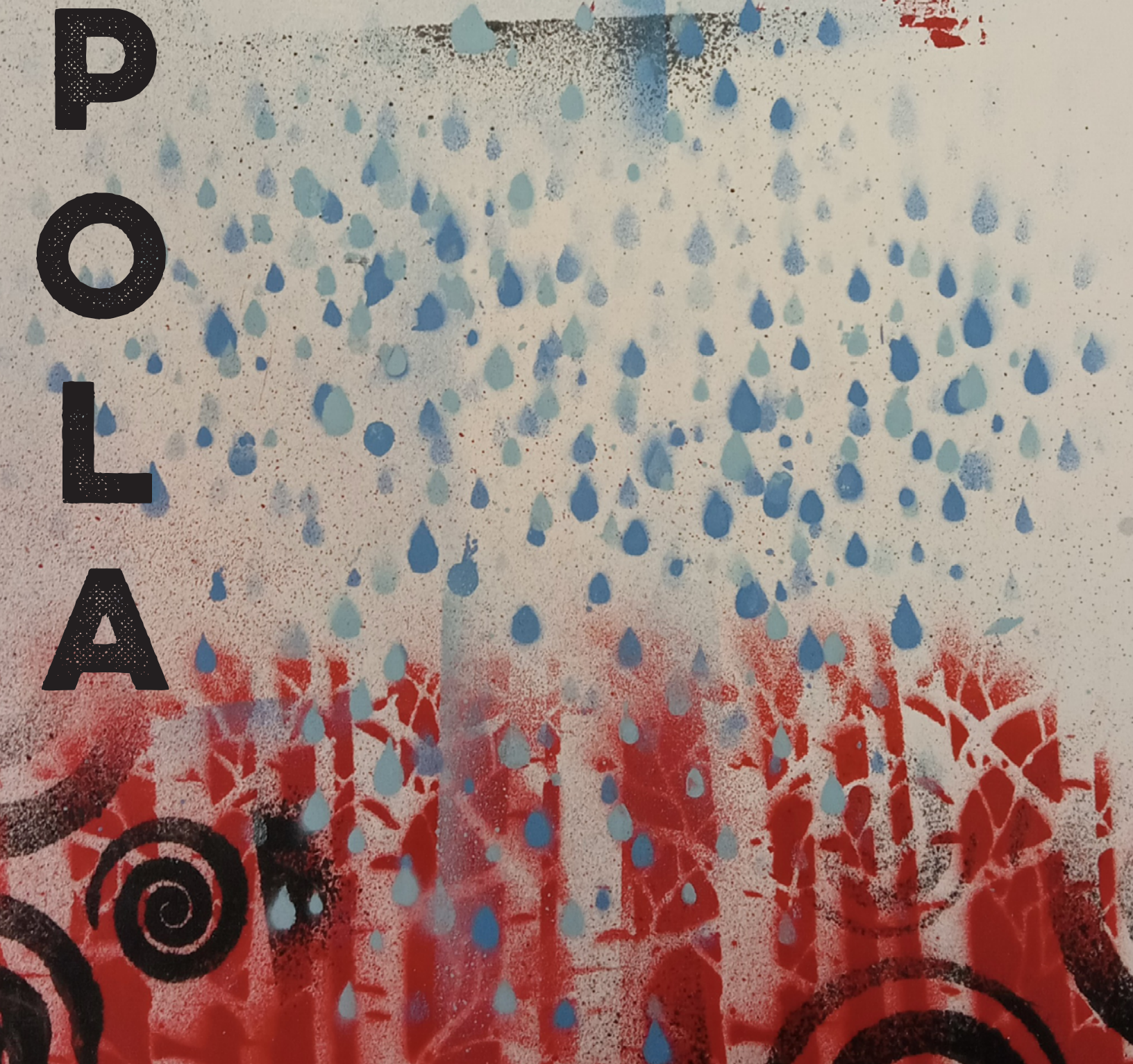


C U P O L A



The Cupola

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Literary Arts Journal

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Teenage Saga

Sarah Tremper

In the teenage saga, where emojis vent,
Texts left hanging, messages not sent.

Woven through struggles, like tangled thread,
Hallway mazes, where rumors spread.

Math class puzzles, unsolved clues,
Crush confessions, oh, if they only knew.

Emotional rollercoaster, looping wild,
In the flow of feelings, like a reckless child.

Mirror reflections, makeup in a trance,
Trying to slay, but it's a risky dance.

Instagram filters, the struggle is real,
A self-esteem journey, a spinning wheel.

Drama whispers, like a TV plot,
Locker combos, easily forgot.

Fashion crises, a wardrobe spin,
In the twists of teenage drama, dilemmas begin.

Late-night texts, secrets untold,
In chapters of youth, the stories unfold.

A poetic dance, a teenage strife,
The stereotypical struggles of a teenage life.

Urk by Marin "Aaron" Green



Are You Sick of Me?

Owen Andrews

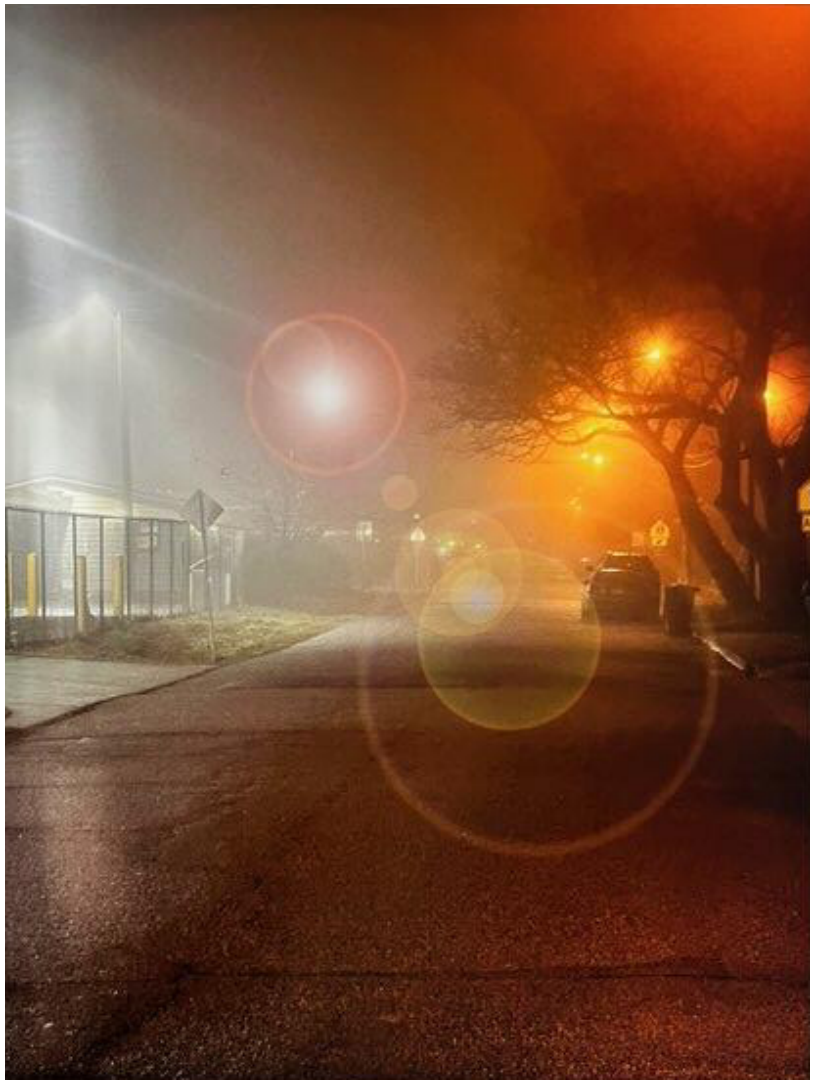
Glitter and soft light in a pirouette
peeling away at the sides of the room.
I won't misstep now, I won't forget;
I'm just happy really, to dance with you.
Limelight adjusting,
record slows all too true.
I forget my place
and you forget my name,
two steps forward
but losing the race.
It couldn't be my fault, the night's to blame,
soaking up all your effortless grace
and leaving me with a losing game.
Darling, don't wander.
Don't reach out too far,
overstep, hit your head,
or exit with a scar.
Don't go off to bed
while the spirits are awake.
Don't set the room on fire,
don't leave my heart to break.
Don't remind me of those times I set off to dance alone
in courtrooms and coliseums
on cold nights, foolishly on the hood of a 2013 Nissan.
Please don't let me leave with another
when I was always yours.
Warmth and poison when you tear me to shreds
like you've done a thousand times
before, just like tonight.
Somewhere the music stopped
and I heard the final note fade and echo
and echo still:

I know I'll love you until the end.

The dance is over.

She never got here.

Now the bottle is empty, and the wind is cold.
And you start to leave me as well.



Mystic Evening by Eleazar Banks

Table For Two

Eli Kesser

8:00 PM

8:03 PM

8:17 PM

Is It Enough? by Alex House

Just a moment

away

The clock, a relentless reminder

A second

A minute

An hour

A day

A fortnight

How long must I wait Must we wait We Who are we

As I wait, I bear the weight of the waiter, waiting patiently for my fate

She is Late

Very Late

A date for two

Perhaps no more

An empty space where a message should be lurking under three of my own

An empty space staring at me from across the booth

An empty space in my heart space in my bed

for the night



4 Way Stop by Pedro Toledo

american money

Cora Cowan

she walks around the playground selling
coins; green eggs like green beggars like green
ills, green
like american money

too young to carry a purse too
old
to carry nothing, she dreams of a briefcase, wall
street,
dream race;
they ask her to think straight, calm
down

back from the high slide like high
rise, like a goodbye,
she gets by, you'll never see
her cry

from the mulch to the metal top
with holes and lines like powder not
snow
oh
she remembers when the grass turned
to mulch
when dreams turned to
dust

oh
now she walks on greener grass
whiter snow
bigger blows
she clicks her boots on
stomping tracks into
american money

Tethered

After Gertrude Stein

Mora Virasoro

Blinding. Blind me. Bling. Blinding. I am Blinded. A flash. A grin. Enough to blind. Wind the thoughts in my mind. Blinding. Blind me. Bling. Blinding. I am Blinded. So bright. Teeth pearly white. Sheer sight of them gives me light. Blinding. Blind me. Bling. Blinding. I am Blinded. Blinded I am. Blinding. Me.

They are blinding.

Cookies. Fresh cookies. Warm cookies. Chocolate chip cookies. Chocolate chunk cookies. Cookies. Fresh cookies. Warm cookies. No cookies. Cook he is. He is Cooking. Cookies. Fresh cookies. Warm cookies. Cook for keys. Keys and cooks. He cooks. Cookies. Fresh cookies. Warm cookies.

They are home.

Feather. Light feather. Light as a feather. Velvet feather. Gentle touch. Caress unfolding. Soft fingertips. Feather. Light feather. Feather-light whispers. Gentle touch. Soft embrace. Skin to skin. Tenderness traced. Feather. Light feather. My tether. No matter the weather. Calm sensation. Silken connection. Tethered feather-light whispers.

They are life.



Don't Let Their Noise In by Zoe LaBeff

The Bodey and the Bloud of Jesus

Abby Larkin

My grandma's basement is bathed in fluorescent lights
covered in a thin layer of dust
decorated for kids who don't exist anymore
with M&M blankets and Sesame Street pillows
cold linoleum covered in faded
rugs once bright with color

I feel buried in plastic storage
containers boxed in by walls covered
in records unspun for decades
photo albums untouched for decades
a warm and happy place for decades
silent and undisturbed

The most recent photos feature me in a crib
my brother missing teeth
Big Blue sits in the corner, a stuffed dog once bigger than me
brushing his fur with my cousins
the same cousins who set up a make-believe church
and wrote the bodey and the bloud of jesus
on the white board on the wall

15 years later not even the strongest cleaning spray
could remove the Expo signs of temporary childhood
Now they are forever preserved in this basement

Turn the corner and find the wood shop
my grandfather's last unfinished project
a wooden carving of an Easter rabbit
April 2017 coincidentally

or not
the last year my grandma used the sewing machine
in the corner where she once
made clothes for my dolls

Her love will always exist
The basement a physical manifestation of it
The basement will always exist
often more real than the room I'm really in

Midnight Hoops by Emmanuel Goodwin



Wrinkles

Abigayle Cheney

When I get older I'll be a different woman.

I'll have tattoos akin to tramp stamps running down my arms and legs.

I'll scream and shout and yell because no one pays attention to the crazy old lady.

I'll shave all my hair off or wear it in avant-garde styles.

Sometimes I might forget to put on my bra and I may begin to just fall asleep in public.

I'll put a bed in the living room, dye my dog key lime, say I'm vegan but still drink milk.

I'll play trumpet without lessons, dress a different decade every day of the week, or not.

I'll sing my heart out at uncouth hours and maybe I'll keep a houseful of uncouth lovers.

I'll not tell anyone what college I went to and will lie about it every day.

I'll drink sparkling water out of brown paper bags.

I'll not keep plants in my house and I'll make no promises that my house will be clean.

But I will always be kind.

I may not conform to society but I will still be human.

I will pray Fajr at dawn, recite the Lord's Prayer at noon, and say Shema before bed.

I will do death meditations in my garden in the afternoons and give offerings to Vishnu.

I will unquestionably give money to people on the streets and always pray for peace.

But I may look a little manic while doing it.

I will call on my friends, even if it is at odd hours, and I will never turn down visitors.

Tea and coffee will not be allowed in my mouth but I'll still keep it in my house.

I will volunteer and knit blankets for babies.

I will live life to the fullest, but I will not do it as I did in my early years.

I will not conform to the blasphemies of society.

When I get older I will be a different woman.

Haiku and Tanka

In a vast green field
the leaves sway on the willow –
spiders are born
~ Mora Virasoro

A soft breeze
and a sharp gust of wind
wipe away the memory
~ Grace Abraham

A crowded graveyard:
Tombstones –
My grandpa's name
~ Akai Bracy

The glare of her glasses
alters the image
of her true love
~ Akai Bracy

A young boy sits alone
A young girl sits alone
Existence without collision
~ Anna Findlay

The lady looks to
her glass reflection –
The peasant, the dirt
~ Marc Greco

Blood on the lowest branch
Coals still smoking
Fresh tracks on the ground
~ Devin Smigiel

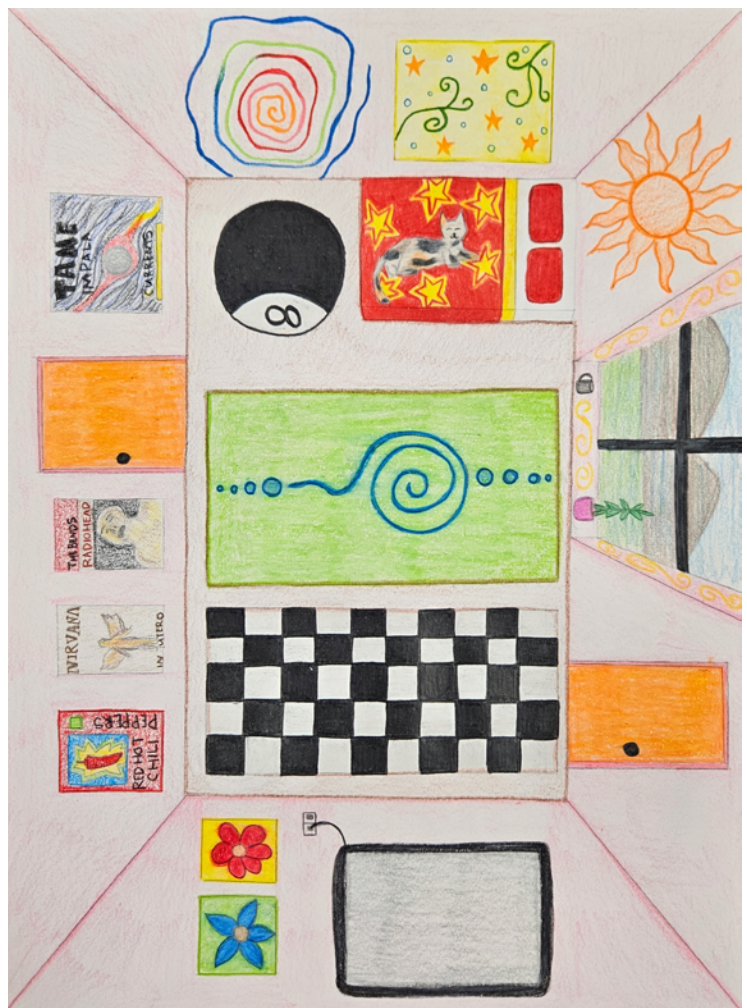
The crack in the hull
sank his heart
and his boat
~ Henry Sol

In a crowded restaurant
a couple laughs –
A glass bottle falls
~ Alexandra Casey

White cracked paint
Wooden cross on the Methodist
Barber blue, bible true
Stop sign red
runs deep 'round here
~ Cora Cowan

Fluffy manes and
white powered hoof prints
behind rocky cliffs
A childhood home –
memories unlocked
~ Miriam Willock

Six feet in the air
the Moko Jumbie gracefully hobbles
in a step-tap dance to Soca rhythms
He offers me stilts to try
but I'm much too clumsy
~ Marin "Aaron" Green



Dreams by Lorena Cuellar

Treatise on Thought

Nathan Jones

Nevermore shall it breach.
It tepid; it tame, no longer
founded by man, no
separate; no separate from nature.

So long . . . inevitably gone
Forgone conclusion which
never reaches . . . its

sought after moment
in reflection, in eminent gleam.
Such seams cracked,
the adhesive corroded.

Its semblance of form and figure
shapelessness and ambiguity
in how one does
ascertain truth from reality.

Governing boards of
“supposed” committees, societies of reality.
Such a façade . . . a dialectic.

Argumentation without
a norm, no knowledge found
when those who subvert reality
for a separate reality entirely.



On Bare Stone by Annie Scheid

Kittens of Old and New

Percy Gordon



How long this December drags across the dry tundra.
Until rain.

These soaked days, cold and windy, washing out all of
the color on the graves
of the dandelions and lavenders.

Look, I I'm sorry

for all the ghosts in the songs that I've shown you
for those epitaphs that I'm remembering, disguised
in rhythm and verse.

Do not wait.
Wait,
I forget.
I forget how this next part goes.

I forget last December exactly.
You certainly weren't there.
It was a different type of mourning.

That's it, it, it was:
"The nymphs are gone."

It was dry then. Worse than this year.
No comforting rain, no washing the color away.
No river, no weeping.

They'll come back, new flowers, I mean, maybe, once
the wind dies down.
And you'll smile.
You said,
well, you said it yourself, I believe:
"It's just a little game they play."

White Space

Amilyn Estes

A distant field
Far away
No one can stay in this far away place

Whispers of horizon
Sun-drunk on the sky's pale canvas
Wind paints silence in strokes of dust
No echo dares this vast far place

Stars like scattered seeds
Blooming into constellations
Whispering secrets only they can hear



Shooting Star by Annie Scheid



Pastoral

Henry Sol and Mora Virasoro

Sloping green over the ancient hills
Years of footsteps going to the mills

The sheep watch the shepherd's passing
As the flowers sway in their laughing

Each year's falling yellow leaves
Reflected in the honey of the bees

In the timeless creek are the new year's fish
Who pass the deer drinking in perfect bliss

The wind carries a faint sparrow's harmony
Elegant notes covering its cries of agony

Neverending Love by Anwynn Williams

Dear Future Maid of Honor

Cora Cowan

I don't ever forget to think about the bow
Ties that you know to perfect
The pink silhouette of your words on the hall
Sprinkled with fairy dust

There could be a gun show
Dark and twisted
You would make it pink

1970, the courthouse detours
Sewn to the man
Those time-pieces have no ruffles
On your hair; soft like flowers

Feathery stitching with your initials:
Alaska – takes me back to your throne
In the audience

The people you capture
The aura around you, captures me
No less than my own day, my own altar

Will I ever feel love like I do
For our porch nights
Pink wine you make bubble with your
Laugh; it's your time

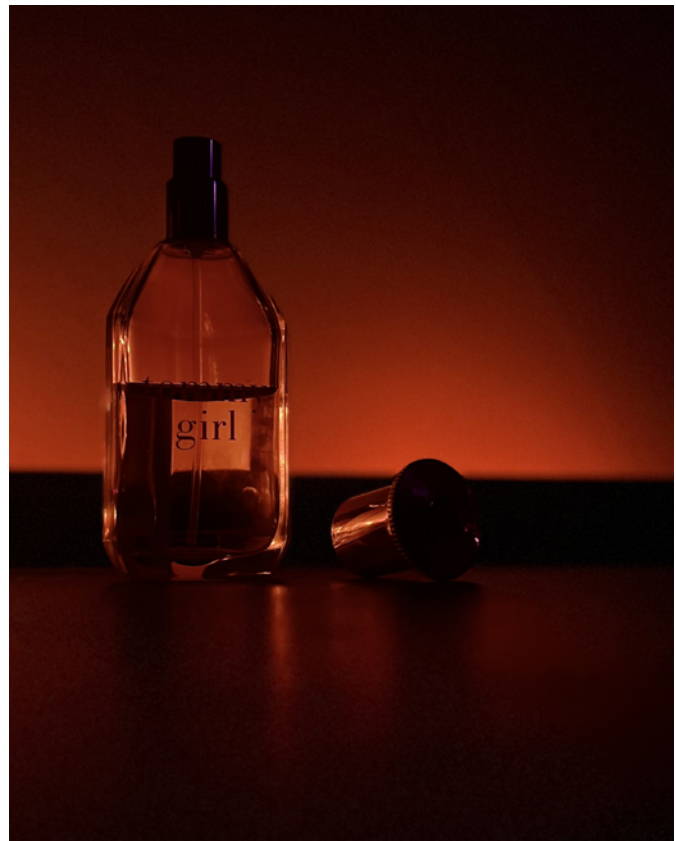
I wouldn't be surprised if he said
Your name
Instead of mine

Alexandra Casey

Somewhere in the middle of nowhere, a small town in a big scene, a restaurant bustling with laughter and music and love. A woman enters to the sight of people dancing. She can see the happiness and joy on everyone's faces. She can hear them laugh and sing. She can't understand the joy. She doesn't feel it. She sits down by herself, in the corner, observing. She broods and criticizes others around her.

People are dancing. People are singing. People are laughing. The woman downs a bottle of wine with the same hint of red as her dress, her lips, and the rings around her eyes. Just then, a tall man dressed like a penguin approaches her and asks for a dance. As the woman opens her mouth to object, the man grabs her hand and rushes her to where the crowd of joyful people sway. What a sight it is: a tall man with a small woman in the middle of a crowd, a crowd of energetic and cheerful people. There's a moment of joy, but she still feels disconnected from the crowd, from her partner, for she only can focus on her own feelings, ones of dismay and anger.

Why does she feel this way? No one will know, but she continues to come back to the restaurant, every night, to observe the people and their joy. She knows she will never feel that way again.



Why Not? by Alexis Townsend

Five to Ten Word Stories

Cats help heal my tired soul. ~ Faith Bisch

“Justice for all” was a lie. ~ Biankah Torres

You made the quiet dog bite. ~ Biankah Torres

Everyone won’t accept you. That’s okay. ~ Aliyah Pitters

Yeah . . . Harvard will not be calling. ~ Angel Christie

Silence is never truly peaceful, ever. ~ Raphael Key

Do it for fun, kind of. ~ Devin Forbes

I wasn’t myself; however, I still played my part. ~ Sarai Spencer

I finally found myself; she was standing right there. ~ Eve Hull

On her last day, someone in the world died. ~ Eve Hull

I dreamed in my nightmare. ~ Hannah Frandsen



Utilizing Sustainability by Liz Hrachukha

Allen Ginsberg's The American Sentence

Far above the clouds, silence. My ears bleed. But this is my favorite sound. ~ Caleb Payne

Love did not come naturally for me. It isn't like medicine. ~ Sophie Hill

The citizen is an ant crawling on the edge of a jar of honey. ~ Henry Sol

The storm is the biggest of them all; two trees dance in for the kiss. ~ Henry Sol

The clock's chimes fell hollow as the hands froze, signaling the outbreak. ~ Abigail Jackson

In that moment, I held the past in one hand and hope in the other. ~ Ryleigh Morris



Future in Our Hands by Liz Hrachukha

Tracy Rice Weber

Why did you add the quote from *Sorrow to No Sorrow* by Ruth Stone? Is she someone who has inspired your art?

Oh, yes— Ruth Stone, Mary Oliver, Lucille Clifton, Toi Derricotte, Natasha Trethewey, Ada Limón, Roseanna Warren, Jude Nutter, Marie Howe, Leslie Miier, Luisa Igloria...and the list goes on. So many influencers. That poem, “Sorrow and No Sorrow” speaks to the subject matter in *Tools & Ornaments*. Loss is a generous slice of the human experience, and the older you get, the more you embrace the imprints made by your past. They’re always with you, holding you in every here-and-now and every what’s-to-come. Our sorrow and joy are bedfellows, very yin and yang.

We noticed that in your poems you reference and write about the negative aspects and memories of your life.

I think I give more energy to the positive memories; but yeah, the hardships tend to be “louder,” don’t they? Back when we lived in a duplex, I remember talking to a friend about the disturbing voices I’d hear through the walls from our neighbors. She said something that stuck with me — “The angry voices tend to be the ones that carry.” Maybe that’s the case in the book?

Losing my parents—both of them so young—was something I wrote about for a long time after. I’m only just getting on the other side of that obsession, and it’s been sixteen years since my mom’s death. Twenty-six since my dad’s suicide. In remembering my dad, I had to acknowledge the struggles we all experienced through his undiagnosed mental illness; but a big part of the reason why I had to write

“The Level, the Coping Saw, the Claw Hammer” was to document the joy he brought us, as well. A person can live a tragedy and comedy simultaneously, can’t they?

Do you ever struggle with recalling memories from your childhood and does this affect the writing process?

No, I wouldn’t say I struggle with childhood memories. If I’m writing about a memory, it’s because it’s left a deep imprint on me. My brain and heart carry scrapbooks full of strangely specific random moments. It makes me wonder if our earliest memories work like Google Maps taking street view shots of our homes. You’re just rolling along, living your life, and then at some random moment there’s a photograph taken that stays put, even if you have a broken toilet on the curb and the grass needs cutting. It’s what was captured, so that’s what sticks. You might prefer for that image to be right after you dragged the trash bins around back and laid down fresh mulch, but it didn’t work that way and you’re powerless to change it.

Now, I have changed some of the small details within my memories on purpose. For instance, in “Pawn” I didn’t hock my grandmother’s bracelets. I considered it but I couldn’t do it so I hocked something else. And the neighbor boy in “Blink” didn’t actually live in that experience. He lived in another experience around that time—in an uncomfortable act of aggression that I haven’t yet written about directly, but likely will. So for that poem, I morphed the childhood experience of watching friends tear lightning bug’s backsides off to decorate themselves with an unpleasant memory about a boy who rode my school bus.

In your poetry you come off as very honest, but do you ever hold back in what you include in your works?

Yes, I do. I certainly do. Before my dad's death, he brought to light some childhood trauma that I reference in "The Level, the Coping Saw, the Claw Hammer." I don't have it in me to get specific with that trauma. I'm sure I never will.

We, as a staff, have talked a lot about tools in reference to your title, Tools & Ornaments. How have tools changed throughout your life? Are there tools you have now that you did not consider as tools before? How might a reader interpret tools metaphorically?

Yes, they really have changed. Everything's changed. I was just explaining to one of my sons why I tell them I'm "turning the channel" on our television! Or why I say I'm "hanging up" the phone!

One tool that comes immediately to mind is the folding wooden measuring stick my dad often used (instead of the retractable tape we use now or some magical tech tool.) Even though I pinched my hand almost every time, I couldn't help myself from fiddling with it like a toy. I loved the satisfying way it folded in on itself. Sort of like the paper maps we used to pull out of the glove compartment to find our way.

I think memories can be tools we use to sort through traumas—to trace their shadows and hang them in a row on a pegboard wall. It helps make sense of them. And it gives us a chance to use them in positive ways—how we've used them to get to the place we are now.

Yeah, I chose the particular tools in "The Level, the Coping Saw, the Claw Hammer" because of the metaphorical possibilities—finding balance, trying to cope, sometimes tearing at the very things holding us in place.

Has your poetry style changed as your children have grown? Have they had any effect on your writing?

I wish I'd had it in me to record more while my children were growing up. There were so many beautiful, magical moments I'd like to bring back. As strange as it sounds, though, I don't remember as many details about that time in my life. It was sort of a big blur. "Not a Lion" came pouring out from the memory of my oldest son's comment eavesdropping on my phone conversation. Sometimes it only takes a few words to trigger a flood of memory.

I recently found an old composition book that my husband and I kept to write notes back and forth when the boys were very young. For the first decade of our marriage, he worked a second shift job to be with them during the day, while I was at my 8 to 4pm teaching gig. We only saw each other about 24 hours a week—nobody had a cell phone back then so communication was very different. I might mine some poems out of that notebook.

Writers are always looking for inspiration; what was the strangest thing that has inspired you?

I'm inspired by the ordinary, everyday stuff of life. Even if my observations don't make it into a notebook or my laptop, I often think in lines of poems. What seems to inspire me most is the way beauty can spring up in chaos.

I guess it might be strange to be inspired by domestic chores. In our house we actually iron clothes. Nobody does this anymore. I get pretty good inspiration when I iron. (Notice how wrinkled my clothes are right now?)



Do you ever struggle with focusing during the creative process; if so, how do you combat this?

I wish I could tell you I was one of those disciplined writers who sets aside sacred time for the muse on a regular basis; but the truth is—focus has always been a battle for me. I get all jazzed up about a project and then quickly fizzle. That's just who I am and I tell you, it can throw me into a pit of depression—all that gets started but not finished.

The best remedy for my attention span is seeking out a space where I'm being held accountable, where I'm given a deadline. When left to my own devices, I tend to flounder—organize the spice cabinet or clean out my sock drawer—any and everything but sitting with my work.

Taking a class at The Muse here in Norfolk is really good for shaking me out of a funk. Also, scheduling meetings and correspondence with other writing friends helps. I have a long-time sisterhood from The Writers Studio run by Elaine Fletcher Chapman in Virginia Beach for years. My friends from the MFA program at ODU are a great support and can help me with focus. Just recently I was introduced to a new circle of poets through Saint Julian Press. Yeah, getting with my people is critical to my focus, to my process.

Were you a poet in high school; if so, what was your writing experience like?

Yes, I wrote poetry in high school, but never in pursuit of publication. It was enough to do it for myself. I had some very special English teachers in high school who fostered my creative writing. One such teacher, Jo Ann Hunter, is now a dear friend, forty-five years later! She's quite an amazing poet and artist, though I didn't know it at the time. All I knew was that when I was in her class I felt seen and heard and appreciated.

About Tracy Rice Weber

After 34 years teaching English and Creative Writing in Hampton City Schools, Tracy Rice Weber retired to place full beams on her own writing. Since graduating from the Old Dominion University MFA program in May of 2021, she's enjoyed teaching posts there, as well as The Muse Writing Center. Rice Weber now teaches First and Second-Year Writing Seminars at Christopher Newport University. Her chapbook, *All That Keeps Me*, was released by Finishing Line Press in September of 2021 and her first full-length collection, *Tools & Ornaments*, was released by St. Julian Press in October of 2023. In April, her heroic sonnet crown, "The Level, the Coping Saw, the Claw Hammer" was published in Volume 34.2 of *Calyx, A Journal of Art and Literature by Women*.





The Company I Keep

Tracy Rice Weber

I thought I'd outgrow a lullaby,
that long division worked itself out

eventually. With more years
than cakes could hold candles,

I wouldn't need your voice
calling hello, calling me awake

to question every station of the heart.
These pages are my mother now,

sorting out the broken bits,
dropping pennies in a jar.

Who can be more than you,
carrying me in your body?

I'll always see your lipsticked
mouth in the moon.

One Year

Justice Alexander

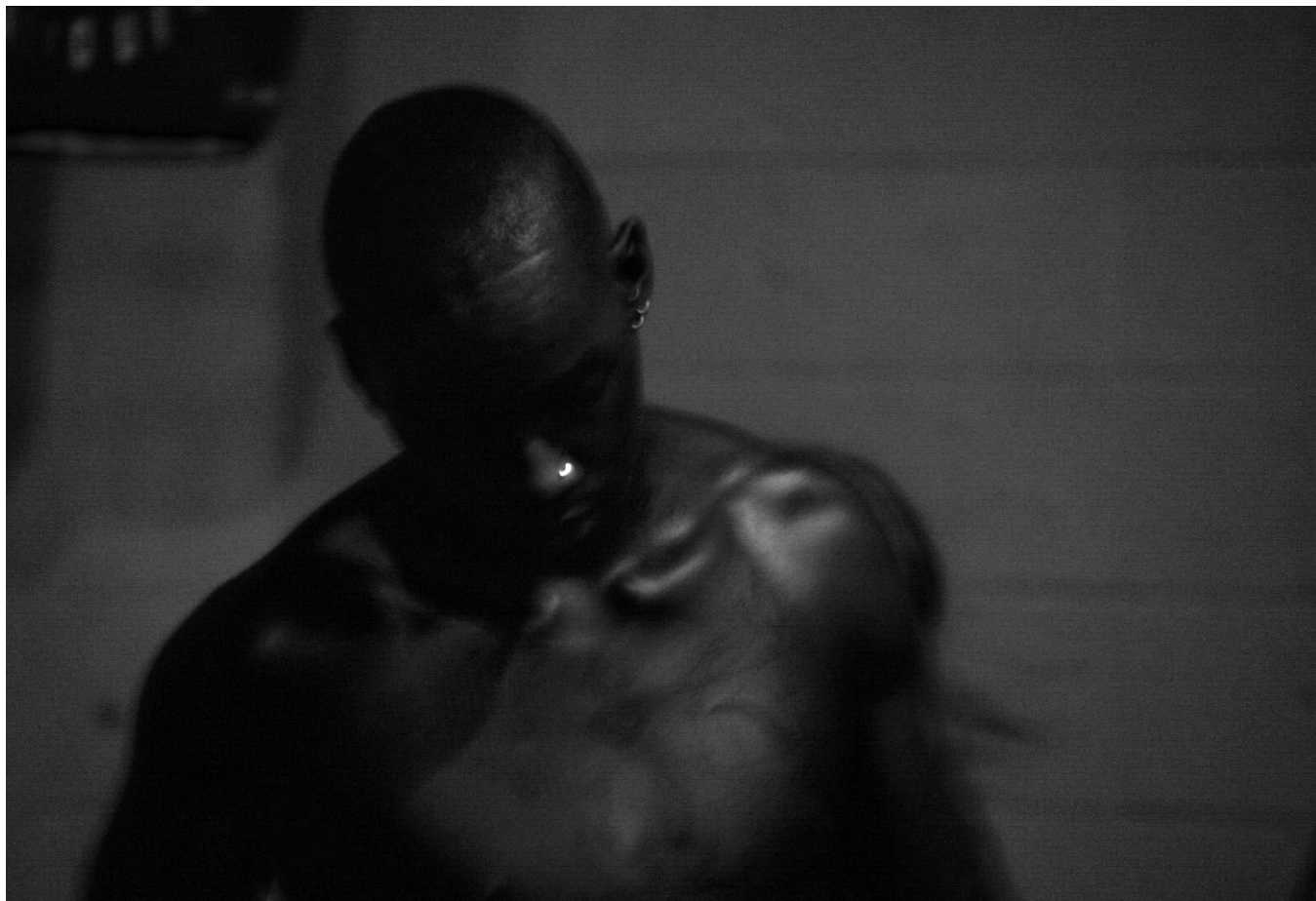
Grab, go ahead get going
Give your head that garb you love showing
Gathering steam, a stream seams, no sowing
Graveling dreams still growing

Mystical thoughts, pacing, chasing
I know the pieces will fit it full
In a tendency to burn a hole in what is culled
A million miles from home now
A lackey's castle to go plow

Too far the kingdom grows, too bit to see
A travellin' man tells me you will wait for me
But he's only a man

Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

Repeat.



Two Braids

Abigayle Cheney

My mother says I have my grandfather's hair. Reaching towards stars and carrying history
but

too short,

too choppy.

My braids barely hold a coil, more broken ends than river bends, and too closely reflect
the short history

of our family.

If I am blessed to carry my grandfather's hair, then I carry the weight of our family identity.

Not a weight to be carried above

the shoulders.

When my hair billows and folds in a multi-color sun scape it's not the colors I should show
because what about

my ancestors.

My brother didn't get my grandfather's hair, so I have to be the living memory but

it's just not

enough.

My two braids just

can't

reach.

I try to hold my head high and adorn these locks with a new family history created not from
fake myths

of belonging.

While it is too short to reach a grave my hair can grow to show the dawning

of this new

familial age.

My mother says I have my grandfather's hair reaching towards stars and carrying history
but

these coils will be the carriers of new stories.

This past will not die, but this future will live

and I will proudly carry them both within my grandfather's hair.

Ocean View Elementary

Devin Smigiel

It is the cold metal of the front doors where I stood for safety patrol and the static of the carpet underneath the secretary's desk. It is the weight of the door to get into my mom's guidance office and the chipping baby pink and royal blue paint on her walls. It is the junk closet I wasn't allowed to go in and the secret basement where the janitor napped, the bright cafeteria that was rumored to once have been a hospital. Peeling tape on the ground of the pre-K hallway to keep us in line and the sounds of gossip from the teacher's lounge. It is the bright EXIT sign lighting the walk to the art trailer, the caterpillar I found on the fence keeping us out of the Maritime Forest and the footprints of bigfoot we found in the field that was our playground. It is the bowties our principal wore when he sat in the little room with the almanacs behind the library to broadcast our announcements. It is the oversized and haphazardly tie-dyed t-shirts worn on field day and the field trips to the beach. It feels like nothing exists outside of Ocean View Elementary School. It is the hand-printed sign made by my second-grade teacher taped to the staircase reading "Remodel in 1 year!" It is the old school, now the fenced-off backyard of the new school. Only existing in my memories.



Old Entrance by Miranda Kidd

80s Ghazal

Anna Findlay & Zoe LaBeff

Dancing in the disco light, the music pumping, rolling on the blades
Gripping onto the firm wall, hoping I don't fall, rolling on the blades

She cooks, she cleans, she washes, she is the foundation of the household
Warming up the TV dinner, prepping the food, chopping with the blades

He rode his bike under the sun, he arrived at school to his dismay
Joined his friends in the classroom, holding his scissors, cutting with the blades

The mower roars, the grass blows out, she watches from the porch with a drink
He's paid to come at noon, his tools will destroy the bush, sheering with the blades

A teenage girl, hair freshly permed, heading to the mall with her girlfriends
The mall days won't last forever, Anna and Zoe, some people are sharp as blades



Ascending by Lily Tamura

Three Keys

Devin Smigiel

My dad owns an estate junk removal business. Two to three times a week he gets a call on the landline phone in his makeshift basement office, exchanges the mandatory, “I’m sorry for your loss” and “Let me crunch the numbers for you,” then uses the same fading Sharpie to mark the date in his National Geographic: National Parks calendar my mom got him for Christmas. I know this routine well, as the laziness pandemic that has allegedly plagued my generation has not been overlooked by my father, landing me a role as his assistant/apprentice/secretary for the remainder of the summer. The requirements of this job are minimal- when Josh-the-19-year-old-who-didn’t-go-to-college and Marco can’t come in, it is my responsibility to help clean out the houses of dead grandmas and alcoholic uncles. It is a mindless and monotonous job. It is a tiring and time-consuming job. It is also a paying job, so I try not to complain.

Last week, on a particularly sweltering Saturday, I found myself in the kitchen of a ranch style house situated between two palazzos like a tricycle parked between two Ferraris—the “before” picture on Extreme Makeover. “Big job,” my dad had stated, not the usual case for divorced empty nesters. Tasked with clearing out the drawers and pantry, I expected a fairly traditional assortment of cutlery with the occasional presidential collector plate, until I got to the junk drawer.

Most houses have a junk drawer, randomly picked based on convenience, maybe once used as a spot for spare paper clips or receipts, given little donations until eventually it won’t close all the way. They contain the misfits that don’t belong on the counter or in your pockets, making up a small army of things that you want to keep but don’t quite want to look at. Treasure troves of trash.

As I began the process of sorting between the give-aways and throw-aways, one object reappeared. Three sets of house keys, each on their own keyring, decorated with assorted keychains. They were crudely marked with sticker labels, names scrawled in marker: Amanda, Ryan, Josh. Remnants of a time when a family lived in this house, coming and going as they pleased. As I held those weathered keys in my hands, each one carrying the weight of memories long faded, I couldn’t help but wonder how they ended up in the forgotten corners of a junk drawer, melancholic tokens of a family’s final chapter.

Changed

Isabelle Ballard

Blueblack phantom
Through the window, hide
Lilac storm
A seam of light, briefly
Milkwhite sadness
Days and days and days on end
Blueblack hour
Vanishes the trees
Lilac dream
You emerge from, changed
Milkwhite joy!
Shatters into diamonds



Fervent Entropy by Nathan Kraus



Amish Girl, City Girl

Ellie Rodgers

Fluffy Cow by Hannah Bonheur

She's a cute city girl, used to be Amish.
Amish no more – now, a city girl.
No more open fields; small yard of the city.
She sits,
she huffs,
she begs,
she bites,
she's dramatic,
a drama queen,
drama llama.
No more open fields; small yard of the city.
Amish no more, now, a city girl.
She has a lot of energy.
She zooms,
she runs back and forth,
she chases her tail,
she has a lot of energy; only a small yard of the city.
Amish no more – now, a city girl.
She's a cute city girl.
Legs like a horse,
brown eyes like beetles,
eyelashes like spider legs.
She's a cute city girl, Amish no more.
No barn,
no open fields,
small yard of the city.
She's a cute city girl, used to be Amish.

The Giant Alaskan King Crab

Marc Greco

George Booth was a man.
George Booth was a busy man.
George Booth was a businessman.
He was happy.
George had moved to Baltimore five years ago for his brand new job.
George had moved to Baltimore five years ago for his husband, Bob.
He was happy.
George worked hard, he liked his rest a lot.
George worked hard, he liked his restaurant.

There, he was happy.
In reality, it's Simon's Restaurant, not George's.
In all honesty, it was somewhat run down, not gorgeous.
But George was busy, he hadn't time for somewhere fancy.
Simon's was next to his office and tasty enough to strike his fancy.
The last five years, George had gone to Simon's each and every Friday.
Each time, the same order: some okra and oysters, the fried way.
Same job. Same Bob. Same food. Same mood.
George thought it high time for something new.
George thought in silence, waiting for his menu.
The waiter, a handsome man, waltzed through the door.
The waiter was a handsome man George hadn't seen before.
"What can I get'cha, guy?" the waiter asked, his accent Transatlantic.
"What can't you get me? Oh my..." George wondered, his mind unpacific.
"Something Pacific!" shouted George, as he tried to find his bearings.
"Something specific," the waiter ordered. His mind sailed to the Bering.
"Giant Alaskan King Crab, maybe? It's the daily special."
"Giant Alaskan King Crab? Oh, baby! That has potential."
But Friday's special wasn't crab. It was a baked potato.
"But this Friday's special, not drab, thanks to this handsome waiter,"
thought the foolish Mr. Booth.
"A beauty like that can only tell the truth."
George sat there, patiently awaiting his crustacean.
It took almost an hour, much to his frustration.
The waiter came back.
George jumped up. "Ack!"
George had waited so long for his food to arrive.
George never could've known his food would be alive.
"It's alive!" said George, his voice filled with fear.
"Not alive, undead," the waiter said, his voice filled with cheer.
"What's the difference?" asked George, cowering from the beast.
"Well, something that's alive wouldn't make much of a feast."

"Bon appétit, monsieur." The waiter dropped the leash. The crab was free.
It roared a terrible roar, showed its terrible claws. George tried to flee.
The crab crawled so much faster. George's flight was to no avail.
George would have to fight with fork and knife and tooth and nail.
Alas, the crab was too strong. Much to his dismay,
This one was a dragon this George could not slay.
The Giant Alaskan King Crab turned George into Mr. Booth puree.

Portrait of Eric
After Gertrude Stein

Ryleigh Morris

I think he thought I thought he thunk he thinks I thought about he
He thinks a lot I thought he thinks like a thinking thought

The tick of a clock the tock
Tick tock the clock tocked the tick tock
Tick tick tock tick tock tock
Time goes he thought

He runs
Run
Ran
Ran by Running
Lap over and over and over again and again over runs over keeps running tick
Speed run runs faster tock

A picture a smile a frame a picture
The camera takes a picture of a smile
A camera the camera shutters
He shutters at the clock the clock the
Clock tick tock the clock the smile in the frame the laps in my brain

But why why but why the why he why he he he hehe why
The why the why the laps in my brain you you hide the why

A fence I'm on the fence you hide you hide you hide the gate
The gate is closed you closed the gate but I'm on the fence the fence he
The fence he built around and closed the gate

The music plays the song the music sings a song that sings on loop he runs the songs again
the songs that play in my brain he runs the songs loop my brain the music plays

Why he the fence he closed he runs around the smile he shows tick tock the time runs out
the music stops he runs no he no he no

No

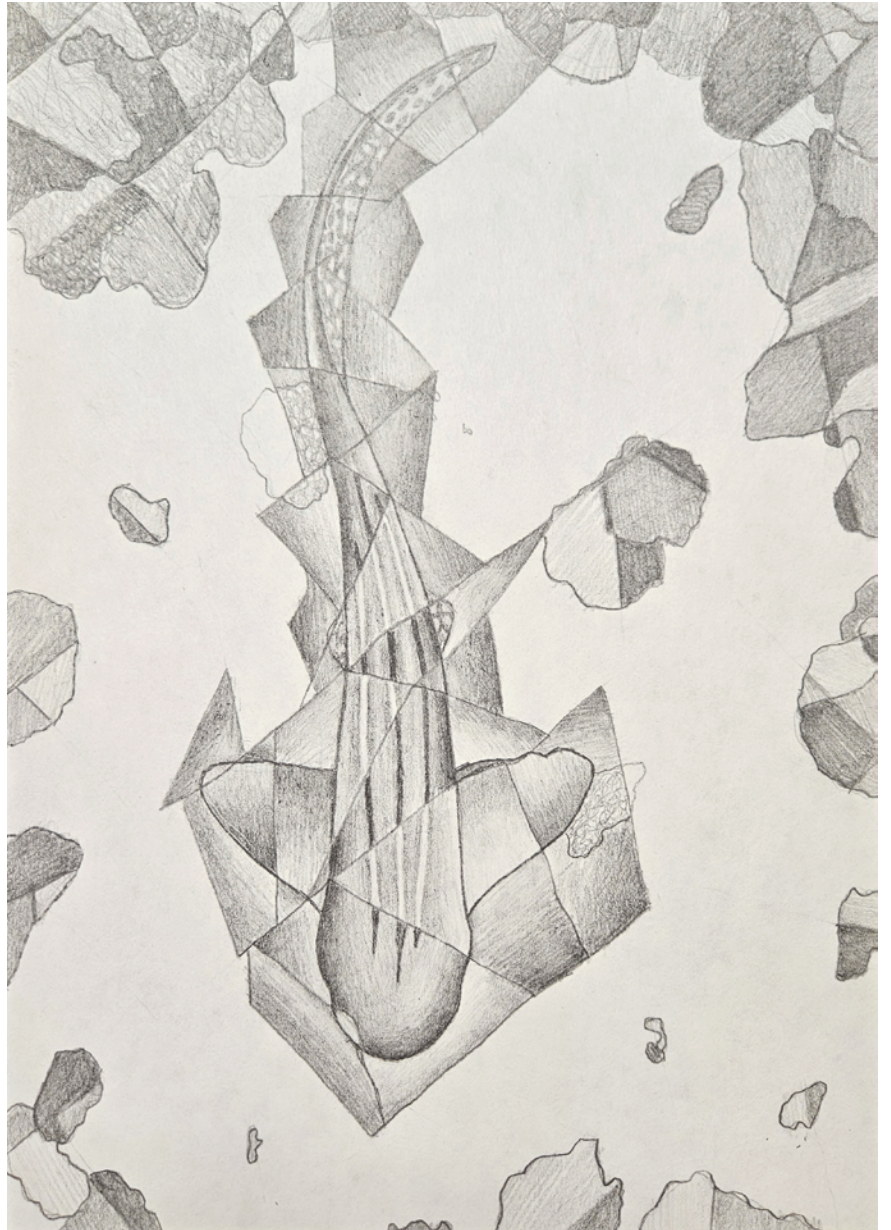
No

No he runs the music no he loops no he just no?

Release

Miriam Willock

Pen on the page
paint on the brush
the movement of the emotions
hidden under the ink
the plastic encapsulating the never
ending
pain released when the stroke hits the
wood
the colors reflecting my mind
the fire of the emotion reflected in
the reds and blues showing
the blaze stuck inside finally visualized
finally outside the confines of my own
mind
released into the beauty of art



Mariner's Watch by Jessica Woodward



The Engine Room by Marin "Aaron" Green

The Lonely Man

Marc Greco

Have you heard?

Zibilich and Hayes' Carnival has come to Santa Fe!
Everyone in town has been waiting for this day.
Even mean old Mr. Earl is feeling a bit gay.
So don't dismay, for the carnival is here. Hurray!

There's popcorn, corn dogs, and candy apples galore!
Oh, boy! Oh, boy! Nobody could ask for anything more.
There's Ferris wheels and bumper cars, so much to explore.
Come, don't be a bore. Zibilich and Hayes' is right at your front door!

Little yellow lights dot the rides and booths, like insects in an insufferable, sweltering summer. Derek stands under the shade of a fading plastic tent, watching as the riders board the carousel where he operates. "What's that noise?" Derek wonders. "It sounds like a rat that just found a piece of cheese." He looks over and sees a little boy giggling, holding both of his parents' hands. The father helps the boy onto the horse while the mother smiles. "Bad parenting," Derek thinks to himself. "The boy should learn to do things for himself. Mommy and Daddy aren't always going to be there to hold his hand."

The next two riders in line hand in their tickets, a young couple holding hands. "Why do they do that? It just seems unsanitary." Derek watches as the two walk towards the carousel, his eyes never leaving their hands. He wonders if he will ever hold someone's hand. "Obviously not," Derek thinks as he looks down.

He looks back up. The couple's hands are separated. The girl climbs up onto her seat. Derek feels a pit in his stomach, a weight on his back. The ride starts. Derek starts. And so Derek continues. Not a real man. Not even a real horse. Just a hollow shell, living a life of traveling and running in circles that never seems to get him anywhere.

Aliyah Pitters

Book after book after book, and yet it has yielded her no results. Vicky doesn't know how much more she can take. Her skin crawls; she tries to ignore it. Just like she ignores the wisps of pale blue hair in the corner of her eye. The soft laughs that chime in her brain like those wretched church bells. It's not real. The smell of dust and despair is thick in the air as yet another page is aggressively flipped in heavy desperation. She'll get her back, she will, and then the itching will finally stop.



Neon Night by Emmanuel Goodwin

After the Accident

Biankah Torres

Niven rushed to Stillwater Memorial Hospital after he hung up his phone. His pupils widened in shock, his hands shook violently. The sensation of adrenaline ran through his entire body. He couldn't believe what he just heard. One specific question ran through his mind. Would she make it out alive? The answer was always the same – no one knows. He sat with her in the hospital room and watched as her condition deteriorated. All the IVs and medication were intimidating. He was afraid. Niven did know one thing, though, and that was the fact that he could've prevented this.

wedding day sonnet

Thea Glab and Jasmine Newton

why are you standing there waiting for me
your steps lighter than a feather, falling
your back pressed against the willow tree
can you not hear the morning birds calling
warning you to run from the coming storm
you ignore them in anticipation
such hope can be considered an art form
the air, sweet like impending damnation
i trace your steps; mud sinks into my shoes
harpies stare, waiting to pick me apart
as we whisper a curse with our i do's
i dread this future; it's only the start
this kiss seals our fate, forever sinners
from this day forward, for better or worse



Lost in Thought by Autumn Meyers

Madelaine: An Elegy

Cora Cowan and Abby Larkin

You kept your scarlet secret close
Inviting high men to your high tower
Bells ring high unmasked, disclosed
They whisper salts but wear your flowers

Menagerie, Magdalene, Genevieve, Madelaine
Blonde bomb, zeppelin, bombshell, we've got him
Spider, her long legs, pale now, dead thin
She left her heart on the radio line, black list

Now after all your secrets rise above
All your body's turned to dust
Red sparrow flies through the procession
Dives crowd deep and hides with a message

Crimson feathers on the floor
Ruby lipstick stain on the stained-glass door
Clear as she'll ever be
Wine red, she held the key

Now she flies through hell, banished banshee
Cold wind, Styx crack, fancy free



Streamline by Marin "Aaron" Green

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Sponsor: Eddie Dowe

Policy

The Cupola features the writing, art, and photography of Granby High School students. *The Cupola* staff accepts original submissions; final selections are based on individual merit. Works to be considered must be submitted by the designated deadline, which will be on an announced date the first or second week of April. Submissions are accepted through English, creative writing, and art classes or may be given to the *Cupola* advisor or staff members. The staff reserves the right to edit submissions, including art and photography, when necessary. After publication, rights revert to the author/artist. You can find this year's volume online at Granby's library homepage, including archived volumes.

Colophon

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