

# **the monitor.**

**a campus collective**

**Vol 17 | Issue 3**



It's a new semester and The Monitor is back and better than ever! The tragic loss of our former editor-in-chief Grace Stansbery has taken a deep emotional toll on the editorial staff. Thus, after a continually-extended three month grieving period we decided releasing this issue was how we should honor her legacy.

For those who are new to The Monitor, let us share a few words about ourselves. The Monitor is a campus collective centered on celebrating local art and culture. At its best over the past fifteen years, The Monitor has: tackled issues other campus media has been reluctant to touch, provided an outlet for social and campus satire, published campus art, fiction, comics, and poetry, and generally entertaining. At its worst, it is boring.

Please don't throw this away, burn it, blow your nose with it, etc. If you make it into a paper airplane it better be really good - fly straight, good stability, etc. Instead, leave your used copy of the monitor someplace where someone else can be Grace-d by its artistic prowess. Preferably in as obnoxious / unsanctioned a place as possible.

The monitor takes open submissions and publishes everything we can fit in the issue, so long as it isn't discriminatory or bigoted. Send us your art, poetry, articles, interviews, etc at [monitor.truman@gmail.com](mailto:monitor.truman@gmail.com)

## WHO WE ARE

Alex Wennerberg – Age: 20 Height: 5'11" Shoe Size: 11

Jake Hurst: Age - 20 Height: 6'3" (6' when slouching) Shoe Size: 12

Philip Zahnd: Age – 21 Height: 5'10" Shoe Size: 10

LAUREN KELLETT – AGE: 21 HEIGHT: 5'5" SHOE SIZE: 10

Natalie Welch – Age: 18 Height: 5'2" Shoe Size: 8.5

Lacy Murphy – Age: 22 Height: 5'3" Shoe Size: 8

**DYLAN PYLES - AGE: 22 HEIGHT: 6'0" SHOE SIZE: 10.5**

## Northeastern Missouri as Viewed from Tula Oblast Conor Gearin

It's charming, I think, looking out the morning window  
in Kirksville as Mr. Coffee huffs and belches,  
when the snowfields of central Canada

drift south for a visit—when our pine trees don  
their Saskatchewan garb, bowing lumps of snow  
on branches deep as the Northland; while other times

I've been struck by how kind it was for the scarlet ibis  
of the Amazon sunsets to spread his feathers  
across our sky, and I have often been grateful

to the quiet suburbs of Paris for lending us  
their rosewater midnights,  
when the near clouds hold the lights

of our small city and glow them back at us  
until the slow, patient dawn—but sometimes  
I do wonder if ever a woman living

in the Russian countryside not far from Moscow,  
her cathedral-like samovar beginning to sing, looks  
out the window and, upon seeing

that heron's wing sweep of sky over  
waves of hills flush with trees, thinks "Gospodi!—  
if I didn't know better, I'd think I was in Missouri."



Xavier O'Brien



## DID YOU KNOW???

by Chris Sotraidis

A list of common facts that people are constantly bringing up in conversations when you want them to stop:

- Skin is the largest human organ!
- Dogs don't sweat, they pant!
- The Eiffel tower was also a radio tower!
- There was a man inside of that purple dinosaur!
- Carl Sagan smoked marijuana and liked it!
- A great portion of the internet is porn. And that's okay!
- Paul McCartney REALLY IS Paul McCartney.
- Everyone should be treated equally.
- Mike Tyson loves pigeons!
- Beyoncé!
- Beyoncé's new album, Beyoncé.
- I'm sorry, but Beyoncé had one of the best videos of all time!
- I can urinate wherever I please.
- Jimmy John's founder mixes trace amounts of Tiger meat into their mayo for a carnal "boost".
- There are 7 billion people alive right now.
- I am entitled to my opinion.
- LeBron James is a great basketball player.
- Mr. Popper's Penguins.
- Christian Bale lost weight and gained weight.
- Electric guitars are cool.
- Electric cars are being manufactured.
- Electric Eels conduct the strength of a standard halogen lightbulb.
- Benjamin Franklin had a serious hard-on for conductivity.
- Benjamin Franklin smoked

marijuana with Carl Sagan.

- Everyone dies!
- Marijuana is legal in Colorado.
- Everything is better in Colorado.
- Justin Timberlake does a lot of things.
- Bugs were bigger in the Paleozoic era because of the air's higher oxygen percentage, allowing for larger exoskeletal monsters!
- Somebody reading this is related to Genghis Khan!
- Toner cartridges for laser printers are expensive!
- People can be douchebags!
- Kanye West can be a douchebag.
- Dogs are the best.
- Method actors are dedicated!
- Removing the ladder to the pool in • The Sims is fun to do!
- Fox News is not a good anything!
- Nikola Tesla died broke and alone—what chance do YOU have?
- McDonald's only sells pork when it is very cheap and profitable to do so.
- The steering wheel is COVERED in McRib sauce!
- Only two people like the McRib steering wheel!
- The cheap BBQ sauce is by the gallon!
- A degree guarantees only that you have it.
- Life is what you make of it!
- Kim Jong-il had no rectum because he had no asshole!
- Peanut butter stops hiccups!
- Alpaca fur. An alpaca sweater. A pack of alpacas!
- An alpaca named Al!
- Steve Jobs lives on a floating island near the border of Spain and Portugal.
- Cyborg Steve Jobs is mayor of Barcelona.
- Cyborg Steven Blobs.
- Travel the world with him!
- Very tall people have very

long tongues!

- Amazon.com is preparing a drone army to destroy our way of life.
- China is colonizing the moon!
- Jay Leno sleeps four hours a night and fiendishly collects automobiles!
- Australia is larger than the continental United States!
- The first contraceptive was crocodile dung!
- Jimmy Fallon and Justin Timberlake are friends!

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# How to Make a Zine

by Chris Drew and Alex Wennerberg

## So what's the deal with zines?

*Chris:* There is a long history of the idea of a zine out there somewhere. The basic principle is a reliance on simple resources to create a physical product which explores and expresses a specific cultural idea or experience. With access to basic computer, printer, paper, and staples a small regular or one-off zine can take shape.

You should consider:

### Content:

This can be anything! Which is scary and amazing. Consider the physical form your zine will take, what you care about, what others care about, and what you want the overall experience of your audience to be.

### Design:

There are all sorts of different ways to design your zine. Scribus is a relatively intuitive open source design software, and there are plenty of expensive ones. Unless you already know a lot about design and visual communication you will probably get frustrated along the way, but it is a process of trial and error to learn to do everything you want/can. Make your zine exciting but readable, approachable but unique!

### Distribution:

It is easy to set up a blog online, as well as social media to promote your zine. Issuu is a site that specifically

hosts digital magazine like objects. It is worth checking out. You can find lots of locations in bigger cities that distribute zines (book/record stores, DIY venues, coffee shops etc.) If you are trying to sell your zine you'll find better luck with smaller places that can allow you to deal directly with the owner/operators, than with massive complex chains. If you are trying to give your zine away, just ask around and see where you can put it. Go guerilla and just place it wherever you think people might find. Ask friends in other cities to help do the same, or find new places in your hometown that you can make into zine distro points! There are also lots of zine libraries out there that with a little interneting you could probably track down.

### Production:

Generally zines are done on a tight budget. If you have the resources to design, print, and put together your zine great! If not, you might check out your school's resources (if you are in school) your local printing place, or library. Working with a small team can make this part of the process easier, though that could be said about all of these points.

The merits of a good zine lie in its simplicity, and its simultaneous one-of-a-kindness. A good zine opens up and shares itself as a cultural artifact capable of confirming and encouraging otherwise marginalized identities. Very few of us can publish articles in the New Yorker or US Weekly, or whatever, but many of us are capable of publishing a few dozen zines that relate more truly and honestly to our thoughts and experiences than any major national magazine. And like in science class when they told you to ask your questions because others might have the

same question but be afraid to ask, it is up to people with the questions, resources and ingenuity to highlight and advance the questions and ideas that a zine's audience might have.

We are all just worker bees playing abstracted roles of 'productivity' and 'consumption' in an inherently unfulfilling and domineering capitalist framework, so just making a real physical object of out your available resources and creativity can go a long way towards giving life a little extra meaning.

*Alex:* For me, a zine is one of my favorite ways of sharing poetry that I'm happy with. You can submit your work to larger literary magazines, but the audience is going to be limited almost exclusively to academics or students of poetry, with a zine I have the ability to expose poetry to people who are not already looking for poetry, plus I have absolute and complete artistic control over how the work is presented.

My last publication was half-page 8-page chapbook, featuring 6 poems. Each copy cost 14 cents to print at Pickler, and would probably cost less if I had my own printer. For \$7 I can print 50 copies of it hide them around campus, just think about how much artistic power that distribution model has for you. Like, I have put almost no effort into promotion, but my zine got 100 reads on Issuu, plus probably at least 50 people saw it in person. Even the smallest of operations gives you the ability to reach so many people.

*The Monitor is highly interested in promoting local artists, if you or one of your friends wants us to talk about, read, review or just namedrop your zine, get in contact with [monitor.truman@gmail.com](mailto:monitor.truman@gmail.com).*

*Chris Drew runs Rasasvada with Jahnavi Delmonico at <http://rasasvada.net/>. They take submissions, comments and questions at [rasasvadacreative@gmail.com](mailto:rasasvadacreative@gmail.com)*

*Alex Wennerberg occasionally distributes his zine sorry i didn't see you at [facebook.com/sorryididntseeyou](https://www.facebook.com/sorryididntseeyou) & various places IRL. He is not taking submissions, but is willing to chat about zines on his facebook page or at [sorryididntseeyou@gmail.com](mailto:sorryididntseeyou@gmail.com)*



**if the sun were a person it would be much better than me in all quantifiable aspects, i think**

By Alex Wennerberg

the sun doesn't ignore people's emails when it is sad or anxious  
 the sun is comfortable at parties  
 people who know the sun describe it as "friendly", "sociable" and especially "down to earth"  
 the sun is humble yet self-confident  
 the sun was not treated very well by its peers in high school and middle school but later ended up feeling that it learned from these experiences to empathize with people who are suffering, to treat people with unconditional kindness, and not to take its friendships and relationships for granted  
 the sun can wear this shirt and make it look "cool"  
 the sun is wearing very large sunglasses and it is "cool"  
 i cannot wear very large sunglasses and be "cool"  
 everyone agrees that people who don't love the sun are assholes



Elle Fitzgibbons



Jessica Boyer



# Wearing Camouflage Outside and On Notre Dame

by Bill Fishback

Look o'er the plaza yet be not jealous: The clothes of Christians are woven of finest Egyptian Cotton. The Nile, the giver of life. Threads softer than angel teat.

Sunday, they filter out during lunch hour and miss just before the sonorous babbling of the next wayward drunk's late morning/early afternoon time spent with his head in the fountain, now for an eternity. This day's wayward drunk disrupts the seriously delightful en brochette during these churchly hours but we come to expect levity in this life. And the medical examiners are just glad their report will not be difficult or strenuous on their porcelain, brittle wrists to complete. Beautiful statues everywhere, made of ambrosive marble: Thou Shalt Not Rust. Thou Shalt Not Piss Off Those Susceptible to Stendhal's and Thou Shalt Not Cease To Smile. Though you can't help but.

At night they of course all start talking to each other—whatever conversation one might have when you stay mum for seventy five percent of the day or more for a millennium or so. Give or take whatever number of years you see fit. All the comings and goings. What's in vogue. The timeless shit that you put on walls, coins and adorn your skin with. They, just like

me, brave the flash photography and determined photobombing of tourists. Some of which have the wherewithal of those practicing adolescent psychiatry and the burning passion behind the eyes of a locavore.

These statues, these nudes deprived of any semblance of modesty for centuries, have learned to poke fun at themselves. And they do so well. But from where I am what I have observed is that they, like humans who are made of guts and bone, take greatest solace in the suffering of others. When that wayward drunk's head winds up in the fountain, they watch it all happen, but they can't do shit. They're made of Italian marble and they can't move. It is a funny thing; those wayward fellas that always end up dying in my courtyard are the only ones that put quarters in the bottom of the fountain because in that state of mind they just might be more generous—they get loaded, they stumble around, they make wishes that will not come true and hope to finance them greatly to increase their odds and then they meet their repose at the bottom of the fountain. There's a lot of bird shit in the water; the locals only put pennies in it. When the sun comes up just right you see this brilliant glint of unmistakable copper lining the bottom of the fountain. All in front of this cathedral most elegant, most enviable, with doors most sepulchral to commit oneself to the eternity whatsoever is chosen.

It pains me deeply. To see the statues at night. They're full of so much wisdom and so much love and tenderness and maybe that's because those are the very things they are made out of. When they come alive at night some-

times they can only manage guttural, amorous sounds toward one another, longingly. When the weather is warmer and they might have more spirited conversations but to be sure still then they cannot move. I heard a conversation last week; they couldn't stop cracking up because their sculptor didn't give them warmer duds. Everyone gets cold! Least the sculptor could have done was to throw a scarf on these nudes.

They've witnessed plenty dead moved by the living in heavy boxes and though they're alive they can't do a damn thing. I don't know if a marble man or woman ever gets an itch on their ass but a person made of marble and not meat sure can't scratch it. Must be a pain.

So you know I feel for them.

I've been watching all this shit unfold for just as long as them. Just guess I've a better vantage point. Up on top of a building. And it is whatever. I don't get to be close to the action but I get to see more. But I still can't move either. I'm in a helluva pickle. I've been in love with the only other gargoyle I know, Greta, for centuries, and she is with me as well, and the best we can manage is conversation when there ceases to be a soul around. They can't find out we see all the things that people do. Come on. It has been this terrible secret for hundreds of years that statues of people and animals and monsters actually have souls. Awful predicament, really. She's a gargoyle, so like me, she's ugly as sin and damn

do we both love one another. Surely just like the statues we grow after centuries more jealous by the day of the fine art of locomotion. Being affixed to a beautiful building is nice, beyond downright pleasant. Don't tell me it isn't, don't at all. The only thing we ever talk about, both our heads facing the same direction over the courtyard, is how nice it must be to touch. We're both granite and have braved the rain forever now. Her skin must be so soft by now. It must be like a cool, quick drink of water in the dawn.





# Newness

Chris Drew

I was listening to Presence by Led Zeppelin recently. It was my first time. I didn't like it. It was bloated, half-assed, and lacked the enthusiasm of their early work. It made me remember why Led Zeppelin is just okay. Approximately 50 percent of their career they spent as the band that did work like Presence. Even if their first few albums are relatively tight, the full image of the band will always include the aspects that made their late albums lame.

Many of you may not give a fuck about Led Zeppelin. A few of you might be really into Presence. My point is that hindsight prevents living in the moment, it prevents a sense of offering one's full faith to an idea. Almost everything ends tragically, fault-lines deepen, secrets are revealed, and if one cares to pay attention at all the whole world and everything in it becomes a sick self-perpetuating disease. If you still want to believe in the American Dream or Led Zeppelin for instance, you have either to ignore the problems unquestionably evident with hindsight, make excuses for them, or recognize and use them to better understand the world.

People still need to have faith in things though. A sense of faith is really all there is to pull people through life. Faith in the weekend, the experience of a book, a friend, a law, or even a government. It is frustrating and difficult to both recognize flaws in a thing, and at the same time maintain faith in it. The facts of Led Zeppelin's late career will always prevent me from having full faith in their musical project. The facts of Christianity's history will



likewise prevent me from having full faith in their religious project. And so on and so forth.

I think that the giving of faith is an important human experience. And I think that faith can take and be given in many forms. Love is a powerful sense of faith. The willingness to turn your body and mind over to a piece of art is also a powerful sense of faith. When we do not get returns on our faith in these (or any) instances we are truly hurt. A bad experience of love or art is a bad experience of faith in the world around you. An unsullied experience of faith (whether as love or art or whatever) is inspirational and satisfying. It is good.

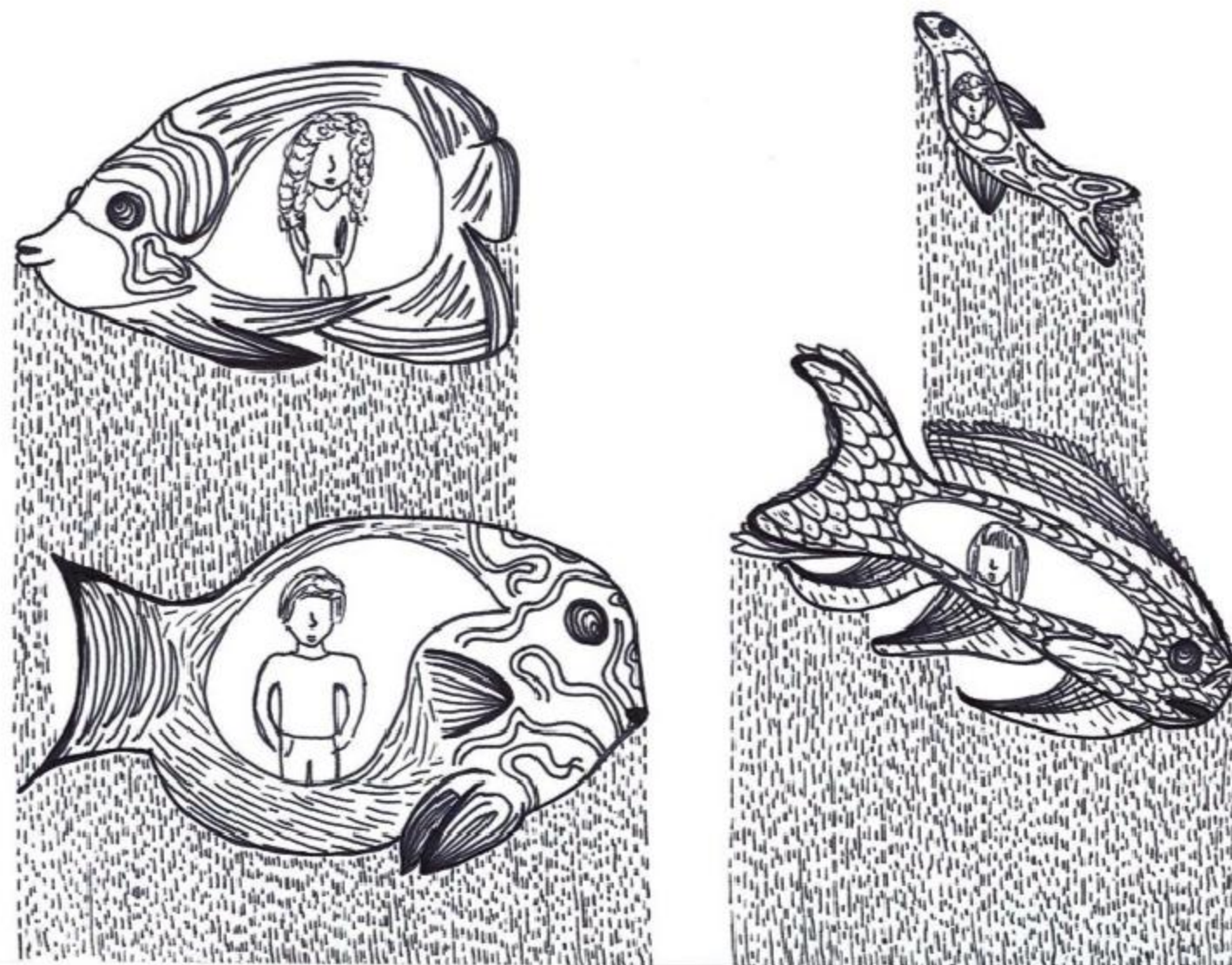
Hindsight and history can show the flaws in ideas. It can provide an upfront representation of how one's faith in a certain idea or another is only partially returned.

History is a powerful machine. Seeing all the cogs in motion doesn't mean that you know how everything works, or what changes will result from what actions. It can give a good idea of what has been done though, and how it has worked out. Centuries of patriarchal culture have for instance, rather clearly, yielded the misogyny and

imbalance we see today. Therefore we could guess that a greater proliferation of non-patriarchal culture would act as a counter force. From there we can find the exact points of differentiation between those cultures, and if we want to cause change, ignore one while expressing our faith in the other. Recognition and action however can form fresh senses of faith in new ideas and new experiences of human existence. These new ideas will ultimately be shown as failures at some point in the future (a future which we experience more quickly everyday maybe) but for at least a moment these new

This requires constant analysis of how history has set the terms on which today's ideas are given merit, and a constant question of whether those ideas deserve one's faith and adherence. Excuses, and ignorance will simply maintain the status quo, and are rather easy ways to experience life. Ideas (and their representation in our world) can be kernels of infinite and beautiful faith in existence and ourselves.

Go out and appreciate something new, criticize something old, or if you are real brave, create something new.



Kirsten Benson



# A Labor of Love

by Lacy Murphy

When I think of Kirksville, I don't think of an elegant city filled with culture and art. I think of the dead grass every spring caused by the salt laid out during the winter to melt the inches of ice, questionable Chinese food, and the way my door knob will become so cold that it freezes and I literally have to warm it up with my hand so I can get inside. When I'm not unthawing the pipes that have frozen overnight in my apartment or daydreaming about floor length quilted coats with fur lining, I do spend a bit of time wondering what the city I've called home for the last three years has to offer. One thing I have learned is that once you begin to unfurl what Kirksville really is, you find yourself surprised by the uniqueness and beauty that is not caught at first glance.

So as I braved the single digit weather to drop in at the reception for the Kirksville Arts Association's newest exhibit, "Fiber, Wood, Metal," I was once again pleasantly surprised at the beautiful pieces of art produced by artists of this city and region. The exhibit offers the softness of fiber works, the cold and structured hardness of metalwork, and the strongest point of the exhibit, the natural warmth of woodworking. Several artists had provided several interesting perspectives within their medium but, as I walked around the one room gallery, I was struck again and again by the work of one artist in particular – a man that seemed to embody this idea that beauty can come from the most unassuming of places: Charles Pritchard.

Pritchard, living and working in Kirksville, worked as a physician before starting his hobby of woodturn-

ing 20 years ago as a release from the pressures of his job. I marveled at this man of science who doesn't recall being artistic as a child and claims that it just developed this way. It took a lot of time and patience, but he found it to be a very fulfilling practice, commenting that his work as a physician was not always filled with gratitude.

Looking at the pieces, one reoccurring theme is that Pritchard has insistently used pieces of wood that showcase several imperfections – either in coloration or in the tiny fissures that most woodworkers might ignore when crafting a bowl or vase. No, Pritchard did not cast these imperfect pieces aside. In fact, he capitalized upon them by leaving the natural fissures of the wood exposed and showcasing the burls as a point of pride, not a defect to be hidden.

The element of chance is evident in his work and Pritchard embraces that wholeheartedly. It made sense to me that Pritchard would choose a medium with this sort of unpredictability and need for patience. He told me that you never know what is inside the original chunk of wood until you begin to develop it. Most of the wood he had selected had burls, which he compared to a sort of tumor in the tree, and are the result of an infection or stress on the tree. Clearly Pritchard prefers to rely on the beauty found, largely choosing to leave the wood with its normal color and natural sheen.

I followed the even mannered artist around the gallery for an hour, basking in the opportunity to run my talentless fingers over the fine, smooth surface of his beautiful works (helpful hint: don't actual touch the artworks in a gallery or museum unless you have the actual artist's permission). He began to tell me about the different types

of wood he used and their histories and I found myself hanging on his every word about the Norfolk pine. One point that Pritchard returned to time and again was how important it was that the people using his creations knew that it came from a real artist and wasn't just picked up at Pier 1. This reminded me of the Arts and Crafts Movement that was popularized from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. This movement retaliated at the impoverished state of the decorative arts and stood for traditional craftsmanship. It was refreshing to find an artist who had such a personal relationship with his work and believed in beautiful craftsmanship.

One quality that Pritchard pointed out to me was the ever-changing quality of the wood. As an artist, he had to account for how the wood would absorb water in the summer and dry out in the winter. The sheen can fade or the wood can chip, requiring special care and the tender hands of the original artist. I took this as a sort of metaphor for the constantly changing quality of art in general. In these cold winter days, it was warming to encounter the earnest works of an artist who was thoughtful about his work and producing artwork from a labor of love that you could not only appreciate with your eyes, but you could even feel, smell, and use.



Xavier O'Brien



# A Chilly Night

by Dustin Capehart

He'd blown it. Through callousness and lust he managed to ruin everything. Playfulness had gone too far and instead turned into a despicable, primal urge. One that left him broken, guilty. Instead of dwelling on it any longer, he slid his shorts on, found his shirt, and headed out. He'd already gone too far to go back and grab his jacket to ward off the rising chill that tickled his spine. Yet it was rather enjoyable...

By now he'd arrived but remained standing outside the door, thinking. A few ideas crossed his mind. Some lingered, some flew. One in particular danced gracefully, leaping, bending, bounding high off every wrinkle of his mind. He turned to the door, examining it. The peeling paint. The rusted door knocker. And then came the chilly night once more. Now the peeling paint and rusted knocker added to the chilliness. Looking at them again, his spine tingled. A chillish, jolting tingle. The kind that makes you draw your shoulders closer.

In an effort to ward off uneasiness, he drew a deep breath and released it slowly, carefully. The breath escaped into a light mist ahead of him which gently glided into the cool night air. He repeated this exercise once more, this time focusing on how each wave of the breath joined the night, each separate from one another. Excited, he did it a third time, predicting the various outcomes of each wave. Again they slid into the night. His features melted to a frown. Disappointed. He was wrong. The one thing he thought he could get right vanished

before him. And then it hit him. The cold night didn't bother him anymore. Nor the peeling paint, nor the rusted knocker. Those worries seemed to melt away with his features. Instead they were blessings. The door suddenly swung open, another breath he wished to watch move freely this time dissipated quickly. She saw him, standing so forlorn and cold, yet happy. Smiling, she beckoned him in. He wordlessly obliged.

In the living room they talked. Just them two. He didn't mention the peeling paint or rusted knocker. Right now he didn't need to. But he did mention the breaths. How each one, though seemingly similar, deceived him, toyed with him. But that was the point—they change every time. She didn't understand. How could she? When had she ever taken the time to simply sit back and watch a breath vanish into a cold night? That was her problem.

His mind now began to race backward through time, the time they spent together. Oh, how he'd given it all up. And for what? For this girl? The girl who couldn't even take a second to appreciate how beautiful, how magnificent, how pure an experience it is to simply watch a fucking breath disappear into a cold night. One fucking breath. Did she ever do it? Of course not. But...she would.

Snapping back to the living room, he stood up. She asked where he was going, genuinely curious. He looked into her eyes, testing her one last time. She stared back. Empty. He'd never noticed. Yes, her eyes were friendly, warm, and full, but still empty. Laughing to himself at the irony he'd been to blind to see, he walked toward the door. Again, she asked where he was going. Swinging the door open,

letting the night whistle inside, he replied, "To her." Her face twisted feverishly into a cruel grin, her eyes burning hot as she inhaled deeply to shout, but once more he stepped into the chilly night, and as the door slammed behind him, the thunk! of the rusted knocker against the peeling paint perfectly masked her final words.

Holding his breath, he ran into the middle of the street, wide-eyed and eager. One last time he released it, this time letting each cool wave billow forth freely until each quietly joined the chilly night air. She would.



Sarah Burns





Adriana Long

### Poemegranate

By Andrew Spooner

WHATS UP  
hey buddy

ok good  
i was worried you were saying the roof  
or the sky  
or something  
nope  
what a relief  
I was going to ask you sarcastically if you  
were looking forward to the  
path of exile expansion  
then decided not to  
okay  
i'm glad you decided not to  
ok

### [The crescent moon]

By Mary Tomlinson

The crescent moon  
Looks sharp  
Sharp enough, possibly  
To slit my throat  
Or to drag it along my leg  
Letting beautiful blood pour out  
Giving some tangible aspect  
To the infinite aching in my heart

### Patience for time killing

By Dylan Pyles

There was a Barnes & Noble  
in Urbana, Illinois where I  
killed time.  
A baby cried on his mother's  
shoulder in the Biography section.

My time killing was a collection  
of Leonard Cohen's poetry and a  
sample of raspberry cheesecake.  
I sat in one of those rather  
comfortable chairs they put  
in circles for time killers like me.

Another man, killing time in the  
chair across the circle with a  
magazine  
was anxious.

He shifted and scratched  
the top of his head.  
He looked up and said loudly:  
"Will someone tell that baby  
to shut the hell up?"

I cringed, tried to crawl inside of the  
chair, which wasn't so comfortable  
anymore. Everyone cringed, because  
we knew what it meant, who it was for -

A Mother, not trying  
hard enough.

The Lord grants me patience.



# Venezuela: Know Your Narrative

By Sam Rogers

As the Venezuelan government attempts to maintain control amid unrest that began with Youth Day demonstrations on February 12th, the foreign media scrambles to find a narrative fit for mass consumption. With each new development, it writes a scene in a story, shaping its audiences' understanding of key characters and conflicts. Headlines read like revolution, with "students" being "gunned down" by "pro-government gangs" and the government taking "authoritarian" measures against "peaceful protest".

Juxtaposing the demonstrations with legitimate, pressing concerns, the media paints an inspiring picture of honest citizens fed up with corruption and legislation that hurt the proverbial Average Joe. Mainstream journalists seem to have reached a consensus, locating support for this thesis in problematic shortages of important goods, sometimes tacking on vague references to human rights and the violent crime that has long plagued the country. Such shortages, however, are not primarily the fault of initiatives on the part of the socialist-dominated government, but in many respects result from its failure or inability to socialize private industry. Responding to these shortages and other economic problems Venezuelans face, January's Fair Price Law regulates the private sector with measures like price-fixing on important goods and a 30% cap on profit margins [VA1].

Additionally, the government has experienced problems arising from the illegal currency market, which offers a tempting rate compared to the official exchange. In undermining the attempt to avoid exploitation of cost-of-living differences and the currency strength of antagonistic countries, this commonplace illegal trade

plays a role in positioning Venezuela internationally to the private benefit of some involved and the detriment of the domestic economy [VA2]. The related inflation fuels a vicious cycle of illegal currency trade, as many struggle to keep up with the inflated cost of basic items not subject to fixed pricing. Politicians urge a response that does not punish working-class people who find themselves involved in the market for lack of other options. Opinions differ as to whether the shortages represent predictable market behavior or, as the president maintains, evidence an upper-class opposition conspiracy, either of intent or interests, to create unrest. In either case, it remains clear that private enterprise, even - and perhaps especially - when restricted by law from seeking massive profit, has failed to meet the economic needs of the Venezuelan public.

Enter the most relevant figure of the mobilized opposition, Leopoldo López, leader of the nominally centrist Voluntad Popular (Popular Will) party, who ended a week-long manhunt by turning himself in to the National Guard on February 18th. Formerly a professor of economics at a private Catholic university, López completed his secondary education at the private Hun School of Princeton in New Jersey, continuing on to study sociology and public policy at Kenyon and Harvard. Having served a stint as mayor, he found himself temporarily banned from running for office on allegations of unscrupulous dealings during his prior employment at the state-owned petroleum company. His politics are much friendlier to private enterprise and foreign - particularly American - business than the policies of the current administration, which grounds its approach to foreign trade in the anti-imperialist Bolivarianism of the previous president, the late Hugo Chávez. Like others in the opposition, López fears the Maduro administration's diplomatic relations with Cuba foreshadow an impending crack-down on anti-socialists.

On the side of the government and its supporters, a different narrative has

formed. Labeling the opposition "anti-democratic" and "fascist", the Venezuelan state stands by its electoral legitimacy, which even the U.S. has begrudgingly acknowledged, and denies allegations of approving violence against peaceful protesters. They respond to alarmist headlines about arrested protesters by pointing out that they were arrested not for protesting, but for crimes committed during demonstrations, such as throwing molotov cocktails or damaging public buildings. The opposition blames such crimes on government-placed agents provocateurs.

Given López's educational background, Venezuela's oil wealth, and the anti-democratic track record of the United States in Latin America, the Maduro administration has accused the U.S. of complicity in what they call a plot by López to overthrow the Venezuelan government. The accusation echoes suspicions of U.S. involvement in a failed 2002 coup attempt. Three U.S. diplomats have been expelled from Venezuela, suspected of conspiring with student opposition leaders under the guise of conducting visa interviews. Whether or not the U.S. government has provided practical aid to the opposition, Al Jazeera reports that one State Department official has warned a Venezuelan diplomat of "serious international ramifications" for arresting López [AJ].

Social media has played an important role in forming the mainstream Venezuela narrative, as Western news outlets ever more frequently outsource journalism to anyone with a computer. Here, blatant lies go unchecked, their immediate sensational value outweighing trivial concerns of "truth" and "geographical accuracy". While the income gap has shrunk under socialist administration, economic inequality in Venezuela still makes it difficult for the people who benefit most from socialist policies, the working poor, to be heard above the echo chamber that members of opposition-friendly professional and business classes, many more of whom speak English, have found on Twitter.

Images of suffering and police

brutality in Egypt, Bulgaria, and Honduras have found their way into coverage of Venezuela. The hashtag "PrayForVenezuela" trended among English-speaking Americans, accompanied by tear-jerking stories about young people fighting for freedom that would not look out of place next to an animation of a soaring eagle in a chain email forwarded from your grandmother. Between the contrarian expatriate rags of Venezuelan- and Cuban-American communities and cookie-cutter 24-hour cable news, few outlets available to English-speaking audiences have an interest in portraying the Venezuelan government as anything other than a totalitarian nightmare.

However much the American and European media would like us to believe this movement represents the triumph of capitalist democracy over socialist dictatorship, you will not find a noble democratic underdog in the opposition. You will not even find a dictator to despise. Venezuela's president belongs to the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela), formerly led by the late Hugo Chávez. The PSUV has swept local and national elections in the past few years. Their characterization of Maduro and the PSUV suggests that opposition leaders have failed to wrap their heads around why current leaders might enjoy genuine majority support in the wake of policies that have reduced poverty and improved standards of living for the working class.

The narratives available to explain these conflicts will adapt and multiply as the situation further develops, but the political and economic interests of their creators will take a greater role than fact in shaping them. For Venezuela as much as anything, the only thing more important than knowing which story you believe is knowing who wrote it and why.





ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPhilipQRSTUVWXYZahnd Lauren Kellett

Discipline had an affair with creativity and now their bastard leans against the Louvre begging for alms. You approach the imp and put on sunglasses in the rain. You're so happy to not be insane.

Passing with peripheral examination, you see he is not a beggar. He is selling flowers from the Garden of Eden, and you wish you weren't allergic to those kinds of things. An almost familiar orchid's sent tickles your nose and for a speck of time the tip of your tongue remembers sweet tea in another life. You sneeze and pull a cell phone from your pants to get directions. Déjà Vu.

#### [She died in]

By Denzel Washington

She died in the spring at forty three. The disease known for the baseball legend it had taken had taken his wife.

It was slow. She withered; she remained her, but it was hard to remember that all of the time. He was there with her throughout the progression, and insisted on caring for her himself, although it took hours each day. When it had ended, he was not relieved.

The movie came on TV. He watched it because he had a lot of time on his hands now. It was a romantic comedy. Two very beautiful people met at a resort in Hawaii; they were there as long as they needed to be. Despite a series of amusing misunderstandings, her insecurities, and his clingy ex-girlfriend, they fell for each other. What else could have happened? Then the movie ended.

Love always finds a way.

#### Titles for Poems I Never Wrote: Part 2

By Allison K. Sissom

Bikini Mint Ice Creams

A Conversation Between Three Bohacs

Love is the Name of My Neighbor's Dog

French Peaches in Sioux City

I Can't Control Anything, Other Than How I Feel

I'm Feeling My Teeth Right Now

Celebrity Twitter Meltdown in The Form of a Sonnet

Love is the Name of My Neighbor's Dead Dog

A Man, A Plan, A Cannoli – Saturday Night at an

SAA Meeting

You Would Be The Food Processor

Truly Clean as I Was Empty

Ewe Are Annoying

All's Well that Ends with Well Drinks

#### Beautiful Veins

By Natalie Welch

Transparent, cellophane  
wrinkled, giftwrapped  
Even the doctor said  
You have beautiful veins.  
& purple is your favorite color  
But those bruises  
don't do justice to your strength  
You are so breathtaking  
you cause  
your own heart to skip a beat,  
Your own lungs  
to pause  
and catch their breath.



Jessica Boyer



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THURS 3/6 POETRY SLAM @ 7, \$3

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THURS 3/20 OPEN MIC  
NITE @ 7:30

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(B/LB TALENTSHOW), \$TBA

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