

Cardinal Sins

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Produced by the students and staff of Saginaw Valley State University and published on campus by the Graphics Center, *Cardinal Sins* features art, photography, poetry, and prose by members of the SVSU community, including alumni and faculty. All submissions are considered for publication. Selection is made by blind voting by the committee staff. Staff members are excluded from receiving an award in any category.

Cardinal Sins uses Adobe *InDesign*. This issue features Brain Flower, Dakota (Handwriting), Modern No. 20, Book Antiqua, and Lucida Fax fonts.

Cover Art by Andrew Tamlyn, entitled "Clap Yo Hands Say Tree"

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Cardinal Sins

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**Congratulations to the winners in their respective categories.*

***Congratulations to the winner of the Fall 2012 Cardinal Sins Poetry Slam.*

~Artwork by Kassie Smith, photos taken by Lindsey Franzel

Editor's Note

Cardinal Sins is officially international. Through the hard work of the *Cardinal Sins* staff, with a special thanks to Marlin Jenkins and Pete Stevens, we have successfully promoted and networked our way into the hands of readers across the United States as well as online readers in Europe through our new multimedia connections as well as returning successful from AWP Boston. We have a new website (cardinalsinsjournal.com) and are actively retweeting and supporting fellow creative writing journals at (twitter.com/sinsjournal).

I would like to say "thank you" to everyone who has supported the launch of our first, open-to-everyone, flash fiction contest. Thank you to everyone who submitted and for everyone who helped spread the word. I can happily say that we received over one hundred submissions. We will be continuing with our no-fee contests next year, with both a poetry and nonfiction themed contest.

For me, being the Editor of *Cardinal Sins*, has taught me so much about people and about working with words. I have truly enjoyed every moment, and I look forward to next year, where I will continue to serve as the *Cardinal Sins* Editor.

I have to admit that we are pretty radical and have made a lot of changes over the past year, like our cover style, fonts and working to extend our readership in the community. We hope to continue to be radical. I once heard that in the 1960's, *Cardinal Sins* wanted to attach condoms to individual issues in support of women's right to contraceptives. Radical right? I think we continue that tradition, perhaps not to that extreme, in attempting to bring the best and most creative and vicarious works available to us to the rest of you.

We look forward to working with you and your work.

Happy reading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandy Abraham", written in a cursive style.

Brandy Abraham, *Cardinal Sins* Editor

How to Become Immortal

by Rachel Schienke

Before we start running, Tricia opens my water bottle and pours a handful of seeds inside. “They’re chia,” she explains. I know about chia seeds. Tricia buys a different brand of chia every time she needs a re-up in order to compare effectiveness, so our apartment is littered with empty bags of different promises. “The best-known plant source of Omega-3.” “100% pure, natural, pesticide-free *Salvia hispanica*.” “Approved by Dr. Wayne Coates, award-winning author of *Chia—Rediscovering a Forgotten Crop of the Aztecs*.” Tricia wears those shoes that look like toe socks, doesn’t shave her armpits, and took a semester off last year to hike the Appalachian Trail. And she always has chia in her water bottle. I look at my own. The gelatin, “an all-natural protective coating that aids hydration and controls nutrient distribution throughout the body,” is starting to develop around the seeds, individual battle shields. I hold it up to the sunlight, see them bobbing up and down, crowded like fish eggs in their own tiny shells, each a source of unlimited resuscitation and power. And I look down the trail, and Tricia is already a mile away.

The Effects of Bedding and its Tendencies toward Dissociation in the Dark

by Emily Gennrich

My soft palate hurts when the blankets are scattered apart in the dark. I've told you this a million times, so very many times, but you still laugh the same:

"Why does it matter if the sheets stray slightly when the shades are pulled down?"

I can't explain this further.

The same way that the textbook says light is lumpy and that is all.

That the word *galactose* can somehow relate to the two of us

1) the tale behind the name of our streak in the sky

and

2) the embracing sweetness of milk.

That everything about us is lovely in the morning except our breathing together.

I can't help but wonder sometimes why their static doesn't bond them together, fibers clasped and rubbing enough to keep at least their skin, if not their very bellies, from slipping. Why it's to one side instead of the other, and apart. Why it's never as simple as a tangle or a knot.

You laugh, but this alone is why I no longer sing to you at night.

Ghosts on a Lake

by Erin Case



As I Wandered Amid the Cosmos



by Justin Kokkinis

Mountain Face



by Erin Case



by Myles Roznowski

meat grinder on the front porch



by Madison Smith

Reader, if you are a fish

by Lauren Boulton

You have never felt the weight of yourself.
You have lived a life in utero,
days filled with fin-floating and slow-blinking
half-dreaming
each breath flowing through your mouth
each breath sliding out your gills
as you move, you are held aloft,
bladed form slicing through reels of seaweed,
body skimming over rock curves rounded by wave after wave.

Once or twice, you may have jumped
to reach that overhead insect
flickering your buckled sky.
For a second the universe

pushed you, arced you,
drew your mouth wide open.

And even this moment was quiet victory,
bug squirming in your belly
until it was as still as your life,
until your short mind forgot the terror that fed you.

Still, reader, consider the deaths reserved for fish.
Someday a talon or hook will steal you from stasis.
Yanked out of safety, you will heave, breathe,
muscles flexing, eyes wide.
You will sink in unbearable air. Your mass!
Your weight pulling against your stabbing bonds,
immense gravity you never knew you'd force.

Wrenched upwards, you will know just how large you are,
how solid the world when you land on the boat,
how dry the hay of an eagle's nest sucking water from your gills.
You will know what it is to flop,
to slap your body and remain in place,
to be trapped without a fluid exit.

Think! You could be picked apart in pieces,
dull blade of a seagull beak ripping off scales, skin.
You could be cleft in four and gasping until the dark,
stripped of the meat that binds you to mediocrity.
You could be dropped on ground and left to suffocate,
breathing toxic air.

And all for reaching for something above you,
all for leaving your comfortable rock bed,
all for hoping, like a trillion fish, that there was something more.

But you?
I think you will be the one that got away.

Marina



by Myles Roznowski

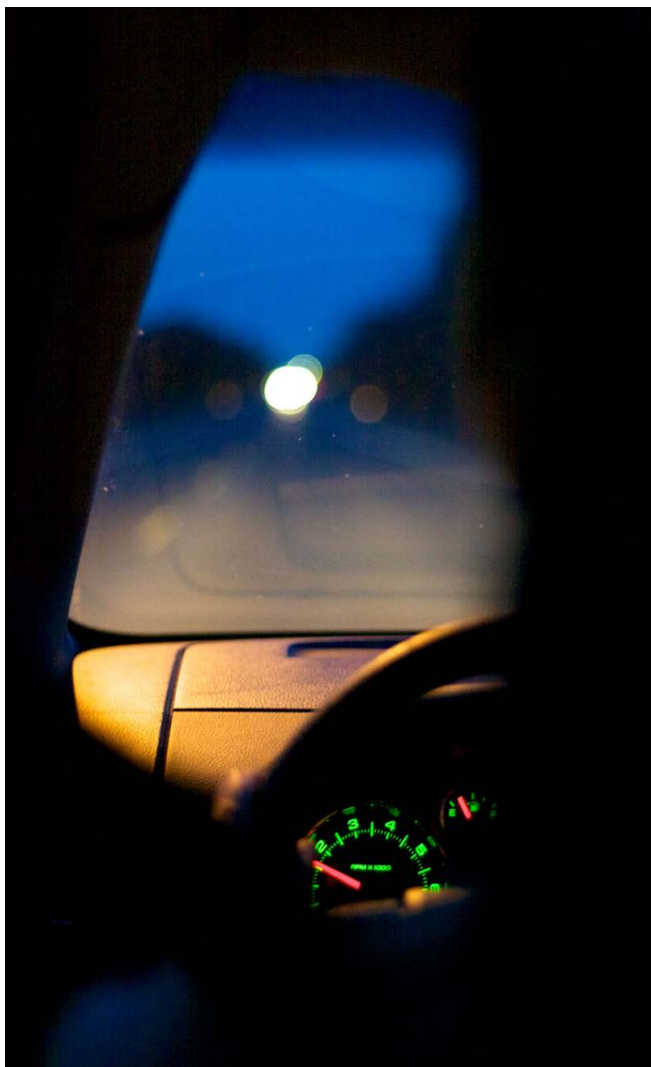
Ocean



by Josh Guerrero

Night Ride

by Tyler Beyett



Empire of Light

by Michael Gibson

Annie checks her face in the hallway mirror. She's wearing a crocheted hat made to resemble a smiling penguin, something she insisted her dad get her for Christmas—because it'll be ironic and fun, she said—but now she's having trouble finding the irony in it, whether it's supposed to bloom more brightly under a smile or a frown, or whether it even makes a difference—and what difference *can* it make if no one ever sees her wear it? She frowns and pushes her glasses up her nose.

Out of habit she massages the spot below her right knee and grazes her fingers through empty air. Doctors amputated the leg seventeen months ago, after the infection. She hasn't seen her physical therapist since, and already her other leg, which hasn't moved in almost twenty years, is starting to atrophy.

She takes a last look in the mirror and tugs her hat down. She can hear her dad's fiancée strumming her guitar in the basement, the same few chords over and over, stopping and stuttering and restarting in an alchemical process she doesn't understand. She shakes her head and moves her wheelchair toward the front door.

Outside the snow drifts in oceanic tides, and when it melts the mailboxes will all be canted and broken and missing, the street-signs bent to occult angles and giving occult direction, the whole of winter forcing the world to a deranged, secret map of itself.

She finds her sister on the front porch with clouds at her lips. Annie can't tell if she's smoking or just cold. The air is still.

"Dessie. Hey. I didn't know you were home."

Dessie's wearing her work outfit, gray pants and red polo; for two months she's been doing temp work at a retail inventory firm.

"Out early." She sighs, shuts her eyes. "Argument with the boss. Fuck, I don't know. We were doing a bookstore tonight." She coughs and drags hard on her cigarette. "I'd rather just, you know, just work in the bookstore. Drink coffee. Read on my breaks." She sinks into her chair and shuts her eyes. "All those books."

"You don't look very good," Annie says, resisting the temptation to ask whether she's picked up any of her bad habits

again.

"I'm just sore is all." She taps her cigarette into one of the flower boxes. "I like your hat." From here, the overpass is a black swatch through the diamond-violet night. Every now and then a car struggles across, tires making digestive noises in the wet snow, drivers filtered out of the bars and clubs, everyone looking for a place to sleep, a forgetting place.

A passing freight train haunts the snow; its noise bellows through the starlight in a low moan.

"Hear that?" Dessie says. "I love hearing that at night. That's, like, *Zen* to me."

"That's not what *Zen* is."

"Whatever." She coughs again, and the moon highlights the rift in her thinning hair. She doesn't look at all like a thirty-three-year-old. "Do you have any rum or anything left?"

"We need to go to Canada and get Cuban rum."

"Montreal. Right."

"We should."

"It's not gonna taste any different." She coughs.

"Besides. You're not gonna find Mom there. Or anywhere else."

"That's not what I'm saying."

The trees are frosted with rime along the river, and, just past, the water glimmers in ice and starlight. Candy-colored lights from the opposite bank melt into the river like summer watercolor. Annie watches.

"Lydia's practicing in the basement," she murmurs. "I can't sleep. All I can hear are these chords."

"Tell her to shut up."

"I don't know." She takes a deep breath and feels her nostrils freeze. "I kinda like it."

Dessie exhales long and slow, and for a second Annie thinks the girl's internal pressure is all wrong, that she'll collapse in on herself if she sighs again.

"I like your hat."

"You said that."

She makes a noise of understanding and starts to say something about Lydia's music, but Annie can't understand. The cold air prickles her throat and she tries not to cough.

"I'm going in," Dessie mumbles. "I don't feel very good. You have rum left?"

Annie nods.

"There's some on my desk."

"You don't mind?"

"I'll just drink it alone if you don't."

Dessie makes a clumsy disappearance. Even her slushy footprints are distorted and indistinct. Annie sits there on the porch awhile longer, considering the frozen street, the shimmering river, all life and color on the opposite bank. Soon the cold makes her cough and she can't remember why she came out in the first place. An excuse to wear the penguin hat, maybe. Dessie's already vanished upstairs by the time she makes it back in.

* * *

Snow drifts lost over the lawn, frosting the windowpane with beads of ice. Annie watches without thinking or noticing. The fire hydrant out front looks like a black tree stump in the winter light, and on the roadside Dessie's car is almost completely buried—here a mirror poking out, there a brief shine of windshield like a ruin half-excavated from many strata of time and loss.

Annie swallows hard and moves away from the window, but she doesn't know where to go. There's a lump in her throat and her nose has been running for an hour.

Lydia shambles into the kitchen, her makeup a mess, all her movements twitchy and stuttering.

"I called," she says, producing just enough breath to get the words out. "They're on their way."

Annie nods but can't think of anything to say.

"I can bring you upstairs if you want. If you wanted to see her again—maybe—say goodbye. Before the ambulance gets here."

She's going to start crying; she can feel it beginning, an expanding ache in her chest and head that gets worse the more she resists. But she holds it in.

"No." She glances out the window, hoping for a distraction. There's nothing there. "Did she say anything?"

"Honey, I—I don't know. Something in French. I couldn't understand her."

If she tries to speak she'll cry, so she only nods again.

"I'm gonna go back." She points toward the ceiling,

motioning her madwoman's eyes upward. But instead of going anywhere she paces around the kitchen, her hands moving uselessly at her side, sometimes drumming a senseless beat on her hip or running through her hair. She doesn't know what to do, or what she's doing, and despite her attempts at control she's just as lost now as Annie.

Lydia leaves the kitchen, talking to herself, and disappears into the stairwell, an architectural void that Annie can't bear even to look at. And anyway, she hardly knows the second floor save odd childhood memories where Dessie would haul her up to her bedroom—whole hours spent on the shaggy carpet reading comic books and gorging themselves stupid on popcorn and pretzel sticks.

She goes back to the window. On the porch next door, Mr. Kaczmarek is a dark, man-shaped smudge through the snowfall, standing at his porch sipping hot chocolate or coffee. If he doesn't move he looks a little like a tree trunk in a blizzard. The snowman his grandkids built yesterday is intact but denuded by the winds—one of its twig arms has a broken elbow, and its scarf billows like the flag of a trampled nation. Annie can't remember if it had a pipe or a hat, but if it did they're long gone.

She listens for sirens, and in this weather it's hard to tell an ambulance from a police car, or for that matter a siren from the wind. Upstairs, Lydia hasn't stopped walking. Her footsteps march around without any kind of rhythm or purpose.

"Fuck you, Dess," Annie mumbles, hardly realizing it. "Fucking bitch. Fuck you." She rolls her chair to the edge of the kitchen and peers into the living room—dark as usual but for the television, always on. The room is too close to the stairs and she retreats back into the kitchen's warmth, to the opposite end near the back door and basement stair.

She traces the patterns on her jeans—planets, spaceships, stars. Lydia helped her sew them on when she came back from the hospital, whenever it was, as soon as she was off the antibiotics. Something to mitigate the tedium of lopping off and sewing shut a dozen pant legs. She likes looking down and seeing a splash of color. There's something comforting about it, something surprising, like lively bestiaries marked *hic sunt leones* on old maps. Little things.

She remembers Dessie saying something about feeling sick, something about going to bed early. Maybe her rum bottle is still on the floor up there. Maybe she never even got the chance to open it.

Finally the sirens crest the howling winter, wailing off-key and plaintive like a wanderer lost in borderless tundra. She's nauseated by the sound, and she opens the back door a crack to let the wind in. Snow melts into her clothing in dark pools, and the pain of the cold shuts out the gradual paramedic rumble of boots and murmuring voices through the front door, across the living room, up toward the negative space where Dessie lies. Annie plugs her ears and waits.

She jolts when Lydia grabs her shoulder. "Ariane, close the door." Lydia closes it herself. "You're crazy. You'll freeze." There's a softness to her voice. "I'm riding with them. You wanna stay here and wait for Dad?"

"Sure." It hurts to talk, and her voice is just a whisper. "How far away is he?"

"Just past Flint." Annie nods, hears the paramedics murmuring up and down the stairs, tracking noise and snow and trouble through the house.

"I didn't think it would happen like this."

"Annie, honey."

"I didn't."

"Ariane." Lydia's crying now, but her tears seem effortless, natural, as if she's rehearsed each one forever, year after year. Annie wonders what there's left for Lydia to do, if this is the single moment her life was reaching for.

She isn't sure what else to think or say. She's been expecting this for too long-long enough that it no longer has any meaning.

She points to the noise of the paramedics.

"Did they-say anything? I mean-are they sure?"

"She's *gone*, Annie." She sighs and for a moment stops her tears. "I think they're bringing her out if you want to see her."

"No."

Lydia nods and touches her shoulder. The flashing lights from the driveway nauseate the room, and the air pressure-something barometric is terribly wrong here, and the

paramedics, invisible, are destroying the house by taking Dessie out of it, removing a crucial pin, and Annie knows now that it's only a matter of time before the whole thing collapses.

"Well, hey. I'm riding in the ambulance." Lydia gives her stepdaughter a convulsive hug, awkwardly snaking her arms around the back of her chair. "Love you, Annie."

"Yeah."

"But I have to go. Dave'll be here in an hour, he said."

"Okay."

"Okay?"

"Okay."

She tousles her hair and lingers a moment, maybe waiting for Annie to say something, maybe trying to think of something else to say herself. But there's nothing, no room even for goodbyes.

"Do you have to ride with them?"

"Someone needs to be there."

"I should do something," Annie mumbles. "I don't know. Call someone. Maybe call Rich. Some of her friends. Someone needs to let them know."

"Do what you have to." She looks back through the kitchen, baring her teeth, each nerve tight past capacity.

"They're leaving. Ariane. I have to go. Really."

"Yeah."

"I'll see you in a couple hours."

No room even for goodbyes. Sentiment will wait until later, until things have cooled down, until they need something to liven up the paperwork and bureaucracy.

Lydia's ponytail is a swish of red swallowed slowly by the December gloom, a last glimpse of midnight sun heralding a long dream of night.

She glances again at the patchwork cosmology on her jeans and grazes her fingers across whole millennia of mythology-made-astronomy, an eternity of dream navigation. Finally she takes a breath and rolls her chair into the living room, feeling more resistance than usual, and goes to the bay window. She sees the ambulance barreling away into the snowstorm. Carol Jaworski has been watching from across the street, it looks like, and Annie wants to wave to her, but of course the woman would never notice.

She returns to her bedroom, hardly realizing it. She feels light, purposeless, without worth. There's nothing she can do now.

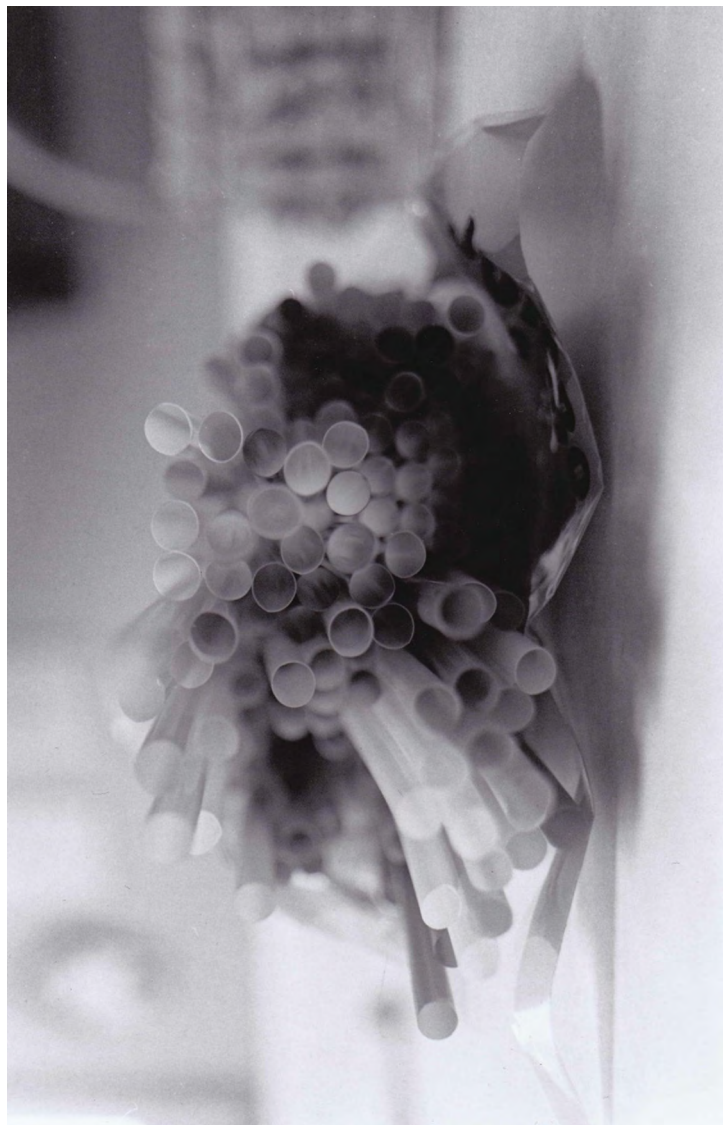
The house is quiet enough that it seems born of the wind, the walls and floors and roof her imagination only. She wonders if she's spent the last twenty-four years mistaking a map for the world.

It takes her three or four tries to get into bed. She pulls the covers over her head and remembers reading ghost stories by flashlight on winter nights. Sometimes Dessie would read them to her, and they'd scare themselves to death—nothing else to do but lie there and talk their fear away, sometimes till the first spears of morning.

She pulls a pillow over her face and considers suffocating herself. She decides against it, if only because she knows it's impossible.

She doesn't think of her mother much, but she's thinking of her now, guessing what she might have looked like. As long as she keeps the sheets over her face she's a child again. She traces the sound of wind against the walls and tries to understand why she's surprised, or why she isn't crying anymore. Soon she sighs herself to a quiet, stuttering sleep, dreaming neither of Dessie nor anything else she understands.

Depth



by Ryann Shaffer

Theater Lights



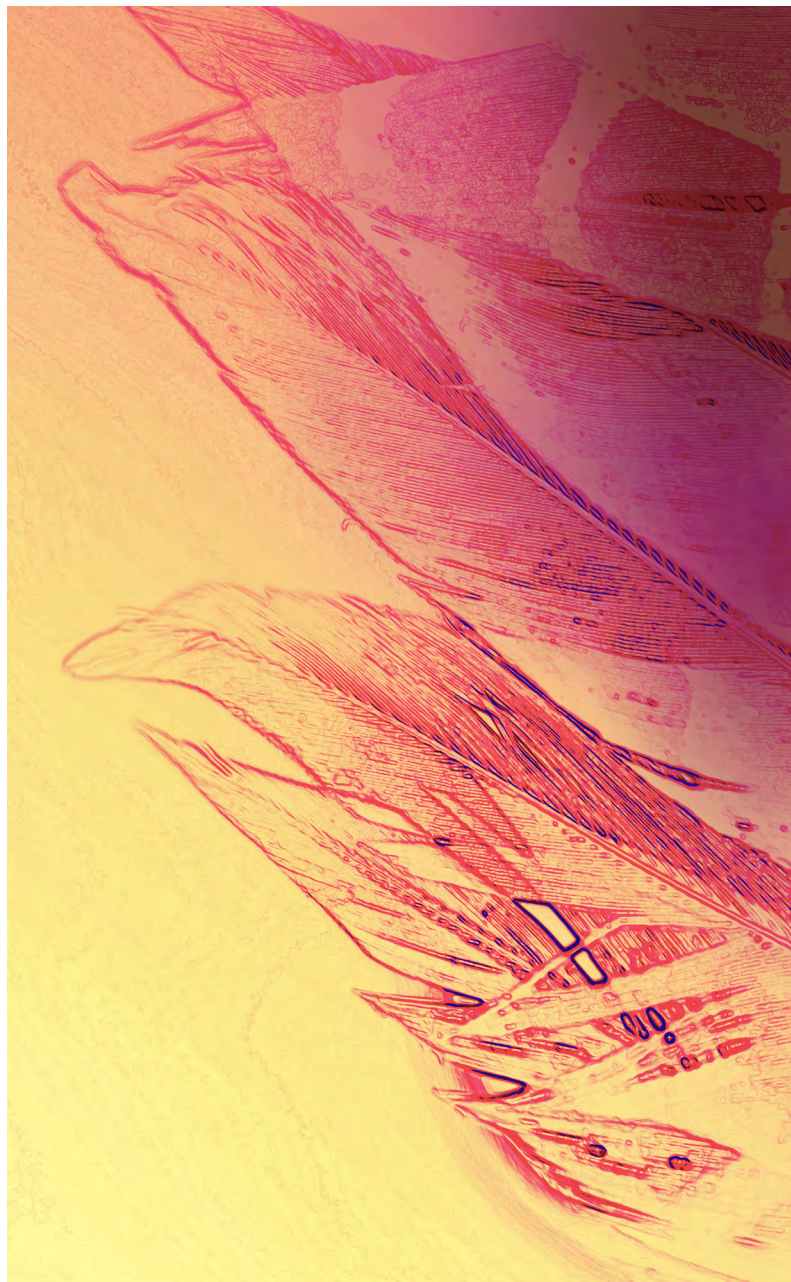
by Arianna Paver

Owl



by Emily Sovey

Feathers



by Myles Roznowski

iContact

by Erin Case



Winter Skin

by Adam Haenlein

The ground had already started to freeze, that's why I decided to bring the shovel. My boots were dry, and the ground threatened to crack under the pressure of my trembling, eleven-year-old steps.

I didn't like to admit it, but I was scared of the forest. Even now, thinking of that modest, woodland grotto sparks more grotesque memories than pleasant ones. I suppose that's why I'd also brought the dog. It wasn't so much that I felt safer with something else there; it was just comforting to know that I wasn't the only one drawing the forest's gaze, as if I had stumbled uninvited into some otherworldly landscape, the target of an unseen arbiter.

Many nights before then I'd made the journey into the darkness with Clark and Hill, but they were gone now. Both had been casualties of my own stubbornness. They say you never have friends like the ones you had when you were young, but back then I couldn't afford to believe that. Then again, wasn't I the one that had been forced to leave?

Near the end of the bristled, thorny trek, I remember suddenly seizing the cuff of my dog's collar as she fought desperately to sprint away into the underbrush. The forest floor was cool, and the crisp, winter gales rustled the empty branches with a sickening, "click-clack click-clack" that made me cringe. Somewhere, off in the dusk shadows, a tiny woodland animal jolted haphazardly across a stony trail in the distance and flung itself headfirst into a secluded bog.

I flexed the grip on my dog's collar. I remember that the weight of the tiny package in my jacket pocket seemed so heavy at that moment that I felt grounded in the dirt more firmly than the withering elms that embraced the darkened clearing. I was beginning to regret my decision to bury it this far into the forest.

Dropping to the ground on my knees, I ran my free hand across the forest floor. The earth felt hard, but broken somehow. As if the tiniest blow would shatter it to pieces, pulling me and everything else down with it, where we'd fall forever. Even so, I quietly set about my task. I couldn't help but imagine myself in my father's shoes, digging another home foundation for a new future, except I wasn't looking forward.

Even though the hole was deep, the package didn't quite fit at first. I had to chip away at the edges until it fell rather unceremoniously to the bottom. Those moments in life where you know you've made a mistake are plentiful, but rarely had I ever made one that resonated so strongly with me as the one I mourned on that day, shivering silently.

Out to Dry

by Ryann Shaffer



Mr. Tepid's Short Shorts

by Erik Johnson

Mr. Tepid lived in a house that consisted mostly of a living room and kitchen connected as one room. It had a large window that to most functioned as a mirror from the outside. Mr. Tepid spent his days in his underwear because he could not decide which of his many shorts to wear. Some shorts were colorful; some were new, others very old. He had shorts made of cotton, some of silk, a pair made from demon pubes and a pair made from soft feathers of unknown origin. He had all kinds of shorts. Things got a little easier when he determined he would only wear short shorts, and thus the longer pairs sprawled moaning in the corners. He was not exactly sure how he came to have so many shorts. Some appeared in his sleep, others managed to get into his house while he was daydreaming on the toilet. Some shorts slowly and painfully inched their way from under the back door. Mr. Tepid spent his days lounging about indecisive. At one point Mr. Tepid invented cheese-flavored coffee while mushroom clouds towered in the distance through his window. Sometime after the earth had begun to repair itself, Mr. Tepid started to wear a pair of shorts over his head. He had not really physically looked at his own face in years. Even when he shaved, he only took notice of the five o'clock shadow that would never vanish. Mr. Tepid figured that if he left his house, everyone would start wearing shorts on their heads and then he would just be seen as someone trying to be hip like everyone else. Eventually the shorts lying about would randomly puke pools of gooey colors. Some shorts banded together and formed a human-like monster. This monster often pestered Mr. Tepid, distracting him if he tried to play video games, and drinking the last cup of coffee without starting a new pot. Despite this, Mr. Tepid began to appreciate that the monster at least gave him some company, so he began to write the monster little thank you notes such as, "Dear shorts on the abdomen with the palm tree design: you really bring out the contrast of the other shorts like an island floating among other worlds." He found that these notes seemed to ease the monster to sleep. He knew the monster would awake sooner or later, but if he were to leave the house now he would at least escape for a little while. He stuffed a pillowcase with random pairs of shorts because he would need a pillow and plenty of shorts for where he was going. Mr. Tepid decided to smear clumps of the puked goo over his underwear and create his own shorts that would be formed from dreary moths, volcano ash and candy wrappers, or anything that happened to stick.

A Day and Night Kinda Job

by Sean Dudley



Guillermo

by Chris Lawitzke

Guillermo was a walker. Sometimes he'd pass late night hustlers selling off stolen goods, designer knock-offs, or any other product that a customer might want. Depending on his mood, he might ask if they had any drugs. On this evening trek, Guillermo stopped to see what they had.

-Are you carrying?

-You look like a cop.

-I'm not a cop.

-What would a cop say?

-I'm not a cop.

-You look like a fuckin' cop, you need to get the hell outa' here!

Guillermo reflected on his failed attempt. He thought next time that he should wear clothing that was less blue. Tonight he'd worn blue slacks, a dark blue Carhartt, and a navy blue Yankee's ball cap. He was, indeed, very blue. He continued walking, each step clicking like a metronome to the sad song that was his failed attempt to score. The awkwardness of his thoughts began to bloom the transparent bubbles perforating the cloth of his cap, the notions drifting around his head like an invisible halo of washed out talkies and glowing green glasses of absinthe. He captured the particles and examined them closely. On these midnight treks Guillermo would often try to take stock of his conscious mind. As he broke apart the gray minutia he found Dadaism, A.A. Milne, and the Westboro Baptist Church. He focused on each of them trying to make sense of their significance. He was lost to their meaning.

It was a cold night. The wind was slight but bitter. He couldn't help but try to blow rings from the breath escaping his lips. The shapes were awkward at first, then taking the form of blobs, strange spirit-like faces, and oblong serpentine explosions. Guillermo often found that his time was spent in these small meditations of strange pseudo-intellectual experimentation. They often left him awake at all hours of the night. His walks were the canvas for these transient experiences. He was lost to their purpose but the act of doing the seemingly unimportant defined his joys.

From a young age Guillermo had been lost to the concept of fun. His parents and peers would confront him with

opportunities to “get out there” or to “shake things up.” He was left wondering where *there* was and what *things* needed shaking. On one occasion Guillermo had asked Mrs. Tresta, his 11th grade teacher, if she needed him to shake anything for her. She’d looked at him with nonplussed eyes then given him a list of words that needed defining. The first word on the list was diatribe. He’d not seen this word before. He went to the large dictionary that sat on the pedestal in the corner of the room. Guillermo had long feared these large books, as many teachers had hurled such volumes at his head after he’d espoused the unorthodox or committed innocent blasphemies. In his last year of primary school his brother had given him a Marilyn Manson CD titled: *Eat Me, Drink Me*. Guillermo had never heard of Marilyn Manson. He listened to the music and became enthralled with the lyrics. He remembered going to school the following day with the lyrics caught in his head; each verse like a spot light on his brain. His teacher, Mr. Phelps, had asked the class to write a report about a woman who’d touched their lives. Without pause, Guillermo knew who he would write about. He returned the next day with his paper in hand. The title read, “Thank You, Mrs. Manson.” Guillermo had been so happy with his work. He’d sat for hours looking over the grammar, word choice, and the quotes he’d included from Mrs. Manson’s songs. Mr. Phelps stated that everyone would stand and read their report aloud. Guillermo was the first to raise his hand; he stood up, read the title, and began:

One woman who has touched my life is Mrs. Marilyn Manson. She is a rock star who sings very interesting songs. On her album *Eat Me, Drink Me*, Mrs. Manson sings, “In the wasteland / On the way to the Red Queen ... / It’s no wonder our stage clothes / Have dreams to be famous. / The trees in the courtyard / Are painted in blood, / So I’ve heard. / She hangs the headless / Upside down to drain.” This song is about Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*.

Guillermo continued reading not seeing the look of rage on Mr. Phelps’ face nor the giant thesaurus that had been hurled at his head. What had happened next was still cloudy, as he’d suffered a moderate to severe concussion from the thesaurus. His classmates told him that Mr. Phelps had burned his report in front of the class and told them that Marilyn Manson was not

a woman, but a man, and that he was indeed a tool of the devil sent to corrupt the innocent minds of the world. After the incident, Guillermo's parents moved him to a new school, and from that point forward he was conditioned to fear such large books for they were surprisingly aerodynamic.

Guillermo approached a bridge. He crossed the street in order to mount the sidewalk on the other side. He stood for a moment before crossing the street. The bitter night had made the streets like catacombs. The only evidence of people that still existed was a newspaper, an empty cigarette package, the last dregs of a soft drink. He looked over these remnants listening to the silence that sliced through the streets like a mute cabaret to a deaf crowd. He put his ear to the ground but heard nothing but the beat of his heart. It was regular and reminded him of the static noise of his head under water. As a child, he remembered swimming with his friends. They would submerge themselves underwater and yell their secrets. He remembered yelling so loudly beneath the water trying to get a message out, yelling until he inhaled water. He remembered the infinite feeling of the rushing water finding its way into his lungs, the joy of floating then the creeping blackness that came from the dispelling of secrets. When Guillermo was twelve he'd gone to his friend Joey's house. It was summer and the sun felt like a finger jabbing the bright red skin of a perforated blister. He and Joey had been sweating in Joey's mother's house. The pool beckoned to both of them, the cool ripples of the water like a finger beckoning them forward little by little.

-We'll get in trouble.

-'Llermo's a scaredy-cat!

-No!

-'Llermo's afraid.

-No, I'm not.

-You are; let's go!

Guillermo stood confused. He didn't know what to do. He tried to think, but nothing came. He looked to the sky and tried to project an image. He tried to see the monkey that had been on his cereal box that morning but there were no clouds. He stared into the sun then blinked his eyes so he could see the traces of color that would be left in his vision. He stared again focusing on the center of the orb. He blinked his eyes. There

remained in his vision purplish traces hanging between blinks like post-apocalyptic curtains in a long abandoned farmhouse. The traces hung in his vision for several minutes before Joey's voice returned.

- 'Llermo!?

- What?

- Let's go!

The boys jumped into the pool. The impact of their bodies on the water erupted like pre-teen depth charges, each one infinitely dramatic beneath the surface. Guillermo looked out under the water and saw the slope of the deep end to the shallow end. It was a perfectly smooth canyon. He hung for a moment suspended in the water. His thoughts jettisoned out of his mouth. They escaped through the air bubbles floating upward. He swam upward letting his face break through the surface. Joey was swimming for the shallow end of the pool, his body breaking through the endless wall of liquid. Guillermo swam after him. He dove under the water grabbing Joey's legs. Joey submerged himself.

- AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

- AWWW LORVEWAAA MAAAAYYTRAAAAAFALL!!!

- WAAWAAA WAAWAAWAA NEEJAWDROOOOOOOO!!!

They drifted back to the surface; each of them with smiles on their faces. They submerged themselves once again, each suspended underwater.

- FUUUUUUUUUUUUU!!!

- SHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

- ASSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!

On the last syllable Joey inhaled a lung full of water. His eyes popped wide with fright. He lost all semblance of composure. His legs became rigid. His arms like claws would not propel him upward. As water rushed into Joey's lungs, Guillermo could do nothing but watch. It was as though the water had frozen around him holding him rigid. He stayed submerged under the water for seconds that transcended to centuries then millennia. His eyes wide as saucers were frozen on Joey's face. Guillermo looked upon the body of his friend hanging lifeless like a discarded net in an endless sea.

Guillermo stood up from the ground. He looked around the street; for a moment he thought he heard the slightest of splashes. Hearing it again, he spun his head like a fretful owl trying to determine the direction of the sound. He heard it again, this time it was accompanied by cheers. Guillermo looked across the bridge. There was a moderately sized group

of people wearing brightly colored t-shirts and flat-brimmed trucker hats with neon lettering. He stood at the foot of the bridge looking at the group of people each of them cheering as a young man climbed over the railing. He was wearing a neon orange tank top that stated "Those That Live by the Gun, Die by the Gun." Guillermo examined the man who had climbed over the railing; he had perfect white teeth, wore a slight gold chain around his neck, and his complexion was free of blemishes. He guessed this was a more figurative statement. He imagined child soldiers wearing this shirt, not this man. He was reminded of his mother's formal living room, the perfection found in the unmoved whiteness. He wondered if this man had ever held a gun much less shot one. Guillermo ran to where the crowd was standing. He grabbed the man and pulled him down.

-What are you doing?!

-I'm gonna jump off this bridge!

- I don't understand.

-It makes sense just think about it. *Tempus Adox Rarum!*

-I don't understand.

-Time devours all things, man.

Guillermo looked on as the man readied himself. The man looked down seeing his friends' broken bodies on the waves below. Pools of blood found in the staring sockets of their eyes, the wanton dribbling from the corners of their mouths. The man looked at them hesitating. He tried to step backward only to be blown over the railing by a spell of rebel wind. Guillermo looked on as the man fell to the waves, his body falling through the air like a bullet through water. It was as though the falling man was being captured in the frames of an old camera etching them on Guillermo's brain. As he heard the pop of the body as it hit the rocks concealed beneath the waves, Guillermo looked at the crowd of ironic t-shirts that cheered for their friend's death.

He didn't understand the cheering. The wind blew through the crowd; the milk of life lost to this colorful death cult. Guillermo looked at the joy scrawled upon their faces. He wondered what tormented them late at night, he wondered what beasts consumed them in their quiet moments, he wondered what escaped and berated them when they were all alone. He looked over the bridge seeing the man who had jumped. He was twisted beneath the waves. Guillermo saw the gold chain strewn across his face, his shirt torn, his perfect teeth shattered. The water washed over the man's face, it took with it the blood, leaving a now-eternal look of surprise.

Lost in Wonderland

by Emily Sovey



wistful reminiscence

by Adam Haenlein

far-reaching worlds
trapped within the flow of time
grip me
pull me
deliver me back
back to those Machiavellian walls

both hands are pointing at the 12
teacher is talking about insects
prediction:
 does the flap of a Butterfly's wings in Brazil
 set off a tornado in Texas?
god i hope so!

i knew a Monarch once
drifting aimlessly
cradling the jumping flea
It said don't cry
It said everything will be all right

i tremble wondering
did It know even then?

the hourglass is shot
i'm soaring with the cavaliers
tangled in orange ribbons
wreathed in leaves
illusionary

Goodbye



by Myles Roznowski



by Kassie Smith

Dominus Tecum

by Kassie Smith



Balding

by Tim Windy

Its top looks like what remains in the wake of a forest fire—barren mostly, ash, charred staggering trunks; the surrounding woods leaning away from the heat; the hands of God combing through the underbrush.

Individual trees uproot themselves to move nearer to their children, to huddle around them and protect them. Ground dwellers seek their dens and fall asleep to die in the rage. The crackling and whimpers mix together into one sound.

Downriver, the water is non-potable with cremated bodies, ferrying them to heaven but also keeping and guarding us from the other shore.

He dries himself with a clean white towel. A desert lay shimmering on his crown and beneath his fingernails—little pieces of turf.

Grip

by Rachel Schienke

Saturday: We're sitting on the curb of the Branch; she's smoking a menthol cigarette and poking at her phone. I've got my jacket in my lap and wiping sweat off my face—I don't dance but the Branch is notorious for overflowing, bodies on bodies and fleece is a sham. The pavement's littered with dead leaves and there's no moon tonight; the breeze catches her exhale and blows it in my eyes.

"Sorry," her voice is low and husky, but she's got this grin on the corners of her lips.

"It's good," I say, eyes watering. "Still worth it, to get out of that sweatbox."

"I'm Alex," she says, extending her hand.

"Kevin," shaking it. Her palms are wide and her fingers are stubby and calloused.

"It feels good out tonight, Kevin. You burn?"

"Wait, what?"

"That's what I thought." She peeks up from under the hood of her sweatshirt and her grin curves, I see neat rows of white teeth, and her brows are raised. "Let's take a walk, smoke this down with me."

I shrug, smile, nod, we walk away, down the street, towards the shadows. Alex steps purposefully. Smoke curls out of her hood.

What I learn: when she was eight she wanted to be a professional scuba diver. At twelve she tried to read *David Copperfield* but quit because Uriah Heep was such an asshole. Her little brother paints his fingernails and her mother is into fad diets. She never wants kids. And then, in front of 810 Marshall, "Thanks for walking me home, Kevin. It was a pleasure to meet you. Call me sometime." She pulls a pen from her pocket, grabs my hand, and then she's shutting the door and I have ten numbers ordered across my palm.

Tuesday: I call. She answers. We meet at a Coney Island.

She walks in with her hood up again, and flips it off as she slides into the booth. I catch my surprise in the nick of time—her neck, it's lined with small punctures and thick, crisscrossed scars. One extends past her neckline, up her jaw, stopping just above her ear. She sits across from me.

What I learn: "It was a pit bull, I was fifteen. I was walking home from my friend's house, right? And this huge, nasty-looking pit is at the fence growling, looking like he hates my guts. I think it's cause I looked him in the eyes. But I keep walking then I'm getting

dragged to the ground by my backpack. There are these big paws on my chest and then it was a nose in my hair, then all teeth. My neighbor heard me and came over to help, I got up, could feel the gashes, but it didn't hurt then, it was just wet."

I nod and empathize.

"It's cool, though," she says. "Adds character or something like that."

Something like that. When we leave the restaurant, I take her hand.

Thursday: I get paid and want to take Alex out. Somewhere that requires us to go out, look swank, see the town, mingle, take shots at bar number one, flip a coin, double dare, laugh out loud, cigarettes, push-ups on the sidewalk, hair sticks to her sweaty neck, fist-bump the bartender, start a tab, shoot pool, kiss her when she loses, request a song, request another song, you have terrible taste in music, "This is my friend Callie," Callie is a whore, trips over her heels, onion rings and cold burgers, lock eyes, bet a blowjob on the tab total, no driving, taxicab, who wears pantyhose?, more smoke, notice how soft her skin is beneath her scars.

What I learn: The girl, while definitely solid, is like wind.

Saturday: We lie in her bed. One slice of streetlight gets through the curtain, falls over our stomachs. We lie on our backs.

"So that guy, that one that stopped and talked to us, that was the pit-bull neighbor?"

"Yeah, that was him. Mateo. He's a good guy."

"Obviously, if he chased that fucking pit away."

"He didn't chase it away. I killed it."

"You killed it?"

What I learn: She jammed her fingers in its eyes. She stomped on its throat, again and again, until it stopped moving beneath her. "I never thought I'd do something like that, but looking back, I'm glad I did." I start to speak and realize I don't have anything to say. Smiling a little, she rolls over, and the scars on her neck shine white in the light.

I feel her small feet between my legs and those calloused fingers tracing my hipbone, and when her breathing becomes heavy on my own neck, I ease slowly out of bed and shut the door behind me.

Frustration and the English Language

by Lauren Boulton

There is no word for the whisper of scissor blades,
that sound, swishing like a nineties tracksuit, but snappier,
similar to cricket legs, but colder,
a color like amethyst, shades darker.

It deserves a lovely word, but there is nothing. "Snip"?
The word is too quick, too cute, it does not fit the slow finality
the sadness and quiet joy. It does nothing to hold the crisp
perfection of scissors snapping closed.

There is no word.
Not in all encyclopedias,
all dictionaries,
all thesauri.

Oh, that word.
If I only had it, I would write.
I would surround it with lesser phrases,
each fawning, each complementing the glory of
that.
wonderful.
word.

That sound, how perfectly it captures the uneasiness of a dental appointment
coupled with the familiarity of lying stretched out on living room carpet.
It is autumn walking on a chalk-covered sidewalk
the delayed shock of a breath mint
a locked door on a public building
the third swim of summer
hand sanitizer
park swings
wet grass.

"Quill," "shark," "wist" — there is no word.

Capsicle

by Heather Worden



jars of moon



by Madison Smith

Ripples of Life



by Myles Roznowski

Just Breathe

by Janey Fry



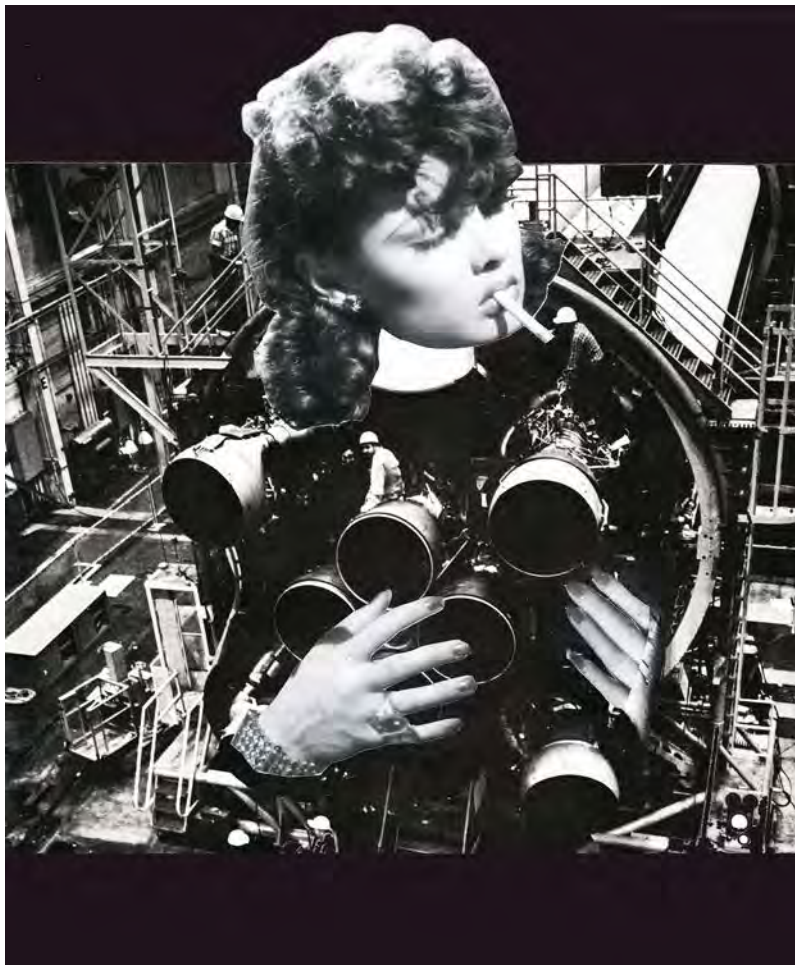
Papa

by Maria Franz

The dust didn't look like you. I took off my glasses since there was no resemblance. When we arrived at your plot everyone sprinkled and tossed you, dropped you. I lay down on the dirt mound because throwing you in handfuls without your sunspots, your tattoo, your skin, was a celebration of you evaporated.

Hoarder

by Erin Case



The second time with you when I was pretty sure the world would end even when I told you I was certain it would not

by Justin J. Brouckaert

Institute of Arts — Detroit, MI — 4:31 p.m.

I pretend to be in love with Renoir's naked ladies, and you play along like you're jealous. We're both lying, but you are way too earnest. It's your first time here and you're bored to death, pretending you love it all. We meet another couple, Robert and Elise, who are much more critical than we are. They rap their knuckles on the medieval suits of armor; try to climb the bright green cubbies staggered up the wall in the modern art display. They are so skeptical. "Fuck this," Robert says to an enormous red slab. "It's a fucking ping pong table." Elise sits sideways on a seventeenth century armchair. "It's hard as a rock," she whines. We are asked to leave. Someone is tuning a piano down the hall, hammering the same minor key again and again. I say something about feeling like a splotch of paint on canvas, something absurdist or Dada. I really don't know shit about art. We walk back through the city I know you don't quite feel safe in, having lived in the country for so long. We are on Farnsworth Street, only a few miles from my childhood home, when I tell you this story: When I was nine, my father hit his mid-life crisis. He took up the bass guitar and started wearing this stupid black beret, trying so hard to be bluesy. Once, when he dragged me to the Scarab Club for a show, I snuck out and made this trek backward, walked the entire DIA alone. When I came back, I searched the room for him in a sea of black berets. I started to panic, pulling on shirtsleeve after shirtsleeve until I stumbled out the back door and found my dad getting high in an alley. He hadn't even noticed I was gone. I thought that was the funniest and the saddest thing, but you don't let me finish — instead, you grip my arm and swing me toward the street, pointing to the steam blowing out of a sewer grate. "Is that normal?" you ask. Your voice is higher, your hand tight around my arm. The steam leaks out around us in wisps and billows. "Yes," I tell you, but nothing feels normal about this, nothing like how it was. The walk back seems so much longer. My head starts to ring with that minor key, again and again, the dissonance of Robert's knuckles on the steel plates. The buildings are warped and sagging, like your fear deflated them. Later, when you are feeling safe, you'll tell me you were afraid, really afraid, and we'll both laugh about it. I'll think of all those berets blotting the room so high above me, and none of them being my father. I'll tell you I was scared, too, for a moment, and we'll both be places we should have left long ago.

Stay

by Janey Fry

When I was in high school I knew this boy who made my heart feel like it just might explode out of my chest. I remember running my fingers down his arm, tracing the scars a razor blade had left behind.

I didn't know love could hurt like that.

I'm a lot older now, but I still don't know a single thing about loving someone the "right" way, so I put every single part of myself into every person that catches my attention. I'm a lover and that's what makes me a fighter. When I was younger I didn't know what friendship was. I've had many friends turn into strangers.

Most days I'm just trying to learn how to love people without looking back. I realize that sometimes being friends with someone means you aren't afraid of the silence when they are near. You aren't afraid of getting a little bit lost if it means they just might be on the other side waiting for you.

Sometimes fighting with someone you care about feels better than laughing with strangers.

I've felt alone in a lot of crowded rooms, but I just want to tell you,
I feel the fullest when I'm with you.

Even if we aren't talking, even if I am trying my hardest to shove what is in my head, out of my mouth, and I look over at you, and you aren't even listening. I don't mind this, because the truth is that it's nice to have someone to text at midnight. To have someone who I can just say, "I need you..." and you're there.

I need you, and I don't need to explain. I need you, and we are out past 3am looking at the streetlights. I am mistaking airport lights for moonlight and you are listening to my childhood stories and I'm just a little bit broken on the inside. I know you had a long night. You are the most unselfish friend I've ever had.

There is this boy who is always opening doors for me.
I don't always walk through them and I am walking straight into him saying, "I'm sorry". The truth is that his eyes scare me because they remind me of the scars that I saw on an old friend's arms.

My heart starts beating through my chest. I can't stop this. I can't pause this.
I can't mute the sound and I am quiet.
I am so quiet when I'm sad.
And sometimes I am loud when I'm trying to hold on to things.

I am holding on to all of this with all the scars we've ever had and I will shatter
before we break. I will fall before we fade. I need this. I just need this.

Like the sun rises and sets. Like the feeling of my heart in my chest.

Like this last breath.

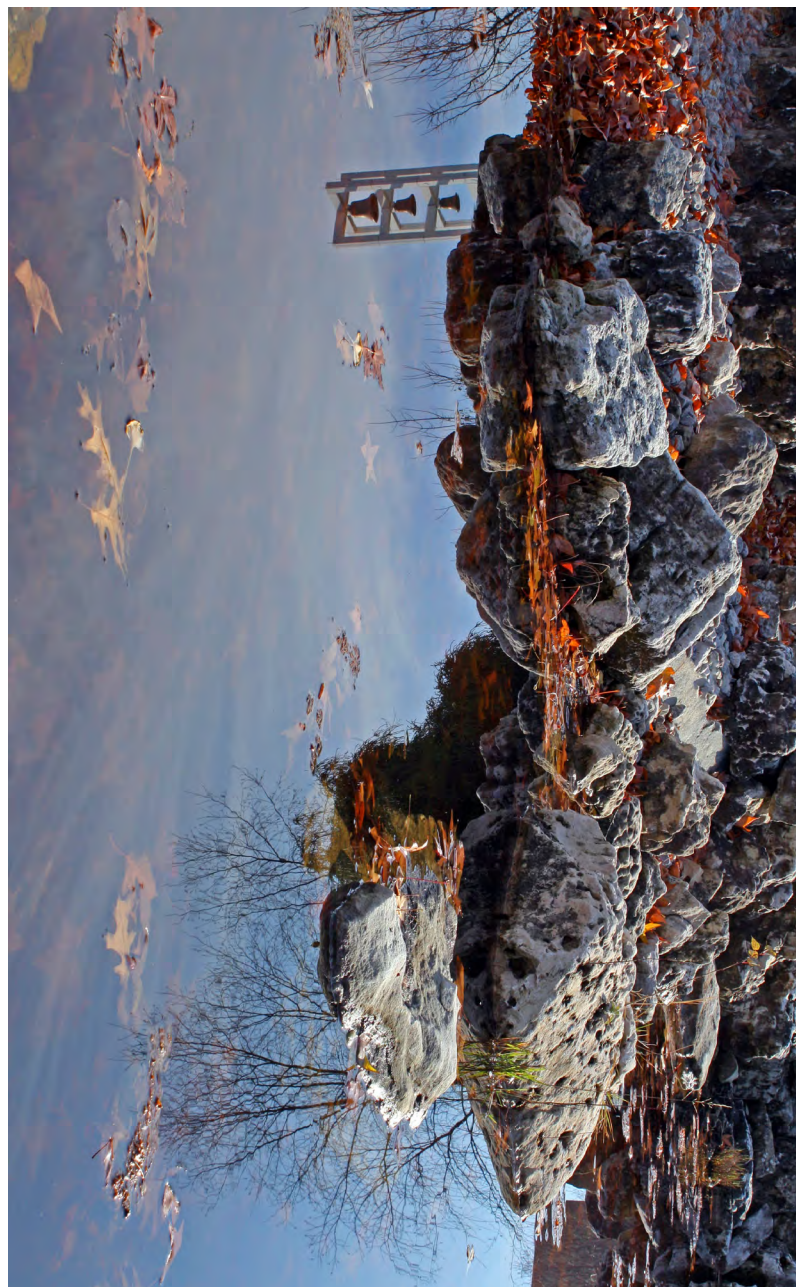
I am trying to live this life to its fullest and all I can say is that I'm a fighter for
this, and every breathe that I breathe, I take with no intent of surviving.

Strands



by Alison Bur

Arise



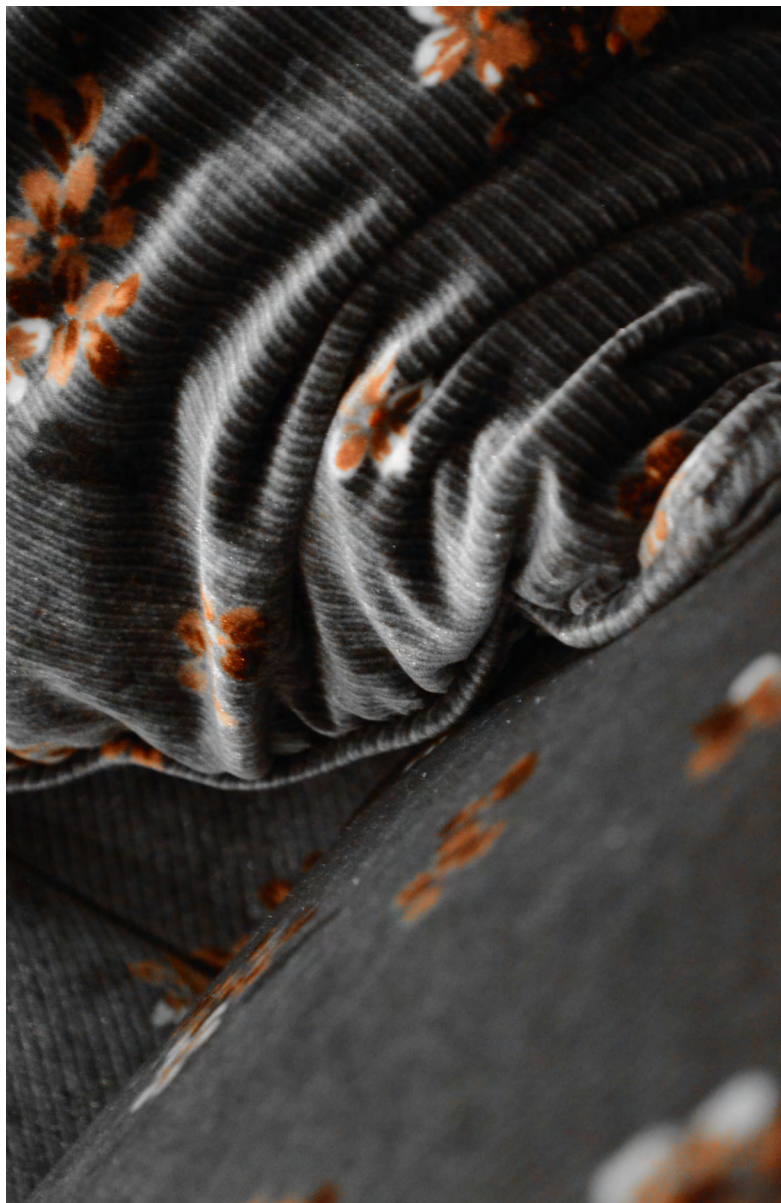
by Alison Bur

April Showers



by Haley VanScoyoc

A Certain Degree of Comfort



by Sean Dudley

Offering 4.13



by Kassie Smith

The Fire

by Maria Franz

My sister and I came back from our walk and watched the fire finish our house. Since Dad was a volunteer fireman we figured there might still be a chance for our parents. He taught us to open heavy windows and that two stories really wasn't that high off the ground. We learned many things by watching him. We used to get singed and Mom ignored what our dad considered "controlling the fire." This is why we lit a box of matches and burned the house down, blocking each way out.

Hold It Together

by Sean Dudley



I Know You Still Have My Purple Pen

by Emily Gennrich

Sometimes when it hurts I imagine purple ink, pooling on my fingertips, the dark liquor of it seeping into the grooves of my fingerprints and the mouths of my knuckles. I do not flinch when it eats the cracked polish and my nails turn to bruises.

I know you want to ask me if it stops there, is that all, or does it crawl up my arms like the way you liked to stop and watch water falling in shifting streams down my skin in the shower before you stepped in.

It doesn't work like that though because by then I have my eyes squeezed shut because I smell smoldering wood and cheap soap, and a little motor oil, scrap rags. My new sheets don't smell like you anymore. My new sheets give me hives.

You see now why I'm crying when I call? I'm covered in red itching wounds, with sloppy bruises for fingers, and the purple of those letters stained onto my skin.

Flash Fiction Contest Winners

Contest Theme: "Trespassing"

Winner

"Smashing" by Grá Linnaea

Honorable Mentions

"Trellis Passing" by Michael Chaney

"Homelessness" by Patrick Sugrue

Check Out Our Upcoming Contests

For *Cardinal Sins* Fall 2013

Poetry Contest Theme: "Expansion"

For *Cardinal Sins* Winter 2014

Nonfiction Contest Theme: "Translation"

...guidelines are in the back of this issue...



Grá Linnaea

Grá Linnaea is an editor for *Shimmer Magazine* and member of the Science Fiction Writers Association. He won Writers of the Future and attended the 2008 Clarion Workshop. His Stoker Award nominated story "Messages From Valerie Polichar" was featured in Shock Totem magazine. Other of his fiction can be found in *Apex* and *Daily Science Fiction*.

Smashing

by Grá Linnaea

It takes me three days and almost every power tool I own to systematically dismantle our house. And nearly a case of Jim Beam.

Becky finally pulls her fancy-ass Cadillac onto our dead lawn, the Caddie she'd talked me into when she got the job at the real-estate place. She's a day later than I'd thought, finally home from mister whoever she's seeing. Mister we never talk about it. Thanks to me, that silver Caddie is her last possession in the world.

Once she's out of the car, she doesn't cry or scream, doesn't even look at me, just looks up at the point where the vintage gingerbread roofline would be if the house was still there. Course, I should be hiding, maybe down in the bedrock hole, but I'm so thoroughly drunk and sleep-deprived that all I can do is sit in our yard on a pile of fluff from our two couches.

She searches for our non-existent roof for, I swear, ten minutes.

"You did it," she finally says.

She sounds more tired than angry, which sort of scares me more.

I can't say anything. The rage that propelled me dried up halfway through the first day. Before the first night was through, all that kept me going was stubbornness and making myself more and more sad.

She looks down at my feet, scans around the stuff in our front yard and lets out a breath I'm sure she's been holding for eight years.

"Where're the tools?" she says.

In that moment I'm sure she means to kill me, so sure that I suddenly feel sober and terrified. But I point in the direction of the pile of tools by the mailbox, obscured by her car. I smashed up most of the electric tools too. I was thinking about starting a fire to try to melt down the remainder.

She takes off her blazer, the one they gave her for best quarterly sales, and drops it on the grass. She walks behind the car and makes clanking noises, rooting around in my pile of tools. She comes out with the sledgehammer and my crowbar. The back tip of the wood handle on the hammer is broken off, but it still has enough handle left for her to take a good swing at me, if that's what she means to do.

She never raised a hand to me our whole relationship, even the times I did to her.

She shuffles back, tilted a little because the hammer is so much heavier than the crowbar. She drops both on the grass.

I start to get up, but I'm exhausted and drunk and I don't have anything left. I don't want to die. I'd read once that foreign people somewhere meditate to not mind dying so much, but I'm swirling in drunk and guilt and all I can do is keep my face still and pretend I don't mind anything. I won't give her the satisfaction of seeing me piss myself.

She picks up her blazer and looks me right in the eye. She strains at it till the cheap seam in the back gives and it tears clean in two. I can't help but jump a little, but I cover it by coughing into my hand. I think she smirks a little. She points at the two tools on the lawn and says, "Which do you use more often?"

Maybe she'll use the one I like best on me, for irony's sake. She's clever like that. Or maybe she'll smash up one with the other. Though nothing short of a blast furnace is going to break down that crowbar.

I say, "The crowbar is lighter, but it's more useful in prying out stuff. The hammer's handle is broken."

She nods, like to say she can see that just fine.

She picks up the crowbar and I close my eyes and try not to shake.

I hear her walking around the grass and I can't tell if she's moving closer or farther away from me. The first crash makes me jump again and I see her breaking out the windshield of her Caddie.

She knocks the safety glass all the way into the car, efficient, only a few strokes. Then she moves along to the side windows.

She works her way around the car. Smash, tinkle. Smash, tinkle. She lets out the best laugh I've heard out of her in years. I watch till the back window is gone.

I say, "You need any help with that?"

Grá Linnaea speaks on Trespassing

Grá rolled around the theme of trespassing, and decided that relationship could be thought of as either us welcoming each other to join our lives, or trespassing on each other. When all that's left is arguments about who did what and who get's what, two people go from partners to treating each other like thieves.



Michael Chaney

Michael Chaney's fictions can or will soon be found in *Nano Fiction*, *Columbia College Literary Review*, *Coe Review*, and *Madhatters' Review*. When not otherwise engaged as an acrobat of observation, he professes English at Dartmouth College.

Michael Chaney speaks on Trespassing

"Trellis Passing" is a lyrical immersion into a surreal series of stolen moments of intimacy with a neighbor's backyard and the supposed joys that flourish on the greener side of a trellis fence. Each of the immersion scenarios is interrupted by an unexpected eruption of technology from the errant neighbors' appliances, culminating in a strange digital echo from the neighbor's garden.

Trellis Passing

by Michael Chaney

The new neighbors were moving vans and glimpses behind curtains. In time, they became an electronic fiction behind a white trellis fence. My dog could smell their vacancies. She was the first to tunnel under the fence, burrowing thawed peat moss and cedar. I followed, calling her name in the muck. On the other side, I saw her dive into their in-ground, the turf fleeing her fur to atomize chlorine, cerulean brown. I called but she was wading in the middle, a rippling furry epicenter orbited by brown and blue. August windows, buttoned up tight, damask and Venetian, dared me to do it. The soil I carried slid off in the shock of the water, clothes and all. It reefed the uncertain tile floor of the pool with our cast away dirt. The dog paddled in circles. Then something turned on. A buzz of machinic vibrato burbled and hissed the water. I did not have to call her then. I followed the dog up-pooling, out-yarded and sub-trellis, re-mucked and guilty in our own plot again, all singe and clay tilled by mounding fire ants.

The next time it happened my wife noticed the piston sniff, a certain pause and drag of the snout, and they shrank to muddy sandals thrashing at the lattice. I followed calling, rebirthed as Gauguin's Tahitian, a patch of ochre on a patio made of sun. My wife and dog tested their wicker with delicious lethargy. I joined them. The naugahyde of the rocking chair cracked in my sway and with closed eyes I imagined us staying all day, uncovering the canvas from the grill that cost more than Lonnie's molar work last month and cooking out all the specials, until the other metal box crouched in rhododendra, sputtered an adjutant's call in the key of H/VAC that evacuated us through loam and lattice.

One night, not long after, as the dog slept kicking phantom paths, I tunneled the lattice alone to the garden across their lawn, dripping wet with waxing moon. I wanted to add their mud to mine, so nestling into the furrows of their exotic fruits, jicama and pitaya, salsify and romanesco, I pulled one of their gourds from the earth like a buried skull, at the same time, I could hear the sounds of an antiquated modem connection rising from the vacated plug, yesterday's dinner bell of static doing its adagio in two notes for tin oboes replayed on a vitriola made of sand. I used their pool to rinse the hybrid mud and returned through the lattice carrying a discontent that only neighbors and foiled thieves could understand.



Patrick Sugrue

Patrick Sugrue is the editor and founder of *Bellow Literary Journal*. He lives, works and writes in New Orleans, a city he has called home since 2008.

Homelessness

by Patrick Sugrue

Grandpa

Grandpa worked in a Cleveland airport for thirty-eight years as a vender selling hot dogs. He said people at the airport dressed like they were going to a wedding and that maybe they were. He called work “people watching.” He said these things to his grandkids and his dogs. Sometimes his dogs died, so he would leave a steak out by the back door, wait for a stray and catch it — yanking a rope tied to the gate. Sometimes he’d catch the mailman or milkman as a joke.

I sat on the front porch once, on a dirt-grained board that creaked. He spoke up suddenly and said, “I don’t like people to watch me shit.” I looked around, the pines and the pond suddenly looking out of place. “In the war I shit in a hole for three years until I got hit. Then I shit in a bowl.” He creaked back in his seat, eyes slits to the sun. I saw the Philippines, how he might have looked at the water.

My mom walked out with a small box full of things: a welcome mat with pine trees, little bears, wolves and deer, his old coffee tin. Then we took him to the Home.

Departing

I’d just picked her up from the airport — where the planes fly right over the gated road (distracting drivers and threatening to prove the disproportionate danger between air and ground travel. [Though, ironically, a plane is most likely to die while landing — and I believe it too — but then again, did they do this death list per-capita? Lots of dead people in African, Mexican, Indian, Asian and even American graves may never have entered an airplane. But who hasn’t entered a car these days? Nearly everyone’s taken a ride in a car these days.]) — and I got lost, I was so excited.

I said I’d found my drug. Good, she said, everyone needs to find their drug to make art. I thought about it.

Back on the road to the airport, the car shot like a bee.

(They're going extinct now; the air traffic's all messed up.) There's always less to talk about before a departure. It's silly, but it's just time. And there's nothing silly about that. Departures are as emotionless and arbitrary as death itself. But we know, for once, how many minutes our mouths have to move, how far our conversations can go while still being completed, and what subjects are too big to tackle. So it's quiet. The clock is more important, rushing to an airport, than watching the road.

South

It's true that I've been somewhere, though it happened only in a moment. I was at my parents' home in Chicago, sitting near the shed. It was summer and I was twiddling my thumbs at the gates, thinking of some great thing. There were two roads. One went east and one went south. We slept under a big oak tree and at night went to see a college. In the country there's much land that nobody owns where you can picnic or even sleep. In the morning we bought apples. The land is remarkable there. We slept in a football field by a mill and when the workers stopped for lunch they walked in bands to a gas station across a yellowing road. We had fried chicken there. At night there were hills. My aunt lives there all by herself. Her husband once shot a KKK man. It rained for three days and we stayed in a motel and watched rain sweep across the road. A creek ran behind a parking lot. We shot bottles there. A sheriff dropped us off by a reservoir. He said his wife had killed him. Before noon the clouds gathered, and trucks with stripped pine shot down the road. Water was in the forest. Oil floated around the trees. The road spread out and a boardwalk led out. A kneeling barn sat stately in the water.

Patrick Sugrue speaks on Trespassing



“Homelessness” provides insight into our American attitude toward freedom, exploration, privacy and property. Though there is no longer an American frontier, there still exist countless boundaries that compartmentalize our American landscape. This submission sets out to explore what happens to those who trespass, and what this transgression means.

Despair

by Emily Sovey



Biographies

Brandy Abraham's writing career is like a bowl of mixed fruit. Her poetry and prose has appeared in *Cardinal Sins*, *Postcard Shorts*, *Stone Highway Review*, *Gambling the Aisle*, *Temenos*, *A Narrow Fellow*, *Squalorly*, among others.

Peter Brian Barry is on a bloodbuzz.

Anthony Betters lives in a hermetically sealed basement, strapped to bean bag chair staring at a wall of monitors and frenetically absorbing pop culture. Coming out of said sadness hole for *Cardinal Sins* has devastated his immune system and he may never recover. He hopes readers appreciate his sacrifice.

Tyler Beyett is part time photographer and part time chemist. He can usually be found at the local Taco Bell surrounded by the finest selection of "Mexican" food in town.

Lauren Boulton writes things down and types things up. She hopes to improve this process at Bowling Green State University, where she enters this fall as a candidate for an MFA in Poetry. She owes her existence to SVSU professors (and, of course, her parents).

Justin J. Brouckaert is a writer of both short and very short fiction. He will graduate in May with an incredible debt to those who have shaped him as a writer and a person over these past five years — especially Marlin Jenkins, Vince Samarco, Diane Boehm and Helen Raica-Klotz.

Alison Bur is a second year art student. She hopes that when you view her work you may see something you didn't before. Her belief and style revolves around the idea that the simplest things are the most beautiful, even if they are things we see everyday.

Tyler Bradley, will you marry me? Because I won't. Because you can't marry yourself in the state of Michigan.

Erin Case is now a four-time winner of a *Cardinal Sins* "Best Artwork" award. Working in both analog and digital methods, she is regarded for the marriage of surrealism, sincerity, and evocativeness that is present throughout her body of work. Visit her website at: erincase.weebly.com.

Michael Chaney's fictions can or will soon be found in *Nano Fiction*, *Columbia College Literary Review*, *Coe Review*, and *Madhatters' Review*. When not otherwise engaged as an acrobat of observation, he professes English at Dartmouth College.

Sean Dudley is a junior visual art major that finds inspiration in the complexity of simple objects and acts that we often pass by every day without truly appreciating or giving a second thought. He believes that the brain is a much bigger tool than our eyes, and that people should learn to see with that.

Alyssa Ellison is majoring in secondary education English with a minor in history. She hopes to someday take a full tour of Europe and visit Romania and Vlad Dracula's castle. Writing is like breathing to her, and reading a second passion. Her dream is to have at least one of her writings/series published.

Maria Franz wants you to know that she is not quite as dark as the way she tends to write.

Janey Fry is just a quiet girl with a lot of words. She tries to keep moments by capturing them in images and writing.

Emily Gennrich is a mapmaker.

Michael Gibson is currently stranded at a bus stop in China. Please send help.

Caroline Goetze is just a copy editor, and she refuses to be sucked into writing pretentious third person claptrap.

Josh Guerrero is a former Marine and SVSU student who is now serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in The Gambia, West Africa. He wouldn't consider himself to be a photographer. He just lives life to the fullest and takes pictures along the way.

Adam Haenlein is an ESL teacher at SVSU who loves reading Victorian literature, quoting *Arrested Development*, and wandering the streets of Rome.

Brittany Hodges spends her days binding phantoms to bodies of words.

Marlin M. Jenkins is burning his tongue on a London Fog. He retweets things @marlin_poet.

Erik Johnson loves SKE48.

Justin Kokkinis is many things to many people. He is a criminal justice and political science major, who in his spare time, writes for *The Saginaw Valley Journal*. He would thank God, his family and friends, and the many teachers who helped along the way.

Kim Lacey. Oh, no she di'int

Chris Lawitzke enjoys cinema and experiencing the little known work of Henry Darger.

Grá Linnaea is an editor for *Shimmer Magazine* and member of the Science Fiction Writers Association. He won Writers of the Future and attended the 2008 Clarion Workshop. His Stoker Award nominated story "Messages From Valerie Polichar" was featured in *Shock Totem magazine*. Other of his fiction can be found in *Apex* and *Daily Science Fiction*.

Lisa Muirhead is a graphic design student who enjoys the finer things in life, comic books and well-made pixel graphics. In life she hopes to be able to keep on creating designs.

Matt Ostrander wants to thank anyone who is reading this right now. He appreciates you for caring enough to acknowledge his existence in this world for as long as it takes you to read these sentences.

Arianna Paver is currently an SVSU junior majoring in psychology and communications. She does a lot of artsy-fartsy stuff on the side. She writes poetry as well as paints, draws, and takes lots of pictures. She thinks that stuff is way more fun.

Myles Roznowski is a graphic design major. He enjoys naps, pizza and polaroid film.

Rachel Schienke is a recent SVSU grad that enjoys well-crafted sandwiches and smartly written food essays. She would like to thank the hardest and most passionate workers she knows, her peers and friends in the SVSU English program, for keeping her driven to succeed.

Patrick Sugrue is the editor and founder of *Bellow Literary Journal*. He lives, works and writes in New Orleans, a city he has called home since 2008.

Ryann Shaffer is a graphic design major, Spanish minor graduating in May 2013. In her free time she loves to paint, travel, cook, & take photos. She wants to make a difference in the world by sharing her love for art and design with as many people as possible.

Kassie Smith is a graduating BFA super senior concentrating in ceramics. You probably know her as that girl you see in the hallway who is always filthy and encrusted in clay and mud. You should go see the fruits of her labor at the BFA show in April 2013.

Madison Smith majors in international studies and likes Japanese culture, video games, & pretending to be creative. She doesn't know squat about photography but enjoys taking pictures. She was born in Kentucky, spent most of her life in Ohio, and has been in Michigan since 2009.

Emily Sovey is a fifth year student who will be graduating in May 2013. Along with painting, she also likes printmaking and ceramics. She plans on going into art history, eventually teaching at the college level.

Pete Stevens is the Fiction Editor at *Squalorly*. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Cardinal Sins*, *Eunoia Review*, *The Legendary*, *Prime Number*, *The Fat City Review*, *First Stop Fiction*, *Literary Orphans*, *101 Fiction* and elsewhere. He lives in Bay City.

Andrew Tamlyn is an artist experimenting with the presence or absence of the inner child among all of us. "When childhood dies, its corpses are called adults and they enter society, one of the politer names of hell. That is why we dread children, even if we love them, they show us the state of our decay." — Brian Aldiss

Haley VanScoyoc grew up where she could see the stars and drank sweat tea from mason jars. She's a small town girl and that's all she'll ever be. She loves her family and friends. She believes in the words of Charlie Chaplin, "A day without laughing is a day wasted."

Tim Windy is sitting in a treehouse built too high, waving sarcastically a white flag too small to see, his peashooter propped against the table beside him.

Heather Worden is a graphic design major. She loves fonts and working with letterforms. Her favorite font is Gill Sans Std. Her life currently revolves around movie release dates.

Ralph Yoder. 20. Sophomore. French education.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all of the people who make *Cardinal Sins* possible: Justin Brouckaert, Tyler Bradley, and *The Valley Vanguard*; Jason Schoenmeyer, Eltar Hoover, Katrina Friedeberg, and the Student Life Office and staff; Ted Goodman and the Student Association; J. J. Boehm and the PJPC; Perry Toyzan, Angela Bublitz, and the Graphics Center; Linda Farynk; Suzette Zimmerman, Emmie Busch, and Jane Anderson; SVSU's English and Art Departments; Katie Zlotecki; President Eric Gilbertson and Cindy Gilbertson; Donald Bachand and Liana Bachand; Andrew Tamlyn for giving us permission to use his art for the cover; Pete Stevens & Marlin Jenkins for helping prepare for AWP; Theresa Stackhouse and Sharon Opheim; Chris Giroux for his continuing support and dedication; Kim Lacey; Peter Brian Barry; our benefactors; our contributors; and, of course, the dedicated editorial staff & genre editors.

Thank you to those who helped make the Winter 2013 poetry slam a success: everyone who came out to compete, the judges of the slam, and everyone who came to watch.

Also, thank you for everyone that came out to see us at our first ever appearance at AWP Boston.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brandy Abraham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brandy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Abraham".

Brandy Abraham, *Cardinal Sins* Editor

Submission Guidelines

All general submissions must:

- be by SVSU students, staff, or alumni
- be submitted through (<http://cardinalsins.submittable.com/submit>)
- include multiple submissions for *a single category* in one document
- not contain any contact information within the attached document

Text submissions should:

- be in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, single spaced, with 1" margins
- include the title at the top of each page
- be attached in .rtf or .doc format
- Poetry should be no longer than 70 lines
- Flash fiction should be no longer than 1,000 words
- Fiction should be no longer than 2,500 words

Artwork/Photography submissions should:

- be 300 dpi or greater and have high contrast and sharp definition
- be attached in email in either .gif or .jpeg format
- *Note: photos that have been manipulated with a computer program should be submitted as artwork, not photography*

Maximum number of entries

- Submit up to 5 poems, 3 flash fiction pieces, 2 pieces of fiction, and 2 pieces of creative nonfiction
- Submit up to 5 artwork and photography pieces in each category
- You may submit to as many categories as you would like

Prizes and Judging

Prizes will be awarded in each of the 8 categories we publish: poetry, fiction, flash fiction, creative nonfiction, black & white photography, color photography, black & white artwork, and color artwork.

Staff reserves the right not to award a winner in a particular category if no submissions are judged worthy of the award.

The winner in each category will receive \$100 and recognition within the publication. All submissions will be entered into their respective category's contest unless otherwise requested.

Judging is done through blind, anonymous voting by the editorial staff. Members of the editorial staff are permitted to submit entries for publication but are excluded from winning contests in any category.

By submitting to *Cardinal Sins* you affirm that the work attached is solely your own. You agree to abide by *Cardinal Sins*' requirements governing submissions. If your work is accepted for publication, *Cardinal Sins* has the right to publish and distribute your work, both in print and on the *Cardinal Sins* Web site.

You retain all subsequent rights to your work.

Please visit cardinalsins.submittable.com/submit for deadline dates.

Thank you for submitting to *Cardinal Sins*.

These guidelines are subject to change; please visit our website for the most current guidelines.

Call for Submissions:

Fall 2013 Poetry Contest

Contest Theme: "Expansion"

Cardinal Sins seeks submissions of poetry for inclusion in our regularly scheduled Fall 2013 print edition. We accept work from writers everywhere, anywhere.

The theme of this year's contest is "Expansion." We are looking for submissions that push the meaning of the word. The *Cardinal Sins* staff wants to know how your writing grows. We encourage you to think about movement in your submission. We do accept mixed genre.

The winning entry will receive \$100 and author's work, a photograph, and a short bio will be included in the Fall 2013 issue of *Cardinal Sins*. Work selected for honorable mention will also be included, but no monetary prizes will be awarded for honorable mentions. Authors whose work is chosen for inclusion in our Fall 2013 edition will be invited to attend a publication party and reading at Saginaw Valley State University.

Submit up to three pieces of poetry of 70 lines or less per submission (INCLUDE ALL SUBMISSIONS IN A SINGLE WORD DOCUMENT). Please include a brief cover letter and contact information, including your name, email, and phone number with your submission.

Send submissions via our submissions management system: (<http://cardinalsins.submittable.com/submit>). All documents must be submitted as .doc or .rtf attachments. We do not accept paper or email submissions at this time.

DEADLINE: October 14, 2013

Please contact *Cardinal Sins* Editor, Brandy Abraham at cardinalsins@svsu.edu with questions.

Call for Submissions: Winter 2014 Nonfiction Contest

Contest Theme: "Translation"

Cardinal Sins seeks submissions of nonfiction for inclusion in our regularly scheduled Winter 2014 print edition. We accept work from writers everywhere, anywhere.

The theme of this year's contest is "Translation." We are *not* looking for *translations*. We encourage you to think about language, languages and culture in your submission. The *Cardinal Sins* staff is looking for nonfiction that we have not read before.

The winning entry will receive \$100 and author's work, a photograph, and a short bio will be included in the Winter 2014 issue of *Cardinal Sins*. Work selected for honorable mention will also be included, but no monetary prizes will be awarded for honorable mentions. Authors whose work is chosen for inclusion in our Winter 2014 edition will be invited to attend a publication party and reading at Saginaw Valley State University.

Submit one piece of nonfiction of 2,500 words or less per submission. Please include a brief cover letter and contact information, including your name, email, and phone number with your submission.

Send submissions via our submissions management system: (<http://cardinalsins.submittable.com/submit>). All documents must be submitted as .doc or .rtf attachments. We do not accept paper or email submissions at this time.

DEADLINE: March 17, 2014

Please contact *Cardinal Sins* Editor, Brandy Abraham at cardinalsins@svsu.edu with questions.

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