



MERCYHURST
serena godoy

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The background of the page is white with numerous red ink splatters of varying sizes scattered across it. A large, detailed grey dandelion seed head is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, with its stem extending downwards. In the bottom right corner, there are two smaller black dandelion seed heads.

BONUS CONTENT

* **The Lighthouse** | Samantha McDonald

* **Pieces of Growth** | Lata Vishesh

* **Surreal Self Portrait** | Eleandra Casane

* **Potash Infographic** | Anne Micale

* **Musical Selections** | D'Angelo Department
of Music

* **Dance Selections** | Dance Department

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ORANGE

choreographer: Ainsley Dunning

Music: "Plan & Elevation: I. The Herbaceous Border" and "Plan & Elevation: V. The Beech Tree"

Composed by Caroline Shaw

Performed by Attacca Quartet

Courtesy of Nonesuch Records

By arrangement with Warner Music Group Film & VT Licensing

Text: "The Orange" by Wendy Cope

Speaker: Marley Ramon

Dancers: Mia Semieraro and MiKayla Sharp

Music: "Hey Mami" and "Come Down" by Sylvan

Costumes and design in collaboration with Belle Perkins

Dancers: Isabella Johnson, Nadia Stronkowski, Madison Wanamaker, Elodie DeVos, and Kenzie Krommes

REMOVING THE PEDESTAL

choreographer: Moira Sullivan



View online at mercyhurst.edu/lumen

ODE TO MY JOY

jonah marshell

Warm. Bright. Elegant.

The waves of sound rush throughout the space,
echoing in their triumphant melodies, and
ricocheting into haunted nothings.

The words not spoken are understood through the voice of my instrument.

Gold. Brash. Beautiful.

The saxophone shimmers in the light as its
wailing tone pierces through the air like an arrow through silk.

My thoughts, once swarming my mind, buzzing like a hive of bees,
disturbed,

now fall silent. Brought to ease by the beauty of music.

The sea of black transforms into a fading sunset,

painting the sky with warm oranges,

lining the horizon of a deep blue ocean.

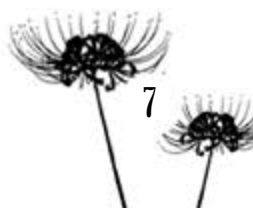
As the performance comes to an end, I take a breath,

my meditative mindset broken only

as the eruption of applause sends thunder through my brain.

My words now understood,

my love now shared with the world.



LITTLE SISTER

katherine michienzi

The lilac blossom
sharing sunshine
with me
Please be more
persuasive to the rain
and a better
friend to the bees
Remember
thaw comes slowly
and July heat may
hug too tightly
And even while
sparrows
distract me
I am with you



COLD DICE

marley ramon

A king is typically gilded; Orphemeral is something else entirely. There isn't much of the man that isn't covered in some form of gemstone, crystal, or shining metal. He sits motionless on a plush throne. Olione watches from her place in line; she's counted the exact number of times he's moved in the past hour. Eighteen. Every time he moves even a wrist, the light refraction changes, bouncing from him to the many walls and fixtures adorning his reception area. Nineteen. The king spins the band on his right ring finger and a man a few places up from her shuffles in his spot — moving the reflected gold light from his eyes. The king is very hard to look at for long.

Olione does not avert her eyes. Not once. She can't afford to. The man speaking to King Orphemeral gasps at something Orphemeral says. Orphemeral allows his eye to wander from the man to his waitstaff, his prosthetic remaining fixed in place, relentlessly boring into the devastated man. His right eye — a terribly cruel-looking icy blue chalcedony stone — is lined with iridescent white gems. Selenite, diamond, obsidian: his eye is beautiful, a force of nature to be under. The goldsmithing is incandescent. Olione wishes she could study the artist behind it.

The closest servant — shoes clicking evenly along the pearlescent floors — beckons the man only once before tugging at his sleeve. The peasant allows himself to be led from the floor, waterline heavy with something unwon.

A woman, shaking in a stained dress, takes her cue to advance. She bows quickly and lightly, feet moving with practiced ease. Olione can only barely see her feet beneath the low and ragged hemline but they cross quickly. Bouncing lightly, her body settles at the nearby table like skimmed cream. Olione doesn't think the woman's said one word before tucking herself into the seat.

Finally, finally, the king moves. He moves like a mountain, each clothing plane pushing against and out. There's enough weight to each fabric face that Olione should be half-convinced they'll split at the seams like tectonic plate proper, but they don't, and she feels a swell of pride through the base of her heels. The king rumbles with laughter, loud and confident like a hardly-realized sorcerer; he rumbles like the rolling thunder barely contained.

The king moves, and the sun moves with him, light coiling every which way. He settles at the table a few paces from his throne. At least a degree, he shifts slightly from King Orphemeral to Appolyon. Olione can tell who will and won't be heard today by the few that step forward to see a better look and those that step back. The waiting, tilted on their axis, should just go home; they haven't any business with his brilliance. There is an ease induced by the still-unsettled light, a comfort that relaxes like dust against a painting.

"She's chosen seven suits, classic off-white."

"It's not such a bad choice; they say it's got the highest odds," a pair of figures whisper just ahead of Olione. She's not quite sure what they're here for, but it's plain to see they haven't considered the gamble. Pity — dry pleaders almost never succeed. "I've heard if you know your maths, it's got the only real shot of beating the crown."

"See that white dress? She knows math."

They are stupid. Olione doesn't shake her head in any discernable way, but her jaw sets against itself instead. The woman is from the upper-class all right: her neckline is too low for her collarbones to be bare as they are, and her earlobes sag with unfilled stretched holes. Olione notes that they're pulling to about fourteen millimeters; she was decently well off. That is a woman who carries herself as if she should be adorned. She probably was at one point, though the skirt line makes it clear she's forsaken her laundering service, and she's here, unsure of exactly what to do with her hands. Off-white: a crude description for her dress and lost class status.

The two men gossiping ahead of Olione are right enough that the woman had money, but they don't know anything about seven suits, not really. The woman in white isn't playing a dealer or some lofty crown. She's sat across from Appolyon Orphemeral and she is going to lose.

Olione noticed the white dress, she saw the high waistline cutting just below the chest, she saw the browning stitches and she saw the empty track along the left sleeve where the ribbon is supposed to be. This woman is not rich right now; she might be educated, but more significantly, she is desperate. And Olione doubts that woman is choosing this game because of personal skill. The woman's brown hair does appear like it would be blonde with a wash; she will likely be fine barring she knows when to set down the cards.

The woman fails her trick, drawing several cards; maybe she will be bad enough to call it early. It takes a bad gambler or the best gambler to call it early. A weight fills Olione's hands like a faucet, and she is quite sure she is neither. From where she's standing — several paces ahead after a few left for the beginning of a game — she can see cards that the blonde woman is holding. She can watch the king barely move and she knows exactly what she would do in the woman's place. Olione itches to move the cards herself, to sort through the horrendous organization the woman's using and carefully pull the numbers down. But seven suits is a fool's game against Appolyon, and it's made all the more clear by another failed trick punctuating her thoughts.

The woman is crying, though trying very well to not let it interrupt anything. She moves one wrist to hurriedly push away some tears, before going right back into the game, biting her lip as she does so. Appolyon, for all his flaws, does not antagonize the woman. It's likely the game isn't engaging enough for him to bother. Seven suits for all its chance in drawing cards, is a game of skill. Carelessly, Appolyon takes trick after trick. He quickly loses cards.

The woman is no longer subtly weeping; she doesn't bother to brush her cheeks and she struggles to sort through her cards. Appolyon moves in clear mistake. Olione is dumbfounded: he has — quite intentionally — provided the blubbing off-white with a chance. He wants to see if she will take it. She clearly doesn't see it, nearly picking up a three of iron. The weight in Olione's hands move before the thought crosses enough axons to reach her brain. Olione has left the line, and the eyes of the room have found her.

The king says nothing for a second's edge. He begins to open his mouth, showing several completely unique teeth. Appolyon has given Olione the moment of clear mistake. He wants to see if she will take it.

Olione has no time to waste, no seconds she can afford to lose. There's a livewire force behind breaking the crowd meniscus; she pushes on. A guard standing behind the table steps forward, his armor fighting to shine dully besides King Orphemeral. The guard's spear tips down naturally as he moves, but Appolyon stops him. The king's hand pulls taut and the guard settles back into place. Olione does not speak, she does not curtsy, she does not think to. Her clothes are clean but faded blue. It's clear that the dress is durable, made for working hands; Olione couldn't carry civil society rules aloft if she tried. It does not matter here. The king can already tell she does not have this information and Olione has only a second before her chances are dashed.

That's the half of it. In the other, a very real voice in Olione's head knows why she stepped out of line.

She does not ask. Olione takes a card from the hand that the woman is holding and drops it on the pile. Appolyon shifts in his seat, but he does not correct her behavior. The golden king lays a card of his own on the table.

Olione wins her trick. And the next. It's not enough to make up for the deficit that the woman put her in, but something sparks in Appolyon's eye. He sits forward. Gilded joints coming together like plate armor. There's a glint in his one good eye, there's something of a fox in Olione's pupils. There's a sentiment that both parties recognize. Something dangerous and poignant: a mirror's portrait in the knife blade. The king sits forward and the room moves with him. Small squares of light jaggedly through the space, dancing on the faces of the line that has stepped up to see closer. It wasn't that Olione's step out of turn was accepted, it was called. There's only one way to really deal with Appolyon; anyone hoping to win has to raise his bet.

Olione adjusts, her hands practiced at holding the deck just so. Seven suits is a court game, she's come with something else. Something dirtier and much, much quicker. There's more on the line in what she wants to play.

Appolyon gestures to his servant, "Marcus, take this woman to her husband. Deal with the warden promptly." He waves the off-white away, turning one eye to Olione. There's an unsaid question of what she wants, what he can get out of her before she gets it or loses. Or more aptly: if she'll fold with direct attention.

"I'm looking for my business associate, she's been missing in the palace for more than three days." Olione is direct, to the point. She does not say who she's looking for or what her business is. The king wouldn't know the name anyways, he's just looking for her to ante up.

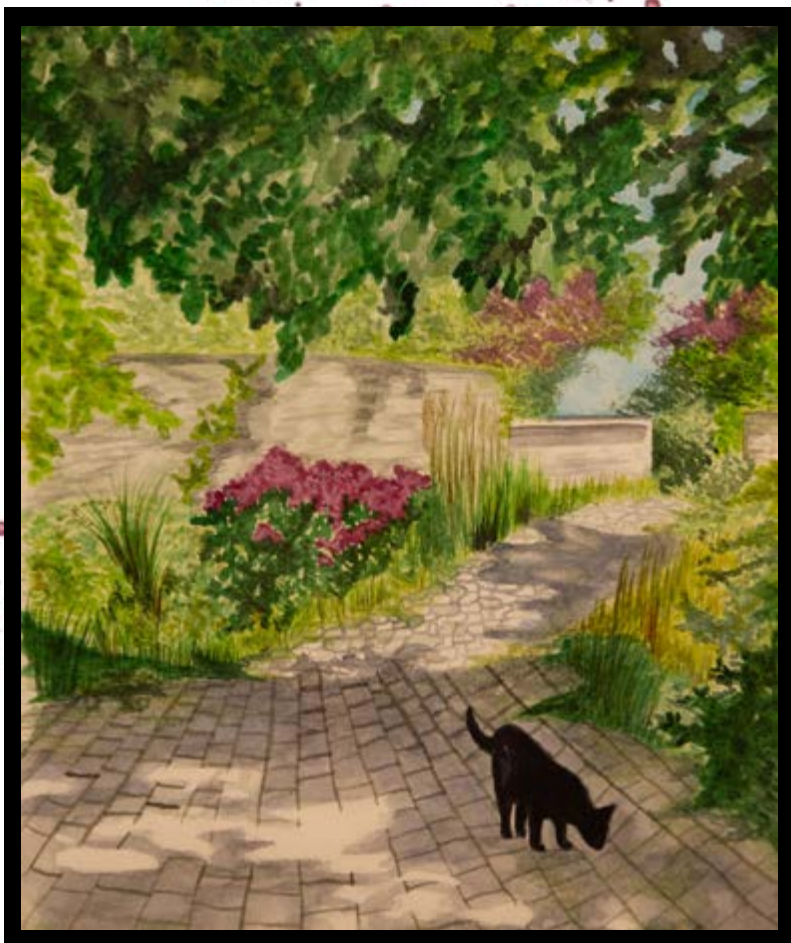
"And you've sat at my table to deal with simple grievance. Very well," he severs his sentence with a smile. The room holding its breath as to not miss what happens next. King Appolyon smiles. Ruthless and sharp and many more colors than white. He smiles like he knows something about Olione that the line waiting does not. He smiles like he can smell blood in the water. "Pick your poison."...

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LADYBUG VASE
serena godoy

THE PATH TO
SILVER WATER
Aurora Risto



CHEROKEE ROSE

ethan harman

Dirt off your tires forms a desert brown
Caused by the old roads outside of town
Your crimson heart humming in the air
Memories and firecrackers cover your seat chairs
All the late night rides adding rust to your frame
Spots on your shield from the fall rain
Distance traveled as you scurried along the road
Took me on journeys from your eye's glow
Dents on your side from battles won
Crashes that could be caused from anyone
You kept me safe even when you broke down
Kept going till I was on the good side of town
I am telling your story that nobody knows
I will never forget you my Cherokee rose



FIELD NOTES OF A STUNTPERSON STAND-IN

corinne voelker

This isn't a poem
it looks like one, you see
no, it's a list, of all the
hum-hawed in-betweens,
the sucker-punch titles
one-liners and confounds
to please its form's needs.
Of course, you'd see it from
afar, the waterskied leap over
circling shark, a blooper
from the jump.

Well, that's where the genius
comes in, and she falls in love,
they break up again, and someone
slips through the hole in the set.
And I wear my few lines, they
critique me again, and I wonder
if life had been real back then —
if I hadn't slipped through the set?
In this octet? Cut —

DAISY'S KITCHEN

ella kloss



CONCRETE POETRY

jamie sennett



OLD ENEMY

Megan Wade

SPLASH. The girl's body thudded harshly in the shallows of the pond water. "Be careful!" A woman called to her in the distance. The girl was done being careful. She was done playing games. She was going to catch this frog once and for all. Old Enemy was his name. He was the largest frog in the pond, but also the smartest and quickest. The girl was on summer five of trying to secure her prize. Her family vacationed to the Adirondack Mountains a week out of every August, and she had caught, kissed, and released every frog in this pond — some multiple times — but never once could she wrap her hands around Old Enemy's slime-lathered skin. As the years went on, he seemed to start taunting the girl — sitting only a couple of feet away in plain sight, knowing he would never be caught. The girl knew that Old Enemy's cockiness would get the best of him and his reign would end soon enough.

The girl awoke the next morning with an impending sense of doom spreading throughout her stomach. It was the last day of vacation. If she did not achieve her goal this morning, she would have to wait yet another year to try again. She knew she had to hit Old Enemy with every trick up her sleeve, plus some, to conquer him. She threw off her sheets, climbed into her bathing suit, grabbed her frog bucket, and clambered down the wooded path to the beach. A cool morning breeze swept through her hair, bringing her a sense of confidence.

"Today is the day," she told herself. "Today is the day I conquer Old Enemy." She wondered if he could feel his reign about to come to a humiliating end. The girl put her bucket down where the woods met the sand, and then laid on her stomach to survey the scene. The water was deathly still. The girl figured that even the fish were still sleeping. Her eyes snapped quickly to the right as she noticed a slight rippling by the water lilies. There he was, her enemy, sitting by the water's edge. His taunting had started already. He knew she was there, watching him, and that this was going to be the battle of a lifetime.

The girl slowly crept towards the evil frog, their eyes locked, neither of them uttering a breath. She was only an arm's length away from him now. Old Enemy was still, seeming uncaring. She lunged, arms stretched out, aiming towards the green smirking devil. She belly flopped into the shallow water, the frog narrowly escaping her grasp. She splashed around frantically trying to keep up with Old Enemy's powerful swimming legs. Finally, the girl froze, her eyes filled with tears, realization finally hitting her.

"I am never going to catch you, am I?" she spoke to the frog. The girl slunk back to the sand, sitting down, criss-cross-apple-sauce, while she looked over the beautiful scenery of the pond. "You are one special frog. You bested me, Old Enemy." She felt utterly defeated.

"Where are you?" her mother's voice shouted from the distance, "We have to head home!" The girl's heart sank as she took one last sniff of the forest air. Future summers will not feel the same now that her goal is utterly unachievable. She stood up to leave this sad scene.

PLOP. The girl shrieked as she saw Old Enemy hop onto her bare foot. She automatically kicked him off and started backing away, but he hopped after her.

"What are you doing, frog?" she gasped, not liking how their roles were now reversed. She ran all around the beach in a panic, trying to lose the frog's tail, but he was persistent. Old Enemy finally croaked at her loudly, causing the girl to halt. He unwaveringly stared into her eyes, as if he were trying to communicate with her. In that moment, she knew what he wanted her to do. Her shaky hands reached down and slightly brushed Old Enemy's mucus covered skin. He took this touch as an invitation to hop into her cupped hands. The girl raised her enemy up to face level, in complete shock, convinced she must still be asleep. He smiled at her. Old Enemy, the frog, was smiling at her. A sense of calm washed over her as she touched her nose to his. He flicked his sticky tongue out to hit her nose, which caused her to stumble back, but she received his message. She gave him a big kiss right back on his slick frog nose. She then heard her mother walking through the woods to come fetch her. Not wanting the magic to be ruined, she kissed Old Enemy one more time and placed him on the edge of the water.

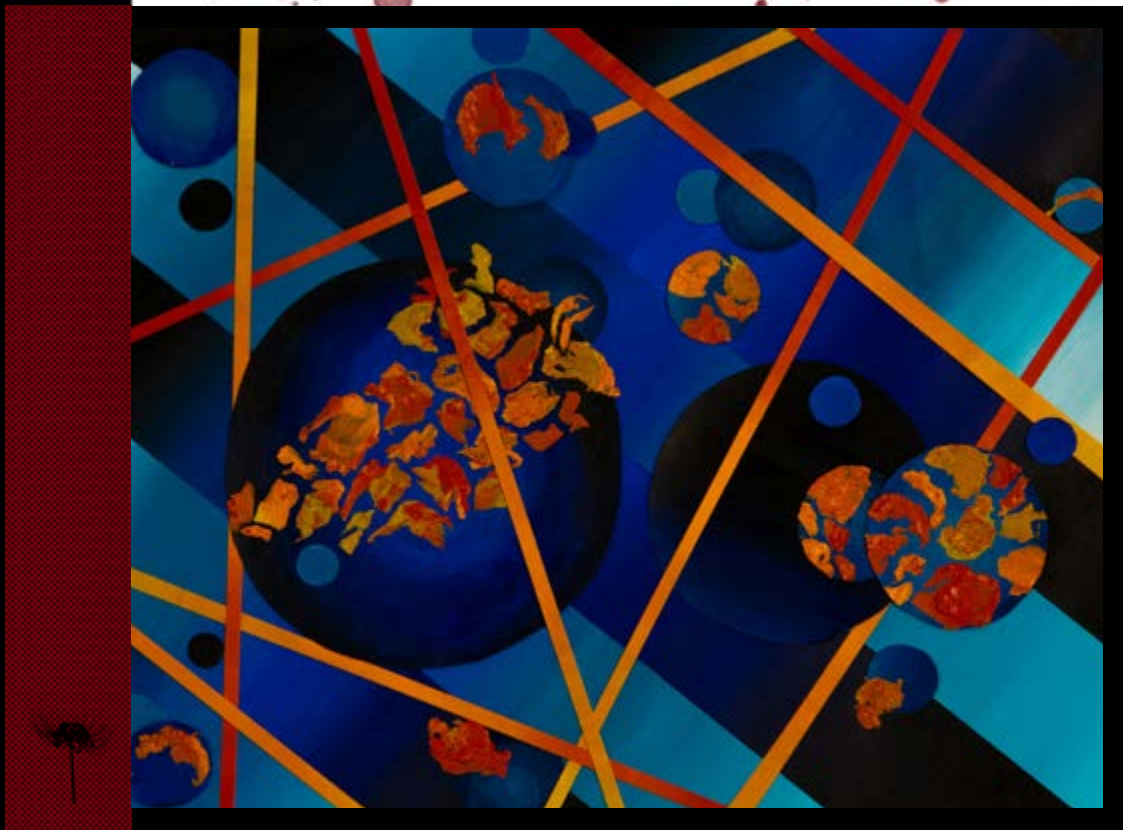
"Honey, we should get going. I'm sorry you didn't catch your frog this year." The girl smirked and looked back at the large frog who hid just under the surface of the pond.

"There is always next year!" The girl replied to her mother cheerfully. Old Enemy winked at her as her mother tugged at her hand to lead her away. As they walked back through the woods, the girl's head swarmed with everything that had just happened. Were those last moments even real? All she knew was that she and her frog were no longer parting as old enemies, but as old friends.

FAUX FERRERO ROCHER (IRON ROCK)

ellia benchouk





FROSTED FLAKES

marley ramon

MR. PARROTFISH

samantha mcdonald



OF THE SAME STEM

elizabeth plummer

You gave me flowers first
a Valentine's bouquet
and I was startled from my musings
the pining in my mind
and it was all I could do
to stanch the bleeding
of purples and pinks
oozing from flower to stem to floor
heart following
for I had never received any before

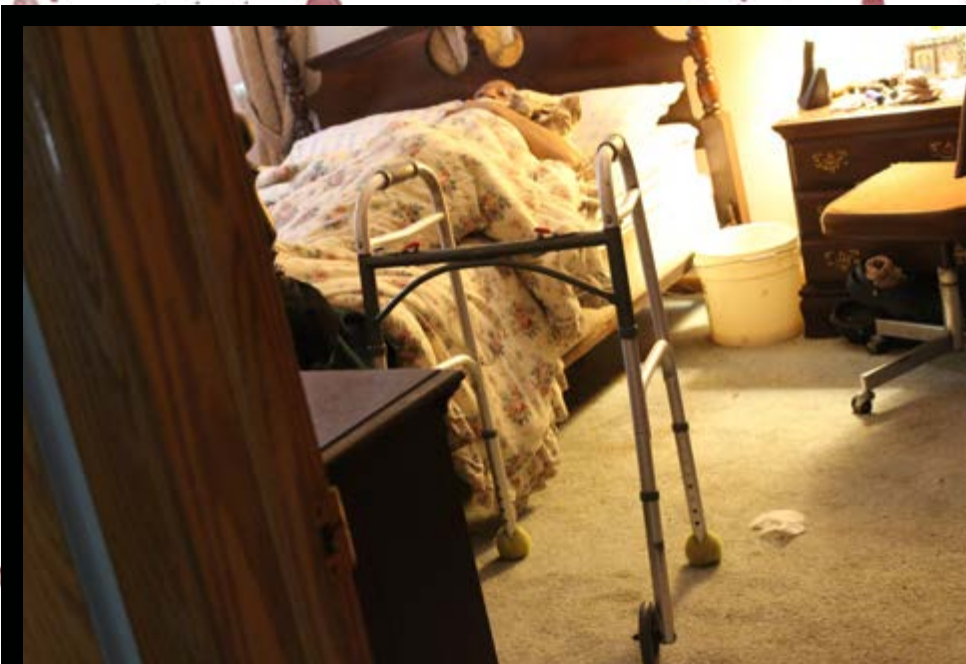
I knew you were my first more
when, lifting color to cheek
I found a perfect match
but we were just roommates, friends
and it was all too fast
a couple months' time
between meeting and now
but how to deny a heart
that never loved before
I couldn't, wouldn't
so, I clung to gesture
bouquet on my dresser
your proclamation

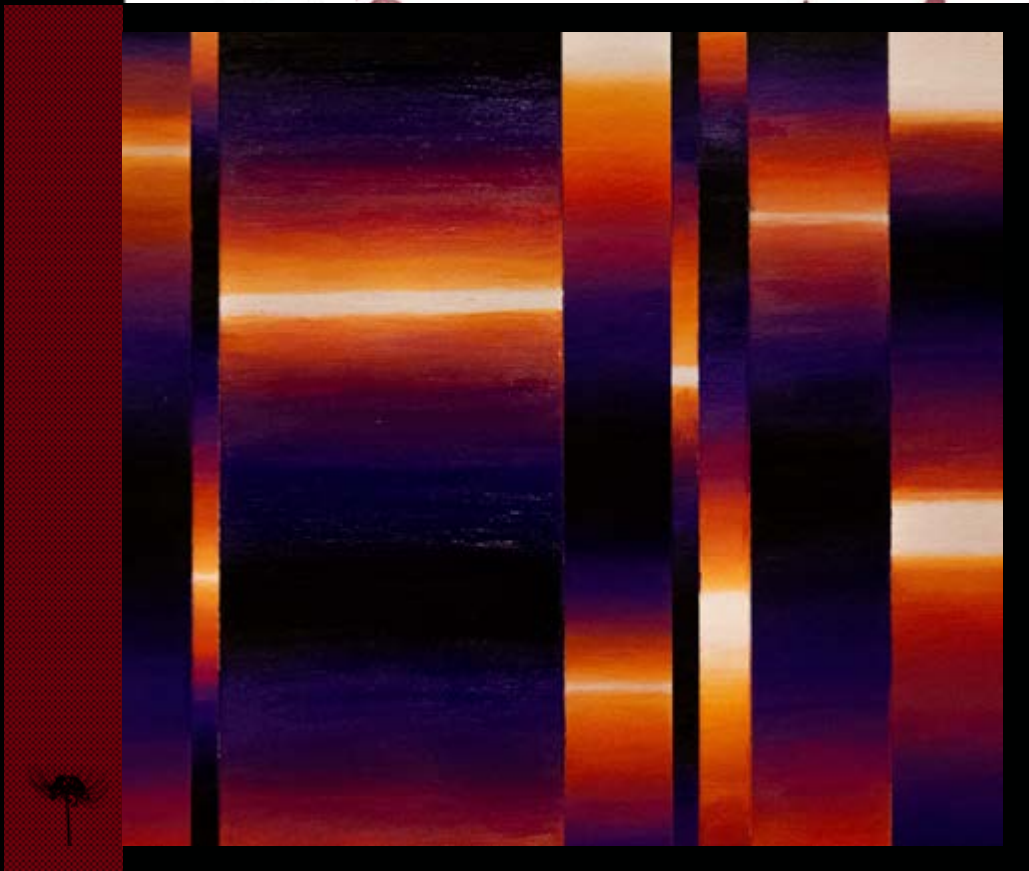
Every bouquet since
is a message, a confession
hoping you feel just as loved
as I do



MY PAPA
hannah ulmer

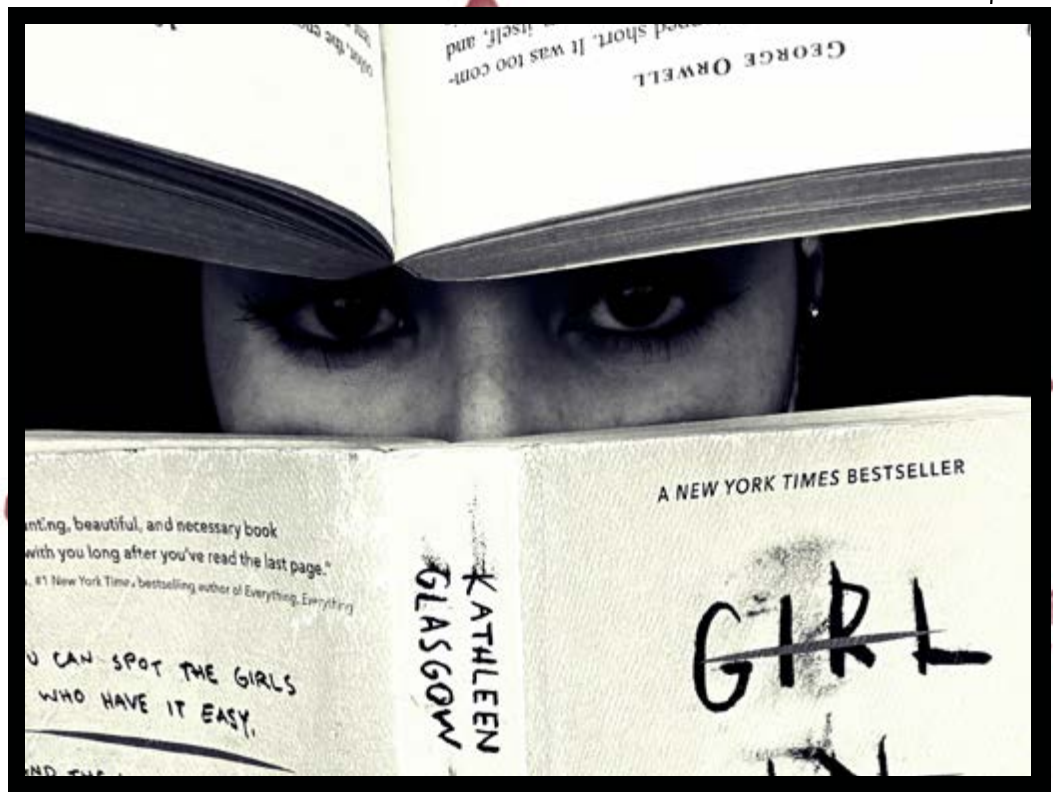






GRADIENT
olivia connor

READING BETWEEN THE LINES
dakota wilson-boyles



INVENT

ARDOR

marley ramon

I beg for serenity
from scripture
and morning dew
and friends lit only by stove light

Relentlessly drawing upon everything holy
I ask how this anger
can be biblical the way I crave

God cast them out
God took their rib
God flooded generations
Gazing over his shoulder
behind oyster backed gates

Locusts and blood and disease
and kill this animal to spare your son
and kill your son to prove your animal
And I ask
how my anger can be anything
but biblical

Eve left with Adam
but Lilith
chose hellfire over damnation
and I feel some third option
coil in my chest

Nietzsche but in a much more violent sense
Betrayal red delicious
I need to be believed in

A golden bull in my China shop
asks if I am prepared to see ramifications
and I look to him
with a second bite of apple
lodged in my throat



SORRY, WHAT WERE WE TALKING ABOUT?

izzy simonoff

I move that Pile of clothes from my desk chair and back onto my bed. It is always my intent to fold them. I have prophetic visions regularly, conjuring apparitions of a full closet, a clean desk, a walkable floor. And I have drive. I have moxie. Yet I, myself, always end up folding to them. So, of my own decree, it is customary to first recognize the Pile's might as only a sum of its parts.

By this, I preserve my authority.

I resist its focus-adverse gumption-stifling psychic damage.

Let's dissect. I wore that green suede blazer to a wedding last week. Wonderful hors d'oeuvres those guys had. It was a real treat on the dance floor — the shoulder pads made me aerodynamic. But I had no idea who the couple was. When *invited* guests began interrogating me, I split (With great speed! Thank you, shoulder pads!), found a dive bar a few blocks down, and had a lovely conversation with a guy that designs "ultra-luxury canine apparel." Dog clothes for mega-rich people! What a job!

Here's a good one. The next day, I wore my blue and tan cashmere argyle sweater overtop an off-white button-up. That sweater was my ex's, and I'll never hear the end of it.

"I know the sweater you're talking about," I said. "There's no way I have it. Are you sure you didn't just lose it?"

"Jesus Christ, nobody just *loses* cashmere! And that was my father's!"

Is it bad that I don't feel guilty? Believe me: if you felt the sweater, you would do the same. Absolutely heavenly. I couldn't find another for sale anywhere. Carpe diem!

Where was I?

God, the Pile.

Why did I wait this long? The Pile could have been defeated by now. Now, it has called for reinforcements! I cannot see my floor. Dirty clothes? Dirty move.

This is a duel, fabric foe!

I always slough off my day clothes like dead skin. But soon, one must navigate my molt. Character husks lay haphazardly stacked like a mass grave. Elegiac cries of the wounded call to me while I stare. Their torment is truly that of a nightmare. I am guilty of these ghosts, but they hinder my escape. Turning, they are reborn as a foul, festering bog where I might wade. Perhaps there is a drain. They reach for my ankles while I blindly vault between carpet archipelagos. I do not want to look down. Once I cross, I rot in raggedy sweatpants, I gnaw through t-shirt necklines, and it is all worn thrice.

The clock ticks counterfeit minutes. Like a toddler tapping on a fish bowl. Where is my mind? Sometimes, I am a goldfish. Am I really that frail? I sit in neon plastic trees and eyesore gravel, and wait, wait, wait...for a delectable, divine dinner that dirties my hideaway. These hungers are not conceived by necessity. I hang the green suede blazer and shuffle through the Pile. My water slowly thickens into a syrupy Flavor Aid broth with the debris breaking through the surface tension. Low visibility warning. This is not by my own will. The curious cat paws, the deafening solitude. T-shirts are placed in rows in the drawer labeled "T-SHIRTS." I don't know when my water will be changed, and it's not up to me. To truly break free would be a miracle, and I do pray. It would surely be my end: the faith I clutch, leaping onto the table beside my bowl. I do a little spinny trick with the hanger around my finger. It hits me in the face.

It's never as difficult as I think it'll be. Really, how could a pile of clothes hold so much jurisdiction over me? It has decreed it customary that I choke and sever my lucky prayer beads. They rupture, rolling around and scrambling toward floor grout channels like military trenches. They hide and tremble, as anyone would, but I am not dangerous. I still dodge them while I crumble, folding and falling to my knees. I rescue them, cradling them in my cold palms while I sit. Usually, I string them back together — they were my mother's.

That went fast. I load the washer and empty the dryer.

Whatever. It's not that serious. Call me Sisypheus.

LOVE FLOWER

mikayla taglow





HOLD ON

Spiritual, Arr. Burleigh

SONATA NO. 1, OP. 22 (1952)

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)



View online at mercyhurst.edu/lumen



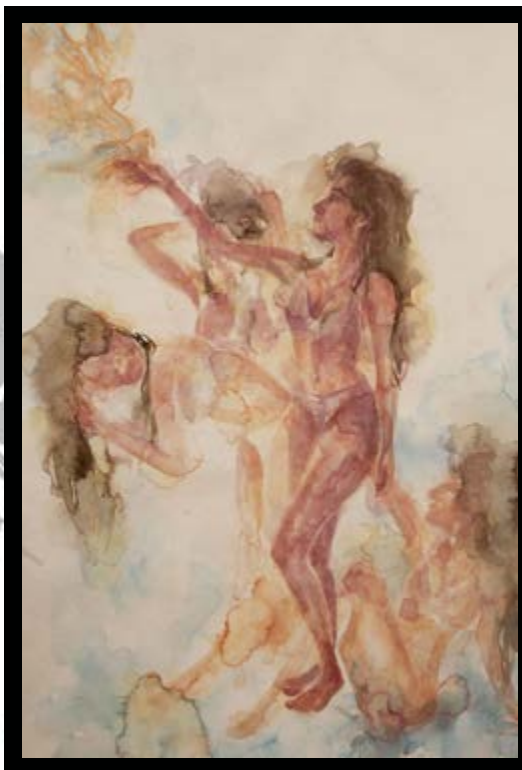
THE UNDRESSING



THE SUBMERSION

THE BAPTISM TRIPTYCH

Hannah Duckett



THE EMERSION

QUIET WONDERLAND

from Theodosia

carmen stewart

Feel me, feel you, in a quiet wonderland
Silence plagues us, in a world so grand
We need each other more than ever
Our love must never sever

Feel me, feel you, during the sunrise
Our hopes too strong to excise
Yearning for community
Escaping this enmity

Why do we quarrel
Where are our morals
When darkness pursues
And we've all been abused

By the cruel system
Must we assist them
A team we must be
Can't you see

Feel me, feel you, in a quiet wonderland
Silence plagues us, in a world so grand
We need each other more than ever
Our love must never sever

Feel me, feel you, during the sunrise
Our hopes too strong to excise
Our dreams will never die
Our lives unable to deny



MYSTIFIED
jamie sennett

AGAIN ALONE
AURORA RISTO



VENUS OF SWITCHGRASS

MARLEY RAMON

There is a woman in the fields. I've seen her, late at night when I'm supposed to be sleeping. There is a woman in the fields, and I don't think she's from around here.

We live on the edge of town: my dad, my sister, and I, right next to the last gas station — the one with only two pumps — and the tall grass. I'm not supposed to go in there, there are spaces where it gets taller than a two-by-six, my dad says, and I could go right in and be swallowed by the earth. There's a lot of things I'm 'sposed to do: get the eggs, pen the goat, brush Henry the sheep dog, be asleep and not be peeking through the slats in my blinds. But that's the one thing I am not 'sposed to do.

But I did it yesterday.

I stepped up to the grasses, right at the edges of where my house touched the wild. And I watched, and I listened. I didn't hear my dad call my name all mad-like, and I didn't hear my sister need anything, and I didn't hear anything growl or tumble in the grasses, and the only thing in my ears was the nice cool wind. I didn't think the Earth wanted to swallow me up. I thought my dad was fibbin'. Missy 'n' him went in the tall grass sometimes. I needed to go into the grass because if I didn't, I'd still be the baby of my family forever. I had to go into the grass. Now.

The first step into the wild wasn't much of a step at all. I put one foot securely over the edge. Let the earth know that I didn't care if it knew that I knew I wasn't supposed to be over here. I put one foot over the line of where the grass turned from grass to tall grass and I put it down decisive-like. Toe then heel, like a rooster, proud and tall. Though I didn't crow anything, and nothing woke to me at all. There was a beacon in my chest, and I ran home to recoup and gather supplies.

The sun was four fingers up the horizon anyways. I didn't wanna chance the dark turning up all the hungry in the soil. I took that foot out just as confidently as I put it in. That's what I wanted the earth to think. And then I walked to the back door. Pushing at the urge to run, I let my boots find each square inch of ground and muscled slow and steady back to the door. I thought I heard a whistle, but I didn't turn around, that's what they tell you not to do.

I slept and rustled in my sheets like grass and windchimes. I'd check the window, slating the blinds just enough to peek out of one end. The tall grass bent my direction, but then it bent the other way. Wind. And nothing else. I laid back down and turned some more, pulling my sheets around me like a twister. Groaning until my sister threw her pillow at me and I decided on my own to quiet down. She's not quite on the edge of fourteen yet, but she's bigger than me and you gotta pick your fights. Her pillow smelled like baking bread and all things nice. And my last survey of the grass didn't tell me anything new.



I slipped into sheets like a rising tide, all at once and totally gone.

When I woke there wasn't much to gather — I put a water bottle and a wax paper wrapped summer sausage into my sack. I wore my tallest shoes, the ones with the hard toes that clomped around. There was work to be done, but when I brushed the dogs and stole the eggs, I took a thin rope from the loft. A great big bundle that I tied to the waterspout.

This next step into the grasses was easier. The blades of grass licked up my calves, but they didn't feel hungry yet. I stooped down to pet them and none of them nipped. Off I went.

The grass climbed higher the deeper in I went. It wasn't long before I had to stretch on my tip toes to see. Wasn't much farther than that until I had to just go in the direction my rope line wasn't. I didn't see anything but the shifting green ocean in front of me.

It isn't my courage that runs out first. It might've, but it hadn't yet because my rope ran out first. Granddad always says that wisdom tries to catch me, but I'm faster. I think it's the same thing with my bravery, I can run too fast. Best in my class and better than my sister too. I want to untie my rope and keep going, but I can't see any direction but up. The grass is thick in front of me, and if I stick my arms out, it's eaten up by the grasses before I pull it up. Gobbled in plain sight, like the earth really will take me if I wait too long.

There's more to see, I'm sure of it. I almost take my rope off, but I see her. There's a tall woman, taller than me by a lot. I can see her honey blonde hair dust the top grasses and she's moving around. Calm like me.

It's still early, and I start to find myself back with my rope. Winding the concourse like that guy that killed the minotaur. Dad told me about him, but maybe I don't want to be him because I didn't come to kill anyone. Who would that make the blonde woman? I shake these thoughts out of my head. She's moving much more calmly than I am. I don't hear any rustling, just deep breathing. In and out like meditation. I'm picking my way carefully through the grass shards and they cut a little closer to my skin.

They could cut me if they wanted. Close to my onion layers like a blade relaxed. They could slash me I think, soft and quick like a paper cut, if they wanted to. I'm winding through the sea again, letting the blades of grass hit my skin and fall off like water. Everything's fine until I fade into a dull walk — like the end of the mile. I'm listening too hard to see where I put my feet. I see them moving in front of me in my peripherals and that's good enough for me. I feel the grass I step on not in my soles, but in my very soul. It puts a crack through me like Missy stepping on my back. I stop to listen and the one ear I can wiggle, I do; I cock it up like a dog might. There's nothing but not the good nothing with the birds and the wind and the bugs and the buzz of life. There isn't anything. It's like I held my hands to my ears or ducked under the soapy bathwater.

The grass starts to rustle all at once as the blonde woman's head reappears. Her hair bounces and bobs along the path from where she was to where I am. She's getting closer. The bit of her head I can see is quickly visible for less and less time.

I shove my draw string off quickly, pulling the mouth open like I might just tear the canvas if it doesn't comply. I'm digging around and can't seem to find it. The woman's head disappears but from angle not from distance. The grass bends around her and the only sound I can get clearly is the whipping noise air makes, like the crack of a jump rope pulled taut, like the snapping of a cord. My hand closes around the wax paper and I pull



it out without unwrapping it. It took Missy a whole bunch of bee stings to get the comb to make this paper, but I hope she'd miss me more than it.

I lob the whole thing — paper and all — high and far. I don't think I made it more than a handful of meters away from me, but the air changes. I don't even realize I'm on the ground but I am, small like the days when Missy would still play hide-and-seek with me. I'm bundled up, a girl and her knees and the rope around her waist just one small mass. My legs unbunch enough for me to roll back on my butt in the unparted section of the grass. My face obscured by too much shadow.

The woman passes nearby, somewhere between me and the sausage. She runs past and she's not wearing any shoes, but I don't think those are feet either. The skin is lithe and muscled like every part of her is flexed and taut, like the individual muscle fibers are working together but aren't joined. Like the whole of her is made of shards and blades and twines. Her body moves not like anyone I've ever seen, she's pulled through the fields and she doesn't disturb any of the grasses as they move around her.

The sound is awful, the whipping of grass out of her way and the tightening of the woman as she pushes through and the slow melodic breathing. It isn't working at all; this thing isn't out of breath at all.

I can't see her anymore, but I can hear her and she's heading away from my rope line. I crawl out of the grass on my hands and knees, careful not to trample anything. I don't look up anymore, my eyes are glued to my steps. A few times, it feels like the grass lays down and waits for me to see it. Standing stock straight as I catch my foot and hop over the trap. The grass stands back up and innocuously joins its brothers' soft swaying.

I'm almost home, I feel it and I can see above the grass for the first time. My eyes barely dusting the top when I fix my posture. I'm moving as quickly as I can carefully. Barely making a noise, it's unmistakable when the woman finds the meat. There's a quick tightening like a short stocky laugh. It's the sounds of a hundred million threads pulling against each other at once, unable to take the tension. The sound of a city bridge sagging with the weight. A chittering like a purr, not at all comforting but from something internal. It's a noise I couldn't replicate.

It's almost night, the sky a dark and dusky indigo. It can't have been that long. I haven't eaten all day and I've been on my feet for hours. I can see my house now. I'm picking through the grasses still; they're only about chest height, but I refuse to take any chances.

I see her again, but she's still. I can't quite make out the blonde woman's features, but she's flat-faced and unmoving. Her hair keeps blowing in front of her and she makes no move to stop it. I don't stop walking.

The woman takes a step towards me, slow and measured. It's weird and jerky again, like a marionette pulled toward me instead of her moving her legs properly. I don't wait for her to get closer, I take off towards the house. Running, pulling the rope to get to the edge just a little bit faster. I don't stop until I touch the waterspout. The blonde woman is still standing there, staring motionlessly...

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BIOMORPH-GENERATION 1
samantha montoro

EXCUSE ME?

TRINITY MAGEE

Excuse me for my hair —
Is it too much for you? Too bold? Too big?
Excuse me for my grace —
Does it make you uncomfortable when I move through life with elegance and poise?
Excuse me for my presence —
Is it overwhelming to be reminded that I am here, fully and confidently?

Apologies, right?

For taking up space you thought was yours to control?
For growing, for shining, for rising beyond the limits you set?
Should I tone it down? Should I choose my words more carefully,
So that you can feel more at ease in my light?

But — **wait. No. Forget that.**

Why should I apologize?

Why should I make myself smaller?
There's nothing about me that's "excusable."
Not my hair. Not my grace. Not my presence. Not my confidence.
It's all here, and it's not going anywhere.
So why should I pretend it's something to excuse?
Why should I ask permission to exist?
I am here, thriving, living — taking up space, and doing it beautifully.

Dear Black men and women,

Why are we still apologizing?
Why do we lower our heads and shrink ourselves just to fit into spaces that were never
meant for us?
Why do we tiptoe around, trying to survive in their discomfort,
When we were meant to thrive in our own greatness?

No more excuses.

In fact, why don't we get rid of them altogether?
Because, let's be real —

Who are we apologizing to?

The same people who wish they had what we have?
The same ones who fear the very thing they admire?

Because me, you, all of us?
We are not just surviving — we are the realization of dreams,
The walking, living proof of what our parents, our grandparents, our ancestors prayed for.

We are their wildest dreams.

So why are we still excusing ourselves?

Let their excuses be their problem,
Let their discomfort remain theirs to carry.
Why should we shrink to make them feel safe?
We enter rooms, and we own them.
We don't just survive — we **thrive**.
We don't just exist — we **rise**.

So why would we stand any less than tall?
Why would we dim the light we carry?
No, we were not made to apologize for who we are.
We were made to take up space,
And that's exactly what we will do.

A BONAIRE SUNSET

LAURYNÉ DAVIS





WALRUS
samantha montoro

BRADY
mikayla tatlow



FAIR FIGHT

katherine michienzi

Tommy pushed his red boots into the snow, packing down the narrow path in the middle of the road. On either side of him, piles of snow and ice chunks towered above him. He reached out, straining to reach the top of them on tip toes, but he fell short.

He wasn't too surprised. He and Joey already took turns jumping the highest to look at what they could see above the white. If they angled their heads just right, and were kind of far back from the snow, they could see windows and roofs. The tops of bare branches stuck out. Like antlers, Tommy always thought.

Joey marched ahead of him. His green mitten trailed along the blue shadows of the snow, letting the loosest layer sprinkle down. He turned back to Tommy, smiling with red cheeks. "Are you keeping up?"

"Yes!" Tommy sped up next to him.

They were getting close to David and Michael's house now, and Tommy knew all their friends would be out to play. The snow had stopped falling two days ago, but it took their fathers that long to clear a path from the door to the road, and for all the fathers and sons on the block to clear out a path on the road.

Right when Tommy was about to lose his mind stuck inside, his mom got a call from Joey's. Tommy was already putting on his heavy sweater and snow pants, and he could hear his mom in the other room talking about the storm and the news from the zoo. They'd already been out for hours, building snowmen, falling into snow, and climbing up the drifts.

Coming up to a break in the snow, they looked down a wider street. The drifts weren't too bad along the street, and they could see outlines of front lawns and paths for sidewalks. All the kids on the street were out, lined up against each other on either side of the street, volleying snowballs through the air. Kids shouted in excitement when they hit their target and yelled in frustration when they were hit. Tommy could recognize some of the people in his school: the Stanton boys, Jenny, Emma, and Robert.

"Look at this!" Joey bounced up and down. "There's David!" He pointed to the kid in a dark blue hat.

Tommy scanned the other side of the street. "And there's Michael! I call his team!"

They broke off from each other, running to opposite sides. Instantly, they were part of the team they joined, gathering snow and forming projectiles. Tommy got hit more than he hit others. Joey targeted him the most, at one point throwing the snowball right at his face. The snow fell inside his shirt, numbingly cold and sharp. Tommy abandoned his front, racing over and tackling Joey. The other boys joined in, pushing and elbowing each other in a giant pile of swishing nylon and knitted hats.



"Alright boys, that's enough," Mr. Stanton called from down the street where he was talking to some other neighbors. Some of the men were in their hunting gear.

They broke apart. Tommy was angry at the snowballs and the fight. Joey had been better than him and Tommy didn't get the chance to get back at him.

"I get one free hit to make it even," he declared.

Joey knew this was coming, and he was even about to offer it up himself. He liked that he was better at snowball fights, but he liked being Tommy's friend more. "To make it even," he agreed.

Tommy went to the pile of snow at the end of the nearest driveway. He searched through the chunks of snow, finding a heavy, football-sized one. There was some ice in there, he could tell, but not enough to actually hurt Joey. He liked being friends with him more, too.

The two boys lined up against each other. The other kids formed a circle of spectators around them. They knew fair was fair.

Tommy held the snow in both hands, raising it above his head, and throwing it on Joey. It hit him with a thud, and Joey oofed at the impact. The snow left a mark on his brown jacket where it hit him.

"Even?" Tommy asked in the silence ringing out.

"Even." Joey agreed.

"Hey, I'll get my sled from the garage!" David called from the side. The kids gasped in excitement, a new fun to be had. Tommy and Joey settled their matter, so there was no more anger or fighting.

They all played together for another hour, under the bright sun and clear skies. Tommy's teeth were cold from smiling in the chill, and his legs were numb from the wet snow soaking through his layers.

Mr. Stanton's voice suddenly cut through everyone's clattering and laughter. "Kids, you have to go home now," he called from his front door where he was talking with Mrs. Stanton.

A collective whine rose from the group.

"Hey, now, cut it out. Did your parents tell you about the zoo animals? Mr. Richards called from a couple streets down. He saw them by his house, so it's time you all get off the street. Let's go."

"What is he talking about?" Joey whispered to Tommy.

"The zoo animals, you don't know?" Tommy asked. Joey shook his head. "Some of them escaped the zoo! I think it was reindeer. That's what my mom was saying. They just walked over the fence cause the drifts got so high!"

"Do you think the polar bears got out?" Joey gasped.

Tommy paused, he wanted to be impressive. "Yeah, they did."

"That's so cool!" Joey was peering down the street.

"Yeah, but hey, we need to go home, let's go." Tommy was nervous at Mr. Stanton's announcement. He went to the zoo years ago with his mom and baby sister. He couldn't remember how big reindeer were in real life.

The kids were dispersing quickly into their homes, and Tommy tugged at Joey's shoulder. "Come on, let's go."

Joey turned, and they began walking back to their street. This time, Tommy led the way. They didn't have to go too far: just five blocks away. Tommy could see their footprints heading the other way as they walked against them. The towering snow drifts were no longer awesome, but sat like a maze for the reindeer to hide in. He wondered how high they could jump, if they could just fly above all the snow, how big were they. He didn't know what they liked to eat.

Tommy could hear Joey suddenly stop when they reached a side street. "What are you doing?"

"Do you want to see a polar bear?" Joey asked.

"What? No!"

"Why not?" He retorted.

"Because I just don't, okay? Come on, I want to go home."

Joey angled his head. Tommy shifted under the look. Did this make him chicken? "It would be so fun, though! It's an adventure!"

Tommy opened his mouth then closed it. "I don't know," he trailed off.

"Well, I'm going to see a polar bear. You can come with me or not, I don't care." Joey turned down the street, heading toward Mr. Richards'.

Tommy watched for a moment. He couldn't let Joey go by himself. If a polar bear really did escape, and Joey was the only one who saw it, he'd be the coolest person in their grade. In the whole school. And Tommy would just be the scared one who didn't see it when he had the chance.

"Wait," he shouted, running down the street, "I'm coming."

Joey pumped his fist, "Yes!"

Even though they were a block away from the Stanton's, it was quiet and lonely on this street. No one was outside. The lightest layer of snow swirled gently across the drifts. Tommy and Joey shuffled along. They came up to another crossroads, this one more cleared out. Snow came up only a couple feet against the trees and street signs.

"That's Mr. Richards' house, isn't it?" Joey whispered, pointing to the third house down.

Tommy looked around at the open street. "Yeah. So, where's the polar bear?"...



LYRICS
ELEANDRA CASANE

ACTION MOVIE POSTER
reid cunningham



CONTEMPT

REID BROWN

I hate that boy
the one that beat his brother
the one that beat himself
handed the world and ruined it
handed life and spoiled it

I hate that boy
The one who remembers every slight
The one that wasted his precious things
precious moments
precious friends
precious family
precious love

Who paid the cost from others' coffers
And cheated both gold and God

I hate that boy
who pushed too hard
and never knew rest
whose clumsy ill omen hands
found old wounds and dug

I hate most
that he grew old and never up
I hate that man
The one who looks me in the eye
Thin faced and afraid

that boy won't forgive me
staring back through the mirror's pale face
but I might just



OUTRAGED ONE

trinity magee

Oh how to be the outraged one;
Trial after trial;
Tribulation after tribulation;
Why was she not enough?
Why was I not enough
Damn it, someone answer me
Is this the death of it all?
How did he, she, they, fall?
Someone pick her up;
Please let her know
That she is in fact enough;

To be young, gifted and black,
Is that phrase the actual truth
Or did everyone just lie
Because even when we are
Young and able,
Gifted and abundant,
Black and beautiful,
It is never enough
Oh Oh to be the outraged one
I'll always let the label stick
For I know this is the truth
With results such as this;

Lord wrap your arms
As you are known as the way maker
For my people need all the
Love in the best way;
Oh oh oh to be the loved one
Oh oh oh to be the accepted one
Oh no
I would much rather
Be the outraged one.



CORAL SHELF
grace gregoire

DUALITY OF CORAL
samuel petros



ENTRAPMENT

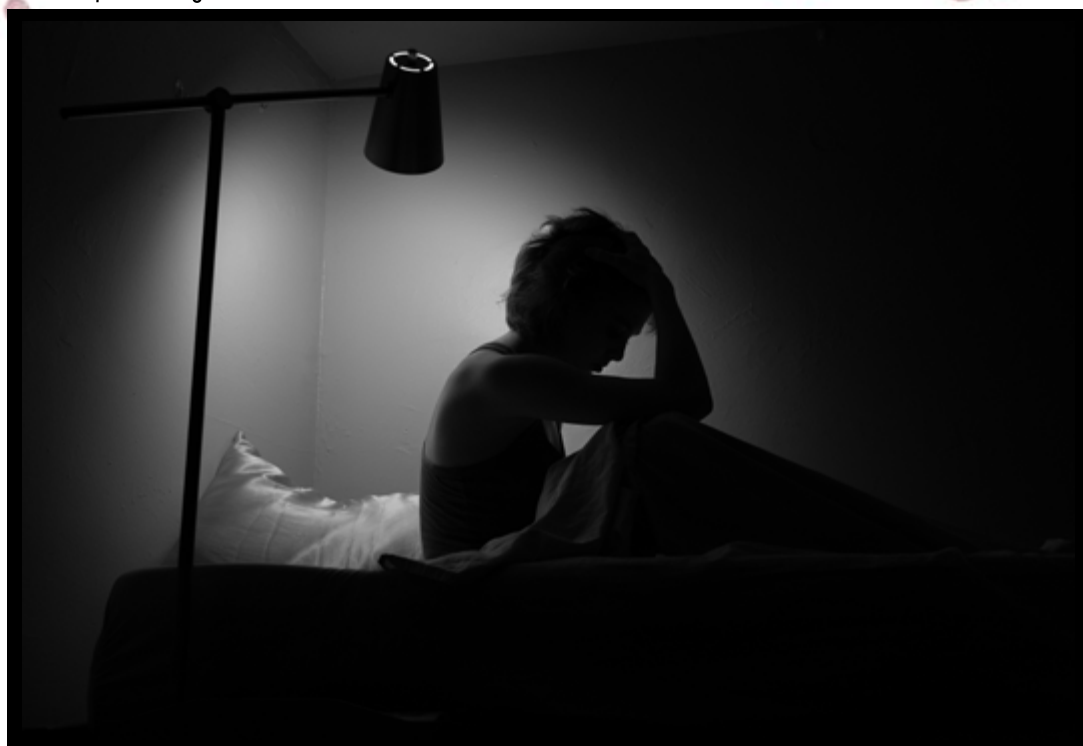
elizabeth plummer

Fingers glide over off-white keys
timid as they discover
lilted song more beautiful
than any master's
though it is off in tune
in rhythm
and captivation is an odd thing
awe trickling down the spine
burrowing into flesh
stuck still as rigor mortis
I'm caught by angled hands
and sleek black piano
notes echoing in empty hall
Then, short silence
and fumbled apology
but whatever for?
No response
so I cling to hanging chords



METEOR SHOWER. CLOUDS.
ainsley dunning

SAUDADE
AVA FORSYTH



INVENT

WHERE THEY ARE

AVA CAMELLO

Ms. Evelyn peered around the half-closed bathroom door. Lucien was still lying on the floor in his new pajamas: this particular set sported trains. She turned back to the mirror and continued brushing her teeth. Swish, spit, check on Lucien, brush, spit, Lucien's still on the floor, brush, swish, spit, Lucien is still —

"Lucien?" Ms. Evelyn called from the bathroom doorway, "Where did you go now?" She put down the toothbrush on the sink counter and stepped into the flickering hallway. "This damned light, they are never going to fix it," Evelyn said with a sigh. She looked left into the neat spare room. Then she looked right at the closed door of Lucien's parents' room. No Lucien.

"Lucien!" She called again, hoping she'd hear a reply. Silence. She stepped into the little boy's room and began to check his regular hiding spots. Behind the door: no luck. In the closet: nope. Ms. Evelyn then stood in front of Lucien's bed and looked down at her feet. He had always feared the dark, but maybe he changed his mind. She knelt and lifted the bed skirt but was met with the silence of nothing. Evelyn stood up and saw little Lucien standing in front of her. "Where did you go?" she asked.

"I'm not sure," Lucien replied with a puzzled look.

"Were you lost again? Because remember what I said, your parents will forgive me the first time, probably again on the second, there is a chance on the third, but absolutely no chance of forgiveness if I lose you a fourth time."

"I remember. I was lost, and I think I still am," he stated, looking down at his shoes.

"Whatever do you mean? You're right here, Lucien. You can't be lost."

He looked up and stared right into Ms. Evelyn's eyes, "That's not what I meant."

"Then what do you mean, dear?" Evelyn started to become worried.

"I'm not quite sure myself. I suppose I don't quite know where I am going."

Ms. Evelyn tilted her head in question, "You mean right now?"

"No, I mean in my life."

Evelyn stopped and began to stare blankly at Lucien's small, chubby face. "I guess —" she hesitated, "I guess I don't quite know either. I guess I'm lost too."

Lucien smiled at this. "Really, Ms. Evelyn?"

Evelyn nodded.

"Then we can be lost together. It gets kinda lonely ya know? Being the only one lost."

"I bet it does. It's getting late, we should get you to bed before your parents get home, okay?" Lucien nodded and crawled into his train-themed sheets with his matching pajamas.

"Ms. Evelyn? Will you read me a story tonight please?"

"Not tonight dear, get some rest." Ms. Evelyn said as she pulled his sheets and comforter to his chin.

"Promise you won't tell them I got lost again. They give me a funny look after you tell them." Lucien squeaked from under his covers.

"I promise," Evelyn said, shutting off the light and watching as the little engine night light illuminated the room. "I promise," she repeated as she gently shut the bedroom door.

An hour had passed since Ms. Evelyn put Lucien to bed and just as she had sat down after cleaning up in the kitchen, there was a knock at the door. Ms. Evelyn figured it was Lucien's parents who may have forgotten their key, it wasn't the first time as they tended to be forgetful. Ms. Evelyn unlocked and opened the tall, mahogany door to reveal nothing but the night sky riddled with stars.

"Who was that?" Asked a little voice from the stairs. Ms. Evelyn turned around to see Lucien rubbing his tired eyes just as the grandfather clock shouted out the time from the living room. "It's midnight. My mommy and daddy should be home to tuck me in now."

"I know dear. I'm sure they're on their way." Ms. Evelyn followed Lucien up the stairs to tuck him back into bed. It was very unlike Mrs. and Mr. Astor to be late; each time Ms. Evelyn had come to watch Lucien, they would arrive back at 11:13 P.M. without fault. She supposed they had gotten talking and lost track of time. They would be home soon, no need to worry. Lucien crawled back into his little train bed, and Ms. Evelyn kissed him on his forehead as she went to nap on the couch downstairs.

"Story?" Lucien asked again in a hopeful voice.

"Not tonight love, get some sleep. Your parents will be back soon to say goodnight." Ms. Evelyn smiled as she closed his bedroom door. As she stood alone under the dim, flickering hallway light, the first wave of worry hit her. Mrs. and Mr. Astor were the most organized, punctual people she had ever met in her life, and there was nothing the pair of them loved more than their little boy. It was strange that they had not arrived home yet, especially since before they left, they promised Evelyn that they would be home early tonight.

As Ms. Evelyn descended the creaky staircase there was another knock at the door. She paused trying to see through the skinny window at the top of the door, but the porch light was off so once again all she saw was the dark of the sky. She continued her way down the stairs, slower this time, careful to not make too much noise. As she reached the door, Ms. Evelyn put her ear against the cold wood to try and hear if there was anyone on the porch, but it was completely silent. She unlocked the door and opened it just enough so she could see the span of the yard. Nothing. No light. No sound. Not even a cricket chirped nor did a lighting bug light. Puzzled and a little frightened, Ms. Evelyn closed the door and made sure it was locked real tight.

She made her way back to the living room and took a seat on the soft linen couch. Evelyn supposed she should stay up as Lucien's parents would no doubt be arriving soon, and she was a bit too spooked to close her eyes. She opened the book she had been enjoying earlier in the night.



The grandfather clock's loud voice struck again, waking Evelyn from her unintended nap. "My goodness, I fell asleep again," she whispered to herself. She awoke to the dark living room and a silent house spare the few natural creaks of an old house settling. Ms. Evelyn supposed Lucien's parents had arrived while she was asleep and chose not to wake her, but she stood up from the couch and decided she should check their bedroom just to make sure. As she climbed the stairs, a thought crossed her mind: she could have sworn she left the lamp in the living room on. Evelyn always leaves a light on because no matter how old she had gotten she was still scared of the dark. She reached the Astor's bedroom door and turned the handle to open it slightly. The room was completely dark. She opened the door wider and flipped on the light. The room was quite messy, with clothes scattered around the floor. They must have forgotten to make their bed, Evelyn thought as she looked at the messy stack of red sheets covering the bed. But still no Mr. and Mrs. Astor. *Oh dear*, Evelyn thought. They most certainly should be home by now. More worried, Evelyn rushed to Lucien's room to make sure he was still sleeping soundly.

The door creaked slightly as Ms. Evelyn pushed it open. But just like his parents, Lucien was not in bed. Extremely worried now, Evelyn began calling the little boy, praying he didn't disappear again. However, her calls were met with the eerie silence of the house. Absolutely beyond worry now, Evelyn rushed downstairs to see if Lucien had made his way down, but as she was descending the stairs another knock came at the door. She completely stopped in her tracks, listening for any signs of someone being on the other side. And for the first time all night, the knocking continued.

The knocks were gentle and came in groups of threes, repeating every couple of seconds. Evelyn stood in her spot at the bottom of the stairs for what seemed like all night. She only worked up the courage to move when the knocks suddenly stopped. Hearing nothing but her breath, she approached the door, unlocking it slowly and opening it only the tiniest bit. To her surprise, Lucien was standing out on the porch. Still wearing his train pajamas. Still rubbing his tired eyes.

"Oh, my goodness! Lucien, how on Earth did you get outside? Are you alright?" she said, flinging the door open and hugging the little boy tight in her arms.

"I was knocking all night Ms. Evelyn. Why didn't you open the door?" Lucien's little voice said right into her ear. Evelyn pulled back in confusion.

"What do you mean love? You were sleeping in your bed. There was no one at the door, I checked twice." Figuring he was just exhausted or sleepwalking, Ms. Evelyn brought Lucien inside away from the cold night. Evelyn locked the door tight and turned around to bring Lucien back upstairs. But in the light of the hall, Lucien looked different from before. His eyes carried large, dark bags and his skin had turned a bright red. "Lucien? What happened to you, dear?"...

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BORED

AVA FORSYTH

INVENT

PILFERING THE REMNANTS

elizabeth plummer

You aren't making this easy for me, weeping on the floor like that. You walked through the front door in a woolen coat that drags slightly against the floor — your father's, that explains it — and you caught dust bunnies on the hem. I can tell from your expression this isn't the house you remember growing up in, always pristine to the point of clinical, I think you'd jab, snickering with your friends. I never minded, knowing how you really felt when you'd fall into the soft couch after spending the night somewhere else, sighing that relieved breath you inadvertently made every time you arrived home. You didn't make it this time. No, you practically held it in, as if inhaling would drag in something lost, taking residence in your chest. I suppose you were right, tears rolling and not stopping, body heaving as if you wanted that invasion *out*, gagged back into the too-empty space.

They've already taken the furniture, auctioned off down the road, likely to be found in neighbors' houses. They always did enjoy my oak shelves and maple table, running grimy hands along their surfaces, leaving oils and envy behind. Your brother didn't consult you first, and that's just Eric, isn't it: big brother attempting to take on everything. He couldn't have known your reverence for things being just as they were: some preservation of who I used to be. I am so sorry — I really should have changed the will after your father died, but that'd be too close to admitting something awful. You and I are alike in this, your weeping my weeping if I could still make the sounds, make the tears.

We may be similar, but you are better, recovering when I never could, that cracked, peeling leather chair sitting in the living room corner until it was abruptly tossed, not even worth the bidding. That hurt to watch, your father thankfully not here to see it. I'm not quite sure where he's gone, or how this works: I only know seeing you has made the loneliness worth it, though I cannot show it.

Cautiously, you make your way to the kitchen, and I know for a moment you're expecting me to be there, wiping down the counters or whipping up one of my famous roasts. Whenever you came to visit after you'd grown, I'd make sure everything was just right: dinner exceptional. Your smile would widen, and your eyes would slide shut — always such a serene expression — and I couldn't ask for greater flattery, genuine joy rarely captured on that face of yours. You're sifting through cardboard boxes now, and oh, I wish you wouldn't, doing more damage than good, but you've brought a bag with you, and I know what you're after. Eric's already set aside the jewelry and trinkets and your father's coin collection — hoping to make some money, I'm sure, though we both know he'd never be so callous as to sell my ring: yours intrinsically. Why the wooden spoon? You must remember stirring the pot when you were young, a chair your makeshift stool, as I stood over your shoulder. You'd ask to dump "flavors" in, our dinner your own personal bubbling brew.

That creativity's fused to your bones, always far more content doodling indoors than running around with your brother outside, though he'd goad and tease, equating you to a pampered house cat. If that were true, he was certainly a muddy labrador, sticking his nose into things he shouldn't with an innocence you couldn't get mad at. You do remember when he got that bloody ear, don't you? The boys would scramble about the woods, staying close to the edge — sure — but never close enough for my tastes. Anyhow, the Jefferson's kid... Blake, I believe, smuggled his father's pellet gun out of the house, and I should have known a scheme was afoot when I noticed Eric carrying a plastic bag full of used tin cans out of the garage. Silly boy, insisting on setting the cans up himself while Blake played around, boasting his aim — an arrogance your brother mocked later that evening, the nurses laughing at his observation.

I doubt even I remember all of Eric's scrapes, fretful as I was, and there are many more tales he never told me or your father. Late at night, I'd be walking down the hallway to bed — as you are now — and I'd catch whispers in the dark, giggles slipping under the crack of your bedroom door. Admittedly, I couldn't help but press my ear against the wood, listening as Eric told you stories he'd stowed away from the dinner table, serving them just for your amusement. You were — are still — my daughter at heart, so you'd scold him, but your tone and the gasps you'd let out as he confessed to switching his friend's ketchup packet for hot sauce or hiding Mr. Moore's pencils around the classroom showed your investment. Every now and then, I'd catch the slightest tint of citrus in the air, and I'd know scandalous anecdotes weren't the only thing Eric had snuck upstairs. Whenever he'd insist you peel tangerines for him in front of your father and I, our reproach would send him back peddling, so a trade out of parents' view it was. It wasn't until he grew some that he finally confessed to irritation whenever he tried himself: a stinging redness spotting about his palms.

You're leaning against the doorframe of your old bedroom now, and I wish I could still quip that it was just as you'd left it: something you delighted in during holidays spent back at mom and dad's. While it wasn't full by any means, especially in comparison to Eric, who slapped up any posters he could get his hands on, it remained yours. We'd painted the walls, you and I, one summer afternoon, throwing your windows open to diffuse the fumes. We'd made a whole day of it, picking out a powdery blue to cover pastel yellow at the store, taping up the walls, and rolling away. You were always such a curious child, excited to learn at any opportunity; you may not have been the most efficient of helpers, but you sure were a pleasant one, humming songs neither of us knew the lyrics to and asking me all sorts of questions about painting and building and renovation and eventually I'd laughed and told you I was certainly due a question of my own.

You'd stopped rolling then, turning to me with a serious concentration I'd never observed on another person's face — at least, not directed toward me. You made me feel adored, admired, and it took my breath away every time. Why powdery blue, I'd asked. It went perfectly with your rubber duck collection, of course, which you'd started lining up along the windowsills. The yellow had swallowed the ducks, and besides, the blue would give them walls to swim in.

The "collection" you spoke of was spotty at the time, only three ducks total. It was more than most children had, surely, but still nothing to change a whole room for. You'd only recently gotten into finding them, I believe, looking at your father with wide shining eyes whenever you'd spot a 50¢ dispenser. Without fail, he'd fish around his coat pockets, ends swishing dramatically about his calves as he fumbled around. You're fumbling, too, eyes



shiny with an entirely different interior, though the look would win him over just the same if he were here with us, scooping you up into an embrace that would crack your very bones. He was good like that, so terribly attentive, knowing how to comfort far better than myself. Here I am, hovering by your side, unable to even wipe your tears away, or offer a tissue.

The blue is all that's left; you'd bagged your army of ducks — which had bled on to dressers and hammered-in shelves by the end of your senior year — taking them with you to your new place. Ducks with crowns and pearls, stethoscopes and lab coats, sunglasses and surfing boards: all littered about the apartment. You'd challenged me to find them all when I visited for the first time, cried over the phone when a supposed friend had stolen several during a house party, describing the exact ducks abducted. I'd gone online, found identical ones, and shipped them to your place one by one. That Christmas, when you'd come to celebrate with us and taken up your old room, the last one was sat on the windowsill you'd set your first. You're staring at the exact spot, refusing to cross the threshold. There's nothing here for you anyhow, the room stripped and sold like the rest of the house. I'd tried to stop them from dismantling your bedframe, but to no avail. It was my second heartbreak after your father's chair.

Something's caught your attention, curiosity finally pulling you into a space otherwise screaming at you to leave. You're shifting a floorboard where your bed used to sit, and it lifts. Twenty-three years you'd lived here and I'd never noticed. Not in all my cleaning and straightening, though I suppose you'd assured that by keeping your own room tidy. It was a habit I'd instilled early in both you and your brother, but I'd still wipe the baseboards and shift the furniture, my presence still existent. It's...a grammar book. I can't imagine you hid your homework out of sight, so what? Oh.

You're flipping through the book, delicately pulling out paper after paper from between the pages. Your back is against the wall, and you're sliding down, resting against blue paint with your knees tucked up. Sidling up beside you is second nature, and I'm seeing exactly what you are: letters, written from you to me. I can't help it, I'm overthinking. Did you mean for me to see these? Was I meant to find them, meticulously making my way around your room, sleeve snagging against the edge of an imperceptible board? If not, why write them? Whatever the truth, you're sifting through them, carefully absorbing words penned to me throughout the years, your handwriting stabilizing as the dates tick closer. You're crying again, as suddenly as the first time, crumbled in the front entryway.

"I miss you," choked up amongst the weeping is all it takes for my entire being to light up, form warbling in distress. I'm reaching out, but you can't feel me, my hand unable to grasp you or anything else. I am afraid, and I feel it echoed back at me, house flickering to mimic my pain. It's not a bear hug from dad, but it does the trick. Your eyes have gone from clam-shut-tight to saucers, hands clenching on precious pages. You are afraid too. That's not what I meant, not what I wanted, for you. I want the shriek of joy you let out, running back down the stairs, after finding your Christmas present. I want the conspiratorial eyeroll after Eric let something incriminating slip at supper. I want hands pressed into dough, watching as I demonstrated how thin it needed spread out.

I want my daughter...

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CAMOUFLAGE

choreographer: nicole walters

Music: "The Kiss" by PHILDEL and "One Day" by Helen Jane Long

"I shall tell you my story and you shall tell me yours.

When we leave this place I will bring you with me.

Others will hear your name again

And again.

Knowing what you mean to me."

Poetry by Elisa Wilson, Secondary Education English Major
at Messiah University

Dancers: Isabelle Garvey, Gabrielle Harris, Mia Semieraro, Annabel Vetock

View online at mercyhurst.edu/lumen

THE DEER IN HEADLIGHTS

Dylan S.

I understand why deer run in front of cars
I understand the thirst for a carnal change
a lust for a life altered
a brush with death
My eyes now open
I understand why they stand and stare as this unknown beast comes closing in
not for fear but unwavering devotion to a calling greater than them
a calling for a change
a yearning for the cool embrace of the mud beneath them
I believe we all hear this call and now as I stand looking down the barrel of that cold sharp
gun
staring forward at the car moving too fast to stop and save me
looking up at the ledge of the building I used to work at
I understand this call to the void
I understand the deer in headlights



NATURE'S EYE
jamie sennett

DUAL
EP JOHNSON



SIX OF CUPS

R.G. Ahrens

"WELCOME BACK!" Shouts the bearded man on James' phone screen. Colette looks up from her book, drawing her gaze to the ceiling where his bright screen is casting light and shadows. She takes a few breaths and returns to her book, resting her head on her hand while closing one ear with her finger. The tinny sounds weasel their way through her frail attempt at noise cancellation.

"Can you please turn that down? Or put headphones in?" Colette asks as nicely as she can manage, the clench of her molars starting to create an ache in her jaw and temples.

James drops his phone onto the bed and sighs, rubbing his forehead. "I don't understand why this is such a problem. My volume is on three."

Colette pauses for a moment, preparing to explain to him something she's said several times before. "I can't focus on reading with someone yelling next to me. Your headphones are right next to you. It's not that big of a deal to put them in if you want to watch something when we're going to bed." Colette faintly feels like a mother scolding her son.

"Whatever," he says, reaching for the headphones that rest atop his nightstand. "It's not like we never spent the night together before I moved in. You know about my routines."

"And you know about mine," Colette says flatly. James rolls over with his back to her, leaving her words hanging in the air. She doesn't know if he heard her and doesn't care much to find out.

She tries to go back to her book, but the emotional irritation of the altercation seeps under her skin, causing a psychosomatic itch all over her body. After a few moments of staring at the pages without reading them, she gives up, shutting the book and placing it on her nightstand before rolling over with her back to James.

She can still hear the yell of middle-aged gamers through his headphones.



The first light of morning slanting through the large windows rouses Colette from sleep, her arm numb elbow down from the way she tucked it over her ear to drown out James' snoring. Always making noise, even in his sleep.

James putzes around the room, getting ready for his 8 A.M. class. He's being as quiet as he can, which isn't very. As he disappears down the hallway into the bathroom, Colette can hear his every move; the drop of clothes onto the floor, the flush of the toilet, the too-short run of the faucet. Her ears strain towards every rustle of toothbrush bristle on teeth, the



low *haaawk* of his throat as he spits into the sink, the thwap of toothpaste-spit hitting the ceramic. The bathroom door rattles as he yanks it open and pads into the bedroom. Colette closes her eyes, pretending to be asleep, not wanting to confront last night's events.

Dropping his pajamas on the floor next to the hamper, James grabs his backpack and swings it onto his shoulders. Making his way over to the bed, he plants a solid kiss on her forehead, a vital step of his morning routine he's never skipped; it occasionally makes Colette feel sorry for so easily losing her patience with him.

She hears footsteps down the stairs, shoes hitting the floor, the front door opening and closing, a sputtering engine that starts his 15-year-old car, tires on gravel.

A loud bird starts its morning vocal performance outside the bedroom windows.

After wasting 45 minutes attempting to sleep, Colette's alarm goes off at 8:15. The bird had concluded its concert just in time for Colette's morning to begin. Throwing herself out of bed with a rumble of leftover agitation, she shuffles into the bathroom. After using the toilet and washing her hands, twice, another time, three, there you go, that's good, she flicks open the top drawer and removes her contact case, putting in the lenses. As she blinks into clear vision, she sees what her natural eyes had not been able to tell her. A fresh spatter of white, foamy toothpaste litters the chrome faucet, the handles, even a tiny bit of the mirror.

A shutter passes through her, the clean feeling of her hands now tainted. She washes them again, once, twice, three times, ties up her hair, grabs a pair of disposable gloves and a Clorox wipe from the bathroom closet, and scrubs the faucet until it sparkles again. Disposing of the dirtied wipe, she grabs a second one, gets the counter and the bottom of the mirror, gets rid of that, grabs a third, cleans the toilet just because now everything has to be the same amount of clean, then throws it all away and gets in the shower because who can go about their day after being elbow-deep in their toilet. She lathers the body soap in her hands, scrubs down in multiples of three, gets out, and dries off, trying her to convince herself the clean feeling has returned.



Colette breathes in the fragrant garlic and olive oil heating up in the saucepan. She didn't work after her classes today and took the opportunity to get groceries for a nice dinner. Though the couple tends to eat pasta a lot, and she's a bit sick of it, she picked up pappardelle to pair with chicken (because she's feeling brave) and a homemade blush sauce, partially as an apology for her shortness with James.

With the pappardelle boiling in its pot, she adds the tomato paste, cream, and the rest of the spices into the saucepan, thinking about their relationship from months past. Sure, she knew about his habits because of their sleepovers, but it was always met with grace from both sides. At this point, she's starting to feel like a nag, even though she can't understand why it's so hard for him to do these simple tasks. Moving on to inspect the bagged rotisserie chicken for miniscule signs of mold, the doorknob rattles with a horde of keys.

"Damn, that smells good!" James exclaims, pushing through the door and dropping his backpack and a small plastic bag on the nearby kitchen table.

"That's the idea. I felt bad about last night, so this is part of my apology."



He walks around the counter to hug her, squeezing her tight across her shoulder blades in the way he knows will crack her back. "I'm sorry too, for losing my temper. Do you need any help with cooking?"

"Everything's pretty much done, but if you could strain the pasta that'd be great."

He obeys, grabbing the colander from its place in the cabinet and dumping the steaming pasta into it. "By the way, I got you something." Righting the pot and placing it back on the stove, he walks back to the table and tosses her the plastic grocery bag, its contents landing on the counter in front of Colette with a hollow rattle. When she pulls out what's inside, that weighted feeling settles into her.

"Earplugs? Seriously?"

"Well, I figured they'd help your problems with falling asleep, and —"

"That shouldn't even be a problem, you're just incapable of watching something on your phone without blasting it through your headphones."

In that moment, Colette sees James surrender. At this point, she's too tired to care, the sting of James' "present" prickling her. "Not to mention I'm so sick of cleaning up after you. You put your laundry on the floor right next to the basket instead of inside of it." She turns back to the stove and starts vigorously whisking the sauce in its pan. "You spit all over the faucet when you brush your teeth. I was running late to class this morning because I had to shower after cleaning up your mess." Turning the heat off the saucepan, she tosses in the chicken, flipping it around as a decoy to hide the sting that's started to form behind her eyes.

"I'm sorry. I didn't notice the toothpaste," he replies quietly.

"How?" Colette asks, not turning around.

"I'm not as psycho as you are about cleaning, okay?"

The use of that word pulls the sting behind her eyes up through her tear ducts. *Psycho*. She's spent the better part of her life trying to convince herself that she's not, that her thoughts and rituals are normal, are controllable.

"I feel like nothing I do is ever good enough for you," he yields.

And there it is. She knows that feeling because it's buried inside her, too. Colette turns to see James leaning on the counter, arms crossed, looking handsome as ever, looking at her like a zoo animal in its cage. An uneasy, trapped feeling sinks its claws into her. This isn't about the toothpaste, or the clothes, or the noise.

"That's not it," she attempts.

"I try to do nice things for you. I know I'm not perfect, but you shouldn't expect me to be," he argues. "I got you something to help, and you got mad at me."

"I'm not asking for perfection; I'm just asking you to have some sympathy for me. And that wasn't a present, that was you not wanting to take responsibility for your actions." She counts to three, then six, then nine, with nothing offered up from either side. "Dinner is ready."...

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MEDUSA MASKS
madison zevallos



GEOMETRIC
SUNFLOWERS
eleandra casane

ALL HE DID WAS END THE WAR

marley ramon

The most important missives are written with a shovel
the office desk beneath salt, earth, and clouded sky
Albedo, bright like summer's day, humidity to match
A drawn face like iron, like bloody teeth and bitten tongues
A rustle of funeral blacks

Soil has a weight to it
power dragged from evolutionarily-guided hand
It's recognized by noses last loved
but a dry mouth tastes of nothing but rich black ink

Truman holds some final stand
pins in palms, in shoulders, in dotted lines
Only the ink is wet
Y'all'd've done the same, he swears

Some other plan would've blown the same
some bigger core and smaller bright

The fresh newspapers of final dates have left their holding hands
A golden locket with light reflecting off the dent
Bent metal asking nothing of its country
The exit hole is larger than a nickel but the same size as a life

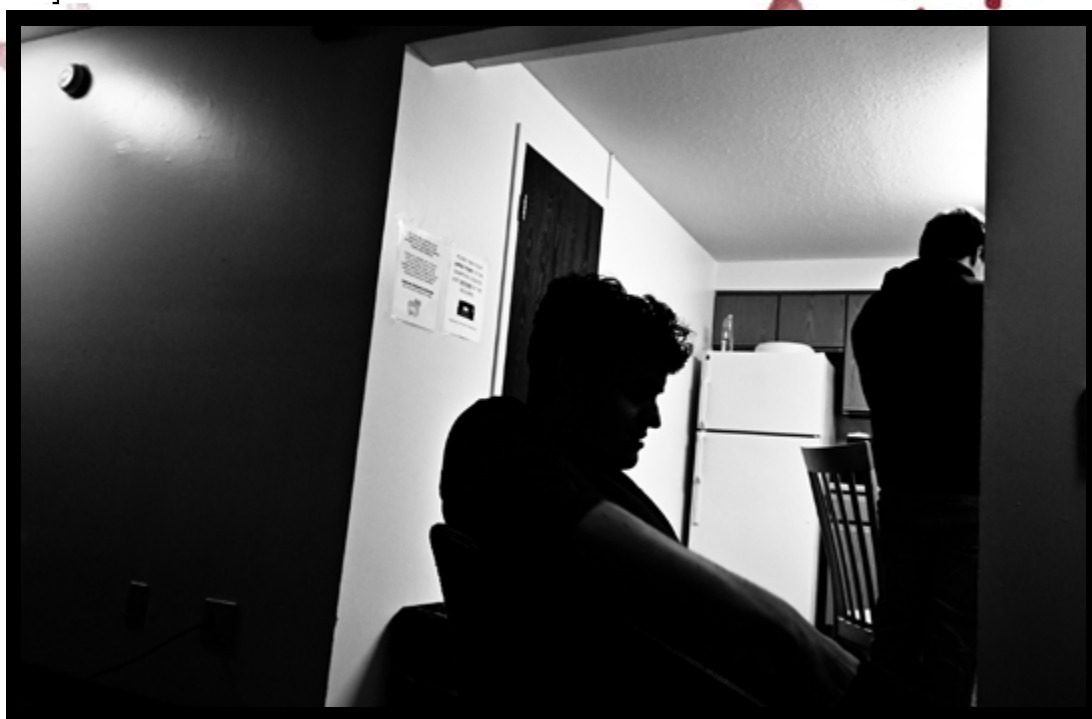
A little bit of the missus to carry, he said
A little bit of the missus to live forever in museum case

Freshly cleaned blues, straightened up gig lines
He'd have to sleep comfortably to have done it all
inveniam viam aut faciam
The pen pulls away, or maybe that's his hand
A toss of dirt
A final stroke



UNTITLED
EP JOHNSON

PREOCCUPIED
AVA FORSYTH



INVENT

PAST HUNTING

elizabeth plummer

The fireplace couldn't quite reach him where he sat, facing its flickering light, the coals in need of stirring. Casting a glance toward the metal stick prodding the hearth's side, he warred, but eventually got back to work, rifle in hand. *Clean, check, lubricate, reassemble.* They were barely his fingers, removing components with care, magazine set aside. Taking a cloth, he moved from action, bolt, receiver, barrel with his father's voice in ear, the approving grumble as intrinsic to the process as the actions themselves.

As a boy, Cooper's brothers helped father where they could, gathering supplies, clothing the hounds, and loading the car. He would be left to the cleaning, sat alone in the logged house, until he was finished. A rough pat on the shoulder signified appreciation's beginning and end, the group finally piling into the truck, dogs lying across laps and feet. Those days marked the only times the four of them were all together, mom left in solitude, waving them off on their wrapping porch with fondness. As the car navigated their long driveway, she would not waver. Akin to a fleck of paint on a canvas, she remained stagnant, greeting them with that affectionate wave. He often wondered if their absence was so potent — so uncharacteristic — she'd grow immobile, unsure what to do without feet romping across floorboards and boys chasing one another, shouts resounding and bodies scuffling.

Denny's head lifted as he clicked the magazine back in place, the foxhound's body curled by the hearth, languid so far, aware it wasn't quite his time yet. Locking eyes, Denny's tail wagged slightly, the thump of it muted from the blanket he'd dragged off the couch to lie on. Sighing, Cooper got up, slinging the rifle over his shoulder, strap stopping the momentum of his carelessness, weapon thudding gently against his back on the rebound.

Traveling from living room to kitchen, he nodded toward various heads on the walls, their expressions serene — or perhaps vacant. The habit was one shared by the entire household apart from mom, who — depending on her mood — had carried through without recognition, or pet them carefully, giving attention to each one. It was more than she'd considered the dogs, whom she banned from the house due to an allergy, forcing the boys to strip their outer garments before entering if they'd been out roughhousing, the chill nipping their flesh on the porch. Their yelps, she'd tease, sounded like the hounds', and in return, they'd stick out their tongues, knowing she'd tease them for "panting" next, ushering them inside with a whistle, smile crinkling.

He grabbed two plastic-wrapped sandwiches and a bottle of water, remembering to snag another as Denny's claws clicked closer, a thrill already transforming his furred body from something domestic to wild, muscles flexing, stretching for the running soon to come. He unpacked one, ripping off chunks of white bread and ham hastily as he poured a cup of coffee, gulping that down just as efficiently. Passing a cabinet, Cooper ripped open a new bag of treats tucked in the back, shoveling some into his pocket as the coffee's warmth

faded from his throat. Closing it, he noticed Denny had sidled closer, almost leaning against his side, staring up with a doleful look, features arranged to their most pitiful. He waited a moment, listening for a whine; it did not come.

"Later," he said gruffly, aiming for the coat closet. Stripping right in the entryway, he shivered, Denny watching a few paces away. Reaching for the stack of clothes he'd brought down last night, he began to layer. Covertly, snow had built up in the dark, undoing yesterday's shoveling. Dragging a hand through his beard, a sigh unfurled, spreading painfully through the silence of the house.

It didn't need done now, he decided, continuing to pile on layers, zipping a camo coat devoid of scent. The absence of a distinct marker had always unnerved him, usually surrounded by hearty smelling stews and wet fur, tapped maple syrup and freshly chopped wood. While those were no longer common, he sometimes would walk from room to room, or roam along the property, and be struck with phantom scents in the air, dazing and nostalgic. Remembering the dog treats, he picked up the worn pair of jeans tossed on the floor. Back to the kitchen he went, snatching another plastic bag from the drawer and stuffing the slabs of artificial jerky inside. One fell from his grip, hitting the tile with a thwack.

"Here Denny!" he called, but the dog did not come. Kicking the treat with a socked foot, he guided it back to the front door, where Denny himself was neatly sat, eyeing the snow. "Denny!" No response. "I've got you a treat!" Nothing. Shedding the now offensive socks, he exchanged the pair, leaving them crumpled with the jeans. He pulled out the rarely donned boots, forcing one foot, then the other, into their dense caverns. Picking up the rifle propped by the door, he flung it over his shoulder once more.

"Come on now, ya beagle," he commanded, giving his thigh a short slap, father's long-standing joke sounding flat on his tongue. Denny shifted his head, finally acknowledging him. Almost immediately, he got lost in the house, staring off intently. Cooper leaned down, grasping his collar, an urgency building in his bones. The leather was wearing thin in some places, but the craftsmanship held, beautiful edges cut and finished to perfection. Father made one for all the hounds, taken from the first deer they helped bring down; usually, they lasted the dogs' entire lives.

Denny refused to budge in that impossible way dogs manage, somehow centering their mass to remain entirely still, no matter the pulling.

In the summer months, father would hose the hounds down outside, and in the winter, they rolled in the sparkling snow, jumping into snow drifts. On evenings after hunts, the landscape would be stained pink from rubbed muzzles and coats. From his place in the yard, Cooper would observe his mom slump over the porch fence, intrigued by the color play as sunlight dipped below the tree line, brightening the unusual hues. One winter day, Remington — a young pup at the time, barely trained — had snuck off into the woods, slinking back to father's calls with dozens of quills agonizing every step. They had all been horrified, the poor creature looking like a porcupine himself. Despite the pain — or perhaps because of it — he had stilled in the doorway of the bathroom, plopping himself down miserably. It was difficult to grab his collar through the plethora of quills, but father had, attempting to get him forward. Remington resisted, as Denny did now.

Cooper and his brothers had gathered round, watching the scene, there to help if father called their names; instead, mom turned the corner, gave a disapproving hum,



then shooed father away. Hanging a piece of roast beef before Remington enticingly, she goaded him through the door, clicking it shut. He emerged — hours later — quill free, hives on mom's arms.

"Let's go!" burst from him in frustration, fighting a losing battle. Denny, in a moment of lax recovery, broke free and went over to the closet door, dragging a paw along its surface insistently. After, he shook his coat. The damn vest, of course. Retracing his steps, he opened it once more and grabbed the requested item, clipping it on. Denny's hide was largely concealed by a brilliant orange.

Muttering to himself, man and dog made their way into the cold morning, consumed by scraggly, white-covered wood. Denny took the lead, traversing the snow with an ease Cooper envied, his own efforts clunky by comparison. Despite the swath of forest around their house, his father preferred to travel, meeting up with several buddies and their dogs: a singular unit poised to track and kill. The deer barely stood a chance, roughly a dozen hounds flushing them out for the final shot. Cooper, however, knew the group was dismantled long ago, the men of his youth in their graves or nursing homes.

He missed the comradery of it all, the adrenaline of sprinting through the trees, the whooping of men after a takedown, father's wide smile and swollen-knuckled hands taking his hounds' faces and stroking them triumphantly, unfettered praise sustained through the drive home, a dog riding alongside him in front, boys all the more crammed in the back for it.

Nothing ever changed, not even at the end, father calling Denny's name on his deathbed, tucked away in their home's master bedroom. He needn't have bothered; his loyal hound lay by his side, welcome in the house since mom passed. Cooper had heard the yell, sprinting upstairs, hovering in the doorway as the old man glided his hands along the only coat left, father's other dogs either dead or with Cooper's brothers. He had died that way, praise for his hound on a stiff, chapped mouth.

Suddenly, Denny darted into the brush, and Cooper could recognize a dog hot on the trail. He followed diligently behind, tracking orange amongst the barren wood, no other color in sight. Everything narrowed, the blur on each side akin to riding through town on late nights, face pressed against glass, car window cool on his forehead. His eyes would lift and fall, unfocused and dreamy, father's voice still thick with approval in the front. In those half-awake moments, he could transport back to the morning, when father's hand curled around his shoulder. Refocusing, he realized the mass that was Denny had vanished. Swallowing the hound's name, Cooper ground to a halt, snow creeping up the sides of his boots.

Five minutes later, Denny became visible once more, making his way back. As he drew closer, Cooper noticed the rabbit in his mouth, caught all on his own. Its blood rolled down from tooth to maw to forest floor. They stared at one another, prey in between them. Denny dropped it, body splayed, eyes boring up at him. He paid it no mind, watching Denny lick his chops, tongue curling around canine briefly, shining it white once again. Cooper continued forward, leaving the rabbit stranded behind: unacknowledged...

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SELF PORTRAIT — NOW AND FUTURE
reid cunningham



OREO BOX
lata vishesh



HONEY,
I SHRUNK THE KIDS
marley ramon

LUMEN LITERARY AWARDS

P. BARRY MCANDREW AWARDS

1st Place: Marley Ramon's "Ardor" (pg. 23)

2nd Place: Katherine Michienzi's "Little Sister" (pg. 8)

3rd Place: Elizabeth Plummer's "Past Hunting" (pg. 62)

Best Essay of Literary Analysis:

Corinne Voelker's "Whitman's *Song of Myself*, a Song of the Nation"

PATRICIA S. YAHN '50 JURIED STUDENT ART SHOW AWARDS

1st Place: Ava Forsyth's "Preoccupied" (pg. 61) — Charcoal Illustration

2nd Place: Marley Ramon's "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (pg. 66) — Ceramic Sculpture

3rd Place: Samantha Montoro's "Biomorph-Generation 1" (pg. 33) — Ceramic Sculpture

Photography Excellence Prize: EP Johnson's "Untitled" — Photography

Honorable Mention: Samantha McDonald's "The Lighthouse" — Digital Photo

Honorable Mention: Hannah Duckett's "The Baptism Triptych" — Watercolor Painting

Honorable Mention: Ainsley Dunning's "Meteor Shower. Clouds." — Photography

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