

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, curly hair, looking upwards and to the left. She has white face paint or glitter applied to her cheek and under her eye. She is wearing large hoop earrings. The background is dark and out of focus, with some geometric shapes visible.

Antemas

A STUDENT JOURNAL OF WRITING
AND ART AT YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE

2022 - 2023



Karah Shea, *Unity*

2022

ARTEMAS

2023

A STUDENT JOURNAL OF WRITING AND ART
AT YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE



Ashley Murray, *Fauna of Flora*

Special thanks to Jo Bearse for her generous support and funding in honor of Danny Bearse, class of 1979.

Artemas, formerly *Corn Creek Review*, is created by and for the students of YHC and serves as a vehicle for their creative expression. *Artemas* accepts submissions of poetry, prose, musical composition, photography, painting, drawing and other art forms. Each year, the magazine is put together by a student group that gathers submissions, chooses the content for the magazine, and designs the layout. The magazine's renaming is in honor of Rev. Artemas Lester, who established YHC in 1886.

Contact Faculty Advisor Dr. Gale Thompson (gmthompson@yhc.edu) if you are interested in joining the staff, securing an issue, or submitting your work.

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COVER IMAGES: JAHLAYNIA WINTERS, FROM *THROUGH RAIN, GO THROUGH*

Forward

If it can't be happy, make it beautiful.

—Elyse Gustafson

These past couple of years have not been easy. The world has been in a state of disarray, and we've been left to pick up the pieces. What else can we as artists and writers do other than create out of the brokenness? Through the storms and the hard times, we continue to persist. We take what we have gone through and use it as an opportunity to grow.

Our cover features Jahlaynia Winters' series "Through Rain, Go Through." Jahlaynia's series is about persevering through the storms and allowing oneself to grow. Without those rainy days, we wouldn't have the rosebuds to show for it. All the art and writing in *Artemas* shows how resilient our students are. So, take a deep breath and admire the buds that have finally bloomed.

This isn't to say that we don't still have stormy days ahead, but from the submissions in *Artemas* we know that the students here will make it through their bad days and still manage to find it within themselves to create art. Even though what we create in moments of anxiety or despair might not always be happy, it will always be beautiful.

Addisyn Clapp | Editor-in Chief

Hannah Elliott | Editor-in Chief



Chayil Aponte, *Anxiety*

ELIZABETH SIGMON

*i got into a fight with a pen, but
you should see the other guy*

if you knew my vocation / you'd think my love language would be /
words of affirmation / you'd think i would be a master at writing love
letters / pour my heart and soul until ink splatters across my hands and
thighs / you'd think by now i would have found a clever way to say i
love you / or i miss you / in a way that would make them run off that
plane / i have tried / i have sent cursive curly letters / filling each line on
the paper / front and back / going on and on / about how glad I am /
i've finally found love / that isn't transactional / those letters feel cheap
coming from me / saccharine in a way that isn't so much sweet / as it is
breakable / a stomach ache / a problem for a later me / how odd it is / i
can chatter on and on and on about the stupidest things / from yeats's
idiosyncrasies / to lorde's lyric philosophies / but i will never tell you
how much you mean to me / words fail me then / words fail me fre-
quently / maybe each verbal failing is a language itself / a love language
/ my own / each glitch and stutter means 'i love you' / each incessant
babbling is 'i hope you love me too' / each long drawn out pause con-
tains a feeling so big i have run out of words to say / not because i have
run out of things to say to you / i love you / is such a trivial thing to
say / when i look at the world that way / why say i love you / when i
can just fall flat on my face in front of you / use the wrong word for the
wrong thing / speak so fast the words all blend together / why tell you
how i feel / when i can show you all the little ways i am breaking?

BRY MEISTER

Jellyfish Embrace

waves slip
and slide
intermittently
and I wade
along the beach
until my wrinkled
toes find
a jellyfish
lurking beneath
the white bubbles
of froth
it tangles its
corded ribbons
of venom
up my calf
brushing the inside
of my thigh
I scream
urine streams
down my leg
the acidic pinch
of salt and piss
cooling the burn
smearing mud
up and down
coating red welts and
pink bands of
lighting

swelling and pulsing as
the stingers of
yellow jackets
are still buried
in my wrist
where they attacked
in sweltering heat
sweat dripping
into the raised bumps
itching in its
current through
my veins
my circulation
begins to cease
as the blood flow
gets cut off
anaphylaxis
curling into
an asphyxiation
tight as the belt
I wrapped around
my neck
at the age of
fourteen
sixteen
nineteen
pulling on the
strap

until the world
twisted
around the edges
and grew dark;
bursting, shattering,
the light in his eyes
flickering
with his fingers
wrapped meticulously
around my throat
comfort in the
gentle press
against my
pulse points
he has my

blood
pumping below
his grip
the ability
to clench it
tight
like a garden hose
so tread carefully
the head of
a jellyfish
is plush,
safe,
but I no longer
go into the ocean
regardless

REBECCA BAKER

Bluebells

In her spare time since the funeral, Sally sorted through her mother's gardening notes. Pages upon pages of scratchy letters detailing seasonal changes and pollination made her eyes blur, so she mainly just stared at the pencil drawings instead. Every day, she returned to the same pages she poured over the day before, thumbing the crinkled edges amongst her fingertips.

Sally rubbed her palms against her face, hoping that would somehow push focus back into her. She turned back to the first page with a sharp turn of her wrist and a sigh. All of the pictures were beginning to meld together into some kind of franken-flower, flashing across her vision whenever she blinked. She flipped the page once again, but this did not dispel the amalgamation of flora that blended and bloomed in her brain. No matter how many pages she looked through, none matched her spotty memory of the flowers at her mother's funeral.

Sally cast a quick gaze out the garage window, shifting in the creaky wooden stool with a flinch. The sun beamed overhead like a spotlight, serving as a mocking reminder of passing time.

When that sun rose a little higher, Sally would have to get in her cramped sedan and head out to her mother's grave. Her brother and father would be there to pay their respects, wondering how they had made it a month without her. Sally would join them on the damp grass and wonder the same thing herself.

In the past weeks since the funeral, Sally's life had come to a standstill. Her freelance writing teetered out into nothing, leaving her laptop to gather dust and her bank account to slowly implode on itself like a ship filling with water. Instead, she spent her time on the corner of the couch, curled into a small oval. The position hurt after a few minutes, but it seemed somehow appropriate for mourning. It felt wrong to be any other way, as if she wasn't acting out her grief right. Would a woman who just lost her mom sit on the couch normally, as if everything were fine? Would she spend her afternoons peering

at a screen, grinding out the most mind-numbing and buttery words about some toaster a client was looking to sell? Would she eat at regular times and walk about her house with her head held high? No, she would stay on the couch in a tightly confined ball and cry. So that's what she did.

Still, a part of Sally crumbled into dust at the thought of not putting in some effort for her mother, even if it was only for her gravestone. So here she was, flipping through manuals and gardening notes her mother had made to try and identify her funeral flowers. Then, she could leave those at the grave and call it a victory, a thoughtful act that was still sad enough to not feel like she was playing at being normal.

But nothing fit.

Another glance outside showed that sun had continued to trail across the sky, reflecting off the hood of the sedan. With slumped shoulders and tears edging at her eyelids, Sally gently laid the notes on a nearby work table and went out to her car. As she turned the key in the ignition and pulled out onto the street, the lack of flowers laying in her passenger seat pinched at the corner of her conscience.

After a while, she pulled into the gravel road that lined either side of the graveyard. She was a bit early, poking at her watch as if she could pressure the minutes into turning. With a hiss of breath, she pushed herself out of the car and down the isolated path to the graveyard, resigning herself to being alone with her thoughts.

Predictably, all her brain offered her were memories of her Mom, either playing with her when she was younger or peering at the flowers in her garden while on all fours. Sally attempted to push the pain of her absence into some darker, more mature corner of her. She craned her neck towards the sky to avoid the surrounding foliage bringing any more memories. The sunlight broke over her skin and slipped off in chunks, like the yolk of an egg. The heat stuck itself within the crevices of her, jamming an intrusive nail into her grief. Summer made the mourning process feel all the more inappropriate, leaving her sweating through the funeral and glaring against the sun instead of properly moping in the rain. She was aware she was following stereotypes, playing at grieving in the same way she felt as if

she were playing at normal life, but what other guidelines were there? What other rules could she follow?

But now she couldn't even muster up the effort to bring her mother flowers. What kind of mourning was that? She couldn't even get simulated sadness right.

Her feet found their way to her family's grassy plot without her knowing. She let her eyes remain upwards, neck straining under the unfamiliar pressure. Even though all that was there was a gravestone, shame trickled down her back at having arrived empty-handed. Clamping her eyes shut, she let her chin drop and felt her voice echo out of somewhere hollow.

"I'm sorry, Mom, I tried to get your funeral flowers but—"

Sally froze as her eyelids lifted from her vision, the unexpected flash of blue rooting her to the spot. Bursts of drooping flowers had sprung from her mother's grave like confetti, rustling in the wind as if trying to get her attention. Slowly, she stepped forward and reached out, grazing her fingers across the sapphire petals as a quivering grin spread across her face.

Ah yes, now she remembered. The flowers from her mother's funeral. The flowers that symbolize eternal love. The flowers she had spent weeks looking for, now sprouting up in front of her like a fulfilled wish.

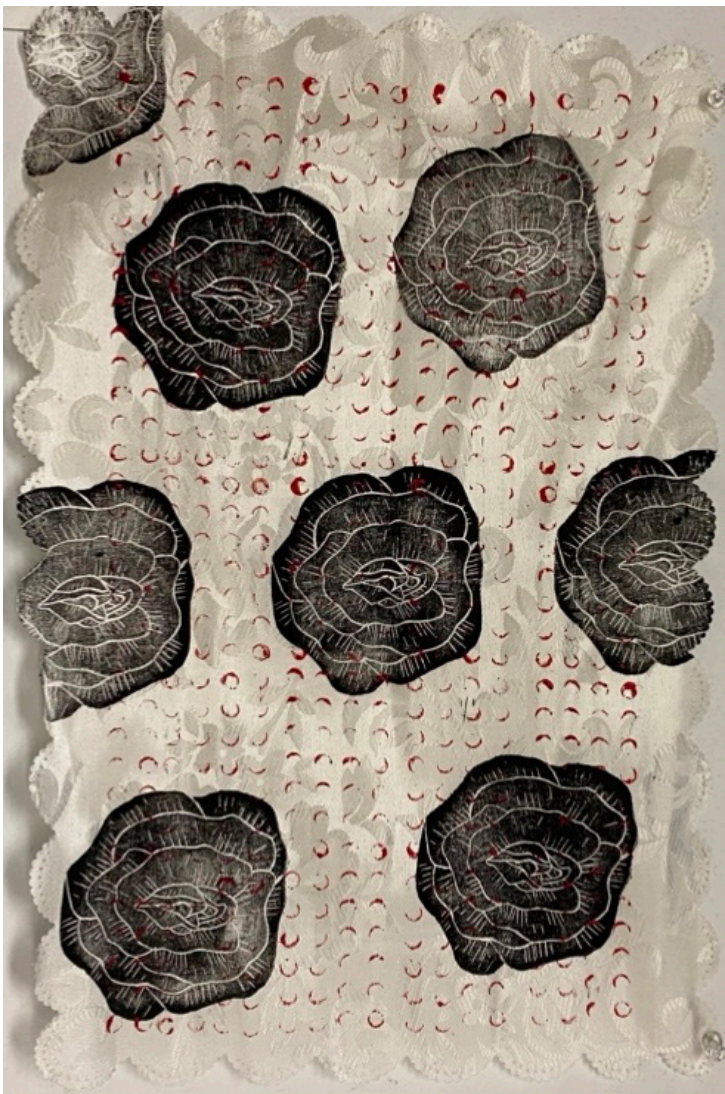
Bluebells.

ADDISYN CLAPP

My Mother was a Pelican

My mother was a pelican, and when we went to church on Sunday, she always packed Crayola crayons. She never packed the Rose Art crayons, because she knew I didn't like them. When she saw my brother and I getting antsy in the pews, she would shove the box of crayons in our hands, fish around in her purse for a notepad, and then hush me and my brother while we colored for the rest of the service. When our stomachs would rumble during a hymn, she would reach for the Goldfish in her purse and exchange crayons for crackers. My mom always stocked up on our favorite chips and fruit snacks when she went grocery shopping. Our pantry was always full.

But that's not why I loved her. In the middle of the night when the moon was high in the sky and the wind huffed and puffed up against the house, she would pluck feathers from her wings and trace squares and diamonds and stars on my arms until I fell asleep. Sleepless nights would be spent curled up against her body with her wings wrapped around me. When trips to the grocery store became sparser, the pantry emptied and emptied until eventually even the mice were struggling to find crumbs. My brother's and my stomach would cry out louder and louder until our wailing grew too hard for my mom to bear. She would impale herself again and again and again until our stomachs were stuffed with her flesh and blood.



Hannah Elliott, *Cycles*

JOSIE BROOKS

Afterlife

I wonder what would happen if
I jumped into the washer.
The back wall a hidden passage
to a life we all want. Free icecream,
long walks on the beach, playgrounds.

I jumped into the washer and never left.
Who would want to leave such a place?
The ocean is made of wine, the sand
rock candy popping and sticking to you.
The dolphins are friends here, they like to
take me deep into the white ocean
to show me their homes, their families.

It took me days to realize I was the only
human here. I climb to the top of the water-
slide and race turtles down it. I asked
Mr. Dolphin once where the other humans
were, and he told me I was in charge of
who got to be here. This was my place.
I decided to bring my family.

I could not find the door to get back
to them, rocks overturned throughout
the entire island. I dug holes, looked
in caves and still no luck. I wondered
why I had hid the door so well.

CHAYIL APONTE

La Verdad

Listen.

I carry anger like a knife.

Tucked beneath layers and

Close to my heart, Separated from el

Mundo afuera.

Never does it cool,

And only occasionally

Do I expose it to el

Mundo afuera.

Only occasionally

Do I let that yellow

Bile return to the

Collective energy

Cesspool of el

Mundo afuera.

Both can harm me.

And those around me,

But I leave it alone,

Bury it deeper, guard

It closer.

Sheathe it.

Will it away as harmless.

It can not and does

Not affect me.

Es una mentira.

No. No, I do not
Carry anger like a knife.
Anger *is* my knife, and
It is always
Plunged between my
Ribs, never into el
Mundo afuera.

Esta es la verdad.



Heather Parker, *Illustration*

AMAYA SMITH

Home

This home is vanilla incense.
Warm and delightful.

An echo down the hall
Twelve sisters laughing until they cannot breathe

The distinct feeling of daisy petals picked one by one.
He loves me, he loves me not.

A Ruby Red click clack.
You are far from “home.”

Home has become reminiscent of Spring.
Cool breeze, sunshine, it’s extraordinary.

It is acceptable to lay flat on the ground.
Picking the blades of so-called grass.

Sisters are attached by the hip
You lay, they lay, they’re right next to you.

Their hearts are glass.
And their souls are windowpanes.

Home is no father.
Home is no mother.

This is no home that requires maintenance.
No grass to be cut, but flowers to be watered.

This sisterhood comes with the sweet taste of

Green apples, s'mores, and cheap Waffle House.

The sisters before me established an infinite tie
Way back in 1973.

Sisters make a family.
But this sisterhood is my Home.



Estefanía Pérez Acosta, *Quetzalcoatl*

JULIANNA PEREZ

Beasts in the Harbor

A paperboy hollered,

“A mystery is to be revealed in the harbor!”

Curiosity took hold of my hand and followed

The preacher, the cobbler, and the farrier

To where the salty sea met a cerulean sky.

I pardoned past women in fur coats and feed sack dresses alike

To see what was delivered by the weathered hull.

My wonder begged to know what lay ahead.

There at the end of the dock stood a massive cage,

Shadows of crooked bars and bent frames

Darkened the tattered sail that separated us from the unknown.

Shadows three times larger than a farmer's horse swayed about,

Low groans filled the hushed air.

A proud captain stood atop the cage gloating.

With great flourish his crew pulled away the fabric.

The hot scent of sunbaked earth and grit greeted me

As two pairs of muddy eyes blinked in the light.

Stories came to life before the crowd stood in the shadows of elephants.

No terrifying beasts with bloody tusks were they,

No wildfire blazed behind their eyes,

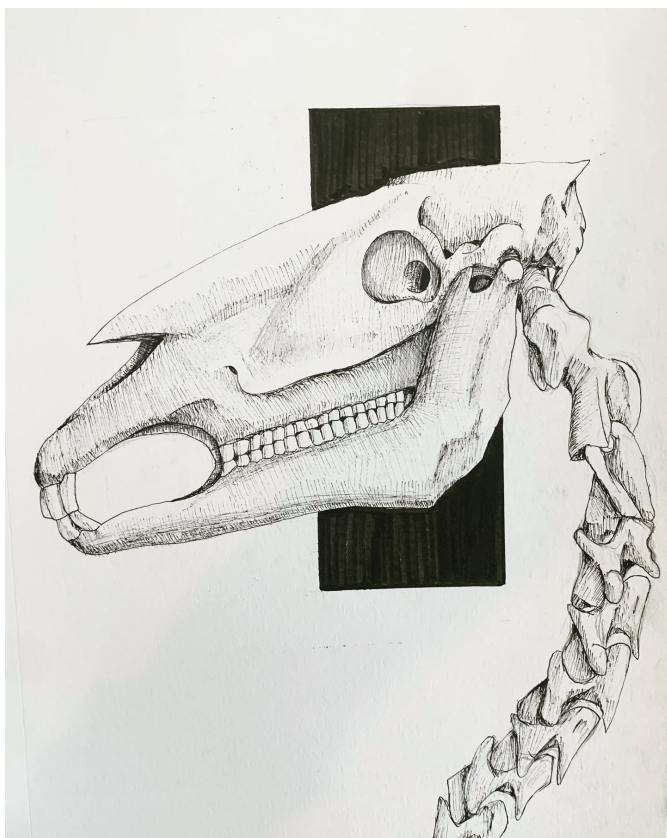
No earth-shaking roars escaped their mouths.

Shouts rang out for a fight,

Everyone demanded a display of rage and glory.

“Send in the hounds and let the battle begin!” they cried.

I took another look at the wrinkled beasts.
The smaller one hid behind
The other, who was tall and worn, trunk curled on the ground.
Behind the bars I saw
A frightened child protected by a mother kneeling in prayer.
Despite the cheers no foreign blood appeared
On their rough grey skin.
Just their own,
From where the chains dug in.



Abram Miller, *What Can't Be Beat*

IZZIE ALLEN

The Whale Sharks and Other Friends

As the sign sits up there on the wall pretty high above my head I grow very excited. Walking in the passageway to the people mover, as my grandfather likes to call it, and the tank itself there is no room to see anything. Children and their parents crowd around the few small viewing windows that are spaced out every so many feet. Me and my sister decided to continue past them, not really wanting to wait for them to move. We reach the people mover and wait our turn staring at the sight that says six feet apart and laughing as no one will comply. We hop on and wait for the magic of the ocean world to be seen through the one-hundred-plus-foot tunnel.

Looking up and overhead, different species of fish and rays swam by. There was a long gasp and there one was. White sea foam materialized, solidified, and congealed. The water lapped around it and we all stood in awe. I was looking at their underbelly. A boat with a figure loomed over us as the guesses to his being there flew around the tunnel. But I didn't care. I was staring straight up at my favorite creature to ever exist.

As the light began to lessen we moved through the tunnel to a darkened part like the entrance to a movie theater showing room. The path forked one for the accessible things, like wheelchairs and strollers, and one for those with limbs who could go downstairs. Picking the latter, the hall opened up into a twenty-three feet tall by sixty-one feet wide and two feet thick viewing window, definitely larger than any tv or computer I've seen.

It was beautiful, amazing, awesome. It was more than these words but the true essence of them. That yes, is cheesy but it was. The different schools of fish danced around in a waltz circling the tank. The two manta rays glided around the tank together. The turtle bobbed and weaved around going along at his own little pace. Dancing on his own. But there was the night sky and constellations that swam past to and fro. Two different ones. Each different in their patterns was

the water blanketed them. The closer to the glass the better they were seen.

Watching this I felt the rough carpet of the little amphitheater step seats digging into my hands. I felt the cold of the room through my flannel. But then there was out of the endless murmuring, conversations.

From the left of me on the same step, I heard a girl around my age, I heard her irritations as she said with her attitude, "As soon as I say we should leave then all the cool shit happens."

I laughed quietly to myself though the next thing was even more funny.

"Is that a manatee or a manta ray?"

"I don't know."

"Oh well, I don't know. It's a mana-something."

My sister is next as she giggles to me, "The stingray is having a good time. It's going like this," gesturing with her hands waving motions that make no sense. Laughing all the while.

Every now and then there is the occasional "Look at that."
"Wow!" "Amazing!"

But my sister takes the cake as she asks, "You know I wonder if there would be a great white somewhere." Looking over I laugh at her and begin to speak when she continues saying, "Well, I suppose not. They are very aggressive."

The man at the podium by the right side of the window announces off the facts about the voyager tank. It is a 6.3 million-gallon tank with over fifty species of animals. There are two manta rays, two whale sharks, and a turtle. He is forty years old, the oldest inhabitant, and is named Tank. Tank the turtle. As the speaker sounded again just a few minutes later he was heard again with the same message and polite reminder that masks are required to protect the workers and others.

I watched the dance of people going along through their day. I watched the dance of the schools of fish. I watched the rays and the turtle. But the dance I love and became obsessed with is that of the swimming constellations. That dance of the Whale Sharks.

INDY AYERS

Lens

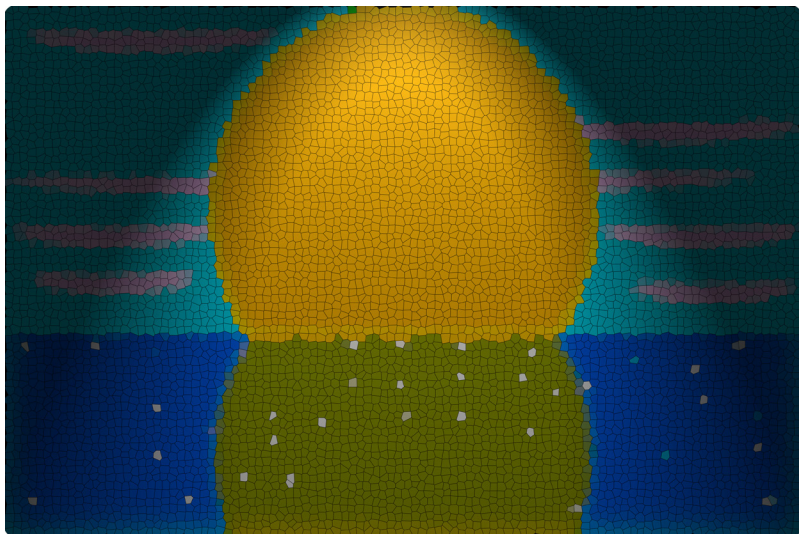
I'll meet you where our stars cross.
We'll lay in the grass to admire
the glazed celestial dome. My ideas will refract
off yours. You'll tell me, look up, look and see.
And I'll reply,

Galileo, look at the night, look at the night.
You too have that hassling halo
encompassing Earth's swooning Luna.
At what point do careful calculations
riddle with mishaps where vision
has turned into an illusion?
The lens should gather starlight
by reflecting and refracting
to concoct a black blanket swirling
with sprinkled time-traveled light.
Round to the nearest light year
when dealing through dappled twilights.
The numbers on the page
have started to blend, bleed,
and drip down into waves
that wobble and wobble.
Notate your science on the page
in troubled thoughts and second guesses,
that we must muster.

The day, Galileo, look at the day.
Galilei, I know the sight of sunspots haunt you
behind every glance took

towards the blue scattered sky.
Gaze through the looking glass as if it
could reward you for the bent and rippled
lumps of our mangled anatomy.
Let's mutilate ourselves further.
Who cares if observing the sun bursts
your eyes with blood or black holes?
We're locked to this degenerative path.
Lost sense, lost self is not a sacrifice
for a spotlight in scientific history.
History is lost without you, Galilei.

Meet me where our stars cross,
Let's lay in the grass and admire
our refracted night
with limited sight.
The sky, Galileo, looks towards the sky.



Jason Anderson, *Conqueror of the Sun*

HANNAH ELLIOTT

exchanging songs with strangers

I sent another guy on Bumble the song you recommended to me
when we first started talking.

He asked me what my favorite song was and that's the first one I
thought of.

Isn't it ironic?

I didn't know when you sent it to me that it would become the way I
feel about you.

The lyrics were a prediction from a fortune teller, warning me that it
wasn't going to work out.

But what did I know?

I thought I had met someone who got me—the real me.

I listen to that song on repeat through my headphones when I'm
alone in my room.

I try to keep the tears inside, so I don't disturb the neighbor I share a
wall with.

I bought you a T-shirt of that band for Christmas, but I never got to
give it to you.

I thought maybe that band would become our thing.

Now I wear it out even though it swallows my small frame.

Secretly, I pretend it's your shirt and I'm just borrowing it.

It provides a sick sort of comfort.

Jack from Bumble liked the song.

I wonder if he'll tell another girl about it, creating a vicious cycle of
heartbreak.

It's not even my favorite song, just one that makes me feel connected
to you.

When I listen to it, I think of the first time I had ever heard it.

It was new and exciting, like you.

Now it's a song I have engraved in my brain, its lyrics tattooed on my heart.

I thought maybe if I listened to it enough, I would get sick of it, but what can I say?

It's a damn good song.



Hannah Elliott, *Memento Mori*

JOSIE BROOKS

Fill Your Mind

with good, that's what my mother
always told me. But I have no control
on what enters my mind and plants roots.
I plant flowers, good seeds to blossom.
My water seems to be tainted
and my flowers stunted.
I feed them bright happy thoughts
but my dry withered plants catch fire.
My flowers are delicate, sensitive.
They hang their heads often. I tie them
to stakes to hold them up straight,
grow tall. They slip through my knots
and the Holly plants overtake them.
Am I in the wrong climate zone?
The Hollies bring their own pollinators
taking them away from my flowers.
The pokey leaves scratching my brain,
irritating my thought process,
corrupting my mind.
A breeze from a friend enters,
dried petals blowing in their breath.
My friends try to teach me to garden, but

my location was wrong from the start.



Corissa Pritchett, *Capturing the Great White*



Heather Parker, *Longevity*

ELIAS GODMAN

Changeling

(Changelings are Faery children that have replaced beautiful human babies. Though unconfirmed if Fae truly stole the children, the changeling endures in folklore, and in the autistic community. Some in the community identify with the changeling myth because of the feeling of not being completely human, or “normal”.)

A Faery spawn, swapped for
 beautiful babies. Monster in
child’s skin, creature of
 deceit and half-truths,
exchanged for a human plaything.

Forced into a world of
guessing and trying for what’s right,
 how to be a human? when
inside is inhumane.

Just as I turn human enough,
kindling kinship, the Fae temper
 lashes; they are not
my own blood, and it
 needles at my spine. I
observe from the edges,
 pondering the all-consuming
question: *am I*

really a human being?

Seeing so many differences,
 tell me mother, how do I
undermine the knowledge that,

very truly, I may not be
welcome in their world, as an
exception to the social norm,
yet I remain
zealous in my strangeness.



Ashley Murray, *Muted Respite*



Karah Shea, *Unity* (Detail)



Karah Shea, *Unity* (Detail)

ABBIE HILL

envy

January started yesterday
three drops of blood stain the snow
his hands like daggers have
pierced my heart of flesh
like an animal head upon a pole
he displays my wounds
exposing my gushing muscle
to the crows hovering by
cawing, laughing, drooling
the warmth of his body
makes my soul twitch
crawling out of my skin
like a butterfly from its chrysalis
the butterfly gets to change
she is granted wings to fly
to be free
but me? I'm stuck here
confined to my empty shell
watching her fly past
the pole into the sky



Jordan Campagnolo, *Cleanse*

KATIE D'AMBROSIO

A Six Pack Wouldn't Hurt

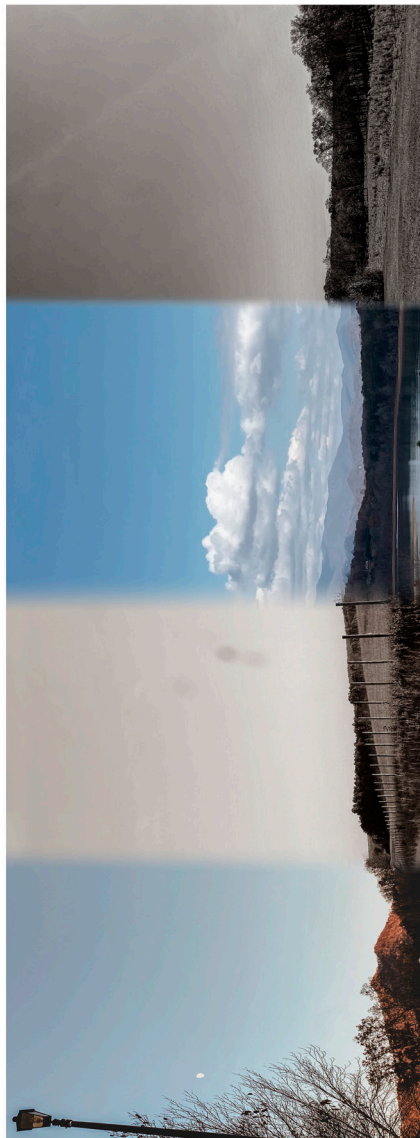
Buy a magazine, study
Chris Hemsworth, beach ready.
Don't you realize? Flab is NOT fab!
Eat a salad, something low carb. Push
for three miles- two is not enough.
Go to YouTube. Plenty of videos
help you here: "Abs in Two Weeks," "How
I Stay Skinny." Lift lighter weights.
Just tone, or you'll block up and bulge. My
Ken doll looks better than you. Plastic
legs like hard-packed sculpture
marble. Think Statue of David.
No, wait—too small. Think Hercules.
Oxymetholone pressed through a needle.
Pack on the protein. Eat tofu,
Quest Bars, lean beef, almond butter.
Rub PanOxyl on your cheeks. Acne
scars are better than actual zits. Add
to cart some penis enlargement pills?
Ugh! It's not too much to ask! I
vote you lose some weight.
Women who say "dad bods are better" are
exceptionally stupid. Idiots. I'm gonna order
yellow swim trunks. Size small. For you.
Zebra print. Let's hope you fit.

ANSLEY GASTON

E•the•re•al

after A. Van Jordan

e•the•re•al \ə\ *adj.* I. The sound of a mother's voice: as in the soothing comfort that envelops you when she speaks her intangible noise. 2. The otherworldly feeling I get when anticipating the celestial sunrise, soft sands caressing my feet that will stay present on me for hours after I leave this world: A whisper of winds and wishes on my back, / A world so blue it is almost black, / A burdened heart preparing to depart, / Your delicate and dainty hand clutched in my own, / When I whisper a sublime promise onto your skin, / When we turn towards the sky, lost in the collage of pastels that will always be there again, / When we dive into the deep, arctic water that pierces our decaying flesh, / When the warmth of our love breaks through, / When we lay on our backs, hand in hand, linked with one another for eternity, / This unceasing tenderness, / This beauty in darkness, / This devotion daring to disappear, / This harsh truth we must accept, / This impalpable weightlessness as we dive, / One last tidal wave knocking into our worn through bodies, / One last breath together under the fleeting night sky.



Makennah Cobb, *Grounded*

KT HORSLEY

*A Collection of Haiku I Wrote
When My Heart Hurt*

A shrine that I've made
Old photographs of lost days
Homage to despair
09/14/2022

You were my Judas
I knew you would betray me
But I always stayed
11/20/2022

I'm like a damn dog
Always laying at your feet
And licking my wounds
01/02/2023

ALLIE KILLER

Roadside Cross

Mom and dad keep watchful eyes,
For a car that won't be home this time.
Cruel crucifix.
Remembrance,
To mock their hollow nest.
Their sparrow, their swallow,
Won't spare them their sorrow;
Their mockingbird laid to rest.
Two beams by the roadside
Where two beams of light
Failed to ward off the lure of the night.
Now only two planks,
X marks the spot,
But tainted are riches with tragedy bought.
Treasure is stored in heaven.
Their treasure is stored in heaven.



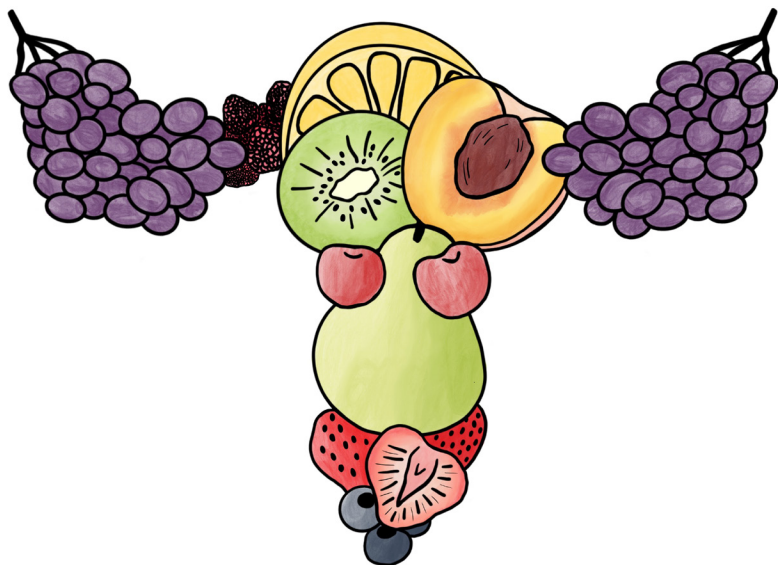
Estefanía Pérez Acosta, *Antiques*

ADDISYN CLAPP

How to Stop Praying

Before you can utter
dear heavenly father
cotton blooms in your mouth.
A field coats your gums,
a southern snow on your tongue
that dries out your prayer.
Cotton tumbles from your lips
onto your bed, your lap,
your arms folded over your chest.
In the morning you will gather
the withered remains,
but for now
you will leave it be.
You part your lips
again, but the words
only flutter in the air
for a few seconds before twisting
together. The words droop
in your lap and return
to dust in your hands.
You raise your head
to the popcorn ceiling.
You sit in the dark
and try to swallow the cotton.
God, I am so lonely.
Can't he see
that you can't lift the pebble
from your tongue by yourself?
What did I do wrong?
You strain your ears to listen
for that still small voice.
You hope that his ears

are not stuffed with cotton.
On Sunday you're told
that you are a lamb of God.
Will he know
how to find you
when your wool blends
into the field of cotton?
Please don't give up on me.
Tomorrow night you'll give
up on your nightly ritual,
because you know
in the pit of your heart
that your words will never
float to heaven. They will remain
wandering in the dead cotton
fields of forgotten prayers.



Hannah Elliott, *Fruiterus*



Ashley Murray, *Auric Ursid*



Ashley Murray, *Gilded Knight*

LACI THOMPSON

The Crown of Oz

Call it what you will, but I thoroughly and wholeheartedly believe that it was God's grace. Do you remember that moment when you literally had 5 minutes to turn in your last major assignment of the semester? How was your heart doing backflips inside your chest? That you had tried all the other options, and this was what you came up with? This was your last resort. Mine was on Wednesday, November 14th, 2021.

The previous night my mom and I congregated in our living room to have me slip into a few dresses that I had used from previous years. One whole closet in our home is literally a jungle of dresses in zip-up bags with dress shop logos. I had a dress for every occasion, that is, except for this one. I needed one for my senior pageant on Saturday. And I needed it fast.

First up, I tried on my favorite, which was the elegant royal blue that was skintight down the middle, but had flowy lace on the sides, and a not-so-low V neckline. The problem? Well, if you stood in front of me, you could quite literally see my feet entirely, in the shortest heels that I owned. I'm convinced that the tailor had planned my demise the previous year and cut off an inch more than we'd asked for. Whatever the case, it wasn't going to work, and neither were any of the other ones I had. The white one with rhinestones threatened to fall off me with even a small step. The red one, maybe? No. We won't even talk about that one.

So, there I was in my room the Tuesday before Miss BHS, tears streaming down my face, my thoughts jumping back and forth. A trampoline park in my head. This was my senior year. My last year ever to do this pageant. *But how can you do a pageant without a dress?*

In a sudden moment, all the children in the bouncy house of my mind had a sugar crash.

Emerald Green. Those were the words that followed, that popped into my head, like a bomb dropping on a roaring city. I didn't know

for sure what they meant at the time, but I had been steadfast in prayer about my dress issue, and I hoped that maybe it was God trying to speak to me. It was.

Nonetheless, in any pageant, there is never just one contestant. Here I was about to compete against some of my best friends, and my *best friend*, Sarah May Reynolds. Who, of course, with her drop-dead looks had placed above me the previous year. She moved here our sophomore year and the two of us clicked right away, like a fancy new ink pen. Even though I had been there my whole life and she hadn't, it's like these people I grew up with were now attracted to me like a bug was to light, simply because of her. In the dark of the night, in the depths of my mind, I was mad, jealous even. *It doesn't make any sense, what is she doing that I haven't been doing all my life?* But we cheered together, laughed together, gossiped, went into more thrift stores than I can count, and all the other things best friends do. I wasn't to be compared to her; I was just as valuable. I told myself this like a child repeating their favorite word, in the weeks leading up to the pageant.

Despite the competition, I believed it was my year. I may not have been magazine worthy like all the other girls in my grade, but I longed to make sure that I could excel in every other way. So, my living room floor morphed into a stage and my sister was the best MC out there. I practiced until my feet fell off, even consulting Miss Georgia Peach, who I'd been so fortunate to have as a mentor.

But that night, as I wrestled my own brain, attempting to sleep, *there was still the issue of the dress.*

Arms full of about 20 dresses, green ones mixed in of course, I made my way back to the fitting room the Wednesday before the Pageant. It would be a miracle if I found a dress this late, and one that didn't need any alterations. I glided through the fancy well-lit arch that led back to the changing space, and it's lucky that the employee took those 20 dresses from me moments before, otherwise they would have been in a pile on the floor, right alongside my jaw. That was the moment I saw it. *The emerald, green dress.* It was covered in sequins. Skintight. My size. It seemed as though I was staring at the city of Oz, that I'd followed the yellow brick road and it led me here. Or perhaps I should put it on, slip on some gloves, a feather in my hair, to attend a party at the home of Gatsby. It was perfect.

This dress meant that God still hears and answers. That my prayers didn't stop at the ceiling. That He cared about every small detail of my life. He cared that I felt beautiful that Saturday night, I did. So really, the results didn't matter.

That Saturday, standing backstage in Copeland Hall, I was surrounded by girls who had prepared for this day as if the rest of their life depended on how they did. It didn't matter how many times I did pageants or spoke in front of people, every time I still felt like I was going to throw up. Everyone around me was also feeling the jitters too, and the fact that we were all physically shivering didn't help. *It feels like an icebox in here*, I thought, as I stood in line waiting to display myself for the rest of my city.

"Ready?" Sarah asked as she raised her eyebrows up to her hairline. Something about the way she said it seemed to imply that she thought I wasn't. After all, she'd only bragged the rest of the morning about how well she did in her interview and how she made the judges laugh. *You're just as valuable. Just as beautiful. You got this.*

"Ready as I'll ever be." I think that statement was one of the truest I'd ever uttered. I had done all the practice. I had found the perfect dress for me. I had my prayers answered. But more importantly than any of those things, when anyone looked in the depth of my heart they could leave saying, "She knows who she is and she's proud of it."

I didn't win the pageant. In fact, Sarah did. As for me, I stood there in my sparkling, emerald, green dress, under the stage lights in Bowdon city hall. "And second runner-up goes to . . . contestant number 14, Laci Thompson."

I wore a different sort of crown, when I zipped up my dress bag and left, that night.



Kyla Rivers, *The Throwaway*

ELIAS GODMAN

An Elephant's Version of Forgiveness

is trampling a woman to death,
finding her pyre 124 miles away,
pulling her corpse down
to beat the dead horse further,
before destroying her home
with a herd's stampede.

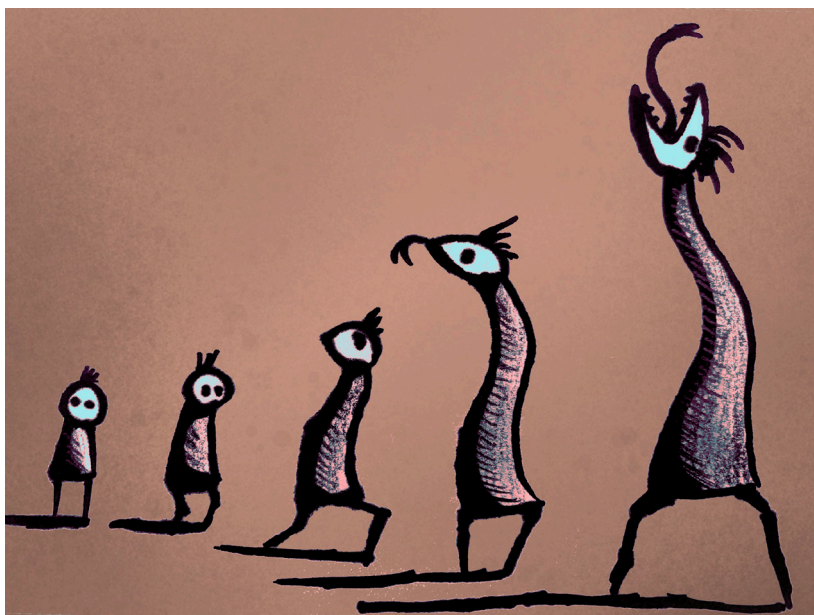
That is the forgiving nature
of the wise elephant.
No one knows why
it chose to attack her
or rip her home apart
but does the behemoth
need a reason
to do the things it does?

Forgiveness for the ivory trade
and rusted shackles on
giant ankles, ripping leather skin,
for the poachers that take
mothers from babies and leave
nothing but the body
for the tusks are all they care for.

An elephant's forgiveness is
violence.
For that is all they've known
from us;
why should we expect them

to tiptoe around our existence?
We are mice to them,
 brittle bones and squinty eyes,
and we all know
elephants hate mice.

Maybe we deserve
 the gentle giant's forgiveness.
Or at least, some of us do.
Perhaps we need
 to forgive the elephant
for standing in the room
 and making us mention her
against our better judgment.



Abram Miller, *Unkind*



Estefanía Pérez Acosta, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights: United Nations Article 14 - ASYLUM*

KAMAR HOOKER

Home (Little Gremlins)

How could I forget,
The chaotic battleground of blood and gore,

The bleeding wall from the battles fought,
And the black holes that tell the tale of the gremlins' adventure.

Little black gremlins marching up and down, around and round,
Screaming freedom, freedom but no hope can be found,

The bald eagle flies above, great uncle sam,
Looking at future threats that will soon be damned,

To the home of chains and shackles,
With cold winter night showers,

The gremlins, mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers all in a box-
But at least we put the world in shock.

I was told that the gremlins used to be kings and queens,
Old stories of gremlins being strong and proud,

Tales of the gremlins ruling over kingdoms,
Fairy tales of us being angels, and gods

But my favorite story has to be the gremlins' home,
The emerald green grass and the azul sparkling water.

I even heard that the gremlins' played drums,
And how our songs could make your feet go numb.

But now, the gremlins' stories are about whips of oppression

And the lynching of the young.

And suddenly there were no more stories of gods and angels,
Instead, I hear stories about demon people who are primitive and
inferior,

Now all I hear are stories about gremlin-on-gremlin crime,
And the lies of us being separate but equal.

There were no stories of kingdoms or a home in a distant land,
Instead, I hear of a hell hole with no water and skeletons with no
food.

But for now, we still march up and down, around and round,
There's nothing left for us to do but drum and drum until we go
numb

Us gremlins beat our beats,
Loud with pride,

A familiar sound from a place no longer home,
But now we pound and pound a new song,

For a home far away from home.

INDY AYERS

Micro

(from *The Waves We Radiate*)

It's ritual now.

You make a joke

while waiting for pizza rolls

in a kitchen lit by yellow-beamed

microwave light. When I turn to you

with a bowl of mini-wheats,

one stuck to the side of my nose,

you'll point and chortle at the sight.

I brandish my spoon in the direction of your mother's room,

reminding you of the hour. Your face sours

as droplets of sugared-milk

splash up into your nose. I snort,

dropping the utensil with a clang.

Gritted mini-wheat sucks up into my windpipe

and I choke in tune with the fluxes of your giggle fit.

When it subsides, I aim a hit to your pec.

You catch it, expected, before pulling me close,

eyebrows wiggling suggestively.

You'll crack a joke about tossing cream

or something else as sexual, I'm sure.

A laugh busts through my lips in a raspberry

and you keel over into my neck

as our mirth drips down our cheeks

in tears and uncaught breaths.

KATIE D'AMBROSIO

Blues

I wake to bedroom wallpaper patterned
with blossomed Forget-Me-Nots.

I'd like to reach through the wall
and pluck those petals.

There are plenty of things to forget.

Like the other day, when you told me,

"I know what I want in a girl,"

and what you really meant was,

"you are not that girl."

But, here's a secret, darling: my
tight-wound comforter is my chrysalis.

Tomorrow I could wake

a Forest Queen. My velvet wings spread wide,

my tongue would uncurl for tangy, indigo nectar.

Could I be enough for you then?

Look! I could float, skate
the blue lagoon with dragonflies. Sip
from tweedia milkweed. My friends
would be the monarch, the June
bug. We'd waltz under the cricket moon.
I could tell them all about you.

The stars, of course, would keep our secrets.

Speckled friends to send us moonbeams,

good dreams. I dreamt of you two nights ago.

I laced on my wings and fluttered to find you.

But you were out with friends, and when I opened
my eyes, only wallpaper was left.



Anna-Reece Thomas, *Creation Turtle*

ELIZABETH SIGMON

can I confess

I often love the restless rattling inside my chest.
The unexpected thrill of adrenaline is there
to remind me my heart continues to pump blood
despite the many times I have half-heartedly wished
it to stop. My foolish heart is powered
by a soul that may not be functioning as it
should, but how it always has: each drop
fueled by love with aching abandon.
Each rip and shred I feel inside reminds
me no vacancies are available
in my creaky crevices from within.
Each shivering grind from my jaw
raises the question, *am I even real?*
Despite how numb my fingers feel
if I bite down on my pinky
til I hear the crunch of the bone,
I would realize very quickly that
I am a sack of dense meat with
a soul. My foolish, dreadful soul.
My fingers are numb right now.
So are my toes. I cannot tell if
it's because I am in Washington Square
Park in the blistering monsoon cold,
or because all the blood-pumping love
with an aching abandon has been drained
from my chest and dumped into
my chattering skull. Sometimes, I feel everything
all at once. At the same time, I feel numb to it all.
Sometimes, I swear it's gonna kill me.

MARIA GREGORIO

Simplemente Maria

after Sandra Cisneros

Maria, a name relating to the sea or *mar*; a body of water. In Christian theology it means “star of the sea” yet for the Hebrew it means “sea of bitterness.” In English pronounced how it sounds, in Spanish it is exaggerated with the rolling of the *R*. In both languages it is a reference to the song, you know the one. “Maria, Mariaaa...”

I was named after my grandmother whom I’ve met but once in my lifetime, though I don’t remember her as anyone but a stranger with the title *abuela*. However, when I argue back or prove my point in an argument I hear my *mama* murmur under her breath “just like your *abuela*,” as if I knew what she was talking about.

My name so basic and predictable, it doesn’t seem to come as a shocker to anyone I tell it to. I imagine there to be hundreds of thousands of Marias roaming around this world, and all named after their grandmothers too. I once had a dream in which I met many other Maria’s. Some with an accent so thick it had me rolling my eyes back. Others with a more emphasized uh sound at the end of their name. Hearing them say the name *Maria* over and over again with different pronunciations was almost like listening to a broken vinyl on repeat, an unpleasant and never-ending screech. It isn’t like *Valencia*, an intriguing name that flows nicely and has people questioning where it’s from, or what it means. Instead, its *Maria*, a name on its own, that decides to stand up and take charge of any situation.

I, Maria, a Hispanic American, or American Hispanic, hate the controversy behind my name. My name is a constant reminder of the internal struggle I face every day to choose between the two cultures I resonate with. It’s similar to when you’re torn between your two favorite sports teams, in my case the soccer teams Brazil and Argentina. Both have amazing players, and are exceptionally good, but in the end it comes down to what one team possess the other team does not. Or like when playing Tug of War. I, Maria, am the ambiguous center

who sways back and forth between the left and the right, disoriented and unable to determine which side will sway first and prevail.

In school while taking attendance nobody really butchered my name, I mean how could they its literally M-A-R-I-A, pronounced “MUH-REE-UH.” But according to anyone else it isn’t pronounced “correctly” because of the R, but it never bothered me because I myself couldn’t roll my Rs correctly sometimes. My parents, to make my name more unique I assume, added yet another R to my name—*Rosalinda*—which literally translates to a *Lovely Rose* in English. I didn’t like it or hate it. I just thought it was too cheesy, so I never embraced it. I try not to mention it to older people, so I don’t have to hear how great it is for an hour straight. But I go by *Maria*. No fancy Rs, no rolling of the tongue, just how it is. I think it bothers me when people can roll their R’s like when saying *Reloj*, *Rojo*, *Rápido*, *Recuerdos*, *Razón*, *Reflejo*, probably because after my 3rd R my tongue, as if by instinct to betray me, gives up. Especially while singing that song that goes *Reloj, no marques las horas Porque voy a enloquecer*, as if it existed to mock me and laugh at my face.

I hate how when some people see the name *Maria* on paper, they assume things already such as who I am, or what I am capable of. It is as if my identity was already preconceived without my knowledge or consent, and there is simply nothing I could do to fix it. A blank slate, tarnished with the prejudice ideals of those who surround me. I detest the expectations that come with the name, such as the requirement to speak fluent Spanish; because if I didn’t, God forgive, I would make a fool of myself.

I assume it would be easier to say I’d like a new name, but I do not think this is true. Can you picture yourself with a new name? I mean something with more Rs would simply not do. Eliminating the Rs won’t change the problem, since no other name could possibly hold the same meaningful value as the name *Maria* would.



Laurel Sanford, *Floral Tiger*



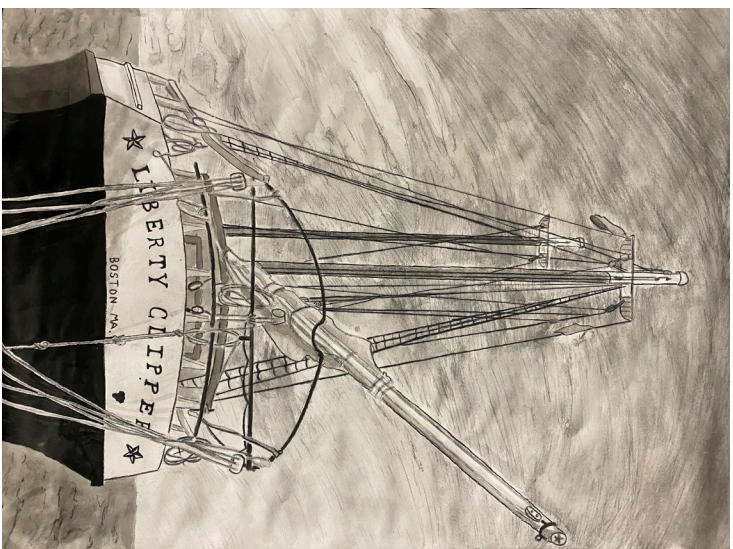
Gracie Nix, from *Gender Fluid Fashion*



Gracie Nix, from *Gender Fluid Fashion*



Gracie Nix, from *Gender Fluid Fashion*



Caleb Camus, New Adventures



Caleb Camus, Uncharted

HANNAH ELLIOTT

Nobility

I wouldn't *die* for you.

Dying for your cause is
too *noble*,

Too soft,

Too sweet.

I don't want a *coward's* death,
using my last breaths to pray to a god
I don't believe in and hoping you hear
my devotion whisper in your ear.

Instead, I would *kill* for you.

I'd put someone on their knees—
make them
beg,

plead,

scream

for another chance to live
the righteous life they wanted,
but had no intentions of living.

Holding a blade tight against their throat,
I'd recite an ode to
you,

your *glory*,

your honor.

They'd know in my eyes
you shine more than any treasure ever could.
They know there's nothing they can do to make it right.

I would
split the seas for you,
turn every city into ashes for you,
 break down walls—*my* walls—
and let you in,
anything I could do to make you proud.

I know it's not a lot, but staying alive is the best I can do,
for *you*.



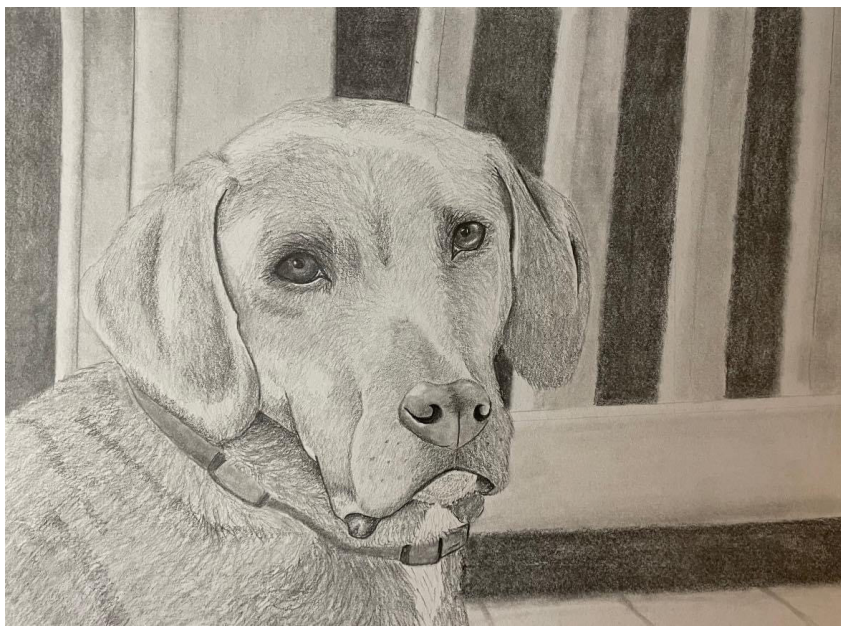
Allie Killer, *Dreamer*

BRY MEISTER

Hell at the Masquerade

My sister and I hadn't been close growing up. She's six years older than me, living in a generation quite separate from my own. Our time together consisted of screaming matches, pulling hair, and calling, "mom" every five minutes. Things shifted as I entered high school, me at fourteen and her at twenty, where we then started to go on car rides together, listened to the same music, and were able to have a conversation beyond "get out of my room." She took me to my first concert that year, right before my fifteenth birthday. We parked at the Murder Kroger, a few blocks away from the venue in downtown Atlanta. There was a mural on the wall of the Kroger that I don't quite remember beyond bright colors and thick black lines. My sister might've been quiet on the walk back after the concert, I can't recall, but I remember skipping ahead of her and turning around to see her smile. The concert had been crowded – this was many years before the thought of standing in a compact crowd made me feel sick to my stomach. As I danced along the empty street, the sidewalk dipping under an overpass, my ears clanged with each motion of my head, but it didn't matter. I don't think I slept that night (how could I with the ringing in my ears?), but I remember going to school the next day with dark circles under my eyes and a smile. I put the ticket that the lead singer had signed up on my wall, where I see it whenever I come home from college. Scrolling the band's social media pages now, I see their fanbase grow and know that I will never get that opportunity again. But I had it before, when my sister and I stood clenched together in the crowd, right next to the speakers when the mosh pit started, and I almost lost my glasses; right after the concert, buying my t-shirt souvenir with money my mother gave me as an early birthday gift. When the lead singer said "hey" at the merch table and my sister asked for a photo, and he offered to sign our tickets. I didn't know what to say at the time but "thank you," and I did. A lot. Until I was making my way down the Atlanta streets after midnight replaying that moment in my mind, turning around to wait for my sister and catching her grin. My sister has never been big on

big emotions, but I like to think that this was an exception, like she did it just for me. I can imagine her laughing when we walk down the street, I can imagine her yelling the words in the middle of the crowd with her fist in the air, but I will always remember her passing me one of her flannels to keep me warm in mid-February. That part was real, and I have the pictures to prove it, the thick pink flannel tied around my waist in the photo of us with the lead singer. The Murder Kroger is gone now, and so is the venue, and I may never see that band again or at least not as intimately as before, but my sister will always be there to hand me a flannel when it's cold.



Laurel Sanford, *Portrait of Hank*

KATIE D'AMBROSIO

23 Smith Ave.

A dining room wallpaper I'll never forget,
bursting with purple perennials,
cracks and peels across the corners.
Dyed, oaken chairs tucked under the tablecloth,
etched with lace and scarlet chrysanthemums.
Flames flicker in the heart of the fireplace,
Grandma Rose stokes the ash-sprinkled wood,
her grip gentle on the iron handle.
Irish soda breadcrumbs litter the coffee table,
jasmine tea fills half-drunken glasses.
Knitted sweaters hug backs of chairs
long after we've all left. This is the house of my
mother's youth. Ten children, six rooms.
Notebooks tucked in attic bookshelves,
ordination oaths half-written. Grandpa Timothy's
priesthood swapped for sons and daughters.
Queer love letters stuffed into mattresses,
rosaries draped across pillowcases.
Silent prayers haunt the walls. The magnolia
tree out front gives fragrance to our secrets.
Ultrasound for the first grandchild, born of the
virgin, sixteen years old. Oldest son skipped college,
went to Arizona—there's more money in fridges than seminary.
Xanax bottles pushed to the back of the cabinet. Now
you and I stand on the front porch, steps from the
zodiac of our lives. Your hand stretches to tap the doorbell.



Chayil Aponte, *Pride*



Young
Harris
COLLEGE

EST. 1886