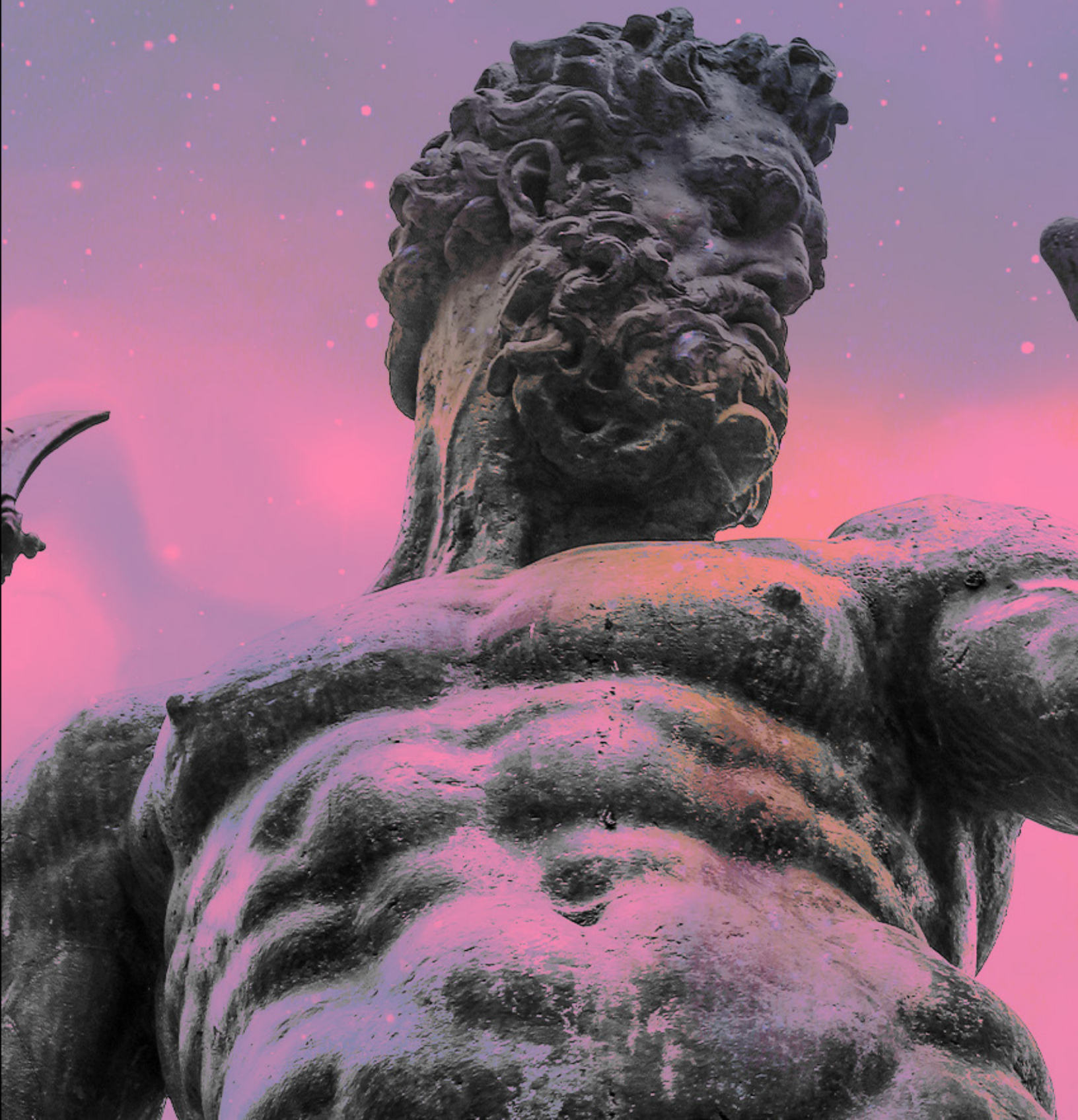


FILIBUSTER 2020





Koi Fish
Nick Yeend

Dear Reader,

Where would this edition of the Filibuster be if you had not decided to grace its pages? It would be alone, inside a box, simply waiting for the day someone picked it up. At this point, I hope you've guessed the theme. I've personified the issue, and introduced the true legends behind its making. This year's theme was Mythology. I wanted the students of AUM to be able to express themselves in a whimsical manner and truly explore the passions of their past while embracing their future. Thank you, reader, for everything. It's good to know that you'll keep this year's 2020 issue of the Filibuster safe and sound. It's full of mystery, emotion, monsters and, most importantly, the contributions of talented artists, writers, and photographers.

And now, I'd like to take the time to thank everyone, because this issue would not have been possible without the help of my lovely cohorts and our faculty advisor. So thank you, Dr. Klevay, our faculty advisor; you kept us on track and were there every step of the way. Thank you to my co-editors, Michelle Aitken and Tye DeVore. I would have gone crazy without your insights and willingness to spread the word about the Filibuster. Thank you to our amazing graphic designer, Kasey Johnson; without you, this layout would not have been possible. The 2020 Filibuster issue would not have been possible without the help of everyone involved. Thanks, and thanks again.

THE TEAM



Erin Terrell

Editor-in-Chief

Legends are born from fire and brimstone, dedication, and large unsavory monsters.

This particular legend was brought forth by smudged ink and symmetrically challenged paper folding. Her specialties include: editing, conquering atrocities, and providing unnecessary commentary about the weather.



Kasey Johnson

Graphic Designer

As far as we know, there was nothing.

Suddenly, from a single point, all the energy in the Universe burst forth. Since that moment, 26 billion years ago, the Universe has never been the same.

A legend was born from dust and was created to only understand things related to art and design.



Tye DeVore

Co-editor

In the beginning life was simple, that is, until this legend bounded in. Flames of creativity follow her every step as she slays the simplicity by sharing her imaginative work to all. Her specialties include: hoarding hobbies, consuming useless knowledge, and a keen eye for creative works.



Michelle Aitken

Co-editor

In the beginning, there was darkness, and then—well, more darkness. But then!—some odd counts of years, a burst of crackling fire and stardust, and one not-so-graceful landing later, a legend stumbled onto Earth. A legend that hoards stickers and crumpled parchment in the pockets of her coats, but a legend nonetheless. Her specialties include: dumb luck, an editorial eye, and an insatiable desire to consume all the texts on Earth—and beyond.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WRITTEN WORK

Celebrating Cason <i>Erin Terrell</i>	6	Benevolence <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	17	Happiness <i>Mathew Hammond</i>	31
Hand Me Down <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	9	Destruction <i>Maya Freed</i>	17	Coffee <i>David Donaldson</i>	31
Delilah's Story <i>Kelly Clifton</i>	9	Aimless <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	26	The Acedian God <i>Zachariah Pippin</i>	33
Black Boy Fly <i>David Donaldson</i>	12	Kiss <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	26	Optic Neutris <i>Sarah Smith</i>	34
Bullet Proof <i>Maya Freed</i>	13	Brother <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	26	Speak Soft <i>Zachariah Pippin</i>	34
Anesidora <i>Sarah Smith</i>	14	Orbit <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	26	Love <i>Dameyune Smith</i>	34
Can't Let Go <i>Dameyune Smith</i>	15	Sea of Faces <i>Alicia Estes</i>	28	Grabbing Coffee <i>Alyssa Nuckols</i>	54
The Naked Dog of Athens <i>Zachariah Pippin</i>	16	A Hymn of Thief <i>Tyson Wilson</i>	29	Intertwiner <i>Stephen Schaefer</i>	55
Hate Speech <i>Sarah Smith</i>	16	Spider in Pothos <i>Haley Mills</i>	29	SHORT STORIES	
Lessons of Love <i>Rachel Ivey</i>	17	Betrayal <i>Kendal Walker</i>	30	American Audacity <i>Alexzina Wilks</i>	19

A Transcendent Essay
Catina Sistrunk 21

You'll Live
Stephen Smith 24

PLAYS

Amnesia
Michelle Aitken 35

The Falling of Harmony
Tye DeVore 40

Open Water
Tony George 44

ARTWORK

Koi Fish
Nick Yeend 2

Psithurism
Kelly Clifton 9

Dreams
Michelle Mitchell

Bones
Nick Yeend 11

Decay
Nick Yeend 13

Balance
Michelle Mitchell 18

Under the Bridge
Michelle Mitchell 27

Untitled
Sophie Bear 28

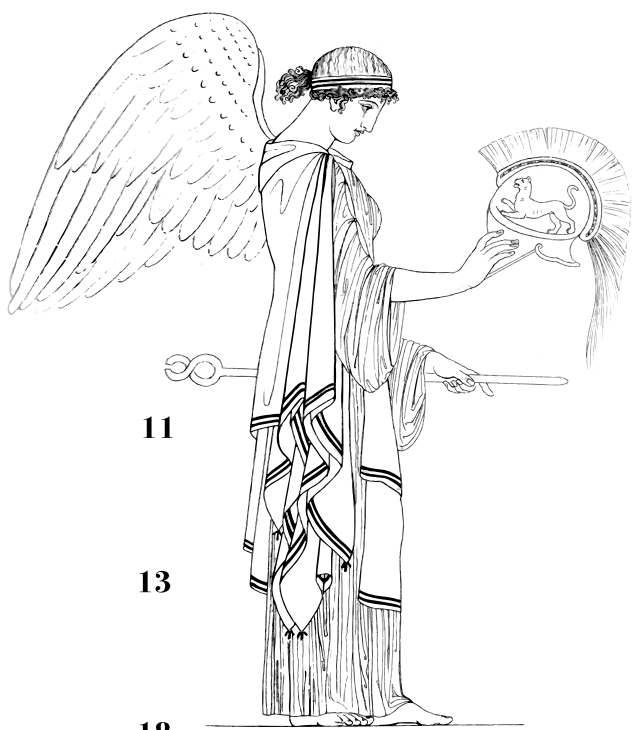
Admirari
Leigh Clark 33

Catching Sunset
Louise F. Gunawan 51

Rendition of Aphrodite
Jane Mayes 55

Portrait #1
Nick Yeend 56

Portrait #2
Nick Yeend 56



CELEBRATING CASON McDERMOTT



Goodwyn Gallery celebrated the life of Cason McDermott with an exhibition of her artwork Monday, November 18 through Friday, November 22, 2019. She was a 2018 visual arts graduate of AUM. We, at the Filibuster, thought it pertinent to also dedicate a portion of our issue to Cason McDermott, as she touched the lives of many individuals.

“Cason definitely had a big personality, she was very warm, her enthusiasm was always infectious, it was always a pleasure to have her in classes I think because she was always so excited about whatever was happening she would get other people excited, which is I think a great characteristic. She was very passionate about her own artwork. -She was really interested in materials, especially the last year, I think after she finished at AUM, she started doing those large scale installations with unusual materials in unusual environments and those works seemed to be immersive slightly unexpected, she worked a lot with balloons and yarn, she worked a lot with mixed media on canvas which is a little unusual. I think she was a great experimenter, and I think she also would try things and then hit upon particular materials and keep playing with them. So she seemed to enjoy experimenting.” –**Dr. Slipp**

“She was dedicated in improving her work, and wanting to talk about her work, and it wasn’t just, I want something to look pretty, or I want something to look aesthetically pleasing, it’s I want to communicate something, to those who have the opportunity to stand there and look at whatever she had produced and to get something out of it.” –**Dr. Finn**



“I think, personally, it was a sad exhibition. I think however it also in some ways was a celebration of Cason and of her talent and of her work and I think that it was important as a department and as a university to acknowledge Cason as a significant part of the community and to embrace her family and her friends and to make a space, especially, for them to come together, with alumni and other faculty, and have some time to reflect on what Cason meant to the department and what she contributed to the community. And I think having it in the gallery, was nice because there was the reception where people could come together publicly but there were also lots of times where you could just go into the gallery and be with Cason and her work and not have to interact with people around that. You got to be quiet and interact with your feelings, obviously it’s a conflicted emotion, but hopefully something positive.

I think Cason had a big personality and she touched a lot of people.

You know in some ways the exhibition doesn’t feel like enough, but I do also know that Cason’s mother and the two friends, have been doing a lot of other community activism around mental health around suicide prevention in Cason’s name and so I think there are always future opportunities for future community members who are interested to get involved, and to continue some of that work, and so the exhibition is now in the past but there are possibilities in the future for

Cason and her memory” -**Dr. Slipp**

“In terms of the work that she was working on in her portfolio, that was geared in terms of admission to graduate school, I think one significant change was that she was spending a lot of time working in installation art. And that was something where there were some photos in the exhibition, but there was quite an ephemeral quality to those installations. We have photographic evidence, but these works weren’t supposed to be things that lasted indefinitely, they were sight specific for her, and she wanted them in a sense to be fleeting.” -**Dr. Finn**



What is the normal process of putting a normal exhibition like this together and how was this one different?

“In this case, Dr. Slipp is our gallery coordinator and Dr. Slipp spent a lot of time working with Cason on her work, in this case I can give you the process on how it took place. Essentially, people who knew Cason gathered her work together, I set aside a particular day and time for that work to be dropped off, there were some pieces out of that work, some of that work ended up in the exhibition, some of which did not, in some cases, it could have been due to the fact that contextually it did not work, it could be the fragility of the object too, there were some hands, that Cason had made that would hang from wire, that were very fragile over all. We did not want anything to be at risk of being damaged, that wasn’t included. There were paintings, produced with acrylics, paintings produced with dyes, she was attaching objects to pieces as well and some were photographs that she had taken that friends of hers had available and they decided to print those images, so that individuals could see the more recent work that Cason had created.” –**Dr. Finn**

“Usually the gallery space gets booked, we book about 6 to 8 months ahead, for example I have a schedule set through May, because the gallery includes usually a visiting artist each semester, student graduating senior thesis shows which Cason had one her last semester, as well as faculty shows. Its usually a pretty tight turn around, some of the upper level museums studies and art history classes curate in that space, so everything gets blocked in usually about a year ahead and then once we have that timeline then depending on who it is and how its going to work I’ll take more of a hands on role, so we have a photographer coming in in January, who is installing an exhibition so she’ll have an exhibition out for two months of her photography, so that’s one example of one exhibition coming up but that’s really different from the senior thesis shows, where the students and their primary advisors manage the space, I just manage the calendar for them, so it just depends on what is happening.” –**Dr. Slipp**

Hand-Me-Down

Tyson Wilson

One day,
You'll outgrow me;
Rather than throw me away,
You'll give me to one
Whom I fit better,
Or
You'll leave me in a closet
collecting dust.
I'm happy to see you grow;
Sometimes,
I wish you wouldn't,
So I can stay with you.



Title: Psithurism

Model: Faith Roberts

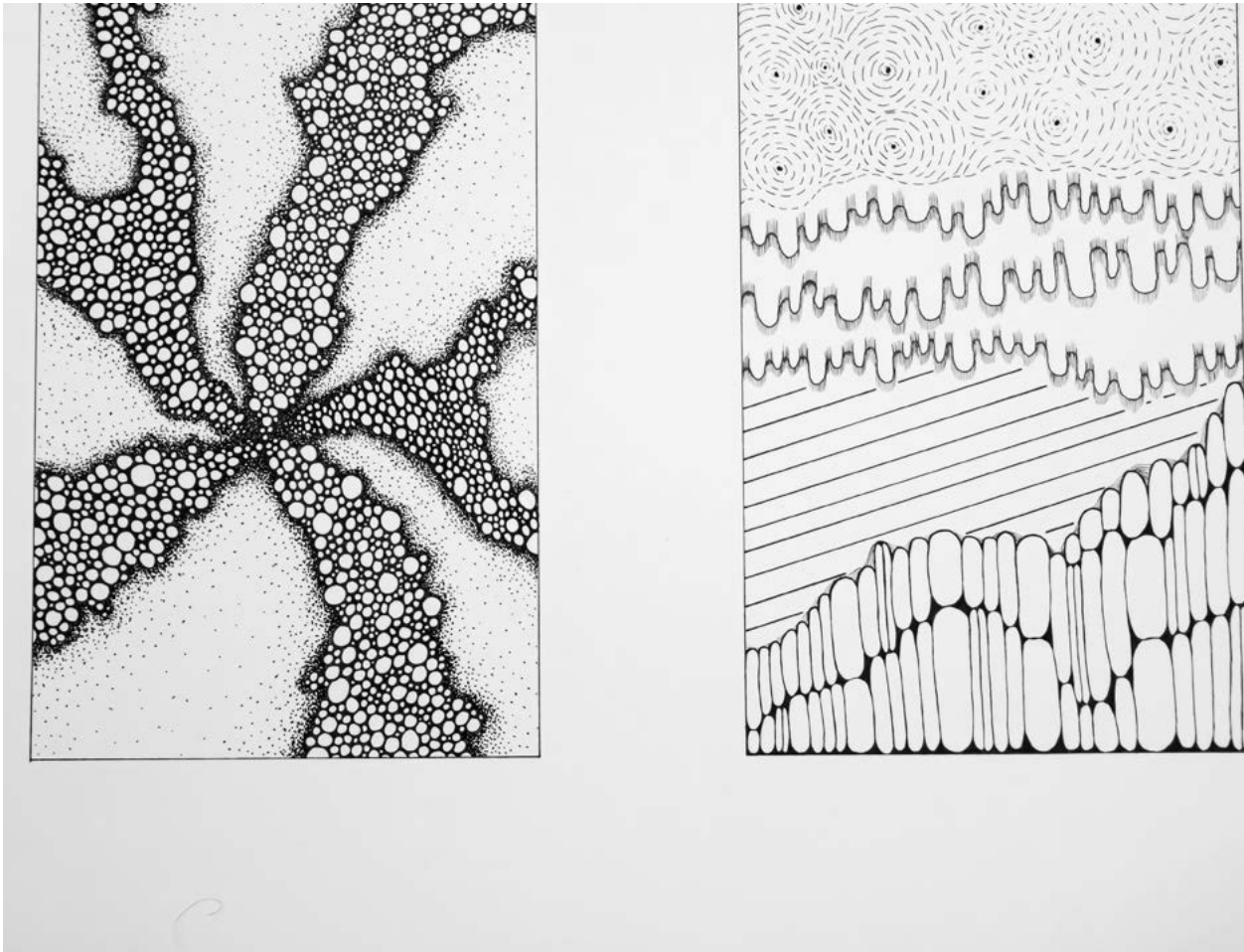
Delilah's Story

Kelly Clifton

You think I wanted to do this? I was supposed to marry the idiot. If he would have just kept his stupid mouth shut, none of this would have happened. My dad forced me into this. No one was supposed to get hurt... My name is Delilah, yes, that Delilah. No, I didn't want to marry Samson, but what other choice did I have? If I had refused, my people would have killed me too then sent some other poor girl after him. It wasn't awful... he's attractive, strong, he could have provided for our children. What did I want? Not Samson, that's for

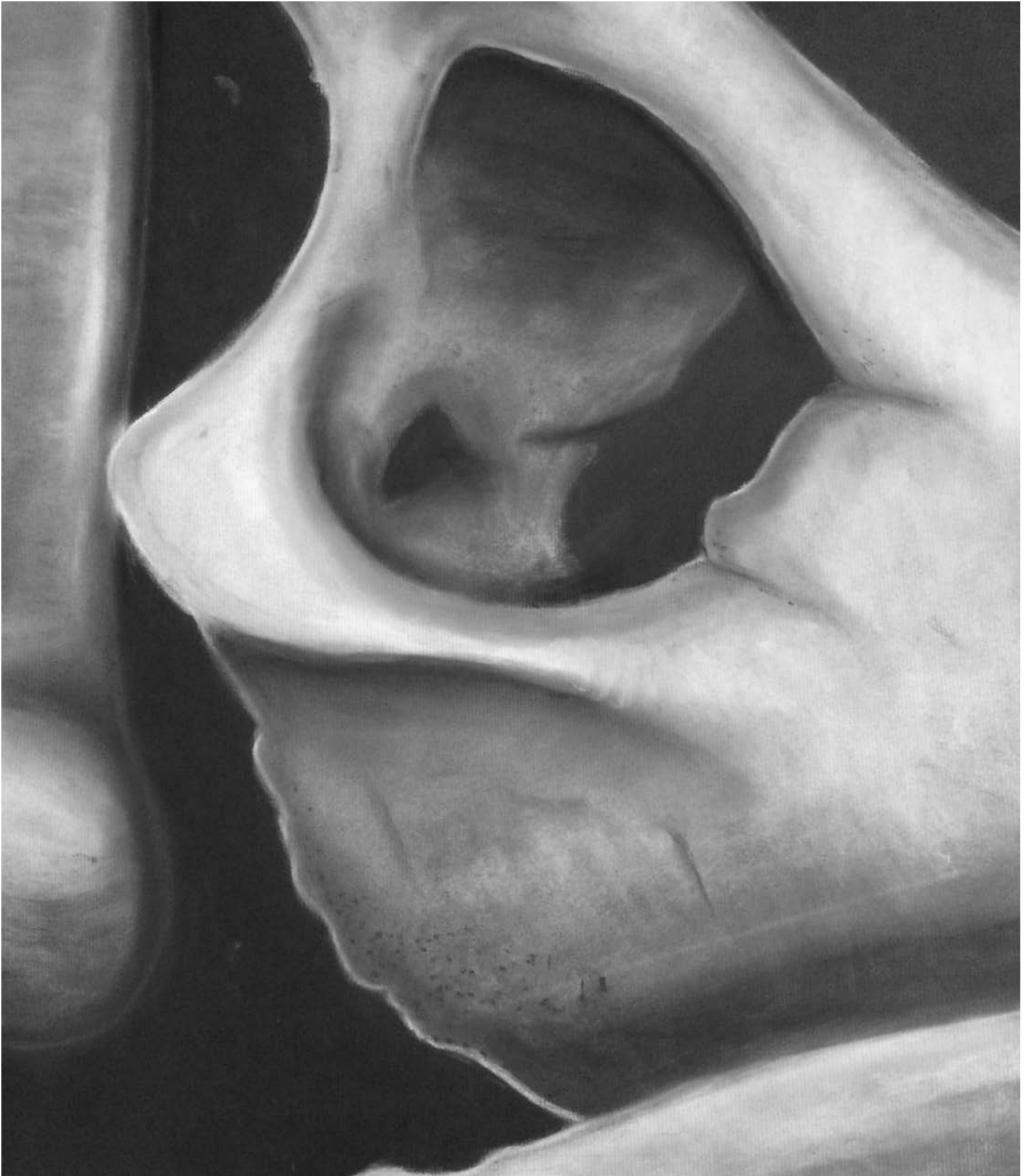
sure. I had another lover, we were all set to get married. My father even approved of him. I had never been happier in my life, everything was perfect. Then, the day before I was to marry my love, my father announces this! I had to seduce the Nazarine and learn the secret of his strength. He called off my marriage and sent my future husband away. I was heartbroken, but I knew I couldn't refuse. I only had two ways out: find out the secret, or be killed by my people. What would you have done in my situation? My father promised the return of my beloved if I did it. So, here we are. I've lost my beloved, my father, and now my husband-

to-be. I didn't think he was serious. I mean, his hair, really? What a crock of shit. I had no idea he was telling the truth. WHY? Why would he tell a woman he barely knows his best kept secret? No... I know why. I couldn't return his feelings. I was still in mourning for my lost love. No one ever talks about me and the sacrifices I made. No, it's always Samson, Samson, Samson. I don't regret what I did, I know I can't change it. Maybe it would have been better for me to have never been born. Either way... now you know my side of the story. Do with it what you will.



Dreams
Michelle Mitchell

Bones
Nick Yeend



Black Boy Fly
David Donaldson

I used to be jealous of Amelia
Earhart.
I used to be jealous of Jean
Rozier.
My wings were clipped at
birth.
Society curtails my
opportunity to escape from
a world where I am a nuisance.
Was it because they had no
other choice?
Was it God answering my
prayers? I swear I could hear
him calling.
My name will be written in the
clouds like the book of life.
I can still smell the Tuskegee
air,
one hundred and six missions
led by a black boy who used to
wish to follow instead.
I proved with opportunity, any
man can prosper.
These wounds are not battle
scars;
Where wings used to be
they've been replaced—
With purple hearts and history
marked in books still read
today.
I used to dream of trading
places with Reuben Fleet.
I dreamed of just one chance
to soar the sky.
The cost could have been my
life,
but I'll forever live to fly.



Bullet Proof

Maya Freed

I was triggered from my peaceful sleep by my mother's indescribable wail --

It was a sound of agony and sorrow.

I followed the noise to the living room and

found her on her knees rocking and repeating, "I told her to be safe"

The news was surreal to me;

The depths of the situation had not sunk in.

I wasn't a barrel full of

emotions,

I stayed calm and did what I had to do.

I called my father and told him the unsettling news,

I heard his phone drop as I told him all I knew.

It was the first time I had ever heard him cry.

I heard the sound again as he was gripped with anguish and distress.

No parenting book could ever

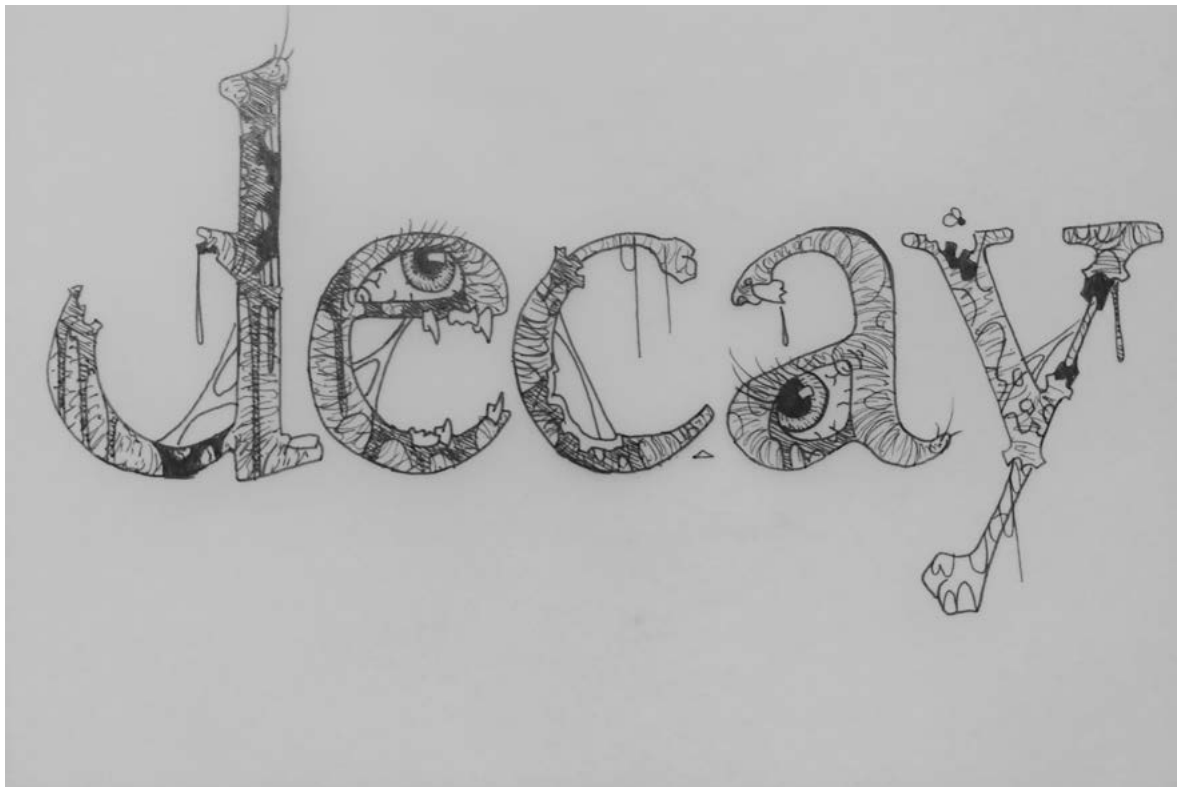
prepare you for the news we received that night.

The two strongest people I know were enveloped in vulnerability.

I was their strength since theirs had been muzzled.

I comforted those who usually comforted me.

I was their shield, and together we were bulletproof.



Decay

Nick Yeend

Anesidora
Sarah Smith

I seized them with wonder, I
later learned—
made by gods who acted like
they'd never
seen another like me. They
called me a
“beautiful evil” but were too
clever
to give me a name. They said
my children
would torment humans, that I
was to blame
for all mankind's evils. But the
gods were
shifty, callous, and mean. They
knew this game,
played friend and foe, mercy
and scorn. Once, they
even brought me gifts. Some
filled a table,
like Apollo's lyre, Poseidon's
pearls,
but others were skills that
made me able,
useful, and valued.
Needlework came from
Athena—before she deigned to
clothe me.
Hermes gave me speech while
muttering words
of guile. He said I could never
see
the truth about my “deceitful
nature.”
He just smiled when I asked,
blamed the grace
from Aphrodite, and thought

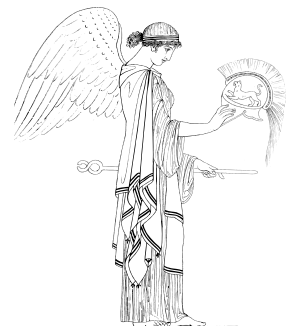
nothing of
all the cunning things I
learned in this place.
Soon, I'm to marry
Epimethius.
But he never even brought me
a gift.
I heard that fierce brother of
his offers
fine favors—eminent favors
that shift
existence. I know nothing of
these things,
but I'd like to get to know him.
And I'm
bored. They never let me do
much around
here—just the constant
waiting, all the time.
My days are filled with these
trinkets. I know
them all by heart. But today, a
new thing's
on my table—an earthen jar.
The clay
is dry and rough, warm in my
hands, and sings
a secret so big only the
mounted
Sphinx can hold it. My new jar
is humming,
whispering thoughts—I can't
quite hear the words
nor can I perceive what might
be coming,
what might be on the way. I
jiggle it,
but nothing inside shifts or
makes a sound.
Is there anything in there to

find? My gift
could not be only the empty jar
crowned
by the Sphinx. It must be filled
with wisdom
(and wisdom must be silent,
for the gods
are always yelling, “Be quiet!”
though I
only want to sing and hear
them applaud).
My hand wraps the lid, and I
hold the Sphinx
as though we were crafted as
one. This pot
torments me, softly whispers,
“Open me,”
hints at secrets, all good and
evil caught
within these golden patterns,
ancient lines,
guarded, fraught and full with
all the knowing,
all the Sphinx's clever riddles,
every
answer whispered sweet, a
spring breeze blowing
just for me. I must think so
clever, like
the Sphinx, open this jar
without a squeak,
and keep these secrets, never
share, just look
inside this gift. Yes, I'll take
just a peek.

Can't Let You Go

Dameyune Smith

I hear no beat, no sound, no
thump nor pound,
There's nothing left and no
one else is here.
I see her limp and cold body
lie down,
My wife, my love, is dead I
truly fear.
I would shed tears just to hear
your sweet voice,
I love you more than life, my
dearest friend.
I guess the Man above has
made his choice,
I do know if I lose you, it's the
end.
I pray we meet beside the
gates of fate,
I know our paths are different,
that is true.
But leaving this earth's one
thing we both hate,
And death's the fate of all like
me and you.
But look at you, awake! Smile,
let it show,
I love you too much, I can't let
you go.



**The Naked Dog of
Athens.
For Diogenes, in
Raphael's "The School
of Athens"**

Zachariah Pippin



In the center of symposium,
at the feet of Aristotle,
there a specter in blue
reverie interrupts marble.

You brood over want,
holding the emblem of
pretense as one might hold
a spider away from his face.

Where the mass of writhing,
patrician snakes share stories,
there you sit, alone, sprawled
across their steps, deprivation
seeping through your sore
back.

If they named you
"philosopher,"
you'd spit on their shoes and
make a banner of their idiocy.

Let the student play Plato's
game,
that you might scrape the
scum
and let them cling to the belly

of your bloated corpse for
succor.

Now, to be made so
annoyingly
immortal, plastered in
perpetuity
on the wall for the world,
when you never wrote a word,

made an object to be owned
by priests and kings when you
made sport of mighty
Iskander.

It is such a gallant humiliation.

All the worse to be in the cen-
ter,

permanently alone in the mid-
dle of

a revel for men you despised.

Hung

like a laurel for the gods you
rejected.

Finally, they have Diogenes.

That lone dog in this confer-
ence of

wolves, who made fools of
them in life,

is forever their fool in death.

Hate Speech

Sarah Smith

Each time she speaks hate,
she tries to infect me.
Her mouth drips with acid,
and she always comes closer.

She tries to infect me
so I'll become her sword.
And she always comes closer,
with her hate in her wake

so I'll become her sword
to spread her word.
With her hate in her wake,
we drown in her nonsense.

To spread her word,
her mouth drips with acid.
We drown in her nonsense
each time she speaks hate.

Lessons of Love

Rachel Ivey

Love: a word that is
greater than definition.

Born craving It from those
that gave me life and form.

Given freely by One,
always Her ambition;
The other, unloved by
his Own, could not break
norm.

No ill-will; an Absence
thought not to have
mattered;

Yet, self-worth and
confidence to Absence was
akin.

Despite doubts, my
own Love found a heart
scattered,

His perseverance brought
forth passion from within.

Devotion from passion,
He mends what was
impaired,

And through the
acceptance of what was, I
am whole.

But, the desire soon came
for Love to be paired,

To create One from Two;
Nature playing its role.

Three times Love was
born, three Times I'll love
forever.

A promise to Them: my
Love, I will not sever.

Destruction

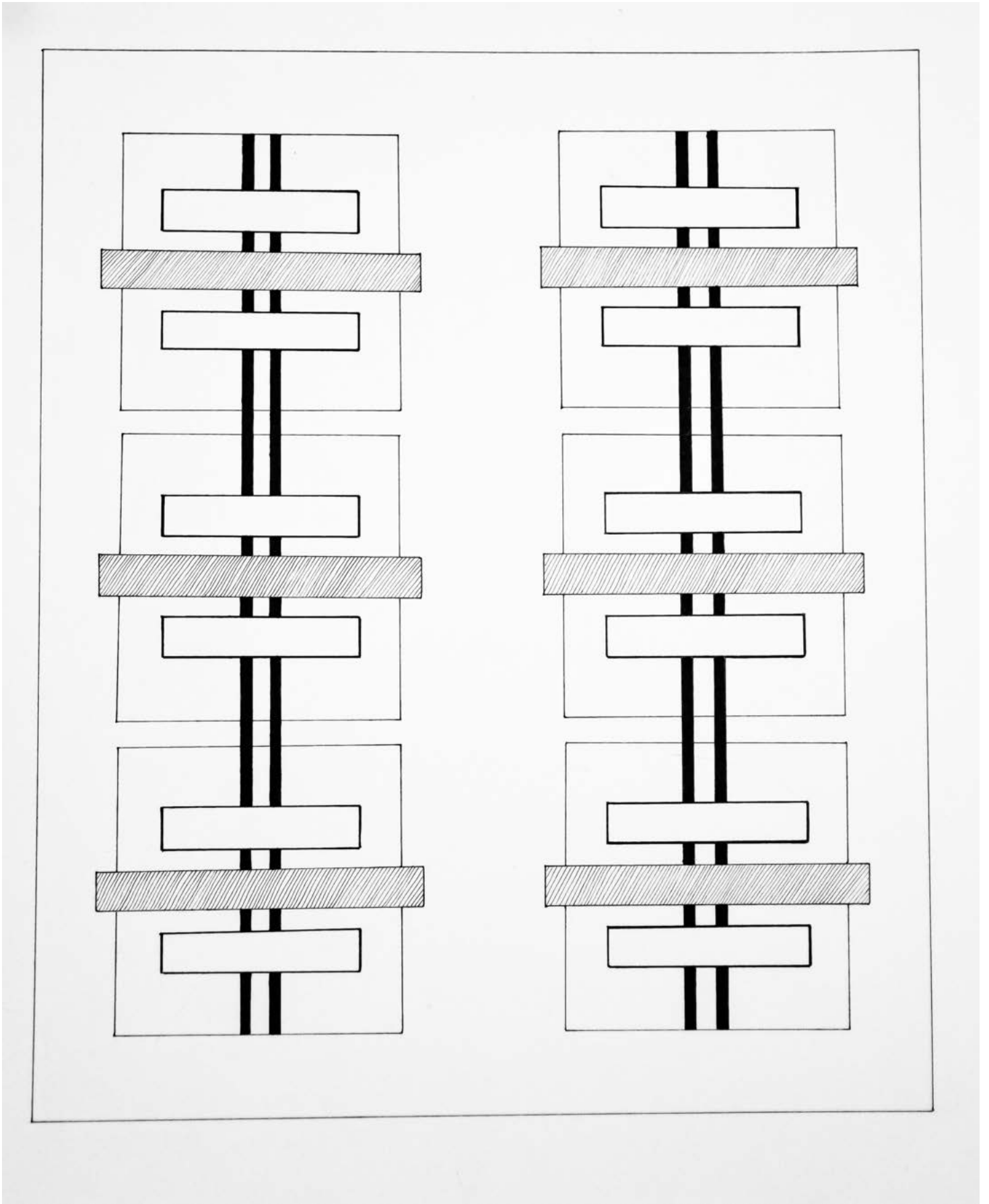
Maya Freed

His love was a hurricane
that drowned every fantasy
I had of intimacy.
His storm brewed
along a coast
I didn't even know existed.
His eye was calm
and eased my worries.
For a second I had no fears,
but his walls powerful
blows knocked me
into an unconscionable reality.
No weather man
could forecast this
downpour, no matter
how advanced the technology.
He was worse than
Frederic, Ivan, and Katrina
combined because
no amount of money could
rebuild the damage
he caused.

Benevolence

Tyson Wilson

I've distinguished friends
From acquaintances by their
Need for recompense.



“Balance” - micron pen on 14x17 bristol
Michelle Mitchell

American Audacity
Alexzina Taylor Wilks

In my younger days, I wore my status as an American with pride, as if I had stars and stripes engraved upon my heart. In elementary school, I stood tall with my right hand over my heart and bellowed of the sweet land of liberty. In high school, I arrived to school early to raise the flag to hang in its proper position, covering the sky and overseeing all. Now, I know better. America is not a country of liberty, justice, or equality, at least not for everyone- such notions are privileges to few, rights to some, and denied to many. I miss the days that I envisioned America as the perfect protector of its citizens and the world alike. I admit that I initially longed for my former days of ignorance. Then, I realized, it is not that I was not knowledgeable of America's shortcomings, but that the shortcomings did not define America. Now, America is defined not by what it gives, but what it denies. It denies the equal application of justice and rights without regard for race, ethnicity, and social status. As such, America has failed me, and you have failed America.

America's perfection did not dwindle in a single incident. Rather, it was a combination of incidents over time that changed its state from a beacon of hope to a spark left wanting. Lady Liberty still sits at America's northern gate, but the flames of her torch have long died, smothered by oppression. America: land of the free and brave who are brave enough to imprison the free. Not imprison necessarily within cages, or behind bars, but imprison through the lack of equal opportunity, the imbalance of the scales of justice, and the abundance of racism, the most powerful and longstanding of them all. Oppressors have taken a hold of American citizens, present and future. I have witnessed black rapists beaten and imprisoned, while white rapists are set free because they would not fare well in prison. When color did not imbalance the scales of justice, wealth did. Do all criminals not deserve to be equally confined as they equally offend? You witnessed these injustices, and you did nothing. You sat idle and watched justice be mocked and silenced; yet, you have the audacity to pledge allegiance to a flag that promises liberty and justice for all.

Where is the justice for my brother whose crimson blood pooled upon the earth after he caught a stray bullet? Nature did not care that he was an African American when her leaves soaked up the life that drained from him. What about the breathless bodies of Americans, black and white, young and old, that litter the streets from the rolling hills of California to the sandy beaches of Florida? It is discouraging to think that a country that can unite against terrorism cannot unite against the terror of gun violence. The lines between right and wrong seem to be blurred by the barrel of the gun. Yes, you will agree that the theft of innocent lives is wrong, but your words ring void, as they are not mirrored by action. What will you do? How will you protect the mothers kneeling in prayer at churches and the men bowing in synagogues or kneeling in mosques? When will your innocent children, full of life and promise, learn in school and dodge balls while at play, rather than take cover in closets to dodge bullets? Hear me. This is your call to action. Why are you reactive and not proactive? You hear of the violence only to forget it in a week's

time. You sit in the mistaken safety of your home and acknowledge the turmoil and even grimace in disgust, but it ends there, until the blood painting the sidewalk is your sibling's, the screams haunting the hallways are your child's, or the voice silenced forever your spouse's. Just wait. It is a matter of time before your inaction forces you into action.

I admit, like you, I have fed into the hierarchy of race, believing my chocolate skin to be inferior to that of ivory, which is worth so much more. Through ignorance, I have considered my race and gender to be my curse. Would you not elect to travel the path of the white male in America? I dare to admit I would like to taste the entitlement that protrudes from the white male by his presence alone. I would like to exhibit the authority that comes at birth; I would not have to yell to be heard, for whatever I have to say would be deemed important simply because it was spewed from my lips. I know better now, but why do you allow race to remain a defining trait in America?

I do not consider myself an African American, nor do I suggest that you consider yourself a White American, Native American, Latino American or anything similar. Be an American, nothing less, nothing more. The titles used to classify us are also used to define us and further define us based on our class. No good comes from separation. If we agree to be only Americans, our goals become united and we make decisions based on the whole and not a part.

I further challenge you to not look at others as merely citizens, but go a step further and consider each other as a brother or sister. Regardless of varying religious beliefs, do we all not share the same creator? We are all painted with a different bit of Earth's clay, but does the sun not shine on us all? And, when we succumb to death's grasp, do we all not return to Earth just the same? If we view each other as brother or sister, we could not sit idle while rights are trampled and liberties denied.

God, bless America. She needs guidance, not through the night, but through the darkness America has always had its share of problems, as even the most beautiful gardens produce weeds. Yet, when the weeds are not removed from the garden, they take over any field and restrict the flowers from being seen at their best. I challenge you to pluck up any weed you see by its roots; call out injustice, end the slaughter of your fellow citizens, and silence racism. Your American pride should surpass your religious, cultural, and ethnical ties or preferences, for our allegiance to country must always be first. Have the audacity to be American, nothing less, nothing more.



Leave the Job to Live the Dream: A Transcendentalist Essay

Catina Woods Sistrunk

To occupy oneself in regular employment is essential in this life and for many reasons we find ourselves so engaged. Some people employ themselves to feed their families, which is necessary work. Others embark upon an occupation to utilize their God-given talents to help others, which is work to which many are called. Whilst others are commissioned for the service, enjoyment and fulfilment that greater works provide. A simple desire crept into my heart setting me ablaze and affright for purpose, for greater works; yet, not for work that would produce greatness, but greater works of service to provide the fulfilment and enjoyment I craved. A simple thing to hope for; yet difficult to exercise for I yearned to transition from the necessary work of merely working a dead-end job to feed my family to a more gratifying and essential call of purpose to which I had no distinct path. In due time, I resigned the necessary work of employment but had no intentions of resigning life. I wanted to live - this was the point of it all. Yet, not as I had lived with my head stuck beneath the sand - swallowed up in necessary work that blinded me to greater works. As Thoreau declared in his trek to the woods, I proclaimed with the same independence that "I wished to live deliberately...and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not my life...I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life" (Thoreau 65). Why continue to die?

The sacrifice of greater work required only once to die whereby holding death at bay to live resurrected life. I died the death of necessity for it was this work that lay a heavy burden upon my mind such that the mind had forgotten even its fundamental tasks - to imagine, to dream, to reach and to think independently of institutional missions and goals. This weight lay heavy not only on my psyche but oppressed my body such that it no longer remembered how to lay in green pastures unbothered by what is called, 'the silent killer.' The soul was not spared as it suffered most - sickened by dreams and hopes deferred. You should not be so content to bare such a burden that has time enough to curdle dreams, kill the body, and crush the spirit.

However, this necessary work to which I died served me in a time when my dreams were no longer in sight. It began in a time of conception due to a collapse of contraception which filled my quiver full. Four offspring, like arrows in the hands of a warrior, were granted to me, a single mother, who was not yet acquainted with whom I would be. Necessary work became indispensable indeed and the focus of living shifted from inquiring of an abundant life to wrestling with a life of scarcity. Years went by and I fulfilled the duty of living their dreams - encouraging their steps toward greater works - a life beyond the necessary to an abundant life of purpose. For work that is necessary is not necessarily a work towards purpose. In time, the four arrows were shot into the world to hit their mark with feathers laced with the liquor of righteousness which guide them in the way they should go - never to stray - while I was left not quite knowing what to do.

I had forgotten how to dream; how to walk in the woods. In middle age, I took very little steps towards uncharted territory since I had no dream to guide me. I inhabited well-defined paths

that offered familiarity, comfort and a sure way of securing necessary work. But work necessary for whom? The arrows had taken flight; yet, for years I stayed trekking the familiar well-defined roads for fear that if I walked not knowing where it is I go that I might get lost along the way.

It was not always this way. In my youth, I loved adventures, even the simplest of adventure that lead me into long walks in the woods for the purpose of discovery and awe. The idea didn't have to exist as a well-defined thought before I embarked upon it. All I needed was a hint – a whiff of something – anything. Sadly at 40, I believed Thoreau's estimation of things when he suggested that "as a [wo]man grows older, his/[her] ability to sit still and follow indoor occupations increases" (263). Now at 44 years of age, I thought it time to walk again even towards the indistinct.

Inspiration came in the form of life-giving breath upon my soul. "Remember who you are," a still voice faintly whispered – "remember." I know not who I am apart from the quiver which has now been pillaged. It lay empty and only tiny hairs of the fletch remain. "Not pillaged," the voice whispered, "but released. You've died your death, now live." Yet, will these bones live? Bones whose marrow has dried and withered having a semblance of life but none that lies therein. Remember who you are and take your form; that which was given you as you were divinely known and that which set you apart before you were born. To take this form, I had to look within. I had to remember who I was BC - before children and AD - after the death of necessary work. I remembered discovering the flute at age 13 and like Pan, the patron of shepherds as he kissed the broken reeds of his dashed love, Nymph Syrinx, a most beautiful sound was born. For seven years, I played first chair and relished the opportunity to play on a national and international scale. I desired to be a great flutist touching the hearts of many with the whimsical sound of Syrinx. In remembering, I took to Amazon and purchased a flute at 41 years of age. The handicap of a left hand that bore fingers refusing to bend still vexed me; yet, I rationalized if I could play in this state then, why not now? The bend of my fingers was the least of my worries as the cleft notes escaped me. I sat before the sheet of music more overwhelmed than ever.

The next day, I made a list of all the things I loved to do in my youth. Performing on the flute was first on the list, then I quickly struck a line through it realizing it was a hobby most enjoyed in my youth and so there it would stay. Next on the list - singing, dancing, writing, reading. Since I continued to sing in church and on special occasions outside of church, I checked singing off the list. Dance. I hadn't danced in years except around the house with my children in jest. Writing and reading. I found it best to join the two since I never wrote anything without reading something. Reading is what always inspired writing. Poems and songs are what flowed from my heart in my youth and I still find myself from time to time writing songs, poetry and inspired text such as I keep in my journals. I published in my 30s a personal work that told the story of my youth. Witnessing a mother killed by a father and a father who hesitated to take my life and that of my sister before definitively taking his own. The book was therapy and now its history. I struggle to publish again.

Then finally, I remembered. It came to me as if it were a vision. It was on the front porch of our country home, nestled among the pines and magnolias that as a little girl I pretended the porch

to be my classroom, my elder sister one of many students, the hardboard siding of our home a blackboard, and for chalk, a green crayon. Then without warning, greater works were birthed in me causing a childhood enactment of teaching to come alive. As the memory played in my mind, I remembered my mom screaming as she stepped beyond the opened door catching an eyeful of what she called a mess of green crayon. This vision of the classroom - this subsequent green mess, began to catch hold in my life. English teacher - could this be the form that my life would take? Could this be possible? I already had a love for teaching that escalated through a Bible teaching appointment at my home church. The preparation of teaching, sharing knowledge to better others, and the creativity of teaching felt uplifting. Teaching produced a desire in me to be better, know more and contribute my person for the sake of knowledge and understanding. The form of teaching chose me.

Finding my form was a difficult process that required times of reflection during a time when my home wasn't the only thing that was empty. My life was void and lacking because I knew not myself or the gifts I possessed. I was the rightful owner of gifts I had not known; yet ownership is easier maintained if you possess, whether known or unknown and difficult to enforce in the absence thereof. I dug no hole to purposefully hide my talent; therefore, denying myself of any hope of gaining more. No, necessary work was the culprit that hid my gifts and caused me to disregard the dream and persist in the job. There is no denying that nourishment is what my family needed; nonetheless, if I had to do it all again, I would have ensured the dream to meet it. Yet, all is well that ends well. It is no longer a strange thing to make a career change at forty or fifty years of age. The only change that is strange at forty or fifty is having to discover the dream to which you are called for purpose sake.



You'll Live *Stephen E. Smith*

One day, about a month ago, I really hit bottom. I was really anxious about the direction of my life. Being a junior, not having my entire life planned out, I was so inside my head that I needed to get some air, and so I went skateboarding. I skated for hours and hours, I didn't know what was going through my mind. Eventually I found myself at the top of this wicked hill in a neighborhood next to mine. It's a normal day, right? The dogs are barking, birds are chirping and together they blended and created a chaotic melody in the background. I began thinking to myself: "Why do we as humans become more fearful the older we get?" I never understood it. When we're kids, we're not afraid to try or dare. However, something happens and the next thing you know, we're afraid of bugs, people, the IRS, love, etc.

"Is this really how we're supposed to live? The sum of our existence and what shapes our reality? Fear? I don't know. Maybe nobody knows." Then I thought "no! Maybe isn't good enough. I want certainty or nothing." I remember very clearly, the clock in my chest was ticking and I decided that I was going to throw myself down this hill. Just charge it. It was like looking into the depths of the unknown. The beginning was molded with a severe steepness, a swirl of a curve in the middle, but nothing but smooth sailing at the end. If I was fortunate, I would ride off into glory. This was my very own rollercoaster.

The thing about rollercoasters is that you're never fully ready when they start moving. This situation is no different. I was so focused on how I was going to attack this monster that I was unaware of my feet. All of a sudden I was moving. I was so tense that my foot pressed downward on my board unconsciously. Now, Satan was dragging me down to hell.

It was pure pandemonium. I wanted to stop moving but I was moving so fast that it was impossible. Like a descending star, I was accelerating dangerously when I approached the curve. If I could break my speed enough, I could make it. In a blink of an eye, however, my board began to wobble and when that happens, any skater will tell you, you better pray for some wings because you're about to fly. The worst case scenario was me continuing straight and going head first into a parked car's passenger window. Or maybe channeling my inner wrestler and being catapulted over a mailbox and landing on my back would be worse. Either way, the idea of regaining control seemed like a distant miracle. My options were becoming clearer by the drops of sweat from my fingertips. All I heard was a screech before my body and soul was shattered into pieces.

On the front end of my board I have a small, inconspicuous sticker depicting the hands of the Virgin Mary with the words "pray for me" in gold lettering lined next to it. Did I place it there as a good luck charm? A deterrent to the demons that surrounded every trick I attempt? I don't know. Perhaps. Too bad I didn't put it on till after the fact.

I tumbled at least five or six times before stopping. I didn't- no, couldn't open my eyes due to the stinging sensation that possessed me. I rolled over on my side and peeked out my left eye just enough to see blood leaking onto the ground. I fought my way onto my knees and looked at my board as if I was asking it "why?" It looked me dead in the eye and rolled all the way down to the

end of the hill while I rolled onto my back and looked at the sky. Both my arms and legs were cut and bruised and blood was everywhere. Everything seemed so violent and unreal... I stood and limped for what seemed to be an eternity up that hill. My feet were on fire, I might have had a concussion and I really needed to sit down. I needed a moment to gather my thoughts and put the world back into rational perspective.

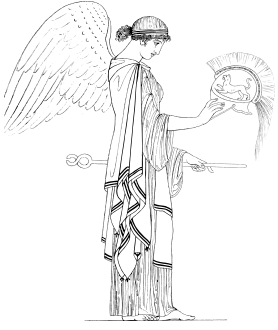
I made it home, sat down on the couch, turned on the T.V. and there was a movie on that I had seen many times since I was a kid. The weirdest thing happened, though. I started watching and I actually got hooked on the film. Then I thought, "What's the point of getting all worked up over the future?" How could I even think of letting fear control my life? I mean, isn't it so stupid? I was looking at the people on the screen and they're really funny and- what if the worst is true? What if we only get one life to live and that's it. Don't we want to make the most of that? Why shouldn't we live unapologetically and go for it? Dance, sing, skate, play, love, or whatever. Life isn't all a drag? The craziest part about the entire thing was that even after experiencing something so painful, nothing changed. The birds were still chirping, the dogs were barking, and the sun was still beaming. It was as if, the world kept spinning and was virtually unaffected by what had transpired in just a matter of seconds. Regardless of how traumatic it was to me, nothing changed. That's when it hit me. It doesn't really matter if you fall or get hurt in the big picture.

No matter how big the fall or mistake, the world keeps turning. So, why not jump off the cliff? Why not tell that girl or guy that you like them or aim for that dream you had since you were ten? Sure, it's scary getting hurt, dealing with pain, and being fearful of everyone seeing you fail... Although, isn't it scarier to go through life being too afraid to jump again simply because of fall?

You may fall again and again, but what if ...what if one day you fly?

Then I started thinking that I should stop ruining my life searching for answers that I'm never going to get and simply enjoy myself. Who knows? Maybe we do get another life after this? Maybe there is something? Nobody really knows, and I know "maybe" is a slim thing to hang our whole existence on but it's the best we have. Then, I sat back and I actually began to enjoy myself.





Kiss

Tyson Wilson

Every kiss imparts fear:
I'm afraid love
Will follow your lips,
Touching me just to disap-
pear.

Orbit

Tyson Wilson

You are My World –
The Earth I circle

As It orbits The Sun.

Self Neglect

My Shoulders could endure
The Tempest;

However,

My Heart falls victim to
a breeze.

Aimlessness

Tyson Wilson

I've kept myself engaged
In Her medley of trivial tasks,
For they keep me grounded;

Upon abnormal chance,
My mind deviates, exploiting
the silence's occupancy.

I wonder:

Without them,
Would I merely float?

Bother

Tyson Wilson

Afraid you'd ignore
My greeting, I waited for
Yours (I ache to confess how
badly I've missed you); I'm still
waiting.



Under the Bridge at Little River Canyon, AL
Michelle Mitchell



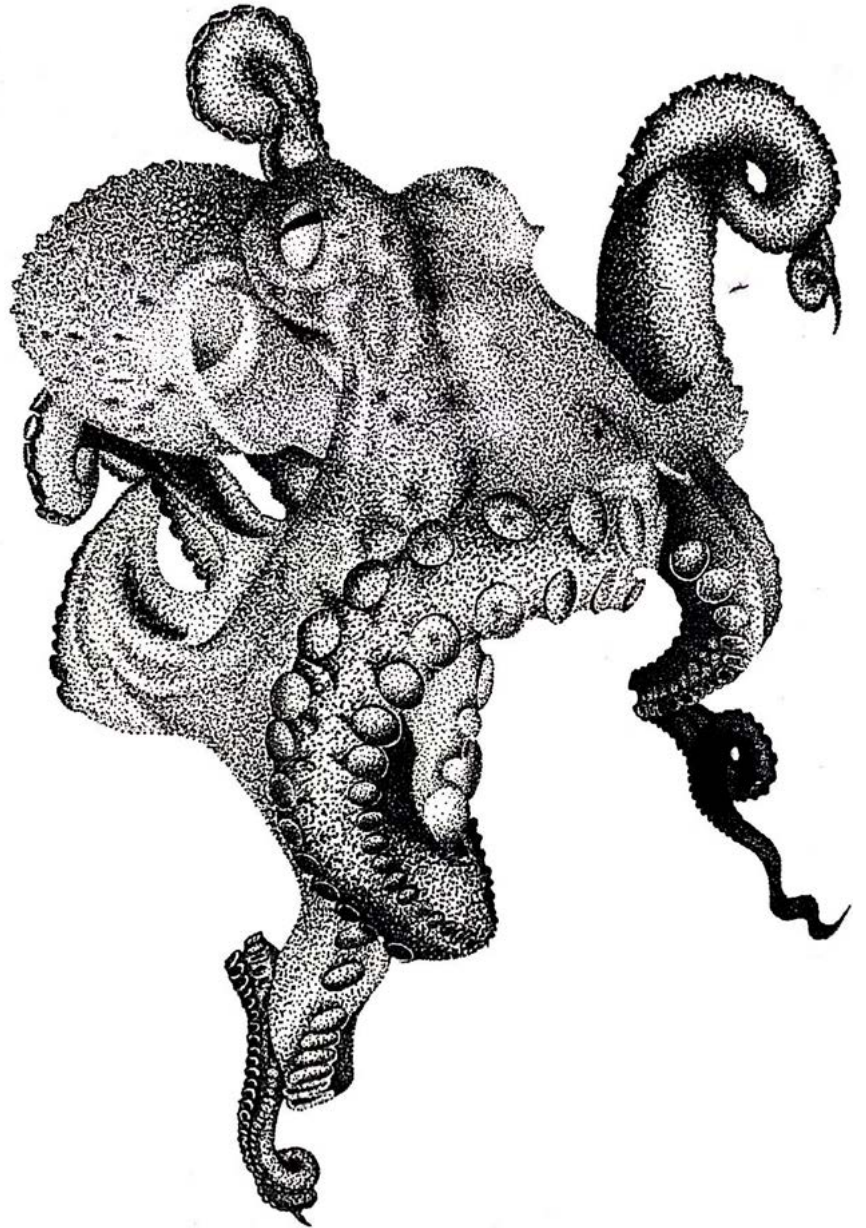
Sea of Faces

Alicia Estes

What was once a sea of
swirling faces,
Of oft which caused mixed
feelings of solitary,
Has since given way to one I
can embrace;
Thus, has that sea become
stationary.
It was as if time was stuck in
limbo,
Unable to move for what
seemed infinite
As our souls peered through
their windows,
And our scarlet cheeks
reached their limit.
Although we long to be in
unison,
Life's tornado keeps us apart,
And robs us of our oxygen
So that we may be weak at
heart.
Alas there is but one small
consolation,
That all along I had my
affirmation.

Title: Untitled

Sophie Bear



A Hymn to the Thief

Alyssa Nuckols

As they lower all of the life you
once were into the earth,
I gaze at your once vibrant face
with my innocent eyes.
You were sent away with
pictures of us to cherish
forever-
but what will I have of you to
remember after today?
Faith began to leave my body
through streams of loss,
yet I have always been taught
to trust the cross.

Through the haze, I can
remember your comforting
voice
telling me stories of the
vintage life; the days you
didn't ache.
We would do word searches,
puzzles, and enjoy our lives—
at nine years old I would have
never guessed you would
disappear
but when we sat there
emptying your apartment,
your life, every crumb,
all of those things you held so
close—gone. I was numb.

I reach up to hold your hand,
hoping to feel your warmth
but instead I feel the frosty
grip of death.
A woman who gleamed with

every pleasure of life,
sat before me still; never to
brush the world with her
words again.
They say that you don't suffer,
you're in a better place
yet they don't know how
delighted you were in this
space.

Memories that should be
sweeter than the finest treat
morphed into a stab at wonder
in the form of mortality.
You were my foundation, a
shoulder to bury my sadness in
until you were stolen from
those who needed you most.
The tears of vengeance often
burn within me,
praise Him they say; He will
heal all. Never— he's a thief.



Spider in the Pothos

Haley Mills

I wonder if Medusa hides
her face beneath the soil,
leaves turning to protect
herself,
like reptiles with scaled
spines.

Her vines drape over a bronze
stand,
the frame supports her
growth.
She guides herself and then
cascades
her locks towards the sun.

Arachne's daughter weaves a
veil
to shield the cursed gorgon.
She knows Athena watches on
to see her victims pain.

Betrayal

Kendal A. Walker

I waited for you—
five months to be exact.
You were across the oceans—
athwart the world.
Who knew what or who you
encountered
in those fatigues that flattered
you so well?
I was enamored.
I loved you then and I loathe
you still.
You were ambitious and
smartly employed.
You held good conversation
and my attention.
We told each other all things—
at least I thought we did.
I travelled home for your
return.
I sacrificed my freedom and
solitude in my own solitude—
all for you.
We were worlds apart
but tighter than triple-knotted
shoestrings.
Our bond frayed when you
arrived.
She was my former best friend.
In a drunken instant, girl code
was violated—
as were we and my trust.

In the states,
in our town,
Of all places,
of all people—
of all that could have been
done to harm me:
this.
You didn't even have the
decency
to tell me yourselves.
No defending morality.
I was even informed indirectly.
People thought it was I—
the mistress whose
responsibility it was
to prove herself.
It was over.
I craved you previously and I
hate you always.
I will never know if my new
love will lie the way you lied.
A year later I learned another
secret;
from you this time through
careless dialogue—
something else you had kept
from me.
There were two
two year olds—
when I only knew of one.



Happiness

Mathew Hammond

Once more she has vanished from my sight
Perhaps she truly is no more than a mirage
A fool's paradise
Sought after for eternity
But never held for more than mere moments
Often I hear tell of her though
As one might hear tales of other legends
The Garden of Eden or the fountain of youth
She, like that clandestine fountain
Is notoriously impossible to possess
Yet we never give up hope
We still search high and low
Collecting evidence of her existence
Shreds of proof that lead us in circles
Because to stop searching
To abandon hope of finding her
Is mankind's ultimate defeat.

Coffee

David Donaldson

Wake up And smell the .. .Regret and hope that
never existed. Too many choices to see it as simply
Black and white, When shades of grey Is what brings
us to life. Light and its reflections Giving us what we Need .
Debris In the eye of those Who chose to see Beauty ,Beware, Bewildered
Be there When timing Is perfect, But barely And near The end As we take
our last breath Crossing finishing lines. Writing Beginnings Don't half step.You're
running out of fuel ,Saying your tanks on E. An optimist would Say at least you're
not done ..Yet thankfully. Head up high Where praise Should be But little do they
know I'm down Begging on knees The cup is half full Fulfilling fate
You see ? don't be Blinded by the sun Open your eyes,
Wake up and smell ...The coffee

The Acedian Gaol

Zachariah Pippin

I – DUST AESTHETIC

I am not a poet.
I am a cigarette receptacle,
a transparent sac of meat and
hair
who absently plays with
words on a table.

Like a cat chasing
roaches, I swat them around,
random and vacant, drawing
drowsily
at a dry well, siphoning petty
pathos from dust.

III – FAKE CANCER

My chest hurts.
 I am convinced now
 that I am dying.
 Rotting and gangrenous.
 Piss and pus.
 Flesh golem.
 Stitched with cancer.
 Parasite ridden.
 Mom. Dad.
 Sorry I'm calling again
 just to let you know I'm dying.

II – BLUE LETTER DAY

Bags of trash lay in piles at my
feet
like teeth in a dead dog's bot-
tom jaw.
Midmorning light is frozen
solid in
dust and smoke through bro-
ken blinds.

Today is not quite right. The
air has turned
gray and soft, but heavy, laden
down with
fat-lidded yellow eyes. It's a
blue letter day.
The type of day for buying
something in a
reverie and taking it home to
hold it close.

IV – YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE

Purgatory is a pinstripe wall-
paper dragon,
and it smells faintly of the
elderly.

Milky axolotl eyes peer into
my peephole
and tap water drool drips in
the mail slot.

A bed is covered in unread
books, half-lit cigars,
secondhand pornography, and
me, sprawled
like a fat grubworm, hang-
over-squinting at the
burnt spot on the wall above
the baseboard.

In the still of the small hours,
Purgatory slinks
between my feet to whisper in
my ear.
I pat his lizard head, as he soft-
ly repeats,
“What you give the ether, the
ether gives to you.”



Title: Admirari
Leigh Ann Clark



Optic Neuritis

Sarah Smith

The world is fuzzy, and she
cannot see.
Her right eye looks just like
her left,
but the right sees only gray,
like a barren winter landscape.

Her right eye looks just like
her left,
and it all feels cold and dead,
like a barren winter landscape.
Her left eye windows the
world,

and it all feels cold and dead.
Finally, she understands depth
perception.
Her left eye windows the
world.
but the dimension shift makes
it hollow.

Finally, she understands depth
perception,
but the right sees only gray.
The dimension shift makes it
hollow.
The world is fuzzy, and she
cannot see.

Love

Dameyune Smith

On this cold fall morning,
I spot her from above.
The darling girl of mine,
Whom I call my love.
Attraction so strong,
It feels like fate.
When it's real love,
It is never too late.

Speak Soft

Zachariah Pippin

The cannibal is coming! With
hangdog eyes
and the wet oscillations of a
long, dripping
tongue peering out from
behind jagged teeth,
he'll uncoil his arms like
turgid snakes and paint
the hem of your dress with
sweat and meat grease.
His voice is like a thousand
stretching cicadas,
and the partition of his
cracked lips sprays the twin
odors of cheap tobacco and
corned beef.

Everything wrong with me is
knotted up in the
tangles of dry, unkempt brain
matter that sit in
lumpy haystacks behind my
true love's watery
horse eyes. Her hands mark
their trail across
my spine with an erratic row
of bulbous tumors.
Her fervor is greedy and
inelegant, a summer
shower leaking lukewarm rain
down my shirt, and
mine is a fat slug perched on a
wet collard leaf.

Amnesia
Michelle Aitken

Jackson wakes up one morning in an unfamiliar place, his head pounding and his limbs aching. All he can remember is a small bout of laughter, an electrifying hallway, and then nothing but darkness. From there, things spiral as Jackson tries to figure out how he got there and, more importantly, who he is. A strange man comes by, speaking soft words and assuring he's there to care for Jackson. But yet, the more Jackson talks to the man, the more Jackson grows increasingly wary and anxious to break out and go home. But, how can you go back to a place you don't even remember?

Scene 1

Jackson is sitting on a couch in a small room. He appears very disoriented. A small table sits in front of him with several magazines sprawled across it. A sparsely furnished kitchen adjacent.

The Counselor walks in and finds Jackson, head in hands.

COUNSELOR

Hello Jackson. How are you?

JACKSON

What's going on? Where am I? Who the fuck are you?

COUNSELOR

(rubbing Jackson's back) It's okay. You just forgot who you were. Welcome back.

JACKSON

Forgot who I was? (smacking the Counselor's hand away) Wh—what the hell do you mean?

COUNSELOR

Hey, calm down. It's normal.

JACKSON

Normal?

COUNSELOR

(walking to the kitchen) I wouldn't expect you to understand, it being your first time and all.

JACKSON

First time? You're not making any sense right now.

COUNSELOR

(opening the fridge) You want some breakfast?

JACKSON

(confused and angry) Wh—? Breakfast?

COUNSELOR

(muffled, rummaging the fridge) Yeah man, I'm starving. Got some eggs, bacon, (holds up juice carton and shakes it) a little bit of OJ. You want some?

JACKSON

Would you please explain to me what the hell is going on!

COUNSELOR

(taking various breakfast items out of the fridge and setting them on the counter) I'm making breakfast. (closes the fridge)

JACKSON

(raising voice) Would you just listen to me! (slams fists on table)

COUNSELOR

(turning on the stove) I am listening, Jackson. I told you already to just calm down. It really isn't that hard to understand.

JACKSON

(standing up and approaching the Counselor) Not that hard? You walk in here and tell me "Hey bro, chill the fuck out, you just forgot who you were supposed to be, by the way, want a fucking poptart?" How the hell am I supposed to be calm about any of this?

COUNSELOR

You need to calm down. It'll all make sense in due time. Just take a seat and we'll get some food and medicine in you and you'll feel better.

JACKSON

(grabbing the Counselor by the shirt) I'm not hungry, you asshole! I'm freaking out over here and you won't even give me a straight answer! Where the hell am I? What is going on? Who the hell are you?

COUNSELOR

(calmly) I'm your counselor.

JACKSON

My counselor?

COUNSELOR

Yes, I'm your counselor. I'm here to help.

JACKSON

What the hell are you talking about? Give me answers damnit!

COUNSELOR

(grabbing Jackson's hand) Jackson, let go. Just listen to me. It's going to be okay. Let's get some food and medicine in you.

JACKSON

(tightening his grip) Don't. Tell. Me. What. To. Do.

COUNSELOR

I warned you.

JACKSON

Wh—?

The Counselor grabs Jackson and pins him against the fridge.

COUNSELOR

Just listen to me and things won't be hard.

JACKSON

I'm gonna kick your ass.

COUNSELOR

(chuckles) I'd like to see you try.

The Counselor stabs Jackson in the neck with a loaded syringe. Jackson struggles briefly, then starts to slump down.

COUNSELOR

We'll try again tomorrow, okay?

The Counselor throws Jackson's arm around his neck and helps him walk.

JACKSON

(slurring) Wh-what did you do to me?

COUNSELOR

It's for your own good.

The Counselor helps Jackson offstage.

END SCENE

Scene 3

Lights up on the Counselor and Jackson sitting across from each other in Jackson's room. The Counselor holds a clipboard, making notes as they talk.

COUNSELOR

You should start coming to the sessions, Jackson. It would truly help you.

JACKSON

No, what I should do is get the hell out of here and go home.

COUNSELOR

Home?

JACKSON

Yes, home.

COUNSELOR

Where's home, Jackson?

JACKSON

(shaking his head) Nah. Don't start your little mind tricks on me. I ain't gon' fall for that shit.

COUNSELOR

What mind tricks? I was just curious where home is for you. (beat) Would you like some tea?
(walks over and pours two cups of tea)

JACKSON

(scoffs) You're so fucking weird.

COUNSELOR

I find that tea always helps calm the nerves. (places tea in front of Jackson) Sugar?

JACKSON

(mocking) Yes, honey?

COUNSELOR

Charming.

JACKSON

You can't make me talk. I don't trust you. Hell, I don't even know your name.

COUNSELOR

(sitting down) That's not important.

JACKSON

The hell it isn't!

COUNSELOR

(sips tea) It's rather good tea.

JACKSON

(gets up and walks around) You still haven't even told me where I am...

COUNSELOR

Not too hot.

JACKSON

Where I came from...

COUNSELOR

Could use a bit of sugar, though.

JACKSON

How you know my name...

COUNSELOR

I should try chamomile next.

JACKSON

(turning on the Counselor, yelling) Are you even fucking listening to me!

Jackson stares at the Counselor desperately, shaking.

COUNSELOR

(stares for a moment, sighs, sets tea down) Your wallet.

JACKSON

(exasperated) What?

COUNSELOR

Your wallet. It was in your back pocket.

Jackson frantically pats his pockets, searching.

COUNSELOR

Key word "was."

JACKSON

You took my wallet?

COUNSELOR

We take all personal belongings and keep them safe while the patients recuperate. If you remember too much all at once, it could damage your cerebral cortex greatly. We want you to heal safely and properly.

JACKSON

Give it back.

COUNSELOR

I can't do that.

JACKSON

It's mine. Give it back.

COUNSELOR

(calmly) Jackson.

JACKSON

No! Stop! I don't even recognize that's my name! I don't even know why I'm here. I don't know where here is. I don't know where I came from. I-I don't know anything. (falls back in his seat defeated)

COUNSELOR

Have you taken your medicine today, Jackson?

Jackson shakes his head. The Counselor reaches in his pocket and pulls out a pill bottle and shakes a pill into his hand. He holds out his hand to Jackson to give him a pill.

COUNSELOR

Here. This will help the confusion and pain. Take it with the tea.

Jackson grabs the pill tentatively, then takes it with the tea.

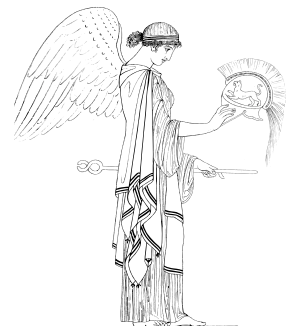
COUNSELOR

Give it a few minutes to take effect.

JACKSON

You're right. The tea needs sugar.

The Counselor chuckles. Lights fade out.



The Falling of Harmony

Tye DeVore

Premise: This play is the modernized tale of two brothers; Osiris, the ancient Egyptian god of the dead and Set, god of chaos and war. Osiris was a great ruler of Egypt and admired by his people. Set was jealous of this and wanted to rule. So, Set tricked his brother into a box and dumped him in the Nile. This led to Isis becoming upset, finding her husband's body and hiding him away so she could do a proper burial. But Set found the hidden body, cut it into fourteen pieces and scattered them around Egypt so that they would never be found again. Isis finds them all by using her vision as a bird and put Osiris back together and brought him back to life. Osiris says he can't stay in the world of living because he had died and that is how he becomes the god of the dead. Set oversees Egypt up until Isis gives birth to Horus, who goes, and fights Set when he comes of age.

Scene: The Party

(The scene opens up on a beautifully decorated courtyard. Lights are strung around and there is a table with an extravagant feast next to a dance floor with a stage and a small string band. People mill about and talking as music softly plays in the background. The mood is light and cordial as people enjoy the party. SET is watching the entrance intently, looking expectant.

OSIRIS enters the courtyard, looking around before spotting SET. He crosses to him.)

SET

Brother, you made it. (He opens his arms wide, almost like he is expecting a hug.) It wouldn't be much of a party without the guest of honor.

(OSIRIS waves away SET's open arms and SET drops them.)

OSIRIS

How could I refuse. What kind of mayor would I be?

SET

A pretty terrible one, I would say.

OSIRIS

You joke.

SET

Come, lets enjoy the party. There's great food, dancing, and even some games planned.

OSIRIS

That sounds wonderful. It will be nice to just relax and enjoy my night. What is the occasion to make you throw this grand party and making me the guest of honor?

SET

I can't celebrate my brother? You are considered the greatest mayor in Egypt. No, in all the world. What more is there to celebrate? (He places his arm over OSIRIS's shoulder.)

OSIRIS

(Shakes SET's arm off.) Yes, well... I am going to go enjoy the festivities. (Walks away towards the banquet table.)

SET

(Scowls and watches OSIRIS.) Enjoy it while you still can. (Grabs the elbow of FRIEND as they are walking by).

CHIGARU

Yes?

SET

Is everything ready?

CHIGARU

It is.

SET

Good, we will start soon. Tell the others.

(FRIEND grins and nods, going into the crowd of people. People begin dancing and having a good time as SET watches on the edges of the crowd.)

(After a few moments of partying, SET makes his way to the stage, nodding to the guests around him as he does. When he stands up on the stage, he clears his throat. The guests look up at him expectantly.)

SET

Dear friends, thank you for gathering for this wonderful party I have thrown for the guest of honor, my brother. (The crowd claps). We are here to celebrate his accomplishments as mayor of our wonderful city and how great he has ruled over everyone. I mean, I guess people would call him the best for a reason.

OSIRIS

(He gives a small, polite smile.) Please brother, let's not make a big deal of it.

SET

Oh, but I should. Look at all the people surrounding you who agree with me.

CROWD

(Cheers) To Osiris, the best mayor!

SET

See, look how they cheer.

OSIRIS

Please, let's just move on.

SET

Of course, of course. (Clears his throat.) Now, where was I. (Pauses and pretends to think.) Oh, yes. How great my brother is. He has helped put the city back in order and the farmers are thriving.

ing. And who doesn't love fresh food, am I right. So, in order to celebrate my dear, dear brother.

We have this wonderful game to help close out the evening.

(The crowd cheers as a box is brought out onto the stage. SET waves his hands to settle the crowd down as the lid of the box is lifted. Everyone silences down.)

SET

(Clears his throat.) Now, this final game is a little different than the usual. For this game, we will see who fits perfectly into this box. Whoever does, will win the final game for the evening!

(Smiles as the crowd cheers.) Now then, whose first?

OUBSTET

(Steps forward from the crowd.) I would love to go first, Set.

SET

(Grins.) Ah, Oubstet. Always eager to go first.

OUBSTET

Of course, you know I love a good game.

SET

Very well. (Motions OUBSTET to the front of the stage.) You can be the first to try your luck. (OUBSTET walks to the stage and climbs into the box and lays down, pretending to try and fit inside the box. When he realizes he won't fit, he walks off the stage dejectedly.)

SET

Oh, tough luck. It appears Oubstet doesn't fit inside the box. Would anyone else like to attempt to fit into the box?

CHIGARU

(Steps forward with a wide smile.) Let me try, I'm sure I'll fit better than Oubstet. (Smacks OUBSTET on the back in a friendly manner as he passes.)

OUBSTET

Good luck with that.

SET

Well then, looks like we have another contender. (Motions for CHIGARU to come on stage.)

Let's see how you do, Chigaru.

CHIGARU

(Steps on stage and lays down in the box, attempting to fit.) I was sure I'd fit. (Tries a few more times and then stands up and steps out.) I give up! (Storms off)

SET

What a shame, I was sure he'd fit. (Sighs.) Oh well, guess we should try another. (Looks around the crowd and focuses on OSIRIS.) I think we should try the guest of honor!

(The crowd cheers and makes way for OSIRIS to make his way to the stage.)

OSIRIS

(Makes his way hesitantly to the stage.) I'm not sure. This seems a litt-

SET

Come on, brother. It's fun! We're testing your fate.

OSIRIS

(Steps onto the stage and sighs.) Very well. Let's get this over with.

SET

Perfect. (Motions for OSIRIS to lay in the box.)

(OSIRIS lays in the box and fits perfectly. SET grabs the top of the lid and slams it down, locking OSIRIS in the box. As if on cue, members from the crowd came up to help finish locking the box.)

SET

Good work. Now that he's there, take him away. We will get rid of him tonight.

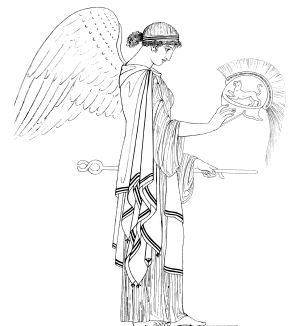
(The members nod and carry the box off stage. SET begins to laugh manically.)

SET

The office will be mine.

(The lights fade out.)

END SCENE



Open Water
Tony George

(Lights up on the three friends, MICAH, ALEX, and SESSI, running on stage from stage left to what appears to be the exact same place. All three are out of breath. It appears to be reaching nightfall on the island and you can see this in the lighting.)

MICAH:
Oh my God!

ALEX:
Oh shit. I'm tired.

MICAH:
What the fuck was that?

SESSI:
I don't know. It looked like a bear!

ALEX:
On an island?

MICAH:
Have you been on an island before?

ALEX:
No.

MICAH:
Then why do you presume to know what creatures could be on one? You're not Jane Goodall.

SESSI:
Jane Goodall actually worked with gorill -

MICAH & ALEX
(In unison) Shut up!

ALEX:
Damn, it looks like it's getting dark. We better set up camp while we can.

MICAH:
Hey! Hey, what if that bear gorilla comes back?



SESSI:
We have to stay calm. We'll figure it out. Just don't freak out on me.

MICAH:
What do we need?

SESSI:
Anything we can find. Wood for a fire. Probably some dry leaves as well to keep it burning. Hmmmm but do we really want to light a fire if that thing is still out there? What if it sees it? Sees us?

ALEX:
We might need to make weapons as well.

MICAH:
Let's just sit down, think for a bit and rest. We've been running all day. If we don't rest, we're going to run ourselves straight into the ground.

(All three of them sit down on the sand, the rocks, or the fallen treewood in the area and commune. They barely have any water or food and it is clear to see that the situation has only gotten worse since the first day)

(After a pause.)

SESSI:
Rarely do I ever say this, but I think I actually miss home.

ALEX:
How can you miss that hell hole? (Pause) Oh, we need to remind ourselves tomorrow that we need to get more food and water.

MICAH:
I think our stomachs are going to do that for us.

SESSI:

Guys, seriously. You have to miss home after all this shit that's happened.

MICAH:

Of course we miss home, Sessi.

ALEX:

With as many people as there are in my house, I was starving just as much there as I am here.

SESSI:

Don't you miss your mom, though?

MICAH:

I sure as hell miss mine.

ALEX:

I miss mine too.

MICAH:

My mom would be cleaning and cooking and stuff and I would just come up behind her and hug her and she would be like "Boy, if you don't get off of me. You know I don't like hugs." (slow giggles) I knew I annoyed the shit out of her but she loved them hugs. (Pause) I guess I do miss home a little bit.

ALEX:

I guess my life isn't that bad either.

SESSI:

Hey, do we have any more water?

MICAH:

Yeah, here.

(SESSI begins to drink water. Not slowly either)

Make sure that you don't (snatches water out of his mouth) what the fuck are you doing?!

SESSI:

Drinking some water.

MICAH:

We are not at home anymore. You take sips, not gulps. You're acting like we're surrounded by water.

(SESSI and ALEX look at each other) (They begin laughing)

Clean, fresh water, you assholes. Y'all are not funny.

ALEX:

We'll get some more water in the morning.

MICAH:

I know, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

SESSI:

You're right. I'll take little bitty sips from now on.

(Pause)

ALEX:

Okay, I hate to be the one to say it, but you guys smell disgusting. And I'm assuming since you smell like that, I probably smell the exact same way. So, I propose that since we are going to be so close to some water tomorrow

SESSI:

We will take a bath tomorrow too!

MICAH:

Wait, wait, wait, wait. Now, I'm as thirsty as the next person but I don't think that I'm going to drink some water I just took a bath in and I for damn sure ain't drinking no water you just took a bath in.

ALEX:

We're just going to find some water tomorrow and figure it out then, okay?

SESSI:

Okay.

MICAH:

Okay. (Whispers) Still not drinking bath water.

SESSI:

We understood the first time you said it.

ALEX:

I am so tired, man

MICAH:

Me too. (Pause) We need to get some sleep before tomorrow. It's going to be a long day.

(Laying down on the ground)

ALEX:

This is so random but Cecil, do you remember that time when we were taking that test in history class and Sessi was the first person to turn it in (can't help laughing in the moment) and Mrs. Smith handed it back and said "Could you please try?"

MICAH:

(Laughing incredibly hard) Yeah, yeah or when

SESSI:

Could we please not do this right now and go to sleep?

(both begin to cool down and stop laughing)

Good night!

ALEX:

Good night!

MICAH:

May we rest in peace!

(Both MICAH and ALEX burst into laughter)

SESSI:

Y'all need to chill before that gorilla bear comes and then who's going to be laughing?

MICAH:

Me, because I'm gonna let it eat me.

(ALEX begins to look worried)

ALEX:

Um, so guys we're all about to go to sleep right?

MICAH:

Yep.

SESSI:

Yep.

ALEX:

Which means all of our eyes will be shut?

SESSI:

Yep.

MICAH:

Are these rhetorical questions?

ALEX:

Yo, who is going to be keeping lookout?

SESSI:

Oh my god. We have been here a whole week and no one has been keeping lookout?!

MICAH:

No! We're lucky we aren't dead.

SESSI:

Well who is going to do it tonight?

(MICAH and SESSI look away)

Come on guys, seriously.

(Looks at MICAH)

MICAH:



I ain't doing it. I need my beauty sleep.

SESSI:
Alex?

ALEX:
Oh, I just don't want to.



SESSI:
Ugh. Fine. Fine! I will keep lookout for a little bit then I am waking you both up.

MICAH:
Great!

ALEX:
Fine by me.

MICAH:
We love you!

SESSI:
Shut up and go to sleep

SESSI:
(looks up to the sky) Whoever is listening, whoever is out there please get us out of here. I can't imagine what this is for or what we did to deserve it but please. I miss my home. My family. My friends. I thought I would be able to do it but I can't. We are dying. We barely have any food, any water. I know I haven't been the best person in the world but I am trying. I am trying so so hard. Please help us. (Sleeps)

MICAH:
(light up on MICAH looking up to the sky) Dear God, I honestly don't know what I did to deserve this. I can imagine those other two did something to make us wind up here. Just kidding. I thought we were gonna die here but now I don't know. We are fighting really hard to stay alive. They are trying harder than me but we are trying. I love them both and even if I've done something disappointing please don't let my friends die here. They are the best people I know. Amen. (Sleeps)

ALEX:

(lights up on ALEX) Dear God, keep us safe from harm and allow us to continue to walk together until we find our way out of here. Thank you for watching over us at all times because I don't know if we would still be here if you hadn't been intervening. We can and we will make it out with your help. I just know it. Amen. (Sleeps)



Catching Sunset

Louise F. Gunawan

Sons of the Titan

Tony George

He stood before them. A Titan. His pale skin glistened with stars emitting light brighter than the sun. He carried a large black scythe and an hourglass that floated beside him. His gray beard flowed down to his torso. He looked forward to look into the eyes of his three sons. “My sons,” he finally said, “you would draw your blades against your own father” The tallest one spoke. “Without thinking about it for a second”. He wore a silver armor that stopped at his waistline which continued on as a blue toga. He held a golden three point trident and aimed it at the old Titan standing before him. He had tan skin and brown curly hair that rested just below his ears.

His blue-green eyes matched the waves of the ocean.

“There is nothing you can do to escape the pits of Tartarus, you evil bastard” spoke the next. For this brother was bit shorter. He wore a pitch black armor and his eyes were fire red. You could see the anger seething from his eyes as he barked at his father. He held a pitch black broadsword with a silver hilt in one hand. In the other, he held a black helmet that seemed to have embers attached to it. His hair was long and black and traveled down his bone white face to rest on his back.

“You are all idiots,” muttered the Titan. “He will create the destruction of the world. Can’t you see it? Hades, I know you have seen the visions of this man and Poseidon, your homes will soon be destroyed. All seven of your kingdoms will fall.”

“You’re just angry, old man. That’s typically what happens when you don’t have any more control.” said the third brother, as he emerged from behind Hades and Poseidon. He wore golden armor and a circled crown dazzled with diamonds. He had golden, fair skin and blonde hair that came to rest on his shoulders. His eyes were gold just like his father’s. He held a lightning bolt in his hand and his entire body was engulfed in sparks. “You’ve become weak and traditional. Your power is leaving you. You’re not worthy to live in this world. Your Titans are dead. Your family is dead.”

The Titan stepped forward, “You are my family!”

“Yet that didn’t stop you from trying to kill me, did it?” replied the third brother.

“Zeus . . . I . . .” whispered the Titan.

“Don’t utter my name,” Zeus interrupted, “Father Time? Pathetic. You’re a waste Cronus and that is why today you will die. Begging won’t stop us from taking your head.” The Titan straightened himself. His long white toga covered the lower half of his body while his muscular torso was left exposed. He was gigantic, a common feature amongst Titans. He reached his hand above his head and removed the silver crown and set it on the ground.

“I have tried to bargain with you. You never listen. None of you. You all want power but you don’t want the responsibility.” said Cronus as he lifted his scythe towards his sons. “Zeus. Poseidon. Hades. I’m so sorry, my sons” A tear fell from the Titan’s cheek. “Come!” His voice echoed throughout the large marble building. They all stood there just yards away from each other. Zeus lifted his lightning bolt, followed by Poseidon with his spear and Hades with

his sword and helmet. Poseidon was the first to run towards his father. He lifted his trident and struck a blow at his head. However, Cronus, in a flash, took three steps back and Poseidon drove his trident straight into the ground. Poseidon looked up to see Cronus's large figure. How did he move that fast? Before he even had time to react, Cronus drove his foot into his stomach with enough force to send him flying backwards.

"Poseidon" screamed the brothers.

Zeus ran over to Poseidon to help him.

"Brother, are you okay?"

"Yeah I'm fine." said Poseidon, catching his breath, "I didn't even see him move again" Zeus replied, "He's the Titan of Time. He can control his own speed. If you're not careful, you'll miss your own death. Be smart, Poseidon"

"A fight is still happening." said Hades, looking back at his brothers "Get up Pose----"

"You should really focus on things in front of you," the voice of Cronus whispered in his ear. Hades turned around to feel the immediate sting of his father's fist hitting his chin, flinging him into the air. He landed right next to his brothers. Killing their father wasn't going to be easy. Zeus stood up. His brothers followed suite. Zeus lunged forward quickly with the tip of his bolt and struck at his father's chest. With immense speed, Cronus sidestepped Zeus and prepared to swing his scythe straight into his son's abdomen. As he swung he felt a force knock him backwards. Cronus' head swung back and forth as he winced in pain. He fell to his knees. Hades appeared in front of him. "Hephaestus, the master forger and son of Zeus has given us the means to kill you Cronus. The helm of invisibility. You can't fight what you can't see"

As Hades kept talking and mocking Cronus, the ground began to shake and from below droplets of water began to rise and then from beneath a large wave emerged and launched itself towards Cronus. He looked just in time to see Poseidon smiling, controlling the water, manipulating it to engulf him. The water hit him with a devastating force, circling his body and wrapping him in a cocoon of water, drowning him. His sons were extremely powerful, he could tell that.

"That isn't it old man!" yelled Zeus. He could barely make him out looking through the prison of water he was trapped in. His thunderbolt was glowing. He smiled at his father. Cronus knew exactly what he was about to do. Cronus closed his eyes and thought about his memories of his young sons practicing combat, and tactics. They were always different. Zeus believed he had to lead everything. Naturally born to tell others what to do. Poseidon. He was too cool to learn anything, yet he had the most potential of the three. He had the earth and the oceans at his command. Lastly, Hades. Hades the hothead. Jealous of both his brothers yet just as powerful in his own way.

He opened his eyes to see his son, Zeus placing the thunderbolt against the prison of water. Cronus shook uncontrollably as the lightning struck him. Poseidon and Hades watched in fascination as they witnessed their brother's power with killing intent once more. Cronus slowly closed his eyes and passed on into the time and space from which he was born. Poseidon dropped the cage of water and Cronus landed on the cold marble floor with life seeping out of him breath by breath.

I'm sorry,
 I wish I would have come.
 I couldn't see you suffer. The pain, intense; choking.
 Years aren't enough. How dare death. How dare I... I—me
 Broken. Crying. Red eyes, tight chest. Clammy. Hot. Moisture.
 Stares...I should... Hold them back now. Yes. Where are you? Are you anywhere?
 Spirit? Angel? Mad. Why? They are looking at me now. I need to leave. I need to see you.
 I can't. Your blue eyes, scratchy smile. Gone— Where? I don't know. Still- No one does.
 We would watch La Bamba. We laughed, but- cry. Holidays with you... bright. Now it's Dull.
 Help. Your hugs, Bob Seger. Temptations. Riding to school. You let me go- my bike.
 Go? We blew dandelions. We made wishes. I want to have a wish now. See you. Hold.
 In the car I force myself to listen to our old favorite songs and cry in agony— anger. Yes.
 I deserve it. You needed me. A goodbye. I didn't. Couldn't. Every day I think... you
 They let you die. No—I did. Me. Your grave. Not one. Urn? Too sad. Ashes,
 We all fall down. I have pictures, memories, times captured. Enough?
 Never. You were. Now—not? God. No. let this happen?
 Believe? Happiness. Fury. Depre- too common.
 Blame? Misery? Died. Left. Grey.
 Look up

One
 latte
 For Alyssa.
 Ok. Leaving now.
 Tears vanish
 I'm sorry
 Papa.

Grabbing Coffee

Alyssa Nuckols



Intertwiner

Stephen Schaefer

Oh, how trite! Your little
mortals suffer
As you dream of lovely tunes
to sing!
And here I am your lost
intertwiner...
Preaching mathematics is the
thing.
An eye hovering between
three mirrors
Infinity is all you will see
As I dabble with fallen others-
The mere thought of you
extracts a fee.
Isn't this sunny day a fine one!
It's good to see you out and
about!
I'll love you when the hardest
work is done
Having woven equations into
doubt.
You seem to be suspended
from wires...
(I turn all your followers to
liars...)



Rendition of Aphrodite

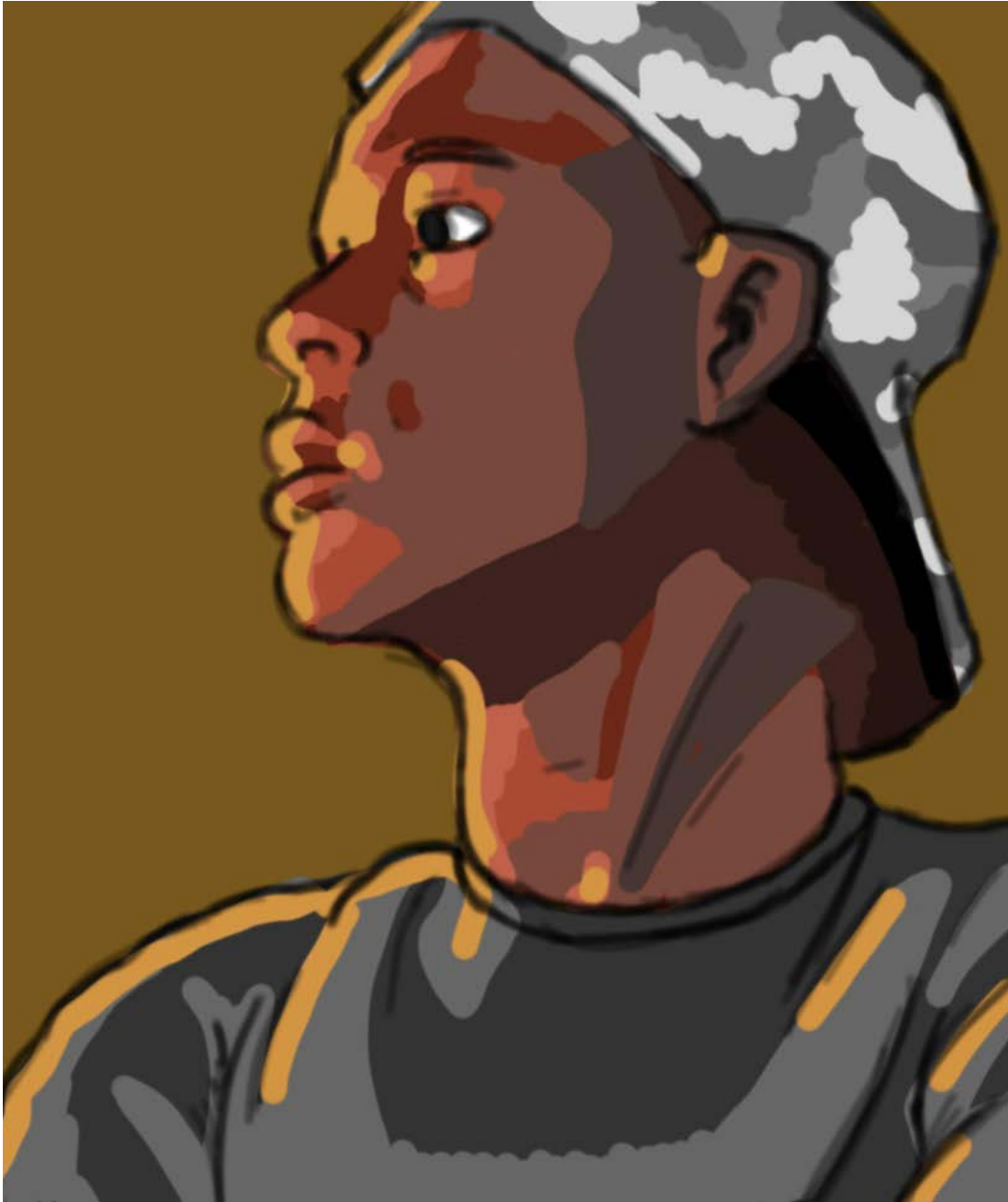
Jane Mayes

“Good luck,” spoke the Titan.

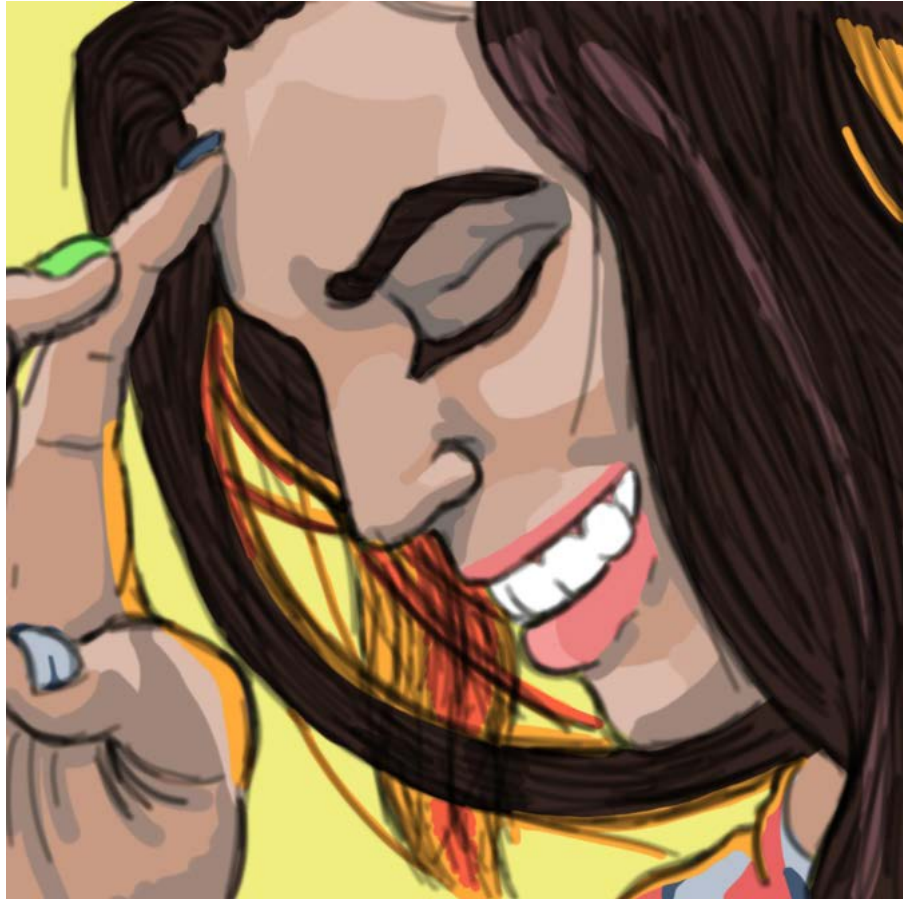
“What did you say?” said Zeus

“I wasn’t talking to you,” replied Cronus. “Good luck Hades and Poseidon. Your brother has dragged the pits of Tartarus onto the surface. You all will die. These humans are destructive. Don’t forget your father not only controls time but can see it unfold. Zeus will get you all——”

Cronus ceased talking as he found the thunderbolt of Zeus in his chest. Zeus looked into his father’s golden eyes like he would look into a mirror and watched him take his last inhale of life. He removed the thunderbolt from his father’s chest and turned to face his brothers. Their reign had begun.



Portrait #1
Nick Yeend



Portrait #2
Nick Yeend

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