

DOOR = J R



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# Door is a Jar

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*"The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity."*

– Walt Whitman

## Move

Jessica A. Schnur

Running is hard; you will need to become a morning person because that's the only way you will have time to get in the miles; you will get used to stumbling your way around curbs, potholes and other obstacles in the dark; you will need to invest in good shoes, more than one pair; aren't good running shoes expensive? Trust me, they're worth it; you will need to learn how to do things like tempo and taper, pace and fuel; you will have to run on days when you're tired, busy, sick and hurt; hurt and injured are not the same thing, you will need to learn what the difference means for your body; you will need to run when it's too hot, too cold, too rainy and too snowy outside; your neighbors will think you are crazy; you will need to make time to stretch and strength train, especially your core; you will have blisters; black toenails; missing toenails; your skin will chafe in places you didn't know it could; wait, what? on some days you will sacrifice sleep and comfort; on others you will sacrifice fun to fulfill the need to sleep more; you will have to eat well; you will wonder if you are crazy; you will spend months training for a race and on that day it will be too hot, too cold, too rainy or too snowy; your legs, stomach, back, feet or some other body part will betray you; you will fail to meet your race goal and vow to never do this again; you will promptly sign up for another race fully aware that the same thing very well may happen again; your friends and family will think you are crazy; this all sounds terrible, why would I want to do any of this? because after a few months it will become second nature; on the days you don't run, you will feel like you forgot to do something important, your day will feel a little more stressed, your temper shorter; you will miss the soothing effect running has on the little irritants; then there are the big things; you will learn the healing power running possesses; your life will fall apart one day; those you love will suffer; you will lose them; relationships will crumble; jobs will be lost; you won't think you can get out of bed; the first steps you take towards your new normal can be literal; your daily run will become your path back; it will be your outlet to vent your anger and frustration, to clear your mind, your sanctuary. The place where you are at peace.



# Chicken

Bernise Carolino

Like in every other crucial moment of our brief lives together,  
you sure know how to make today memorable.

Anniversary at the boy bar,  
honeymoon under my sister's bed,  
and now: it's not you, it's me  
at the nearest KFC.

You order chicken like you're trying to prove something.  
Like your veganism was a passing fad.

Look, you're lovely. But you're not the one for me.  
Fork piercing through the slaughtered fowl.

Look, I met someone. A girl. Lovely, inside and out.  
Flaying the skin, setting it aside in a crumpled heap.

Look, I couldn't help myself. She's lovelier than you.  
Attacking the white fibers, tearing them off one by one.

Look, you say again, and jab at the breast:  
underneath the white, the inside is red.

Wait, I say, as you walk to the garbage.  
You can't just throw it away.  
Chicken is expensive these days.  
You worked hard for that, didn't you?  
Just speak to the manager. Have it cooked again.  
Don't waste a perfectly good piece of meat.

Your gaze is steady, down on me,  
as you scrape off your food,  
untouched and uneaten,  
into the trash.

You say, It wasn't raw. It was rotten.  
I don't feel like chicken, not anymore.



## Filter

Courtney LeBlanc

He'd been dying for years  
when they finally pulled  
the scalpel across the pale  
of his body. Unzipped  
his skin and stuck their gloves  
inside, the heat steaming up  
as they pushed aside organs,  
finally shaking hands  
with his kidneys before  
clipping them clean.  
The new kidney sat  
in a stainless steel tray,  
cooling in an ice bath,  
red-purple with blood  
it glowed in contrast  
to the gray, cyst-filled organs  
they gingerly lifted out.  
In the waiting room  
four healthy, grown children  
and his wife wait,  
their blood pumping fiercely,  
their kidneys filtering  
their fear and shame.



## **Siamese Sister**

Courtney LeBlanc

We came from the same  
body,  
breathed the same  
air,  
had the same  
blood pulse through our veins.  
We grew up attached  
at the hip,  
knee-deep in imagination,  
in the pond where we hunted  
frogs or in the barn  
where the kittens were born.  
We played house  
in the best  
climbing trees and pulled  
our dad's old t-shirts onto our 80-pound dog.  
We spoke in our sister-tongue,  
scampered through  
field and forest,  
held fierce our belief  
we were conjoined for life.  
We jumped hay bales under the summer sun,  
shared secrets,  
held hands in the darkness  
and ran up the stairs two at a time  
for fear of what lurked in the basement.  
We covered each other's tracks,  
whispered late into the night  
and crept into one another's dreams,  
hopscotched our way past curfew  
and kissed the boys behind our parents' backs.  
Now with states between us  
the twine is stretched but never frayed,  
never broken.  
Our hearts still yelling like wild banshees,  
our hands still reaching  
for the other in the dark.



## **Meditation (After TU FU)**

George Freek

When I was young,  
I knew where I was going.  
But when I got there,  
It wasn't where  
I expected to be.  
I've now grown old,  
learning every day  
how little I know.  
As stars drift by,  
through a sky  
more endless than the sea,  
I care as little about them,  
as they care about me.



## **On My Seventieth Birthday (After LU YU)**

George Freek

I've watched ten thousand  
nights come and go.  
I no longer get out of bed.  
I drink wine as the sky  
weaves around me its shroud  
of invisible thread.  
The moon is an orange stain  
that clouds my eyes.  
Shadows like snakes  
crawl through my brain.  
I know almost nothing.  
But I know that soon  
I will be gone.  
That much is plain.





Emma Zurer, **Gouache on Collage paper**



Emma Zurer, **Gouache on Collage paper**



Emma Zurer, **Gouache on Collage paper**

## Saying Bye to You Both

Cady McClellan

My heart beats faster with rage, my organs are working overtime due to frustration and my body shakes with fury. He stands on the opposite side of the garage and stares me in the eyes. With a wrench in hand, he holds it above his head as if he is going to throw it right at me. I yell at him to do it—to get it over with and hit me already. I can see the entirety of his body shaking and I know he is angry, but I also know he is high. I hate seeing him like this, but it was something I had gotten very used to.

Part of me wonders if he will actually throw the solid piece of metal at me. I kind of hope he does so I can have some type of physical pain to override this unwanted emotional pain he has caused me. He used to be a gentle big brother, but now I'm not sure who he is and I'm entirely unsure of his capabilities of violence. I imagine the amount of physical pain he could inflict upon me would be somewhat equivalent to his emotional influence.

His anger-filled eyes, almost unrecognizable, pierce into me. He stands there not releasing the wrench. I yell at him and tell him he is lying. His response is the usual denial. I try to be civil and even a little open-minded when I ask him who else, besides him, could have stolen our dad's T.V. when it was only him at home. To this he had no answer.

At this point in my brother's addiction, he had stolen just about every valuable item in my parents' house and pawned it for drug money. His normal routine after such activities would be lying about the situation. I knew he had stolen my dad's T.V., and more importantly, I knew he would never tell me the truth. I have been dealing with his bullshit for almost two years and I'm over it.

"Are you fucking kidding me Sean? OUR DAD IS IN THE HOSPITAL!" I am angry and he knows it.

"I didn't steal anything!" He yells back at me, hoping his words will erase his actions.

I have never been able to understand how Sean was able to steal from my parents and me and not even feel a bit of remorse, but the fact that he was able to steal from our dad, while he's in the hospital being treated for a heart attack, makes me incredibly sad. I thought I had seen him at his worst many times before this, but now I realize how tightly Mrs. Addiction is holding him by his throat. She wants him just as badly as he needs and desires *her*.

Dealing with Sean has taught me not to care about anything of material worth. This way, when something goes missing, it's easier to not be upset. His stealing has become so severe that there are only a few items that are still considered valuable in the house. I don't think I would be as pissed at him if he had taken something of mine instead of stealing from our helpless father. I have a shield around my heart that I built in order to deal with the emotional aspect of my brother's addiction; my dad,

however, has a very fragile and sick heart that I cannot imagine is able to withhold any further pain.

As Sean now stands before me, I feel as if I no longer know him; as if the brother I once had is no longer in existence. He is a stranger to me. I am fed-up with his new lie and I can see his normal routine coming in to play. I have been dealing with this for way too long and I am exhausted. It's difficult seeing my brother struggle with this battle, but at the same time I feel as if I have done everything I can to help him without enabling his habits more. My parents have even offered him endless opportunities for help, but it is now beyond obvious that he is not ready to change.

My brother has already been to an in-state behavioral health center that helped him detox (for only five days) and then sent him home and offered him therapy sessions to help transition in to sober living. He has actually been here a few times, but each time after leaving he relapses within a couple of weeks. Unfortunately, my parent's insurance will not cover more extensive treatment, so until my brother makes the decision that he is ready to clean up his life there is really nothing I or anyone else can do for him. With this realization comes my new perspective on the situation. I decide that I no longer have to deal with my brother's ugly habit and that he will not be a part of my life until he figures out his own.

This decision to part ways with Sean and Mrs. Addiction seems easy in my current moment of rage, but I know that in the reality of the situation it is going to be a difficult transition. Even though he has let addiction hinder all of his moral values, at the end of the day he is still my big brother and I can't help but constantly worry about him. I hope that in taking myself out of his drug-induced state of living I will be able to focus on something other than his sickness and maybe, someday, he will be ready for positive change.



## Strategy

Genelle Chaconas

Every game, including this one, has a logical system to it, a natural order to its chaos, a no-failure equation to follow if you know the right moves, a way to hack your chances and succeed.

A customer told me as he strategized and worried over the dingy Plexiglas counter, considering the newest scratch ticket. He's a regular on a nightly routine: the liquor store, then here.

Tonight I can't lose, he tells me. I've got the perfect combination, you see, it's a system based on logic, chance, mysticism. It's a science, c'mon, you think I can't do it? I believe you, I answer.

He's determined, tries odd or even tickets on both sides, twenty-dollar tickets, one-dollar tickets, he asks the time to calculate the choice. Once, he asks me to kiss the ticket for luck, and I do it;

There's a part of me that wants to believe, that wants to see this loyal frustration pay off; it's too much effort watching him. I want to believe in his system of rigged odds, the path of events skillfully manipulated. Most times, he stands there, cursing, ripping up cardboard, inconsolable.

He doesn't win the big prize, the amount listed as the jackpot, or even half of what he's spent. I fear he'll go home with empty pockets each time, but he often wins the price of a new ticket.

Now I know what to do; now I've got this system down. Every game, including this one, has a way to beat it, he insists with a smile. You've got to lose a lot to learn the system, but it pays off in the end. Yes, I say, reaching below the counter for a fresh stack of his choice, I believe you.



## **Waitress**

Joan Mcnerney

Sally thought everything was  
up to luck and she had zero.  
Her chances got swept  
away with yesterday's trash.

Every day working in this  
dumpy diner slinging hash.

There were the regulars  
who knew her name and  
left good tips. They had  
no place else to go.

Her feet swelled up at  
the end of lunch rush.

Sally wiped tables, filling  
ketchup bottles, salt shakers,  
sugar jars while staring out the  
window at pulsing rain.

Waiting a half hour for the bus,  
winds tangling her hair.

She stopped at the market to  
bring a few groceries home.  
Struggling now to open her door,  
only cold rooms would greet her.



## **Whatever You Make Of It**

Kevin Pittack

Please, reach over to the nightstand  
And hand me those sleeping pills.  
They're nothing more than an innocent crutch,  
I still have power of will.  
I only feel that they will help,  
It's not like I need the damned things,  
But it's just easier to close my chaotic eyes  
When they go down and begin working.

I want them, but I don't need them,  
They just give me what I want.  
I swear, it's an innocent crutch,  
They just give me what I want.

I don't say anything about what it is that you do,  
I did once and you looked at me like I stuttered,  
Maybe we should just stop judging,  
Maybe we should fix each other.



## **Moonbeams**

Kevin Pittack

The winter moonbeams splinter through the window frost  
With shafts of light a glacier blue.  
They play upon her lovely face and illuminate  
Her gentle, ethereal perfection.  
Her soft breasts press against me  
With each whispered breath,  
And the pacific moonlight exposes a previously concealed  
Beauty about her dark tresses.  
The corners of her mouth are turned up,  
If ever so slightly,  
And she slumbers peacefully.

Yet, despite the serenity splashed across the surface,  
And the grip with which she clings to me notwithstanding,  
My love's eyes are impenetrable.  
Her windows offer neither daylight,  
Nor icy moonlight, and  
I remain in the dark.  
What lies before my tired eyes,  
And behind her own,  
Shall forever be unknown.

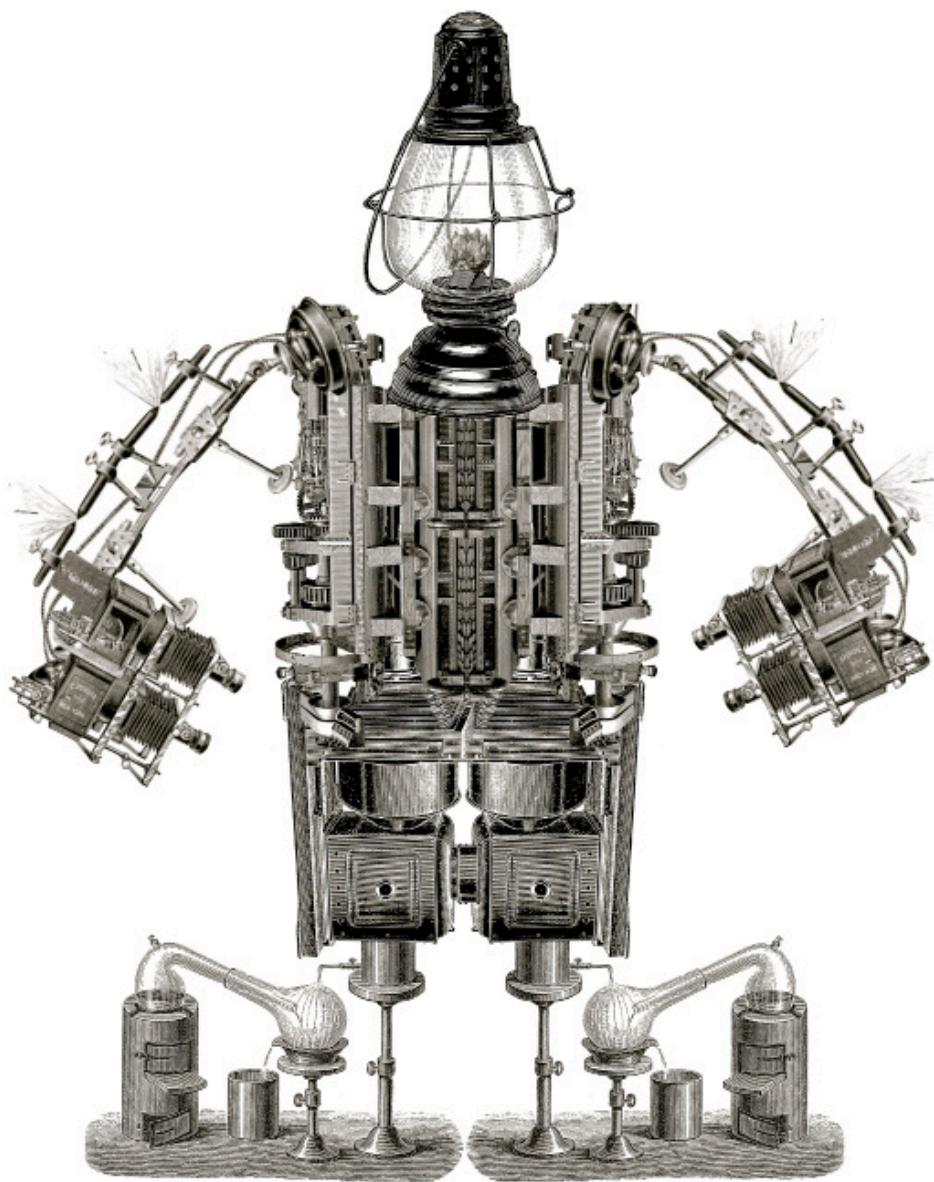




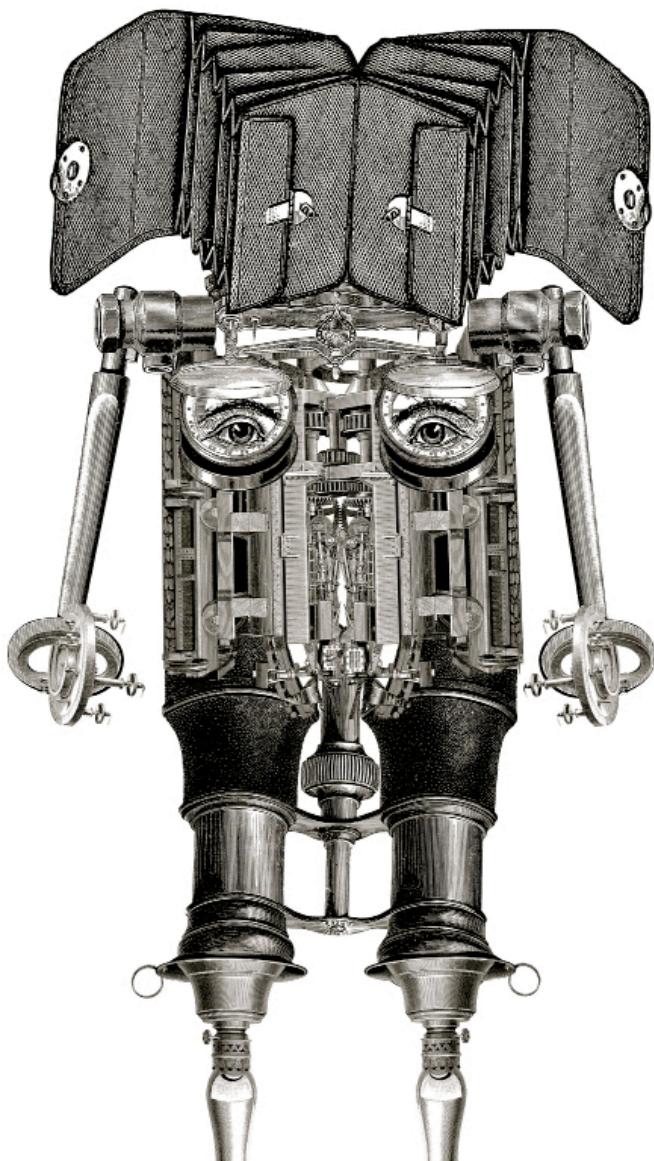
Bill Wolak, **Mixed Media**



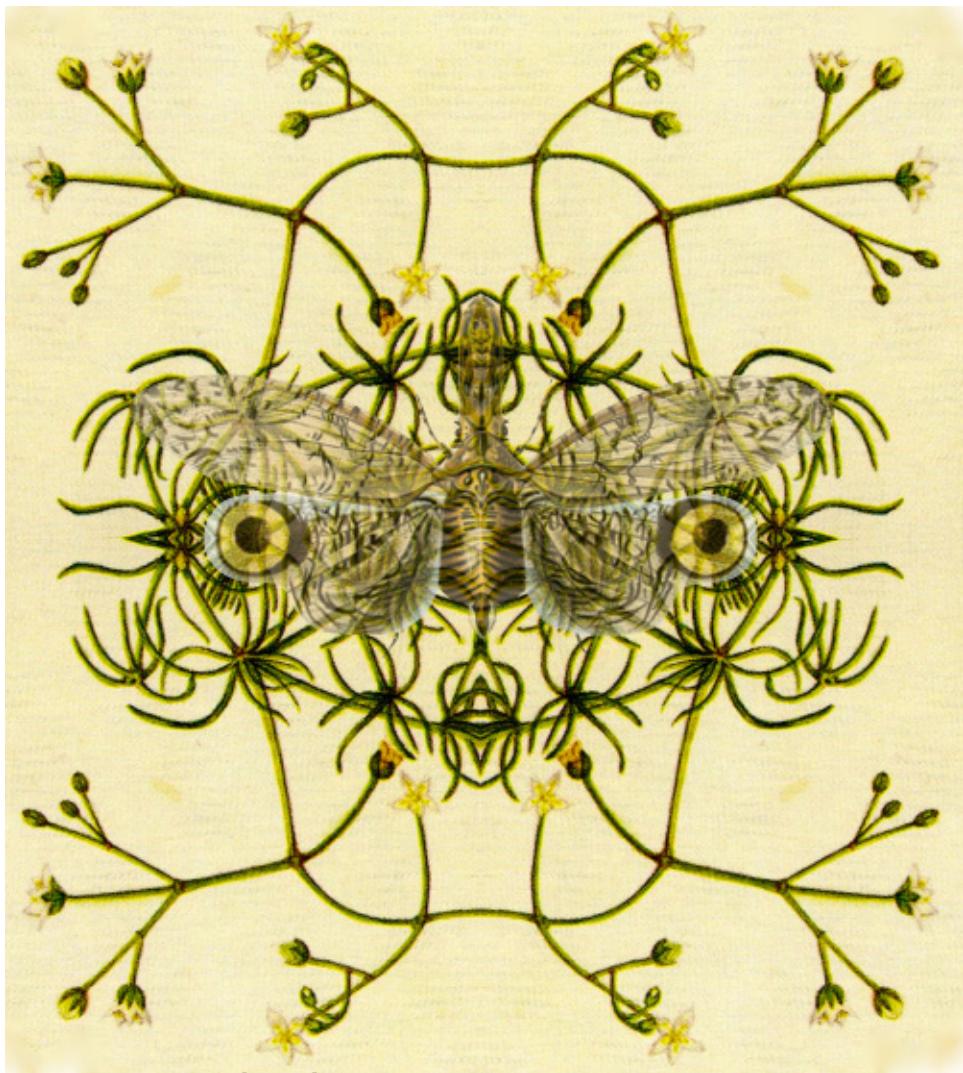
Bill Wolak, **Mixed Media**



Bill Wolak, **Mixed Media**



Bill Wolak, **Mixed Media**



Bill Wolak, **Mixed Media**

## **Amoebas**

William Fowkes

Setting:

Earth.

Characters:

Amoeba #1

Amoeba #2

It's a beautiful day. Blue sky. Amoeba #2 is sunbathing.  
Amoeba #1 slithers in.

AMOEBA #1

We are in big trouble!

AMOEBA #2

You're being paranoid again.

AMOEBA #1

No, I mean it—we are in really BIG trouble!

AMOEBA #2

Chillax! ... Here—come lie next to me and enjoy the sun.

AMOEBA #1

But that's just it—I don't think I can lie next to you anymore!  
Something strange is happening. I'm having feelings I don't  
understand. ... I think I want to merge with you!

AMOEBA #2

Ooo, gross!

AMOEBA #1

I'm sorry. I can't help myself!

(Amoeba #1 tries to merge with Amoeba #2)

AMOEBA #2

Stop that! Get away from me! ... Or maybe...? ... Wait! What's  
happening to ME? ... What's this strange feeling? ... I think I want  
to merge with you, too!...Yes! Oh, yes! Merge with me! Please  
merge with me!

(Amoeba #1 pulls back)

AMOEBA #1

No...wait... Stop! ... I've changed my mind. I'm going to fight this thing.

AMOEBA #2

Are you sure? I have a feeling a merger could be really awesome.

AMOEBA #1

Yes, I'm sure.

AMOEBA #2

Fine. Whatever. ... Well, you're not the only one around here, you know. ...

(calling offstage)

Hey there, stranger! You over there! Wanna merge?  
(Amoeba #2 slithers off stage.)

AMOEBA #1

Hey, don't do that! ... Merge with ME!

AMOEBA #2

(from offstage)

Sorry—too late!

**END OF PLAY**



## Bravery

Meghan McNamara

The ride whirls round and round, gaining speed as it spins. Ana's skin feels like jelly, like it's melting off her bones, fusing with the walls of the Gravitron as it spins, *faster, faster*. The music blares and the outside world feels far away, gravity pressing her body flat against the pleather panel. A confetti of disco lights dance across the faces of the other riders. Around her, the panels on the wall begin to move, one sliding up, up as another slips down. The stronger kids flip upside down. There's no fear of falling, not while they spin.

She feels a *click*. Her panel begins to move. Her head is no longer flush with it. She feels a sharp blast as her skull connects with something hard. She cries out, but even she can't hear her own voice above the roar of the music. A dull ache spreads out across the back of her head. It feels liquid warm, but she cannot move her arms, cannot reach to touch the spot on her scalp. Ana squeezes her eyes shut, suppressing tears, and counts the seconds until the spinning ceases.

Outside, in the bright afternoon sun, the shadow of the Ferris wheel cuts patterns in the flattened grass.

"Is it bad?" she asks her best friend.

"Oh. My. God." Heidi's voice is a mixture of disgust and excitement.  
"There's blood!"

"A lot?"

Heidi looks mildly disappointed. "No. Only a little."

Heidi's mother, Mrs. Thurgau insists they go to the sheriff's tent. Officer Donnell wears a ranger hat with a wide brim and a big red mustache that curls up at the edges. He does not look like a real police officer, more like Yosemite Sam.

"Looks like you got yourself real good," he says. She can feel his rubber-gloved fingers spreading the hair on the back of her head.

She sits on a plastic folding chair as the Sheriff douses a cotton ball with rubbing alcohol. The scent burns her nostrils. She can almost taste it, metallic and bitter, in the back of her throat. She grips the edges of the plastic seat, holding her breath as Officer Donnell applies the cotton ball directly to her scalp. It stings all the way down to her belly button; her ears feel like fire.

Afterwards, Mrs. Thurgau takes them for ice cream. Ana orders her favorite: Blue Bubblegum. She spits out the gumballs one by one into a paper cup. When she gets home, she will tell her mother about the Gravitron; how impressed she will be.

Heidi's mother pulls into her driveway as the sun dips below the trees. It's early evening, but her father's white company sedan is already there. Her throat tightens, the massive gumball stale and tasteless on her tongue.

"Shouldn't I come in and talk with your mother?" Mrs. Thurgau asks.

"No. It's ok."

Mrs. Thurgau's face pinches like a prune.

"Really, I'm fine." She presses the gumball into her cheek, forcing a smile.

"Alright then, have her call me."

Ana promises she will and is out of the car before Heidi's mother can beckon her back.

She hears her father's voice in the living room as she slips through the garage door into the kitchen.

"And for what?" he bellows.

These three short words will echo in her mind a long time after he is gone. Later, they will be the only way she can recall the sound of his voice.

She catches the door, careful not to let it slam.

Her father whooshes out his breath. "You think we live in *this* house for free? You think the bills just pay themselves?"

"Greg, *really*." Her mother hesitates. "I'm worried about you," she finally says.

Ana tiptoes past the kitchen, down the hall. She is standing at the door to her bedroom when she hears the first crash: the crack of glass against the living room wall, a clattering noise that rains down on the hard wood.

"Worry!" her father roars. "All you do is worry!"

She slips into the dark haven of her bedroom. Gently, she slides the closet door along its track, pushing the clothes to one side. She tugs pillows from the bed and arranges them around her in a protective barrier. With blind fingers, she clicks on her flashlight and opens her book. The paper is worn and wrinkled; it's one of her favorites: *The Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. She imagines she is the main character, Claudia. She imagines she has run away.

Later, when the sky has turned opaque and dinnertime feels forgotten, the door slams and he is gone.

Her mother's sobs echo in the hall, muffled, uncontained.

Ana retrieves the first aid kit from below the bathroom sink, tugging her mother up from the bathroom floor.

"Sit," she says.

She soaks a cotton ball with rubbing alcohol, just as she watched Sheriff Donnell do that afternoon. She pats the split skin above her mother's right eye, blowing gently on the crimson slice of half moon.

"My brave girl," her mother says as she squeezes the sides of the toilet, issuing a ragged breath when Ana applies the Band-Aid.

After, they share a meal of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, a single can of root beer.

She chews her mother's words.

Swallows them.

Feels them slide down the back of her throat, sharp at their limits.

She keeps them deep within her.



## Skip A Life

Meghan McNamara

A crowd gathers in the cemetery at dusk: Tim's family, a handful of kids from school, our English teacher Ms. Whicker. Tim's father, Mr. Baker, hunches at the front of the small crowd, his chin tucked into his chest. I can just barely make out his face in the shallow light, yellow like the yolk of a hard-boiled egg.

The burial is short, and not the least bit sweet. Mr. Baker lowers the urn into the ground. The shallow cut of earth, roughly three feet deep and just bigger than a cinder block, seems better suited to an infant than the six-foot tall man that Tim was becoming. The priest closes the ceremony with a prayer, and I send up my own silent invocation that wherever Tim is now, he cannot see us.

After the service, Ms. Whicker catches my arm.

"Oh, Margaret," she says. "How are you holding up?" Her eyes dart left to right, searching mine. But I don't have the answers. "I just can't imagine..." She begins to cry, falling into me. For several minutes I cradle my English teacher like a child, my shoulder catching her tears, until the fabric of my sweater is damp and I can feel them on my skin.

"I have to go," I finally say.

She is thinking what we all are. Was it somewhere in his stories? The ones she so enjoyed. The ones she encouraged him to get published.

Maybe.

Luke knocks on the living room slider later that night. The hollow *dink* reminds me of summer, when we used to sneak out and drive around. We didn't do much, except smoke weed and listen to music.

Tim loved to drive.

I would recline the passenger seat, Luke stretched out across the back, as Tim guided Luke's Impala along the swaying country roads. Some nights we would drive straight through the night, the sun pushing up on the horizon and the tractors just rumbling to life as Tim pulled back into the drive.

The Impala growls across the street, just out of earshot of my father's bedroom. I slide into the passenger seat, lean into the worn leather, and close my eyes—pretend it's just one of our drives. Music cracks through the busted speakers.

*Skip a life completely. Stuff it in a cup.*

It only takes Luke a minute to snap through the chain on the cemetery gate. We wind up the snake of black asphalt between the graves, a dark sea of grass and stone flanking us on either side. Though he refused to attend the funeral, Luke knows just where to go. Tim is buried next to his mother.

Luke slides the car out of gear and applies the emergency brake, killing the engine. He's up and out of the Impala before I've even unhooked my belt. The sureness of his movements suggests intention. I find him rummaging through the trunk, a shovel propped against the bumper. He reels back, handing me a flashlight.

"Hold it up high," he instructs.

I shine the light on the fresh mound of packed earth as Luke forces the spade into it with the heel of his boot. The dirt, still unset, loosens easily. It's only a minute

before we hear the muted clink of the shovel's hard edge against the urn's bronze surface. I prop the flashlight against Mrs. Baker's headstone and we drop to our knees, working in silent synchronicity, our bodies swaying back and forth in a seesaw motion as we clear bits of rock and mud with our bare hands.

Luke lifts the urn out easily and I shovel the loose earth back into the empty hollow. We smooth it out by hand, trying to make it look as it did before we found it. Though it's near freezing, sweat lines my temples as I drop into the passenger seat. Luke passes me the urn and I feel the weight of it bite the top of my thighs through my jeans.

*It was good what we did yesterday. And I'd do it once again.*

When we have driven several miles clear of the cemetery, Luke pulls off the road. He takes a Phillips-head from his pocket and motions for me to hand him the urn, turning it belly-up. He pops the screws out one by one, removing the plate that seals its contents. In the pale shaft of moonlight I see Tim's ashes, white as ivory against the dark bronze.

Linger on, your pale blue eyes.

Luke rolls down the windows and pulls back onto the road. In the distance, a herd of cattle huddle in the dark.

We are flying now, the frigid air drowning all other sound. No static, no music, no thoughts. We soar down a straightaway, the kind that could last a lifetime in your dreams. Luke plunges his left hand into the gut of the urn, his right hand on the wheel, and draws out a fistful of ash, casting it out the open window. I turn and watch it go, dissolving in the soot-black night.

It's my turn. The ashes are cool, like beach sand at night, and there are hard bits too, small fragments of bone. Something inside me shakes loose, disconnects, as I fling Tim's ashes into the wind. The wind whips my face, stinging my eyes. Small rivers stream down my cheeks. We hurl bit-by-bit, handful after handful, until there's nothing left.

The first blush of dawn blooms in the distance, and we could be anywhere.

"I didn't know," I yell over the crush of wind.

Luke rolls up his window and lights a cigarette. I watch his chest expand and contract.

"No," he says. "You couldn't."





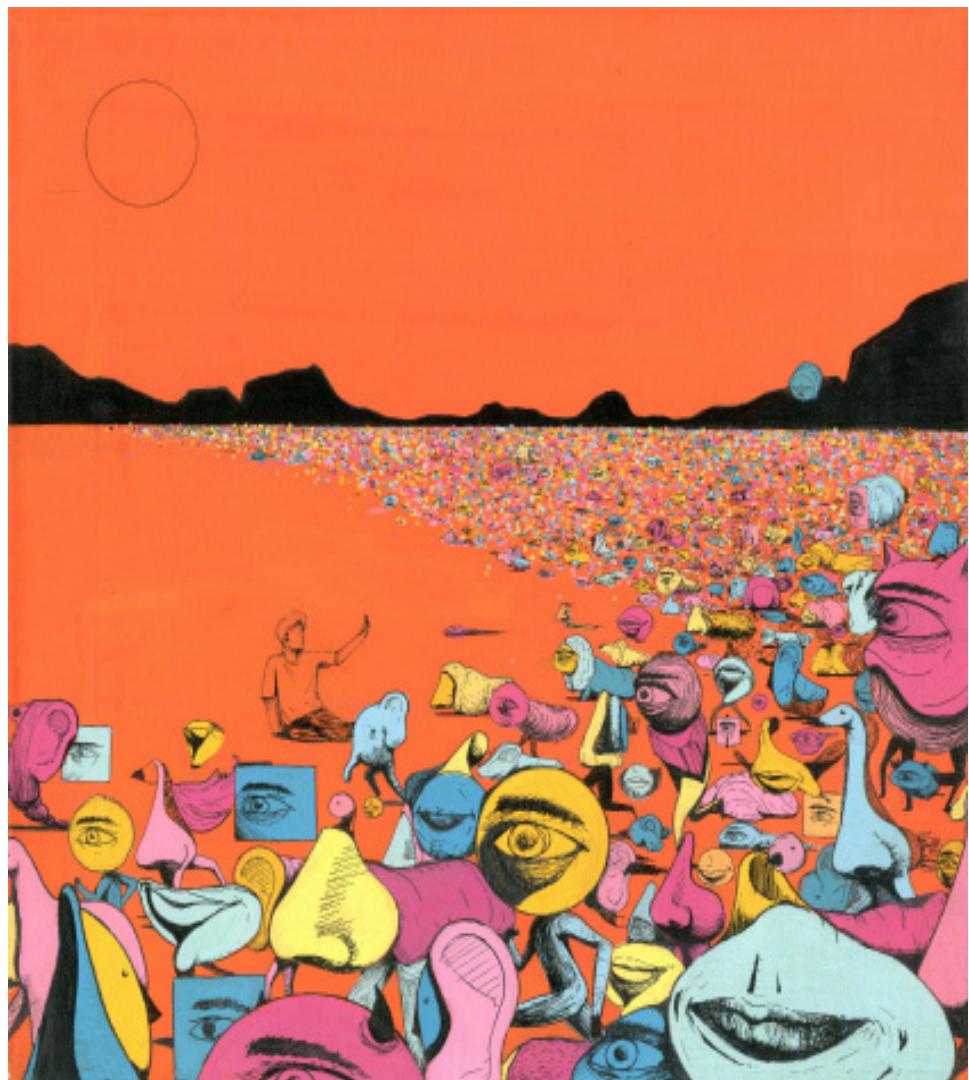
Ege Al Bege, **Oil on Canvas**



Ege Al Bege, **Oil on Canvas**



Ege Al Bege, **Oil on Canvas**



Ege Al Bege, **Mixed Media**

## **Moving Day**

Aanya Sheikh-Taheri

Now that the halls are alone and the boxes full,  
it's clear how bruised and worn it all really is.  
Empty bedrooms, somehow bigger, like swollen tongues,  
heavy and numb with the weight of memory;  
Turning the key to lock the door once more,  
I say *it is over* out loud;  
each syllable rips through throat  
as darkness settles on top of the stale air  
like a coffin  
being closed.



## **Mama Always Said That Means He Loves You**

Aanya Sheikh-Taheri

We stroll side-by-side down the sidewalk  
as cars hum by when  
he switches sides  
to be on my right  
walking closest to traffic—  
his body, a fence, encircling.

The minute he moves,  
I know.

Our arms now dangle at our sides like wet hair where  
coy fingers feverishly find one another,  
 fleeting—  
like brushstrokes,  
like butterflies,  
like shooting stars—  
until music reverberates  
between these hands  
and I hear our extremities  
becoming piano keys.



## **Our Father**

Louise Kantro

He was always between jobs.  
Our job: to cover for him,  
Mother's: to be the provider  
without letting it show  
that she was wearing down  
after long hours on her feet  
and more, later, to do at home –  
cooking, mending, load after load  
of children's clothes, sheets, towels  
to wash, iron, hang, fold, put away.  
We children had only good to say  
about the father who had no time for us.  
Mother, steering the vessel,  
tended to our coughs and later  
broken hearts with a tenderness  
she should have had no energy for.  
Even when she divorced him  
after thirty-seven years  
and he disappeared entirely,  
she spoke of him in a  
kind but distant way  
never asking for us to side with her.

Now when I think of him,  
what we wanted and never got,  
I picture her face at day's end,  
lined, lipstick worn off,  
finally relaxing as she  
listened to a Patsy Cline record,  
bare feet on the coffee table,  
smoking a leisurely cigarette.

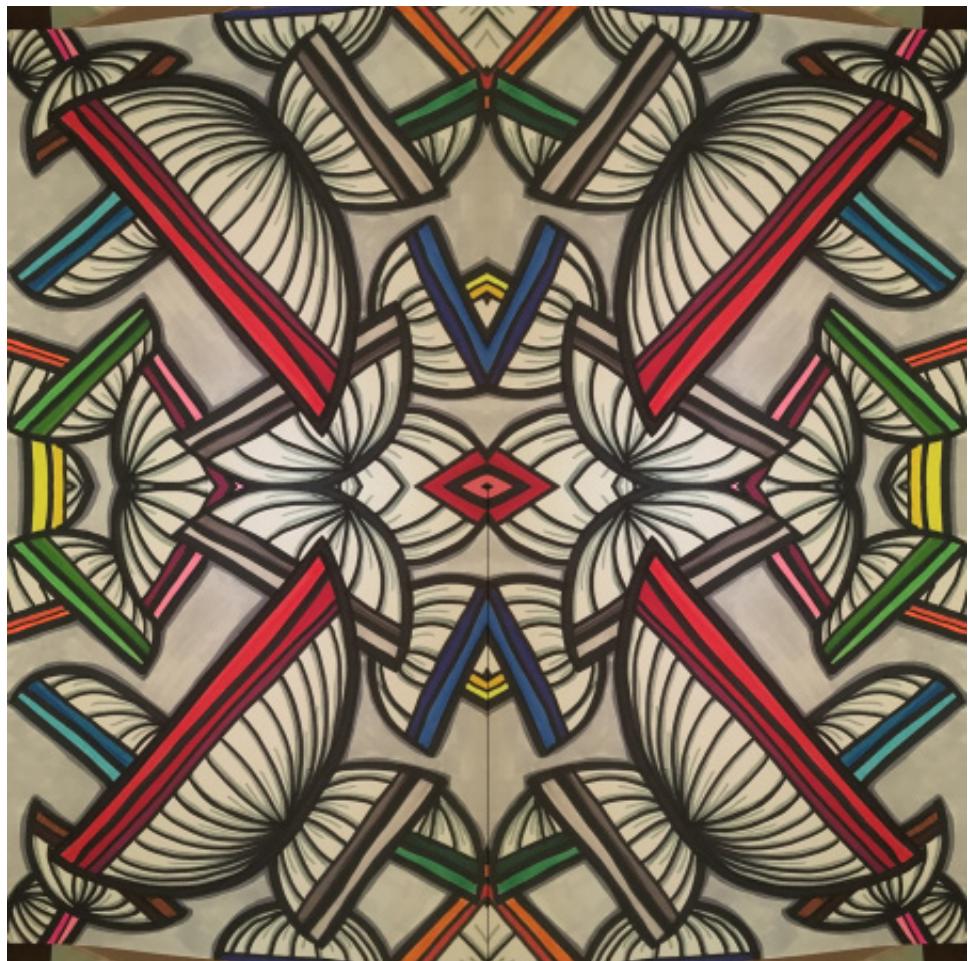


## **Shivers Calm**

Diane Webster

Reflected in the puddle  
another sparrow  
until they both step in  
and ripple a blur  
of bird-bath splashing  
until the final shake  
shivers into calm  
evaporation.

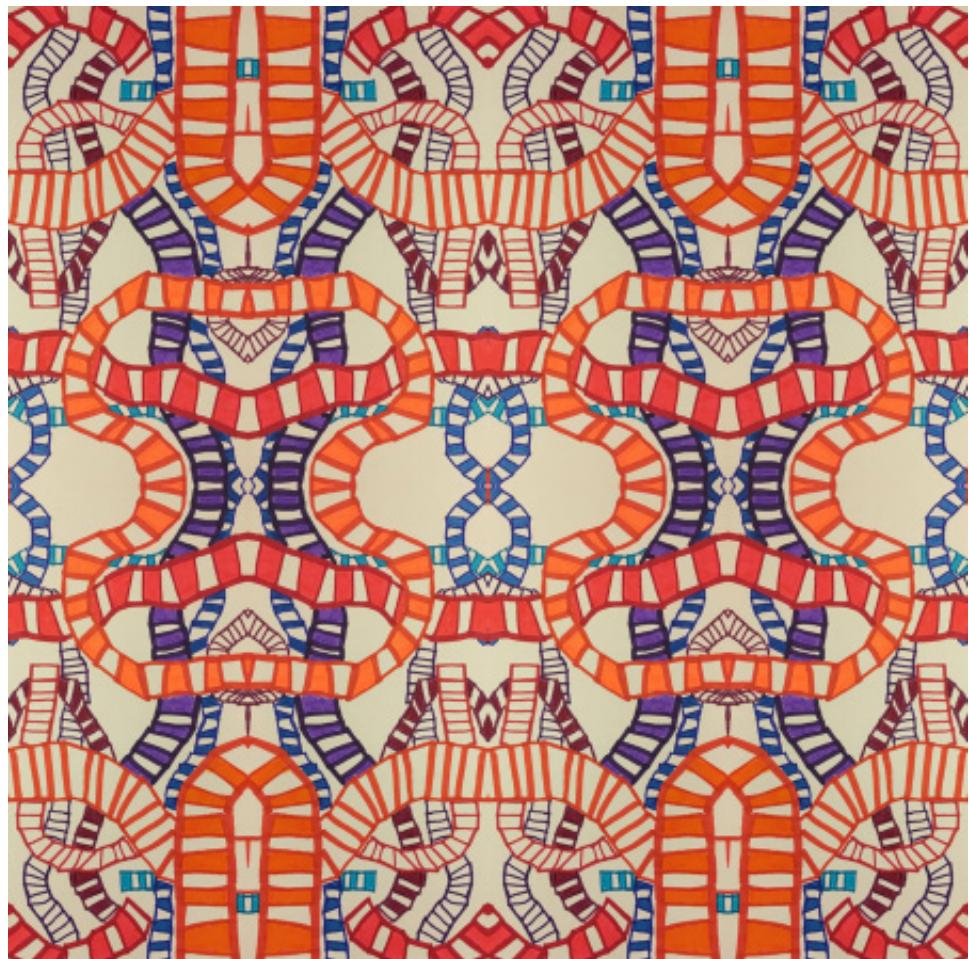




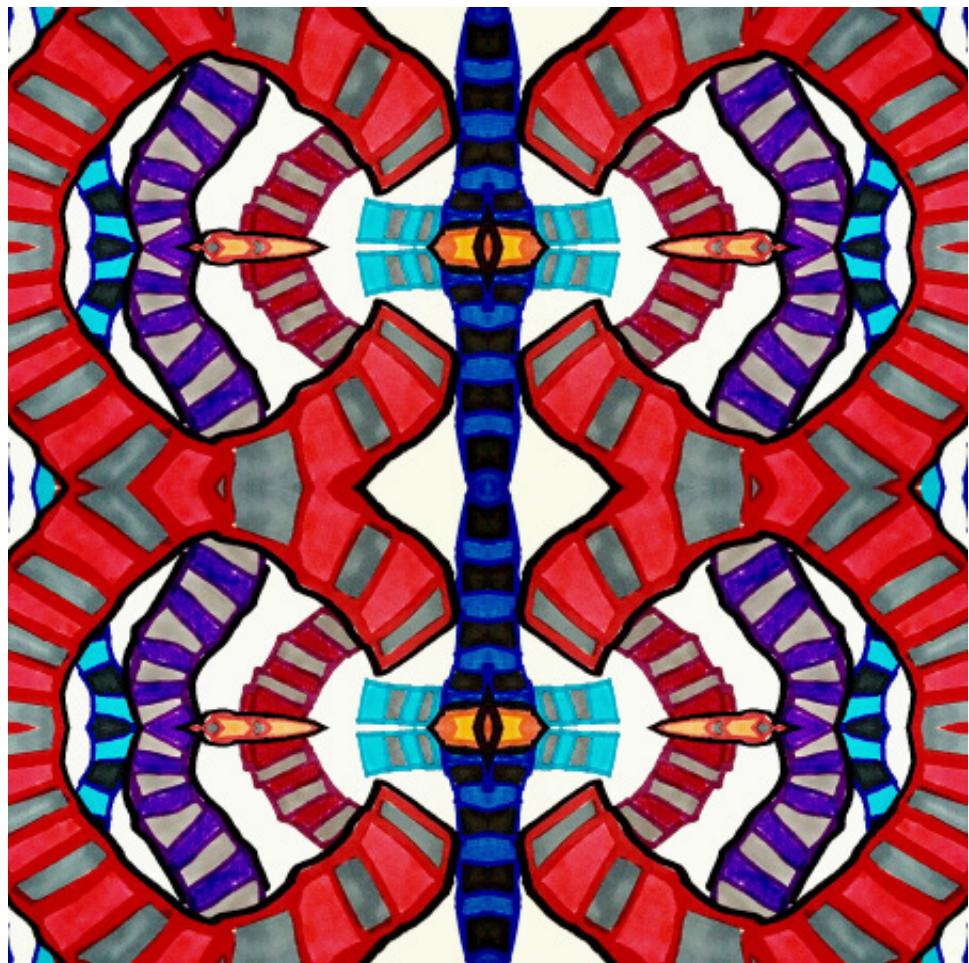
Gilmore Tamny, **Mixed Media**



Gilmore Tamny, **Mixed Media**



Gilmore Tamny, **Mixed Media**



Gilmore Tamny, **Mixed Media**



Gilmore Tamny, **Mixed Media**

## **Sunday Dress**

Diane Webster

The little girl clutches  
her white gossamer dress  
in both hands  
and spreads it outward  
as far as she can reach  
like making snow angels,  
three-dimensional snow angels  
twirling right before my eyes.



## **Days of Summer**

Diane Webster

The cat lies under  
the dangling toy,  
swats it once  
and yawns.



## **Tales from a Single Wide**

Hannah Carmack

The cockroaches crawling in our tuna can home sound like marbles spilling from Tupperware.

In the kitchen, last night's pizza is on the counter and liquid cheese is scorched on the electric burners. That shelf-stable, government funded cheese never let us down.

The bookshelf we kept King novels in, is now a water damaged spice rack, home to your zip-tied brown sugar and ant traps.

Behind the pleather couch our dog tore up, there is a hole the size of a Ping-Pong ball, letting disease in.

The crowning achievement in our chapel of white trash is the 1940's ambulance rusting into the front lawn.

Not to be confused with the authentic 1960's public transit bus we refurnished into a woodshop.

Filling a bus with garbage and calling it a woodshop is as effective as shoving a family into a tin can and calling it a home.



## **The Bearer**

DC Cathro

### Characters:

Father

Son

Dad, elderly, and son, adult, talking. Reminiscing.

SON

I cried when Jim Henson died. And Lucille Ball.

DAD

Your mother had to console her sister when she heard about Elvis. Your mom didn't really care, but...

SON

It's crazy, right? How attached you get to people you don't know and never met.

DAD

Marilyn Monroe.

SON

Amy Winehouse.

DAD

Who?

SON

She's a singer. Never mind.

DAD

The Rat Pack, one by one...

SON

I was bummed when Robert Reed died. It was the first time I ever realized that I could lose you. He was, like, a second dad growing up.

(Pause)

DAD

When you were little, about four or so, your mom and I were folding laundry, and you came upstairs, walked to the middle of the room and said "Kennedy was shot." Just like that. And just went back downstairs.

(Pause)

Your mom was inconsolable. Hearing those words from your mouth...

SON

I... I don't remember that.

DAD

It was... It threw us for a loop, you know. Our little man, and hearing that news. You...

(Pause)

Your mom had a hard time looking at you for a while. She was... It was rough. For everybody. I had to feed you, hold you, tuck you in. She... I guess it took some time for her to separate you from that news.

SON

I don't remember that at all.

DAD

Good.

(Pause)

You shouldn't.

**END OF PLAY**



## As The Tide Came In

Kristin Roedell

You went out.  
You put on your slicker  
your sou'wester hat  
and slammed  
the screen door.

I heard crisp seaweed  
underfoot, I smelled salt  
in your wake,  
and knew you'd set  
your soul adrift.

I think now I saw it coming.  
The wind brought in  
a smell of brine and loss.  
My arms and legs slipped  
like scales  
away from you  
at night.

It was the last of us,  
the last smooth curving slide  
of a whale's back  
surfacing briefly before  
returning to the deep.



## Dare

Toti O'Brien

Close your eyes. Jump.

You've been sitting there for more than half hour. Down the ladder they are blocking your way, just for fun. They are sitting as well, beer in hand, biding their time. They would let you by if you—let's say—had a fit, started crying, said you needed the bathroom. They would fight you... they'd tickle you, then they'd let you go. They would tease you around dinner—for the entire vacation, forever. Could you stand it? Not sure. Would it matter? Not sure.

You have been sitting for forty-five minutes. It is sunset, and the pool is emptying of people. You'd like to take a shower, get changed, move on with the evening. Remember: you're the one who chose. You stepped into this stupid predicament. But your body is failing you. Fear overwhelms you. How can something so immaterial be so strong? You hate it.

Fear is in your body—encased, embedded, engraved. You'd like to kick it out but you can't. It is in your cells. Fear is memory. You recall water in your nostrils, your sinuses: the pressure, the headache. You recall vertigo and it becomes panic. You don't know how to behave underwater. Not any more. You know you won't die, but your body reacts as if in mortal danger. It refuses to bear the discomfort—while you would, of course, out of pride. Pride? No concept is more alien to the body. Cells know nothing about it. Or about dignity, for that. Cells are a bunch of cowards. Bunch of cowards...

You jump.

Not that hard, after all. You have jumped from the highest diving board. You feel light, relieved, and wet. Cold: it is past sunset. Will they leave you alone? You've proved it: you're as tough as anybody else. There's no higher board in the facility.

Pay attention. There's also no limit to daring. By the way, they'll still tease you... you've remained an hour on your perch. It will go down in history. Get dressed.

You are not a fish—though you know how to swim with style and endurance. A few things you can do well, in water—other tricks you will never learn, and it bothers you. Limits bother you... elementals borders. You would like to adhere to the elements without borders. You wish you could sink within a maelstrom, touch the bottom, ride back to the surface. You would like to possess that Zen quality, that perfect abandonment, when it comes to the ocean. But you can't, not entirely. A subtle anxiety remains. You're afraid you and the blue will never be one. Not a fish.

Still, the ocean soothes you like nothing else does. Still, the water is the best caress you know about.

When the anomalous wave took you in, your mom was on the beach, but she didn't notice. It is typical, is it? *You have noticed it.* Pathological fretters miss the real clue, the real danger. You suspect that is what their insubstantial worries are for: spare them responsibility. Mother chats with someone on dry sand, neatly sat on her towel—clean, behaved. She's in the last flash of the beach you can steal, before losing sense of direction, unable to reach for air.

For a while you have tried, with some success. You have gasped for oxygen and got some. First, you have also screamed, but then you had to choose. Either yell or breathe. Breathe. Now you are disoriented: you don't know where your effort should aim. No more struggle towards the surface: you roll, coiled in fetal position. You feel faint and you close your eyes.

You enjoy darkness. And you realize—with a sort of weird smile—this great thing nobody ever told you: it's not hard. All tensions release. You are aware you won't make it. No one paid attention. When they will, it will be too late. You are just seventeen. And that's fine. Very smooth, very sweet. There is this smile, expanding—is it yours? Not sure.

Open your freaking eyes. Your brother has seen you. Or he hasn't, and he has worried—efficiently. He's located you, or just swam in the right direction. He has grabbed one of your arms and he's pulled you ashore. Now he slaps you. You have swallowed lots of salt water: that's all. Say nothing to mother. She has seen nothing. Remember, though: dying is darn easy... a joke. Why would you worry? Why do you?

Jump.





Michal Mitak, **Mixed Media**



Michal Mitak, Mixed Media



Michal Mitak, Mixed Media



Michal Mitak, **Mixed Media**

## **Pimp Slap My Poodle**

Mark Antony Rossi

It's hard to hate a Taco Bell dog. But I'm giving it every effort. He's about the size of a cat; yet leaks more than a White House staffer. Wish I could train him to use a cat box. Wish he was as quiet as a church mouse. Wish his stomach wasn't connected to my Visa debit card.

He doesn't like anyone but me. Why? I don't know. I don't take him on walks and have no patience for a weirdo in a winter coat of white wool. I'm not an animal hater. He was left to me by a dying relative. I grew up with cats. Now I'm stuck with dysfunctional doggie. And all I wanna do is pimp slap him whenever he starts barking at shadows.

He means well. And probably misses my aunt whom treated him like a son. Sometimes, in the afternoon after a rainstorm, I see him staring outside. He's looking for a glimmer of her ghost dancing in the drops splashing against the window. He's chasing yesterday because I haven't adjusted fast enough to show him a tomorrow.

Somehow this pain in the butt mutt has stolen my heart. And I have to figure out a way to form a relationship with a lonely dog. I'm not about to hug a tree or save a frigging whale. But I'll help this dummy find happiness again.



## **Ed**

A play by Mark Witteveen

### Characters:

BOB (ED): male, in his 30s.  
MAN: his older partner, male, in his 50s.

The living room of a well-to-do home.

### Scene:

A room. Evening. At Lights Up, BOB (ED, in his 30s) stands contemplative. He's just come in; he's dressed exquisitely in a suit: collared shirt, loosened tie, nice slacks, and shoes. He carries a briefcase. In short, he's a successful businessman, or lawyer, etc. He is in a daze of sorts, still digesting news from an hour before.

MAN (*off*

Bob, is that you?

(older MAN, in his 50s, enters.

He wears a flowery kitchen apron.)

It is you. What is it, poodle? You look upset. Rough day at work?

BOB

Always.

MAN

Something else is wrong. What is it, Bob?

BOB

That's not my name. Apparently my real name is Ed. Must be short for something: Edward, Edmond, Edgar...

MAN

(anxious)

You've done it, haven't you? You went to see that blind therapist fool.

BOB

Terry is blind, but he's no fool.

MAN

I begged you not to consult him. Bad dreams! That's all it is.

BOB

Get this: I'm adopted. Turns out, Terry knew my mother. She's dead. Dead.

MAN

No! Your mother lives. She's alive in Corinth.

BOB

And I'm not from Corinth. I was born in Thebes.

MAN

You were born here? In Thebes? But you moved here from Corinth.

BOB

Yes, from Corinth. Years ago, and on the journey a car charged me. I swerved. But it came for me. Road rage or some such. Then I got angry. I rammed the car's bumper. Over the cliff it went. Crashing onto the rocks. The driver was a woman...

MAN

No.

BOB

Yes. She was your wife. She was my-

MAN

My wife was killed in a multi-car pile up on the interstate! An accident!

BOB

The dates, the locations are the same. I checked. My name is Ed.

(MAN digests this news.)

MAN

Ed. That was my son's name. Oedipus.

BOB (ED)

Sounds distinguished. Oedipus.

*(They look at each other for a couple moments.*

*The truth apparent – they are father and son.)*

*(MAN turns to exit.)*

Stop! Where are you going? What will you do?

MAN  
(irritably)  
I'm going to check on the children.

(MAN exits.  
BOB is troubled, pensive. Frozen. Still holding his briefcase and jacket.)

**Blackout.**  
**The End.**



## **One Gold Button**

Sharon A. Larsen

I go with grandmother to her garden  
where we pick thick green pods of peas.  
She wears a red bandana over her thin, gray hair  
and when she bends to pick,  
the wind catches her long cotton dress,  
whipping it around her brown stocking legs.  
We pod the peas in her back room,  
laugh when the peas pop out  
and roll across the floor.  
Her little dog Sparky gobbles them,  
licking his chops.  
When we are done she sits me at the table  
and brings out her box of buttons.  
I dump them, look at them with wonder,  
sort them into piles –  
whites here, there silver.  
Some sparkle and I know  
they are diamonds.  
I match them all up.  
four of these,  
ten of those,  
only one gold button  
with a blood red stone.  
"Your mother wasn't always like this," she tells me.  
We put the buttons back in the box.





Jeff Cappell, **Mixed Media**





Jeff Cappell, **Mixed Media**

## **Goodbye**

Daniel J. Fitzgerald

Her eyes watched me  
as a tear  
hangs on a lash, then  
she slowly closes them,  
releasing the single drop.  
I weep in disbelief  
at never going to see  
those eyes again.  
She turns, her back a barrier  
not open to even a word,  
walking away in silence.



## Pre-Birthday Blues

Howie Good

I'm about to turn 64  
when I'm interrupted by five,  
maybe six men who,

emboldened by the barbaric roar  
of their backpack blowers,

march in a loose, lanky line  
across the dull width  
of a pale November day,

pushing dead leaves  
into untidy piles and spirals,

incautious conjurers  
inspiring the last ragged remnants  
of summer to dance.



## **Life: The Movie**

Howie Good

It ends how it must end,  
with the good bad guy,  
gut shot, bleeding out,  
driving erratically down  
a tree-lined country road.

The sun shines softly.  
Horses with shiny black coats  
graze behind a rail fence.  
The car slows, swerves,  
stops.

He slumps over, dead,  
and nobody gives a shit.



## **Not This Time**

Danielle Green

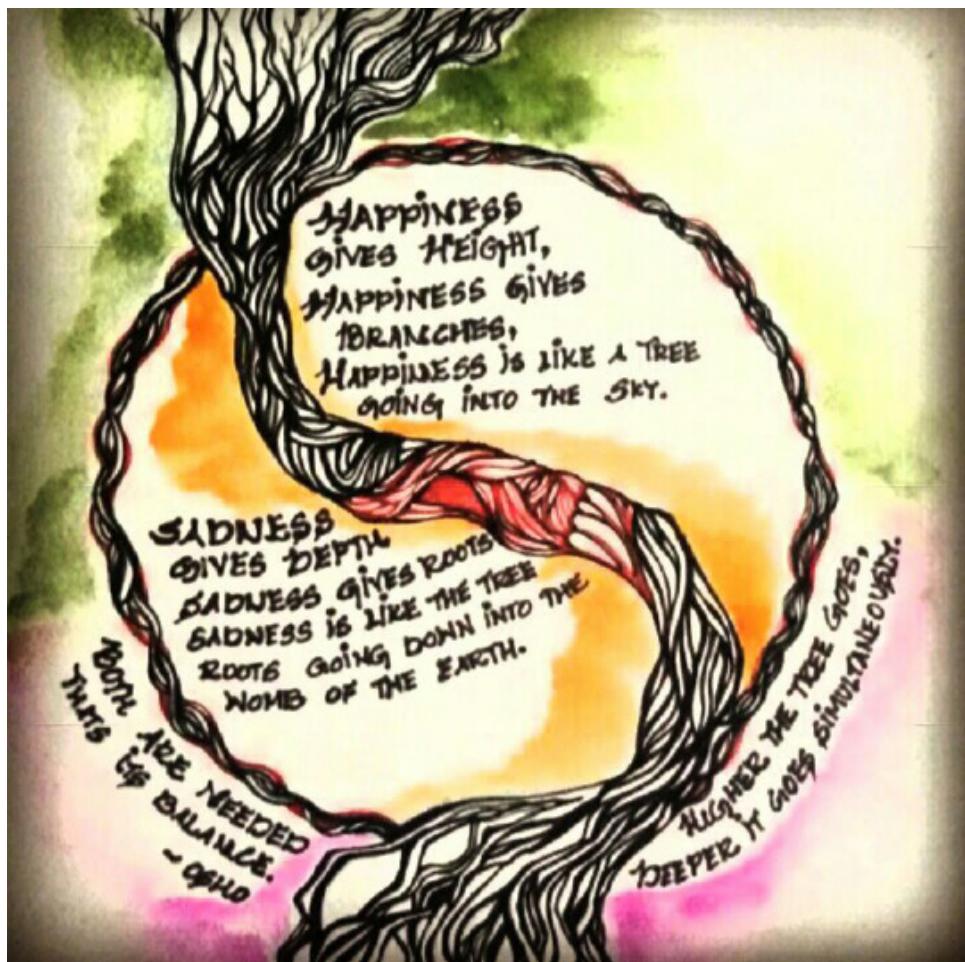
The water was covered with pads  
of lily. She stood  
on the edge wanting to  
walk across. *Come on*, she said. *Let's  
do it together.*

She was always a dare-devil, pushing  
limits until I found myself breathless  
from shock. *Don't  
be a baby, it's not far.* She touched  
one foot on a circle, allowing  
the water to surround her. *Let the water  
have its way*, no matter what  
happens. She didn't have to  
tell me that, I knew. Smelling  
of cigarettes and perfume, I wanted  
to stay clean. *You  
go. I'll watch.*





Akshayaa, **Mixed Media**



Akshayaa, Mixed Media

## **Veiled**

A play by Lindsay Adams

Airport Security. Now.

A Woman wearing a hijab walks up to a Security Officer, who is assisting another person entering security. In a matter of seconds they hand the Officer an id and a boarding pass. The Officer barely even looks it, scans the pass, and ushers the person through.

The Woman hands him her papers, tentatively smiles. He looks up, then inspects the id thoroughly.

Finally he ushers her through.

Shift to the line waiting to go through a body scanner. Other people walk through and pause. The Security guard ushers them in with the same practiced hand motion, grunt and head nod.

The overall effect of this repetition is that of a machine with all the parts moving smoothly until the Woman arrives.

The security officer stops her.

SECURITY GUARD

What's that on your head? Is that a cultural thing or something?

The Woman nods and seems about to speak when...

You've been randomly selected for security. We'll need you to step over there and wait.

The Woman stands and waits while a female security guard starts to pat her down.

Shift to a plane. The woman sits with an empty seat next to her. Two people traveling together sit in the seats across the aisle.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
(from offstage)

Welcome on board Flight 457 to Kansas City.

As the voice starts all the passengers look up and forward, listening.

While we are here to ensure that you have a comfortable trip with us today, we are also concerned about your safety, if you would please take out the safety packets, while a steward comes by to check all seat belts...

A flight attendant walks down the aisle and leans to the Woman, indicating she should tighten her seatbelt.

She does. The attendant exits.

The woman settles in with a book, but overhears the passengers across the aisle.

PASSENGER 1

I can't believe they still allow that on the plane with us.

PASSENGER 2

If they really cared about our safety they'd send all these sand-niggers back to Iraq.

The Woman looks at them, then looks away. She blinks away tears of pain and anger. Almost unconsciously, she feels for the edge of her hijab with her fingertips, as if to make sure it is still in place.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

We welcome all of you onto 457 to Kansas City and have a wonderful flight.

**END OF PLAY**



## Reading in Bed

Johanna Evenston

with his eyes closed,  
an open book  
resting against his knees.

Tired letters  
start to fall off the pages,  
characters from the story  
go on new adventures  
behind closed eyelids.  
Confused and excited  
they take on unfamiliar  
and unrehearsed lines.

Until I sneeze  
and his eyes open.  
The letters scurry back  
into their sentences  
and the characters  
mosey back  
to familiar settings.



## **Pet**

Laura Ahking

I buried it  
in a shoe  
box  
coffin,  
the fifth pet  
to rest

like the fish  
with the tumor,  
the coffee tin  
of caterpillars  
who shriveled  
without water

laid it with tools  
to remember it—  
wood chip and  
chew stick,  
carrot stump,  
and apple skin.

Under the back  
yard tree bearing  
pears, I covered  
it like water  
covers a rock.



## **Silent and Painless**

Christy Wise

Cancer differs from arthritis.  
Silent and painless,  
it waited patiently to take over.  
But was discovered by chance,  
perhaps in time.

As I stride quickly in my red cowboy boots,  
exuding confidence,  
no one knows from the outside  
what this skin hides.

During my days of searing hip arthritis,  
a limp and labored walk  
broadcasted my limitations.  
Watching me, one might have thought that  
my days were numbered  
in double or triple digits.  
And I wished they were.

Today, a person could assume  
I have decades to live.  
And I might.  
None of us know.  
A car accident can change any  
of our fates.

But the cancer makes me  
a marked woman.  
And I know it.



## **Family Photo: 1993**

Maria Williams

There's this family photo, taken what must have been a year before I was born. Mom, Dad, Sarah, Basil, Morgan, standing outside one spring morning. It must have been planned—they're all in their Sunday attire, and the kids are grinning ear to ear. You can't tell, but Dad's hand is gripping the back of Morgan's neck, reminding him to smile. Even years later, he's still gripping all of us, turning our necks this way and that, and we sit and smile in every photograph because everybody's fine. Everybody's just fine.



## Trigger 21

Donna Munro

L O N E L Y

was written in giant white letters  
across the top of a brick building in Providence.  
My son said *I guess he was pretty lonely.*  
The day before he had been asked by a recovery coach  
what he thought his triggers were.  
He picked loneliness.  
He sees it everywhere now.





Dean Reynolds, **Oil on Canvas**



Dean Reynolds, **Oil on Canvas**  
84





Dean Reynolds, **Oil on Canvas**





Dean Reynolds, **Oil on Canvas**

## **When I Was In Hiding**

A play by Ali Viterbi

*A tiny apartment in Brooklyn. SHIRA and JAMES enter the apartment after having dinner with SHIRA's grandmother.*

SHIRA

And she said, throat crackling- "James? That's a goyisha name if I ever heard one."

JAMES

Oh God.

SHIRA

So I said, "Nonna, you know he's not Jewish."

JAMES

Shira-

SHIRA

What? Was I supposed to lie?

JAMES

No, not lie. Just-

SHIRA

Just what?

JAMES

Nothing. So then what happened?

SHIRA

What else? She told me a war story.

JAMES

She's a genius. Your grandmother is a genius.

SHIRA

(imitating her accent)

"You know, during dee War, when I was in hiding- I lived with tree Catholic sisters. So we went to Church every day. And after being dere for a year, I knew all of de prayers, but none of my own prayers, de Jewish prayers. But a young Jewish girl who also lived in my neighborhood, whenever she had de chance, she would call me over to her and quietly whisper: Never forget you are Jewish. Never forget you are Jewish."

JAMES

Shit. That's-  
What did you say?

SHIRA

I protested, of course. That was a different time.  
"But then we were shoved like cattle into these carts, and it  
went on and on and on. That girl, we talked for hours on de  
cart, but she never survived.  
Never forget you are Jewish, Shira."

JAMES

Jesus. I never should have gone to the bathroom.

SHIRA

She's a mastermind, right? Cornering me like that? Gahhh.

*JAMES takes out a pint of Ben & Jerry's from the fridge. He  
hands it to SHIRA. She opens it and alternately eats the ice  
cream and feeds it to JAMES.*

I can't get her accent out of my head now.

JAMES

Stop, stop. You got me, you got Ben, even Jerry's on our  
team.

SHIRA

"Never forget you are Jewish, Shira."

JAMES

Now you're just torturing yourself.

SHIRA

I know, I know. But I feel her now, in this apartment. I  
can't help thinking, here I am, in bed, feeding my goy-

*A beat. JAMES puts down the ice cream.*

SHIRA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean... You're not my-

*Silence.*

SHIRA

James, stop. I'm sorry.  
Give us a kiss.

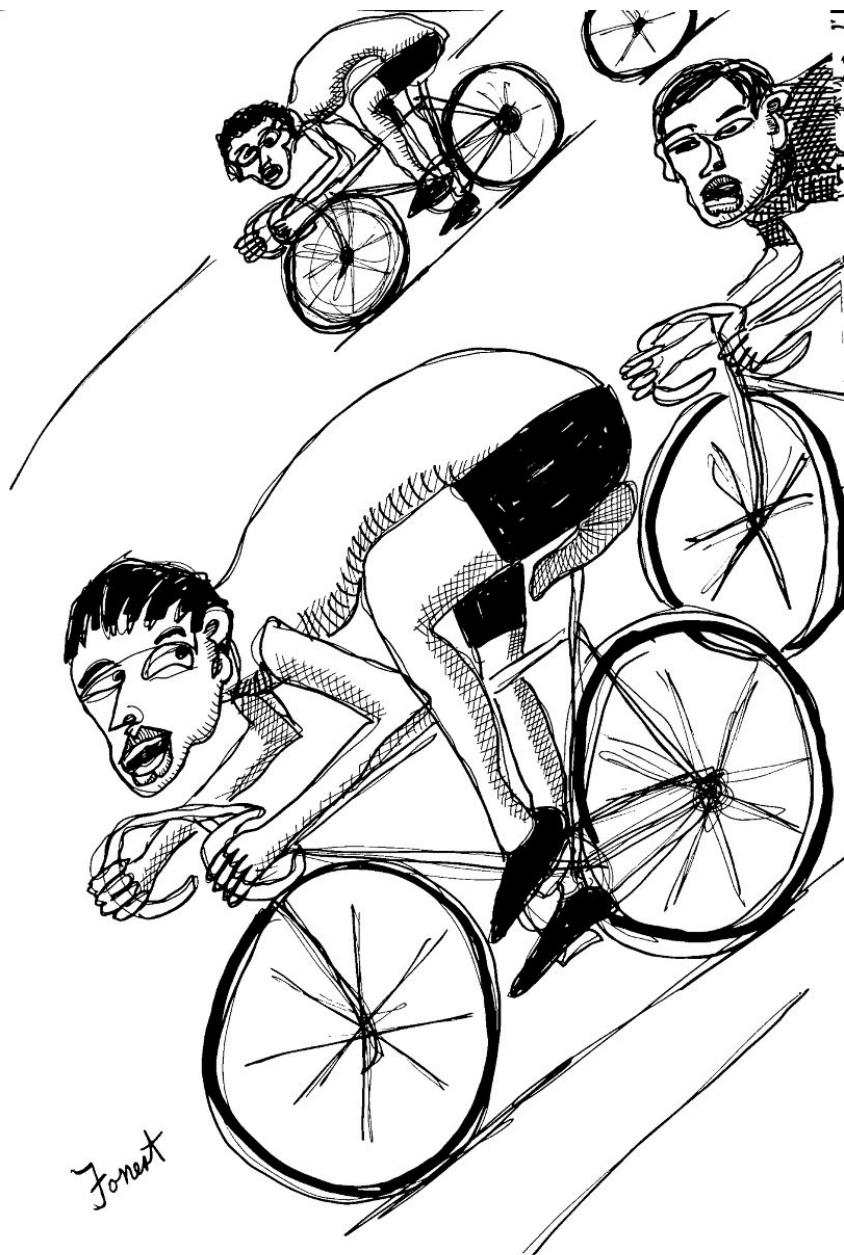
*JAMES gets out of bed.*

JAMES

I'm gonna take a walk.

*Nobody moves.*





Allen Forrest, **Graphite on paper**



Allen Forrest, **Graphite on paper**



Allen Forrest, **Graphite on paper**

## Calculus

Paul Hostovsky

My hygienist likes to include me  
in the decision making.  
"Shall we use the hand scaler  
or the ultrasonic today?" she asks me.  
I like the way she says "we,"  
like I'm a consultant or a colleague,  
like we're doing something intimate  
and collaborative,  
like building a snowman,  
or more like dismantling one  
after an ice storm, flake  
by frozen flake. "The calculus  
is caused by precipitation  
of minerals from your saliva," she explains.  
"You can't remove it with your toothbrush.  
Only a professional can do that." She's very  
professional. She doesn't dumb it down.  
"Pay more attention to the lingual side  
of your mandibular anteriors," she says.  
I love it when she talks like that.  
I love the names of teeth:  
incisor, third molar, bicuspid,  
eye-tooth. Her own teeth are  
virtuosic. "Calculus comes from the Greek  
for stone," she says. "In mathematics,  
counting with stones. In medicine,  
the mineral buildup in the body, kidney stones,  
tartar on teeth." She teaches me all this  
as I sit there with my mouth open,  
looking astonished.



## Contributors

**Lindsay Adams** is a nationally produced playwright, coffee addict, and mediocre harmonica player. She currently lives in Washington DC, while pursuing her M.F.A in Playwriting at The Catholic University of America. She loves science fiction movies and dreams of someday growing up and having a pet tortoise. She would like to thank her very first director, her mother, for everything.

**Laura Ahking** is a poet, an appreciator of old and contemporary painting and cats. She is pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing at Southern Connecticut State University. Mechanical pencils are her favorite writing utensil and she lives in West Hartford, Connecticut.

**Ege Al'Bege**, 24 has been producing art with a vengeance for as long as he can remember. Growing up in Miami Beach after immigrating from Colombia at the age of 3, Al'Bege's work is deeply inspired by the strangeness and singularity of Miami, the Magic City, and draws on the beauty and the grotesqueries of the human species. The mixture of revulsion and fascination with the modern world a central driving force in his growth and motivation as an artist.

**Akshayaa** is from Chennai, Tamilnadu, India and is an architect/artist/blogger/healer who pursues art with passion through different mediums and explores its creative sides. She doodles quotes/thoughts and paints memories and stories that inspire souls.

**Jeffery Cappell** is a cartoonist and a surrealist artist, expressing what he feels and what he sees in the world. His work goes where people question things, making the unreal a reality. He shows the simple truth that lies right in front of us in order for us to be able to live in a world where anything is possible.

**Hannah Carmack** is a hard worker who loves to write. She is a chronically-ill undergrad who is living with ulcerative colitis and pelvic floor dysfunction. You may find that disability and illness are what a majority of her pieces are about. She is very passionate about disability rights and amplifying the voices of marginalized community. Writing is her livelihood. Writing is how she make it through the day.

**Bernise "Berry" Carolino** is a book eater and a law student. In between reading cases, she engages in a drawn-out existential battle with herself on what she should do with her life and God-given talents, to the great dismay of her long-suffering parents. She spends most of her time indoors and never gets bored. She dresses like a grandmother raiding her gay grandson's closet would. She lives in Marikina City, Philippines, and can be contacted at blackydano@gmail.com.

**DC Cathro** manages a comic book store to pay the bills while carving time out of his day to write whenever possible. He's a fan of board games, chocolate chip cookies (with nuts, please) and most things pop culture. OH, and 80's music. Thanks for supporting the arts.

**Genelle Chaconas** is a writer from the mean streets of nowhere, lived in Sacramento, California, but right now, they're stuck in Boulder, Colorado. She's single, queer, feminist and proud to the bone. Genelle writes what is crucial, present or interesting at the time, whether its poetry, prose or all the other stuff. Following an MFA from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics and Naropa University in Summer 2016, she has since become post-employed. She reads too much Science Fiction, Crime Fiction, and Poetry, watches too much of the wrong side of YouTube, eats too much top ramen, walks for hours everyday, and can't wait for winter to end.

**Johanna Evenston:** "As you read my lines please infuse a slight Finnish-Swedish accent as it still lingers, at least that is what my psychotherapy clients and the members of the Unitarian choir tell me."

**Daniel J Fitzgerald** started writing a number of years ago. When he found he could not write in complete sentences, he stayed with poetry.

**Allen Forrest** was born in Canada and bred in the U.S. He has worked in many mediums: computer graphics, theater, digital music, film, video, drawing and painting. Allen studied acting in the Columbia Pictures Talent Program in Los Angeles and digital media in art and design at Bellevue College (receiving degrees in Web Multimedia Authoring and Digital Video Production.) He currently works in the Vancouver, Canada, as a graphic artist and painter. He is the winner of the Leslie Jacoby Honor for Art at San Jose State University's Reed Magazine and his Bel Red painting series is part of the Bellevue College Foundation's permanent art collection. Forrest's expressive drawing and painting style is a mix of avant-garde expressionism and post-Impressionist elements reminiscent of van Gogh, creating emotion on canvas.

**William Ivor Fowkes** is an author and playwright based in Manhattan and Connecticut. He used to be a corporate executive (most recently a marketing VP at SHOWTIME). Before that he was a philosophy professor. He was once married to a woman. Now he's married to a man. For more information: [www.williamfowkes.com](http://www.williamfowkes.com)

**George Freek** is a poet/playwright living in Belvidere, IL. His poetry has recently appeared in 'The Cape Rock'; 'The Limestone Journal'; 'Trade West Review'; and 'The Sentinel Poetry Journal'. His plays are published by Playscripts, Inc.; Lazy Bee Scripts; and Off The Wall Plays.

**Howie Good**'s latest poetry collection is Dark Specks in a Blue Sky from Another New Calligraphy. He is recipient of the 2015 Press Americana Prize for Poetry for his forthcoming collection Dangerous Acts Starring Unstable Elements.

**Danielle Green** is a writer from Maryland. She enjoys the local seafood and the corn fields that seem to go on for miles. She likes to study languages and has an enjoyable time practicing what she learns with the family pug named Malcom. She plans to travel the world, writing about her adventures and the people she encounters. Danielle knows through her faith in Jesus Christ, all things are possible.

**Paul Hostovsky**'s poems appear and disappear simultaneously (Voila!) and have recently been sighted in places where they pay you for your trouble with your own trouble doubled, and other people's troubles thrown in, which never seem to him as great as his troubles, though he tries not to compare. He works in the Boston area as a sign language interpreter and Braille instructor, and spends much if not most of his time with the deaf and the blind and the deaf-blind. Visit him at [www.paulhostovsky.com](http://www.paulhostovsky.com)

**Louise Kantrø**, retired teacher, mother of grown sons, cat-lover, ball-and-chain to her husband of 44 years, plays bridge, tends to her 90-year-old mother, and goes to the library every three weeks. Her last travel venture: Zion and Bryce National Parks. Coming up: Kauai. For fun she works as a court advocate for foster children, runs errands, and collects rejection slips.

**Sharon A. Larsen** is a semi-retired from a career in the news business, where she worked very hard to be objective. She kept personal feelings to herself. After a while, she wasn't sure she even had any personal feelings. Now away from office pressures, she has discovered this little lockbox in my heart, full of formerly forbidden words and thoughts. She feels wonderful being able to let the poetry out.

**Courtney LeBlanc** reads and writes poetry from her home in Arlington, VA as well as on her travels around the world. She always paints her nails dark colors and thinks champagne should be drunk regularly because every day is a celebration.

**Michal (Mitak) Mahgerefteh** is a passionate poet and artist from Virginia. She creates digital abstract paintings on her iPad and mixed media paper collage on various surfaces. Her inspiration comes from experiencing world cultures and from the Masters, like MIRO, KANDINSKY and Hilma af Klint.

**Cady McClellan** is an inquisitive soul who has a never-ending passion for discovering the impeccable forms of words used in language and text. She is aware that because of the existence of language, we as humans are capable of unimaginable possibilities. Our knowledge, if we so choose, has the ability to both expand and create while positively influencing life. It is known that there is a lot of disaster, heartache and sadness in the world, but there is also such great beauty, happiness and serenity that are at times more hidden to us. One of her dreams in life is to uncover these secracies by traveling all around the world and exploring happiness throughout the lands and peoples of different cultures and lifestyles

**Meghan McNamara** is a third year fiction candidate in George Mason University's MFA Creative Writing program. A California transplant, she moved to Washington, D.C. in 2008 to pursue a career reporting on national politics, but after a brief stint in journalism, she began taking workshops at the Bethesda Writers Center and decided that her true love wasn't news writing at all, but fiction. Her writing tends towards the realistic and sometimes abstract, and she has lately fallen in love with the flash fiction form. She lives in Northern Virginia with her two cats, and spend the bulk of her

writing these days on her thesis, a novel-length work. In addition to her MFA, she also helped found and serve as communications director of Northern Virginia's Stillhouse Press, an independent, literary small press run by graduate students in George Mason's MFA program.

**Joan McNerney**'s poems deal with the work-a-day world. Her poetry has been included in numerous literary zines such as Camel Saloon, Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Blueline, Missing of the Birds, and included in Bright Hills Press, Kind of A Hurricane Press and Poppy Road Review anthologies. She has been nominated three times for Best of the Net. Joan also likes coffee and is kind to animals and children. She loves to look at trees, birds, flowers and the skies.

**Donna Munro** moved to the ocean and is still searching for one grain of sand with her name on it. She writes about forgiveness, love and reality. She is not a saint, but may want to be. She is a mother. She suffers from incredible stage fright, but writes and reads her poetry anyway.

**Toti O'Brien** is the Italian accordionist with the Irish last name. She has published a few things, mostly in another language or another life. She is always making that when she should do this - or the other way around. She learns most of her lessons by the very young, after having sipped in those of the very old.

**Kevin E. Pittack** is a retired metalhead, a punk in twilight, and a man whose soul is forever that of a folk singer. He typically dabbles in short fiction, but has recently ventured into poetry, and *Door is a Jar Magazine* is the first outlet where he has submitted poetry. Kevin is a freelance writer from Pennsylvania, as well as a staff writer for the baseball website [baseballessential.com](http://baseballessential.com).

**Dean Reynolds** has a weird way of seeing the world, and as he continue to make paintings the work gets stranger. Maybe this is being born in Los Angeles, maybe the world is getting stranger, maybe he doesn't have the words to say what he sees. It's daring to find some form of transcendence and using old tools of oil paint, brushes and canvas to reveal that. Right now under the Arizona sky he is a traveler seeking to find the answers.

**Kristin Roedell** is a retired attorney and Northwest poet. She is the author of *Girls with Gardenias*, (Flutter Press 2012) and *Downriver* (Aldrich Press 2015). She lives with a menagerie of ferrets, collies, cats, children, and one husband. She writes her poetry in a sunlight bedroom overlooking Lake Louise, and despite the constant laundry, she feels blessed.

**Mark Antony Rossi**'s poetry, criticism, fiction and photography have appeared in *The Antigonish Review*, *Another Chicago Review*, *Bareback Magazine*, *Black Heart Review*, *Collages & Bricolages*, *Death Throes*, *Ethical Spectacle*, *Gravel*, *Flash Fiction*, *Japanophile*, *On The Rusk*, *Purple Patch*, *Scrivener Creative Review*, *Sentiment Literary Journal*, *The Sacrificial*, *Wild Quarterly* and *Yellow Chair Review*.

**Jessica Schnur** teaches in the General Studies department at MSOE, an engineering college in Milwaukee, WI. There she has the unique challenge of pushing engineering students out of their comfort zone and engaging them with literature and writing. When she is not teaching, she spends her time balancing too much long distance running, recovering from the running, reading, and writing a little bit of everything – fiction, nonfiction, and (somewhat poorly) poetry.

**Aanya Sheikh-Taheri** likes old things: synonyms, portraits, clawfoot bathtubs. Her favorite kind of flower is a sunset. She likes when people squeak when they sneeze, and how sunshine can make the sea glitter like a jewel that has been cracked open and sprinkled across the horizon. She thinks we can learn a lot about love in watching how children pronounce words when they first learn to read: every eager syllable escapes each mouth as if it knows its time in the world is fleeting.

**Gilmore Tamny** is an artist, writer and musician living in Somerville, MA. She's been working on the series Lines, Dots, Circles for the last several years and utilizing both right and left hand has now amassed in the neighborhood of 450 drawings. In the 90's she was in the band The Yips which released three full length records. Weather Weapon, her current band, released Weather Weapon on bandcamp in March 2015. Her novel My Days with Millicent is being serialized online at Ohioedit. She is a committed artiste, feminist, rawk fan, old master painting junkie and audio book listener

**Ali Viterbi**'s relationship with the theater has been a long and amorous one. She crossed her theatrical Rubicon at the age of five, crafting imaginary worlds for her Barbie dolls, and casting her younger sisters in original "Wizard of Oz" sequels. Over the years, however, she has had the great fortune to continue her love affair with the theater on more professional, but equally exciting, stages. Ali loves dreaming, listening to Joni Mitchell, and rewatching episodes of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." Her proudest accomplishment: She was once ranked #1 in the world in Buffy Trivia.

**Diane Webster**'s goal is to remain open to poetry ideas in everyday life or nature or an overheard phrase and to write from her perspective at the moment. Many nights she falls asleep juggling images to fit into a poem. She enjoys the challenge of picturing images into words to fit her poems. If she can envision her poem, she can write what she sees and her readers can visualize her ideas. That's the excitement of writing.

**Christy Wise** is a native Californian, who cherishes an annual week in Desolation Wilderness, especially time spent along Jabu Lake. Ocean, mountains, forest — they all offer restoration and inspiration yet she also loves urban environments. When not writing, she gets her hands wet with paper-making or is challenged by book-binding.

**Maria Williams** is currently a senior at Utah State University, doing her best to balance work, school, and writing. She will graduate in May with a BS in English and a BFA in graphic design. After that, she is hoping that her hard work will pay off, and will magically get her dream job as a book editor in New York. She enjoys reading and writing (obviously), doodling when she is supposed to be taking notes, and eating popcorn. She thinks she is starting to find her voice as a poet, but that's easier said than done, isn't it?

**Mark Witteveen** is a playwright living in Rochester, New York. He is currently working on a series of dance/theater pieces with choreographers, and wondering why he didn't do it earlier. "Always remember," scolded Mistress Necessity to eager Invention – the latter moved through cigarette smoke and chatter at the side door, and turned back to catch the note before disappearing into the vom, "dance is the mother of theater."

**Bill Wolak** is a dedicated erotologist, who enjoys his research. For fun, he likes scouring through used bookshops, antique stores, flea markets, and estate sales. He loves working in his garden growing tomatoes, basil, and arugula.

**Emma Zurer** is a Brooklyn-bred artist, performer and educator. She helps to promote the acceptance of clowns and the legacy of Klaus Nomi. Her collages have been exhibited in galleries in New York including the SculptureCenter and CULTUREfix Gallery. Emma has performed with the artist collective Cheryl in nightclubs around New York, including the Museum of Modern Art. She has recently joined the engagement team at the Abrons Arts Center where she also teaches a movement and art classes for children. You can view more of Emma's collage work at [emmazurer.com](http://emmazurer.com)

