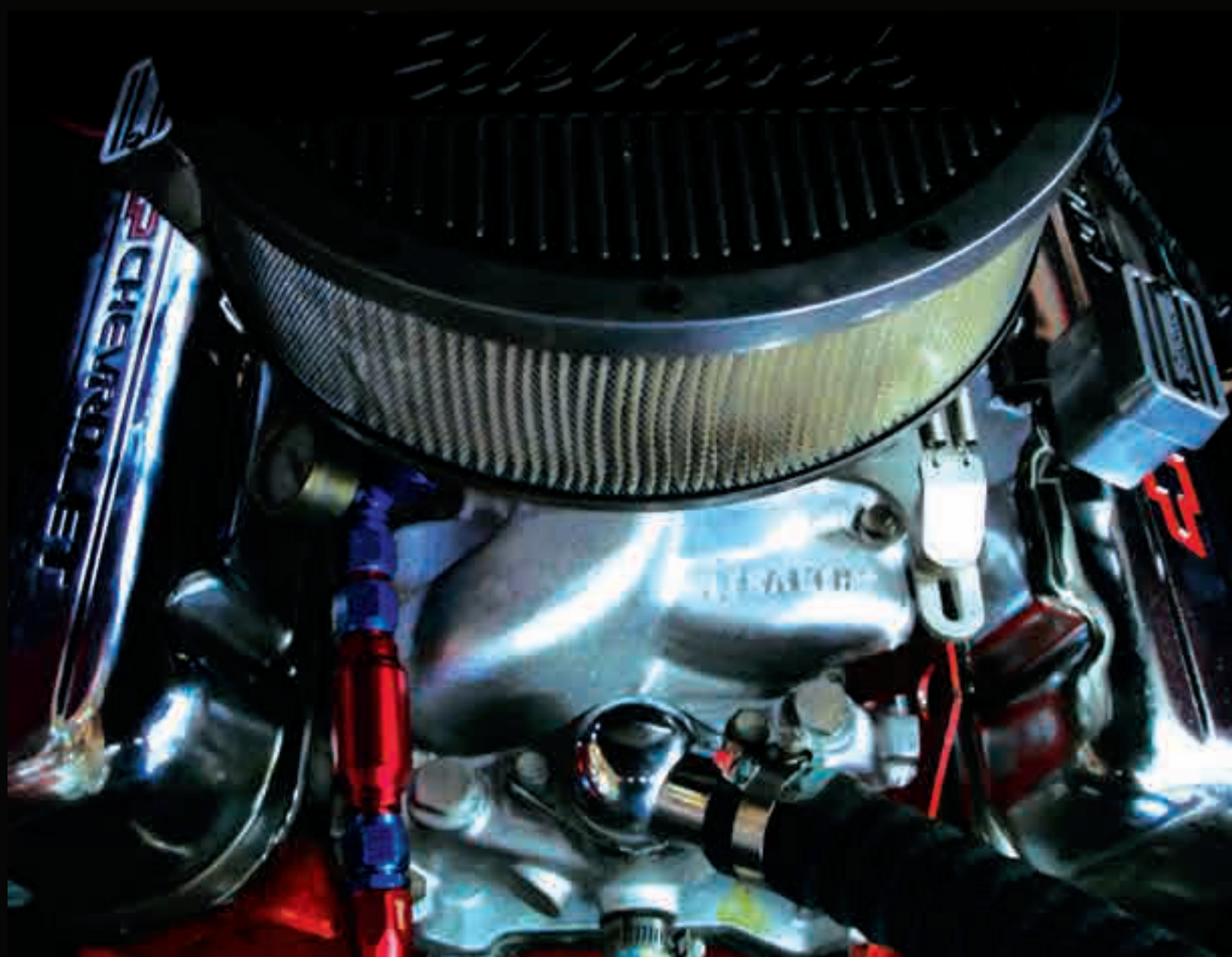


BEH

2013



AUM's Vehicle of Creativity



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Thanks for looking under the hood! While you're here, I'd like to give you an in-depth look at the "vehicle of creativity" assembled by those who submitted to (and those who labored underneath!) the Filibuster for 2013.

Despite my love for muscle cars, it would be a mistake to assume that this issue is devoted only to car-themed submissions. The actual theme this year is "Open." I wanted our contributors to express themselves and to give you (our readers) insight into what inspires them. A few of our writers even remixed their favorite poem, quote, or scene from a movie.

I would like to thank our Graphic Designer Josiah Almosara for fine-tuning this issue. His talents will allow you to speed through the following pages . . . or to stop and enjoy the scenery!

I'd also like to thank my co-editors. Brandon Taylor, Robert Bullard, Victoria Spencer, Hillary Fowler, and Antonio Byrd who,

helped to promote this issue and provided much needed criticism. They were the crew that helped to make this year's Filibuster the high-performance machine that it is.

Dr. Robert Klevay, our faculty advisor and crew chief, kept us focused. Even with a formidable task ahead of us, Dr. Klevay helped us to enjoy our work.

On behalf of everyone who worked on this issue, I'd like to dedicate the newest volume of the Filibuster to the artists, writers, and photographers who supplied the essential parts for this creative vehicle. All of us enjoyed assembling this issue.

Fasten your seatbelts! It's the Filibuster for 2013!

**Thanks for Reading,
Matthew Johnson**

Dancing on Water

Allison Parliament



Blooming

Andrea VanderMey



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The Bus Driver

Robert Bullard

It's weird:
I give people directions
when my life has none.

Once, this old man was asking
how to get to the bookstore.
I thought,
shouldn't you be wise?
It was not out of malice,
merely surprise.

Every day, Monday through Friday,
I drive kids to school;
I say kids,
They would like to say so much more.

I am the silent listener:
Through this I know their lives.
They reveal everything,
whether it be through shout
or whisper;
even silence can be telling.
They do say so much more.

Through lanes, highways, and dead
ends,
I pass.

Many lives here will never be known.
Some have the grades to claim fame,
others do not.
But when was fame

based on grades?
People thrive on superstitions.

No matter who they are,
I let them do the talking,
for at school they must be silent.
I take my own silence willingly.
Back at home that is all I have.
I hear the plot of great adventures
never had:
some truth, some lie,
those most human words;
people live by telling themselves so.

If childhood is a school bus,
many of us have been there;
some have moved on;
others never made it on.
Somehow, I'm still here.

Here but not really,
a spectator,
not an actor
in this motion
called life.

If only we were all silent,
and listened to something greater than
ourselves.
But that is difficult,
And we find ourselves talking.

Here in the silence of myself,
I hear only others.

People who have been removed from
society
for the sake of education,
they tell me not what they learned
but who they are.
It will be the former
That matters to the world.

I let them go on speaking,
for their silence must return soon.

Dream World

Charisa Hagel



My Song Ashley Stanaland

I am the living breathing being.
The young babe nestled in the nurturing bosom, I sigh with the fullest content;

The waddling toddler on the oceans shore, I worry not;

The juvenile girl tramping in the wild wonder of the earth, I search for treasure unknown;

The blossoming woman walking through the treacherous metal-lined wall, I tremble at the world;

The blushing bride holding the hand of a king, waiting for my life to begin;

The poor, sad wife sitting over the table, I sign and cry;

The divorcée starting down a new road, I look with pleasure;
The old maid reflecting over my garden, I smile and slowly close my eyes.

I am the sum of all parts,
A combination of good and bad, right and wrong, life and death, humor and somber.

The strong athlete, running for the goal,

The graceful dancer, balancing above the world,

The artist, no one understands,

The musician, focused on only the feeling,

The adventurer, climbing deep into Mother Nature's depth,

The professional, sighing with frustration at the sight of the white-walled cell,

The adopted child, looking for home,

The prisoner, running, running, nowhere,

The mother, everyone loves her,

The daughter, aiming to please,

I am the living breathing being.

*Inspired by Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"

A Southern Tradition

Jacob Lambert

Brenda and Lee's next-door neighbor, Michael Ashford, was the first to hear the shots next door. At the time, he had been in the back room of the house, his eyes fixed to a computer screen—his hands, however, doing something that, if caught, would send his grandmother into a Catholic frenzy. But what could he do? A man had to find comfort somewhere, and his body, all two-hundred-and-seventy-five pounds, wasn't exactly winning him the affection he desired. At least not from anybody in the flesh.

And then he heard the shots, sending him up from his crouched position in front of the computer, the pajama pants (with Donald Duck all over the front and back) around his ankles nearly introducing his face to the tan shag carpet. He didn't even think to pull them up until he saw his grandmother storm into his room, her face contorted dried pork fat, insisting to know what he had been doing, if he had heard the loud crashing sounds—and if it had been him the whole time causing all the ruckus.

"Well, then who was it, Mikey? And don't lie to me! Oh, and don't think I don't know what you've been

doing in here late at night! What would Jesus do? Now, spit it out!" his grandmother shouted, a long white muumuu covering her grandiose body.

Michael, his bulging, sweaty gut hanging over his pajama pants, looked to the ground, ashamed, and uttered a low response: "It wasn't me, Grammy, I swear, and I was only getting dressed when you walked in. I—" he stopped, interrupted by his grandmother's metal plated cane slamming across the bridge of his nose.

"Don't you lie to me, Michael Fain Ashford! You cannot lie to me, neither could your father, and you both got that same spirit in you, Lord yes! The same filthy spirit!" She said, her voice wavering up and down, louder and louder.

His hands clasped over his nose like a miniature temple, blood pouring from between the creases of his fingers, Michael sobbed, tears mixed in the flow of tissue. "I'm not lying, Grammy, I promise. It wasn't me," he stopped, his breath caught between moans, and continued, "It came from next door, and, and, I was just."

"The mud ducks next door? Are you

positive? Oh, and Mikey, if you are—"

"Yes, Grammy, it was them, the, the, black people next door," he interrupted, then picked up a dirty white T-shirt from the floor, wiping his face, smearing the blood all over his forehead and chest.

"My goodness! I think it's happening, Mikey!"

"What's happening?"

"Don't play stupid with me, you hear me? You know damn well what's happening. Now, you get dressed, Mikey. I'm going to call the sheriff, okay? And I want you ready to leave in twenty minutes, understand?" she said, her tone hysterical, her face taking on a pale hue.

Was it really happening? Judy Ashford could only speculate, but she was almost positive that it had: the blacks were finally taking over. Everybody else thought old Charlie Manson was crazy when he first said it would happen, but not Judy. Lord no. Now was the time, and the time was now. She had to think fast if she wanted to find safety, but as for Mikey, well, he was one of lost. Over the past thirty-five years, Judy had tried every avenue: exorcism, communion, even baptism; but nothing had worked to cleanse Mikey of his demons. The thought brought tears to Judy's eyes, for she knew, just knew, that her

sweet little man would have to suffer. God deemed it, she assumed. But why? She had never spared the rod—not once, yet the boy still refused, and if Judy's guesses were right, he had been touching himself when she walked in the room. Yes, he did have the same spirit as his father, and like his father, only the Lord himself could help him.

Judy Ashford reached the phone and dialed the number to the sheriff's office, and after a few gurgling sounds in her right ear, the irritated voice of Patty Barns answered, asking her to please wait.

Anxiously, Judy stood there, one large arm propping her equally large body against the wall, her breathing labored, her heart thudding in her chest.

She didn't hear Michael coming from behind her.

"Grammy?" he asked, his tone flat and distant.

"Didn't I tell you to—"

Before she could get another word out, Michael jammed a thumb in each one of her eyes, digging in deep and sending her to the ground wailing, the phone dropping from her hand and hanging upside down from the cord.

"Hello?" a voice asked from the receiver, but it went unnoticed to either Judy or

Michael, and as Patty listened to the screams and garbled cries from her end, Michael took his grandmothers' cane and brought the narrow end of it down through her open mouth, opening the backside of her throat—ending the noise.

Michael, nose still bleeding profusely, reached down and picked up the phone, placing it to his ear, and, in his hefty, nasally tone, spoke: "Yes, ma'am, I'd like to report a shooting next door and," he stopped, looked down at his Grammy, and smiled, "a murder."

Tales Untold Matthew S. Shoemaker

I died today with tales untold.
My ready pen on empty desk
Waiting faithful for tomorrows
And rainy days that never came.

Star Stuff MeKoi Scott

We are part of the universe.

We are in the universe and the universe in us.

Traceable to the crucibles

that were once the centers of high mass stars

that explored their rich guts,

enriching pristine clouds with the chemistry of life,

the very molecules that make up your body.

Smile.

*from Neil deGrasse Tyson, astrophysicist, spoken on
The Universe, episode "Beyond the Big Bang."

Light the Way
Andrea VanderMey



Unafraid
Allison Parliament

Nothing ever seems to stay the same,
everyone keeps moving on,
Learning to let go,
now and forever.

Hold me close,
just one more time.
I'll be unafraid,
as I let go.

I will go, unafraid into the light,
escaping the darkness, left behind.
Waiting, living, loving,
until my time is called.

Washing away my fears,
living my dreams,
holding you close,
I'll be unafraid.

Holding onto moments,
keeping them close,
never saying no.

The sky changing colors
the wind changing directions,
the rain drying,
the sun burning bright.

Going unafraid,
waiting for the next page,
letting ink dry,
but moving forward as it does.

Two Feet, Two Wheels Gabriel Manuel

Feel the heat from the engine.
Feel the wind cut your face.
Hear the engine scream.
See the pavement fly by.
Taste the fumes on your tongue.

And know that it's not enough.
It's not enough.

You know you need more.
Even though it might kill you.
More speed.
More power.
It's a rush you can't refuse.

When Eternity Passed Antonio Byrd

In the morning I woke
just after eternity's passing;
the world lay different
from what I knew before.

As a shade walking
to and fro I observed
the desert, full and alive
like rushing water.

But I saw the fire,
heard the cries, and I
indifferent, joined in the rape of
the world, and
by indifference, did nothing.

Shall I speak and in
speech be silenced?
Shall I heal and in
health be diseased?
Shall I free and in
freedom be chained?
Or shall I live and in
life be dead?

Fear to tread where
good men and angels
refuse to go, yet walk
I among the ruined.

I hope that when
eternity returns they

remember me, and
they, while sleeping, follow
me into beginning without end
and end without beginning.

A Man by the Pond

Jacob Lambert

As the train came to a shuddering halt, Thomas Little stepped down the steel steps and out into the dry summer air. In the distance, he could see an immense pond, one surround by a forest that seemed to threaten the very integrity of the above crystalline sky. The humidity, along with the multitudes of insects swarming around his sweaty, waxen face, made him wish that he had worn something thinner, less heavy, than his current black slacks and grey wool jacket. However, that was the dress for the day, or what the gentlemen at Harvard suggested, but Thomas, now walking around to the other side of the train, his eyes resting beyond, towards the pond, was growing tired of these formalities, these outfits of gloom. Perhaps, the man he was going to see, the one who would lecture next week—depending, of course, on the merits of their conversation—might make his job simpler, giving a concrete “yes,” without his typical allusions to abstract philosophies. Then, hopefully, Thomas could go home and change, see his family, and, possibly, read—but he doubted it. After all, he was going to see Henry David Thoreau.

The walk was a laborious one: tall grass, dried mud, and more insects, each making the journey to the minuscule cabin in the distance tedious, almost painful, but Thomas continued, his stale brown eyes scanning the ‘property’ for the man in question. Then, approaching the wooden refuge, there he was, sitting to the right of the cabin, his attention engaged to a small book in his lap.

“Mr. Thoreau?” Thomas asked, confused as to why the man resigned himself to reading in the dirt when, just inside his tiny home, there was a perfectly apt desk for the task.

For a moment, Thoreau continued to read, as if he had heard nothing, but seconds later, he abruptly slammed the book to a close and turned to view the heavy man to his right. He then stood, stretched, and nodded—saying nothing in reply. The first thing Thomas noticed was the grimy clothes the man wore: tattered, dusty slacks and an equally ramshackle black jacket. His black beard, seeming to cover only his jawline and under, was unkempt, and his hair, aside from growing wild on his head, looked as if he had been sleeping in the woods. But his eyes,

deep-set and masculine, emanated intelligence, a sort of searing blue seen only in the hottest part of a flame.

“You are Mr. Thoreau, are you not?” Thomas asked.

Thoreau, once again, nodded.

“My name is Thomas Little, sir, and I come on behalf of the university,” he paused, looked around, and frowned. “Say, if you don’t mind my asking, why did you decide to move into such a...such a wilderness, something so far removed from society?”

Seeming to consider the question, Thoreau looked up at the sky, a dim smile forming on his semi-thin lips, and after returning his gaze back to Thomas, placing his hands to his side, he answered. “I wish to meet the facts of life—the vital facts, which where the phenomena or actuality the Gods meant to show us, face to face, and so I came here.”

“I don’t quite understand you, sir. What life can a man profit from this place? There is nothing but sediment and emptiness,” Thomas replied, bewildered by Thoreau’s statement.

At this, Thoreau’s smile widened, his eyes seeming to drill through Thomas’ own. In that smile, Thomas could see another, less appealing characteristic of the man: his unconventional face, the ugliness that

surely plagued the tall man, another possible—if not frank—reason for his departure from society: hiding, not basking, in the wilderness of the forest.

“Life! who knows what it is—what it does? If I am not quite here I am less wrong than before,” Thoreau replied, taking a step to the right and walking past Thomas, towards the pond.

“But what about the silence? Does it not bother you?”

Without turning around, for his gaze remained on the pond, Thoreau shook his head, his mess of hair swaying in the wind, which provided no comfort from the increasing heat bearing down on the afternoon turf. “Sound was made not so much for conveniences, that we might hear when called, as to regale the sense—and fill one of the avenues of life.”

It was, Thomas thought, like speaking to someone foreign, someone lacking the ability to translate mind to mouth, like a child searching for understanding in grunts and cries. Thoreau was exactly like what he expected, especially after the briefing at the university, where warnings about the man’s strange sensibilities remained hidden in conversation. Only a few more inquires, Thomas thought, and then down to business.

Walking over to where Thoreau had perched himself by the pond, Thomas wiped the sweat from his face and spoke, "There is a certain melancholy to this place, sir, or does that not bother you as well?"

Thoreau tilted his head to the right and sighed, his hands gently playing with a small twig. "There can be no really black melan-choly to him who lives in the midst of nature, and has still his senses. All nature is classic and akin to art—The sumack and pine and hickory which surround my house remind me of the most graceful sculpture."

"And what of religion? You spoke of God, but what did you mean? Do you attend sermon on Sunday?"

To this question, Thoreau seemed irritated, for he suddenly grunted and tossed the twig to his side, his attention drifting from the pond to Thomas. "The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest, at the end of the week, (for Sundays always seemed to me like a fit conclusion of an ill spent week and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one) with this one other draggletail and postponed affair of a sermon, from thirdly to 15thly, should teach them with a thundering voice—pause & simplicity."

"So you say that it is too dry? Or

lacking the vitality of truth? What do you mean?" Thomas asked, but Thoreau had stood up and started to walk towards his cabin, intent on finishing the conversation with the closing of a door.

His entire body drenched from the temperature of the forested sauna, Thomas, picking up his pace to catch Thoreau before he disappeared, shouted at his back. "Are you going to do the lecture then?"

Before there was a reply, Thoreau was out of sight, leaving Thomas to venture back to the train, back to Concord, and though the heavy-set man thought of pursuing Thoreau, trying one more time for the answer, he figured he would just wait, leave the task to someone else more suited to it. The university, after all, did have other representatives, and Thomas, already exhausted, decided to leave the man alone, leave him to his dirt and trees.

"Perhaps, sending a letter would suffice. Surely the man has a mailbox," Thomas said, turning around, a smile forming on his thick lips.

"Definitely, a letter will do."

More Wits Alexandra Jurus

"Men of almost every degree of wit called on me...some who had more wits than they knew what to do with...one real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the north star."

—Henry D. Thoreau

The cabin was much smaller than he had anticipated. The contorted limbs of the chestnut oak trees obscured the moonlight, but even in the darkness Samuel could clearly observe the unadorned structure. He had never seen a white man in such a meager dwelling. The hazy memory of a similar building flittered into his thoughts: a cabin he had lived in with his mother for the first six years of his troubled life, before he was taken from her to work in the fields with the other men. Cold and hunger and the wet grass seeping through his thin shoes interrupted his reminiscing.

The door opened suddenly just as he raised his hand to knock. He had quickened his pace near the end of his long journey, fearing that he might wake his kind benefactor with a late arrival, so it was no surprise to him that his heavy breathing betrayed him in this still

corner of the woods. The pale light of a lamp cast a long shadow on the features of the man standing before him. The sharp, hooked nose, wiry beard, and cold, blue eyes of the cabin's inhabitant took on a daunting and foreboding appearance that sent a chill through Samuel. For a moment he was pierced with fear. Could this be the wrong cabin? Had he confused the directions meant to lead him to a place of refuge on his way into town? Reason quickly reminded him that there could not be two such isolated shanties.

The crook-nosed woodsman's expression softened as he swung the door open and invited Samuel into a single room hardly large enough for one man, and there was a moment of awkward proximity before they settled. Samuel nearly collapsed from fatigue into the lone chair in the room as he thawed himself by the fire adjacent to the door. The woodsman had less to say than most of the white men that had sheltered him during his travels, but Samuel didn't mind so much. It was a relief to be left in peace to rest. Most men fed themselves on his stories of enslavement to reignite the fire in their souls, to fuel the zeal for a cause they had never experienced, but the woodsman was in charge of his own kindling. He seemed distracted for

most of the night as if forever chasing a thought. The man had the air of one who had not been in the company of others for quite some time. Still Samuel was having trouble imagining such an odd fellow opening up to even his closest companion. He was amicable enough, but could hardly be accused of being effusive. He could tell the man was a gentleman, but the sylvan life appeared to suit him so well that Samuel half expected to see a blue jay perched on his arm and moss peeking from his scraggly whiskers.

The woodsman had little to offer in the way of nourishment, but he used the fire to roast a couple of redband trout that he had caught in the nearby pond. Samuel's new life of running in shadows was fiercely unsettling. Perhaps it was the quiet serenity of his surroundings and the concealment of the woods, but for the first time since he had begun this weary journey he felt a moment of contentment in the heated glow and was tempted to yield to his unexplored ache for security.

Samuel asked his new comrade why a man free to live life as he chose would keep so to himself, alone in such sparse living quarters, but at first could not make much of the woodsman's answer. A slave's education is limited, and the strange man's high talk was

hard to follow. When a man is treated as being inferior to a packhorse or like a piece of machinery that need not be treated with the basic civility afforded even the simplest of creatures, there is not much purpose, at least not to his master, for him to be equipped with more than enough knowledge to put one foot before the other. But Samuel had always been naturally quick-witted and possessed a suppressed intellect that, although stifled for so long, was beginning to broaden faster than even he was aware.

Samuel thought about the woodsman's answer and surmised that a white man created his own chains by relying too heavily on his neighbor and by becoming disconnected from the earth and the natural state of man. The white man made a master of his neighbor or his government. The crook-nosed woodsman had sought a primitive sabbatical to escape those invisible bonds. Samuel responded that he found it piteous for a man to imprison himself when God had placed him in such a fine lifestyle with so few obstacles in his path. There were countless men living in much worse conditions who had no need to invent their own shackles. The woodsman's laugh caught Samuel by surprise and

he saw an unexpected twinkle in the man's eye. He believed that a moment of understanding had passed between the two of them and was startled by the effect that this affirmation of respect had upon him.

Samuel finished the revitalizing meal and soaked in the warmth of the fire one last time. Now that his appetite was satiated, and he was fully dry, he rose and thanked the woodsman for his kindness. His rest had come to a close and the time had come to travel onto his next destination. He only hoped that it would be as edifying as his last.

Koi Bubble
Josiah Almosara



Ascent
Andrew Blake

What kind of ladder would allow an ascent

Up from the bog and out of the maw?

How is hollyhock leaf, stem and scent

Are we to house King Crow's caw?

Take a century's worth of arsenic mint

To think this on through.

Without hullabaloo,

The political strip-tease has merely been lent

But the Gloaming and gob-stopped goblins will
stay

Through first of may

Or till youth group missions at last saves the day.

Altered Mekoi Scott

I feel a bit of sorrow as I look down
the aperture of a random bought bottle,
its iridescent glass projects
a kaleidoscope of murky colors,
its contents no longer obscures or refracts
And I know, sooner than I wish,
perception, after being swayed and slanted,
will snap back to its upright and rigid stance.

Troller's Creed Deric Sallas and Matt Johnson

This is my headset. There are many like it, but this one is mine. It is my second life. I must master it as I must master my avatar. Without me my headset is silent. Without my headset I am silent. I must keep my "lol" button true. I must troll harder than those who are trying to troll me. I must flame him before he flames me. I will. My headset and I know that what counts in flamewars is not the truth we tell, the butts we hurt, or the tears they shed. We know it is the souls we crush that count. You will be mad, bro.

My headset is alive, even as I am alive, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a bro. I will learn its weaknesses, its strengths, its volume, its voice mods, its garbled mic, and its tangled cord.

I will keep my headset grimy and broken, just as I am grimy and broken. We will become part of each other.

Before 4chan I mumble this utterance. My headset and I are the guerilla warriors of the internet. We are the kings of douchebaggery. We are the saviors of nothing.

So be it, until victory is no one's and the world is crying.

*Inspired by Major General William H. Rupertus's "Rifleman's Creed"

Untitled
Angel Lopez



Skype Call
Sean Osborne

When I join in I see avatars alight with greeting
Black background shifts to blue to show who speaks
And I have my regards given in passing
To those disembodied who haven't seen me in weeks

The Visitor

Andrea VanderMey

Two hours. Had it really been that long? The concept of time seemed unrealistic with the absence of light. Of course the moonlit backdrop offered some illumination, but mostly an eerie glow. The only sound entering the desolate night air was the slow flip of pages. It was rhythmic, in its own way.

The eyes of the visitor swept the room, landing on the small lump in the middle of the bed. Satisfied with the steady rising and falling of the boy's chest, he again preoccupied himself with the book.

Now why would the little caterpillar eat through all those foods instead of finding what he really wanted; the succulent, juicy leaf? He could have just as well known what he wanted and went right for it instead of taking his precious time. Wouldn't life be simpler if everyone knew what they wanted? A sigh escaped parted lips. This darn kids book has more truth than they will ever know. He looked at the small caterpillar with disgust.

A thin line formed across his lips as he stroked his naked chin. His rough hands were not the most friendly to the touch, but they did their job. Eyes again lifted to the boy. He lay so

peaceful, so innocent, so full of life and hopes and dreams. The young face was barely visible in the moon's light while he himself remained engulfed in darkness. He liked it that way, a man of the shadows.

The faint green glow from the boy's alarm clock read a quarter past two. There was enough time, plenty in fact. Experienced hands swiftly closed the book and slipped it back into place on the shelf. His hand lingered on the spine, but only for a moment.

I will come like a thief in the night. The thought troubled his mind. Those words had been spoken to bring hope. They felt right, but somehow misplaced.

Silent feet followed him as he stood and paced. Hard brown eyes examined the small room. Everything fell into place, it always did. He inhaled, deep and long. Savoring the pure air as it swished around his tongue and into his lungs. There would be no surprises. There would be no problems.

His eyes moved about the room. It was more familiar than his own as of late. The medium blue walls with scuffs around the baseboards, a knob and latch for every toy and knick-knack

even though they all lay scattered on the floor- everything about this room screamed Marie's name. It housed everything needed to be nice and neat, but also had a tendency to be a complete mess. A red fire truck sat patiently by a group of green army men (obviously a brutal battle scene) with Mr. Potato Head about to crush them all.

One step too many landed his foot on an awaiting squeeze toy. Arms flailed, searching for something, anything. A doorknob jarred his rib before he grabbed hold; the other arm slapped the wall knocking a portrait sideways. He held his breath praying the noise had not awakened the boy. He appeared to have set off the grenade that would end the bedroom war. Wincing, he looked toward the bed. The boy twisted into a more comfortable position in his sleep.

There was something soothing to him about the mess, about the tension of the room. But then again, he wasn't one to be placid. Adrenaline, risk, fear of the unknown, that's where all the real fun lay.

Wasn't that why he was here now? Every intention was bent on this one night. Ever since Marie- that didn't matter though, all that mattered was tonight. Life would be much better after they were gone. It would

be so easy to slip out right now. But what about Ma-He shook his head, erasing the thought like the boy's etch-a-sketch.

The thought had been there, hidden in the back of his mind for some time now. Every time it surfaced he would suppress it. He knew that he and Marie were having problems, but was this really the answer? Until recently, he thought it a coward's decision. But now-

Trying to ignore the giggles on the phone, the late nights with friends, it was nearly impossible. Seeing her at the deli had likely thrown him over the edge. He was handsome, he would give her that much. But that man was not her husband.

His chest tightened at the thought. His love for Marie ran deeper than she could ever know. Every harsh word she lashed out was like a dozen knives cutting through his heart. What he wouldn't give to hold her in his arms once more. But the lies, the men, the way she glared at him. How could those thoughts be ignored? She didn't deserve the boy.

They used to come in here together. Sitting here in the too tiny for adult chairs as they watched their little Tyler sleep. They would whisper for hours, both afraid they would wake their little one, but neither

holding back giddy laughter. What happened?

He was five years her senior, and felt it on days like these. She was young and free, and he a lonely father. If only she would give him another chance. If she would walk through that door and reclaim what was lost.

Nonsense, some would say to conjure up such a dream. But in his state, pure and helpless-

Slowly he stood, cringing at the creak the miniature chair created. He glanced lovingly at the boy and kissed his forehead. He stood, towering over him, watching his chest slowly move. His hands itching to just reach out and take him. A tear rushed down his cheek but was quickly dried. Marie had made her choice. Now he would make his. His hand half raised before he froze. A pain filled his chest. He choked a cry and fell beside the bed. The covers muffled his tears, as they became damp and soggy. Marie would never- He gulped for air, his sniffles all but too loud. She would never forgive him. How could he take the one thing between them that she still loved. The twisting pain in his chest grew tighter at the thought of life without Tyler.

His entire being plead to take the boy, but he refused. "I love you

Tyler, I always will." His voice came cracked and gruff. His palm lightly pounded the wall as he let out a silent scream. He glanced once more at Tyler, eyes wet.

Fidgeting with the window lock, it easily released, allowing a quick departure. He slipped through and disappeared into the night.

The Lazy Stranger Who Took Over My Couch

Ashley Stanaland

When I quit my job over a year ago, a woman moved into my apartment. At first, I thought her presence would be a great relief, since I was now taking a break in life and resting before my child was born. Instead, she has slowly become a horrible and annoying nuisance who constantly tempts me.

The first morning after she arrived, she refused to get out of bed. She demanded a cup of coffee and a good book and then invited me to join her. I almost gave in. Well, actually I did. It was a wonderful day lounging in bed and reading. Once the evening began to set in, I quickly realized I needed to cook dinner. "Relax!" she said, "Just order takeout, Chinese perhaps?" Chinese did sound good.

Throughout the pregnancy, she tortured me every day, lying around and doing nothing. Because she had lain around all day, dishes piled high in the sink and laundry heaped in the washroom. She hated doing laundry and dishes. Granted, there were never many dishes because she would pick takeout over cooking any day.

Takeout creates a large amount of trash though, something she also hated dealing with.

"Don't worry about it," she would say, "someone will get it. Just lie down, you're pregnant, you don't have to do anything!"

I must admit, sometimes I was jealous of her ability to do absolutely nothing. She could sit on the couch in her pajamas with unruly hair and watch TV shows for twelve hours straight. I never did that, not until she came. The jealousy soon turned to anger, however, because I had to clean up behind her. Every day I walked through the apartment, picking up clothes, trash, blankets, and pillows. I have never met anyone so lazy.

The closer I got to my due date, the more anxious her presence made me. I kept warning her that she could not stay after the baby was born. She refused to listen and fussed whenever I brought the subject up. I insisted that there would no room for her shenanigans with a newborn in the house. She just stuck her tongue out and continued to watch a movie.

Soon after, I returned home from the hospital with my son. I searched the apartment high and low for that lazy woman, but she was nowhere to be found. Soon the memory of her was pushed to the back of my mind by diaper changes and late-night feedings. I thought she was gone for good.

I was almost right. Occasionally she comes around, knocking at my door, begging to come in. She throws offers of lazy days at me, and though I am tempted, I remind her of my son. "No time for that, I've told you before!" I yell at her. I never let her in. Well, maybe once or twice.

Damaged Wings

Hayley Moon

I flew, soared into the heavens, looked
and saw the face of God, saw the treasures
of Heaven, and I did it all with damaged wings.

Wings that had been torn and a little rough around the edges,

The feathers from my wings fell. And each feather

That descended to the Earth also took with it a tear.

My damaged wings, weather beaten and torn in uncertain spots,

caused me to weave back and forth as I flew searching for a

Place to rest my

Damaged wings.

I Wandered Lonely as a Zombie Joyce Kelley

(With apologies to William Wordsworth)

I wandered lonely as a zombie
Who stalks sweet brains through shopping malls,
When all at once, near Abercrombie,
A host of people lined the halls;
Beside Hot Topic, beneath Penney's,
Laughing and sipping their coffees.

Plentiful as the ants that show
When fresh dead bodies line the floor,
They stretched in never-ending row
Right up to the theatre door:
A hundred saw I with one look,
All of them fans of that vampire book.

Rock songs around them played; but tweens
Drowned out the sound with squeals of glee:
A zombie just could not be seen
With such a sorry company:
I stared—and stared—then shook my head
At canines who rival the walking dead.

For oft, when on my couch I lean
In brain-dead, vegetative mood,
Undead flash on the TV screen,
Which is the bliss of zombitude;
And my cold heart with pleasure skips,
And waits for the apocalypse.

Near-life Experience Lane Pickett

I hurt myself laughing one time,
and I swore I'd never do it
again.
I accidentally cut myself smiling,
and I promised myself I'd be more careful
next time.
The other day I had a near-life experience,
and I haven't been the same since.
I heard on the news
that the humans we're beginning to cross our borders.
Their heartbeats get louder every day.
The sun is starting to shine brighter,
and a flower even sprouted through all the cement.
I picked it quick so the others wouldn't have to
endure the ghastly sight of it.
I keep it next to my bed so I can always keep my eye on it.
Just in case it gets any ideas.

Why Do I Care?
Kelhi Depace

Why do I care? Back and forth, flows the frothy tide;
Back and forth, just like my heart's beating.
I, in the wind, swaying side to side.
Water splashes. My eyes, with the salt, are bleeding.
Look! A jumping fish! A swooping bird!
But the tide will surely leave, like my thoughts fleeting.



Mrs. Popwell
Kaylee Hobbs

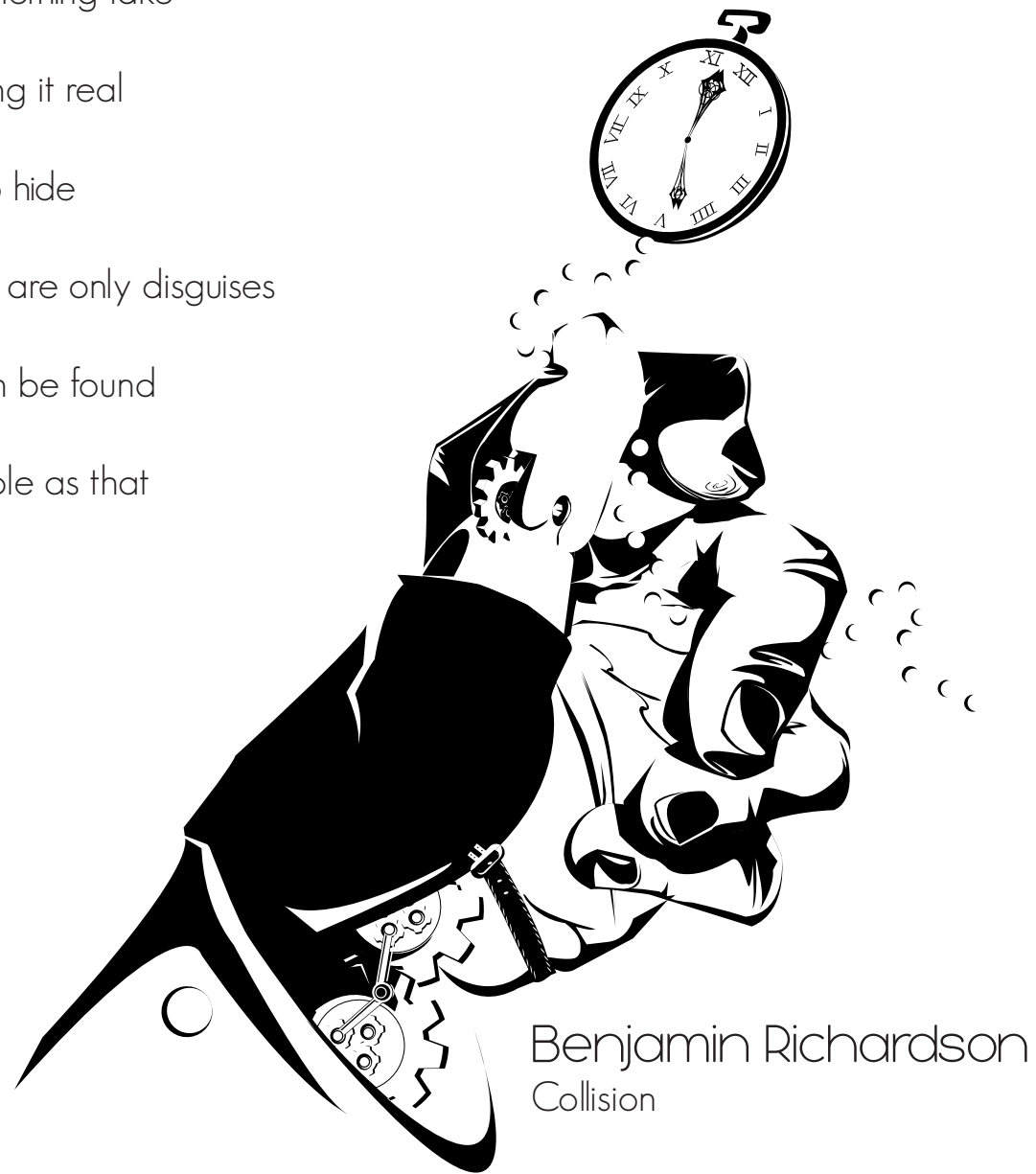
Cosmic Wisdom
Jessica Tapia

As I ponder at the Stars, Moon, and the Sun
I see their rays of light shining upon us
Nurturing us with the knowledge of the Cosmos
Literature Interpretations
Organized Sound
Mathematical Definitions
And the knowledge of its own origins
And while I look around I see others shining
Shining even brighter than I
I begin to wonder if my brilliance has reached its peak
Is it because I have reached the pinnacle of life
Or is it the need to expand the surface of my mind
In order to absorb more of the light
Others shine brighter
While I go deeper into wisdom

*Inspired by and dedicated to Dr. Barbara Wiedemann

Writing Leslie Rewis

It's as simple as
picking an image
out of the air
taking something fake
and making it real
a place to hide
and there are only disguises
no lies can be found
It's as simple as that



The Story of Me Anthony Pickett

It was another night in the Navy. I stood on my perch in the back of the ship and looked out into the darkness. Every great man I served with did this same job before me. We all had stood the lookout watch. Most sailors despised the experience. It involved waking up in the middle of the night, standing completely alone on the back of the boat, and staring at the water. Then, the next day, they were expected to be productive at work with only four hours of sleep. I did hate the next day, but standing the watch itself resulted in some of the best spent hours of my life. I had the whole night with nothing but me, the endless sway of the ocean, and the caffeine inspired thoughts running through my head.

I stood this watch for almost two hundred days before we came home. I saw sea snakes coiling and zipping through the North Arabic Gulf, heard the longing melodies of the sirens, saw the phantom glowing shapes in the "Sea of Ghost" (which ended up being jelly fish), and felt fear when the ship rocked so hard I could barely stay upright. What ended up making the time valuable, though, was having nothing better to do than think.

Somewhere along the trip, I decided what I wanted to do with my life. More than that, in my daydreaming and fantasies I decided what type of man I wanted to be. Standing there by myself, I thought about all the principles my father tried to teach me but I had summarily rejected when I was a teenager. Eventually I began to understand and believe what he had tried to explain. At this point, I had had a relatively easy life and a good childhood. If you had told me I had it good then, I would've disagreed, but it was true. Excluding my work in the Navy, I had never been tested.

When I finally finished my military deployment I was granted a few privileges. First, I got to pick my next duty. I had had plenty of time to think and had dismissed my early inclination towards the aviation field. This ended up being a great decision in itself because it turns out that the aviation jobs are miserable. Instead, I chose to go to the journalism and public affairs school. I eventually wanted to be a lawyer, and good communication skills seemed like they would help. Secondly, I was given permission to use the leave I had accrued (all of it).

That meant I could go home to Alabama and do whatever I wanted for an entire month. I knew exactly what I was going to do. My sights were set on the girl I'd always wanted in high school. Since then I had spent countless nights thinking about her, and countless phone cards keeping in touch with her. In school, I had been a silly, awkward boy and never knew how to approach her. Now though, I fancied myself a man, and I had developed a "brilliant" plan that involved several late night road trips, some flowers, and a poem. In retrospect, the plan was goofy and melodramatic, but it (surprisingly) worked. I had my first adult girlfriend, and my first brush with love. It was an excellent Christmas.

Unfortunately, the bonds a couple can create in a month are not necessarily made of iron. In our case, these bonds may as well have been made out of the water I had become accustomed to, because three weeks after I left for training she was patching things up with her ex, and I was enjoying my first heartbreak. In the broader view of my life, my time with her was fairly insignificant. She was merely a pebble that started an avalanche. After our breakup, I turned to a girl named Lacey from the military photography school for "

comfort." She tried to act tough, had a fiancé, came from a poor background, and wanted freedom. We only hung out a few times before we went our separate ways. I considered it a done deal and went about trying to win back my suburban princess, Jenny.

A month later though, I was sitting outside of the barracks finishing a cigarette and taking sips out of a bowling pin of Miller Light when I saw her walking up to me. She looked meaner than normal. Her face was twisted in a scowl and she stormed toward me. Naturally, I didn't care. I didn't anticipate anything new. Instead of the underhanded comment I expected or a token display of her middle finger (She never meant anything by acting mean. She was a front-line Columbine witness, and it just became how she related to people.), she stopped and sat down next to me. We sat there for a minute, not talking, until she pulled out two cigarettes and thrust one in my hand. She lit her cigarette, looked away, took a puff, and said, "I'm pregnant." That was it. She didn't look back for a long time, she just sat there and smoked her cigarette like it was the last one she would ever get (incidentally, it was her last one, she quit that night). "You told me you were on birth

control!" ... "I want you to get an abortion!" ... "I barely know you, just leave me alone." I could've said those things, God knows they crossed my mind, but I didn't say anything at first. I had already thought about this scenario, and I knew my father's principles. I reached over, took her hand, smiled at her, looked toward the sky, and started telling her about the constellations. The truth is I didn't really want to look at the stars; I just didn't want her to see me cry.

We both knew the end of the story even from the beginning. Her mother was in the process of partying her way out of her seventh marriage, and wanted her daughter to be just like her. I had dreams of college and wealth, while she wanted to get out of the military and smoke drugs at Stevie Nicks concerts. I wanted a church family, and she blamed her childhood on God's apathy. We wanted our lives to go different directions and the relationship was doomed from the start. Still, we pushed all that aside. I decided on marriage before she finished that last cigarette, and I spent the next year finding my way into her heart. In doing so, I accidentally fell in love myself. We raised a daughter and tried our best a marriage for two and a half years before the Navy

called me back to sea duty.

I find it ironic that the same experience that indirectly led to our marriage would be the catalyst that ended it. I was back on the water staring at the ocean. I didn't have to anymore; I was a non-commissioned officer and had new responsibilities. Every night, though, I found myself drawn to the back of the ship to watch the waves. At home, however, my wife was going out of her head from loneliness. I couldn't call, and she couldn't write. The only person she had to talk to was her mother. Before long her mom had her way, and my wife was back in Colorado smoking weed at concerts and hanging out with other men. It is an absolute fact that we both knew how it would end but that didn't make it any easier. I spent three months barely sleeping or eating. Then, a month after my appetite came back, I found out that my daughter wasn't mine. Lacey had gotten pregnant a week before she met me and didn't know it until a divorce lawyer suggested a paternity test. That news started the heartbreak over. It was another two months before I could sleep. I knew meeting Lacey was for the best, however. Lacey had already gotten one DUI and hadn't even considered slowing down

until she met me. Ava, my daughter, wouldn't have had a father to teach her trust and security during her formative years. I was starting to drink too much when I met her, and I needed something to ground me. But most importantly, if Lacey hadn't had me during her pregnancy, then Ava may have not been born.

Now, 6 years since I met them, I am the same. I treat my women fairly and respectfully and treat my associates courteously. I anger slowly, but stand up for what is important. I keep away from drugs and avoid people who would bring problems into my life. Still, after I fall asleep I still spend most nights looking at the water. The only thing that has ever changed is the woman I want to see when I come home. It was my first love Jenny, and then it was my fragile wife Lacey; now it is always my daughter. At the end of my dream, when the waves cease their rhythm, I look for her. She sits where she always will be, beside my bed in a small wooden frame smiling at me. She looks like she is about to talk, but I'll never know what she wants to say.

The Odyssey Ashley Stanaland

Beads of sweat materializing on my brow, I look with utter frustration at the computer's blank stare. The small shade of black blinks with unerring rhythm against the snow white display as the clock extremities swirl faster and faster. My mind racing, I frantically run my fingers over the keyboard, aspiring to salvage any remaining intellectual armory that may exist in the gray matter. The imagination that normally flows through the cerebellum is a dry and daunting riverbed, cured only with many cups of life supporting elixir and a smooth creamy bar of sweetness can cure. The challenge has only begun.

My mind races through a mental battle of sleep deprivation and motivation of accomplishing the goal: finish the introduction. Body paragraphs? Check. Cited quotations? Check. Conclusion? Check. Introduction? Maybe in a few hours. The current provocation, compare and contrast, has my mind enmeshed in a sea of vocabulary, sentence structure, and MLA format, all the very least of my worries. Opening the essay to the reader, drawing them in, keeping

them interested . . . seems to have confounded the little man upstairs. Just as I begin to wearily give in to the siren call of the sea of blankets across the room, it hits me. I begin to type faster, faster, until the moment strikes where I realize, I am finished. Like a jolt of lightening, the information rushes through my tiny vessels to my tingling fingertips, aching from the exertion of power. An overpowering relief washes over as I carefully compress the save key, thanking the gods above that the task is complete.

Thinking all is done, I quickly realize I am Odysseus, caught between Scylla and Charybdis, for I must now transform the literary work into a little electronic file of minuscule proportions and send it on its merry way. I am doomed to venture into the unknown deep depth of the cyber world, into the ninth circle and returned unscathed. One of my copious trials is that of the internet incubus, and more specifically, the one known as BlackBoard. As we begin our battle, I tenaciously upload my work, and blow after blow, she repudiates my advances. Utterly exasperated, I return to the archaic email

(remember?) and emit the treasure
into the atmosphere. Placated, I drop
heavily into the sea of cotton and
close my eyes.
Mission accomplished.

Trance

Josiah Almosara



Carapace

Sean Osborne

Tracing my eyes down your sternum
Shirt off, old chest bared to the world
On a cold Spring day; your scar
Reminds me of looking at a topographical map
And seeing the Continental Divide.
Aorta splits apart at the bottom.
Blood runs from either side of this pink gash.
I see the blue rivers, Mississippi and Colorado
Just under your spotted skin.

The flesh around your breast
Is flab, molded; a carapace carved
Around your heart. Your ribs
And distended belly remind me of
The Buddha, soft, but strong, impenetrable.
No marks of hunger, but the stitches at your center
mass
Threaten to burst and bare your soul,
Give me a view only surgeons could see.

I've been waiting for the day
I see a world without you
Giving me all you own,
Forgiving me all you could.
I cannot imagine a world without you so
I wait, head wracked with
Flashes of your chest asunder
And who I will be when
Nothing but your shadow's left.
Twelve years of held breath, of
Yardstick jokes and "good mornings", of
Asking about Tet, Da Nang, and why you

Didn't have any war wounds.

Battle scars equal to surgical sutures
Chaos equal to a fireworks show
Seen from afar, safe and sound
In the barracks. Twelve years
Of lessons, a dozen times
Reminded of your love.

Now I wish only to sit by your side
Like at the old house where we'd watch sad movies
In ripped recliners, broken in by many backs
Where you let me cry.

Final Thoughts Moving Forward

Andrew Blake

The prairie's reign and consummate realm
Consumed in iron.
Information's mercurial web of emerald glistens
In poisoned veins. The sleep of a child may pierce
This net with nighttime's riddles, for but seconds
And are buried in fragments of futures ordained by powers
Who grasp not the force behind their bristling fingers.

Even the railways shrink into pixels. And where are you
Lincoln, my love, Olson, my dear, Father Time immanent
But unable to work against what lies beyond,

Elevators, street cars, ships all swept away in the dream of motion.
The new movement which straps all hands to deck and devouring space
Leaves us, un-mothered, at the feet of the Ghost. Lost with night

moonlight kisses the mitts of the sea as it continues to crawl
Claw by claw across out land.
The night bird rush of air, her coal stained hair
Are to answer the call
Of a sacrificial sentence annunciated: clarity's curse.
Regulation of language rendered in finality of ghost.
The sign of morning posing questions: what is? And how will these actions
inhabit
Reflections: labeled divine? More ghostly. Pin wheeled by fortune
The translucent chamber: catch, click, disruption of dreams.

Eruption of power in illusory order.
Divinity dark and fitfully riding.

Skein

MeKoi Scott

He seems so put together
as he walks through the crowd,
passing jagged people.
Yet the tiniest of strings hangs.
A person traps it under foot
while they stop and spat.
Walking away he begins to unravel.

Italy

Nick Richardson

My grandfather, a humble, small town Alabama boy, joined the Air Force at 20 years old and became stationed at a base in Italy. Subsequently, he met an Italian woman, got married and brought her back to the States. A year later he decides to take his mother along with him back to Italy to meet her new Italian in-laws. Keep in mind this a lady whose travel resume ranged only from Birmingham, Alabama to Tupelo, Mississippi, with less than a handful of cities in-between. Skipping the details of the plane flight (which is another story in itself) they arrive at my grandmother's house in Naples, Italy. Upon entering, the two families exchange introductions and assemble in the living room for further pleasantries. Immediately, the conversation manifests into what is a display of loud speech accompanied with demonstrative hand gestures. The scene becomes even more intense as the members of the Italian side of the family stand up and begin pointing fingers, yelling at each other in their native tongue. My grandfather's mother becomes terrified and asks her son, "What in the world are they

saying to each other? It looks like they are about to start swapping blows!" With a wry smile my grandfather shakes his head and says, "I can understand why you would think that but no, they are simply discussing whether or not the blinds should remain open or closed." I can only imagine the look on this poor woman's face, whom I never had the pleasure of meeting, and suffice to say it was priceless.

The setting is the kitchen table of two friends during dinner
Giuseppe Rossi: You like the mozzarella I brought?
Giovanni Conti: Yes! Were did you get it?
Giuseppe: Aha! I'm glad you asked. This morning I drove 30 miles outside of Naples to a remote farm where they raise water buffalo and make mozzarella. I bought 1 kilo from the farmer for 10 Euros. Pretty good eh?
Giovanni: Mmmhmm that's good. What do you think of the wine I brought today? Buono?
Giuseppe: It's good. It tastes like some I bought the other day.
Giovanni: No! You think you know

wine?? Your wine is vinegar compared to this! You don't know wine. This wine is made from grapes grown on the slopes of Vesuvius. It is called Lacrime Cristo. "The Tears of Christ" You want to know where I get it? I'll tell you. This morning I rode my burro to the mountain and knocked on a man's door that makes this wine and I said to him that I heard he makes this Cristo wine and if I could buy some. He said to me "No" he could not sell me any because the little bit that he does make is just for family and for meals. But he said I could taste it since I had come so far. He pours himself and me a glass each. After that, one more apiece. Then I say to him that I will give him 50 Euros for a bottle because it is so good. Again he says it is not for sale. He then grabs the bottle so I grab it too. We both pull back and forth until I have the bottle in my hands. I start running through the house and out the front door while he chases me! So I reach in my pocket and throw behind me a 20 Euro bill and say "Thank You" You are fortunate he stopped chasing me and I was able to make it here in time to eat with you.
Giuseppe: Giovanni... So you stole this wine?
Giovanni: Steal? I did not steal it! I told you I paid 20 Euro didn't I?

Giuseppe: Yes. But you also took it without permission and that is stealing.
Giovanni: What do you want from me?! I travel a great distance to get you the finest wine in all of Italy. I pay good money for it. I even risk my life by taking it from the man's house while he chases me and this is the thanks I get?! You call me a thief?!!
Giuseppe: Giovanni I...
Giovanni: I'm finished. (Takes bottle off table) No more wine for you.
Giuseppe: But, but...
Giovanni: No! I don't want to hear it. Now eat your cheese and be quiet.

Mask

Allison Parliament

Hiding behind a mask of my own design,
my flaws hidden from a world that demands perfection,
accepting nothing less.

Inside broken, angry and lost,
knowing anyone else could see the mess,
knowing they would walk away.

Lost is the voice I used to have,
my happy, a mask for indifference,
Spending it on tolerance.

Diamonds and other gems,
Demons waiting to pounce,
promises of nothing up their sleeves.

Salvation? What is that?
Just an empty act,
smoke, mirrors and illusionist lights.

Hiding behind a mask of my own design,
my flaws hidden from a world that demands perfection,
accepting nothing less.

Telescope

Angel Lopez



I Saw Your Ghost Last Night
Lane Pickett

I thought I saw your ghost last night
underneath every red light
on my way home.
It was just shadows
forming figures
beneath the fluorescents.
I drove through
the thought of you
anyways.

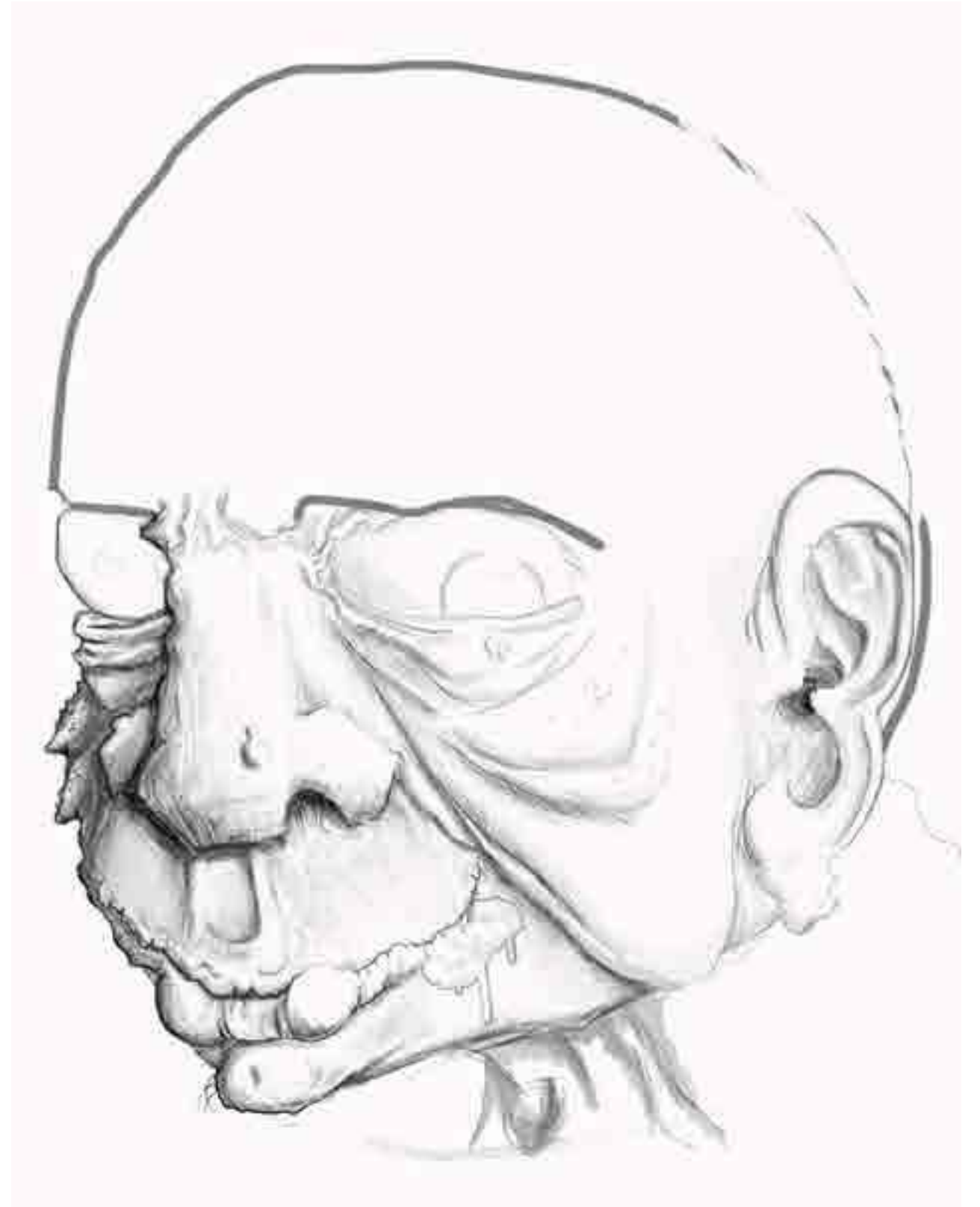
Untitled
Angel Lopez



Euphoria
Josiah Almosara



Untitled
Benjamin Richardson



Dot of Red
Andrea VanderMey



Untitled
Philippe Brown



Untitled
Philippe Brown



Momento di Sosta – Florence
Alexandra Jurus



di Flusso – Rome
Alexandra Jurus



Filibuster

2014

We are already accepting submissions to the next issue of the Filibuster.
Send your artwork, short stories, or poetry to:

filibuster@aum.edu

Have Questions? Email Dr. Robert Klevay.

rklevay@aum.edu

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