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The Eckleburg Project

A STUDENT LED ORGANIZATION

'23

ART, POEMS, &
PROSE WRITTEN
BY STUDENTS

V.11.1

DEDICATION PAGE

The staff at the Eckleburg Project would like to dedicate this edition of the journal to Meghana Kodali and her family. The contributions she made to the organization were innumerable and she will be deeply missed by both members of the Eckleburg Project and Texas A&M University.

EDITOR'S NOTE

DEAR READER,

As we reach the end of another semester, another chapter in our still short lives, it's inevitable that we look back and wonder: how is it that we are here, and where are we going? This question, I will admit, occupies too much of the already limited space in my brain. I wonder about what's next, and how I'm supposed to get to whatever "next" is, and then I remember that "next" doesn't have to be a final destination. Not for me, not for any student, adult, teenager, or octogenarian out there. "Next" is not "the end," in fact, it's a lot more like "the beginning."

As we enter the next chapter of our lives, we can choose to think that one end creates a new beginning, a more exciting beginning filled with new characters, arcs, and plotlines. Even us, the protagonists in our own stories, have to let the version of ourselves that is stuck in a previous season go in order to advance the plot of our lives (because we wouldn't want the ratings to go down.)

So, Dear Reader, in this much anticipated edition of our literary journal, you will see the beginnings and the ends of all sorts of chapters. You will see expressions of growth and of frustration, of hope and of sadness, of light and of darkness, and all of these are beautiful in their own right. I only have one request, and that is that you let the art move you in the way that it has moved us, its writers, editors, and screeners. We have seen the beauty in all of these different expressions of life, and we sincerely hope that you do, too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'A.M.' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

TEAM

CECILIA PELAYO...

EDITOR IN CHIEF

SAVANNAH YOUNG...

MANAGING EDITOR

ISABELLA ALCORN...

HEAD STAFF WRITER

ALYSSA LAZARCHIK...

HEAD DESIGNER

ELLA WARD...

CO-EDITOR

BRIANA PHELPS...

CO-EDITOR

ROLES

SCREEN TEAM

BETHANY COILE, ALEXADRA FREYTES, CATE CONWAY, ELIF KILICARSLAN, ELLA WARD, JESSICA WILSON, LAURA GUNN, MIMI LASSEN, NICOLE LOPEZ, RAEGAN HARVEY, SHELBY MORENO

STAFF WRITERS

AMIRA MAZZAWY, AKKAD AJAM, DAMARIS MARTINEZ, LOCHAN MOURTY, REN MAI, MATTHEW VIERA, ANALEISE ST. JOHN, EMMA EHLE

DESIGN TEAM

ALYSSA LAZARCHIK, SAVANNAH YOUNG

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OCEANS

BY V.H. LEWIS

You didn't know how to love
And you tried your best
Reaching in your wallet
Your love came out green and

I don't know how to love
And I try and try and try
Giving out all I can;
My love is blue water

Suffocating and smothering and
People drown in my waves,
I just want them to stay
Their blood comes out red



ARTWORK BY
MICHEL ACOSTA

"BEAUTY UNDER WATER"

2

SPIRIT OF DEMISE

BY RITIKA BHATTACHARJEE

I wish to know –

If you found yourself in the echoes of my bones –

If you found your spirit in the flesh of my dreams

Animated by the breath of my life.

When your fingers gripped at the seams of my failures,

Ripping them apart with derisive precision

I wish to know –

If destroying me sated you.

Despite my living warnings,

You summoned demons, all artifice and black rapture

I attempted to shield you, pulse for pulse

Your spirit of demise inevitable.

Though I once thought you to be the sun, I now see

I am some distant star! Just as bright – !

With light years of darkness between us.

I instigated my own ruination,

Pushing the weight of my perceived expectation

Uphill, for you, endlessly

Until the force cleaved muscle from bone,

Cleaved spirit from flesh,

My ossified carcass the sole witness of my effort.

My spirit, the prison for the titan of my fury, my art

Expunged from the angles of the bones

The spirit wanders without flesh

My relic the tunings of stone.

I wish to know –

If you would meet me there, in our graveyard

Despite our differences, to gossip, to whisper, about our bad blood

Because while the flesh is dead,

The words are still living!

And the words, they now look for new spirits.

3



PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DAVID EMERY
"TRAGEDY AT THE RIVERBANK"

4

ARTWORK BY RAAIDA HASNAIN

"REPOSITORY"



5

DEAD WEIGHT

WHAT A MILLION FILAMENTS!

that this body, positively crawling
with nerves, teeming, even itching,
this urge

TOWARD A PERFECT WORLD.
WHAT A MILLION, MILLION FILAMENTS.

these lengthy nerves, rascals, race through
– we are so stretched thin –
hairline wires swelled on skin balloons.
and strings to dangle from.

what a nerve, what a nerve,
the fractal pattern of a curve
that spasms once and twice and stops
and flops from balconies, and writhes

TOWARD A PERFECT WORLD.
WHAT A MILLION FILAMENTS.

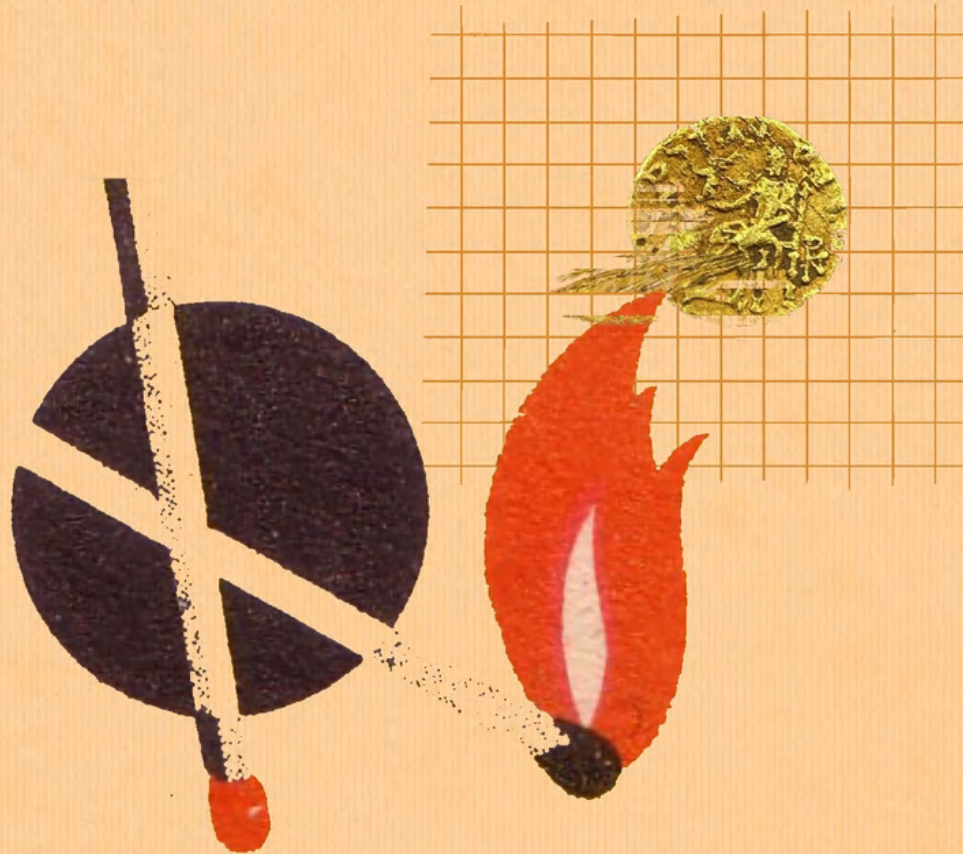
oh punctilious acupuncturist,
pricking skin, sticking pins,
oh needle-necrophiliac!
what a nerve to swerve a fate,
and what a word for that!

the stress and strain, plus curvature –
we are so stretched thin.
– and strings to dangle from.

OH GOD THE RELIEF.
WHAT A MILLION FILAMENTS!

what a billion billiard balls
scattered in a brain
spattered on a page
sputtered out and died, and only
halfway down the lane.

BY JONATHAN PETTIT



ARTWORK BY AUDREY RYDEN

LOVE'S SORROW

BY M.C. DEANE

Our love lies deep within the solid ground
Where cold and creeping silence steep the years
The howling wind and trees- the final sound
That chills the mourners hearts and fills their ears

Before- our love, unbound, flew free and true
On wings of wax our souls were bright as day
We snatched the stars to paint the clear sky blue
Til' you, my darling love, were gone away

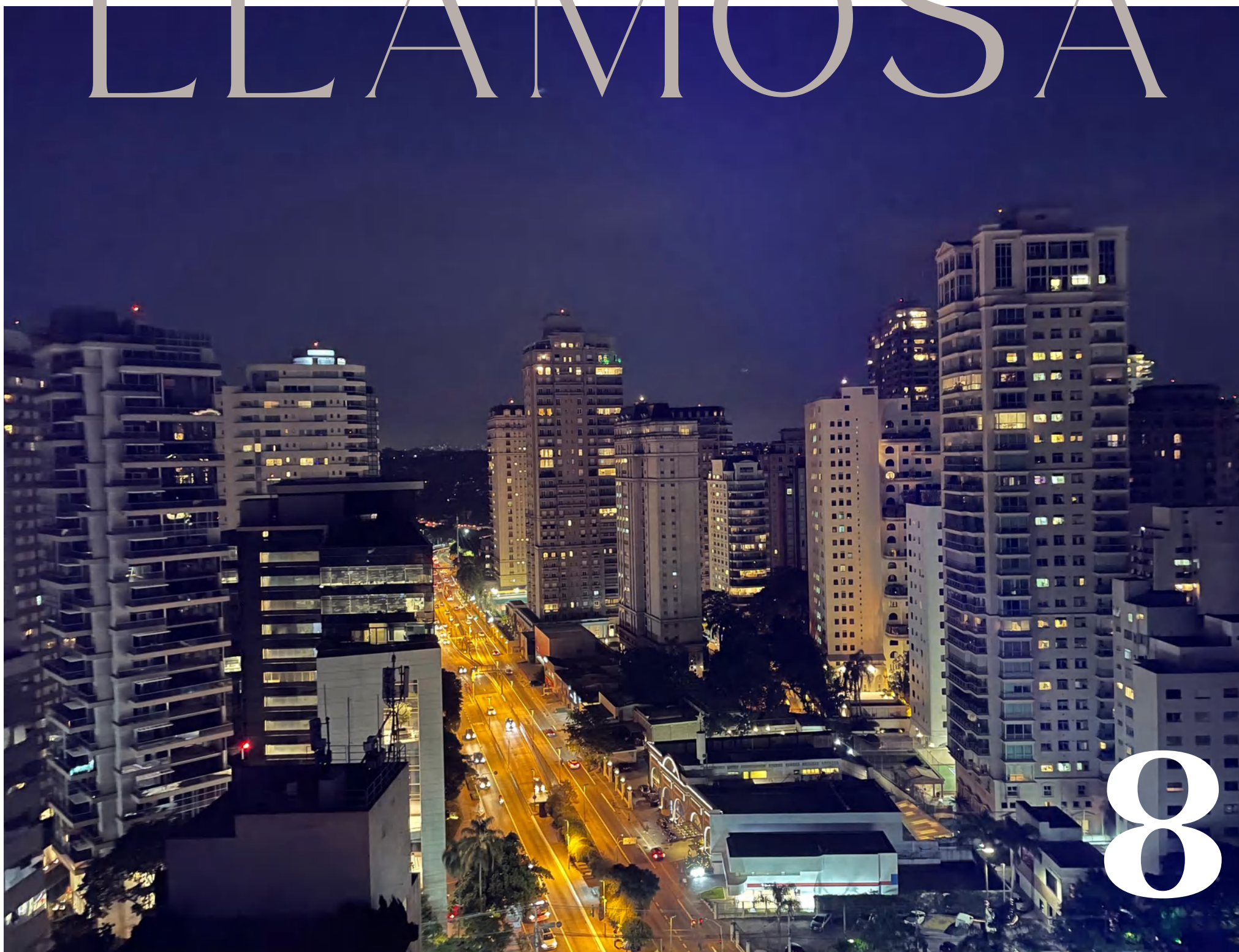
The vows we made that Death one day would part
A bleak return to days without her warmth
Perhaps, I can reclaim thy stolen heart
An act to reignite our lifeless hearth.

To join our souls, our love, in Death's embrace
In Love's joy, flowers bloom, our grave is graced.

"NIGHTS OF SÃO PAULO"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANCISCO

LLAMOSA



8



A VIBRANT ECHO

BY SAMEEKSHA SHARMA

RUTABAGA OR SOMETHIN'

BY HAYLEY FLEENER

i heard
from sammy just yesterday
that some ol' witch
is snatchin' up chil'ren again

i swear
it was just last week
that stinkin' ol' rumple-what-not
was sniffin' 'round for kids

and now wes got
a whole new mess happenin'
a babe stole in the night
all because of a rutabaga or somethin'

yeah, sammy was sayin' that
the momma just couldn't resist
that ol' rutabaga the witch was growin'
so the daddy done stole some of it for er

now i dunno why he did that
cuz my rutabaga's better then any
ol' crap some witch is growin' out front er cottage
but whadda i know?

anyhow, the ol' witch snatched up little rutabaga
uh, huh, that's what the parents was gonna name her
bless er heart, poor thing
gonna be cursed either way witha name like that

now they sayin'she's locked up in some tower
all because of a rutabaga or somethin'
poor babe
wonder if she ever gonna git out

i'll tell ya one thing
if this whole nonsense started
with a rutabaga or somethin'
i'm raisin' my prices

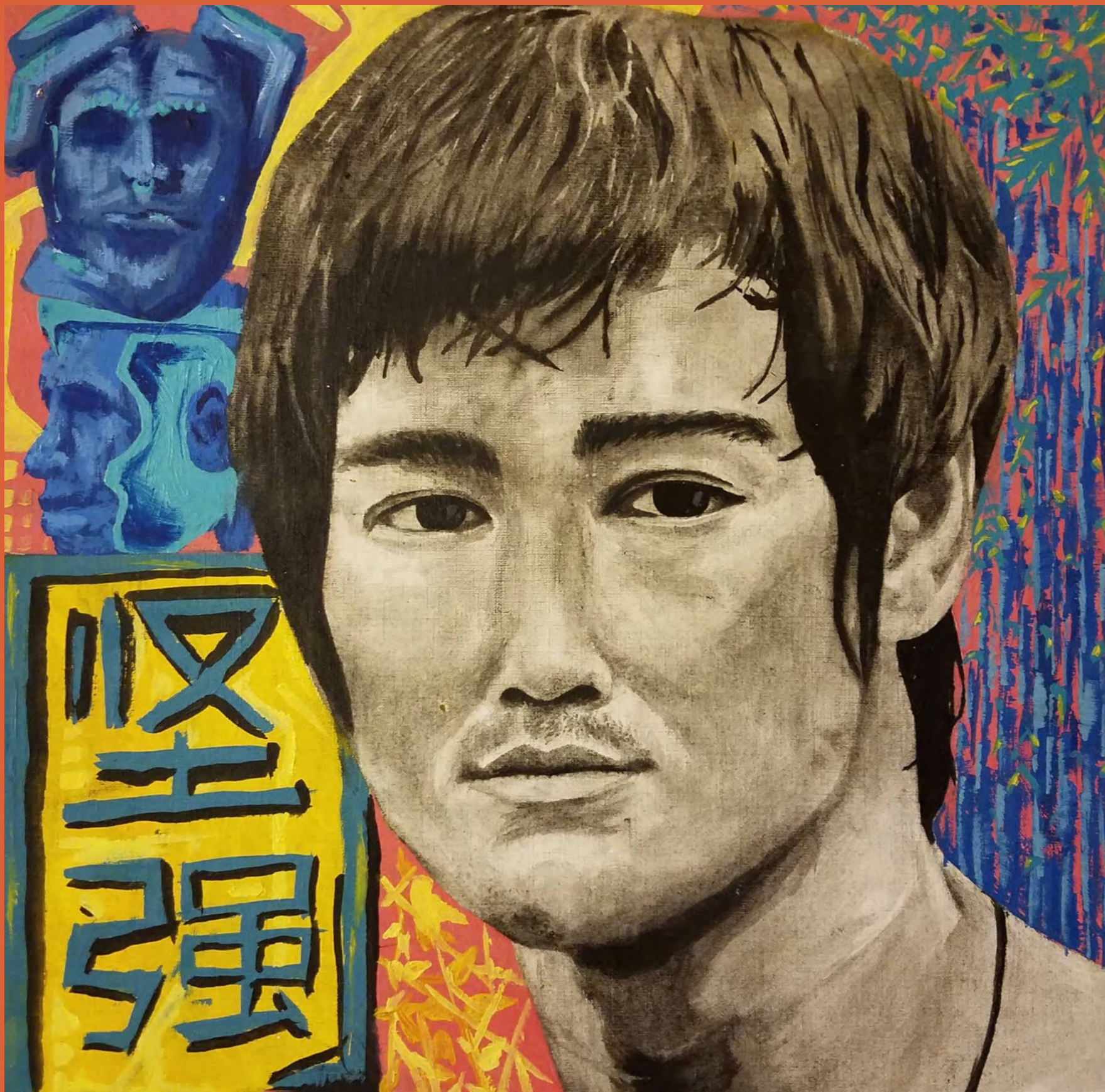
so, how many you gonna buy?
git 'em now 'fore the prices raise

all because of a rutabaga...
you better take a dozen, just to be safe

BY HAYLEY FLEENER

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BY JESUS FRIAS

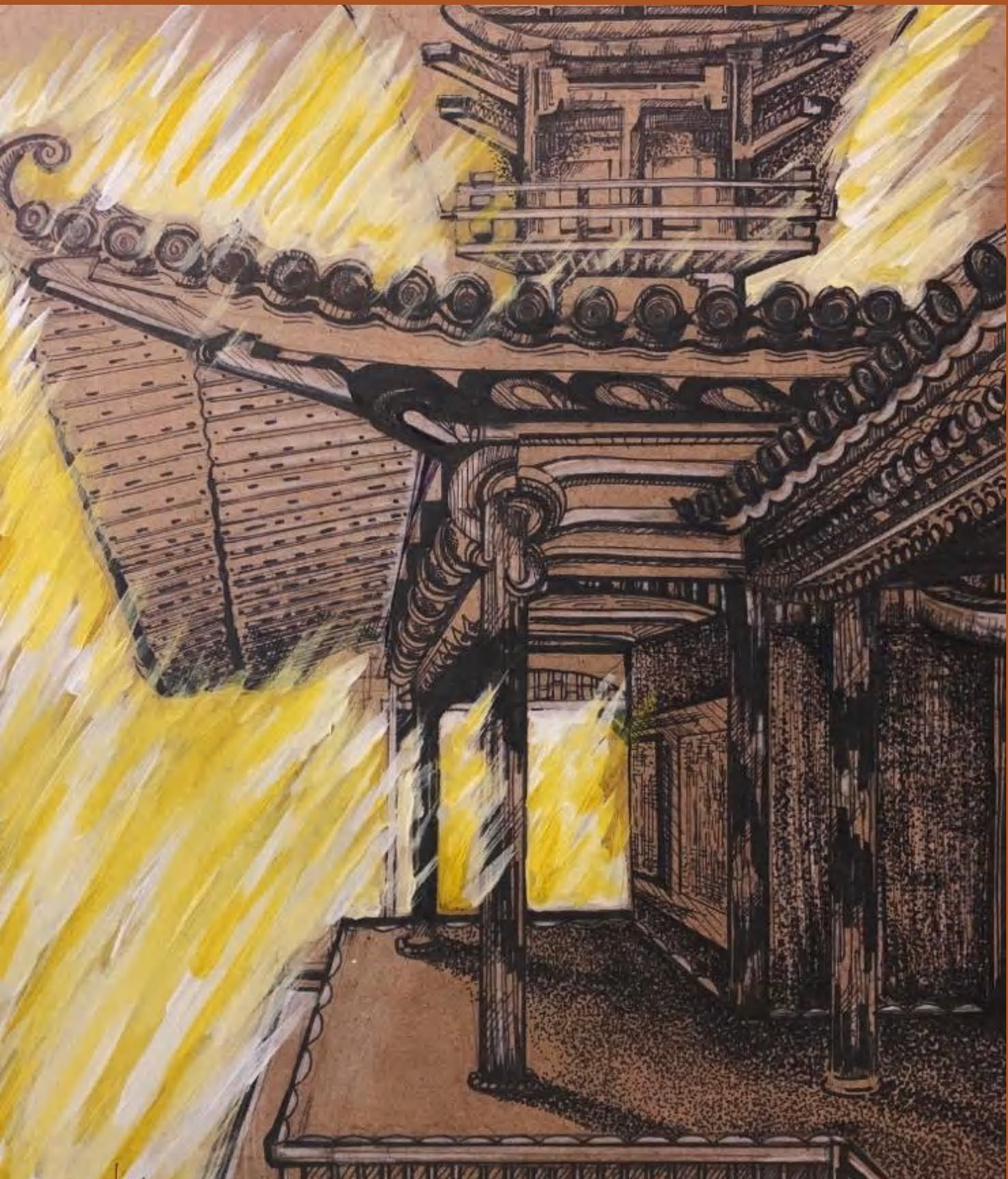


THE WARRIOR

BY JESUS FRIAS

TEMPLESTUOUS

BY SAMEEKSHA SHARMA



2

THE POET

BY M.C. DEANE

Their words collapse and fall like rain from God
The meaning, vague and senseless as the night.
The poet's words interpreted too broad,
Are useless syllables made out of light

The spectacle, though grand, is not beauty
Without the core, the message, the perceived.
The poet's pomp and poise hide poverty,
Incompetence, the world- still disordered.

In vain, the rules assert a kind of rule-
A tyranny of structure over truth.
The poets' words, now trapped, make them all fools,
Content with making prose that simply soothes.

These fancy words, though pretty, lack design-
A plot to hold the pretty words in line

Is this prison the Bard's design or mine?
Does leaving mean betraying my own kind?
Is beauty just for beauty's sake divine?
Perhaps, the poem's purpose is to shine...

But if I break this mold of senseless rhyme,
Can I, the poet, include the sublime-
Unite conditions to the poem's signs,
To share the plight of poets, throughout time?

While Sartre may claim that poetry's behind,
The epic Homer laughs from his kept shrine

The poet's form and legend can combine
To share the situations in their mind

If meanings come in stories, I'll tell mine
To hell with pentameter, beat, and rhyme
I'll repeat, pause and break with every line
To show how poems, stories, must entwine



“GRAND PAVY BLOSSOMS”

BY AUSTIN BIEHLE

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PROSE

WRITTEN BY
HAYLEY FLEENER

ARTWORK BY ALYSSA LAZARCHIK

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A STORY OF SHOES

BY HAYLEY FLEENER

ARTWORK BY SAMEEKSHA SHARMA

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PAGE 1

“I think I know why Cinderella’s slippers were made of glass.”

Eddie’s keys lightly jingled, almost like the romantic lilt of sleigh bells or the chime of a door opening in an old soda shoppe, as he set them on the table by the door. He slid his heavy backpack off his shoulders, and it slammed onto the ground with a thud. There was nothing overly romantic about that, of course, other than the fact that he did it everyday and Gabriella could hear it from anywhere in their little apartment and know that Eddie was home.

Gabriella turned her cheek towards him as he walked behind the couch towards the kitchen. He kissed it lightly without ever really stopping his movement. The most romantic thing of all was the question that he asked as he opened the fridge, tugging at it because he knew that the door tended to get stuck.

“So why’s it made of glass?”

Gabriella smiled and turned to lean her body over the couch towards the kitchen. She eagerly pushed herself up with her arms.

“Well, I was thinking about the story, you know, and asking questions—”

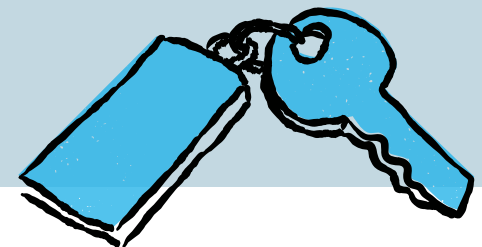
“Because that’s how you come up with the best ideas,” Eddie interjected.

“Exactly.” She smiled. “And I thought, why are the slippers made of glass? There’s no practical component. It can’t be to make Cinderella stand out, because surely magic could think of something better than glass and her dress covers them anyway and...” Once Gabriella began talking about fairy tales, she couldn’t seem to stop. Eddie nodded along as he poured himself a glass of iced tea.

“So it’s metaphorical,” she continued. “Glass is symbolic of love. It’s delicate, easily broken, and shatters like a heart.”

“But the prince finds her. Nothing gets broken.” Eddie walked into the living room and sat beside her on the couch.

“But it could have, so easily. How delicate it is, that’s what makes it precious. And if you think about it—”



PAGE 2

Eddie stopped Gabriella's rambling by gently placing his hand on her arm. "Wasn't it a translation error? Wasn't it really made of fur? The version you're talking about, that is. Like all cultures have some version of the story."

"That wasn't really the point." Gabriella was surprised for a moment that Eddie would know any historical information regarding Cinderella tales, but then she remembered that she had accumulated quite a bit of baseball trivia during the past few months.

"Love's fur, not glass. It's warmth and comfort and protection. It's stronger than you realize."

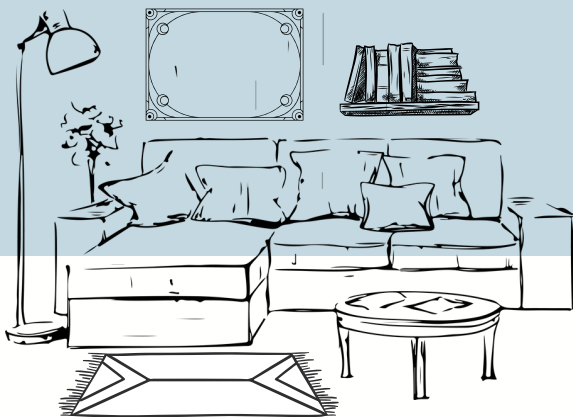
"You really think so?"

"I know so." Eddie squeezed her hand.

The pair sat in silence for a moment, and Eddie picked up his tea. Gabriella slid a coaster onto the ring of condensation on the old coffee table. The table was used, but that didn't mean that they couldn't take care of it. Gabriella looped her arm through Eddie's and rested her head on his shoulder and looked at their crowded little room. The lamp they had picked out at Hobby Lobby—or did they end up purchasing the one from Target?—the rug from Gabriella's dorm room, the couch Eddie's parents had been getting rid of, the purple throw pillows that Eddie hated, the ugly painting from the one art class Gabriella had taken last semester. Eddie had insisted that it was worthy of being hung on the wall. The small space they had made into something much bigger—a home.

Gabriella's favorite part was the bookshelf. They had built it together—well, Gabriella supposed it was mostly Eddie doing the building while she had mostly done the watching. They had filled it together, too, and that part was mostly Gabriella while Eddie had smiled and shaken his head at her excessive spending. Her rows of fantasy novels and childhood favorites were overflowing, but there was still room for half a row of Eddie's assortment of athlete biographies, baseball novels, and collector's items. To the unfamiliar eye, those items might look out of place, but Gabriella knew that wasn't true. That signed Rockies ball should be right beside her copy of *Ella Enchanted*. The Rockies were called a Cinderella team after all.

Eddie's things were right where they belong, melded into hers.



“She wasn’t ever lost. She was searching for something.” Gabriella’s voice came out quiet.

“Right.” Eddie smiled the way he did when his eyes crinkled and they looked even bluer than usual—her favorite smile. “Don’t you always say her story wasn’t even really about the prince?”

“So you’re saying the story isn’t romantic?”

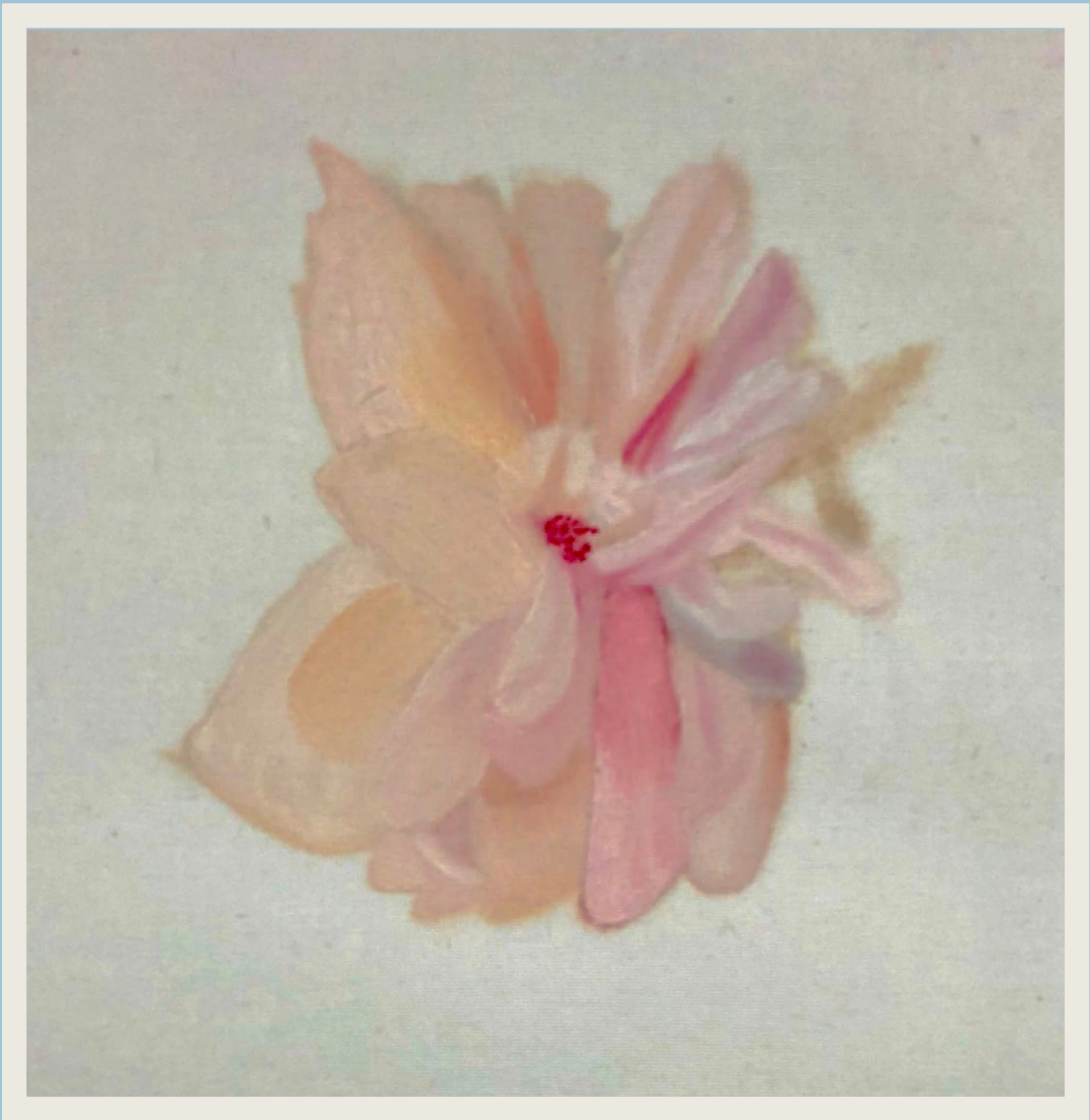
“No, I think that’s why it’s romantic. Like, she just wanted a way out of her situation, but she wasn’t looking for someone else to solve it for her.” Eddie dug through his bag while he talked until his hand emerged with a piece of bubble gum. “Then she and her prince just happened to have a connection, you know, so they fixed it together.”

Gabriella smiled. Together.

Eddie nudged her shoulder with his own. “Are you ready to go?”

“Yes, I’m ready.”

As Gabriella laced her shoes, an old pair of Eddie’s and a couple sizes too big with cotton balls pressed into the toes, she started to wonder if maybe they were both wrong. Maybe the most romantic shoes in all of history weren’t made of glass or fur. Maybe they were made of leather and covered in dirt.



BEGONIA
ALYSSA LAZARCHIK

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PART ONE

LUZ QUE ILLUMINA

BY IRENE ROBLES-RAMÍREZ

PART TWO

ILLUMINATING LIGHT

BY IRENE ROBLES-RAMÍREZ

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"HEART OF MINE WAS MADE
TO TRAVEL THE WORLD"
ARTWORK BY VAMSI VALLABHANENI

22

PART ONE

LUZ QUE ILUMINA

BY IRENE ROBLES-RAMÍREZ

SPANISH VERSION



23

La luz de la cocina se prende
Iluminando el camino.

El Monte Carlo de '76 corriendo por las calles del '84,
Iluminando el camino desde la Polo Inn hasta cruzar la Alameda.

Abajo la luz que ilumina
Buscando la luz que ilumina,
Desde ese Monte bajando del montón de tristezas
Y sueños rotos,
 ahogados en Tom Collins, su servidor,
 y su compa, la Schaeffer.

La luz que ilumina el negro oscuro—
 Cómo se pierde
 El camino cuando la hija se hace mujer y deja de buscarte?

Esperando ese Monte, dulce alivio,
Porque te vi llegando así a mi.

Agrio sentí,
Cuando no te vi alejandote de mi.

Llévame contigo en el Monte porque acuérdate
 lloraba
 suplicaba

irme más allá en la luz
esa la que iluminaba tus cigarros y te llamaba Gracie.

Montón de madres gritadas en el Monte,
Uno grita y nadie se fija—
Vivir o morir o vivir y morir y te fallé...

Me prenderás el camino?
Me imagino.

PART TWO



ILLUMINATING LIGHT

BY IRENE ROBLES-RAMÍREZ

ENGLISH VERSION

25

The kitchen light comes on
Illuminating the path.

The Monte Carlo of '76 racing through the streets of '84,
Illuminating the path from Polo Inn till it crosses Alameda.

Beneath the illuminating light
Searching for the light that illuminates
From that Monte Carlo driving down from the heap of sorrows
And broken dreams,
 drowned in Tom Collins, at your service,
 and his buddy, Schaeffer.

The light that illuminates the black darkness—
 How do you lose
 Your way when the daughter becomes a woman and no longer searches for you?

Waiting for that Monte Carlo, sweet relief
Because I saw you coming back to me.

Bittersweet I felt,
When I didn't see you moving further away from me.

Take me with you in that Monte Carlo because remember
 I cried
 I pleaded

to go further into the light
that one that lit your cigarettes and called you Gracie.

A bunch of obscenities shouted inside that Monte Carlo,
One screams and no one notices—
Live or die or live and die and I failed you...

Will you light my way?
I imagine you will.

I FORGIVE YOU

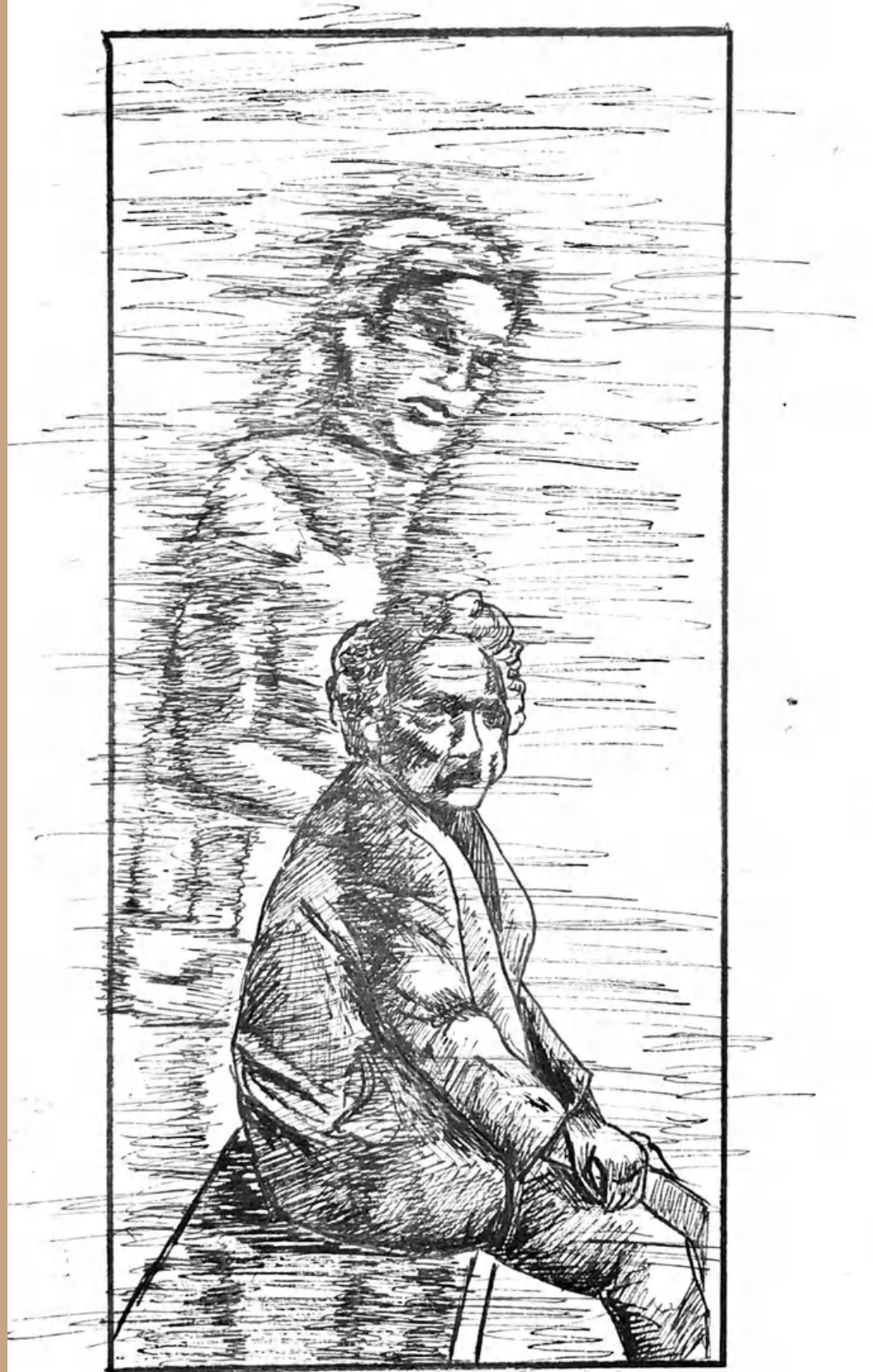
BY JESSICA KING

I Forgive You

I don't get to blame you.
I can't stay angry,
because as soon as the smoke clears
I remember Forgiveness saved me
and changed me,
and did the same for you.

So
even though you can't hear me,
I forgive you,
and this time I mean it.

27



CALLIE HANNA
"REFLECTION IN A WINDOW"

Is it the fault of Icarus
that the view was so lovely,
the sun so bright,
the air so warm
against his rosy cheeks?

Should we blame the bird who rejoices in being freed from its cage?

A boy who has lived with his feet planted on the earth
does not know how fast a raindrop falls,
or how much it hurts to land.

FALLING STAR

BY CATE
CONWAY

28

"REFLECTION"
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAYLYN



29

Dark curls on a pillow and a smiling face
Chubby fingers reaching out for a worn hand
Just one more? Please? Please?
A pause, a sigh, and then
There once was a merchant who met a genie...
Eyes flutter shut but the smile remains

with the promise of another once upon a time
she slept

Red eyes and tear-stained cheeks
Angry stomps and a clenched hand
But why? Why do I have to do it?
A moment of thoughtful searching and then
There once was a mermaid and a king...
Tears dry and eager ears listen

with the wisdom from another once upon a time
she repented

Drooping eyes and paper towers
Clenched shoulders and head in hands
I can't do it anymore.
A sympathetic nod, a knowing look, and then
There once was a horse made of ebony...
Breathing deep as shoulders ease and spirits calm

with the beginning of another once upon a time
she rested

Aching limbs and brittle bones
Wrinkled fingers reaching out for a kind hand
Do you remember my old favorite?
A smile, a nod, and then
There once was a merchant who met a genie...
Aches pause to listen and a familiar smile
returns

with the hope of another once upon a time
she lived

Crowded chapel and family in black
A faded picture and a fresh face asking
What was she like?
Hesitation, an idea, and then
There once was a girl, quite like you...
Eyes widen and a child smiles

with the creation of a new once upon a time
she remained

dawn
to dawn
to dawn

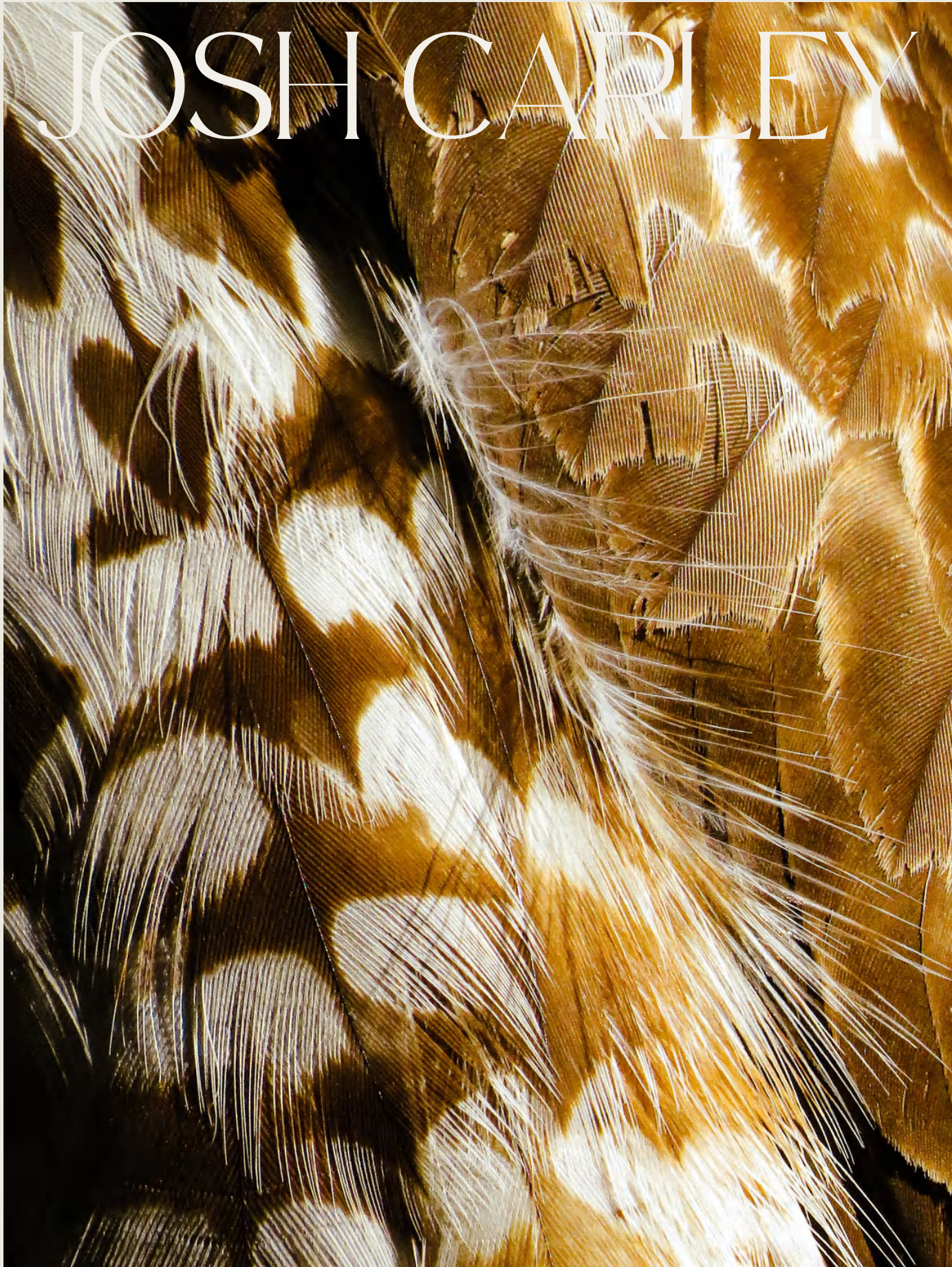
DAWN TO DAWN

BY HAYLEY FLEENER

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"ACCIPITER PLUMIS"

JOSH CARLEY



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PHOTOGRAPHY
BY DAVID EMERY

"SLOW AND STEADY"

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HANNAH PAUL



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ARTWORK BY
HANNAH PAUL

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COLLECTION BY JESUS FRIAS

1. "LA JUVENTUD"

PAGE THIRTY-SIX

2. "BASQUIAT"

PAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

3. "SEE YOU AT MARS"

PAGE THIRTY-EIGHT



LA JUVENTUD

BY JESUS FRIAS

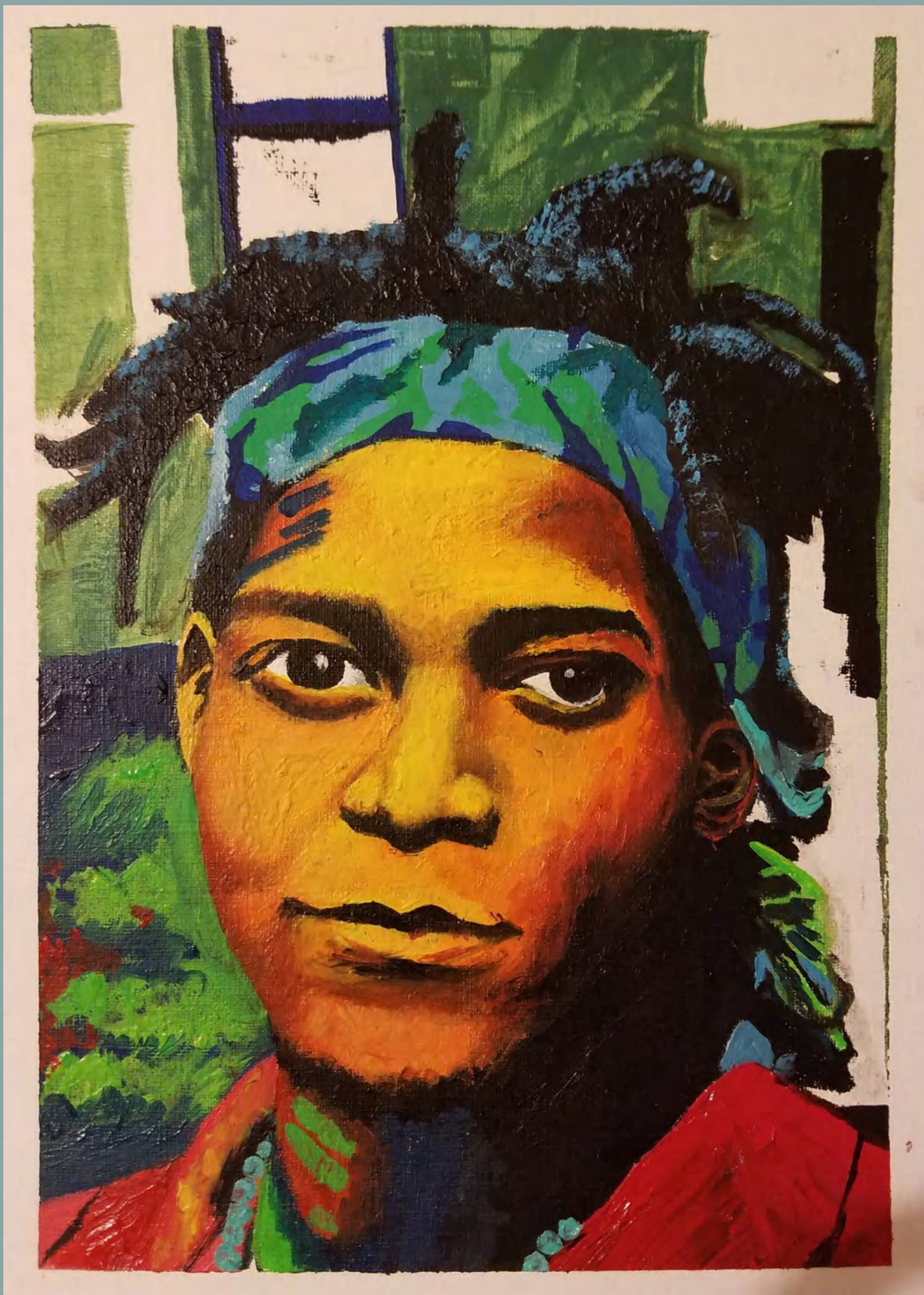
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37 "SEE YOU AT MARS"

BY JESUS FRIAS



38 BASQUIAT

BY JESUS FRIAS



39

“BLUE CROC”



"BLUE CROC"

ARTWORK BY: RACHEL BROWNELL

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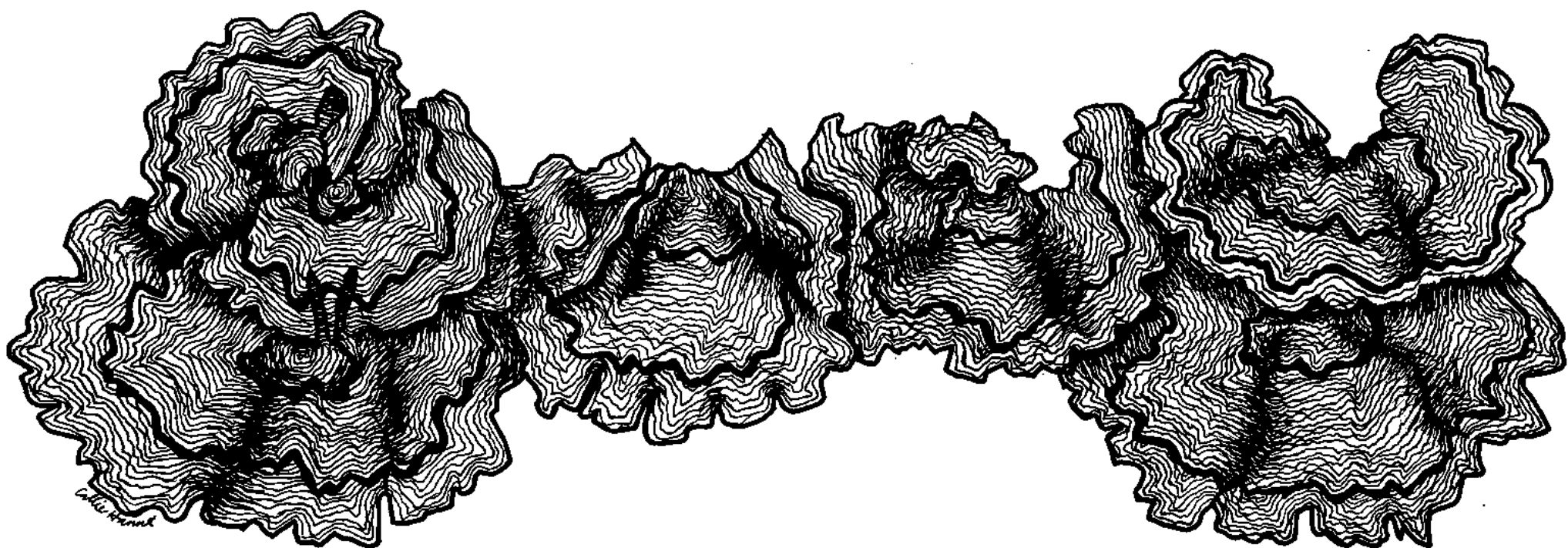
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"FUNGI" BY

**CALLIE
HANNA**

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STUDY IN CHARCOAL

BY AUDREY RYDEN



**STAFF
WRITING**

POEMS & PROSE

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STAFF

WRITING

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"APATHY IN THE TIME OF SUMMER"BY REN MAI

"A GIRL AND HER CAT"BY KEVIN CASTRO

"DESERT NIGHTS"BY JOAN J. BELL

"446"BY AKKAD AJAM

there are four ghosts living,
Hidden away
behind ivy-covered walls.

In the house of the river,
they are all sleeping,
Slowly in decay
under heavy blankets of moss.

In the house of the river,
they are delicately gliding,
not noticing the way
the dust is always settled.

Gathered at the dinner table,
the flowers in the vase
have long since wilted,
the silverware tarnished,
but "What a splendid meal!"
They say.
Laughter is soundless,
skin transparent,
movements rehearsed.
Their lungs have long since
turned to cobwebs.
Is anyone breathing?

- in the house of the river,
they are not breathing,
forgetting day by day
the water spilling through the cracks.

In the house of the river,
someone is waking,
gasping for air,
remembering.

Pulling at the moss,
"Wake up, Wake Up, Wake Up!
We've all been dreaming.
The house is flooding-
we must leave at once!"

In the house of the river,
no one is watching
as it submerges at dusk.
They all made it out
to the land of the living.

EN LA CASA DEL RIO

BY DAMARIS MARTINEZ

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POEM BY REN MAI

cheap language
wasted on your
listless eyes,
i hope to fill whatever disappeared
from my heart with
spackle and brick.

to catch attention is
to snatch the trailing wisps
of foam in egg drop soup--
and to find acceptance is
to look at forgotten calluses with
neutrality.

like wooden blocks stacked
without thought,
i knew that we made a tower
built to break and yet,
my lips always held whispers of
silent devotion, of
ardent anger, of
"i hate you" but
my hands remained
over my mouth to
still and smother any breath I let out.

scraping snails off the cement,
and catching geckos clinging onto
the porous brick,
sometimes i wonder
if you think of me the
same way i think of you.

the air smelled of rain today.

APATHY IN THE TIME OF SUMMER

"CASTELLO DI AMOROSA"
BY ALYSSA LAZARCHIK

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A GIRL AND HER CAT

BY KEVIN CASTRO

There's a little girl laying in bed
with her cat.

It's the dead of winter
and the heater is on.

Light music covers the room
like an extra blanket.

The moonlight, sneaking through the blinds,
waltzes in and gives each of them
a soft kiss on the forehead.

The little girl forgot to kiss her cat goodnight,
But it's already been forgiven.

The notes are hugging them
and the blankets are, too.

The little cat has found
her way under the covers again.

She can feel each breath her little girl is taking.

It's cold outside, colder than the girl
could dream of.

She tried to feed her cat earlier,
but all the cat wanted
was a bit of warm milk.

The world is quiet tonight, save for the music.
And the girl forgot to kiss her cat goodnight,
The cat would wake her—
Remind her of her duty—
but the girl is at peace now.

The world could be falling apart around this room
and she wouldn't care;

She wouldn't move an inch from this spot.

The cat lays by the girl's legs,
so she wouldn't disturb her,
and takes her slumber.

The girl forgot to kiss her goodnight,
But she's already been forgiven.

DESERT NIGHTS

BY JOAN J. BELL

Everything moves so quickly.
The stars never stay in the same place in the sky,
Night to night
I twist and turn feeling for a warm body
to bring me back down to Earth.
When I touch skin
the cold sweat slick over my hands
Pooling in my palms across
The fronds of desert sheets
where sleep eludes me
and any semblance of oasis is a false promise,
Would it be an intrusion on the
kindness of constellations to ask for directions?

"LONELY ROAD" BY JAMES HERNANDEZ

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FEAR
FOUR
FOUR
FOUR
SIX

four

four

six

PROSE BY
AKKAD AJAM

It complains when it moves, leans, or swivels. A bothersome piece of furniture that's still clinging to its functionality. The arms have scratch marks, and I'd lower it, but its height is just right. Somehow, the other chair has survived an equal amount of time unscathed. It belonged to him, and though he's been gone a long time, I still find a use for it. I'll swap a chair when I need the other, but It can be quite clumsy alternating amenities in my compact room.

Two chairs sit snugly beneath two desks. There's just so much more room to breathe when they're tucked away. Maybe it's that the sun has more tile to reflect on, or maybe I've been holding my breath for a while.

His desk is laid bare, its subservience no longer required. I find less purpose in the desk counterpart of his pair. My desk, on the other hand, doesn't share the same conviction as its brother, bearing a far more chaotic landscape.

My desktop sits near the wall, held together by tape and riddled with dents, scars of unnecessary adventures. Two displays trail to the left, the further finding a home on my desk after an adolescence alone. Behind lies a jungle of tangled wire, with twist ties as king. Behind the metaphors, I'm the true king for managing the jungle at all.

Scattered around the room are troves of untouched bookshelves. Floor to ceiling, stacked tall and wide, books of every kind that speak curious minds. I often envy him for having read most of them while my collection rests shyly on a single shelf, holding value in its pages rather than its meager arrangement. My fantasies weren't usually found on those pages but on my throne.

A throne for an unlikely king. A black leather recliner, older than I am, consumes most of the whitespace in my room. I don't often dwell on my past achievements there, for lack of any, but instead, dream dreams that I couldn't save for the nighttime. Laying on it, I'm only the king of my own mind, but a king I am.

Beyond a king, his kingdom. A grove just beyond a parking lot, basking in the sun year-round. Standing out on the balcony overlooking this patch of trees, I can be disturbed by singing birds at any time I please. One of many reasons why I don't stand out on the balcony. But from my creaky chair, I can look out and smile at the trees as they wave back at me.

There's more to this room as there can always be more to describe, but I don't think there's more worth remembering.

*

It's heavy, uncomfortable, and completely silent. A bothersome piece of furniture with functionality that doesn't belong in my crawl space. A solid gray contrast to the wooden floor and color-blended wall decor. There's another chair, and then another. Two beds as well, a girl on one of them sucking up all the air. Sunlight doesn't reach the wood floors, and the vents don't breathe oxygen.

My desk is a suggestion. Suggesting I make use of my functionality by making use of its purpose. Suggesting that the chaos on its surface isn't there for entropy but for order.

His desk is a question. Questioning his use as he questions it too. Asking to not be left alone, to not be another surface covered in dust.

On my bookshelf, I stack lies. Behind the lies, there are books. Behind the books, I wouldn't know; I've never seen back there.

And there are eyes everywhere. I placed them around so I could always be watched. They're so at home here. Looking down on sediments of dust and hair. Looking up to patches where paint used to be.

The fog is so thick. Incense aromas clash with intense scents of littered crumbs. There's a mess in every corner and along every diagonal. There's discomfort between every nook and cranny. There's procrastination in every chore laid about.

There's a question and a suggestion and a suggestion and a question and a suggestion and judgment.

I can see the inside of my own brain. This room is a maze of neurons I can't manage to traverse. And it's all on display to the mouths coming in and out. The eyes that don't shut. The ears that don't listen. The skins that can't feel. The noses without nostrils. It's all on display, the chaos on my desk, the eyes on the walls, the crumbs, and hairballs, my faults. When the sun eeks in, or even during the darkest hour when not a ray of sunshine gets through, they can see every particle of dust and it's theirs to belittle. I lack the power to tell them they're wrong. I lack the faith to even disagree with them.

My room has no room for guests. Yet, it's so crowded in here. Every exhale is a hazy fog that takes the shape of another guest. As I breathe in, I inhale the fog, and I want to spit it out, but it's already in my lungs and it's already in my bloodstream and I can't breathe and I can't see and I can't tell.

I can't tell what time it is. I've never thought to buy a clock. I'm sure it could fit well among the other decor, another suggestion for my collection. Then I could sit on my chair and count the seconds along with the longest hand. That's what I did. When I would lay on my recliner and stare at the ceiling, where patches of paint used to be. The clock would pull me away from my routine suggestions and questions. Counting the seconds as they would go by, it provided a metronome for my dreams. I really think I should buy a clock now. I want to be back there, on a chair that gives me the chance to dream in the daytime. I want to be back there, to a bookshelf filled with books and books. I want to be back there, on a desk that is mine, looking at a screen that is mine, on whitespace that is mine, breathing oxygen that is mine, feeling the sun on my skin.

Where am I?

WHERE DO THEY GO?

BY ANNALIESE ST. JOHN

As the beat of wings hum in my ears, a thought surfaces,
Where do they go?
Suddenly, I can remember one who flew away too,
a month before,
Sorrow begins to consume me, crush me, and traps me, for
though he flew off,
He never came back, so what good is flying when trapped?

Overhead, dawn, with her rose-red fingers,
turning brilliant shades of tangerine and light pink
And still they fly on, scudding across the cloudless sky,
Unaware that they too may ne'er return.
But he may have went where peace and love flourish,
To a place where there is prosperity and goodness

A warning sends them on their way
Away from familiar and into new
Away from the world they once knew to be true
To a place they stay for days
Where they seek refuge from foreboding winter

And so here, in my sorrow, I blame the snow
For it is why he flew off
We had tried to hold on,
but the body has a mind of its own,
And alas, he was suddenly no longer a part of my life

Endless days in the sun
All gone in one, that day he flew away
And just happened to be done, Sucked away the last part of his son
The life of his daughter
And the soul of his wife, all of them gone.
With a simple flutter of wings, all destroyed through the night

Alas I am left in darkness
No longer does a light shine upon me
For I have been left in the cold
Alone, miserable, and exhausted
Comme on fait son lit, on se couche
As the french say, but I di'nt choose this bed

As the beat of wings hum in my ears,
my finger lifts towards the painted sky
Towards the v-like formation that points south
And a question tumbles from my lips
'Where do they fly, is it to a better place?'
Loving arms then caressed me so
And murmured a less than sufficient answer
'Hmm please do tell me when you think you know'

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CHEERS ALL AROUND.
IT TRULY TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A
CREATIVE PROJECT.

- THE ECKLEBURG PROJECT STAFF

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