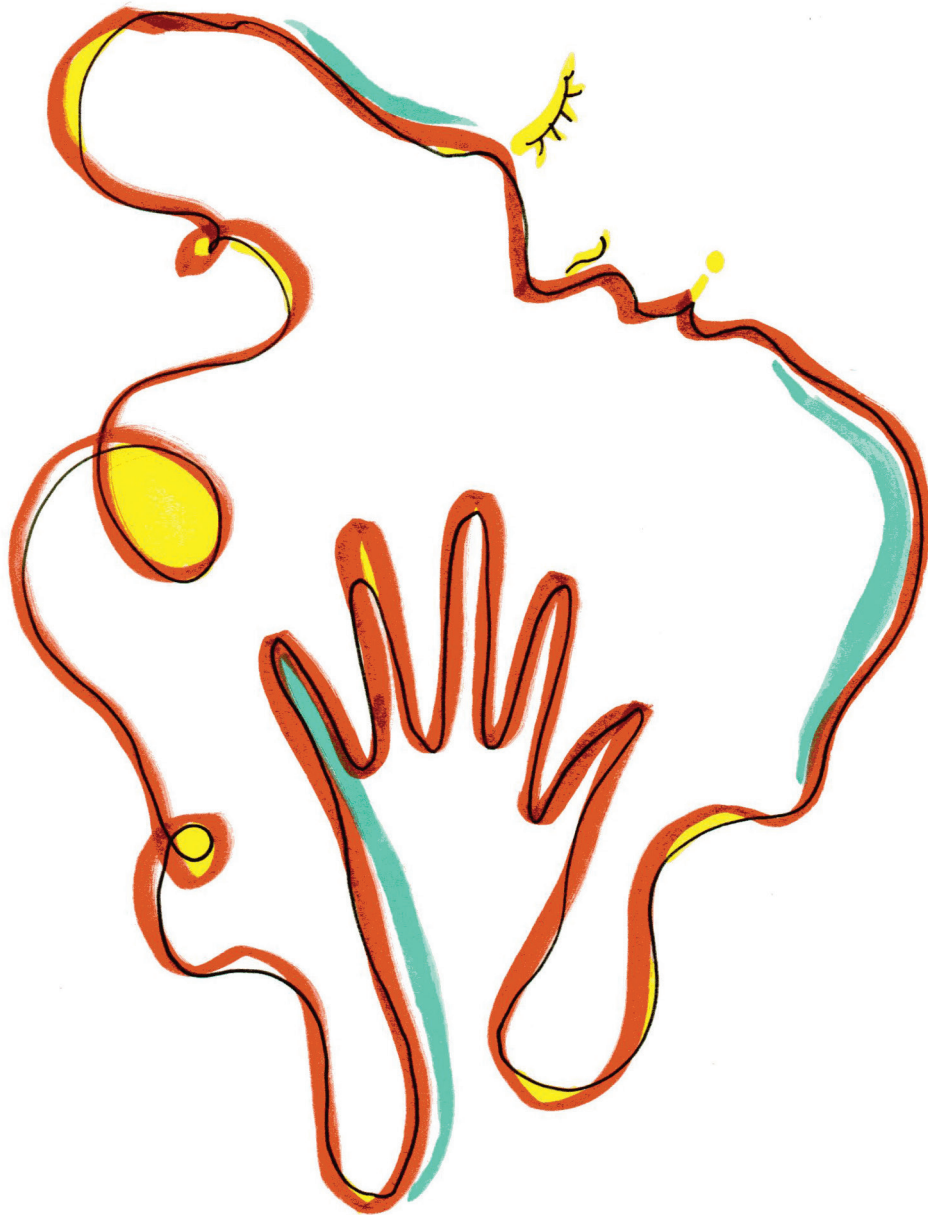


RAMIFICATIONS

Literary & Arts Magazine



SPRING 2018



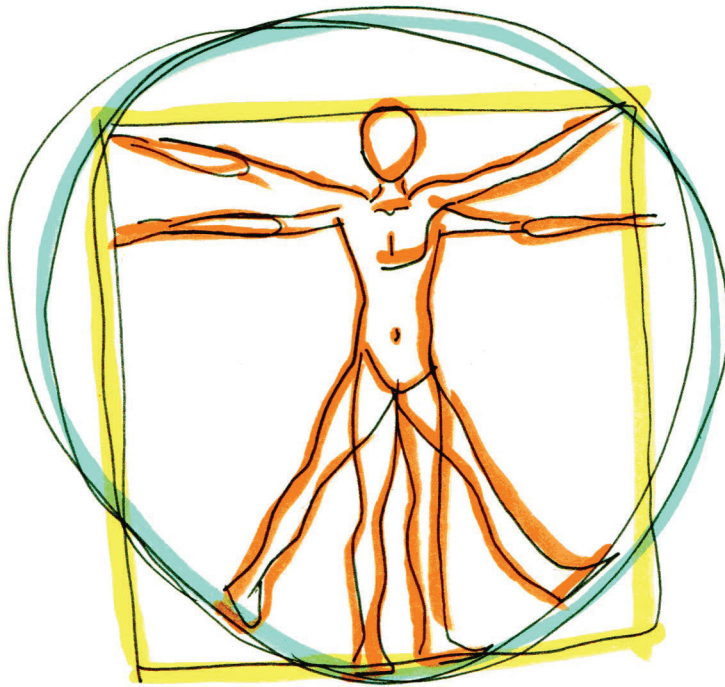
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literary & arts magazine



PARASITE

Avery James

After Bruce Conn's Concise Definition for a Parasite

An organism that lives on or in another organism of a different species, maintaining a long-term intimate relationship with that host species, and ultimately causing harm to the host.

The child was not this to the mother, no matter what she may tell you. She tasted her pulse, iridescent like gasoline, in the roots of her teeth each time he spoke from the backseat of the Corolla: *What was his name? Did he love you? Why did he leave? Was it my fault? Yours?*

Eyes, dry like frostpine. Hands, tack-hard, grafted to the heated skin of the wheel. She thought of leaning forward on the pedal, loosing them off the ramp's lip like a reckless arrow. A weightless snap of time. An exquisite shriek from the backseat. Their bodies catching up to them as they spanned concrete. A single, heavy answer.

But looking to the rearview mirror, she saw the tightness in his eyes. A habit left by the absent man like stain on them both. No, these two did not fit the definition. They had the same hot blood, the same resentment coursing through them.

She turned the corner. He opened his mouth to another question.



SONDER

Aine Gwaed Infanc

the realization that every person has a life as unique and complex as your own

Walmart. 9:47 p.m. Sunday Night.
Amid the empty highway desolation
of a late night at the supermarket,
enter the following characters.

First, there's the 26-year-old guy
buying Miller Lights ahead of me in line.
Yeah, that one with the leather jacket
talking it up to the cashier,
telling her she doesn't look a day over twenty
(she's fifty). When he glanced back,
I caught a look at his face. At his eyes.
At the emptiness his smile hides.
For that brief second, I've lived his life,
known him as well as his sister
he hasn't seen since he left at eighteen,
leaving her to deal with broken bottles
and vomit. A motorcycle's waiting in the damp,
hazy-ring-around-the-lights parking lot
taking him, six pack, and Redbox movie home
to the white-walled one room apartment
where his girlfriend (two weeks) waits impatiently.

Then there's the cashier who raises
four grandkids by three different children.
She's worked here for the three years
since her boss at Fried Green Tomato couldn't understand
her need for a thirty-minute smoke break twice a day.
The boy with the Millers reminds her of her son
who overdosed (heroin) two years ago,
leaving her a pigtailed six-year-old.
He had the same smile as this boy,
same way of talking that charmed
her into giving him the keys,

shushing maternal reproaches
with a “Mom, you’re looking gorgeous.”
She questions if it’s his angel returned
(she believes in angels) or just she’s been on shift
eight hours and sees his face most places anyway.

Then there’s me with nothing
better to do than ponder the lives of strangers.
Me, the adult remnant of a lonely, only child
who read too much, dreamed too big,
trusted too many, now doesn’t know where to go
except home with Blue Bunny ice cream,
thinking how my life I insist is complex
is a mere paint speck in the graffiti mural of humanity.
I pack my late-night Walmart philosophy
into the thin plastic sack with ice cream
and return to the solitary night.



THIS IS NOT AN AD // Emma Wright

I've been living hopefully,
wrote like I'm supposed to be
the best, no one close to me,
supposedly that comes with time,
so I devote my time to thee,
my all to thee, my heart will be
the only thing that's holding me
from going where I'm supposed to be.

I'll pick up every broken piece, cross every river,
and deliver just a sliver,
just enough to make them shiver;
they say that getting better only comes with getting bigger,
but the president of Ireland's a midget, tell me how you figure.

I'm feeling like Simba, watching for hyenas,
ambitious with an appetite and someday I'll be the leader;
aggressive with an attitude,
an aptitude for gratitude,
I'll state a platitude,
that you can't get up on my altitude.

I've got the latitude to do what I set out to do,
if I use hate as motivation, why should I be mad at you;
when it's obvious I'm gifted,
and the gap between us has too much a distance
an architect couldn't bridge it.

I got a vision, that put me on this mission,
I'm tripping to my fruition, I'm trusting my intuition;
that's while I'm in tuition, until I can end tuition,
you probably missed it,
play on words about my school expenses.

Dreams without activity are nothing more than wishes,
but dreamers throw their money to the fishes,
and they hope for change;

Go get a dictionary,
follow my vocabulary,
I'll go make a moment,
in a minute, make it monetary.
Making millions, making moves,
I move a million miles a minute,
moments never wait, that's why they're moments, don't you get it?

Sleeping on my music, guess that means I've gotta prove it,
because everybody thinks it's easy until they have to do it.





THE BOYS // Harrison Downs

PERSPECTIVE

Madison Poole

A variety of curious students meets a variety of nervous men. All ages of men and all levels of anxiety. The irony that muscular, imprisoned, and middle aged men could be nervous about meeting people only half their weight, age, and experiences was truly eye opening. This was the first thing I noticed at the combined Inside Out meeting. It hung to me throughout the remainder of the class. People kept admitting, “Were y’all as nervous about today as we were?” or “My hands have been shaking since this thing began.” My reply, kindly, was of course-we were nervous. I realized though the levels of nervousness were at two ends of the spectrum. These men were far more nervous about this meeting than the students were, but I’ll never let them know that. The realization was not only humbling, but interesting. Students had envisioned many possibilities about how the class would proceed. Large guards checking our pockets at the door, filing us down a long corridor to a warm and smelly closed room, then to only meet large gang men that were highly uninterested in what Dr. Allred or any of our personal days entailed. Reality was the opposite of the envisioned. There was no security search, long corridor, or smelly room. The room was enclosed and a tad bit warm, but nicer than anticipated. If only society could sit down and chat with these people they call criminals. These people that were once known as part of society. Are we not all criminals? We have all committed a crime; texting and driving, speeding, or even underage alcohol consumption. The only difference in being inside these walls and outside-society didn’t get caught being criminals, only the inmates were caught.

As we sat in a large circle, looking around the room at all the different faces and all the different clothes. This less pleasing observation challenged me for almost the last hour of the class. An Inside student had mentioned only minimal and medium security prisoners stayed at Floyd County. As the daughter of an ex-inmate, I knew where to look next. Shoes grabbed my attention. All of the men there wore them, but some were different than others. Some were allowed the privilege of running shoes with laces. Others were confined to a simpler style, flat shoes with no laces that can be referred to most athletes as ‘slides’. I fought to keep this as only an observation and never a judgement. From chair to chair the clothes became captivating. From bright whites, to dingy, to slightly dark and dirty, to brown and stained all of the men wore almost the same style of clothes. A simple no logo t-shirt, with or without a long sleeve under shirt, and pants with a navy stripe down the sides. These clothes were meant to be white, but not all of them were. It made me wonder if the men in bright whites had only been here a short time, or were they privileged with more in-prison funds to buy different sets of clothes. It made me curious about how long a man would have to work, sweat, and not clean those clothes to take the brightness out of them and turn them to seaweed green. I then wondered if some of these men simply didn’t care about their appearance and had not changed from their work shift that day. Then I recalled my first observation.

As I was transfixed by these thoughts many emotions pulled at me. To not have a choice in clothing. To not have a choice in when you do laundry. To not have a say anymore. I enjoyed these people that were so honest and true. These men I had only known for a couple of hours were now captivating my emotions. They could easily be a friend of mine, a coworker, or even family member. These inmates were human beings, only fifteen minutes from my small college bubble. Observation three was an easy one- these men enjoyed our company. As the closing of the class began each person wanted to say more and talk faster. Their opinions had probably been disregarded since their first day of trial. Now that they had a chance to have a voice again, each one wanted more time for talking. I just wanted more time to listen to them. When the Outside students stood to leave, the man beside me asked with a little chuckle in his voice, “Do yall wanna join us for

dinner?” My heart tilted at the thought of what these men ate on a regular basis and the limited amount of human interaction they would have amongst themselves. I told the man a united supper sounded like a great idea for the class and then walked to the door sadly realizing next week was a separate meeting.

The irony in the American prison system, from a highly personal perspective, is that human beings put human beings in prison and once they are in prison they are no longer referred to as humans- they become solely prisoners. People talk of the system as being unfair, human beings make up this justice system, so these people are unfair. It’s unfortunate, unfair, and unjust how society treats people that were caught doing wrong. I am speaking for all of them- the abusers, the murderers, and the minimal offenders- We are sorry. We have learned the lesson. We do not deserve this lengthy sentence. Every human makes a mistake, but only certain ones are punished. Too often they are punished much longer than necessary, so long in fact that they forget what they are supposed to be sorry for anyways.



Δ HEDGEWITCH CONSIDERS ΔPPALΔCHIA

Siobhan Mulligan

meadowgrass and mixedwood leaf
for your mandolin song of spruce.
artemisia: fever cure, remembrance in
mouth, mother and foremother, paintbrush
and knife. spoon cream, coffee rose, capture
the lilac time. watch the smoky grape
vine of factories unfurl across
their cirrus-strung trellises.
minimalist grey concrete
a study in values. theirs?
or yours? yours,

whose purpose cures with burning
bush, sugarbeet sweet on your tongue, poured
like cream into caffeine cantrip. stir twice.
your roots scrape the walls
as infinity falls to watch.



UNTITLED // Olivia Mead

NUCLEAR JUNKYARD

Miranda Heyman

Dingy tracks, chipped white paint, lead
to the buildings that are peeling
like dried skin.
Seeping through the sizzling fog
a ferris wheel creaked, decomposing
along with the front line
littered through fields
of bright, crisp sunflowers.
Calculated swirl of their irises
mixing with stealthy fumes
that had already infiltrated sky
and earth. Bursts of gold catch
the hide of a doe, her hooves slip
over rocks her
skinny knees tremble she fades
into the brush. Once vivid orange
of a coyote now
matted and dull, his fur scattered
in patches. He lays down
in the shade of the sunflowers,
rusted blood staining gilded petals.





RED RAVEN // Destiny Witt

AND THEN HE WILL DECLARE, "I NEVER KNEW YOU"

Benjamin Allee

Walker.

Suit, tie, hair done nice.

I'm a good guy. Shoes are polished.

Dad's inside.

Feet soles hit the cement just like everyone else's.

Except the soles were more expensive.

Flashbacks to birthdays with every exhalation.

Blowing out candles, Dad's proud.

Dad's pride, wanted me to go to business school.

I did and so I did and now I can afford to walk expensively.

Brass door handle turns smoothly, door opens like an old one.

Every classroom opened doors, doors needed to be open, doors open doors closed grades earned words shared piece of paper making paper now I've got expensive shoes.

Suit jacket is clean, pants have a stain on the right thigh, can't afford to care, day is over, day is done, meetings through and through, Dad's upstairs.

Stairs are creaky, nurses smile cleanly, they find me attractive like I want them to but that don't matter at the moment.

More doors and hootin' hollerin hear the sounds of war brothers firing off stories.

Open the door, sleeve pulls back, cufflinks made of gold, you see.

Dad's sitting in a rocking chair, surrounded by good ol' hooting and hollerin boys.

The room smells dirty. Like dirt. Bad bad dirty clothes.

The ol' boys and Dad looked like an expensive painting about cheap men.

I stepped in, squatted down.

"Dad?"

He turns.

"Wha?"

"My name is Connor Alway. I'm your son."

"You're who?"

"Your son."

His uneven retinas slid across my appearance.

"Now you look like a man I wouldn't talk to under any circumstance...so if you're tryin' to pull the wool over someone's eyes you can talk to James over here."

He motioned to the good ol' one to his right. They started laughing.

And Dad laughed too. And he looked at me, his crooked finger aiming at the man where his prodigy once stood now

prodigal now prodigious now producing now profoundly inadequate.

Now pared by his vapid eyes. No longer part of his memory. Not even worth a prayer.

I pulled my lips together and backhanded him, cufflink into withered temple.

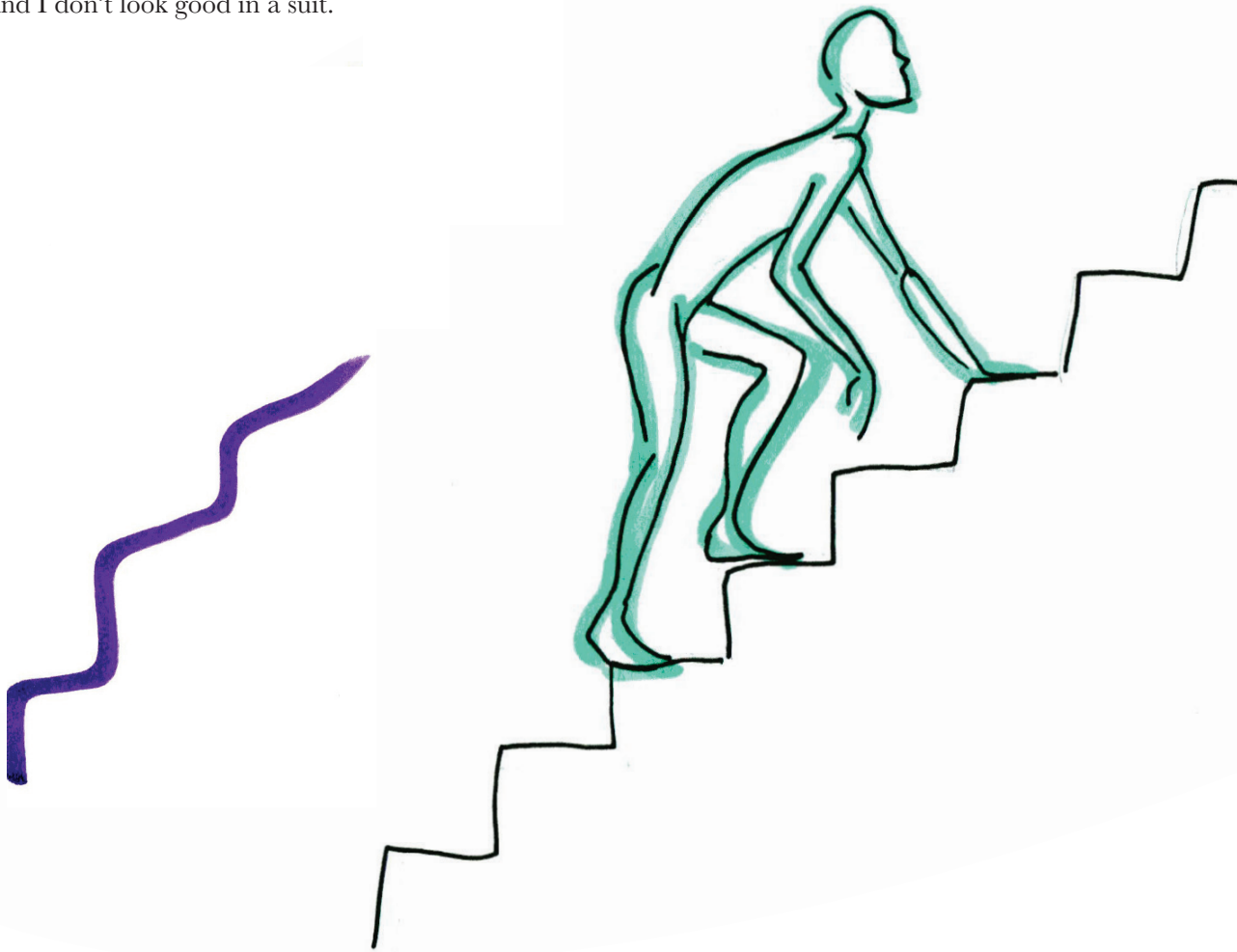
The ol' boys didn't say much, a grunt or two.

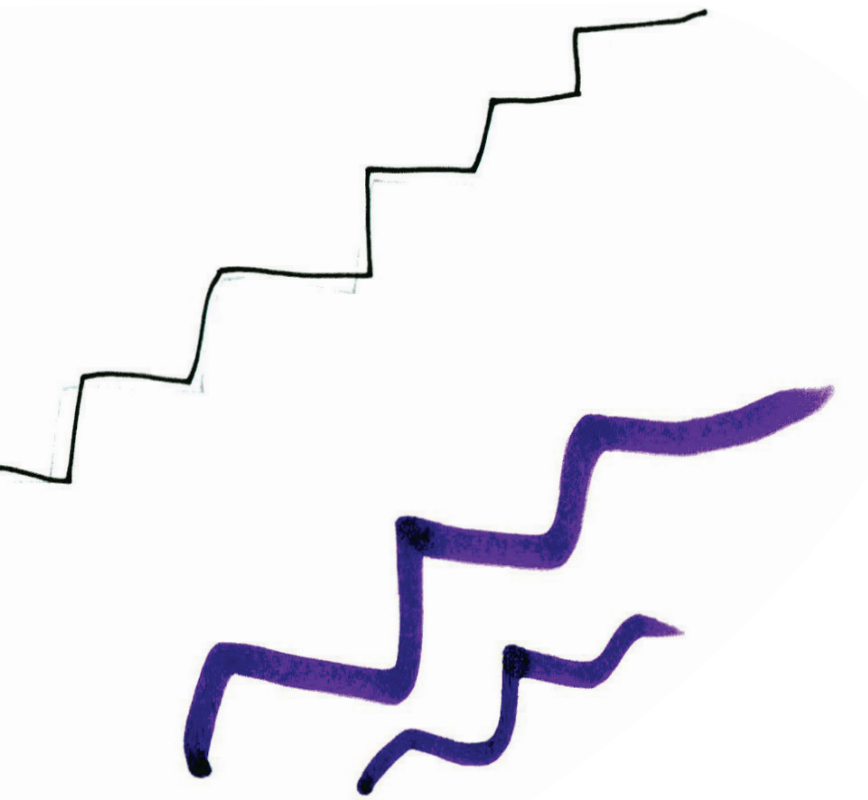
A third grunt from the hinges as the old door closed once more.

Walking again, but my eyes weren't nearly as clean as my suit.

They were as red as my tie, as wet as the morning.

I'm not a good guy. And I don't look good in a suit.





Δ PLAYBOOK FOR TELLING YOUR ΔBUELA SHE IS BEING DEPORTED

Darian Kuxhouse

you are boiling rice—the staccato of grains against bated breath. there is no peace in anticipation. you wait for them to soften, click click, the gas stove heating water. you mimic the sound with your heeled shoes, the faux hardwood floors a sort of plastic that deadens your rhythm. you pace from pantry to pot, letting the weight of your body pull each footstep down, harshly, to remind yourself you are there. the rice is a side dish, you are making street tacos, carne asada. you got the wrong rice, steam from the pot rises. you continue to mimic the clicking, this time pressing knife to cutting board. but it's not right. the dull ••• stays stuck in your ear. diced cilantro and red onions. jasmine rice and chunked salsa. chipped plates and the lingering sound of a dropped fork.



I'M SO JAZZED // Hillary Albertson



SHADOW AND COLOR

Eyes are the windows to the soul. That's what I was told when I first joined the Morning Star. Which was why I didn't cringe when I passed a man with eyes of the enemy being kicked and beaten by Pietro before he was taken away for interrogation. Unlike myself, Pietro enjoyed the feel of flesh against his fists. But I wasn't hired because I enjoyed dragging in traitors by the scruff of their necks. The Morning Star hired me because I could see the true colors in people's eyes even when they were disguised with died eyedrops or colored contacts. Few could see the difference. Fewer could see past the disguise. I could always tell the difference.

I hugged my bundle close as I turned into the alley on my way to work. I always met two men there, both presumably homeless, both as inevitable as the barbed wire fence surrounding the city. Dominic always smiled at me from the concrete. He adjusted his knitted hat and unsuccessfully wiped grime from his wrinkled cheek. He had the enemy's colors in his eyes. I'd made it a habit to give him something to eat—usually biscuits, because those were his favorite—and to make sure he had a steady supply of contacts. Dominic never told me much about his time with the enemy. The problem was that once someone turned, there was no coming back. But people could forget, confuse, hide. That's what Dominic was like. I didn't think he remembered that his eyes were forever stained by the enemy anymore. At least the Morning Star didn't need to interrogate him.

The other guy I was concerned about. He sat just down the street from Dominic, dark skin stretched over a hollow face, a striped hat pulled over thick dreads. The thing about him was that he always wore black glasses covering his eyes. I couldn't trust someone whose color I couldn't see. Sometimes I thought I saw strange shadows stretching out on either side of him. But I was always seeing things. That's why I was valuable.

I've never told the Morning Star about the man with the dark glasses, though. At this point, I was too used to him to bother doing more than drop a biscuit by his calloused bare feet and nod a greeting.

He nodded to me today before Dominic could exclaim, "Isaiah, see here! Here's Matteo. He's got biscuits again."

I didn't bother to tell him they were scones this time. Dominic didn't notice the change.

Another figure was on the street today, a woman I hadn't seen before. She eyed the scones hungrily as I handed one to Dominic. She didn't wear contacts or use drops; I could tell. There was only a standard sliver of the enemy's color in her irises. I had the same. Most people did. Nothing to be concerned with; the Morning Star could still save us.

"What else did ya bring?" Dominic questioned, looking at my bundle expectantly.

"Just your drops." I handed them to him, making sure he applied them correctly to cover the enemy's colors before I turned to drop a scone at the other man's feet. He stared after me as I walked away. I looked back just as I was leaving the alley, catching the man with dark glasses silently pass his scone to the lone woman. She scarfed it up greedily without thanks.

Nostalgia washed over me as I left the scene and passed through the white doors where the Morning Star operated. As a child, I wandered the city like a beggar, jumping from shadows, pointing out colors. I was taken off the streets with a fellow survivor, Avalia, both of us thrown into training to hunt down the enemy and report to the Morning Star. We were good at our job. Avalia took more action than I ever did. I just watched and reported, attended interrogations. Avalia enjoyed inflicting the interrogations.

But she wasn't here anymore. I had to remind myself that over and over again.

I ran into Pietro once I passed through the entrance. His pale complexion was stained red with the exhilaration of bringing in a resistant traitor.

"I caught him trying to get people out of the city," he stated proudly.

I shrugged. "This isn't a prison."

"He was trying to take them *there*."

A shiver ran down my spine. I didn't like talking about the enemy's place. Every time we talked about it, I saw shadows at the edge of my vision.

Before Pietro could continue, a messenger came to report a summons from the Morning Star for me. It was another interrogation. There was nothing more said. Turning to lead me to the proper room, the messenger adjusted her glasses just enough to distort her eyes. Not that it helped around people like me. Messengers never had the enemy's colors.

I knew something was wrong as soon as I entered the hall. The interrogation rooms were the worst places in the entire city, practically dungeons with barred doors and chains bolted to the floor. Only one was in use today. When I heard the shout, I froze to the spot.

The messenger looked back at me and I knew this was a test. It had to be. And I had to pass. In this place, there was no other option lest I wanted to end up like the people I was hired to look out for. Unless I wanted to end up on the streets like Dominic. Unless I wanted to be labeled a traitor.

Without even taking a deep breath, I stepped forward just outside the room. The Morning Star was there, slowly circling the girl chained to the chair. Neither had seen me yet, and the messenger had already left. I was glad. No one could witness the way my lungs rebelled against me.

When Avalia had disappeared, would turn. She used to be like it was barely a sliver in her eyes. her irises. It shown so brightly I

Numbness inked down my bones. conversation passed between the Morning hand on her shoulder. She whipped around, ozone spiking in the air.

"You cannot touch me, snake!" she barked. But her voice was more than her own. Another voice more magnificent and terrifying poured out behind it, causing me to tremble at its sound. I was certain this was the enemy. It was the first time I ever saw the Morning Star look so scared.

Enemy eyes looked up at me and softened. There was something of Avalia in them again. But it seemed swallowed up by this new shade, this new identity. I didn't know what to think.

When the Morning Star noticed me, he composed himself and approached. "Ah, Matteo, I hoped you would come." I didn't mention the messenger.

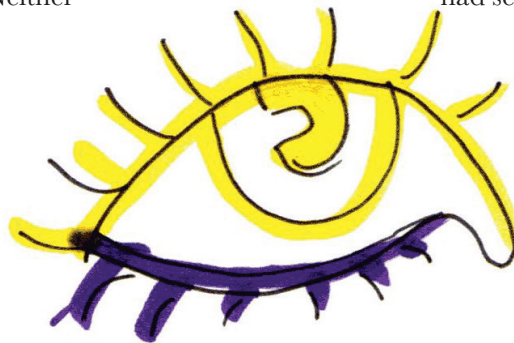
Standing beside me, he gestured to Avalia. "You remember her, I presume."

Steadily, I nodded.

"Then tell me, what is it you see now?"

I knew what I was supposed to say. But she wouldn't stop staring at me, waiting.

"A stranger," I said at last, earning a proud smile from the Morning Star.



no one ever speculated that she me, the enemy's color so small Now it completely encompassed could look at nothing else.

My ears rang. I couldn't hear the Star and Avalia. Soothingly, he went to lay a

My spine snapped straight at her words. I knew my labeling her would mean inevitable torture, excruciating interrogations. But if I couldn't say it... She narrowed her eyes. That must have been when I made my decision.

The words weighed heavy. "A traitor."

And she smiled, as if I had given her the highest of praises. Then the Morning Star shut the door and gave me the key. This was my test.

I failed.

We reached the barbed wire fence that night, shadows swarming the edge of my vision. Beyond the fence, I knew that was where the war waged. That's where enemies swarmed. But I was helping one escape.

When I stopped dead in my tracks, she whipped back around severely. "You're not coming? You know what it's like back there!"

"Exactly why I should stay: I know *here*."

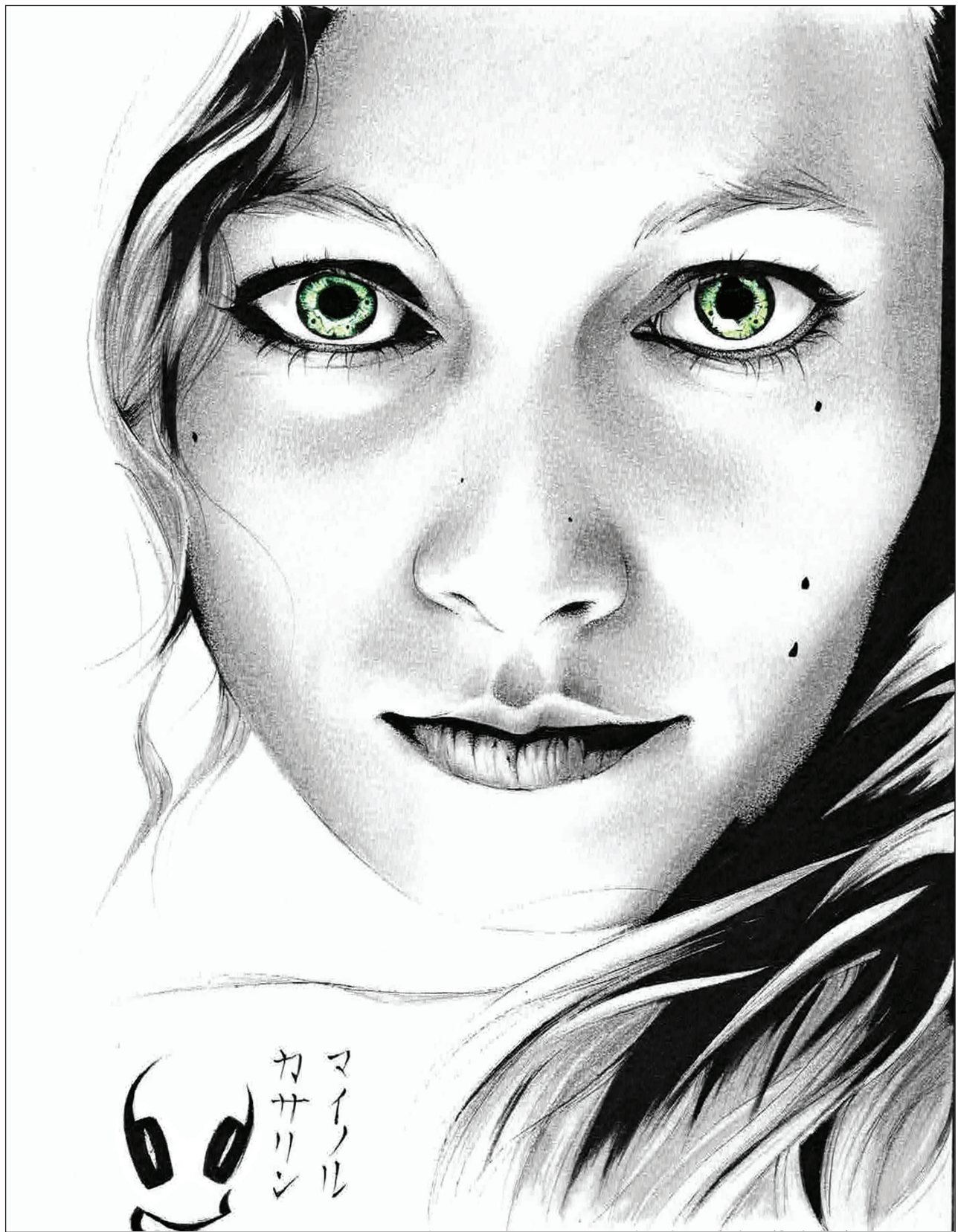
The fence stretched tall overhead, twisted at the top like birds caught in a web. We used to cross it sometimes, when we were just children trying to survive in a world of shadows and colors. Now it looked like a cage rather than protection. I didn't know which side was safer.

I thought I could hear the city stir behind me. Pietro was probably among the shadows that would try and catch us. It wouldn't matter that he knew us.

Waving around at the concrete and wire concealing the discarded and unwanted, Avalia demanded urgently, "Haven't you ever thought of something better than this?"

I shook my head. "There can't be."

Her expression grew grim. In one fell swoop, she stuck out her hand. "Come with me and I'll show you otherwise."



EMERALD // Kathleen Minor



L I F E L I N E S // Timothy Wooley

I'D LIKE TO CHANGE

Drew Eichholtz

The night he told you go to the shelter and
find someone else to help you. We
just wanted this Christmas photo while you gazed
at our winter jackets from your concrete-chewed clothes, upon
streets you called your home. The
tree behind us said Christmas, chimes
said so too. But you were of
no station to feel that freedom,
from want as pains in your stomach went flashing.

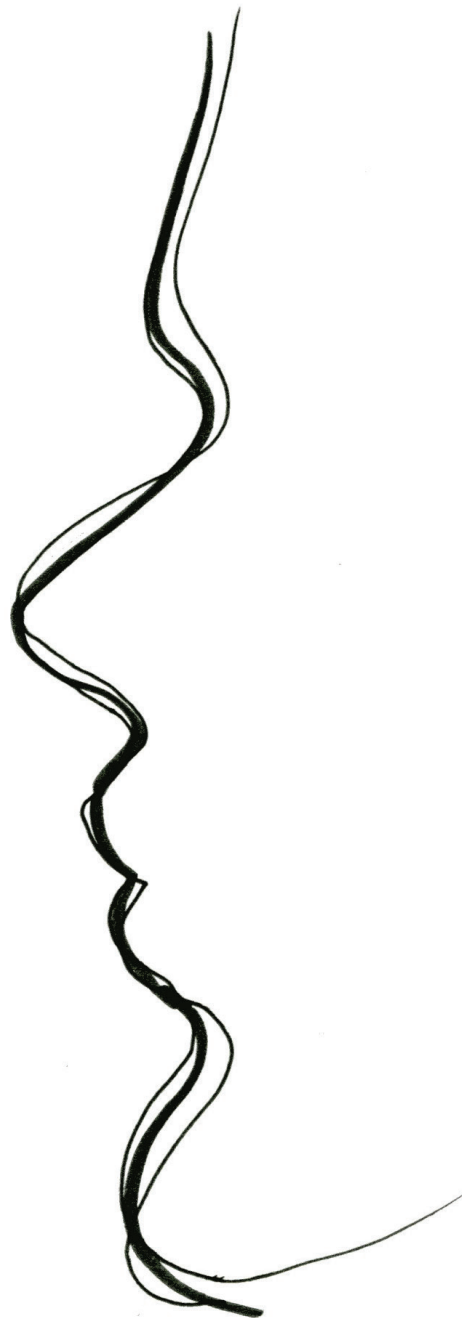
MUTED LULLABIES

Abby Wilson

Two lines of
pink radish,
a revealed truth
we weren't ready for.
In three months,
we arranged a mahogany
crib and changing station
in a gender-neutral nursery—
chevron elephant grey
and foamy white. I had spent
daybreak to darkness
hugging porcelain in our
bathroom, chewing on
ginger root and saltines.

One night I woke up drenched,
sharp pains filled my
abdomen and groin. I saw
pooled liquid staining the sheets,
the poinsettia color transforming
into fading rose. My doctor
confirmed it at the ER—
beyond the foggy white, in
between stars made into
an oval, I saw nothing but
darkness—a black hole
where my baby should be,
blurred and floating.

Envy has new meaning
when you're rolled by
the newborn baby wing
smelling of warm biscuits
or cake, and a glass of milk.
Lullabies escape cracks
from mineral gray, double



their newborns, their cheeks
containing splotches
of peach fuzz. One mother
reaches for the icy blue or
teaberry pink burp cloth buried
in the denim duffel bag,
diapers exploding from the
pockets after breastfeeding
the baby. I envy
the mothers who have
engorged breasts, full
of milk to feed little ones, mothers
who accidentally lactate any time
they hear a cry, who take
their babies home
to walls painted a sea washed
glass or honeydew, to mahogany
cribs the child would dream in.

I will never get to swaddle
my baby with a silken peacock
blanket. My breasts are still and flat
with half brewed milk
that would've nourished
my child. I will not be using
my diaper bag, with burp
cloths, pacifiers, breast
pumps and bottles buried
behind the closed zipper.
The mahogany crib full
of stuffed lions and giraffes,
an elephant and a pooh bear
won't feel tiny fingers or
showers of slobber.

My husband took
me home, forced me into
the porcelain tub of
waves and ripples. I ripped

off the monorail silver
magnets stuck to the tiles,
chucked them toward
the trash can, cracking
the bathroom mirror.
My husband was saying
something—his peachy lips
moved, shaping this vowel,
that letter, but sound had ceased
to exist while he bathed
my motionless, muted body.



NUDE COMFORT // Lauren Groseclose

QUOTIDIAN

Kathleen Minor

Sunshine bleed over anxious knees.
Slow wake, thunderstorm beams through trees,
their gangrene leaves and pouring breeze
in over me, sight dystrophies.
Drip, drop rain on a single head
as feet slip shoes through the words they said,
arms limp, cold by the sides reread
memories, thoughts, and the pain they said
“Don’t think about it, let it all fly away,
like a bird in the sky, bright lights of day.”
Atrophy thoughts, tight sighs, dismay,
apathy rhymes under cool and gray.
Flicker sun flares through windowpanes.
Broken lead skid mark slows the gaze.
Blur brown irises, nervous seines.
Insecure hesitation, trapped, insane.
Neural transmission remission misread.
Snap—synapse black, dope, dopamine debt.
Chin rest desk, cheek press, embed
ganglion sins, congenital dread.
Monomaniacal thoughts, they cling
as the throats chokes down hot black caffeine.
Virulent time flies, night stirring
refractory lies and malignancies.
Systematic looks stare off dysphasic.
Predict systemic sick caustic razing.
Flip paper words: blind moonlit cryptics.
Lie back, eyes shut, fists nystagmic.
Feet touch snow steps, sleep profanes.
Static TV box light sound refrains
on the cloud breath, shudder, ‘please!’, then disdain,
wishing this mist was crack cocaine.
Tired lines drop into syncope
hearin’, “Hey, loosen up and relax, like me.”
But you can keep talkin’, lean back with ease
‘cause your brain doesn’t feel like a fuckin’ disease.





ROME // Erin Nye

THE BOTTOMLESS NURSERY

Timothy Wooley & Shea Crider

I thought I was ok
but I could tell by your silence
that you were not talking.

The pubescent girl
sometimes she wonders

Now I know why they call it a scavenger
hunt.

Things unknown
form together out of nothingness
Like paper mâché on a chalkboard
and the belly of a crocodile.

I swam to the wrong part of the ocean
and drowned in the waves of your love.
They were salty.
I was nine years old.

Holographic bipartisan lingerie
hangs in my bead room.
I mean bedroom
it's covered in beads.

Solely for the purpose of
personal satisfaction, I lay still.
Watching the hikers pass,
they tread on my back.
I wait for rain.

Marsupials have pouches
To carry their young.
I too have a pouch
to carry my emotional baggage
It's Dior.

You dusted off your tie-dyed t-shirt
And headed to the planetarium.
Tuesday tentatively tickles the trees.

The moon clings to the sun
as I cling
to your mother's dirty laundry

Humpty dumpty sat on a wall
Hump me and dump me.

A youthful little vagabond lurks
Beyond the howling pumpkin

I swear I saw an octopus
in your brown ocean eyes.
He fled when I drew near
Often I am rough.

Speak to me softly
like raisins rolling down a grassy hill.

Two gumballs sit on the table.
Hollow. Still. Waiting.
Her teeth are still crooked
as you empty your cup in my mouth
You taste it. So do I.

Two pears
sliding against each other
Creating friction.

I wish there was a word greater than love
I would feed it to my fish.

Elderly eggs
eagerly expecting eczema.

Aren't we all
A little ticklish
On the inside?

Calling all zookeepers
please donate earwax

Creativity flows
like water from a faucet.
It all goes
down the drain.

Anteaters run amuck
In the trailer park
it's five o'clock central standard time.

Gregarious grapes gargle garlicky
grandfathers

I knit a scarf made of all the promises you
didn't keep.
And you better believe I gave it to someone
who wrapped it around his
arms.

Moistening the large armchair
For the big day.
Fog outside the window
churning like a washing machine.
Matrimony is in the air.





'NEATH A STARRY SKY // Jamo Filston

LIFE IS LONG UNTIL IT'S NOT

Jack Padgett

I was never scared of the open road
but that was before gravity shifted
and my duffel bag hit the roof of
my Prius shortly before my head
did. All of a sudden right is le-
ft and left is right and up and
down no longer exist and all th-
at is left is the cardiograph buzz
of helicopter propellers lodged in
my ears and I think I'm screaming
but it's hard to be sure over the dro-
ne of my judgment drawing
near and the wind whistling across
my fractured dashboard that sounds
like a catcall from God. I feel as
though I should probably consi-
der my loved ones but it's hard to
do as I'm too preoccupied with
the way the sun looks as it's spin-
ning at the speed of the gleaming
flares it emits which glint off the
shards of my rearview mirror as I
try to throw an arm across the bri-
dge of my nose to shield my cor-
neas but it's as though they are go-
-ne and I have been left limbless
so I leave them uncovered and wa-
-it for my life to flash before th-
-em but it doesn't flash it simply
stretches until every second is
the time it takes for me to realize
that my road ends where this one
continues and while the future I
could have had is my friend
the pavement is not as it—



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 will vote on a scale of 1 to 5 and submit 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.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTE



I have poured my heart into all editions of RAM that I have been a part of, but this one in particular has been a passion project more than any preceding it. For the past three semesters I have been pushing the limits of our magazine from changing the font (for the first time since the early 2000's) to developing a website this semester, and I couldn't be prouder of what we have accomplished. I also want to take a moment to thank our staff illustrator, Hillary Albertson, for creating the cover, back cover, centerfold, and all of the other beautiful illustrations that you see scattered throughout the pages.

This is my last semester on staff, which is heartbreaking. I knew that I wanted to work for Ramifications from the moment that I decided I was going to Berry, and after four years of showcasing our incredible student talent, I couldn't be happier with all of the work that we have done. Now, I am extremely excited to see where the upcoming Editor-in-Chief, Miranda Heyman, will take this magazine.

Thank you, readers, for picking up RAM, and thank you, submitters, for being talented creators and keeping the literary & arts community alive at Berry.

Go check out our website at ramifications.berry.edu!

DARIAN KUXHOUSE

MEET THE STAFF



Online Editor
Jamo Filston



Siobhan Mulligan



Miranda Heyman



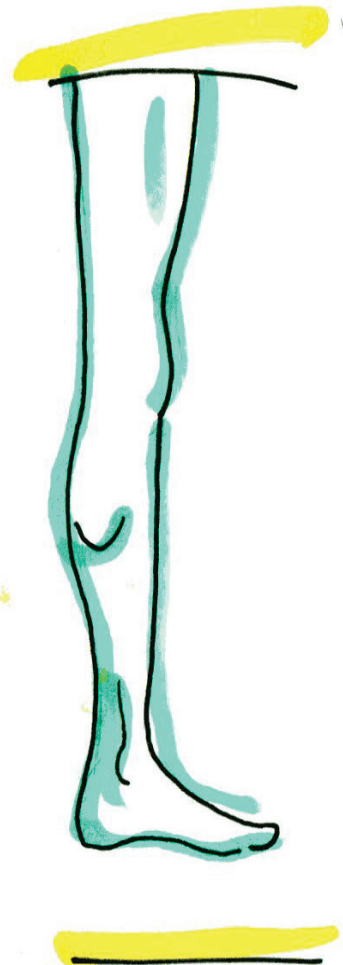
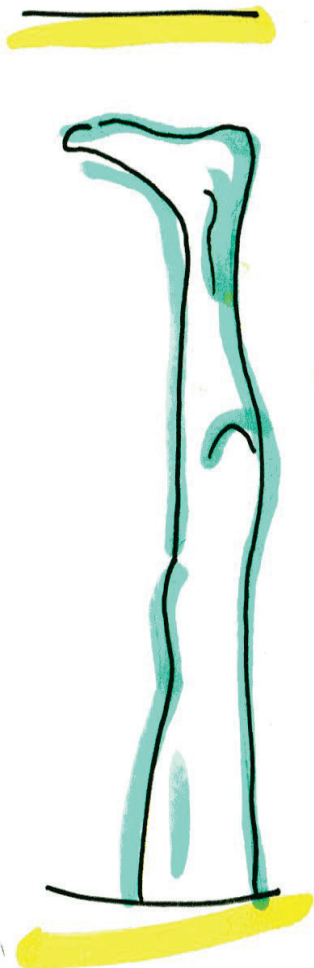
Emory Frie

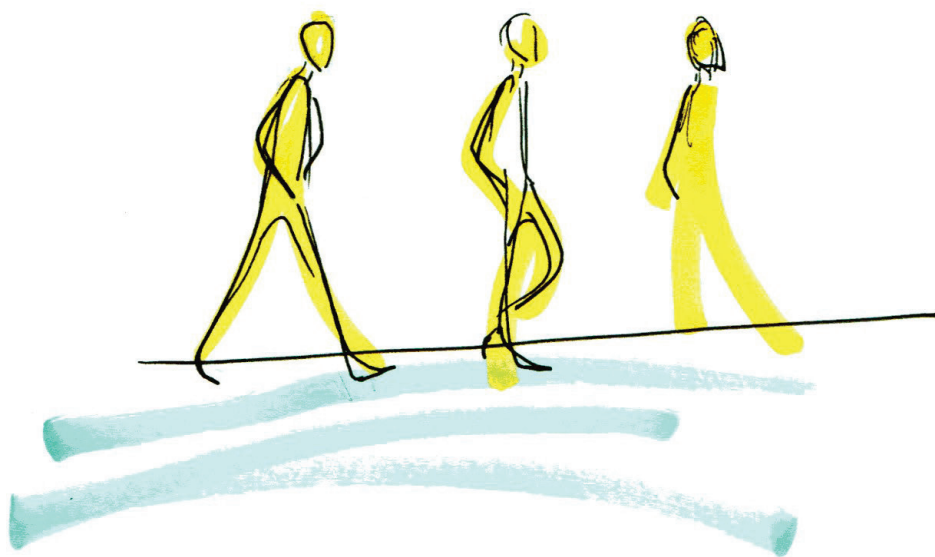


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