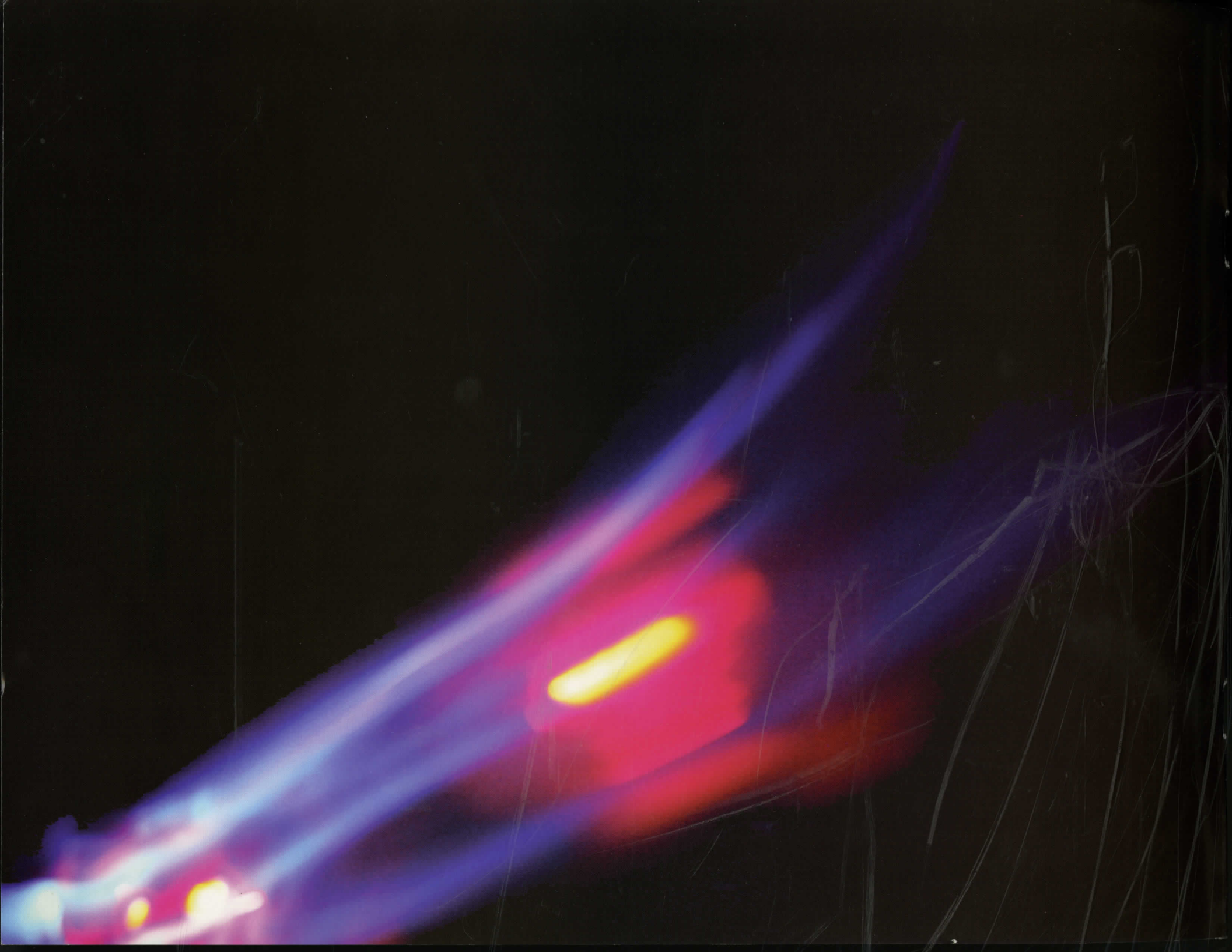


The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly black or very dark blue, with several glowing, ethereal shapes. A prominent feature is a vertical, elongated shape in the center that glows with a gradient from red at the top to yellow in the middle. To the right, there is a vertical, elongated shape that glows with a gradient from blue at the top to white at the bottom. On the left side, there is a solid red circle. The entire surface is covered with fine, light-colored scratches and fibers, giving it a collage-like or weathered appearance.

collage

a journal of creative expression

vol. V Spring 07





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letter from the editor

This semester has certainly been a rewarding experience, filled with ups and downs. Alas, that's life.

I first would like to thank everyone who submitted. You made it extremely difficult for the staff to decide what would appear in this edition of *Collage*, but after long deliberation and careful consideration, selections have been made and brows wiped clean. Since we couldn't publish every excellent piece we received, I strongly encourage those of you who weren't published this time to resubmit your work next fall. Selecting the best submissions from so many excellent pieces of work was an astonishingly difficult task, but our dedicated staff rose to the challenge.

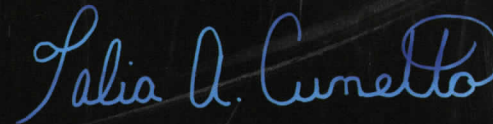
My personal thanks to Marsha Powers and to my brilliant, quirky staff for being so patient with me as I settled into my new position. When I allowed myself to become distracted by miniscule details, you guys helped me to see the forest through the trees, and I'm grateful.

I must also thank Dr. Mathis, Dr. Carnicom and the rest of the Honors College staff for opening their doors and making me feel welcome.

Finally, I would like to thank my mom, dad and aunt for twenty years of support, faith, trust, love and friendship. You three are my lifeline. The support that you have never failed to give is what keeps me following my dreams; your immense faith in me is what assures that I will one day live them. I have more appreciation, respect and admiration for you than you will ever know and love you with all of my heart. This is for you.

Drum roll, please...

Ladies and Gentlemen, without further delay, I would like to present to you...
Collage: A Journal of Creative Expression!



Talia Cunetto

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Slouching Towards Adulthood, Part I
Stephen Trageser

Wanting to make a sandwich,
I reached for a new loaf of bread.
I discovered that beneath the
Still-virgin wrapper had grown a
Thin, blue layer of mold.
I recoiled in terror.
"Oh!" I cried, "We must mourn
The hands of the farmer.
The eyes of the trucker.
The back of the grocer.
All their souls ground to nothing,
For nothing comes of their labors.
Woe unto us, for in our slothfulness,
What horrors have we wrought?"
Mother reached for a knife,
And deftly removed the crust.
"Shut up and eat your sandwich."
Father poured the milk.

Daybreak
Justin Keoninh
Digital Photography





I Was Driving
Ryan Bolton
Linoleum Print

For Elizabeth
Dawn Andreoni

Now, it is only an alpine reverie,
Muted as the snow falling on palm trees—
The unerring beauty of the unexpected,
The veracity of a heart left unprotected.

Sweeter than sangria to the sober tongue
Or the paternostoral air to the smoking lung,
With the first taste, the damage is irreparable;
Two hearts joined once are forever inseparable.

Evening comes and sheds a world of light.
A slippery serpent with fresh skin is the night.
It coils around to conceal us in its cool embrace
So enticing, we race to keep a snake's pace.

There is no oxygen between these peaks.
Spinning like a carnival, the stars become streaks.
Dancing to a language a country cannot contain,
Rhythm provides communication that words cannot sustain.

November waters shocking limbs febrile with roguery,
We take cue from the night and test the truth of modesty
And it seems we are unadulterated by being bare!
Our skin is the most beautiful thing we could wear.

In the light of the dawn, there is nothing left to say,
Only to face the sunlight and try to carve a way.
A glacier grates a valley into a mountain's side
But ice is independent and water relies on the tide—

It laps against the shore with the beat of a sleeping heart;
It soars up to the sky and then, in tears, departs;
It pours over the fall and hides the eroded rock beneath
And continues on to sea, to arctic, to coral reef—

Cycles 'round the world, and then returns to you
Smiling in that last moment, my shin stained blue.
Now, it is only an alpine reverie—
In another year, will it fade into fantasy?

A Musing Tale

Renee Davis

Ishkabible sat high upon her shelf. She had worked hard over the past decade to achieve the status of world-famous muse of the Fictitious World.

It was not easy making a name for herself. She had run across a few writers who were lemons. She had to fill out a pink form, get a blue stamp, and wait for a yellow transfer sheet, but she was willing to take the time in order to find a musable writer. Three years of this had led her to this shelf.

Her new writer thought that she was a gift from an anonymous fan; after all, where else would a purple stuffed dragon come from? He had placed her above his head on the computer desk. She could tell that he was going to make something of himself one day, all he needed was inspiration. A muse.

After three years of short stories and newspaper articles, a novella was published by So-and-So Company out of Who-Knows-Where. The first hurdle had been cleared. They worked night and day, caffeine fueling her writer and ideas fueling her stuffed body.

Four good years shot Ishkabible up the Fictitious Ladder of Musing. There was no stopping her and her writer, until one day, she got muser's block.

She had never felt so terrible! For months, she felt like crawling off of her shelf and sitting with her nose shoved into a corner. They had been on a roll! That is when the letter came:

Dear Ishkabible,

We regret to inform you that your usefulness as a muse has been brought into question. We are preparing an inspector to visit you tomorrow night at eleven o'clock. Please be prepared for your evaluation.

Thank you for your time,
The Fictitious Monitoring Department

Those lines summoned the end of her career as a muse. She waited in anticipation for her evaluation. A small pig of a dragon came at exactly eleven o'clock and asked questions such as, 'What would happen if Suzie...?' and cite a problem. From there, she had to create a five-point story where Suzie got what she wanted in the end, winding the plot through B, C, D and finally, E. She ran through two of these scenarios before the round pink dragon told her to stop mid-sentence.

"That is enough," he said, as he made a few final scratches on his clipboard. "You will be notified of your results in ten days."

Ten days? Surely, the Fictitious Corporation of Muses didn't realize how long and agonizing ten days could be. She sat on her shelf, her life being weighted by a bunch of patched-up dragons who had never met her. She could picture them discussing case number X since that is all the world is: cases and numbers. As she waited for a bunch of dried-up muses to decide her fate, Ishkabible's muser's block became even worse. She felt terrible for her writer, a star pupil with a deadline sneaking up on him.

In exactly ten days, another dragon – a transfer student – showed up on the doorstep. He was set next to her on the highest shelf of the office. Rookie. She wanted to knock him off, but that would have to wait.

That day, her writer was able to finish more pages than she had ever mused. That new dragon was good. Ishkabible would have to listen to that newbie flaunt how he cured writer's block on his first day; she would have the rest of her stuffed animal life to think about how she failed where this youngster succeeded.

That night, she learned that her new adversary was Snizerfritzl, a cute little orange thing from a well-to-do college that she had never heard of. She was informed of the new regulations and how they had let her slide for so long. There came a time when all muses had to retire, and Snizerfritzl had brought that moment with him.

After a few weeks of this torture, Snizerfritzl could no longer take Ishkabible's dour mood. He decided upon the perfect cure: she needed a younger crowd. Sure, this was her star pupil, but he would take care of the writer while she was away.

She had to fill out the green form to transfer. The purple stamp turned almost black against the green. That was how she felt, purple to black. Useful to dead. The yellow transfer sheet finally came, and she was whisked away before she could properly say goodbye.

Her new assignment was at a school. She had never mused for teens, always going straight for the adults to bring out their untapped potential. A teacher claimed Ishkabible and set her on a high shelf with a sombrero. What had she gotten herself into? Most of the day, students came and went like cattle every time a bell rang. Lunch came and went, sixth period dragged by. The final bell rang, and the room emptied.

Her new writer sat at a desk in the far corner. She wasn't writing... she was...she was...she was grading papers! This wasn't writing at all! What was she doing here? There must have been a misprint in the transfer. Where was her writer?

Ishkabible sat next to the funny hat and waited for night so that she could wander around the room and read the new selection of magazines and books. This was her retirement.

The door opened a final time. More students filed in, throwing greetings across the room. Who were these people? What was the word for these people... cult?... no...club! That was it, they were a creative club! They rearranged the desks into a circle, plucked Ishkabible from her perch, and brought her to the center of the circle. They took roll, got official business out of the way, and then the real fun began. It had been a while since Ishkabible felt so much new potential. They strung a single story together, all of them adding their own touch to it; the creative spirit had entered the room. Despite being retired, she still had a lot of musing to do.



Fairy Boy Curio
Barbara Plummer-Smith
Photo Collage



The Sunshine State
Ashley Krulikowski
Pastel Drawing

The Bastard Oak Pam Manley Davis

Sepia-toned at dusk, a faded photograph of antebellum days, this proverbial mammy bends over her charges, her arthritic arms reaching toward the Big House.

My arms cannot circle that huge oak trunk, nor could the master's children hug all her spreading middle as they rest adoring heads on her breast.

Its limbless backside bows against the street—as heedless of my stares as she is to kin shaking their heads at her devotion as they sneak off to fight the Greys.

A massive oddity is this *Quercus Austrina*—a remnant from the water-logged basin, flooding Middle Tennessee's history, a living relic from woods

cleared for this upscale neighborhood—unsightly next to sculptured evergreens on velvet lawns, or so whisper neighbors behind cupped hands.

But the owner likes its quirkiness. And so do I. Looming, the tree recalls an ignoble past, a presence that will not let me go.

The Serpent
Victoria Ogle

Hate and love are intertwined,
Said the sibilant voice of the living vine.
The serpent twisted and he sighed,
You fell into both wide-eyed.

Are you blind with one yet?
Because that's as close as you'll get!
Before the hissing of spirant laughter,
I saw the image of the one I was after.

I shook my head and covered my face,
But could not escape the bitter taste.
For truth, there was nothing that I could embrace,
And the betrayal seemed such a tragic waste.

In the serpent's eye, there was a look of glee,
For he had accomplished what he set out to do to me.
But beyond the pain of a hurting heart,
I saw the glimmer of a brand new start.

"So what if I forgive?" I whispered.
The viper's sudden rage was only barely tempered.
You'll meet me again someday, he hissed,
And then the only thing left was a flutter in the air
that his tongue had kissed.

The Key
Barbara Plummer-Smith
Photo Collage



All I Care to Remember
Sarah Neal

"Come back, Moon," I say
as you disappear into clouds,
and I, into this page,
writing to you.

And then, shyly,
you peek out
your antiqued,
mustached face
to slowly swirl
into a hint,
a blurred whisper
of motion,
for a dance
with my eyes.

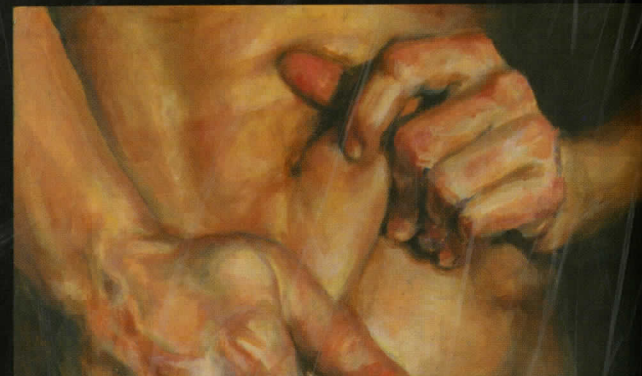
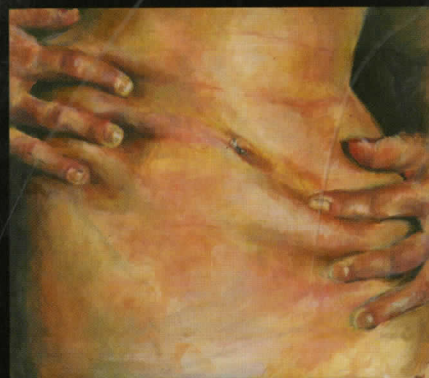
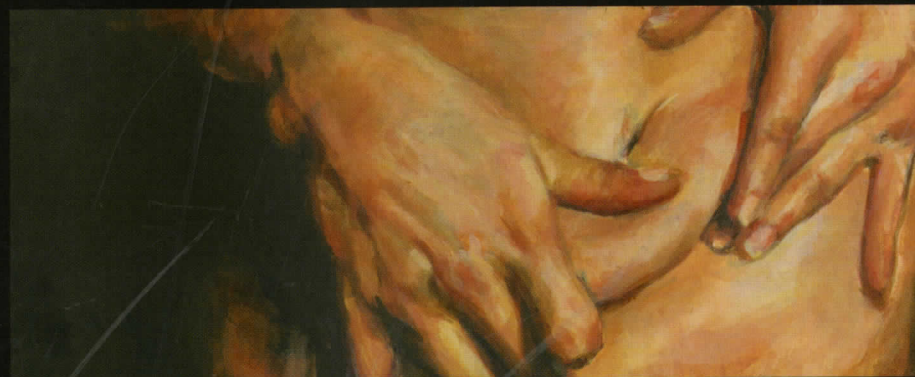
Dear Moon,
pearl opal of night,
light of the awakened sleepers,
you fold me back into virgin skin
every time I look.

Had I a mirror, large enough
to show you your beauty,
perhaps then I could rest.
But then, there is the ocean,
on whose reflecting liquid you tug,
sighs of satisfaction,
blue murmurs of your self.

Dear Ivory Apple,
You are the one-a-day
for my soul
and my body,
pleased with midnight yoga,
is Moon, posed and
sweet muscled.
With you in the stretch,
my heart is a baby,
pulling towards your breast.
For you are the giant wheel
beneath my heavy,
loaded self,
carrying me through
when I am all covered in night.

Nevermind,
I say
for this slow move dance.
Nevermind,
to glide through
your white-hole-looking-glass,
and channel into weightlessness.
Nevermind
is the only word
worth remembering
when there is you.

Untitled 1-3
Sarah Sullivan
Painting



Stones River National Battlefield
Chalit Chawalitangku
Black and White Photography



Fallen Brothers Zac DeFrancesca

His phone rings with a strange number.
He immediately knows who it is.
He doesn't want to answer.
He's had this call before;
16 other times to be exact.
He knows the conversation by heart.
Another brother has died,
And an unknown mother wants him
To come bury her baby boy.
16 times he's driven this drive.
16 times he's hoisted that casket.
16 times he's heard the sobs.
16 times he's felt the mother's tears
Soak through his uniform.
16 times he's folded the flag.
16 times he's folded the flag.
16 times he's heard the gunfire
And has tried not to wince every time.
In the beginning, there were 52 of them.
Now, 17 have died,
Fighting for the freedom of another people.
He can't go back to save his brothers,
Thanks to the bullet holding his shin together,
So instead, he just gets angrier.
As he starts his car, his phone rings again.
Number 18 has fallen.

Stones River National Battlefield
Chalit Chawalitangku
Black and White Photography



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Now, 17 have died,
Fighting for the freedom of another people.
He can't go back to save his brothers,
Thanks to the bullet holding his shin together,
So instead, he just gets angrier.
As he starts his car, his phone rings again.
Number 18 has fallen.

Never
Dawn
Andreoni
Scene

For two people. The bold print is for a woman, the other is written for her inner child, also on stage, who is voicing the woman's thoughts.

I had never never
never
never
seen the sunrise until that one one
one
one
when I met my my
my father.
He ran out out out ran out on us
us
us.
He called to say he was going
going going
to come come
come
come visit—
that he loved me,
his his
his
his daughter.
It was hot, and I was sweating sweating
sweaty from the heat so I showered
so I would smell smell
smell
smell like Spring—
showered.
I waited
waited
waited for my father for for—
he came.
he came and I was sweaty sweating
from heat
nerves nerves. I was nervous.
He was ugly!
ugly
He was bald and I I
I
I I saw the sweat on on his bald head.

never say Never

one day in August

me mine
my *own*

me and my mom--we *loved* him!

but he left us

Come back, Daddy, please!

Love me!

his one and only
me

I smelled like summer.
May flowers, April showers
showers showers

for hours
for hours

from
nerves

inside and out!

my
eyes saw

He didn't talk talk
talk
talk to me.
He had had said he loved me,
but he only only
only
only stayed until after dinner—
after after filling his fat fat fat fat
stomach. And then left
left left left
left, and I cried cried
cried.
So I ran out out
out.
Out!
after I heard my my
my
mother cry herself to sleep.
It was warm warm, and I didn't sweat
because it all went to my tears
tears tears.
And then
everything
turned
pink—
I saw the sunrise.
It came up quickly and I didn't move
move move. **Move!**
I had never
never
never seen
a sunrise.
Then there was no color anymore, it was
light light light
so I ran ran
ran
ran ran
ran
ran
ran home.

Talk to me!

Love me!

if only

left me again

my *mom* cried

out into the night

My own mother!

tearing me apart

I
turned

I saw the sunrise.

Never say never!

ran so hard
ran to my mother
ran away from him

Behind Ground Zero

Leah McGraw

Digital Photography



Drone Star
Bill Bynum
Silkscreen Print





Someone Else's Dream World
Cristina Brito
Acrylic Painting

Musish Stephanie Weaver

I wish my heart was housed in the hollow of your guitar.
I wish you used my veins and arteries as your strings.
I don't care if you break one every now and again.
You'll get covered in blood;
it'll splatter on the wall,
some permanent decoration on the blank whiteness
of your studio apartment.

You'd better draw the blinds;
someone is watching you.
Someone is calling the police.

Hello, officer?
There's been a murder in a studio apartment.
No, he didn't write a perfectly dreadful song.
No, this isn't a joke.
There's blood all over the windows.

So they come and search.
By now, you've scrubbed away the blood.
You've disposed of the shirt that was once sprinkled with vermilion
verisimilitude.
You've set the guitar in the corner,
and the only crime the cops can find is a broken string.
They don't find a body, and that's disconcerting.

I'm in the guitar,
keeping as quiet as possible.

Except for my ear.
You ate my ear, but never swallowed.
It's caught in the back of your throat.
I hear every sound you make
before it becomes a word.
I hear the guttural moaning
of your rawest thoughts.

You sing to me in your sleep.

I remember it.

I keep it here in the guitar.

It's waiting for you

when you wake up.

Don't joke about needing me.

This is serious infatuation.

You taped my lips to your harmonica.

Now, we have an excuse for making out in public, under spotlights even.

People will come from miles around to see you

play with my heart and kiss my lips.

They will applaud you and, in time, imitate you.

They will say they love you,

and a whole generation of victims like me will fall.

They will say they loved us, too.



Warren Swann's Pickguard

Heather Moulder

Mixed Media on Plastic

Why I Do What I Do

Anna Parker

To feel the breath of the arms

And the song of the feet

How to dance with feeling

And pull people from their seats

Why do I do this

If only myself to please

And why do I study

If not to feel at ease

They are not just mere steps

But a feeling so complete

Of breath and life

Not just steps of the feet

I feel that if I sing my steps

They become much more

Than just executed movement

A brush off the floor

Anyone can kick a leg

Or raise an arm

Can do some turns

Without any harm

But rare is the one

Who can translate with care

The words and meaning

Behind choreographer flare

That's my goal you see

To make movement ring

Till it transfers itself

And I can hear dancing sing

Phantom Fields Michael Guggisberg

Sector 1023, one of many, yet few, inhabitable environs of the world, was no more than a glorified landfill. Save for assorted shantytowns and steel-walled tents, the mainland refuge reigned over an uncharted panorama of isolation. Sixty-six percent of all resources were nonrenewable. Ironically, the "apocalypse" greatly benefited the kings among the sinners, bestowing upon them, a slave race of frail, fearful survivors.

Anonymous, maligned conspiracy theorists blamed the earth-ending nuclear war on these multi-faceted human herders, a half-truth accepted as sacrosanct by those who never even knew of green grass. Where pastures should have grown, laid chalky desert asphalt, strewn with the remnants of the long dead, permanently etched into the stony base of Hiroshima-like ground. Hence, the majority of the landscape was called the Phantom Fields. Somewhere in the distant hills, an eleven year-old bastard marched determinedly through the rough terrain with a full, weathered sack.

On the outskirts of the Sector waited an orphaned slave-girl of ten. Her portly lord would not bother to find her corpse, for even the hungriest of scavengers were wary of prematurely decomposing meat. The girl's numb, rotting right hand signified the Mark. Bearers of the Mark met trepidation and ostracism from all of the animal kingdom. She silently grieved for her departed, yet still-living, mother soundlessly. No blessing ever lives past a short term.

At last, the sole boy survivor from the westward fields came. He wasted no breath apologizing on behalf of his fleeting endurance. Rather, he lent her his short, concealed smile and cordially took hold of her better hand. A nearsighted bystander could not have differentiated the male from the female since both specimens donned sparse hair follicles on their visible scalps. The pair walked.

Dust from deteriorated material blanketed the solidified ground. Resonating metallic canisters glowed with the afterbirth of nearby acid geysers. Distant predators echoed their presence within canyons, like a thousand rattlesnakes. The unspeakable monstrosities had also adopted cannibalism

in order to deter infection. Every race of life sterilized. The neo Moses was still-born. Alas, a silver bullet to the center of the earth would be a mercy killing in contrast to the eating away of all creatures. Still, the two soldiered on through spectral plains for their final destination: the fishless sea.

Their path crossed a decrepit terrace of red brick, the most obscure remnant of a home. The shelter was roofed with shag tarpaulin. An albino mutt panted in their direction, beckoning more to the prospect of water than to the walkers themselves. In the wild, white prey prevailed over the more colorful breeds. They neared the hut with amiable intent, a trait the neglected dog relished. A shriek resounded from the terrace and a feral juvenile raced outside. He hovered protectively over his canine, spitting and shooting inarticulate gibberish at the boy and the girl. All the while, the dog stayed quiet, whimpering while being ushered inside by its undomesticated master. Acting as a barricade, the boy sat in the entrance, sniffing and hissing at the girl. They willingly retreated from the area, the girl sighing sorrowfully for the loveless.

The barren beach appeared on the horizon. However, lack of nutrients stopped their trek seventeen yards short. Neither child could contemplate stationing camp atop the uphill shore, despite facing the slightest of slopes just ahead. Undeterred, the girl spotted a nearby warhead casing in which they could rest in peace. They relaxed their fragile frames against the blunt side of the dud missile. After eight minutes of inhalation, a ceremony followed. The boy hastily prepared first, because he knew that time was precious.

To a looter's eye, the trifles the boy's emptied sack would amount to penny collateral. Nonetheless, the girl instantly treasured her hunter's spoils. A hollow, silver disk lined with a foreign rubber, was either a halo or a crown. An equally corroded stave, sans the blade, made a scepter. A petrified reptilian egg was to be the family jewel. Even the worn out sack doubled as a sanctified robe. Whether she was playing the angel or the queen, only they knew. He would never tell her of the evils he faced to attain their small fortune.

Idle
Bill Bynum
Digital Illustration

Before adorning herself, the girl prepared her own minimal tribute to the boy. An inner ache near her vital organs panged deeply as she fretted over her leprosy. Her status forbade her entry to all valuable caches. Even intangible forces, such as lament, transcended painfully into the physical realm. Symbolizing her utmost loyalty, she sacrificed her body. The fourth finger of her hand broke away without effort or sensation. She tied the finger with a portion of crude wire that holstered her garbage bag of a gown. The boy bowed as much as his spine allotted to receive the flesh necklace, ritualizing their love for one another. Matrimony was made with a parched kiss, an embrace as brief as their terminal eternity.

The boy was first to cry. He refused his bride's caress to strengthen himself for the task at hand. His burden burned more than the radon infestation within his bones, yet somebody had to mark the grave. Gathering a relic of cardboard from an accurate doomsday picketing, the boy stenciled their names into the sandy residue, caking the aged sign like permafrost. Maybe millions would pass in the near future. Maybe one of them would have a pen in which to rewrite history. The memory of the bastard and the orphan might surpass every ruthless oppressor that ever pillaged in and out of Sector 1023. The spark would ignite with death.

The vultures stayed at bay, dismissing the contaminated girl's body. As a corollary, the boy's feasibly edible body was left untouched, reifying the pledge of the necklace. By their fifty-second hour in the infrared sun, they became phantoms. On first sight, one would know their plights, their pains. Forever, all would know their names.



Goodbye Ashley Orman

I sat in my mother's car, watching my hands. I closed my eyes for a moment and took in as much air in one breath as my body allowed. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't seem to get enough. As I sat there, I began to collect as much courage and composure as I could muster. I heard my mother's voice beside me, "Are you ready?" Would I ever be ready? "Yes," I vaguely remember answering her.

As we got out of the car, I felt the breath escape me again. My legs buckled under me and went numb. I looked at the ground and listened to the sound of my heels against the pavement as we approached the ugly, green steps of a house.

I briefly glanced up and saw two unfamiliar men sitting on the front porch in rocking chairs. They caught my gaze, and I quickly looked back down. I slowly walked up the steps and through a clear glass door. A man welcomed me, but I paid no attention to him.

I walked into the main room and heard my mother's voice again. "Aren't you going to sign the guest book?" I didn't think of myself as a guest. It was my family. I was a part of it. Why did I have to sign a guest book when I clearly wasn't a guest? "Sure," I replied as I foggily scribbled my name.

As I turned around, I was greeted by two of my cousins. You could easily tell that they were tired and had been crying. Their eyes were swollen, and their speech was coarse. I don't even remember what I said to them; I was more interested in finding my father.

I turned and saw him talking with a strange woman. I heard him say my name and introduce me to her, but I neither remember her name nor really care. I went up to him and squeezed him as tightly as I could. A tear escaped my eye before I had the opportunity to wipe it away. He spoke to me. "I was getting worried about you. What time did you leave?"

I said something like, "We left about one. I had school. We had to eat. We came straight here."

He went on to say that since that was the case, we made good time. He thanked my mother for bringing me and told me that my grandmother was worried. I should show her that I had arrived safely.



Cotton Field
Valerie Rosenblatt
Photography

He pointed to the front of the room. I didn't want to look because I knew what I would find there but did as my father instructed. I looked and saw a group of people standing in a line.

As I followed the line to its beginning, I saw my grandmother and my two aunts speaking with several people whom I didn't know. I was told to skip the line and go straight to her, but I wanted to stand in that line. I wanted time to stand still, to keep myself from the pain. I wanted with all my soul to run from that house with my face buried in my hands. Somehow, mechanically, I walked to the head of the line. My grandmother's back was to me, so I touched her shoulder. She turned around in surprise. As soon as she recognized me, she took me in with the warmest embrace I have ever known.

"ASHLEY! I was beginning to get worried about you!" As soon as those words exited her mouth, she began to cry. When I felt her body shudder with

the sobs, I lost myself completely. My composure and courage melted away as if they had never existed.

“No, no Ashley. Don’t cry. Just look at him. He looks as if he was sitting at the kitchen table.” How could she say this to me? He would never sit at that table again. He would never do another crossword puzzle. He would never again say to me, “Hey there, Buddy!” I began to reminisce about all the times we’d had together.

I suddenly snapped back to reality. I didn’t want to look at him that way. No matter how hard I closed my eyes, I couldn’t make the scene in front of me go away. I couldn’t block out the sounds of the sniffing and crying in the background. I took a staggered breath and looked at him. She was right! I didn’t want to accept it, but she was right; he looked as I remembered him. He had on his Notre Dame baseball hat, his glasses, his favorite flannel shirt, and his good pair of blue jeans. It was just how he would have wanted to look. I couldn’t help but to smile through my tears.

The rest of the night was a blur. I talked with family, recalling none of their names, of course. Then, the extended family slowly began to leave until only my aunts, uncles, and cousins were left. The director was telling us how the next day was to proceed. He talked slowly so that we could understand what he was telling us. After we decided that my grandmother would ride with my father and me in the procession, we all decided to leave and try to get some rest. My mom and I went back to our hotel, and I tried the hardest I ever had to get some sleep. The next day would be the toughest day I would ever have to face.



Lady Jules
Justin Keoninh
Digital Photography

Glass

Marie Brown

The first weeks you were gone, I wrote plays,
took tests, lost weight and lost sleep, pushed away
thoughts I'd never see you again.
Summer came, then winter, my mind circling
your spring message. I erased your voice
telling me, "The hospital visit is routine."
Days later, you called at midnight, asking about my studies
and if I'd come home after graduation; said you'd send money.
We talked an hour that last conversation.

A year later, I try to sort our lives and remember being left
to walk home from school to clutters of beer cans,
a Bacardi bottle or two, no sign of you.
Sometimes, for days, I'd knock on your door,
bang on your window, afraid I'd crack the glass.
I'd visit you, graveyard shift, at your guard station on the docks.
I'd tap the bars, you'd come around,
offer me brandy. We'd walk the rounds, salt misting
hair and coats while you searched beyond the breakwater,
waved an arm toward the channel, saying, "Life's not so bad."



A Pastel River
Andrew Cox
Digital Photography



Virgo
Chalit Chawalitangku
Black and White Photography

Helen
Amanda Johnson

Too bad we couldn't have
enjoyed your flowers earlier;
you slaved over them between
naps and doctor's visits,
their green stems your
soul's striving to bloom.
Your rows were always rather
convoluted, bunched up,
never straight, but
always weed-less, to you.
No one knew that those
Calendulas and Baby Blue Eyes
were just like Black-Eyed Susans:
a little wild and always beautiful.

No one paid attention!
The Carnations, Mums,
Baby's Breath and Star Gazer Lilies that
they've given you, now
are cultured, cut,
organized – all that you despised,
trimmed tightly in dreary, translucent,
squatty vases and
perfectly round wreaths.
(You'd rather have put
Bloodroot in your morning tea.)

Why didn't we bury you there
by the pond, among your
Foxglove, Oxeye Daisies and
Hollyhock and kill
the already dead Tulips-
that filth
which decorates you now.
You never would have stood
for such ugliness.

My Heroine Addiction

Anna Parker

I'll admit it. For the last fifteen years, I have had a harmful addiction. I wake up wanting it and go to bed without enough of it. When I don't get my daily fix, I break out in hives and scratch my skin for hours. I know it's not healthy, but it's so hard to break out of the vicious cycle. I blame my parents, my school, my teachers, television, the internet, every aspect of my life. I can't sleep at night, and when I do sleep, all I dream about is getting more, more, MORE!

What is it, you ask? I am addicted to heroine. That's heroine with an "e." You know, the female protagonist of a story? Yes, I'll admit it. For fifteen years, I have been addicted to reading.

Sorry for any confusion, but I had to let that out. You see, I have been harboring this addiction inside of me for so long now that it is such a relief to get it off my chest and out into the open. So here goes. The story begins when I was a young child.

My mother, God bless her, tried so hard to teach me to read. I didn't get the hang of it for so long, and I blamed her. I broke my pencils, ripped my paper, and threw ridiculous temper tantrums because I didn't know what was wrong.

Then one day, it just clicked. Every letter fell into place, and all of a sudden, I was able to read. Little did I know that this small victory was the beginning of a painful addiction.

For years to come, I would spend hours and hours reading: Jane Austen, Edgar Allen Poe, Louisa May Alcott, Robin McKinley, Tamora Pierce, Gregory MacGuire, Virginia Woolf, Lemony Snicket, Margaret Mitchell, Agatha Christy, J.K. Rowling. I couldn't get enough. Sometimes, I wouldn't even read the book, just sit there in its presence, soaking up the words through the cover. I could consume a book or more a day. Size didn't matter.

While other kids ran around and got suntans, I would sit and read. But I wasn't unsociable. I mean, I talked to people. About books.

The invention of the online library system only worsened my condition. Now, I could request books online and have them waiting for me at the front desk of the library. I requested as many books as I could carry.

It got so bad that my mom had to limit me to only five books at a time. "Besides," she said, "how many books can you read in a week?"

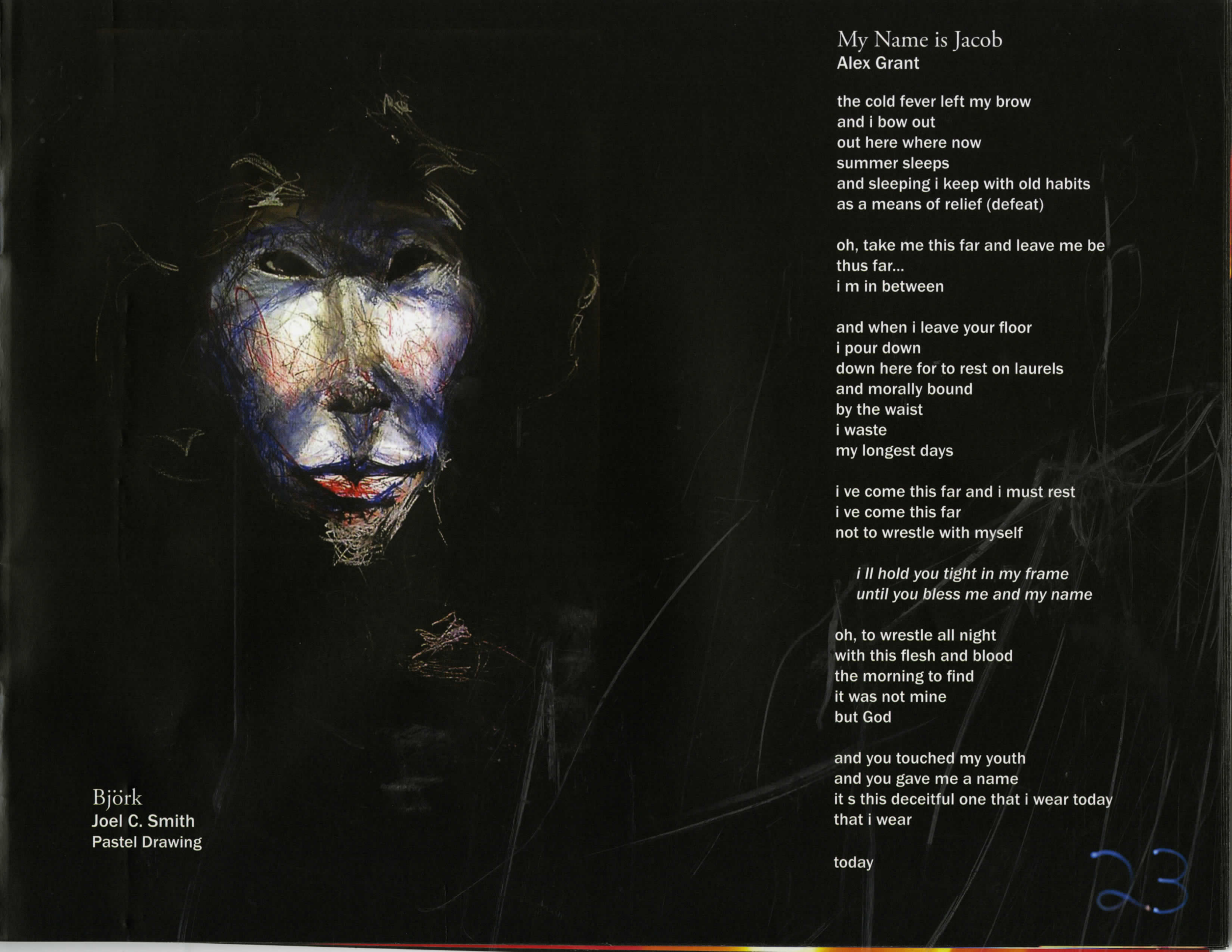
"A lot," I replied.

It wasn't until I was in high school, balancing a school career with a new job, that I began to suspect that something was wrong. I thought that getting a job would help contribute to the small library that was forming on my bedroom floor, but with my time heavily divided between academics and money-making, it was hard for me to find time to sleep much less to read. My favorite copies of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Little Women* kept dust bunnies as friends while I served food at a local fast-food restaurant.

My withdrawal symptoms were so intense one night that I collapsed onto my bed in a fit of tears. It had been too long since I cracked the cover of a book, and I needed a fix.

It was then that solace came in the form of something my sister learned when she went to college: time management. She said that I first needed to admit that I had a problem. Then, I needed to write it down, read it aloud, and burn the paper.

Well, I added the burning part, but that would be fun. It could be like a dramatic gesture that the heroine in a story would make to a letter written by her love who has been excommunicated because he fell in love with her, the princess, even though he is only a gentle shoemaker... yeah, I could do that... write a letter... huh... where's my notepad? Here it is, right next to *Beauty and the Beast*... a book... I should read this...



Björk
Joel C. Smith
Pastel Drawing

My Name is Jacob
Alex Grant

the cold fever left my brow
and i bow out
out here where now
summer sleeps
and sleeping i keep with old habits
as a means of relief (defeat)

oh, take me this far and leave me be
thus far...
i m in between

and when i leave your floor
i pour down
down here for to rest on laurels
and morally bound
by the waist
i waste
my longest days

i ve come this far and i must rest
i ve come this far
not to wrestle with myself

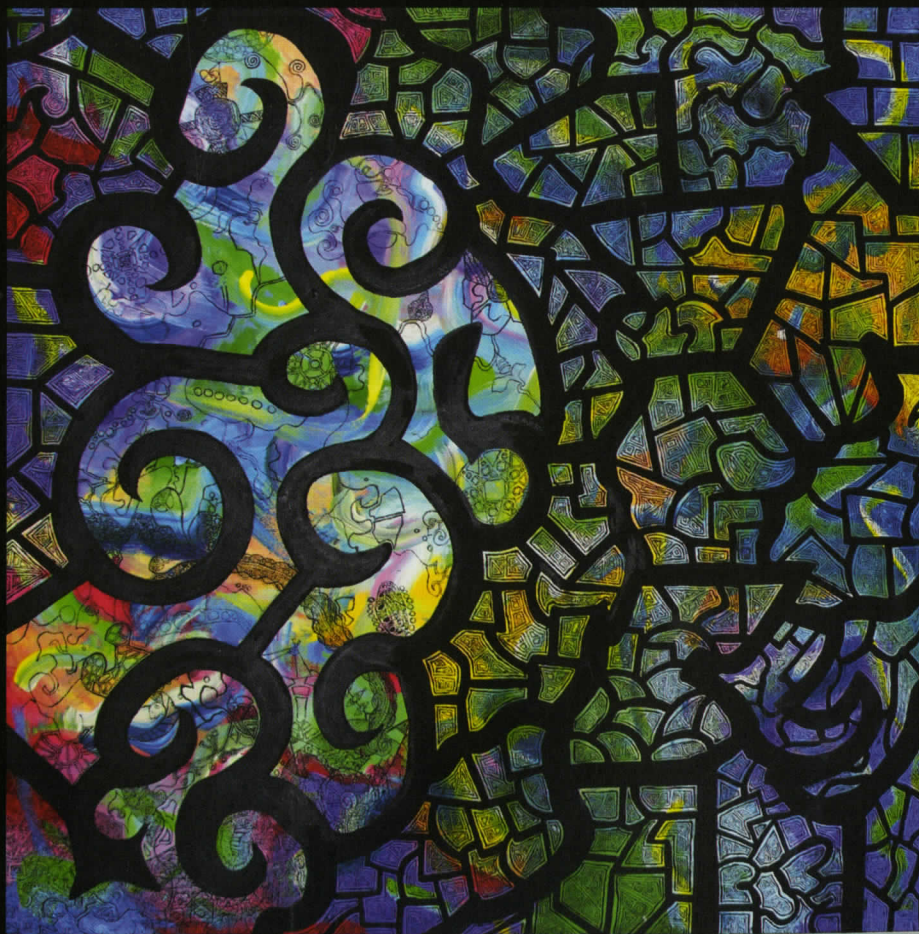
*i ll hold you tight in my frame
until you bless me and my name*

oh, to wrestle all night
with this flesh and blood
the morning to find
it was not mine
but God

and you touched my youth
and you gave me a name
it s this deceitful one that i wear today
that i wear

today

23



Visual Equations
Brian Michels
Acrylic Painting

Heat Signatures Aaron Shapiro

A weekend of trivial explosions—
gun powder popcorn, cherry bombs,
bottle rockets and M80s: July 4th
in its affable flag and firework drag.

Between mouthfuls of bratwurst,
chicken franks and summer beer,
my friends recall past casualties.
Lucas, who lit a pack of sparklers

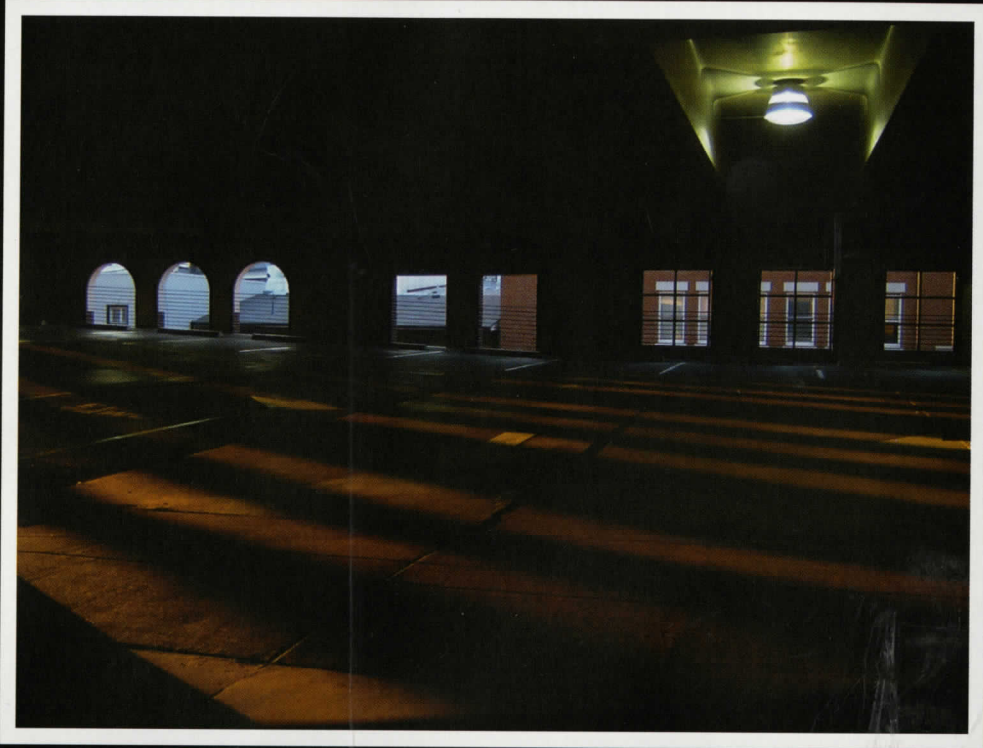
All at once and blazed a pebble trail
of tiny scars across both cheeks. Mike,
who turned a hand to hamburger
fixing the wick on a faulty mortar.

Or Tom, who gave his middle finger
to friendly fire from a miniature tank.
And over this, over the litany
of botched launches and old injuries,

Our ersatz DJ, Little Matt, has slipped
Elvis Costello's (*What's So Funny
'Bout*) *Peace, Love & Understanding*
onto the stereo: a sardonic soundtrack.

A few of us are laughing, a few less
sing along. But as the song winds down,
someone mentions heat blooms on CNN
that morning. Missile tests in N. Korea.

Garage Scene
Bettina Nicholson
Digital Photography



Jump Self-Portrait
Sean Conley
Black and White Photography

25

Leda

Laura Grant

Long, twice-daily brushed blonde strokes of hair – all shades from natural platinum highlights burnished by the sun, to strawberry hanks growing slightly wavy from the nape of her neck – fell from the top of Leda Mitchell's pretty head, all the way to her Oshkosh be-clad girl-child hips.

Select moments in Leda's life are as follows:

Age 4: Leda's favorite aunt, Melinda, a widow from California, tells her that her hair makes her look like an angel with a halo. Leda has just returned from Easter Sunday services at St. Mary's Church. She spends fifteen minutes in the bathroom before Easter dinner, searching desperately for the halo, pulling aside locks of hair, feeling with her fingers for something she thinks must be either solid gold or warm light.

Age 5: Leda lies under a cluster of pine trees in her neighbor's backyard. The sun falls down and around her like dropped coins. A line of black ants is softly crossing her right leg. She does not brush them away. Her hair is coiled like a thick pillow beneath her head. A light breeze snakes through the undergrowth, lifts tendrils of white hair and lays them across her face. One of her friends is calling her name, but she does not answer.

Age 7: While Leda is playing with her brother Doug, a three-stick wad of gum is lodged in her hair. Leda's mother lets loose with a piercing shriek at the sight of her daughter's wadded, minty head, gathers the child in her arms, and runs for the house. Leda's father, hearing the racket, drops his National Geographic on the bathroom floor and runs to the kitchen, thinking all of the things a father must think when his wife is screaming bloody murder and carrying his daughter in her arms. Once the situation is assessed, he brusquely advises his wife to cut the wad out of Leda's hair and returns to the bathroom. Leda's father was not immune to his daughter's beauty, simply annoyed at the interruption. Doug, having run into the bathroom to escape the wrath of his mother, sees his first pair of breasts, and his second and his third: a line of native women from an unknown African country, splayed out on the tile. Douglas is eight and feels a surge of guilt when his father returns, bends down and closes the

National Geographic. Years later, the same surge of guilt will return when he makes love for the first time to his first (and then second, and then third) black girlfriend, although he doesn't make the connection at the time. Leda sits quietly, patiently, angelically for the next three hours while her mother labors to remove the gum. First mayonnaise, then peanut butter, then oil are employed as her mother combs gently through every tangle. Leda is instilled with the feeling that her hair is precious, not to be cut; gum is never lodged in it again.

Age 8: Leda and her best friend, Deirdre Murphy, are having a slumber party at the Murphy house. They spend hours playing, teasing Deirdre's younger siblings, and hiding from her stepfather, Gus, whose violent temper was only calmed in an alcoholic stupor. As the night wears on, Leda and Deirdre pretend that they are secret warrior princesses who have to escape their prison (Deirdre's room) and sneak into a cave (the den) to steal the treasure (a small wooden box containing Gus' weed stash) from the dragon (Gus). Before undertaking this dangerous task, Deirdre insists that they take an oath. They prick their fingers and mix their blood. Then, Leda stares, wide-eyed, as Deirdre pulls a pair of scissors out of her desk drawer, takes a lock of her own hair – a warm, walnut brown – from the back of her head, and cuts it close to her scalp. She lays it ceremoniously on the bedspread, and turns to Leda, who lets out a shriek that wakes the dragon down the hall. The dragon bursts into the room, breathing fiery curses and beer breath. Leda is sent home and upon seeing the state of Deirdre's stepfather when she picks her daughter up at midnight, Leda's mother swears to never let her go over to the Murphy house again. Deirdre does not speak to Leda the next week at school, and their friendship is never rekindled. Three months later, Deirdre is killed in a car accident with her stepfather.

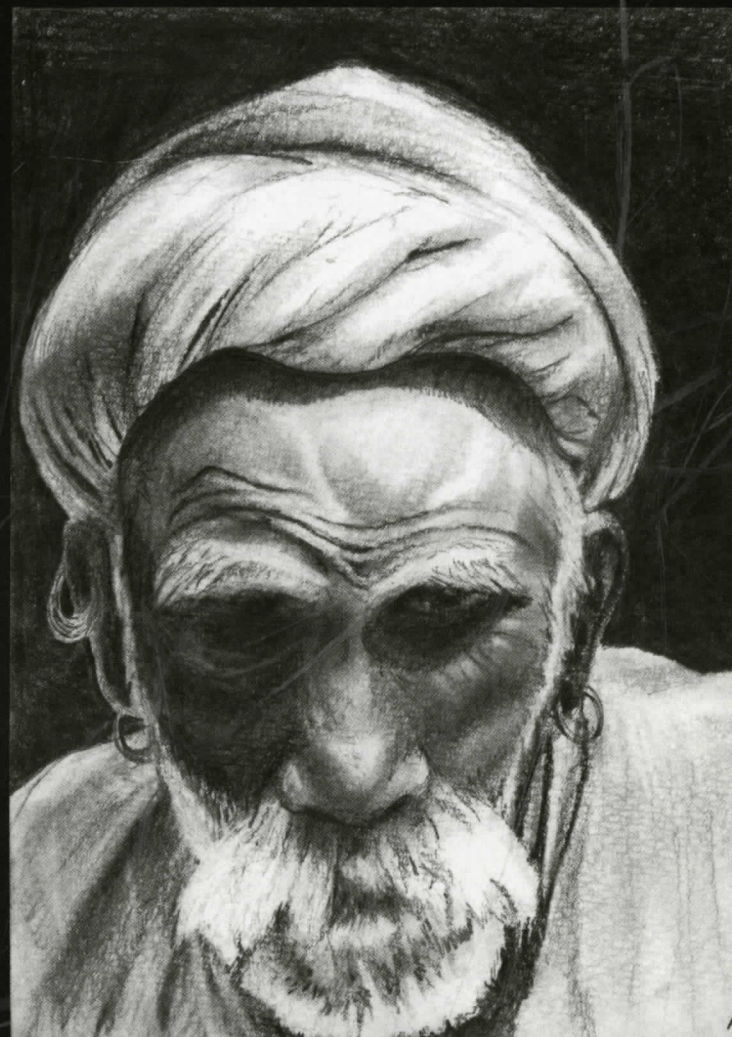
Age 8: Leda is climbing a tree in Danny Davidson's backyard. She hangs upside down, with her arms and legs crossed over the branch, like one of the sloths they've learned about in school. Her hair falls down in a curtain and Danny walks below her, laughing as he moves back and forth through her hair, which covers his face and falls to his shoulders. He braids strands of her hair, face intent; it is this face that Leda will love for the rest of her life.

Age 9: Wakeside Elementary has a Halloween parade. Every child dresses up, as do the teachers. Leda wears a renaissance-style dress her mother made for her, and turns her long hair in a single braid down her back. She is Rapunzel, of course, and enjoys the attention she receives that day, with one exception. Lorne Horowitz, a tall, skinny Fifth Grader who has recently transferred to Wakeside, approaches Leda during the parade. He smiles at her, reaches around her shoulder and pulls – as hard as he can – on her braid. He thinks it is a wig. Of course, the hair is firmly attached, and Leda falls to the ground, covering the white and blue of her dress with mud and grass stains. She cries for ten straight minutes, mostly from shock. Lorne is punished and sent home.

Age 10: Leda is in recess when a man missing the lower half of his left arm shuffles onto the playground, his jaw shiny with blood. Most of the kids run away from him, screaming, toward the school building. Leda and two other children, Jeremy Jenkins and Rosie Stanton, run to a tree nearby and climb it: Jeremy first, then Rosie. Leda is just beginning to climb, using her arms and legs to pull herself up, when the ghoul's gnarled hand, covered in bites, reaches into her hair, which hangs behind her as she tries to climb. Like a vise, his fingers close, the knucklebones sliding out of the flesh, tangling strands. She screams when she hits the ground and again, louder, when he begins to devour her, cramming mouthfuls of her hair-wrapped flesh into his mouth.

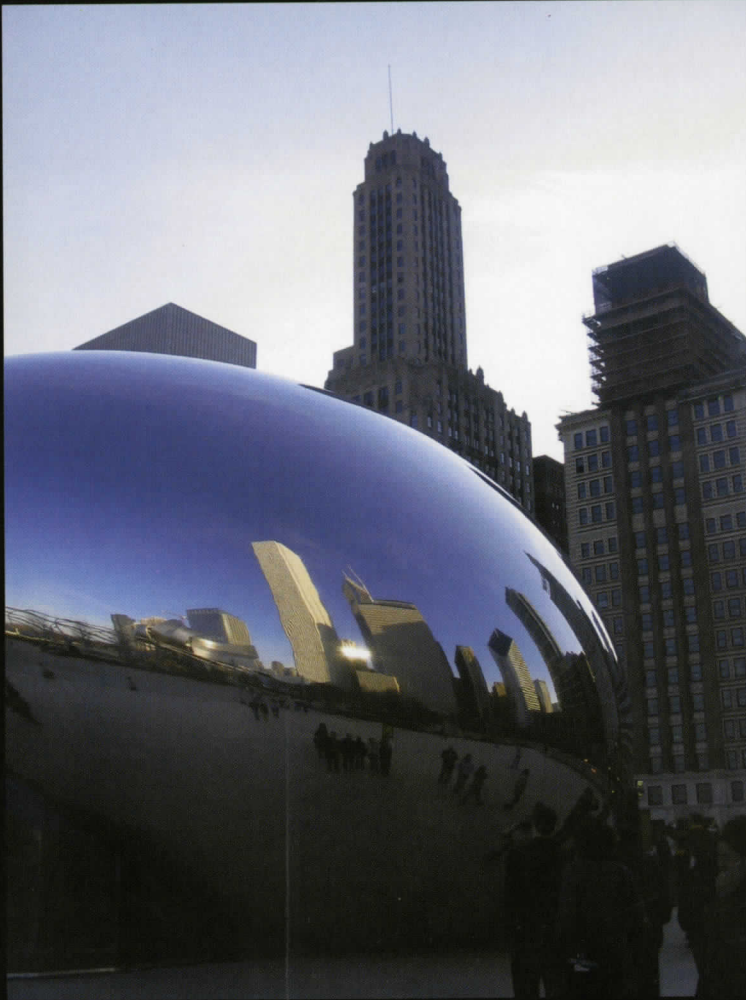
Ageless: Leda awakens on her back; white eyes turn up through and through and through the sky, filtered by strands of red and gold across her gaze. Above her, clinging to the branches of a tree, two children scream, endlessly. She stands, and a stream of blood and burst eyeball washes out of the cavity of her face, smacking onto the packed dirt beneath her feet. Her hair, which is red now, clings to her wet back and falls off of her face in angry snaps. Her arms reach to the branches above, although she has forgotten how to climb.

Untitled Sketch
Christina Chappars
Pencil Drawing



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Reflections
Lauren Baugh
Photography



Two Moonfruits for Charley
Sarah Hadley

Charley, dear Charley
If you were my girl
I'd fly to the moon
And bring back
two moonfruits.

(When covered in cinnamon
Pickled in brine
They are more beautiful
Than your face
[Only slightly.])

Scoop out the insides
Mash them up, serve them
On fine brittle china
With red and gold edges.
You'd love me forever.
I'd love you forever.
And forever we'd say
It was down to
two moonfruits.

But you are not here
And I'm only there
With my eyes
Live and televised
Watching you
Wanting you
To stop cooking.
Eat something.
I can just see your ribs.

(Not that ribs are not beautiful.
I've always loved them
Covered in red powder
Sizzling and hot.)

If you were my girl
If I were your girl
I'd fly to the moon

and bring back
two moonfruits
cook up
two moonfruits
serve up
two moonfruits

And we would delight in them
One spoon at a time.
You'd love me forever.
I'd love you forever.
Together forever
we always would be.

I can't offer money

(Moonfruits are expensive.)

I don't have insurance

(You can't live on that.)

But so long as I see you

(Each day, on this channel.)

My love is enormous

(So are my thighs.)

I ask you, consider
And savor my offer.
I've always been patient.
I'll wait for your call.
You've never had that
which compares with
two moonfruits.

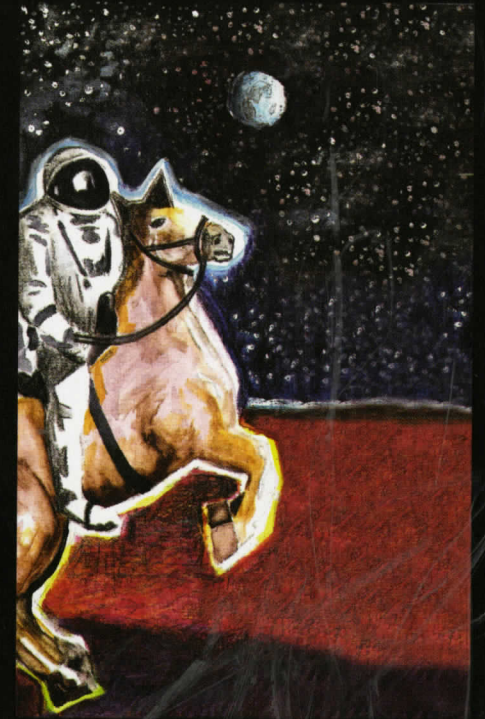
Not your caviar
Duckling
Pineapple
Or squid.

(They all are exotic
As you are exotic
With warm, hidden juices
Just under the skin.)

In closing, dear Charley,
Please don't
Throw my letter
Away like some peelings
I have just one hope.
If I gave you the gift
Of my heart and
two moonfruits

Perhaps you'd find me
Deep inside
Like the stone
Of some far-away fruit
From the far-away moon
Hidden away
Most exotic of all.

Cosmo Cowboy Series
Joel C. Smith
Drawing



23

Contributor Bios

Dawn Andreoni's contribution to *Collage* and her major in the recording industry at MTSU reflect a few of her intellectual pursuits.

Lauren Baugh is a child development major from Maryville, TN. She plans to pursue a career as an elementary school guidance counselor.

Ryan Bolton is a recording industry major. He hopes to run a concert venue, art gallery, and recording studio in the near future.

Cristina Brito is a painting major and wants to become an animator. She was born and raised in Tennessee.

Marie Brown is an English GTA from Murfreesboro, TN. Her work has been published in *Sidelines*, *The Muse*, and in *Collage*.

Bill Bynum is a graphic design major and illustration minor from Franklin County, TN. He loves to draw, but is still figuring out what he wants to do with his life.

Christina Lynn Chappars is an aerospace major. Her work has been on display at Memphis's *Arts in the Park* and the Midsouth Fair. She plans to be a flight dispatcher.

Chalit Chawalitangku is a photography student at MTSU. He plans to be a photographer after college.

Sean Conley is a junior electronic media production major. His work has been displayed at Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Art Museum, as well as the Center of the Arts.

Andrew Cox is a junior electronic media production major from Knoxville, TN.

Pam Davis is an English doctoral student now living in Murfreesboro, TN.

Renee Davis is a Spanish major. She intends to be a teacher after graduation.

Zac DeFrancesca is a senior mass communication major from Kingston Springs, TN. He plans on being a radio host after college.

Alex Grant is a writer, musician, farmer, and RIM production and technology major. He plans to continue being a writer, musician, farmer, and student after college.

Laura Grant is an English major from Johnson City, TN.

Michael Guggisberg is a sophomore journalism major. He aspires to work in every field of media he can find after college.

Sarah Hadley is the pen name of Sarah Crotzer, a senior at MTSU. Under her real name, she writes much more serious things.

Amanda Johnson is a senior philosophy and English major from Kentucky. She is graduating in May and is currently a candidate for the JET program.

Justin Keoninh is a senior media design major. He believes Truman Capote's quote, "Good taste is the death of art."

Ashley Krulikowski is a graphic design major. After college, she plans to be a graphic artist.

Leah McGraw is a senior psychology major from Little Rock, AR. She plans to work as a drug and alcohol therapist after graduate school.

Brian Michels is double majoring in psychology and Spanish.

Heather Moulder is a graphic design major from Woodbury, TN. Her works have been featured at the Arts Center of Cannon County and in MTSU's Todd Gallery.

Sarah Neal is a senior English major and women's studies minor. She plans on attending graduate school in creative writing, publishing, and teaching.

Bettina Nicholson is thrilled to be graduating this year with a BS in media design and minors in art and writing.

Victoria Ogle is a liberal arts major from Knoxville, TN. She plans on pursuing a career with a publishing house after college.

Ashley Orman is an English major with a writing minor. She hopes to become an English professor one day.

Anna Parker is a Spanish major with an English minor. After graduating, she plans to learn many languages and travel the world.

Barbara Plummer-Smith is a graphic design major from Murfreesboro, TN.

Valerie Rosenblatt is a senior mass communication major from Memphis, TN.

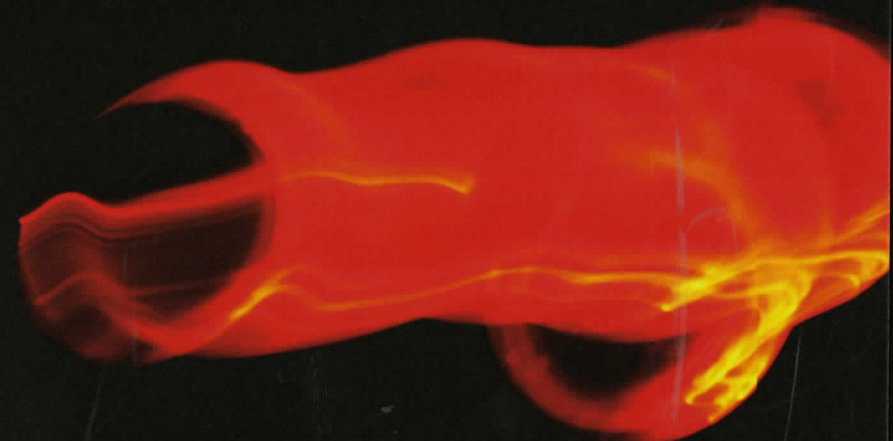
Aaron Shapiro is a graduate student in literature. His work has appeared in *The Mangrove Review* and *Speak These Words: A Guerilla Poets Anthology*.

Joel Smith is an aspiring artist who aims to prove that time does not exist.

Sarah Sullivan is a painting major from Connecticut. She plans to pursue a master's degree after leaving MTSU.

Stephen Trageser is a senior recording industry major. Again.

Stephanie Weaver is a sophomore and wants to stay in school the rest of her life.



To submit to *Collage*:

Collage is now accepting submissions all year. Please check the submission guidelines for details. Each submission must be accompanied by a completed submission form, which is available at www.mtsu.edu/~collage. On this website you will find the deadlines for each publication, as well as all the latest *Collage* information. Submissions may be turned in at the *Collage* office, Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors Building, Rm. 224 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or by mail. Submissions will not be accepted over the world wide web, and you must be an MTSU student to submit.

Collage
Middle Tennessee State University
MTSU Box 267
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
615.898.5789

Collage Staff Bios

Talia Cunetto, editor in chief, is majoring in journalism and theatre. She plans to move to New York City after graduation. Also, she likes the name Ishkabible.

Elizebeth Tucker, assistant editor, is majoring in international relations and minoring in French and communication studies.

Chris Kennedy, lead designer, is seeing his plans of world conquest come to fruition. He will ultimately fail when an attempt to invade Russia and moving through the Alps goes awry. Also, he hates the name Ishkabible (really, just typing it).

Ashley Sherwood, assistant designer, is working on a degree in media design with minors in art and marketing. She plans to design magazine layouts in 2008.

Marcus Snyder, online editor, is working toward a degree in mass communication with minors in English and art.

Jacob Sharbel, literature arts editor, is an English major. He plans to travel, get his writing published, and attend graduate school, after which, he might become a teacher.

Graham Wells, assistant literature arts editor, is majoring in accounting. This is his second semester on staff with *Collage*, a privilege that he greatly appreciates. And he quacks.

Audrey Weddington, visual arts editor, is majoring in advertising and minoring in Spanish and marketing. After graduation, she plans to go wherever the wind blows her.

Hutch Crowley, visual editorial review staff, is currently living in the Nashville area to fulfill his dream: getting his own day time talk show on CMT.

Kirstin Johnson, assistant visual arts editor, is a media design and graphics major preparing to graduate in May 2007.

Jolene Barto, video communication co-manager, is majoring in electronic media communications. She often ponders the annual wood consumption of "A. Woodchuck."

Amy Powers, video communications co-manager, is an electronic media production major with a minor in psychology. She hopes to create movies, TV shows and music videos.

Christina Runkel, print communications manager, is majoring in English and history and hopes to work at a museum. She plans to attend graduate school and write novels.

Courtney Ferraro, literature editorial review staff, is majoring in journalism and hopes to one day be involved in writing for a Chicago newspaper.

Mandi Wochner, literature editorial review staff, is a public relations major focused on the recording industry.

April Dill, visual editorial review staff, transferred to MTSU after two years at Jackson State Community College. She is currently working toward a degree in painting.

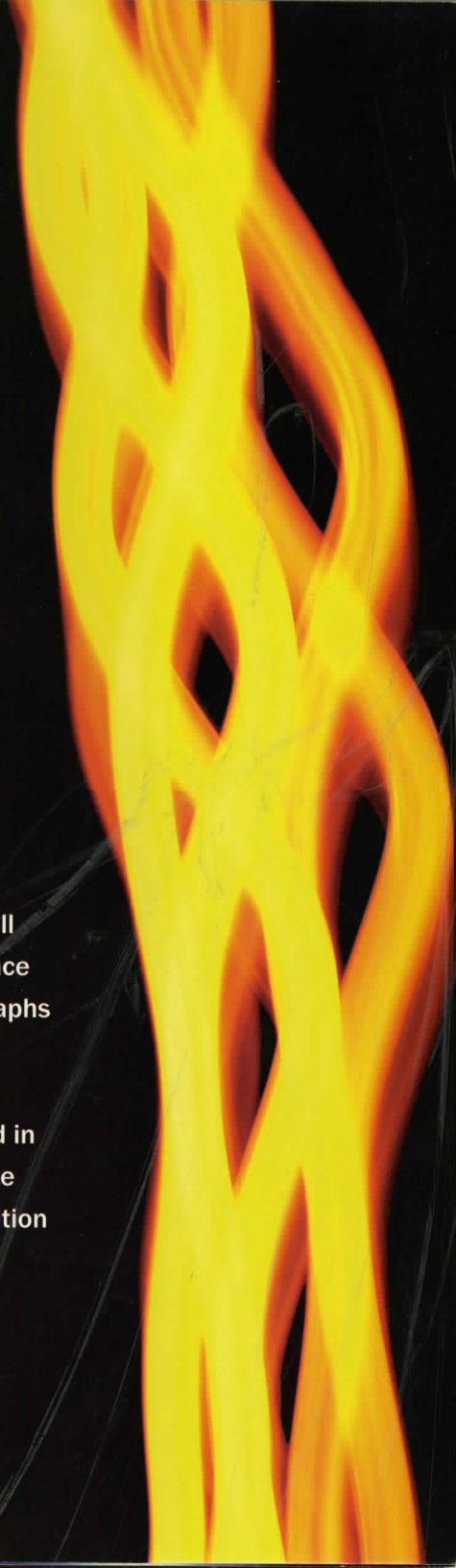
Hannah Green, visual editorial review staff, is an art major. After failed attempts to have work published in *Collage*, she decided to join the ranks.

Jenny Stracener, visual review staff, is a communication disorders major. She enjoys learning how to help people and has a massive love for photography.

Sarah Van Wicklin, visual review staff, is a psychology major from Brentwood, TN.



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