

Cardinal Sins

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Cardinal Sins uses Adobe InDesign. This issue features Trebuchet MS and Source Sans Pro fonts.

Cover Art by Guliz Mutlu— color photo entitled “Silentio”

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Table of Contents

Editor's Note.....	3
--------------------	---

Black & White Artwork

Feel the Music <i>Britnie Walston</i>	6
Silentio post clamores <i>Guliz Mutlu</i>	17
Wind and Precipitation <i>Paweł Grajner</i>	21
Oh Happy Days 1c <i>Edward Supranowicz</i>	31

Black & White Photography

Fells Point <i>Britnie Walston</i>	39
------------------------------------------	----

Color Artwork

Sliding Doors <i>Guliz Mutlu</i>	10
Molten Lava <i>Britnie Walston</i>	26
Green Bull <i>Guliz Mutlu</i>	27
Blue Sea <i>Britnie Walston</i>	36
Resting <i>Edward Supranowicz</i>	37

Color Photography

Parallel Lines <i>Erik Suchy</i>	9
----------------------------------------	---

Poetry

James <i>Lauren Sartor</i>	4
Thanksgiving <i>Mary Sesso</i>	5
Me, My Window and the Rain <i>Yakoub Mousli</i>	6
Depth of Worship <i>Jaden O'Berry</i>	10
In Winter, Tears are Glass Ornaments <i>Brian McCarty</i>	18
Wrongs Of Winter <i>Gerard Sarnat</i>	22
Spring <i>Brian McCarty</i>	22
Degas and the Sale of My Boyhood Home <i>Timothy Robbins</i>	27
Reaching Up <i>Navida Stein</i>	28
Cheap Mustard <i>Tara Kareta</i>	29
Clear-cut <i>Brian McCarty</i>	36
white rose <i>Michael Campagnoli</i>	38

Editor's Note

I always struggle to write these editor's notes. It feels like an impossible task to encapsulate my experience working on this journal in just a few, short paragraphs. It never quite feels like anything I can say will be adequate to express my gratitude for having had the opportunity to work on this journal with so many kind, passionate and talented individuals for the last two years of my undergraduate career.

It goes without saying that it has been a trying, stressful, and anxiety-inducing year that all of us have had to muddle through. For many, it has been some of the most challenging months of our lives thus far, including myself.

I have never had the conventional experience as an editor here with *Cardinal Sins*. Being editor-in-chief for the past year and a half, I have never known what it is like to be doing this work without the obstacle of a worldwide pandemic standing in our way; I have never known what it is like to host a publication reception, to hold in-person meetings, to see the faces of our staff without masks on or not through the pixelated barrier of a computer screen.

Some people might say it makes it easier that I never experienced what it was like in the *Cardinal Sins* world of "before the pandemic." It is better that I don't know what I missed out on in the experiences we didn't get to have, the in-person connection that the pandemic took from us, and the wonderful contributors that I never got to meet or celebrate with a reception. While I'm not altogether sure if this makes it easier or not, I can surely say that it makes me all the prouder of all that was accomplished with this journal this semester.

In a world of lockdowns, quarantines and isolation, we received some of the best creative work that I have seen in our submissions in my time working here. We were able to make meaningful connections and conversations at our weekly Zoom meetings, despite streaming in from our own separate homes instead of altogether in one room.

In a world where it feels as if everything is pulling apart at the seams, we managed to create something beautiful. I think that is powerful, and

Golden Gate Bridge haiku *Gerard Sarnat*.....39

Flash Fiction

<i>Wishes Frances Koziar</i>	5
<i>Cracked Feet Kiana Govoni</i>	13
<i>Dark Reflection Wood Reede</i>	18
<i>Gone Frances Koziar</i>	24
<i>Mother's Day, 2018. Ronald Oremland</i>	25
<i>The Monster Frances Koziar</i>	26
<i>Outside the Rain Falls James Patrick Focarile</i>	35
<i>Shroud of the Father James Patrick Focarile</i>	38

Creative Nonfiction

<i>Cold Winter Day in Michigan Anna Leitao</i>	9
<i>Cocktails with Irma Mike Coste</i>	13
<i>The Hellenistic Nature of Hector Mercury-Marvin Sunderland</i>	23
<i>Killing My Father Dustin Grinnell</i>	29
<i>Through Time--Who I Am Caroline Helmstadt</i>	37

Fiction

<i>Liminal Courtney Bennet</i>	7
<i>Admirer Frances Koziar</i>	11
<i>Finding Dad Frances Koziar</i>	19
<i>A Mere Slip of a Girl Joe Smolen</i>	32

something worth recognizing.

In this uncertain world, I am not sure when this journal will be complete, when it will be printed, or when it will be distributed to our talented contributors. Nevertheless, I hope that they are able to feel the same spark of pride and joy when they finally hold a copy in their hands that I feel while writing this note.

Keep sinning,

Madeline Bruessow, Editor-in-Chief

James

Lauren Sartor

Wax bags of dynamite
The holy ground wherever blood ran thick.
When you wrapped him in a blanket
as blue as his eyes
Did you kiss his forehead?
Did you swallow pennies?
Or did you shuffle out of from that ground-floor apartment,
in a cozy coat of dope thinking, “Shit,
I should’ve searched his pockets”?
Your lashes, I imagine, weighed heavier than your conscience
your neck arched back
to breath in the fool’s heaven.
Earlier, when you woke in that death room
it was with a sickness blossoming
in your stomach,
a distant siren.
You peeled back an eyelid
and blew into the pupil.
Unresponsive. You wrapped him in a cocoon
the color of his eyes, a brief nod toward compassion
for those who stay young.

Thanksgiving

Mary Sesso

For chocolate to be Belgian and whole roasted.
For a bottomless glass of milk standing by.
For the recipe to be your grandmother's.

For vanilla flavor to be subtle.
For flour in a bag that warns of weevils.
For the gift of blades to cream butter and sugar.

For eggs to give up their yolks without resistance.
For flowers a cookie cutter finds in dough.
For the oven to scent the house with everything nice.

For a hot mitt to slide into the sink.
For your mother who warned tongues burn if you taste too soon.
For your aunt who gave you her heirloom serving platter.

For a hill of crumbs on your pink plate.
For sticky lips and fingers to wait for a damp cloth.
For the afternoon to have faded while you were eating.

For a low hanging winter sun to play in your hair,
For the image to turn up in your dream
and shine through your sleep.

Wishes

Frances Koziar

It is a perfect day. Grasses of emerald and gold brush the ankles of my children as they run through our backyard, their laughter crystalline beneath an azure sky. My wife gives me a suffering look, but her mouth twitches up at the corners in a smile I can only return.

"Momma," one of my children calls, racing up to me. "Play with us!" Ze reaches out a hand, a warm brown blend of my black and my wife's white. But I shake my head, and it feels almost like a tremor in the air, a hesitation in the melody of what I see.

"Momma's tired today," I say, not looking at my newly crippled legs, not thinking of that which I should not think of.

Ze runs back, squeals when my wife tickles zer. My heart swells and my shoulders relax again. I breathe in the fresh scents of fall, of life, of family.

"Shandria," my friend calls from beside me, appearing through a wall of magic with a ripple like parting a waterfall.

"I came to fetch you back," she says worriedly. She looks different from the others.

"They are beautiful," she says, looking at my family, my beloveds. "But don't join them yet," she reminds me, taking my hand and helping me up. Hers is cold. Lined with the weight of life.

I follow her reluctantly, hobbling on my legs and my crow-foot cane back over the threshold. On the other side, I look back for their faces, for that scene of perfection.

But the yard and my family are both gone—gone with the house and the money and the crash. I can see only the wasteland of the witch's home: rubble and dirt, clumps of dead grass speckled with snow. I clench my eyes against the pain, and hear only the magic whispering on the wind with their ghosts.

Feel the Music

Britnie Walston



Black and white artwork

Me, My Window and the Rain

Yakob Mousli

It was me, my window and the rain
In the night of cold December.
With dried eyes I stood there watching,
And a heart heavy with life.
It was me, my window and the rain,
One night of cold December,
When the last leaf of crumbled melody
Was shed from the tree of my soul.
It was me, my window and the rain
Telling each other tales;
Of how we all were shy and dismal,
Of how we all without refrain.
It was a night of cold December—
Another night of distant winter,
Where my window was wide and open,
Where the rain was a thread from heaven,
Where I was torn inside.
It was me, my window and the rain,
And the wind dared not disturb us.

Liminal

Courtney Bennet

The upstairs hallway was the longest part of the house. My toes pressed into carpet, finding the step down—the one that wasn't supposed to be there. The same man built every house on our street but made a mistake on ours; the master bedroom sunk half a stair lower than the rest of the floor. Four inches closer to the ground, I entered the threshold of a room that wasn't quite right.

Eleven years was old enough to sleep in my own bed, but the night infantilized me. My fingertips found the quilt first, roving over the stitched outlines of small roses, leaves. Then the pink sheets, worn soft by time, peeling back like skin from bone. The right side of the bed was cold with absence—Dad had been gone for three months now—and it was difficult to detect any warmth at all ever since Mom's fever broke. All week she had radiated heat, her blood crawling with influenza. She was cooling now, turning to winter while she slept. As I climbed into a newly vacant space, the air mattress groaned. Mom sunk lower than I did.

I sometimes confused the roaring of the highway with the crashing of waves. Both were equally close to our house. We were far away from most things: a log cabin in a small town, a mote floating in space.

The skin on the back of my neck rippled with unease. Eyes stared, fixing me in place—but no, they were windows. Too many windows. The woods outside were dark but not quiet, the glass separating us wide but not thick. I knew that if Dad were with us, I would feel safer. His snoring was a steel blanket, warding off murderers, robbers, rapists.

Dad wasn't here.

Someone stood by the bed—or no, it was a coat, hanging on the door. Just a coat.

The trees whistled and moaned with wind. Oak, maple, and pine, their branches twining together. I tried not to think about the one-two-three-four-five of them that could land on our house. I tried not to think about odds.

Outside, high heels clicked across the back deck. I clenched the sheets in my fists, listening in paralyzed silence for one second, then two, but then—no, it was just Jasmine, our black Labrador, licking the same spot over and over on the carpet. She lay in the corner of the room, producing a damp mark with her tongue. We didn't know why she did that. I once learned that snake tongues have no taste buds; instead, information about the environment travels straight from their tongues to their mouths to their brains. Jazz wasn't a snake, but still. Maybe she knew more about the house than we did. Maybe she lapped up history embedded in the floor, the foundation, the woodwork.

Mom was colder, her breathing quiet. Mom was a refrigerator. Did she feel Dad's absence? Did she see him in the dark like I did? I reached across the bed to make sure she was alive, found the smooth silver of her wedding ring on her hand. She did not wake, but the tension lifted from my shoulders. Cooling skin was not dead skin.

I thought about Dad.

The door widened just a fraction, and dim light spilled onto the floor. It was him—or no, no, it was one of the cats, nudging her way in. There were five of them now. Most nights they romped around in the dark, barreling into each other, knocking over plants, glasses of water, table lamps. Tonight, they were unusually quiet.

The creaking of the door.

Was it a cat?

I heard footsteps.

I know I heard footsteps.

The week before Mom got the flu, we scattered Dad's ashes into the lake. The morning was cold for October; the trees, rocks, and driftwood were all coated in a layer of frost. Dad still didn't feel dead, just gone. I rubbed my teal-blue mittens together as I watched the waves batter him again and again onto the shore. My breath billowed into the sky. Further down, there were pieces of kitchen tile, cement bags, and twisted metal lying half-buried in the surf.

You'd be surprised at what washes up on the beach.

The footsteps were louder now.

A raccoon reared up by the dresser with a narrow snout, bold stripes, and curled claws. I blinked, and the raccoon became laundry, just a bundle of laundry, striped by the rising moon peaking through the blinds. "Not real," I whispered, over and over. "Not real." I squinted my eyes shut, but even then shadows danced across the backs of my eyes. There was no escape. The night gulped down reality like a starving animal as the shadows in the room seemed to rise and take form, creeping over Jasmine, the silent cats, creeping over Mom. Curling inward, I clutched my arms to my chest, pressed my fists against my throat. Tried to keep myself together. The pulse in my neck thrummed violently against my fingertips.

The shadow-creatures were a tide, rising together in the night. They howled and gnashed their teeth, turning toward me with hot breath and glinting eyes. Raccoons and coyotes rattling the bones of our home, morphed into something bigger than they were: something sinister. Their voices outweighing my whispers, screaming "not safe," telling me "Go on. Try to stay alive."

The door was wide open.

I remember him standing in the corner with a burning cigarette. After-shave and smoke spiraling toward the window. He observed the room, the dusty photos, the heap of laundry, the dark circus unfolding. I was mired to the bed, coiled so tightly I could snap.

Outside, the shadow-creatures gathered their army.

Inside, Mom grew colder while claws reached for my chest. I tried to scream but my voice was stuck, white hot, trapped somewhere between memory and reality.

I sometimes confused the sound of his voice with the crashing of waves, the sound of the highway with a casket rolling slowly down a long hallway.

I saw him by the window, burning out like a cigarette. Our eyes met and he opened his mouth to sing his lullaby, like always, to clear away the dark. But the emerging voice was thin and wailing like a coyote's cry. His music melted into the chorus of forces converging on the house: the wind, the creaking, the howling. The shadow-creatures closed in. By the time his song was complete, he had turned completely to ash.

Cold Winter Day in Michigan

Anna Leitao

During a cold winter day, snowmen were being made and people were shooting down the hills in their toboggans. I was three and just started to walk upstairs normally and I was bundled under so many layers including my giant magenta Columbia snowsuit. My brother and I finally made it to the top of the hill which seemed like climbing Mt. Everest for a three and a four-year-old. We got to the top and looked down to see where my parents were. They were at the bottom of the hill having and had cheeky smiles on their faces. Though their presence comforted me, I was still scared.

As I looked at the ground like a person looks at an abyss leading to certain death, I tried to back up and go down the stairs. My brother, Jack noticed this and said "Anna, it's only scary at the beginning." I looked back down at the mountain that our little lime green and the purple plastic sled was, and it did not seem as treacherous. I went on the little green sled; it was hard to sit with all the layers of thermal wear that I had put onto me that morning. Started our descent down the hill and it was the scariest and funniest thing that happened to me that winter.

As we got to the base of the hill, we ran to our parents or at least tried to with our little legs. We then drove home on the icy, cold December roads and walked in the door. We drank hot cocoa with whipped cream and marshmallows. And as the night got colder and darker, I looked out my window that night and said to myself, "I'm not afraid of heights anymore."

Parallel Lines

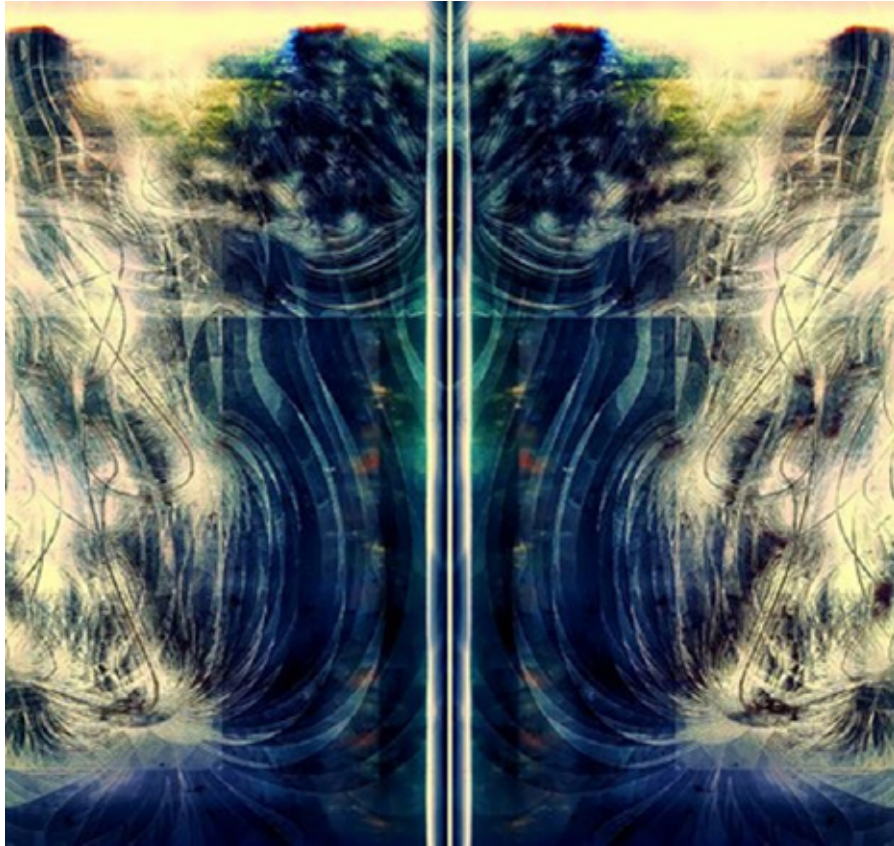
Erik Suchy



Photograph

Sliding Doors

Guliz Mutlu



Color artwork

Depth of Worship

Jaden O'Berry

you never thought about what it meant to be religious until the hymns his fingertips spun like yarn on your body formed goosebumps on your skin,
until the hushed whispers that fell from his lips were like a devout confessional from an immoral man,
not until it was you that brought him to his knees as he praised all of you in your entirety — flesh and bone and breath.

your room becomes the cathedral,
his mouth finds your chin, your jaw, your neck,
and within those cathedral walls you find yourself praying.

religion shifts
and you *sin*,
you sin,
you sin.

-j.o.

Admirer

Frances Koziar

The first picture was innocuous—just a small photo, cut out from regular paper, of my office building. When I found it on my desk at work, with nothing more than a heart drawn in pencil on the back as if from some schoolyard crush, I asked the woman at the desk next to me about it, but she just shrugged and turned away.

The second photo was waiting on my desk the next day when I returned from lunch, just like the first, and this time it was a Google Maps image of the street that my office was on. This time, the photo was under the stack of papers lying on my desk, so I asked the intern who'd delivered them if the photo had come with the files, but the young man had also shrugged and shaken his head, some anxiety sparking in his eyes at the possibility that he should have known.

Then, at the likelihood of seeming paranoid, I stopped asking. The location suggested someone I worked with, but everyone seemed to act normal.

Every day after lunch I found a photo on my desk. After the first one, all of them had been invisible to those walking by, and all of them had a small heart drawn in pencil on the back.

I considered that I might have picked up a strange admirer. Some tech person without social skills, maybe, who thought that sending strange photos without words was romantic. But the pictures became disturbing.

After the street, there was a picture of my car parked in the office building's parking garage. Then a picture of the gas station I sometimes stopped at on my way home.

Then a picture of my car in my garage at home.

I hadn't mentioned the photos to my wife, and I felt like it was too late now. I considered calling the police, but what could I say? Someone knew where I lived and where I worked, and had taken pictures of my car?

So I just kept returning to my desk at lunch, eyes furtively sweeping along any nearby employees to see if they looked suspicious, and looked at the photo with a sinking feeling in my gut, hoping against hope that this was some weird Valentine's Day gimmick. Or April fool's joke. Or Halloween prank.

It was June.

The evening after I received a photo of the upper story of our middle-class home as viewed from the street outside, I knocked a pen off of a table in my living room and into the recycling bin beside it. When I reached in, lifting some pages out of the way to reach the pen that had fallen to the side, I froze. And lifted more pages, exposing what lay beneath.

Pieces of plain white paper with holes the size of small photographs cut out of them.

I stared at our living room printer. For one terrified moment, I thought someone had broken into my house, was here now, ready to kill me like in all of those horror movies I never should have watched.

Then I realized it had to have been my wife. I laughed in nervous relief, retrieved the pen and walked away.

But I was left to wonder—*why* would my wife do this? And had she really gone to my office every day to drop off the photos?

The worry returned, but now I shook it off. She would know the answer.

But she was away for the evening, staying overnight to care for her sick brother's kids across town, so I would have to ask tomorrow. When I went to bed, I kept frowning up at the ceiling, wondering why she had done this, and trying to see the humour in it that she must have.

The next morning—Saturday—there was a new photo lying on the breakfast table. It was a photo of the breakfast table.

I spun around, but my wife wasn't there. Neither was anyone else.

"Hello?" I asked. "Kisha?"

But the house was silent except for the whirl of appliances and the sounds of birdsong outside.

I ate my breakfast, my eyes straying again and again to the photograph, the hair rising on the back of my neck as I listened for all I was worth. Nothing.

When I'd finished eating, I picked it up. Flipped it over. Stopped breathing for a moment.

The pencilled heart was there as usual, but now there were typed letters too.

TERRENCE PARK

I looked at the picture of my breakfast table again, then back to the note. Then I put on my shoes and a thin jacket and headed along the trail that went directly from our backyard to the park a block away. Had this all been some set-up of my wife's to get me to meet her at the park on her way back? Was this some surprise party for an occasion I didn't remember?

I was gripping the phone in my pocket, but I didn't call the police. I didn't know, and probably this was just some prank that I'd failed to laugh at. If this was a mugging, then the photographer could have picked a far better place than Terrence Park, always filled with kids on a Saturday morning.

No one was waiting for me when I arrived. I walked around the park

Cracked Feet

Kiana Govoni

twice, looking for someone who was looking for me, but neither my wife nor any stalkers seemed to be there. I made to sit down on one of the benches near the narrow track I had taken from my house to wait, but I nearly fell over half-way down as I saw the square piece of white paper with a heart pencilled on it. I flipped it over, my heart pounding even as I expected—hoped—to laugh as my wife revealed herself, but the picture was of my wife and I eating brunch together in our dining room as we often did on the weekends, through the tall windows at the back of our house. I blinked at the photo, then up at the lack of people staring at me, then back at the photo.

How was this photo worse than the one of my breakfast table? I wondered as I sat down.

And when had it been taken? I wondered too—for it had to have been from at least last weekend, when my wife was home. In the photo, I was wearing the same shirt I was wearing now—my favourite red blouse. Had I worn that last weekend, or was this photo even older?

When it became apparent that no one was coming, I headed home, more confused than ever, my hand betraying me as it gripped the phone in my pocket tightly. I heard voices when I neared—my wife was home—but when I stepped out of the trees and into the backyard my steps faltered.

I stared for long minutes, watching them walk in and sit down, talking and laughing through the windows of our dining room. My feet brought me closer, right to the place where the photograph had been taken.

The photograph was in front of me: my wife and I, eating brunch together at our living room table.

My wife and I. Me, dressed in the same shirt I wore now, like some twin or a clone or...or an admirer.

I raced around to the front door but stop dead with my hand on the knob before tearing inside to do whatever I would have done. Taped to the front door was a square of paper, heart-drawn-in-pencil side out. That shouldn't have made me afraid, but it did.

I peeled the paper off the door and turned it around.

It was a picture of a freshly dug grave. Next to the gaping hole was a headstone that didn't bear a name—only a date range from my birthday to today, and an engraving of a heart.

I took up running after we met during the summer of my great suppression, and my husband still hates the blisters and raw skin on my feet. I overfeed my daughter whatever candy I can buy to keep her quiet, but I know you wouldn't want me to feed her processed sugar. Sugar rots the teeth.

I cut my hair last weekend, something that I promised never to do because our hair grows slowly and gives us something to hold onto. When my ex-boyfriend from college cut my hair because he thought other men found me too attractive, I vowed to the grimy toilet seat and those cheap Dollar Store scissors that my hair would always reach my bellybutton, or I would destroy the world with my teeth.

When your sister made you shave your head to support your niece who had cancer, your entire family scolded you for crying like they were sawing off your head. They called you vain and emotional as they shaved off your curls and pretended not to hear you when you sobbed and promised to show your love for your niece in any other way.

My husband hardly notices that I cut my hair to ear length, but he does say that he can't get as much of a grip on me when he pulls my hair, yanks it, strokes it when he needs me. I would like you to braid my hair again, but it's too short now. Forgive me as I try to forgive you. I keep hearing that I make you ill, that the air I exhale is poisonous to you. You're not ready to die yet, so I have to stay away from you.

You fear death, but I remember how you held my hand and wiped away my tears all those years ago when I lost my eldest daughter to old age—how you kissed the top of my head and held me close to your breasts when the vet injected my daughter after promising me that she would die peacefully. You helped pay for her gravestone at the local pet cemetery and didn't yell at me for spending so much money on my eldest daughter who I loved for over fifteen years. After her death, you always turned the TV off or changed the channel when a dog came on the screen to die, and I loved you for that.

Remember when we used to watch tv together for hours—marathons of Law and Order, Unsolved Mysteries, documentaries on the Discovery Channel, and later, videos on YouTube where people fell and hurt themselves? We always laughed and drank wine coolers, our bare legs touching, and our nipples hard in the cold air of your living room.

We talked of the color of our shit and of indigestion, bad hips, women's health, and our planned trips abroad to fuck knows where in Europe to celebrate our relationship. Remember when we first met at a beach on a chilly Autumn

afternoon where we saw an ally in each other, in another woman who breathed in the same way. I touched the crack in your throat, and you soothed the cracks in my feet when we were close enough to touch and embrace.

We sought sanctuary in each other as the months and years passed us by, and I made you blueberry tea every time a hole formed in your voice box, keeping you mute for days on end. You turned on the lights, rubbed my feet, and kept me company when my pillow latched onto the back of my head and wouldn't let me go.

When you could talk and I could walk again, you always braided my hair in French braids, and I painted your nails blue to mark the reemergence of our control. I started running on the weekends, overwhelmed and desperate to feel euphoria—to feel you. I couldn't stop running and killing the feet that my husband used to suck and kiss every night before bed, my wearied and blistered, cracked feet. I still remember this. Do you?

Sneaking out to see you, I overfed my daughter so much candy that she now fears the sight of it and runs away when I come home carrying a grocery bag. I saw you at the park the other day when I took my daughter to the sunset swing set, and she leaped from the swings at the sight of your back and screamed, "No more candy today!"

I hated myself enough to die.

Candy burns my daughter's stomach and makes her cry, but I cannot stop myself. She's desperate for you to disappear, but I'm desperate for you to reappear, hold out your hand, and call my name as I run through walls to get to you.

Remember when we used to run along the duck pond together late at night when the moon stood guard, the trees sung, and the water glowed with night fever? We took turns listening to music so that one of us could hear everything around us, and we would have kept running if the sun refused to rise.

Cocktails with Irma

Mike Coste

It's mid-March, not quite the Ides, but still something ominous was headed toward Denver— a bomb cyclone blizzard. Unlike Brutus' famous betrayal, this blizzard had been anticipated, and all but essential services had been shut down before a drop of precipitation had fallen. I'm walking my shih-tzu, Loki, and he shoots me a glare, indicating his displeasure with the rain. I'm not sure why, but he is convinced I'm responsible. He finishes his business and leads me quickly back into the house. After I remove his harness, he runs into the hollowed out fabric shark that serves as his dog house and peers out from between the beast's teeth.

I grab a mug of coffee and look over at the counter that also serves as a bar. We are out of wine, white wine in particular. This is an emergency. There's nothing like blizzard-chilled white wine, and a cyclone blizzard (whatever that is) calls for this icy delight. I look out the window. Snow is beginning to fall. Hard. I check online and find that the local liquor store is an essential function. Of course.

Not one to panic during a calamity, I first take care of priorities. Finish the coffee. As I take my last slurp, I again look out the window, and it's snowing even harder. The snow is piling up on the roads as well. Although Loki likes to go to the liquor store, I have to leave him alone. It's too dangerous out there.

I get in my car and head toward the store, a long two miles away. Like all sane Coloradoans, I have all wheel drive, but I move slowly so I don't lose control on the slick road. As is typical in these situations, a large truck comes up behind me and starts following closely, letting me know that they are capable of moving quite a bit faster and not caring about the risks. It stays right on my tail for the last mile before the store. As I turn into the parking lot, I can see, in my rearview mirror, the driver's head shaking as I am finally out of his way.

At this point I realize, through his eyes, the sheer ludicrousness of my quest. What is wrong with me? Everyone is warned to stay off the roads, schools and businesses are shut down, and I am out risking my life for the sake of a good glass of wine.

What is wrong with me? Is it a chemical imbalance? Is it genetic? And then, my mind goes back to a different kind of cyclone, this one headed toward Florida. And this one had a name. Her name was Irma.

I was driving to work, feeling particularly grown up and responsible since I was headed to a statewide meeting of academics and administrators. As I was going to be around so many vice presidents, deans, and other officials, I had dressed professionally in grey pants, light blue shirt and plaid tie, along with

my college-issued name tag. With my grey hair and glasses, I was the picture of respectability as I drove through south Denver. The big news that day was the impending arrival of Hurricane Irma. This was going to be the mother of all storms, and it was going to hit the east coast of Florida hard. That's where my parents live- Rockledge to be exact.

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The Venue

According to Mapquest, Rockledge is the oldest city in Brevard County Florida. It sits just west of the Indian River, south of Cocoa. Merritt Island lies east across the river. Merritt Island is in turn bordered on its east by the Banana River. Across the Banana River lies Satellite Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. About two hundred miles to the south, down the coast is Miami.

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My friends had asked about my parents, and I wasn't too concerned. I had Skyped them a few days earlier, and they said they were headed to my sister's house in Lakeland before the hurricane. They would be safe there. My sister's a nurse. She's very responsible.

The day before, I had heard Sean Hannity on the radio, encouraging people to evacuate if they lived in Florida. Good. This was not Fake News. Even Hannity knew my parents should leave. He was talking about all the effort the Trump administration was putting into removing rules and regulations during the storm so that Floridians could escape. He also talked about the horrific traffic and gas shortages. I was relieved at the thought of my parents safely farther north and inland, even if the hurricane was going to hit Lakeland as well.

Then my phone dinged. Two texts. The first from Mom: "Just FYI.. we've decided to ride out Irma from home." I couldn't believe it. I know my father. He has the patience of a dog standing in front of fresh meat. There was no way he was going to put up with all that traffic and the long gas lines. Damn! They should have been at my sister's days ago. Now they're going to hunker down in their house, right off the Inland Waterway. Much better to risk annihilation at the hands of Mother Nature than to spend a few hours in a traffic jam. Appalled at such irresponsibility, I was going to talk sense into them. I first weighed whether to let my wife know about this, and then I saw the second text. Apparently they had included her in their message as well. Her text: "OK but please keep us posted... our phones are with us [thumbs up emoji] be safe [heart emoji]". Great. I know they are their own people, and no matter how hard I try to be a good in-

fluence, they will make their own decisions. I wasn't going to worry. They made their own choice here. Still, I would to talk some sense into them. And then I realized I would only fuel whatever rebellious streak had possessed them. So I knew what I had to do. I texted Mom: "Just make sure your bar is well stocked and you have a way to keep your ice cold when the power goes out". Mom responded: "Got our priorities straight. [whiskey glass emoji] [martini glass emoji] [hurricane glass emoji]" No visual pun intended. My response: "[thumbs up emoji] [martini glass emoji]".

So, although we'd have to play it like it's no big deal, I had a sure-fire way of knowing if they were okay. Mom likes to play Criminal Case on her iPad, and as long as she was sending me cards and power boosters from the game, I'd know they were okay.

At the meeting, my colleagues gasped as I told them my parents were staying put. For all the crazy parent stories we had shared, I now had the one no one would ever top. The woman sitting next to me pulled out her phone and showed me a representation of Hurricane Irma in the Atlantic next to a representation of Hurricane Andrew. Irma was huge. I could barely see Andrew. My phone buzzed with a news alert. Brevard County was under forced evacuation. And my parents would soon be mixing up Manhattans and getting ready for Wheel of Fortune. I suddenly had a vision of them in a couple of days, in the eye of the hurricane, sitting out on their back patio, sipping their cocktails. Because that's what they do. Irma be damned.

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How to Make a Manhattan
From Marion and Bill Coste, *Attitude Adjusters*

- 2 jiggers bourbon
- ½ jigger Canadian Club
- 1 jigger sweet vermouth

Garnish with a maraschino cherry.

Can be served on the rocks or straight up.

Author's note: I have never known my parents to drink their Manhattans straight up. For good reason, by the way. Ice really draws out the flavor of whiskey. This is a pretty stiff drink. If you plan on driving, operating heavy machinery, making important legal decisions, or speaking coherently, you can make a weaker version by leaving out the Canadian Club.

To be honest, I was a little jealous. As ill-conceived as their plan was, a couple of days hunkered down a handful of miles and two rivers from the coast sounded a little exciting. That night, I got online to see how much it would cost to take a flight to Orlando as soon as possible. I doubted my parents could pick me up, but I could Uber it. Sadly, there were no flights available. I would have to observe vicariously.

The next day, the day before Irma was to hit, I awoke to a message that Mom had sent me more energy in Criminal Case. I picked up my phone and played the game for a bit for the first time in quite a while. The more I played, the more likely I was to get a response.

It struck me that depending on Criminal Case to tell me how my parents are doing was a bit passive aggressive. I thought that it would be inappropriate to contact them directly with a storm getting ready to bear down on them, but that line had been erased when they decided to stay in that storm's path. So I texted Mom to see if they were available to Skype. A few minutes later, Mom responded that they were going out to have their pre-hurricane Manhattans and that they would be available in about an hour. Priorities.

When they Skyped me, I had the Notre Dame-Georgia football game on, and Dad was going through channels trying to find the game that had been preempted in his area because of coverage of Irma. Then I heard a familiar voice. It was my sister, The Responsible One. Instead of my parents moving inland to Lakeland, she had decided to head southeast with her boyfriend, German Shepard, and two cats to join them. The storm was veering toward the west, and she decided they would all be safer at my parents' house. I wondered if anyone knew that highways also headed north.

My parents were well prepared for the next few days. They had canned provisions, plenty of water, and of course, the aforementioned stocked bar. Still, they chided me for my response to their original text when my wife had shown genuine concern and support. I felt like a bad son for not showing more sympathy.

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Provisions for a Hurricane
One bottle Jack Daniels bourbon
One bottle sweet vermouth
One bottle Canadian Club whiskey
One bottle Tanqueray gin (for variety)
One large can of mixed nuts
One block of cheddar cheese

One block of brie
One block of Monterey jack cheese
Three boxes of assorted crackers
Six bottles of red wine
Six bottles of white wine

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At this point, I would like to defend my response once again, using an analogy. We've all seen the horror movie where someone walks into a room and sees the words "Get Out" dripping in blood on a wall. Inexplicably, the person decides to stay, along with loved ones and family pets, sometimes even inviting friends to come visit. Now, suppose a friend or family member texted you that they had such a message written in blood and they decided to stay home anyway. Would you send a message of support and ask them to check in, or would you make sure their bar was stocked for the bumpy ride ahead. They're choosing to stay with the demons, despite the warning. Don't you think their decision would require a little liquid courage? Now CNN's the wall, Florida Governor Rick Scott is the bloody message, and Irma is the demon. See my point?

That night Notre Dame barely lost to Georgia giving the Peach State its second piece of good news. The latest reports had the trajectory of Irma hitting Georgia, but not as hard as had been originally projected.

I awoke the next morning to the news that Irma had hit the Keys and was making her way up the west coast of Florida. Tornadoes had been reported in Satellite Beach, close to my parents' home. Mom and my sister had both sent me energy in Criminal Case. As I began playing the game again, I developed my own conspiracy theory to add to the rest. Some people considered Irma and other hurricanes a punishment by God for the various moral transgressions committed by liberals against His commands. Others felt that Mother Nature was punishing, Florida, Texas, and other red states for supporting a climate denier for President. I had a more plausible theory. The makers of Criminal Case had found a way to manipulate the weather to get people to play the game as a way of tracking their loved ones. Very clever, and quite obvious if you think about it.

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A Recipe for a Hurricane
1 low pressure area
1 part warm ocean water
1 part water vapor for fuel
Keep ingredients away from wind shear and mix during the Summer or

early Fall. Like Manhattans, hurricanes can be mixed at varying strengths, from Category 1 (74-95 miles per hour) to Category 5 (over 155 miles per hour). Irma was a Category 5 hurricane when she hit Florida, but the winds were at the high level of Category 1 when she hit Brevard County.

Author's note: This is not the drink by the same name. Do not attempt to make one of these yourself. The drink is just something that tropical bars invented so they could water it down and make a profit. If you're going to have a drink, have a Manhattan.

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I texted my mother that evening as the storm was bearing down. She responded that they were doing well and still had power. The evening news showed devastation and flooding in southern Florida as Irma made her way northward. During the night, she made her way past central Florida. I awoke to a Facebook post from my sister saying that their power had gone down but the worst of the storm was over. The house had suffered minimal damage. She had also sent energy in Criminal Case.

I knew I would not hear from anyone during the day, especially given the news accounts of widespread power outages. By the time I got home from work, it was late in Florida, so attempting to contact them would be futile. I checked on Facebook and Criminal Case, but there was no sign of activity- hardly surprising. What was unexpected was that I could not find my sister's Facebook posting that they were okay, nor could I find my reply thanking her for letting us know. This was perplexing. I began to panic at the thought that a huge storm followed the passing of the hurricane, and as the house was being crushed, my sister, realizing that her post was inaccurate, somehow managed to get back on social media and take down her earlier post so we wouldn't have a false sense of their safety. Or maybe there was another explanation.

I was not surprised the following morning when I attempted to call my parents and discovered the lines were down. However, I sent a text on the off chance that their cell phones were working. To my relief, Mom texted back that they were fine, save a few branches down and the loss of a couple of shingles. The power was still out, but they had found a way to charge phones. I could finally leave for work confident that the worst was over.

Later, as I was getting into my car to return home for the day, I saw another text from Mom. I glanced at it and saw, "Things are really bad...." I could feel my heart pounding. I knew it. I knew they weren't safe at all. The text they had sent was premature. Somehow the hurricane came back around and destroyed their house, and they were floating down the Indian River in Dad's

Mercedes. They should have been more responsible.

I loaded my stuff into the front seat, sat down, and read the full message: "Things are really bad... we had to have our Manhattans tonight with NO ICE." Of course. At least they weren't out of Vermont. I replied, "I'm calling the Red Cross."

I knew the Red Cross would not be sympathetic, and I even entertained for a moment the possibility of sending ice out to them. Coming to my senses considering the myriad holes in that plan, I realized I had a chance to call them before it got too late. I dialed my Mom's cell, and she picked up. It was true that they had no ice, and they had even patrolled the area in vain trying to find a store carrying ice.

As it turned out, Irma had passed over them during the night, and they had slept through the worst of it. The damage was minimal, limited to a few shingles and a small hole in the garage roof. Tree branches were strewn all over, from the top of the roof to the yard. The canal had overflowed, but the house was up high enough that water did not reach it; at one point their house was on its own island. The boat survived as well. The people on the other side of the street, along the river did not fare as well. Their docks had been smashed by the torrent Irma brought forth.

The good news was that the worst was over. Despite having no ice for their Manhattans, my parents were able to make do. They had a bottle of red wine, so they could drink something that was normally at room temperature. They salvaged a couple of filet mignons from the freezer and cooked them on their gas grill. Dad could watch his beloved Red Sox on his phone. Within a day, they would have the electricity they needed to make more ice, and soon the cable would be restored, and with it, the regular episodes of Wheel of Fortune.

Although Irma was the most dramatized hurricane, my parents had survived others during their lifetimes. Perhaps the worst inconvenience during Irma's aftermath was the inability to cool down during the heat. However, Dad pointed out that when I was very young we had lived in a house in Key West with no air conditioning at all. And that was the least of our problems. We lived ninety miles from Cuba, during the missile crisis. In the face of a Cold War, a cold house wasn't as important. Yes, there had been more than one potential catastrophe in my parents' lives, and they had survived them quite well.

But this was different. Most of the earlier events had imposed themselves on my parents. This time, Mom and Dad literally chose to stay in the path of the hurricane. And they were lucky to have escaped unscathed. I can't make choices for my parents, nor can I control their behavior. They are their own people, and I am proud to be their son. Still I worry about their priorities and hope

Silentio post clamores

Guliz Mutlu

they have learned to act more responsibly in the future. I hope I raised them well.

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Lessons My Parents Learned from Irma

1. Find an app that allows Dad to watch football. We barely threaded the needle when the power went out after Sunday night football, but came back before the next week's game.
2. Change the cell phone data plan. Who knew the extra data charges for watching Red Sox games would cost more than the hurricane damage?
3. Get a generator. It will allow us to keep the ice cold when the power goes out. No more Manhattans without ice.
4. Don't tell our son we are staying. Tell him we drove straight north up the coast to Maine, turned inland, found a fallout shelter and stayed there for the duration of the hurricane.
5. If he continues to worry, refer him to the *Attitude Adjusters*. He needs them more than we do.

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Back at the liquor store, I'm moving quickly to get ahead of the storm. They like to move the wine displays around so I struggle to find my usual favorites. I tend to prefer cheap- I mean economical- wines. I come upon one of my favorites. I usually buy it for special occasions as it is a bit pricier than I like. At this point, it occurs to me that, if I do get into an accident, and if the paramedics ask why I went out in this weather, my answer would be more understandable with that wine in my car than with a more economical brand. I grab the wine and make the trek back home, slipping occasionally but without the company of a tailgater. At least I'll have no shortage of ice.



Black and white artwork

In Winter, Tears are Glass Ornaments

Brian McCarty

Snow records the way sounds fall,
denudes tone, conserves only the shapes

Of echoes that unthread semantics.

What's left is breath that breaks

Like pencil lead on recycled paper,

The frail discourse of angel wings cracking

Under scarred work boots,

Cardinals shaking pale shadows,

Which also make a cracking sound.

Snow records these—

And then spills its ink between the lines.

Dark Reflection

Wood Reede

Deep in the woods, not far from her home, there lived a pond. It was vast, and black, and dangerously deep. A boy had disappeared years earlier, and it was rumored that he had met his end in its depths, though no one would speak of it.

As a child, she was warned never to go near the pond, and to her credit, she had no interest. She was very good at moving forward without much thought to the past. The forbidden pond was something she neither desired or craved, and so she managed much of her life without consideration of its depth or size.

When she was much older, she discovered she could no longer move forward. Perhaps life overwhelmed her, or the past caught up with her, or maybe she was just tired—whatever the reason, she now stood at the edge of that vast body of water not knowing how she got there. She stared at the surface, and her dark reflection stared back at her. Before she realized what she was doing, she stepped in. First one foot, then the other, her legs, and finally her shoulders disappeared into the black water. She knew she should turn around, run away, but the pond embraced her, and soothed her, and calmed her. And so, she let it pull her down into its depths. The experience was terrifying, and thrilling, and strangely calming.

The next time she went, she stayed longer, and then longer still—for when she was completely submerged, nothing mattered, nothing was important, nothing hurt, which was a welcome relief. She knew she should be afraid, but the pond was hers—hers and hers alone. As long as no one knew, she could visit whenever she wanted or needed to, and no one could take it from her.

She often thought about the boy who was said to live at the bottom. She wondered if he was finally calm, detached, quiet. And what of the other inhabitants in the depths of the dark water? She reasoned there must be many, because everyone knew that the pond was vast, and black, and dangerously deep.

THE END

Finding Dad

Frances Koziar

Sarah closed her eyes and took a deep breath, feeling the cool hush of a summer morning breeze against her skin, and told herself again that nothing good would come of this.

When you're looking for me, he had said with that old wink, as if she were speaking to a memory and not her father, *follow the wind*.

And so here she was, alone, her hand pressed to the cool off-white side of the old house. She let it slide down, and—gripping the crutches that curved around her forearms—made her way down the dirt path toward the trees. Each lilting step was like walking back in time, but she had to remember that she couldn't really go back. Otherwise she'd end up just like her father.

Where's Martha? he had asked her on her visit months before.

She's dead, Dad, Sarah had replied. *She's been dead for years*.

Usually she tried to go along with it, but she'd been so frustrated that day. It had all been too much—with the kids, with Wakisha, with a father who only ever asked for her mother, when Sarah was the one who needed to speak to him.

It's me, Sarah, she had said that day, wanting, needing him to remember that she had mattered too, once. That they had spent decades meeting up for lunch every week. *Your daughter*.

Sar, he had said, surprising her. *Fetch your mother. I want to tell her something*.

She's not here, Dad, Sarah replied gently for the thousandth time, wishing she was. Mom would have known what to do. She had always known what to do.

You can tell me, Dad.

This isn't for you, Sarah. Go get her.

Okay, Dad, she had said, standing up to go.

But he had caught her hand in his. His veins had bulged up beneath his sickly-pale skin and his hand had shaken, but the feel of his grip had been familiar enough to bring tears to her eyes. *Martha?* he had asked with a frown, peering up at Sarah's face with eyes that were glassing over.

Sarah levered herself up over the crumbling stone wall. She had caught her first snake there, back when she was eleven. Dad had congratulated her, while her brother John had only grumbled and gone off to catch a bigger one. And there, further along the path, she had stepped on a wasp once and her whole foot had swollen up. Dad had given her ice.

The property was hers now, but she had no intention of living on it.

John hadn't wanted it, off on the west coast. She could charge a lot if she sold it, what with the subdivisions surrounding it and the size of the lot. They could certainly use the money.

But she couldn't sell it yet. She had needed to come back first, and to come back alone, even though Wakisha had the kids and the taxes to manage at once right now. Her father's goodbye haunted Sarah more than the early days of his fragmenting mind had.

She had become used to him not remembering her, to his delirium and flickering presence. As much as she could become used to it, anyway. He never recognized her for more than a moment, and those seconds—like flickers of sunshine in the long dark of winter—only hurt more somehow, to see again for a moment what she had lost.

That's what she had been expecting when she'd gone to say goodbye two months ago. The doctor had told her that he was going, and she and Wakisha had visited him while the kids were in school, on what turned out to be the last day he was awake. She remembered Wakisha squeezing her hand before they went into his room, and how she had averted her eyes so that she couldn't see the compassion in her wife's dark brown ones that would only have made her cry.

Sarah had braced herself and walked in, prepared to say goodbye to a man who looked like a withered version of her father but wasn't really him. Instead, it was as if his years of incoherence had never been. She had raised her eyes resignedly to where he lay, head propped up on pillows, and then she had stared. She had gone crazy, she had thought in that moment, to see a man who was capable and intelligent and loving sitting there in that wasted body. But then he had spoken.

Thank you Sar, for everything, he had said, his voice rasping horribly. *I'm going to see your Mother now*, he had added with what might have been a smile, and then he had broke off into a hacking cough.

Sarah made her way through the lawn at the base of the trees, her twisted legs and crutches snagging on the overgrown grass, tall and thick and clinging. John had shown her how to whistle with a blade of grass here, on one of the days they'd liked each other.

Follow the wind, her father had said to her that last day before he'd died, as if he could possibly have meant it.

It was an old game of theirs, from when she'd been in elementary school. He would give her a clue, give that old wink, and off she'd go, searching for whatever he'd hidden. Sometimes it was a treat, like candy or strawberries. Once it was just an ordinary pencil, but it had always seemed so special to her.

And here she was.

She arrived at the rock where they had always started, at the edge of the trees. There was a bushy cedar to her right where she'd hidden during hide-and-go-seek once, a tall balsam to her left whose sappy warts had all been punctured umpteen times, an old birch ahead whose bark had those black and grey eyes that had been the answer to one of the other scavenger hunts. Everywhere she looked she saw her childhood, long gone. Everywhere she saw the echoes of her father, flashes and colours like the world broken and shattered by the kaleidoscope of time.

She thought of his sketchbook. How he'd sketch the trees and show them to her. How on the pages between those sketches he would write the clue for the scavenger hunt. When she'd found whatever it was, she would draw a picture below it—badly—in pencil crayon.

She had fought desperately over that book with her brother before the funeral, until she'd had to walk away shaking. It was the one thing she'd really wanted of his, but John had said it was Dad's book and he'd buried it with him.

The hunt's never over, her father had always said when she'd found what he'd hidden, and begged him to do another hunt. *You've got to keep searching and figuring things out, but that's it for today*. And he'd get up off the stone and she'd follow him inside.

She was forty-eight. The last hunt they had done was when she was fifteen.

Sarah sat down heavily on the rock, big and grey with a flat top, and set aside her crutches to drop her head into her hands.

Of course he hadn't remembered what the wink had meant. Of course he hadn't hidden anything for her when he was over eighty. He would have forgotten what he'd meant to do before he was halfway down the hill.

When you're looking for me, follow the wind, he'd said.

"I'm looking for you now," Sarah murmured, her breath ragged.

She had already come here. The day after he had died, filled with a restlessness she couldn't control, she had driven here and searched around the rock, looking west first, where the prevailing winds blew, and then scouring the bushes until her body ached and the overgrown grasses had torn scratches into her bare legs. That day, it had been clear what she had wanted to find.

She had wanted to find him.

Sarah tilted her head back and opened her eyes, the world swimming and shining like diamonds through her tears. She looked up at the trees—maple, poplar, elm, birch. He had taught her them all.

Dad? she had asked him, rushing to his bedside and that old light in his

eyes as if it was the lighthouse through the turmoil of her life.

I'm here, he had reassured her, patting her hand with his wasted one.

Just for now.

And the words had flooded out. There had been so much she hadn't been able to tell him over the past few years, this man who had known her better than her wife sometimes. She had wanted to ask him questions, to talk about her life, but they had had no time.

She had been riveted by his voice, by his weary smile, had held on to every word like they were drops of water in a never-ending desert. She had stared into those eyes, at the blissful, incredible, recognition in them, and for one final moment, through the cracks in that disease, he had loved her.

She had forgotten how much she had missed him, the old him, the real him, until that day in the hospital. Had forgotten his playfulness, his charisma, his steady strength, had forgotten how they had never needed to speak to share a joke. Seeing so much life in those final moments had made it harder to accept his death.

But he was never coming back.

Sarah closed her eyes again, and this time took a calmer breath. Tomorrow was another day. She would go home, talk to Wakisha, take care of the kids. She would take it all one moment at a time.

She listened to the wind blowing in the trees, rustling the new leaves, and then opened her eyes, ready to go.

But she closed them again with a frown. She cocked her head toward the sound, and then opened her eyes. The poplar was making all the noise. She could barely hear the leaves of the other trees in the wind. Were poplars always like that?

Keep looking, she almost heard him say.

Sarah sat up straighter, her heartbeat picking up, and listened when the wind blew again. She grabbed her crutches and made her way quickly over to the tree. She trampled and tore the weeds and saplings around it, looking. There was nothing on the ground, and no branches to hang something from. She knew she was wrong.

She kept looking.

There. A down arrow was cut into the poplar's trunk, about waist height, on the side facing away from the rock and into the grove. She looked down, cutting her hands as she pulled the weeds away from the soil, but there wasn't anything there. She dropped her crutches and fell to her knees, clawing at the ground with her fingers. All the while she was pointing out all the reasons this didn't make sense. He'd never buried something before. "Follow the wind"

Wind and Precipitation

Pawel Grajner

could have been a metaphor, like follow your heart. He couldn't have been lucid enough to remember all of this.

But he had used to be so smart.

She touched plastic. She found the top of a ziploc bag and tore it from the ground. There were papers folded inside, loose. She opened it and pulled the papers out, her legs now sprawled crookedly in front of her. Was this from years ago? she wondered.

She flipped through them quickly, and then more slowly, barely breathing. They were black and white photocopies, but they were the pages from the sketchbook, all identical to the real thing. Except—

—There. A note, scrawled in an unsteady hand on the back of the page from the pencil hunt. It was dated from this fall. She held it in front of her as if it were made of porcelain.

The hunt's not over, Sar. You've got to keep searching and figuring things out.

That's it for today.

~ Dad



Scanned silver halide black and white print

Wrongs of Winter

Gerard Sarnat

“iii. ... left to private devices
I fill a Martini glass with trail mix, slip on
a favored Carlos Nikai flute CD, ascend spiral staircases
into the Captain's chair overlooking my cosmos.
Down below with the clocks
it is so cold the sea does not shimmer;
I soar up the seventeen steps
to search out odd glimmers beyond picture windows.
It poured earlier, but for this time
innocent and ecstatic, I rise above the muck
to where it is bright on both sides...”

Love everyone, serve everybody.
Remember god -- whatever that means.
I am lonely in the universe, an outsider
unless banded together.
The end becomes precious beginnings.

I dig deeper and deeper
into a me that just wants to give birth...”
— From Rites Of Spring, 2008 (Mendocino coast)

Thirteen years past full frontal royal flush
of roiled ecstasy with lover and best friends

what was written then in one sitting alone in catbird's seat,
first work perhaps sadly my finest sustained imagistic effort

when still felt you were young before too suddenly
rounded sober inelastic bend toward eighty years

by happenstance I now find self returned to another high perch
—but this tearful time no lucky stroke of muse's virile magic.

Spring

Brian McCarty

Orchids bloom fire.
Synapse feeds the fire.
Skin feels nothing but haymaker thuds

of blossoms that dismantle the forest
like absinthe.

There is no country of lasting things.
There are goosebumps and coins
that flash silver in light like the wings
of Canadian geese over the city

at its most taciturn and nocturnal.

The geese are flying north.
The coins are always sinking;
they wear smiles like cocoa butter and sting our palms
in moonlight.

The Hellenistic Nature of Hector

Mercury-Marvin Sunderland

“Eyes glaring bright as a Gorgon’s eyes / or Ares’, man-destroying Ares.”
(Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 8, page 242, lines 397-398).

Homeric similes are commonly praised for having attributes to nature, but what was considered to be nature didn’t just stop at plants or weather -- it also attributed to mythology, which, in his time, is considered a form of nature itself. However, while this could sound like a blatant cop-out from tying what doesn’t appear to have any basis on nature into a thing about nature, that is not true. In this simile, Homer refers to the Gorgons, which are the snake-haired monster women from Hellenistic mythology, who are so ugly that to look into their eyes will turn one to stone. The most famous one, obviously, is Medusa, who was slain by the demigod, Perseus, and her decapitated head was used to turn people to stone. While Gorgons are mythological, they are attributed to snakes and statues, and the mythology of them wouldn’t exist without the nature of those things themselves.

However, this simile isn’t just strange in the way that it parallels nature and mythology -- the phrasing is an unusual take on the Gorgon mythology itself. While Gorgons are known for being so ugly that looking them in the eye will turn one to stone, to describe their eyes as “bright” isn’t something that is very heard of. To call them “bright” brings a lot of unusual implications -- that perhaps Gorgons eyes glow, that their ugliness is so distracting that it’s similar to light, that the gaze of Gorgons is somehow alluring or simply so powerful and quick that it mimics light.

This, notably, brings back into the similes about nature -- while, again, the quote doesn’t originally SOUND like it takes much from nature, the Gorgon’s gaze is being compared to light, which, obviously, is something that comes from nature. To say that a Gorgon’s gaze is like light is to say that it is powerful, quick, and, oddly enough, natural. This could be just an overanalysis, but Homer is known for having written in some very misogynistic ways about women, such as how much he contributed to Hera being diminished as just being “Zeus’ wife” instead of her original reputation as one of the original gods born from Cronos himself.

However, even when one puts aside how this is a simile about the Gorgons, there’s still another detail to this -- this is someone else being compared to the Gorgons, and thus being compared to the Gorgons being compared to nature. This is not just a simile in how most are just “X is like X,” this is more of “X is like X, which is like X.” However, one can also notice, that, while it does inherently follow that method, it doesn’t have the same structure. Instead

of saying “eyes glaring brightly like light, which were like a Gorgon’s eyes,” it says, “Eyes glaring bright as a Gorgon’s eyes.” This means that while there is a double simile in the simile itself, it’s more hidden and one has to read between the lines to see it.

One could argue that the original quote doesn’t inherently imply “eyes glaring brightly like light,” and that this is all just looking way too much into this. That’s a fair way to see it, but that doesn’t mean it’s an accurate rebuttal. For starters, the word “bright” itself usually implies light, because light itself is needed in order for something to be bright. The word, “bright,” in this context, is meant to emphasize intensity, which could mean that this could be taken as “eyes glaring intensely as a Gorgon’s eyes.” That’s fair, which, could, admittedly mean that the word “bright” itself is a mistranslation. However, the word “bright” doesn’t solely mean “intense,” nor does it solely mean “light.” Therefore, it can mean both of these things at once. One of the many great things about language is how much can be said with so few words, and this is a fantastic example.

However, even if this wasn’t a double simile, there’s still something to be said for how this quote in particular encapsulates and illustrates the thematic concern. In the context of this quote, Homer is talking about how the Trojan warrior Hector rode his horses in war, as an enemy of the Greeks and as someone who disapproved of the Trojan War itself. While it makes sense that an enemy is being compared to the Gorgons, he’s also being compared to one of their own gods, described as “man-destroying.” Ares, notably, is the Greek god of war and courage. This means that while Hector is being seen as vile as a monster like Medusa, he’s also being compared to the vengeance of the Hellenistic gods themselves and thus showing that he as someone who opposes the war entirely has a bit of both sides to him.

However, all of this glosses over what the main focus of this simile is -- anger. Fierceness. Hector isn’t just being compared to the Gorgons and Ares because both of those are terrifying, but he’s also being compared to them because both the Gorgons and Ares are vengeful, angry beings. Much of the *Iliad* is focused on how the gods themselves took a part in the Trojan War, so it makes sense to say that Hector’s rage could encompass Ares himself. While the Gorgons aren’t gods in any way, Medusa herself was turned into one as a punishment from them. Therefore, to compare Hector to both the Gorgons and Ares illustrates the complicated relationship he has as someone who doesn’t want the war to exist in the first place, and, as was said earlier, illustrates the ties he holds to both sides.

Now, one could ask, even after the mythology bit, what does this all have to do with nature? Easy. Nature is defined as surroundings, and Homer is illustrating

the “nature” of Hector. That could sound like a stretch, but everything is intertwined and Homer is known for showing the complicated nature of who these Greek and Trojan warriors were alongside the Hellenistic gods themselves. By using this simile, Homer illustrates how even Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior in the Trojan War itself, encompassed elements of Hellenistic mythology, showing that even his own spirit was a part of Homer’s surroundings.

Gone

Frances Koziar

She flickered like a firefly—a flash of colour and sound, of a courtroom filled with people—then nothing. Then another flash.

It was like a heartbeat.

Like her son’s heartbeat.

If I can’t kill you myself, then I’ll kill you by destroying what you love.

She didn’t know where she’d heard that before, what movie, what torture scene, but she heard it now as if someone were whispering in her ear with a malicious smile, and only that voice understood the maelstrom that ravaged her being. Only that voice understood that her son’s recent death would kill her too.

If I can’t kill you myself, then I’ll kill you by destroying what you love.

A smiling boy, her boy, running around with a grin on his face. Just turned four, his eyes like hers, his heart as warm and open as his dead father’s.

“...charge of manslaughter.”

She blinked and saw the courtroom again, decided it was real, decided she couldn’t care. A dull pain, where her fingernails had pierced into her palms from her clenched fists, appeared and disappeared like the worlds she stood between.

Fractured scenes appeared before her, still and moving like the shards of a kaleidoscope.

A little boy, her boy, drawing in chalk on the driveway.

An urgent call from work.

Knocking at her neighbour’s door. Asking him to watch her son.

Backing her car out quickly, sure he was inside.

A bump.

A body on the newly coloured asphalt.

A dead boy, her boy, no longer breathing.

“...not guilty.” The judge’s voice, speaking gently.

A sea of eyes around her. But none of them were his.

I’ll kill you by destroying what you love, that mad voice whispered in her mind again and again, and her body shook. She needed to go back, needed to find him, needed to save him. Tears dripped from her chin.

What you love.

The world blacked out.

Mother's Day, 2018.

Ronald Oremland

My mother was an excellent cook. Not of the fancy-schmancy ilk, but someone who had a standard repertoire of recipes that were always the high point of our family meals. This was especially so on Friday nights, where our Shabbat dinners were epic. By the time I had turned the age of ten, I was convinced that there was no one else on the face of this Earth more capable of nourishing our souls and tickling our palates than my very own mom. That is until I met Mrs. Rizzo. My oldest brother Alan and his fellow-Brooklynite buddy Joe Rizzo (Bay Ridge) were close pals while undergoing basic training in the army at Fort Dix, N.J. We ventured out there on Sundays to give these two poor starving GIs some home-cooking, served picnic style in summer, so as to sustain them through the coming week. My mother extravagantly laid out a table adorned with roast chicken and a number of tasty side dishes, while at the same time, Mrs. Rizzo, a little Italian lady entirely clad in black, quietly placed a number of her own dishes on the table. She demurely came to me and handed me a small paper bowl containing eggplant parmesan, with the mild admonishment:

“You eat now, yes?”

I was nearly bowled over by the exotic fragrance and lusciousness of this simple dish. Eggplant was something my mom, try as she might, could never master. But Mrs. Rizzo made me a big fan of eggplant parmesan, a taste that persists to this very day.

But not to sell my own mom short by any means. She made many tasty edible staples that were always in abundance in our home. So much so that I took them for granted. One of these was mandelbrot, a hard almond-flavored very granular cookie that went well with hot tea. There was always an ample supply of these jaw-breakers in the pantry, something I would eschew if there was a stash of store bought soft cookies to stave off a teenager's hunger after school. Mom passed away in 1989 as did many of her recipes and that seemingly endless supply of mandelbrot.

But several years ago, just before I caught my train home from work in Menlo Park to San Francisco, I realized I was famished. I grabbed a cellophane-wrapped Italian biscotti at Café Berrone and proceeded towards the train station. Taking a bite while half-way across the track, I had my very own “Ratatouille” moment.....it tasted so much like my mom's granular, almond-laden mandelbrot that my eyes welled up with tears and I stood motionless for some time right in the middle of the tracks. A train could've smashed me to bits given that I was so lost in the reverie of this Proustian moment of things gone by that I was totally unaware of the world around me.

So thank you mom (and Mrs. Rizzo) on this special day for all you have given me, including of course mandelbrot (and much, much more) and an eternal, unexpurgated taste for genuine, homemade eggplant parmesan.

The Monster

Frances Koziar

We had caught him, but it was too late. It was done.

I'll get you back for this, he had said all those years ago, before he'd been locked away for his experiments. I wouldn't have remembered the threat at all—I've heard the same so many times in the line of duty—but he hadn't said it angrily. He hadn't spat, hadn't cursed. He had only said, *I'll get you back for this*, like Death's own promise: quiet and seductive and sure.

My officers circled around the cage before me—three women, one non-binary, and a new young man—and the new recruit turned away to vomit.

"Boss?" one of the women asked, her voice as gentle as a breath and yet her eyes filled with horror. I hardly heard her.

Is it dangerous, what you do, Mommy?

Sometimes. But don't worry, sweetheart. We're careful.

The monster moaned and gurgled as if too broken to scream, the sound strangling out of an empty hole of a mouth in a lump of a head that resembled no creature I knew of, and my feet led me to the bars of its cage against my will.

It had six legs: the front two like a Komodo dragon's, the middle like a cougar's, the back like a human's, toes curled in pain. Eyes were burned everywhere into its flesh, but it had no real ones. Eyes didn't transplant well.

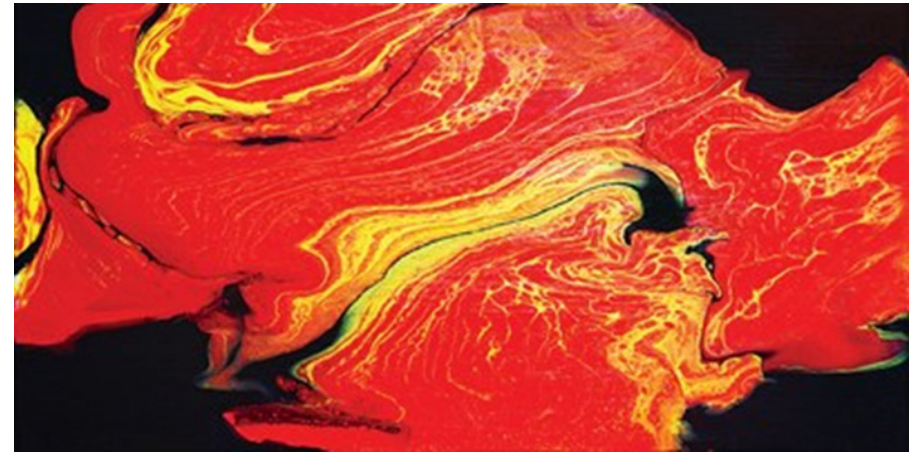
I clutched the bars, shaking as pieces of my life whirled around me, caught in the winds of a hurricane. My daughter's high, curious voice. Her delighted face as she brought me a new discovery. My wife kissing her on the cheek while I tousled her hair.

But the truth was in front of me. Fresh stitches criss-crossed the monster's body, stitching tough reptilian skin to mammalian fur and the soft, brown skin of human.

Of her.

Molten Lava

Britnie Walston



Acrylic on canvas

Green Bull

Guliz Mutlu



Color artwork

Degas and the Sale of My Boyhood Home

Timothy Robbins

Degas before a bulldozed lot
stares at a house he once
lived in. A fresh morbid thought
splashes in the shower as I
squirt too much shampoo on

my palm: What if David, whom
time has turned to my most
loyal friend, goes before I go?
Degas guesses who sits —
and why is she looking up? —

at the third-story window.
There's a crane on a square
crater's rim in downtown
Chicago. This crane thinks
little of its strength, preferring

to bemoan lack of grace
relative to Degas's creakiest
dancer. Degas feels no
sympathy, his view blocked
by ravished eyes and the

bitterness of a thousand
uncompromising portraits.
I weld a camera to an
excavator's claw and market
the film as the history of

my halting artistry. Degas
hands me his pocket watch
and asks me to walk the dog.
He hands me his yoyo and
asks what time it is and if

the cafe is open yet. The

Reaching Up

Navida Stein

sound of my man's sleep
is Duncan, which is to say
it's either or it's both the
sound of a yoyo rolling down

and climbing up its string or
a string banishing and
recalling its yoyo. An
extravagant way of praising
the fickleness of the sound

of his sleep. Affidavit —
sounds like a flower — petals
a color that strikes the eye
as good cold coffee strikes the
tongue. My neighbor promised

me a start from her affidavits.
She's so busy, she's probably
forgotten. Maybe I should
slip over and help myself.
Degas stares, satisfied, at a

canvas he worked on for
years and I painted over last
night. "Here lies my judgment,"
he says. "I won't miss it. So
often it misled me." True. His

guesses were wrong. Dreyfus
and twenty other Jews, my
man and I, my parents, their
vigor, the people who bought
56 years from them — and yes,

a handful of retired ballerinas
crowd at that honest window.
Desperate to see one last
pirouette, Degas commands
us to whisper and jump.

I remember yellow daffodils
Planted on the strip of soil next to my childhood house
Courageously blooming thru an early Easter snowfall.
As we step out for Sunday sunrise services
With our hats from another era
Mine like the bottom of a pink cake, the organza ruffles, mirroring piped pink
frosting
I think, *those daffodils have done it again. Been fooled into spring.*
Their bulbs sought the heat emanating from our basement
Coaxing them to push thru the cold earth.
They do find their true goal
The southeastern sun that strikes our house each morning.
Sometimes my mother
With advanced knowledge of a late frost
Would surround the daffodils with old crumpled newspapers
Forming little protective castles.
Each year, I too bloomed, reaching through frigidity and rigidity
Beyond hypocrisy and falseness
Minus make-shift citadels
Because I recklessly desired to reach for the sun.

Cheap Mustard

Tara Kareta

Small white circles stain what use to be Mom's favorite chair
a nice chair, real wooden legs and piping along the arms.
The perfect shade of pink to match the Tiffany lamp.
Dad got mad and threw the mustard bottle
the cheap kind in the bright yellow bottle
all American logo.
It splattered all over the door frame, wallpapered walls
bright yellow blobs, like finger paintings.
My mom cleaned up
hands in a soapy bucket,
sloshing
not crying.
Scrubbing the yellow condiment out of the fabric
scouring away the delicate pink with discreet force
cleaning up and shining what was a mess.
The chair was repositioned with its back to the wall.
After the storm, I sat on the hard wooden floor
studying the back of her favorite chair.

Killing My Father

Dustin Grinnell

In the workplace, I often bristle at being told what to do and exactly how to do it. It's frustrating when I sense that speaking frankly among colleagues is frowned upon, and I must self-edit for sensitivity. Maybe it's my New Hampshire origins—my strong identification with the state's motto, "Live free or die"—or my problems with authority. Either way, when my marketing department brought in new leaders who were neurotic, authoritarian, and sought to promote conformity and stamp out individuality, I wasn't happy. I began to see myself as a white-collar slave. A corporate drone living in a velvet ghetto. I earned a respectable income at a prestigious job as a creative writer for a profit-driven organization. Still, I was melancholy, unfulfilled, searching for something else.

In the 15 years I've worked in Corporate America as a writer of marketing copy, my free-spirited father, Greg—a self-employed builder in a sleepy town in the White Mountains of New Hampshire—has been a fictive vessel for my wishes: to work for myself, to live in a more tranquil, rural setting, to say and do as I please—as he does. While I report to the same building every day, Greg has a different job site every few weeks. While I attend countless meetings on a daily basis, seldom in control of time, Greg plans his schedule and can come and go as he pleases. I do what I'm told, or I'll be shown the door. No one tells my father what to do or how to think. I envy his agency and ability to be an individual when I must remain obedient, present an artificial identity, and avoid sincerity for the sake of civility.

Though I'm ashamed to admit it, I'm similar to Edward Norton in the movie *Fight Club*—and my father is Brad Pitt. It's embarrassing because Norton's character, the narrator of the story, called Jack, is a tense, miserable corporate employee who can't sleep because he's living a mundane, meaningless life. To cope with his gloomy existence, Jack invents a man who helps him fulfill his subconscious desires to live with more confidence. That person is Pitt's character, Tyler Durden. Tyler is everything the narrator admires: confident, charismatic, and, most of all, free to do and say as he pleases.

In the same way that the narrator in *Fight Club* put his alter ego, Tyler, on a pedestal, I've put my father above mere mortals. I worship his devil-may-care attitude that allows him to follow his gut when he's lost on a motorcycle trip with friends. When I ride, my destination is set on my phone's GPS, and the route is mapped out before I depart, leaving almost zero room for error. Greg fancies "winging it," whereas I sweat the details. My father sleeps soundly; I wake up at night gasping from acid reflux. The vanity license plate on his truck reads "GBOGH," meaning "Go Big or Go Home." And he couldn't care less if someone

driving behind him can't decipher the acronym.

Three-quarters of the way through *Fight Club*, Jack realizes that he's spent months split from reality, communicating with a person who's never been there. Just before he passes out, overwhelmed by the depth of his psychosis, Tyler explains why Jack invented him: *All the ways you wish you could be, that's me. I look like you wanna look, I f*** like you wanna f***, I am smart, capable, and most importantly, I'm free in all the ways that you are not.*

Like Jack did with Tyler, I idealize my father and his attitude of not giving a f***. But there's a problem with idealization: it's built on a foundation of denial. It often means that you're revering a person, idea, worldview—anything, in fact—without acknowledging its negative aspects. Idealization is not believing reality; it sees the good without the bad.

For instance, Tyler is charming and bold, but also chaotic and violent. Someone to marvel at for his gumption but also to dread for his recklessness. He's clever but also juvenile. A role model and a criminal. Was the same dynamic at play with my father? What negative aspects of him was I denying? By idealizing Greg, I could overlook his faults. My idealized father leads his friends down an unknown trail while mountain biking, but my real father must admit he's taken a wrong turn. My idealized father dashes off unreadable emails to business clients, but my real father loses potential income when those clients cut ties over his lack of professionalism. My idealized father preaches the gospel of self-reliance, but my real father has trouble connecting with people because he often chooses to ignore their pain and dispenses advice instead.

Why do I need this fictionalized version of Greg? By keeping him on a pedestal, I can deny my anger toward him. For years, I've viewed him and his lifestyle through rose-tinted glasses while being seriously, albeit subconsciously, angry at him. Greg was of a generation that saw corporal punishment as appropriate disciplinary action. His father hit him with belts, sticks, and coat hangers. His grandfather probably did the same. In childhood, if my brother or I did something reckless, like dropping small boulders down the well in our yard to hear the splash, not knowing we were destroying its inner workings and costing hundreds, we were given a whipping.

As a young boy, I was terrified of how my father would discipline us with a short piece of wood he kept atop the refrigerator and fetched if we acted out. If we were disobedient or broke the rules, we'd scatter and look for hiding places as Greg jogged to the refrigerator to retrieve The Stick. My brother might have slid underneath his bed, and I would entomb myself in a closet behind hanging shirts. My father always found us, however, and dragged us out by an arm or a leg and smacked us on the rear end as we writhed, covered our faces, and

wailed.

Jack invented Tyler to rebel against his meaningless life; I created an unrealistic version of my father to ignore my adolescent rage. By idealizing Greg as the ultimate free spirit, I avoided my anger for the pain he caused when I was a child. It meant not accepting that being dominated, hit repeatedly, and left squirming on the floor in pain had been humiliating. Idealizing my father helped me repress the terror of his pursuit with the intent of using The Stick on me. I wouldn't have to accept that such events made me an anxious adult who still has shame buried in the dark corners of my body.

While Jack starts off the film as cynical, depressed, and psychotic, he's victorious across the story as a whole, in several ways. He quits his soul-deadening job, starts a cultural movement—a cult, basically—and finds a woman who darkly complements him. Jack's biggest achievement, in my opinion, is that he pierces his illusions and, in doing so, discovers his authentic self. He does so by retracing Tyler's steps to learn that the man who's been disrupting his life is, in fact, his own split personality.

I, too, have climbed out of denial by accepting that the fictional version of my father isn't genuine but rather a figment of my imagination. The same way that Tyler was for the narrator. I have ceased putting Greg on a pedestal and stopped telling folks that his harsh disciplinary style gave my brother and me the enviable self-discipline we have today. Like Jack, I must continue to summon the courage to confront reality and stare clear-eyed into the facts of my life. The truth is that I suffered through trauma and should be kind to myself while the psychic wounds heal.

Near the end of *Fight Club*, Jack realizes that by not idealizing Tyler he's left only with himself—a product of all the desperation, psychosis, and pain he's experienced. Not worshiping my father lets me see that he's like all of us: flawed but just doing the best he can. In place of that idealization, I can find something else: admiration. I value his positive qualities and accept his negative, all-too-human ones. He's a go-getter, but restless. A problem-solver, but unreflective. An optimist, but intolerant of negative views.

Getting honest about Greg allowed me to get real about myself. I had to stop denying that my authoritarian managers were making me unhappy. So when I was offered a new copywriting job for a technology company, I resigned. In my new role, I still write within a corporate environment, but the organization is less bureaucratic and hierarchical and open to fresh ideas. I work in a “story-telling pod” with a team of talented creatives who are funny, open-minded, laid-back. It's a good fit, and I've flourished. And the melancholy and restlessness has lifted.

Oh Happy Days 1c

Edward Supranowicz

At the end of *Fight Club*, Jack realizes he doesn't need the alter ego to cope anymore. When Tyler refuses to leave, Jack puts a gun in his mouth and threatens to shoot. Just before he pulls the trigger, Jack looks into the eyes of his idealized self and says, "Tyler. . . My eyes are open." When he shoots, the bullet bloodies his face and knocks his jaw out of place, but it doesn't fatally wound him. The bullet does, however, kill Tyler, who blows out a whisper of smoke, drops to his knees, and dies. Not a physical death, but a symbolic one. Jack killed his alter ego.

Like Jack, I, too, have laid the fictionalized version of Greg to rest. By accepting my reality, I admit that I'm not my father—nor do I want to be. I don't live in the woods; I'm a city dweller. I'm not self-employed; I work in Corporate America. I'm not carefree; I'm careful. When making choices, I don't think about Greg's values; I consult my own. With the idealized version gone, only my real father is left, warts and all. And by opening my eyes, at last, I have discovered myself.



Digital painting

A Mere Slip of a Girl

Joe Smolen

For some strange reason, even though it has been three years since she was taken by the consumption, I can see my older sister Gladdie's beautiful face plainly through our ceiling. Always the shadow of tragedy in her dark eyes, Glad-die was never a threat to any Yaquina girl as a rival for she had left her heart with the young man in Corvallis where we lived during 1872.

They found a body on the beach today. My Father heard it while he was south at Seal Rocks because Bennie Collins's boat was in danger. They think I'm asleep with the consumption, but I can hear them in the kitchen. They said the dead man was quite tall. The men said it was nothing but an Indian that cut his own throat, but they flushed the turkey vultures and dragged it out of the drift-wood and buried it right there. They said burying an Indian was government work and being as there was plenty of room on the new combined Reservation and "no Indian should oughtta been on the beach near town without a pass from the Su-perintendent anyhow", they just dug shallow. The men being burdened taxpayers besides, they said shallow was good enough, as turkey vultures don't dig.

Most folks in Newport think it was maybe a renegade some people call Charlie Taylor, but I know it wasn't. Charlie Taylor's hiding up at his sister's right now.

I'm the only girl left in our family. My Mother says "No, dear", but I know it's my time to die – just like my three sisters. All of us girls the consumption, my brothers spared. I can feel myself coming out of my skin - drifting away - just going and starting to fly free on the summer Trades. My chest isn't hurting right now so I've got nothing to do but lay here thinking about a dead Indian. They lived all over here before us, but you pretty much just can't know it by looking around.

It must already be afternoon. I can hear the wind – the Northwest Trades rumbling in our stone chimney.

That day, I folded my dress. I never told he saw me. I never told.

Our house is so quiet! The rumble of the Trades is a voice. I know what it is telling me to-day.

Public School here is just the Summer. Instead, all winter private, my Mother used to school me and at least a dozen other children – charged their parents a "plenty high" twenty-five cents tuition a week – taught us eight months straight. That year, we got done early. I could easily read and understand even the books the schooners brought us out of California where new books came up around The Horn from Europe. Mother said she couldn't give me a public award because she was the Teacher so people would talk. She told me I'm not a student, but a "true scholar" and so instead of an award with my name on it, she made me

a new flannel dress. She didn't have buttons, so she designed it a wrap-around with a sewn-on belt that went through a slit at the waist and tied in front. The collar flared and stood up with real style. Down my left leg were three small ties that kept the bottom of my dress from blowing open. Some girls said I "parade" in it. They were right.

Why my Mother and Father have loved me as they do, I don't know. I am prideful and disobedient. From an early age, I would roam for many hours and return home to find my Mother, her fears driving her to tears. On one of my selfish junkets, I learned that every Spring, there's a little cliff flower with a yellow button center and lime-colored lettuce leaves that hug the ground. If you're daring, you can pick them free, way out on Yaquina Head up high above where the sea birds all nest. My sisters – Gladdie, Loie and Iris are all buried in a row up on Palatine Hill above Yaquina Head overlooking the vast Pacific. I used to risk to pick the little cliff flowers for their graves.

I guess I did fall asleep a while ago. It's dark out now. I'm all damp and chilling from the night sweats. My Mother is here beside my bed. She looks very serious and teary all at the same time. I wish I could make her feel better.

I think I was just now dreaming. I saw him again. Even though I know now he's dead, this time he didn't look ugly and fierce like before. Folks say some Indians have white souls inside their dark skins. I don't think so. White isn't the right color. White's too homely.

Yaquina Head is all solid rock. It sticks at least a mile into the ocean and they put a light house out on the end. All along the Head, high cliffs drop to the foaming ocean far below where groups of rocks are scattered so no boat can come in safe closer than most of a mile. It is a desolate, forlorn place. The ghosts of lost fishermen and ship-wrecked sailors wander those rocks where they were drowned. Missing miserably my dead sisters, that is the very reason I walked out there quite alone the first time. That's when, in our simple life in Newport, I first saw the little button-centered flowers and I finally had something to give my sisters. That's when lonely Yaquina Head first became my own place.

Will Keady is here again to visit me. He smells so fresh and alive like the salt air off the bay. I'm quite embarrassed at my pale, sickly appearance. The new girl, Clad Bensell, had marked him for her own. She is older and has quite a glamorous air and sings the old songs like "Gypsy's Warning" beautifully, but Will would be mine for-ever surely if I were to live. Now, he daren't even touch my feverish hand, but I can see it in his eyes.

Everyone has gone outside in the Sun. The house is again so still. Today, in our chimney, the Trades are a full gale. It screams a cold, Summer melody.

But Will Keady has been killed! My Mother just told me this morning.

She said I have slept or been delirious for over a week. She said a strange storm forced a Danish lumber schooner, its deck load torn away, into our little bay for repairs. She said the crew was three weeks starved, hardly even water. A day or so before the time set for the schooner's departure from our little bay, the Northwest Trades brought us some very squally weather. One afternoon, Will sailed up to Oysterville with Captain Nissen (of the schooner) in the schooner's small boat to finish some business. The Oysterville reach was a ragged chop that afternoon and the wind was crossing the tide. The Captain's body has been found very battered, but not Will's.

Mother has gone back out into the kitchen and she is singing quietly. I know she doesn't want to sing, but I beg her so she does, though sadly.

My eyes are closed, but I know evening is coming on. When people's voices inside our house stop, I hear the wind hushed down now to a moan.

Just now, I felt a dark shadow pass over my bed. My eyes are closed, but I could feel him.

I know tomorrow, the Trades will take us both.

I can never, never tell. His shadow just now has made me suddenly remember details I haven't thought of for a long long time. It was a morning to make the blood quicken in one's veins and in my "parade" dress I pilgrimaged alone to Yaquina Head. That time, I brought along a basket Old Mary, wife No. 2 to California Jack who was brought up the Coast when they condensed the Indian Agencies, had given me. In it, I carried a small lunch of bread and dried apples. I wanted not to be distracted by hunger. I wanted Gladdie, Loie, Iris and myself to have occasion to talk while I placed my little cliff flowers on their graves, but we never did.

Out onto Yaquina Head, I walked in the lonely sunshine feeling, just as in the story, grand and melancholy so to speak as "The Lady of the Lake". Even though great huge waves were rolling in off the deep, blue ocean far below me, the dark water rose and fell slowly over the sharp black rocks like the breast of giant, sleeping Gulliver quietly breathing. The barks of basking brown sea lions echoed up to me through the stillness of the morning.

But when I arrived at my usual flower beds, I felt a sudden, stinging pang. I discovered that I had been invaded. A stranger had picked all my flowers and so I began to think of a route around the salal walls that commanded Yaquina Head.

The wagon road to the Yaquina Head light house runs to the north, protected from the fierce winter gales that sweep from the southern ocean. The opposite, southern edge, where I sought my little flowers in those days is smothered by an endless thicket of wind-stunted pines and fluffy myrtle floating on a

sea of dark salal that stands tall as a man, and dense as the hair on a head. But Captain Wynant, who can command his ship without using profanity, has a spyglass about two feet long which pulls out in three sections, the small end to your eye. With it, I had studied the Head from a distance of over two miles. I had seen scattered on the salal sea along the southern cliff brink, grassy islands of safety where it appeared Spring flowers might grow.

I have coughed up quite a lot of blood today. There is more pain. Our single physician in Newport, Doctor Hoag, a pleasant man and kind, can really do nothing for me but sometimes bring my fever under control. Doctor Hoag is here now. I can hear him and my Mother murmuring somewhere distant. They can't know of the shadow which I felt pass over me just moments ago. I sense him near me.

Now, I see there is no longer a scar across his throat.

I remember, though very dismayed at first on discovering my flowers all picked, I had resolved to find the islands of safety I had seen through Captain Wynant's spyglass. Salal has a beautifully smooth, red bark and it rises to the occasion exactly like myself then – skinny and spindle-legged. I remember, to save it, I took off my dress and folded it with the bodice on top so that my stylish collar could stand. In only my under-things and carrying my folded dress and basket, I stepped behind the salal curtain.

Reaching for the Sun's life, ever dense salal formed a canopy over my head that barely parted above me as I stepped and stooped through the silent gloom. At only eleven, I was such a mere slip of a girl that I barely needed ever to push the tall stems aside. A winding dark passage yielded to me endlessly. I stopped at the white bones of a small animal that had died quite a long time ago. I crouched. I studied the skeleton intently. Since its bones were close together, I could tell it had died a lonely death. When I stood back up though, thinking to check behind me, I found the salal curtain had closed back as if I had never passed there at all. I had an awful moment of confusion and panic. I had lost my way home. But then I heard my father's voice reminding as he always used to do, "One thing at a time, Lucy."

Even though I can hear the muffled and distant mutterings of my Mother and Doctor Hoag, I am exactly alone at this my final hour. I can feel again the heat of the Sun on my Island of Safety – just as when I first burst out upon it from the salal that day – just when its warmth first touched my skin. Suddenly back in that warm sunshine, I sensed a deliciousness. I saw far to the south, slowly crossing the bar that windless morning, the black hull of a lumber schooner entering our little bay in ballast, probably bound to lade at Puget Sound, thence San Francisco. Since Stonewall Shoal wasn't breaking, I knew the

schooner was lifting on a flood tide. At the entrance to our snug harbor, up on the bluff amongst the pines, the white-painted Ocean House was plainly visible in the clear air as was below it the tip of the plank boardwalk my Father and Mr. Venables had built. On top of my entire world, I was profoundly alone. Almost directly below me, a whale nursing its little calf drew my vision down. Just as if I were Alice, I realized I was standing at the beginning of what appeared to me as a natural stone staircase descending, and not far, before it disappeared from my sight.

I became so powerfully curious, I felt alive beyond measure. Following the white rabbit, Alice did not hesitate. I took her example. My earlier feeling of deliciousness was replaced by a very strange sense. As I thought carefully where to place my feet and balance, I realized that long, long ago other minds had thought and chosen and stepped exactly on my same stones, descending and descending that high wall of fatal rock.

Suddenly frightened, I stood stopped, unsure of anything. I thought I should just go back. I thought helplessly of home and my Mother and how she would feel if I... but then, a cool breeze puffed up off the ocean and into my face. A wild sound rode it – the chatter of thousands of seabirds. I had never seen so many dark, diving Murres blanket the sleeping ocean.

At sea level, the rock spread and flattened nearly evenly, just as if it once were the flowing batter of fresh, morning flannel cakes poured out onto a giant griddle. For once, my poor, clumsy shoes which my Father had made me were perfect. I stood quite still again. I had been near the ocean on many occasions, but now profoundly alone in that strange, watery cathedral the salt air fairly stung my nose. I had the creepy, lonely sense that I and my dead sisters were nothing more significant than barnacles – in whose nameless faces I was stepping right then. Thinking of my lost sisters, suddenly I became so sad that I couldn't stand up. I set my folded dress and Wife No.2's spruce-root basket on a log. For a time, sitting beside them, I couldn't move at all and the warmth went out of the sun. I felt feeble and that I was in a dangerous place and that I had been a foolish, foolish child and that my body would never ever be found.

I felt very certain that I would not die of the consumption, but of heart-break, and that ever since Iris' death – the first of my sisters to waste and die in front of my eyes – I had been pretending. In that teeming, lonely place, nearly naked, beside what wife No.2's dark hands had patiently made me, my mask fell away and I mourned my sisters as my childhood - that would end that very day.

Finally, through my salty veil of tears, I saw what struck me as – while I was descending earlier – a most precious gem. Very near the brink, where the flannel cake rock ended and the ocean seemed to sleep, was a deep pool

somewhat larger than our small kitchen at home. The water was of the greenest emerald, its sides lined with every color of life and deep purple, spiny urchins. When I slipped my bare hand through its surface, its warmth startling me, I was suddenly flooded again by the same sense of strange deliciousness as before. Immediately, smiling, I decided I would swim! I left my under things and my shoes on Wife No.2's log and I slid and disappeared into the cool calmness of the emerald pool.

I was a foolish, foolish child. One ought never to risk oneself, because others will suffer for it. Even just my bare feet in their cold, the icy Yaquina River flowing from the east into our little bay, or the ocean itself always took my breath away. But I had never in my entire life, over my entire skin felt such a caress as my emerald pool just then. I filled my mouth with it and rolled on my back and spouted. Above me was only the Sun and blue. A pair of seagulls chased madly across my sky. I thought stupidly of school chums Ed and Mort Abbey, who just couldn't wash behind the ears. I felt clean and perfect. I had a very exciting thought I have never told anyone – that when my time came, I would bring my husband to that pool. I floated on my back. I closed my eyes.

But suddenly, icy cold water stopped my breath. There was a great, gushing roar. My thought was only panic. By cold water, I felt myself carried up and up. I had foolishly forgotten the rogue waves that always accompany a flooding tide. My arms and legs had no force. I was lifted higher, faster. Then I dropped. I spilled. I couldn't see. The cold salt water seethed around me madly and stuffed up my nose and into my throat.

In a single moment, I saw a band of blue sky with speeding dark stone walls right and left. Seeming to hang as a hunting Eagle against the blue, the silhouette of a man with streaming long hair soared.

Then, I was laying alone beside a fire that had burnt down to embers. Its smoke filled his cave. Outside, exactly as before, the ocean seemed to sleep. Further inside, the dirt-floor cavern reached away into blackness.

Newport's native inhabitants we knew then came sixteen miles over from the Siletz Agency. They came for a change of scene and to sell fish to the campers from the Willamette Valley. I had seen their fishing spears with their fire-hardened points many times. Beside a bed of spruce root, some firewood, and a large, spilling pile of the black shells of the mussels that grew everywhere beside the ocean, there were only three things in his home. One was just such a fishing spear as I knew. The others were two baskets, crude compared to the fineness which Wife No.2 had given me.

When the man saw me awake, his dark face turned instantly fierce and ugly. The sight of him terrified me absolutely. I felt myself begin to shiver and

Outside the Rain Falls

James Patrick Focarile

shake. Vague stories of what Indians had done in olden times flooded my mind. Across his throat was a great, scarred-over gash. I saw he carried the largest knife I had ever seen. He was much taller even than Charlie Taylor and his arms and chest were bundled cords. I could see he was a hard, hard man, that he was a most dangerous, defiant renegade.

When I began to cry and wail for my Mother, anger in his face became more hideous than anyone I had ever seen. He threw up his hands just as my own Mother had done in her tears of frustration with me and my ramblings. He drew his knife and, several times with it, he made a violent slashing motion across his own throat. I was so terrified I thought, in that moment, that Gladdie, Loie and Iris had been lucky compared to what I knew he was going to do to me.

Heavenly Father, I want to tell you now and at this, the hour of my death, that I gave not one thought to what I had done to him.

In this one you are almost smiling. Filled with hope and promise, but not fully developed. A day that will create a canvas for all to come.

Your white lace gown flows to the floor. Your veil cascades behind you and frames your short dark hair. Young and inexperienced, but you look regal.

Just the two of you, holding a single bouquet of white lilies. Everything fades white against a pale blue background.

Beyond your focus awaits old family and new. An urban cocktail of immigrants of different religions and traditions. What will come of this concoction? Of course, you don't know, but you are innocent and deserving and that is enough.

Outside, the rain falls in heavy sheets, but you remain insulated from it. Caught in a moment—a time where everything you desire can be realized. At peace in the not knowing and, most importantly, in Love.

Clear-cut

Brian McCarty

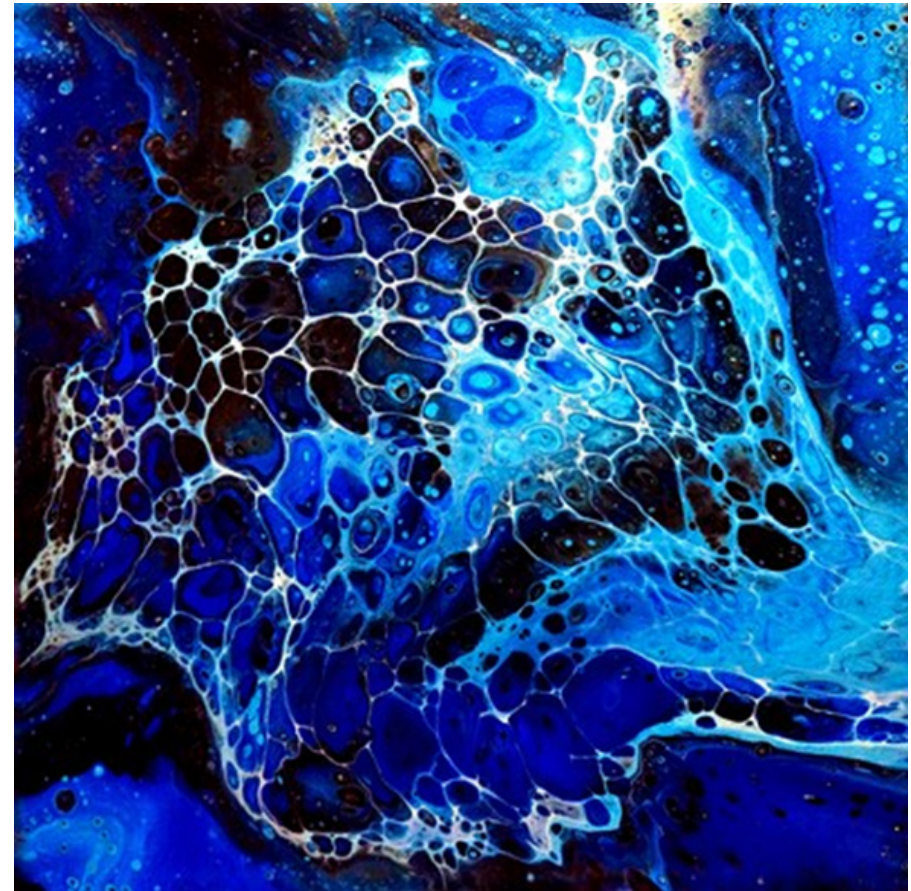
I remember when the woods beyond dad's dead-end street
turned to bone
and the maps we made of them
in inks scribbled so deep they scabbed--
Mixon Creek's landfill backwash
funneled through clay and oak roots knuckling the clay
rendered deliriously blue and serpentine—
wilted in the flames, became sky, rained
ash on our faces,
left burns no bigger than the dash
of whiskey dad stirred with honey into our tea
to cure our congestion.

We wondered what made the burns
as maps emptied from the sky—
the paths we wore through briars?
The reds that hung from carnations
like costume jewelry (the result of hasty scrawling)?
Or coyotes we never really saw
and were nothing more than hobby horses
anyway?

I never abandoned the woods,
walk gingerly still atop their unspun EKGs and birdsong
after work each day—
the paths all vanished with the maps—
and polish the cartilage and starved jaws
with ammonia and washcloth
until, lacking their crown of shade,
the whole thing gleams like paradise.

Blue Sea

Britnie Walston



Acrylic on canvas

Resting

Edward Supranowicz



Digital painting

Through Time—Who I Am

Caroline Helmstadt

I wish I knew more of my heritage, of the truth behind my genes. So much of it is shrouded in mystery. I know from my Memere that French was her first language; behind her daughter, my mother, there is also English and Hungarian. My father bears an adopted name and a biological history that is all but known. Caroline, Caroline. My name is neither French nor Hungarian. It is a small county in Maryland where the poor daughter of a trucker saw something in a serious, wide-eyed boy who was fond of cars and anything else with a motor. It is hope for a future, brighter than their own.

Caroline. The name evokes in me a sense of traditional spirit; back in a time where men moved the world and women wore long dresses that reached to the collar bone. I have defied such tradition since I was a child, befriending boys before girls, adopting their simple wardrobe style and preferring soil and trees to the stereotypical “softer” duties of the home. Growing up in a fairly traditional and conservative home, resistance to such social constructs marked me more than tradition ever could.

Being unique never scared me, but sometimes I feel I am floating along in the vast spaces of history and time with nothing behind me. Behind me is mystery and a crumbling family structure and I, the last of my line, have chosen not to procreate; to deny instinct and instead place a value on independence and enlightenment—I learned long ago to find solace in the quiet hours of the day.

But alas, there is something behind me. There is the past, there is history, and it has shaped all of us. Though I scorn traditional social constructs, there is something old in me that desires the simpler life of antiquity, one that revolves around the natural world and humans' minor role in it. Perhaps my name, then, reflects an older time but not the gendered values that go with it—of course I have given it an ironic twist with my dark jeans and the barbell through my ear.

The personal connections of my history, of my biology, are weak. Yet, I am aware that I stand at the brink of time, a precipice looking out over a future that no one can fully comprehend. Moving forward into the unknown, I know I am me, and that is all I shall be.

white rose

Michael Campagnoli

In the whiteness of her hips
I die
In the whiteness of her thighs

Soft
The undefiled fabric of her skin

Soft
The shadow of a bird's wing
Pale blue vein
Beneath her breast

And I,
Battered by her beauty
Battered

Cabalistic
The fiery dance
Of dark and light
 distended touch
Trembling
 rolling,
 whirling,

inscrutable bodies

*who comprehends
the riddle?
the arc
of co-mingled forms*

*the stillness at the center
the momentary stay
the initiation complete?*

Shroud of the Father

James Patrick Focarile

He lay there. Still.

We couldn't take our eyes off him.

We cared for him—the wife, sons and daughter. We became the adults, he the needing child. We fed, clothed and even bathed him. We marveled how disease transformed simple, everyday tasks into procedures that required great care and preparation. Foods cut fine to swallow, medicines reviewed and allocated, his body anointed by our hands. We each had different histories and relationships with him, but we united in a common purpose—Salvation.

They pulled up outside our home and hauled in a metal gurney. The wheels clanked against the wooden floor. They lifted him to it. It was our last chance to view him. Then they wrapped him in a shroud. Larger than life in life, but now he looked small and fragile—not a man, but a thing. Some-thing that gets wrapped up in a cloth and taken away. The door creaked open and closed—whisked away. Except for the faint smell of antiseptic, a new emptiness filled the room. Only an uncomfortable, numbing silence remained. Our hard work to maintain the old order was left wanting. He was gone, just a whisper of what he once was.

We never spoke of that moment, of that day. We all experienced it, but it wasn't the same for any of us.

The Shroud of the Father insulates you from the cold of death for a time, but soon its warmth fades and you are left alone in darkness with your grief.

Golden Gate Bridge haiku

Gerard Sarnat

Whistling and whirring
Sounds of ocean winds in wires
Hum, *Please-please don't jump.*

Fells Point

Britnie Walston



Black and white photograph

Acknowledgments

There are countless incredible individuals that I owe my gratitude for their work towards this journal, and I will probably forget to acknowledge a good many of them. If I have forgotten to mention you here, please know that it is not a representation of my lack of appreciation, but of my poor memory.

I would like to thank everyone who made *Cardinal Sins* possible during this difficult semester.

Thank you to J.J. Boehm and the PJPC team; everyone at the Graphics Center; SVSU's English and Arts department and the RPW department for encouraging students to join our team; the SVSU IT department for their numerous efforts in helping me with my nemesis of the past several months, the office computer; President Donald Bachand; and all of the SVSU students who have shown interest in our publication over the past few years.

Thank you to our amazing advisor, Kim Lacey, for her never-faltering kindness, hard work, and dedication to this journal. We could not have done this without you.

Thank you to our incredible contributors. I will never fail to be amazed by your talent.

And of course, thank you to our staff and committees for their hard work during these trying times. Your passion and commitment to this journal is never overlooked.

To everyone I forgot to mention, thank you.

I hope that you all enjoy the finished product that we have created for the Fall 2021 semester.

Kind regards,

Madeline Bruessow, Editor-in-Chief

Biographies

Ethan Alt is a Creative Writing Major and a Communication Minor. His favorite medium is poetry and his favorite poet is too hard of a question. He can, however, talk your ear off about all his favorite film soundtracks.

Courtney Bennett grew up along beaches in Southwest Michigan. She is a writer, artist and therapist currently working in Lansing, MI.

My name is Lia Bracco, and I am a third-year student here at Saginaw Valley studying art. I enjoy drawing, painting, and making 3D art.

Madeline Bruessow is a reporter, editor, and award-winning poet. She is currently working towards her B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Rhetoric and Professional Writing. She probably spends too much time writing and her poems appear in *Still Life*. When not working on her next piece, you can usually find her daydreaming or haunting a local coffee shop.

Michael Campagnoli has worked as a waiter, fisherman, journalist, painter, and short-order cook. His work has appeared in *New Letters*, *Nimrod*, *Rattle*, the *Southern Humanities Review*, and elsewhere. He can be seen most mornings running somewhere along the coast of Maine with his mongrel dog, Yogi, and Anthony, his equally mongrel son.

Mike Coste contributed the nonfiction piece "Cocktails with Irma."

Megan Draper is a native Michigander studying Creative Writing and Spanish at SVSU. When she's not writing or reading, she enjoys watching superhero movies and petting cats. She's an active part of the writing community and can be found at www.authormeganriann.com.

Kee Ferguson is a creative with a penchant for mischief and chaos. Self-proclaimed Angry Bean with the memory of a goldfish and curator of ideas big and small. They thank their cats for helping them get where they are today, namely, out of bed and in front of the computer.

James Patrick Focarile resides in the Pacific Northwest. He holds a B.S. from Rutgers University and a M.F.A. from Brooklyn College. His works have been produced on stage and in film. Short fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Bright Flash Literary Review* and *Pulp Modern Flash*.

Kiana Govoni is a writer in the Boston area. She is currently in her first year as a candidate in fiction for her MFA, and her work has been featured in *The Broken Plate*, *The Bridge*, and *Massachusetts's Best Emerging Poets*.

Paweł Grajner is a writer/filmmaker working in Poland and the US.

Dustin Grinnell is an essayist and fiction writer based in Boston. His writing has appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *VICE*, and *Writer's Digest*. He's the author of *The Empathy Academy*. He earned his MFA in fiction from the Solstice MFA Program, and his MS in physiology from Penn State.

Caroline Helmstadt contributed the nonfiction piece "Through Time—Who I Am."

Tara Kareta has a BA from The Culinary Institute of America in Baking which is completely unrelated to her professional life but sure was fun. In addition to a normal corporate nine to five; Tara is a yoga instructor, retired professional bikini competitor, pretend farmer and most likely a witch.

Frances Koziar has 100+ pieces of prose and poetry published in 70+ different literary magazines, and is seeking an agent for diverse NA fantasy novels and children's fairy tales (PBs). She is a young (disabled) retiree and a social justice advocate, and she lives in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Kim Lacey wonders if everybody has peanut butter in their keyboard. Oh, you don't? Yeah, me neither.

Anna Christine Leitaó is a published writer, accomplished artist, and now decent poet. She has publications for DeadTalkNews, a Horror Movie review site, and has written captions for social media companies. Anna began her writing career at the tender age of 6 when she picked up a composition notebook and never looked back. Now as a senior at Saginaw Valley State University, Anna plans to graduate and hopefully pursue a career in writing as a journalist. Anna's work comes from her perseverance, her vivid imagination, and her willingness to never give up even when life gets hard. Anna's poems come from real life situations, reflect her views on social issues, and showcase her views on mental health awareness. Overall, Anna's work is the embodiment of perseverance and the determination to turn in high-quality work.

Brian McCarty is a PhD candidate at Southern Illinois University Carbondale specializing in post-World 2 film and literature. When not studying, he enjoys hiking in the local national forest with his family and cultivating his neuroses as though they were high maintenance flowers.

Yakoub Mousli is an, as of yet, unheard Algerian voice. Teacher, writer, poet, translator, with works soon to be published. Holder of a Master's degree in Linguistics, winner of the Constantine Reads short story competition, author of "Journeyed Marks of a Vague Land"; a man with —yet— faintly sparkling eyes.

Guliz Mutlu. 1978. Turkey. Artist. Poetess. Francophone. Renée Vivien Prize. Grand Prize of Francophone Poetry (The Society of Poets and Artist of France). Jean Aicard Prize. UNESCO's World Poetry Mention Prize. PostDoc from Pompeu Fabra University, Spain.

Jaden O'Berry is a graduating senior at Saginaw Valley State University studying Theatre with a minor in English and Creative Writing. Her main inspirations are Shakespeare, Keats, and Glück with a special adoration of contemporary and slam poetry. Her work was last seen in the 2020 *Still Life* journal.

Ronald Oremland contributed the flash fiction piece "Mother's Day, 2018."

Wood Reede's work has been featured in *(macro)mic*, *Cobalt Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Quiet Lightning*, *Freshwater Literary Journal*, *Waving Hands Review*, *Penmen Review* and upcoming in *Umbrella Factory*. A graphic designer by profession, Wood is an avid cyclist and vintage clothing junkie. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and son, and Watson, their Miniature Schnauzer.

Timothy Robbins has published five volumes of poetry: *Three New Poets* (Hanging Loose Press), *Denny's Arbor Vitae* (Adelaide Books), *Carrying Bodies* (Main Street Rag Press) *Mother Wheel* (Cholla Needles Press) and *This Night I Sup in Your House* (Cyberwit.net). He lives in Wisconsin with his husband of 25 years.

Gerard Sarnat MD's authored HOMELESS CHRONICLES, Disputes, 17s, Melting Ice King. Gerry's published by *Gargoyle*, *Newark Public Library*, *Blue Minaret*, *North Meridian Review*, *Columbia, Penn*, *Harvard*, *Brown*, *Stanford*, *Main Street Rag*, *New Delta Review*, *Northampton Review*, *New Haven Institute*, *Buddhist Review*, *American Journal Poetry*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Brooklyn Review*, *LA Review*, *SF Magazine*, *NY Times*.

Submission Guidelines

All general submissions must:

- 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, .docx 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 3,750 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 3 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 to SVSU students, faculty or alumni in each of the 7 categories we publish: poetry, fiction, flash fiction, black & white photography, color photography, black & white artwork, and color artwork.

Outside SVSU artists and writers are free to submit and are eligible for publication; however, they may not receive compensation for a general submission category prize.

Lauren Sartor lives in Texas where she is a high school teacher. She got her MFA from Sarah Lawrence College and a PhD from Binghamton University. She is expecting to finish her first novel in 2023.

Mary Sesso is a retired nurse who lives in Bethesda, MD with her dog, Beau, both of whom are doing their best to age gracefully. Sesso's chapbook, "The Open Window", was published in 2019 and her latest, "Her Hair Plays With Fire", will come out in July.

While Mr. Joe Smolen's B.A. English is of the University of Washington, the publishing history of his post-grad fiction is available at joecsmolen.com. He, his wife Sherrie and the ghost of their black, standard poodle *Rico Suave* all live on the Oregon Coast in a really pretty good Frank-Lloyd-Wrightesque house they designed and built themselves.

New York based storyteller, actress, writer and musician Navida Stein writes plays, stories, poetry, adaptations for the stage and reviews theater for an online arts magazine. As a performer, she's worked Off-Broadway and regionally. Her storytelling/solo performances include both traditional tales and personal stories. She believes in being perpetually curious.

Erik Suchy is an aspiring writer/photographer from North St. Paul, Minnesota. He is currently in his final year at Metropolitan State University, where he is earning his B.A. in Creative Writing. His photography has appeared in *Haute Dish*, *Shift Journal*, *In Parentheses*, and *Cardinal Sins*.

Mercury-Marvin Sunderland (he/him) is a transgender autistic gay man with borderline personality disorder. He's from Seattle and currently attends the Evergreen State College. He's been published by University of British Columbia's *Decomp*, UC Davis' *Open Ceilings*, and UC Santa Barbara's *Spectrum*. He's @RomanGodMercury on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Edward Michael Supranowicz is the grandson of Irish and Russian/Ukrainian immigrants. He grew up on a small farm in Appalachia. He has a grad background in painting and printmaking. Some of his artwork has recently or will soon appear in *Fish Food*, *Streetlight*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Door Is a Jar*, *The Phoenix*, and other journals. Edward is also a published poet.

Britnie Walston is a Maryland based artist, who captures energy through light and vibrant colors. Growing up and living near the Chesapeake Bay, her work is inspired by nature, often depicting the absence of human presence, liberation ("set free") and freedom ("being free").

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

The SVSU-affiliated 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 cannot receive prize money for winning a category.

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

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

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