

Add subheading

The Catalyst

Fall 2017 Volume 177

A publication of *The Catalyst* Volume 17 – Fall 2017

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Emily Markham

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

Anna Walle	Quinn Fitzsimmons
Avery McLain	Ashley Colbert
Gordon Patterson	Anthony Welch
Madeline Dorman	Noah Finco
Samantha Stroozas	Olivia Hackbarth
Mike Hanson	Abby Walkush

FACULTY ADVISOR:

Dr. William Stobb

WHAT WE ARE:

The Catalyst is a student-run creative journal of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse English Club publishing prose, poetry, photography, art, music, and all other creative works by the students and faculty of UW-L. Each semester, the student editors pick a new theme and accept submissions about and outside the chosen theme.

This semester's Theme:

It has been 17 semesters since *The Catalyst* was taken up by the UW-L English Club. This semester the Editor-in-Chief decided to forego a theme again, instead posting prompts on our Facebook page to inspire creativity. Please check us out on Facebook! Hope you enjoy the latest volume of *The Catalyst*!

- The Editors

WORD OF THANKS TO:

William Stobb for being such a great advisor, supporting us and pushing us to grow into the publication we know we can be

The UW-L English Club for helping us obtain awesome submissions, and for spreading the word about our publication

Rob Wilkie for helping develop our new website and all the tech support he has provided through the years

Jake Speer for spending so much time helping archive all of our previous editions, and for IT information

Everyone who has submitted to *The Catalyst* in this publication as well as in the past

And, of course, all those who read this publication and support the amazing creativity we have here at UW-La Crosse!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER

Home

Cassidy Herman

POETRY

Nature	6
K Weinberg	
Untitled	10
Kirsten Petersen	
A War on Names	14
Melissa Clement	
a redneck daughter's manifesto	16
Payton Yahn	
tombstones	27
Payton Yahn	
In Dust, Trees	31
Brevin Persike	
small things.	36
Payton Yahn	
My Tribute to the "Entitled" Men	44
Sona	
Farm Animals	54
Sona	
Untitled	57
Sona	
September Twenty-Seventeen	65
Nicola Perini	
Mornin' Sunshine!	66
Nicola Perini	
Prost	79
Nicola Perini	

Me, Myself, and I Nicola Perini	80
Christmas From the Other Side Cindy Plymesser	82
Us Kirsten Petersen	83

PROSE AND SHORT STORY

News Rylee Hedberg	11
To Never End Jenae Winter	18
The Room Alaina Steffes	29
Sometimes What You're Feeling Is Just It Dany Bicoy	38
Briars Dalton Gamroth	47
Confidence Paulina Goebels	56
In the Room William Albea	60
Elle Katie Bailey	69
Dad Lea Menges	77

ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Eucalyptus Gabrielle Bruns	9
Vintage Text Message Gabrielle Bruns	12

Summertime Oral Surgery Vanessa Weeden	13
Corn Child Vanessa Weeden	15
Untitled Jake Joling	17
Untitled Austin VanBuren	26
Self-love Baley Murphy	30
Be Kind to Your Brothers and Sisters Julia Mielke	34
Be Kind to Your Brothers and Sisters Julia Mielke	35
Untitled Christopher Hinytzke	37
Fight or Flight Abigail Kolbe	43
Untitled Austin VanBuren	46
Untitled Randi Whiteaker	55
Untitled Christopher Hinytzke	58
Home Cassidy Herman	59
Kwik Trip Run Vanessa Weeden	67
Untitled Sarah Daentl	68
Home Cassidy Herman	75
Untitled	

Austin VanBuren	76
Home	
Cassidy Herman	78
Ibn Gabirol Afternoon	
Matthew Sirgrist	81

THE CONTRIBUTORS

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Nature

K Weinberg

She uses words like divine and enchanting.
The kind of words that abandoned me
as thirst was replaced by static boredom.
My mind lazy, my heart estranged
- I had stopped looking for beauty
in the smaller parts of life.

She greeted me with a yearning to be
surrounded
by all things Earth.
Equating someone's physical features with
a butterfly;
She discovers organically,
raw like the dirt beneath my fingernails.

I greeted her with absence,
desiring to revisit lost memories.
My smile hesitant,
it was as unfinished as us.
We followed a trail scattered with "I wonder,"
and shadowed by trees of uncertainty.

What were we doing there?
On that trail, dirt clung to our toes
and we clung to year-old glances
and rested in the solitude of our imagined existence.

There was a night,
where for a moment in time
our trail wasn't shaded.
The canopy opened and
in danced our imagination,
fluttering into reality.

Glistening in a new season,
her eyes were like flowers blooming in the infant Spring.
Our trail was covered in green life.
We breathed exasperated winds,
rustling the leaves around our feet.

Earth hugged us gently
like it would a meek Grandmother--
Scared to pain our frail bones,
Earth cuddled our moment.
The grip was powerful and loving,
but careful not to initiate departure.

She kissed my lips with hers.
And it was the first time I wanted to taste myself.
How long would my breath be weighted in her balm?

I pleaded with my whiskey-soaked memory.
"Please be sober enough to remember
how it felt to breathe into her and her into you,
how your bodies hovered above your chairs
in harmony."

She left me as Fall becomes Winter:
abrupt, without consent, and
in the middle of something truly beautiful.
The delightful breeze that gently turned leaves
became a harsh gale, capable
of displacing even the most cemented.

Shade returned and all that remained
were the memories of our
dance with sunlight and
the remnants of our imagination
explored.

We shared new seasons with new people
and walked unfamiliar trails,
sometimes gazing back and
wondering what it would be like
if Fall went on forever.

.
.
.
.

The memories of her positively haunted me,
as nostalgia sometimes does.
I craved her captivating presence

like the Summer sun craves my skin.

My skin stained with the sun and
my mind stained with her smile,
I would spend Summer nights
lost in thoughts of cascading
her skin.

Settling again into imagined existence,
I envisioned her body extending beneath my touch.
Her body endless like a Summer night beneath the stars,
my touch as gentle as sweat visiting her face in the afternoon heat.
Heat.
Will the warmth of Summer ever recollect us from this cold Winter?

Jaded by the harsh Winter
but thankful to have her blossoming eyes staring into mine again,
I welcomed her back with the graciousness
of Spring trees welcoming back the green
that abandoned them in the cold of Winter.

The trail we once aimlessly navigated looks different now.
I am greeted by the rays in her eyes,
longing to stain something with her fervor.
Open like the Spring sky, my skin rests from afar
desperately hoping to catch her gaze.

I greet her with a deep yearning to be
surrounded
by all things Earthly.

Her skin is the soil beneath the ground,
rooting me in her landscape.
Her eyes are the soothing waves of the ocean,
gently awakening me to the complexities of an endless body.
Her voice is the still of the night:
powerful and slight.
I could rest in her existence as I could a sleepless night,
delightfully drowning in unending thoughts and provoking questions.

Eucalyptus
Gabrielle Bruns



Untitled

Kirsten Peterson

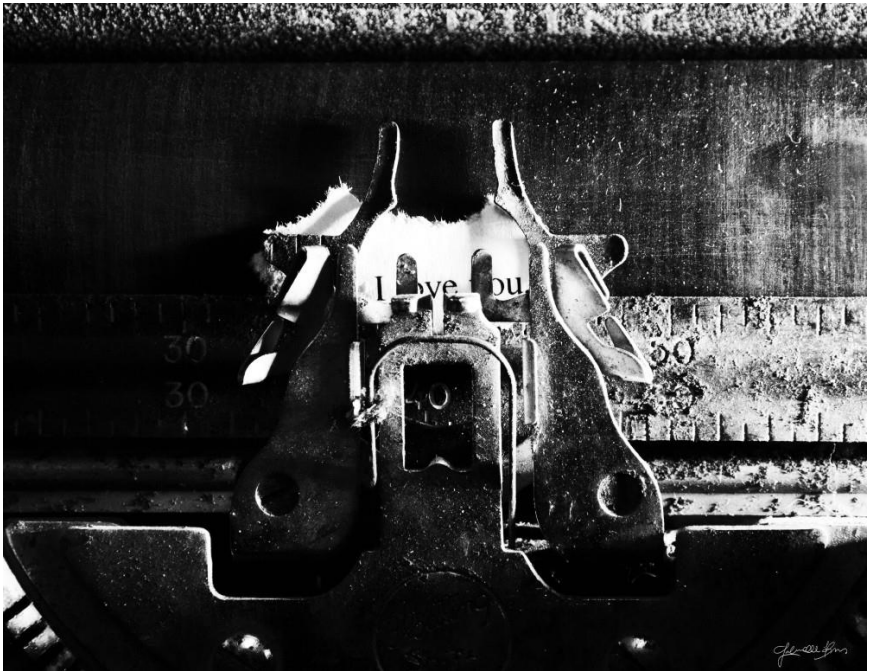
I want to be the person
who drops everything
to help you.
But you keep calling
when you know I am carrying
glass.

News:

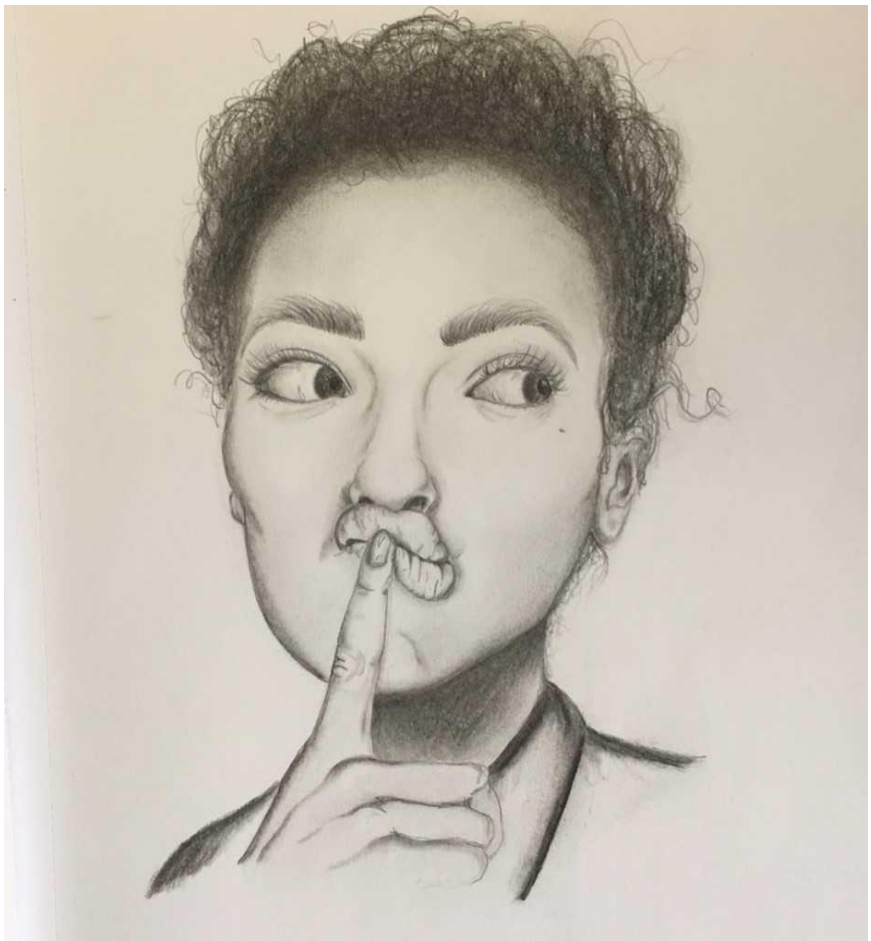
Rylee Hedberg

Every time I take a step closer, you fill me with dread. I think of you all the time though, I can't escape you. You're everywhere I am, in the store, on the streets, in the words I read, the songs I listen to, I even hear you in my mother's voice as I stare at the soap-covered dish I've just cleaned. I stare and I stare and I try to forget you, to think of something else, anything else. I am afraid of the feelings I get when I think of you, they make me feel all sorts of things but mostly sadness. It's a sinking, dark feeling that ensnares my mind so tightly I can't manage to respond to the person I'm pretending to talk to. If I talk with them for too long, you'll come up; I'm sure of it. I used to love you, you used to make me feel happy, intelligent, even out of this world. You were everything I wanted to be or thought I could become. But now I don't want you at all, yet somehow I can't let you go, you're a drug to me. So I'll take another step and look closer, if only for a minute.

Vintage Text Message
Gabrielle Bruns



Summertime Oral Surgery
Vanessa Weeden



A War on Names

Melissa Clement

Long ago in the ancient line
lived some shade
by the Great bonsai.
Self-titled Self-cast planetary
branches yawned faster than
the speed of sight into
rubicund the color
of sun-drawn bow and
release.

It slunk with love
through the somnolent street and
cave it found with scalpel concealed
in crease of palm and joint,
joyously taking for Its own.

Corn Child
Vanessa Weeden



a redneck daughter's manifesto

Payton Yahn

My bones melt in the heat of August,
flowing through streams and rapids,
an assortment of watersheds
where I become a cool afternoon drink for a tadpole,
or an instrument of pure ablution
on the muddy feet of a sweet summer child.
But, as with everything in its season,
I never forget to evaporate & condensate,
carrying myself home on the promise rain.

Writing this,
I begin to molt,
shedding sentimentality
like so many softgrey feathers
only to glue them back on,
my fingers sticking together like honey.

And my poetry will always be
the poetry of punk boys dressed in
earnestness & leather jackets.
Of highways, not airplanes.
Of people who have never seen the ocean.
Of fallen yellow leaves, wet after a storm.
Of a man who once upon a time
told me that cow manure “smells like honey”
as he threw back his third glass of Drambuie—
because they raised me, and I believed them.

Untitled
Jake Johling



To Never End

Jenae Winter

Eleven-year-old Helena Dolenze stands alone on the platform. She clutches the suitcase she doesn't need in one hand, and the ticket she does in the other. The ticket is easily the most valuable thing she's ever held, and yet her clammy fingers keep a loose hold on it as it whips in the salty breeze, as if she wants the wind to steal it away. The print on the ticket screams

**TO: NEXT STOP
FROM: KNIGHT'S ISLAND
DEPARTURE: MAY NINE, 8 A.M.
OVERSEAS RAILWAY**

But she doesn't look down. She's already memorized the ticket. There's no need to check the time of departure again and again. Helena can practically feel the seconds ticking by, jolting through her from the wristwatch weighing her arm down.

Other ticketholders, all graying and elderly, shuffle about the platform, giving Helena a wide berth. Their eyes stray to her small figure, but they say nothing. Their optimistic smiles twitch on their cheeks and make way for pity. It was the same at the checkpoint. All of the guards congratulated the elderly passengers on their exciting new journeys to another life, all grins and laughs. But with Helena, the congratulations dissipated.

She stares out at the railroad that will take her away to a new world, a new life. It arcs out over the water, towards the endless horizon where water meets sky. The bridge seems just as endless. It slices the water perfectly in half. The ocean side, to the left, a calm deep blue. The gulf side, on the right, a joyful, mischievous green. Two worlds coming together.

The breeze whips her dress about her knobby knees, beckoning her forward. Urging her to leave one world for the next. It whispers promises in her ears, but Helena can't hear them over the memories she pores over in her mind. But the wind doesn't like to be ignored. It pries at her loose fingers, making her ticket flutter wildly.

Helena breaks from the ocean's hypnosis, finally looking down at the ticket and the suitcase.

She almost forgot about the suitcase she carries. None of the elderly ticketholders carry one. No one brings their old possessions to a new life. Helena feels a little foolish holding it, but not enough to leave it behind. Mum had packed it before they left this morning.

"You might need something on the trip," Mum says, throwing Marie, the stuffed dog Helena had carried everywhere as a child, into the suitcase. She is too old for stuffed animals now. But she doesn't make to remove it from the suitcase.

Mum stands, hugging herself, chewing the inside of her cheek like she always does when she's thinking. Her eyes shine like glass ready to shatter. They had since Helena's ticket arrived in the mail a week ago. Helena wants to say something. But what can an eleven-year-old say to smooth away the lines of worry on their mother's forehead?

She follows Mum's gaze to where it rests on the photograph on her nightstand. The three of them, Mum, Dad, and her, wrapped tightly around each other. All smiles. Mum takes the photo, tucking it safely between two sundresses. She suddenly laughs shrilly.

"Who knows if these dresses will even fit you in your new life?" Mum runs her fingers lightly over the cloth. "But you should still bring them. They're your favorite ones after all. Maybe...maybe you'll remember."

Dad appears in the doorway, knocking dried knuckles lightly on the open door. The whites of his eyes are stained red.

"It's time to go," he says, pointing at his metal watch.

"Hello." Helena jumps at the voice that tears her from her memories. She whips her head up, squinting against the morning sun shining off the bald head of the man she assumes spoke to her. He smiles down at her, the kindest smile she's ever seen. By the look of him, he can't be much older than Dad, Helena thinks. The only signs

of wrinkles on his tanned skin are the laughter lines at the corners of his eyes.

“Hello,” Helena says. His smile is contagious. She can feel one of her own tugging at her trembling lips.

“We stick out like two sore thumbs, don’t we?” The man laughs.

Helena looks around the platform, at the other elderly passengers. “We do,” she agrees. It wasn’t unheard of, younger people going to Next Stop. Just uncommon. Helena remembers when she was little, when their neighbor, Mrs. Pearl had gone to Next Stop.

“But what is Next Stop?”

Dad thinks over her question for a long moment, drumming his fingers on his bouncing knee. “See, lives are just like the train stops on the normal trains we take into the city. This life is one stop. And when you’re done visiting, you go onto the next.”

“But what happens there?”

“No one really knows until they get there, sweetheart!” Mum joins them on the porch. “That’s the beauty of it! You get a brand-new life, a brand new adventure!”

Helena glances across the street to the Pearl’s house. “But then what happened to Mr. Pearl?”

Mum and Dad exchange a tense look. “Well,” Dad sighs, bouncing his leg again. “Mr. Pearl got his ticket a long time ago. But he wanted to wait for Mrs. Pearl to get hers. He wanted them to leave together. But when he didn’t leave, well...he missed his chance to leave this stop, so to speak.”

Fear strikes up Helena’s spine. She remembers watching Old Mr. Pearl’s eyes glaze over, his back hunch, his skin gray. She remembers watching Mr. Pearl become a shell, forgetting everything and everyone, even Mrs. Pearl.

Mum must have seen the fear on her face. "Enough of this talk. You won't have to worry about Next Stop for a long time, Helena. You still have this life to live to the fullest!"

Not anymore, Helena thinks now, her stomach hollow.

She looks across the platform at the gleaming gray train, ready to speed over the never-ending bridge. It doesn't look like anything special, like anything that will bring her to a new life. It's the bridge that looks like it can do that, stretching far and away over the water.

"How do you think someone built such a thing?" Helena finds the words rolling off of her tongue before she can stop them. "Or did it just appear one day, I wonder?"

The man's eyebrows shoot up his forehead. "What a thing to ask. And what's your name little miss?"

"Helena," she says, offering out a hand.

The man laughs again. He takes her polite hand in a shake. "That's a pretty name. I'm Jim." For a moment, Jim considers the bridge. "You know something, Helena? I have never thought about that. But whoever built it, I'd sure like to have a word with them." He doesn't elaborate. He's waiting for her to ask him why.

Helena peers up at him, wondering if she should. After all she's just met Jim, and Mum and Dad had taught her well, telling her never to talk to strangers. But Jim doesn't feel like a stranger. She trusts his smile.

She smiles back at him. "Why?"

He rubs an unshaven cheek. It's as if he rushed right out of bed just to get to the platform on time. "Because I wasn't done with this life yet." Jim muses. "I shouldn't be saying anything to you, Miss Helena, I got more of a start in it than you did. But even so. I've got a wife. I've got two sons. I've got grandchildren. I don't want to leave them." He looks out over the water, not really seeing it. He's far away with all of his family in this life. "I've still got things planned.

“And I’m sure you had tons of plans, little miss.”

Helena shrugs. She’s only eleven. What should she have planned? Mum hadn’t even allowed her to plan her own her tenth birthday party.

Suddenly, the train screeches an impatient whistle. It sounds so far away to Helena, as if she’s sitting snug and safe between Mum and Dad, on the way home. Where she should be.

“All aboard!” The warning whistle sounds again. But Helena can’t move.

The train whistle rings through the station at Knight’s Island. Mum carries Helena’s suitcase in one hand, and holds tight to Helena’s hand with the other. Dad grips Helena’s other hand. The last time they did this she was much younger, walking in the park across the street from home, Mum and Dad swinging her back and forth between them. She’s too old for this now. But she can’t let go. She can’t let go of this life.

They stop at the sign that declares OVERSEAS RAILWAY in the same wavy print as Helena’s ticket.

“This is as far as we can go, Helena,” Dad says.

“What?” Panic seizes Helena’s stomach. She feels lost. She feels flat. Too easy to rip. Like one of her paper dolls trying to fit into this vibrant, dimensional dollhouse meant for much more solid inhabitants. It’s like the Next Stop is already trying to claim her. But she fights against its pull.

“I don’t want to go!” Helena cries suddenly. She can feel eyes, on the common and Next Stop platforms alike, turning to stare. She feels like a child. “I want to stay here with you and Dad! In this life!” Usually, Mum might tell her to “act her age,” but not now. Now, Mum drops her hand, catching her in an embrace, hugging her tight.

“I know, sweetheart. I know,” Mum says, her voice stuck between a sigh and a sob. But it doesn’t sound like Mum knows. What it sounds like, is that Mum wants to bring her back home. She

doesn't want Helena to go, just as much as Helena wants to stay. Next Stop may be a new life for all of the gray-haired people filing through the checkpoint in front of them. But not for Helena.

"I don't want a new life. I want this one."

Dad's face turns stricken. "We want you to stay here with us too. Don't think for a moment that we want you to go." He tries to blink tears back, but only manages to make them spill over the rims of his eyes. "But you're braver than Mum and me, you know? Don't be afraid."

How can she be brave when all she wants to do is curl into them and ignore the guards' persistent calls for every passenger to "please form a single-file line to enter the Next Stop platform."

Mum carefully tucks the suitcase into Helena's hand. "Do you have your ticket?" She asks with barely enough breath.

Helena nods through her tears, not trusting herself to speak.

The goodbye hangs silent between the three of them, building a wall, brick by brick. Mum and Dad on one side. Helena on the other. Alone. Between this world and the Next. Dad lifts his arm, undoing his wristwatch.

"Here." His words sound as choked as Mum's. Dad fastens it safely around her wrist. It twists around, far too big, but Helena clutches it close to her chest.

"You won't forget me?" Helena asks them, this greatest fear finally boiling up from the deep pit of her gut.

"Never," Mum promises through streams of tears.

"I won't forget you either. I won't let me." Mum and Dad pull her close, and the moment is gone too soon. Helena wants to stay in this moment, in this world. Maybe forever.

But then it's gone, carried away by the salty wind, too fast for any of them to chase.

"I love you," Mum whispers, letting Helena go too soon.

"I won't let me forget you!" She assures them through tears, stepping backward to the checkpoint, never wanting to leave them, never wanting Mum and Dad to leave her sight. They wave, "I love you" etched out onto their lips, but she can't hear it anymore over the drumming footsteps around her, and the guard's constant calls. Helena watches Mum and Dad until a guard turns her around, checks her ticket, and pushes her through the turnstile before she's ready.

Helena feels flush with the urge to turn around and march right back home. Who cares what will happen if she doesn't go to the Next Stop? She doesn't know what's there. Why should she want it? She knows exactly what this life has to give her, and it's all she wants. Even if she fades away, like Mr. Pearl, she'd still have everything she wants here.

Tears spill down her cheeks again, uncontrollable.

"Shall we, then?" Jim suggests. Helena clutches Dad's watch tightly. She looks out at the water, at the never-ending bridge, at the cruel train that wants to pluck her out of this life.

She looks up at Jim. For the first time since she's met him, the smile fully falls from his face as he catches sight of her tears.

"I can't do it," she whispers thickly through tears, feeling them stream down her neck, seeping into the cloth of her dress. The wind stills, sensing her distress.

"I know," Jim says sadly. Without the hint of laughter hanging around him, Helena feels even worse. Fear and dread weave together inside her, crinkling her up and ripping her. "I can't either." He sends a rueful look towards the train. Nearly everyone is aboard already, ready to go. Ready to start a new life.

"But I'll tell you what," Jim squats down before her, both knees cracking in the process. "We'll go together, okay?" He holds out his hand. His usual smile tries to stretch across his face again.

Helena meets his steady gaze. “Don’t be afraid,” she hears Mum and Dad’s whispers together, louder over the jittery thoughts telling her to run away. Like they are here with her.

“Okay.” She takes Jim’s hand. The wind rejoices, tugging her dress forward. The tears still flow freely, but Helena takes a deep breath, doubling her strides to match Jim’s long ones.

“Tickets please,” the engineer asks, hardly looking at them.

Helena finally releases the precious ticket, letting it drop from her tight, tense fingers. Jim helps Helena and her suitcase up the steep stairs as they board the shimmering gray train. The water seethes beneath them, meeting in an uproar at the border of different worlds just below the bridge. Before Jim can even close the door, the train lurches forward. And they’re off. Helena looks down at Dad’s watch. 8:00 A.M. As the train gains speed, she looks back at Knight’s Island Station. She knows Mum and Dad are moving farther away with each second, but she keeps the memory of their smiling faces, imprinted on the photograph between two sundresses in her suitcase, at the front of her mind.

“I won’t let me forget,” she promises to herself. “Never.”

Untitled

Austin VanBuren



tombstones

Payton Yahn

My grandmother is one of four sisters
who once in a season travel home
to where our dead are buried
and with arthritic knees
and red bouquets heavily held
they kneel at the names,
and wipe them clean,
arranging the flowers
just so.

On a rainy Tuesday in November,
a doctor bikes to the cemetery to talk with his wife.
It has only been a few months
so it doesn't feel strange yet,
but when he is there he often thinks strange things.
Is decay irreversible? Can consciousness be transferred?
What sacrifice would have to be made?
He leaves such thoughts to lie with her
and begins to head home.

Wiz Khalifa traveled to the grave of Pablo Escobar
and smoked a joint beside the epitaph that read,
"When you see a good man,
try to imitate him;
when you see a bad man,
examine yourself."
Alive, Escobar lost one billion dollars a year
to the digestion of rats. Dead,
I wonder if they eat him too.
The fleshy bits first,
just so.

When I travel to my tombstone alone

I will be eaten by fire and fire alone,
marked by a mosaic of me
smiling
in glittering yellow, blue, and gold.
And when a teenager ashes
his cigarette over my ashes,
he will think of me
just so.

The Room

Alaina Steffes

Different versions of myself had come and gone in that room, yet it remained the same over all those years. The paint may be layered, but down to the core, it has always been the place, unchanging no matter the date or the year.

Memories are tethered to the space so tightly, that when I return, I find them flooding back into my heart and soul. The vulnerable moments and those in which I found myself are the most prevalent.

It is place where I discovered who I am on the inside, raw with emotion and tears streaming down the landscape of my face. The amount of times that I stared at the ceiling, pondering God's purpose for me, and countless times more that I prayed to the One who knows me best.

This space and I are two stars in the sky, tied together as a constellation. I breathed life into the walls, and it provided the safety and comfort that allowed for me to thrive. And as a planet orbits, I will travel, but will always return.

When I am away, I crave to be within again. There will always be other rooms and other places that I call home, but none is more home than this one. It has grown as I have, owning my years. It whispers secrets and memories to me that only I know exist. I know every corner and every crevice so that when I close my eyes, I could navigate it better than anyone.

Self-love

Baley Murphy



This piece speaks about self-love and how women never give themselves enough credit and are always saying how "ugly" or "fat" they are compared to others. Each negative word is like a punch or cut to the face. However, even though she beats herself up, you can clearly tell how beautiful she is.

In Dust, Trees

Brevin Persike

Welcome to Rhinetown
An industrial city
Old ways for old folks

Many read the newspaper
With a cup of black coffee

People interact
Technology is lost here
People carry on

We were built on the river
Biggest paper mill around

The old people stay
Lives already squandered here
The young people flee

The motto: Leave while you can
The future won't exist here

Welcome to Rhinetown
Smoke billows out of the stacks
Taste the smog-filled air

The polluted atmosphere
Reminds you that you're back home

So much pollution
Injected into the air
The environment

Snow discolored as it falls
Rivers contaminated

We pollute the clouds
Acid rain falls in the east
Birds flee and trees die

How will this planet survive
The harm that humans have done?

Survival comes from
The paper that we produce

Families alive

Books, news, paper planes, airplanes
Reasons to keep the factory

Trees become paper
Nature is at our expense
Ecosystems fail

Coal imported for burning
Paper exported for planes

Close knit and dying
The city will crumble down
Empires always fall

At the hands of industry
Rhinelanders will disappear

Five hundred people
Employed, destroying nature
Jobs are on the line

Metal on metal squealing
Screaming, sweating, suffering

Paper owns this town
The death of Rhinelanders is
Inevitable

For now prolonged by paper
It just can't last forever

Money grows on trees
Cut trees down to make paper
Paper is money

Industrialization
It's getting old now

Cheers to the forests
They brought life to a city
Time to set them free

Let's pour one out for nature
Birds will sing and trees will grow

Deforestation
Modern pollution problems
Just keep adding up

Since 1887
Death to nature of the north

We can still believe
In the idea of progress
In "Forward" thinking

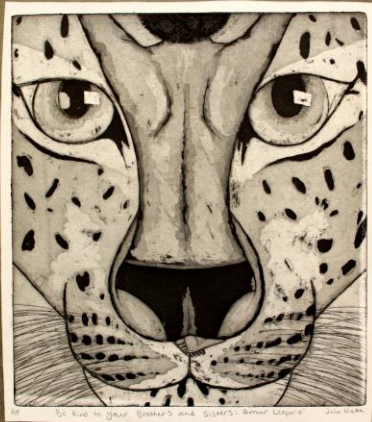
Put an end to industry
Welcome all to Rhineland

Our flag says "Forward"
Once a progressive motto
Industry now owns

Nothing can stop industry
Welcome all to Rhineland

Be Kind to Your Brothers and Sisters

Julia Mielke



Be Kind to Your Brothers and Sisters

Julia Mielke



small things.

Payton Yahn

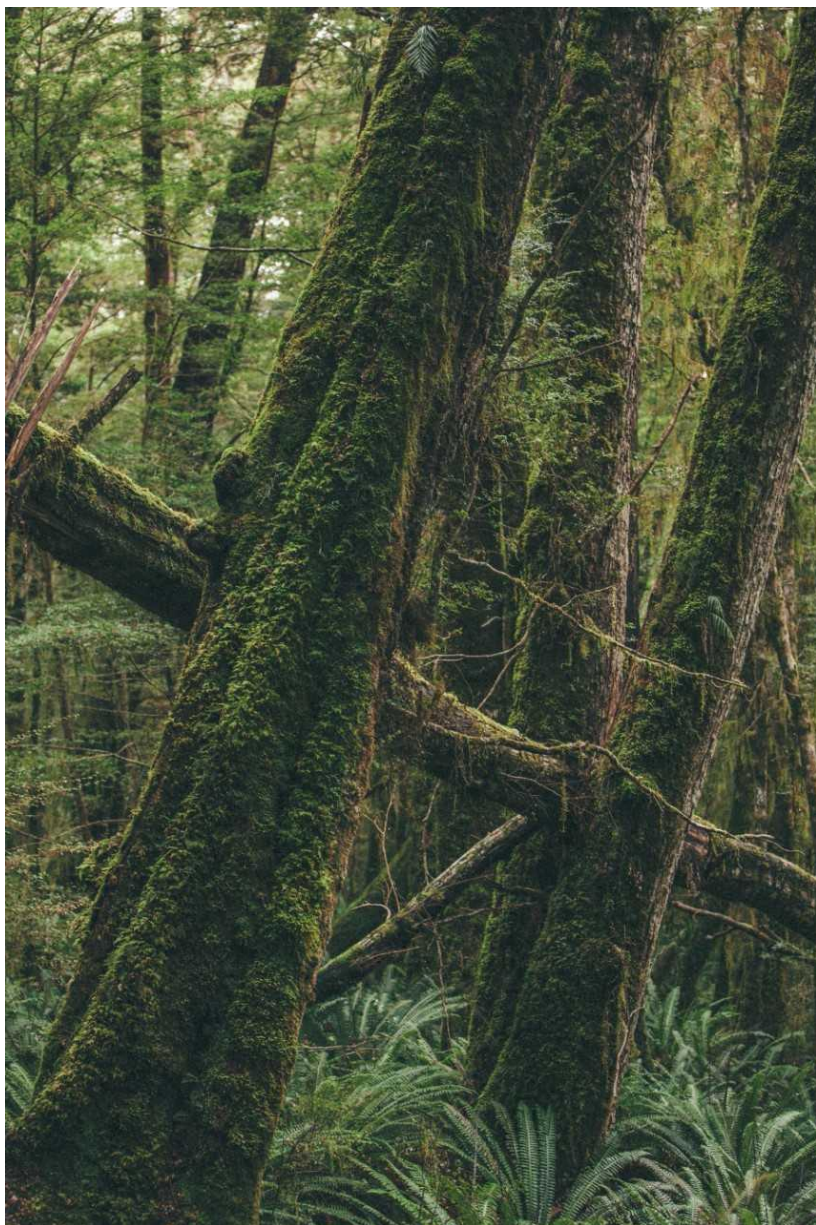
I have carefully sorted you into a rolodex of small things,
dusted and preserved, like archeological evidence:
a song by a washed up 90's band,
your cologne on a man's sweater,
the scar on my finger that you bandaged,
the sound of my skates against ice,
your name on a screen,
an absence.

I would like to be a small thing too,
carefully sorted in the top drawer of your dresser.
I want to be a watch your grandmother gave you,
a tie you wear to feel confident,
a left-over lemon drop you've forgotten about,
a nickel you will never use,
a presence.

(with no hard feelings)

Untitled

Christopher Hinytzke



Sometimes What You're Feeling Is Just It

Dany Bicoy

Iris entered her humble apartment, throwing her keys on an end table she kept near the door for throwing keys on. The familiar sight of home was an interesting feeling after spending the day seeing the familiar sights of her childhood home in Sixville. She turned her nose to the air and sighed deeply.

Her clothes were black because she was mourning. And black is the kind of thing you're supposed to wear when your mourning. Iris was mourning because her father had recently "passed on" (which is what you're supposed to say instead of died). Little known to Iris, but her father's death was entirely dependent upon the invention of mechanical pencils. As in, there is no possible way his death would have happened when it did in a universe where mechanical pencils had never been invented. He was mauled by a bear, but that doesn't matter.

She removed her shoes and walked through her tiny kitchen which doubled as a dining room into her tiny bedroom that doubled as a living room. There was a window at the end of the room that her bed was against and she laid herself down on it and looked out the smudged window. The sky outside was as blue as the blue paint one would find in a can one would buy to paint the walls of one's house.

Iris had only painted walls once in her entire life, when her father and her moved to a slightly smaller home and he was desperate to make it look brighter. She could recall how unimaginably blue the paint was sitting there in that can waiting to be spread onto her new home's walls. The pleasure of making the first dip into it with her paintbrush was incomparable for her at the time, as she was only ten years old. However, she had matured quite a bit since then and could now quite easily compare it to a mediocre level orgasm.

Soon Iris's good friend Natalie appeared in her apartment. She appeared there because Iris let her in, which explains why her reaction to Natalie being in her apartment was to hug her rather than call the police. She joined her on the bed.

"Was the funeral nice?" Natalie asked, her eyes attempting to meet Iris's. Iris shrugged as her mind attempted to think about anything other than the funeral.

"It was a funeral, I don't know. Not many people came, we've never really had any family and he's never been good at making friends," she answered, and Natalie made a verbal response to affirm

that she received the appropriate soundwaves Iris had projected towards her.

“Who were the people that did come?” Natalie asked as she attempted to sit up further on her bed, readjusting her posture and pushing up her body with her hands.

“He did have some friends, they all came. He found a group to play Dungeons and Dragons with years ago and they all came to mourn their lost paladin. They were the ones that probably knew him the best,” Iris said, her eyes searching the wall across the room. The sun was near setting and the shadow of the window pane sat at an unsatisfying angle to the corners of the room.

“Well that’s good,” Natalie replied, her eyes searching aimlessly through the air in front of her as her brain attempted to collect itself and formulate a response while several quiet moments passed.

“Are you doing okay?” she finally managed to ask.

“I said I was fine,” Iris answered honestly and confidently. Every word in that sentence was the truth and yet the meaning of it was hollow, providing a paradox unsatisfying to the thought.

“So you were fine back in Sixville,” Natalie said, picking herself up and crossing her legs, facing Iris with her full attention. “Doesn’t mean you’re fine here. You haven’t been there in years Iris, how are you feeling?” she asked, leaning in and attempting, as always, to meet Iris’s eyes.

Iris averted her own eyes and began to search the ground. She noticed the uneven placement of her floorboards, and let it begin to bother her. Unknown to Iris at the time, the floorboards of her apartment were infamous in the minds of the people that had lived there. There was something about the angles and the lengths of the planks that made people uneasy. Not quite uneasy enough to ever tell anyone about their plight, which is why the infamy only existed in their heads.

“Iris?” Natalie asked, regaining Iris’ full attention. “How are you feeling?” she repeated, and Iris’s thoughts returned to that question with glum reluctance.

“I haven’t seen or communicated with my father at all in over three years,” she answered.

“Really?” asked Natalie, her brow furrowing indicating concern in her large eyes made larger by her glasses. She had not known that information.

"We had nothing to say to each other," Iris answered truthfully. Her forehead head started to twinge with the beginnings of a headache.

"And how do you feel about that?" Natalie asked.

Iris had once spent an entire evening measuring the different lengths of floorboards that were on her floor. She arranged these lengths into categories and found that there were only five different lengths of floorboards. From this she could view her floor as a sequence of values from zero to five, each different type indicating a different integer. She wrote down the sequence from multiple perspectives and spent the coming weeks trying to decipher it.

"Iris." Natalie patiently repeated, regaining Iris's attention again. "do you wish you would have talked to him more?"

"I..." Iris began. She thought she knew the answer to that question. She definitely knew how she was supposed to answer that question. "I don't think so. I chose to not speak to him. He chose not to speak to me. I don't think there was anything more to it,"

"Okay, so that's why you didn't talk to him. How do you feel about that choice now?" she asked, scooching closer to Iris on the bed.

"I think," Iris began. Her eyes focusing on the different lengths of floorboards. "I'm angry about it."

"Why are you angry?"

"Because I chose not to speak to him, and now I have no choice anymore. I'm sad about this, and I'm pissed at myself for being sad about this. It's stupid."

"It's not stupid, it's how you feel." Natalie comforted, offering a hand on Iris's shoulder.

Iris closed her eyes and pressed her hands to her temple, her headache building. She once spent weeks trying to decipher the code that must have been left by the builders in her floorboards. She wrote down every possible combination of letters that she could derive from it and spent an unhealthy amount of time trying to find the right way to break up the letters. She did end up figuring it out one day, and she triumphantly raised her fists in the air as she read the finished sentence. It said "Stop messing around. Listen to Natalie. Focus. She can help you."

Iris opened her eyes and looked over at Natalie, who had a measure of love in her eyes Iris had seen only a small fraction of in her life. Natalie cared very deeply, and was very obviously putting

everything she had into this moment. For her. She swallowed and spoke.

"I think I'm just confused as to why one change can mess me up so much," she said. Natalie nodded. "I feel so trapped and it's making me panic,"

"I'm sorry," Natalie said softly.

"I don't want to talk to him, and yet I'm still made sad about not talking to him. This is a ridiculous, annoying, idiotic paradox," she said angrily and she could feel the sadness seeping to her eyes.

A fun fact about Iris was that she had never seen the Niagara Falls and yet had made exactly four plans to go and see them in her life. Once immediately after high school with her now ex-girlfriend that fell through because her now ex-girlfriend decided to add the 'ex' to how Iris would refer to her for the rest of her life. The second and third time were both made on her lonesome. The second time she was whole heartedly planning on going but when the time came to leave she couldn't bring herself to lift the bag that she packed.

Iris pressed her hands over her face and could feel it burning. Her breathing started getting shallower.

The third time she had planned on going and bought the plane ticket, however when the date came to leave she simply forgot she had planned on going until the plane had left. The fourth time she had made plans with her dear friend Natalie to go at long last, however the existence of mechanical pencils made that also fall through.

Tears began streaking down her face.

"Hey Iris," Natalie said suddenly, pulling herself closer to Iris and putting her arm around her. "Your emotions are not a paradox. You did love him and now he's gone. You don't need to be able to explain all of your feelings," Natalie squeezed her shoulder. "Sometimes... what you're feeling is just it," she said.

Iris could feel the sadness dripping off her eyes. Her hands began to shake and she balled them into fists and pressed them to her legs. Natalie pulled her closer.

"The last thing..." Iris said in a shaky as her body began to tense up in resistance "that he said to me... was to make sure I wore a rain jacket on the way to the airport. Three years ago," Iris said as she felt the sadness start to pour from her body.

Her arms wrapped around Natalie, clinging to her. Tears gushed down her cheeks. Her mind filled with static as flashes of lightning seemed to run through her body, causing her to convulse

and sound to leave her mouth without her permission. She held onto Natalie for dear life as the room around her fell away completely and she received repeated images of her father stabbed into her mind's eye while the sadness poured out of her until the night had long fallen and she was drenched in sweat and her energy was sapped.

She lay collapsed next to her dear friend Natalie who kept a hand around her shoulder to steady her. Her body was limp and her mind empty, her eyes lazily examined the ceiling texture with a dull interest. The particular patch of ceiling she was gazing at was hand made by a man named Michael, who, upon finishing it, did happen to wonder about what type of person would be looking up at it one day. He wondered what kind of troubles that person would face and the life they would lead independent of him. Michael would then go on to grow weary of the city and move to the small town of Sixville, where he began playing Dungeons and Dragons with Iris's father.

Iris was not aware of this coincidence because it wasn't actually true. So she stopped thinking about it. Her father had lived a long life of isolation, largely by his own design. He didn't know how to show love in his eyes, so he showed it in other ways. Iris had learned a lot from him. He died recently, and she missed him.

Fight or Flight
Abigail Kolbe



My Tribute to the "Entitled" Men:

Sona

Come on in,
have a seat;
your dinner and a show.
Fix your belt,
sit up straight,
no worries,
no candles here to glow.

For you are not
that type of man,
a romancer,
or one to lead a gentle hand.
No,
you are "that guy",
the one who rather
have me stand.

So sweet and smooth
you greeted me,
yet your intentions
crystal clear.

Because now your lips
do beg for me,
not intellectually,
but sexually;
an advance I no longer fear.

With this expectation,
that I owe you this or that,
I believe there is something
for you to know you
"entitled" little brat.

I am a woman intellectually,
physically,
and mentally,

an individual of my own.
I breath fire when I speak,
carry worlds upon my back;
my body is my home.

Little man, little man,
a bone is what you request?
Haha!

How foolish to think this body accepts guests.
I am sorry dear friend
but a seat at this table
I cannot find for you.
So I guess a barrel
between your legs
will sorely have to do.

Untitled

Austin VanBuren



Briars

Dalton Gamroth

The forest surrounding their home was full of wicked and malicious creatures. They were out there; she knew they were.

She just had to find them.

Bryony and Mei crept through the snow-blanketed wood, silent as wraiths, holding lichen-covered sticks scavenged from the brush. The sky wept snowflakes; Bryony could almost hear the delicate taps as each flake landed, the woods were so silent, and she was surprised that she couldn't even hear Mei's nose whistle.

She sucked in a sudden breath, the air as cold as peppermint, and squatted behind a fallen tree, dragging Mei down beside her. "Shh!" She hissed, releasing a misty cloud as she spoke. "Did you hear that? Quiet!" She reached her scrawny arm across Mei's chest to keep her behind the log. "Weapons at the ready!"

It was as if a spring sun were shining, bright and pretty and hopeful, when Mei giggled. "Is it the gob –"

"Quiet, Mei!" Bryony said urgently. "Weapons at the ready, I said! Can't you smell them coming?"

Bryony gripped her sword tighter, preparing for the assault. Her heart thrummed, thrilled with the hunt. She couldn't wait to impale whatever moved her way, to tear it apart. She smiled, giddy.

She knew what happened if one lost their concentration around a goblin. They were creatures of ice, malevolent, and if you breathed in their evil breath, that ice encased your soul itself. It made you empty, made you lonely, made you feel as if you could never breathe again.

She heard the goblin's cackling as they neared. She nudged Mei, who was as silent as the air around them.

"Ready?" Bryony spoke through a maniacal grin, her words dripping goblin blood. They would never see her coming. "A battle approaches!"

A moment passed, and the serenity of the forest shattered at Bryony's command.

"ATTACK!" She howled, launching herself over the log and brandishing her sword above her head.

She sliced her sword downwards on the nearest goblin – about waist-high, with white mottled skin that blended in with the snow and eyes made of shadows. Its mouth opened in a snarl to show jagged teeth made of the sharpest icicles. Her sword ran

straight through the monster's body, and the creature instantly melted into steaming water. It was a weapon forged from sunlight, the deadly weakness of any goblin, and Bryony was its mighty wielder.

"Ha!" Bryony exclaimed, and turned to the next goblin. "Come on, Mei! Fight! I can't do it alone!"

"Hi-ya!" Mei sang, and her voice tinkling off of tree trunks, a ladybug tinkling off of a sun-warmed window. "Take that! Hi-ya!"

Bryony dodged a wickedly sharp goblin claw and thrust upward with her sword, beheading it. She grinned, adrenaline coursing through her veins like a blizzard.

She couldn't see Mei; she was too busy, swinging her sword, slicing two goblins in half at once. But after she had cut through the remaining – with not a scratch marring her skin – she turned to see Mei, sword in hand, a slain, melting goblin at her feet. She looked up at Bryony – cheeks rosy from the cold, long black hair flecked with snowflakes, her almond-shaped eyes alight – victorious.

"We did it!" Mei said, jumping up and down and throwing her sword to the ground to clap her hands together, the sound muffled.

"Yeah, we did!" Bryony joined in. "But Mei, don't ever let go of your weapons. That's how you get hurt!" She bent over and shoved Mei's sword back into her hands. She was tired, and she walked past Mei as if the girl were but a specter and sat on the log that had hid them before the battle. "Now who do we fight?" She asked as Mei sat, light as air, beside her, twisting her small silver ring around her finger. Bryony watched the small metal butterfly disappear, then appear again, so fast that it was blurry. She had given the ring to Bryony two weeks ago as a gift, but Bryony knew how special it was to her, and so today she had let Mei wear it.

Mei sucked in a breath, as if she were about to speak, and then let it out without any words, like she always did. "What? What were you gonna say? I'm still ready to fight!"

"I'm thinking!" Mei said.

"I think we should go hunt for more goblins," Bryony suggested.

Mei shook her head, cocking her head to the side in thought. "We should look for some pixies! If we can find their nests, maybe we can wake them up from their hibernation and spring will come faster!"

"I don't think they have nests around here," Bryony said. Mei often lacked the nerve it took for an adventure worthy of her standards. She didn't want to look for frilly fairies.

"Yes, they do! I made them up!"

"I don't like the pixies, though, and this is *my* quest. Are there vampires?" Bryony gasped, an idea blinding her mind, the sun glaring off of an ice-slicked lake. She tried to grasp Mei's arm, but she missed, and her hand slammed against the rough bark of the log. "Or witches! Let's go kill some witches, Mei!"

"No, I don't think witches exist in this part of the woods," Mei mused softly.

"I think they do."

"It's my game, though," Mei mumbled like a clubbed seal. She had a way of making herself smaller, softer, as if she were nothing but a shadow. It made the blizzard within Bryony settle down into a lazy flurry, and she put her arm around Mei's shoulders.

"Sorry, Mei. We can look for pixies if you want. I guess," Bryony said, trying not to sound bitter. "When we find them, though, can they make me another sword?"

Mei smiled. "Yes!" She laughed, tiny golden bells ringing in Bryony's ear.

The snow was falling heavier and the sky was growing ever darker. It would be night soon.

She sighed, looking up at the colorless sky. The whole forest was colorless. "I wish you were my real sister."

Mei breathed in like she was about to speak, but then abandoned her voice and was silent for a few moments. Bryony tried not to lose her patience. "Me, too," her friend said, finally, and as they sat, Bryony began to notice the cold biting at her cheeks.

"Let's go!" She said, raising her sword, and she set off, Mei trailing her silently, floating along behind.

* * *

The woods were now darker, colder.

She pushed forward, shoving aside brambles that caught on her coat and pricked her hands. It was always the briars that stayed and flourished during the winter, never the flowers, never the bright leaves and petals.

She didn't mind the dark; she wouldn't be afraid of it, or be afraid of anything, for that matter.

"Maybe we should go back, Bry," Mei said from behind her for the first time in a long time, sniffing. The forest at dusk tinted everything in cold blue. Bryony couldn't see very far in front of her own feet, but that wouldn't stop them. No, they had pixies to find. She wasn't ready to go back.

"I don't think we should," she said, stopping and turning to Mei, whose silhouette looked faded. "We've still got a while before we reach the pixie nests."

Mei sucked in a breath, and halted. Bryony blinked slowly, irritation scraping her ribcage. "I think . . ." Mei started slowly. "I think the pixies are deeper in the woods. But it's dark, and Ms. Charlotte's been calling us. Haven't you heard her?"

"So what?"

"I want to go back. I'm cold."

"I'm not."

"If we don't go back we might not seconds for supper," Mei pled.

"We never get seconds, anyways." Bryony thought of the few other kids in the group home with resentment, most of them younger than both she and Mei, with crusty noses and marker-stained hands. "Let's keep going. I bet we're almost there, and maybe we'll run into some more goblins!"

"Goblins don't come out at night, you know that," Mei said, as if reciting from a textbook. She kept looking over her shoulder, eager to get back to the home. "They're too afraid of the Ice Dragons."

Bryony's heart leaped, perked with interest. "What Ice Dragons?" She took a step closer to Mei, but she still looked like a shadow. "Are they killable? You never told me about them." Her voice grew brittle. "What else do you know about that you didn't bother to tell me, huh?"

"I don't think humans can kill them," Mei said, ignoring her. "Let's go back. Please?"

This time, Bryony ignored her. "I could kill one. Tell me how to kill a dragon!"

"It takes two people to kill a dragon," Mei said, though her words were almost lost. Bryony folded her arms across her chest and tapped out an angry rhythm with the toe of her boot. "I'm leaving, Bry."

Before she even had a chance to protest, Mei was gone, as if she'd never been with her at all.

"Hey!" Bryony stumbled forward. "Get back here! I can't kill a dragon by myself! I need you, Mei!" Her throat cracked, the air freezing her lungs. "Come back!"

Her friend didn't come back. And she wasn't *going* to come back.

It had been two weeks.

"I don't need you," Bryony said to herself, quietly. She moved to the trunk of a large tree and cleared away a small spot to sit, her back against the rough bark. She drew her knees up and leaned on them.

"Bryony!" Ms. Charlotte's honey-sweet voice cut through the wind, through the trees.

She nuzzled her face deeper into her coat. She didn't want to go back; going back would be walking into a home full of goblin breath, because she knew that Mei would not be there when she kicked off her boots or hung up her coat for the next girl to use. Mei would not be at the dinner table when she sat down for whatever it was that Ms. Charlotte had made, and she would not be there to fill the empty bed beside Bryony's own.

She bit her lip. She wasn't going to cry. She was a warrior; she needed no one.

"Bryony!" Ms. Charlotte called, voice sewn with a few threads of worry.

It had happened instantly, suddenly, without warning. In one moment, Bryony had gone outside to patrol the grounds for the goblins, who were after Mei's enchanted butterfly ring, and the next, Mei was walking out with Ms. Charlotte to meet a friendly pair of faces and an SUV, smiling, lacing the late fall air with a kind of warmth only she could bring.

"Where are you going?" Bryony had asked, throat strangled with briars, though she already knew. Images were clicking into place in her mind, pictures that had left her confused for several weeks: Mei leaving with Ms. Charlotte for hours at a time; this same SUV, parked in the driveway every other day; Mei giving up things, like her butterfly ring or her favorite spot on Ms. Charlotte's couch. For a long time, Bryony had suspected, had wondered, but she never really thought that Mei would be . . .

". . . moving in with a new foster family," Ms. Charlotte explained, through her red lipstick and her honey-and-lemon cough drop breath, fussing with the glasses that were too small for her face. Mei kept looking down at the ground, her cheeks pink, eyes rimmed with tiny little crystals.

"Why?" Bryony demanded.

"That's just how it is," Ms. Charlotte said, moving from Mei to Bryony and resuming the exact same posture, with both of her dry hands on Bryony's shoulders, standing behind her. "We need to make room for new children who need a little help. Mei has been with us

longer than any of you girls, and . . .” The rest of Ms. Charlotte’s words were lost to her. Ice had formed over her eardrums. “But we’ll miss you, Mei. Won’t we, Bryony? She’ll come back to visit every now and then, just to say a quick hello, after she’s all settled in.”

For the first time, Mei had looked up, and it was Bryony’s turn to look down at the driveway. Her chest had been knotted so tightly; it felt as if her heart would stop beating, for there was no room for it to beat. The tightness was traveling up, into her throat, trying to release some of the pressure through her eyes, but she wasn’t going to match Mei’s tears. The thorns, the briars, were winding around her heart, squeezing, squeezing, squeezing.

“No,” Bryony said, simply, bitterly, and she tore herself out of Ms. Charlotte’s grip and stormed back into the home.

She had been trapped in that moment, a little girl caught in a blizzard, tripping and stumbling, unable to find a way out. How many times had she relived it?

“Bryony!”

She closed her eyes – just for one minute – and inched up the tree until she stood on her own two feet again.

Mei was probably at the dinner table right now with her new family. Why had they wanted Mei, anyways? What was wrong with *her*? Bryony was a smart girl, she was just as well-behaved as Mei most of the time, how come no one ever –

Stop it. You don’t need anyone, anyways.

She closed her eyes, imagining the briars tightening around her chest, so tight that no feelings could get in, and none could get out. She was a warrior. She was fine by herself.

* * *

Bryony began trudging back to the home, abandoning her sword, and reached into her pocket, pulling out the small butterfly ring. Mei had left it for her; Bryony had found it tucked underneath her pillow on the night her best friend left, along with a little note:

I’m sorry Bry right now I’m moving away for a little while and I’m sorry I didn’t tell you but I was scared you would be mad and I don’t want you to be mad at me. Soon spring will come and maybe we will see each other again then and we will go on more adventures but for right now I will see you soon. I love you!

Love, Mei

She slipped the ring onto her finger, the little butterfly facing upwards, the tips of its wings curled, as if in flight. Right now, it was dark and gray and nothing more than cold metal in the winter night; she couldn't wait for the sun to come out, to be able to shine on it and turn it into something golden and bright, something beautiful.

Tomorrow, she would go searching for the pixies. They brought warmth, according to Mei's imagination. They were out there; she *knew* they were.

She just had to find them.

Farm Animals

Sona

Here I am,
Feminine with a price.
Drag your eyes slowly
And pick out your slice.
Is if my curvy frame?
Or maybe my thighs?
I thought I heard you mention my breasts,
Or was it my eyes?

"Don't huff, don't puff!
Don't turn your face!
I am a man you know...
A man,
The human race."

It's nature you tell me,
A basic human right.
What humans are we
If being human is a fight.

Untitled

Randi Whiteaker



Confidence

Paulina Goebels

One morning, resting against the kitchen counter, I found myself staring at a bag of apples. I had walked past them in the organic section of the supermarket on my way to find Cheerios. “One apple a day, keeps the doctor away”, my mother’s voice had resonated in my head and I was feeling particularly responsible that day.

They looked strangely out of place, sitting there between the boxes of cereal and the busted old microwave. ‘What a bizarre word’, I thought. Micro-wave. ‘Who thought that that was a sensible term for an electronic heating device?’ After having articulated the word microwave in various forms into the empty space of my apartment, I came to the conclusion that it didn’t matter. I hadn’t used it in weeks now and I strongly suspected that it was broken anyway.

I had thrown it into the general direction of my ex as I was moving out but then went back and took it with me. “Who’s too absent and indecisive now, asshole?!” I had shouted up at the closing door on my way back down. Minnie had shaken her head so many times that day, I started feeling nauseous just looking at her. ‘Why did you keep that bloody thing?’ she asked me after. ‘I don’t know’, I shrugged. ‘It’s essential, isn’t it? I mean, I’m pretty sure you’re not a functioning adult without proper kitchen equipment.’ Minnie shook her head and emptied her gin and tonic in one go.

The neon light flickered as the alarm on my phone went off. ‘Work’ it blinked brightly on the screen. My gaze still rested upon the bag of apples. My stomach grumbled. It seemed too much of an effort to reach for them. ‘I’ll just get chips from the vending machine’, I decided, nodding reassuringly at myself. I shouldered my bag with panache and let the door slam shut behind me. The apples would still be there when I got back.

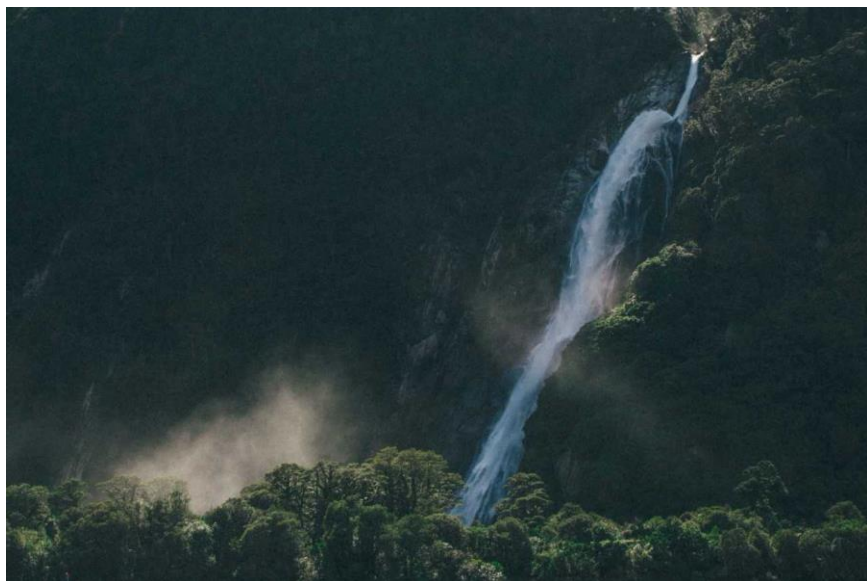
Untitled

Sona

We spoke of love
and cities found
atop mounds of twinkling gold
deep underground.
How mighty rivers sigh
when meeting the sea;
like a dabble of whiskey
swirled in tea.
We spoke of poetry,
and art in gold frames,
until morning dew sparkled;
glitter from midnight rains.
We wrote in the stars
our wishes bright,
as shadows of our past
dissolved by the night.
We spoke of weddings,
children and things,
Of ticking clocks
and front porch swings.
You held my hand
intertwined completely,
while you fell far below,
but never beneath me.
And although now apart,
two weeping doves,
what must be remembered,
is how we spoke of love.

Untitled

Christopher Hinytzke



Home
Cassidy Herman



In the Room

William Albea

At that time, it was the small hours of the night and only a short distance from his own room he visited the bathroom. Upon being, for the most part, still asleep, he pushed the bathroom door until it hit its frame, unbeknownst to him that the door did not close and spawned a quarter-inch's space between it and the doorframe, drawing a thin, yellow needle of light into the dark hallway. Groggily he flushed the toilet and washed and dried his hands with the hand cloth hanging from the brass ring mounted on the wall next to the mirror. He turned and reached for the light switch, pressing it down with his lump of an asleep hand, returning the black void. As the bright image from the bathroom dissolved from his eye, he was now able to see better in the darkness.

Slumped, he returned through the small hallway, letting his feet to slide along the thin yet silky rug spread along the floor. His eyes were adjusted back to the darkness. He entered his room, closing in the same manner his bedroom door as he did the bathroom door, just a sliver of open space in the doorframe. Sulking at his bedside, he knelt into bed, lifting the covers over his legs and torso where he could still feel the warmth of his body in them that he found helped greatly, if not on occasion entirely, on falling back asleep. Resting his matted head on the pillow, he gazed across the room in his last moments of wakefulness and saw the opposite wall facing him dressed very dark and with shadows of the things in his room. Looking at the wall he saw one still shadow move and walk across the wall, it being human, and out his bedroom door.

His eyes followed the shadow slide across his room and out the crack of the doorframe. It did not appear at first to be the shape of a person, just a partial shadow set in the others when it finally lumbered past them and out the sliver of space in the doorframe, was he able to recognize it as being of someone. He began thinking and debating with himself and realized that no one could have cast that shadow.

He sunk deeper into his bed, pushing the covers over his nose and ears trying to hide himself from whatever had been in the room with him. He was not sure if it still was in the room, hiding in other shadows, watching him and knowing him. He was not sure if the thing had really left when it slid from out of his door, but some reason in him concluded that it might. He realized then that there was a fifty-fifty

chance of this thing's whereabouts; either it was still with him in the room or it had left after he had seen it walk across the wall.

He was now getting anxious and was becoming wide awake. He closed his eyes as another possibility burst into his consciousness; unless, he thought, when that shadow left my room it didn't leave me, it's still watching, observing me, knowledgeable of where I am and what I have done to try and hide myself from it. It could have left my room, but it still *sees* me, knows that I am trying to hide from it. It was just an illusion, to get me to watch it, watch it leave the room so I'd think it left me completely.

Tingling sensations sparkled up his back and neck and down his sides, causing fear to set in. He slowly pushed the covers over his eyes, then forehead, until the blanket completely covered his rigid body. Now he was totally awake, unable to shut his wide eyes and not daring to make a sound or any movement so if the thing was still in the room with him, it would not hear or see him. He could not have it knowing that he acknowledged it, for he believed that if he did, the shadow would know he is awake and trying to hide.

His only protection were the blankets covering him, yet the shadow had dominion over his room, he knew that. It might be there, watching him, whether it be illuminated on the wall from the window, or perhaps it is standing in a black corner, being darker than the black, lightless corner it is inhabiting, proving all the more to him that this thing is there, *being* something, possessing an agenda.

Sweat began to bead at his hairline and above his chin. Each exhale he breathed fumed and fired the small environment he had created for himself, and with no openings to his room, his hot exhalations sat there on his face and neck and burrowed into his matted shirt that stuck to him from stains of sweat. He hoped to open a small hole in his covers to let in some cool air from his room. However, no matter how great his desire was to let in just a mouthful of fresh air, a swell of cool wind, he knew he would not dare even twitch for so much as a salty drop of sweat rolling into his eye.

Yet as he lied silent and still in that oven of blankets, he truly did not know whether the shadow was still in the room with him or not, and that is what unnerved him, that unknowing, causing him to feel helpless and vulnerable. He did not know if the thing stood there again on his wall, staring ominously, a disembodied shadow, *his* agent of petrifying fear; he too did not know if the thing had actually left his room. But still he could picture it, standing there: a black form perched

in the corner close to his bed, with only the intent of staring at him, drilling its unknown sight into him.

After what he guessed at an hour and a half, he fell asleep without feeling tired, an instant and forgetful way as just a minute ago he was wide-eyed and soaked in sweat yet now at the present he fell into a dark cascade of a dreamless sleep, black and comalike.

It was the next night that he felt paranoid having to sleep in his room again.

He cautiously looked around his room; the wall, the window, and to the door as he stood wondering where the shadow had come from and if it could be in there with him now. Then he grimaced at his bed and slowly knelt into it, bringing his limbs bent and close to him as his thick covers flowed over his condensed body.

Just as his protocol was last night, he covered himself with his covers, letting not one tuft of his hair poke out to where the shadow could see it. The room was black and was now past midnight as he was again beginning to feel the hotness of his breath and sweat. A bead of sweat rolled down his forehead and soaked into the sheets of his mattress when he reluctantly decided that he must open up his blankets a bit in order to breathe some fresh air and try to not contract a heat stroke.

He wedged his fingers in between the blankets and the bedsheet and he felt the anticipation in the churning of his stomach as he opened up a hole that spanned most of his face. The cool air that flowed in his mouth and in his blankets, was the exact elixir his body craved and felt rejuvenated as his lungs filled, and his skin touched.

Upon opening his eyes, the familiar scene of his dark room at night lay before him, seeming ordinary. There lay on the floor the silky rug, across from him his closet and to the left of that the door.

Lying on his side was becoming increasingly uncomfortable as his bodyweight pressed on his right arm and shoulder, growing numb and painful. What elixir his body needed now was to turn over on his back and diminish the prodding numbness. His mind halted his movements with the thought of the shadow. He became nervous and recognized the same flavor of fear that he had felt last night when he saw it slide across the wall and out the door. But the pain was becoming crippling, it was bleeding into his neck and was like someone had placed a dark lance in his shoulder, pushing on all of his muscles and sinews, outpouring pain into him.

He let it go on for perhaps ten minutes when he finally decided to slowly turn over and try to make the maneuver as unnoticeable as he

could. He began with his hips, turning them around. Then his legs and torso. When he turned his head, the open space he made in the blankets covered one side of his head as he glanced at the far side of his room. His movements stopped as the dark form stood in the corner, still and watching him slowly spin around in his bed.

The shadow loomed in the corner, tall and black as soot; he found no facial features on its face. It stood there, existing and dark, thin, with its arms at its sides and its head facing down at him. But it seemed not to be cast on the wall like the previous night, it was standing in the room, taking up space.

He was petrified.

The shadow stood there and then walked over to the foot of his bed.

It stood there over him, with its face pointed down at him and its arms still at its sides.

The shadow was less than two feet from him, and he dared not to make any sound. He never felt a fear like this, it was too great to allow him to move, it was petrifying. He was completely crippled, body and mind; he did not believe he could move any part of himself and he could not think of anything but the thing that loomed over him and was growing in its knowledge of him.

The shadow stood there motionless, standing over him and his bed, watching.

The only thing he could do was to watch back, but he knew the shadow had dominion over him and his room. He just lied there, watching back at the thing at the foot of his bed.

A while had passed as he was still petrified and lay in his bed, watching without blinking at the shadow who did not move and still was less than two feet from him. However, the same instant, not-tired sleep came over him again as it did last night, black and dreamless, forgetful as to how he unknowingly fell into that dark coma.

He woke up to a dark room. He blinked his groggy eyes, still adjusting to the image of the dark ceiling and the darkness of the room. He turned over on his side and saw two shadowy legs standing at his bedside, and looked up to see a black form standing directly over him with its face pointed down at him, watching and knowing him sleep.

The coma came over him again.

The next night he was reluctant to even enter his room and saw it as its own isolated entity entirely, torment incarnate.

The night was black and late, and he felt it pressing in on him as he knew that when he walked into his room, the shadow would be there, either visible or invisible, standing still and watching him.

He was terrified and felt eyes already on him as he walked through the blackness of his room and knelt into bed. He was lying there in his bed when he felt someone sit down in it. He slowly turned over, and was met by the black, featureless face lying right next to him, underneath his covers.

September Twenty-Seventeen

Nicola Perini

Madness, madness, and nonsense.
a peeling orange wanting full destruction of
onehundredtwentythousandfivehundredn'forty
kilometer-square of land.
Land of People,
over twenty-five million feelings...
Not only you are crazy
but everyone around is too.
Nonsense, nonsense, and ignorance
One plus one
equals two... ...two idiots
looking at missile size dildos
to shove up each other's asses
without caring
about their bleeding assholes...
Or maybe it's all talks.

Mornin' Sunshine!

Nicola Perini

beep...beeeP..beEP..bEEP.BEEPBEERPBEEP

the alarm,

on the bed side table

found on a curb,

yells, screams: GET UP!

The human rustic machinery slowly

moves, followed by a Liszt's symphony

of cracking and popping.

BEEP..BEEP..BEEEEP

the seventh alarm sounds like an annoying, ugly seagull

in the dark room.

Closed eyes

mornin' breath

ass scratching

time for twenty push-ups,

thirty crunches,

to awake the body.

Mornin' Sunshine routine, but

twelve-hundred seconds later

my body

slowly turns on the other side

of the bed

happily,

unconsciously,

falling asleep.

Kwik Trip Run
Vanessa Weeden



Untitled

Sarah Daentl



I created the attached piece in Ceramics class here at UWL last spring. It's a mixed media piece created out of cardboard and porcelain, then attached to a canvas. All of the flowers are made pedal by pedal and were attached one of the time. Overall, I'd say I put about 40 hours into this piece from start to finish. I enjoyed creating this piece because I love repurposing everyday objects such as cardboard, and I also liked how reparative and intricate this process got. I also liked using the porcelain and think that ceramics is more than just creating fancy bowls, cups, and plates. There is so much more to ceramics, and I think it's important to showcase artwork that show the diversity of the media.

Elle

Katie Bailey

My leg starts bouncing of its own accord while I attempt to do my chemistry lab assignment. I put my ginormous chemistry textbook on my leg in an attempt to slow the bouncing, but it tips off with a loud thud. I turn around to check that my roommate is still sleeping; she stirs momentarily, making the college dorm bed creak sexually. I turn back to my cramped desk, filled corner to corner with chemistry notes and assignments. I pick up my textbook and put it on top of a small pile of papers which accidentally upsets a stack of paper next to it. The papers slide off my desk revealing my small digital clock; it reads 2:17. Shit. I have class in 5 and a half hours and sleep is still far away. I go back to my lab assignment which isn't actually due for another two weeks and finish it when the clock reads 2:43. My leg is still bouncing and my brain is still racing. I get up and quietly put on my running clothes and shoes. I lock the door carefully behind me and jog out of the building, ready to go. I stop and do some stretches on the sidewalk in front of the dorm, then I plug in my headphones and turn on my Spotify playlist: Piano Classics. Symphony No. 3 in F Major, Op. 90 starts serenading my ears as I set off at a light jog. I don't know exactly where I'm going, but I definitely want to see the stars. I turn north to go through the marsh.

I follow the well-travelled marsh trails in the dark, the only light from the moon, and silently berate myself. Why am I running through the marsh, at night without my pepper spray or a buddy? But I keep going, happy that at least I remembered my phone. As I keep running, my legs become leaden and my breathing is harsh and I remember high school cross country, how the second half of the first mile was always the worst. I keep going, focusing on my breathing and thinking about how great I'll feel in a couple minutes; once I hit that second mile. Right on cue, I hit the second mile and my stride lengthens into a more comfortable gait and my breathing evens out. At about that time, the song changes to Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major. The running brings back memories of Jayda and how I joined track. I was never really into running, but Jayda was. She was the middle school track star. She loved running so much that she ran a half marathon for fun in 8th grade. I went to all of her events and

cheered her on, I held her hair and rubbed her back when she went through a stage of involuntarily puking after every race. I did everything for her. I still remember the look on her coffee-black face when she won, how her chocolate eyes would light up and literally sparkle with happiness and she would smile the biggest, most beautiful smile I had ever seen. We were best friends but it was something more for me.

I breathe in deeply of the warm summer night air and smell the wet smell of soggy plants and a little bit of fish. Goldberg Variations, BMW 988 comes through my headphones as the smell brings me back to the summer before my freshman year of high school.

It was a beautiful day in July, just a few days after the Independence Day celebration that our families had hosted together. This year it had been at Jayda's house and her mom had grilled while her dad made delicious potato and pasta salads. We were tanning at the beach, or at least I was. Jayda was already dark especially compared to my fair skin and brown hair. I was laid out on a towel, probably just burning anyway with Jayda next to me. I was so happy, nothing could kill my mood, but Jayda did.

"We're moving next week." She blurts.

"But school doesn't start for another two months almost." I frown.

"But cross-country practice starts in two weeks almost." She mimics.

I frown more and open my eyes. She won't look at me while she draws lines in the sand.

"Do you want to go?"

"No."

"Then why are you going?"

"Because."

“Because why?” I start to get frustrated.

She shrugs, still not looking at me. But I know why, because she loves to run, but more than that she loves to win. And this high school she’s moving to has an awesome cross-country coach and a lot of their students go to college with scholarships and even go on to the Olympics. She would rather get into the Olympics than stay and be with me.

I stand up and start to leave, picking up my stuff as I go.

“Wait!” I hear her call, but I keep going until I hear a thud. I turn around and think she must be kidding, because she’s lying on her stomach on the hot sand and not moving.

“Jayda! Stop it! That might have been funny when we were like five, but not now!” I wait impatiently for her to hop up with that mischievous smile on her face, but she doesn’t. I take a few steps towards her.

“Jayda?” I stand right next to her and poke her in the arm with my foot. She doesn’t move. “Jayda!” I kneel next to her and roll her over, pushing her beautiful curly hair out of her face.

I pull myself from the memory with effort and can still see her face in my mind’s eye. My breathing is harsh again, but it isn’t from running. I stop on the side of the path as I struggle to get my emotions under control and the song changes to The Planets, Op. 32: Venus the Bringer of Peace. I check the time on my phone: 3:22, I guess I can turn back now. I turn back the way I came after my breathing gets back under control. I settle into my comfortable stride and try, unsuccessfully, to not think about Jayda. Turns out that Jayda had had a bad heart, and the doctors don’t know why it acted up when it did. Her dreams of running in the Olympics died that day. When she left the hospital, I went to cross country practice.

~~~~~

I make it back to the dorm by 3:56; I climb into bed at 4:04 and set my alarm for 7:15. I succumb to troubling dreams of Jayda. My first cross country practice was horrible. I was not naturally good

at running. Jayda was there in a wheelchair because her heart was still a little unsteady. The coach set us to run an “easy” three miles to warm up. It was definitely not easy. When I finally finished, Jayda was pissed but was trying to keep her heart rate down for obvious reasons.

“You call that running?” She demands once I get close to her. I’m too out of breath to answer, so I shrug. “Lengthen your stride, you’re restricting yourself with that stupid jogging pace. Move your arms more. Keep your breathing even.” I continue to pant, “Try harder.” She spits and wheels away. The dream morphs into a cartoonish version of the highlights of my high school career as an unwilling runner. I get a quick montage of a teeny-tiny me running endlessly around the track while a ginormous Jayda with red eyes screams at me to run faster, go farther, that I’m not good enough. That I never will be good enough. Then it resolves itself into my first cross country meet. I’m so terrified that I think I will throw up and Jayda isn’t helping.

“Remember, long stride, push through second half of mile, and even breathing.” She sounds like she’s reading off a grocery list. Then it’s time to run. I have a good start; my stride is long, and my breathing is good, but my stamina kills me. I make it through the second half of the first mile, and the second mile is pretty good, but I lose it in the third mile. My breathing gets uneven and my legs shorten their strides in rebellion. I push myself but it’s no good. I imagine Jayda’s face if I don’t win and my pace picks up. I somehow get third place and I’m happy with it. Jayda approaches me after the race, no longer in a wheelchair, and slaps the smile off my face.

“Not good enough.”

Her words echo in my mind as I bolt upright in bed, narrowly missing the ceiling of my dorm room. I look at the clock: 7:02 and turn off my alarm. I couldn’t fall back asleep right now even if I had wanted to. She never asked me to run cross country for her, but I felt like I had to. It was my fault that she couldn’t run anymore, so I ran for her.

I get my stuff together to go shower and walk down the hallway in my towel. Happily, I'm the only person showering this early today. I start washing my hair and can't help thinking of Jayda.

Once I started winning, Jayda started smiling again. Those were our golden years, we were the best of friends until senior year, when everything changed. There was this boy; his name was George. He latched onto me despite my indifference towards him. He was short and scrappy. Kind of a hot-head, but a good person nevertheless. He started going with me to cross country practice and Jayda hated it. She didn't like him because he didn't let her walk all over him. I admired him for it. I'd slowly come to the realization over the past 3 years that Jayda was controlling, and I didn't think I liked it. The problem was that I didn't know how to stand up for myself, George helped with that. He stood up for me when he could, and it inspired in me a small spark of rebellion. She pulled me aside after a particularly loud yelling match between her and George.

"He can't stay." She squared off with me, expecting my acquiescence.

"I can't tell him what to do." I retort, attempting to mirror her aggressive stance.

"He's pulling us apart." She wheedles, becoming less confrontational. I roll my eyes.

"Don't be dramatic, Jayda."

"Don't you love me?" She looks at me imploringly. A surge of hatred rolls through me, she knows that I've loved her since forever. But she's not the same as she was, her eyes don't sparkle anymore. Her smile isn't the beautiful one I love, she's changed and not for the better.

"No." I shrug and walk back to George.

"Elle!" She gasps, shocked. "Elle! Don't you walk away from me! Fine." She stamps her foot. "But we aren't friends anymore!" She finally leaves, marching to her car to go home.

“She’s got a few screws loose.” George says, trying to make me feel better. I smile at him and go to cross country practice. I stood up for myself, I should feel great. So why do I feel like shit?

I turn off the shower water and dry myself off, wrapping the towel around my chest. I walk back to my room and the clock reads 7:25. I quietly get ready for class and try in vain to stop the unbidden memories.

After cross country practice, I get home and my parents are waiting for me. Shit. But they look concerned, not mad.

“What’s up?” I ask.

“It’s Jayda.” Mom starts to say. I freeze.

“What happened?”

“Her heart gave out again—.” Dad starts but I cut him off.

“Why aren’t we at the hospital already?” They look at each other with unhappy looks on their faces. “What?”

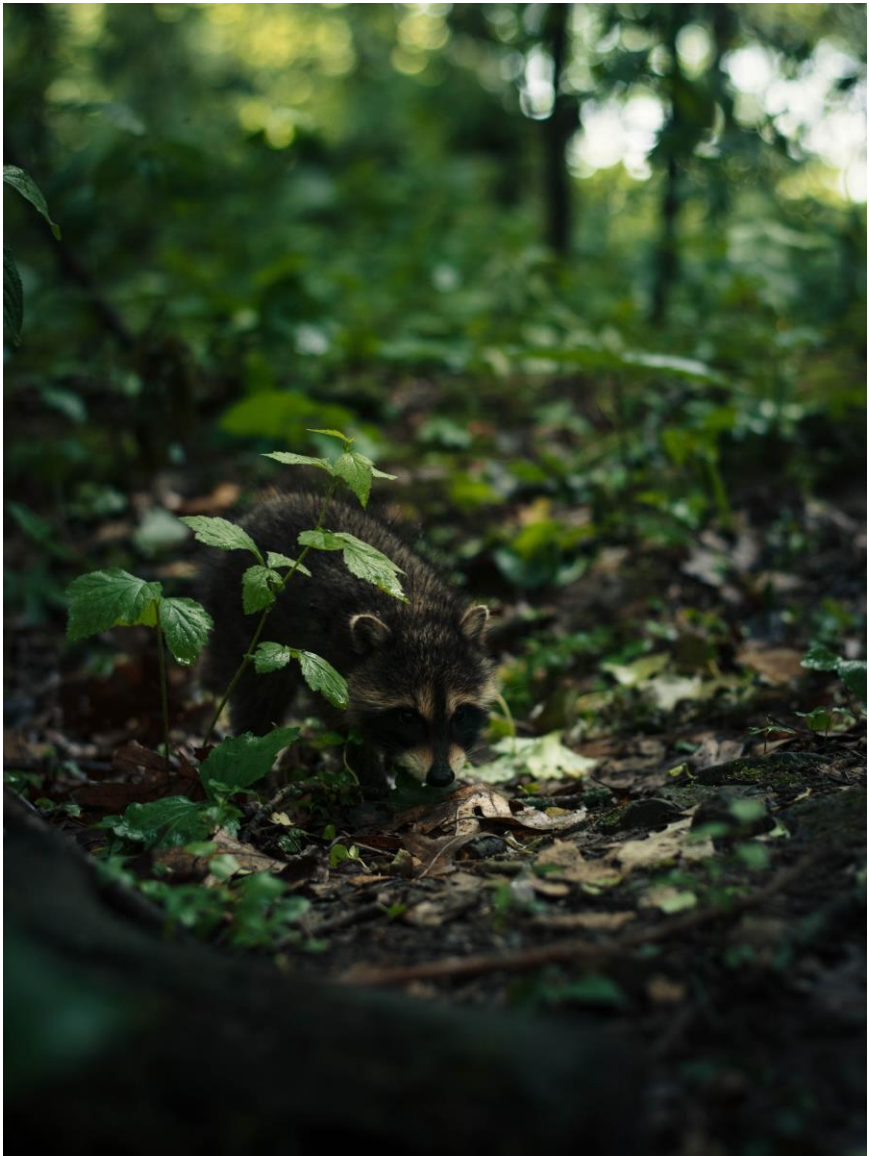
“She was driving, Pumpkin. Her heart gave out and she crashed.” Mom swallows and blinks back tears. “She didn’t make it.”

Not-memory tears are dripping down my face and I struggle to keep it together. On this day two years ago my best friend, the love of my life, and the literal bane of my existence died because of me. It was my fault her dreams died, and it was my fault she died.

Home  
*Cassidy Herman*



Untitled  
*Austin VanBuren*



## Dad

*Lea Menges*

On the last day of September, we drove to the airfield in your old black BMW to fly my brand-new kite. As soon as I got out of the car, I ran across the empty field, the evening sun illuminating my freckly face, and started searching for the perfect spot with the perfect breeze that would catapult my kite into the summer air. “Dad, hurry up,” I shouted, and the sound of my tiny voice echoed from the trees around us. You handed me the string and I ran as fast as my little feet could carry me, but somehow the kite wouldn’t take off, so you had to run and then it leaped, slowly tumbling at first, then graciously wavering through the sky. After what seemed like ten minutes but must have been an hour, the sky grew darker, and I gave you an uneasy look because I was afraid of thunderstorms, but you told me it wouldn’t be that bad. Spoiler: it was bad. Suddenly, rain poured down on us, and you took down the kite and ran, and I ran too, in my little red rubber boots. When we reached the car, I was crying because my kite had torn, and I was cold and wet and afraid of the thunder, and you looked guilty and ashamed at your admittedly unprecise weather radar. The rain had turned into hail and we just sat in your BMW, watching the cold icy pieces that looked like peas beating on the windshield, and in the distance, lightning was illuminating the dark green fields. The ferocious sound of the thunder drowned out the sound of my crying. As the hail retransformed into rain again, you turned on the car radio and played your favorite Fleetwood Mac album. “Thunder only happens when it’s raining,” Stevie Nicks exclaimed, and you grabbed my hand and said, “You’ll get a new one,” wanting to make amends for your miscalculation. What you didn’t know was that I had long forgiven you. I just felt happy to feel your hand on mine.

Home  
*Cassidy Herman*





## **Prost**

*Nicola Perini*

Cool air drunkenly dancing under the warm sun  
Oktoberfest!  
Smell of booze walking through the city,  
looking for a night one stand  
with a blonde.  
People navigating on beer from bar  
to bar on their invisible ships  
made of green tickets.  
Orgies of Lagers and Pills  
on every counter  
let the German heritage shines  
for a few hours before passing out  
on a black bench by the river.  
College students flying  
Superman style on plastic tables  
to find out that  
it wasn't as awesome as expected  
but still standing, cracking open a cold one,  
and shotgun it! YOLO.  
Screams and laughs  
fill the atmosphere while sipping on a pint glass  
trying to remember, what happened the night before.  
Whatever,  
more blondes on the way  
filling the American Dream  
of lost Deutsch souls  
Prost

## Me, Myself, and I

Nicola Perini

He thinks of his choices, decisions that,  
in all these years, took him where he's at today.  
Tramp looking to find answers, looking for a...different future.  
Could have chosen to staying home,

with friends.

Could have gone through a financially

smoother

path,  
but all his mind kept saying was: FUCK THAT  
Some ask "the" question,  
WHY?  
WHY?

Same exact question  
every single morning, in front of the mirror,  
he asks himself.  
Washing his face with warm water,  
dried it with a sad  
beige towel from the dollar store  
and look up, look up to his face,  
where some water is slowly drippin' down his chin  
through the dark and red beard.

Looking up at the old bathroom's mirror,  
politely asking  
WHY?

Sometimes he's silent inside the head, and  
does not have an answer, or  
the answer.

Other times though, he thinks:  
I'm fucking awesome

I

AM

AWESOME

**Ibn Gabirol Afternoon**

*Matthew Sirgrist*



## Christmas From the Other Side

*Cindy Plymesser*

*Are you ready for Christmas? Have you done your shopping yet?*

Oh Yes! I am so ready to see  
the disappointment my girls hide  
behind a chorus of thankyou's  
while my stepdaughter sneers  
and raves about this amazing fucking Santa  
who brought her this year's holiday craze.

Oh Yes! I am so ready to see  
the zeros in my bank account  
while my credit cards seem to have  
the inverse problem –

Oh Yes! I am so ready to see  
the crowded stores full of spoiled,  
ungrateful, demanding children followed  
by parents asking them what they want  
and putting it in the cart as they watch.  
Little Napoleons holding their parents hostage.

**Us**

*Kirsten Petersen*

I don't like things to be left unfinished,

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

---

**K Weinberg-** K Weinberg is a current graduate student at UWL in the Student Affairs Administration program. They graduated with a degree in English from the University of Missouri in 2015, with an emphasis in creative nonfiction and multicultural studies. K wants to thank The Catalyst for sharing their words with others and for supporting student artists. Never underestimate the power of a creative space.

**Kirsten Petersen-**Kirsten Petersen is a nature enthusiast from Green Bay, Wisconsin who's currently a sophomore studying English Education.

**Rylee Hedberg-** My name is Rylee Hedberg, I am a senior at UWL and will graduate in December! My major is communications and my minor is International Studies. I am a double barista at the Root Note and Bean Juice coffee shops. I also do some writing and journalism for SEVEN magazine and Ocooch Mountain Music. I enjoy traveling, running, yoga, coffee, nature, dogs, music, friends, movies, and reading.

**Payton Yahn-** Payton is usually reading, but occasionally tries to write. She is happy you're here and hopes you are having a really love day.

**Jake Joling-** I am a third-year finance student. I am on a pre-law track and plan to attend UW-Madison school of law. I enjoy golfing, playing guitar, running, and spending time with my girlfriend.

**Jenae Winter-** Jenae Winter is a senior at UW-L, majoring in English Literature and minoring in History and Spanish. When she is not writing or reading, she spends her time in bookshops and coffee shops.

**Alaina Steffes-** Alaina is a freshman at UWL and is excited to be majoring in English and minoring in Creative Writing. She enjoys coffee shops, especially those that provide the perfect environment to write creatively in. Her dream is to be a novelist, and hopes to one day travel the world.

**Baley Murphy-** My name is Baley Murphy, I am an Art major undergrad at UWL going for Art Therapy. I have had ten of my paintings displayed around La Crosse, including one that was chosen to be in the All Juried Exhibition at UWL. I have been painting since I was five years old, when I was inspired by my father; who is also an artist. A majority of my work explores the realms of color, along with texture, as well as how unrealistic colors in a realistic painting can amplify its visual appearance.

**Brevin Persike-** I'm Brevin Persike. I study at UWL and I am from Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Most of my writing takes on scenes of the Northwoods that surround Rhinelander or bits of the time I spent in Brazil.

**Dany Bicoy-** Dany Bicoy was born on a particularly cloudy Tuesday in 1967 C.E. if you use a unit of time that's a little longer than a year instead of a year to measure years. She plays music to deal with her emotions, and has a deep love for mathematics. She spends her days feeling happy, miserable, and sometimes other things.

**Abigail Kolbe-** Abigail Kolbe is a junior at UW-La Crosse majoring in Nuclear Medicine Technology. A self-taught artist, she seeks guidance from small details of the world around her to aid her artistry.

**Dalton Gamroth-** Dalton Gamroth is an English Rhetoric & Writing major and Creative Writing minor. He loves words, stories, ice cream, coffee, and Disney movies (*The Little Mermaid*, specifically). He dislikes numbers, math, logical thinking, and soup.

**Nathanial Handahl-** Minnesota resident, seeker of any good story regardless of format (books, films, shows) and music addict.

**Randi Whiteaker-** My name is Randi Whiteaker, I'm a transfer student this year at UWL. Creating art is a passion of mine, and I work with many different mediums.

**Paulina Goebels-** Paulina Goebels is a former international student of UW-La Crosse. She is 24 and studies English and American Studies in Frankfurt, Germany. Her work is influenced by spontaneous and intercultural experiences as well as abstract art and literature.

**Cassidy Herman-** My name is Cassidy Herman, and I'm a sophomore at UWL. I'm majoring in Art Education, and I tend to dabble in all sorts of mediums and art forms. These photos are some I have taken over the course of the semester that have caught my eye, and I hope others can see something in them as I do.

**William Albea-** My name is Will Albea and I am a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and I have written short stories and poetry and sent them to numerous literary websites and magazines, having some of my work published in the past few years. Writing is something I enjoy and am glad to send in my original work to The Catalyst to hopefully be read and published.

**Nicola Perini-** I am Nicola Perini, international student from Milano (Italy), and I am currently a senior majoring in Biology and minoring in English Literature. I would like to become a chiropractor and open a center recognized as an alternative health care provider option back in my home country. Other hobbies of mine are writing poetry and reading all sorts of books, I do love basketball and European-football. The past four years in the La Crosse community have been one of the best time of my life where I was able and honored to meet fantastic, caring people.

**Katie Bailey-** UW-L Senior with a major in English Literature and minors in Archaeology and Creative Writing. I hope to one day be a published author since reading has always been my favorite past-time and I want to bring more people into the magical world of reading!

**Lea Menges-** I'm an exchange student from Frankfurt, Germany, where I study English and American Studies. I'm currently in my junior year. Besides creative writing, I enjoy being outside capturing beautiful sceneries with my camera. I also love travelling and visiting new places—a hobby I can perfectly combine with my love for writing and photography!

**Matthew Sirgrist-** Matthew Sigrist is a senior at UWL majoring in biology with a minor in history. He is an artist by hobby but looks forward to utilizing artwork in communicating scientific concepts to both academia and the public.



Gabrielle Bruns

Vanessa Weeden

Melissa Clement

Austin VanBuren

Christopher Hinytzke

Sona

Sarah Daentl

Cindy Plymesser