



Spring '17

Ramifications

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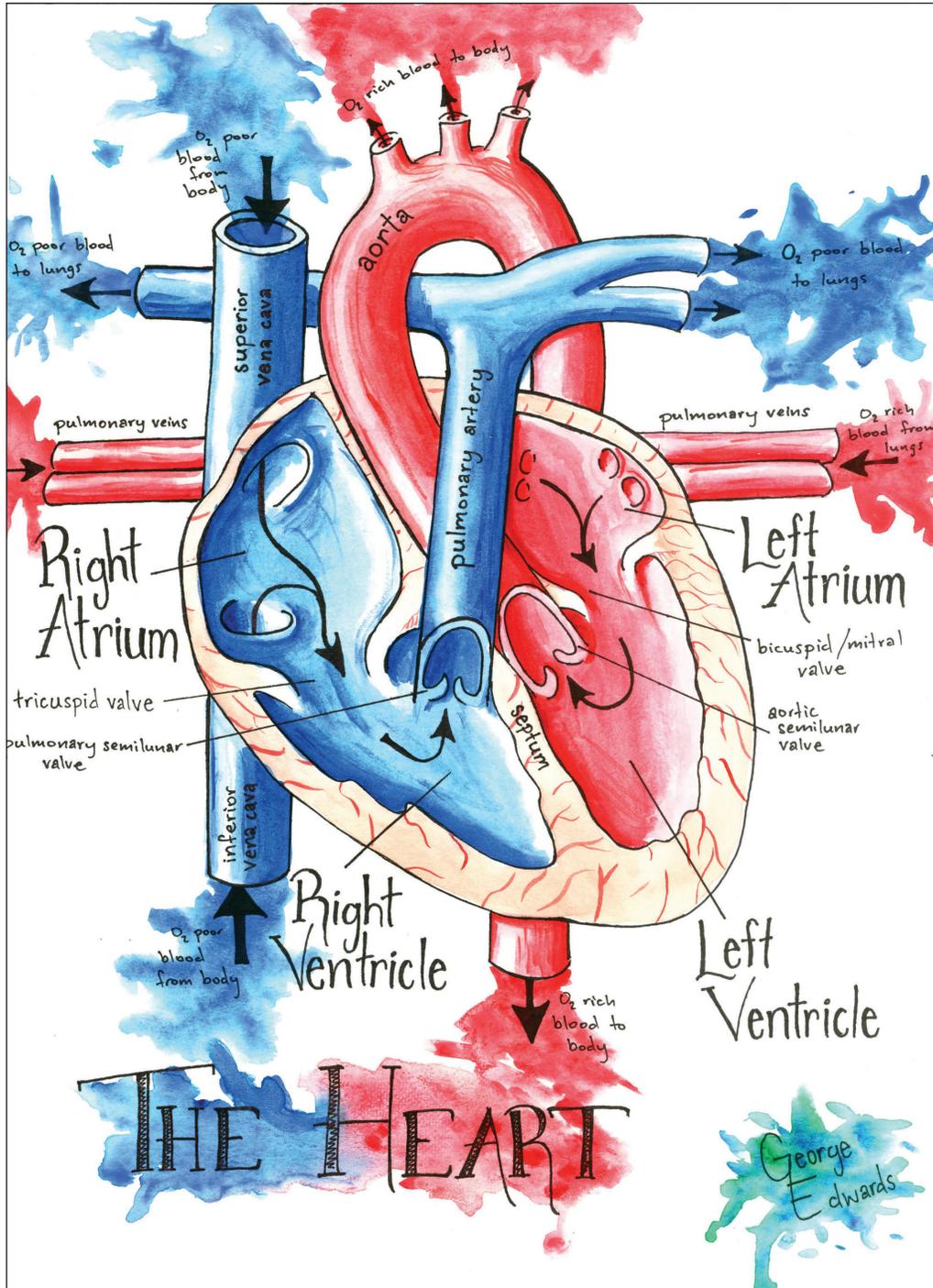
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PROSE



Painting

////////////////////////////////////
The Heart // George Edwards

Come on out to the Junior High Pool Party

Michael Shaw

True, I will never see you again. I hardly knew you then anyway, when we were at that place just below acquaintances. Our eighth grade class was big for a private school, the kind of private school where one of our fellow students cheated on the Bible verse quizzes by keeping a piece of paper under his foot that he could peak at while writing. Our few class officers for our small eighth grade class decided, we should have a pool party.

We had a pool party. I got there on time. Eventually other people started showing, and the guys took their shirts off, because at pools, guys take their shirts off. I took my shirt off, because the only thing worse than being seen without your shirt off is being seen when you're the only one with it on. My cheeks were red before the sun could make them any redder, just my disposition, and then it wasn't long before you drew attention to me.

I don't remember the weather. Perhaps the sun made everything sticky, evaporating the sweat off our eyebrows. I imagine the concrete would've cooked our toes into bacon if we hadn't worn shoes. Or perhaps the pool was veiled by clouds stretching across the space above the neighborhood. There's plenty I do not remember.

One of the guys, who was darker and quieter than me, and one of the other guys, who was paler and louder, had toned six pack abs, but I hadn't gotten the memo that in middle school, I was already supposed to have that. A group of girls saw.

You were among them, and you all sang an improvisational song with no consonants, "Oooooooooo." All your eyes angled down forty-five degrees, remained on the space around their belly buttons in a fixated trance, and you could have drooled. You stood next to the deep end. I stood to the side of the group.

"That's ab," you said, pointing to the quiet one's stomach, then pointing to mine, "and that's flab," and you touched it. You touched it.

True, it was a pretty good rhyme. That is to say, you thought this through, stared at their stomachs and then mine, then probably at theirs for longer, thought of the rhyme, considered it worthy of recitation, and relished the opportunity to point out the difference. Literary excellence. If only our language had a word for elevation by means of cutting down the other.

True, I do not remember if everyone laughed or not. You did see the need to repeat your pulitzer sentence, I remember that. The party changed from one of the eighth grade class. It became the skinny people and me.

I did what we had to do before we could drive ourselves away from things, before we were untethered to the rides of our parents and legal guardians. I kept my lips curled upward and did my impression of a kid enjoying himself. I swam around. I jumped off the diving board. I climbed out using the ladder at the side of the deep end. You were talking loudly with your friends, and I looked back.

“What are you looking at, Hanes?” you said, in reference to the logo on the underwear showing from the waste line of my shorts. Another pithy observation. You should write poetry. For someone so disgusted by my abdomen, you sure loved to look its way.

True, I don’t remember exactly what I thought then, but perhaps it was that maybe you did not like me personally, or that I could get you back by being kind, a kind of prideful selflessness, to make myself feel better. And so I held out a hand for you as you swam to the edge to get out, both to you and your friend. Of course, you shooed the hand away. Can’t give the fat boy any wrong ideas, not to mention, any of the people watching.

For me, no one’s eyes were welcome for the rest of the day, no one’s gaze was wanted. For the rest of the party, I waded in the pool to where it was up to my chest, the water level like overalls, one size fits all, so long as I crouched enough to keep the water above the thing that stood out. “Hey,” another girl said, noticing my constant constipation posture, “you’ve gotten pretty tall now, haven’t you?”

“Yup.” She smiled. “Okay.” I kept crouching. What a shoddy attempt at baiting me to stand. True, you left less than a year after this, but your little rhyme was Elmer’s glue, and not even the kind that the elementary kids at our private school could eat and get sick over. At least that kind you digest or excrete or whatever your body does to glue when you eat it. At least that kind of glue gets to be forgotten. At least that kind of memory gets to be outgrown.

This was before college, before I ran away from eighty of my pounds, and before I stared at stretch marks in the mirror. I was born nine pounds, a fat baby, who grew into a skinny child, who ate himself into a fat boy, who ran himself into a healthy man. But you never saw the man.

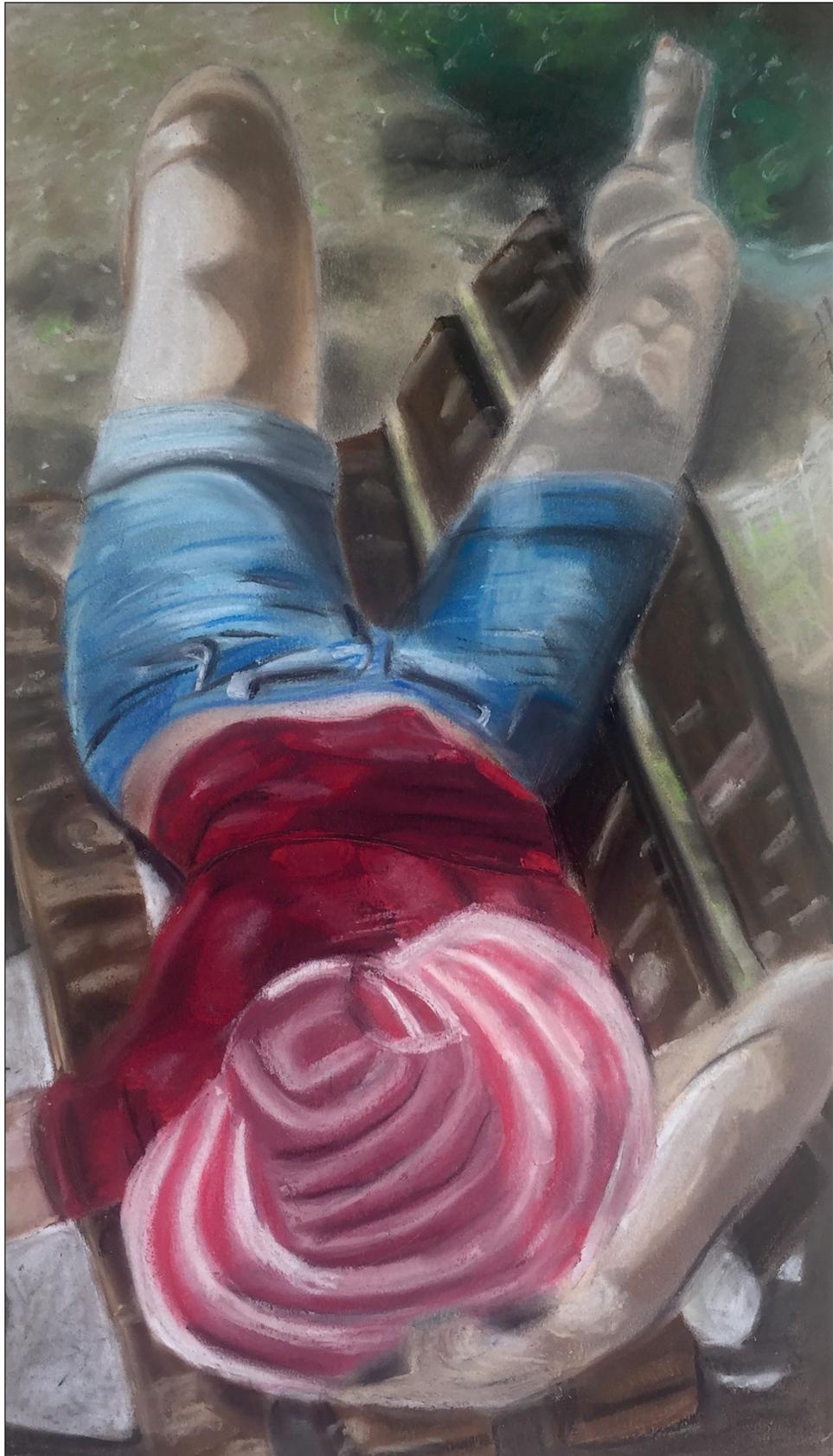
True, I won’t find you to inquire what you think of me now. I won’t call you up and ask if eighty pounds was enough, if you have a rhyme for someone who’s a third lighter now. It’s true, because if I did, it would say more of what hasn’t changed about me than what has.



Photograph



Month of March // Tyler Jagt



Pastel



Escape // Julia Zarichenko

Rasgado

Avery James

I'm wearing makeup when I walk into the chapel — that expensive shit that thickens your skin by a centimeter. These tattoos have made me more black ink than brown skin — an 'MS' between my eyebrows, dead brothers and sisters wrapped around my neck. The hollows drawn onto my temples, nose, and cheeks emaciate me.

The chapel is empty. You can hear nothing but the muffled hiss of cars and wind pushing trash across hot asphalt outside. This is a good time for confession. Everyone's busy on Thursday afternoons. And since no one is here, I roll up my sleeves and unzip my jacket halfway, exposing the black ink I never bothered to conceal—the thorned roses, a wolf, the outline of my bones.

The confession booth takes up the only corner of the chapel that isn't peppered with bullet holes. You can tell by how when you close yourself in, there are no holes in the mahogany to let light in. Inside, it is cool and dark and endless like something beyond sleep.

I check my phone. 11:58. Confession starts at 12.

Light footsteps scrape across gritty wood. The door to the booth beside me opens, closes. He sits. Then, the screen between us slides away and a lattice of light falls into my booth.

It's like God is pouring over you.

"Forgive me, Padre, I've sinned."

"Go on, Leo."

"I'm going back to Lupe."

Silence.

Shock?

Disappointment?

I'm not sure.

"He came to me last week, and he... They're my family. You don't leave family."

Silence.

"Have you told Andy?"

I swallow hard. "Yes."

I'm much younger when I meet Andy, haven't gotten my tattoos to show I'm with Lupe yet, so people from other neighborhoods still try to jump me.

It's just me and him at the bus stop. It's dark out. He's wearing one of those good shirts and a watch that flashes in the sick amber of the streetlight.

He holds himself as delicate as the razor tucked beneath my tongue, hugging his elbows as he leans against the bus sign.

He looks around, checks his watch, doesn't seem to notice me.

I spit the razor and press it to his neck, tell him to give me his wallet.

He hands me his wallet.

He hands me his watch.

He hands me a few fives from the breast pocket of his good shirt.

He takes me to a diner.

We talk about God and his new job teaching at the high school down the street. He's from Ohio, and he wants to reach out to kids in the Barrio. Well, he talks. I wait for him to start something.

He never does.

Over the next two months, we trade things. He teaches me the Ten Commandments. I teach him how to get extra gas in his car for less. He teaches me Matthew, Luke, John. I teach him which colors to wear at night and where to hide jewelry so he doesn't stand out. He teaches me how all sin is equal in God's eyes. I show him how to clench a razor between your fingers when you're jumped, how to hide a limp so when you walk away you don't look like you've lost.

My lessons scare him. He hides it behind slow nods and high chuckles. I don't think he realizes who I'm trying to protect him from.

"Lupe gave me a second chance," I tell Padre. "Said if I did what he told me to, I'd be family again."

"You have a family here, mijo. Everyone loves you. Jorge, Amelia, and Gloria still want you to play Sorry with them, you know."

"I want to, but—" I fear this god more. "—Lupe's dangerous. These people are dangerous."

"You don't have to do this."

"I already have." I suck in a breath. I need to confess. "Andy.."

I came here to confess. Don't be a coño. Confess!

"Andy's not coming back here."

Coño. Just say it.

"Leo."

"Padre, are we really punished for our sins?"

"Leo, what have you done?"

Silence.

"I can't come back here again."

Padre's calling after me as I head for the exit.

You're not supposed to cover a fresh tattoo. It needs time for the swelling to go down, time to heal. Still, beneath this brown skin mask, my cheek stings with a fresh tear.



Photograph



Printmaking in Moon // Bailey Albertson

Late to the Party, or a Beginner's Guide to the Zine

Rachel Schrauben Yeates

My first exploration into zine culture (the zine scene, if you will) was in the basement of the Atlanta Vintage Bookstore in a section labeled “Radical Literature.” The zines were displayed prominently next to the communist manifestos.

I was there for research. It was part of a literature class project in which I may have become overly invested, drawn in by Riot Grrrl, xeroxed pages, and the smell of ink.

The zines I discovered generally fell into two categories: the personal zine (or perzine, a close and intimate look at someone's thoughts and emotions, a bit like gaining willful access to someone's diary) and the social justice zine (concerned with matters of intersectionalism, racism, dismantling capitalism and the patriarchy, etc.). I've lived my whole life within an hour of Atlanta, and I had no idea that a thriving DIY community existed just past my doctor's office.

Marginalized communities have long found voice in small press and self-publishing. The advent of the zine follows a natural progression of DIY publishing and creative expression within these groups, notably POC, the disabled community, those with mental illnesses, and the LGBT+ community. The location seemed apt as well – zines and their audiences tend to be younger and travel in underground circles. Their cheap prices make for accessible content, but they address very niche audiences.

I have been interested in zine production and content for a while, but hadn't done more than purchase a few zines by local artists and research current zine makers on Tumblr, feminist websites, and artist collectives. I have been actively following the evolution of identity and vocabulary within the LGBT+ community for several years now.

As someone pursuing a career in the publishing industry, I find it fascinating how self-publishing has turned those norms on their head. Zines and DIY publishing tend to make full use of the book as art, using every aspect of the “book” and re-examining form, flow, and readership. I have been able to attend multiple book-making workshops in the past two years, and the simple cuts and folds necessary to turn a single sheet of 8.5” x 11” paper into a multi-page book seem to meld geometry and magic.

Creative space exists on the conventional pages but also in the space between folds, on the flip and undersides of the paper, in the direction that the reader examines the final product, on the re-flattened full sheet of paper-made-poster. And all of this is compounded with the mixing of genre.

In my first zine, I tried to incorporate elements of zine aesthetic in their prime (Oh, the 90s). These elements included: found and repurposed materials, media recommendations, stream of consciousness diary-like entries, a respect

for negative space and production via a copy machine. I ran a grand total of one copy. Mainly because I lost a battle with the copier.

Zines are the Alka-Seltzer of self-expression – they're travel-size, fast acting, some relieve indigestion. They are intensely personal because they are the product of creative energy without expecting profit. They are a cry for community and a listening ear.

When production is kept to a minimum, creative control and freedom lies with the artist/author. Mass production is not often the goal, so the creator can focus on detail in the most minute way. It's small press at its smallest.

For anyone interested in the zine resurgence, check out Hodge Podge Café in East Atlanta. It's the current home of the Atlanta Zine Library. You can browse hundreds of zines from local and not-so-local artists. Riot Grrrls are a good feminism starter series if you're into that sort of thing. Other locals to check out include Muriel Vega, Sunni Johnson, and the staff of WUSSY Mag.

POETRY



Photograph



Lights // Kate Moore

Gay Rapper Exposed as Fraud*

Courtney Wimberly

J.T. LeRoy, watch
out. There's a new
phony in town. Gay rapper
Caushun exposed
as fraud when manager gave
an interview, admitting
he wrote and performed
rhymes, acknowledged Jason
Herndon portrayed Caushun public,
really a hairdresser

with no musical
skills. A few years ago, a popular
figure in the New York
hip-hop scene. Created
as a joke, Matias called a station
and pretended
flamboyantly. Matias, a straight
man, recorded demos and passed
them to radio stations as the work
of Caushun. The lie

snowballed, enlisted to portray
the face, attracted high-profile
fans like Kimora Lee Simmons, wife
of hip-hop impresario Russell.
Hairdresser convinced her
he was Caushun, almost signed
to record label,
but was arrested for identity

theft, the lie started
to unravel. Matias
in his interview told, "It's
business the end.
A sting, I learned. My
job is make people
buy
and sell
again."

*per an article published May 17, 2007, on Advocate.com



Photograph



Shake it Off // Emilee Burroughs



Charcoal

////////////////////
Space // Erin Shelter

Grip

Andie Golligher-Strange

My father worked
in a scrap yard
from 8 to 5.

I think of his hands.
Hands that knew cold.
Cold metal.
Cold weather.

Hands that reached
for a bottle
or for a Bible.

Grasp firm
on both.
His skin cracked at the knuckles
and his palms, calloused.

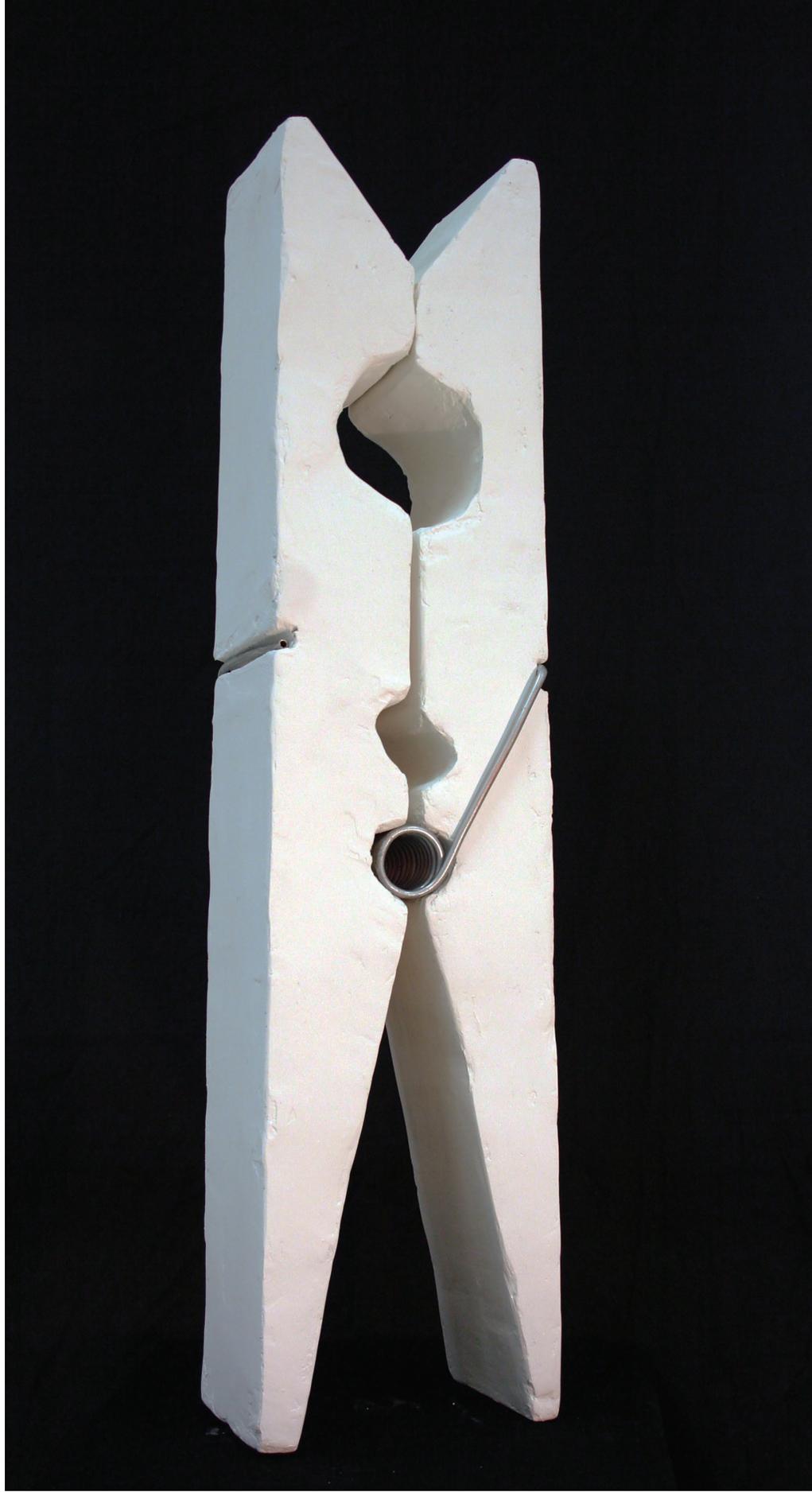
He'd rub my neck,
and they'd feel like
sandstone.

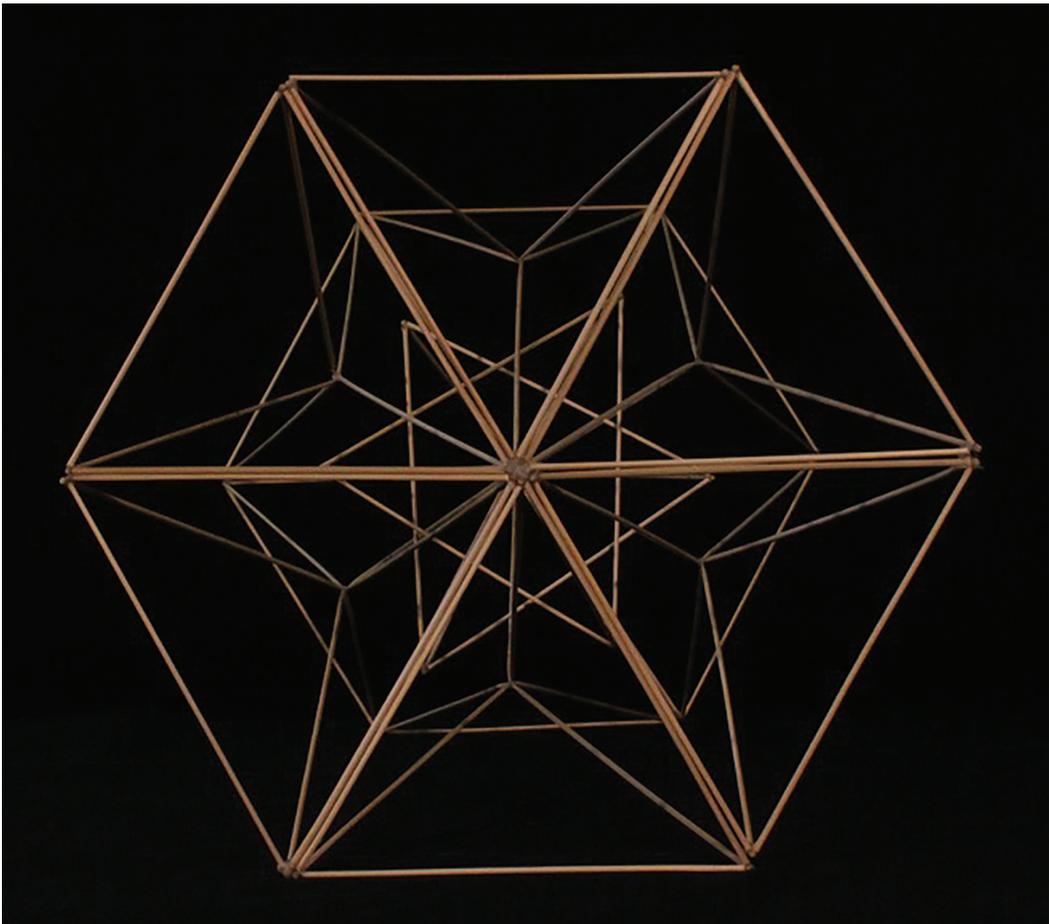
I bought him lotion
for his hands.
Oil based and alcohol free.
Healing powers he'd never know.

I see his aching hands,
opening and closing
around his last bottle.

FEATURED ARTIST

Matthew Shuipenus





Sculpture



Untitled No. 1 (left)

Sculpture

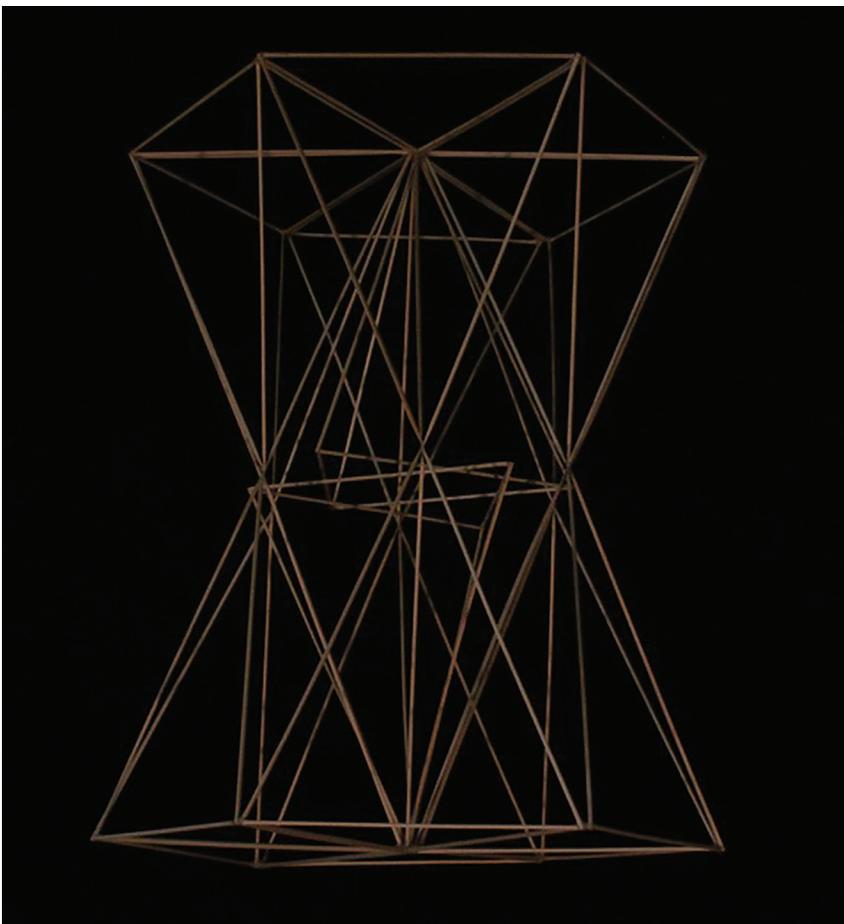


Untitled No. 2 (right top)

Sculpture



Untitled No. 3 (right bottom)



Alone in Atlanta

Katie Coe

Brights lights

He sits alone at the small red table,
cold white tiles under his feet,
warm air heavy with garlic
but empty of people

Fresh spinach and plump roma tomatoes
swimming in a lake of slippery olive oil
and dark, sour vinegar
just the way Uncle taught him to make it

Warm flat bread

kneaded and pounded by his own bony hands
instead of by the strong, muscular ones of his son

Stuffed inside- bursting ripe tomatoes, crisp leafy lettuce
bought from the farmer's market
instead of grown by his wife
in their backyard
loved and nourished
as she gently whispered Lebanese lullabies
from their childhood together in Beirut

Warm, tender gyro meat

sliced off the loaf
that is crammed in the tiny fridge;
Lamb, beef, mixed together as he stood alone
instead of behind his daughter
whose small fingers could not grind the meat enough
so he guided her
holding her precious hands in his

Cool tzatziki sauce drips:

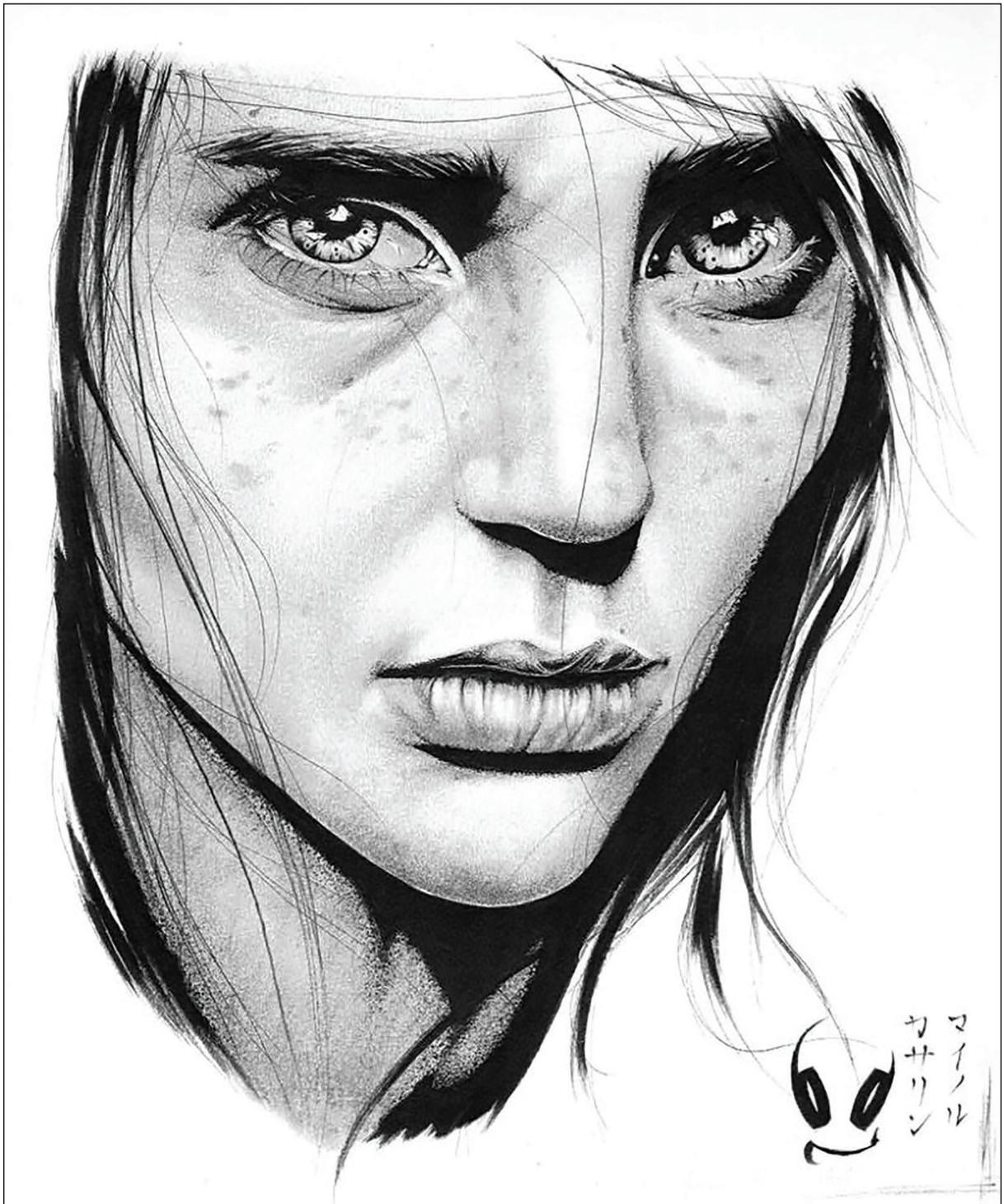
fresh, watery cucumbers, sweet onions, and thick cream
carefully blended
with Popa's spices tediously added-

thyme, oregano, basil, garlic, salt,
and his secret Cavender's mix
that is still kept in the small green vial
but now in the crowded pantry
of his American apartment
instead of the wide open shelves
of the kitchen in Tripoli

The warm embrace of pita and gyro
the sweet explosions of fresh produce
and splashes of refreshing tzatziki
the acidic bite of vinegar and oil
overwhelm his tastebuds
and sends him back
to his lovely Aziza's garden
to the tiny Shevna, playing at his feet and reaching for the mixing bowl
to Uncle and Popa's kitchen
full of spices, oils, and vinegar,
and Zahle, with the dough.

The taste of Lebanon
takes him home
so wherever he travels
he is never really gone.

With the taste of home,
he is not alone.



Ink



Samsara // Kathleen Minor

Headache

Raven Wilson

Brain blooms. Pansy petal pains stretch little spindles past conception. Johnny Cake face melted between olive smudge.

Eyes darting through tangerine cream of Vitamin C. Red red wine should subtle blush the pain.

Tip the chipped chalice and chug. Fill yourself with drink.

Until she skips through crocodile dreams,

Until her sugarbeet cheeks are cream. Cream to clarified

butter. You knew her.

Wishing for that same Obsidian duvet to sing you to sleep;

As it did on Chestnut Beach. As its kiss of mint and coconut milk steeped.

Wishing for her sitting pretty on jasper

Green pasture and lichen-laid. She prayed over

Your hush puppy tongue, a sea breath stained.

China white

gems scraping your wormy neuro

Nodes. Toasted apricot hot. Turning cocoa berrie cool to spume.

Lick the rim of the glass and smack. Dry the carafe.

Until your mind stops pulsing gamma green,

Until your bile filters through Turkish Coffee.

She was sitting pretty with a pansy petal pink bow in her hair. Her clarified butter curls coiled and cocked, ready. She had hush puppy skin from her father

The family blooming

I bloomed awake into a



Photograph



Flow (Above), Watching and Waiting (Below) // Caroline Lee

The Fall

Ellie Harmon

Veins frozen by

Death

A little factory

of hardworking cells

Suddenly unemployed

Winter bought the place out.

The new management didn't have time for chlorophyll

Renamed us 'seasonal workers.'

They wanted to make green

So efficient and practical

They forgot to put

Living

Into the budget

This is Not Date Night

Julia Dawn Elkins

We make our way back
from Arby's his beef-
ruben loses
its taste after the third
bite and he moves
on to me
once the car stops, puts
his hand
on my thigh to feel the soft ridges
of tattoo scars,
he doesn't ask, but
he is waiting
for the word
"no."

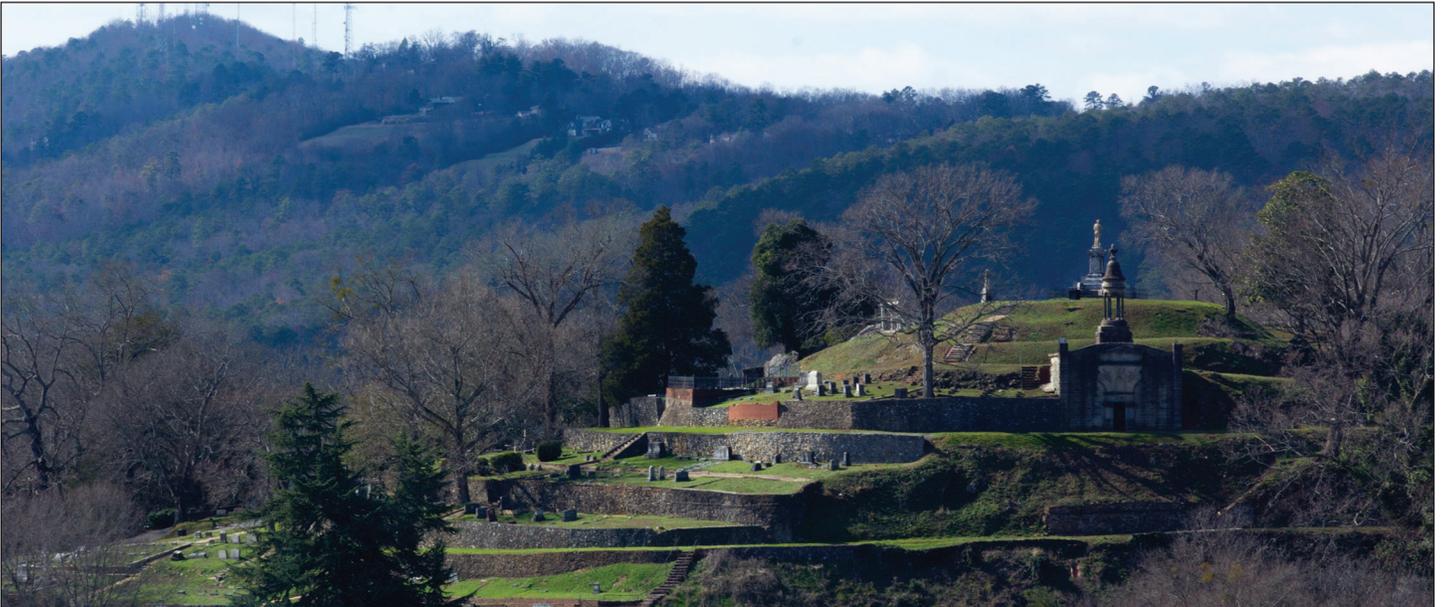
The girl whose boyfriend
doesn't mind my mouth
on hers, won't text
me back and I am just
lonely enough
to fill myself
with the boy that doesn't matter.

He tucks
his sandwich behind the seat
and kisses me.

It is wet;
his lips are the kind of soft
that I cannot

feel. We climb
into the backseat.
I do not question
why I bother
to move three textbooks
and six sweaters
to make room
for his skinny
body. When my mouth
touch the tip
of him he erupts
in seconds.
I pretend
not to taste
it, if I don't notice
then I'm not done
being human,
being valid.
Street lights are already on
in the parking lot.
My car sits behind the brick
theatre building.
I don't come here
enough to know
if anyone sticks around here.
He crams
himself into me,
half hard,
hoping to impress
me just

enough that I repeat
my mistake.
Afterwards I forget
about his sandwich
tucked under the sweaters
on the backseat floorboards
until the whole
car starts to smell like shame.
The garbage fills
with maggots
the day I throw his food away.



Photograph



Myrtle Hill // Josh Hines

Watching Television in Hieroglyphics

Olivia Murphy

At first, stars were the only worship
because the writing was already
on the wall. Eventually we got
Osiris and his 14-piece body but
at first, things were

simple. The pilot
light flickering on when Sirius
first winked into man's eye.
That wonderful blank hindsight.

We pawed at abacuses,
chiseled poems into sandstone,
counted scarab legs.

It was all *good morning cats*
and crocodiles

teeth. I had the hottest new fruit
since kiwi. Honey from a bush
you've only heard about around
the bonfire, opium that'd make you see
new fundamental particles.

Back then, I controlled nights
with the spotlight heat
of my hip bone.

Imagine the first taste
of butter on dry bread – such
was my richness. How I wanted

to throw an arm around a scribe
and claim him, make myself
goddess like Elizabeth Taylor
or Lucy goofing hearthside and oven-warm.

Those men, the smooth sand dune
wigs and coal eyes black
as the ibis' beak, those arms threshing
wheat beading sweat
salty as pigeon and *fuul*,

the incredible junctures of staff
and crook like bread
pudding and *Umm Ali*. The stars foretold it
because they all fortell a connection, then
explosion, a chronology compacted
to the instant of fingertip on fingertip,
black splitting into static.

We knew then that chakras
are only glands, rebranded
and technicolored. Food to mouth and mouth
to flesh was the hardwood of our immaculate
foyer. Ah, to get back
to the pure spirituality:
Orion looseming his belt,
seagulls scattering out
and fading into the sunset
like a laugh track.

DRAMA



Photograph



Fantastic // Savannah Robar

VAN DOLLAR

Heather Pharris

Well that's just great! I'm going to have a grandson in law. I love him sweetie the whole family does. I'm just so happy for you. And I know you're happy. Look at you! You're grinning like a mule eating briars.

(laughs hard enough to activate smoker's cough)

Don't you worry your pretty lil head bout one damn thing. If you still wanna do this back yonder I'll make sure the yard looks purty and green and Carliss is already talking about putting a gazebo back there and everything. Speaking of Carliss, I won't tell her yet. You know I'm a good secret keeper. I'll wait till you can share the news with her. But be careful if you start wedding planning with her. I love my wife but she likes things done the exact way she wants it. And the way she wants it is usually with some sort of name brand shit and a price tag to match it. Damn woman knows how to spend money.

But anyway back to what you were saying. I won't tell anyone yet. This is yours and Devan's news for you two to share. But if you don't mind I want to embark some of my worldly wisdom upon you if you would allow me. I have been married three times, so I'm kind of an expert on marriage and a doctorate of divorce, but I do know this. You have to have your secrets. It's okay to not share everything. You have a life... Devan has a life. I know there's been some shit that you would rather not bring out in the open. I'm willing to bet he has his own shit that smells just as bad. But you two don't have to share it. It's healthy to hide things from each other. Like Carliss, I can't tell that woman a damn thing without her poking her nose and asking a million questions. She's a nosy woman. Worse than that she's sneaky too. She found out about your brother's speeding ticket before me and your daddy did. The boy was probably working his thumbs instead of paying attention to the goddamned road.

(clears throat, remember he's a 20-plus-year smoker)

But I told you that to tell you this... I'm proud of you honey and I'm happy for you but have your own bank account.

Lessons

Darian Kuxhouse

FRANNY, a middle school aged girl, is alone on stage. It is dark with a single spotlight shining on her. She is holding a cup of water and sitting on a stool.

FRANNY

I didn't realize this would be so hard. Our teacher gave each of us a glass of clean water, told us girls that we were all Mary's. Then, she told the boys to take a swig from their glasses, swish it around, spit it in our cups and move on down the line. I was near the end of the procession, watched as Leah's cup grew fuller and yellower, cringed when I saw plankton like floaters in Emily's, couldn't look up when Jackson's spit didn't quite hit its mark and splattered a bit on my shoe.

(Beat. FRANNY'S hand with the cup of water starts shaking, some water spills as she talks.)

His slow "wouldja look at that" whistle made the water in my cup tremble, I swear it. He said sorry, and I said its fine, but it wasn't. And our teacher knew it too. She walked over to me, and do you know what she said? She said, "Look at your cup. No one could call you Mary with that filth inside of it". I wanted to argue, but I didn't know how. I didn't ask for my cup to get like this, for boy after boy to ruin a name that wasn't even my own. I wanted justice. I wanted to wash my cup, fill it again. And again. No one would spit in it, but maybe I'd allow sips, knowing that I could always find more water.

ABOUT US



Ramifications is a 32-page arts and literary magazine. We showcase student talent through our publication and strive to reflect the Berry community through our selections. We have been publishing our magazine for over 50 years, including genres such as poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essays, musical compositions, drama, and all types of visual art.

REVIEW PROCESS



All submissions are compiled into one anonymous word document and given to staff members to vote on. Staff votes on a scale of 1 to 5 and submits their scores to the Editor-in-Chief. From there, the Editor-in-Chief tallies the votes and presents them to the staff during a selection meeting. The highest voted pieces are discussed and final selections are made.



Left to Right: Miranda Heyman, Rachel Yeates, Mallory Todd, Tyler Jagt, Julia Dawn Elkins, and Darian Kuxhouse.

Editor-in-Chief's Note



This spring has been full of transition and change. Our magazine has gone through a complete redesign and is now full of life and in full color! Our staff has worked hard learning all of the format changes and helping choose submissions to showcase in Ram. I am so proud of the staff and our final product, but we will still continue to push creative boundaries and create an increasingly better publication.

We have put together a beautiful magazine, and I can't wait to continue to innovate Ramifications next year.

Darian Kuxhouse

Meet the Staff



Art Editor
Tyler Jagt



Staff
Rachel Schrauben Yeates



Staff
Julia Dawn Elkins



Staff
Miranda Heyman



Staff
Katie Coe



Staff
Mallory Todd

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