

Spiritus Mundi

A Collective Memory



Honors Literary Magazine | Spring 2017



Colorado State University

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Cover Art:

HAREBELL AFTER THE RAIN

Anna Eick

This edition is dedicated to Robert Wendell King,
a member of the original Honors class in 1957,
whose career exemplified literary excellence.

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BURGUNDY
Olivia Claxton

Coming up in red,
Earth shadows, done all in burgundy,
Rise slow on curved skin.

Burgundy nails and lips contrast with pale, white hips,
Then smooth, Caucasian legs cross.
Her smudged, ivory tusks poached for pennies.

Dark red house bricks,
That deep, purple red with its night glare.
In the shadowed corner, she just sits there.

Nightfall in deeper-than-navy blue,
Deeper than any desire she knew.
So much dignified want, a kind of caged necessity.
Power condensed in fingertips, future confined to dark street mazes.

Shining, turned blue under street lamps and drizzle,
She waits.
And there will be.



REBUILD
Alexandra Orahovats

DRY ROOTS
Kellyn Dassler

Today, under the shade of the willow tree,
in our backyard,
beside the white picket fence,
I pulled a shriveled tulip,
right up from the ground,
clumps of soil dangling from the dry, thin roots –
and I remembered.

Under the shade of the willow tree,
a shy, blue-eyed boy,
pacing,
a wildflower girl,
shaking,
a bright red tulip,
bought from a florist,
exchanged like a kiss.

A kiss that was planted,
under the shade of the willow tree,
forgotten,
by a man whose blue eyes turned bitter and gray,
and a woman whose wildflower beauty would fade.

So today, under the shade of the willow tree,
when I pulled that tulip,
right up from the ground,
I wished I could replant it,
but as I gazed to the other side
of the white picket fence,
at the neighbor woman's house,
I saw a bright red tulip,
growing in her yard,
and I realized...
my tulip was from the florist – you bought hers from the gardener.



GALAXY
Reagan Fitzke

HOLD ON
Olivia Claxton

I lean my head back to watch the dust particles glitter
In the fading sun rays that made it through my window.
So many made it.

I shake, imperceptibly, in the back row of a classroom.
My pencil shivers between my fingers.
My foot gives one sharp twitch.

I shake, devastatingly, in a small, foreign bathroom.
Doubled over, down to my knees on hard tile,
I feel the cold tingling in my limbs like a blessing,
A premonition, a *déjà vu* gone awry,
Something saying: live.

I lean my head forward, between my knees.
Euphoria, bitterness, dread and hope,
In one breath and one body,
In one stifled scream.

I stand up, smile, whisper:
Of course I will.
Of course I will.



RODS AND CONES
Asher Augustinis



FISHING FOR THE MOON
Lindsey Paricio

SANTIAGO
Olivia Claxton

Cool, concrete hosts sidewalk tiles that have all come loose in their beds.
They live, breathing under my feet as I traverse this lamp-lit path.
Fading summer trees lean over me and watch.
A taxi goes past slowly, and street dogs bark in the distance.

The rooftop party hosts a variety of tired, half-drunk half-adults.
Their expelled, smoky haze makes sweet-smelling curtains
For open balconies. I try not to cough.

City lights glitter inside a tall building as we lean out over the edge
And watch. I wave to a memory, far below on the sidewalk,
And it melts into the frigid night air.
I blink and sip my drink.

Walking back, the old buildings' facades loom over me.
Faded white paint and curved edges,
Balconies, curved windows shaped like clubs, and dark wood doors.
Black iron bars encase windows, and I hear the echoes of warning shots
Fired over the heads of would-be terrorists.

Forest green, armored military vehicles' tires squeal.
Rounding the corner, they pursue reckless curfew-breakers.
Communists' footsteps run down inky alleyways.
Their ghostly memories slip into nothing when I blink
And look back at my feet.

A family whispers softly in Spanish behind barred windows,
Their child's terror muffled inside their concrete bastion.
He's weeping in his bed.
Screams streak through dark streets, and a husband, a father, a brother
Is taken away. A gasping, trodden-on sob
Melts into the sidewalk.

The *carabineros* watch my approach from the corner,
Their tan and green uniforms ironed to perfection,
Black eyes glittering beneath their caps.
One's hand strays down to his side.
I lift one hand in greeting, and they fade into shadow.

A street dog's eyes glare at something unseen above my shoulder.
Tail wagging, ears alert, it lets loose one sharp bark.
I turn to watch this city's past sidle up to me, grinning.
Winding its fingers through mine in a strangled embrace, history laughs.



SPIRITUS MUNDI

WINTER
Reagan Fitzke

FREEDOM IN THE FLOATING
Kellyn Dassler

A frameshift occurs – unnoticed until now

as you, small girl, match your footprints to mine
in the sugar powder snow,
softly following,
or

Floating

from one leap of air to the next,
Freedom found.

Just like those red-and-white-candy-striped

balloons

Floating

from one leap of air to the next,
tied to your hot-chocolate-warm soul with just a

string.

For as your balloons buoy you along,
bright against the black-licorice sky,

I realize,

yes,
a frameshift has indeed occurred.

I have let go of all my balloons –

Freedom and hopes long gone –
security found in the footprints.

Then, I slip, on frozen tears, falling,

falling,

falling, or maybe,

Floating



HOLTZ'S HOME
Allyson Fyfe



STRENGTH
Brenna McWhorter

RUMINATIONS OF A REVOLVING DOOR
Lauren Hallstrom

I
am an
ever-present metropolitan
hurricane you can't restrain,
whisking, whooshing, wishing
the world wasn't so round. Refrain
if you would from leaving fingerprints in passing.
Though I am glass, you are porcelain – from battering sun
to conditioned air I swish you around and spit you out,
you're not ready for the worlds I throw you into.
Sorting through hurried steps that briefly converge,
sending you stumbling into a changed world
every second, or is there
only in and out?
No need for me,
ruminating...
am
I



HAGO EL TANGO
Amanda Evans

ODE TO THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK
Lauren Hallstrom

Monday, you startle people.
You tackle
the blank faces of schedules
and with inky shackles you bind their features to our idle fingers,
you linger as we loiter
beneath covers.
Forgetting to tap on the door, you knock it down.

You are confidence,
you are look-at-me-because-I'm-important,
you shake up the glass-bubble worlds we build for ourselves,
you walk on porcupine-needle heels
and laugh at the masses that dare to form an opinion.

Encased in the dew of dawn
you glisten,
gracing the day with something
no one has ever quite seen before
and I have to say,
the sweat on your fingertips suits you.

You are, Monday,
the beginning of
tapping fingers, of
coordinated footfalls in a crowd,
clicks and taps of keyboards, floorboards,
hands sliding on handrails, coffee mug rings, untucked shirttails,
the buzz of individual minds blurring as one.
You are a music maker, concocting
a symphony within cacophony,
the like of which the world will never quite see again.

Through half-slitted eyes I
can't help but behold you.

STAND IN THE REIGN

Lindsey Paricio

*“Stand in the Reign,
stand your ground,
stand up when it’s all crashing down”*

Through earthquakes and trembles,
When the sky starts to fall,
Through the hatreds of people
And those subsequent walls

When the crushing clouds weigh
Heavy on the horizon
And the ice-paved road
Is too slick to walk on

*“I simply gotta march,
my hearts a drummer.
Nobody, no nobody, is gonna Reign on my parade”*

When words alone cannot stand,
and when saying ‘hand in hand’
is painful
uncertain
and not going as planned.

*“Oh misery, misery.
What’s gonna become of me?
Reigning on my heart.”*

Can hearts drown?
Rather than break
Suffocated, breathless, turning blue and brown

Sinking further and further down
In the sea of my salty fears

Fearing to feel
Because feeling the fear
Makes the future much, much too unclear.

*“I met another man
who was wounded with hatred...
It’s a hard Reign’s a-gonna fall”*

When the reins lash like a whip
On the straining backs of labor

When the rain lashes on the window
Battling throughout the storm

And the Reign begins encroaching
Before the storm clouds finish approaching.

Through the Reign we will battle,
Through the Reign we will stand
Through the Reign we will march to the beat of our own band.

For not me
But we
Can rain on this Reign
Wash clean with our voices
Re-stitch with our hands.
Together reshape
Begin anew again.



CITY LIGHTS
Hannah Jacobsen



CORDUROY
Elena Haverluk

THE STREAM

Kellyn Dassler

Cotton fields – hundreds of acres of cotton stretched as far as his eye could see. His sharecroppers worked slowly, angering his equally slow mind. If they kept working at this rate, his whiskey cabinet would never be full. It was utterly empty – though he couldn't remember when it had been full.

Tick tock tick tock – his pocket watch beckoned from inside his button-down shirt. It read 12 p.m. – high noon. The sun dripped down his back – he couldn't imagine working in those fields. Throwing away the thought, he snarled, lashing his whip and yelling at his sharecroppers as they tenderly picked the cotton, deftly avoiding the thorns that surrounded each tuft – a skill gained from many years of work. It was a skill passed from one generation to the next in the hopes that life would become easier for their sons and grandsons.

One of these sons watched as a drop of red blood dripped down his skin, mixing with the salty sweat that accompanied the work of high noon. The blood swirled down his finger, staining each whorl of his fingerprint bright red like his conscience. His father and his father's father and his grandfathers' fathers before him had worked in these same fields. Each generation had promised the next would be different – but freedom had lied. Freedom was nothing more than slavery dressed in another color. He had wondered if there was more, and this had led him to her – the white silhouette who watched from the window. Their mutual escape from reality had led them only back to the mundaneness of everyday life, still hoping for the happiness that could never come again.

Inside, she watched from the window, wondering if the glass would forever remain her only obstacle to the outside world. If only she could break through the glass, and feel the life that was the cotton fields – life in all its forms. The wind on her face, the heat of the sun on her back, the prick of the thorns and bright red blood dripping down her skin, and the white, pure cotton – soft, like clouds

between her fingers. If only she could feel that, she could live life as it should be, rather than this subdued form, stuck behind glass. But there are children to be raised, she thought. Then she sighed and turned back to the screams of the children running behind her, as her life faded before her eyes.

Suddenly, a single musical note rose high above the cotton fields. A bird emerged from behind a lonely tree as the ground began to shake, rumbling with the sounds of the earth. Droplets of water began to flow down the crags of the tree, forming a pool at its base. Then, without warning, green sprouts rose from the barren ground under the tree, as a chorus of birds flew from all directions, rushing toward the sudden vibrancy outpouring from the dry field. As the bird song grew, the sprouts took form, and thousands of trees broke through the soil, growing together, lush and green. The sun's heat turned to a bright light, warming the earth with its mercy, as the saintly trees continued to grow, creating a fortress. And then, meandering through the forest from the base of the original tree, was a single, shining stream.

The children playing in the house and the fields skipped to the forest along the worn dirt path, as if beckoned by a circle of fairies. Dashing between the live oaks that twisted and turned, the children giggled in amazement, using the branches of the oaks as slides and swings. Laughing, the children scampered away from the cotton fields and further into the unknown gardens.

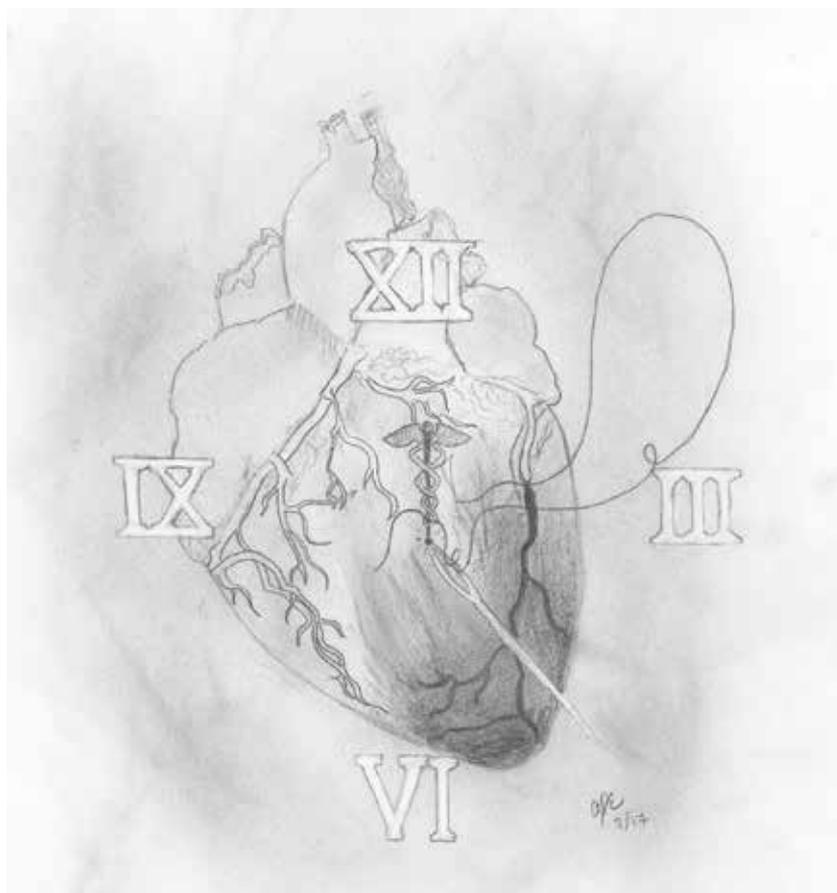
Then, the three began to run.

First, the strong one from the cotton fields. His strong legs carried him across the fields as he threw all the cotton wisdom from his ancestors to the dirt beneath him. Thousands of thorns pricked his skin as his feet pounded against the rich brown earth beneath him. Bright red drops flew from his skin – he was a burning flame against the gray backdrop of his past.

Then, the silhouette from the window. Her yearning heart carried her through the house to the doorway, where her gulps of breath broke through to a scream. Breaking through the screen door, she ran through the wind, tearing her dress to shreds – a vision of breaking glass as she carried herself toward the flame and forest.

Finally, the last of a generation of unrespectable men – the last of one hundred years of despicable Peter Pans. He ran too – not towards freedom, but rather towards the final threads of his contrived world – a world that centered around his whiskey cabinet. The flame and breaking glass flew around him in a flurry as he struggled across the fields toward the forest. Thorns pricked him from both sides, wrapping around his ankles and pulling him to the unfeeling earth. Each thorn grew into a vine, wrapping around and around him, until all he could see was a glimmer of a candle – a stained glass candle, made of broken glass, tenderly holding a flame.

He watched them – two broken souls as one, lighting way through the forest, lighting the path and stream – a path he could never take, and a stream whose water he could never taste. A small glimmer of hope rose within him, until the thorns yanked him towards the earth, twisting and turning until he was buried beneath the ground – and a whiskey-washed world faded from his grasp.



THE TICKING
Amanda Evans

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University Honors Program
Colorado State University
1025 Campus Delivery
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Ph: (970) 491-5679; Fax: (970) 491-2617

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