

Northern Lights



2013



Northern Lights

Art and Literary Magazine

North Hunterdon High School
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Notes from the Editors

What if all dogs were humans, and all humans were dogs? A question I ask every day. I would have to say that my hair has become longer during the process of editing this magazine. I haven't shaved in two weeks now (that's more of me being lazy though). There are very few things that I enjoy more than reminding Kayla and Jack about the *Northern Lights* meeting, and I am grateful that Theresa always was the first one to be there. Towards the end, when the group whittled down to a quartet (Jack, Kayla, Thersea and I), we all stared down a screen looking for a perfect font size, and that perfect space between the lines; 1.25 pt or 1 pt? Well after the minutiae we were finally able to compile something into a mess that we like to call *Northern Lights*. It's definitely an impression piece; I can still see the light changing as I close the door on this process. Finishing this is like gutting the cutest fish in a brook.

—Andrew Rubner

Northern Lights is the last thing I would have expected to be doing my senior year. Amidst fast-approaching college deadlines, a job, and countless other things to do, I still let Andrew drag me to Thursday meetings. Thursdays at *Northern Lights* soon developed into ritual Coffee Thursdays, and *Northern Lights* changed from a club I sometimes went to into a literary magazine that I was working on. Through most of it, I maintained that I hated poetry and knew nothing about it. I still kind of do—but now at least I know what good poetry looks like, and I can appreciate North's talent.

Thank you to the other editors, for your dedication and for helping me discover the true meaning of hip. More importantly, thank you to Mrs. Fetherolf for pretty much everything—support, dedication, insight—and everything that makes a great advisor.

I hope that the passion of the 2013 *Northern Lights* staff is visible to every reader; enjoy the work of North Hunterdon's endlessly talented students.

—Kayla Panek

When my sister would bring *Northern Lights* issues home from school, I would read the poems, skip the long ones (I was 12), and look at the pictures. I never would have guessed what went into the process, first voting on submissions, choosing a layout, laying out, choosing a cover, choosing a back, etc... But now I know what it's like, and now I love it. I've never been involved in or enjoyed being involved in extracurricular activities until *Northern Lights*.

—James Timothy Coleman

Notes from the Editors

I remember the first time I had considered joining literary magazine, it was because I had made my freshman English teacher laugh. It was a Friday sometime in December, which meant the weekly vocab test. To liven mine up, I decided to draw a medieval knight riding a horse, while saying, “I protect this test from bad grades”. For some odd reason, she thought my doodle was the most hysterical thing she’d ever seen, and encouraged me to take my oh-so-creative self to Northern Lights because they needed someone of my prestigious talent. Or something like that. While the drawing I used wasn’t original (I had seen it online), her praise combined with my pride found me in room 016 that Thursday, eating lollipops and chowing down on poetry. And I’ll admit; I was having a blast.

For us quasi-normal people, poetry is a kind of release from reality. It’s a living, breathing form of expression, and how it moves depends on the reader. At Northern Lights, I learned how to see those expressions, and have them published for the world to see. Well, the world in terms of the dozen or so people who know where to find the Northern Lights online.

Anyway, enjoy the magazine!

—Theresa Vitovitch

Note from the Advisor

To answer Andrew’s question: if all humans were dogs, I would have the best pack in the school. My editors are creative, hard-working pups that like to stick their heads out of moving cars and taste the wind, smell life on the move. They howl at the moon, bathe in its mysterious light. They are loyal, trotting in to lap up poetry and stories every week, chasing down the best pieces of art to include in the magazine. What they have created is not a mess, but a magical hodgepodge of work by talented North Hunterdon artists—artists that aren’t afraid to express all the wildness and beauty inside them. Thank you to all of the students who live, as Neruda says, “as if you were on fire from within”—And thank you to the editors of *Northern Lights*, my pack, who knows that truth is not always beautiful, yet still searches for beauty that is true.

—Suanne Fetherolf

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So I See Now

by Andrew Wong

So I see now,
As mirror shows context,

The impatience of a restless mind,
Realizing what may have been achieved,

An impossible fantasy only broached by film,
A projection, not shadow, of view and perspective,

My back to the ahead but his to oblivion,
Finding where my own body carried me,

I want to stare at the seed,
Reflect at success,

Travel by regress,
Eat the ego,

Purge the worry,
Know

Heads by Jessica Horn



Anything But

by Emily Torres

Stuck in a sweet haze of yesterday,
Wishing it went different
Or dreaming it was simpler
Like it was, ten years ago

But ten years ago,
Tomorrow is all we dreamed of
Said we'd make it different
It can only get better, right?

Morning comes and we desire bedtime
But when the sun sets, we cling to the light
Stuck to the days
Too short to start anything

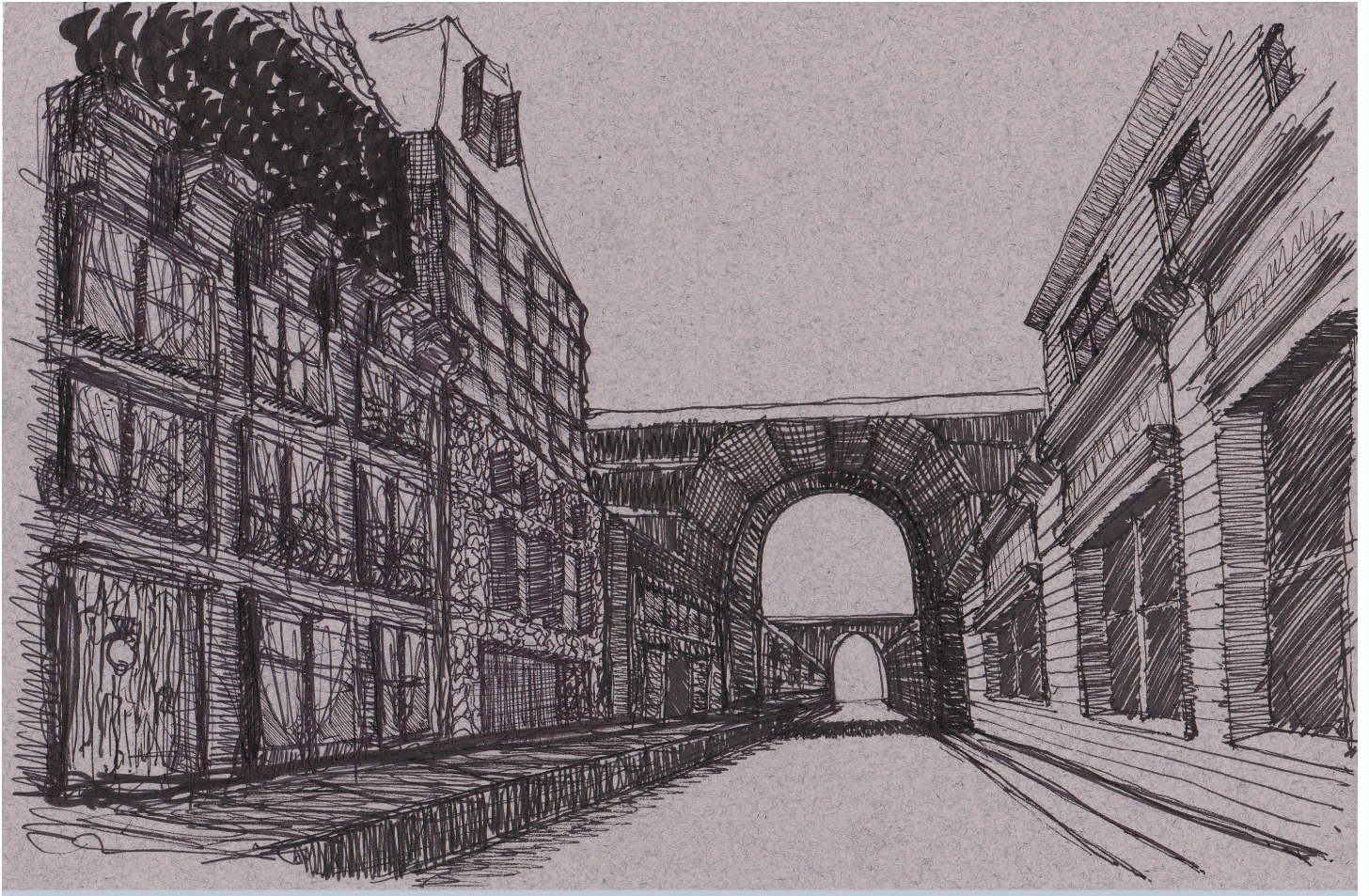
But the minute we're bored
The days are too long
Not enough darkness
Let's hunt down the sun

We never have anything
Anything right that is
Not enough or just way too much
Regardless, we aren't content

Crying for how it used to be
Or screaming for tomorrow,
Sweating for more time
And watching the clock slug on

We have anything but what we need,
When we need it
Whether we are dwelling in the past
Or awaiting a bright brand-new beginning

We continue on wasting right now
This moment rolls by like tumble weed
Pointless and ugly
Anything's better than now



City Streets

by Andrew Wong

Tuesday Night

by Raphaele Gamanho

He's going to fall. Why aren't you watching him? You're too busy watching me. His little legs wobble as he marches to the top of the slide. He can't even reach the bar. And his mitten is falling off. Go run to him. You finally take your beady eyes off of my watermelon of a stomach. I know what you're thinking. And what you should be thinking. Go run and catch him. We make eye contact. I'm too tired and cold to let you know how much it bothers me. That you've been staring. You're a bit old for him to be your son. The grandmother, perhaps. The rigidity of the bench beneath me makes my back ache a little bit more.

Like a tiny angel, the little boy flies down the slide and hits the ground with a dim thud. He lets out a soft whimper. He isn't hurt. He's just dazed. You finally snap and run to him. There's really no need to yell. He isn't hurt. He's just dazed.

I'm tired and cold. I can't zip up my jacket anymore. I rest my hands on my stomach. My stomach is warm. My hair is getting long. It'll hurt when the baby tugs at it.

What will I call it? If it is a girl, I will call her Madeleine after my grandmother. She was lovely. Or at least, I think she was. If it isn't a girl, I will call him something else. But I hope it's a girl. For now, I will call him my son. God knows, no one else could.

The sky is red now. It must be six o'clock or somewhere around six. The beady-eyed woman brusquely grabs her grandson by the wrist and drags him away from the see-saw. She mutters something but I don't hear it. She avoids glancing at me as she passes the bench to fetch the stroller. They leave. The little boy scurries a few feet after the woman toward the street. She yanks him back and he starts to cry. I can't look at him any longer.

In the Moonlight of the Fifth

by Andrew Wong

Shadows of black and hills of grey,
Like coin reflecting,
Who I am and what we are,

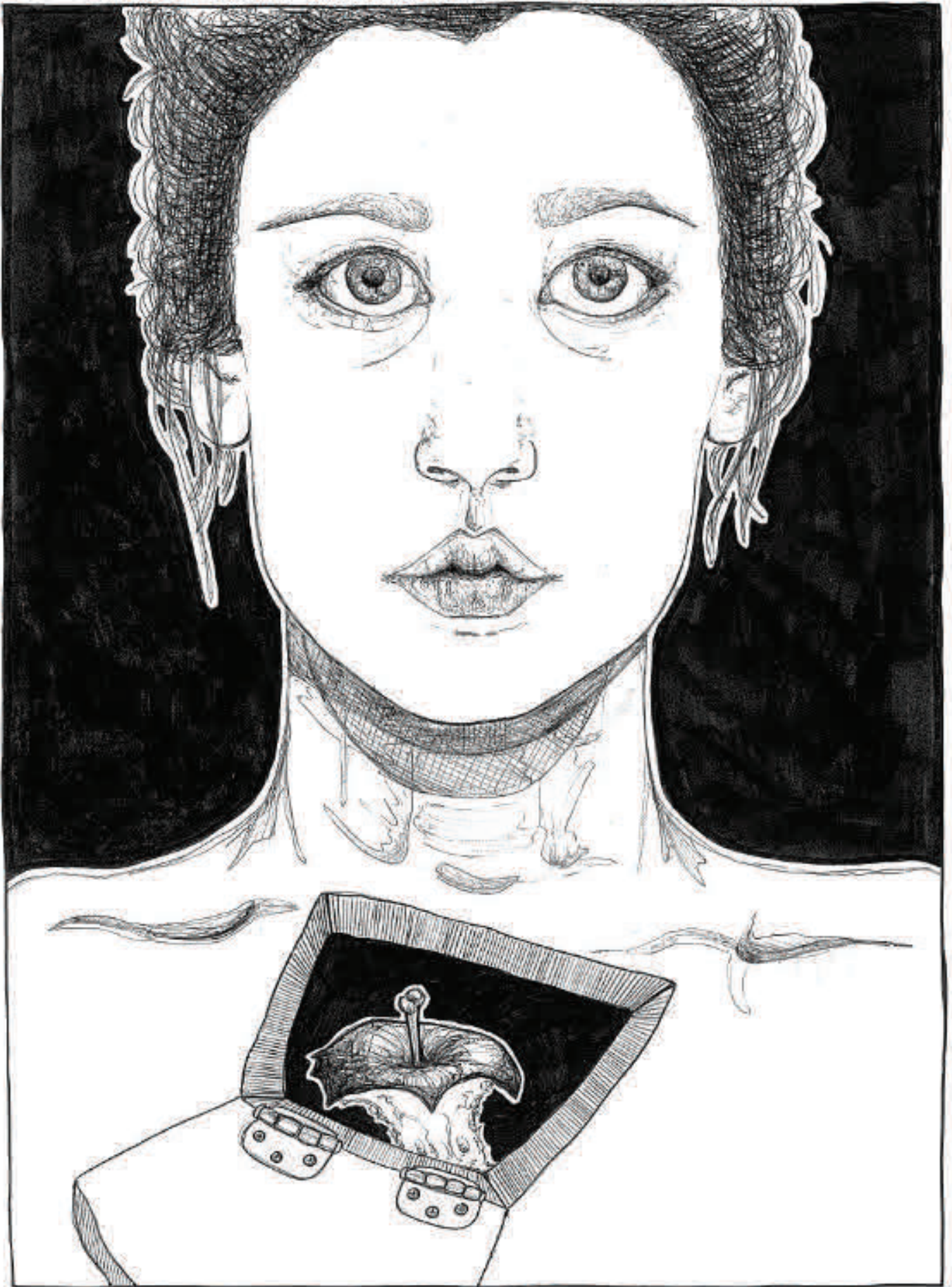
In rain and cold,
A union between soul and sound,
Together in the fifth season,

An expansive feeling,
Just a mind in soft flight,
Through the fluids of want

Perched, played,
And then, like the waves of the earth,
A pause squeezed from my chest,

An inhale like bottomless caves,
And a note, like rain, like the traffic of man,
Flows from my lips,

Where passions,
And gut are finally sung,
In the song of the fifth season



Self Portrait by Raphaele Gamanho



Angst by Liz Witte

Excerpt from “Sway”

by Emily Torres

And scale the sticky bark
Screaming with laughter
Daddy was right by side
Getting higher with me
I stared up at him
As his spider-man like sense pulled him
Further and further up than me
But his grin made me giggle
He was a bird
In his element
Up in the tree tops
But it swayed side to side
My Daddy swayed too far

Pressure

by Lindsay DeMarco

Walls closing me in,
I am Atlas, shouldering
Earth’s crushing burden.

Watermelon Dress

by Kelly Fleming

Watermelon dress,
Wrinkled in July sunlight.
Smiles wide as the baby blue sky.

Duck-duck-geese and cops and
robbers,
Even the grass delighted to know
such
Young and cheerful kids.

Picnic tables,
Hard to reach
Bouncy chocolate curls peering
Over the scarlet lunch pail.

Wonder bread
And peanut-buttered fingers

The feast of a princess.
And for dessert, a treat from
mommy-
Ice cream cone.

Rainbow sprinkles,
Colorful as the world of a toddler.
Every lick
Wearing away at their vivid tints,
Every taste
And a little less of the vibrant
jimmies remained-
Until, one day,
There was nothing but
Plain vanilla.



#ultrahip by Kayla Panek



Glasses by Olivia Greendyk

For His Wedding One Night

by Andrew Wong

When the sun was at seventeen and the world began to turn,
We would explore the hills as though they were new,
And they were,
We would stare to the field like critics,
Never daring to be fully submerged,
Until seventeen, when we had to,
Throw ourselves to the grain,
Throw ourselves to the grain,
And soon the subtle sun receded.

Then a common call would ring through acres,
And we would reel ourselves in through oceans of emerald,
Exploring as though it were new.

And now I remember the quiet of our runs,
What subtle things give,
When one reaches the effervescence of effect,
And is stuck to times until times like these,
A toast to young union.

Haikus

By Emily Torres

Our souls in rhythm
Your beat lingers in my bed
Drifting to your thought



Walking barefoot on ice
Boil my blood, run it through my veins
Those eyes, like aloe on my burns



Burn the green trees down
Have fun, trample their ashes
Build some tall buildings

The Beach at Night

by Brianna Watkins

The mystifying moon's
Reflection shines bright
On the ocean surface.
I stare at the stars, as I stand
On the shore. They shine
So bright like a million
Holes in God's floor. Some flying
Across the sky.
The night is black and bright.
I can hear the chirp of crickets
In the brush behind me.
The stars look just out of reach, as I extend my arm to touch
One. I'm left to wonder
Which of my wishes
Will be granted.



Planted

by Lindsay DeMarco

A man sits apart
From the party beside him.
Children sit at their mothers' feet.
A knitting circle borders the trees.

A pink path
Embarrassed from attention.
Black shadows in the trees
Surrounded by green
And yellow
And more black.
The sun peaks through,
Illuminating blue bonnets
And brown shoes.
The face of the blue sky
Unhindered,
With only the white blush of happiness
Upon its cheeks.
A building sits,
Promising,
At the edge of the clearing.
The children run and jump,
Hop and skip.
Knowing no poverty,
No reality,
Only joy.
The ground is littered
With stopped sun,
Souls of the moving
And stationary
Mimicked on the floor.
Voices,
Happy voices,

Encircle the man.
The man who sits alone,
Planted,
Rooted to his ways.
A top hat resting on his head,
A jacket warming his arms.

A bird sings a soft lullaby.
Heard as a whisper
Above the melody of voices.
Alone as the man
In its tune and pitch.
Joyful as the children
In its sound.
Mysterious as the trees
That surround the path.
The pink path.
Upon which,
A man sits apart
From the party beside him.





Wonderland by Emily Parker

My Human Companion, Zero to Seventeen

By Raphaelle Gamanho

We were born on the same day,

Brand-new and untouched, like snow.

Not knowing what it was, you chewed off my red plastic nose.
The first time you walked was toward me.

You'd bite me and kick me and embrace me.

Catapulting me down the metal slide, I'd hear your rosy giggles.

At night, you'd hold me close and gently let go as your eyelids descended. Then, you buried me in your blue knapsack and brought me to school.

Then, you didn't even bring me at all.

But I was always there when you came home, in the same place you left me. You still held me close at night, but you vanished during the day.

One day, I watched you wake up, put your makeup on, and leave. Now I sit on your bed, watch the shadows traverse the room,

Think about when you tore off my arm and cradled me, weeping.

Your grandmother mended it with a needle and thick, white thread.

I still know the places you'd bite me and kick me and embrace me.

One Friday, late at night, a boy with muddy feet trudged into the room with you. You hid me in your closet among dirty clothes and ancient artifacts.

When he left, you were sobbing.

You retrieved me from my prison and took me in your arms once more.

How sad and tired have you gotten.

How forgetful and rotten and foolish and vicious. No longer brand-new,
Or untouched,

Like snow.

Excerpt from “Not Enough”

by Emily Torres

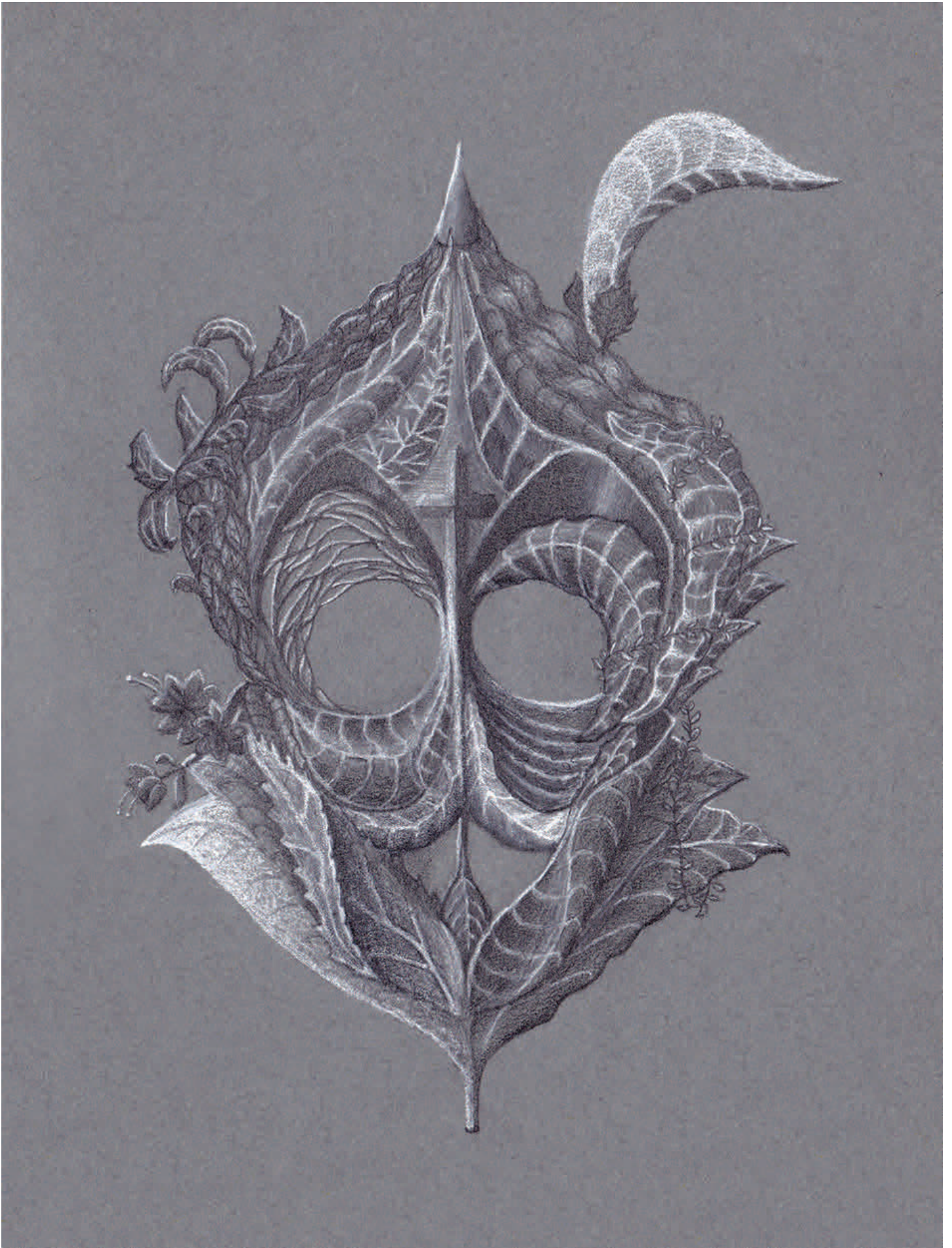
When the pain is great enough,
We will let anyone be doctor
Try to put in stiches with an unsteady hand
Cut the string with strong yellowed teeth

Or plug up holes
Tape on gauze
So our self does not seep out

We can't survive without the extra pressure
Pushing against the flow
From a stranger wearing a familiar cologne

The wholesome smile and docile tone
Eases me as you take my trust
Out from underneath my feet
But your icy touch
Satisfies me that you're a professional

Without a degree or years of training
You cut me open
Read my organs and test my blood
And I give you help
Lie still for you
You know what you're doing



Mask by Andrew Wong

Noel

by Raphaele Gamanho

It came on a Thursday

And I

Dragging my feet across cold tiles
Glancing at red eyes above the sink

A frightened bird in a cage
Is a conscious decision

It came on a Thursday

Through an opened window
Up frozen wood and down white walls

And I

With my shaking fingers
Closed it

And I

With my shaking knees
Unlocked the bathroom door and went downstairs
And sat by the green hooded stranger
In the dark
On a Friday

Fireworks and Potato Chips

by Alanna McBride

Sitting on the front of the boat
Daring to dangle
Our feet over the edge.
Gripping our shoes
So they wouldn't slide
Right off into the water.
Jeans rolled up past our knees
Sleeves pushed up past
Our shoulders, a sigh against
The sultry night,
Velvet pressing into us.
We lean against the cool
Metal of the boat,
Passing a bag of potato chips

Between us, balancing
Coke cans against
The slant of the boat,
The gentle rise and
Fall of the waves,
Like a tightrope walker
Against the wobble of each step.
Two sisters waiting for the sun
To fall past the edge of the earth,
And the fireworks
To explode across the stars,
Stretching like spiders against the night.



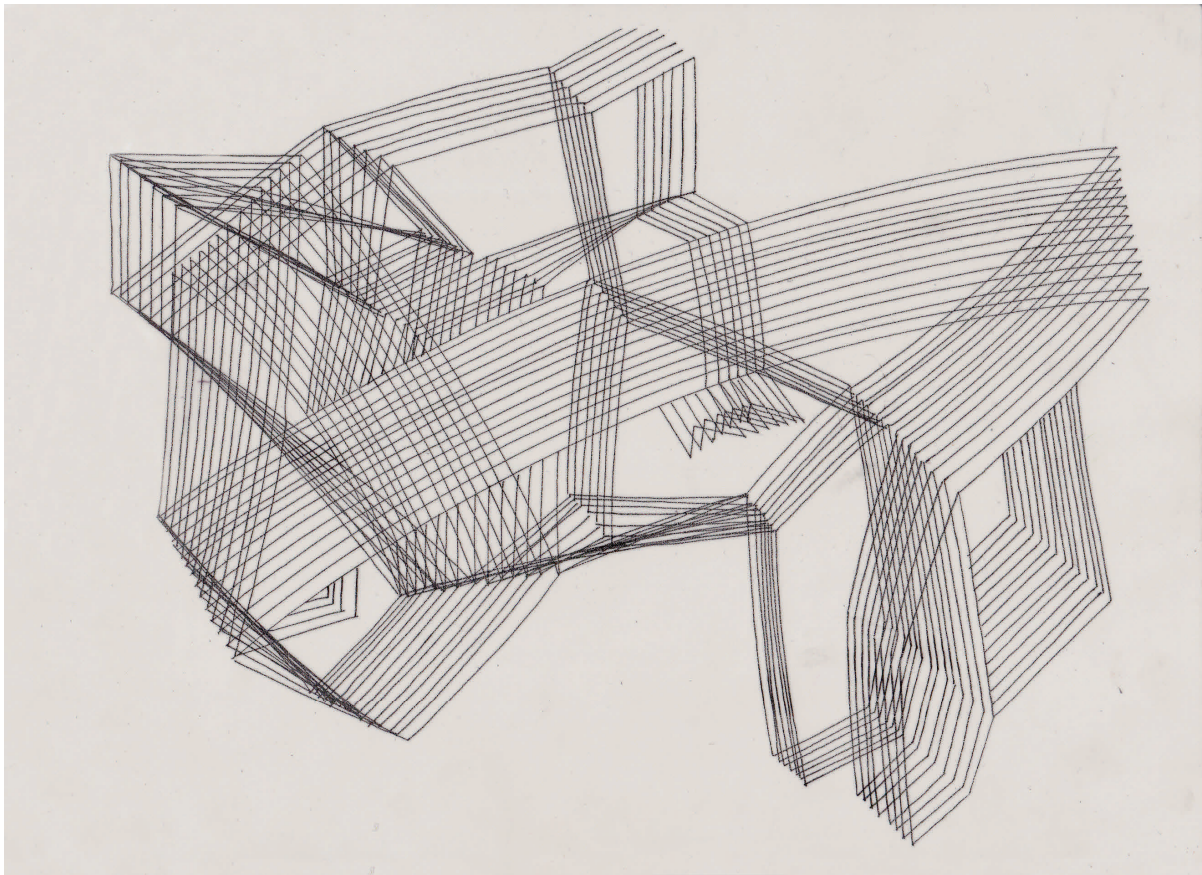
Deer by Hannah Bittenmaster

Flowered Rags

by Alanna McBride

Imagine a soul
a kitchen.
One chair at the table,
its cushion
fallen off and forgotten,
its edges worn and cracked.
The faucet rusted
no longer flowing
a vein run dry.
The wallpaper is peeling,
flowered,
blossoms turning to rags
Rags to wash the window
its dirty corners.
The microwave door is open
the timer is still beeping
the soup inside long since
gone cold.





Agoraphobia

By Lisa Infosino

People don't visit much, anymore.
I hate to throw things away-
Cracked teacups, sagging sofas, letters I
read but never answered.
How many lost things are there in the
world?

I hate to throw things away.
I wasn't always alone like this.
How many lost things are there in the
world?
Everyone grew up while I wasn't looking.

I wasn't always alone like this.
Nobody comes by anymore.
Everyone grew up while I wasn't looking.
Why did I never change?

Nobody comes by anymore.
Time slows to a stop in these cramped
rooms.
Why did I never change?
I wonder if he still remembers me.

Time slows to a stop in these cramped
rooms.
I always feel so cold.
I wonder if he still remembers me.
It's easier to stay inside.

I always feel so cold.
(Cracked teacups, sagging sofas, letters I
read but never answered...)
It's easier to stay inside.
People don't visit much, anymore.

Childlike Eyes

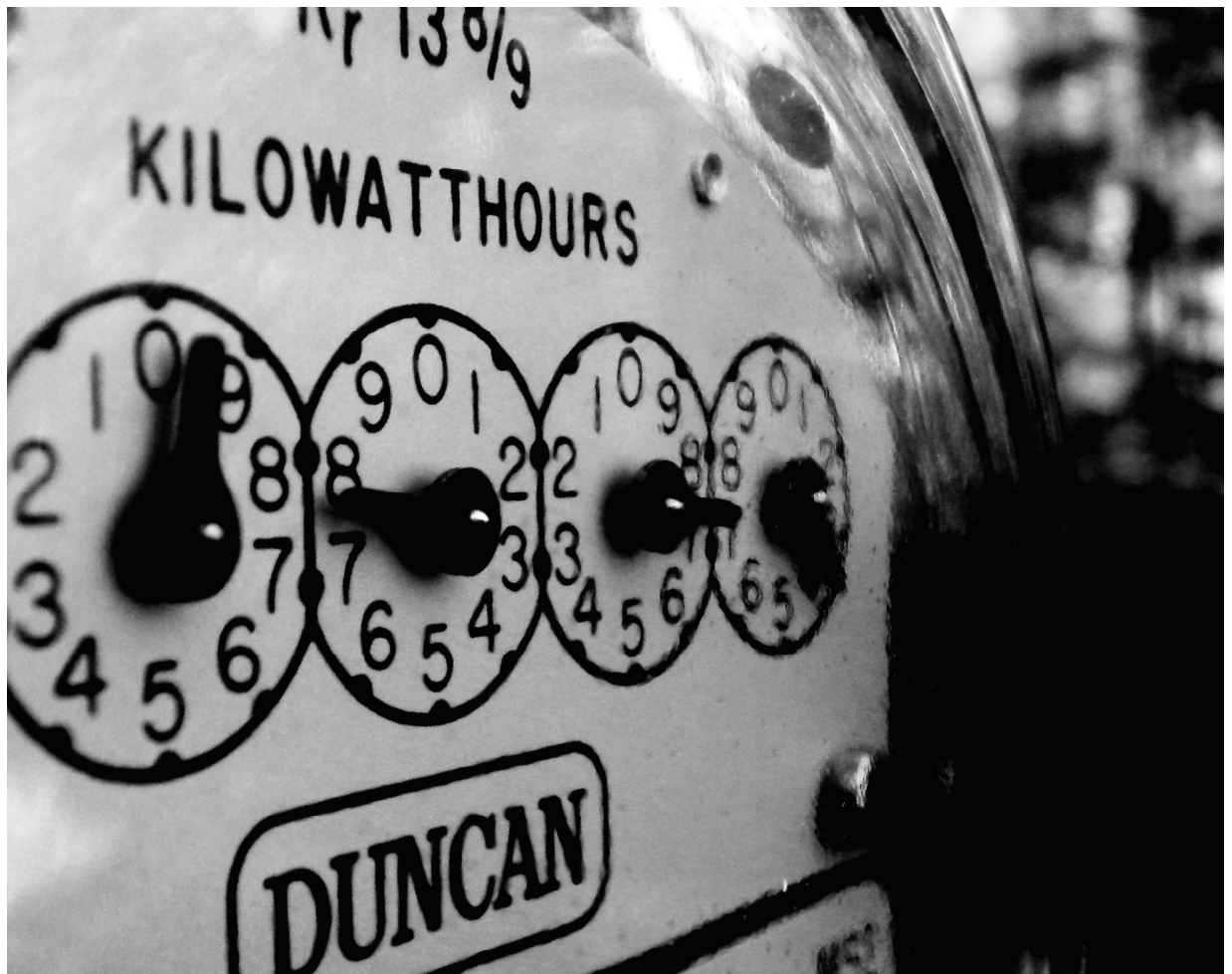
by Lindsey Holt

As a child, the world was simple
War made no sense
Child eyes do not see
Boundaries, borders, and lines

Now that I have grown some
I see these divisions
But the child in me
Still cannot understand them

I very much believe that when I am old
The divisions will remain
And though I may understand more clearly
My childlike eyes will not accept them

Kilowatthours by Nikki Kowalchuck



Daytime

By Laura Mocker

The warm air caresses skin as a breeze tickles the face
The sound of children laughing in the distance
Birds chirping
The scenery fosters false security
As well as a discomfort in one's self
A wall is put up
The people are safe
They mock what society sees as normal;
Only showing their true colors as the comfort of darkness expands
on the ominously blue sky
The sunshine uncovers the insecurities, and the mistakes
It mocks people with its sense of hope
As mother nature looks on smirking at what people see as beautiful

Distance

by Catie Lenahan

His mother would sing
His father would work
His mind ran off in a million different directions
The moment a little boy is concerned
With which is a jay and which is a sparrow
He can no longer see the birds
Or hear them sing
The words flooding from his mother's mouth
Don't quite sound the same
His father is never near
Distant from the old rocking horse
He wore out
Leaving faded wooden edges

The Things That Make Us Human

by Alanna McBride

One step closer
to the edge of the world
with each passing rain
each Christmas candy cane

A doll beheaded
its skin discolored and legs ripped off
why do the things we love most
crumble the most quickly

Little boys and little girls
all done with this day's chores
they'll tell you summer is sweeter
than any flavored Tootsie Pop

Transformed
a fly caught on a rubber flip-flop
cast up into heaven
for a taste of an apple

I wonder sometimes
had Orpheus never looked back
if there would be a happily ever after
or if love would find another way to keep the two
apart.



A Morning at North Hunterdon

by Kelly Fleming

Alone; skin tight denim pressed against
The checkered hall
Teeming with hormones and brand-
embossed
Jackets.

That Voice inside my head,
That cricket chirping relentlessly
It drowns the noises of
Luxury footwear
Glazed eyes, and glossed lips
That purse at
Frivolous
Morning conversation.

Aside from an ever-moving herd
Of shuffling leather heels
My mouth lets out
An unamused
Teenage sigh.

That Voice inside my head again,
It boldly critiques the shallowness of
Petty gossip
And lacquered nails
That grab their
Frivolous
Things. I think-

A name means nothing here
The label tells all that
Anybody could think worthy of
Discovering about my miserable
Undecorated body
That is
Three sizes too big
To be important.

Passing those who have been
Blessed by puberty
And by every second they have spent
On these poor, abused
Checkered hallways
But they will, too, find out
That once platinum blonde
Fades back
Into the colors assigned by
God himself,
That their frivolous blessings are numbered
and running out,
Tossed like a dated
Tote bag, onto a rack to be
Picked up by naïve
Self-seeking freshmen.
One of many fads
Forgotten by everyone but these
All-knowing brick walls
Who have seen everything- they laugh

And that Voice inside my head again
It lifts me off the floor, saying,
“Rest assured
That all of this will
One day be but a
Frivolous
Image of the past” – I walk
As if my tassel
Is pulling me through
These four years and countless
Failed attempts to be more
Than just an
Awkward slump
Nestled against a locker- I rise

And wish that those who lean against their
stones
And pop their knees and nod their chins
Would only nod in understanding that they, too,
are just
A fad,
A four-year fling
Regardless of how many touchdowns scored,
How many weekends spent
Scoffing shamelessly
They will be crushed
By a reality much colder,
Much rougher

Than the brick walls that
Laugh at them,
As they refuse to listen
And believe instead
With every vapid wish
That no one would dare
Laugh at them,
Nor criticize their seemingly unbreakable
Yet ignorant and cliché
Picturesque stature-but
That Voice inside my head-
It knows
Far too much than a
Girl
Like me
Should.





Dreams By Night, Horror By Day

by Xaviere Schembre

Married at 18 I was, to a stranger of my heart.
My world was one of a rotten shack, and yours that of a filthy labor.
At night I dreamed of a better life with a partner I truly cared for.

While I was still a young woman, I brought a treasure to this world,
only then did I love my partner, he was like a loving friend to me.
I wanted him with me in the sunlight instead of underneath it, crawling through danger.

But years later, with three treasures and another one on the way, I watched in horror.
As I saw him, that is after black dust and Earth's mass had stifled his breath.
His fellow workers brought his remains to my door,
and I regret, ever having taken my one dream come true for granted.
My world has become a closed door,
knowing what's on the other side but too afraid to face it.

My life has sunk lower than the very tomb beneath my feet which took you.
Like bright lights in my head, memories cloud reality.
Our wedding, the first kiss, a white dream crushed by death.
Sleep in the darkness brings happiness through my dreams,
but daylight brings the dark horror back to me.
The laughter of our children weighs upon my heart and tears at my core.
What to do, what to do? Shall I send our son to work, or begin again?
If only you were here, my love, instead of buried with your labor.

Forks Clank

By Lindsay DeMarco

She is in the kitchen,
Banging away,
Creating a delicious melody.
I sit, the two-step step-ladder under me,
Nestled between father and sister,
An Italian sandwich.
The white lace of the table cloth
Is protected by a clear, plastic sheet,
Like a bulletproof vest,
Stopping our rounds of ricotta
And our projecting penne.
The heavenly aroma of our soon-to-be dinner
Wafts throughout the room,
Carried on the breeze
From an open window.
The promise of the incoming course lightens
my mood.
I lean to my dad,
How much longer?

A cheer erupts
As the first peek of a pot emerges.
Forks clank, wine chugs.
Conversations are leaves in the wind
Scattered, dancing, jumping.
We do as she asks,
We eat.

Our bodies are stuffed:
Stomachs filled with food,
Heads filled with gossip,
Knowledge of the day and days past.
The taste of sauce
Lingers on our lips
Sloth-like.
Slowly moving away,
Gradually becoming a dream.

And then it's gone.





Red Lips and Berries by Lorra Barile

Lipstick

by Kelly Fleming

Eight lingering hours after the dusk engulfed
her world,
And finally, she pays some attention to me.

Stuck; a cage of thick and unbreakable plastic,
That guards my vivid complexion
Of carefully constructed crimson.

A task for me; which I alone am capable of.
Miracles to work on a self-conscious girl
In need of the reassurance
That my moisturizing glisten provides.

A small part of the wider, brighter mask.
A bold, thin layer of relief;
For no one will see her true colors, not today-
Not behind my glimmering shade.

She spreads me on,
The swift and careful jerking
Of weary morning fingers
That bend to mold a masterpiece.

And not once will it cross her mind,
Not for a fraction of a six o'clock second,
That this mask will soon fade;
Just as the one of the dawn before,
And every one prior.

And still, I wear away.
One glob at a time,
And soon, I will be withered down
Like a relentless ocean
That beats against the fragile pile of sand

That, like me,
was once was a mountain.

A ninety-nine cent bargain,
But to her, worth so much more.
Though I have face value-
To me, I am but a miserable, replaceable
Stub.
A glimmering package
That once was.

A Bunch of Haikus

by Theresa Vitovitch

Confusion

I'm lost in myself.
The world turns uncaring; its
contempt crushes me.

The Question

Forgotten flowers
wither, drowning in dry air,
hope dying with them.

Doodles

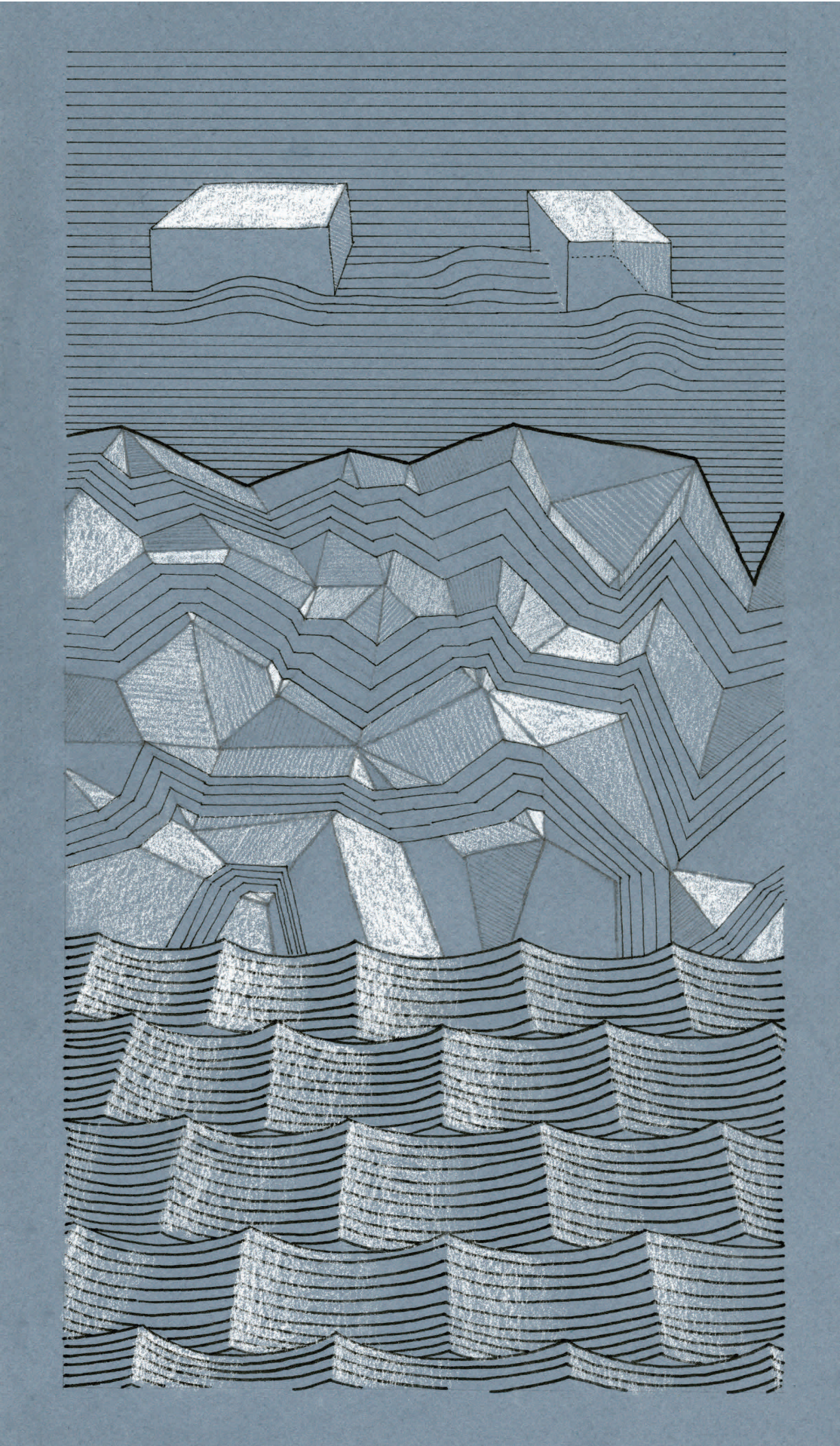
Graphite flowers bloom,
Blue lined rows divide them.
My trig notes look so pretty.

Child's Play

Crossed-out colors,
My childhood awakens.
A princess now green.

Math

Graphite cracks appear,
Scrawled on a paper window.
Frustration noted.





Pragmatist

by Jack Coleman

Peeling away my
uncertainty, but it was nothing more
Than a structure, built
On
On top of me.
Peeling back my skin
Nothing seeps but
Uncertainty,
Nothing more than
Fractures
On the sides of me,
On the pragmatic
Side.

In the search of conclusions,
Wading is necessary to tap
What is unknown,
And to leave what is known
To the gloved hands of contemplation

We'll take strides
To weed through our trifles
To keep the grass clipped
To keep what is crucial
To patch pragmatism
And the cracks that will ensue.



Moon Cycle

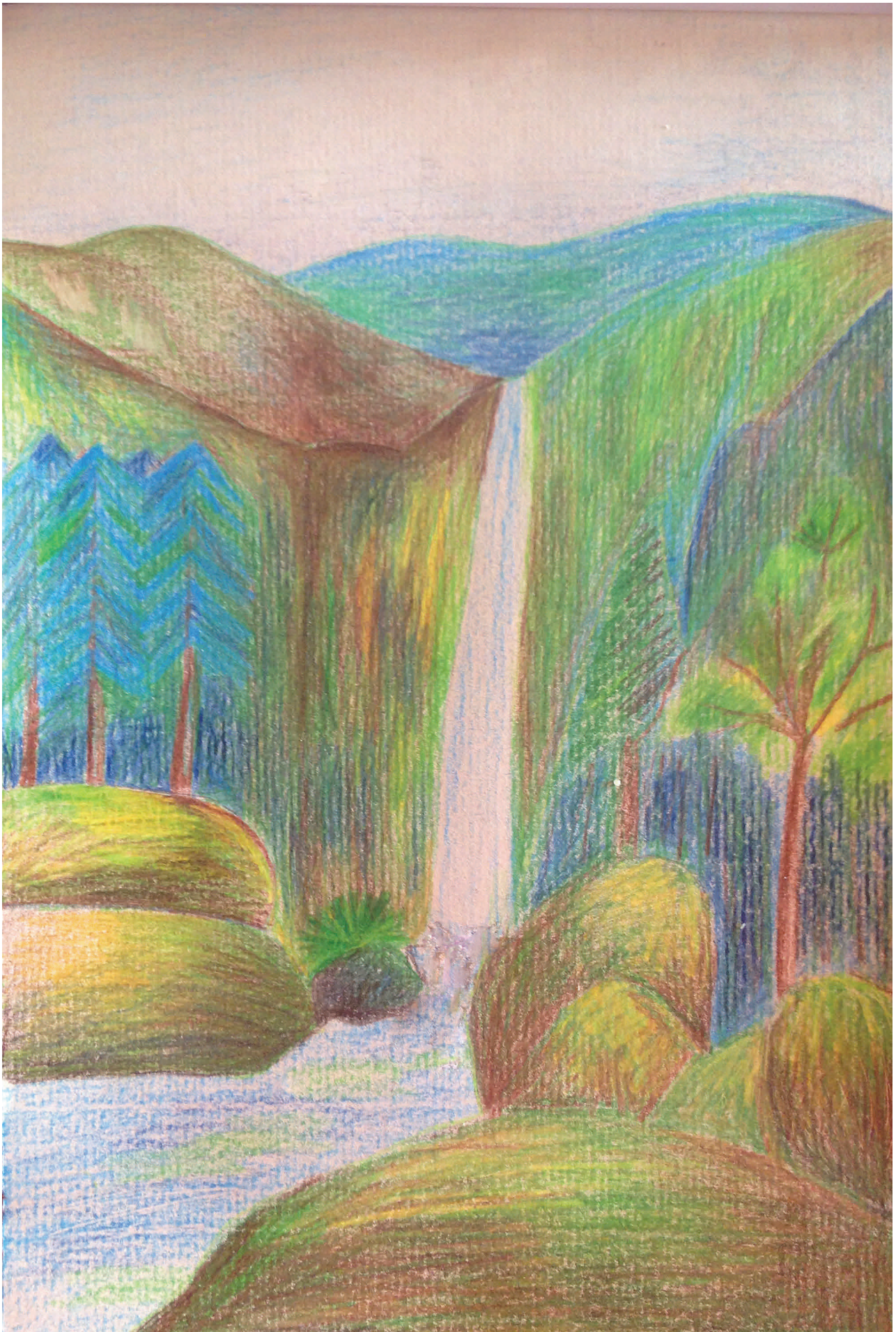
by Andrew Rubner

Waxing Gibbous is a
Three quarters moon
It floats in the air at least once a month
Maybe twice a month

I really am just confused
Like cellophane in the ocean
Or on the floor
Anywhere but where it should
Belong which is a container filled
With grease and grime
And sometimes glow

Only when the moon
Is a bright red
Everything might be illuminated
Depending on the position of the moon
Or on the way the clouds settled

One time it stormed
I was almost sad enough to notice
That the world was not ending
When the moon came out
From the terrible ghoul
And cluttered my vision
And gouged out my eyes
And for a second everything fell
And I was peaceful



51 Waterfall by Liz Witte

The Universe from the Perspective of a Paper Airplane

by Alanna McBride

I glide over the floor,
A patchwork quilt
Of gum and papers,
Food wrappers and linoleum
I dodge the locker
Of the harmonica player
The new guy
On the football team,
The one that really wanted
To be in the marching band.
I don't know the hand
That made me,
The manicured fingers,
The wrist that
Followed through,
Like it was shooting
A basketball hoop.
It's all I can do
To keep moving forward
To stay afloat
Of this sea of bodies.
But gravity pulls me down,
Like that backpack of bricks
On that senior over there
The one whose parents
Separated like oil and water last year,
The one who now has to
Take extra classes,
If she wants to graduate on time.
I tumble into a corner,
A corner of the quilt,
Of gum and papers,
Food wrappers and linoleum.
The tide of the sea
Ebbs away,

Then flows back.
I wait.
I'm patient.
But the tide
Ebbs and flows,
Ebbs and flows.
And no one picks me up.
No one throws me again.
They forget that
I'm just the same
As they are.
They forget that
I'm just something lost,
Something waiting to be
Found.

October's Fight

By Kelly Fleming

Leaves were once vivid,
But now their green tops, they fade.
Out comes rusted shade.

Fruit is plump, roots dry.
Wind grabs hold of lost twigs-
Pushes them awry.

Fingers clench through night,
November rings the doorbell,
October will fight.

Trees, discouraged now,
Broken promises of spring,
Leave branches barren.

Lips cracked, brisk breeze comes,
Early sunset drifts to sleep,
Tired of summer play.





Feet First by Courtney Morrissette

To Be a Star

by Alanna McBride

My mother says that when the world slides out under your feet, you have to get back up and keep going. But I don't see how you're supposed to get up if you have nothing left to stand on.

And Ally was sensitive to begin with. She cried when we found a dead crab on the beach one day and made us hold a funeral for it. She cried when a little boy dropped his ice cream on the sidewalk and wouldn't stop crying until Eli bought him a new one. I think if she had thought about where meat came from too much she would've cried every time she ate a hamburger. But that's not a bad thing. It's just the way she is. Which is why I don't think it's fair for anyone to expect her to get back up after what happened.

I first met Ally when we were seven. Seven was the age of push up popsicles from the ice cream truck and learning to ride a bike on the boardwalk. Seven was also the age when my mother finally let me go play on the beach by myself. I guess that this shouldn't seem like such a big deal since we live right on the beach, but I did feel very grown up crossing the street alone in my one-piece and cover-up.

My mother gave me only two rules: one, that I had to remember to look both ways when I crossed the street dividing our house from the beach, and two, that I was under no circumstances allowed to go in the water. I didn't mind following these rules, except the second made it hard to build a sand castle. Because when you just put dry sand in the mold and turn it over, it falls into a pile. And I couldn't use the wet sand because it dried too fast. The only way to do it was to get water in one of the small plastic buckets and then pour it on top of the sand in the mold. Except I couldn't go in the water. It was a vicious cycle.

I didn't really have any friends before Ally because I was shy, so for the first week or two of that summer I just sat in the sun trying to pat the sand enough so it would stay in place.

"I don't think that's going to work."

I looked up, and she was standing there in a tankini, with her sunglasses pushed up on top of her head like a movie star.

"You're trying to make a sand castle, right?" she asked shyly. I just nodded.

"Why don't you mix the sand with water?"

"I'm not allowed to go in the water," I said.

"Oh. Neither am I. At least, not by myself. But my brother is. He's eleven. Do you want to come make a sand castle with us?" she asked, pointing over to where a boy was sitting with a red plastic shovel. He saw her pointing and waved.

“Okay,” I said, and grabbed my towel, sand castle mold, and bucket, and followed her back over.

“Eli, will you help us make a sand castle?” she asked the boy.

“Only if there’s gonna be a moat,” he said.

She turned toward me. “Is a moat okay?”

“Sure.”

“Then I will get the water,” he said, grabbing the bucket, “while you two fill up the sand castle mold, and before you know it, we’ll have a royal palace.”

We scooped sand into the mold in silence until she asked me, “Where do you live?”

I pointed to my house. “Over there. The one with the blue shutters.”

“It’s pretty.”

“Thanks. Where do you live?”

She pointed down the street towards the boardwalk. “There. It’s the one with the boxes on the porch. We just moved here.”

“Oh,” I said. “That’s why I haven’t seen you in school before.”

“Yeah.”

We had finished filling the sand castle mold, and we seemed to have run out of things to say. So we watched her brother walk back to where we were sitting, and she drew squiggly lines in the sand.

“Oh, and I’m Ally,” she said suddenly as her brother sat down next to us.

“I’m Eli,” he offered. They both smiled at me.

I smiled back. “I’m Sam.”

And so it began.

My mother used to talk a lot about how lucky we are. She would say to her friends on the phone how lucky we are that we get to watch the sun rise over the ocean every morning and hear the waves crash from our living room. She would say to my father that he’s lucky to have a job, and such a high-paying one at that, so he shouldn’t complain about his boss. She would tell me that I was lucky we were able to afford our house and that I should stop asking for a new pair of flip-flops, even though mine were old and worn-out. She would talk to Mrs. Wallace next door about how lucky we were that so few others had discovered our paradise. That was another one of her favorites. Paradise. We lived in paradise.

I wonder if she would call it paradise now.

I don’t know why so few other people lived in our small beach town. The temperature never dipped below 40° in the winter, and I think the hottest day last summer was 87°. So far this summer it hasn’t gone above 75°. We even have a boardwalk north a little ways from our house. Mind you, it’s usually closed, and there are no Ferris wheels or rides or anything, but if you really want to eat a corn dog or pop balloons with darts, it’s still pretty fun. I went there on the few weekends it was open when I was younger with my parents, then later with Ally and Eli.

Lately Ally and I have been walking along the boardwalk at night, even though it's closed—or maybe because it's closed. It's quiet there, with nothing but the waves and the weathered shacks to keep us company. I don't say anything usually, because there's nothing that can be said in these types of situations. Ally doesn't say anything either, but I guess she has a good reason. So we walk together in silence.

One night we were walking past the ring toss, boarded up, the paint on the sign peeling so much that the words were barely legible. There was a soda can lying on the ground, and Ally kicked it. She stopped walking. I stopped walking. We both watched it scuttle across the planks of the boardwalk. Then Ally started crying. So I went and picked up the can and threw it in one of the recycling bins along the side because I didn't know what else to do, and I looked at the stars and wondered how something so beautiful could let something so terrible happen.

Once when we were around ten, Ally and I went to the beach at night without Eli. By this time he was a freshman in high school, and he had his first final exams. Ally had told him not to worry about us, that he should stay home and study, she thought we could manage one night without drowning.

We talked about school and summer vacation and what it would be like when we were freshmen in high school. Eventually we stopped talking and just sat together in silence, watching the waves inch closer and closer. It was a good kind of silence though, and I remember feeling so peaceful, like I had never been happier, and that nothing would ever change, not the glow of the street lights on our backs, not the moonlight on the waves, not anything in the universe.

After a while, I don't know how long it was, but it felt like a while, Ally asked me something I'll never forget, "What do you think it's like, to be a star?" It was a simple enough question. But it had about a million different answers. I thought about saying it must be bright, or fun to sparkle, but neither of those really answered Ally's question.

It was a simple enough question. But it had about a million different answers. I thought about saying it must be bright, or fun to sparkle, but neither of those really answered Ally's question.

"It's got to be better than being the sun or the moon, because then there's only one of you, and you're all alone. But when you're a star, there are a billion of you, so I guess at least you wouldn't be lonely," I said after a moment. And I knew it was the right answer because I saw the stars winking and nodding at me, high in the sky, secretly congratulating me, like I had unraveled some great big cosmic mystery of the universe.

There's a pizza place the next town over that sells the best pepperoni pizza. Eli had had a job there since he was sixteen. Sometimes he would take me and Ally along and buy us a root beer and a slice of pizza each.

"On the house, ladies, on the house," he would say, and Ally and I would giggle and pretend we were celebrities getting special treatment. We would sit and talk in the bright fluorescent lighting, while the red and blue neon open sign on the window flickered, and wait until his shift ended. Eli would go from table to table, smiling at all the customers and making jokes. Everyone loved him, and he always got the biggest tips. He had to, really, if he wanted to be able to go to college. His parents had refused to pay for any of his tuition.

Eli normally had the last shift, so it was his job to close up the pizza place. Ally and I always helped wipe down the tables while Eli restocked the shelves and put away any dishes left out. Then we would go outside and Eli would lock the door. We would all pile into his car and turn on the radio as he drove us home. If there was nothing good on the radio, which there never was, Ally would put on Eli's Augustana CD and flip to our favorite song, Stars and Boulevards. We would all sing along when it got to the chorus:

"Oh, seems like I'm always on my own
Seems like I'm never coming home
Seems like I'm always on my...
All the stars and boulevards ain't close enough for you."

My mother keeps saying how lucky it was that Ally and I weren't in the car when Eli was coming home from work that night. But I don't know. Maybe if Ally and I had been there we would have seen the drunk driver rounding the corner and warned Eli and none of this ever would have happened. Or maybe we would have held him up at the pizza place and the driver would already have passed by. Or maybe it just would have been easier if all three of us had gone together so that no one was left behind. Maybe, maybe, maybe.

After that one night with the soda can we didn't go on the boardwalk anymore. We didn't talk about it. But best friends know these things.

We went other places instead: the ice cream shop, the park, the closed mini golf course. Most nights we ended up on the beach, walking parallel to the waves and eventually sitting in the sand, staring out at the ocean. Sometimes Ally would say something.

"Remember that time Eli let us skip school and we spent the day at the beach?" she asked once, her eyes lit up but far away, lost in the anesthesia of a memory.

I smiled. "We had to walk down that way because we were afraid our parents would see us from a window."

“And Eli packed sandwiches.”

“And we didn’t have our swimsuits so we swam in our clothes.”

“Remember when, at the boardwalk one year, we all got banana splits?”

“Eli took whipped cream from his and put it on each of our noses.”

“And then we took whipped cream from ours and put it on his nose.”

“And he flicked his cherry at you.”

“But it missed and hit the woman behind me.”

“And she came over and called us irresponsible children and threatened to talk to the manager,” I finished, and we both started laughing, a little too loud, a little too long, because it had been a while since either of us had laughed.

But every time, when the story was over, Ally’s eyes became sad again, sad and lost and lonely. She remembered that these memories were only memories. One night toward the end of the summer we were laying down on the sand, looking at the stars and listening to the waves crash. I was thinking how nice it would be if we could just stay there forever, with the sand for a pillow and the universe for a blanket.

“Remember when I asked you what it was like to be a star?” Ally asked. I looked at her. She was looking at the sky, but her eyes weren’t far away. They were here. And they weren’t lit up, but they were sparkling, like they were reflecting the stars.

“I told you that it must be better than being the sun, or the moon, because there are only one of those, but with the stars there are billions, so at least you wouldn’t be lonely.”

“I read somewhere, in some myth, that people used to believe that stars were made out of souls,” she said. She took a shaky breath. “Do—do you think Eli could be up there?”

“Well I don’t know what else would shine so bright. I think he could.” I meant it, too. It felt right, when everything else had felt wrong.

“They seem so far away.”

“All the stars and boulevards ain’t close enough for you,” I whispered, remembering a line from our favorite song.

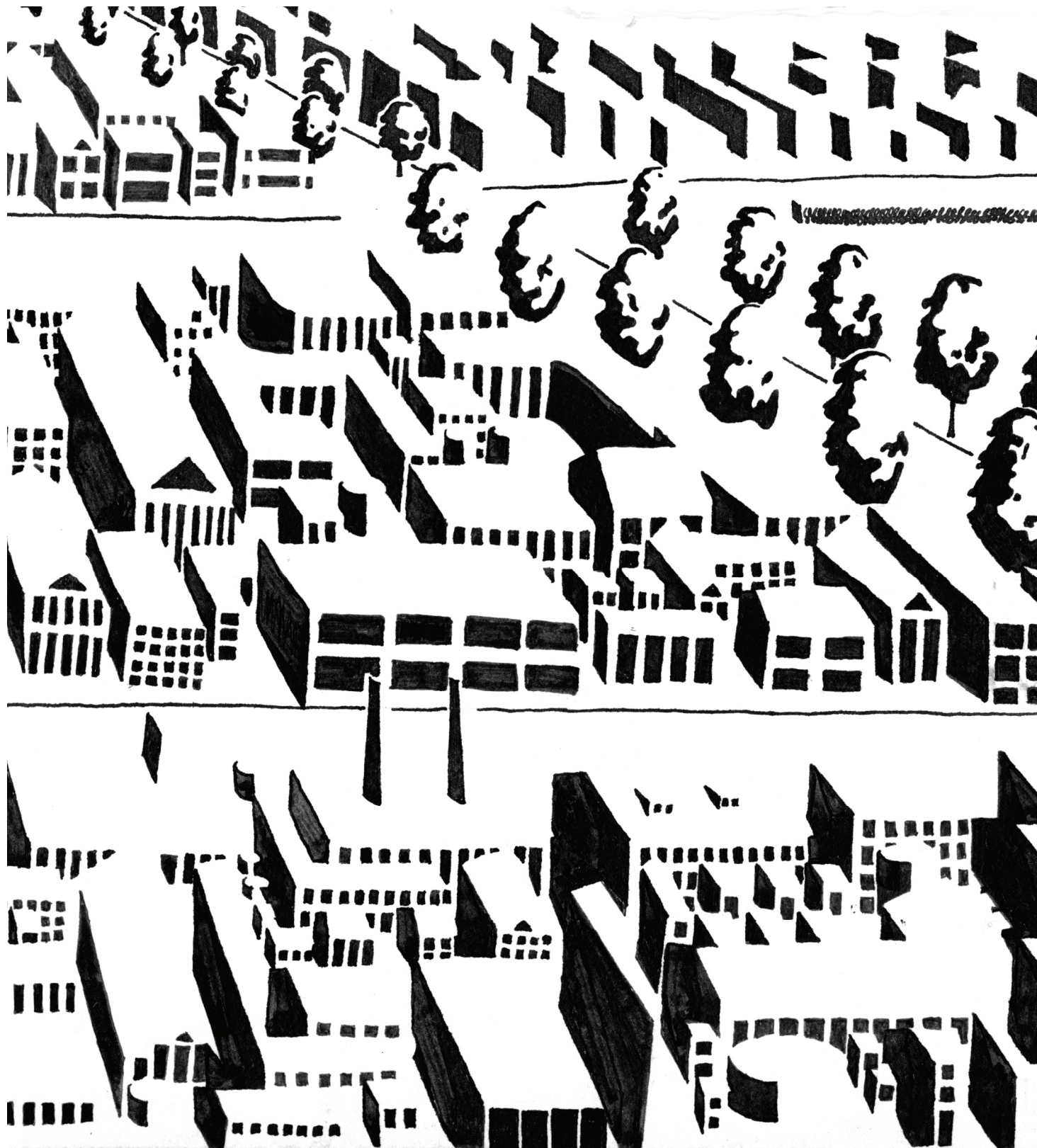
“Eli will never be close enough,” Ally said.

“No,” I agreed. “But at least he’s out there somewhere, right?”

“Yeah,” Ally said. “And one day we’ll join him, won’t we?”

“I guess one day the whole world will join him. And then it will be like nothing ever changed.”

I know you’re shining now, Eli, wherever you are. Don’t worry about Ally, I’m going to take care of her. I’m okay too, but we both miss you like crazy. I bet you’re the brightest star in the sky now. I’ll look for you tonight.





Cityscape Detail by Andrew Wong

Vines

by Kayla Panek

Do budding vines grow stealthily up your spinal cord
and poke holes through your cerebellum?

Do their reaching arms
choke your thoughts as they emerge,
extinguishing them well before
they reach your mouth?

Are they nourished by your failure—
do they grow strong each time you water them?

Have they escaped through your ears, eye sockets, and nostrils;
are they swiftly crawling down your neck, arms, wrists?

Squeezing, binding, cutting off the blood flow

Are they enveloping you?

Can you still breathe?

You should have nipped them
in the bud.



Old Woman by Jenny Zhang



Two Girls by Raphaelle Gamanho

So Bad That Death Should Follow

by Andrew Rubner

1

Late last year I transferred to Timothy's college to pursue my love for mathematics. I also transferred to be with Timothy. I felt like he needed someone to spend time with. Being alone as a person can be beneficial in limited ways.

My classes are usually small. I rarely have over 25 kids in any of my courses. This puts more pressure on me to make friends with the people who I am surrounded by.

Luckily, the people in my classes seem to be introverted. Not many of them seem to have any interest in talking to me. I tend to mind my own business also.

"Hey, do you understand this?" A girl who didn't seem over the age of 17 turned and asked.

"Umm, not particularly at the moment, but I am sure I will sooner or later."

"Well, I just don't like his teaching style. I mean, who can understand a thing he says.?"

"His accent is quite thick. I wonder where he's from. Maybe Scotland?"

Before I could finish my sentence, she had turned from me. She was packing up her things. In between the days of our class the girl slipped my mind, but my time in that class was spent thinking of her.

Another conversation ensued a few weeks after the first.

"Okay I think I got this. I just need to become more comfortable with the equation," she said.

"Yes, being comfortable is a big part in succeeding with calc."

"I think this class is going better than I imagined," she started to ramble. "I was so scared to enter college, but the classes are not that much different than ones in high school. Ya know?"

"I tend to agree with that statement, but I doubt this will be the hardest course we take our college careers." I chuckled at my own joke. She gave a slight smile.

"Do you want to study for the final in my dorm Sunday?" she asked abruptly. "Around twelve?"

I was startled by her proposition, but answered accordingly. "Umm, yeah of course I can come."

She cut me off before my next question. "I live in the Jefferson building, second floor, room 26."

Again, before I could respond, she started to leave.

"Bye, bye Marie," I said as she left my vicinity.

The next few days went by slowly, as all days do when you are waiting for something. I sat at my half-sized desk working out some of the equations that I would see on my calculus final on Monday. I couldn't concentrate on mathematical equations. I kept asking myself why such an innocent girl would be interested in speaking to me. It's not as if I had a bad reputation, but she seemed so lost in a world that I didn't perceive.

It was around two in the afternoon when Timothy's alarm clock went off. The loud bell sound resonated throughout the room and startled me.

"Will you shut that thing off?" I asked. "I am trying to study."

Timothy made a sound that I could not make out.

"You should start studying during the day and sleeping during the night, then we could share an alarm clock," I said passively.

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. I do not want to be any of those things." Timothy said.

"Or you could you go to bed at a reasonable time out of respect for me."

"That would mean I would have to respect you, James." He made a loud yawning noise and then went into the miniature refrigerator and grabbed a carton of milk. He drank straight from the carton. "Do we have any coffee left?" Timothy asked.

"I don't believe so. Here's ten dollars, go out and get us a couple cans." I handed Timothy the money. He would never disagree to go out and take a walk.

This gave me some more time to finish up my work. Soon Timothy came back and I was still not through with it. After a while the symbols and numbers started dancing on the paper. That's when I decided to close my textbook and take a break.

"Let's go out and get something to eat." I proposed.

"I don't know." Timothy sounded hesitant. "I feel like I have *beaucoup* work to complete."

"*Tu peux finir plus tard.*"

"Your accent needs some work." Timothy would never miss the opportunity to make of fun of me.

"So does your French."

We decided on a small café in the university district. The place was frequented by us. We began to notice all the regulars and soon enough we considered ourselves regulars as well.

“I met someone.” I said.

“And who is this?” Timothy sounded uninterested.

“A girl in one of my calculus classes.”

“And is this another one of those pseudo-intellectual types who told you that Dali was her favorite painter and mentioned that Salinger should have written more novels?”

“No, actually she is quite the opposite,” I stated. “Well actually I don’t exactly know much about her personality, only the fact that she is a strong math student who pretends to need my help.”

“So, that means she doesn’t know much about you then.” Timothy’s statement was hard to argue with.

“I suppose you could say that, but we are getting together on Sunday to study. And I will get to know her then.”

3

Sunday came around, as it always does. I didn’t know how to present myself. I assumed it was a casual get together. I wore slacks. I also debated whether or not to bring flowers, and if I do what color, red or white? I decided that there was no need to bring them. If she was expecting flowers, only a little disappointment would come over her. And if she wasn’t, she might have been creeped out by the act.

I decided to ride my bike down to her house. The late morning wind was blissful as it crossed my face. I felt as if time was elapsed and I was floating. I could feel the separation of the asphalt and my tires. When I arrived I felt myself smiling. The thought that a petty get together could make me smile was wonderful. I spend so much of my time sitting at my desk thinking of the people I see every day, the people I talk to every day. I just rarely go through with making the effort to see them during my time.

I knocked twice in rhythm. She seemed to be waiting by the door. She was dressed in her usual attire. She never dressed down, but at the same time never up. She wore typical clothes, nothing that would catch the eye in a negative or positive way.

“Hello,” her voice rang with excitement.

“Hello, how are you?” I responded.

So Bad That Death Should Follow

Before small talk began she decided to get right down to working, “Okay, so. I was thinking that we should go over some of the practice problems that McGillian gave us.”

“That sounds fine. Luckily, I’ve been working them out all week. I think I understand them a little bit better now.”

About ten minutes later, another girl walked in with a towel around her body. Her facial features resembled Marie’s greatly.

“Put some clothes on.” Marie sounded irritated. “I have a guest over.”

Her sister turned to me, “Oh honey, run as fast as you can. This girl is beyond crazy.”

“Don’t listen to her. She obviously doesn’t have a filter. Clearly she is the crazy one.”

I sat silently. I didn’t want to say anything. Nothing at the moment would have been appropriate.

Marie went back to going over equations with me. Her sister proceeded to get dressed with us both in the room and then left.

“Sorry, about her. I know she can be annoying.” She apologized for her sister.

“It’s fine. My roommate isn’t too much better.”

“Oh, you live with your brother?”

“Not exactly, I live with my best friend. He’s still a jerk though.”

Her sister entered back into the room on her cell phone.

“What do you mean?” She was yelling, “Alright well stop calling me if you just wanna argue...You know what I mean. Bye.”

“Can you please go somewhere else with your problems?” Marie sounded irritated.

Her sister stormed out the room and slammed the door behind her.

“She seems upset,” I said.

“Yeah, well she’s often like that. She has a lot of issues with boys,” Marie said causally.

We ended up spending all day studying for our final. Time went by quickly. We spent time talking about various aspects of our life while working out arduous math problems. After awhile it took no effort for either of us to talk to each other casually.

I decided to leave around seven. The sun had already set and I wanted something to eat. I was tempted to ask her to accompany me, but a sheepish feeling overcame me as I was about to ask.

“I better get going.” I said. “I have some things to take care of by me.”

“That’s fine. I guess I’ll see you tomorrow then?”

“You shall.” My voice dwindled down towards the end of my sentence and then there was a long pause between us.

“We should get together next week though, Wednesday?” I saved the conversation.

“Yes!” Her face lit up. “I would love to meet Timothy.”

“How about you bring Molly and I’ll bring Tim.” I began to head for the door.

“That sounds wonderful. I’ll see you Monday then.”

“Bye, bye.”

4

“Wednesday?” Timothy pretended to contemplate whether he had something to do or not. “I think I’ll be busy.”

“Busy?” I was offended by his humor. “Busy doing what? Sitting around doing nothing?”

“Maybe,” he continued.

“Well you’re coming, because your apathy depresses me.”

Timothy stuck his nose back into *The Selected Works of Lord Byron*.

5

The next day was a little odd. I woke up late due to a dysfunctional alarm clock. I rushed into the bathroom, taking a five minute shower and cutting myself while shaving. I ran out the door without making coffee. I had a lit cigarette hanging out of my mouth as I exited my dorm.

“Put that out when you’re inside please.” A receptionist yelled at me.

I entered the door at 9:50 for my 9:45 math class, the one in which I had to take a final in.

“Wad it kull ya ta be un tyme, sur?” My Professor’s accent sounded thicker than usual today.

I walked right past Marie. She didn’t bother to look up at me. I took my seat behind her. I immediately started to focus on the assignment at hand. I could not afford a second for my mind to wander. It would have wandered too far.

By the end of my test I could hear my brain pounding up against my head. I had opened up new chambers of my mind. I wanted to go home and sleep for a while. Marie was still working when I handed mine in. I didn’t bother to stick around.

Later that night I got a phone call.

“Hello?” I answered.

“Hey, it’s Marie,” I was a little confused. I didn’t remember giving her my phone number. “I hope you don’t mind me calling. I got your number from McGillian.”

“Oh! No, no, no it’s fine trust me. I wasn’t doing anything.”

“Okay, good.” She sounded relieved. “So I was thinking that we could get Japanese food on Wednesday. I know this great place right outside the university district.”

“Yeah that sounds fine.”

“I’ll see you in class on Wednesday anyways, I’ll tell you more then.”

“Alright, that’s fine.”

“My work awaits, I’ll see you then.”

She hung up the phone before I could give my salutation. She seemed a little bit nervous at all times. I hoped she would get past this with me. I hate feeling like I’m in a rush all the time.

Wednesday came, as it always does. Timothy and I were getting ready for our double date.

“This girl better be worth my time.” Timothy acted unenthused.

“She will be,” I said reassuringly. “Have I ever let you down?”

“More than once, buddy.” Timothy looked over at me and smiled.

This dinner was doomed. I was certain that Timothy would be a nuisance. I would be at a loss for words. The conversation would be bland. I was having second thoughts. I felt like turning my car around and sleeping. There was almost no point in trying to make this work. It amazed me why I bothered to make an effort at controlling fate.

We got to the restaurant before the girls. It was a quaint Japanese place with only a few tables filled. We decided to be seated.

“Do they have any consideration for us?” Timothy complained. I ignored his comment. There was no point in igniting his fuse.

The girls stumbled in ten minutes later. Timothy and I already had our drinks in front of us. I didn’t feel right ordering our food before they showed up.

“Hello,” Marie sang. “Sorry we’re late.”

Marie smiled in his direction, “Hi, I’m Marie, and this is my sister Molly.” Molly waved awkwardly in our direction.

“How are you both?” Marie asked.

“*Comme ci, Comme ca, et toi?*” Timothy answered.

“I’m doing fine,” I said.

“You speak French.” Molly smirked.

“He thinks he speaks French,” I said.

“I am not fluent, but I have the desire to be. Throwing in French expressions here and there makes me feel better about myself,” Timothy explained.

I was hoping the conversation would hold a jesting mood. I was wrong. Timothy’s apathy didn’t clash well with Molly’s hostility. There were points in the conversation when Marie and I would throw banter between the two of us, leaving Timothy and Molly silent.

“Well I am pretty sick of my History 101 class,” Marie began, “I hate writing about history.”

Timothy chuckled, “The understanding of history is the keystone to understanding contemporary society.”

“I suppose—” Marie was cut off by her sister.

“That is true, but we should be able to write about what we care for. If I’m a Chemistry major why would I want to write a ten page paper on a court case that happened a hundred years ago?”



Bison in Water by Liz Witte

“That is an ignorant way of looking at things.” Timothy said. “Maybe that court case shaped the way you live your life today. What if it was *Minor v. Happersett*, a case that was overruled by the notion that gave women suffrage? That affected your life directly.”

“Having an appreciation for something and having extensive knowledge of something are two completely different things. I appreciate what the case did for me. However, I don’t care to find out minute details about it.”

Timothy seemed to be stumped by this comment, and instead of slowing down the conversation, Molly’s remark acted as a catalyst. Timothy and Molly spent the remainder of time arguing about various aspects of culture. Marie and I were left out almost completely. Sometimes we would shake our heads in agreement.

The dinner ended eventually. We all exchanged phone numbers. Timothy had promised to call Molly.

6

Winter had ended and the spring semester was underway. Marie and I shared a geo-trig course at 9:45 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Our new professor was much more interesting than our last one, which is an odd trait in a mathematics professor. This was the only class he taught. Most of his time was dedicated to research.

“Hello my new subjects,” his enthusiasm rang throughout the room, “I am Professor Kebler. I will be your Professor for the remainder of the year. One thing that you must know is that this class will be very difficult to pass. That is why I only give out two assignments, the proof that is behind me, and a final exam. The latter will be on the last day of my course, and the former will be due next Monday. Write this problem down and then you can leave.”

“Do you think it’ll be easy?” Marie asked me as we were walking out.

“Not easy, but...”

“Yeah, I know what you mean.” She paused for a second. “Hey, I was thinking that we could stay away from each other while working on this and compare answers on Sunday?”

“Perfect, but I still want to see you for dinner on Friday.”

“Yeah, of course.”

We kissed goodbye, then our paths separated.

7

The week turned out to be quiet between Timothy and me. He was sleeping later than usual. I hadn't seen Molly around the apartment in several days.

"Where's Molly been?" I asked.

"Around." Timothy didn't pursue conversation.

It wasn't odd that Timothy was avoiding Molly. He does this often. He likes to fool around with a girl for about a month or so. It just had seemed that both of them had gotten to know each other so well. They acted like best friends together. Even though their relationship consisted of constant arguments, most of them were benign.

"Why do you have to do that?" I asked.

"Do what?"

"You know."

"I actually don't," Timothy said.

"Don't act stupid. You know exactly what I mean. What is even the point in starting a relationship with someone if you know you are going to end it a month later?"

"There was no relationship; Molly is my friend."

"Wow, I wish all my friends spent every waking moment with me. I wish all my friends took me out to dinner. I wish all my friends shared cute little inside jokes with me." I began to get frustrated.

"You're so dense."

"I'm dense!" My voice escalated. "You are oblivious to your surroundings."

I stormed out of the room. There was no point in dealing with him.

8

I woke up early that Sunday even though I had gone to bed late the night before. I had been trying to figure the proof that was assigned last week. Today was the day that I was supposed to share my answer with Marie. We kept our promise not to talk about the math problem. We were tempted to speak of it at dinner on Friday, but neither of us mentioned it out of respect for each other.

There was no coffee in the cupboard so I went out to enjoy the morning. I walked down Main Street to the nearest coffee shop. I brought along my books and bag.

After four medium coffees, I decided to go back up to the room for a change in scenery. I looked down at my clock; it was 2:44 in the afternoon. I should have gone back to bed, but I needed to be absolutely sure that my answer was correct. I had been working on it all week. I was almost there. I would go see Marie afterward. We would both claim that the problem was juvenile.

I walked into the bathroom and turned the shower on. Timothy followed me.

“What are you so happy about?” Timothy said.

“I have the answer,” I said with excitement.

“Kudos to you.”

“Can we get lunch?” Timothy asked. “I have something to tell you.”

“I can’t. I promised Marie I would show her this.”

“Well, this could be important.”

“It’ll have to wait.”

“Maybe I should just tell you now.”

“I can’t talk now, I have to get ready.”

He started to explain, “Well it’s just that I think I’m going to apologize to Molly.”

“Yeah, that’s great,” I said while taking my clothes off.

“I have been thinking about what you said to me last week. I think I’ve been unfair. Do you think it will work out?”

“I really can’t answer you right now. I’m going into the shower.” I jumped in the shower. I heard Timothy mumble one more thing before he left me alone.

After my shower, I fumbled through my clothes to find a perfect outfit. I went into the kitchen to find Timothy tapping his fingers on the counter top.

“I’m gonna ask her out to dinner tonight,” Timothy said anxiously.

“I’m sure she will be delighted.” I walked out the door before I could catch the next phrase that Timothy would say.

I rode my bike to Marie’s with great anticipation. Just the fact that I was going to see her made my lips turn up.

I knocked on the door twice. Her face lit up when she answered the door.

“I have an answer,” she squealed, “And I’m assuming you do too?”

“Yes, yes I do.”

We spent a few minutes looking at our answers; they matched. We were both certain that it was right. We didn’t have any second thoughts about. We kissed out of excitement.

We spent the next few hours doing nothing. We sat around waiting for nothing. There was nothing to do now, besides celebrate.

Molly walked into the room and threw her things on the ground, jumped on her bed, stuffed her head in her pillow, and then shrieked.

“Come on Molly,” Marie was irritated. “How old are you?”

Molly’s eyes were bruised from crying. “You have no right to talk to me like that while I am in this state.”

“You are always in that state.”

“Well then leave me alone.”

Marie rolled her eyes and turned back to me. Molly got up from the bed.

“Timothy told me last week that he did not want to see me anymore. He said I was ‘a nuisance to his productivity,’ whatever that means. And now! Oh and now! He wants to see me tonight. Like I am some sort of booty call.” She enunciated every word with malice. “I’ll give him a great meal. I’ll give him a real *nuisance*.”

“Good.” Marie sounded unenthused. “Can you leave now? We are trying to do something here.”

“Ugh,” Molly grabbed her bag and left the room.

Molly’s visit to the apartment was forgotten in a few minutes. The mood went back to what it was until I left later that night. I kissed her goodbye.

The bike ride back to my abode was peaceful. I was happy with the way the night went.

The elevator was being serviced in my building. I was forced to take the stairs.

Eventually I made it to my room and shoved the key into the keyhole. I swung the door open.

“Hello Timothy, how’d your evening go? Because I wanted to tell you that mine was first-class.”

I turned over to the dining room table. At first I did not know what I was looking at. Timothy was face-down in a plate of spaghetti. A wine glass was lying on its side next to his hand.





Blue by Olivia Burton



Boy by Raphaele Gamanho