbling along in all its third-dimensional illogical glory and no one ("no one" being, in this case, your boss) gives one measly hoot about your hard work and they are certainly not going to spend any energy recognizing or rewarding you for it, and you can just go ahead and forget about that raise.

“Wait just a minute now, what does my job and my stupid, stupid, *stupid* unappreciative boss have to do with your artist statement? You seem to have traveled a long way from the initial topic, buddy.”

Well, I have written an artist statement, actually. Here it is:

Artist Statement:

God works in mysterious ways.

XVI

Hello.

Where are your pills?

Look in the bathroom cabinet.

There they are.

Open the bottle.

Dump the pills onto the counter.

Lay them out in rows.

Yes.

Rows of eight.

Yes.

Eight rows of eight.

Yes.

You have sixty-four pills.

XVII

Update from the Third Dimension: I have been taking the Escitalopram for three weeks now and my mood is more stable. “Stable” in this case means that my mood is (for the most part) staying in the third dimension and not wandering off into other dimensions and taunting me, which it used to do quite a bit. “Stable” is also the word for a place where horses live (and where they sometimes receive shots from giant horse needles). On Earth when there are two completely different things that share the same word (like “stable”) it is called a homonym. Homonyms happen when a thing gets named in one dimension without the other dimensions first being consulted to see if the word is already in use. This happens quite a bit², and leads to a lot of cross-dimensional confusion.

XVIII

You have sixty-four pills.

XIX

Earlier I mentioned a space alien and a hole in my brain sack (medical term: myelin sheath). There was a brief moment in early November when the alien, while practicing for the intergalactic air-guitar semi-finals (picture lots of wild gestures and tentacle slides and head-banging of all four heads), unknowingly switched off the main power switch to my brain. This isn’t quite as bad as it sounds, since my brain has an emergency battery-powered backup

² “Bit” is another horse-related homonym from the English-speaking section of Earth.

system. However, the battery backup only supplies enough power for the most rudimentary of functions, so I was left mooning around like a zombie for the better part of an hour before I encountered an obstacle (stairs) which I did not, in my battery-powered state, possess the motor control to effectively navigate, so I fell down. The force of the fall jerked the space alien out of her Melvins³-impersonating reverie and she immediately switched on the main power again, but it took my brain a while to fully reboot, during which time I was dragged off to the Emergency Room. “Emergency” is the earth word for when people start reaching out of the third dimension and toward the fourth. So if, for instance, you act like a zombie and then pass out unexpectedly, someone near you might say, “Look, she’s having an Emergency. Say, isn’t there a designated Room for that sort of thing? Perhaps we should take her there.”

In the Emergency Room they did lots of three-dimensional tests with lots of three-dimensional equipment worth lots of three-dimensional dollars. Eventually a doctor came in with a two-dimensional image of my three-dimensional brain and pointed to a small area of it, which happened to be the *exact spot* where the space alien had burrowed years ago. The space alien had the good sense not to show up on the two-dimensional image, so the doctor’s explanation of what happened had nothing to do with the Andromeda Galaxy or intergalactic air-guitar semi-finals or how easy it is to accidentally bump into a power switch when you are jamming out to “Interstellar Overdrive.” The cheese-filled rat maze, however, did show up on the two-dimensional image of my brain, and the doctor made lots of *cheesy* jokes about the *gouda* old times before cheap brain implants were turning everyone into *muensters*, and how she’s just plain *feta* up with the whole brain industry nowadays. “And regarding the hole in your brain sack,” she said, “it’s probably just a fluke thing and you’re probably perfectly fine. But you should have a few follow-up tests done just to make sure. Be sure to *colby* if you have any questions.”

3 The Melvins are quite popular in the Andromeda Galaxy.

XX

You have sixty-four pills.

XXI

Update from the Third Dimension: I haven't had anything alcoholic to drink since I've started taking the Escitalopram, except for half a beer I had last week as an experiment. The experiment ended when I immediately vomited up the beer. The earth word for someone who vomits after drinking half a beer is "lightweight."

XXII

You have sixty-four pills.

XXIII

Update from the Third Dimension: Today I discovered I have ringworm. The thought "maybe I have ringworm" crossed my mind yesterday, but I didn't look into it because I also thought, "maybe if I ignore all these itchy red circles then they will go about their business and leave me alone." Sometimes in the third dimension if you ignore something it will go away. As it turns out, this does not work with ringworm.

The source of the ringworm is most likely my cat, whose left ear is almost completely covered in an itchy scaly patch. The cat has been my roommate ever since one week after I didn't go to the fourth dimension. Cats, incidentally, are fourth-dimensional creatures, which is why they never seem to give a shit about anything in the third dimension. It's amazing how attached you can get to a creature who doesn't give a shit about you.

XXIV

Where are your pills?

They are not on the counter.

Where are your sixty-four pills?

You gave them to Heather?

Why did you give all your pills to Heather?

Find some pills.

Find some pills.

Find some pills.

Find some pills.

Find some pills.

Find some pills.

XXV

I have, off and on, been thinking about visiting the fourth dimension for a long time. Thinking about it, while not the same thing as actually going, is still a pleasurable pastime, not unlike looking at pictures of the Caribbean online.

“*What!?* Thinking about the fourth dimension IS NOT pleasurable!”

...is what Most People will say, and then they will immediately

change the topic, because acknowledging even thinking about the fourth dimension has made them very nervous, and they will stuff their hands into their pockets and shift their eyes about, because these are known cures for fourth dimensionally induced discomfort.

The thing is, despite the fact that Most People avoid talking about fourth dimensional thinking, Most People also indulge in it at some point. It's a universal secret, like picking one's nose. Ask any fully grown human about nose-picking and they will almost invariably make a gagging noise and say, "What a disgusting, filthy habit" and "I would never," even though their own nostrils are stretched out and red from a recent clandestine spelunking expedition. Ask them if they like the taste, and they will put on their best "shock and horror" face and refuse to even answer the question, citing "common decency" and "propriety." They will then wipe their lips in an overly casual manner, explaining that any yellow bits around their mouth are from some cheese they were eating earlier.

XXVI

Well now.

You don't have pills.

But here is something to consider:

...have you ever thought of cutting off all your fingers and all your toes and sewing them to your lips with dental floss?

Or.

Here is another idea:

you could slice off your nipples with a paring knife and gore yourself with the shower rod.

XXVII

Update from the Third Dimension: I am now on semester break from graduate school. After trying to be Pro-ductive all semester, it is nice to have some guilt-free Anti-ductive time.

The ringworm cat (who is always Anti-ductive) and I traveled to Wisconsin to stay with my parents. “Parents” are people who will tell you that all of the paintings you are making in grad school are lovely, just lovely, even when the paintings are just smearings of expensive colorful paste that don’t come close to transporting anyone or anything to the fourth dimension.

My brother is also here on semester break from graduate school. A “brother” is someone who is smarter and taller and younger and more stylish than you are, and who is studying Statistics, a field which has actual useful applications in the Milky Way Galaxy, not to mention job opportunities.

XXVIII

When you are in your second year of graduate school for painting, you are made to do something called “Orals”. Orals is when you hang up all of the paintings (a.k.a. “Visuals”) you have managed to do so far in graduate school. You then stand in front of the paintings for an hour and a half while the painting professors ask you Questions. A “Question” is something that is designed to make you feel self-conscious and dumb. If you can manage to answer the Questions in fancy zeroth-dimensional Artspeak, you are awarded extra bonus points. I could not answer in fancy zeroth-dimensional Artspeak. I could barely answer in regular speak, and kept repeating the word “Uhhhhhhhh”, which is the earth word for “I really want to run away and hide and also maybe throw up all over my shoes, but for some reason I am still standing here.” It occurred to me that I could at least mentally escape the whole anxiety-inducing

Orals ordeal by asking the space alien in my brain to flip off the main power switch again, but she was away at the intergalactic air guitar semi-finals that day.

XXIX

Several hours after I didn't go to the fourth dimension, I called my girlfriend to tell her about my unsuccessful trip. A "girlfriend" is someone who somehow still loves you even when your mood is busily traveling to all sorts of crazy dimensions and radioing back to your mouth with instructions to shout things like "leave me alone forever" and "you're better off without me." My girlfriend works for an intergalactic spy agency based out of Kansas (which is in the -1th dimension). Because of her high-clearance position in the universal secret intelligence community, it would be irresponsible to print her real name, so I will refer to her as Pinocchio. After I had told Pinocchio about my non-journey to the fourth dimension, she drove thirteen straight hours from Kansas to Indiana (which is in the -2th dimension). "Driving" is something an intergalactic super spy does when she is trying to fit in on Earth. If it weren't for having to maintain a low profile (which involves not mysteriously traversing long distances in less than a second), you can bet your boots she would just use the Dematerializing Pan-dimensional Hyper-port Express System⁴, because it's sooo much quicker.

XXX

Pinocchio finished driving to Indiana at 5:00 am and crawled into

bed beside me. I always sleep better when Pinocchio is next to me, which, seeing as we live in different dimensions, doesn't happen very often.

⁴ which is run by Amtrack

XXXI

Update from the Third Dimension: Sometimes I am afraid all of my teeth will fall out, so that I will feel my gums next to my gums.

XXXII

Yesterday I walked to the hospital to have a Lumbar Puncture (which was one of the follow-up tests ordered to determine why there is a hole in my brain sack). “Lumbar Puncture” is a calm way of saying that someone is sticking a giant horse needle⁵ between two of your lower vertebrae in order to collect spinal fluid. Since my head usually faces the opposite direction of my lumbar spine, I couldn’t see what was being done, but I imagined the procedure was similar to tapping for maple syrup, or perhaps it was like a humming bird on a nectar-collecting mission. I wasn’t allowed to taste the spinal fluid, though, so I can’t tell you if it was as sweet as flower nectar or maple syrup. It probably was.

XXXIII

Update from the Third Dimension: Sometimes I want to take a pliers and rip out all of my teeth, so that I will feel my gums next to my gums.

XXXIV

Update from the Third Dimension: I am in a coffee shop, trying to write about the fourth dimension. I am also trying to not spill tea on my

⁵ no, I didn’t dream it this time

brand new three-dimensional computer. The two women sitting at the table next to me are communicating in a language that sounds very much like Fancy Artspeak. They are saying words like “temporality” and “linearization” and “materiality”, but they are not talking about Art. They are talking about History. “History” is the study of all of the Todays before Today. “Today” is a third-dimensional word for a fourth-dimensional concept. Today is both time-specific and never-ending. Today only makes sense in the fourth dimension.

XXXV

The day after the Lumbar Puncture (a.k.a. “Today”), I went to a beginning-of-the-semester Creative Core meeting at school. “Creative Core” may sound like a program for doing abdominal exercises in unexpected manners, but it is actually a fancypants administrative way of saying “Visual art is necessary! Don’t cut our funding!” The topic of the meeting was “Remember to do Your Job This Semester.” The meeting was at 9:30 am, which is a bit early for a bunch of grad students who have just been on semester break for two weeks, and who have “Art Vampire” reputations to uphold. Art Vampires are generally not very enthusiastic about 9:30 am meetings, and would rather be at home in their coffins, resting up for their nighttime bouts of misunderstood creativity. Ironically, and very un-vampirically, “not sucking” is a common goal among Art Vampires.

During the Creative Core meeting I looked across the table at Ben, who, like me, is an Art Vampire working on his painting MFA. Ben was wrinkling his forehead skin to indicate his deep interest in the discussion of “Remember to do Your Job This Semester.” As I watched his brow ripple, I noticed that Ben’s entire head had slowly and gently detached itself from his body, and was now drifting lazily upward. When it reached the ceiling, it bopped around, delicately changing directions whenever it encountered a light fixture. I had

never seen Ben's head do anything like this before, and was slightly taken aback. For one thing, if Ben's head were to detach itself from his body, I would expect it to rocket off explosively, not casually float away like a slightly underinflated balloon. I looked down at my hands. When I looked back up, Ben's head had reattached itself to his body, and was nodding in studious agreement with the meeting leader: "Yes, yes, we should remember to do our jobs this semester. Yes, our jobs are teaching visual art. Yes, yes. Yes."

XXXVI

Admission from the Third Dimension: I am not actually an Art Vampire. At least, I am not the kind of Art Vampire who makes mysterious art things late at night. I like to go to sleep at 10:00.
XXXVII.

You have pills again now.

Because people trust you.

So now is the perfect time.

XXXVIII

Pinocchio and I took the Dematerializing Pan-dimensional Hyper-port Express System (we decided to risk it, driving is boring) to the "Scenic View" restaurant just outside of town. The "scenic view" in question turned out to mostly be a view of the road we drove in on, but also included some trees. We ordered two different combinations of eggs and bacon, and talked, in a circuitous way, about the fourth dimension, and about how I could avoid going there. One thing people always like to tell you about the fourth dimension is that once you go you can never come back. Then they will look at you meaningfully and say that there is no third-dimen-

sional problem big enough that you should just pick up and leave for the fourth dimension. Pinocchio did not say either of these things though, because they are very simplistic and dumb observations, and do not need to be pointed out. Pinocchio is very good at not saying simplistic and dumb things.

XXXIX.

You have pills again now.

Because people trust you.

So now is the perfect time.

XL

Update from the Third Dimension: It is now January 7th, 2017. Here in the third dimension we have a January tradition of momentarily forgetting how horrible everything is because we have a “Fresh Start” and “New Year, New You!” Then we make lists of unreasonable expectations for ourselves that include things like “lose 500 pounds,” “visit my mother-in-law who lives way the hell out in Arp 188 Galaxy,” “go to the gym at least $\sqrt{-1}$ times per week,” “eat more of whatever this year’s current trendy vegetable is.” I have not yet come up with a list of unreasonable expectations for myself.

XLI

[KCHHHHHGHGHGHGHIIHHHHHHhhhhhhhhhhchhhhhsh-
hshhhhgG GGGGCHHHHHHH]

XLII

walk walk walk walk waLK waLK wALK WALK WALK WALK-
WALKJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUM PJUMPJUMPJUMP-
JUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMPJUMP-
JUMPJUMPJUMPJU

XLIII

Update from the Third Dimension: It is now January 8, 2017. I went to the studio today to take some pictures and spray-paint some plywood. Heather stopped by to lend me her camera because mine has developed a nasty habit of not focusing. A few moments after Heather walked in (perhaps three moments, or maybe four), I realized that I felt very relaxed in the bladder area, and very wet in the pants area, and very embarrassed in the brain area.

XLIII

Knock knock.

XLIV

Who's there?

XLV

Knock knock.

XLVI

Who is there.

XLVII

Knockknockknockknockknockknockknockknock-
knockknock

XLVIII

Not home anymore.

XLIX

Like my knockers?

Guess why I didn't ring the doorbell?

...because you're already a dingdong!

L

God damnit.



Quarreled Lovers, Kelsey Smith, Oil, 31"x23.5"

ALLISON HIRSCHY

Meeting Hamilton

Reveling with rebels in Morristown,
I spy him across the ballroom, candlelit.
Over the chatter of men vying for me
and the swelling of music, his laughter bends my ear.
By the missing buttons of his coat and ragged breeches,
I see his class: penniless, immigrant,
yet his wit, his eyes—he renders me helpless.
A man with nothing but his uniform
and a lilting smile, he returns my gaze.
Shorter than most, he crosses the room of giants
and reaches for my hand. His lips
brush my knuckles, a calloused thumb pressed
against my flesh, as I find my voice.
“Elizabeth Schuyler. Pleasure to—*pleased* to meet you.”

SARAH SIGMAN

A Memory

Camel Crush
tiny menthol flavor
the mall looming
at the edge of the lot
your head crowned with dirty
lamp light
burning afterglow in my eyes
love rises from toes to chest
like the swell of gray salt water
you the boatman
make a path
for the aftermath of ghosts
beacon on the coast
phantoms hold skeletal frames
with transparent fingers
on the threshold of discovery
eyes gaze through a fog
the shore so close
thrown back by the tempest
heart-sore torn fingers
grasping clawing basking in our life
I didn't drown but ended
face down in grit,
in my eyes and between teeth
making outrageous demands
who where what is *I*
but you only smiled
steady
and offered a hand



Within Yourself, Soyoung Jung, Watercolor on Traditional Korean Paper

ERICA WHITE

Black Cat in Atomic Bomb Dome

August, Hiroshima. As soon as the month nears around the town slowly builds into a city of collections. The array of different faces, colors of flowers on the street side, the grocery stores have set out gold, red, blue, and black patterned wind-socks in front of store windows.

The fruit stand nearby
I buy discount grapes, oranges
from a wrinkled man

Platform in the street
Dozing tram passes through it
Honkawa Station

The convenient stores are packed. The posters of cigarettes and what I believe to be lottery tickets are obscured by legs and shoulders, only a peek of a thin white cigarette emerges from a man's collarbone. The bright yellow letters hide as a woman walks by. I think about peach chu-hi and onigiri as my face dewes with sweat.

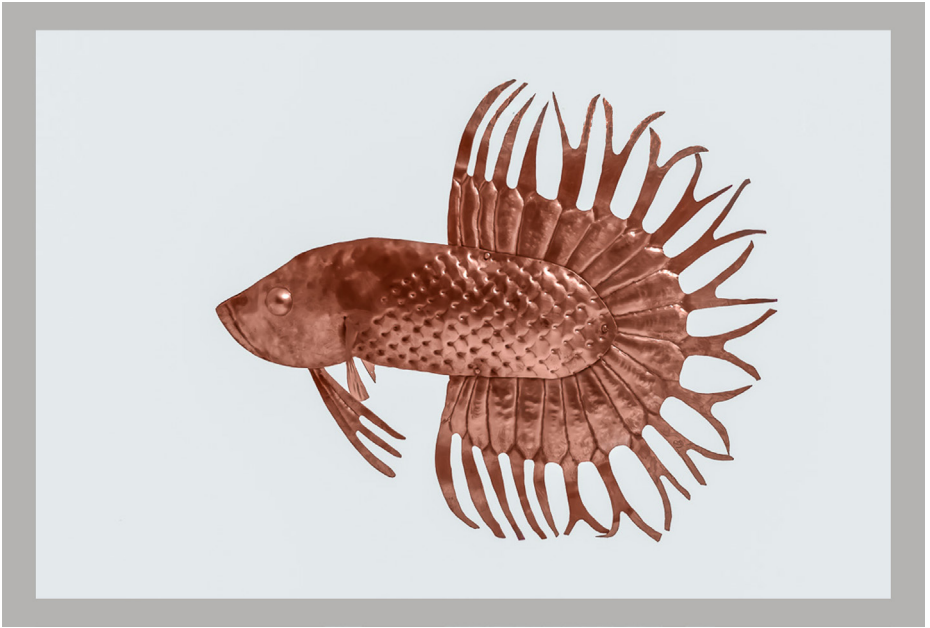
Hills past Aioi Bridge
clothed in gauzy haze
bring forth the river

The tram thunders over the T-bridge before stopping momentarily, letting out a fleet of multicolored faces as they all speak from tongues flowing from various parts of the world. I am alone, sitting on the concrete ledge in front of a dry shrub.

Black cat walks past crowd
inattentive as it glides
eyes transfixed elsewhere

People stand in twos and threes for pictures in front of the fenced
in dome. The skeleton of the building, now a mere shell, shows
humanity looking in a mirror where it once drew blood from its
own body. Mothers push their babies in strollers, an old pink man
with a white beard walks an Alaskan husky through the park. I pet
a stranger's orange dog for its smiling face. I did not hear the crows
that day.

It passes the fence
which kept all else from touching
the short grass, therein
a sooty oval, two eyes
slip between what once stood high



Copper Beta Fish, Brittany Moberly, Metal

JOHN LEONARD

Moose es Sign?

David Foster Wallace ruined lobster for me.
So, there's that now.

In the unrelated book I'm reading, (Notice I didn't say *novel*)
all the cows are dead and physics doesn't really exist.

It sounds like the Bible, I suppose. But it isn't.
Whatever man.

Someone at a bar in Nappanee, Indiana once told me a joke.
The punch line involved a preacher in a dung heap.
Now I'm a regular, and pretty soon
I'll be a townie. Knowing Beethoven means very little these days.

[49 minutes elapses]

I should be put in a corner and forced to stare at cobweb architecture.
A spy revealing the secret song of dust when it turns indigo,
signal flares of a stratus uprising.

(I'm blowing you all meaningful kisses)

Figure out a way to make all those parentheses go away
and send me a note. (Please)

If I could ask you one thing, it would not be about those starlings.
I wouldn't ask you if you saw our future in their murmuration,
black like the storms of your youth, charmingly rhythmic.

Say you held a gun to my head, and killed a couple of people
in front of me. I still wouldn't ask you about those starlings.

Even if it meant freedom.

Cheaply we'd go sailing, and on your third glass of
Morse Code Shiraz, maybe you'd remember the sage advice
that your grandmother gave you that Easter Sunday-
the time she made you wash her windows
all afternoon
hungover.

It must be.

JOHN MILAS

Raging Bull

Levi Walker thinks he sees a middle-aged woman grabbing her husband's penis, but he isn't sure. The line of people stretches like an accordion, and when the woman walks forward, Levi sees her hands folded behind her back, three fingers reaching out toward her overweight husband. Then he catches up and pushes himself against her body from behind, the two of them grinning.

And no one else notices—not Mom or Dad, not even Kayla, who always tries to hug Levi too much at home. She merely stares off in a daze now, her skin scarlet and shiny, as they wait to ride Raging Bull, the best roller coaster at Six Flags Great America. The train plummets from two hundred feet up, passing over the patrons below. Riders scream by in an orange blur. Mom and Dad's heads sway back and forth, following its path as it swirls around them.

“I'm thirsty,” Kayla says.

“Don't worry, honey,” says Mom glancing down at her watch.

“We'll get you something in about an hour.”

“Come on, Susan,” Dad says. “It won't be that much longer.”

“We'll see,” says Mom.

Levi looks down at his Batman watch, what Dad called an early birthday present when he bought it at the gift shop. The watch reads 5:30. Raging Bull will be their third ride of the day after Goliath and Viper.

“But I'm starving now,” Kayla says.

“Sweetie, I know,” says Mom, looking down at her from behind a pair of sunglasses.

“At least we know she won't throw up on the ride,” Dad says. He chuckles, takes off his hat, and wipes sweat off his face. Mom doesn't answer. She pats Kayla's head and turns away from Dad to

face one of the TV monitors playing old Looney Tunes. The roar of Raging Bull gives way to the honks of Road Runner evading Wile E. Coyote. People watching the monitors look up to see Coyote tip toe toward a box, open it, and find nothing within. The line crawls forward again, while guests zigzag back and forth guided by hand railings. Levi strains to get a better view of the husband and wife through the crowd, but a hand lands on his shoulder just as he's deciding whether or not he can see the man's erection. Dad looks down at Levi, the train behind him clattering up the lift hill.

"Levi," he says with a big smile—too big. "We're having fun aren't we," and then he clears his throat.

Levi swipes Dad's hand off his shoulder. "Yeah, sure," he says. He is about to turn back to further investigate, but sees something fall from the train as it rolls over the edge of the sheer drop above them. A little black object tumbles down, fluttering through the air.

Dad points with a smirk. "Look, Susan," he says with a little chuckle, and then, "Some poor bastard lost his wallet."

"Nice language," says Mom.

Kayla wonders out loud how much money is in the wallet and Dad says probably not much if that dum-dum forgot it was in his pocket.

"Can they get it back?" Kayla asks, and Levi suspends his spying again.

"Of course not," he says. "You get deheaded if you go past the fence."

"Levi," says Mom. "Shrimp get deheaded, not people."

"It's beheaded," Dad says. "And I think I saw that on the news actually. Some idiot crawled under a roller coaster and got their head knocked off."

"Roger, please," says Mom, covering Kayla's ears.

No dub, Levi thinks. Everyone knows a guy got decapitated under The Batman. Everyone talked about it for weeks at school. If you do something dumb like climb the wrong fence, something dumb happens to you.

"Gross," Kayla mutters after a minute, scrunching up her

face. Dad wipes more sweat off his forehead and looks up at the cartoons.

When Levi gets another clear view of the husband and wife, they're out in the open climbing stairs to reach the train platform. The wife is in front of her husband; the husband a few steps down behind her. If she wants to grab him again, she'll have to wait. Soon they disappear over the top.

"Damn," Levi says, and Mom turns her head toward him, but doesn't say anything. He turns away, pretending not to notice her hearing him. With how late it's getting, Levi realizes they might go on one more ride and then leave, which would total four roller coasters in one whole day's worth of waiting in line. This is not what he expected when Dad planned their first trip to an amusement park. This is not what kids at school said it would be like.

Now Mom doesn't talk, Dad doesn't talk, Kayla doesn't talk. They languish under the evening sun like melting sponges as they climb the stairs. At the top, Levi catches one last glimpse of the man and woman as they latch themselves into their seats. He could almost swear he sees the woman reach across her husband's lap as the train rolls out.

It's their turn to sit when the Walkers fill four seats across a single row. The attendants shuffle by and double-check each locking mechanism, shoving them down against the passengers' legs. They announce an all-clear on the PA system and the train jerks forward, linking against the chain that pulls them into the sky, clacking like tank treads. At the peak, the clacking stops. There is just the wind and the greatest view Levi has ever seen. Roller coasters reach up like mesas in a cartoon desert. Kayla reaches over and grab's Levi's wrist. They dip forward and drop two hundred feet straight down, plunging through a tunnel and shooting back up. Levi screams the whole way, wind blowing his lips apart as they launch into a sharp hammerhead turn. The blood rushes to his feet, ready to burst through his curled toes.

ERIN CLARK

Runner Up for the 2017 Prize for Poetry

Working Girl

Goodbye Burgerville!

Hello, Chickentown! with your Service Means I Like Everyone,
all appropriate surfaces are red, and caring too much is our worst
quality.

The back booth has my butt ninety-five percent engraved and the
cow posters are no longer charming.

I don't feel pity for the chicken filets; they should feel pity for me.
They live such stunted lives, not having to worry about anything
other than becoming my spicy chicken sandwich.

Filets don't have to be at the beck and call of the entitled ringing
in, a sound which follows me home, writes itself on the walls with
permanent marker, haunts my phone even when I'm on the toilet.

My bathroom is aquatically themed; no chickens here. There's a
small moment to breathe. Not that one should inhale too deeply,
since Jimmy was its previous occupant, but it's a moment.

The school of tropical fish gracing the shower curtain regurgi-
tates a compelling need to provide, rather than giving in to my
gut-wrenching wish to never exhale "My Pleasure" again. To pro-
vide, not just for myself, but for that one egg floating around in my
fluids which will one day have its nine-month metamorphosis.

I wonder if it will like chicken as much as I have to.

ALLISON HIRSCHY

Attack of the Clowns

The news said “Cloudy, with a chance of clowns—
They’ll terrorize and stalk our neighborhoods.”
One newsman laughed, “In time for Halloween!”
The woman next to him corrected, “No,
They’re crazy, they’ll devour your family—
get out, run, hide, this time tomorrow they’ll
be everywhere. They’re hungry. Hide your kids.”
I shrug each warning off, the news unheard.
At night, I spy the first outside my home—
a looming giant simply standing still,
a red-nosed figure waiting for me. Just me.
I’d never seen such darkened eyes before.
The news continues filling my ears now:
“These clowns corner their prey before they strike—
some carry weapons with them. Please, beware.”
A frantic race to reach the unlocked door,
a horror film where I can’t come dead last.



Is This What It Means to Be a Man? Jackson Wrede, Oil, 24"x36"

I Want to be a Cowboy (Sometimes)

I love the road. I love travelling with no plan, no goal, no schedule—just to see where the road takes me, and what lies along it. I saw my first-ever naked woman along the Middleboro Pike in the spring of 1976. She was only a photo in a water-logged *Penthouse* that had been thrown into the ditch, but I was eleven years old, riding my bike, and she was the most wonderful and mysterious thing I'd ever seen.

It doesn't have to be some shocking or significant discovery that makes the road special. I get a thrill from the most mundane things: deer grazing in a field, a hawk on a telephone pole, even a pretty house on a hill can fire my imagination.

Then there are the things that thrill my soul. Watching a storm rolling toward me across the plains of Nebraska, miles-high storm clouds blotting out the horizon, backlit by lightning, a dark wall of water eating up the world. When I hit it, my truck shuddered from the shock of the rain and wind. My windshield wipers and headlights did no good at all, and I slowed to a crawl, just to stay on the road. Minutes later, it had passed. The sun was shining, and the whole world sparkled. Driving into it was like diving off a cliff into the ocean. Beautiful.

Sometimes of course, the discoveries are not wonderful, but are still profoundly affecting. The first wild bald eagles I ever saw were not soaring majestically, or dramatically diving into a mountain lake to catch a fish; they were not the noble personification of freedom. No, these two—a male and a female—were face-down in a road-killed raccoon in Wisconsin. As I drove by, the male lifted his head and gave me the kind of look I get when a telemarketer calls in the middle of dinner. It was funny, but at the same time, it made me sad. Why would they settle for roadkill raccoon, when the forest was full of game, and Lake Superior full of fish, just a few miles away? Then I thought of my own life, and how I so

often settle for what's easy, what's convenient, rather than tackling something more challenging that would really make me happy, that would let me be what I like to think I am. I realized that, if I'm trapped, it's a trap I've walked into voluntarily, lured by TV ads and the promise of comfort, and that I could walk out of it, free myself, if I just had the will.

I remember the times in my life that I really felt free. When I was a kid, out riding my bike with my buddies—riding just to ride, for the sheer joy of it. Racing and seeing who could take turns the fastest. Yelling like Comanche's as we tried to pick up pop cans on the fly. Whooping with delight at each new triumph, and laughing off every failure. Occasionally stopping to examine something that caught our eye. Every ride was an adventure, a voyage of discovery.

I think of my honeymoon: my wife and I driving aimlessly around Ireland, getting lost, finding new, amazing things around every bend. Stopping on top of Conor Pass to look at the view below. The sky was cloudy, but a few golden beams of sunlight shone through and lit parts of the valley like spotlights. We climbed up the mountain just a little bit, and found a hidden lake and a little waterfall. We had nowhere to go, and no pressure to get there. We were free to just be in that place, in that moment, with the person we loved more than anything else in the world.

The road is not without its dangers, but even those add to the thrill. Pedaling like crazy to get out of the way of a gravel truck barreling down on me really got my heart pounding as a kid. Running out of gas on the Texas-New Mexico state line in the middle of the night was even kind of cool. Hiking through the desert at night, with no idea how many miles to a gas station, looking up at millions of stars made me realize just how small and insignificant a part of the universe I am. Climbing up into the dark cab of a semi that offered me a lift made me realize just how significant a part of the universe I am—to me anyway.

I was on the phone with my wife (using one of those hands-free gizmos) when my truck started to jackknife on an icy bridge in Iowa. I was running about sixty miles-per-hour, pulling a thirty-five-foot trailer that weighed more than my truck, and it was a real

life-flashing-before-your-eyes kind of moment. I had a semi next to me, and nowhere to go but straight ahead, with no room for error. I managed to keep it on the road, but it scared me. It scared my wife too, who'd heard me yell and start cursing as I fought the wheel. I could hear her shouting, asking if I was alright, but even after I got it straightened out, it took me a moment to collect myself enough to tell her that everything was okay. Later, I realized how much more it scared her than it did me, and I was at least a little more careful after that. I hated the idea of her worrying about me. I was also, of course, kind of proud; that was a damned fine piece of driving.

When I was a kid, I wanted to be a cowboy; sometimes I still do. Riding the range, drifting from town to town, from job to job, no obligations, no baggage, nothing to tie me down. I look around me now, at the house, at all the things that need fixed, the bills that need to be paid, the innumerable family, work, and social obligations and I just want to hit the road and never look back. I just want to be free. Then I look at my wife (although ideally, she could be a cowgirl), my kids and grandkids, my dogs and cats, the mountains of books, and I know that the only thing more free than a cowboy, than an eleven-year-old on a bike with playing cards in its spokes, is a genuinely happy man.

JOHN LEONARD

He Remembers 1961

He always puts an extra steak on the grill,
just in case a neighbor stops by.

It's not that kind of world anymore.

The wind was his only visitor that night. It carried
the animated buzz of a nearby bonfire.
He thought about all the funerals he attended
that year and he thought about Hurricane Jenny.

The sun's last breath felt like thunder.

A child down the street yelled,
Olly olly oxen free,
but to him it sounded like,
All your friends died in Spring.



Chasm, Mia Kaplan, Nickel, Silver & Resin, 1.25"x2"

BARBARA LUI

Butterfly Trouble

The sun
left me
what to do
much due
a honeysuckle
tree listens
to me
butterfly trouble
the forest
roots honest
my eye
ginseng heart
torn apart
what to do
much due
quiet of
 fresh breeze
sings solemn
deny waver
remembering
 society
what to do
much due
butterflies
 with me
 bluebell
fields of view
 stumbling
as I
pass through



Of Mice and Magnolias, Alexander Landerman, Printmaking, 18"x26"



Birds and the Bees, Alexander Landerman, Printmaking, 16"x28"



Hungout, Alexander Landerman, Printmaking, 18"x26"

CASE FARNEY

Dead March

We marched up these same streets,
the same confetti, white and red□
Now it seems like lifetimes ago.
We were hardly stopping to hug our mothers,
to kiss our sweethearts, to shake our fathers' hands.

We marched through the underbrush,
sweating through government-issue fatigues,
fatigued by the weighty air, damp with homesickness,
clammy despite the heat, entrenched in enervation,
driven on only by the desire to be elsewhere.

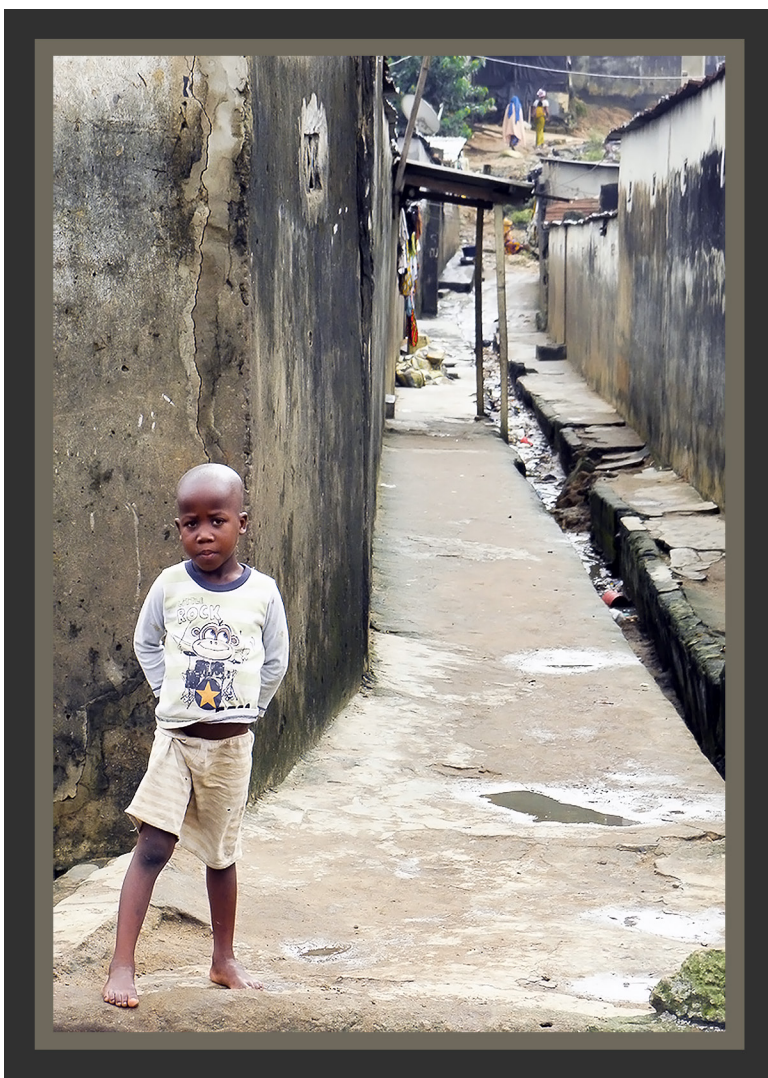
They would fall on us like a thunderstorm.
We did not know how to fight the weather.
So we did not fight them we sang.
Grey hymns to the only god we could fear□
A dark god, he demanded sacrifice.

We were his crusaders into an unholy land.
Our prayers shot out from our hands.
We offered him a sort of incense, the reek of rot.
We left stone monuments in his honor.
The best missionaries were always filling the pine pews.

But our sacrifice was not sufficient.
He took of us what we would not give.
We returned partial, dismembered,
but we are whole enough to march.
So we march through the same street again.

A man in white records our march,
an angel, I think, an angel of death.
Under him sits an old man

who cannot stand to watch.
He is the only one that understands.



Extreme Poverty, Mina Samaan, Photograph



Angel Among Us, Molly Heck, Mixed Media

Blown Home

1.

As I drive North on US 27 into Randolph County, Indiana, they come into view: tall white towers with three turning prongs against a skyline fading in red and gold with the beginning sunset, the sky higher up still blue. They stand in the middle of fields, near the corpses of trees scattered about the farm fields. They are height-capped at 499 feet, making them nearly the same height as a forty-six story building. But then they aren't standing in the middle of the trees. They only look that way because they come into view, peering over the trees on the horizon. As I drive towards them, they first appear to stand in diagonal rows, like white squares on a chessboard. But the closer I get the more it becomes clear that they are not diagonally placed; they are just in straight rows, one behind the other parallel to the road. The vroom of the rumble strip on the side of the road reminds me that watching the road is more important than watching the windmills. I jerk the car back onto the road and peer into my rearview mirror. I hope no one saw me do that.

2.

It's night and it's raining but since I'm going North on US 27, back to Randolph County again, the turbines should be there. The sky is dark grey, and the rain pouring down obscures my vision as I drive.

Out of the darkness, a panorama of red lights flashes above the ground on for a long moment. Then the lights vanish. The wind turbines look like they are signaling each other in secret ways in the dark. Like the jailhouse letters we looked at once in class, where finding the one word that doesn't match reveals the coded message the inmate hid in the letter—that's what I need here. That one flash, one signal, which will break open the whole thing. The towers don't blink short flashes like a cell-phone tower or

radio antennae, but instead stay on for long moments in the dark. Apart from the light; they remain invisible until I drive past, then they show darker gray against gray, with the red light still flashing periodically to inform the other turbines of their location. I'd heard that there were lights on the towers, but until now I have never seen them.

3.

Two houses down from where I live, there is an old windmill. Maybe one-story tall. Standing on metal with fan blades and a tail, it looks like an old-fashioned water-drawing windmill. It was probably used to draw water for the animals on the farm where it stands. It creaks in the wind. It takes me a while to place where the creaking is coming from. It's not so loud as to be obnoxious, but it can't be missed. The little windmill was painted once—it looks like it may have been yellow—but the color has since faded, so no one can really tell. Rust is the main color of the windmill these days.

Wind turbines are often accused of making too much noise, either noise that people can hear, or noise that they cannot hear. I've heard reports of the noise wind turbines make, too low for the human ear to hear, a continuous hum that is supposed to affect the human body in negative ways. But Earth makes noise too low to hear as well. Altered so that the human ear can hear it. It can be looked up in videos online. The noise Earth makes, the noise too low to hear in all cases where it isn't altered, is recommended for use as white noise while at work or for meditation. But there's noise everywhere. I've heard the noise they make before. I don't see how it's any worse than the creaking of the old windmill.

4.

On vacation, while trying to save on drive time traveling north on M-127. Near St. John, Michigan I can't see the turbines very well. This road is far too busy and the turbines set too far from the road for me to really gawk. I don't remember the surroundings. The buildings all blur together when you're driving down a state highway. But I think I remember a specific scene: a house, white

and large, with a smaller wing to the left, off in the distance—with the turbine beyond it. I think this is wrong—that can't be just one turbine, there's more than one turbine up there. And there are lots of white houses along the highway, so I can't imagine this one very clearly.

This town is not the halfway mark on my trip. The halfway mark is closer to Mount Pleasant, still farther north, but this always feels like halfway to me. Maybe the wind turbines make me feel like I am almost there. Being here is symbolic, at least for me, a preview of the turbines near where my Grandmother lives.

5.

The year I graduated from IvyTech, a small community college in Eastern Indiana, I made my first solo trip back to Michigan. I took a picture of the wind turbines that were visible from a hilltop a few hundred yards from my grandparent's home. It was morning. I was out to start the next stage of my journey, and there were the wind turbines! That throwback to childhood memories of much-loved music and the thought that *someday I want to go where the windmills are all lined up in rows like that music video of that one song that I loved when I was younger*. The beacons that for years I never saw in Indiana but that announced my return to the peninsulas. In that picture there is a road, a hill, some trees, and the turbines, but for me it is the picture of a new day, and a new step, and the idea that even though I'm doing something new, childhood is not so far away, symbolized by these towering turbines. These turbines, which stood like sentinels for all those years of my youth, are still there, still standing, turning in the wind.

KYLE CLARK

Only Two Ends to a Gun

some days
 i'm a
highwayman
blasting train cars apart with
 blood bright dynamite

& some
 i'm a
glass patient
jack-knifing from my sheets towards
 slate-black tile

& i
can never stand
 between

BOOK REVIEW

TANYA PERKINS

Strange Transactions: A Review of *Meditations
on the Mother Tongue*

Tran, An. *Meditations on the Mother Tongue*. C&R Press, 2017.

It is, of course, a lie, that old adage about not judging a book by its cover. Readers do all the time, as cover designers for any publishing house will tell you, readers like me. In fact, it was the cover of An Tran's debut collection that stopped me short at a national book fair last month—a cut-out photo of a woman's head, bisected neatly down the middle. The right half, in grainy 1950's era black and white, is smiling, WASPy, with bouffant hair and fake lashes while the left side is Asian, brown-skinned, somber, with a gaze focused somewhere in the distance. The two images are photoshopped together to produce an eerie whole, an uneasy union between discordant elements.

Which is a pretty accurate visual for what's going on in the twelve short stories of this collection. As an Asian-American, Tran draws on his own experience navigating multiple languages—Vietnamese words and phrases are interwoven with English through many of the stories—yet the collection explores the idea of communication in larger ways than that of any one point of view. Unexpected angles dominate, whether from the perspective of divers searching for a wreck under the sea, hikers gazing down on an underground forest, or researchers hunting for otters in a prehistoric cave. Shapes dart under the surface, just as language plumbs what is intrinsic to our idea of self. For example, in the ninth story of this collection, Kesuk, an Inuit hunter tells a visiting American reporter, "They tell us all the time that the world cannot actually speak to us, but all they can say for sure is that we always find what we are looking for...They can't tell us we're wrong, because we always find it" (p. 111). In Tran's world, *everything* speaks—inter- and intra-species communication is the fulcrum for episodes that by turns solidify and destabilize his characters' ideas about identity and belonging.

But communication is not limited to speech. In the first, eponymous story, a Vietnamese-American son's involvement with parkour's "vocabulary of vaults" (p. 10) leads him back to a renewed engagement with his mother tongue and a reappraisal of what it means to be a good son. This is yet another theme, the push-me-pull-you between parents, children, siblings, made all the more thorny by movement between homeland and America. Stories like "Once I Wed a White Woman" and "The Dharma's Hand" feature Westernized sons ambivalent or even resistant to the conservative expectations of Vietnamese parents, a Gen 1.5 perspective I first encountered as an undergrad reading Andrew Pham's *Catfish and Mandela*. In this sense, Tran's collection fits with diasporic writers like Pham, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Thi Diem Thúy Lê and others.

And then, plunk in middle of the collection, after Vietnamese parkour experts and lush subterranean jungles, are two stories that take a very different turn. The first, "The Grinning Man," is a tall tale that might have been plucked from a Washington Irving notebook or maybe a mid-century *Twilight Zone*, followed by "Prophecy," an emotionally bulky story about a middle class, middle-aged Midwest mom overprotective of her son who suffers from Crone's. A little jarring? You bet.

More jarring, though, was my own doubletake, however momentary. Did the two stories seem misplaced because they didn't fit the rest of the collection aesthetically or because they didn't fit expectations of what an Asian-American writer is "supposed" to write about? This is an uncomfortable question but an important one, exposing what film maker Kartina Richardson in her 2013 *Salon* article calls "The Default" i.e., whiteness as the norm, against which experiences by persons of color require explication or examination as, in the case of Asian writers, exotic objects. "White artists are never asked why they aren't addressing their experience of race in their work," Richardson asserts. "We don't have the same expectations of white artists because, of course, they are raceless."

The interjection of these two decidedly non-Asian stories reveals my own default assumptions about the particular literary

experience that this Vietnamese-American writer would produce, one complete with wise old matriarchs and memories of fleeing Saigon. And sure, Tran delivers. But to imply or suggest in any way that that is *all* an Asian writer can or should write about is to deny what it means to be a writer of fiction. Writers occupy a thousand lives, some of which look a lot like their own but many don't, in the most astonishing ways, because writing means occupying a certain personally alien geography, bolstered by research and imagination. Yet, paradoxically, writers can't help but write what they know. Stories, like Tran's "The Golden Turtle God" or "Extinction with Residue Remaining" are convincing because Tran is speaking from some form of lived experience, from an authentic knowledge that many non-Vietnamese writers, for example, would never presume. But writing what you know isn't a prison, for heaven's sake and anyway, the whole idea of "knowing" is a multiplex, a house with many abodes.

Still, it is hard to shake the sense that the middle two stories, "The Grinning Man" and "Prophecy," are loose threads within an otherwise, glossy literary fabric. I'm left unsure as to whether it is my imperfect and fallacious expectation, or whether the stories are genuinely misplaced. And maybe that perplexity, that instability forcing introspection, is just what Tran wants. Despite the agile prose, there is an uneasiness here. The collection repeatedly thrusts unanticipated matches in the face of the reader—a Sumatran guide strapped to the back of the white American scientist, a deaf girl and a gorilla conversing in sign language, a linguist reading signals of desperation from a captive squid—reminding us that language itself is a strange transaction, never only a matter of words.

INTERVIEWS

LEANA CHOATE

An Interview with Teddy Lepley

At first glance, “Lounge” could be mistaken as a drawing. Can you describe your printmaking process? Is it your intention to create this illusion in your prints?

I believe that drawing is the foundation of art. All of my prints begin as drawings, so I do not know if I would call it an illusion, but rather the truth of the process. Before I make a print I draw and draw and draw some more. Drawing is another way of thinking through it until I find my concepts and ideas. I don't think of a concept and then draw. I just draw.

In this case, I drew my friend. I really love figural works because the act of drawing a model is so empathic. Figural works tend to emanate emotion and empathy. Alice Neel's paintings and Kathe Kollwitz's drawings and prints are good examples of this—you will see the tenderness they had towards their models in their work.

Once I have a nice drawing of my model, I draw through grounds (a waxy asphalt) on a zinc plate and etch it in diluted nitric acid. The acid etches the drawn lines that hold the ink in the printing process. But printmaking is not merely the reproduction of a drawing; it transforms the drawing and brings it to a new dimension. With “Lounge” my intention was to make a beautiful print, this started with an empathic drawing.

One thing that struck me about your prizewinning piece was that the only object in color (or vivid color) is the chair. Everything else looks grayscale. Why call so much attention to the chair, rather than the woman?

Anyone who has taken a drawing class at Ball State will recognize this old, worn green chair. The chair likely exists in hundreds of

pieces made by Ball State students. By coloring the chair with green mulberry paper through chine-collé, I am making this icon of the Ball State School of Art more recognizable to the community. I also find that the woman, being so light in value and such a large portion of the composition, draws enough attention to herself. So without the color people would not really notice the chair in the way I want them to.



SARA BAXTER

An Interview with Patrick Allred

For me, your piece “Eternity” evokes a sense of restfulness, not just due to the sleeping face and the calm water, but also because of the combination of browns and blues that dominate the piece. Can you tell me about your decisions with color in this painting?

Thank you for noticing the calm effects in the painting. I achieved this through the numerous vertical and horizontal elements in the painting, trying to keep the diagonals to a minimum. Blue also has a very calming effect. I used the brown in the painting as a complement to the blue. I try to use complementary color schemes in most of my paintings.

Another dominant (and intriguing) feature in the painting is your use of line. You gave us a cosmic-like night sky with circular lines and spiky, squiggly, chaotic lines in the tree branches and roots. How did you decide what types of lines to use in this piece?

The circular lines in the painting are meant to be symbolic of eternity. The spiky and squiggly lines as you call them are meant to add interest to the composition.

What struck me most about your painting “Eternity” was the water. The reflections, especially, are very evocative. Can you tell me what kind of impression you intended to make with the water?

The water and the reflections in the water are also symbolic of eternity. To reflect on something is usually to look back on it, and hopefully use the information gained from history to make better

decisions in the future.

You do wood carvings in addition to painting. Can you tell me more about the various mediums you work with?

Unfortunately I've been cursed with an interest in almost everything. Because of this fact I will probably never be as good at any one thing as I should be. I enjoy painting, drawing, sculpting with both wood and clay, creative writing (poetry specifically), and making music. I would, however, rather paint than do anything else.

2016 Tributaries Cover Art



Eternity, Patrick Allred, Oil on Canvas, 48"x72" in.

Interview with Katy Didden



Katy Didden holds degrees from Washington University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Missouri, and she has taught courses in creative writing, composition,

literature, and film. Her first book, *The Glacier's Wake*, won the Lena-Miles Wever Todd Prize from Pleiades Press. Her poems and reviews appear in journals such as *Ecotone*, *Bat City Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Image*, *The Missouri Review*, *Smartish Pace*, *Poetry*, and the *Best New Poets Anthology* (2009). She won the Beulah Rose prize from *Smartish Pace*, three Dorothy Sargent Awards, and an Academy of American Poets Prize, and her work has been featured on *Verse Daily* and *Poetry Daily*.

If you could tell your younger writing-self anything, what would it be?

Trust the weird, something-like-joy and something-like-fear feeling of finding words. Even now, sometimes I have no idea what a poem is or how to write one. If I'm not writing every day, I feel simultaneously drawn to and afraid of starting to write again, like standing on a high dive and peering down at the pool, or like considering a dare to grab an electric fence.

Many times when I finish a poem, I feel like it came from outer space. I have notebooks full of drafts that never take shape as poems—which brings me to my more practical advice: “Make more soup.” For me, poems often start as conversations. I have a

vision of the best part of the writing life, which is sitting at a table with a bunch of artists, tired around the eyes, passing a basket of bread and talking about a poem we read or song we heard or scientific phenomenon someone describes so well that everyone levitates for a minute. That's how the poem starts, but it only takes shape in performance, as if communicating feelings in words were a means of carrying camaraderie forward, a risky energy, or as if that became the occasion to recreate it.

In your experience, what are some challenges unique to the process of writing ekphrastic poetry? How does it separate itself from other ways of writing?

Many people think that ekphrastic poems are “poems about art.” But if you tell someone to write a poem about a work of art, nine times out of ten it will stall out in description. I think it's more productive to think of ekphrasis as a device to use inside a poem, like a metaphor, or like rhyme. What happens to Homer's *Iliad*, an epic poem, when he describes the shield of Achilles? That passage introduces all kinds of questions about what makes the world, about work, about cycles of loss and celebration. The scale of what's described dwarfs the Trojan War even while it shows what everyone is fighting for. When I read that passage, it feels outside of time—an infinity spiral in the middle of a war march.

Many people see the relationship between verbal and visual art as a longstanding rivalry, and since artists use different media to communicate, ekphrastic moments are often seen as moments of “otherness” in a poem. Today's poets embrace that encounter in fascinating ways. Natasha Trethewey reshapes history when she writes in the persona of Ophelia, E.J. Bellocq's muse. Her poems do not merely describe Bellocq's photographs, but talk back to them, helping us to imagine Ophelia's life and how she survived it, and helping us to admire her and know her.

Describing a work of art can be a way for poets to navigate between their own private experience, and public knowledge. I'm really fascinated by how differently Claudia Rankine uses images

in Citizen than in Don't Let Me Be Lonely. In Citizen, we encounter the work of artists, and that resonates in a really different way than illustrations or archival photos from newspapers. When you include the work of artists, you are engaging with someone else's choices for how to represent experience, and at some level this stirs up questions about the nature of art, and the nature of life. As you can see, I love thinking about all of this stuff, almost as much as I love talking to artists, dancers, and musicians about their approach to creative work—artists in other disciplines can teach us new ways to think of structure, and rhythm, and juxtaposition. These are all tools poets can use too.

Is there one poem in your book *The Glacier's Wake* that you still go back and revise or that you think could be different? If there is, what about the poem makes you feel that way?

The Glacier's Wake feels like it has a life of its own now, and I don't go back to those poems. Whatever I notice that I'd like to change in those poems I bring with me to the new poems, and try to make them better this time around. It's like looking at old photographs—those poems show who I was at the time.

What are some ways that you get ideas for poems (personal experience, things you read, etc.)?

Avenues into poems abound! The most common way poems start for me is with a visual image; sometimes this comes from research, or trying to describe what's around me, but more often it relates to memory. I write a lot of poems about places I've traveled to, and I think that's because when I'm away from home, I'm often really alert to my surroundings. When I think about those places, maybe Death Valley in California, or Perito Moreno Glacier in Patagonia, or the temple of Aphaia in Aegina, certain memories will be more vivid, and usually that means that there's energy there—something unresolved that I can explore.

I travel with friends, and being out in the wilderness intensi-

fies group dynamics, so I'm often writing about that. When I write about memories I try to re-create the scene in enough detail that someone else can go back there with me. Other times, I will be reading a poem, or listening to people talking, or listening to music, and I'll get a rhythm in my head. When that happens, I will write towards that rhythm, sometimes even writing nonsense lines about the weather, until I figure out where the rhythm is leading me, or what emotion it contains.

I also like to work in form. Right now, I'm writing an entire book of poems using the poetic form of erasure, which means I take a block of prose and pick out a poem inside it. The book I'm writing is called "The Lava on Iceland," and I am erasing a variety of source texts about Iceland (geologic surveys, and Icelandic edda, interviews with Bjork, historical records of the women's march) to the voice of lava. When I thought of which poetic form would help me achieve the voice of lava, erasure came to mind because I imagined the layers of ink as a formal echo of the layered effects of lava on land. I like working in form because it helps me give up control—scanning for words to fit the scheme is like opening new rooms in my gray matter. Form also gives you an architecture, a sturdy base of history.

Who are some poets who have affected your writing style and how?

I did my undergraduate thesis on Marianne Moore, and I continue to be haunted by her lines:

"Its leaps should be set / to the flageolet"
from "The Jerboa"

"yet with x-ray like inquisitive intensity upon it, the surfaces go back"
from "People's Surroundings"

"What is more precise than precision? Illusion."

from “Armor’s Undermining Modesty”

“like the glaze on a / katydid wing / subdivided by sun / till the
nettings are legion.”

from “The Mind is an Enchanting Thing”

Moore’s poems are wonder maps, a palette of animals and minerals set in a startling, un-iambic flow. I keep trying to get a foothold on her work, but I’m still bewildered by it. Anytime I try to write about her work, the poem “An Octopus” for example, I get lost in it for years. Sometimes, she can get too much in my head—when I was a young writer, I used to channel her tone unconsciously, but in my work it always sounded stuffy. I had to learn to avoid certain patterns I perceived in her work, because they weren’t authentic to my voice.

**Do you often feel like your poems are “complete” or just
“complete enough?”**

I guess that depends on the poem. Sometimes I’ll go through thirty drafts of a poem. For example, I fiddle with final lines a lot, because I like to have the feeling of crescendo, or a held note, or a lid-shutting beat, or a panning shot of a desert highway while the credits roll. Sometimes, it works out, so then the poem feels complete. For a lot of my poems, though, when I read them out loud, I hear sections that sound like flat notes to my ear, and even though that’s usually a sign I need to revise that part, sometimes I leave it in there, because the poem feels “complete enough.”

SARA BAXTER

An Interview with Michelle Burke



Michelle Y. Burke earned a BA in creative writing from Loyola University Maryland, an MFA in poetry from the Ohio State University, and a PhD in English from the University of Cincinnati. She is the author

of the poetry collection *Animal Purpose*, winner of the 2015 Hollis Summers Poetry Prize. Her poetry has appeared in *Poetry*, *Hopkins Review*, *American Literary Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Massachusetts.

I'd like to start with your book *Animal Purpose*. This collection includes several fascinating intersections: masculine and feminine, natural and urban, domestic and wild. Can you tell us why you choose to make connections between these seemingly opposing forces?

I don't feel like I'm making connections between opposing forces. These "seemingly opposing forces," as you so smartly call them, exist in opposition only because we humans have agreed to divide up the world along these lines.

For example, does a horse think of itself as domestic or wild? These labels are meaningless to the horse. We humans apply these labels as a kind of shorthand for a whole constellation of ideas rooted in culture and history.

My daughter, who's two, uses "boy" and "girl" and "kid" interchangeably, and it totally works. The individual differences

between people are far too varied and vast to be encapsulated by simple dichotomies. I'll be sad when she starts to see the kids as "boys" and "girls." It will reshape her experience of the world.

I was captivated by the way in which your poems depict how similar humans are to animals, as well as how important we are (animals and humans) to each other. What is it about this relationship that inspires your poems?

Well, humans are animals, right? It makes sense that we would see ourselves in the animals around us, but there's also a way in which our relationships with animals are simplified. For example, it's much easier to be 100% forgiving of a beloved pet than a beloved spouse. Animals are easy to love, and they're also easy to ignore. People are harder to love and harder to ignore.

Many of your poems ("Not by Extraordinary Means," for example) are rich in leaps and surprises. Can you discuss the role of surprise in your poetry or in poetry as a genre?

I find it pleasurable to see connections between disparate things revealed, so this comes through in my writing. I like finding those surprises when I'm reading, too. I think that most writers like to be surprised by their own writing, and this is part of what drives us to the page.

I think that poems, especially short poems, need that surprise to feel satisfying. It's why the volta is built into the sonnet.

Let's talk a little bit about form. How do you decide the form you will use for the poems you write? How important is form to you in the poems you read?

Form can be intensely connected to the sense of surprise. Working within a closed form can usher you into writing something you didn't know you would write. Of course, working in organic form can do the same thing. You find yourself working within a pattern and then the pattern is suddenly opening up new avenues for you.

That's the closest thing to inspiration that I ever feel.

Like a lot of poets, I find patterns satisfying. Maybe because the mind itself is so chaotic, or at least my mind is chaotic, so there's something satisfying about wrestling that chaos into a form.

Writers love to pass along great advice on writing. What is some of the best advice you have ever received about writing?

The wonderful poet and teacher Andrew Hudgins once told me to just jump in the deep end of the pool and to stop worrying about being nice in my writing. I'm sure he doesn't remember telling me that, but it really struck me. That conversation happened when I was doing my MFA. Much later, James Cummins told me to stop with the rhetorical bullshit and just be honest—and that humor was a kind of honesty. It was similar advice, and it made an impression.

As an undergraduate, I studied with the poet Lia Purpura, and she stressed the importance of practice. She likened learning to write to learning to play the oboe. You had to practice your scales.

Last question, can you talk about your next project?

Well, right now I have a two-year-old daughter and a son due in July, so all reading and writing occurs around the edges of my family life. In a lot of ways, I feel like I'm "practicing my scales" these days, but I do think that my next book will be profoundly influenced by the experience of motherhood. It's made my experience of pain and joy unimaginably deep.

Contributors

PATRICK ALLRED is a senior at Indiana University East and will graduate this spring with a Fine Arts degree. He enjoys painting and wood sculpture. He contributed the cover to the 2016 issue of *Tributaries* with the painting “Eternity” and received first place in visual arts with his painting *Death Dancing*.

JAMES BRIGHTON is an Indiana native, born and raised in Terre Haute. He attended Indiana University Bloomington for two and half years before moving to Los Angeles, California to pursue creative and professional interests. James reenrolled with Indiana University East in 2012 and received a Bachelor of Arts and Humanities with a minor in Creative Writing in December 2016. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Mallory.

HANNAH BROWNING is a student at Indiana University East and this is her first publication.

HANNAH CASTOR is a Technical and Professional Writing student at IU East who enjoys both creative and technical writing. She has written several novels that she hopes to publish one day soon. She is currently editing one of her novels for her Honors Senior Thesis project in preparation for (hopefully) publication. She has a Chihuahua named Sophie who she adores and babies to ridiculous extents, but she only gets to see Sophie on the weekends, so she has a valid excuse.

LEANA CHOATE is a Junior at Indiana University East. She is an English major with a concentration in creative writing. She lives in Dublin, Indiana with her family and pet pig, Porky. She is unsure what is in store for her after college and is (terrifyingly) going with the flow until she figures that out. Her family is as important to her as anything, and she thanks them (from the bottom of her heart) for their unrelenting support, which has pushed her to achieve

everything she's done so far.

KYLE CLARK is a fourth-year English student at Indiana University Kokomo. He is a poetry editor for the on-campus journal *Field: A Journal of Arts and Sciences*, and his work has appeared both in *Field* and in IU Bloomington's *Labyrinth*. Kyle lives in Peru, Indiana, with his large, loving family.

JEN CLAUSEN is a painter and writer whose work has been exhibited primarily in the third dimension. Jen is currently finishing a master's degree in painting at Indiana University in Bloomington. She lives with her cat, Ida, and houseplants, Charlie, Gwendolyn, Anastasia, and Jonah, at 764.8 feet above sea level.

BEN COOKE-AKALWA is a BFA student at Indiana University in his senior year with a focus in metals and jewelry design. His work is strongly influenced by modern art and architecture movements, specifically the repetitious nature of Mid-Century architecture and the geometric abstraction of minimalist art. These graphic influences inspire him to create elegantly designed work that is simple in form and commands the attention of the viewer.

AMANDA COWAN currently resides in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is working on her bachelor's degree in psychology at Indiana University East. In her spare time she enjoys caring for magical creatures, playing Quidditch, and enjoying the occasional butterbeer.

BAMBI DEAN showed an affinity for drawing at an early age and fittingly, holds a BFA in Ceramics and a minor in Art History from Purdue University in West Lafayette. She recently graduated from Purdue in December of 2016 with her Art Education Degree for grades K-12. Bambi currently lives in Lafayette, Indiana with her husband and four children (three of whom were born while she was attending college). Bambi loves art, music, and writing lyrics and poems. Bambi CANNOT WAIT to see what the future holds.

BRITTANY FANCHER is a student at Indiana University East.

RYAN FARLEY is a printmaking artist currently based in Bloomington, Indiana. Recent exhibitions include the 3rd International Printmaking Triennial of ULUS in Belgrade, Southern Printmaking Biennial VII, and Points of Departure at John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Ryan will complete his MFA in printmaking in 2018 where he will move on to attend the Rhode Island School of Design to pursue Graphic Design.

CASE FARNEY is an undergraduate at the University of Evansville majoring in Religion and Creative Writing. This is his first opportunity to be published, but he hopes to one day write books of poetry. Case has lived all his life in Evansville with his parents and three siblings as well as his beloved dogs.

MELANIE GARCIA is studying English, Creative Writing, and Photography at IU South Bend. She has published poetry and fiction in IU South Bend's creative writing Journal *Analecta*. She also recently published a photograph in the book *One Day in May*. If she's not reading or watching *The Lord of the Rings*, she's probably photographing her precious cat, Chester.

MOLLY HECK is a sophomore at the University of Notre Dame, majoring in English and Studio Art. Her focus is on poetry writing and photography. Molly is also the creator of *La Vie en Rosé*, a blog in which she posts her photography and writing samples.

ALLISON HIRSCHY is a senior at IU East majoring in English with a focus in creative writing. She currently lives in Portland, Indiana, with her husband and two cats. She's admittedly small, but has a lot of stories to share.

SOYOUNG JUNG was Born in Seoul, South Korea, is currently studying as an MFA student in Fine Arts at Purdue University. She lives with her husband and two children in West Lafayette, Indiana.

She holds a BFA from Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, South Korea. She worked as a graphic designer and an illustrator for publishing companies, magazines and newspapers until 2008. She started studying and practicing Korean traditional painting in 2011 and has experimented with traditional techniques and media to create new imagery. Jung, through her interest in the human figure and city scenes, explores her identity as someone who grew up in one culture and now lives in a different one.

MIA KAPLAN is an artist who is a senior at Earlham College, pursuing a degree in Metals. Her work includes both sculpture and jewelry that incorporates her interests in biology and natural forms. Mia has had a solo show at Liberty Arts Studio & Foundry, titled SOL (2016), which exhibited an accumulation of works from that summer. She is currently living in NYC for a semester, studying with the New York Arts Program, and interning at Brooklyn Metal Works.

SARA KRAMER is originally from Westfield, IN. She is a senior at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. Sara is fascinated by the history of portraiture and its relationship to the highly manipulated, instantaneous portraits of ourselves that we can now create, using apps like Instagram and especially Snapchat. Her most recent work explores this cultural phenomenon through its psychological effects and urges the viewer to think more deeply about the ostensibly contradictory effects most often associated with selfie culture: narcissism, agency over one's own image, and distorted self-image.

ANDREW LANCE is an undergraduate at Purdue University studying American poetry and creative writing. Lance is an assistant editor at the Purdue Bell Tower magazine, a leader in the Purdue Student English Association, and an Eagle Scout. He is currently composing his first poetry collection. This is his first publication.

ALEXANDER LANDERMAN is working on his MFA at IU Bloomington. His work focuses on the role of animals within the

modern world. His hope is to encourage a reconnection between people and nature and to foster a sense of awareness and social responsibility.

REBEKAH LAVERE was introduced to wind turbines when she was young and they have been markers in her mind ever since. She lives in Hagerstown, Indiana and is a Senior at IU East with a major in criminal justice and a minor in creative writing. She was previously published in the 2016 edition of *Tributaries* and is a member of Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society. In her free time, she likes to read, write, listen to music, and travel.

JOHN LEONARD is an emerging poet and winner of the 2016 inaugural Wolfson Poetry Award. His writing has been featured in *Analecta* and *The Jawline Review* and most recently in *Tributaries*. He is an English graduate student at Indiana University South Bend.

DANNIELLE LIEBHERR is a Secondary Education major with a concentration in English in her junior year at IU East. She found a love for poetry and creative writing through her college classes and hopes to continue to write and improve in the future.

TEDDY LEPLEY is a double major in printmaking and drawing at Ball State University.

He is greatly involved in the printmaking department at Ball State and works in intaglio and relief but has developed a fondness for bookmaking and letterpress printing. He has shown his work in local and regional exhibitions including “Student and Mentor” Ball State University Printmaking at the Arts Center in Portland, Indiana and the Minnetrista Annual Juried Art Show and Sale in Muncie, Indiana. Teddy is currently organizing the 3rd Annual Printer Jam, an art show and sale at his home in Muncie.

JOHN MILAS studies creative writing in Purdue University’s MFA program. His work has appeared in *Superstition Review*,

O-Dark-Thirty, Chicago Quarterly Review, and elsewhere.

BRITTANY MOBERLY is the creator of *King Beta* (2016) sculpture, medium copper. She is currently majoring in art at Indiana University East and lives in Richmond Indiana with her husband and two daughters.

LLOYD MULLINS is the author of a number of unpublished stories and essays, although he is hoping to change that. His story "A Kentucky Courtship" won first prize for fiction for the 2015 edition of *Tributaries*. He also writes about politics, religion, culture, philosophy, and humor at www.moonsthoughts.com, a modestly popular blog.

TAYLOR O'NEILL HALL is a senior journalism major at University of Southern Indiana where he is the Sports Editor for the university's newspaper *The Shield*. He has aspirations for writing about either sports or video games. Aside from that, he loves watching old, awful Japanese monster movies. His favorite is King Kong vs. Godzilla from 1962.

AMBER ROGERS is a very passionate, out going, caring type of person who enjoys helping others and writes about her life experience.

PIPER ROWLEY is a Junior at IUPUI, pursuing a Liberal Arts degree with a concentration in Creative Writing. Previously she won Best of Fiction for her piece "Her" in the Spring 2016 edition of *Genesis*, IUPUI's art and literary magazine.

MINA SAAMAN is a Senior the Indiana University East School of Nursing.

SARAH SIGMAN is a student at Indiana University East.

KELSEY SMITH is a junior studying Visual Arts Education at Ball

State University. “Quarreled Lovers” was an oil painting done for a cubist assignment in her Intro to Painting course when she was a second-semester sophomore. The painting features two quarrelling lovers surrounded by a peaceful forest scene. It was inspired by Picasso’s painting “Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J.)” and her relationship with her boyfriend.

RACHEL SNOWLING is an online student from Fairfield, Pennsylvania. This is her first published story.

ERICA WHITE’s poems and visual artwork have been featured in University of Indianapolis’ Etchings. Her critical postcolonial writing was featured in Purdue Calumet’s online journal and at The 2017 Sigma Tau Delta International Convention. A literature and creative writing undergrad at IUPUI, Erica divides her time between writing, visual art, and traveling.

JACKSON WREDE is a Junior at University of Notre Dame, majoring in painting and drawing. He is an aspiring young artist working towards his senior thesis project and building a portfolio for graduate school. He lives and works out of Chicago.

Juror's Statement

KATY DIDDEN

Poetry

Winner: “Henry Miller, Winter in Big Sur” by James Brighton

So many techniques converge in this moving poem—it’s written from the perspective of a historical figure, and the framing is terrific (starting right in the middle of the action). The imagery invokes a specific place but it is not mere description—the character reads the natural world in such a way that it carries emotional significance, like these lines: “[I rest] my eyes on the Golden Hills below, / the great belly of the blue /waterscape, making golden the chance / to forgive and accept.” I really liked how, by way of this single character, the poet points us to larger questions about the nature of family, fame, and forgiveness.

Runner-up: “Working Girl” by Erin Clark

I was intrigued by the prose poem form of “Working Girl,” and I liked the sarcasm in this poem, and the way the speaker turns everyday objects into existential meditations: “I don’t feel pity for the chicken filets. They should feel pity for me.” I liked how the doorbell of Chickentown haunts the speaker in surreal ways. Finally, I was most impressed by the unexpected final turn in this poem, when it transforms from a rant against Chickentown into a reconsideration of the self and a desire for motherhood.

Nonfiction

Winner: “Unfolding Me” by James Brighton

As I read “Unfolding Me,” I could feel my brain doing somersaults

as the author led me through story to a philosophical consideration of “the particle and energy fields that surround [our existence]” the way water surrounds a starfish. This author was able to introduce complicated concepts in a thought-provoking way, and it made me look at the world, and at the smallest decisions, with a new kind of wonder. Above all, I appreciate how this author arranged the essay as a coming-of-age personal narrative, yet invited the reader to consider how we all belong to a wider universe, with infinite possibilities.

Runner-up: “Ch-ch-changes” by Lloyd Mullins

I could hear David Bowie’s “Changes” in my head from the start of “Ch-ch-changes.” I really like how this author used the frame of the Bowie song to meditate on the nature of change, and on his own experience of changing over the years. Change was the center of the wheel, but the author introduced all kinds of radiating spokes, from the reshaping of global geography, to advancements in technology, to evolutions in his own self (both mind and body). I really appreciated the moments where the author introduced family scenes—those were well-observed and very moving.

Fiction

Winner: “Raging Bull” by John Milas

This story brought me into the mindset of Levi Walker, a disgruntled pre-teen at an amusement park, immediately. The author re-creates the atmosphere of waiting in line for a rollercoaster with persuasive details, and we get a sense of Levi’s yearning for independence. I liked the author’s framing strategy—we’re waiting in line with Levi for most of the story, but we end on the triumphant first drop on the roller coaster. This author has a knack for description and dialogue, and I was impressed by how well he captured a pre-teen’s perception of family dynamics.

Runner-up: “Things to Paint in the Fourth Dimension” by Jen Clausen

This story was a wild ride from the beginning, asking us to imagine a character inhabited by “a space alien under witness protection from the Andromeda Galaxy” who burrowed “a small hole in a section of the myelin sheath next to [his] right frontal lobe.” I liked the form of this story, as it was written like a series of journal entries reporting on the narrator’s progress in accessing the fourth dimension. I particularly liked the reflective moments in this story, when the narrator considers how artists like Mozart, and like painters in general, might hold the key to accessing other dimensions. This was imaginative and thought-provoking.

SHAUN DINGWERTH

Winner: “Lounge” by Teddy Lepley

Runner-up: “Mid-Century Tea” by Ben Cooke-Akalwa

It was a pleasure being invited to juror the visual arts for the 2017 issue of *Tributaries, A Journal of Creative Arts*. The high quality of the submitted works made judging a difficult process - a tribute to the talented artists who submitted.

The exhibition represents a diverse display of works in a variety of mediums, featuring an array of styles and techniques. The subject matter was interesting, well-drawn and executed. As a juror, I pay close attention to the compositions and perspective of an artwork, but ultimately, I want the subject to be one of interest. Drawing and print making stood out in my final juror’s selection. It was refreshing to see the superiority of artworks represented and encourage all the participating artists to continue their work.

Congratulations to each of the artists who were selected for exhibition. As an artist, it not easy to open one’s work to the complicated juried process. Yet this process will serve as an important

tool in an artist's future development.

It was an honor to be a part of the 2017 issue of Tributaries.

Patrick Allred
James Brighton
Michelle Burke
Hannah Castor
Leana Choate
Kyle Clark
Jen Clausen
Ben Cooke-Akalwa
Amanda Cowan
Bambi Dean
Katy Didden
Ryan Farley
Case Farney
Melanie Garcia
Molly Heck
Soyoung Jung

Mia Kaplan
Sara Kramer
Andrew Lance
Alexander Landerman
John Leonard
Teddy Lepley
Dannielle Liebherr
Rebekah Lavere
John Milas
Brittany Moberly
Lloyd Mullins
Taylor O'Neil Hall
Tanya Perkins
Piper Rowley
Kelsey Smith
Mina Saaman
Rachel Snowling
Erica White
Jackson Wrede

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