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Honors Literary Magazine Spring 2021
Colorado State University



SPIRITUS MUNDI

A COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Spring 2021

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Editor's Note

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 Diane Burton. Diane, thank you for giving us your constant support and sharing with us your winning personality. We wish you the best in the next chapter of your life.

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HANNAH PRINZI

Growing Up

The faded bruises on my knees remind me of falling
And tripping and laughing --
My antebellum.
The hidden scars and stretch marks on my stomach remind me of crying
And tearing myself apart --
The war zone.
And yet, the faint laugh lines around my mouth remind me of loving --
And living --
A peace offering.

The art of growing up
Is the art of war.
But the trenches of scars and skin
Now bloom little, lovely
flowers.

ABIGAIL THOMAS

Elevation

it's harder to breathe
but I feel *lighter*
dizzy and gut-wrenching
vertigo forewarns
it is a whisper,
a caress *whipped* away
wind unforgiving and cold
I pretend not to hear
because the goosebumps make me feel
alive the ice in my lungs feels *fresh*
I'm closer to the stars

but I'm not there yet

ASHLEY GERAETS

Purgatorio in Flight

Multimedia



SARAH MENDUS

Words

Watch how I conjure, how I string paragraphs on silver wires and weave palaces with my syllables.

Tell me, what would you like to see?

I can make you come alive with strength, your scarred hands brandishing rusty swords and your shoulders wrapped in war paint. You will be powerful. Mountains will crumble around you as seas rage and drums echo, and kings will kneel at your feet.

Something else, perhaps?

Close your eyes for a moment and I can bring the glossy blueprints of your imagination to life. With feathery wings you will outrun the moon, touching every contour of the earth and sky. Your home will be the elegant wilderness of space, stardust tangling in your hair as you wade through galaxies and skate on the shoulders of constellations.

Not quite to your liking?

Here, instead come sit with me as I paint for you an oasis of serenity. I will draw from the depths of the city a meadow glazed in dew and elegant greens. A place where flowers are draped in feathery yellows and a golden mist hangs in the trees. Gentle songs will fill your ears, the whispers of hummingbirds and raindrops braided together into darling melodies.

You will be safe.

You will know peace.

CLaire Douglas

Architectural Defiance

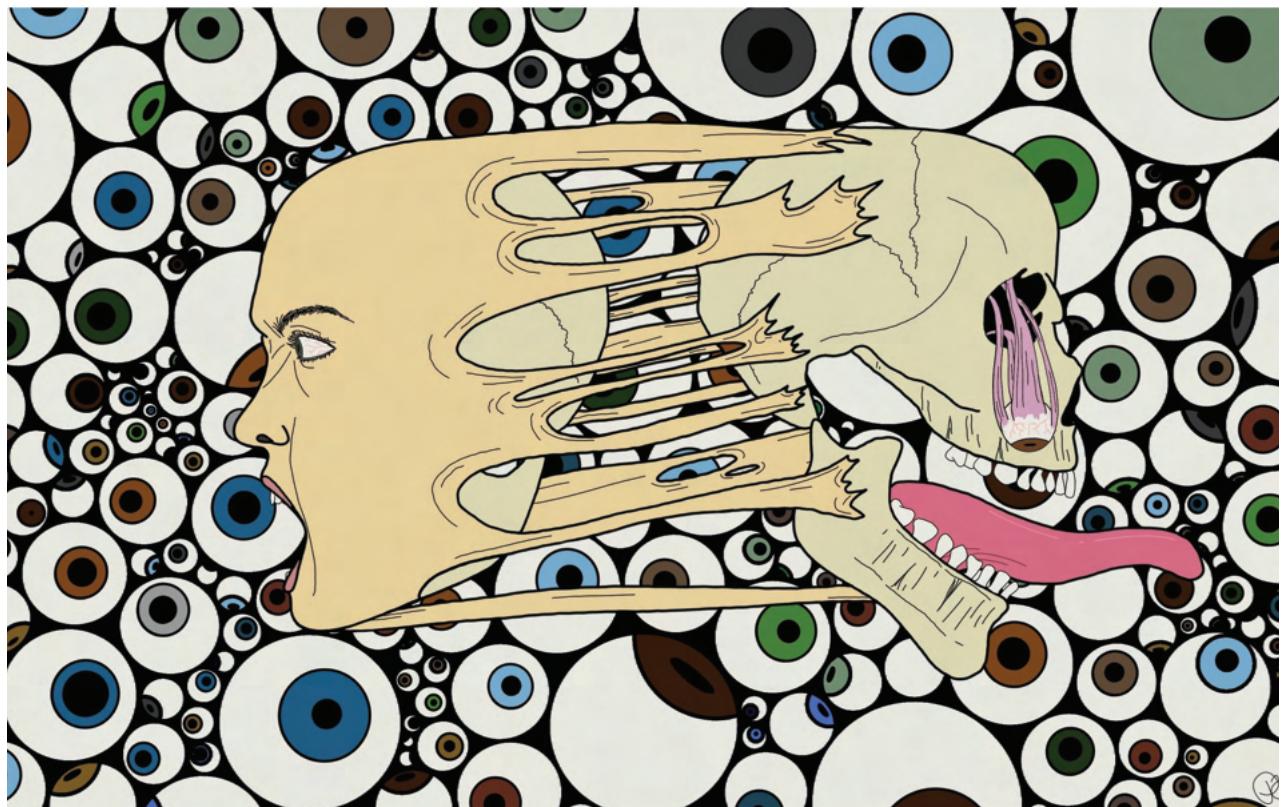
My body is not a playground
for your grubby, little hands to climb over.
I am a castle, a tower.
I stand supported by my thoughts, my feelings
I am a fortress,
made by my own emotion and conviction.
I cannot be felled by the ignorance and anger of men.
My skin and bones are beautifully and wonderfully made,
but by nature, my only God.



PEYTON HARPER

Deadly

Digital



ANDREA RUSSELL

Hope Is In Our Hands

Photography



HOLLY RYAN

Graveyard

Dark, gray, overcast.

Snow falls softly upon the frozen ground,
like powdered sugar upon a solemn world.
I am not shadowed,
nor cold.

I am not sheltering from the frost that claims the world.

I breathe deeply,
feeling the icy flakes coat my throat, singing the songs of winter.

I wrap the snowflakes around me in a sheath of white remembrance,
frozen in time and space,
and there is nothing that changes that moment where not only is the world silent,
but I am silent.

At peace and content to feel the icy burn that scorches me,

I fall into the soft embrace that claims even the strongest.

I am not forsaken, nor forgotten - I am remembered.

The hallowed ground remains open for the last of us to fall into,
and I am too exhausted to fight this darkness.

I will fall, I will bleed, I have sacrificed.

Evil claims the broken edges and dangerous heart,

and it is useless to pound away at what makes you sick.

Not even the light of the heavens can save the twisted soul.

Bring forth the grave, for I am coming.

CADE HEBERT

Your Palate

Leafy drops of chamomile and rosebud
sink, fully fleshed and flushed in their surroundings,
lying in wait for the warm flicker of water.

Steely silk-like punctures of structure
scream at the world, and my heart
follows suit, while fruits so pungent,
so irreplaceable, sting my senses
and picture you in full view,
salt-rimmed lips touching over-stretched skin,
heedless to fleshly desires of where
and when.

When is now, and leaves of dust softly grunt,
Maintaining their pairs of collapsed lungs. Flavors
heave inward, like a child tugging in their
breath before plunging into waves of
suffocation. All the while,
aromas extend contagious glows,
trying to find their betrothed
in crowds of essence, among
the chaos. And
you, the plague
to my palate

You
have rearranged. You long for a
new tang, a breath of life
I couldn't bring.

The aromas have found one another, but
you charge your splintering sword straight through my skull.
Now I sit, disturbingly close to

death's dark cloak,
blood sloshing to the ground,
waiting around to see if my life will
linger, as zestful odors do, or snap its fingers to
detract each lifeless limb of its legacy.

We are all just waiting to see if the tea has steeped.
In vain,
of course, letting the hoarse, raspy, voice of
realization knock at the door. Tastes have settled,
nestling warmly against one another's
soundless shapes, projecting echoes
of ghosts
left to suffer in the sun for far too long.

What is done,
is *done*,
and leaves of sog are laid to waste, washed
end to end, joined by the ones who
found solace in survival, the ones who
tossed a note of good riddance on a doorstep.

And I *choose*
to sip proudly,
stretching full lips towards the residue. You see,
no weather, no rain,
no swords of steel strength, no blasphemies of taste,
will take this warmth away.

Seeds of Shape

I think without even realizing it we tend to search that exist of a seashell, But what is a coincidence and Does that count since twenty What comes next in the even matter anymore I keep changing I

for patterns innately the seeds of in nature like the shape a sunflower, the spirals in a pinecone... what is a pattern? Can they one is technically two sequence? Does it since I how decide to count?

coexist? Can I fit 21 words on this line? words? Does it matter?

Does it

GRACE BERNHART

Time Traveler

Photography



IZABELLE HOOD

The Boy Who Loves Cheese Naan

I stepped out into the negative 10-degree weather to a smiling, rosy-cheeked boy. He took my hand, leading me to the warmth of his Jeep. It was a very cold Valentine's Day, with record temperatures for our frosty little town in South Dakota. The below-freezing temperatures and living more than 500 miles away did not stop us from meeting on this lovely day.

I wore a long, flowy black dress that had wooden buttons up the front and a silver heart necklace that he had given me earlier that day. I layered the necklace with another silvery compass necklace that he gave me before I left for college — so I would “always find my way back to him.” His navy-blue sweater was layered over a floral shirt that he wore two years before, paired with khakis and his favorite belt that had the pattern of a rainbow fish.

The drive to my favorite Nepalese restaurant, Kathmandu, was slow in the white snow. Time seemed to stop as we watched the big, white flurries of snow land on the windows. We drove around the block a few times before landing on a parking spot in front of the restaurant. He opened my door, and once again, I stepped out into the freezing cold. We walked quickly into the restaurant, feeling as though our breath had been taken away by the freezing air of the evening.

Dinner was pleasant, spicy, and sweet. Our waitress had a Nepalese accent that he could not understand, so I ordered for him. He would try so hard to listen to the sweet woman, but he could never understand a word she said, not ever. I had the buttered chicken, and he had the lamb masala. On the side, we ordered the variety naan breadbasket, and he wanted all the cheese naans.

I pleased him by telling him that all the cheese naans were his, making a wide smile spread across his face as he chuckled, “I love you.”

Desert wasn't asked for; our bellies were filled with the sweet taste of mango lassis and iced chai teas. There was naan left over and he boxed it up, savoring joy for later. He took care of the bill, as always, and we were off.

We spent the evening laughing in his room and photographing one another in our nice clothes. He had many different cameras that he liked to play with and show off. First, he photographed me in black and white film with a 35mm Canon, hoping to pause our moment in a frame of time. My black dress would contrast nicely against his grey walls. Next, we moved to the digital camera as we posed with serious faces and mysterious smiles.

The night was ending as we slow-danced in his room. He twirled me around, gliding with the movement of my black dress. I stared into his brown, steady eyes as he stared into mine.

Trying to escape the burdening thought that I leave in the morning, he asked, "Is this the dress you would wear if I died?"

Bursting into tears, I said, "Why would you say that?"

He quickly tried to cover up the remark as he held me tightly and assured me that he was only joking — that I was the sweetest for taking him so seriously. I knew he was joking, but the idea of leaving him, even the next day, haunted me in the same way death haunts the living. Being so far away from him, daily, was so terrible, I couldn't fathom the idea of him dying. His grounding soul finally calmed my heart — for the time being. He took me home and I immediately fell asleep from the emotional joys and sorrows that resided from the evening.

The next day I wandered over to his house, down the street, before leaving for the airport. I enclosed myself around him outside his house. Tears fell from my cheeks and froze when they hit the ground. My frozen tears etched in his driveway; he told me not to cry. I tried to be brave, to smile or to laugh. He smiled his generous smile as he repeated that he loved me. I let go of him as I walked back to the car and took off in the pure white snow of the morning.

JESSICA SHERWOOD

The True MLB Hit King

Multimedia



PEYTON DAILEY

Caged

He said he loved her because she was wild, free, and strong.

But he wanted her to be his unconditionally.

He tried to cage her wild heart, her kindred spirit, her unfettered strength, and put her in his box;

His box being a rather formidable one with four strong walls, three bedrooms, a kitchen, a two-car garage, and a modest backyard.

So he acted upon his desire and took her from her kingdom and brought her into his.

At first he was radiant, glowing with pride at the very thought of his accomplishment: capturing the stark, beautiful, exotic spirit.

But as time passed, she began to wilt, transforming into another creature entirely.

A quiet, uninterested, domestic creature content to live in the box, learning to love the very box she once despised.

She no longer yearned to venture beyond the four walls.

The box that once seemed to have locks to keep her inside, now seemed to have locks to keep everything wild, free, and strong outside.

The man grew tired and frustrated with her, no longer knowing who the woman had become.

But what he never came to realize was that it was he who had changed her very nature, broken her wild spirit, and tamed her strength by bringing her into the box, the one she never wanted to inhabit in the first place.

He now despised her with the same ferocity that she once despised the box, and he yearned for her former self: an ideal of the past, crushed by the very act of trying to possess and tame her wildness rather than loving it in its natural form and choosing to maintain this love while letting her remain free.

CLARISSE NADEAU

The Destruction of Gaia

Coughing,
Gasping,
She pleads.
Burning,
Blazing,
She chokes.
Melting,
Thawing,
She drowns.

“Gaia,” they say,
“What has become of you?”
“Gaia,” they entreat,
“What can we do?”

Moments pass,
thoughts churning,
Gaia responds, “Love me again.”

Silence.

“But why did you stop?”
She cries,
“Why did you fill me with filth,
deforest my lands,
pollute my oceans,
exterminate life,
defile my beauty?”

Frozen,
they stare,
pondering.

Is their existence worth the devastation humanity has wrought to Mother Earth?

KEELAN KENNY

Chosen Skin

As a child I was able to morph forms whenever I wished. I lived amongst a pack of fellow wolves within a hierarchical system. I ran with a herd of wild horses whose golden hooves pounded against the Plains of Abraham.

In the third grade I registered that my essence was inextricably tethered to my body and suddenly I was unable to embody any persona. The body that I found myself in resembled a hollowed out gourd. Perhaps a calabash or a muskmelon.

It's an odd sensation to be tethered to one body. Before I had matched other people's personalities in an attempt to understand how the internal riot of cacophony and cataclysm makes a human.

Color me impressed. She's a chameleon. A harmonization of the room around her.

I prefer to be an outside observer. Some might label this depersonalization disorder. Others may distill it down to empathy. But I would rather try on different skins.

I find myself in the comforting embrace of disaster—the destroyer of skin. A snake finds sweet relief in the process of desquamation and the rebirth of its largest organ. Find space for the remembrance of past skins.

She's a self-started wildfire. An ember. A swivel-eyed thunderstorm. A droplet.

This chosen skin evades me. Coaxing me into dissociation. The closest thing to childhood bliss. And so I meet this pilgrimage with acquiescence—mouth open and chest bare.

PEYTON HARPER

Entangles

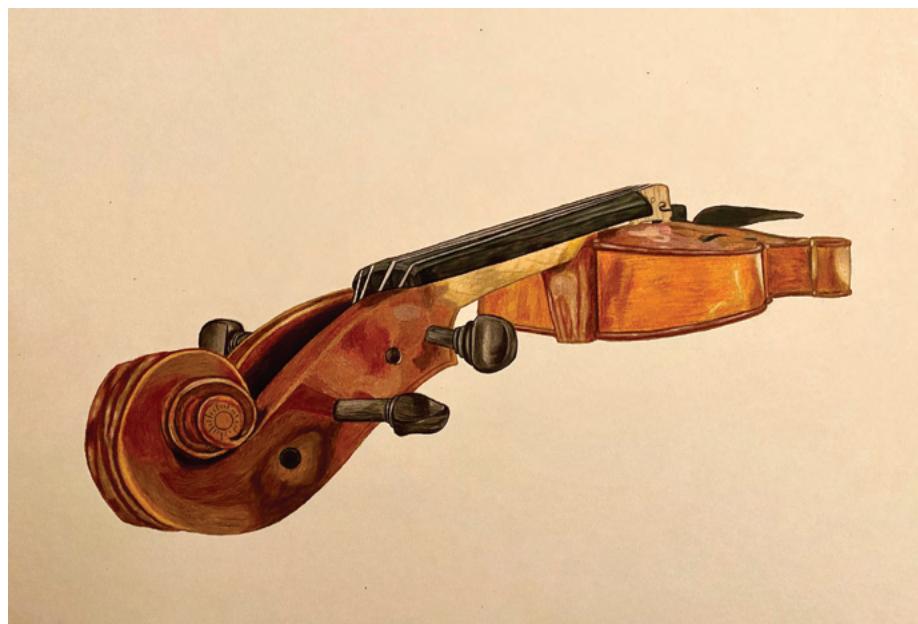
Pen



SARAH NESS

Violin

Colored Pencil



RILEY LIMBAUGH

My Grandfather's Pipe

The old pipe lies
Squat in my hand,
A distant memory of fire and briar.
Smoke curls from its lip
Now as in decades past.
A warmongers pipe,
That of the unforgiven.
Its owner among the dead.
A reaper in his time,
A proclamation of war
Rested in his hand as in mine.
Old and brittle, yet still it works.
Its char a sign of days gone by.
Bites in the stem from a jaw other than my own.
A jaw steely set
A jaw from Normandy.
The blood from its owners' hands has been absorbed by the wood.
And now in my hand it rests.
Now in my own jaw the smoke settles.
What duty was felt by my former?
What drive did he feel
Which is now on my heart?
A pipe is a memory.
A memory of the old tobacco soaked in its pores.
A memory of teeth and saliva.
Its butt and stem show its use.
I am a mark in the line of its tradition.

BRANDON LOWRY

Conversation with the Elm

I.

She said we should talk.
And honestly, I've waited for this
moment for a while now.
I've painted you probably 200 times,
you always creak into my frame.

II.

I have so many questions:
Do my dreams float beyond my pillow,
tickling your branches along their way? and
have you seen nightmares like those?
Are you scratching my window to say I'll be fine?

III.

I probably seem silly to you,
worrying so much
about loss and fear and chance.
I bet you embrace the lightness
as your last leaf falls.

IMANI VONTOURE

Extremes of Faith

She presented herself proudly to the sun,
Challenging him for all he stood for.
For his laws only served man,
And the rest were tired of it
If she were to fall fighting a God
Then that God was not as merciful as man made him to be

ERYNN COMINSKY

Daisies

Photography



ANDREW BENNETT

Hollow Twilight

Hollow sunlight
From a hollow sun
Drawn out over my eyes like a pale film

Hollow moonlight
From a hollow moon
Watching the bitter breeze blow
With steady ignorance of its bite

Days and nights have fused
And a twilight gravity tugs me half-heartedly
Towards the earth
My body is neutral to the soil
My heart is neutral to the skies

I rotate lazily with the tides and the stars
As the moon sinks into a listless coma
As the sun watches with vacant eyes
And revels in its own ennui

I am surrounded by stars

I'm tied to an unmanned rowboat
As we float beside each other
Across a sea without waves
Neither of us move
It is always twilight here
The day and night are in stalemate
As both settle to yield
The rowboat would sink
If the water were bothered to board

I am still surrounded by stars

Why are there stars twinkling out at twilight?
Have I misunderstood them?
Have the stars taken refuge here as well -
Refuge from the day's and the night's boundless apathy?
Perhaps, they're still capable of suffering; of beating back the world's fog.
They have protected their battered smiles better than I, it seems,
But though they have followed me here,
There is no soul in sight to bear a mountain of dispassion.

However, I am surrounded by stars.

SAMANTHA MAYE CLARK

Moonset at Loch Vale

Photography



Lone Rock

Photography



MARLENA GIANNONE

A Moment of Magic (*in a world of green*)

One of the most magical days of my life
can be told only in moments

*(you can't see all the stars
but you know they're there)*

I arrived in the dark
a long drive on a windy road
trees everywhere

The world was green and I
was merely a small entity passing it by

I entered a house of vines
and was handed one bottle of warmth
after another

*(stay with me
let's drink this poison together)*

I watched as a boy
lit fires in his hands
only to throw them to the sky
and witness them burn

*(we're all a little bit afraid of fire
but he was least afraid)*

For a moment
I was scared the green world
would ignite and turn
orange and red

But instead
the orange and red
fell down to the earth
and faded to black

*(they faded like my mind did
slowly then all at once)*

All I remember after that
were warm embraces
and dancing
so much dancing

with unsteady steps
into the depths of darkness

*(I knew its true colors
I wasn't scared)*

As the world spun around me
I smiled
closed my eyes
and was tucked in

*(“I'll tell you a bedtime story,” she said
and before I knew it, I was asleep)*

A cocoon
equipped with new knowledge
of the earth
ready to be born again

*(until next time
world of green)*

RYAN SCHMIDT

Kissing Moose

Photography



CECILIA KASTNER

I hope, for your sake, that Heaven is real

Lay down, lovely thing, in your bed of flowers
The Earth welcomes you with wide open arms.
Your muscles and bones, they deserve to rest.
The beat of your heart pauses forever,
in your chest.
Survival became tiresome,
I saw how you fought hard for light.
You trudged on and on until you
just couldn't, anymore.

Now, you don't have to fight.

I pray with every inch of me,
to whoever's listening
That you are sleeping, blissfully.

Rest, soft angel, in your bed of leaves.
Those eyes of yours deserve to see
only beautiful things.

The cards you were handed
Weren't dealt with much care.
The weight on your small shoulders
Was so much to bare.
But you dealt with them gracefully,
Thoughtfully, with might.
And laughed about it all
Until you just couldn't, anymore.

I trust that you did what felt right.

I will with every breath left in me
That you are sleeping, now, peacefully.

We are better for having known you, delicate child.
Your absence is a hole I will feel
For the rest of my waking hours.

The world loves you.

ANDREA RUSSELL

Reflection

Photography



SARAH MENDUS

Extinction

Yellow light filled Death's office, catching on his brass candelabras and cluttered shelves. His massive desk was crowded with scrolls and dockets, the soft tacking of a typewriter echoing as Death recorded the day's losses under a mist of cigar smoke. The ringing of a rotary phone echoed through the room and Death paused to lift its receiver. The voice on the other end was quick and concise — he knew how Death was annoyed by unnecessary words. Death acknowledged the news with little more than a grunt, well acquainted with this particular kind of loss. Another animal species gone. Not gone, though — gone was too passive a word. It didn't account for the violence of a species being killed by human negligence.

Death rose from his leather armchair and made his way to the Extinction Gallery where the loss could be properly tallied, pondering the situation as he went. The humans wouldn't survive this behavior, this cancer growing inside of them. They couldn't see it festering under their golden suits and diamond rings and they wouldn't until it was too late. Their destructive habits would mangle the planet until it couldn't sustain life, killing creatures that had been there for centuries before ultimately killing mankind. Someday, they would see what they'd done, they would see their headstones on the horizon, but despite their panicked scrambling, they won't be able to save themselves. With an empty expression, Death added the newly extinct species to the Gallery's wall, one of thousands yet to come.

CLARISSA HERNANDEZ JEPPESEN

I am

I am scarred for life and waiting for the sky to close my wounds,
I wonder if I will ever give in again and find someone whose love is true.
I hear the Moon cry every night for the lost love that never could,
I see the Sun shine bright every morning without any kind of clue.
I want to pull them together and smile because I am the reason of what should–
I am scarred for life and waiting for the sky to close my wounds.

I pretend to be happy, even when my world is tumbling down,
I feel like nobody else should know I am not wearing a crown.
I touch the stars and remind myself that there is still hope,
I worry that the Moon will give up and forget what is to love.
I cry just to think that the Sun chose another Moon.
I am scarred for life and waiting for the sky to close my wounds.

I understand that the universe was not meant to fall in love,
I say love has no boundaries – but that is just something to control my thoughts.
I dream that the Moon will find a way to give it another shot,
I try to go with the universe – but I guess that is just something I do not trust.
I hope I grow up to believe that I did everything I could –
Hi, I am the Moon,
I am scarred for life and waiting for the sky to close my wounds.

ASHLEY GERAETS

Drowning in blue, drowning in black

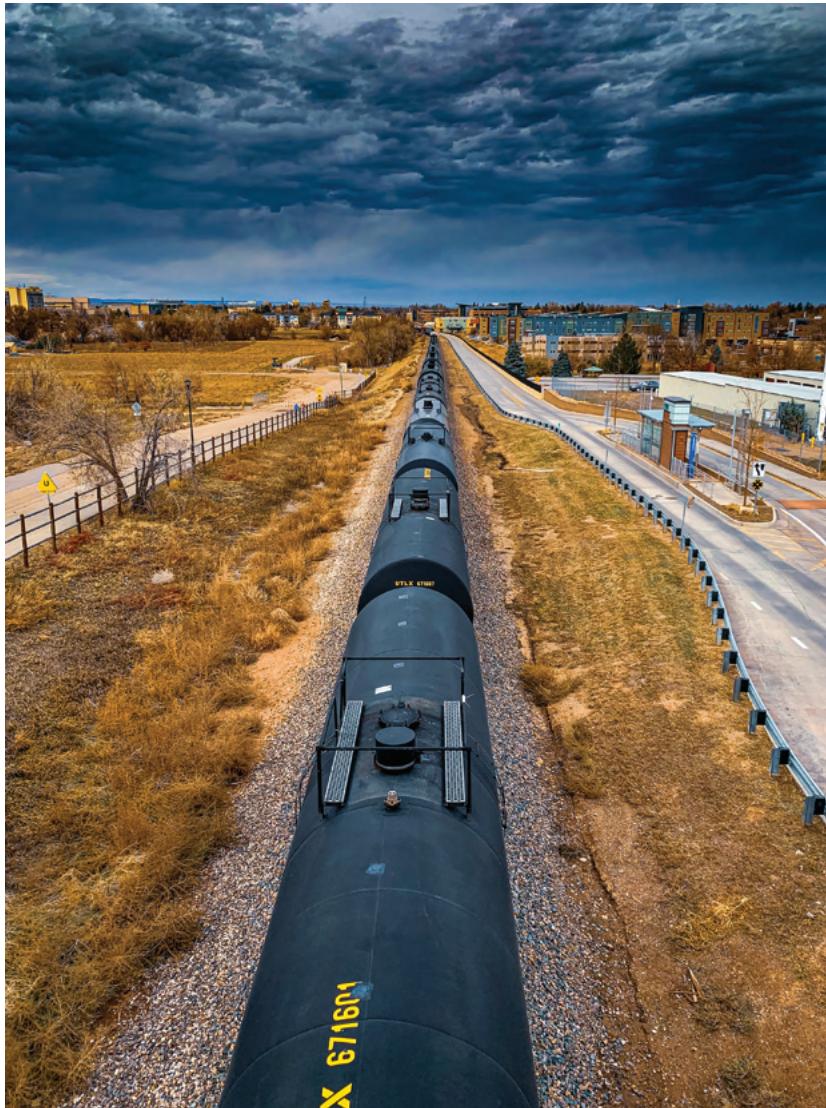
Multimedia



JACOB LERNER

Shipping Out

Photography



NATALIE MONTECINO

Praying for Peace

Photography



ABIGAIL THOMAS

it is 3 a.m. and i've realized my biggest fear

i have my mother's lips but my father's tongue,
his eyes, her lashes, different shades
i am nothing of my own but rather
an amalgam, just like my nose

no more like one than the other.
i am nothing and everything.

the result of two puzzle pieces jammed
together, torn apart, ripped and then
re-aligned, the image distorted, a little
forced yet not out of place

my siblings and i are The Image.
i wonder if they remember what we looked like before.

i have never seen closure, a clean break
i have witnessed fragments of bones and
splints and slings, no medication and
i am the one with the bruises

she keeps the wound alive and infected.
he rips open the scars and let fresh blood well up

it spills out in jeweled beads to pierce my heart and shatter
the crimson stains my lips and nightmares
which are not mine either
but that doesn't make them less real

IZABELLE HOOD

Mother Sun

A seed birthed
from sea and shine,
from light and dark
pulled in the direction
of Mother sun.

She warms my leaves,
energy breathed life
as her rays pulse
through parenchyma.
Fruitful is she
compelling my bloom
wild and defining
in her lovely light.

Yellow in turn
circular delicacy
reflection of her
unashamed beauty.
Commanding of
the sky and rise
she ventures
east and west
giving effortlessly
to all she brings life.

MARLENA GIANNONE

Life's Infinite Recursion

```
1  "Life begins here."  
2  
3  happiness = 0  
4  happy = False  
5  
6  "This function does not solve life it merely explains it."  
7  
8  def the_meaning_of_life(happy, happiness):  
9  
10     if not happy:  
11         happiness = happiness + 1  
12         happy = True  
13     elif happy:  
14         happiness = happiness - 1  
15         happy = False  
16  
17     "Return to the_meaning_of_life."  
18  
19     return the_meaning_of_life(happy,happiness)  
  
1  "Finally, run the program."  
2  
3  the_meaning_of_life(happy, happiness)
```

RecursionError Traceback (most recent call last)

.

.

RecursionError: maximum recursion depth exceeded

¹ 'elif' is used in the Python programming language as the command 'else if'

² This error is produced when a loop or a recursive call never stops running

RYAN SCHMIDT

Reflection

Photography



PEYTON FARNUM

Bittersweet Corruption

Photography



LUNA LI

Dear Sunset: Please Don't Go

Inky roads, shady hills, you're the only light.
The on-coming headlights don't count, you're the only light.
Like the last glow from my dying phone, you're a dying light.
But in this car where darkness surrounds me, you're my saving light.

Red, like the blood bleeding from my ears.
Is this why you cut off your ear, Vincent?
Because of the abusive words?
Then if so, hand me the knife.

Orange, like the gold that can't stay.
Why does it have to leave, Robert?
Why can't it stay with me and be my sunshine?
Please Sunset, I beg you, don't go.

Purple and blue, like the bruises on my soul.
Why does he sharpen his nouns and verbs to weapons, Mom?
Why am I his target, filled with bullet holes?
Just aim for the bullseye already.

I wanted to capture you, dear Sunset,
In a bottle, in a picture, in a memory.
I wanted to ask my father to slow down for you, dear Sunset,
But no, he'll just drive faster.

Can't you see the plea in my eyes, dear Sunset?
Can't you see you're my lifeline, dear Sunset?
A white sky, black clouds, and a murderous mouth,
These are all I have now, dear Sunset, because you left.

ANDREW BENNETT

Atlas

Welcome to my mountain.

I have knelt here for almost as long as my old mind can remember

Under a false midnight.

I can see the way you're smiling,
And I know that you're tired too.

Your arms are weak

From carrying your dark stones -

Rough stones -

And the light in your eyes has been stolen
By the shadows stalking you in the night.

That's why your smile is cracked,

Isn't it?

I invite you to rest beside me.

Allow me to take the blackened stones that burden you so;

You don't have to shoulder that burden on your own.

I carry countless stones on my back:

The stones of those who have wandered here before you,

Stones of midnight black;

The stones that I could not bring myself to leave behind,

Stones that pressed down on me

Like all the space between the stars.

I, too, climbed mountains once.

I stumbled up their slopes,

Crippled and hampered by the stones I carried,

But I climb no more.
Now, I kneel here as I have
Since the stones finally defeated me.

Ease yourself;
Don't make the mistake that I made so long ago.
Vanity will not hold the stones
When the night's freezing claws drag down your shoulders.
Give me the stones that pain you so greatly,
The stones that weigh upon you so heavily,
The stones whose rough edges dig into your back
And bend your neck forward.
I have been condemned already.

See the stones that tower above my head?
Stones that have been stacked so high to the heavens,
They block out the sun,
Creating the guise of eternal night?
Between the stones, pinholes of light peek through.
You see stars in them,
But I see the last glowing beacons of truth.
Do you understand what they mean?

Rest,
Please.
If I am doomed to kneel,
Unmoving,
Forever,
Then allow me to free you.
Allow me to ease your pain.
Allow me to take your stones upon my back -

The back that holds the world's sky upon it.
I will carry the stones of thousands more after you,
If they let me,
So that they may wander to the truth in the skies -
The truth that if they can look above the stones,
They will see what only trickles through pinholes here:
The truth that all the world is light.

Unburden yourself beside me,
So that you may discover this truth.
Lay your stones before me,
So that I may stack them higher on my back.
You owe the stones nothing;
Leave them behind.
Leave them with me.
I am strong enough to hold them.
I have been sentenced to kneel here on this mountain for eternity,
And if I cannot be allowed to truly live,
Then allow me to give you that choice.

Atlas is my name,
And if you will let me,
I will spare you the fate that claimed me
A long, long time ago.

ERYNN COMINSKY

Abandoned Sailboat

Photography



HANNAH HURST

Returning Home

Mixed Media



SARAH MENDUS

Stand

We know the death our ancestors tried to bury beneath their palaces, the slaughter and greed that their thrones are built on. They laugh, their bloody claws studded with diamond rings and curled around wine glasses, phonographs turned up to mask the bothersome noise of the world burning alive.

We were supposed to be their successors, heirs to their crooked empires and dirty money.

They stitched us up in matching suits and slippers, a most civil tone to their voices as they showed us their bombs and their wars and told us to smile.

They never thought we could erase the smoke screens they stapled up around us.

They never thought we could be so strong.

We ripped their train tracks from the earth and wrought them into blades, trampling the boxes they drew around us. We stand together, iron knuckles white around our swords and pens.

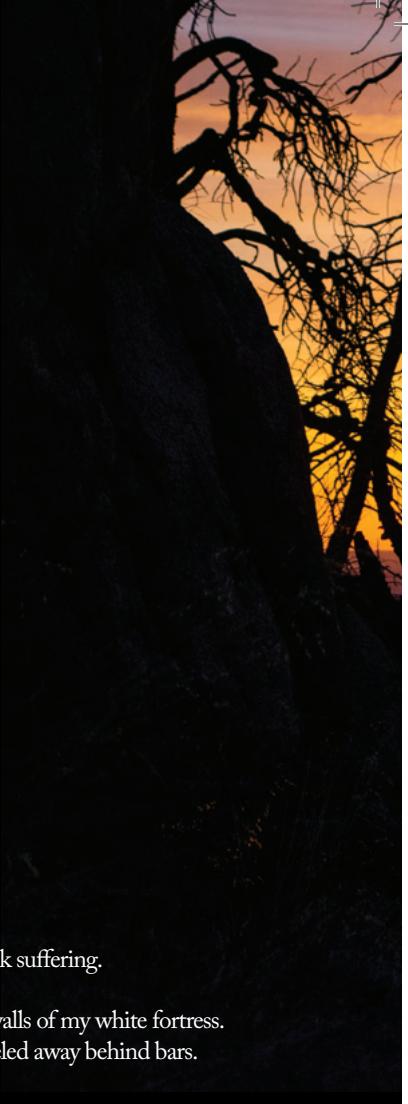
We know what we want.

And we know we are stronger than them.

And you, you are one of us. The warrior we have been waiting for.

You are *powerful*, and you are ready.

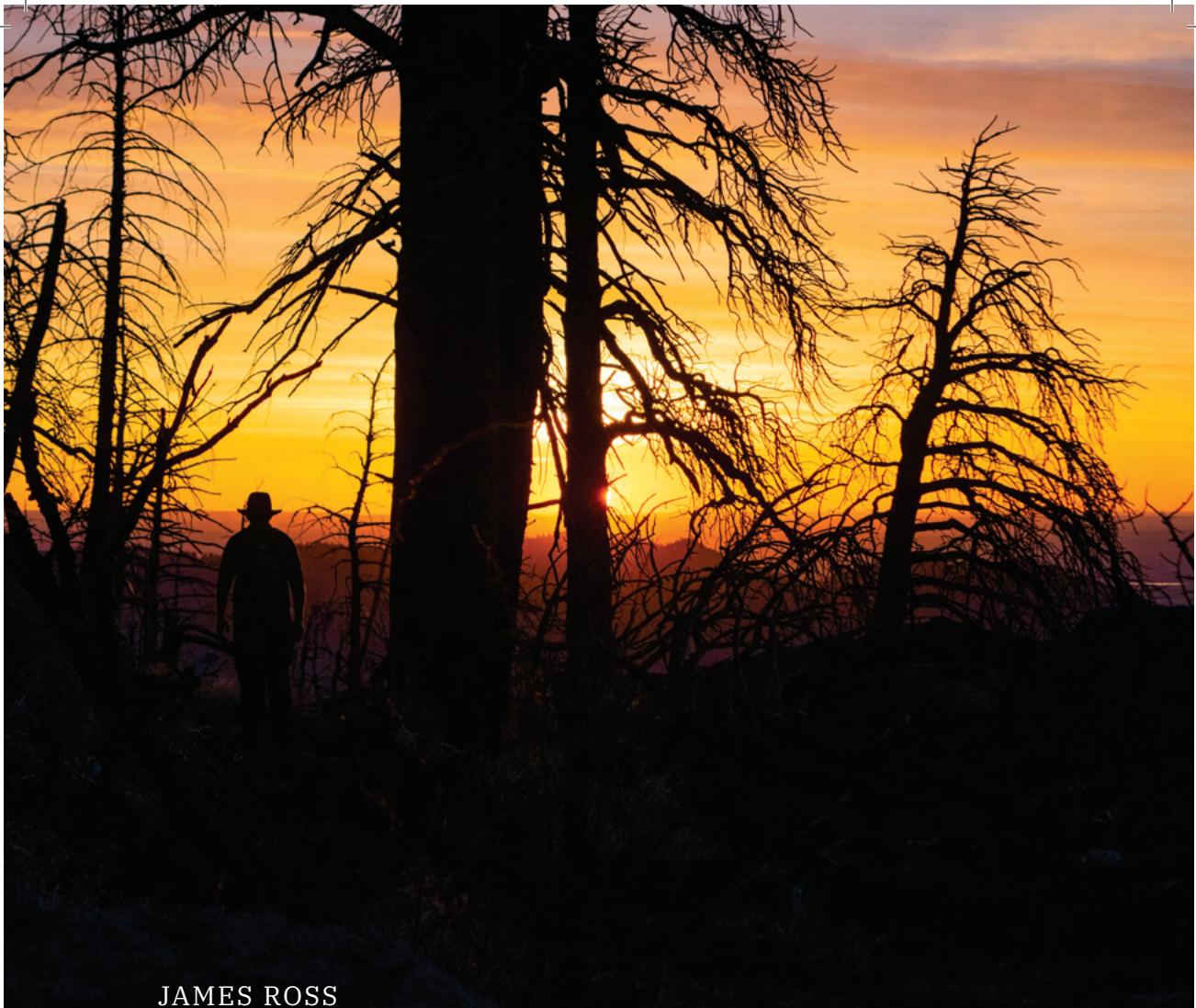
Pick up your sword.



PEYTON DAILEY

Walls of My White Fortress

White hands turning white pages filled with black print, brimming with black suffering.
White author, white readers, black story.
Reading with no referent, perched in an armchair situated safely within the walls of my white fortress.
Insulated from the cries for justice and the weeping of those wrongfully wheeled away behind bars.
Shades of grey evaporating.
Black and white becoming the pronounced boundaries once again.
Black justice, white authority.
White privilege, black repercussions.
Coming no closer to the suffering than the brush of my fingertips against the blackened page.
The white pages and my white fortress trying to wash away the stain the black text leaves on my conscience.



JAMES ROSS

Brimstone

Photography

