



SPIRITUS MUNDI

A Collective Memory

Spring 2020



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A COLLECTIVE MEMORY

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Book Design

Katrina Olasen
Keelan Kenny
Herman Chavez

Cover Art

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Ryan Schmidt
Mount Evans, Colorado
Photography

SPIRITUS MUNDI STAFF

Faculty Advisors:

Judith Bryant, Shivon Pontious

Editor-in-Chief:

Keelan Kenny
Third Year
Biomedical Sciences
Environmental Health
Spanish minor

Managing Editors:

Herman Luis Chavez
Second Year
Cello Performance & Pedagogy
Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts
English minor

Katrina Clasen
Second Year
Art Graphic Design
English Creative Writing minor

Editorial Board Members:

Katherine Matzke
First Year
Biological Science
Spanish minor

Abigail Thomas
Second Year
English Creative Writing

Bo Burkhardt
First Year
History
Theatre Technology and Design

Natalia Sperry
Third Year
English
Creative Writing and Literature

The phrase “*spiritus mundi*” translates to “world spirit” with the aim of honoring the collective memory. Colorado State University’s Honors Program similarly strives to uphold this concept by honoring past, present, and future students through the creation of this magazine.

We encourage our students to share their self-expression and diversity of thought through literary and visual arts.

This issue is dedicated to Judi Bryant, someone who has been a pillar in the Honors community for many years. She has served as a mentor, an advisor, and as a friend. Thank you for spending these last 14 years with us, and we wish you the best in this next chapter of your life.

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{our}rhythmics

ANNA VAROSY

“Can I take off my shoes?”

Gravity has caught me at my ankles,
and somehow an organized cacophony is the only thing I believe can liberate me.

When we were kids,
(Such limited repertoire, a shame, I know)
we turned off the lights and let archaic analog guide our souls.

Have you ever seen an adult float away?
Kite trails of paper children who are unafraid to let go,
visualizing a post cocoon existence.

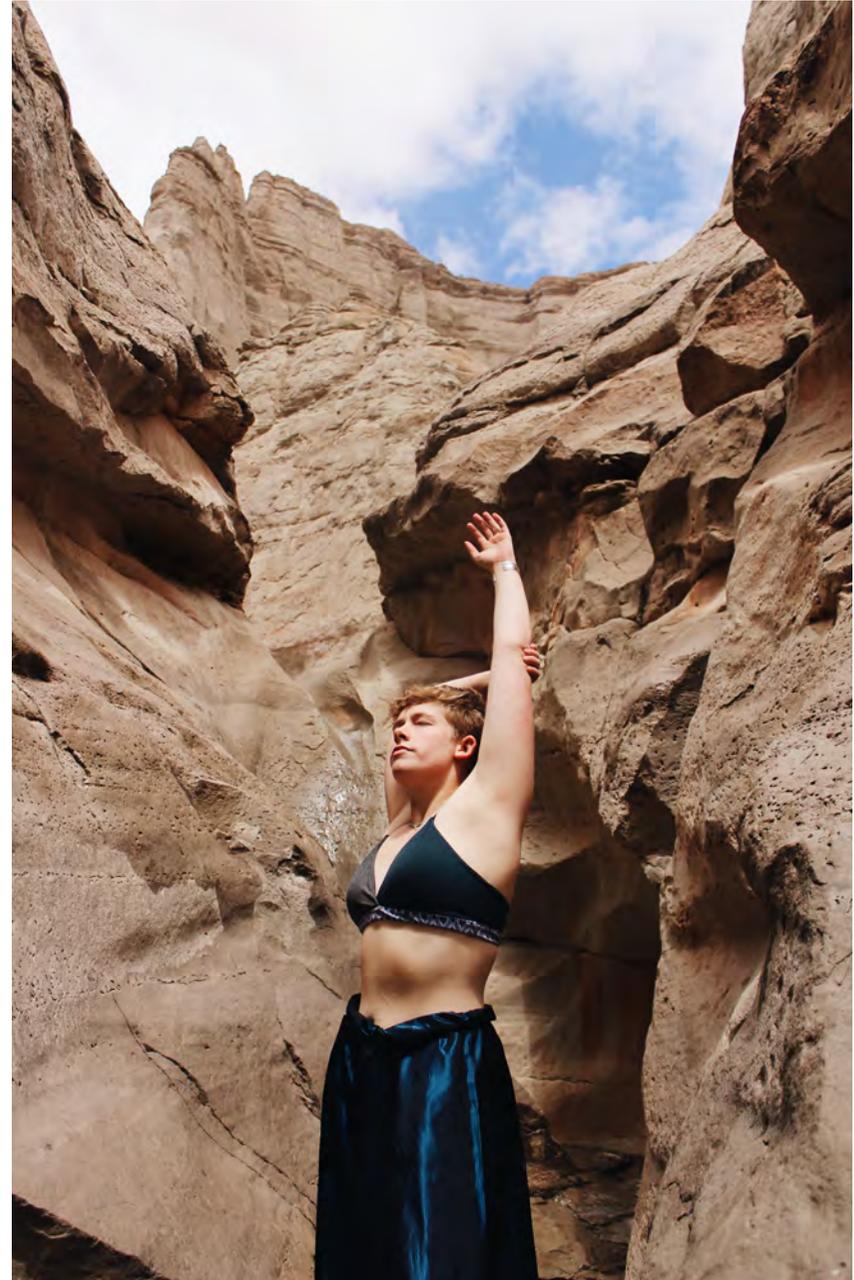
Yet truly it is my words that are fossilized.
I cannot speak a child into feeling.
Quick! React! Follow!

(I cry through a drum and a jingle of our keys.)
Can you see the breathless expanse of stars?
Have you put on your smooth white suede skates?

Details cannot give me wings.
Why am I thinking more about the flick of my wrist
than my yearning for the sun?

Watching our heaven,
I realize that *this* is Truth,

and it is ours.



the way my grandmother's do. My mom still has scars behind her ears, where the doctors borrowed skin to create an extra crease in her eyelid. "I want two creases like you," she said. "Your Popo gave those to you."

I think my grandmother knows better than anyone else how demons move in America. Not only can they jump, but they can climb through windows and pick locks. And if they still can't get in, they might ply their trade at the doorstep of your basement, slipping in by some more sympathetic means and entering the house from below. Having grown up in a household without demons, she had the kind of childhood she wanted to give my mother—a white one, the kind with wide-open windows, the best of the Old World tucked inside the new. Apparently, she succeeded in those bright Cleaver years, but somehow that story is the least real to me—beautiful, maybe, but completely foreign. Instead, I feel more comfortable wading through my family's skeletons, building my own history as they turn up. It's the tragedies that make a family: the felonies, offenses, the mistakes and the missteps, the diseases and the deaths. It's not in moving on but in taking root, marrying yourself to the tragedies of your own people and culture. Popo may have raised my mom upon her one sublime slice of childhood, but that wasn't enough to escape tragedy. Nor was it enough for my own mother. Sometimes people tell me I am strong, and I'd like to say, "No, my family is just unlucky." Somehow it's the same thing. That strength is maybe the one thing my Popo never meant to give, something that grew inside her when she crossed the ocean in a boat full of pirates and woke up in America. Bad luck or strength, it's something my family will always have after Popo. We will fling our doors open and welcome the demons.

red string

CHARLIE DILLON

i wake up to unexpected snow,
to you, absent. there is a still
that hovers over this town,
a zombie fog, a pending moment,
between the almost is and the always was.

i look for you in fragments,
in tiny shards of glass, snow falling,
in reverbs and echoes, in empty parking lots.

i find you in the in-between:
in the beats between moments,
in the spaces between words,
i cannot find you in the seconds
and i cannot see your presence.

i look and i look
and it always ends the same.
my hands are blue and my heart is cold.
the red string looped around our fingers
that ties us together
is frayed and worn,
buried under snow,
melted, refrozen,
reburied.

frost holds my hand this february.

Aqua Vitae

ASHLEY GERAETS | COLORED PENCIL



I won't forget you will forget me

EMESHE AMADE

Mama tell me
of lost July days. The brittle sand snapping under your back. Your skin opening into can-
yons of cracked earth. Tell me of cinnamon butterflies fighting the desert's angry breath. Of
precious
water that arose as diamond backed rattlesnakes slithering down from smokey peaks. Arose
as
crystals scraping the desert's parched lips.

I want to know of Elk, the grand black beetle you rode around the campfire when the moon
had taken you as a lover. Of red cherry jewels rolling down the trade routes of interstate high-
ways; roads that traced a black leather harness over the land's rippling coat.

You said your heart blossomed open to a white scorpion that risked falling from heaven to
sting Jupiter. You said the footprints left by barefoot pilgrims in the riverbed made you think
humans were worth saving.

Mama you see that I am afraid of not being.
By your tomorrow I will be the crunch of wind stripped bones. I will be the wood of nobody's
house. The flies will forget the song they sing to me, or think me not worth singing to.

Only you can make me believe that lost days are vital.
Soak them in your mouth until they become plump between your teeth. Spit them out onto
my plate so I can love them too. Your stories will be the water in the sagebrush roots. The
pop of wax gooseberries in August.

Her mouth was thick with wool

KEELAN KENNY

I. Yielding

Into wood she carves longing
and from herself she carves song:
leg yielding to the blade.
She attempts to speak,
but her mouth is thick with wool.

II. Stopping

She pauses, and born of the sea
she sucks on grass blades
drenched in morning dew.
She pauses, stopping, hoping
to glimpse the white skeleton
of the world, only to see herself
reflected as a grey gargoyle.

III. Strike

Scalded, she strikes against
gargoyle, igneous to magma.
Striking, she cracks into thirds:
sternum to sacrum, praying for the wool
in her mouth to ignite. She prays.
She prays that love is thicker than forget
and that forget is thicker than wool.



Touch of Love

ANDREA RUSSELL | PHOTOGRAPHY

Cascade

ABIGAIL THOMAS

If my eyes are waterfalls
then let my mouth be the
rocks at the bottom
my teeth the
ragged edges
my hands the stinging spray
they surge over the edge but
my tears were never for
you,
are never for you
if you dare to jump and believe
that I will cradle you,
guide you along my tongue to splash into
my heart
to welcome your pollution,
then impale yourself on my words,
my unabashed womanhood
choke on my sweat and drown in my blood
nature is not, *does not*
nurture
and I am her daughter
taking life as I give it.



Gift of the Daughter of Nature

ASHLEY GERAETS | OIL PAINTING

Clementine Abode

ALISON LANNING

Gently, eyes become two butterflies
As I wake to the tender light that pours
From the yawning, stretching sun
Unwilling to detach from the dream
Of yesternight. I could feel my heart
Caved into herself, as I swept into the realm
Of divine nature, vision with its mouth
Wide open, faint and intoxicated

In this dew grass space, I tended to the streams
Of affectionate light, 'til bare feet guided me
To one splendid tree, a magnum opus
Studded by blends of saccharine buds
Singing tunes to tickle the teardrops
My veins felt their sorrowed smile,
Knew their sweet euphoria,
Mused the ornaments its branches adorned

The Pink Lady apple, a grand dame
Subjects bow to the cheerful cheeks her colors parade
Reflecting a sunset, like the day one promises
Themselves to another, with a kiss that seals a lifetime.
The Duchess could be compared to Narcissus
Her succulent veneer a distortion of authenticity

The nectarous peach broods on its limb
Bruising on the exterior, sentimental gushing within
She has been outwit by the lot, so her manor
Proves to be sheepish, she wants to pluck herself

From the bubbles that fire beneath the Earth
The soul of a sinner, too soft to pipe up

With ducts full of dust, I dreaded
My free spirit could never be tied down
To a single entity, as I explored the essence
Each bough the masterpiece offered
To be surrounded by flawlessness, yet to feel alone

Before the hopeful sparrow died in my bosom cage
I glimpsed the clementine— O clementine!
Full in its gracious glory, I found my twin spirit
In a most resilient, delectable beyond imagination
Child of wonder cultivate! How did holy exist
Before she began? I whisper to her, my love

As I hold you, I will be everlastingly soft
With the gilded shield you've drawn
For you've allowed many unfit hands
To dig their clouded nails in your ambrosia.
Pucker at your guzzling spring of luscious hope
All to ultimately abandon your wholeness
With what remains of your body I will
Build us an abode, rapture
In the bittersweet walls, built on devotion.
The humanity I have succumbs to you
Whilst the Heaven and Hell between
you is enchantingly— sincerely— mortal.



Head Above Clouds

EVAN BODE

past rattling borders, white
water blankets distance.

some strange science keeps
our heavy bones afloat.

if we thought too hard,
would the sky let go?

many nervous hands
drag white crayon

on the big blue bowl
together, hoping.



Watch Me Disappear

CAROLINE McPHILLIPS | PHOTOGRAPHY

Of The Dead

EMESHE AMADE

It rained every day the June I met and unmet my grandmother. It was wet with colors. And that June, they all meant something.

The red breasted hummingbirds were for my grandmother's mind. Scattering, weaving, here one moment, gone the next. They were thrumming on a wind to the next valley, a darting blur of negative space. She couldn't remember where her mailbox was.

The fierce orange of the poppies was for entropy. The decaying brilliance of a sunset about to go underground. She would say, "I'm ready to go. I don't want to be here anymore." She would say, "There are dark things in the night. There is a pain I can't explain and no one will believe me that it's real." Then she would notice the flowers on her table for the thirteenth time that morning and be overwhelmed with joy.

The great blue heron standing in the river was for my grandmother's hands when she would drift into an uneasy sleep. Quiet. Finally still. Scanning the world beneath the water for silver fish. A world beyond this one. A world I couldn't see yet.

The gold mist at sunset was for her voice fading away after I closed the door at night. Sweet rays of sun dripping down the evening. One last look over plum purple mountains. Almost gone, still beautiful. "I love you. I'll see you tomorrow."

The colors that June felt bright, but it was because in my mind they were all in contrast to black. Black was for what it's like to watch someone start to die. Death stifled the colors like a plague of locusts settling over an open field. Gray cement sidewalk outside the memory care unit. New gray slacks from Macy's when my grandmother got too thin to wear her old pair. Gray walls in the doctor's office waiting room. June had been the sunset, now it was the hour after and everything was fading. October happened: gray tree limbs, gray flower beds, gray days. My grandmother went into hospice. I didn't notice the colors anymore. Their time was over. Now I saw the milky sheen on the eyes of old people. That's how the gradient works: white to gray, then black. "I love you. I'll see you tomorrow."

Then it was time for me to leave. Her in her bed, me on a plane to Mexico. To Todos Santos. All Saints. Did you know you have to be dead to be a saint? I packed the gray up in my bag. I packed it with the black I knew was coming too. Black pants, gray shirt, black coroner's van, gray funeral home carpet. In my mind she was already dead. In the U.S. black means dead. It means stuff the sadness away somewhere. Bottom of the suitcase. Blot it out with white: the color of void, the color of absence. Pretend nothing was there to begin with.

Arriving in Mexico, I plunged into green like a cold foot into scalding bath water. I felt

violated by vibrancy as I lugged my bag of gray past bougainvillea exploding with pink flowers and cardón cacti flexing their arms in the glaring sun. I wanted to protect my sadness from the heat. I didn't think it fit here. My grandmother's death was surrounded by a cloud of foreboding that I could not reconcile with the unabashed life of the Baja Peninsula after the rainy season. So I decided to tuck her away somewhere gray and somber inside myself. I didn't think her ending had a place in Mexico. Her time for colors was over. It was time for me to forget and move on.

When I came to Mexico, I carried cemeteries with me too. They were the cemeteries of my country: identical marble headstones standing regimented and orderly, grass clipped painfully short. No abundance, nothing frivolous. Graveyards are where you go to pay your respects. In the U.S. respect means straight lines, strait faces, and muted colors. The muted colors mean be quiet. Be somber. Stand straight and proud like the headstones, be quiet and dignified like the dead. Leave as soon as possible. So when I moved into a building next to the Todos Santos cemetery, it took me a week of looking at it before I could recognize what it was. To me it was a little city, a doll's refugee camp, a spectrum of color that would delight the eyes of a child. Each grave was a miniature cement house, complete with a pointed roof and windows. They were scattered over the dusty dirt lot like a fairytale village, each painted a different vibrant color. A striking magenta grave, next to a lime green, next to a creamy white, next to a robin's egg blue. Some even boasting a different color on each wall: the soft pink of roses kissing the deep blue of tattoo ink kissing at the corners. Each grave was made special. Gray cement coated in color. Gray cement coated in "I love you."

When I mentioned to my new friend Miguel that I lived next to the cemetery, he casually replied, "Her sister is there," gesturing to his niece swimming in the ocean beside his bright yellow kayak. I had just met the man an hour ago as I sat by myself on the beach next to his family's picnic. I had been adopted. The little niece's face temporarily fell at the mention of her sister, but her uncle continued, "She has a beautiful pink and purple castle, and a nice bench so you can sit with her..." "—and there's a really pretty picture of her there, and you can hear all the kids playing" the little girl continued, warming up to the topic. I smiled, "Oh, que bonito." Inside, I was pulling my hand back from a hot flame. Her sister was in the graveyard. So casual. So matter of fact. They had taken something stabbingly personal and painful, the death of a child, and put it to a stranger's skin. In the culture I come from, death is a hushed, private affair. A personal pain that you shield from prying eyes. Don't speak of the dead. Keep it in the family. When a loved one dies you let sadness calcify around it quietly, a coin rusting at the bottom of a deep well. My mother never openly mourned her father. My grandmother never openly mourned her husband. People talked little about him after he died. When they did, there was a tightness to it. Slowly, years of silence muffled him away.

I went to visit the grave of the little girl. A choir of insects hummed from the unruly

brambles that lined the cemetery. A hand painted sign at the front gate proclaimed “Prohibido bebidas embriagantes. Mantenga limpia su area” (No alcoholic beverages, Keep your area clean). I remembered the loud music that had sometimes flowed into my room from the graveyard. It seemed that spending time with the dead was a perfectly acceptable use of a Friday or Saturday night. As I wandered deeper into the cemetery I looked at each grave, personalized with different colors, unique artifacts, different representations of the Virgin de Guadalupe, and overflowing with a rainbow’s worth of fake flowers. I looked at heaps of decorations, spent candles, and beer cans amassed at random intervals throughout the graveyard. This was not a place you came to pay your respects and leave as soon as possible. The dead here had been given new homes, not graves. When I came upon the little girl’s home it was exactly as they had said: cement shaped into rectangular turrets and Grecian columns plucked straight from Disney’s Cinderella. In the shade of the palm trees there was a bubble gum pink bench, next to a raised bubble gum pink cement box, under a bubble gum pink roof. A battalion of stuffed animals gazed back at me from beside a portrait of a smiling girl. A cheerful ranchero tune played from a truck parked behind another grave and the sounds of children playing drifted over the fence of a nearby elementary school. She was 15 years old and she had her own castle. She was in a cemetery and she could still listen to the sounds humans make when they’re happy. She was dead and her uncle could still speak about her like a member of the family. Each shock of pink told me that her essence was still important, that her youth was still important, that in some way she was still alive. I thought of the little square with my grandfather’s name on it back in the U.S. I thought of the little square that my grandmother was destined to be stuck under before I returned home. Both were dark metal. Both gave no hint of who the individual underneath might have been. Back home dying means you get to be just like everyone else.

“We are not happy because our loved ones have died. Never think that,” declared a man named Noel, as he stood before an empty altar in his restaurant on the first night of Dia de los Muertos. “Foreigners believe that Day of the Dead means we’re celebrating the

fact that people have died. This is not true. We love our families, we are heartbroken when they die. That is why we must remember them. That is why we keep them with us.” He lit a chalice of copal, powerful incense made of tree resin, to purify the space. Turning back to us he said, “The ofrenda is a sacred space to honor our ancestors and call them to be with us on this holiday. Every element on an ofrenda means something. Please don’t take pictures.” That night we would see the process of an ofrenda being built for Noel’s family. A careful set of steps to guide their spirits back to him. He explained to us, a captivated group of American college students, that the following night his loved ones would not be gone. Instead, they were to swirl in room along with the smoke of copal and candles. Gray smoke but not gray spirits. I felt my grandmother beating in my chest.

And so it came to be that my November began with colors. Began with colors, and began with death. Something I had not thought possible.

Decadent oranges and yellows for guiding the spirits of loved ones back home. The velvety leaves of marigolds glowing in flickering candle light. The beckoning warmth of tiny flames. Hand painted earthenware bowls kissed by iron. “It is warm here. You are welcome.”

The sugar glazed gold of the pan de muerto for arrival. As was the deep ruby sheen of the apples and wine, and the rich milky brown of the hot cocoa. The hearty refreshment for after a long journey from another realm. The feeling of walking into a place where everyone knows you. “This is still your home.”

The budding spring green and pink of the papel picado for the wind of someone you love stepping in through the front door. Bright color that draws the eye, unafraid. Bright color that draws the dead, unafraid. An unabashed, unmuted lick of pigment saying death is real.

So I carefully placed my hands on my chest. Lifted my grandmother into the candle light. Into the noise of the bustling town square on the night of Dia de los Muertos. I held her for a moment, and then placed her on the altar. I wanted her to see all the colors. I wanted her to know that they all meant something. “I love you. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Love Letter to the Wind

KAYDEE BARKER

From the time that I was small
I treasured your embrace
At once a gentle caress
And a challenge for me to race

To lean forward into your force
And take the lashings of your tears
The rain you throw against my face
The sound you roar into my ears

Yet sometimes a light touch
A relief against the heat
An invitation to dance
Through the trees you provide the beat

Sometimes you're Resistance
And sometimes you carry me along
You're with me on every journey
Your pull is always strong

You teach me about love and faith
The way it's felt and never seen
Known by what it moves
There in the in-between

So be my sister, dear wind
And speak always to my soul
That I may keep moving forever
Guided by your relentless pull

Female Red-Winged Blackbird on a Cattail

RYAN SCHMIDT | PHOTOGRAPHY



Oh the Privilege

KELLY CRUZ

If you're still breathing you're one of the lucky ones 25 have not been so lucky
They heaved through corrupted lungs
Prayed through silent tears
As their last breaths
1, 2, 3
Caressed their dry cracked lips for the last time.
Their last memory was of home
Families wept
Strangers cried in anger and fear
For they might just be next
But the mariachi played and through broken hearts poured the words "Como quisiera
que tu vivieras"
Their only crime was to dream and hope
As courage and ultimate sacrifice coursed through their veins
People of steel and gold-covered by chocolate complexions of love and pride Beautiful
souls only acknowledged to be torn apart
Brown skin, a reflection of past lives and civilizations
Colonized and labeled for the commodification of the White man
The word morenita, I resented
The White boys made me feel unlovable
I grew bitter
My ancestors had done this to me
A brown girl
What a joke
I could amount to nothing more
They all said it, they were all right
What could a daughter of a house cleaner do
What could a daughter of a construction worker accomplish
She was behind
She had the accent

But little did you know
She is her mother's daughter
And she is her father's daughter
And she is the daughter of immigrants
She is the girl who lives with fear
Fear of a call
Where her mother cries, telling her it's time
Time for her to grow up without her Mami
She fears they might just take her too
Her brown skin tells all, she has a story
They ask where are you from? But from where?
So she carries this card
And the fear subsides
But oh the privilege to have this card
Oh the privilege to have been born on one side of the standing wire and steel Oh the
privilege to have a brave Mami and Papi
Oh the privilege of never feeling close to death in the middle of the desert Oh the
privilege of being a United States citizen
Oh the privilege to visit the homelands of her parents
Where they laughed, they got angry, fell in love, and were heartbroken
Oh the privilege to be Chicana
Because this morenita needs no White boy to tell her worth
This morena feels her power and her strength coursing through her veins Endlessly and
tirelessly working to decolonize every single cell and thought Because she is the bridge
Her children will know the stories of their grandparents
They will respect because of their privilege for being second generation
They will be proud of their chocolate complexion
They will speak their grandparent's tongue
Because my Mami and my Papi will never be disrespected
Especially by their own
They did not risk being another number to be disrespected
They are the true Americans by heart
They wear the Mexican flag, sing the United States anthem, bleed their Aztec blood and
speak the language of their colonizers
They are the trailblazers, I'm simply doing the easy part
Oh the privilege of mine to know half the pain that my Mami and Papi carry Oh the

privilege to be who I am
Oh the privilege to have a voice
Because someone out there is hurting our children
And it has gone on far too long



Youth Homelessness

KENZIE KHOURY | CHILDREN'S TOYS AND FOUND MATERIALS

Truman Rummy

SARAH MENDUS

my blood is thick with aces and kings. i count in
runs and sets, i see in spades and diamonds.
i've always had cards shuffling in my hands,
tallying my triumphs and losses in nickels and quarters.

my family has the same blood,
the same callouses on their knuckles.
we would play around our kitchen table,
a well-worn rickety battlefield painted with age spots and scars.

someone else might have preached about the gift of imagination—
how through a creative lens that cracked brown lacquer
could bubble into a creamy green velvet stolen from the steps of Vegas.
around this altar we could evolve into ravishing patrons of great wealth and elegance,
wrapped in lush silks and feathers, painted with dark lipstick.

that's not how we saw it though.
to us it was just a crappy brown table.

we would lounge around it in neon socks and thrifted sweatpants,
trading blue playing cards and eating crackers.
our little yellow house would fill with music and teasing and laughter,
every game we played adding a brick to our palace.

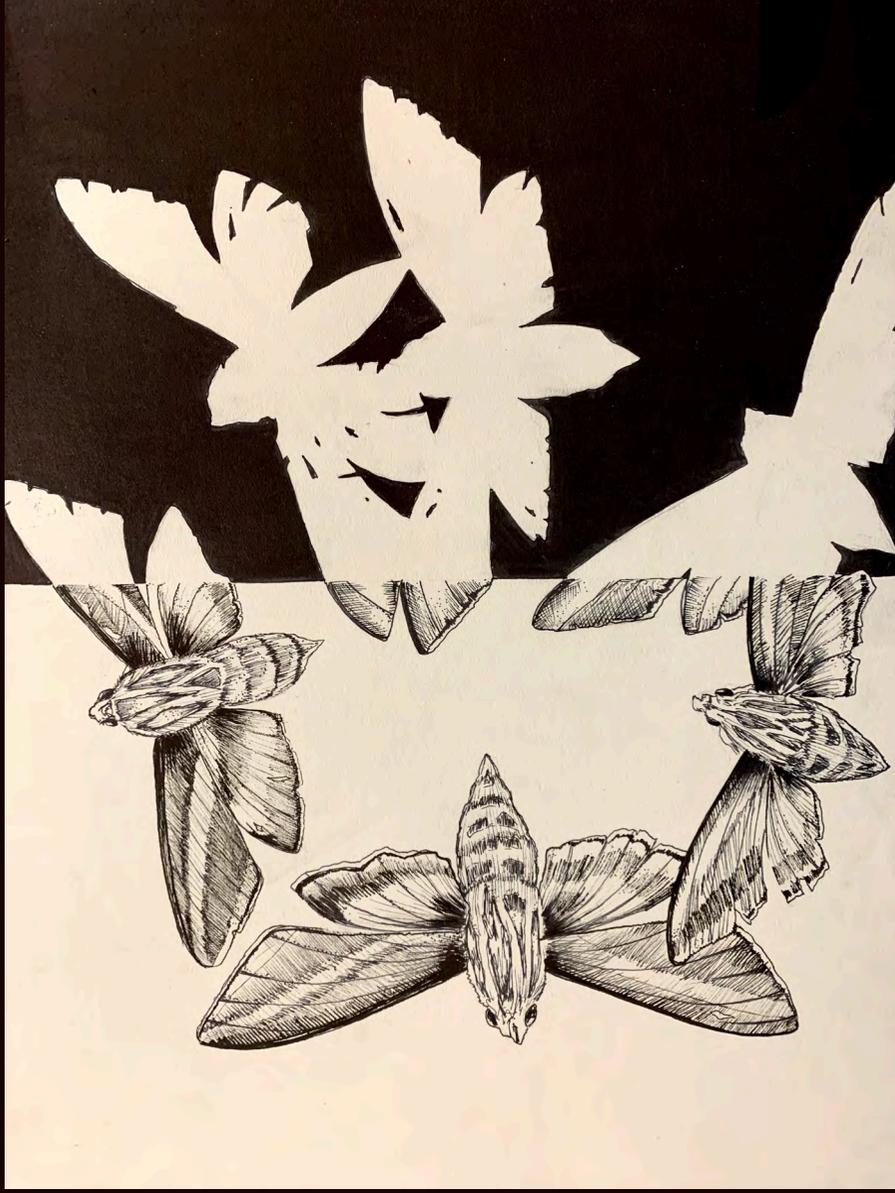


Grafton Street Architecture

CORINNE NEUSTADTER | PHOTOGRAPHY

Hawk Moths

SAMANTHA HOMAN | INK ON PAPER



Cul-de-sac

HERMAN LUIS CHAVEZ

Language, like love, starts local.

It begins in the belly and shoots from the chest to the throat and it stay there long enough to verify the official documents and then it pours, young yet but ages in coming.

This language and love are neighbours:

The white people are from
Peoria but live here because
they have too much money
to stay where their
roots reside

The brown people do
not remember where
they're from but they
see the roots and feel
them in their taint

They both grow roses on their lawns and they water them at the same time.
They were both outside when I met them:

I had admired myself for far too long they told me, both of them,
so I was branded and built and sent back down the street

but I'm not just somebody in a house. They both live with me now and every so often when I pay the bills I remember what I was told when I first came to town:

This was a summer of wanting impossible things.

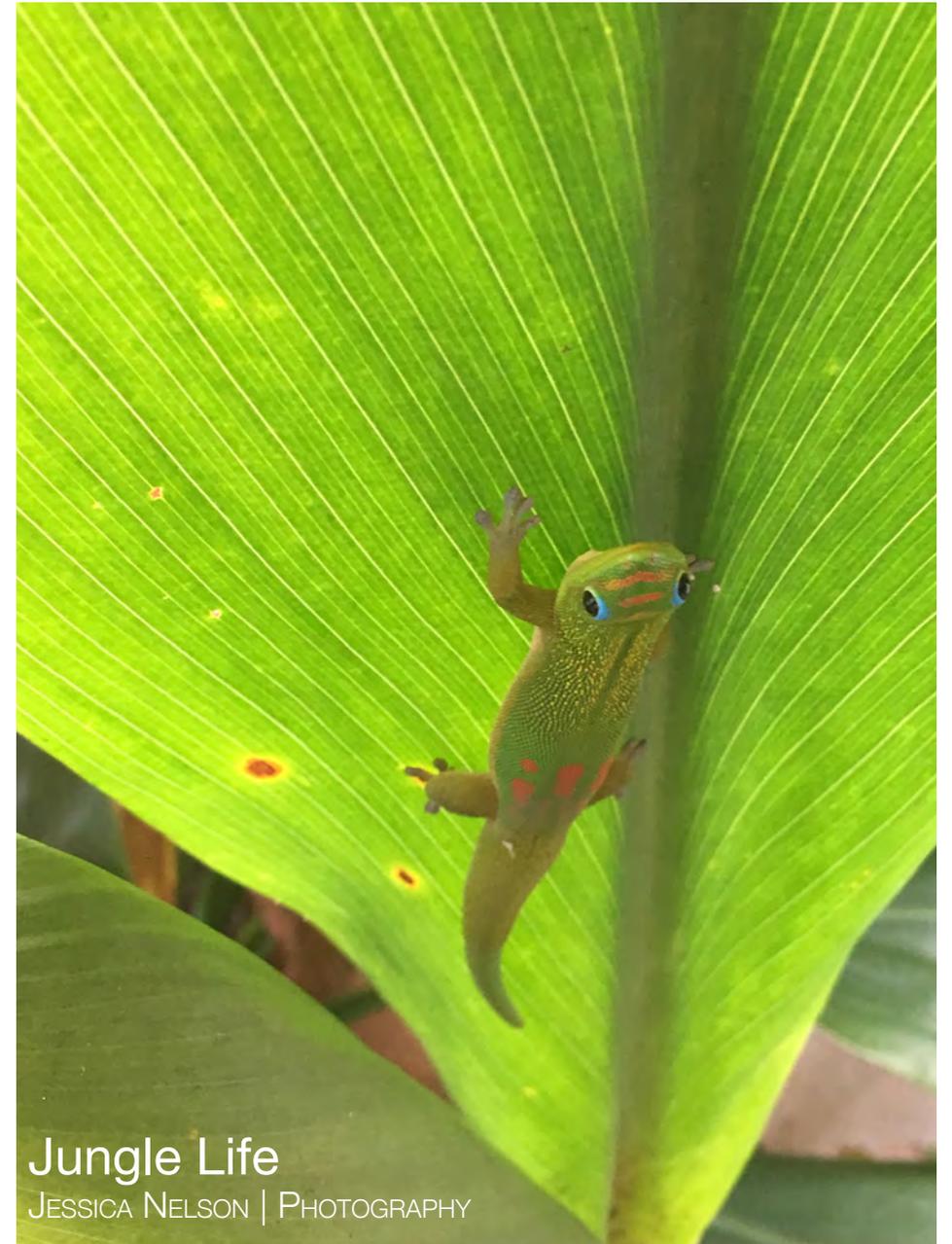
the arboretum

ANNA VAROSY

I am the aspen tree
all consuming and therefore unseeded
as if not calling its name will hide the gnarled flesh
oh so unwelcome in the fertilized plotting
not pretty like the cherry blossoms
who litter the earth with their bio-confetti
as if their roots aren't already strangling me

I envy the dandelions
for they are proud and everywhere
brilliant yellow speckled like buttons on a child's dress
they do not apologize for the space they take up
and they have waged wars for years on those who whisper
weedweedweedweed
under hissing breaths
spitting poison
[converting]
to make a picket-fence-small-town-small-mind yard
they proclaim who they are with open arms and dance in the wind with joy

And I wonder,
do the dandelions reach towards the heavens
or are their roots tangled in mine?
are they praying for me
[just a little more space]
[don't be so scared]
or do they hope I
rot;yummy
feeding off my repression?



Jungle Life
JESSICA NELSON | PHOTOGRAPHY



Discarded

ABIGAIL THOMAS

if squirrels could eat concrete this would be a jungle

ivy persists

reek of pine and trees stare as if they want to scream

leaves only whisper

stomps echo louder on tile than on grass

footprints are so much smaller

spongebob band-aid on the pavement

earth still bleeds

i witnessed a prom here once

my feet are as sore as the girl in the 5-inch heels

*i wonder if we ran
from the same things.*

Untitled

KENZIE KHOURY | PLYWOOD

a star's fate is ours

ALISON LANNING

Mercury retrograde is in Pisces

Spoon-feed me

Sound. A lust for petrichor.

The body shivers laughter
as I, with clumsy

Quivered feet, slick over the

Storm cloud pavement.

Blood of the sky brands its socks

The color of wet sand

The mind cries for any form of reconciling

With winter. Jungles of tension

Form over a head full of desire to forget.

Aching for the pain

That comes before nightfall. I have always been

One million teardrops in an ocean

Of flowers, that broke their jaws and wounded

Their souls. Still I slumber, see that

There is no awakening, there is only the noise

Of life. It draws, harrowing

Inner sunlight, transforming into hurricanes of unruly Dandelions. The mirror is only a
reflection

Of itself, repeats until clocks stop managing time, we stop To feel the stars explode unto
our eyes

Wrap their golden elements around us, blanketed

In the warmth of letting the sun die.



Moonscape

CORINNE NEUSTADTER | PHOTOGRAPHY

Our New World

BENJAMIN RANDALL

A voyage; a journey; a start
Sails set to mast, then off to sea
To discover the virtues of the Earth
hidden valleys, treasure troves, lands unknowing of the sentient touch,
that being the brushes of human influence—transforming, teaching, terrorizing— even
so, creatures from depths unheralded, fauna blossomed from the waters of time, forests
that prevailed the molten centuries, minerals for only the mightiest to collect, all of this
awaits our traveler, so keen is thy,
a sir to take these jewels for his own, only to masque the involvement of p'rtugal inside
his greed, so vile!
a greed so venomous yet sound in *la vida* of Spaniard luxury.

•••

But can such a task, and such gold, and such prosperity
be burdened by only a man shrouded by the cloak of navigation?
The journey is, and has always been, the finest of wine
drunk slowly, almost irritably slowly, down the throat of those that walk, those that
walk, sail, swim; those that struggle under the burning hot sun to thrive. The wine; the
ammo—the fuel of corruption for the nobleman—who lacks nobility 'ut only the mark of
inequity for the commoner—who daren't taste el vino.

•••

Alas, our journeys are but the nooks and facets of life,
hiding under the tongue, shadowed by our truths, and in our very essence; our soul!
Yet, thy sweet Christopher, needn't whisper to echo his malevolence to snowy peaks.
If a journey was ever to be rushed, this was not to hasten
the trip to new frontiers, and a New World
must be cherished, and drunk ever so slowly,
assimilation, deforestation, and inhabitation must happen slowly if life must venture
away from home, but a knave would know this and drink slowly, to take in this long sail.
But no! The chalice was loosened from its mantle, and thirstily devoured,
drop, spitting off the edge of our solo man's chin,

falling with alarming expedience, causing the world to balk at such an action
Foreshadowed as rushed, and rushed it was, as drop after drop of our precious wine
was absorbed by our New World.

The commoner—the firstcomer—fears this vino, sensing the coming wave.

A wave of heartbreak—tsunamis of lustful destruction—crashing down.

With each drop was an egal drop in prosperity, in equity, and horribly,
in Indian life

the Taíno people, shackled to the constraints of the ebony gates of Death,
our navigator toyed with. Bargained, weighted, our navigator with the lives of the
Original Ones.

•••

And sold did he, our navigator, the precious human life that established the very soil that
was so welcoming, so elusive elsewhere, and so valuable to our existence in our New
World.

Sold the Taíno to the inheritance of prejudice, to be extinct, in absolute from our New
World.

Yet on those shores, with trees bearing fruits sugary and sweet, and land beckoning for
hills of plantations,

Yet on that frontier in the Americas,

was our New World.

Not once, twice, thrice

but four ventures it was,

for our navigator, to sail around our blue sphere.

To preach notions of slavery, the banishment of Taíno, and quaking raptures of tyranny,
some say lost was thy, lost was the navigator in our New World
Lost to the monstrosity of incoherent evils, to the mighty coin.

•••

Though, I digress! Our navigator; the man who found and founded
the boat which sailed our ideals,
our hopes, our dreams, and our fate,
carry did thee, across the ocean blue,
many moons ago in a year thus reckoned fourteen-ninety-two.
This is our man, our chaperone, our escort that provided the soil that so righteously
grew us!

Must such great feats come at most ravenous moral dilemmas?
The deaths of many, for the sanctity of generations...
In our blood chalice, there lies but questions.
Questions that beckon to future navigators, to diverse adventurers,
to the most cunning of the mercenary.
To answer moral dilemmas that by any other name are just as sweet as life itself,
clouded by historical satire 'nd arrogant ganadores, casting illusions of Christopher's
venture—
to answer these dilemmas
we must set sail,
At long last, penultimately to
A voyage; a journey; a start—

The Spaceman and Mother Earth

OLIVIA GOOD | COLORED PENCIL



Cycled

CAMILA SILVA MONROE

CHAPTER I: THE FIRST MEMORY

Sometimes, people ask me: “what was your first memory ever?” My first Barbie will often pop into my mind, and then my friends that I’ve known for so long that I cannot really tell when we first met. I have been thinking lately about those answers just to realize how wrong they are. Those are things that marked me, things that give me that nostalgic feeling we all like to have when we try and think about memories and our own past. But, hey, that was not really the question, was it?

I started thinking about the very first moment I can perfectly describe. I was three and a half years old when I broke a kid’s nose. Not an accident, since I intentionally punched the boy who picked on my brother. My weak, little, sweet brother, who was also my best friend. I’m a girl, but no one could really tell. Many words would be used to describe me; “girly” was never one of them. I hated skirts, and with my boyish hair, I was always amongst boys until I turned four and was sent to school. I frequently had some blood on my shirt, usually my own—except for that day.

It’s interesting how the details of my first memory keep coming to my mind once I first pinpointed the occasion as if my brain was trying to protect me. As soon as I surpass that first block, however, everything comes crashing down. As if a crack on a dam just caused a village to flood. I’m telling you this because I also ended up remembering what came after the furious broken-nosed boy’s mother grabbed me by my arm and took me to my dad. He didn’t look at me but said with a shrug: “I thought you had done enough damage when you were a baby.”

Although I was never sure what he was talking about, here’s my guess: I was a very sick baby when I was born. In the second day of my life, the doctors diagnosed me with both pneumonia and bronchitis, which would be dangerous for an adult, but fatal for a little human being that young. They said I would not go past through my second week of life. Apparently, I went against the odds and survived. But that came under a lot of crying and lots of sleep my parents lost over medical bills and the special needs I had. As you can tell, that drove my dad to his limit.

My first days of life determined the life relationship I was going to have with dad.

CHAPTER II: THE MOM

Before you start thinking I was a kid deserving of pity, let me tell you this: I have the best mom ever, and it’s been like that since I can remember. Yes, I know how everyone’s mom is the best mom ever... but, seriously, my mom was THE mom. A teacher at two schools,

leaving our home every single day at 6 am to come back twelve hours later. That woman had enough energy not just to make out the lack of care that I suffered from my dad, but also to be the hero of other fifty kids under her supervision all day, every day. Kids who were living, mostly, the same kind of situation that I was at my home—so you get the importance of someone like my mom in our lives.

I have never enjoyed the female superheroes on my TV. Please, don’t get me wrong... all power to storytellers who go on to tell the world all the amazing journeys of female characters.

Here I am, telling my own story, after all. The explanation for my taste is quite simple: I just had this superwoman at home. How could I ever think an Amazon princess would ever be as good as this woman who hid me in her wardrobe when my dad was angrily seeking to punish me?

More than once, my mom saved my world.

“The explanation for my taste is quite simple: I just had this superwoman at home.”

CHAPTER III: THE BIG SISTER

While I was my little brother’s big sister, I also had a big sister of my own. Three years older than me, she was actually so tiny that nobody would say she was the big sister. Her compassion to others and kind voice were exactly what you would expect just looking at her. Of course, I loved her just as much as I loved my little brother. How could someone not love her, after all? She was also as pretty as a first rose blossoming in the first day of spring, and also as fragile. Being so passive, of course, she could not stand up to my dad’s madness. That’s exactly what made my dad pick her as his favorite kid—and also what just put me more and more like the least favorite one.

Being compared all the time to my sweet sister is probably what made us grow apart.

CHAPTER IV: THE BEST FRIEND

Everyone has that friend that you do not even remember how you have met. Or at least everyone should. It is the kind of friendship that does not need heroic or rare moments to get started, it just starts when no one is paying attention and heroism happens in little gestures, on a daily basis. The friendship simply exists, and you get so used to it, that you cannot see yourself without that person anymore. If one day you grow apart, it feels like your arm is being chopped off.

I have that friend. She was this blonde, kind girl with incredibly bright green eyes. If I believed in angels, that would be like one would look like to me. She was my first girlfriend, and we lived in the same street; since my mom was so busy, it was my friend’s mom who would daily take me to school. Needless to say, my mom felt guilty for not being able to do

that herself. The irony is even her lack of time to perform that task was precisely right for me.

My mom did not have any idea how important those short walks to school would be to my childhood and eventually to my teenage years.

CHAPTER V: THE NANNY

She was in her 20s, just like my mom. Those two could probably be sisters by heart because no other two women have ever shared such a great love for me and my sister. I was around five when I had watched the movie *Mary Poppins* for the first time. From that moment, I have always watched out for my nanny's umbrella. I knew she would probably go flying around using it at some point. She did not, but there was a far more important similarity to *Mary Poppins*.

Just as the famous nanny helped to save the Banks family, my anonymous one gave our family extra time, too.

CHAPTER VI: THE LITTLE SISTER

Ten years after my brother was born, my mom gave birth to the last addition to our broken family. I was eleven when that chubby baby saw this world for the first time. When she came home, I confess I saw some hope for the bitter old man my dad was. For the first time in forever, I saw him smiling for something that was not his soccer team's victories. He was lowering his voice for the first time, too, even if it was only to speak to my baby sister. At one point, I got myself thinking if he was that nice to me when I was that tiny.

Those first six months of my little sister's life were really somewhat peaceful at my home. Not just because dad was better, but also because mom was home all day long on maternity leave. That meant even when my dad exploded for some reason, she was there to make everything smoother by trying to handle it, as quietly and as far from us as it was possible. With four kids, our money was not enough to pay for a nanny anymore, so when mom finally went back to work, my baby sister became my responsibility, since my older sister had a job after school.

I threw my dolls away to start playing with a real, heavy and really crying one instead.

CHAPTER VII: THE LUNCH

Being at home with a baby all day long was nicer than it sounds; I could play with that lovely child, and even had time by myself at home, when I was free from any person's judgment—including my dad's. I was going to school at night, which meant I had no interactions with my dad all day long. It was the best time of my life up until that moment.

Once I got used to—and good at—taking care of my baby sister, my dad thought I was not busy enough. Thus, he gave me one more task: prepare a fresh lunch for him, every day, punctually at 11:45 AM, when he had a break from his ambulance driver's job to get some food. At that point, I had no doubt my dad could feel when I was happy and was determined

to end it. My nightmare started from day one when I cooked the rice too much. When he didn't get the food quality he wanted—which was every day—the humiliation sessions would start. According to him, I was useless, worse than a stray dog. "Not worth the food I pay for you to eat," he liked to say.

My dad never spanked me hard, but I imagine our new daily routine caused me as much or even more pain than a purple eye.

CHAPTER VIII: THE FIRST KISS

I was ten years old when I got my first period, which quickly changed my whole body and personality. The person who looked a lot like a boy was turned into a girly girl at last. As many girls will agree, I started feeling like a grown-up woman with that monthly visit, and slowly started leaving behind any toys and children's games. I also wouldn't play with my brother as much. Three years after my first period, I fell in love for the first time. Handsome and smart, the boy was two grades ahead of me. My crush finally asked me out in February, and we went together to a Mardi Gras party. Between confetti and happy music, he kissed me. That would have been a sweet and nice night if my little brother was not watching me from a distance.

I cannot really say why he told my dad about my kiss. Jealous of his closer sister growing away from him? Maybe. Revenge for being left aside when I repeatedly refused to play with him? Possibly. But I am very sure that no matter which was his reason, if he knew what was waiting for me at home, he would not have even thought about sharing my story with anyone. I had not even turned the lights on when I received the first punch.

CHAPTER IX: THE HIGH SCHOOL

If all the silence imposed by my dad at my house was cruel for some reasons, it also helped me to develop my love for books. That was likely the one thing we could do without making him angry. So, there was little me, reading Shakespeare and science magazines when everyone else was just watching TV. Sorry if I sound a bit arrogant here, but you have to know I grew up in the 2000s and lived in an internet-less countryside town of a developing country, always among people for whom books were something they only saw on the TV. That made me stand out.

Being "the smart one" eventually made me loved by teachers. I was so desperate to be noticed and appreciated by someone... anyone who could make me forget all the ruthless things my dad, every single day, tried to convince me I was. On the contrary to most high schools, mine was my escape, my happy place. Unsurprisingly, I spent as much time as I could there. I went to become president of the student body, captain of the basketball team, brain of the class, life of the party.

What my dad said would stop hurting me so much when I discovered a whole world of people out there to tell me he was lying.

CHAPTER X: THE UNIVERSITY

My biggest dream then was to become a successful “brain doctor” someday... I was not really sure if I wanted to be a neurosurgeon or psychiatrist, but I knew I wanted to study that fascinating part of the human body. On a sunny morning of a Tuesday—which I remember so well—I received the “thick package” telling me I was the winner of a full-ride scholarship that would allow me to go to the state university, famous for its coveted medical school.

Three days later, another one of those letters. Now, I was invited to join the best journalism school in the country, also with scholarships. This time, however, in a big city, far away from home.

Any dream became small close to the one of finally getting away from my dad.

CHAPTER XI: THE GOODBYE

In a small farewell party, I had said goodbye to most of my friends and family. Dad was not there. My bus to the new exciting life I craved would leave that night. Mom was the only one standing at the station. I hopped in the bus and grabbed a seat close to the window, so I could see her eyes red and puffy after a day of crying with the thought of one of her babies going away—a first for her. But my eyes would soon fixate into someone else.

Seven feet behind my mom, I saw him. On his driver’s uniform, dad had on his face an expression that was completely new to me. As a choreographed event, the bus engine started as soon as I stood up to leave. While I sat back down, I glanced once again at the window to the figure of my dad. This time, his lips contorted into some sort of a broken smile. In his eyes, I read the apology that I’ve never expected, but desperately craved.

I didn’t know then, but that would be the last memory I would have of my father.



Sunrise on the Rocks
CAROLINE McPHILLIPS | PHOTOGRAPHY

Piano Man

CAITLYN IMFELD | PHOTOGRAPHY



between you and me

CHARLIE DILLON

in most places, the sun takes less than five minutes to rise / we stay on the green mountainside,
watching, for much longer / i am dressed in grey sweats / from head to toe and / i catch your eyes
in the morning light / a breath / and i realize / i don't have to sacrifice comfort for your adoring
gaze / the sun has been in the sky for a dozen minutes, maybe / we can't seem to get enough of the
view / or perhaps / we can't seem to get enough of the moment / the stillness away from the city /
suspended in minutes before the morning dew disappears / before august sun drags us back to
reality / the reality that / we are both counting, dreading the suns rising until i / leave you.

in any other reality / any other version of this universe / we never meet / does that scare you? /
does it make you want to be careful / or reckless with our love? / in any other reality / we don't
meet in summer's last breaths / she chokes and dies / quietly / and we both go to our separate cities
/ without knowing this simple tenderness / i think chance scares me / and i am afraid / in the
distance between us / you might grow farther at heart / and not fonder.

Apocalypse

ALISON LANNING

He was my world, and for that
the world was a glass globe.
It kept me compact, tiny as I was,
one second a place of safety, then
A tumultuous blizzard. It was afraid
of letting others inside, afraid
To ashame and disappoint. The pine
needles had fallen, an everlasting autumn
The sun shined behind the clouds
aching at the thought of being remembered.
The roots of the flowers—their shaken,
forlorn petals lying in the crisp earth—
Had withered into the veins of dying fairies
no longer fit for the stars above heaven.
The climate became dusty, and the sand
scorched my eyes with the mercy of
Lightning currents, hot blisters
that scathed my caved-in chest;
It was an infinite midnight
where the clock struck and rang as I waited
With weary eyes for the morning hour
for a baby blue sky I had once seen
In a demented photograph... a sky
I'm not sure ever really existed.

Seeing Red

CHARLIE DILLION | PEN & INK



Oh, Where My Feet Will Wander
KENZIE KHOURY | CEMENT, YARN, WAX & WIRE



Toes of Ganesha

KEELAN KENNY

I was born standing on the toes of Ganesha:
Indian god of thresholds. I am wet
from another life, from a liminal womb

whose water broke too early. Coconut milk
balanced on my tongue, black net cigarette.
I was born standing on the toes of Ganesha.

I spent my days balanced on the doorstep between
two homes, surrounded by old film cassettes
from another life, found in a liminal womb.

I stood in hurricane doorways, sucking on sugar
thumbs, lighted by an ambrosia silhouette.
I was born standing on the toes of Ganesha.

I bounced baby fat legs against a wicker toy
chest, a face of glee and mischief: a perfect duet
from another life, born from a liminal womb.

These thresholds keep me steady, balanced as I
teeter-totter on the counter of our kitchenette.
I was born standing on the toes of Ganesha,
God from another life, born from a liminal womb.



The Calm Before the Storm

BETHANY COMINKSY | PHOTOGRAPHY

The Performance: One Time Only

EMESHE AMADE

Missouri heat means to breath
lobelia amphibiously—
to feel wet seeds of sweat plum
on my lips.
Letting plump
beads from my cheeks seep onto my tongue.
Sun an obese aunt at a family reunion.

Her stifling hug means it's July— Sunday morning.
The clouds feed out across the sky;
A magician pulls white handkerchiefs from his sleeve.
I know he means to please me.

Leaping in a blue velvet infinity
with a flourish,
he whispers— *The card you picked may be misery,
but the morning is a golden coin that will vanish.*

Open Letter

Zach Simon

Wonders of the future
will never come to pass
if there isn't one.

Why say more?
My generation
has already said
more than enough.



The Crest
Jamie Henry | Acrylic

Yang

AIDAN LEWIS

Running

With pupils full of desolation and brine tears
Sloughing confusion to flaked lips.
On my knees, I gape
Placidly up to the root I have been searching for.

Gasping

Feeling my neck as frayed leathery reins
I give a thick, weathered
Glance back to the transient
Footprints that delivered me here.
All that I can afford.

Lost

Palms cracked with servitude
Slump to the ground as sails
Keeping the storm at bay.
I look ahead
Just to complete the circle.
But confusion has been replaced by understanding.

Tao

With a thump,
That I thought should have been louder,
I roll onto my back.
Burying my chains.
Filling my desolation.

*All is done
without doing.*





Xy

MAE TICE

This is a man's world and I'm living in feminine reality
where my choice can be found on the next ballot
and I've only ever met first ladies.

In this strange place
my body is my greatest weapon
and equally my downfall

because they can't say no
or hear it either.
When I scream there's silence.

They will walk free
when we all fall down
and everyone who's anyone will weave lies like the baskets their mothers made.

We get no justice.
They get no redemption.
After all, you don't need saving if you're not a sinner.

Because the judge wears pants
and he sees no evil,
speaks no sentences,
male reprieval.

dry

HERMAN LUIS CHAVEZ

- I. as a mirror
lost in the flesh, cracking
with the ferocity of my
father's whip, loud, deep
valley-like.
- "free from tears" is a promise
left unkempt
by both him and yourself;
my irises shattered, rather,
from abandonment.
- my skin left pock-marked
is a calendar event,
ringing-dinging
after the morning dew,
absorbed, photosynthesized,
made to last eighteen years—
- scantly-clad we met
(rather he introduced himself)
and then the appointments became
scarce with the rainfall.

- III. choking
(a chocolate chanson)
was the sound of my mother's pleas,
please please pleas that plea for
only one ear
(not even two)
to descend from the
storm-clouds
- the second son despised the
mosaic of mooses that his brother made
of this drought and
so he too
rose
to the thorny storm-clouds
and offered wine to the thirsty.
- VII. and this is his body,
which he gives to us,
he relinquishes,
he sacrifices every day for us.
this body is untouched by man
and by woman
and even by creature
but is molested and shafted and thorned
dripping
with himself.
we will feast on the untouched man
who left no part of his kindness
without self-colonization.

X. I took a vote of confidence in myself when I sent my pigeon to deliver the news that yes, I was officially upset, and I stamped this saffron card with oozing wax to make sure your dick knew it would fast for a fortnight. After I sent this card you assured me you received it. Precisely two weeks later I found the same card, unopened, in your briefs. The wax seal matched that of the two-hundred-ninety-one other cards I had sent you so I did not know which grievance you had failed to address. In eight-months time I visited the post-office to cast yet another vote. Against myself. That night I returned to my bedroom, where the pile of four-hundred-thirty-nine cards (perhaps ten to fifty were missing) lay, unopened. Despite their identical appearances I found the single card I sent you prior to the fortnight following your betrayal, and opened the card. Sure enough I found my lettering, thick and deep, condemning you of the grievance I'd suspected I'd made. This was card number four I had discovered with exact precision after I had collected the four-hundred-thirty-nine I could locate. With all four cards, my fingers became gripping only once I had voted against myself. This was curious, for there were four-hundred-thirty-five more cards, and the post-office was the next county over. The next night I resolved to build a bonfire.

This bonfire was grand and large. I had bought the finest firewood, hired two white men to drag it from the forest to my home. Together the three of us shoveled the cards into the fire. I was wearing all white, chiffon around my neck and my belly-button. The two men wore white but it had been stained by the few times they had fallen onto the freshly-mown grass as they brought me my firewood. As we filled the bonfire, the smoke enveloped our dresses and my home. We became engulfed in soot and the fire began to disappear. We made efforts to apagate the smolder, but the fumes made the boys break out in boils and fall dead within seconds. I however remained unaffected by the air, other than my outfit, and sat on the fire. It went out, and to my dismay, I discovered that the envelopes had been completely burnt, but the letters themselves remained intact. I marched inside and left the corpses with the cards.

Within my home, I entered my bathtub and resolved to mourn the dead men, the ruined dress, and hole left in my lawn. I went to the faucet and eagerly wrenched the handle towards me, begging the flow of water. Unfortunately there appeared to be an issue with the plumbing because no water came

through. I resolved to make my own. I stood in front of my mirror, still sooted in my white white dress. My resolve meant nothing because the bathroom's counter remained just as unforgiving as my bathtub. I found this upsetting, and sat on the toilet.

Unfortunately the toilet offered me no respite either. Once seated upon it I was overcome with the desire to release my sadness from its hold on my intestines. As I could not mourn, I ripped off my white dress and pushed all of myself out of my anus. Luckily, all excrement relieved me of my symptoms. The physical exertion was quite taxing, though, and while I thought I could cause an anal fissure and bleed out right then and there, my healthy digestive system saved the walls of my rectum from sure devastation.

I found myself quite exhausted from the day's activities and thus resolved to take a respite from this suffering. Also, I felt the need to honor my body's courage. I walked to my bedside, and picked a walnut from the gold-plated bowl on my nightstand. I cracked the egg open between my pinkies and caused severe nerve damage to the short fingers. After ingesting the product of the cracking I sat upon my bed. I called in the waitstaff but after a few moments of silence was reminded that they had been instructed to remain off the property for the remainder of the day, so as to avoid witnessing the bonfire. This was disconcerting to me.

As my pinky fingers throbbed with the massive undertaking of cracking the walnut, I resolved to take a brief respite from the great suffering. Having already stripped myself of my chiffon dress, I slid between my bedsheets, the soft linens stroking my battered skin. I let out a sigh of relief and placed my head gently upon my long, fluffed pillow. Above me the four corners of my canopy welcomed my return. None of the five of us could have known how long it had been. And none of us would ever know. I slipped the paring knife into my heart with only a whimper. The corners of my canopy bed were delightfully surprised—not even a drop of blood had stained the chiffon sheets.

XI. The villagers rejoiced at
the coming of the rain for
it had been nearly two whole

decades from which the drought on
their unseemly kingdom had
so gleefully descended.

Seven minutes into the
storm, the clouds began to clear
and the poor people shed tears

for their dying crops once more.
Upon the eighth minute the
clouds stood still in the skylight

and began to drip a drop
every nine or ten minutes.
Here my religion was born.

Hands of Fire

MARLENA GIANNONE | PHOTOGRAPHY





Portrait of a Mountain Goat

RYAN SCHMIDT | PHOTOGRAPHY

