

**SALMON  
CREEK  
JOURNAL**  
ART & LITERATURE



2013

**SALMON  
CREEK  
JOURNAL**  
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SALMON CREEK JOURNAL  
Washington State University Vancouver

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In addition, thank you to all the students, staff, faculty, and alumni of the Washington State University Vancouver community who submitted their works to the journal this year. This publication would not be possible without your contributions.



## Letter from the Editor,

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2013 edition of the Salmon Creek Journal. This year, the SCJ staff strived to create a publication that encompasses a more modern approach, moving away from what had been done in the past editions, while still maintaining the customs established by the earlier publications in the years past. We also took great care to keep with the tradition of quality work that represents the talent on campus so well.

In the past couple of years, the Salmon Creek Journal has expanded more fully into its role as one of the three student media entities on campus. One of our major goals has been to promote student involvement, and throughout my two years of working with the journal, I've seen this organization grow and become more visible on campus as more people contribute to and come to know more about us.

This year, the journal received more submissions than ever before. In reflection of the design element of change, the theme that connected many of these works is transformation. Whether it is a photograph of pristine scenery that shows no hints of the past years of alteration that created it, a story about a family that is inextricably changed by tragedy, or a poem about the frustrations of self-realization, transformation is an essential aspect to many of the pieces this year.

As editor-in-chief, I have seen the amount of work that each staff member has put into the journal, the amount of care that is put into assembling every section, and communicated with every submitter that sent in work to be considered for publication. The Salmon Creek Journal is still a small, tight-knit organization on campus, but I am proud of the work that each person supplied that eventually become a part of this year's edition and I am sincerely grateful to have had a chance to collaborate on this project with my staff. I hope that our dedication and commitment to this publication comes through in the finished product, as well as that of everyone else who contributed to making it a reality.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isabela Oliveira". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Isabela Oliveira

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

■ EDITOR'S CHOICE FOR EACH SECTION IS DENOTED BY ■

## PROSE

<i>Gran</i>	■ Katherine Fisher ■	2
<i>The Boy Who Flew</i>	Amy May	7
<i>Picking Flowers</i>	Janae Green	11
<i>Whore</i>	Ali Benson	12
<i>besitos de mariposas</i>	Ashley Pirrone	16
<i>On the Rack</i>	Linda Augustine	17
<i>The Rivers of Spring</i>	Amy May	20
<i>Koi No Yokan</i>	Kerry Layne Jeffrey	25
<i>Goldfish Memory</i>	Katherine Fisher	28
<i>The Chute</i>	John Wolf	30
<i>The Water Pump</i>	Marites "Tess" Castro	35
<i>Revelation 16:3-6</i>	Kelly Schrock	36
<i>Amber Glowing Ecstasy</i>	Kimberly Lawrence	40
<i>In Perpetuity</i>	Dustin Davis	42

## VISUAL ARTS

<i>Mother Earth</i>	■ Kory R. Dollar ■	52
<i>Inuit Man</i>	Katrina Long	54
<i>Moonrise</i>	Faun Scurlock	56
<i>The Battle Of Rain</i>	Cambri Shanahan	58
<i>Forest Monster</i>	Kelly Schrock	60
<i>Untitled</i>	Dustin Davis	62
<i>Break and Consume</i>	Alexandrea Chaudoin	64
<i>River Car</i>	Faun Scurlock	66
<i>Soulless</i>	Amil Haddad	68
<i>Where We Buried</i>	Kerry Layne Jeffrey	70
<i>The Moulin Rouge</i>		72
<i>Blue Skies</i>	Kyle Olsen	74
<i>Class Notes</i>	Kelly Schrock	74

<i>Cowboy Vanity</i>	Kimberly Lawrence	76
<i>See Me</i>	Cambri Shanahan	78
<i>River Lookout</i>	Janie Black	80
<i>Fas-Neo</i>	Inahlee Bauer	82
<i>St. Helens</i>	Troy Flowers	84
<i>Another day</i>	Cyndie Meyer	86

## POETRY

<i>Death Was There</i>	■ Dillan Simmons ■	90
<i>Historiae animalium</i>	Christopher Chaffin	92
<i>Carousel</i>	Linda Augustine	93
<i>How Did She Take All That and Live?</i>	Kelly Schrock	94
<i>Mar amado</i>	María Lee López	99
<i>Water on Fire</i>	Kerry Layne Jeffrey	100
<i>Ivy</i>	Christopher Chaffin	102
<i>Rats Flee Ships</i>	Kelly Schrock	103
<i>The Compass Rose</i>	Teresa Lane	106
<i>Sediment</i>	Dillan Simmons	107
<i>Aesop's anachronism</i>	Dustin Davis	109





**PROSE.**

# ■ GRAN ■

BY KATHERINE FISHER

My clearest memory of my grandmother is of the way she looked under the florescent lights in her old shop, hunched over as she slicked a pelt. The room would be hazy, a forgotten Pall Mall clamped in the stitches of her lips. I remember how the stale blood would stain her hands, gather along her cuticles and settle into the crevices of skin around her joints. She held the county title in the taxidermy of native mammals; foxes, badgers, raccoons, a doe: glassy-eyed and silent, they all watched over her, frozen in pose.

Her hands were all carved up from working with so many blades. As she got older, her skin seemed to thin; it draped loose over her swelling knuckles and softening veins, age-spotted and tobacco-stained. Sometimes she would fall asleep on the couch at night, and I would run my child fingers over her scars. When she slept, her fingers curled into her palms so that her hands looked animal, like paws or talons, such elegant machines.

Gran was out at the butcher's making a pick-up, and the uncle that was supposed to be watching me was eight beers under, wrapped in the stacy haze of a mid-afternoon double feature. His eyes were glassy and drooping at the edges, flickering the stilted reflections of the television. I was on the floor, just beyond the glow, leafing through a faded issue of *National Geographic*. The shag carpet bit into my elbows under the weight of my head. The smell of Uncle Toby's cheap beer was building in my throat and I kept trying to swallow it down. Mounted above the fireplace, Gran's first boar watched over us both, its disc nose dusty and limned in the false glow.

I shifted back onto my haunches and rubbed at the serrated carpet imprints on my elbows. Uncle Toby's eyes flickered towards me. "I'm going to get a drink of water," I told him, and he just grunted and nodded. I eased onto my feet and slipped into the shadows of the kitchen; the fridge kicked and rattled in a corner, and the linoleum was cool through my socks. At the opposite end

of the room, the crack under the door that led to the garage and Gran's shop spilled light over the mottled surface of the linoleum. I looked over my shoulder, back towards the living room. Uncle Toby hadn't moved. He'd probably forgotten that I was in the house at all now that I was out of view.

The doorknob was cold in my hand. The metal was all dented in on one side from the door being thrown open against the oven. I hesitated, feeling the rippled metal under my fingers, course and peaked like a blown bullet. Gran's shop was on the other side of the garage, but I could smell the hot stale scent of rot even from where I stood, and I could feel my insides rise to meet it.

The garage light was on, but the shop's doorway was dark. I crept around the dead Chevy, and edged past the work bench where some creature lay prone, lumped under a stained tarp.

The shop was full of sharp things and prowling shadows. I tried never to let my nerves reach my face, though, where Gran could see it, or I was afraid she'd send me inside. I liked to sit on a stool by the door and watch her work, the way her hands moved, so sure. I'd seen her slip and cut herself once or twice, but even that motion seemed certain and deliberate. It was always me she asked to bring her the bandages, the bottle of bourbon: "Would you reach that amber bottle down for me, Rhea? You're getting to be so tall, girl. You can have a swig, but don't tell your Ma, deal?" The liquor lit me up, burned full and heavy in my belly. It turned everything into a dream, and perched there watching Gran I felt like some ethereal omniscient presence, like I was watching over her, another of her creations.

When I reached the door to the shop, I stood to the side and peered in at the shadows. I went still and made my breaths shallow and slow. Everything was bated-breath quiet. I had the prickling feeling on the back of my neck like I got when I was doing something I wasn't supposed to; it was a measure of guilt and defiance, a warning.

As soon as I got old enough to understand, I'd asked Gran why she killed things. "Don't be an idiot girl, Rhea. I haven't killed anything. Look: I've only put them back together. One day, you'll see that." She didn't look at me when she told me this; her sinking eyes were fixed on a lump of bloodless flesh on the table in front of her, a fox turned gut-out. As she dragged a razor over the surface of it, I remember the way the blade snagged against the skin, and how the wounds she left didn't bleed in the blade's wake. Under those frosted florescent lights, her hands were washed of color; only the blade between her thumb and forefinger glinted, sharp as diamonds, as it caught the light.

My shallow breathing and the distant words from the television were all that I could hear, crouched there in the doorway like some predator sniffing out its prey. I slid my hand over the wood of the doorframe and up to the light switch just inside the door, feeling the tickle of peeling paint under my sweaty palm. Everything went completely still for a moment; I held my breathing, and the mumbling from the television hit a lull, and before anything had the chance to suspect my presence, I flipped the switch. As the lights stuttered on, my eyes took in each form in the room: the proud mounted heads on the far wall, the desiccated carcasses on the bench, the positioned mounts that sat along the tops of the shelves and cupboards. Everything was still and silent; I couldn't catch the gaze of even one beast.

“What are you doing, Rhea? Get back in here. You don't want one of those jumping down and coming after you, do you?” I started at the sudden break in silence. Uncle Toby was leaning against the doorway, chuckling through his beer-heavy throat.

“I thought I heard Gran come back,” I said, and shifted more fully into the doorway. I could feel my back rippling and prickling, some sort of forgotten instinct telling me never to turn away. I felt my hand up the wall and switched the shop light off and followed Uncle Toby back inside, where the sour smell of hops hit me fresh.

When Gran got back from her pick-up, I helped her unload the truck. Uncle Toby had nodded off, and Gran just rolled her eyes when she saw him and waved me outside, where she lowered the tailgate and helped me up. I slid the bundles along the bed of the truck to where she could reach them. Some of them were blood-stained and left my palms frozen and tinged a watery red. When Gran had divided everything between the two freezers in the garage, all except two little bundles she left out on the work table, she sat in her chair and took a drag off a fresh cigarette.

“Pull your stool up, Rhea. We'll start small.” She slid one of the bundles on the table towards me.

My blade slipped and sliced one of my knuckles open almost as soon as I'd begun, as I'd slid the razor along a part I'd made in the rabbit's fur. I pressed my eyes shut to hold in the tears. I could feel the hot blood unfurling over my iced skin, and when I opened my eyes again, I saw that the blood had run

down the side of my finger and pooled along the cut I'd begun to make along the rabbit's belly.

I expected Gran to click her tongue at me, or at least tell me to be more careful, but she didn't say anything, just dug out the bandages and twisted the cap off the bourbon.

The biggest mount in Gran's shop was a doe's head. It won Gran her first county title; Selena, she called it.

Selena leaned out from the wall, nose lifted, nostrils wide. Her eyes were round and dark, curious, pinned ahead; they reflected the room in distorted silhouette. Dry, yellowed teeth were visible between her black lips, and her ears were pulled back, slanting towards her skull. I was allowed to touch her only once. I'll always remember how strange and featureless I looked, trapped in her glassy eyes, like a fish in a bowl.

"I bought her hide from some prick down in New Mexico," Gran told me once, "He really let her suffer. Let her bleed 'til she was cold." She settled her eyes on Selena, gave her a sharp nod, and went back to stitching up the full belly of a red fox.

Gran was wildness disguised as lipstick-stained bottle rims, as a monthly subscription to *Good Housekeeping*, as wavy-thick bifocals.

I have a picture of her tacked up in my dorm room; in it, she's young, tight-skinned. She's laying on a dock somewhere, blowing smoke at the camera. Her hands in black and white are so smooth and unblemished, and her eyes look silvered and new. Her smile is all teeth. She said that it was the last picture her sister took of her, and then she handed it to me and told me to keep it safe. Her voice was steady but muddled, and her eyes were glassy, and I could see just a sliver of her tobacco-stained teeth between her lips.

The last time I was home was for Gran's wake. The house was swarming with people, and I started getting too warm so I slipped out into the garage. It was freezing, and all the sweat on the back of my neck went icy against the raw winter air. Through the door, everyone's voices were muted, and the sounds didn't form into words. I leaned against the washer for long enough to finish

my drink, and it settled there in my belly like some celestial ball of flames. I looked across the garage, past the dead husk of the old Chevy, and into Gran's dark shop. I wondered if her stash of cheap hooch was still in there and if my uncles had touched anything since Gran had gone into the hospital.

I left my heels by the washer and padded over the frozen concrete floor in my stockings. I crouched to the side of the shop's doorway and felt around the corner for the light switch. As the room lit up, my eyes darted to the walls, snagging on the muted gaze of each beast. Only Selena seemed to reach towards the door, hoping to find my scent unthreatening, hoping, perhaps, to catch Gran coming home.

# THE BOY WHO FLEW

BY AMY MAY

My father married Constance when I was two. He left us both a year later. I never saw him again. Constance was a bad dream from which I could never be woken and yet she was as present as the hand that remembers her in these lines. Constance took me to those places nobody goes with intention, introduced me to the kind of people who thrive in shadows, and convinced me to see facts as no more relevant than fiction.

All of us have the potential to be disastrously complicated when pushed. We each possess facets of desperation we can't begin to fathom. It is in the hollow hand of darkness we capture glimpses of our appetites for comfort. Like children, we are unable to predetermine which people or places or myths in life will guide us to mental cliffs from which we would willingly leap. Even now, a grown woman, I have not escaped the claws of her relentless grasp. I retrieve the nightmare Constance was from the obscured recesses of my memory with the intention of illuminating a monster in the daylight of a new morning's mercy.

When Fariq came to our house, or should I say the house of Constance, he was four and half. He was as shy and fragile as a hummingbird. His little boy eyes were teeming with fear, but as enticing as two dark, round chocolate truffles. His hair grew in brilliant ringlets encircling his chubby olive face — a face that was the only place on his tiny frame nourished by a hint of roundness. It would be a disservice to neglect mentioning his absolute beauty. When the social worker dropped him at our doorstep, I took in his nervous hands and the way they grasped the worn edges of his frayed superhero backpack. I remember thinking the superhero wasn't even a real one. It was like a poor imitation of Barbie, done just well enough to know the superhero was in reality a nobody. Why do we give children imitations of the real thing? Imitation leather, imitation crayons, imitation families? It's wrong and we know it, but we smile and nod and indulge the fantasy of fake as if we are somehow making up for what isn't.



The social worker briefly explained that Fariq had very few possessions with him as his situation was complex, but that in the bag was a favorite stuffed dog he was deeply comforted by and a blanket his daycare provider said his mother had insisted he be given for naps. The child's parents had immigrated here. They died in a car accident while he was at daycare and not another living soul was anywhere close by to take the child. The agency was desperately trying to reach his family in Iran, but there were endless complications and it could be some time before they could place the child in the arms of his real family again.

I watched as Constance wordlessly discovered Fariq's fear. She was inexplicably drawn to strong, harsh edges. This child, all soft eyed, unfortunately round in his ability to cope and weakly curved by his lack of courage was not attractive to her. Cleverly she performed the obligatory fawning over him as the social worker introduced him to her as his new foster mommy; I caught Fariq's shiver as Constance ran her icy fingertips over his little boy cheeks like a feline purring soft and low while caressing its prey.

The moment the door closed, and the social worker left Fariq alone with Constance, she became her true self. A cruel self few people ever observed. "You look tired, Fariq," she said, removing the soft a as she pronounced his name, distorting it to sound like freak. "Come give me your backpack, I'll put it up in a closet to keep until your mommy comes to get you, or your father, or whoever it is that will someday come and take you home."

The poor child didn't utter a word, his eyes simply filled with tears that flowed one after the other down his blushing cheeks, and caught in streams upon his trembling lips. Without the least bit of resistance he allowed her to take the pack from him. She would have preferred a child who fought back, but Fariq was far too timid to come against his new mommy.

Never have I seen a child so filled with grief he was emptied of sound until I met Fariq. He fit quietly into our household; he moved about as cautiously as a wild animal not wanting to be seen. His parents were dead, and though he lived, he was no more than a ghost, a shell, a human void of reason to do more than survive. How can it be a tiny person senses meaning of losing one's parents as deeply as did Fariq? And yet, he most assuredly did. I lingered outside his door as he sobbed himself in merciful isolation, at day's end, to sleep. I heard him wake in the night calling, "Mama!" and then there was the inevitable silence as his foggy mind cleared and he realized she would come no more to comfort him. I lay in my bed knowing he was in a place void of any comfort at all. He resided in

a foreign home his parents had never introduced him to—the home of Constance—rigid, hard, lacking in empathy Constance. His parents went to heaven while Fariq was left in hell.

For reasons she never explained, Constance decided to return the child's backpack to him one sunny afternoon three months after she had taken it. For the first time since his arrival a smile nearly took hold of his precious little mouth and curled it upward once again. Fariq removed his blanket from his bag and painstakingly tied two of its corners around his neck. Then he removed a well worn, much loved, stuffed puppy from the backpack and buried his face in its cotton candy colored fur. He sat there for the longest time, a miniature man wearing a blanket as a cape, a teeny tiny super hero grasping a silly blue dog. Constance watched him from the distance. Shame, in all of its heaviness, crawled through my veins as I observed the child comforting himself with familiar objects from a mother and father who came no more.

Early one morning while Fariq slept, I ran across the street to borrow a drill for Constance from the neighbors. Just as I was returning to the house, I looked up and there was Fariq in the small dormer styled window of his on the second level of the house. To my horror I watched as he slid the window open and crawled awkwardly out to the edge. *My God what is he doing?* I thought to myself, and then I realized the awkwardness was due to the fact his blanket was tied around his neck. He clumsily managed his way out onto the frame of the window like a undersized clown balancing along the edges of a box in the air; he paused to reach back inside the window and brought out his puppy.

I recall every damned moment in great detail, as if it took several minutes, but in reality it all happened in an instant—just an instant, really. “Fariq!” I cried, “Get down from that window! Go back inside right this minute!” The child stared at me with no expression for the briefest of seconds, and then in an unprecedented moment of courage, holding his puppy carefully, he tottered to his feet right there in the window, “Look!” he yelled down to me with the pride filled delight that is only found in children. “I’m a super man!” he cried out. It was then I saw his smile.

With those words, Fariq leaped into the thin air right before my watching eyes and crashed to the concrete porch below. I ran to him but it was too late. I was too late. His body lie there crumpled, blood rushing from his ears, his blue puppy turning an odd muddy shade as its brave super hero owner lay dead grasping the little dog ever so close. Fariq held that silly stuffed dog as close as

any mother has ever held any child. I picked him up in my arms, careful not to allow his beloved dog to slip from his now slackened grasp. I rocked him softly as if I were his own mama even though I knew he was gone and with any luck at all, he was in his real mother's arms in a place where children and mothers and fathers are never separated. I kissed his perfectly still cheek and imagined him running, laughing, and even flying. I imagined he was in heaven.

# PICKING FLOWERS

BY JANA E GREEN

Deception is the arrangements of flowers in floral shops. Beautiful together, friendly flowers, but the stems don't belong together in bundles. Its bundles are made from tiny devils with pink bows, picking secrets from the lawns of neighbors. Their mouths giggle like the bits of green grinning from between teeth across a table. It screams and curses like a teenage smoker, but you avert your eyes because you know that someday it will move out.

Desire is the pedals smeared on sidewalks. The vibrancy stains the pavement until time can feast on the memories of colors: reds, purples, and blues. The colors are like stop lights; no one slows at yellow and no one wants to love in yellow. Collisions happen at these speeds, but it's the experience that maims with gentle hands, like Lenny's fondness for caressing rabbits.

Doubt is the insects gnawing for nectar. Their greedy eyes are the nightmares of real things, human things that make you sweat and bleed seas of thorns. The thorns take heavy bites into marriages, gnashing at birthdays and holidays like the destruction of landscapes for multiplexes, superstores. Blame the men in plaid. The trees have never felt a tighter squeeze.

Danger is the plume of scents that perfumes the nose. The smell is familiar like a bad habit in the form of a mask, the face of a friend. The friend is like shaking hands with a mirror, leaving a trace of fingertips and messages foggy with breath. The reflections can be both knowing and scared, but always look like your flowers.

*Your flowers kept in special vases,  
your flowers in hands that shake,  
your flowers that burn with sticks,  
your flowers of all size and shape.*

Deception is the desire; doubt is the danger.  
But life is the flowers, it is the flowers.

# WHORE

BY ALI BENSON

The whore has shiny shoes and greasy hair streaked back. Waiting alone, with uncrossed legs, the whore's gut hangs over tightening pants; the plastic button is about to break. Sitting upon a rolling chair, the whore impatiently shuffles and shifts to find comfort, but the chair simply trembles. The whore's fattening, ring-clad hand holds the chair's arm to steady this. The result is a loud creak in a quiet, darkening room. In daylight, the room surrenders an aged yellow from its walls, a neutral color. But it's getting late, and the color starts to fade. The whore's eyes flicker, and from chapped lips and a long day, the whore yawns.

Glass windows surround the room. Outside, tired men who have given up on the day retreat from their offices to indulge in their exploits. Looking upon this, the whore exhales a sigh that is almost as dark as the falling night. With that sigh comes a feeling within the whore's shiny shoe, a feeling of rot that has persisted on the whore's foot for about a week now, itching to the nerves. It's a reminder that these feet are neither good nor strong to stand on. The whore would see a doctor but too much shame decorates the foot. Luckily the shiny shoe covers this. The whore's rotting foot begins to tap anxiously. Sweat fires down greasy red skin. The whore thinks about giving them what they want, about sacrificing something long fought for, and the whore's weak heart beats faster. It's strange how so much can change and be lost in a simple act. But the whore feels relief in thinking they have something to give back in return.

Something useless. Meaningless. Something of no moral value, something overrated. Cold, hard. Is it worth it? The whore's confidence is shot down. And slowly, the night falls. The glow of the street lamp lingers over dirty sidewalk corners and seeps into the windows.

Finally, a knock on the door. The stronger sex walks in. The whore's gut is sucked in, a smile is flashed. These are all meager attempts to contest the poise of the stronger sex's stride. The whore's foot stops tapping, but the whore

continues to slouch. The whore and the stronger sex both notice this, but the whore's poor posture restricts any change. The whore flashes a brighter smile, but continues to duck submissively like a dog.

The whore and the stronger sex stay in the room, for the sake of business. They close the curtains, and take off their clothes, the servitude of the action so naked and obvious. Greasy hair somehow looks so fitting with the fat that pinches every inch of the body, and the sweat on red skin turns as cold as truth. The room remains stiff, like the whore's shiny shoes, which don't come off because of the shameful rot lying underneath.

The beam of the street lamp outside sweeps its fingers against the window, pressing so delicately in an attempt to expose the flaws and ugliness of mankind. But for now the glass is skimmed over by the thick curtains. For a little bit longer the reality of what is being done remains oppressed. There is no light inside, no light to tell who is who, or that the room is yellow. All that can be sensed is the regret and shame adorning every inch of the whore's fat. But what is thought, what is felt, it doesn't really matter, because even after all that waiting, the planning, the sitting and tapping, the loud creak in the room with glass windows, it is all done and over with in short time.

The whore feels guilt.

Betty pulls her pants up over her legs after a few minutes. They have grown strong and admirable tone from walking in the city in her heels. She wanders over to the window, draws her hair back then pulls up the curtain. Beneath her, she sees some men walking. In the dark night, by the glow of the street lamps, these men look so weary and defeated, scrambling on the sidewalk to their home fronts, legs lagging behind them. As if they are trying to flee from the light of the street lamps, slumping in safety on the dark corners. Betty realizes that she knows some of these men. Funny, she thinks, how these very men carried themselves with merit and virtue when the daylight had shown upon their exteriors.

The street lamp outside is level with the room they are in and much light floods Betty's vision. She thinks she would enjoy the view below much more if she were only a few stories above, a bit higher up in the building. But this is Mr. Monroe's office, and this was the place he felt safest meeting for the first time. "Expect Thursday's call," Mr. Monroe's voice cuts into the room, so softly.

Betty does not reply, and continues to stand by the window. There is nothing to be said, and she already knew those words would be coming. With her back to Mr. Monroe, Betty can do nothing but smile to herself. She realizes she got what she wanted. With her muscle of power, it's her opportunity to stay alive in this world--no, better than alive. The payout is good, and she knows, like every pathetic man, Mr. Monroe needs her. Betty nevertheless depended on the comfort of hearing those three words: expect Thursday's call. And after years of hard work, she marvels at how it all slowly stacked up this way, how she has to get what she desires simply by coming to a man with compromising values, a man who has to call his wife and tell her he will be coming home late from the office; he was on the brink of settling a case, and don't wait up because he'll be too tired when he gets home anyway. Still, Betty climaxes at the thought of the money, the power she is getting out of this deal.

And those thoughts retreat back into the room because Betty realizes there is a deathly silence in the wake of what has been done. No trumpets sounding off, no cries of defeat. In the scope of things, Betty's sacrifice was much too small for anything like that. But the promise of her future pulses pride from her heart, through her core and straight to her limbs. That pulse pushes one foot in front of herself, and then the other. Meanwhile Mr. Monroe is still struggling to put his pants on.

Leaving with what she came for, Betty continues towards the door. "I look forward to Thursday," is all she says to Mr. Monroe. He deserves nothing more. She continues to the elevator with graceful stride and valiant shoulders even though no one can see her.

Betty neglected to close the curtain and the streetlight continues to murk through the window, exposing the man's flaws. Mr. Monroe finally wrestles up his zipper. Out of breath, he must sit for a few minutes upon the trembling chair. He pulls out his phone and makes a note about the upcoming deliberation with the senior staff concerning which of the newest, youngest, and brightest lawyers will replace Jim's position. Jim got fired about a week ago and his cleaned out office is waiting to be occupied, same payroll and a name on the plaque included. The office is a few stories higher than this room with the yellow walls.

Mr. Monroe is going to tell them that Betty ought to replace Jim. She is smart and shows a lot of potential, and is already well-liked, the most obvious choice of the candidates, but Mr. Monroe, the most powerful in the firm,

wanted to see how much he could get from her. He didn't think she would actually do it. For a while he thought lowly of her. But after tonight, Mr. Monroe could tell that she could care less about what she was doing. She could care less about him. She left him surprised and feeling used.

Mr. Monroe itches a scratch beneath his hair that is slicked back. He uses that hand to dial his wife's number and call her once more, he'll be home sooner than he thought, the case is finally settled. The call ends, and it is finally time for him to scurry home, but Mr. Monroe is not quite ready to get up. The rotting feeling has come back to his foot. In the yellow room with the windows, he nervously taps it again, glad that he's got such a shiny shoe to cover it.



# BESITOS DE MARIPOSAS

BY ASHLEY PIRRONE

Looking through old pictures of you. You always seemed to be starving. I guess that's what drugs do. My heavy eyelids fall closed as I remember the moment it was taken. You trembled but gave twitches of smiles and besitos de mariposas that reassured. In between camera flashes you turned to look behind us. Forever looking behind us. On those nights with only the moon to light our path. I would watch the stars, you would watch our backs. There were times I convinced you to lay in the grass, hoping that with your back against something solid you could experience the beauty of the heavens with me. Parched, begging you to drink in my vision. Never quenched. Lecturing that I'd never find happiness among those celestial beings. While you feared eternal rest, I longed for it. I fought in life, you fought for life. Like two hour glasses whose sands ran at different speeds. Laying close to cure the chill of the early morning fog. Physical proximity the restitution for mental divergence. You told me it wasn't worth it. I told you, you didn't need it. You stopped waking up with coke snot plastered all over your face. I stopped waking up wishing I hadn't.

# ON THE RACK

BY LINDA AUGUSTINE

I hand my car keys to the young man behind the desk.  
I look deep into his face for any sign of trustworthiness and find  
an unreadable face: handsome, dark eyes, dark hair.  
But quite expressionless, no reassurance, no contempt, nothing there.

He glides through the huge garage door, targets my parked car and with the  
keys I just handed him, pulls my still legal baby SUV into an empty bay.

*I really don't have money for this. Plates expire at midnight tonight. It's 10 am.*

I begin to wonder about the character behind the plastic mask:  
Have I just entrusted my life to

A sadist, pleased to think of me twisting into a pretzel in the waiting  
room?

A carrot blunted by boredom?

A murderer, sizing up the lone woman behind the glass window, who  
now has no means of transport for escape?

Just a shy guy...or maybe (do they even exist?)... a good guy?

My eyes trail his every move.

He notices my scrutiny, but shows no response, attaching lifelines from a  
little box on wheels to an otherwise invisible portal somewhere under my  
little putter's steering wheel.

“Minimum, \$45, just to diagnose or locate the trouble. Probably \$95, usually  
takes about an hour. Then we can estimate the rest.”

*I really don't have money for this...or “the rest.” Plates expire at midnight tonight. It's 10  
am and New Year's Eve. I hope this garage doesn't close early. I hope DEQ doesn't close  
early.*

I continue my careful watch, but his stoic face remains statue still. He's too young for a Botox treatment and anyway--he wouldn't Botox his whole face, would he?

I scour the walls, the desk, the windows for any warning, any tell. Desk is neat, professional. Walls and floor are clean. Signage is succinct, not overbearing.

An open door, behind the desk. The backroom reveals the same organization, but wait—  
lying on a little table in the corner, a stack of what looks like recognition plaques, several. On top of this stack lies an American flag, ceremoniously folded into a tight triangle, supporting what looks like the dust of centuries. I know it's a clue, but I can not interpret it.

Now it's 11 am. My poor little Sportage looks like a patient melding with a slow drip, still hospitalized, tubes attached to wheeled monitors.

“It's definitely the emission *something something* purge valve. Bad news is I don't have one here. I can order it and with the holiday have it here by Tuesday, installed for sure by Wednesday.”

*But, my plates expire today.*

“Let me check my source.”

*Quick! To the Bat Phone!*

“They don't have the part. Will have to order from Kia, probably a week.”

Looks like I'm in the hands of the Marquis...am I squirming? I feel my face tighten like a rubber band about to break.

“But my plates expire today...is that your only source?” I'm hopeful.

Now it's 11:30 am.

“I’ve found one in the next town over. I’ll go get it myself when I take lunch. I’ll have it back here by 12:30 and we can install it real quick. You should be out of here, easy, by 2 o’clock at the latest.”

Yeah...a likely story. Still looking into his eyes, trying to perceive any hint. I’m really leaning towards sadist, but Indecision throws a Caution.

“Can you tell me about that flag?” I had to know.

Turn of his head, following my gaze.

“Oh that. That’s my brother...Iraq. We started this shop together. I haven’t had the heart to move it. I really should take it home or something. That was his office. He was the bean counter.”

No facial change, his flat eyes look at me again. Surreal.

The big question barrels out of my mouth: “How much?”

“Oh,” he says absent any emotion. He passes me the estimate.

“Oh!” I say and release the deep breath I’ve been holding all morning.

“Yeah, only charged the minimum on the diagnosis...And it should only take about 15 minutes to install. That shouldn’t set you back very far. And you can still make DEQ.”

Suddenly, he smiles. Sunshine in the lobby!

It seems a good guy after all.

# THE RIVERS OF SPRING

BY AMY MAY

The dead roam the earth in the heads of the living. I used to believe if I closed my eyes they would disappear, but there is no escaping what has already been. Eyes open, eyes closed. There they are. Blink. See through, color drained, dreadfully missing pieces of who they actually were. Hungry ghosts, they demand the memory of them be fed. Helpless to do anything else, I enter a morbid past. I answer, I oblige, I lose my own mind in a place that no longer exists and yet simply remains. The veil between us and them, and then and now has been rent in a violent storm nobody seems to admit to but me. It isn't what is in front of us that haunts; it is what lies behind. To be more precise—it is *n/ho* lies behind.

It is her neck that comes to mind in the most inconvenient of moments. No, it is what lies just below her neck that I cannot forget. How can I? She appears in all her grief, her anger, her drive for reciprocity from me, exposed as she never was in life. Yet, the earth holds no power over her in this dimension. Wait! I have stumbled upon my words. It isn't in my mind she appears at all. Eyes open, eyes closed. Blink. There she is. There she is bent, carrying the weight of a motionless child in her bone thin arms, whose form, like hers, is nothing more than stagnant air.

My eldest sister and her fourth daughter have refused to offer me any consolation, any peace, any sense of sanity returning at all. No matter how many years have passed since their passing, they visit. The more numerous my years have become, the more frequent their appearances. It is always the same. My sister, Lan, aged only to the day she died, her face stretched as thin as paper wearing a damning expression of horror and accusation, her hollowed eyes boring into my very soul. She wails and weeps before me. Her straggly haired two and a half year old daughter limp as a doll, rests in an eternal sleep across her arms. My sister's ghost haunts me for more than one

reason--the most profound is her demand I should wake her lifeless child. As if I could.

Xue was born to Lan late in her mother's life. Lan wanted, no, needed a son. A son to inherit and till the small piece of earth belonging to Lan's husband's family. A son to take care of her and her husband in their old age. A son to keep her husband away from the bed of another woman. Of what use to Lan was a daughter, another worthless daughter who would only drain the family of their resources and my sister of her husband's affection?

When my sister's fourth child was born under the hottest hours of a summer day, I considered my sister's misery in silence. I drank her bitter grief and swallowed it whole as if it were my own. She named the child Xue. She claimed the child was thus named for the fairness of her skin. Xue, its cruel white presence blankets the earth in the coldest days of winter. The child was named to represent the cold she brought to her mother from her father because she was a girl. A fourth girl. An end to a string of worthless disappointments. I knew my sister could barely contain her sorrow and yet she would. I also knew she was weak.

The body of a boy, a child of strength, would never have survived in the frailty of my sister's womb. She was to blame for a houseful of daughters. And yet, I loved her. It was my love for her that caused me act upon what I, a sister, as well as any common village woman already knew. Xue was a curse to be removed, a burden to be lifted.

My sister worked in the fields alongside of the men after each of her children was born. She had no other option as a lowly producer of nothing more than girls. I was fortunate, being a woman of unusual fortitude, not to mention a first wife, to bear three sons for my husband. My mother-in-law hated me when I arrived, but with each son of mine born her appreciation of me increased. I was a good investment for their family and for her precious only son. My sister was hated in her household.

I rarely saw her after she married with the exception of an occasional Spring Festival when daughters are allowed to return home to their families of origin. She had four children in six years and never traveled during her pregnancies lest she should harm a potential son growing within her womb. Thus, for many Spring Festivals she didn't return to the house of our father.

But after Xue was born, Lan returned carrying her newly born child in a pouch attached to her body. Lan was a disgrace in our family and that which she had married into, and yet I loved her. Her child, an unusually round cheeked, alert eyed baby was clearly draining the very life from my sister. The child's expression proved she knew more than anyone would guess. Lan's body had pitifully wasted away in the months since Xue's birth. Never the less, my sister, always a compassionate, gentle soul prone to weakness appeared to adore her latest daughter. She didn't seem to notice the child was nothing more than a leech stealing her future. I knew she kept her feelings to herself, as a good woman would.

When Xue was just over a year and a half old, Lan and I both returned home once again for Spring Festival. Xue was toddling about on sturdy legs. Dark hair had sprouted in a profusion of scraggly strands. Her face held even more wisdom than it had in her first few months of life. I took it upon myself to relieve my exhausted sister of the child as often I could during the days of the festival.

Xue squirmed and wiggled to free herself from my firm grasp. She protested too loudly and carried on as if she were a spoiled son every time I attempted to wrestle her from her overly watchful, tired mother. My sister's skin stretched tightly upon her slender bones and she appeared five years older than she had the previous year. Her dark hair had begun to gray and fine lines cast themselves all about her worried eyes. It was obvious to anyone who loved her as well as I to know she couldn't carry the burdens she bore. Something or someone had to give. She was emptied.

I took it upon myself to seek the opportunity. I knew my sister didn't have the fortitude to do what had to be done. I did it for her. For her and her alone. It was nothing more and nothing less than an act of undefiled devotion to my eldest sister who comforted me in childhood, who raised me as best she could when our own mother refused to acknowledge my very existence. Because she once saved me, I now risked the loss of her affection, the loss of her attention, worse--the loss of her ability to understand how deep my undying, unselfish, undeniable love for her actually ran.

Xue, for reasons unknown to me, took an immediate dislike to me from the very beginning. She did not forget her disdain for me the following year when she returned to Spring festival as a spindly two year old with scraggly dark hair and overly suspicious eyes for one so little. She reminded me of myself when I was a child. Only she was adored by her foolish mother. Mother love was an unnecessary luxury I had known nothing of. It was obvious to anyone who took the time to notice, Xue was draining the very life from my sister's rapidly aging body. My sister appeared another three years older than last year. Xue, a demanding two and half year old, had stolen eight years from her mother's life in her own short life. I was silently outraged. I knew what needed to happen for the sake of us all. I had known it since I first laid eyes upon Xue.

Lan was making jiaozi when the opportune time arrived. How much more powerful a sign could the ancestors send than to allocate the time for me to take Xue when her mother was making dumplings symbolizing a farewell to the old and rushing in of the new? Xue was behaving like an overly indulged little prince, and considered no one besides her self as my sister worked on the dough. I could stand it no longer, and yet maintained my strength by knowing I was saving my sister's life and her future, I hid my contempt. "Let me take Xue for you," I sincerely offered, "I will entertain her awhile. I need to walk and it would be good for her, as well."

Lan hesitated and just as she did Xue, conveniently, broke into one of her bouts of temper. "Come to Auntie," I cooed. The child seemed to sense I meant her harm, but I spoke in my softest voice which sounded very similar to her mother's when I controlled the pitch. In a moment of undeniable fate she toddled into my arms and I swept her up. "Say good bye to Mama."

And like a well trained puppy she puckered her slender lips and waved one of her spidery little hands in the direction of her poor mother. I knew then, my sister's triumph was closer than she imagined.

When I returned carrying Xue, her limp body icy cold, an odd shade between gray and blue, drenched, Lan let out a wail unlike any sound I had ever heard. It tore from her innards and carried to the heavens. It was wild, primitive and repeated like falling rain, over and over. She nearly ripped Xue from my arms and knelt before me wrapping the child in her arms like a liv-



ing grave. I had not anticipated her level of grief. I quietly explained the child would not behave and ran into the river and was momentarily swept beneath its currents before I reached her. Lan didn't seem to hear me--didn't seem to recall the love we always shared for one another, even as children. In the end, Xue stole my sister's lifelong love from me. Lan was found in the river the following spring, during Spring Festival, floating face down, her long black and gray hair floating like wings around her. It was said she was heard calling Xue's name at all hours of the night and day the year after her child had slipped beneath the water. I supposed she entered the river imagining Xue would meet her there and Xue would no longer have to haunt the earth alone.

There are those from my youth who have become ghosts. They haunt me in times of abundance and scarcity. Why does nobody admit that the dead roam the earth in the heads of the living? It isn't right to be haunted before one's time. I used to believe if I closed my eyes to what was in front of me it would simply disappear. The trouble is, it isn't what is in front of us that haunts, it is what lies behind. To be more precise--it is *who* lies behind. There is no comfort for me. Not even under the cover of time. Eyes open. Eyes close. Blink.

# KOI NO YOKAN

BY KERRY LAYNE JEFFREY

The sun blares through the windshield as Heather snarls. “Do you even know what the speed limit is?” She’s not even looking at the speedometer.

“I’m going like, five under.”

“No you’re not.”

I say nothing, because it’s usually better to be quiet than to be right.

“Pull over.”

“Wait, what?”

“Pull over.”

“You’re kidding.”

She isn’t. “Pull over. Right now.”

I hesitate.

“Now!”

I concede and pull the car up to the shoulder. I turn off the engine.

“Wh--”

“Get out. I’m driving.”

“What do you mean you’re driving?”

“You’re done. I’m sick of you driving like a pissed-off teenager. You need to get out because you aren’t driving anymore.” She punctuates this by opening her door. I wait until another car passes by before I open mine. I don’t stop to wonder what it says about me that I’ve given up the driver’s seat so easily.

Heather remains unsatisfied. “So stupid.”

“I don’t understand what the problem is.”

“The problem is you drive like an asshole.”

I squint. “What are you ta--”

“And now you’re making me drive all the way home because you can’t control yourself.” Her voice breaks into a whine. “I’m tired. I just want to sit here and relax and I can’t even do that because you wanna be an idiot.”

I want to say that I don't think anyone *wants* to be an idiot, or that I was driving five miles under the speed limit on a straight stretch of highway, or that she couldn't relax even if she wanted to, but I don't.

Instead, I think about my Freshman year of college. I think about biology class. I think about moving my stool around the edge of the lab table to sit next to Caralee. We would write each other notes in the margins of my lab report because I was never going to turn it in anyway.

She would write *Are you always going to take credit for my work?*

And I would write *Yes, always.*

"Like, do you even care? Do you even care how tired I am?" Heather alternates between a childish grouse and righteous indignation. "And now you get to sit there and do nothing. Great." She is now driving well past the speed limit and I hope as hard as I can that we're pulled over by the police.

And now I think about getting out of class after dark, the lamps drawing dull circles on the ground of the walkway. Caralee and I walked side by side and didn't utter a single word to each other. I would watch her walk to the bus stop. I wanted to give her a ride but I didn't know how to ask her.

The sun is making its way behind the trees. It will be another hour before we're home. Heather stares ahead, her face fixed in a seemingly-permanent sneer.

"I just...what is your problem?" She asks, more statement than question.

"I don't have a problem." I let the words escape before I can help it, "I just don't understand why you're so bent out of shape."

"Bent out of shape?" I've lit a fire that I wish I hadn't. I find myself hoping that in a rage, she'll lose control of the car and kill us both.

"Maybe it's because you're an asshole, and because you can't drive, and because I'm tired and I just want to relax, and because I have to work in the morning. Maybe if you weren't such an idiot, if you would think about someone other than yourself, you would get why I'm so," she switches a mock tone that nearly makes her words indecipherable "bent out of shape."

I look out my window and breathe through my nose. "I'm sorry."

"No you aren't."

But I really am.

I think of the night I sat in front of the mirror for hours; I would point to myself, then put my hand over my chest and close my thumb and middle finger together like I was plucking some invisible coin, then point to my

reflection. I practiced this until it was a fluid motion.

The last day of biology class, I sat next to Caralee. I started to wonder what it was I would say. There weren't any words that I knew except for the ones I practiced in front of the mirror. *I. Like. You.* Where would I go from there? How would I know what her response was? I hadn't thought to look up the myriad of possible gestures. How long would we have to write in the margins of homework that I'd never turn in? What if she simply frowned? I could never make that mouth that never opened twist into any shape but a smile.

We walked side by side and didn't utter a single word to each other. I watched her walk to the bus stop. I could have given her a ride, but instead I drove home.

Two weeks later, I met Heather. Two weeks after that, we went on our first date; dinner at a restaurant she chose, followed by a movie that she wanted to see.

"Great. I'm just sitting here, talking to myself." Heather turns the headlights on as darkness settles on the highway. "You aren't even going to say anything, are you?"

I open my mouth to speak, but close it. Without shock or suddenness, it occurs to me that I love Caralee. I love her more than Heather, more than my mom and dad, more than little sister, more than any one person, thing, or concept. I love her because the only thing she's ever said in her whole life is her own name. "*Caralee*," in a whisper, each syllable handed to me like a baby bird with a broken leg. The only word she can say out loud and she can't even hear it.

The police aren't going to pull us over. The car is not going to flip over the guardrail and destroy us both in a flaming wreck. And Caralee would always sit alone and wait for the bus. I am the only variable, the only agent of change. I am the reason there is silence and no silence.

"You aren't even going to say anything, are you?"

I look out my window and watch the trees slowly morph into the lights of the city.

# GOLDFISH MEMORY

BY KATHERINE FISHER

You feel sorry for them. They're so crowded in; some have died and they float there, limp and filmy, alongside the live ones. You stand off to the side of the crowds and peer into the tank, at all the swirling scarred bodies, their flat eyes, the dark shapes of their organs through thin layers of translucent scales and muscle. Their fins pulse and sway at their sides.

The air is hot with greasy food smells and the electric fizz of lightbulbs and generators. And loud--it's *so* loud--you imagine being suspended in liquid with those sound waves carrying through you like shivers.

The guy at the booth tries to hook you. "I can tell you want one," he says, "Come on, it's only three bucks. Everybody wins!" His voice is smoke-scarred; he's got deep lines like ravines around his eyes and mouth, but his eyes are clear and wide like canyons. You look away from him; you just want to watch the tangle of bodies in the tank, bodies like arrowheads, bodies prehistoric and time-worn. The fishes' finned spines break the surface of the water, emerge slick and pearly in the hot carnival air. You wonder about the moral ramifications of trading life for three bucks and a lucky toss, but you can't help thinking about all of their weak little-fish heartbeats, bred to last only as long as it takes for them to get swallowed up by someone's pet predator. The lights blinking all around you reflect off the flat staring eyes; eyes like moons, like disks, like coins.

You can feel all the cheap beer you drank in the 7-11 parking lot before you came bloating your belly, the beer it took you half an hour of shoulder-tapping to acquire and less than fifteen minutes to swallow in swigs so big they hurt your throat. You're numb to your fingertips; you can feel the booze sloshing around your belly and pressing your mind into fog. The feeling traps you there in your body, and you can feel the heat of all the people crushed around the booth radiating over your skin.

You have to shoulder your way around to the front of the booth, and the edge of the plywood platform holding the crowds back bites into your hips. In

the center of the booth is a platform, a big sheet of plywood propped up on two sides by sawhorses, bowing in the center under the weight of itself and all the little cups it's holding. The water in them is trembling, and it reflects the incandescent red and white lights blinking from the tilt-a-whirl nearby. You're unsteady and your depth perception is skewed, but on the fifth try, you get one of the scuffed and misshapen ping pong balls into one of those cups, where it floats unevenly until one of the carnies scoops it out. He grins all chew and stained teeth. "I believe you just won yourself a goldfish, little lady," he says, and his smile keeps getting wider until you start worrying that it might swallow you up.

You step back around to the tank; around the base, the dirt is blackened and spongy with fish water, and you feel your heels sink in. The carny is up to his elbow in a shimmering vortex of gold and white and silver and black. When he pulls his arm out, you see a limp soggy body, opalescent orange, cradled in a seaweed-colored net. Its fins look so small and thin, so heavy without water to hold them as they flutter uselessly at its sides. It gasps so frantically in the air that its whole body seems to collapse in on itself; the gills open so wide that they look like gaping clean-sliced wounds, raw and fresh on the insides. The fish twitches and slaps its tail, all tangled in the net, until the carny reverses the net and the fish tumbles. It churns and thrashes in the air until it meets the murky water in the baggie the carny's holding, and the fish's panicked movements go soft all at once.

The man bloats the bag with air, then spins it so he can knot the top. You watch the fish with its head dug into a bottom corner and feel sorry that it doesn't have eyelids to close against the world.

"Don't worry," the carny tells you as he ties the bag and hands it to you, "He'll forget all about that in about three seconds."

You hold the bag up so that you can look at the fish head on, can watch the flexing of its gills and the pulsing of its fins fanned at its sides. You wonder if it really can forget those moments of dying, and what that lightness of existence would feel like.

In the next morning's illumination, the fish almost looks peaceful. Its pale belly breaks the water's surface, bloodless and surrendered. It is completely still, all except for its fins, which wave limp and thin with the sway of the water.

# THE CHUTE

BY JOHN WOLF

The chute stank, but the boy thought the deli detail was still the worst. He never voiced this opinion. He liked his job here, everyone who worked at the corner market did. Still, there was no denying that sometimes you had to do dirty detail to make things run smooth. Cashiering was supposed to be his main thing nowadays, but things hadn't been exactly normal since the new manager showed. The way things *had* been going at the market took a lot of the shine out his day, but now the boy trundled the garbage cart down the aisles with a spring in his step and a whistle on his lips. The pharmacist waved behind his blinding white counter, the one night checker looked up from his magazine racks to smile in his direction. Things were going back to the way they were.

That was not what they had all been promised a month ago. The unions and shares held by the employees didn't seem to matter as the new manager explained. The corner market was in the black, yes, but too near the red anyway. He said they all needed to think ahead, that offering the same fried chicken and the same two ply and the same everything wasn't how businesses were run. The boy wasn't alone in his disapproval or his silence. Keep your head down. Not too much noise. People knew exploiting any kind of thing would be bound to lead to issues. The manager might have known that at one time. The boy stopped on aisle three, thinking. He thought he knew the manager from before. High school maybe? Church? He shrugged, kept pushing the wobbling cart.

The pharmacist said it best. He always did. That was how things *were*. Some people just outgrew things. The boy liked that idea. It reminded him of the strange green butterflies that liked to flutter about the mouth of the chute. But, just like his disapproval, he would never tell anyone about them. People might think him a little odd if he admitted to staring down that stinking black hole for too long. People did talk.

People's opinions on the manager were voiced soon after his arrival. Would the deli go under a remodel? The cereal aisle would stock more

whole grains? Why did they need two sets of vegetable and fruit stands? Weren't all of them organic to start? They couldn't believe the audacity. They predicted no one would come in, and their predictions proved right in less than two weeks. The people at the corner market knew this store and who they catered to.

The people would come in for their Froot-Loops, take their Mesquite Pork Rinds, pay for the 24 packs of Coors. They would pay and what was left would go down the chute. The town had gone about this easy riding rhythm for decades. Before was when the market was in the red. Things only got normal after they did things the way they ought to be done. Now? The boy shook his head. He didn't notice the cart straying closer to the shelf into it connected. The heaviest bag, should have put that on top the boy thought, slid off the boxes and landed on the floor with a solid but wet thump. The boy took his head out of the clouds, got to loading the cart back together.

Only three days ago a similar spill happened back in the meat department. The boy thought that would be a nice place to go to if he really wasn't going to be cashiering and stay stuck in the deli. Only if it was cleared of course. That day the boy was on his way to the break room when the butcher dropped a box of cut steaks yet to be packed. He bet he could have heard the manager's yelling from the other end of the store. They were better than the crap they used to cut according to the manger. They were prime, grass fed. Later the boy tossed them down the chute. They didn't look like anything special or prime to him. They were bloodied and not too dirtied hunks of meat. If they were different the boy couldn't tell and he felt better knowing the chute didn't notice either. They slid down as easily as all the rest, eaten up by the chute and its humid, heavy dark. The manager didn't seem to share the boy's opinion. The pharmacist and cashier were fuming on their lunch breaks. The butcher was a fixture at the market, just as their old way of doing things, but now the manger had gotten rid of both. He put a letter in each employee's locker. Supposedly along with the new market make over and new products there would be a new head of the butcher block.

The boy picked up speed with the cart and bumped through the swinging doors into the back. The bright fluorescents, energy saving bulbs now, of the market gave way to flickering bulbs strung along the ceiling by clanking chains. Pools from busted containers and what not dotted the floor,



but the boy navigated them easily enough. Both the light bulbs and pools all leaned gently towards the chute and its odd noises like leaves stretching towards the sun. He passed a pallet of granola, just another reminder of all the changes that were planted here only to die.

The manager had set his sights on the back of the market for the next makeover. No one knew how much that would cost, or how many other people might have to go, but the pharmacist had plenty of ideas. He bet that pretty soon none of the original staff would be working at the market anymore, and that idea put the fear in the boy. Not the fear of God, but fear of the chute. For the chute. If what the pharmacist was true, when was it not, the chute would be replaced too and everything would fall apart. The rest of the planning went smoothly after everyone's minds were greased with that idea.

It was up to the boy to start it all, and when the rest told him he actually felt proud. Sure, everyone new about the chute, knew when and what to toss down its black throat, knew how important it was to keep it sated for the market and the town. They all learned that when it first made itself known, but the boy *knew* the chute. He'd risked getting caught sneaking in at night to open its door, to stare at the strange green butterflies that danced above the greater darkness, to listen to it shuffle. So, when he had to make a scene, he did it the best he could. The boy was good, he sometimes wished he'd finished that associates in drama but that was before the chute. It started with a crash, the empty fry buckets for the chicken did well. Nothing came of it though, the market stayed pretty quiet except for the occasional bleep from the registers and the Springsteen over the intercom. The manager had to hear it! "My Hometown" was not that loud. The boy saw the pharmacist cast him a quick but deli-slicer sharp glare from his counter.

Letting the fryer spill its oil did the trick. Luckily the Sunday one wasn't running and the oil came out cool. The pharmacist helped out a little by paging the manager and going to the front doors. They could have shouted across the market if they had to, business was absent, no thanks to the manager. Soon he came and stopped short at the swinging doors, just before reaching the widening lagoon of oil. The boy watched his face turn red as London Broil and winced at the incoming anger. Except the manager just stared and stared. The boy said nothing. He was too busy willing the manager to step forward, just one step forward. It would be easy after that! Finally the manager asked him what happened. Still wincing, the boy tiptoed

across the oil. He didn't need to, his slip on rubber grips helped him with that, but it would be best if he acted the part. Over the manager's shoulder stood the cashier, the pharmacist, and now the butcher. The boy had to take a second to recognize him in his civvies. The manager followed the boy's stare and then turned completely. Before anything else could come out of his mouth the boy took hold of his shirt and yanked. The oil did its work. The manager's dress shoes, not the footwear they used to wear but something he was also trying to introduce, held for a moment then he fell to the tile. His head came down last, whip cording on the stem of his neck and cracking hard twice.

The boy imagined how scared the manager must have been, seeing the others crowd around, looking down. The pharmacist had looked downright furious. That made the boy feel a little sad. He turned the last corner of the concrete hallway, saw the rusted and chained hatch of the chute. The sadness fell off like a dog shakes fleas. He stopped the cart, throwing what few cardboard boxes there were into the recycling. The large bag slid again but stayed on the cart this time. The fluttering of his green butterflies came to his ears like the whisper of a long forgotten friend. He whistled stronger now and went to the hatch. It hadn't been too long since the last body. The boy thought about the last manager as he picked up the largest bag. That one had gone willingly enough to the chute, he knew how things ought to be done. Not like this last one, but given their relation, it was suitable that the son should follow his father. The chute might actually like that better. Maybe it planned this all along. The boy believed it. Why wouldn't he? It had done such wonderful things for the town. With his free hand he slipped off the padlock, twisted the worn handle, and opened the chute. There they were, painting the perimeter with their light. The boy shooed away the ones still on the ground. He noticed the smell, but didn't do much besides acknowledge it was there. You got used to the way things were. If not...well this kind of thing was apt to happen. He slid the bagged torso on its way down. A wet thump as it landed at the bottom. Then the heavier sound, much heavier. The walls of the chute trembled. The noises, that was something that the boy did acknowledge. It was the strictest lesson from the wisest teacher there was, and now it called for more.

It took longer than usual to put all the pieces down the chute. The weight wasn't so much a part of it, but this was important. Nothing was to

be spared, otherwise who knew what would become of the market. That's why the butcher took even longer to do the job. The manager's eyes went glassy after his fall, but there were moments as the butcher worked that those eyes cleared up like fog on the lake. He tried to scream twice, when the butcher drew his knife from his belt and right after he started his work, but the blow to his head must have messed him up plenty. The rest just watched him flop and kick like a dying bug and his blood colored the grease an even darker black. It cleaned up easier than the boy thought it would. Tomorrow things would begin their slow settling and the waters would clear. Life would get back to the way it ought to be. The boy hefted the head and chicken breading scraps up by the garbage bag.

He didn't bother waving goodbye to the last bag as it bounced like a half-inflated soccer ball down to the darkness and what lay just beyond. Its journey down stirred up the butterflies again into another alien flurry of green wings. The boy couldn't help staring now. Though they illuminated nothing more than usual, he swore the chute beyond did writhe slightly at the last bags arrival. He kept staring, thinking of what might happen if doing things different got to be normal, if the chute and all its occupants could survive. There was no question the market would fail if the chute died away, and the town along with it. He leaned in just a little further, sinking into the stench now like an overstuffed pillow. No, that smell and those wings, and that blackness were too much to just get washed away. It needed them just as much as they needed the chute. He leaned in more, just to see...

The boy smiled in the dull green light, and the darkness beyond smiled back. It kept smiling as the boy withdrew his vulnerable body back into his world of light and normalcy. The padlock went back on as it ought to. The cart went back in its place as it ought to. The boy kept whistling, casting away his apron for the night where it ought to go. The smile still on his lips, he left the chute to whatever work had to be done and went out into the warm night secure in the belief that things would go on the way things ought to.

# THE WATER PUMP

BY MARITES “TESS” CASTRO

There was a water pump in a cemented area of about twenty feet by twenty feet in front of the neighborhood. It was a place where women— young and old—gathered to wash their clothes. It was fun to wash clothes with other people and hear them talk about what’s going on in the neighborhood. There was a house next to the water pump that always caught my attention. A young couple lived there with their two young boys.

The mother doted on her two boys. I could hear her talk to her boys with kindness and love. She always made sure that they had good food and clothing. The youngest boy was about five years old. He had a cute smile and sweet voice. He was also respectful to his parents and older brother. I didn’t have a younger brother and if it were up to me, I would pick him as my younger brother.

One day I saw the mother in her backyard. It was easy to see her because none of the houses in the neighborhood had fences. She was boiling a large pot of water and putting clothes into it. I also noticed that she walked with her head down and one hand over her mouth. Her husband followed her and wrapped his arms around her. While they walked together, I saw her shoulder moving up and down like she was shivering. She was crying uncontrollably.

Later on that day, I learned that her youngest boy had just died of diphtheria. She had to boil or burn the clothing so that the germs will not spread to the rest of the family. It was the first time someone I knew and liked died at such an early age. After that, washing the clothes at the water pump was a little different. The laughter I used to hear coming from the house was replaced by silence for quite some time.

# REVELATION 16:3-6

BY KELLY SCHROCK

What happened was not meant to ever happen. Not really, we told each other, not in our lifetimes.

You had heard bits and pieces of the story: from references in literature, from movies where the world was a barren desert, movies where everyone had dirty faces and talked in hoarse hurried whispers. I had picked up fragments of the story during childhood. During years of cold mornings fidgeting in hard pews. While a thin-haired man droned on I drew on the back covers of hymn books: sharp teeth, long claws, swollen bellies of monsters. I cobbled the scraps of the story into a moth-eaten narrative for you and fed you the blistered remains of it from my broken memory. We agreed – maybe it could happen, but never in our life times.

One night the sun sank into the ocean with a heavy sigh.

The sea whipped itself into a frenzy, it reached to touch a snow storm brewing furtive waves.

Days later a gull fell from the sky, swooping, lifeless. It did not fight the earth's insistent pull. With a dull splash it sank into the arms of the waves. The ocean gathered the pale fractured body close, sucked at eyes, at hard orange nostrils, filled the gull's lungs with wet breath. The feathered body tumbled and danced down to the ocean floor.

We never had a chance to stop it, to catch it, somehow, before it fell.

Not the first gull.

Nor the second, nor the army of flying feathered things which threw themselves headlong into the grey waves.

We held each other, struck dumb.

Rotting bird bodies dotted the high tide line one morning, their reptilian feet curled into fists.

News vans gathered at the beach head. Reporters toed small wet bodies and squinted at the sky. Camera men set up shots. Of empty eyes staring at the blank close clouds. Of detached wings spinning in tide pools, flying circles to nowhere.

We choked on the stench of it. Beneath our dinner we tasted rotting flesh. We moved the food around our plates with fork tines and sneaked glances out the windows, as if hoping to catch a glimpse of a stray bird's wild kamikaze flight into the dark waves.

I felt ashamed of my desire to watch destruction.

After the need for tangibility had been done away with, it became nearly impossible for us to distinguish the real from glittering spectacle. Inside walls, we stared into glowing screens for a thousand invalid reasons: work, school, porn, fun.

I knew you were real. I rubbed your leg with mine. Your smile made me feel less alone.

Before the bird fell we barely went outside. I forgot the voice of the wind. We forgot our names in the place of things. We fell into bright screens, mistaking glittering spectacle for something real.

Later I would wonder if we were ever offered chances for redemption, or if by the time we showed up someone had made off with the last one. If by the time we arrived the doors were locked, blinds pulled shut.

Maybe we were doomed from the start, I said.

You only shrugged.

Dry-heaving reporters were led by pale-faced crew members into the news vans. They pulled out onto the highway, kicking up gravel. Their eyes wide and white in the rear view mirror.

When the news vans left we stood against the wind on tall, hard rocks. We stared down at the waves arcing and crashing beneath our feet. We caught sight of dark-necked blue jays, robins' flashing chests, leaping yellow jewels of western gold finches, dark jaunty crows. I cried out, pointing to spotted western tanagers, dark rufous sided towhees, kildeers racing across the sharp rocks. I pointed to prairie hens, ring necked pheasants, barn swallows, darting water ouzels. Birds you had never learned the names of. Their bodies flung by waves. They exploded in splashes of red, dark shining stains against the rocks. Washed to pink in the white churning waves. Feathers clung to the sharp edges of the rocks, like drooping party decorations. Soft edges waved, tickled by the breeze. Waves beckoned to us with curling fingers.

I had to look away.

Behind my back the sea sang the stolen song of the red winged black bird. It echoed off the rocks, the voice of a ghost.

That night in West Beach Motel, room 306-B, a reporter hung himself. An ambulance pulled up to the dim motel, silent, red lights flashing. A cousin of one of the West Beach Motel maids worked with you at the time. She said they had found the Gideon Bible on the reporter's night stand, open to Revelations 16: the second angel poured his bowl into the sea.

The next day we were invisible. Ghosts floated on the edge of town. The world was a grey haze where life flitted by in shadows, quiet and afraid.

Who are we? I wanted to ask.

The river was dark and turbid as it fed itself into hungry hands of the sea.

We climbed as far as we could. We drank from each other's hands and felt for each other in the dark. We curled our limbs into each other, a tangle of legs and arms and twisting fingers. We talked of the people and places we knew. Privately we puzzled their worth. But your thoughts were mine and neither of us brought these fears to our throats' attention.

In the morning the rocks were cool beneath our feet. We drank from wet moss and dripping leaves. You put your wet muddy hand in mine and we ascended together. Morning air stung our cheeks, biting them pink and red. I had to look away from you as we climbed. Your closed lashes fluttered against my beating heart as we lay against each other in the moments before you awoke, your breath soft warmth against my chest. When you opened your eyes I saw in them something so real my chest ached.

I cupped your wind-bitten cheeks cool against my palms. I looked into your eyes and I felt alone.

Where could we go, I wondered, after this?

I wanted your wet hair under my lips as it was in our bed two nights before, whispering our late night plans, laughing at the cracked ceiling in each other's arms. That's where I wanted you. Where we almost made sense. Where we weren't free but could at least write blistered poetry about the bars of the cage, where we could pass coded notes beneath the door to the friends we never talked to. We were used to our lives, sure-footed in our slow decline.

Out in the wilderness we were useless, clumsy, scared.

We climbed the mountain in the grey wet morning. Behind us the sea roared with the voices of ten thousand birds. We launched headlong into something we did not know, hands wrapped tight, eyes on the path just

ahead of our feet. We slipped on sore feet and hoisted each other over fallen trees.

When the sky blew sulfur orange and wounded purple, I looked at you, at your hand in mine. Your face, your eyes, the lashes which brushed my chest every morning as you awoke. I wondered, if we survive this – will it be hand in hand?



# AMBER GLOWING ECSTASY

BY KIMBERLY LAWRENCE

*For D.S.- thank you for affording me this memory.*

Awoken by a subconscious desire; slowly building a passionate yearning since the morning before.

Slipping out of slumber with a start, she silently shifts from her partner's arms and creeps through the room stealthily.

Dawning her nightshift, she finds comfort in the thick navy knit of cable and the scent of another. Applying her most beloved accessory, she is ready for her most alluring affair.

The sliding door utters a small cry as she escapes into the crisp morning twilight.

A deep breath ignites every sense; never before has she felt so alive.

A luminescent blanket of amber glow creeps over the numbed foothills.

She balances herself on loose cinderblocks with her bare feet; toes gripping the edges to keep her still. Her nightshift gently fluttering in the wind, but held in place by her newly acquired sweater- three times her size.

As she quietly peers through the dim scene, the amber light reveals to her the privacy and intimacy of the awakening world.

Breath held, she positions herself for ecstasy--heart pounding, blood pumping, and stomach fluttering nervously.

As the golden amber shoots through the horizon, spreading rays of sweetly dripping honey over the dry and dusty landscape, she takes it in; shutter cocked, focused, adjusted and with a slow exhale- release.

She slips back to the room, as silently as before. She removes the traces of her passionate affair.

Settling back into her partner's slumbering arms, the only trace of her secret is the sunlight glimmering mischievously in her tossed hair.

# IN PERPETUITY

BY DUSTIN DAVIS

Before the Big Bang, gravity and matter were convergent in a point of infinite density consisting of no volume. This is known as a singularity. Without space, time does not exist. All of the material of the universe was at one point condensed into this infinitely small point. After the moment the universe started expanding, time began. No life form in the universe is composed of anything that was not once part of this singularity. Explain to someone who has no understanding of what gravity is, exactly what the word means. Go further; explain why gravitational forces exist at all. Define time without using the word itself. It's impossible.

“What I’m saying is that two twins living at different altitudes, everything else remaining the same, will die at different times, because there is a stronger gravitational field closer to the center of the Earth. The passage of time is affected by gravity.”

“How much of a difference will it make?”

“That’s not really the point, is it?”

“...”

“Doesn’t the very concept make you question everything you think you know?”

“How much of a difference will there be, though?”

“Well, in this case, I suppose the difference is fairly negligible. They will die within the same second, but that’s because the difference in gravitational forces between any two points on Earth is very minor. Actually, both twins experience their lives as if each has lived the exact same length of time. It’s only relative to one another that there is any difference at all.”

“...”

“Maybe that’s a bad example. Say you take two twins-“

“Why twins again?”

“To illustrate the point that every other facet of their existence remains constant. To take out all undesired variables. The two people are genetically identical.”

“Ok.”

“You have two twins, one of which spends his life travelling at close to the speed of light-”

“That’s-”

“Not possible, of course, but it’s a necessary situation to explain relativity.”

“...”

“Both twins experience a life of seventy-five years, but one spends his life travelling close to the speed of light. The twin remaining more or less stationary for his seventy-five years dies many, many years before the other twin, but only relative to one another. Born on the same day, each lives the same amount of time, but one dies first.”

“...”

He was sitting on the couch in his underwear. In front of him on the coffee table was a mostly drunk bottle of Jack Daniels and a laptop he had spent the day alternating between porn and television shows with. He hadn’t taken a shower today, nor had he brushed his teeth.

The clock on the wall read 3:23 a.m., but it was really only 2:23. He hadn’t even realized tonight was the night the clocks “fall back” an hour, and only the automatic update of his cell phone made him aware of it now. The realization of this extra hour granted to him prompted an immediate sense of elation.

With this extra hour of sleep, he would get up in the morning feeling refreshed. He would go down to the employment office and find a job. Somewhere he could help people. Somewhere he could really make a difference. If he had the right job, he would have something to look forward to; a reason to leave his house. With the money he would plan a vacation. He had always wanted to do some travelling, but had never gotten around to it. Alaska and Japan each had a certain appeal.

Tomorrow he would begin doing some of the things he had been meaning to for some time. He would start writing again. He would start running

again. Tomorrow he would call his mother, whom he hadn't spoken to in weeks. He would inquire about the rest of his family as well, hoping to one day resolve whatever had led to this estrangement. Tomorrow, he would fix his life.

Like the countless hours preceding it, however, this one, too, had been squandered. Wrapped up in his thoughts, the hour had passed before he knew it, and he was still sitting on the couch in his underwear. The idea of setting an alarm now seemed silly to him, as he knew he would be tired in the morning.

Time fucking drags at the station. The clock on the wall's second hand is in constant motion, but time never seems to move forward. Adam starts chewing tobacco just to have something to do during breaks. Any excuse to go outside. He sits behind the station, spitting in the grass, constantly looking at his watch. Fifteen minutes until he has to go back inside. Fourteen and three quarters. Fourteen and a half. Eventually he has to go back in and deal with customers. Two hours until he gets another break. One hour and fifty nine minutes...

Adam suffers from narcolepsy, but he thinks he has insomnia. Everyone is always shaking him, telling him to wake up. He thinks they are trying to give friendly advice, as in get your head in the game. It becomes very tedious. Sleeplessness causes unprecedented irritability. The difficulty with recognizing his real problem is due to the fact than in his dreams he does the very same things he does in his waking life. He eats breakfast, showers, goes to work, talks to customers, goes back to his apartment, masturbates, plays video games... The only thing he never does in his dreams is sleep.

Absolute exhaustion makes dealing with customers an absolute nightmare. This close to the border, every other person is a Canadian of Asian descent. Canasians serve the vital role of developing a sense of camaraderie in the employees at the station, but they can't pump gas worth shit. There is a joke at the station that the employees will make a movie similar to those in the Saw franchise, where the victim has to solve some elaborate puzzle to escape a gruesome death. In this case, the Canasians need only figure out how to pump their own gas.

"It keeps asking me if this is a debit card."

“Well, is it?”

“No.”

“So, just press the button that says no.”

This cannot be a real conversation.

The first night he meets his new roommate, Adam wakes from a dream, but there is no distinction in his perception. Running through the apartment, he shouts, “It’s those spiders again. It’s those goddamn spiders.” The new roommate is justifiably frightened. How do you convince others that what you’re experiencing is real?

Adam is on the freeway driving to work. Adam is sitting in his car in the parking lot of his apartment complex, keys in the ignition, asleep at the wheel. Surely, he left with plenty of time to spare, but ends up late to work.

At work, Adam dreams about eating mushrooms. He tells himself that no matter what happens, no matter how weird, it’s just the mushrooms. Minutes (maybe hours) later, an elderly man buys a newspaper. While ringing up the transaction, Adam forgets what he is doing. The old man watches him, waiting for his change when the roles reverse. Adam is no longer serving the old man, but finds he is waiting in line himself, behind countless other people. When he gets to the front of the line, the old man gives him a shovel and tells him to start digging.

Being a self-proclaimed nihilist was something Adam took pride in when he was in college and had an end goal. As a dropout, working in a dead-end job, nihilism has lost its flair. Every weekend is just another sixty-four hour countdown until he once again must arrive at work. With such a limited amount of time away from the station, hours spent sleeping are wasted, but hours spent awake are impossible to enjoy because of the lack of sleep. Adam thinks this might be a catch-22, but is too tired to remember the exact definition. In any case, a balance must be struck.

Susan is baffled by how seemingly content her Kmart coworkers are. Every night is the exact same thing, over and over again. Susan’s designated work area is pet supplies. There is no incentive to be a quick stocker. If she unloads a palette of dog food, another awaits. She is the slowest worker on night shift. Her gay boss, Dan, has only had one job in his life. He is forty-nine-years-old. He insists on telling her how he’ll never love again, after

having his partner leave him for a woman, as if she cares about the history of her Kmart-boss. If nothing else, Dan is efficient. His dedication to excellence is astounding.

There's a slogan in the military: "hurry up and wait." If the process of enlisting is any indication, it's an apt phrase. Going to MEPS is a two day ordeal, but it certainly doesn't need to be. The first day at the Military Entrance Processing Station, prospective sailors are made to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. The ASVAB itself is no longer than any standardized test, but the real test has started hours beforehand. Prior to a person being allowed access to a computer on which the test is administered, he/she must sit for hours in a room full of other enlistees. With nothing to do, everyone adopts a blank stare. The purpose for such a long wait is hard to determine, but one full day of doing absolutely nothing is more horrific than most people understand. The test itself is absurdly simple. For such an easy test, a perfect score garners much congratulating. Case in point: that is not the real test.

Back at the hotel, an enlistee is instructed to call his recruiter, who tells him not to fuck anything, including his own hand, as this might affect his piss test the next day. It has something to do with protein. Who is he to question this logic? This is of course meant to remove the only possible means of entertainment one has alone, in a hotel room, ninety miles from home. It is an effective method of lengthening the night.

The second day at MEPS is another lengthy debacle, consisting of a series of physical examinations. A wrinkled old man tells the enlistee to pull down his pants, bend over, and spread his cheeks. The man looks in his asshole. What he is looking for is unclear, but the enlistee seems to have passed the test. During the urinalysis, the enlistee is struck by the hilarity of looking at the face of a man who is paid to gaze straight at his dick with a look of complete and utter stoicism while he pees in a cup. He is told by the man, just doing his job, that it is common for people to get nervous during this phase of MEPS.

The final examination sees a group of young men in their underwear doing various movements across the cold floor of a large room. Duck walks, lunges, jumping jacks... Why in their underwear? This cannot be a

real procedure. Paranoia creeps in. Increasingly, the enlistee feels as if he is at the center of an elaborate hoax. Like this whole day is a big joke, all at his expense. It's not a joke, though. The process weeds out those who can't cope with the endless hours of meaningless debasement.

Those that make it through MEPS receive a contract that stipulates active duty will begin in ten months. It might as well be a decade. And, so, the enlistee goes back to doing whatever they were doing before. With this now being simply a means to an end, there is not even a semblance of significance in the act. The military finds those that are able to make it through the elongated perception of time, void of any meaning. It is the most difficult of things to overcome.

Finally, if a person makes it through the torture of waiting, they spend two months in basic training. When they arrive, they are told that they cannot speak to members of the opposite sex. Even at the biological level, it seems the military is only interested in those that are able to overcome this meaningless span of time. As a reward for graduation from basic, the enlistee has four more years to look forward to.

Every year, Lisa spends Labor Day weekend hiking around Mount St. Helens. It takes three days to complete the twenty-eight mile trek. On the mountain there are no traffic lights. There are no people waiting for the crosswalk to change colors, or sprinklers automated to water the grass at designated times. On the mountain no one gets pissed off because they are stuck in traffic. There is no loss of freedom up here.

Camping this high up, Lisa can see a curtain of stars that can't be seen through the light pollution of the city. It's impossible to know if these stars are still existent, but they are clearly visible. This high up, there is no beginning and end of days. There is only the rotation of the Earth determining what can and cannot be seen.

And just like that, I snap out of it and am immediately conscious of the fact that I was just in a place not of this world, but in my head. That's how salvia is. One second you are in this incredibly detailed world off in your mind somewhere, and the next thing you know, you are back sitting on the floor with a glass pipe in your hand, senses dulled to such an extent that all



you can manage to articulate is something along the lines of, “fuck man, that was crazy.”

In this other world, an inestimable amount of time is compressed into mere moments.

I am a bottle of pop among many. Soda. Colors bleed in and out of each other and nothing remains still. I cannot move and overhead are rays of sunshine of vibrant colors. These rays of sunshine are complete with faces and are singing, and it seems as though I should be feeling far more delighted to be in such a glorious environment, but something is wrong. I realize that the sky is not singing, but rather preaching to me about the ways of the world, and I am overcome by a feeling of terror previously unfelt.

To describe the rants of the sky is difficult for it is not in words so much as feelings that their message is conveyed. I come to realize that the dreams and aspirations I have had all my life are meaningless. I had always thought that my life and the world were a certain way and was now being laughed at. The sky finds my naiveté comical and absurd. Rising in me are embarrassment, shame, despondency, anger, hysteria, but there is nowhere to go, and so I remain under the mocking gaze of the sky. Even wordless, the sky conveys its thoughts: Aspirations? Ha! There is only contentment or insignificance.

The most admirable trait a person can have is not courage or honor, integrity or faithfulness. It is the ability to reconcile the vast amounts of time at one’s disposal with the mundane trivialities used to fill it. The measure of a person’s success has nothing to do with material possessions or monetary accounts. A successful person is one who manages to wake up to the same shit every single day, and does not regret living out the natural span of his/her life.





**VISUAL ARTS.**

# ■ MOTHER EARTH ■

BY KORY R. DOLLAR

Glass on glass mosaic, direct method

28 in x 54 in

*Mother Earth* was inspired by Kory's photography. The piece features thirteen hand-pressed jewels (created for a restoration project for a vintage stained glass dome originally created in the 30s in New York), two vintage four-inch diameter glass handspun and mouth-blown roundel, one unique ceramic sphere, and a combination of glass tiles and marbles. All of the stained glass is vintage and salvaged and some of the glass predates 1930. All of the pieces were hand cut. The piece is constructed on a vintage window that can be displayed as a sun catcher and hung on a window.

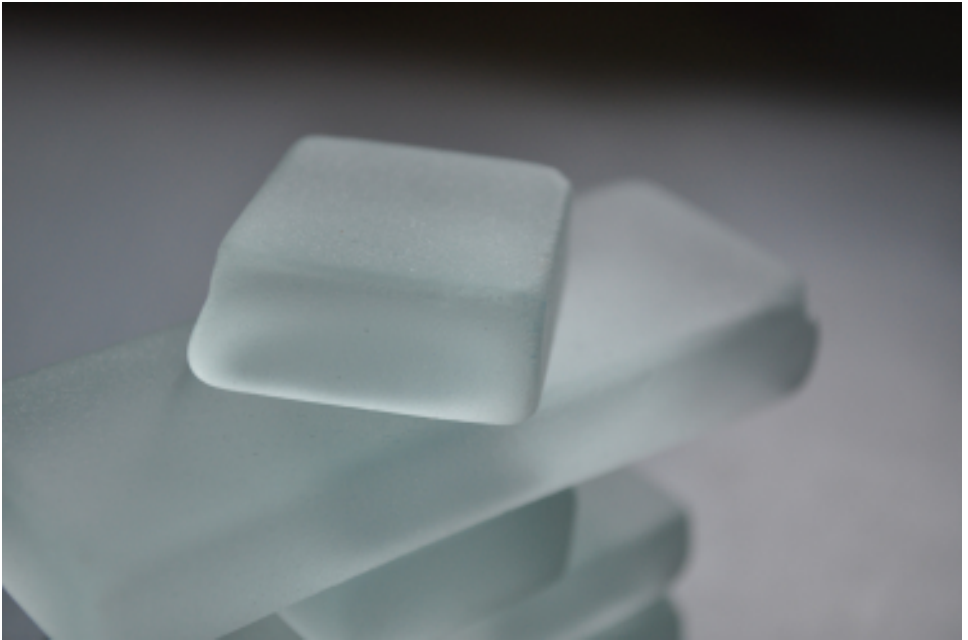


# INUIT MAN

BY KATRINA LONG

Photograph

The best inspiration comes from the world around us. All we need to do is look closely.





# MOONRISE

BY FAUN SCURLOCK

Digital photograph

14 in x 7 in

Nature inspires my subject; I tend to combine nature with my current habits. Before I created *Moonrise*, I had been working a lot of graveyard shifts, seeing the moon and Mt. Hood (at sunrise) quite often. I wanted to work with both elements, but the moon by itself was too plain and I've done plenty of shots with Mt. Hood. From here, it made sense to work the two together. *Moonrise* needed to be dark to reflect the time of day (er, night) but I also wanted the awesome color from a sunrise around Mt. Hood, hence the golden-orange glow.



# THE BATTLE OF RAIN

BY **CAMBRI SHANAHAN**

Acrylic on canvas

17 in x 18 in

I have done a lot of experimenting in the past year with painting techniques and finding intriguing subject matter. Unsurprisingly, elements of nature and influential music have continuously presented themselves through my paintings as I have found an interest to playfully and abstractly represent these elements.



# FOREST MONSTER

BY KELLY SCHROCK

Pen on paper, scanned and digitally edited  
21 in x 18 in

I drew this at work. I worked as an activities assistant at an assisted living facility at the time. A musician came to perform one night and I sat in the back and fell into this drawing.



# UNTITLED

BY DUSTIN DAVIS

## Photograph

In all honesty, I know very little about the technical aspects of photography. Every once in a while I find something that looks nice, point my camera at it, and press the button on top. It was pretty easy to take a picture of the sunrise above the clouds. Right place, right time.





# BREAK AND CONSUME

BY ALEXANDREA CHAUDOIN

Digital illustration

2500 px x 3000 px

As a DTC major, I primarily focus on web design and development, as well as graphic design and digital art. This digital art piece in particular focuses on the two main characters of my web-based narrative, *Consume*. Both of them are bound by regret over their past actions, and are therefore broken by their lingering memories. Jealousy leads the woman on the right to question her worth, while despair brings the man on the left to his knees.



# RIVER CAR

BY FAUN SCURLOCK

Digital photograph

15 in x 10 in

Whenever my thoughts run dry for new projects, I turn to artists online for ideas. Sometimes I just challenge myself with new effects and other times I get an idea for a full-blown project. *River Car* was inspired after a day on my parents' boat and some browsing on the internet. I really enjoyed the photo, especially the subject, but wasn't sure if there was anything great to come from it. I checked out a lot of black and white photography that isolated specific elements and decided to work in that direction for this particular photograph.



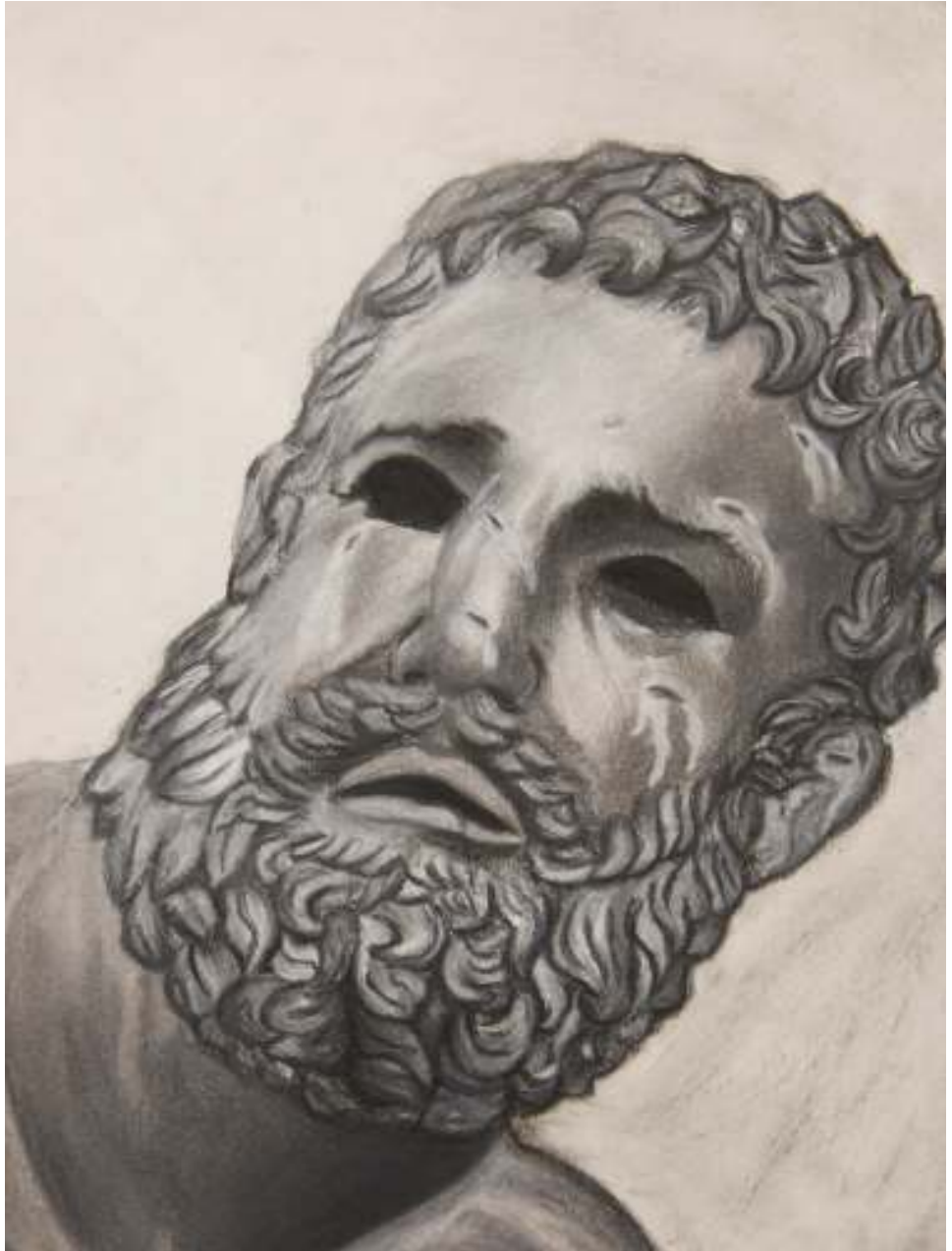
# SOULLESS

BY AMIL HADDAD

Conté crayon drawing

9 in x 11 in

I wanted to create a portrait piece of a sculpture that I had seen before. However, instead of my usual medium of graphite or charcoal, I wanted to use a medium that would give me the look and texture I wanted; a look that seems realistic as though the sculpture was right in front of you. The conté crayon, for me, was the best fit. It was a bit rough to work with in regards of line quality, but in the end it was the rough feel of the lines and tones that, I believe, brought the piece to life. I used only a black and a white crayon to create all of the different tones in the piece.



# WHERE WE BURIED THE MOULIN ROUGE

BY KERRY LAYNE JEFFREY

Digital photograph  
34 in x 45.3 in

*The Moulin Rouge* was the first desegregated hotel and casino in Las Vegas. Opened in June of 1955, it enjoyed instant popularity, was home to performances by Lena Horne, Nat King Cole, and Sammy Davis Jr., and even appeared on the cover of *Time Magazine*. However, in December of that same year, the casino was shut down under mysterious circumstances. The remnants of its signage are stored in the Boneyard of the *Neon Museum* in downtown Las Vegas, NV, among the signs of other since-defunct casinos and hotels.





# BLUE SKIES

BY KYLE OLSEN

Digital photograph (Canon Rebel T2i DSLR, 50mm IS-USM lens)  
5184 px x 3456 px

This picture was taken in the late morning at the rim of Mt. St. Helens, near the summit. The slope up to the false summit seen in the photograph looked like a road into the sky, Helen's door into summer. It was an egregiously deceptive fancy; beyond the false summit is a long fall down a cold, rocky mountain.



# CLASS NOTES

BY KELLY SCHROCK

Pen on notebook paper, scanned and digitally edited  
32 in x 25 in

I drew this in class. I was paying attention, even if this piece seems to say that I was not. Drawing is the only way I ever pay attention in class. If I didn't draw I would sing or pace around, and that would be very annoying.



# COWBOY VANITY

BY **KIMBERLY LAWRENCE**

## Digital Photograph

Trained originally as a black and white film photographer, I stress the composition of pieces in the moment of capture. I enjoy the anticipation and release with a completely manual shot, such as with film, and attempt the same with my digital work. Limited editing also makes my work imbue the rustic, rugged scenery I often enjoy shooting. This composition embodies the tired and dusty, yet functional, rural beauty of Chelan, Washington in late August.



# SEE ME

BY **CAMBRI SHANAHAN**

Charcoal on crescent board  
19.5 in x 27.5 in

Charcoal is my preferred medium while focusing on doing portraits and re-creating the intricacies of the human face. Inflicting some type of emotional response within my viewers is one of my goals as an artist and this larger piece is the most intense of any of my works.



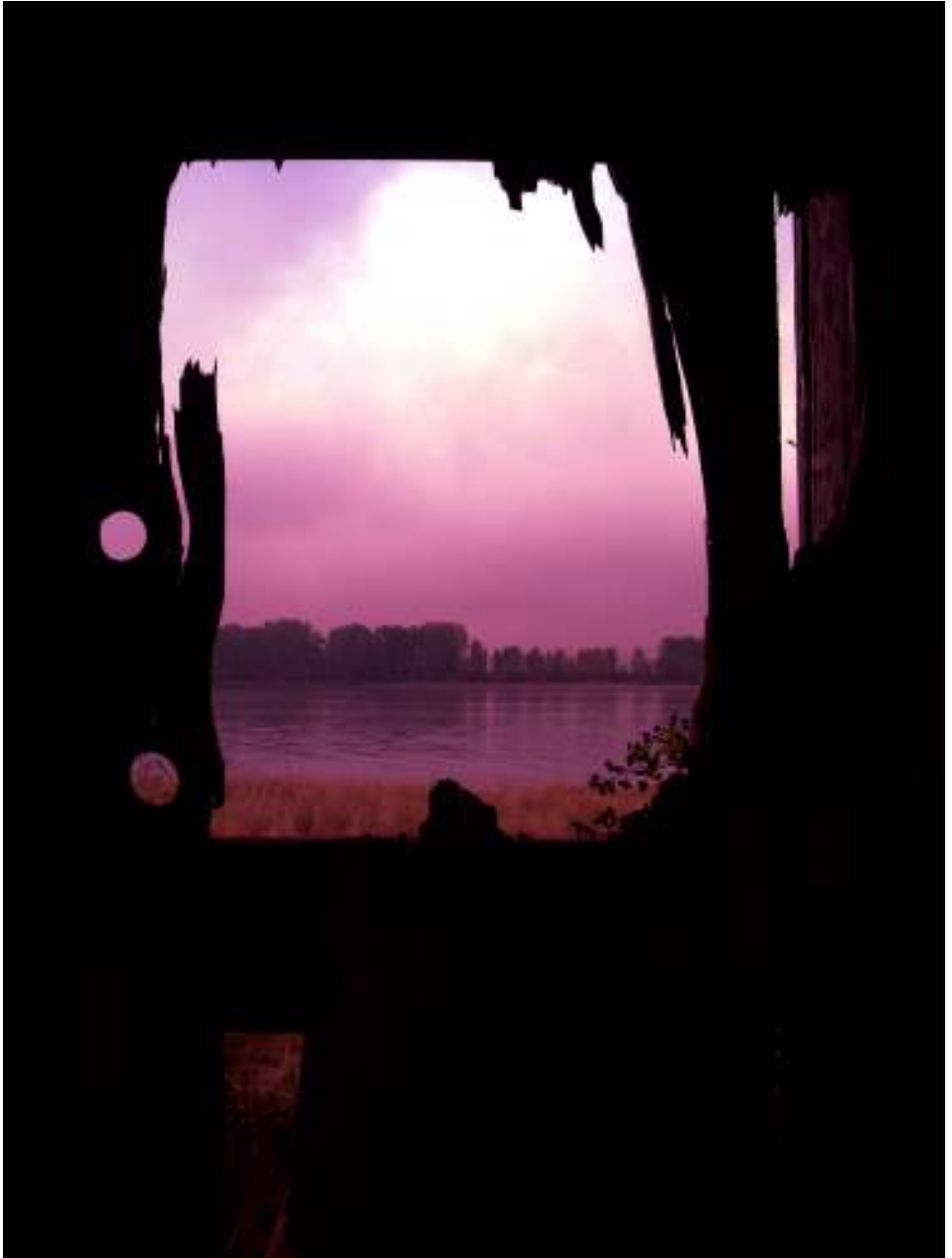


# RIVER LOOKOUT

BY JANIE BLACK

Digital photograph, digitally edited  
768 px x 1024 px

My grandparents made the wise decision to never let me set foot in a middle school. Instead, my grandfather retired from his job as a high school math teacher and we spent every day, regardless of weather or season, exploring up and down the Columbia River. We spent most of our time in a boat-house—little more than a floating garage—which my grandfather rents. Sometimes I revisit this area, always discovering new and interesting places. This picture is from one of those more recent adventures.



# FAS-NEO

BY INAHLEE BAUER

Pencil and ink sketch

18 in x 24 in

I had been studying biology and chemistry at the same time as I was taking an art class. The cellular-like structure on the left corner of the page represents the creation of cells and organisms with complex roads and mazes. When they emerge into the atmosphere, they branch off like chemical bonds that will either become a solid atom or a cloud. The concept is the journey of life and death; the beginning and the end. This is my first abstract art piece.



# ST. HELENS

BY TROY FLOWERS

## Photograph

This shot was taken on a hike around Mt. St. Helens. This was an HDR merge of three bracketed shots using a small aperture to catch the foreground texture while keeping the mountain in focus. A red filter was used to add contrast for a mono conversion.



# ANOTHER DAY

BY **CYNDIE MEYER**

## Photograph

I took this photo while traveling through the hill country of northern Thailand. I appreciate the narrative that can be read into the lines on the woman's face: her tiny stature and the large burden she carries. I took the photo with an old Olympus SLR.







**POETRY.**

# ■ DEATH WAS THERE ■

BY DILLAN SIMMONS

For a split second think about death.  
Think about death as a cleft foot frankenstein standing over your  
shoulder, that hot breath curling the hairs on the back of your  
head.

Then go to a window, and watch birds.  
Look at the wrinkles of their feet,  
watch the fluidity of their feathers each one spooning another  
one.  
Think of your last kiss.  
The guest mouth against your mouth.  
The taste of another person, the graininess of the tongue.  
Tell yourself you have control of things when you don't,  
enjoy the good in the bad.  
Death will sit in the corner of the room, where the bulb's gone  
out, a chain-smoking gorilla.

Don't focus on Kilimanjaro and sell any shotguns to the pawn-  
shop.  
Stay away from bridges and butchers.  
Watch cartoons, drink chocolate milk, and think about toys you  
had as a kid.

Take your clothes off near the ocean.  
Show death all your pink-white scars,  
show death your age and laugh.  
Laugh like a kid listening to a dog fart.

Death hates laughter  
Death was a heavily teased youth  
Death was a failed comedian

But don't get cocky.  
If you fall down, death will become the running of the bulls.  
Understand that in a fight there are only so many punches.  
Understand that death is a very nimble fighter.

After laughing you'll feel tender.  
Put your hands in your pockets, feel the warmth of your thighs,  
run your tongue against your mouth's cathedral ceiling.  
The thump of the ocean will wash everything away,  
and gulls will blend in and out of the horizon.

# HISTORIAE ANIMALIUM

BY CHRISTOPHER CHAFFIN

There is music in water.  
I know this well.

I hear the chants of the bishop-fish,  
that poor gentle monster locked away

in watery sepulcher.  
We offer the same prayer,

born of song, baptized in salt.  
Kings and queens would have us silent,

never free nor near the sea.  
Yet still, we sing.

# CAROUSEL

BY LINDA AUGUSTINE

Riding the waves  
    of carnival air  
On sparkly ponies  
    with immobile smiles

Round and round  
Sailing the ocean of lights

High as the  
    crest of a child's squealing laughter  
Low as the  
    slowing intrusion of hollow-tin music

# HOW DID SHE TAKE ALL THAT AND LIVE?

BY KELLY SCHROCK

There's a woman I am so jealous of  
I lose myself in it.  
I deleted her off Facebook  
to save myself from drowning.

sometimes I look  
through her pictures, anyway

Oh look  
here she is again, her  
sexy legs and  
graceful movements captured  
in an Instagram.

She makes  
the transparent shirt and  
black bra combo  
look classy.

She makes  
a mohawk feminine.  
Chic, somehow.  
It doesn't look gaudy  
or trashy on her,  
like it did me.

There's something  
thrashing in my throat  
something like  
rage  
or  
shame  
or a bastard wilting  
neglected  
child of the two

She doesn't  
deserve  
that blessed vibrant creativity

she has  
no right  
to her gift  
of creating beautiful spaces  
for people to live, dance, kiss in  
to take pictures  
of each other  
having fun

when  
every time  
I've thrown or been to  
a party  
I just got too fucking  
trashed hammered sauced  
tripping all over myself

when  
in my pictures  
I'm all  
nasty wan skin  
my teeth all coated



sour wine  
breathing whiskey like a dragon

and my hair  
all the wrong way  
too short  
sticking up  
every direction

I never let go,  
dancing, singing  
letting me be me  
embrace  
liquid social movement  
until I am too gone  
to speak,  
listen,  
or stand upright.

my art is so naked  
I hate it.

But she,  
Oh she  
is effortless:  
sexy  
confident  
beautiful  
soaring with the clouds  
kindly indifferent to life passing tiny beneath her

she's got  
these gorgeous green eyes  
you could just sink into  
grateful like  
into a warm bath at the end of  
the worst week

her skin  
is perfect.

she is  
totally willing  
to be totally weird

and  
she  
fucking pulls it off

while I was the one always  
shamed  
punished  
alienated  
isolated  
for being  
weird  
different  
out of step  
laughing at the wrong moment  
wearing too much make up  
or not enough  
carrying my body in space  
all awkward and slouching

how did she take all that,  
how did she take all that and live?

and I know it's  
just  
jealousy  
because I wasn't  
cool fun free good enough  
to keep my friends mine  
when she came floating around

and whisked them away  
to better times

I know I don't hate her  
for her sexy legs  
green ocean eyes  
floating graceful movements  
for being  
totally calm  
in her totally weird self

I know that  
really I can't stand  
not  
good  
enough.

# MAR AMADO

BY MARÍA LEE LÓPEZ

!Oh! mar Caribe

que lames las costas de mi isla adorada

recuerdo tu azul intenso

tu rugido furioso,

en el plenilunio de la noche plateada

tus olas incesantes

tu sabor salobre

y las noctilucas como diamantes

en tu inmensidad azulada

Te recuerdo mar Caribe

Como te recordaría una amante

que dejó a su amado en tierras lejanas

Y es que eso es lo que somos tú mi amante y yo tu amada

# WATER ON FIRE

BY KERRY LAYNE JEFFREY

The kids are lighting their faucets on fire  
and watching their horses die,  
There aren't any vigils,  
There aren't any pictures on the side of the road,  
Like the ones for the boy down the street.

And I think about how, now,  
if I took a blowtorch to that same creek  
it would explode  
or turn to plastic,  
the way my eyes  
or mouth  
or ears should have  
when that same boy shoved my head into a toilet bowl.  
And now his lungs and stomach are waiting to go off  
and I wish they would--  
The drunks would fizzle and burst in bars  
connected to dead streets  
named after people who are still alive--  
the empty shops would be swallowed whole--  
drums of battery acid  
and pseudoephedrine  
and acetone would light up like roman candles,  
it would be the brightest thing we'd never see.

everything would burn  
except the paper mill;  
there's nothing left there that's flammable.

And maybe that's why everyone fought  
our biology teachers  
when they refused to teach us  
that God made us,  
the birds,  
and the trees they lived in,  
but no one said anything  
when they didn't teach us  
about pumping hydrochloric acid  
and sulfuric acid  
and formaldehyde  
and sodium hydroxide  
into the veins of the Earth.

Maybe everyone is waiting  
for someone to light a candle.

# IVY

BY CHRISTOPHER CHAFFIN

Ivy appears without warning,  
carried by unsuspecting wings,  
silently stealing nutrients, choking out air,  
thriving in stagnation, sheltering vermin;

*life strangling life.*

Science has labeled her an invasive species,  
emerald-flecked majesty gone wrong,  
destroying all who dare stand in her path.  
She reminds me of my mother.

I think she is beautiful.

# RATS FLEE SHIPS

BY KELLY SCHROCK

We're all beaching ourselves  
against some great tragedy  
beating against the walls  
of some unbreachable dam

some say that  
we create our own realities:  
that our imaginings  
the stories we tell  
shape us

all of our lives  
formed by  
humans thoughts  
human actions  
fantasies  
prayers  
fears  
built upon each other  
brick  
by brick  
by brick  
by brick.

it keeps getting harder  
to imagine  
something beautiful



our words  
our art  
shape birds

falling

from

the

sky.

and dolphins  
beaching themselves  
off the coast of Brazil  
of glaciers  
melting away  
further each year

escaping a place  
no longer meant for them

there is no longer room  
in this world  
for golden frogs  
black rhinos  
spotted owls

inescapable  
is the notion  
that there was never room  
in this world  
for me.

I am extraneous.

taking up a place  
designed for  
spotted owls  
tender golden frogs  
to sing

# THE COMPASS ROSE

BY TERESA LANE

We're wandering past the atlas lines,  
distant territory, the unmarked edges of the world,  
mapping ourselves in cartography,  
mapping me out in valleys and hills,

I am made of valleys and hills,  
between my ivory breasts,  
under my lips, the soft sides of my knees  
you brush and skim and sweep and honeyed kiss  
where my ribs end in a cavern you fill with your ribs,

yourself a collection of magnetic plateaus and cliffs,  
hard, formed gladden rough,  
our skin molding into one another's like converging rivers,  
like the edges of a peninsula greeting waterfront folds,  
you and me, an estuary of rivers and streams,

contour upon contour and oh, we've charted inside too,  
the caves, the den of your heart a home  
marking grottos, turns and curves and  
we know these places, deep,

like a blazing passion,  
like a branding love,  
and an infinite enduring burn.

# SEDIMENT

BY DILLAN SIMMONS

I go and check the amber colored cider  
In the cool cellar  
Where there are blind crickets  
that smell of potatoes and dog's breath.  
I hold the bottles to the mellow orange  
of the old fluorescents  
Always there is sediment.  
Tiny particles that sit at the bottom  
like whispers of smoke.

I wonder what sediment is forming in my life?

Yesterday I went swimming in the river,  
The Methow, or Cheowak.  
Void of people.  
The water a blue pearl moving.  
that took the pores of my skin  
and opened them like daffodils.  
The current played my body  
The river stone beneath me slick  
fish bellies oiled in canola.  
Each one smooth and beautiful at the bottom.

It is the summer and I have fallen in love with  
the water, beer, and my little garden  
planted in an old sandbox.  
Sometimes when I dig potatoes,  
I find matchbox cars,  
kids dreams that have rusted out,

red corvettes and lime green hotrods  
Turned the same color as the spuds.

What dreams sit in my stomach at night?

Do all the poems seem to ramble like this one  
After too much rum.  
Every spare line: the sediment.  
The chunky morsel at the bottom  
You choke down.

How long until these thoughts  
Drown away?

# AESOP'S ANACHRONISM

BY DUSTIN DAVIS

Soon after the invention of the car alarm,  
people stopped paying any heed.  
The manufacturer made the alarm  
sound like a woman screaming.  
Crime rates soared.



Linda Augustine  
Inahlee Bauer  
Ali Benson  
Janie Black  
Marites "Tess" Castro  
Christopher Chaffin  
Alexandrea Chaudoin  
Dustin Davis  
Kory R. Dollar  
Katherine Fisher  
Troy Flowers  
Janae Green  
Amil Haddad  
Kerry Layne Jeffrey

Teresa Lane  
Kimberly Lawrence  
Katrina Long  
María Lee López  
Amy May  
Cyndie Meyer  
Kyle Olsen  
Ashley Pirrone  
Kelly Schrock  
Faun Scurlock  
Cambri Shanahan  
Dillan Simmons  
John Wolf

