

# The Watermark

UMass Boston's Literary & Arts Journal

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# The Watermark Journal Editorial Staff

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David Earl

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## Acknowledgements

Thanks to our coworkers Olivia Reid and Riley Hammond of UMass Boston's *Writ Large* magazine for their invaluable expertise and assistance.

## About *The Watermark Journal*

*The Watermark Journal* is UMass Boston's bi-annual student run literary and arts journal. Since 1979 we have celebrated the work of students, staff, alumni and community members by sharing their pieces with the campus and the world. Our primary focus is nurturing emerging writers, artists, and publishers within the campus community.

We accept submissions year-round. Our doors are open to all members of the university's community, and we welcome submissions of poems, prose, acts of plays, photographs, paintings, sketches, doodles, screenshots, or maybe a creative work we haven't thought of before. Take a chance, we're open minded.

## From the Editors

Well hello, I don't believe we've met before! This is my first semester as the Editor-in-Chief of this storied journal, and it's been... well, I won't lie, it's been a bit difficult picking everything up, especially after our long spell under COVID-19. But despite all that, it's been an incredibly rewarding job and it's been an incredible privilege to read and work with the creative side of the UMass Boston community. Thank you to Chuck, our advisor, for both his firm, guiding hand and for giving us the creative freedom to do what we do. An eternal thanks to Tim, my Managing Editor (and resident goblin of the English Department), who, despite his endless list of campus responsibilities, has been invaluable for getting the word out on submissions and helping me put the journal together. Last but not least, thank you to our contributors, both new and old; we'd be nothing without you. I hope you all enjoy our magazine!

David Earl,  
Editor-in-Chief

Having never worked any sort of literary journal, I went into the creation of this semester's issue of the Watermark with so many images in my head about what being a managing editor would look like, and I am so glad to say that almost none of those fantasies reflected the reality of creating a journal such as this. Dreams of smooth, organized, workflow spontaneously combusted every time I stepped into our office to face another barrage of submissions, but seeing all the wonderful pieces of art from such a diverse community made the chaos worth it every time. This was a semester of firsts for me, and I could not have asked for a better journal, a better editor-in-chief, or a better community to have introduced me to the realm of curating art journals. I hope all of you reading this find as much joy and meaning in the works enclosed within the pages of this issue as I did when I was exposed to each of them for the first time.

Tim Percival Truong,  
Managing Editor

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Poetry

## Capsized

*Noah Wambolt*

Pruned fingertips eclipse  
Marooned wrecked ships  
When they try to touch  
Your much sought after lips.  
Mere blips on the radar stay far  
Away from life's dives and dips,  
My mind persists, your swaying hips,  
And though you're sick, I still insist  
You are my medicine

*Written June 14th, 1:54 am, in the waiting room of Tufts Medical Center*

**Earthbound.***Noah Wambolt*

Cement holds me still as birds fly above.  
Casting shadows blocking the sun,  
Crows, vultures, pigeons, doves.  
All ignoring me despite my shouts  
As if it mattered to them what I had become  
And thus persist my deepest doubts...  
Glowing still in my soul's recesses,  
Gaining nothing, becoming undone,  
Getting stiffer as the world progresses  
Elicits a primal fear, but hope still underlies.  
Expecting, for some reason, a positive net sum  
Extending, I reach despite my likely demise.  
Dangled in front of me, enticing my whole being  
Dropped from the heavens, they tease my freedom  
Determined fingertips grasp at the fleeing

Poetry

**Pointless**

*Noah Wambolt*

I'm a broken pencil  
Yeah I've got nothing to say.  
I write a line or two and it turns out cliché  
I'm pretty boring  
I've got no stories to tell  
And I would make some up if I could only write well

I do this to myself so I can unwind  
But lately I ain't feeling too sound of mind  
Every story about love has been outlined  
And there's too many 'bout the ending of mankind  
You might still be reading and looking for insight  
Turns out I'm just an author with nothing left to write

## Words Left Unsaid

*Kate Flaherty*

Words left unsaid  
bulge beneath the rug,  
nestle in book tops on the shelf,  
and cling to the greasy stove.  
We sweep them up,  
they inundate the room,  
they contaminate the rag,  
they proliferate like dust bunnies.  
After lumping them  
into the plastic bag  
ordained by the town for dumping,  
we lug them to their final resting place,  
a troop of ravening gulls descends  
to tear them loose.  
They gobble them whole,  
Our vices, omissions, and sins.  
They bring them back to life—  
To batter us  
and those we love  
or wish we did.

## Sacred Dance

*Abigail Wallace*

Please watch me undress.  
Rest your gaze upon me.  
Admire the way I move  
across the room with intuition and intent.  
It is only for so long you would think to do such a thing.  
So please watch me undress.  
See how I tie up my hair,  
wash my face,  
make myself anew.  
Recognize my fragility,  
challenge my strength,  
notice my imperfection,  
recognize it's humanity seeping from me.  
Womanhood is a gift;  
love me for it,  
hate me for it if you please,  
but feel something, please.  
Memorize every inch,  
stare at my spots like stars,  
get lost in my constellations.  
Every smooth bump,  
every harsh line,  
the creases in my eyes prove I'm alive.  
Read me like a book,  
turn my pages,  
learn to love my story.  
Write poems, novels, about me,  
about what you see.

So please, watch me undress;  
it is the dance of my ancestors.



"Dreams"  
*Elaine Happpie*

## Poetry

### Love

*Alicia Smith*

My parents didn't teach me how to love  
I had to unlearn the love they taught me

Love isn't tiring  
Love isn't who can yell the loudest  
Love isn't who had the harder day  
Love isn't screaming into each other's faces  
Love isn't putting your hands on each other  
Love isn't going to sleep the second an argument erupts  
Love isn't guilt tripping your partner into being a parent  
Love isn't blaming the kids for a failed relationship

I had to unlearn the love they taught me  
I had to unlearn the love that they were taught themselves

I lay my head on my partners chest knowing I love them the best way I can without  
showing my parents love

I still love my parents but it's easier from afar



## Cold Seat

*Rosa Morales*

“You won’t understand why.”  
 Dad put away his checkbook.  
 “You aren’t going to make it a year”.  
 “I’ve done this before”.

Before I left, I made our hug worth it. Something worth remembering or completing a relationship on. I couldn’t fathom the new way I was going to live; a house? An Apartment? Maybe Dad’s...

I saw the things I needed and grabbed those. The back of the Honda was roomy enough for it. I made sure I didn’t need to come back this time. The driver seat was warm and the passenger side, cold. His cold Dunkins that never made it to him. A cold, now exposed creamy coffee seeping into car-carpet. He wasn’t a coffee person till he accidentally drank mine. I loved the feeling of being influential. He was often tough to talk to; tough to teach, and tough to hold.

Sigh.

“Yes”?

“How are you?” Dad said.

“Perfect”. I touched the cold seat.

“I was hoping you changed your mind”?

“Never”.

The car was ready and I went in the direction of the sun. I wanted to spot twilight when it happens. I was really leaving this time. I didn’t sell picture frames, or box illustrations, or donate uniforms. I just left his memories for someone else to gather. I’m sure Dad will intervene. He was as great in absence as in presence.

I did go back one last time. I shuddered in his doorway, and spotted the smashed cell phone. I tiptoed around his things like it was memorabilia, as if it would toughen the stench I already had on me. His baby self is now staring at me from behind a glass in a picture frame. Last time I saw him he was trying to leave me. I wanted to chuck it.

This time I took him, just like on all his birthdays. I sat him next to the Dunkins as my passenger. Maybe those things he loved would reawaken the dust of his urn. Maybe his life would start over again and I’d squeeze everything out of it.

Poetry

## On a snowy day in late April '21

*Ginny Bradford*

I am just a cog in a system

And the wind is blowing all around me with my jacket torn behind me, the revenge  
of the earth, planters toppled and buds, but maybe it is snowflakes, or hail

... and I am between things. I am a body with frozen ears.

## Renovations to a place that has long since been demolished

*Ginny Bradford*

Would I still be panicking if I was at home, not painting snail-trails of bleach over the dining room floor with a mop bucket? Would I still cry, would I feel more or less lonely?

The answer is always that I'm still making money, a few more dollars in this economy, that's all that matters, not how much my feet hurt cause there's always someone whose feet are aching more from a few more hours, wiping mud off the walls of a cinderblock basement, could be that only that will exist in a thousand years, unable to be broken down into soil, unlike all the recycled-paper napkins and cups, but the plastic forks will be there too, and I will not

Or the very fact that Mildred still bothers to dust her china cabinet, even though the dust comes back the second it floats away. Got to keep getting the dirt off. Got to keep mopping the floor. Got to keep setting the table. Got to do more than I can to keep things going, as if I'm the only one who can.

It is 3:47.

Poetry

**Worm**

*Ginny Bradford*

Lovely muddy eyes, meaner than they seemed  
And I'd come to the sea, just to see you  
I woke atop your chest, like in a dream  
With your curly hair, and hand tucked in mine.  
So quietly, you severed all we were.  
In the height of the flowering spring  
Your smell more fragrant than the blooming loam,  
and we looked lovelier than anything.  
Then after last night's storm, I am the worm  
Just like you said, the sun killed it today  
And how could I understand how it worked?  
Not so, it was alive, best I could say  
You wouldn't let me put it in the dirt.



“Mothman”  
*GeMeisha James*

Poetry

**Bonfires**

*Robert Castagna*

What brown thoughts  
lay beneath the artist's  
colors, blown apart by  
gas powered engines

Strapped to the backs  
of political zealots  
their words misplaced  
on the wind

The machine sweeps  
nature away, the dirt  
no longer dark but a pale  
shade of earth

Such muddied thoughts  
creep into butterfly gardens,  
neighboring backyards  
smoked and blackened

On bonfires  
as the unweighted ash  
stirs in the heavy air, lost  
to the oppressive sun

## **Corners**

*Robert Castagna*

In every corner of every room  
I've hidden something

Where the two walls meet  
we meet too; our walls indifferent

To the straight lines of function  
not placed squarely or assuredly

Our walls are conceived to be  
imaginary; they arise where we are

In the car while we drive  
In the middle of the room, affixed

to memories of disregard  
painted with the wrong palette of blue

and still their corners hold  
their miters glued

Words that make us walk back  
what we want to say

Those words of intimacy  
filed away

## Clay Pot

*Robert Castagna*

Imitating a still-life  
he sat alone  
dark as the glaze  
that hardened the surface  
of a clay pot

His mind filled  
with former flowers; little  
bluebells and wild geraniums  
picked by the delicate  
hand of a woman

A special friend who  
came and went like any blossom would  
with his entrenched position,  
the stale water, the obstinate  
objections; unfriendly

To opening in the tall grass—  
secrets floating on the open field  
spring irises  
whispering— now  
                  silent and wilting

We sat in the tall grass  
exchanging small words  
and reluctant glances.

## Tall Grass

*Robert Castagna*

You said to me,  
“Venus, I am not like you.”  
What you couldn’t see

was that it was fine with me.  
It was not the similarities  
I desired to explore;

but how you formed the clay  
between your fingers  
and drew me in

like a vessel— filling me  
over and over again, water  
falling; your hands

shaping and curving  
the earth that connected  
the clay to life—

I was an iris  
blooming— not in opposition;  
but a muse for your forming—

feelings felt inside  
your firm surfaces  
put there by desire



## Potter's Wheel

*Robert Castagna*

It is night  
and I walk the field alone  
thinking only of her—  
thinking of her  
like I think of a diagnosed cancer

Jupiter of the sky—  
You rule with nothing  
but darkness

Your throne—  
a potter's wheel spinning;  
an orbit filled by an iris  
formed with the water  
and the stars coming down

A circular dance—  
two hands shaping planets;  
bodies in attraction.

If I could only  
place you somewhere  
and forget what has taken  
hold inside, instead  
I become fixed

By the fire that hardens  
and places me  
at the altar of passion

## The Girl in apartment three

*Elaine Happnie*

Let me tell you about the girl above me  
You know the girl in apartment # 3  
I hear her late at night, walking back and forth  
Barefoot across the creaking wood floor  
In the darkness of the shadows of the night  
Full moon, a ray of light, on this hot, long and lonesome night  
I hear music coming through the open windows  
Smooth sad jazz , Billy Holiday “I’m a fool to love you”.  
I hear her crying , crystal rivers flow, seep through the crack in the ceiling  
Dripping down upon my face  
I catch the hot salty tears in my mouth  
And I hear her walk and cry walk and cry



"Hands"  
*Elaine Happnie*

## **An Awakening, a Metaphorical Wake**

*Scott Canter*

When a heart reaches out in longing,  
It opens up.  
Which is both its point and essence.  
The heart is receiver as well as transmitter.  
Open yourself up to the best of Yourself.  
And, if you occasionally fail, this is the cost of living and learning.  
Rise up and be Reborn.  
Brush yourself off and start again. Again. And again.  
You will find that something has been built from all the mistakes,  
All the small victories, with their moral highs and lows.  
There will be many more triumphs.  
Even though you may not have the truest sight to see them.

## Untitled

*Sylar Robles*

School was finally out for the day and I could go home and have some fun. It was a really weird day. We had to practice something called a Lock Down. We sat in a corner silent in the dark for a while, while my teacher looked pretty panicked. The intercoms were screaming at us that it was a Lock Down and alarms were going off. It was really loud. It felt like it was really loud for hours, but we couldn't have been sitting there for that long. My teacher got a phone call and she started crying which was weird. I've never seen a teacher cry. Why was she crying? After being in the classroom in the dark forever, a few big men in fancy uniforms, and armor, who were holding big scary black things, told us we could leave the room. They had us get in a single file line like we do for recess, and we leave the school. We got out of school early today. After the Lock Down, they told us all we needed to go home. So I took the bus home today, because it had started snowing and my teacher suggested that after today it would be safer to take the bus home. I really do love snow, but walking home in it without my jacket was too cold. My mom reminded me to grab my jacket and said it would snow, but I guess I forgot. I usually walk home with my neighbor, Charlie, so I hope he isn't upset that I took the bus. We walked to school together this morning, so maybe he just walked home instead of trying to take the bus too.

Charlie and I have been best friends for years. He lives in the house right behind mine. Every morning before school, he will meet me by my mailbox and we will walk all the way to school. Rain or shine, we walk. Same on the way home from school. When we get back to our houses, we part ways to our own houses and get a snack and say 'Hi' to our dogs and then we will meet back up again to play all day. This has been our routine forever. I'm sure since he's not on the bus he probably walked home, or maybe his parents picked him up. He will come to see me later like he always does and I'll say sorry for not walking home with him. The bus got to my cul de sac and I got off, saying goodbye to Stan, the bus driver. I start running to my house, being careful not to slip like I always do in the snow, because Charlie is not here to help me up if I do fall today. I grab the key from under the mat in front of the front door and break into our blue house. I am greeted by my dogs barking. They are my favorite part of my day. Spike and Gabby are chihuahuas and they bark A LOT, but Tommy is a very relaxed collie, and just likes to say hi quietly by wagging his tail and giving me hugs. My dad was right behind them in greeting me. It is a lot more of a greeting than I am normally used to, but I am glad he's home from traveling for work. He picks me up into a big hug and says, "I'm so happy you are home. Are you okay?" He squeezes me tight, swaying us back and forth, and won't stop asking if I'm okay.

"Yes, I'm okay. School got out early today. I didn't know we had a half-day. It's also snowing! I took the bus so I didn't have to walk in the snow."

My dad sets me down and gently grabs my face with both of his hands. His hands are gross and sweaty on my cheeks. The whites of his eyes are really red too, which looks weird around his normal blue. His eyebrows were scrunched together and wrinkles were formed in the middle of them. Is he okay? "I'm glad you're safe" he releases his eyebrows, smiles, and kisses me on the forehead. "Go play," and that I do.

I walk upstairs and enter my room full of bright colors and fun. My walls are teal, my closet is neon green, and my trim is purple. It's a lot of colors to take in, but it makes me happy. I'm also met with toys on toys. Stuffed animals take up every spare inch of my bed. I expertly make my bed each morning so that each and every one of my stuffed animals can be on my bed.

If they are not all there together, they will get lonely and not be able to talk to each other all day while I'm at school. I know what that feels like. Charlie and I aren't in the same class, so I don't get to talk to him all day. I don't want my stuffed animals to not be able to talk to their friends all day like me and Charlie don't get to. I greet them all individually, ask how their day went, and tell them about mine. This takes a while since there are about 59 stuffed animals on my bed. I take extra time with my favorites, but try not to make it too noticeable to the others.

"I can't take all of you outside with me," I say to them. "I wish I could but my arms aren't big enough. Please don't be upset with who I pick. Look on the bright side, you get to stay inside where it is warm, while they have to go outside and freeze with me." I smile at them and they nod and smile back. I'm glad they understand. I'm sure some will be upset because I usually bring the same mix of them on adventures with me. I think they secretly know who my favorites are, and I hate that they do. But there is no way for them not to know! They pay so much attention to everything. It's like they are always watching.

I decided to bring my usual crew with me: Leo the Lion, Jaggy the Jaguar, Foxy the Fox, and Kangy the Kangaroo. I know those names are super creative, but I named them years ago when I was little and I can't just change their names now that we are all older. That wouldn't be fair to them. They are my top favorites and don't tell them, but Leo is my favorite favorite, and then Foxy. Charlie has a stuffed animal that looks just like Foxy, but he's smaller, therefore he's Foxy Jr. Charlie will bring him to play with us like he always does.

Anyway, I start putting on and layering my warm clothes. I have black leggings on already, and I throw on sweatpants over that. I, also, have a purple long sleeve shirt on and put on a cozy sweatshirt and a jacket over that.

"It's time for us to head out," I say to the four of them. They look so excited for our adventure today. We are going to head out to the playset today, but I think it might be a pirate ship today. Pirate days are Jaggy's favorite. I think that's what he wants to be when he grows up. I pick up the four of them, and we say goodbye to all 55 others and we set out on our voyage. We walk through the living room and see my dad on the couch. He is watching something on the tv. There is a bald guy sitting there in a suit talking. The volume is down really quiet, so I can't really figure out what the bald man is saying. There are banners filled with words running across the screen, and my dad's face looks shocked, and those wrinkles have returned. Something bad must be on the TV again, he's been like this a lot lately. He's been on the couch, with that look on his face so often, I'm nervous his face will stick like that. Today he seems more bothered by it than normal. It's talking about something happening at schools but I'm not sure. It seems very serious.

"We're going outside, Dad," I interrupt the bald man talking. "We will be back at dusk." That's one of my new favorite words. He nods and we head outside. I hope we run into Charlie. He's usually over here by now to play with us. When I open the

back door, I am instantly freezing, but that's okay. Pirates can endure the cold, and as their leader, I can't let my crew see that I'm cold. It's unfair that they all have fur to keep them warm, though. I grab the nearby sled and empty it of snow, and set everyone in gently, leaving a seat for Foxy Jr. when he and Charlie join us.

"Off to sea we go." I grab the string and we head off across the snowy yard/ocean. We make the voyage to the big ship and board it. We climb to the very top and I unpack everyone. We are going to have a long fun night. Usually, we go on these trips with Charlie. He loves pirate days too. It's starting to get late and Charlie still isn't here for us. I climb to the very top of the playset, I mean ship, and make circles with my hands and hold them up to my eyes like binoculars to help me see better. From the top of the ship, I can see his bedroom window. It's really dark though. His whole house is dark, except for his living room. The lights are on in there, and I can see his mom and dad on the couch. Crying? Laughing? Fighting? I can't really tell. I wonder where he is. He usually is outside by now, and we walked to school together this morning so I know he's not sick. Maybe he went to a different friend tonight. I brush it off and I get back into pirate mode and we play until dusk.

It has been a week, I still haven't seen Charlie and we haven't had school since the day I played pirates. My parents have been really sad, and they keep asking me if I'm okay and if I remember anything from that day at school. I am okay, but I am confused. I do remember that day, but nothing more than that Lock Down drill, sitting quietly in a dark corner, a whole lot of alarms, and a couple of big bangs. I don't know what that has to do with anything.

I try to remember more, but I don't. I try to ask them where Charlie is, but they don't really know how to explain where he is. I try to convince them to tell me where he is, but they can't and it makes my mom cry, so I stop asking. I try to ask them when I will go back to school, and they don't really know. I try to be less confused, but I can't. My head is spinning because of all these questions they are asking me. Being home for the past week was fun at first when I was able to play a lot, but I got bored really quickly not seeing Charlie. Every day I would go out to the very top of the playset, and look through my hand binoculars at his house, but the light in his room was still off. It was always off. One day his parents came over to sit with mine and talk. When I opened the door for them, they had Foxy Jr. in their hands and said Charlie wanted me to have him. That was nice of Charlie, but isn't he going to miss him? I know how much he loves Foxy Jr., and I think part of why he does is because he's so similar to my Foxy. Just like how we are so similar. Charlie will miss him too much, so when I see him again, I'm going to have him take him back. Foxy Jr. deserves to live with Charlie like he has his whole life.

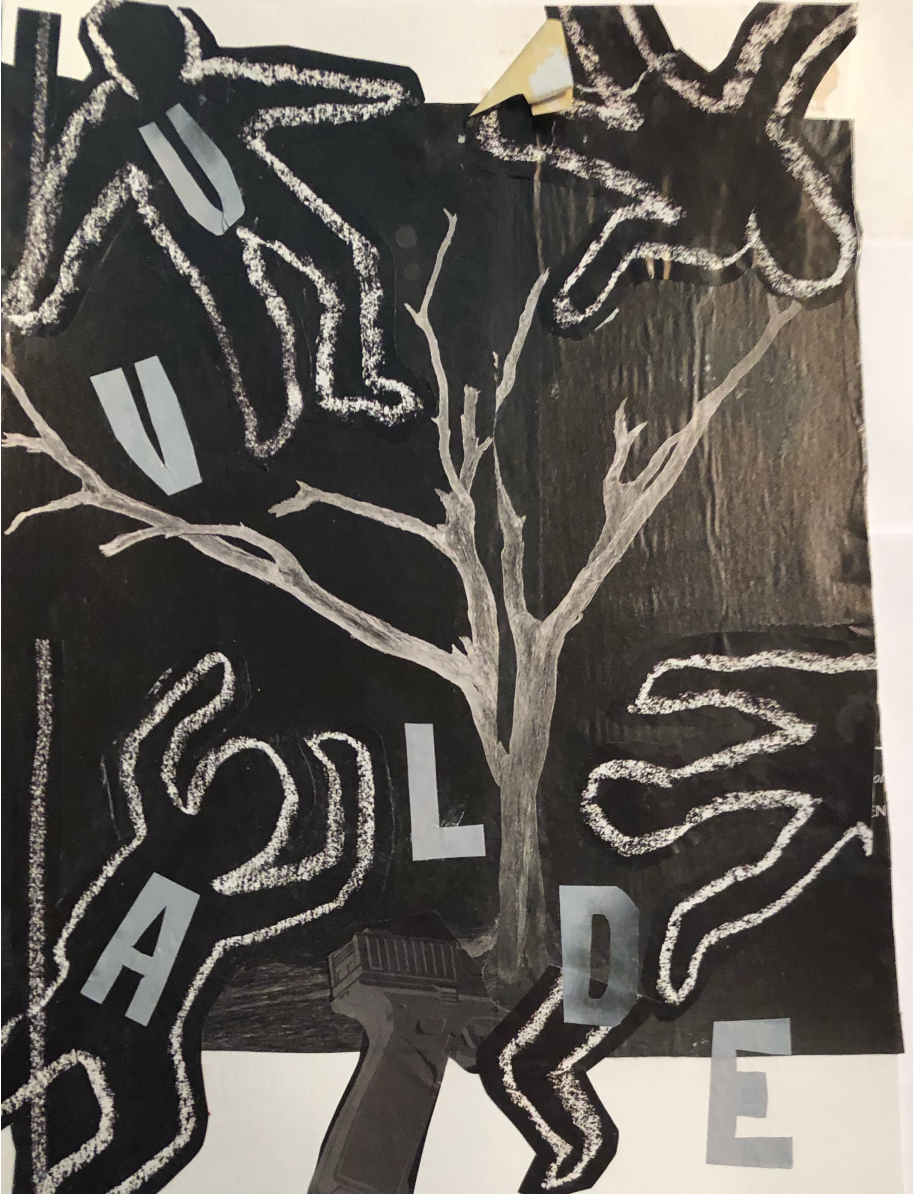
Charlie's parents sat down with mine on the couch. My dad had that bald guy back on the TV again. I want to hear what they are talking about, so I rush back to my room, which is just down the hall from the living room where they are at, with Foxy Jr. in my arms. I break through my door, scoop up Leo, Jagggy, Foxy, and Kangy too and we leave my room. We creep down the hallway very quietly, like we are playing spies. I make it to a place where I can see the bald man on the TV, where I can hear our parents talk, and where I am out of their sight, and I set my five friends down next to me. Once I finish setting them down in a perfect line, I hear a sob and I look up. Charlie's mom started crying. I look towards the TV and there is a picture of

## Prose

Charlie there. Why is he on TV? I stare at his picture and he stares back at me for a little while and then the picture changes to some other kid from my school. Why are they putting kids' pictures on the TV? Are they going to put my picture on the TV soon?

After a few more kids from my school show up and disappear from the TV screen, I give up on waiting for my picture, and I grab my 5 friends, and we head back to my room. We run and dive onto the pile of 55 stuffed animals, now making it 60 and me. I begin to cry. I'm so frustrated because I want things to go back to normal where I see him every day and where I go to school. I don't understand why things changed so suddenly after that Lock Down drill. When can I go back to school? When can I see my best friend again? Why is Charlie avoiding me? Where is he?





Untitled  
*Sonia Valentine*

## Hindsight

*Bobby Lovett*

A drug  
You have become reacquainted with  
A lovers' fear emanating  
From a past long forgotten  
And yet tragically remembered

You are tortured once again  
By the modern era  
And yet you have since walked away  
From the trauma that carries you soundly  
Down the sleeping river

Waking into stress and discernment  
By the grace of affection  
Love is most deserving of being shared  
But trust is earned, quite mutually  
And it's questionable whether what the future holds  
Is worth the prescience

## What Dreams Are Made Of

*Bobby Lovett*

A torrential downpour  
 Consuming you in waves  
 Shifting into chaos  
 And into depravity

A thunderstorm endorsed  
 By the waking world  
 Festering in the back of your mind  
 And keeping you in pleasant slumber

A hellscape of mentality  
 The randomness of upset  
 Seeds planted to remind you of  
 Your waking fears and tensions

Hope and confusion  
 Driven by fantasy  
 Rocketing you into the unknown  
 Where you are confident and wise

Loving, charming, and romantic  
 Giving you the tender kiss  
 You have so longed for and deserved  
 But never truly received

A proper ending  
 To a story you've long dwelled on  
 Or an epilogue worse  
 Than your every imagination  
 The mind decides your fate it seems  
 Your control brimming at the seams  
 The mind chooses an unknown path  
 Knowledge dies, and time will pass

Now here you are  
 Dreaming in the daylight  
 Remembering a memory  
 That was really never there

I believe in you oh somber vessel  
 Muse of the child's soul  
 The soul that's been since left behind  
 Yes, I believe in you

## Poetry

Go your own way  
Wherever that may be  
The mind decides once you fall asleep  
No way that can be expected  
Even if it makes sense  
In some place in your heart

When you wake up, confused  
Having teleported back  
The whiplash, you need a minute  
To recover from your jetlag

The rest of the day it lingers  
The life you lived overnight  
Confused as to why you have to leave it behind  
And why you may never return  
Like dreamers do in the movies  
Confused why you lived there in the first place  
Confused why it meant a thing  
Confused as to what even happened  
Confused as to where you've been

Hello, oh gentle dreamer  
I caress you in the night  
And while you nap at school  
Telling you it shall be alright

Amidst the maelstrom of your mind  
The combat and the warring  
The passion and the drivel  
Hidden by your conscious snoring

You wake many times in the night  
In between each dream  
And every time you want to go back  
Even when it hurts, it seems

The dreams give you a chance to process  
Worlds beyond your making  
A psyche that now understands  
Our insignificance, our human aching

Hello lover, fiend, and friend  
And hello pretty boy  
Hello regal lady

And hello age old toy

Greetings and salutations  
 To the God that lives amongst men  
 The deity of our rage and sorrows  
 The reason you go 'round the bend

The kindly neighbor wearing loafers  
 Heathen and your cohort  
 Hello teacher and romancer  
 Hello there, old sport

I believe you  
 I believe in you  
 That's what your dreams are saying  
 They present you with the fantasies  
 For which you have been praying

Endless tales of mayhem  
 And not one of them makes sense  
 If they do, that's the scary part  
 A story shall commence

I shall lie here awake for you  
 Fending off my dreams  
 Although I miss them dearly  
 They're for you, my sweet

Sleep tight now, gentle lady  
 Vagabond, and yes, old friend  
 I will keep you safe from your dreams  
 Protect you from going 'round the bend

I believe every word you say  
 Although I do not trust you  
 Dreams are what life is made of  
 You need not believe dreams, must you?

Hello, fair prince  
 Goodbye, waking  
 Welcome to the night  
 I'll see you soon in your dreams  
 Let's hope we learn tonight

## Poetry

### Liúlàng zhě ('wändərər)

*Bobby Lovett*

Coast to coast  
She wandered in those early days  
Much to boast  
Though she held it in, so hard to break  
Unlike most  
Her travels led to quick collapse  
She had no way  
To make it back

Glistening in different lighting  
Tyranny from far away  
Resenting what has been so hidden  
Open doors, and castaways

Tossing open, thrusting doorways  
Moonlit nights are a soft glow  
But what she wants is hard to find  
A calming beach  
Plus hard work, coast to coast

Relief is something she doesn't know  
She was born to be a survivor  
Combat with the highest order  
Our Christian God's greatest warrior

Though not a missionary  
Nor understanding of the Lord  
She is just an honest fighter  
Nothing is, and nothing more  
What does she believe in?  
She's a ghost  
Traveling from wall to wall  
But at least she knows  
She'll never be  
A painting  
Trapped inside the halls

She maneuvers into quiet mayhem  
Call it research, office life  
She shrieks at the sight of bugs  
While drugging mice, and taking lives

They call her the wanderer  
Even though she stayed  
Because her mind's forever wandering  
To what still happened yesterday

# Water Man and Break in Boy

*Willem Lorette*



Each time we meet this  
Rolling boil fever dream  
Turns slow to glass and cream  
Calms me down and takes my coat  
Seals my lips and chills my throat



# Fukubukuro

Willem Lorette



Corner of the parking lot  
Plundered gift from god  
To seek and destroy all the  
Holy ornaments of life

Snuff it with my palm  
May everything I want  
To give you be bound  
In shameless cling from wrapping  
That you may pierce and dispose of



## Evil Angel Alien Baby Maybe

*Willem Lorette*



Must've slipped my mind  
Taking stock and eating right  
Mutes the holy lines  
And so to burn your good faith  
Proved to be a waste of time

## Star-Crossed

*Natasha Nurse*

I watched my father die in front of me when I was seven, all I could think about while watching him struggle to breathe was that I never wanted to listen to that sound again. The sound of his labored breathing as his dying body fought to keep his chest moving, I swear I could hear the sounds of his heart slowing and the sound of his ribs struggling to expand. At that moment I wished for death to come, either for him or me because I could not handle the look in his eyes, the way he struggled to tell me he loved me back, and finally watching as his chest stopped moving up and down. The beep of the machine telling me he was gone, the shrilling noise echoed in my head, like an alarm clock waking me up to my own personal hell. The moment he died I think a part of me died too, but I mourned for neither.

That day eight years ago royally fucked me up. I would like to think it's the justification for why I am the way I am. I would like to tell myself that I treat the people around me like dirt because I grew up without the love of my father. I know that's not true, and I know it's unfair, but I can't bring myself to care. This sense of uncaring overwhelmed me, it drowned me to the point where it was either die trying to get myself out or learn to swim with the fish.

I remember his funeral, my mother was crying, barely holding it together. It made me angry seeing her cry, I'm not quite sure why. Maybe it was because I never cried and watching those tears slowly roll down her cheek felt like she was rubbing it in my face. Telling me that I was fucked up for not displaying emotions as she did. There was one moment that I truly felt the weight of my father's loss, it was when I watched the casket slowly lower into the ground. I kept just thinking about how he was still in there and what if maybe we were wrong, maybe he was just asleep? I couldn't remember the last time I had hugged him, I just need one more hug and it will be okay, just one more chance to throw myself at him knowing he'd catch me. Just smell him one more time, close my eyes, and breath in his scent because it felt like I hadn't in so long. I forgot what color his eyes were and as I turned to look into my mother's I can feel the tears building behind my eyes, it feels like a dam on the verge of breaking. A stray tear rolled down my cheek, and I licked it into my mouth before anyone could see, allowing the salty tang to ground me. I don't know why I was so embarrassed to cry, why it felt like if anyone saw my tears I would lose what little self-respect I had left because in reality there was no hiding how broken I was. I would catch my mother looking at me throughout the funeral, waiting for me to break, to show some sort of emotion to tell her that I was still a person, not a monster. I think she's still waiting for that moment.

Now I barely think of my father, I don't try to remember his voice, his face, his smell, or the way he used to come into my room every night to tell me these fairytales that always ended with a "happily ever after." I definitely don't think about my wedding day, when I'll walk down the aisle by myself, how if he were there he would turn to my future husband and say "don't you hurt my little girl." No, it never even crosses my mind.

I remember my first day of sophomore year, my mom and I had just moved and I didn't know a single person at my new school. I sat in the back of my first class,

pulling my hood down over my eyes. I hoped and prayed that I would go unnoticed, that the teacher wouldn't make me stand in front of the class and tell them my name and where I'm from, because who was going to give a shit? I know that kids in that class weren't sitting on the edge of their seats wondering what the new girl's story was. Until the moment you sat down next to me. You smelled like the outdoors, like a breath of fresh air. Before I even had a chance to process your presence you were already talking to me like you'd known me my whole life. Like you saw how screwed up I was and didn't care. But I think I was just imagining a connection you never felt.

"Hey, you're new right?" You asked, before I could even respond you kept going, "Well obviously you're new because I've never seen you before, anyway I'm Lilith but you can call me Lily." I smiled at you, gave you that sort of nod that said 'hi nice to meet you, please stop speaking now.' Either you ignored the nod or didn't understand because you continued to speak. "This is the part where you tell me your name, and then I give you the rundown on this shitty town and we inevitably become best friends." I couldn't help but laugh at this, how someone could be so entirely childish and naive to think life is so simple.

I sort of envied it, which led me to make the best and worst decision I've ever made, "I'm Tessa," I choked out. You laughed along too saying how that's how it always went in the movies and for the remainder of class you gave me a speech on how life should be like the movies, with unplanned breakdance in the middle of school and happy endings for everyone. The conversation didn't make me think of my dad, it didn't bring me back to sitting in my bed looking up at him like he could answer all the questions I could ever ask, like why the fuck I didn't deserve a happy ending? Or a happy beginning or middle?

You began to follow me around after that class, like a fly to a dead animal. I never really talked but you didn't seem to mind, it seemed that you didn't have any trouble coming up with my half of the dialogue either. I pretended to hate you at first, rejecting the idea of having friends, of thinking I was worthy of someone like you who was so clearly loyal and disgustingly kind. But over time you broke me down, shitty pun by shitty pun. My small smiles turned into full ones showing off my crooked teeth. Those responses to you that I kept in my head slowly started to slip out, until we were having full-blown conversations. It made me feel normal to talk to you like I was just a regular kid with a regular life.

I still felt like I was underwater watching the world around me but now it felt like I had dragged you down there too. Every time you got a word out of me, every small touch, every goddamn time you looked at me I brought you down a little further. I decided that it didn't matter what would happen in the future because now you were stuck with me. I was a wolf in sheep's clothing and you were the innocent girl who brought me in not feeling as I slowly sunk my claws into you, slowly pulling you towards me until there was no one else, just us. I know it sounds bad to bring you down to my level but I was just so lonely that I couldn't bring myself to think too much about it, how I would inevitably blow up on you one day, taking out everything around me till you begin to look at me like my mother did, like I was a wolf.

I think I was in love with you, well I still am but not for much longer. The moment I realized I loved and I mean really loved you was when you were sleeping over, your parents had been fighting that whole day and you were a wreck, you could barely

get a sentence out without bursting into tears, and there was snot dripping from your nose and your face was stuck with this pained frown, and I thought to myself how beautiful your suffering was, how I wanted to consume it all, consume you. I loved that you allowed me and only me to see you like this, it showed not only how much you trusted me but needed me. I had never felt needed before you.

I don't blame you for never returning my love, I never told you so really I can't blame you. But it didn't lessen my pain when you started to tell me about the crush you had on the kid in our 4th period.

"He's so cute Tess, but I don't know what to talk to him about. He's not into any of the same stuff we're into." I loved it when you did that when you refer to us as if we were extensions of one another. "I've got to look up that football team he's always talking about, that way we can talk about it."

I hate how you wanted to change for him. Fuck him if he didn't like the same things you liked and you shouldn't pretend to like his stupid hobbies. He should love you for the way you are, the way I do. "Lil, don't you hate football? Stop trying to change yourself for a stupid boy." I said, you just rolled your eyes and laughed saying that I was just jealous because I didn't want to share you with anyone else. And you were right, I didn't, selfishly I wanted to be the only one that hears you laugh, that sees your smile, that feels your touch.

The first time we kissed, I felt time stop. It was like that silence in my head finally stopped and all I could think of was you. You had a date with that boy of yours, you were scared that he would kiss you and think you were a bad kisser. I couldn't help but think that was stupid, he should be grateful to even feel your lips, for I had only thought about how they would feel millions of times before.

"Tess, don't be weird about what I'm about to ask you, okay?"

I laughed, "you can't just tell me not to be weird, what if you say something weird, huh?" you gave me that look where you were trying to act annoyed but I could see the corners of your lips tugging up.

"C'mon, be serious." you took a breath and for the first time since I'd met you, you seemed nervous. "It's just that" you paused again, looking down and I wanted you to just spit it out, "that I - uh - I think that it would help me be less nervous for tonight if maybe we practiced." Slowly you looked up at me, upon seeing my face you turned bright red, "oh god never mind forget it!" You turned away from me.

It wasn't that I didn't want to, I was just shocked at the opportunity you presented to me, but for once, I couldn't let it go by. For the first time in my pathetic life, I wanted something, I wanted it more than I wanted my next breath, "wait wait, we can if you want." I hesitantly suggested. That pit in my stomach felt like a bowling ball, weighing me down but also grounding me, not allowing me to think about anything else, not that I ever wanted to.

You looked at me and gave me a shy nod, then you stepped back into your typical self, giving me a sly smirk. We sat on my bed and turned to another. It felt like my limbs didn't belong to me, I didn't know where to put my hands, what to do with my feet, or where to look. But you took the lead as you did with everything. Without a word, you pulled me in. Once our lips touched it felt like I could finally breathe like I found what made other people want to wake up in the morning. Like this was all I would ever want.

And then it was over. You went on a date with Tyler or Riley or whatever the fuck his name was and I stayed where I always was and did what I always did.

Slowly we grew apart, you became friends with his friends. You tried to invite me to things but I couldn't find the will to go and see you with him. To watch someone love you the way I always wanted to.

Every single night I dreamed about you. One night it was so real - so god damn real I wanted to stay there forever - like a flashback, we were in my room, you were upset and had clawed your way into my personal space. I finally dared to kiss you, for real, with no other alternative reason but to just kiss you.

But I'm awake now, and realize I wanted a life that wouldn't ever be possible. You haven't talked to me in months, you have new friends. I don't blame you, I never did. But every day I miss you.

Maybe I'll see my father, I'll tell him I'm sorry for never crying, for never thinking of him, for never imagining the future we could've had.

Or maybe I won't, maybe there's nothing but darkness to greet me. Maybe the darkness will entirely consume me, the way I wished to consume you. Until there's nothing left of me. I will always love you, even when there's no 'me' left to love you, know that it's still there.

For I am now my father,  
I was never truly yours, Tessa

## Shadows and Reflections in the Bike Rack behind the Integrated Sciences Complex

*Ellen Foust*

What is a bike rack? One can say it is a boring utilitarian object not worth a second look. On the other hand, for those who take a second look a bike rack is much more! I have observed this bike rack often and have seen it in many lights! Literally. As the sun travels through the sky, the bike rack casts amazing shadows on the ground below it and on the textured wall behind it. At the same time, the glass wall next to it serves up amazing reflections. To those who take the time to stop and look, this bike rack presents an amazing and constantly changing, visual delight.

*Artist Statement for the following five photographs*



“Light Triumphs”  
*Ellen Foust*





“Stay The Course”  
*Ellen Foust*





“Tai Chi”  
*Ellen Foust*



“Lighting the Way”  
*Ellen Foust*



“Into the Mystery”  
*Ellen Foust*



## Same old story

*Nalani Depina*

### Scornful

Smile brighter than the sun  
No judgment just comfort  
Arms so open  
free to cry  
Trauma left in the past

Looking over to clear eyes  
Yearning but hesitant  
Could I pull her close  
Lips pressed together  
Breathing so heavy  
Windows cloud with steam

Future blooms in my mind  
Fear pushes it behind  
Jaw clenched  
Unable to speak up  
Silence resonates  
Straining our bond

Separating before it breaks  
Days into weeks  
Till reuniting at last  
Behind the starting line  
Starting a gentle walk

Past unspoken  
Yet unforgotten  
Tensions are low  
And life goes on

Would it be so bad  
Becoming your future  
As much as I hope  
Its too far fetched  
Out of sight out of mind  
You've moved on  
So should I

He's not good enough  
You deserve the world  
More than the mess of me  
Who can't cope  
The void you left gaping  
In your wake  
Smiling with him  
So far from me.

**Affection**

Always avoiding  
 Running is a hobby of mine  
 When I get too tough  
 leave it behind, just dust  
 Wandering an endless track

She was a breath of fresh air  
 From brushing shoulders  
 To walking side by side  
 Eager to ease my loneliness  
 Also aiming to ease her pain  
 Symbiotically passing days

Something blossomed  
 A unique flower  
 As its petals opened  
 A sweet smell emerged  
 Until it withered without water  
 Only the roots survived

After a time it bore fruit  
 Friendship in its leaves  
 But its taste was sour  
 Abandoning the bittersweet  
 Ready to eat something ripe

There he was  
 A modest tree  
 That grew for months  
 Unnoticed by my clouded eye

Flowers are sweet  
 But trees are strong and tall  
 Leaves reaching the sky  
 Roots deep within the earth  
 Each year adding new rings  
 Solid trunk thick with trust  
 Abundant in fruit and love

Our secrets and sadness  
 Left in the past  
 Bonding new branches  
 Fertilizing our future  
 With tender hands  
 Thriving in rich soil  
 You taught me to be myself  
 I taught myself to love you

**Made Eternal**

Magic Erupted in my eyes  
 My world was opened  
 The first day I saw you  
 Your radiant essence  
 Captivated my soul

Each day passed  
 Learning more of you  
 Made me fall  
 Further and faster  
 Every word enchanting  
 My heart grows fonder

At first, you didn't know  
 So I played pretend  
 We were nothing but friends  
 But I wished for more  
 You became my person  
 I feared losing you most

No judgment or hate  
 Digging deep into our souls  
 Finding scars locked away  
 Opening and healing  
 Made easy in your arms

Eventually, I confessed  
 And you ran away at first  
 I let you go unknowing  
 You'd return full of love

Hands intertwined  
 You hold me and say "mine"  
 A new feeling for us both  
 Sharing and caring  
 Nothing unspoken  
 Bond always growing  
 Strong as a diamond

Taking on life together  
 Each day burns brighter  
 Running back into my arms  
 Warming me with your fire  
 We can weather any storm  
 Take on the world together  
 Till death do us part  
 I do

## It Always Ends with the Sun Rising

Oscar Brown

*After Midnight Mass, Book VII: Revelation, directed by Mike Flanagan*

“Isn’t this what you wanted?”

The sky blossoms with a bruise wrought from his fist.  
His pride is cold, lain at his feet,  
his love a memory, brushing against his sleeve,  
now he sits in lonely company.

The sun is rising.

This is the price he will pay,  
the juice of the apple still wet on his lips.  
Eve does not remember that first taste,  
but it is still sour on his breath.

When it appeared in a cathedral made from dust  
it brought on wrinkled wings, not a gift,  
but damnation.

What righteousness did he lose when he fell?  
What world has he lost for his love?

Those ruins, they echo in his bones;  
that beast, it has a home in his heart  
where the aching timbers of an empty home  
stretch to meet its new host.

What gentle sin brushed his lips while he wept?  
What graceless curse held his hand while he walked?

The bridge is hard beneath his hands.

No, she never felt like a sin.  
No, his love was never wrong.  
Only now it isn’t His forgiveness he wants.

A ghost of light streaks across the horizon.  
He can feel the heat begin to blister his knuckles.

“All I ever wanted was you.”



Untitled  
*Sonia Valentine*

## The Static in my Skull

*Kyle Massask*

gaze remains as days pass unblinking  
ringing in my ears as all noise begins to mesh together  
colors mute, grey appears as primary, feel myself sinking  
drowning in melancholy, feelings of forlorn independent of the weather

surely this is better than yesterday.  
I don't even really know what day of the week we're on  
maybe tomorrow I'll step away to the dismay  
of no one. Quick to search for happiness in days forgone

I couldn't find my reflection in the mirror this morning  
Suppose that means introspection is unattainable  
wonder if I should recognize this as a form of warning  
sullenly silencing myself, deeming this struggle unexplainable

I've felt my life fading into the background

sad to say it'll never be found.



## All the King's Horses and All the King's Men

*Kyle Massask*

Sullen, I sulk and stumble all along the trash scattered train platform.  
Despite my sobriety, I teeter, hobble, totter, stagger, lumber, shamle along.  
Trains pass, gifting me with their departing windstorms.  
I wander endlessly, mindlessly, a shadow to passing groups, a spectral tagalong.

Finally I climb into one of the passing trains, unsure of its direction or destination.  
I'm met with an army of piercing stares, what feels like thousands of glaring eyes.  
Excellent, I've stumbled upon what appears to be my personal, social damnation.  
Unintelligible conversations creep to my undeserved ears as we begin to mobilize.

After what feels like lifetimes, the doors open and I slip out onto unforgiving asphalt.  
Tears well my eyes as the train continues its course, leaving me alone.  
Accepting the fate I've made, I can recognize this moment as strictly my own fault.

I can easily break despite all that I've grown.

All the king's horses, and all the king's men  
bore witness to the fact I'll never be fully together again.



“Heidi Fleiss”  
*Elaine Happpie*



“Fort Meyers Florida”  
*Elaine Happnie*

Poetry

## Capsule

*Kacey Pharris*

I thought that I knew  
what I wanted.  
That I could take  
a deep breath  
and keep you locked away  
with me.

I thought that I wanted a shelter for us.  
To hide away  
and forget everything. To  
drink in the warm musk of  
one another  
in the dim.

I thought that I needed  
someplace dark.  
A capsule to contain  
everything that we are  
and will be.  
A cocoon of  
hair and breath,  
close noses and closed eyes.  
hands and legs  
and bones.

I thought what I desired  
was a secret haven  
But it isn't.

I want that deep breath,  
yet I want to sigh it  
out in the open.  
I want to take you  
to a field  
to a yawning expanse  
of everything  
and of nothing.  
True freedom with no  
Strings attached  
or expectations.

I want to lay with you  
in the tall golden grass. For our legs to pound

against roads made of dust,  
or dangle from crude bridges.  
I want to have you  
and no worries.

To explore  
And to find.  
And live a much simpler life Than we do.

I want to escape with you.



## Hydrologic Cycle

*Kacey Pharris*

It's fat and warm, with a cold spray visible in waves that ebb to no consistent shore  
The air feels thick enough to swim through.  
I want to swim through it, become helpless in a constant stream, lose my breath.

The rain turns to white groundwater. It slides along the crevices in the concrete and  
down to no certain destination.  
The water fuels my lungs.  
I think this is the only time I breathe.  
Negative ions  
Negative ions so completely positive

I enjoy the rain for the same reasons I enjoy the waterfall in my therapist's office.  
Negative ions.  
It's scientific, science that touches my soul in a way that I think all logical or  
"scientific" things can make those soul-feelings.

Bumps prickle my skin. I crave more of the rain, to be beaten into the earth by it.  
To curl up in the soil and let the rivets of warm water carve rivers down my back, all  
throughout my skin.  
Rain lifts something otherly inside me  
Wraps me in a blanket of a feeling of knowing I thought I had  
Of how it felt to love and  
think that I was loved in return

How it felt to be the only one to really know a person.  
When we stood in the hot, fat rain  
With our mouths open to the sky  
And nothing could touch us

Since when did I need another person?  
When I remember how it felt in the rain.  
When I was a keeper of secrets and love that was only known by myself But that love  
was a secret all along, only to be spoken under the roar of a thunderstorm, only for  
my ears and eyes and never other than that.

The water covers my feet.  
I am insatiably cold when the rain lets up.  
Alone and quiet  
When the rain makes no sound around me.

The water rises over the road.  
It makes a river.

I don't remember the name for the water cycle.  
But I know this system is scientific too, the thing that comforts me is crafted by an  
understood system.  
Isn't all that is unscientific simply something not understood?  
If something is not understood, is it unscientific?  
Is love considered magic because it isn't understood  
because there is no system to explain or predict it?

Or maybe a homesickness for a place you haven't been,  
a person you haven't met yet,  
someone you've met but can never see again.

The rain is spiritual.

## Bloodline

*Kacey Pharris*

What's in a bloodline?  
Ain't it all just learnt behavior?

Cause my daddy taught me how to shoot  
I was raised in the sawdust  
Of his shop  
Watched him cut the gun wood  
Make his art, a silent worship

My daddy taught me how to walk quietly through the underbrush  
With dirt beneath my heels  
Watched him skin a deer for the first time  
Bag of dry cereal in hand,  
Rubber boots where the grass met the dirt  
Holding my breath in reverence

He didn't teach me how to love sitting still  
How existing in that old dusty shop soothed me  
How watching him carve designs,  
monuments,  
gave me peace  
How much I enjoyed the silence and still of the woods, of becoming the animals  
A silent worship

What's in a bloodline?

Did my daddy teach me how to stagnate?  
How to hate the loud  
And all the other internal hatreds  
How to self destruct with anger  
Or well,  
Destruct

Ain't it all just learnt behavior?

'Cause my mama taught me how to tend a house  
Taught me how to feel disgust  
Taught me to be a good churchgoer  
A respectable offspring  
How to take pride in all things  
Watched her lean into her bloodline and let it carry her  
A silent worship



My mama taught me how to fight  
To wait to strike  
To build a case until it was strong enough to kill  
Watched her take notes of her enemies, watched her wait for the exposed throat

Mama never taught me how to watch  
To sit and gauge others like a time bomb  
To make the quiet loud  
Watched her seeth and shatter on a pin drop  
Watched how to anticipate it  
A silent worship

What's in a bloodline?

What did they mean to teach me?  
What's in my blood and what's a product of little eyes watchin'?

I wish I knew  
If my capacity for ruin exists between my veins? Am I doomed to infect, To make  
those same inevitable punishments

Mama and daddy never taught me that.



Untitled  
*Sarah Kalkert*



Untitled  
*Sarah Kalkert*





“Real Photo Postcards Exhibition”  
*Taj Amir Madison*

## 2nd Childhood

*Taj Amir Madison*

Laughing, we're gleaming, posted on corners like stop signs at the end of a street  
Beaming seeming as sunrises, bursting through seams, surreal as our dreams  
Could we do this again barely articulate of what it is I ask myself, "is this what we  
are"

Mindful because it's confusing as Confucius. But somehow still well-made  
Similar to the ethereal, still having time for cereal, innocent & immaterial: is  
what we're made of

Could everyday be as great as these

As rich as these fall as Autumn with burgundy-orange leaves

At the height of one end the near entrance to another

As Gold as Tutankhamen's embalmed body in his coffin

Here and now... or in the After-life... there's no reason to suffer

Poetry

## A Native Child's Boundless Spirit

*Taj Amir Madison*

Can you see me—  
then  
I look nothing like what I am— now

But the furrow of my brow,  
remains, even after death  
the *reasons* that account for my countenance have not changed, they've only  
deepened,  
like the irons now rooted in this land

My head tilts down, slightly  
and I look as if I want to draw back and that's perhaps because I do

Because deep within my being, I still believe that what you  
want me to believe is— untrue

Now I move about  
as fast as... light travels Because I'm one  
with the Supreme, I'm immersed in Spirit

But that slight smirk that slight grin  
still remains

As I watch you live  
in a land where  
my people once reigned

Where we were once  
in harmony with nature  
but tradition has changed  
and now, I'm in communion with

you  
as you are in connection to your metal—gods

*Inspired by the Exhibition titled, "Real Photo Postcards: Pictures from a Changing Nations Exhibition"*

*ghost.**Addie McElreath*

Today,  
 I learned  
 that in  
 the language of the Ojibwe Tribe  
*-iban* is added to one's name when  
 they have passed on to another world.  
 The last four letters of your name  
 The irony did not escape me,  
 Thick, hot tears running down  
 my cheeks  
 again

I felt your warmth on my lap  
 when I drove by your treatment center.  
 It feels like I was there yesterday,  
 a year ago,  
 and never, all at once.  
 The feeling of your breathing  
 will never leave me.  
 Although I know not how I know,  
 I know that you are with me  
 and I know that you will remain.

I cry for you still, more often than I'd admit  
 to anyone, but these tears are not sorrow.  
 They are the tears of longing – wishing  
 for your shape, your touch, once more  
 although your spirit persists.  
 I am thankful for the years you spent  
 with me, and for your softness which  
 stays inside my heart as always.  
 The lessons that you taught me  
 will never be forgotten.  
 No matter what may come to pass,  
 No matter who may take your place  
 You  
 will  
 always  
 be  
 my  
 number  
 one.

## Night Time Contemplations

*Helen Batiste*

I lie in bed listening to my heart beat in the darkness,  
While outside icy sleet drums its fingertips against my window  
In a steady staccato of frigid, intrusive cadency.

I cannot escape the insistent high-pitched tone of ringing in my ears,  
So much more pronounced now than it is  
When it hides in the white noise of daily life.

Thoughts, unwelcome specters from the past,  
Come alive to taunt me,  
Pushing their way  
Into my consciousness,  
Their determination so much stronger  
Than my feeble attempts to banish them.

Regrets for actions that occurred decades ago,  
Now burdens that I and I alone must carry,  
Surface in the darkness to punish me.  
I whisper futile apologies to those long gone,  
All the while knowing  
That I am the only person alive who remembers,  
Or cares.





“When will we ever learn - prisoners Gulf War”  
*Elaine Happnie*

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