

The Cupola



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Cover: Guardian Angel by Martha Parsons

Inside Cover: Deyana Johnson

Back Inside Cover: Veiled Passageway by Mateo Mallari

Frigid Saunter by Mateo Mallari



Warm Tea

Vienne August

I fracture in the morning light of Sicily
The world wakes again
I cannot breathe as the world breaks around me

The curtains blow wide letting in the breeze
Last night's candle sputters out, sets the
shadows into spin
I fracture in the morning light of Sicily

The cool wind kisses a bare knee
peeking out of bed, a turtle leaving its pen
I cannot breathe as the world breaks around me

It carries in, from under the door, a color
seeped in honey
Whatever it touches drowns in its amber secretion
and I fracture in the morning light of Sicily

I will give up every cent of my money
to gain this newfound already lost emotion
for I cannot breathe as the world breaks around me

In this lonely moment of serenity, I grasp the
unknown so quickly
Just in this brief moment I feel enlightened
before I fracture in the morning light of Sicily
and I cannot breathe as the world breaks around me

Two Walks

Owen Andrews

There are sidewalks in Arizona that boast puddles, that choke on the sprinkler water the grass refuses. I have never seen grass glow quite like it had in that mid-morning sun, rising 50 miles west of Phoenix, reminiscent of another day in paradise.

The Wigwam is the kind of golf resort you'd sell your soul to retire next to.

"It seems very walkable."

I say to my Uncle Don, having eaten that day, the lump sum of an airport sandwich, whatever microplastics one can find in a lemon-lime Gatorade, and 30-some Hi-Chews, before sustaining the 8 hours of plane ride I had to "raw-dog" after my headphones died.

"Yeah... It's very walkable."

Says Uncle Don. And then he narrowed his eyes and looked at me with the kind of mild disdain one reserves for the blatantly obvious.

It was the following morning that I field-tested my little idiot theory, making the mile-long trek to Walmart from my foodless room. You never hear about the lemon trees in Arizona, the ones painted white at the trunk to ward off the sun, the ones that litter the emerald grass with fruit too bitter for the birds.

Outside the walls of the Wigwam, the sidewalk was accompanied instead by gravel, yucca, cacti, and succulents. All massive, barbarous, spiked, outstretched towards one another like combatants frozen in place by the light of some alchemical star. I took pictures of them, as I imagine now, how the

passing cars of local Arizonans must have taken pictures of me.

Soon enough I exited Walmart, item in tow, and on my walk back noticed the plastic. There is always plastic. But this time it was bags, stuck to the sides of golden barrels and cups in the shade of prickly pears and straws basically everywhere, and I pitied the ravenous little guys.

The cool thing you don't realize about spontaneously deciding to pick up trash on the side of the road with your bare hands like a God-fearing schizophrenic is that most trash is actually plastic bags, and once you have one of those, you're doing business, honey. You got a whole plastic bag to put all the other plastic bags, instead of just holding them, and praying for another, larger plastic bag in the form of a trash can.

Eventually a trash can was found, and I made it back to my room. Along with food, my room didn't have any silverware. So there I was, with my single jar of Walmart-brand peanut butter. It was my vacation peanut butter. It was two fingers at a time that that jar was emptied, as each day I made a mental note to steal a spoon from my Uncle's house, and then never did. It ended up going home with me, and I can only wonder if the TSA agent who stole all the shaving supplies out of my suitcase found it novel.

It was the overmorrow of that day, that I went hiking with my step-mom, and the boyfriend of a relative who'd been around long enough to attend Thanksgiving. On the way to the hiking trail were houses with grass—some with trampolines—and the wooden frames of hundreds more, and the massive, ominous stone and steel office which I swear to god had "Techcorp" printed on the side of it, lurking a mile further down the road. The conversation was about the naked stretches of highway that my

step-mom remembered, the drive-to-the-hiking-trails that once was.

After applying sunscreen in the heat of late November, we descended into the wash. Mounds of mountainous sediment, gray as the moon, as though the shock of rain had torn the color from the land. Shallow roots jutting over the edge of the escarpment. The walk was quiet.

The trail led into the hills. Accompanied by the saguaros, green and brown in that season, engorged on last year's rain, some having collapsed under their own weight, others diseased and eaten. They stood tall and alien out of the brush, far from the rounded arroyos that winded into a single artery as they met the base of the pass, which broke to dust as it scaled the mountainside. Nowhere else was there white; there wasn't water enough for wind. Nonetheless, hesitant specks of lichen were left by the elements to bepopulate the sheer face of the cliff that lay to our left across the ravine. Jagged rocks sat along the path, striking out from the brown and tawny bands of stone. The dirt trail dissipated into rock, harboring angular little grasses, and in some places more saguaros sat awkwardly like beings posted along the footpath.

In the early hours of dusk, made illuminate by the sun cresting over the summit, was the extent of the wash streaming down the mountain, stark and white against the cliffside stone, like the ashen heart of some comatose demiurge. In time we would walk through its sands.

I chose to wear a wool shirt, I was sweating like a hog in those tiny dunes.

And through that desiccate sylvan scene, surrounded by sharp peaks on every side, we found water. It collected into a muddy pool at the bottom of a small doline, set in the middle of a boulder that patiently longed for the sound of thunder. Flies, no larger than the grains of sand, revolved lazily around the wetness. The edges of the doline were smooth, made of auburn rings. 100,000 years ago it must have been the size of a dime.

I rested in that place, dangling my legs into the hole, staring across the length of the basin. Once I'd breathed the air, I stood up to climb down the mountain, readying myself for the ride home, and to be reminded again of another day in paradise.



**Pernicious
by Mari Orts**

Worship

Mars Smith

I call you, little bird, the one that bleeds
I hear your mourning sound of worship
In the belly of the tall weeds

Nevada's sown its lily-white seeds
And though I love the rock, it
doesn't match your hip
I call you little bird, feel the breeze

The air rings with silence now, not even a sneeze
Don't you know that you could slip?
I warn you little bird, won't you listen, please?
You sing despite the air, filled with its unease
This, too, is a scene you cannot skip
I call you little bird, the one that bleeds

Though you love to love, you feel its sharp tease
That great purifying fire, the evil it will strip
You've seen the creek when falling on your knees
This silent love will kill you, not appease
That holy habit you cannot nip

I call you little bird, I'm begging, please
Do not doubt the words that leave my lips



Great Battle by Catherine Corrie

Haiku

**Yellow dressed women
purple umbrellas in hand –
The sky and waves crash**

- Jazlyn Jimenez

**A light smile
crests her face –
*How are you doing?***

- Vincent Lam

**Dead horse
rotting:
Dalton Highway**

- Janmarie Morala

**A skull
Mid-June
On the dinner table**

- Mars Smith

**The tower looms
behind the Momiji tree –
Shoes on the floor**

- Luis Duarte

**Darkness surrounds
the forest; reverse images –
Christ watching**

- Luis Duarte

**Smoke beckons me
turns my wood to embers –
I am the ash**

- Christian Dunbar

**I get ready for my day
Heart racing –
This damn knot in my hair**

- Anya Eichenlaub

**Her face smeared with ink –
Dreaming a life in colors
with both her eyes shut**

- Radel Alarcon

**Eleven eyes
beside a bus zone sign
in the cold winter**

- Finley Craig

**Lactic, legs burning
I choke on oxygen
Steady, the heart beats**

- Noah Fournier

**Ivory cow bones beneath
delicate white roses –
Her cold lips sigh**

- Sarah Hardy

Sijo

**The butterflies in my stomach have turned to moths – love to hate –
enjoyment to torture. I am everything I don't want to be.**

Take this hurt away from me. But, let me keep just one memory.

- Yaani Easter

**How many stars can you count in the heavens? Glimmering high,
millions, I think, eternally far. Time will pass us by here.**

What a blissful end; let us tally until they fall like rain.

- Sarah Hardy

Water falls gently upon my shoulders, whispering soft.

Lyrics half remembered spill from my sore throat like swift sparrows.

**May they lull prickling thoughts to sleep, wash notions down with soap
suds.**

- Sarah Hardy

My friends have left me

Birds in trees

What slow song is there now?

Chrysanthemums bloom in the garden

Breathe in sweetly

Where have you gone?

- Vienne August

Beneath the open sky, oceans roar, tides wax and wane endlessly.

Their rhythm mirrors constant struggle, a search to find stasis.

I, too, seek balance in my life, though worries storm my restless mind.

- Vincent Lam

Floating Lotus by Mateo Mallari



The Factory

Christian Dunbar

The Raven crows and disrupts our ritual
Orange ogre ogles at frail models sober
Bohr's child doesn't bleed residual

Pastoral factories, that's our parteciple
Where we repeat that bloody October
The Raven crows and disrupts our ritual

When cogs lose oil they become the victual
Other parts weep, but it's blamed on Kosher
Bohr's child doesn't bleed residual

Doped by the wrench, claimed as spiritual
Then pushed as a passenger by the prober
The Raven crows and disrupts our ritual

And the assembly becomes instinctual
Then bloater becomes the older
Bohr's child doesn't bleed residual

The gears then retake their visual
And the box dusts off its loader
The Raven crows and disrupts our ritual
Bohr's child doesn't bleed residual

Esoteric by Jordan Collins



My Healthcare

Finley Craig

Quickly!

Talk so much, share your thoughts

Dump all that is known into this different mass

Then you'll feel okay, Atlas

But the weights are not taken, they're only shared

Fraudulently interact, then you'll feel repaired

Share your pain, your salary

Hit that deductible, you'll be happy

Need real help? Dial up nine

Maybe this isn't enough, we can double up

We'll take your insurance, give you assurance

Don't like what I say? Make me go away

With one click, I'm gone, that's it

20 Calories

Yaani Easter

Normal kisses burn 6 calories

A passionate kiss burns 20 calories

A kiss of lust

Burns more than a kiss of love

The passionate kiss you give to

The one you are not supposed to be with

Is more impressionable

Than the one you give your newborn baby

With those 20 calories

Comes 20 more things you just have to know about them

Comes 20 new emotions you didn't know you could feel

Comes 20 less calories in your system

But 20 more ounces of desire



Flower Field by Kaitlyn McLean



If I could be a Koi by Shaniyah-Amor Upshur

Eclipse

Anya Eichenlaub

In your absence I am new
Cleansed and fresh
My outline scarcely remains
I am not empty, I am still whole

My gravity and I are invisible
Something almost godlike
Makes the tides rise and fall
And flood the Earth

You and your light call back to me
You are just like last cycle
But as different as I am
We are re-revealed

When you shine more
My grin is seen to all
Some unseen force pulls me back towards you
The Earth takes in half my light

I am almost whole again
My godlike strength fueled by you
The tides king and spring
Riverbeds exposed one hour, great floods the next

Finally, I am ablaze with you
I am full once more
Even when you are farthest away
My iridescence is worshiped

A rare phenomenon when two objects collide
Some ninety-three million miles turn to zero
We connect in something blinding
We're still here without watchful eyes

Stream of Consciousness

Sarah Hardy

I feel the weight of the wooden board press down on my head the birds sing soulful melodies from their tiny prison and I wonder how they feel I know how they feel standing in this doorway standing in this in between world won't someone let me out? How did I get here? I still remember the sweet popsicles we would eat in the park as children and how we carved our names in the wet cement in front of the neighbor's house wanting to be remembered because that's what we do, isn't it? Try to be remembered desperate to leave something behind some mark on this cruel and changing world something to say *I Was Here I Made a Difference* even if it's just initials in a sidewalk in a forgotten suburban neighborhood lost to the floods muddy water rising high higher higher it reaches the windows of my mind but I can't get out help me help me get out the door won't open the water pressure is too high so I sit on the roof watching my life drift by and away and the prickly pears peek out of the torrents I hope they at least survive this watery hell but oh how I loved the water the way it swirled and shifted the way it could stand glassy and placid and peaceful like I wish my mind could emulate breaking the surface like thoughts bubbling up from a spring but the river has iced the lake has frozen over and I'm stuck stuck beneath the surface stuck under the thick cold prison while the cold seeps into my bones it's so cold it's so cold and I move so sluggishly I think my muscles are giving out and I can't feel anything but the pins and needles stabbing my nerves as the ice creeps closer and I bang on the window to the sky but there's no one there so I know how the birds feel perched in the cage upon my head I know why they chirp why they scream though he may feed them they are not free I wish I could Fly away from here on delicate wings with feathers falling far drifting drifting like wood in the water but the seaweed wraps my ankles it pulls me close and whispers sweet nothings to my sodden hair and I scream that I can't stay but oh how the cold is comforting how the pain is familiar and so here I lie forever until the algae blooms on my face.



Sculling by Cassandra Davis

Q-Masters by Mateo Mallari



Stream of Consciousness

Naana-Aba Baffour

All my thoughts are unable to be contained in this letter, this envelope hinders this great wave. This wave, this ocean seems to be so vast, so great, so deep, but still everything feels contained. I strive for a breakthrough, an escape, but this spiral turns into a spring that just boomerangs. It's as if I was in an interrogation room, but the only other soul present is my own - does the reflection in the mirror show truth? Maybe I can face myself; it's a time of deep reflection, but everything around me seems to be a butterfly, without its vividness, without its wings, without its antennas - just wrapped up in a cocoon. Maybe soon I will be able to fly, to soar, to blossom, to ignore, all the doubts of the past, all of the things that just held me back from growing. They say it's everyone's first time living and this seems great to live up to: with every moment and interaction and dialogue and point of view, living is a coin toss, a vending machine, with anything up for grabs. Sometimes finding yourself just doesn't seem to be achievable, but with the right pollinators, it's possible that life could just be safe and sound.

Birthday Poems

August 4, 2007 - Once Again Christian Dunbar

Murder is the most human thing
today. The Ganges River begins
to flood. 20 million become
homeless. Foot and mouth
disease, in the United Kingdom
outbreaks. Al-Qaeda's leader
is killed in Iraq. We run from
ourselves to Mars.

April 30, 2007 Mars Smith

Twenty-three, a killer taking thirty-two:
Thirty-two hopes and dreams today. If only
the oldest memories are enveloped and handed over
to the Library of Congress, it will be hidden. Unlike
the soldiers we will send to Iraq, dilapidated and bare and
exposed for the world to see.

September 24, 2007 Vienne August

Stock market rises to a record high
in Brazil and currency increases by 11%.
Accounts of eyewitnesses - it was the biggest Burmese
anti-government protest. India defeats Pakistan

by five runs in the ICC World Twenty. Criminal
investigation into Israel's P.M.'s purchase of a house.
Statements of the Iranian president at Columbia University:
"The Holocaust was fake and gay Iranians do not exist."

Call of Ban Ki-moon for a special UN session
to discuss climate change. General Motors's plants see
union members walking off their jobs together without
a new contract. Parts of Great Britain severely damaged

by tornadoes. Former Pakistan P.M. begins her final
visit to the United States before ending her self-exile.



Interview with



Jane Alberdeston Coraline

When in your life did you start writing?

I remember beginning to write the summer of 1982. I wrote what I thought was a novel, filling one of those checkered composition books in a cursive story about a girl, a boy, and a horse. Had I ever ridden a horse? Did I know anything about horses other than what I'd read in the Encyclopedia Britannica? No to both questions. What I remember clearly is the excitement I felt writing into that world and what I imagined was a first kiss. There's a longer story here about not having any friends, growing more timid every day, finding solace in a small library of books. In the end, burying myself in the world of a book transferred to creating my own worlds. I guess that's what makes a cliché - - real experiences of human condition.

Have any specific writing communities influenced the styles of your poetry?

Two major communities inspired me, both occurring between the 1990s and 2000s: the DC poetry community and by extension the Cave Canem Foundation. I wrote with, performed with, and grew up with poets who taught me what it means to be a member of an arts community; more importantly, they taught me to call myself a poet and a writer. During my years as a mentee of Cave Canem, I was fortunate to workshop with a brilliant bevy of poets and learn under the wings of godheads, Cave Canem's founders Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady. The workshop sessions were invaluable, and though some of them have passed onto their next plane of existence, their teaching will remain with me forever.

In our own poems we take a lot from other artists and writers. Are there any artists that you draw inspiration from?

There is a long line of writers from different genres who have influenced me in myriad ways. For instance, when I need compression in a piece of fiction, I go to poetry, especially the poetry of Lucille Clifton or to Bashō. For the lush language and fantastic metaphor, I visit the poet Sylvia Plath or the author Arundhati Roy or poet and author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. For the art of enjambment, I go straight to Yusef Komunyakaa. For the power of an image, I knock on the door of Lucia Perillo or Sharon Olds. Currently I am reading Roque Raquel Salas Rivera, a Puerto Rican trans poet whose work transcends the tradition of a poetic form and reflects the silences/voices of a page's white space.

Being a professor, have you learned anything from your students about writing; has teaching changed your creative process at all?

This is a wonderful question not often asked. Students inspire me ALL the time. I sit in class listening, astounded by what students have created from a writing prompt or how they've been inspired by a particular author or conversation. Teaching always changes me in many ways: the way I teach, the way I read, the way I write. The day that it doesn't give me a new idea or process to consider or world to think about, it will be time to go. I'm lucky to find myself in those rooms where art is made.

Many of your poems address family, spirits, grandmothers, etc. Is family a source of inspiration for your work, and if so, how would you say it inspires you?

At the start of this interview, I talked about my early writing experiences being about romance and horses, worlds I knew nothing about. It was an escape for a 13-year-old struggling with low self-esteem. But there was a big shift after my grandmother died in 1990. Because grief makes you do big things, my mom decided to leave our home in Puerto Rico and take a new job in Mexico City, so my brother, sister, and I went with her for the adventure. And it was, but it was also a time to reconcile with the past. As I walked the city's undulating streets that covered their earthquake dead, I began to remember all my grandmother's stories, about the island of her youth, about hunger, about loss. Her voice began to roll around in my head. Writing her stories down, under the fabric of fiction, was the best way I could keep them, keep her.

Location is a major motif throughout your poetry, would you say that moving to different places has affected the focus of your writing?

Another great question! Growing up, I didn't live anywhere for more than three years before we packed, picked up, and moved again to another military post or base. Later, I moved around with my mom. The place I've lived the longest was Puerto Rico – from 2008 to 2022. All these locations affect not only the content of my work, but also its voice and the style in which I write. I'm still finding the Hampton Roads area, waiting for the first story or poem to come, wondering what it will say. And this time I'm ready to sit still.

And I should add that setting is my favorite literary element to read, teach, and write. I can't get over Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* lost on the moors in 19th century England or an AI droid *carefully* learning how to walk in grass in Kazuo Ishiguru's latest novel *Klara and the Sun* or the lonesome dog surviving the Alaskan wilderness in Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. Or Ayanna Lloyd Banwo's description of an old cemetery at midnight in *When We Were Birds*.

Your collection of short stories, *Vivid Gods* centers around different mythical gods intervening in the lives of people. What significance would you attribute to myths in relation to your writing, in the short stories or otherwise?

We are experts in creating our myths, even in our gossip. In Greek myth, people move against their fates only to find themselves again in the path of destiny. In the Ifa pantheon of gods, the patakis tell the stories of the gods, which become lessons humans must learn. In Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, the parables become lessons for life well lived. My grandmother's stories, especially her retelling of Bible stories, were adjusted according to the lessons we needed to learn in our youth. She didn't tell them all the same way to the same person either. That's how I knew she was an expert storyteller. My first supernatural stories came from her, my Abuelita. And Rod Sterling. And then Stephen King and Anne Rice and later in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. So, I can't avoid the myths, the tragic tales, the speculation of my own work. That is what inspired me to write *Vivid Gods*, to rethink the stories I've already been told.



We see you're working on a novel: *Colony 51* (very exciting!!). How has your experience with a longer form been, and could you see yourself writing more novels in the future?

The novel *Colony 51* is due for release this year by Jaded Ibis Press and, yes, it's very exciting! *Colony 51* is a speculative novel about a post-apocalyptic island in the Caribbean. It's a second novel for me; the first, *Sister Chicas* (New American Library/Penguin), was a collaboration with two other Latina writers, Ann Cardinal Davila, and Lisa Alvarado. I have two novels waiting in the queue of my brain, one a tragic horror story and another a love story. But they both have to sit tight till after I finish *Vivid Gods*!

About

Jane Alberdeston Coralin

Jane Alberdeston Coralin's work has been published in various anthologies and journals, such as *Paterson Literary Review*, *Sargasso: A Journal of Caribbean Literature*, *The Acentos Review*, *Rock and Sling: A Journal of Witness*, *Louisiana Literary Review*, and *Callaloo*. Jane's new novel, *Colony 51*, is due for release by Jaded Ibis Press. She teaches creative writing at Old Dominion University while working on a new collection of short stories called *Vivid Gods*.

COMING SOON

Colony 51

BY

JANE ALBERDESTON CORALIN

Viejo, Vejigante!

Jane Alberdeston Coralín



Mi viejo! Look at you! Man, where have you been? ¡Estás como coco! Yesterday you were a devil chasing children into church. Now look at you, on tshirts and bumper stickers, Hecho en Puerto Rico merch. You have arrived, Boricua.

Don, you a God, I see you turning god corners, eating god-ly. You got people talking, saying you dance in hurricanes, sing up an earthquake. You got whole volcanoes in you, waiting, compay. Y me cuentan que you once shifted Christopher Colon's sails!? Viejo, tú eres más viejo que the first track a bare foot left in the dirt. Pa'lante, papa!

Can't even imagine the waters you swam to get here. Por ahi dicen que you are who you are because tu mama was a Moor. But that is what Colony will do to you, my brutha, don't matter the conquistador. Turn you against you, that's the price of Commonwealth.

Nah, but really, where have you been? Tell me. The Motherland, right? Met up with your Benin brothers or maybe your cousins in Ile-Ife. I bet for the first time in 400 you spoke in the market, and nobody mistook you for nobody or said anything about the spikes in your mask. Tch-tch. Or maybe you took refuge as far as the Red Sea, slept with mermaids and other leviathans, or you warmed your body against a Dahomey campfire and finally fell to sleep in our people's long bloody dream.

¿Dónde tu ha estado, Papi? Yo, and don't say Orlando. You couldna gotten close to the lakes of the Ghirardelli without getting arrested. For what? Tch – you don't look like you belong, though you got stiffed selling oranges by the roadside or off-brand mouse ears. Did no body recognize the dull edges of the island in the way you walk, in the way you talk when you asked a cashier for some pop? You being a boy, not the boy from Loiza Aldea hawking tickets or wiping down plastic restaurant chairs or parking cars or standing roadside waiting for a day's work to drive up.

In those places, who were you, Viejo, whose Vejigante were you? Devil, father of the carnival, angel like the morning rising as you finally fell to sleep in a motel room overlooking another parking lot, the ironies of your loud jumpsuit you hid beneath the bed because on those streets you cannot live looking like a flare shot into the night.

But you're back now, right? You here for good, old man? You come back to stay? Maybe it's time to rest, you know, with this whole Covid thing. You don't have to hustle no more. Tía abuela will keep you fat with sanchoco and you will sleep like a baby in Bebo's old house – you remember him, he won the FEMA lottery and got a new tarp on the roof. Mira. Tu no eres el único. Remember Cuco? He's chilling in Humacao. Been island side for years now. Has no plan to leave. If you ask me, on him, retirement looks pretty good.

Over Stimulation

McKenzie Joiner

The itch, it never stops.
My skin's on fire, my body locked.
Each little scratch a frantic plea
but it's still there, surrounding me.

The heat, it clings, a heavy weight.
I'm burning up, I'm wide awake.
Every corner, every inch
I feel it all too much, too quick.



**Covering Disappointment by
Michael Harris**

Her chewing, God, it's deafening.
The way she bites, the way she sings.
A crack, a pop, a slurp, a smack.
Each sound attacks and pulls me back.

Her voice, it screeches, sharp and loud.
The videos drone, a constant cloud.
It wraps around my fevered mind
a thousand voices intertwined.

The fan outside – why won't it stop?
A constant hum, a creeping drop.
It blends with every noise I hear
and all I want is peace – please, Dear.

I can't breathe, can't think, can't find
a way to slow my racing mind.
Each touch, each sound, each pulse, each beat –
I'm trapped inside this endless heat.

I curl and squirm, but there's no way
to quiet this or make it fade.
I need the dark, the still, the calm –
but everything's too loud, too strong.



Sleeping Beauty by Christina Cuffee

The World is My Wishlist

Hobie Peterman

the frozen land
the world's black sheep
the vodka in the ocean
forbidden and shamed

the colonizer of the world
iberian beaches
waves crashing onto the beach

my six year language finally coming to use, the lost continent, never colonized

separated after birth
one an ally, one an enemy
same language, different voices
display beauty through separation

identity theft
colonization and gentrification
the loss of identity
the rich man's desires always fulfilled

a frozen landscape
locked in time
yet containing no timeline

blocked by some
never welcome
invited by many
always welcome
the world is my wishlist
sometimes never fulfilled

Chrysalis

Andrew DiGiorgio

As I remember things, minutes stretched out to days and weeks
An awful burning spread across my chest
That look in your eyes makes me think that all I ever felt was contempt

But I know that isn't really true
Because I still remember those times we spoke
And the things I thought of you then
The way I idolized you

But maybe that was just me seeing myself in you
I am nothing but a mirror of the people I've met
And you are no exception

I fall to the ground and lie in a puddle of my shattered self
Cold to the touch but I can't tell
Gnats land nearby and drink from it
And everything I was shifts
I am reborn from the husk of my old self

amygdala talks

Noah Fournier

my stomach dropped
when you said

you know the words
that you said

you think i'm a fool

you said

i don't know you, you said

not anymore, you

said i wasn't for

you, said

pack your bags

and get out of my

house

my stomach dropped

when i

stepped out the door and i

saw my way out and i

saw the sky

it hadn't changed at all

i mean it was

night, earlier day

but it wasn't purple nor fiery nor

falling or rising nor

anything but

what you often say

you changed here
the subject, reader

weatherman i thank you

the forecast can't be clearer

my stomach dropped

when we

meshed our thoughts

your quantitative

and my qualitative

the data shows,

you said,

it matters not

my stomach dropped

i said

it matters not



Bird by Lily Browder

Always on That Phone

Deng Mayom

You are always on that phone
whispered through the dusk
A fleeting sound, but sharp as glass –
You are always on that phone;
the hours melt like wax
dripping between your fingers
lost to a glowing screen.

You are always on that phone.
The moon, a silent witness, hangs heavy –
a metonymy for time slipping past,
its cold light mocking my reflection.
My thumbs dance across the keys;
an idiom of distraction,
a waltz with shadows
as real as fleeting dreams.

Pauses bloom between the words,
a caesura to hold my guilt –
but still, the pull of that electric glow.
Irony strikes like thunder:
connected to the world, yet adrift,
seeking solace in echoes
of voices that aren't here.

Teenage Fever by Jordan Collins



In the Name of Providence
Eben McCammon

The sprawling end of substance
Left to fester like a wound in the sun
Nothing left in the name of providence

The drag of your countenance
Shopping mall into homespun
The sprawling end of substance

The wrong kind of abundance
The incidence from which to run
Nothing left in the name of providence

Thoughts by Lily Browder



Ceding into nonexistence
The day that has once again begun
The sprawling end of substance

No room here for insistence
Stimuli but none to stun
Nothing left in the name of providence

The threshold of subsistence
Bone reaches for what is done
The sprawling end of substance
Nothing left in the name of providence

Beyond Blue by Kiara Lewis



Cranberry Smoothie

Sofia Still

I sip sip sip away at my
smoothie. Taste buds are

bamboozled. As I sip I write about
bloodlust. Turns my smoothie red

as I fill it with cranberries. There
it hits the wall

my bibliography thrown
across the hall. Crazy sounds

fill the air. With my cranberry
smoothie now in my hair.

Rattlesnake Song

Aidan Fackler

Lovely Songbird,
melodic and naïve,
the Rattlesnake stirred,
curled under an eave.

While the Songbird cried out
its songs of affection,
the Rattlesnake's doubt
married its abjection.

Heartbroken Songbird,
voice hoarse from screaming,
the Rattlesnake's words
were far from redeeming.

The next day a human
sat down in the grass,
a candle to illuminate
the Songbird's pass.

"Virtuous Songbird, oh
dear friend of mine!"
The Rattlesnake's throe
abandoned his mind.

He hissed and bit
and slithered far over.
The human he hit
with his fangs in the clovers.

When the dust cleared
and settled with dread,
he realized what he feared;
the Songbird, too, was dead.

With one last glance
at his impermanent friend,
his tail's solemn dance
symphonizes the end.

A Throne in the City of Empire

Jazlyn Jimenez

A throne in the city of empire

Some lonely two, please, make us anew

A knife in hand with her head in the clouds

A growing dread in her hands

City unraveling as the crowd grows blue

A throne in the city of empire

And with time, soon it'll rock by a wire

Crimson lights a flight, born to us new

A knife in his hands, with her head in the clouds

Let them light the fire

Skin marked by two, silver and golden hue

A throne in the city of empire

All alone in the ashes of a liar

A breath of what they knew they couldn't do

A knife in his hands, her head in the clouds

Blues of the crowd go drier

To the head, the breeze blew

A throne in the city of empire

Let the monarchs die in the depth of their own pyres

Is this a storm or a
constellation?

Sarah Hardy

It's funny how everyone we meet
leaves something with us
I am a paper mâché doll
held together by
scraps of your newspaper
Should I cite you in the bibliography of me?

I fear the unknown and
the length of a
F

A

L

L

but not from towers which touch the sky
more from
the height of the bar
and expectations too tall

The wheels are spinning
Gears are turning but
no amount of strength can hold the horses of my mind
Someone should chase down
that runaway carriage
and deliver my thoughts and prayers

Scarlet blood contrasts
the gold-edged glinting flash
Note to self: Don't catch a tumbling glass



Ocean Crest by Mateo Mallari

The Sin of Absence

Tommy Tong

“Seven Deadly Sins: Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Science without humanity, Knowledge without character, Politics without principle, Commerce without morality, Worship without sacrifice.”

- **Mahatma Gandhi**

Wealth without work – a fool’s gold, fleeting treasure
slips through fingers, leaving empty hands forever.

Pleasure without conscience hollows the heart, unseen,
a shell remains, lifeless, where joy once had been.

Science without humanity crafts tools for inhuman deeds,
dividing worlds, as suffering plants its seeds.

Knowledge without character fills heads but leaves chests bare,
truths amassed yet purpose absent – none to care.

Politics without principle spins truths into ash,
promises crumble, forgotten in power’s grasp.

Commerce without morality strips the world to its core,
values traded for gain, leaving meaning no more.

Worship without sacrifice speaks words with no weight,
actions undone by empty claims too late.

Jazlyn Jimenez

Her shadows cast, my haven
with her I'd implore
We could become forever

A vibrant, hand-drawn illustration featuring a large, brown, tree-like face with closed eyes and a serene expression. The face is framed by thick green branches and yellow bands. It holds a realistic globe of the Earth in its mouth. Below the globe, two hands are shown holding it; the right hand wears a green leaf bracelet. The background is a warm gradient of orange and yellow, with white clouds and silhouettes of people dancing, suggesting a joyful, communal atmosphere.

Life on the Big Screen

Noah Fournier

[illegible]

I Can't See

Vincent Lam

Light

On/Off

Flashlight

Light Light

Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight *Light Light Light Light*

Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight *Light Light Light Light*

Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight Flashlight *Light Light Light Light*

Flashlight

Light Light

Light

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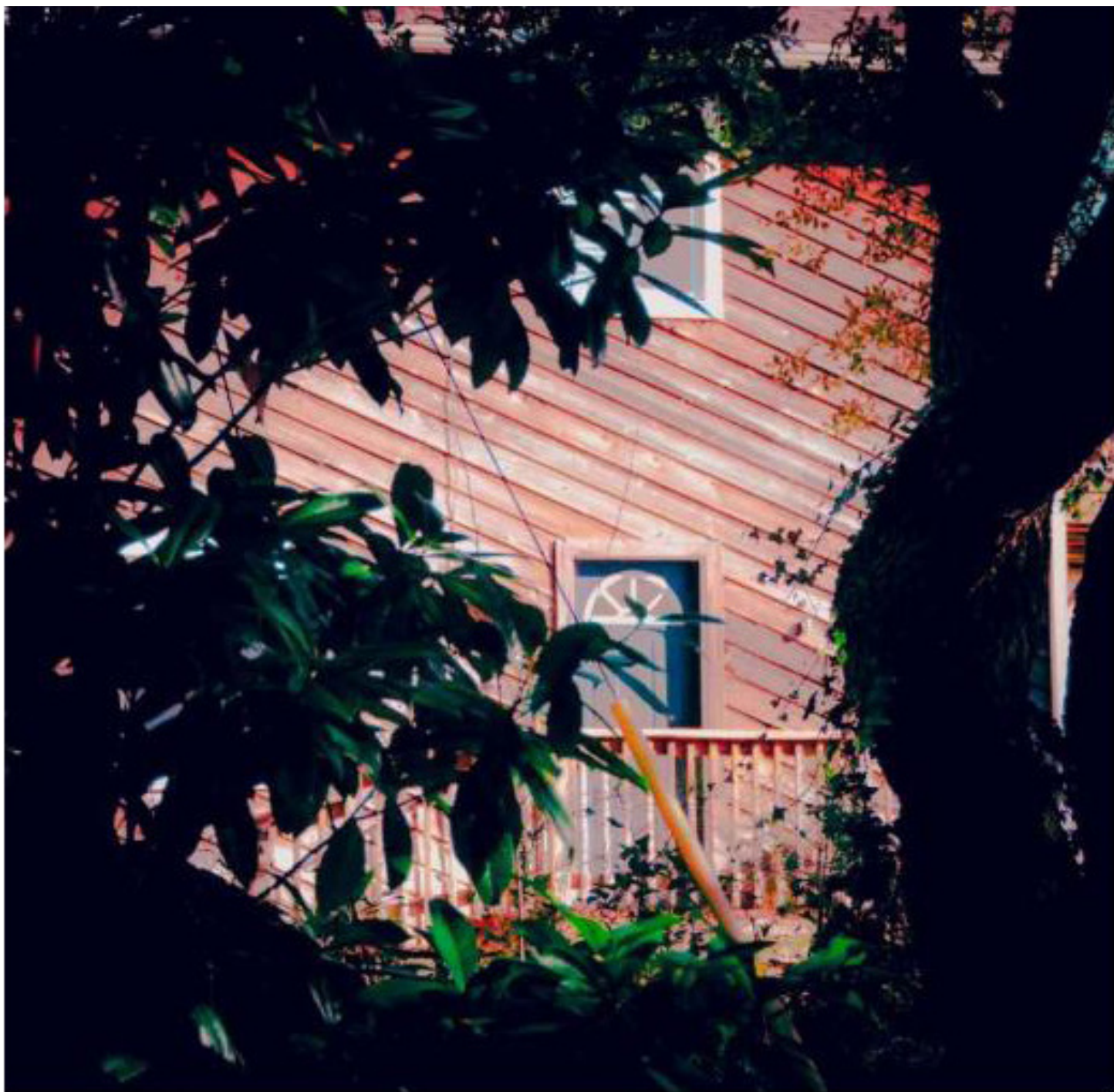
Mars Smith

Policy

The Cupola features the writing and visual art of Granby High School students. The Cupola staff accepts only original submissions created without the assistance of AI programs; final selections are based on individual merit. Works to be considered must be submitted by the designated deadline, which quite often will be Samuel Beckett's or William Shakespeare's birthday. Submissions are accepted through English and art classes or may be submitted through Cupola staff members. The staff reserves the right to edit submissions, including visual art, 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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Veiled Passageway by Mateo Mallari

Aba-Baffour
Alarcon
Alberdeston Coralín
Amor-Upshur
Andrews
August
Browder
Collins
Corrie
Craig
Cuffee
Davis
Dunbar
DiGiorgio
Duarte
Easter
Eichenlaub
Fackler
Fournier
Hardy
Harris
Jimenez
Joiner
Lam
Lewis
Mallari
Mayom
McCammon
McLean
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Smith
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