

*Spiritus Mundi*  
A Collective Memory

Honors Literary Magazine  
Spring 2015

# **Spiritus Mundi**

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Honors Literary Magazine  
Colorado State University

Spring 2015

Cover Art:  
Katie Botwin  
*“The Falls”*

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Thoreau once wrote, “The world is but a canvas to our imagination.”  
This edition of *Spiritus Mundi* is dedicated to the creative spirit  
and celebration of art in its many forms. We hope you enjoy.

*An Ode to the Gales that Blow-eth*

Stephanie Kaiser

T'was past the Ides of March, upon a fateful after-noon,  
When I felt the warmth that morphs the bipinnatus to maroon  
Now, Springtime is a fellow that be Winter's wily neighbour  
He scoffs and gripes and whines about his neighbour's lack of labour  
Gazing and astonished at the icy desolation,  
Spring tears into the Winter's yard without an invitation  
Seeds and weeds and grasses pop up stalks, all long and lean  
Care none of name or order, just so long as they are green!  
The rowdy Season winks as he grants life to colored flowers,  
He nudges and grins his wicked grin when sending April showers!  
For as of yet, it seems that we may have an early June;  
But the honor-ed Spring must know that we have thunk this thought too soon.  
The moment that it all appears a calm and sunny day,  
That, my friend, must be the time that early picnics pay

Spring inhales without a pause, for he has mischief in his eyes  
And screams a gale across the earth as robins flail in skies!  
The girls may cry as sand and wind disrupt their braided hair,  
The boys are blown away and run to mother in despair  
The windchimes are a-ringing,  
But the sparrows are not singing  
The far-too-breezy breeze is just a-strident and a-stinging

Now Spring enjoys a giggle at his tasteless, rude surprise,  
A chaotic wind, that in the form of flowers, he disguised  
So a smarter fellow came and squash-ed all of Spring's delight:  
He traveled to the corner store, and well,  
He bought a kite.



*Bridge*  
Katie Botwin

*The Piano Man*  
Lindsey Whittington

She had always loved watching him play.

There was a meticulousness with which he moved his hands, one that mirrored a stern, precise concentration that weaved across his face. No words escaped him. She would imagine herself resting her arm gently against the wooden side of the large grand piano at which he always sat. She listened to his whimsical flourishes from her place at the bar. She swirled the drink in her hand in long, drawn out circles, wondering if she would ever reach the bottom of her glass.

His legs were spread outward on the cushioned seat at an angle, his hips thrust lightly forward with his back hunched even more so, his elbows jutting out like a Swiss Army knife, all pointed and prodding. His hands oscillated casually across the ivory keys, each finger extending and retracting, flexing, knuckles whitening then reddening. Not a dance. A symphony of joints curving and untwisting. The strings were splayed out, the inner organs of the piano open to the air, clipping and pumping with each flit of a finger. If she watched close enough, it was as if the whole instrument was waving to her in swift, measured moments. One, two, three, four.

He sometimes took a break and came to sit three seats away from her. He would order a whiskey some days or just water the next, sometimes even a large glass of milk. They would nod at one another from the small distance that separated them, accustomed to each other's glances, accustomed to each other's smiles, but mostly accustomed to each other's habitation of the bar stools, their small niche where they had come to coexist. After so long, it had become their place.

He played the piano all night. The sharps and flats laughed as each new note passed by in an elusive haze, hand in hand, blacks and whites blurring to a sheet of grey. She wondered what his fingers might feel like against her skin, wondered if his touch was calloused or smooth. She traced the pattern of his tight jaw and noticed how perfectly those eyes of his were hidden beneath the curtain of the notes of the simple song. She could not bring herself to take her eyes off of those hands of his that traced the length of the small keys. Perhaps, she was afraid he might just disappear.

It would be his last song. He bent his head down as if in prayer, his forehead nearly touching the backs of his hands. He was young, like her, but there was a wisdom about him that she could not explain. She wanted to ask him, wanted to know what had brought him to this place, like her. He closed the cover over the keys, and even with the small chit chat blooming around her, it echoed like a climatic gun shot. It was done. He stood. He grabbed his coat off of the rack near the front door. She wanted to call out to him, to ask him to sit with her and have drink with her. She wanted to stand and touch his arm and ask him “How did you learn to play like that?” But she couldn’t do it. His tired, sad eyes looked too much like her own. Oh, what man he might have been before, if she could have found him earlier.

Another regular shuffled up to him and whispered something close, and he began to laugh. His laugh flooded into the music of the somber bar, and it was all that she heard, and she was lifted up into the air with it. His face came back to her, his hands returning to his body, folding inward, gentle, as if, for a moment, he was cupping her face with the inside of his delicate palm. He turned to her then, eyes alive. Smile alive. Hands alive. He nodded, and then walked out the door.

She supposed she had always loved him from afar. And again, with another drink in hand, she would try to remind herself that she was alive, too.



*Sugar, Spice, and Everything Nice*  
Nina Mascheroni



*This is for you*  
Hannah Teicher

This is for you

For the star that shines so brightly yet cannot see her own brilliance.

This is for you

For the sun that can melt the coldest ice, yet cannot feel the warmth she affords to others.

This is for you

For all the nights you lie awake hating yourself

And for the nights you sleep deeply because the monsters in your dreams pale in comparison to the ones you face when you wake.

This is for you

Because nobody has told you that your worth does not correlate with a number on your transcript labeled "GPA."

This is for you

For the girl with a soul so dazzling it illuminates your every breath

And a heart made of a metal so precious the greediest man alive could not name its price.

This is for you

For all the times you think you are not good enough

And that you are alone.

This is for you

For the promise that one day you will smile

This is for you

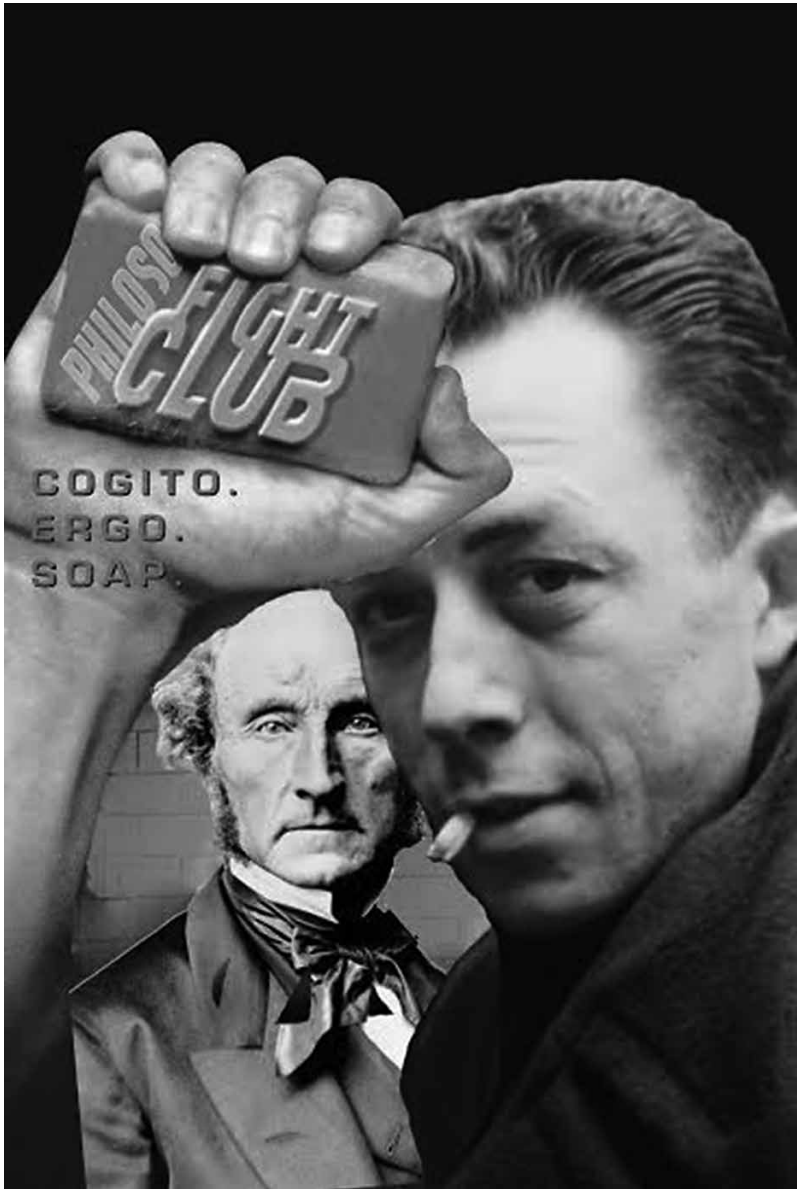
For every day you make it through and every time you muster the courage to do it again.

This is for you

For every step you take and every word that you speak

That prove you are still here.

This is for you



*Philoso-Fight Club*  
Emily Mohr

*Oranges*  
Krista Reuther

I think of you  
as my fingers peel  
back thick skin  
the fruit, so cold,  
numbs my touch

but

the air is electric  
alive with possibility  
as my teeth tear  
into you  
and juice flows over  
my peony tongue  
I can't tell  
if I feel guilty  
or refreshed.

*Silent Night*  
Lindsey Whittington

There is a constant pull from  
the space created about me like  
a biting twist that lingers and  
draws blood from my skinny veins  
and clips at my toes and nose  
as I grapple and tug dutifully at my clothes,  
nothing seems to fit  
and I shuck layers of skin off  
myself that litters that ground  
so bare am I that the chill air  
burns so deep, the blood cools and congeals to  
a standstill glug, and my toes  
fall off, my fingers next and  
then my arms and legs and head  
until only my blackened, burned, boiled heart  
remains in my remains on the  
floor.

The silence. It kills me.



*The Sappy Details*

Chloe Craft



*Woven Ocean Scarf*  
Nina Mascheroni

## *The Watchmaker's Doll*

Bergen Adair

Once upon a time in the wandering, coal dusted streets of Prague there lived a very talented Watchmaker. He was known throughout the city for his work; copper pocketwatches etched with scenes of trains and castles and flowers, Gregorian grandfather clocks that could chime the hour in D major, intricate and imaginative cuckoo clocks of beautifully stained wood. Everyone who was anyone in Prague possessed a timepiece of his creation, and he made a hearty living.

But the Watchmaker was lonely. He had never married; no woman seemed able to keep his odd hours and live amongst the constant ticking and clicking of his work without going quite mad. He longed for companionship, and the solution to his anguish came to him in a strike of genius.

One day as he traversed the narrow, crooked streets he came upon a clothing shop with an extravagant window display. The latest fashions were modeled by porcelain mannequins, life-size dolls with sweet expressions and delicate features. But so still, so statuesque! He would make a better one. She would move, and speak, and help him with his work. Always smiling, always attentive, always beautiful. She would be his perfect companion.

He began preparations immediately. Only the finest materials could be put into his porcelain bride; the purest Kaolin clay, the brightest paints, and the softest, golddest genuine human hair money could buy. The Watchmaker fabricated a frame of gears and springs with moving arms and legs, that bent at the waist and at the elbows, that had a turnable head. Inside that head he rigged the most sophisticated series of cogs and clockwork of his career. She would hear his words, and she would learn to speak. She would understand him better than anyone ever had.

After many weeks of hard labor, he finished his masterpiece. A porcelain watch-woman, wound by a key in her back. He named her Milovaný: my Beloved.

At first, Milovaný was exactly what he had always hoped. She helped him with his work tirelessly, listened attentively, waited on him with undying devotion. She called him Tvůrce, both Creator and Author. She never bored of him, and never complained about the cleanliness of his shop.

But her painted eyes never blinked, and her clockwork movements were jerky and graceless. She spoke with a hollow, discordant voice. She was child-like and imperfect. If he did not wind the key in the center of her back, she would stutter and seize, then slump over wherever she stood like a marionette with its strings cut. He came to view her with disdain.

“Tvůrce,” she asked one day, turning her blank gaze to her creator and master, “What do you do while I am asleep?”

“The same things I do when you are awake, Milovaný.”

“Do you not require my assistance when I sleep?”

“Not always, Milovaný. Often I sleep too.”

“Do you like to sleep?”

“Yes I do.”

“I do not like to sleep. I have frightening dreams.”

The Watchmaker grew very angry when she told him this. “You do not dream, Milovaný! You are a machine!”

She looked at him for a long time with the chinadoll eyes, then touched the painted lips to his cheek as he had showed her to do in her infancy, thinking himself sly.

“I dream of you, Tvůrce.”

He began to wind her less often, leaving her to stare vacantly from corners for days at a time. But he would find himself growing lonely again, and wind her up.

Milovaný had a habit of smoothing her delicate hand through his hair, or laying her head of golden curls on his knee. After a while, he began to recoil from these demonstrations; her china skin was cold and hard as ice.



“Tvůrce,” she asked after one such rebuke, “Why do you push me from you?”

“Because I do not wish for you to touch me.”

“Why? I see the pretty small girls lay their heads against their father’s knees, and mothers pat the heads of their sons. Why may I not?”

“Because you are not real!” He shouted at last, when her questions grew too numerous and too persistent. “You are not a real girl!”

Milovaný went to sleep for a long time after that. He carried her out to the firewood shed and left her there for weeks. But again he grew lonely, unable to find satisfaction in his own silent company, and he brought Milovaný inside and turned the key until she clicked and whirred to life again. Her dress was faded and the paint had chipped on her cherry red lips. He stayed up with her late into the night, telling her all of his plans for new clocks. She listened unblinkingly and silently until he fell asleep.

When the Watchmaker awoke the next morning, Milovaný was nowhere to be found. She had never left the shop before, so he became very worried. If anyone saw her they would surely take his marvelous invention for their own!

He searched and searched for the entire day and long into the night. As the hour neared eleven, he gave up hope; she would have wound down by that time, and been snatched up by some greedy peasant to sell. He went home, mourning the loss of his creation. He had never realized how much he missed her until she was out of reach of his whimsy and caprice.

He awoke in the night quite suddenly. At first he didn’t know what had startled him from sleep; the room was dark, the hour barely past three. Outside the world slept soundly.

He sat up and realized that the bed beside him was very damp. It must have rained through the leaky roof; yes, that was it. That would explain his wakefulness at the odd hour. He lit a candle by which to see, and turned to survey the extent of the leak.

Beside him in the bed, Milovaný's painted china eyes gazed up at him.

"I have come back, Tvůrce," she said, her voice hollow and rusty. The hand she placed to his cheek was sticky and soft, and he screamed and fell to the floor. She sat up in bed, turning her head to follow him with her blue eyes. Her arms were checkered with patches of skin, the original flesh still attached and hanging in chunks. Her dress was torn, and she had draped a belt of viscera around her hips. A matching necklace of gore graced her porcelain neck. Blood trickled between her doll eyes, dripping from the mass of dark, tangled hair that rested, scalp and all, atop her bloodstained curls. The lower half of her face was a mess of bloody, haphazardly arranged human teeth, and one dropped off onto his pillow as she leaned forward.

"I'm a real girl now, Tvůrce." Her voice grated and juttered, as if the gears were slowing. She gave the key in her back a double turn; she had learned more than his speech. Milovaný jerked forward towards him, and he fell back with a cry. She landed on his legs, clawing at his nightshirt. A fingernail fell away from her grasping doll fingers, and his white nightshirt began to turn red.

"I'm a real girl now, Tvůrce!" She pressed her mangled maw to his lips. He tasted blood. He screamed again and twisted away from her, but he had made her as strong as he had made her beautiful.

"Do you love me now, Tvůrce?" She asked. "Do you love me now?"

*Edges*  
Lindsey Whittington

She will look just like me  
Perhaps with her father's nose  
Or eyes or lips  
But her spirit will be mine  
One that cannot be tamed but only  
Gardened and nurtured into a fiery  
Storm of curse words and laughter  
And tears and love of chocolate and stories  
Filled with loss and love and anguish  
Such things that will be hers and mine  
To share in a mutual togetherness  
A shared passion, a shared place

She will wear blue and red and green  
Any color that she fancies  
It will match her dark brown hair  
That she may cut in the bathroom  
While I am not looking because she  
Wants it out of her eyes  
She will want to see everything

She will wear boots and sunglasses  
And I will let her run her little fingers through my hair  
And she will ask me about love  
And I will tell her that she is love  
And she was made with love  
And she will laugh and ask me  
To paint her fingers so they shine like stars  
In the night, so far up she cannot see  
The edges, the points, the crosses  
She will wonder why those lights shine so bright  
And if she can do the same

I will tell her she does not need  
Makeup  
That she can use it only as a paintbrush  
So she may discover the curves of her  
Own beautiful skin  
And I will tell her to never be embarrassed of her body  
For it is strong and she is strong  
And she will be strong because no one will tell her  
She is meek or weak or something to be  
Compared to  
  
She will bite her lip and skinny dip  
And she will hold hands and also  
Punch her fists and fight against  
She will hide in the cupboards as we play  
All day I will search for her, but I always  
Find her because she starts giggling  
And cannot stop  
  
She will cry because she thought she found love  
And I will hold her close and tell her  
She can love again if she finds someone who loves her  
As much as she loves herself  
And that she deserves the world and more  
And I'll tell her of Paris and Rome and Madrid and Crete  
And I will tell her that she must go and find  
Her place, no matter where that  
Plane ticket may take her  
She must be free to love and dance and make love and lose it  
And find it all again and again  
To push her hands high into the air to see if she may  
Touch the sky without standing on her tiptoes

She will be beautiful no matter  
She will smile no matter  
She will sleep soundly and dream  
Of a day when she wakes and does not see  
A difference between her and  
A man

And she will find a small little one beside her  
A little one that looks like her  
And loves her and wants nothing more  
Than to grab the ends of her lovely brown hair  
And ask about the future and why things must die  
Where the people may go to find them  
And perhaps why the flowers bloom some days  
And weep the next  
If the sun shines even when the rains falls  
She will grab up and up and up until she has grown too tall  
And she will ask again and again and again if the stars  
Have grown closer or if she has grown wiser  
And if those same stars  
Have edges



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