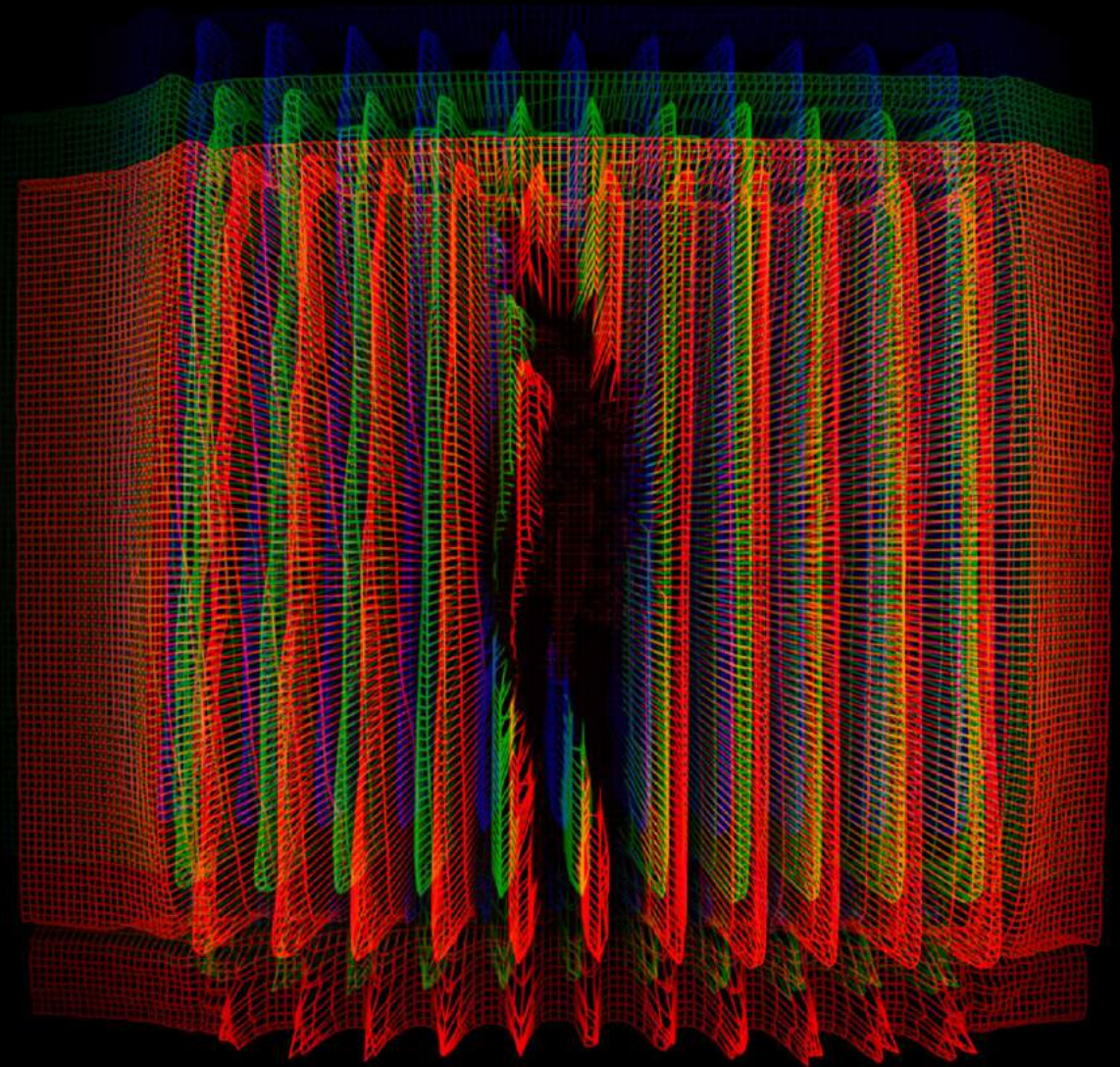


THE GALLATIN REVIEW



THE
GALLATIN
REVIEW

Volume 32 • Spring 2017

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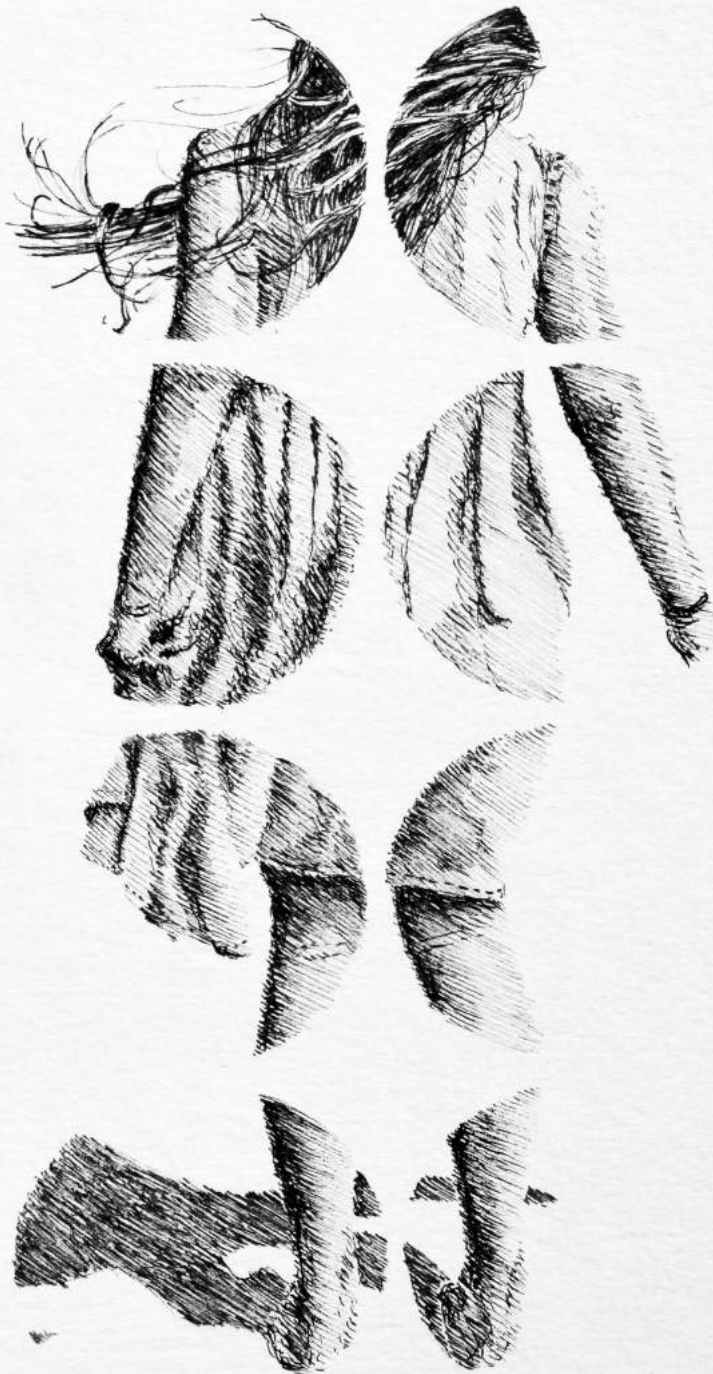
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Sofía Matías Alvial

An Educational Conversation

by Vincent Thompson

DJ Victorious: How you all doing, New York? This is DJ Victorious, reporting to you live from Road to Redemption Radio Station. Today is freedom Friday, and every week at this time, I have the privilege of interviewing one of our productive brothers or sisters who has just been released, or is on the verge of being released, from incarceration. We get to talk to them about what led to their incarceration, their transformation while incarcerated, along with their present and future goals. Today, New York, we have Vincent Thompson.

Mr. Thompson: I'm finishing up 12 years on a manslaughter charge. I'm on the verge of accomplishing my associate's degree. I'm just trying to stay in focus mode, and I'm getting ready to come home. I plan on being a youth counselor, and I am putting the pieces together to start an organization to help youth who come from environments similar to mine. I want to show them the world is bigger than our neighborhoods. I also want to educate them about life and history. Yeah, I want to do the job public schools are supposed to do. I also want to enlighten the world about the criminal in-justice system.

DJ Victorious: Why do you call it the “in-justice system?”

Mr. Thompson: There needs to be a better understanding and relationship between court system, judges, district attorneys, and the individuals they are convicting. They are giving teenaged children thirty to forty years for burglaries — now, don't get me wrong; these teenagers are not Boy Scouts, but thirty years is a lot! In some cases these children are from broken households. Father's gone. Mother's a drug addict. They may not need correction. They may just need affection.

DJ Victorious: Okay, okay. I see where you're coming from, Mr. Thompson. Hold on for a sec. We have a caller. Road to Redemption Radio. Who's speaking?

Streets: Never mind my name. Just call me Streets. Yeah, call me Streets. That's where I'm from.

DJ Victorious: Okay, Streets. You had a question for Mr. Thompson?

Streets: Yeah, I got a couple of questions...yeah. Vincent, it's been so long! What — eight or nine

years? You remember me, right?

Mr. Thompson: How can I forget you?

Streets: I don't know. You read a book or two, and you change.

Mr. Thompson: Figures you'd say something ignorant like that.

Streets: I gotta give you applause. You big time now! You enrolled in NYU! You *academically inclined*. But how can you forget about me? How can you forget about the streets?

Mr. Thompson: Calm down and listen up! I understand your point of view. This approach is new to you, because you very rarely get to experience growth. I can't ever forget where I come from. My goal is to improve that environment, by taking on the court and the school systems that we been falling victim to for so long.

Streets: Yeah, I heard you want to help the youth out, but these teenagers out here have their minds made up. Remember, experience is the best way to learn—besides, nobody help you out.

Mr. Thompson: For children growing up in an environment like ours, having a positive male figure they could relate to can never hurt. That's something I never had. If someone was there to guide me and show me the right way, I'd probably be working for Apple today. Instead, the people I looked up to motivated me to sell drugs! As I reflect on it now, it's like they encouraged me to go to prison. And you know what?

Streets: What?

Mr. Thompson: Your negative energy reminds me of those guys. That's why it's important for me to establish a strong, positive presence in our neighborhoods: to help combat all the negative influences misleading our youth.

Streets: Another way, ha! Mr. Approval vs. Acceptance. You the one that change! You downplaying Streets and advocating for books? Everything you learned from the streets—what, it just disappeared?!

Mr. Thompson: Listen, the problem is you're missing the message. What I learned from the streets have made me who I am today. From the

negative experiences, from the so-called friends who betrayed me—those are the reasons I have trust issues today. However, there are beneficial traits I've developed from the street—like discipline, determination to survive, a hustler's "go-get-it" work ethic. Now I'm using these traits to accomplish something positive, and better myself. I'm applying my determination to succeed legally, and using my work ethic to obtain my college degree. This combination elevates me to a different level educationally and mentally. What I'm learning at NYU nobody ever tried to teach me in the streets, and what I learned in the streets could not be taught in any academic classroom.

Streets: Yeah, yeah, yeah! I know knowledge is power. But when you come home and reality hits, a dollar will supersede an education any day of the week.

Mr. Thompson: I hear your sarcasm, but you're starting to get the point. Knowledge is power. That fact has been established since they denied our people the right to learn to read and write during the times of slavery. During the Jim Crow regime, it was law that black and white children couldn't be seated in the same classrooms. Even today that continues, with school funding determined by taxes. As I look around, the majority of my neighborhood is waiting on welfare checks. I come to the conclusion, similar to Frederick Douglass's, that education must be power, since white Americans always establish obstacles to deny African-Americans a proper education. They cannot hide history or reality from us, if we're constantly reading books. We need to start valuing education a lot more. We undervalue education and overvalue money. I cannot deny it: I have a drive to make money too. But what do you expect, living in a country that's driven by money? I was raised to

value material things that depreciate. However, now I know their worth. I still like nice things, but I know how to prioritize a little better now. Today I know money is not worth my freedom. Ten years in the prison system, the one thing I developed is priorities. In the past I thought only for the present. Now I am thinking for the future.

Streets: You got it figured out, eh? I give it to you: you was not talking like this ten years ago. The prison system did a number on you. By the way, I heard about your coalition speech. I heard it was so good they erased the footage. I'm confused though. You advocating for Black Lives, but you sold drugs to your own people, and you killed another black man. It sounds like a contradiction to me.

Mr. Thompson: You're putting words in my mouth. I never said I was advocating to stop black on black crimes and drug dealing. It's definitely a problem but I decode it a little differently. The term is just another form of propaganda to make us look like savages when we, as black people, do what other races do. Think about it. When you're in a community where the majority of the people look like you, the natural social human dynamic is that those people are likely to have committed crimes against each other. So the same things that happen in our communities also happen in white communities. In fact, the last I checked on the stats, 90 percent of African American crimes are committed against each other. On the same note, 82 percent of crimes that are committed against whites are committed by white people. But I bet you never heard anyone promote the term white-on-white crime or Asian-on-Asian crime. If we really dug into this issue, we'd see that the government and the city planners create this problem. The percentage would drop if the neighborhoods was more diverse, but the government is using the media to promote "look,

they're killing themselves!" In all actuality, this is just another excuse to justify their injustice. Selling drugs—I wish I saw it as poisoning my people at 14 years old. All I saw was Benjamin faces and Jordan logos. Living in a household with one mother and two siblings, the things I wanted I had to get on my own. Don't mistake me: I had my fair share of wrongdoings, but I learned from each one. I was a young boy who fell victim to his environment.

Streets: I can't deny you is smart. Don't get me wrong, you always been smart, but prison and college took you to a whole other level. This is what gets me kind of angry. You know how much tuition is at a school like NYU? Coming from where I'm coming, the only way you get a scholarship to a good school is if you were good on that basketball court. When I look at you, it frustrate me. Like, what I got to do, commit a crime to get a good education?

Mr. Thompson: That's what it looks like. Some African Americans are fortunate, others are not. College programs in prisons have helped educate minorities dramatically. I feel like the reason they have college programs in prison is because college reduces the recidivism rates. But, you know, the prison system is not about reform—it's about capital.

Streets: I see where you coming from; I understand you a lot. If the public schools are not doing their jobs, then we have to put forth the effort to do it ourselves. Whether that be through a prison college program, teaching ourselves, or even learning from elder individuals, like Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, and Huey P. Newton did.

Mr. Thompson: Yeah, and don't forget Vincent Thompson.

Streets: Man, you pushing it now. Don't put your name in the class with elites. You still have to put a lot of work in, but you have potential to be something special.

Mr. Thompson: Thanks.

Streets: I'm glad I grew into you.

Mr. Thompson: Thanks. That means a lot. If you don't understand me, who will?

Streets: Nobody. Just keep up the good work. I'm out!

DJ Victorious: That conversation was epic. Anything else you want to say to New York, Mr. Thompson?

Mr. Thompson: Just stay tuned. The Road to Redemption has just begun. Peace. ♦

Plight of the White Working Class

by Stewart Carrier

I didn't feel a sense of shock on election night. It seemed apparent to me the week leading up to the election that there was a real possibility Donald Trump was going to win. The first red flag was then-President Barack Obama visiting Michigan. *Michigan?* Robby Mook, John Podesta, and their pollsters hadn't taken the time to send Hillary Clinton to Michigan (or Wisconsin) and now, the week before the election, they were sending the President of the United States of America to campaign for her in a state that wasn't supposed to be all that close.

I grew up in Michigan and spent much of my young life struggling to survive there. The plight of the white working class, the stuff you hear about on television and NPR—that was my plight. We lived it every day, every frigid winter, every hole in my shoes and every hand-me-down coat; the plight was the price we paid to live in Michigan. Michigan didn't owe Secretary Clinton anything, and I was certain that her absence would be noticed by the plighted in the Mitten State.

Of course, most of us didn't know we were in a plight. That journalistic expression and the assignment by demographic prognosticators wasn't something the average Michigander was aware of when I was a kid. My mom made two or three quarters more an hour than minimum wage, somewhere around six dollars for each exhausting hour she spent trying to provide for us. She did home health care, she did side

jobs, but she never made much more than that amount of money. To us, that was simply being poor, it wasn't considered a plight.

Our poverty was such that our pipes regularly froze during the winter months because mom couldn't afford proper insulation. Without water there was no shower; sometimes we went to school two or three days in a row without being able to clean ourselves. The wind would often whistle through the lazily pieced-together trailer and snuff out the pilot light of our propane-powered heating unit. Without central heat, there was no sleeping in our own comfortable beds. We'd improvise by hanging up a blanket to partition the living room from the rest of the trailer, so that we could huddle together on the floor near a small electric heater. If the electricity went out, we would use a kerosene camping heater. I am still not sure how the cockroaches in our kitchen survived those brutally cold winters; it seems unfair that they would thrive in the same conditions we struggled in.

Often I find myself wondering if our life was the plight of the white working class. More specifically, I wonder if this is the plight that the politicians debate when they argue about who my mother, my sister and I once were. During all of the years living like that, we never once considered ourselves representatives of the way the talking heads and academics discussed the angry silent majority that elected Donald Trump and perpetuates prejudice.

Perhaps what makes the plight of the white working class even more complicated, at least in my mind, is how often it is viewed through the lens of racism, homophobia, misogyny, Islamophobia, and xenophobia. Making America great “again” through the policies and leadership proposed by Donald Trump involves explicit and implicit acceptance of those biases. This is certainly true if we consider “again” to mean the “good ol’ days” of American exceptionalism. Segregation, Jim Crow, and white superiority are all implied and understood by “again.” Based on my life experiences, however, I’d argue that the vast majority of citizens are too ill-informed when it comes to making a nuanced voting decision.

When I was growing up, there was no talk about how to make America great again, at least not in my family nucleus. To my single mother, voting was her duty as a citizen and she always voted Democrat. I can’t recall if she has ever voted for a Republican. Many members of my white working-class family have, especially my grandfather on my estranged, now deceased, father’s side. But even he, a Reagan-era Republican, never talked actively about the greatness associated with white America.

Grandpa Sam was a truck driver and experienced all different walks of life during his time on the road. His best friend, “Black Mike”, a fellow veteran and the only black guy in town, smoked pot with him and they played pool together at the local Eagles Club. The marijuana helped

both of them with their health problems. Being around this drug taught me that everyone, even Reagan-era Republicans, had their coping mechanisms. Neither “Black Mike” nor my grandfather had a filter around me. I was considered the prodigal son, so they exposed me to almost everything. Their trust sometimes allowed me to steal their pot; I spent the entire summer of my eighth grade year stoned.

One thing they did that always bothered me was regularly talk about and use the N word. My mother raised me to believe that certain terms were inappropriate. That was one such term. “Black Mike” and Grandpa, however, had no such sensitivities when it came to the language they used to describe people they had no respect for. To Grandpa and Mike this word meant men who didn’t work or stay with their families. I had always found this ironic, because my own father didn’t work or stay with our family. One day I heard them call my dad that word and it shook my understanding. It was explained to me that it didn’t matter what your skin color was; it was how you acted that determined whether or not you were “that type of person.”

My grandfather’s relationship with “Black Mike” was typical of most people in my community growing up. People were indifferent to the idea of various “isms” and prejudices. Grandpa Sam was the type of person who would treat you with respect until you wronged him, and then he would become unruly and frightening.

That isn't to say, however, that he wasn't capable of ignorance — all people are capable of ignorance until they are educated.

When I came out of the closet, it was still common for many people in my family, including my grandfather, to indiscriminately use the words “fag” or “faggot” or “gay” or “queer” as a way to negatively describe something or someone. I played football, I wrestled, and people considered me “big man on campus” by the time I was a senior in high school. If I could be the epitome of the masculine jock as a gay man, then the concept of the homosexual as “less than” couldn't fit into their stereotype. Coming out of the closet fundamentally changed the way many of my friends and family understood homosexuality; it was one of the scariest and most rewarding experiences of my life, and it is why I don't consider most of them homophobic.

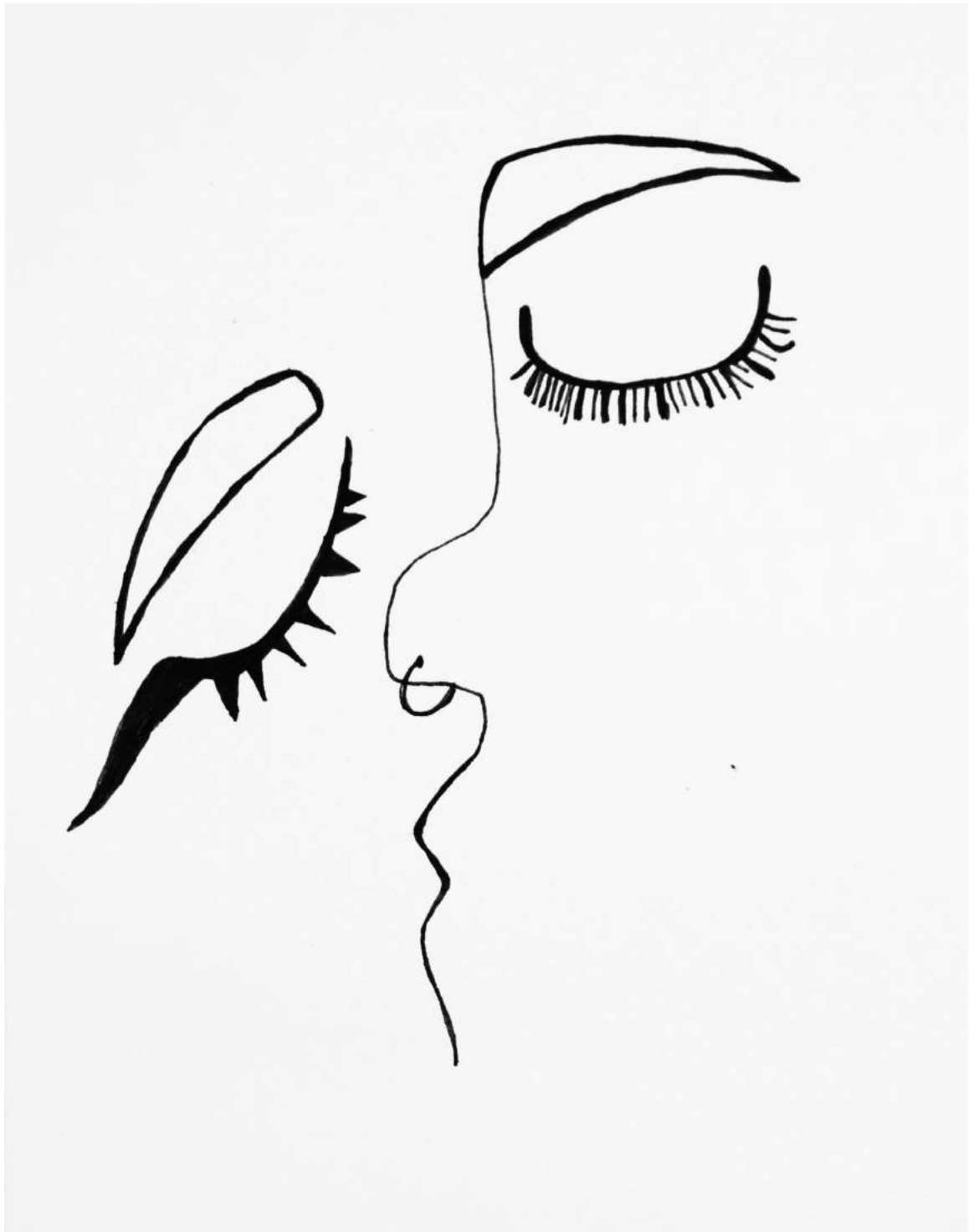
Eventually, my mother was able to crawl out of the poverty we lived in for so many years. She married a nice man who made drastic improvements to our home, was dedicated to his family, and worked full time. He hunted, enjoyed country music, and loved working with his hands. In every way imaginable, he was the typical redneck, the archetype of the white America that elected Donald Trump. He was completely ignorant of his privilege and totally skeptical of government. Never in my life did he mention something negative about blacks, women, homosexuals, or Muslims. When he cast his vote for Donald Trump, it wasn't because he disliked people different from himself, and it wasn't because he didn't care about the targets of Trump's rhetoric. My stepfather voted Trump because he was tired of being told by other people who he is, how he feels, and why he's wrong about everything progressive liberals hold dear.

My mother and stepfather divorced recently.

She found out that he had been cheating on her with one of her very close friends. After the divorce, he ended up marrying that woman and having a baby with her. By the time his infant daughter graduates high school, he will be nearing 70. I hope he'll no longer be working in manual labor by that time. It's difficult for me to think about forgiveness for him because the pain is still so fresh, but I think about him constantly because he helped transform my life. He loved me, traveled the world with me, and embraced people different from him always. He taught me how to be a good man, and supported me when I struggled.

The members of the silent majority who elected Donald Trump share many similarities with traditionally oppressed minorities. They deal with the same class struggles, drug use, employment issues, single parent homes, educational achievement gaps, and anger directed toward the government for failing to understand who they are. I once attempted to use my own experiences to empathize with the black and Hispanic struggle, and was told I have “white fragility and tears.” This alienated me in a way in which I believe my grandfather, stepfather, and many anti-establishment voters feel when they are *told* who and what they are instead of *asked*.

The white identity, especially in heterosexual men, is now synonymous with oppression and fragility, ignorance and hatred, bigotry and fear. Because of a lack of understanding on all sides, and a projection of identities that might not exist, Donald Trump, a possible fascist, will be president for the next four years. How do we move on? How do we resist? What is our struggle? Perhaps we should move away from collectivism and work towards a greater understanding of the individual experience. If we don't, I fear we'll have eight years of Trump instead of four. ♦



Hipster Kiss Fallon Smalberg

On September

by Lillian Starbuck

I was making potatoes for breakfast.
Hardly any peaches had juice left.

They hid hemispherical among paradisiacal hands
and were cheaper everywhere but New York.

At my window the cold exhausted their sun
But when I opened a journal naked against the wire screen,

they were not as sweet as I once remembered.
Across the stones of Cité de Trévisé I saw nights

with the solitary breaths of a morning run,
and these were exhausted in slight too.

I rode to Rockaway. I rode to Second Avenue.
I watched Nauman walk behind black lacquer,

and sent for schizophrenic clicks from last fall.
I sat on a botanic path flecking a traffic jam.

I saw a couple fruit the pear tree.
I heard the bells of a polar express

fast approaching. Winter once meant
that anything not gotten over is worth getting over

even in vain.
I found a Louis Armstrong who sounded of hollow wood.

The wind took up. It was the old wind
telling me something time should.



Grandfather Looking at Clouds—Home, 2016 Daniels Mekšs



Waltz I Ebru Eltemur



Waltz II Ebru Eltemur

My Father

by Adam Young

dips
his toes

the river
pulls
my father
in

the river
tightens
my father
dives

the river
swallows
him whole
and spits
him back
out

my father
crawls
to shore
catches
his breath

wrings
his hands

then

dips
his toes





Untitled Ebru Eltemur





Muscle Memory Michelle Johnson



Infinity Tree Abe Libman

Gallery on 24th and 10th

by Henry Sheeran

We are nervous to go. An exchange of phrases between southern strangers crosses over the dark wood corner of an afternoon bar. But these bore my mother and me, so we walk to the posthumous (not posthumorous: he left a staple stuck to the bottom of one canvas, at which I smiled) exhibition. The gallery owner is happysad at his death and she speaks of his magic hands. But my mother is the painter's daughter, and she nods and mm...s at the owner, because for her the painter's hands were father's hands. Nearly sweating, I walk around the corner, where there are ribbons and circles and drips and smears and blues and yellows and even the luscious bath-warmth of beauty; and staring at a painting, I almost shove my fingers through the canvas and heave myself into its sighing orange.

October 2016



Split Personality Emilie LaRock



Galaxies Collide Emilie LaRock



Sanukanchha Sunar, Nepal Yonatan Medina



Cultural Resonance

by Hajra Jamal

Try to titrate my blood
and classify my type of “exotic.”
Create a new litmus paper for me.

I am neither the thin meniscus
between water and oil,
nor diluted “chai tea.”

I am both broken Urdu
and aspiring poet:
Rumi and Neruda.

I am cat eyes, never kohl—
masala on fries, sometimes.
Sadly, always “ج” instead of “چ.”



Before the Flood Alexander Geisel



223 Alexander Geisel



Reikon.2019 Kylie McManus

We'll Be Able to Fly

by Eva Chen

I.

The tear. It appeared over the beach, black and vertical, looming above the shoreline, waiting to be discovered. Mr. Gottlieb was the first in town to come across it on his daily 6 a.m. jog. Electrified by what he saw, he weaved through the cul-de-sacs and called on everyone, friend or stranger, to behold it. My father's hair was freshly slicked and his tie hung loose around his collar when he answered the door. I looked up through the kitchen window, pouring strawberry milk.

"There's something big happening on the beach," said Mr. Gottlieb, running in place. A plastic orange whistle bounced on his track-suited chest. He wore fading blue nylon with white stripes. The rising sun cast a shine on his bald crown. *High knee. High knee. High knee. High knee.* He always had us do a million of those in phys. ed.

"Seriously, swing by on the way to work. It's really somethin'."

He hurried off to the next house.

My mother handed my father the coffee.

"What was that about?"

"Dead body washed up," said my father, totally

sure. "Somethin' new in Newport." He returned to his *Wall Street Journal*.

I chewed my waffle as fast as my jaw would go.

"I'm going to school early today," I said.

"Oh, you are not to go to the beach," said my mother. "Promise me."

"Promise," I said, tucking ever-unruly hairs into my baseball cap. "Let's even sign on it."

"Just don't get in any trouble." She kissed me on the forehead and I flinched. "Okay, honey?"

"Please don't get lipstick on my hat."

A crowd was gathering on the beach. It was a Wednesday morning, and people welcomed the disturbance in routine.

The tear floated in midair out of our reach, tall as a house. It was two dimensional, facing toward the town. There was no back of it. To the sea, it was not there. It swallowed and obliterated light, without any hint of reflection. The insides of the tear were inestimable.

I spotted Getty fiddling with the straps of his knapsack, and walked over to him. He looked

up. As a welcome, he kicked some sand at me. The grit intruded through the grommets of my sneakers. In the sun, light glinted off the lenses of his glasses, casting white space where his eyes were supposed to be.

I tossed him the newest Stephen King, which he'd lent me a week ago.

"Hey. Did you do the geometry homework?"

"Geometry homework? Forget the geometry homework! Forget everything!"

We stood together, feet anchored in the sand and hands gripping our backpack straps, beholding something which felt truly new. New not like a shiny hardcover from the bookstore on the first day of release, but new like an unprocessable language unearthed from primordial days. I tried to imagine how the others were seeing it by opening my ears to haphazard speculations.

"Looks like the air is ripping open."

"Holy crap...black hole?"

"Nah, it's just a light refraction trick. A digital projection or something."

The student body president of Newport High, Twister Collins, walked up, his presence parting a chasm through the incessant chatter of the crowd. He carried his navy backpack slung over one shoulder. His new sweatshirt read DUKE BLUE DEVILS. His skin, now saturated by the sunlight, was a perfect expanse. Looking at the upperclassman, the future occurred to me. We would all lose the ugliness of this body-haunting puberty, and we would all leave this town to go to college. But getting there would happen so gradually that the guarantee of it was hardly comforting. In the end, there was no way I could measure up to Twister, who was "most likely to succeed." He turned around in the sand looking for someone, shading his eyes with one hand. It

cast a shadow roving and dancing across his face.

Getty blurted a loud rush of words out. "Hey Twister. What do you think it is?" The situation had infused my friend with a momentary courage. The statuesque senior looked over and down at us, fixing his attention on Getty kindly.

"Hard to say," said Twister, whose real name was Henry, but was likened to a force of nature for his style on the football field and rhetoric in mock trial. His gaze wandered over to the tear. Getty looked to the tear, too. His eyes were deadlights, dulled and disappointed that the conversation had not turned into something else.

Twister's eyes began to move up and down at hyper speed, as if tracking movement inside the black. I looked at Getty, astonished, but he had not seen.

A sparrow was flying over us, straight into the black tear. All heads were turning, obeying the fear, all holding their breath, silenced and stilled.

Not a moment had passed when the bird flew out again, unscathed.

"MAKE WAY MAKE WAY!" yelled the sheriff, docile deputies trailing behind. He popped through the crowd, jostling kids and shoving olds by way of his bearlike figure, forcefully creating a path for himself to the front.

"You want a knuckle sandwich? Move," said Sheriff Lemon to scrawny, big-eared Steve Foster. The boy snapped out of his hypnotized gaze up at the tear when accidentally nudged in the head by the sheriff's hip holster.

"Back up, folks! Go to work, go to school, go walk the dogs!" ("I am walking the dog!" a man holding a mutt in his arms shouted.)

"Decatur, let's get a roll of rebar fencing here, stat. I don't want anyone trying anything funny with this thing until we know more about it. What's

the name of that Indian science teacher at the school? Curatollo, ask her to come down.”

II.

I had been a member of Philosophy Club since my science teacher chartered it that year. We met lunchtime every Friday. Some of us were Mrs. Aleem’s kids, here for extra credit, others were burgeoning intellectuals, at least in their own minds. They had been intrigued by her posters of cartoon Descartes taped up along the hallways. I was one of the former.

“Take the thought-experiment of the Flying Man, posited by one of the most important thinkers of the Islamic Golden Age, a man called Avicenna, or Ibn Sina if you’re Persian. He was an expert on philosophy and medicine, and thoroughly fascinated by the human soul.” Mrs. Aleem balanced a piece of chalk on her index and middle fingers. “He proposed that a fully formed man is created in midair, floating in a constant state of suspension. Avicenna wanted others to determine, would this flying man be aware of himself? Would he have a consciousness of himself, if all he had was flight without wind?”

Nobody spoke.

“Can he smell?” I asked, hesitant about where to begin.

“He cannot smell. He cannot see, or hear, or taste. He cannot speak, Jesse, because he has no words. He floats.”

A voice rung out behind me.

“Um, Mrs. Aleem, this scenario should be called the Flying Man or Woman.”

The teacher paused and stared at her.

“Yes, of course, Courtney. Then you have provoked a very interesting question about self-identity, or the absence of it, in this situation...”

That Friday, Ruth Mill showed up. She was Twister’s girlfriend, and known to be crazy. She was also very striking, with eyebrows which lilted and dipped, giving clues to her temperament. Her black denim jacket was frayed, and her presence loomed over mine from the back of the room.

At the end of the period, when we were all debating out about the Flying Man, Mrs. Aleem asked, “Any questions?”

“I have a question,” said that rare yet recognizable echoey voice.

Ruth’s head had come forward from the wall she leaned against. Her eyes were reserved and unchanging. She hadn’t spoken once in the past 40 minutes, but now she spoke with enthusiasm.

“What’s the thing that appeared on the beach? I mean, this has been really interesting. Personally I think Avicenna was tricking us into admitting we all have souls. You know, tricking us into agreeing with him. But I’m not even sure I care about philosophy right now. I only want to know, what is the tear?”

“It’s dark matter,” someone called.

“No, it’s pollution. My dad says so. He would know; he runs a laboratory at the college.”

“Everyone shut up and we’ll find out! Mrs. Aleem’s the only one who knows!”

Getty was right, so we looked to Mrs. Aleem.

“It’s nothing man-made, I can tell you that. And it will draw the eyes of the world to Newport. So keep watching the beach, and keep watching the news.”

Her eyes were knowing and cool as usual, but her words revealed nothing to us. Something in me cowered and withered. I let the inkling go to the back of my mind, to the brimming repository of all things unexpressed.

III.

The sheriff's deputies had erected a fence of steel mesh, encircling the space over which the tear hovered. The attempt to bar us from the tear was only an invitation. Forbidden things must be pursued. We were possessed by instinct, taunted by the bareness of life otherwise. Tides beat up on the shore over and over, loud and droning.

When we got there, I found that the fence was a corral of black plastic mesh with large holes, held upright by wooden stakes.

"What a great fence," said Getty, squeezing and folding a part of it in his fist.

"Probably budget cuts again. Dig a trench around the posts," I said, throwing him a fallen branch I'd found.

"I know, I know," answered Getty, waving me off. He got to work.

"I'll dislodge it from this side."

Once the fence was loosened from the sand, we lifted the wooden stakes to dislodge it completely. Preparing to launch the fence into the sea like we'd planned, we lifted it by the stakes to get more control.

"Heave on three," I said.

"One..two..."

We looked up; a strange tunneling sound had started.

"Crud, it's stuck."

The tear was sucking weakly at the top edge of the fence and wouldn't let us have it back. Dismayed, I thought we should....Then, reverberations of laughter, at one moment low and gentle, at another shrill and manic, came from a distance.

Getty and I froze, then broke into a run toward a tall patch of scrub in the other direction, sand sinking beneath our shoes.

A girl came running onto the beach pursued by a boy. She ran in under the fence and lay down under the tear, her long dark hair spread out around her head like a halo. Her locks caught the moonshine. The boy fell onto the sand next to her. It was Twister and Ruth, I realized. They started macking in the sand. Hand in hand, mouth in mouth. Their frenetic energy seemed to rise into the tear, forming an invisible connection.

Electrify. A force field of you and me unassailable by covetous eyes.

I giggled, exhilarated.

"Why are you looking?" asked Getty, in a voice spiked with anger and disgust. "It's weird when girls are perverts."

"I'm not a pervert."

"Yeah, are you even a girl?"

My hackles rose and my face turned red. No, I'd never really been interested in being a girl. But for some reason I felt like I'd been slapped.

"At least I'm not an all-around pussy," I said. I guess I'd never really thought much of Getty after all. Why were we friends again?

A police siren sounded once nearby from the lot. Twister and Ruth leapt up from the sand and set off across the beach, buttoning up their clothes as they went.

Getty looked at me coldly, and left the brush, going back to the tear, to the mass of mesh hanging from it.

"The sheriff might be coming this way," I whispered, following him. "We've got to go."

He didn't listen. Without hesitation, he leapt onto the steep face of the fence and began to scale it, hooking his fingers carefully as he went, stepping with precision into the mesh holes. His blue windbreaker made zzzz noises as the fence

scratched it. It took a while before he got to the bottom edge of the tear. Under the vast blackness, Getty looked small and far away. He stretched his arm out and an index finger up towards the rip. I watched, more in anticipation than fear, as the surrounding space of the rip seemed to pull slightly on his outstretched arm. It began to suck on him like an attractive magnet.

“Getty, don’t do it,” I said. “It’s not worth it.”

His finger stayed there, an inch from the black. For a while nothing happened and I breathed a sigh of relief.

The next moment, Getty pulled his finger back, recoiled and crashed backwards into the ground. There was a liquidy explosion of blood and the flash of bone.

It answers.

He was candy red all over.

He was screaming.

IV.

For a short time the tear existed only in our town. Everyone went to the beach as often as they could now, leaving the glass library unusually cold and organized. At the beach there was banter and laughter. Spirits expanded freely from the bodies they inhabited, jazzed on caffeine or sweets. Someone always had a six pack of something to share.

It was one afternoon that people watched the drifter go. It wasn’t that they were callous, or in awe of suicide. She went in just one moment, and one moment was not enough time to react. One moment was only enough to question if it really happened. It did. A college girl stood nearby, still looking through her video camera, jaw slack and body frozen. The lens was supposed to be a more protected way of looking, but this had been an unplanned scene. It had been a sacrifice on film.

The drifter had been wearing an olive anorak and a canvas backpack bulky with possessions. She had walked straight through the beach toward the tear. She had not stopped. She just walked to it as one would to their front door. She scaled up the hanging mesh, sun rays glinting off her toe rings as she ascended.

Everybody had noticed her at some point. Shaggy-haired travelers with tattoos and huge hiking packs always came through our town for the cheap food, and we always looked at them and their otherness. She was lithe, and that had helped her be quick and get to where she wanted to be. She had slipped seamlessly into the black, without a ripple, without a doubt.

“We have to help her!” yelled a man still in his office clothes, eyebrows compressed in anger and shock. He pivoted this way and that, looking to do the right thing.

“Why isn’t anyone doing anything?” he screamed. His deep voice had become shrill and cracked.

The trouble was, we didn’t know what to do.

We all just inched closer to the tear, urging it with looks to have mercy, hoping it would spit the girl back out whole. I sunk faster every second I tried to reach an understanding.

“Well, if no one else is going to call the cops, I’ll do my part,” said someone in the background, walking off to find a phone.

“Hey folks!” said a jovial voice. Our daze broke, though we were still anchored to a certain dependency. “Whatchasmellin’? That thing up there cookin’ something good?” It was Mr. Gottlieb, jogging through the sand, doing high knees.

“No, Mr. Gottlieb. Someone just went in there.”

“Someone went in there?” He repeated, smile fading.

“They haven’t come out.”

“Well, who is it? Is someone getting help?” He ran in place, looking at all the rest of us who couldn’t bring ourselves to leave.

“Someone from out of town. A homeless person. One of those wanderers. A girl. How old? I don’t know.”

“Well listen, you all,” said Mr. Gottlieb. His black mustache drooped as he began to run around us in a circle. “We mustn’t tell anyone about this. We must keep quiet, and pretend we didn’t see it happen. There was no girl. You only imagined her.”

V.

I believe in the randomness of the universe. I believe in its unfathomability. Humanity has disgraced all that with its metrics and tiers and dividing lines. I believe in our ugliness. It subordinates us to the cosmos. Our ugliness and our cruelty. I am miserable when I’m happy. And I am happy when I’m miserable, because it feels like discovering the truth. I never want to lose that. If I do, I will be—flat.

Tense, tight-lipped physicists from M.I.T. came and set up a large black tent on the beach, shrouding the tear. Inside, they cast a light into it with an experimental laser camera and found people whirling around in the darkness, illuminated in shades of gray by the laser light, faces distorted into long curvilinear stretched masses, mouths opened in silent screams, rubbery lips receding from the teeth, hair torn out like feathers and floating around their heads like halos, eyes popping out of faces in shock.

Or so I dreamt.

Instead of *The Newport Press*, everyone walked around with a copy of *The New York Times* that week. The central photograph dominating the

front page was a rectangle of blackness. No light was yet bright enough to illuminate the tear. We could not understand it.

The mystery wasn’t dead.

VI.

Class rings and mortar boards and yearbooks. We were seniors now, happily submerged in a saccharine era. A strange unifying conciliation sedated us all.

The tear is expanding. A whole new field of study is arising from the panic. A generation is majoring in it, obsessing over it, measuring it, attempting to obliterate it. New calculations are published every day, insisting numbers at each other like a screaming match: “Exponential increase...thirty years...twenty years...sudden death, ten!”

We used to joke all the time in physics club over traded Wonderbread sandwiches. Aaayy, the earth’s drying up in a billion years, peanut butter, pickles, it’s all relative.

Well, I guess clichés have become meaningful:

Timing is everything.

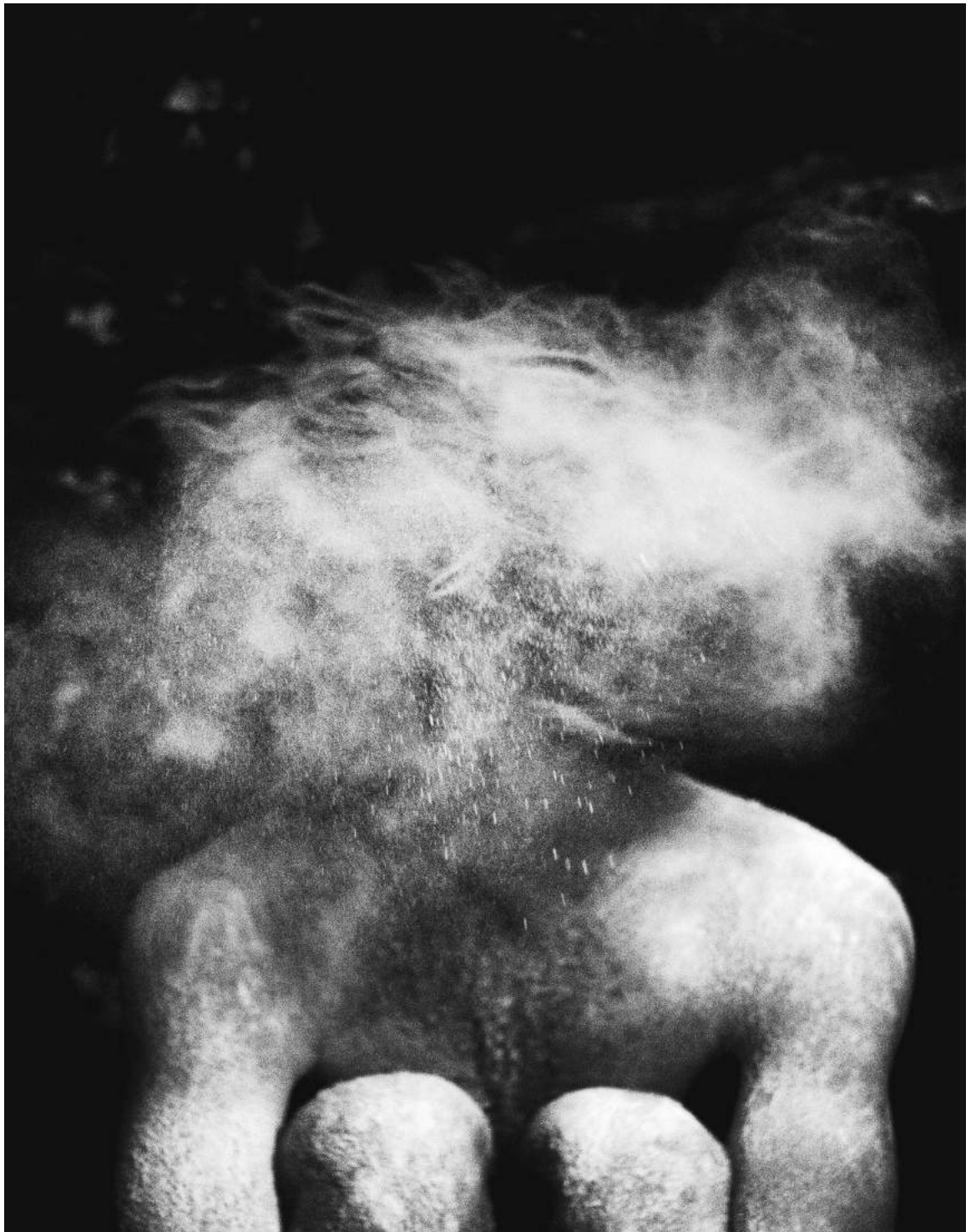
I see the end. It is pitch black, tearing apart the fat in our brains, causing our thoughts to degenerate before they’ve fully formed, dissolving time. Now it’s dark! A nothing-space fit for the Flying Man.

According to Mrs. Aleem, the moment the Flying Man came into existence, he was self-aware.

He’s been screwed ever since. ♦



Untitled / Elliott Ally Zhao



Cendres Ally Zhao

Revolutionary (Cry for Mother Haiti)

by Kenneth Harden-Smith

As a revolutionary,
there's no disputing the bloodshed
that goes on in my head.
Though my heart shed for Mother Haiti
I envision the birth of Haiti,
once a baby,
from the wound,
through the growing pains of a nation
which encountered the hatred,
but grew patience
as a nation of poverty and famine.
Thus Mother Haiti is currently facing
a caste system...
I see the revolutionary in the eyes
of my fellow allies with relative ties.
As my ties from the Motherland thus died,
I feel a vibe that's still alive
I cry oh! Mother Haiti!
She asks to save me
as she's in dire help
of what she prior felt.

I see such strong wealth in a land, culture,
and people, but Mother Haiti was stripped as
by a vulture.
Therefore I do hope a revolutionary is to
be born,
for our identity is torn and I mourn
for her to never be gone,
as she nurtures from the dirt up.
Still no such luck!
Though the sun's up,
I cry for Mother Haiti,
for the turmoil and deprivation,
as I take a look in the nation's
black faces which show a nation that has
felt devastation,
but made it through salvation,
between two races,
throughout these revolutionary phases,
thus giving birth to the first
Caribbean black nation.

Colfax

by Paul Pinson

I

I stand before a statue of Schuyler Colfax in Colfax, California. He was the Vice in our drunk-est White House. Even here, in official memory, Colfax looks runtish and seedy, with his wide-brim hat warped and his striped suit pants wrinkled and loose. I intuit that his eyes were grey and fogged like creekwater, and that he must have squinted a lot during his tour of the Sierras, absently nodding to the idea of the Union as he fingered his coat pocket for his flask.

Colfax is a suitable *genius loci* for this “small drinking town with a railroad problem,” where worn-out presidential miens peer at you from every other pickup truck, barstool, and check-out line. They are self-wise inveterate drunks, pulling off their incapacities -- likable to one another because their hiding isn't well hidden.

They all know what's up: their time here on friendly terms with law enforcement, with a plot of unincorporated area and an unincorporated gal.

(Notice to passing nth wave hippies, starseeds, Rainbow Children, and shamans on your way to Grass Valley, Nevada City, Burning Man, or the Pleiades: stop here only to refuel and use the bathroom at Starbucks. There is nothing aurally welcoming about Colfax. You will be

stared at from porches. You will be mocked by dropouts foraging for beer and smokes. You will have a bad trip thinking about a statue of Schuyler Colfax.)

II

In 2014, I was laptopless in Colfax. My only friend was Schuyler Colfax. We walked to rivers and read print by sunlight. Yet I carried with me a crowd.

Whenever Colfax noticed I was distracted by the thought of the others—what they'd make of me now, stranded here in Colfax, entertaining Colfax—he'd bat the air, instructing me to turn off my phone and dissolve such shades with spells of willful archaism, so earning myself a moment of solitude, a suspension from the world-historical.

“If you want a secret, listen...” Colfax once said, pushing my shoulder. “Deign to posture Thoreau or mutter an old Catholic school prayer. Talk to the sky; live out a parable; venture something meaningless and mockable—and Solitude, sovereign, will deign to admit you. She does not accept pretenders—but since pretend you must, pretend outrageously, at your own expense.”

With Colfax stone drunk by my side, I sometimes felt strong: we were two solitudes against the thought of the crowd.

“They love none, nothing, and no one in particular,” he’d say, passing the flask.

III

“Friends! This whistle still echoes, these engines still chug—but these are old, obsolete engines, carrying rotten goods,” I found myself crying, soapboxing at the center of town, with Colfax swaying by my side.

“You retired construction workers!

Fatigued sportsmen!

Aging Hell’s Angels!

Lapsed Mormons!

Auto salesmen out on disability!

Billiard hall wraiths!

Your ears are pricked up, your blood is attuned. You hear this train’s old war cry petering out into a swan song – so you’ve begun to fence off hills, stockpile weapons, ideate hit lists, and carve out circles in the woods to act out the control you think Schuyler here promised you, which has always been denied. Listen! When the world to come weighs you, it will find you lacking; and if you resist, you will be helpless before a power infinitely more intelligent, networked, and licit.

If you’d preserve the Union, lay down your guns, your life, even your pride, and take up the—aah!”

The Whitmanian wax had provoked an unleashed dog that chased us all the way to the part of Colfax with gas stations and fast food.

IV

As we caught our breath, we spotted a prostrate figure in the distance, on the grassy island of a drive-thru: a sleepy meth head, Colfax supposed, one of his own. But as we approached, we saw she was healthy and well dressed. Just before Colfax could ask her if she was all right, if she needed a hand, I noticed she was only charging her phone with a hidden outlet. She glanced at us standing there, then quickly looked away, got up, wiped the grass off her jeans, and returned to her idling Subaru. Twice sobered, we silently continued toward the Taco Bell. I thought about how I must have looked to her, with Colfax at my side.

So that I didn’t have to wait long for my Gordita Supreme, I turned my phone back on to order. That’s when Colfax suddenly stopped and pretended to search vainly for his flask. He said he’d be right back. I haven’t seen him since. I guess Colfax just didn’t know how to say goodbye. ♦

What It Is To Slog

by Hannah Treasure

the woman who birthed me says
desire dims beneath slanted sun
as I slosh soap at laundromats

where a pocketful of quarters
gets you sweet again

Sundays I kneel
at the dirt praying to
a south I know by its soil

I scrape out pumpkin guts
digging my fingers orange
pruney from scrubbing
without a dishwasher

I am farmer not Viking
art is highbrow toil
not the pitchfork I need

my work ethic makes me hate him
the way he knows my body
and the way my body wants to sweat
from libraries and fields and notebooks

but now it's night and nothing seems too important

somewhere rooms of clapping people revel
with free snickerdoodles and I think
of when I wrote the earth in his hair

how could the end be so gentle
in his picture of us laughing like
there is pasta sauce on my nose

his mouth, two beautiful
hinges blow out candles
hop fences
call it liberation

this place is just as foreign to me as to you:
you pleasure
me slog

The Haul

by Elena Cabot Rodriguez

Pat rubbed the back of her neck where sweat had dampened the collar of her tee shirt. Long drives always made her neck stiff, and the relentless summer Texas heat made her feel sticky. She wanted to take off her shirt altogether, but she knew Lori would be uncomfortable. In front of them lay another long road, pavement crumbling at the edges and disintegrating into another dusty plain. Tufts of sunburnt grass danced alongside the car. The emptiness of Texas sometimes scared Pat. She wondered how long it had been since someone had driven down this particular road. She could see a heat mirage hovering over the front of the Volvo. It made the air look thick and drinkable — like melted glass. She was afraid to breathe air that was too hot, afraid she would choke on the denseness of it all.

Lori tried to turn up the air conditioner again. She was also sweating through her tee shirt — the pink cotton turning a deep red under her breasts, armpits, and the rolls of her belly. The small vents continued to blow gently, not responding to Lori vigorously turning the knob. “Damn car,” she muttered. She smacked the fan and the loose knob rolled into Pat’s cupholder.

Pat pulled out the large road map that she had folded between her feet. Pat and Lori had gotten the map thirty years ago, when they first moved to Texas, and creases where the map folded made whitish lines that blurred out the names of some cities. Pat traced her finger down from El Paso and across Texas.

“The last sign we passed read Sonora,” Lori said. Pat found Sonora on the map, which now read “Sonor.”

“Then we’re almost in Austin,” Pat replied, “and from Austin we only have four more hours.”

She folded the map again and placed it under her feet. Looking at the map for too long made her nauseous. When she looked at Texas for too long, it made her nauseous.

The trailer attached to the back of the Volvo slowed down their trip. The Volvo was nearing twenty years old, and with an extra ton attached, Lori was lucky to be able to push the car to 65. Her whole right foot was pressed all the way down on the gas. She felt that she was physically dragging the trailer herself, her back ached and her arms felt sore. So much baggage, so much stuff.

The trailer made Pat nervous. They hadn't used it since they had moved from Ann Arbor to El Paso. It was rickety, and had groaned uneasily when they started their trip earlier that morning. They had to pull over every once in a while to let a car behind them pass, and the large right turns annoyed other drivers at intersections.

Pat couldn't look out the window anymore. It was making her dizzy and tired. The same scene swept by on either side of the car, making her feel like they hadn't moved. They could have been driving in circles and Pat wouldn't have been surprised. She looked over at Lori, who had one hand on the Volvo's wheel and another on her Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee cup. The ice had melted; there was a thin clear line of murky water above the coffee and the plastic cup was sweaty.

Lori had always been the one to drive. Pat was just as capable of driving, but for some reason they had developed a habit of Lori being the one behind the wheel. It didn't make any sense because Lori had gone blind in one eye and Pat got dizzy looking at maps — but it was the way it was, and changing their old habits seemed crazy.

Pat noticed that Lori had begun to grow grey hairs that poked out of her chin and ears. They were curly and stiff, and only noticeable if someone was looking for them, Pat decided. Lori had gotten heavier in the past few years. She had put on weight above her hips, and her belly sank between her legs when she sat. Her toes were puffy and bunched in her sandals, cramming to fit between the straps. Her arms had begun to get flabby and when she raised them freckled, fleshy skin hung like wings.

She hadn't always been like this. Not when they were young in Ann Arbor — they were college students who were pretty without trying. Lori didn't look like this when she and Pat had broken into the ceramics studio when they were 19, and made love behind a hot kiln, and spent the night under shelves of wet clay. No, Lori had muscular thighs back then, and biceps that bulged under her smooth skin. Pat remembered spending all of college running her fingers up and down Lori's long muscles. She remembered very little of the classes she took.

"I'm happy," Lori said suddenly, reaching down

and grabbing Pat's hand. It sounded forced and awkward. She grabbed a little too hard.

"Me too," Pat said. "Are you sure you don't want to stop? Maybe we could get some dinner."

"I'm all right if you are. I just want to get there," Lori said, and then added, "unless you're hungry, then of course we can stop."

"No, no, no. I'm fine. Just checking on you," Pat said. Recently, conversations between them had been nervously polite. Both of them knew it. The tension hung between them delicately, one wrong word could snap it, and the raw bitterness would be exposed, making the rest of the ride unbearable. They had stayed relatively quiet for most of their trip, commenting every few minutes on the heat.

Their marriage, like anything else that endures 30 years, had become stale. Love had a way of doing that, Pat realized; it became lazy and tired. They had fallen into habits. It wasn't like the love wasn't there. It just wasn't exciting. Their marriage had become a dusty old radio, one that was outdated and dirty: nothing to look at, but still worked well enough, it would be a drag to replace.

It hadn't been a spontaneous decision to leave El Paso. Lori and Pat actually enjoyed living on the outskirts of the city, surrounded by mountains that broke the heat and didn't make the sky seem so huge and empty. They liked how the roads curved and twisted, unlike the roads that lay before them now in straight, predestined lines. They could walk into the city on weekends, go see a show or go to a new restaurant, and then walk back home and collapse on their bed—the city becoming a whisper outside their window. The heat in El Paso wasn't as scorching as it was in the middle of the long roads. It could easily climb up to one hundred degrees in the summer,

but Pat and Lori always had something to do to distract themselves. They both had worked at the high school, Lori as a gym teacher and Pat as an English teacher, and even though they had retired years ago, they still had other teacher friends they went out with every once in a while.

Pat, however, grew restless. His name was Carlo, and his wife had recently died of lung cancer. He was depressed and Pat was fidgety, and the two of them awkwardly made love on his dining room chair. Carlo was only a year younger than Pat, and he pulled his thigh muscle on the chair and they decided to move to the bed. The pause in their lovemaking gave Pat a moment to reconsider what she was doing, and as they made their way from the dining room to the bedroom, Pat realized it wasn't worth it. Carlo held her hand and walked in front of her. His back was covered with evidence of age—moles, freckles, and scars splashed across his back like a Jackson Pollock painting. His wrinkly penis dangled between his thighs like a dog's ropey chew toy. Aside from that, he looked like Lori, Pat realized. Much like every newborn looks the same, every old person does too, she thought, but there was a deep wrongness in it that Pat couldn't shake.

Pat dressed herself and walked back to Lori, where she immediately confessed and the two of them broke down in tears—sad about the affair, and sad about the possibility of loneliness.

They had stayed together, both of them doing their best to forget. But Carlo lived right across the street—he would get his newspaper, go on walks, and be at neighborhood parties. When they bumped into each other, Lori would get anxious. She would break a sweat across her forehead, and her hands would tremble. Pat and Lori decided then to move.

The Volvo nervously turned right at the end of

the dirt road, and the trailer hesitantly followed. The metal clasp that dragged the trailer made a loud screeching noise, and both the Volvo and the trailer stopped mid-turn.

“What happened?” Pat asked, turning her head to look out the rear window.

“I think the wheel’s stuck. It can’t get over the pavement.”

Pat opened her window and poked her head out. The air was thick, hot, and dusty. The sun pounded down harshly, and Pat had to squint to see the trailer’s back wheel. Lori was right, the pavement and the dirt below it were a good six inches apart, and the wheel hadn’t pulled itself onto the road.

“Just give it more gas, it’ll come back up,” Pat said, watching the wheel as Lori pressed down on the pedal. As soon as she did, a metallic shifting noise came from the back of the Volvo, followed by a clanging and then a loud snap. The Volvo had unhinged itself from the trailer, and had begun to speed away, leaving the trailer sitting on the corner.

“Stop!” Pat shrieked, waving her hands. “We’ve come loose!”

Lori quickly braked and the two opened the doors of the Volvo and walked around to the hinge that had snapped. It hadn’t just come loose, but it had broken altogether. The metal rod was disfigured and the latch that had been attached to the trailer was lying at Lori’s feet.

“Fuck,” Pat said.

She stood with her hands on her hips, the heat sinking heavily on her shoulders. Lori picked up the latch that had fallen on the ground, examined it, and with one long thrusting motion she threw it into the barren field that lay next to the road. The latch landed with a soft thud

behind a tuft of browning grass.

Lori then unclipped the rest of the hinge from the Volvo and threw it, this time with a grunting sound. Lori’s face was red and beads of sweat grew above her eyebrows and mouth. Pat raised her eyebrows and Lori dusted off her hands on her shorts.

“What in there do you need?” Lori asked, pointing to the trailer. “Because I don’t need anything.”

Pat’s eyes widened in disbelief. The trailer held their bed, their chairs, their dining room set. It held their silverware and pots and pans. There were pictures and posters collected from various trips, linens and boots and clothes all crammed in the extra spaces. The past thirty years of their marriage stood uneasily between the dirt and the pavement, looking as though it were about to topple over.

Pat hesitated, squinting at the trailer and then back at Lori.

“I can leave it if you can leave it,” Lori said, wiping the sweat off her brow.

Lori’s hands were on her hips, thrust a little forward, damp patches of sweat lining her shorts. The hair that had fallen out of her braid was hanging over her shoulders. This was all Pat needed. This sweaty, tired, crazy woman. They were going to grow old together, their skin was going to sag together, their hair was going to grey together.

They climbed back into the Volvo, and Lori started the car. In seconds they were driving away, faster this time, without the added weight. Lori gripped Pat’s hand tightly, and Pat opened the window next to her. The wind blew into the car as they sped away from the trailer. Pat leaned her head out of the window and watched it become a small dot on the corner of the road. ♦



[CHORUS]

I used to be fading from my life.
But this road to my goals has guided me
to where I need to be.
And though there will be days when some will throw shade,
just hold on!

Where am I?
Not wasting time falling to my demise by egotistical lies
from people who care less and
wish me and my peers rest,
hoping we all fall victim, then go abroad, yes—
like all those deposed from their goals.
I'm talking 'bout lost souls who choose the wrong sets.
I suggest you intercept with these different forms of intelligence that
prove relevant for the mind and consciousness.
Cut the nonsense!
Release the beast that has risen to feast on knowledge
from scholars, who holler "Education!"
Talking about debates and book relations,
essays paragraphed for research papers,
notes and quotations:
I suggest you digest these
nutrients for your mind to flourish, like young seeds when water waters



Untitled / Drew Ally Zhao

And sunshine shines. No more deaf, dumb and blind!

[CHORUS]

Let these fine teachings intertwine in your mind's quarters.

Push aside the genocide that energizes wrong orders,
and those who wish to rob us of higher learning.

I suggest you intensify that fire burning
that causes you to get to yearning for more
then just a H.S.E.

Take the opportunity while you sit in your seat, and
envision such significance that has been given to us,
once young and knuckleheaded,
now those who run to be educated and elevated;
once separated, based off hate strategically coordinated,
now integrated, based off love appreciated, but people who appreciate it.

Appreciate us! Appreciate the strength we found to come as one.
I suggest no more time wasting, waiting, hoping, and wishing for,
because you're calling done called for—
what you think this all for?

Not for you to stall, ignore, rise, and then fall for!

This is for you to explore towards. So I suggest
give your all for what you want to be applauded for.

Because some doors aren't just rooms, cells, and bathroom stall doors.

[CHORUS]

Oak

by David Brake

The kitchen was familiar, but the small wire-basket was free of its usual fruit. The cabinets were bare except for a bag of flour and a tin of sardines. He opened the closet and was surprised to find three bottles of wine left behind. One had a chunk of the cork missing; it had chipped away at some point, but the liquid had kept its color. The corkscrew set easily, and so he paid it no mind. In a cabinet he found a bowl-shaped glass, blew away the dust inside, and poured, filling to just below the point where it began to lose its convexity. The wine was full-bodied and had an aroma of damp wood.

Carrying the wine, he walked to the small workshop that was built years after the house. The shop had always been poorly lit, but it seemed that light had truly lost any inclination to enter. It struggled through the door, and barely reached the far wall. His fingers found the switch, and three bulbs lit. Evenly-cut wood lined the walls, and tools awaited use on pegboards and shelves. Nothing was out of place. Though his car would surely arrive soon, he could not resist lifting a large slab of oak, and resting it to his left. His throat became as coarse as the surface of the bark, and his hands tremored softly.

He knew where the tool lay, but it hadn't been cleaned recently, and so a thin blanket of dust had gathered. Stretching to reach it, his arms felt restricted in his rented suit: the cheap polyester garment fit him poorly. The blade he chose had a red handle. He pulled it six times along the oak, watching the shaved wood fall to the ground.

Meticulous and logical, he had always been taught that problems were solved with a clear head and steady hands. The hands that had taught him belonged to a man in the middle. His father was split between a passion for building desks, and having to work at them. The worn outer bark remained on the floor.

There was a living smell rising from the freshly stripped wood, as though it had been cut from its roots only days ago. This was deceiving. Although his father had always picked lumber by hand, it was impossible that this wood had been chosen recently. Nevertheless, thoughts of trips to the hardware store arose. He closed his eyes and drank the wine slowly. He used to walk through the aisles, one hand in his father's, the other skimming along the wood — always with the grain, never against. Still, small red droplets of blood formed on his fingertips from small, unexpected splinters. His glass now only carried a tint of the wine. His head throbbed slightly and he could feel his legs tingling.

The sandpaper was kept in a rectangular tin on a shelf above the bench. He chose a fine grain and began running it along the wood (always with the grain, never against), focusing his motion on a dense knot in the middle of the board.

Never daunted by the undertaking, his father liked the knots in wood, though the extra hours of sanding left his strong and calloused fingers pruned. His father's hands guided his only once, after which the task was his. Insisting that projects must be done properly, his father encouraged

the tedious work. Sanding had always been his least favorite of the steps. It required patience and genuine strength, both of which took time to develop. Now, however, he found the sanding to be rhythmic.

His hands felt numb. As layers of dust fell from the wood, a fresh, peaty surface appeared. The wine glass was empty, so he pushed it aside and drank from the bottle directly. The red liquid eased his dry throat, but hardly steadied his hands. Small beads of sweat formed on his neck beneath the starchy shirt collar. As he slid his hands along the wood, his perspiration collected a coating of dust. At last, he was satisfied with the texture of the board. He clapped twice, and the dust fell to the floor. He blew across the wood softly and a cloud lifted and settled.

Noting the excess wood and sawdust on the floor, he wiped the moisture off his forehead with the back of his sleeve. He swept and deposited the remnants into a small wastebasket in the corner of the room.

When he was too young to handle tools, his job had often been cleaning his father's wood shavings and sawdust. Explaining the importance of every stage in the process, his father challenged him to leave nothing awry.

He knew that he would not have time to finish his project, but until the car pulled into the driveway, he could not stop working. In a drawer beneath the workbench, a collection of wood-stains, glues, and paints were kept. Finding a jar of scarlet stain, he pried the lid open with a flat metal beam, resulting in a *pop* that echoed through the shop. It released the scent of gasoline and alcohol which caused his eyes to water. On the workbench was a can holding a few brushes. He chose a large one with an engraved handle. The brush should have fallen apart years ago, but careful tending had preserved it. The horse-hair

bristles were bleached, and he dipped them into the can of wood stain. The oily excess dripped off the bristles, and then he brushed the wood back and forth — always with the grain, never against. The stain soaked into the wood, transforming the light oak into a deep scarlet. He painted lightly, applying coat after coat, protecting the wood with layers of red stain.

He took a swig from the wine and leaned against the workbench, glancing occasionally to his right where the drying wood rested. The suit felt heavy on his shoulders, and the workshop felt smaller than ever. The tools surrounded him. This would probably be their last use. He drank again. The wood grain and knots showed through the scarlet stain. He finished the wine.

The car had to arrive, and before he was ready, it did. The wine bottle was empty. The work bench stood quiet, except for one perfectly-sanded plank, freshly drying from its scarlet stain. The desk was not finished. The lone slab was all he could manage, and he did not dare rush.

He darkened the lights, and closed the door. Brushing dust off his sleeves, he walked towards the car. The red dirt path shifted beneath the shoes that fit too tight. Past the sign, with its red *Sold*, and past the apple tree which would blossom in the coming spring. His pace slowed, and his feet grudgingly inched closer until finally he stood before the car. Steam rose from the exhaust in the cold air. His thin jacket held no warmth. The air pierced his lungs, and as he exhaled softly, he watched his breath crawl up, disappearing into the sky. Finally, he opened the car door. He sat looking at the house as the car pulled away. Dirt slapped the underside of the car as it drove.

The tips of his fingers were stained red and the wine on his breath tasted acidic. ♦



Four Butts Jimi Stine

Perspective (of a Korean Tennessean)

by Shawn Paik

Trickle down
Lookout Mountain
to the Trail of Tears
the boss is white
and so is the cashier
he likes to hunt
we like deer
wounded severe
Tennessee Volunteer

what does that mean?
they say “we’re post-racial.”
behind my back they laugh
at every yellow fellow.
to my face they say
“I don’t see color.”
br’er’s got orange
on his socks, his belt
and his collar

now don’t you dare tell me
you don’t know the difference
between white and black
I’ve seen Red Dogs,
neck and all,
spit on sweatbacks

in 2015, a terrorist shot up my city
killed a sailor and four marines
may good men rest in peace
the report on TV
said the following:
homegrown extremist
unforeseen tragedy

good riddance to the killer
ye ain’t heard, where i’m from
errebady know some fol’
who could pull a trigger
now imagine every day of your life
some chunky soup cracker
calls you a sand n—
pardon me boy
that’s not my word to use
sorry to digress, y’all
but fuck Fox News
y’all it hurts

hearing the word chink
but what’s worse
is *knowing*
that’s what some folks think
and they think I can’t see
they don’t know me
I got that mouth
from the South
and I wanna scream
WAKE UP
that’s the State of Tennessee

The Piano in Block 23

by Matt Litman

Shlomo couldn't sleep. He was sandwiched in between Father and his brother, Jakob, who were snoring. Three other men lay beside them, serving as bookends. Someone was whimpering in their sleep a couple of bunks down. The barracks were cramped; it seemed like there were hundreds of prisoners in Shlomo's alone. Each night gave way to its own unique struggle for position as ten men fought for space on the small, wooden bunks they had for sleeping.

The night before, Shlomo had been unlucky; he'd had to sleep on the bottom bunk. Shit and urine dripped through the slabs above him from prisoners either too sick or too defeated to control themselves. And since he was the closest to the floor, rats spent the night crawling on top of him, gnawing at the scabs and sores on his feet. Shlomo cried, but the other groans and moans in the barracks overshadowed his own.

This night, however, he was lucky; he had the top bunk. The smell was still there; the shit, the vomit, the sweet tang of infected flesh, but the air felt lighter, and nothing was leaking from the roof.

Shlomo should've been able to sleep. But before his eyes could find their moment to shut, his mind began coming up with new "what ifs." It was a game Shlomo had invented in the camp, and he played it when he was bored or tired or

couldn't sleep. It was a game Father didn't approve of, for reasons that seemed clear to everyone except Shlomo. It was a game that never ended, and Shlomo liked playing for that reason. He'd stretch to come up with new "what ifs," like, *what if a giant bird came down from the sky and took me and Father and Jakob onto its wings and flew us far away from here?* Or, *what if for dinner tomorrow they gave us challah and roast chicken?* Some were funny and made Shlomo laugh, some made his father angry, and some seemed to present themselves in secret to Shlomo, so that he felt he couldn't reveal them to anyone. Eventually, no matter where the game would take him, Shlomo would come back to the singular most important "what if" there was: *What if Mother was still here?*

He could remember it exactly, the last time he saw her. As soon as they stepped off of the railcar, the SS Guards approached them, shouting commands in Polish and German and striking them with whips. Dogs with foaming mouths lunged at Shlomo as he walked past.

He felt Father's hands latch onto his shoulders and pull him close.

"Stay with me."

Dressed in uniform, one guard took Shlomo, Jakob and Father while another, a much younger one, took Mother. Shlomo tried to scream for her,

but he couldn't see her anymore. Mother's face was a blur, turning from side to side, desperately trying to get one more look at her family while a guard pulled her away. It was absolute chaos; thousands of people saying goodbye to each other without even knowing why.

Wide, uniformed chests closed off Shlomo's sight and forced him towards a separate line. Shlomo's mother was taken to a line of women, young children and infants, which led to a long rectangular brick structure. On the roof stood a chimney shooting smoke into the gray sky.

In his selection line with Jakob and Father, Shlomo realized he still had his piano books in his jacket: a worn out booklet of Chopin's nocturnes, a stained thick book of Beethoven sonatas, and a thin packet containing Chopin's Polonaise in A Flat Major. Shlomo felt them in his jacket, and Father noticed.

"Take it out, Shlomo; show the music to the guards!" he urged.

"What if they take it away from me?"

"So be it. But maybe they have a piano here."

"A piano? Here?" Jakob laughed. His father glared at Jakob, then turned quickly to look back down at Shlomo.

"Show them your music."

The line began to move rapidly, and Shlomo could

just make out two uniformed men standing at the front of it. One was holding a clipboard while the other, an array of medals displayed on his chest, clasped his hands behind him. The man with the clipboard was directing the people ahead to go either left or right.

"Left! Right! Right! Right! Left!"

His voice was like a pig's snarl and his words rang out like gunshots.

When Father reached the front of the line, he began pleading with the man holding the clipboard. "I can work. I've worked in factories, I've worked with granite, I've worked chopping wood. Give me something to do, please. I can work."

The man with the clipboard looked Father up and down and met his eyes. Father was handsome. He was fit and tall, and had dark brown hair that he combed over the left side of his face. When the man's eyes met Father's, he didn't flinch. Father was strong, Shlomo knew that. He was proud that all the kids back in Warsaw wished Shlomo's father was their own. The man looked back down at his clipboard.

"Left!"

Shlomo's father walked away from the line. Jakob took his place. The man didn't look up from his clipboard.

"Left!"

When Shlomo reached the front, he looked up at the two men. The man with the clipboard looked more like a boy. He had thick eyebrows, a dark tuft of hair, and a gap between his teeth. The man next to him, with the medals on his chest, provided a stark contrast. He was heavier and shorter than the man with the clipboard. His nose was wide and his cheeks were plump and round. He looked fair and decent; on a crowded street, he wouldn't have warranted a second glance. But the way he stood, the way he displayed his medals, the way he smiled at everyone in line as they passed from left to right made Shlomo uneasy.

"What books are those?" he asked in Polish, motioning to the tightly held music books against Shlomo's chest.

"Piano books," Shlomo answered.

"Ah, you play then?"

Shlomo nodded.

"Any good?"

Shlomo nodded. The man laughed and looked to the man with the clipboard.

"Should we keep him then? He might be good entertainment." The man with the clipboard looked at Shlomo, then back at his colleague. He shrugged.

The man with the medals looked down at Shlomo and took the sheet music from his hands.

"Let's see what you have here...Beethoven's sonatas...Chopin..." he laughed. "Ah, Chopin." The man muttered something under his breath. He looked at the cover of the Polonaise, uninterested.

"You can play this?"

Shlomo nodded.

"Fast?"

Shlomo nodded again.

"You better not be lying," he said, and shot a look towards the man with the clipboard.

"Left!"

Shlomo walked quickly to catch up to Father and Jakob, when he realized that he was missing his music.

"Papa! The man still has my music!" He turned back to see the man with the medals holding the music in his hand, nodding towards Shlomo.

"Sie bekommen diese zurück, Junge, keine Sorge!"
The man with the medals yelled.

Shlomo didn't understand what this meant, but he saw Father smile and felt reassured.

Soon, Shlomo, Jakob and Father were taken to a building where there stood a man dressed in a blue and white striped uniform, wielding a razor. He shaved their heads with jagged movements of his arm. They were then ordered to undress and enter a large, cold cement room with sprinklers on the ceiling. Covering himself, Shlomo tried not to think that this was the first time anyone else had seen him naked. Guards shouted something that Shlomo didn't understand and then water came pouring down. It was cold, and fell down on him in strong, jagged spurts. They were given uniforms identical to the one the man with the razor was wearing. Shlomo thought that his smelled; it was dirty and stained a dark red in some parts. Father told him to put it on. They were then tattooed with a number on the inside of their left arm. Shlomo tried to act like it didn't hurt, but couldn't help the tears that welled in his eyes. 140603 was his number. Afterwards, they were taken outside, ordered to line up, and sorted into their barracks. Night came soon thereafter.

That was two months ago. It was the last time he saw his mother — and his music. It could've been two years or two days; Shlomo couldn't

keep track of time anymore. He knew only day and night. And it had been many days and many nights since he'd seen his mother. As he looked up at the roof of the barracks, trying his best to savor the cool, fresh air coming through the cracks in the wood, Shlomo found himself a little tired. His mind began to slow down, the wheels in his head came to a halt, and his mother faded from his thoughts. He closed his eyes and the air carried him into sleep.

When Rudolf entered the front door of his villa, he was immediately greeted by his four children: Klaus, Hans, Heideraud, and Birgit. Hans fell into his arms, while Birgit attached herself to his leg. Rudolf staggered into the kitchen where he saw Hedwig cooking dinner with an apron fastened around her waist. He kissed her cheek.

"Good day?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. "Very good."

Rudolf and his family ate dinner, played cards, and eventually, Hedwig put the kids to bed, though she had some resistance from Klaus, who thought he was old enough to stay up later.

Hedwig was tired, so she retreated to their bedroom while Rudolf stayed downstairs in his office. He poured himself a glass of whiskey and set it down on his desk. He had paperwork to do for the maintenance of the camp. A guard said the showers didn't always turn on and that their supply of Zyklon B was running low. Rudolf signed a stack of papers, filed requests for parts and supplies, and checked his schedule for the following day. Nothing. Nothing of importance, anyway.

He thought about the boy. And the music books that were on his nightstand. From the day he saw the boy, Rudolf felt something towards him. Fear, jealousy, attraction, he didn't know.

But he wanted to meet him. Hear him play. Rudolf opened his filing cabinet and pulled out a thick booklet from a drawer. It contained all the records, all the numbers of the inmates in camp. He looked up the boy's number, which he had gotten from one of the guards. 140603. After flipping through some number of pages, Rudolf found him. 140603: *Shlomo Weissman. Age: 13.*

Rudolf tapped his finger on Shlomo's name.

Shlomo stood in line the next morning behind Father and in front of Jakob, with his chest out and arms behind his back. Last night's restful sleep had still not worn out its effects on him, even though he'd been standing like that outside the barracks for the past three hours now. The prisoners were up at four a.m. every morning with screaming whistles and shouts of "*Aufstehen! Aufstehen! Raus!*" and were forced to wait for the rest of the guards and commanders to commence roll call at seven a.m. During the three hour gap, beatings were handed out to those who wavered in their stance, and it was ensured that every prisoner from the barracks was there. If not, the guards would incriminate the entire barrack of the missing person and force those in it to either reveal where the absent prisoner was, or make up a good enough lie to satisfy them. Even the dead had to be there, the ones whose souls had left their bodies during the night, held up by fellow prisoners in line.

With each day they were at the camp, Shlomo noticed his father becoming more and more distant. Shlomo couldn't even remember the last time his father had talked to him — really talked to him, not just a mumbled "good morning" or "good night." With the heavy work they were doing, and the little food they were getting, Shlomo's father seemed to recede further and further into himself. The three of them were

placed in the same work group, and their group had spent the last weeks laying roads within the camp. If Shlomo dreaded anything, it was the work. Eleven hours each day. For a thirteen year old who was still growing and whose voice had just started changing, carrying and laying stones heavier than he was not an easy task. No breaks were given besides lunch and if a prisoner stopped working, he was beaten, if not mercilessly killed on the spot.

At once, a Guard shouted.

“Achtung!”

The prisoners shifted in their stance, straightened their backs.

“Obersturmbannführer Hoss!”

Shlomo looked around and saw a man walking towards them. He recognized him immediately: the man with the medals, the one who took his music. The guards pounded their feet one-two in the mud and saluted him as he walked past. Heavy silence followed after.

“Labor Groups! Now! Go! Run!” one guard shouted in Polish, as fellow guards began striking the prisoners with whips and following them to their work stations. As Shlomo began walking with Father and Jakob to join their Labor Group, he felt someone grab his arm. It was the man with the medals.

“Come with me,” he told Shlomo in Polish, tightening his grip on his arm.

“You two,” he said, pointing at Father and Jakob, who had both stopped walking. “Go! Now!”

Father didn't move. Neither did Jakob.

“Go,” he ordered, reaching for his pistol with his other hand.

Shlomo looked at Father and saw his jaw clench. Reluctantly, Father turned and walked away

with Jakob. The man with the medals motioned Shlomo to start walking.

He brought Shlomo to a brick building on the other side of camp. It was one in a row of many. Shlomo had never been to this side of camp; he had never known it even existed. But like his side, it was filled with prisoners. The only difference was the uniforms. These prisoners wore the same blue and white striped uniforms, but Shlomo noticed different symbols sewed onto them. On his own, Shlomo had a yellow Star of David. But now he was seeing red triangles, purple triangles, green triangles. Shlomo had thought there were only Jews at the camp.

“Go inside,” he said.

Shlomo did what he was told. The building looked like any other building Shlomo had ever been in. There were stairs leading up to another level, and a series of doors lined the walls. Some were equipped with peep holes. One of the doors opened and out came a guard, fixing his belt. He saluted Rudolf and walked away. The guard didn't close the door all the way, and as Shlomo walked past it, he saw a naked woman inside lying on a bed. Her chest heaved as she wiped away her tears.

Rudolf led Shlomo down a flight of stairs into a hall. There were folded tables and chairs stacked on top of each other, and a stage at the front. On the stage, there was a grand piano. It was bigger than the one Shlomo had at home, and much shinier. Shlomo heard a rustling and looked up to see Rudolf taking out his music books.

“My music!” Shlomo said, as Rudolf gave them back to him.

Shlomo held the books tight against his chest. He felt the torn cover of the Chopin, and the chipped edges of the Beethoven. He flipped through the pages of the books to make sure

everything was still there. He saw the tempo markings of his teacher, Mrs. Strauss, and all the notes and corrections she'd made to him during their many lessons together. He remembered how each day after school she would be there, sitting at his family's piano with a cup of tea in her hand, waiting for him. She would greet him with her gummy smile and immediately begin the lesson, asking him to perform his scales. Sometimes his mother would watch from the kitchen. His mother. He missed her.

"Don't you want to play?" Rudolf asked.

Shlomo came to and nodded. Rudolf watched as Shlomo leaped onto the stage with his and sat at the piano. Shlomo rested his hands on the keys which, he thought, must've been cleaned every day; they were as white as snow. He played a chord with his right hand, and the sound filled the room. Shlomo smiled to himself. He took a breath and started playing Chopin's Polonaise in A Flat Major.

His hands flew across the keys. He played with such force and certainty, but the sound emanating from the piano was so delicate and sweet. And as he traveled through four octaves, playing the scale that led up to the main motif, Shlomo raised his left hand high in the air and punctuated the bass note that would take him into the refrain. Shlomo, after all this time, finally had the piano; he had a piece of himself again. And after he finished playing the Polonaise, he moved on to the next piece. And after he finished that one, he moved on to another. All the while, Rudolf stood in the back of the hall, watching and listening.

Shlomo was allowed to stay in the hall until the end of the workday. When Rudolf came to retrieve him shortly before the evening's roll call, he invited him to play for the Guards' Luncheon the following day.

"I think the guards would thoroughly enjoy your playing," Rudolf said.

Shlomo didn't totally understand Rudolf's German, but enough to understand what he meant.

"Yes," Shlomo replied, and began to gather his books.

"I think you should leave those here. They will be safer."

Rudolf tapped the piano to make sure Shlomo knew what he meant. Shlomo laid his books gently on the piano bench and came off the stage. When they got back to the main floor of the building, Rudolf ordered a guard to take Shlomo back to his barracks. The guard grabbed Shlomo by the back of his collar and forced him outside.

The evening's roll call was unusually short. When the guards ordered them back to their barracks, Shlomo went to find Father and Jakob. He saw them standing at the entrance to the barracks and hurried to tell them what a day he had.

"Where were you?" Father asked.

"The man, he took me to play the piano!"

"You're lying," Jakob said.

"I'm not!"

"You went with him this morning." Father said, as he led Shlomo and Jakob into the barracks.

"We expected you to be back within the hour, if not sooner. But then you were gone for the whole day! Where did he take you?"

"To the piano, I told you! There's one on the other side of camp. With other prisoners too!"

"Did he hurt you?"

"No, Father, he let me play! I stayed there for the whole day. Why don't you look happy, Father?"

"I was worried."

"I'm tired," Jakob said. "I had to cover for you, Shlomo. Can we find a bunk?" They saw one that was filled except for the top bed, which only had two other men sleeping on it. They climbed up to reach it. Once on, Shlomo took off his wooden clogs and inspected his feet. Some of his sores were scabbing over. Father lied down and closed his eyes. Jakob followed suit next to him.

"Goodnight Shlomo." Father said.

In a moment, Father was snoring. Shlomo didn't want to bother Jakob, whose chest was slowly rising up and down, so he willed himself to sleep.

Rudolf met Shlomo the next afternoon where his labor group was stationed. They were working in mud, digging up dirt for shallow trenches that would eventually become roads. Father and Jakob were working farther ahead on the trench. But the work was pointless; Shlomo noticed that the mud he shoveled would eventually trickle back down from where it came. Shlomo saw Rudolf talking to one of the guards, who had come to fetch him for the Guards Luncheon. Shlomo hadn't forgotten; it had been the only thing on his mind since he woke up. It had been at least a year since Shlomo had performed for others. Shlomo always got nervous before a performance, no matter the audience, but the fact that he had barely played and didn't even know yet which piece he was going to play, compounded the nerves into a fist-sized ball of anxiety.

"140603!" the guard yelled. He stood over Shlomo and started laughing. Shlomo looked up at him.

The guard took out his club and struck Shlomo on his head. "Go!" he said, and pointed to Rudolf. "Go!"

Shlomo, dizzy, wobbled towards Rudolf.

Rudolf didn't say anything to Shlomo as they walked to Block 23. Shlomo's clogs were seeped with mud and he curled his toes inside them to make sure they didn't slip off. It was during this walk to Block 23 that Shlomo noticed how brown the camp was. The barracks were made out of wood and the ground was only dirt, not a single blade of grass in sight. And if there had been, he would've eaten it. Smoke and soot was constantly drifting through the air, so that even when the sun was out, it was still cloudy. Shlomo rubbed his hands over his head; he still hadn't gotten used to the feeling of his shaved scalp. He wondered what he looked like.

They got to the building. Rudolf opened the door that led to the hall. Shlomo could already hear music and the clinking of silverware. And with each step, it got louder. Shlomo heard someone singing, and when he finally entered the hall, he saw that there was a live band backing the singer up. Shlomo couldn't understand the song since it was in German, and the singer was singing far too fast.

The tables were unfolded now and placed around the hall, where guards and their wives sat, talking amongst each other. The guards were in uniform, but they were laughing, smiling, stuffing as much food in their mouths as they could. It was an odd scene, with Shlomo standing in the back in front of Rudolf, dirty uniform and all. Shlomo felt himself blushing; he'd rather be working now. He didn't like it here with all these guards.

The singer finished her song, and the band cleared the stage. Rudolf grabbed Shlomo by the arm and pulled him with him towards the stage. As they walked through the tables to the front of the hall, a guard spat on Shlomo, another hit him on the back of his head.

"Just play," Rudolf muttered in Polish, and pushed Shlomo onto the stage. "Play good, yeah?"

Shlomo nodded, and sat himself down on the piano bench. Rudolf went off the stage and sat at one of the front tables. Shlomo saw that the keys were oily from the player before him. It was silent.

“Stupid Jew!” a guard yelled. Others banged their glasses on the table.

Shlomo’s face felt red, and his heart was beating fast. He shifted in his seat and placed his hands on the keys. He took a deep breath and started to play the opening notes of Chopin’s Polonaise in A Flat Major.

The bass notes reverberated through the room. The guards watched Shlomo as he played.

A guard sitting next to Rudolf leaned towards his ear.

“Can he play it any faster? It’s supposed to be faster.”

Rudolf didn’t see who it was, since the lights were dimmed, but he walked onto the stage and stopped Shlomo’s playing.

“Faster.”

Shlomo nodded. He could play it faster, so he started again.

“Faster!” another guard yelled, a minute into Shlomo’s playing. There was a murmur of agreement.

Shlomo looked at Rudolf again, who was still standing behind him on stage.

“Play faster,” Rudolf frowned.

Shlomo started again, but he made a mistake a few measures in. The guards began to boo.

“C’mon Jew! You good-for-nothing Jew!” a guard yelled. “You fucking Jew!” said another.

“Play!” Rudolf yelled. He took out his whip from his belt and struck Shlomo’s hands. Shlomo winced.

“Play!”

Shlomo started again.

“Faster!” Rudolf struck Shlomo’s hands again. Shlomo continued playing.

“Faster!” Rudolf struck again. Shlomo played the scale that led to the main motif.

“Faster!” And when Shlomo played one of the chords wrong, Rudolf struck his hands again.

“Play! Play it right!”

Shlomo started the piece again.

“No! Not from the beginning! Keep playing!” Rudolf struck Shlomo’s hands again, hard, and the whip finally tore through the skin. Blood started to trickle out onto the keys. Rudolf struck harder, creating longer and bigger cuts.

“Faster!” The whip came down.

“Faster!” Harder. “Faster!” Red.

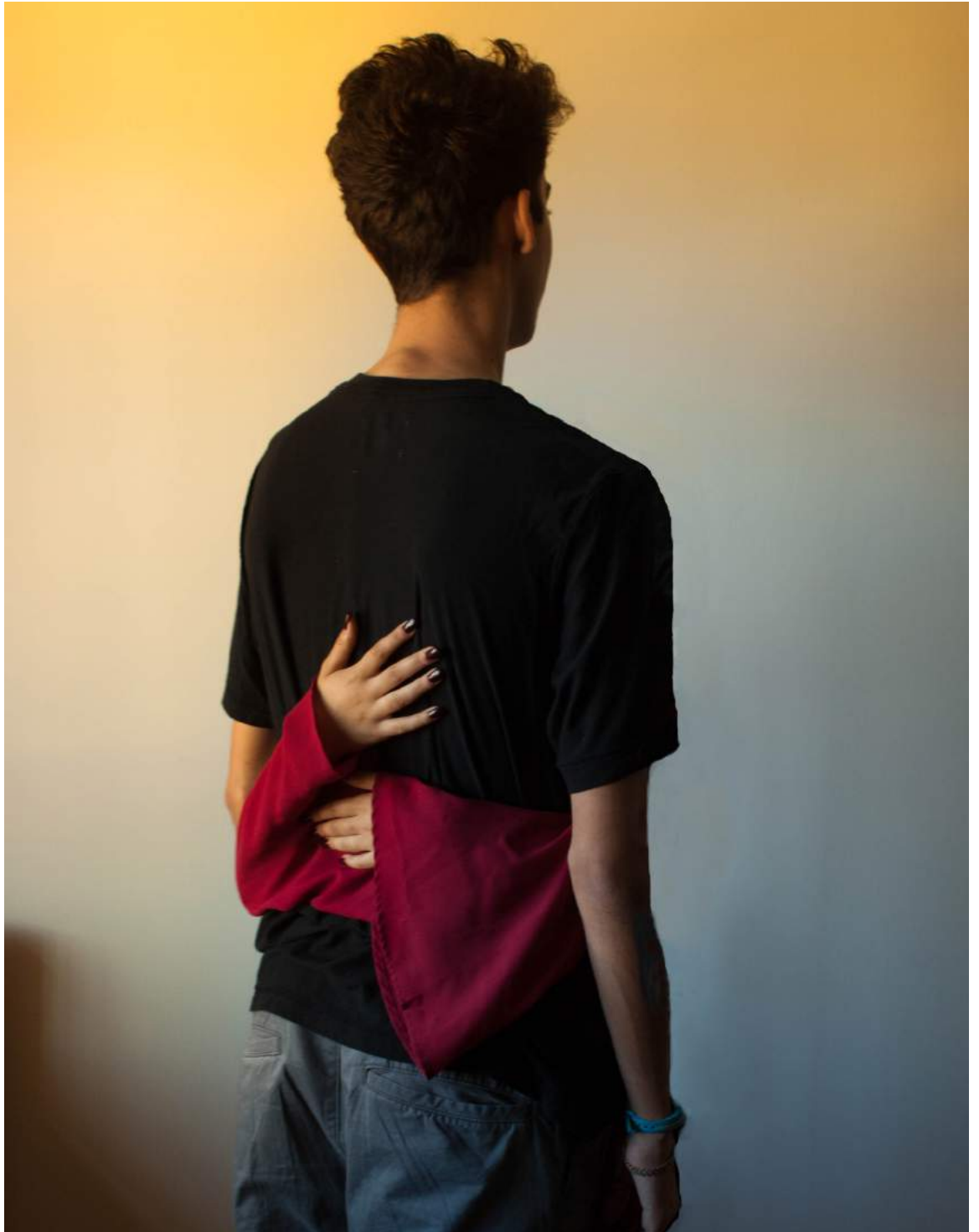
Shlomo wasn’t even playing the piece correctly anymore. The keys were slippery from the blood, and Shlomo watched it as it dripped onto the floor. Shlomo was lightheaded. He couldn’t hear anything except Rudolf’s screams and the slashing of his whip through the air. Shlomo looked at his hands. They were shaking.

“Play!” Rudolf yelled. “Play!”

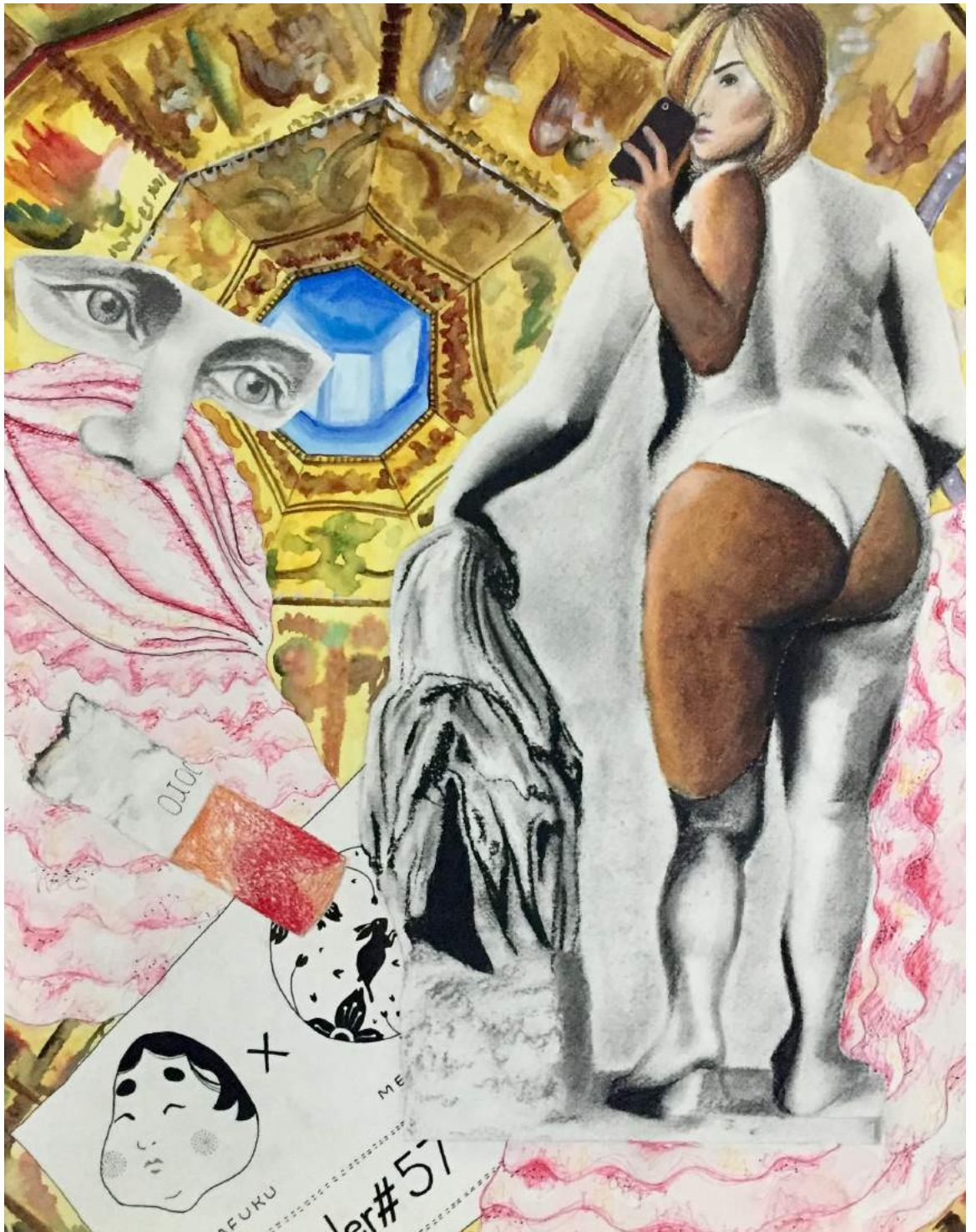
Shlomo looked up at him and didn’t say anything. Rudolf spat angrily in his eyes, and Shlomo saw him reach for his club. As the hard, wooden club hit the soft, tiny indent on the back of his head, Shlomo saw his entire world turn black. ♦



From series "Casey Brooke Levy" Mikus Kanneniaks



Traces Katerina Voegtle



The Rise and Fall of the Nude Michelle Johnson

Within America

by James Worley

Though the odds are stacked against us, I see a sliver of hope
My optimism has broadened my vision from the naysayers' narrow scope
and ambition propels me forward via aesthetic minds and sand impressions.
Altering the course and process of natural selection,
breaking down biology in sections,
then reforming a strong frame with principles and mental intervention,
I'm on a crash course with life's oddities but I'm focused,
dividing man's true nature from the dangerous doses of hocus-pocus.

Do not allow the magicians to fool you: the sky isn't broken,
only obscured by foggy mirrors and shady politicians who still smoke 'em.
Life is strange, I know it. Futures are even stranger when they're cloaked
by ignorance, diluted education, systematic religions, and caged votes.
But remain diligent, enlighten the weary and wake the buried,
'cause everything is possible in solidarity; only the weak find it scary
to stand up, to speak up, to find courage in life.
It's impossible to bring change if you won't stand up for your rights.





Onions and Prince—Home, 2016 Daniels Mekšs

Virginia Slims

by Andrea de Varona

I lie flat on my rounded belly that expands and contracts, like
the balloons I had tried to inflate earlier that day.

I chuckle as the cold Spanish tile tickles my skin,
like the butterfly kisses right before you tuck me in.

The unevenness of the surface keeps me awake
on a green smoky third-floor balcony.

I dream and try to stay within the lines
of the Miyazaki coloring book you bought me
a few months ago, when your hair was the color
of my favorite ice cream flavor, dulce de leche.

Now it's bright red like the Little Mermaid, and you say
you don't like it because *es un color de puta*,

And I ask you what *puta* means and you roll your head
back and laugh and laugh and laugh.

We laugh all afternoon and you sing to me,
smoke flooding from your mouth.

Fumando espero al hombre

A quien yo quiero

Tras los cristales

De alegres ventanales.

With youthful eyes and wrinkly hands that lie
about age, you tell me your secret —

Hay quererse mi niña linda —

As you smoke your cigarillo and your hand dances in the air...



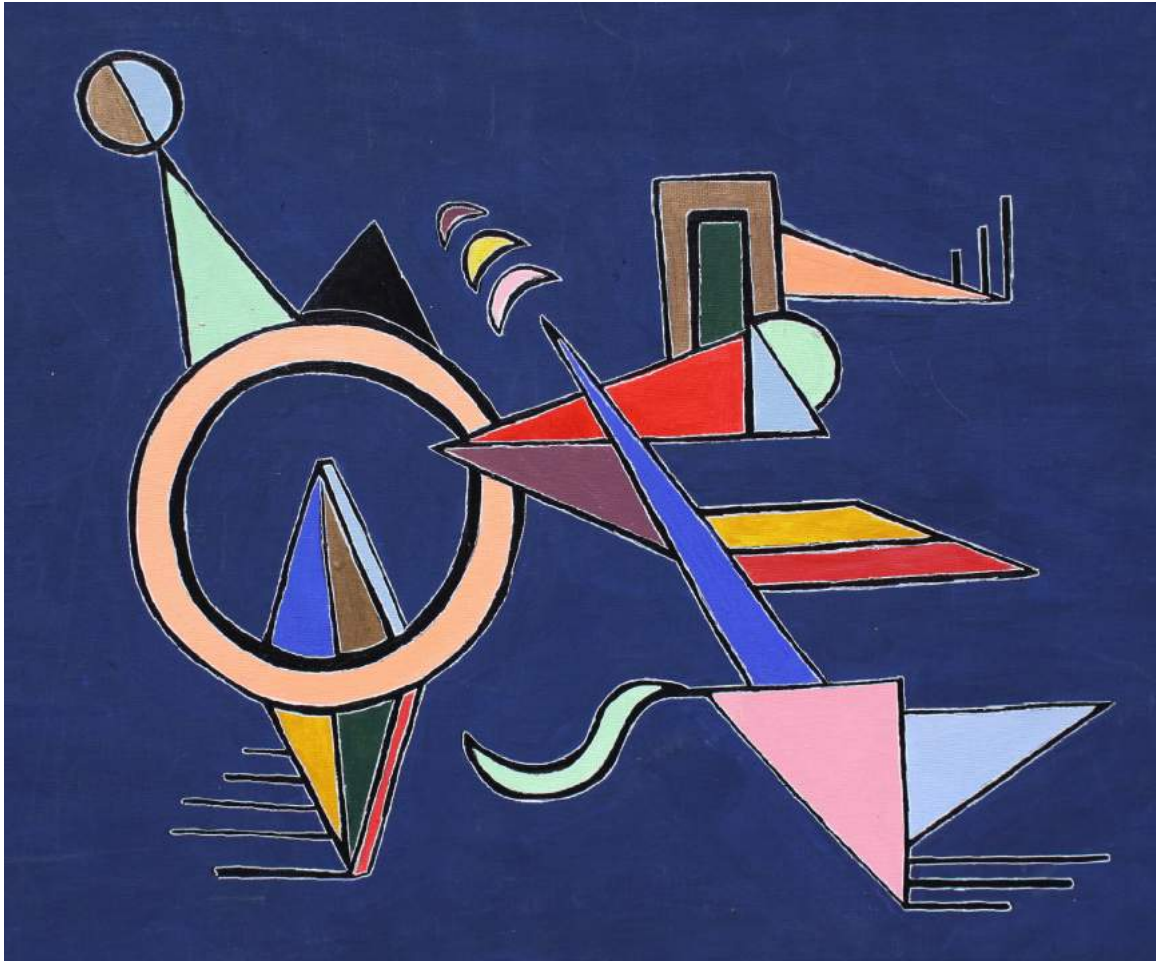
Dampkring Fallon Smalberg



Irving: A Portrait Ilana Spigel



Xander: A Portrait Ilana Spigel



Shapes in Space Emilie LaRock

Your Body is a Catechism

by Sojourner Brown

I want to know his name.

I don't want to know about his mother and if she weeps, or if his father's still around. I don't want to talk numbers or how he fell to the ground. Don't blame the system, the car, the window, the gun. Don't tell me 'bout his hands — if they shook, how fast he could run. Don't say he was an athlete. Don't tell me his rap sheet. Don't use the word ghetto. That has nothing to do with

the boy who sat next to me in school. We grew up together and apart, but I remember how he used to shift, assimilate, alter his speech, lower his grades to submit to the streets. The day he turned silent, his voice went dry and it made me forget the man in the sky.

Black boy,

don't you know how far we have come? That you have eyes familiar and strange and feet that can walk the earth and hands that can lift up boulders and push past stone? You could cause cosmic fission. You could shackle the stars. Do you know that you have roots that stretch deep, eternal? You rose up from the clay, you were shaped, you shook.

The day he died, the television went black, and my hair was too much, too curly, too big, and the dolls were left out on the counter, and every painting of Jesus in church was white, and I forgot how to brush my teeth. I had to remember how to swim and I didn't cry, because my eyes sealed shut against the light.

That day in gym I ran on a racetrack without a straight starting line and when the whistle blew, there was one lagging behind. In math class, I learned numbers aren't equal — some are less than one. That there's direction in distance when the damage is done. Science taught me we need sunlight to grow. Life is passing a test and if you hear the word "no" enough times you forget about "yes."

Black girl,

you who blend with the night, with eyes dark as stone. You who sunk in the sand, stuck, who drew circles in quartz, your hands dipped in gault. You with the skin you tried to shed, with bones you broke and bent to the ever-changing tides,

you are living proof of God.





Blue Wenkai Wang

The King of Botswana

by Sojourner Brown

What did I care?

I am not a boy on the other side of the world.

Though I am black, my face burns like
baked Alaska at the thought that we
might be one and the same,

the fourth element of coexisting in this
twisted jinx of a universe.

The first, mind you, is knowing what you are
and what you look like could be defined by
chance, accident, disorder.

I could have woken

up in a white woman's body

in Santa Monica. I could have

worn shorter skirts and brushed my

hair by the window, absent from

thought; I could buy nice things for

my husband; I could've been married to

white suburbia, had a body in the junk-room

hiding from the neighbors; I could have

been born in India like my grandfather,

a different shade of brown; I could have been

born in the rain; I could have been

abandoned, left on a doorstep in

Philadelphia, picked up by an elderly

white woman and gone to Catholic school.

I could have been adopted; I could have been

sold on a ship; I could have been

a servant, a duke, the King of Botswana.

I could have been a boy, the one who died
last night.

I needed an accomplice, a guardian.

Somewhere in heaven; somebody

pointed a finger and said she's gonna be
somebody and that's the day I was born.

It hurts, Being.

The fifth element—page 48 of the book of
life—is shame: shame for hurting so much,

shame for holding back tears, shame

for my family, for my people, for my country,

shame to be born into the lamplight

of this sad dismembered city. I break

and I go up in flames. Somebody turn off

the light: my eyes need time in the dark

to practice playing it safe.

I could've been a boy.



Quashierra Emma Bigelow



Untitled Katerina Voegtle

The Beast

by Hunter McLaren

We send only the best meat into space—smart meat, strong meat, meat that works well together. But in the end, when they fall back to earth, they're just meat, and the Beast is a carnivore. Its arrival was predicted, prepared for, and even laughed about, but the time is nigh and fear silences all mouths. The Beast seeps from the blackness like a nightmare, transforming the comforting quilt of stars into an inky sky. Within the space of ten quickening breaths, the Beast presses its terrible eyes against tempered glass and begins to scream.

In moments, the returning space shuttle is tangled in thrashing claws of wind and plasma, and on lumbering wings it swings hard turns to shake off the fiend. The howl of this bloodshot specter surges into a roaring shriek, its rasping talons searching for any fault it can exploit to reach the delicacies strapped inside.

With skill and patience and luck, the light against the windows dims to sunlight, the shuttle lands safely, and the astronauts retreat gratefully to their homes. But as they celebrate, the Beast whispers to them from the void, glaring with glowering rage at the humans below. *Look up, the Bête Rouge hisses, gaze upon the millions of*

suns shimmering through my midnight hide. None burn as brightly as my hunger for you.

When it was proposed during Nixon's presidency, the space shuttle tasted a lot like the future. Americans were accustomed to rockets that looked like skyscrapers, with astronauts in the penthouse and a fire as the foundation. These crafts took off like hundred-foot Roman candles and splashed down in the ocean as little helpless capsules, needing the Navy to come and scoop them up every time.

The shuttle was different. It was a glider lashed to the side of a massive fuel tank and two enormous boosters, thundering up and over the launch pad like a cowboy on a booming bronco before disappearing into the night. On returning home, it rode a streak of flame from one coast to the other before rolling to a picture-perfect landing on a runway. Nothing felt more American.

The shuttle was so impressive that everyone tried to forget how disappointing it was from a purely logistical standpoint. It was a clunky orbital truck with a too-small bed and extraordinarily expensive gas. NASA had promised a mission almost every week; in the shuttle's best year, the year leading up to the *Challenger* disaster,

it barely managed ten launches. But God, was it fun to watch.

Two minutes after its spectacular liftoff, with seven different rocket engines belching its trademark rattling roar, the shuttle ditched the dying boosters and continued to climb into orbit. The astronauts aboard released satellites, conducted research, and watched the world turn underneath them. At the mission's end, they strapped in, executed a braking rocket burn, and gingerly dipped the shuttle's belly into the whipping wisps of the upper atmosphere.

Sipping the atmosphere as we do might lull a surface-dweller into believing that the breeze is as gentle as the butterflies and fallen leaves that it lofts. But wind is not so kind. An open window at highway speeds deafens the passengers of a car. Double that wind speed and you start tumbling in the gale. Quadruple *that* and you're wavering on the edge of the speed of sound, 'Mach 1' as it's called, where the rushing wind is a wall. For the Space Shuttle at Mach 25, the wall roars to life, eyes inflamed and maw agape, and becomes the Beast.

The Beast can be kept at bay with careful design and piloting, but the margins of error are nearly nonexistent. Shuttle astronauts worked in the narrowest of envelopes between lift and liquidation, where every increase in airspeed shrank the gap between life and death. Escaping this Goldilocks zone for even a moment could—and twice did—cause immediate and catastrophic ruin.

Reading the word *Challenger* brings a particular image to mind: a single tower of smoke, a fireball, and two jets of ash. Six career astronauts and a schoolteacher, Christa McAuliffe, were aboard. Millions of students across the United States watched the launch on television, and they all saw the explosion. But *Challenger* was

not destroyed in the infamous blast; the orbiter actually survived the explosion intact. What shattered the craft was the wind.

It was a very cold January morning, much too cold to launch, according to NASA engineers. Pressure rings on the solid rocket boosters would freeze, they despaired, allowing burning gases to escape the rocket with potentially catastrophic consequences. The flight controllers brushed them off: shuttles had survived chilly mornings in the past, and besides, the world was watching. They started the countdown.

Recordings of *Challenger's* launch showed the right booster starting to spew burning gases less than a second after launch. A minute later, a jet of flame sliced into the external tank, causing the calamitous explosion. The shuttle survived the blast, but was pushed out of the relative safety of its aerodynamic bubble and into the winds whipping past faster than the speed of sound. It was ripped to shreds.

Somehow, the crew compartment was left almost undamaged, sending the crew—still very much alive—careening toward the sea. The seven crew members were killed on impact, which was caused by the vehicle breakup, which was caused by the explosion, which was caused by a faulty O-ring. But who let the O-ring fly?

We trust smart, strong, insane meat to fly higher than anyone else can go. Quick eyes, hands, and brains work blindingly fast to stay alive between liftoff and landing. But pilots can't fly alone: engineers who create the craft, technicians who maintain it on the ground, and managers who decide who flies what and when do as much to keep aviators safe as possible. A failure in design, or in maintenance, or in management, can kill a pilot more certainly than if they closed their eyes and slapped the controls. With the *Challenger* disaster, the crew perished in the sea, but they

were killed before they got to the launchpad.

Two decades later it became clear that *Challenger* had taught NASA's pigheaded flight managers nothing. *Columbia*, too, was damned by hubris. As the shuttle blew past the sound barrier on launch, a piece of insulating foam broke off the external tank and slammed into the left wing's leading edge. Such collisions had happened on dozens of shuttle flights, chipping and denting heat shielding, but had never caused fatal damage. Consequently, investigating insulation strikes and their causes slipped from vital to trivial. But *this* foam impact was different. *This* foam impact left a gaping wound in *Columbia* for the Beast to exploit, a gash deep enough to expose the tender, easily meltable aluminum superstructure below. Engineers saw the blow happen during post-launch analysis, but their desperate cries to flight controllers for a more detailed observation of the collision site fell on deaf ears. Insulation strikes have happened on nearly every shuttle mission, the managers said, and they've all come home. Why would this one be any different?

This behavior, often called the "normalization of deviance," ran so deep that even as the shuttle

sank into the rarest reaches of the atmosphere, the crew still had not been alerted that an impact had occurred. NASA allowed a crippled craft to re-enter the atmosphere without even attempting to assess the damage. As seven doomed astronauts thought of home, the ravenous Beast tore through the laceration in the ravaged wing with flaming fangs. Within moments, it gutted the shuttle from wingtip to trunk. The violence of the feeding flipped *Columbia* up and to the left, exposing it to the winds cascading past at many times the speed of sound. Still 40 miles above the ground, *Columbia* fragmented.

But we only send the best meat to space. Even while ensnared in the jaws of the beast, *Columbia's* pilot fought unconsciousness for half a minute, struggling to fly a shuttle that no longer existed. Decompression eventually took him, which was caused by vehicle breakup, which was caused by a damaged wing, which was caused by a piece of foam. But can you blame a beast for its beastliness? Or the air for its flow?

No.

I took them, the Beast purred, picking its teeth, *but you sent them to me.* ♦

Cantaous

by E.R. Pulgar

Marcel had never been to the commune. He walked with the snowy Pyrenees framing each step, the fallen mush clogging his boots. Winter was a few weeks from ending, yet Castilian roses were already starting to bloom, rebellious pink stars dotting a white expanse. He reached a large building with a metal sign nailed to the ground in front of it.

Couvent Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue, Cantaous

It had been 25 years since his mother had left Bourg-la-Reine, a suburb just south of Paris. She lived off the Parc de Sceaux stop on the RER, a short 30 minutes from the city she worked in, but didn't belong to. She was a writer, then an unexpected mother, then a diarist and a seamstress. She missed the mountains she grew up around, the Sunday services, the baked bread.

Marcel was five when Claudette left him at his aunt's apartment in the ninth arrondissement, saying she would come back in two days and to not give her sister too much trouble. She smiled at him before getting in a cab. Marcel was happy to spend two days in the city, but then the weeks wore on.

He attended service at Sacré-Cœur every Sunday after she left. At age 10, he stopped praying for a mother who wasn't coming back.

At 15, he smoked his first cigarette: a butt smoldering on the steps of the basilica as a hailstorm

covered Montmartre, barely enough for two hits. Marcel overlooked Paris, looking for his mother amid anger and the rain.

At 20, he asked his aunt about her.

His mother was a devotee of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes. She was born in a commune near the shrine. She had attended school in a nunnery before training as a journalist at the Sorbonne Nouvelle. She loved to write. She hated Paris.

Then, the assumptions: she was a crack addict under the bridges near the art district. She was scared of being a mother. She couldn't afford to be his mother. She never wanted to be a mother.

She hated him—if not, she would have stayed.

Marcel knocked on the old oak door. The streets were quiet, twilight seeping into the wet snow. An old woman no more than a meter tall opened it. She had wrinkles on her forehead and the kindest blue eyes in all of France.

"Child, it's freezing," she exclaimed under her habit. She was wearing a black fleece blanket on top of her clothes, with a red scarf covering her mouth. "Come inside."

He observed her small movements, how she skittered about the main hallway, feet in simple shoes, the lines of her face illuminated by the icons, by the candles. She unwrapped her

scarf—laugh lines framed her mouth. She looked nothing like the gnarled monster of his fantasies.

“What’s your name, child?”

His blue eyes refused to meet hers. His throat was dry. At least he had dyed his hair; the last time she saw him was as a child, but she wouldn’t have recognized him anyway.

“Léo.”

She watched him with sympathy, with borderline motherly concern.

“Do you need shelter from the cold? What brings you to our small village?”

His throat was dry. He continued to look to the icons—Saint-Antoine here, Saint-Joseph there. He thought of the private eye he spoke to before taking the train. He thought about the new *soeur* who arrived in Cantaous abruptly, who had lived in this convent for 25 years. He thought of the pictures of her singing to the flowers and the children in the village streets.

“Passing through before I get to Lourdes; my mother was devoted to the Virgin there.”

The nun finally locked eyes with him, smiling briefly before turning her attention to Saint-Antoine. His heart pounded. She used her dress as a cloth, gently wiping dust off the Christ Child in the statue’s arms. She was smiling.

He wasn’t sure she knew. He wasn’t angry like he thought he would be.

“That was always my favorite shrine,” she said gently, wiping the last bit of dust off the statuette. “I’m sure you will love it, child.”

He wanted to leave. He wanted to cry, but couldn’t let her see him cry. He wanted to scream, but how could he? Not here, not in the face of this smiling, fulfilled old woman.

“I need to go,” he said bluntly, his face hot, holding back gasps. He managed a weak smile—she’s loved well in her life. It just wasn’t meant for him.

“You’re welcome to come back whenever, child.”

She smiled as they stepped out, he on the snow, she on the stone steps. He began to walk away.

Marcel walked further out, catching the last rays of scarlet sky disappearing into violet. The mountains never looked more beautiful. The nun cried out as he crossed the street.

“*Au revoir, Léo!*”

He looked back at the small black shape, illuminated slightly by streetlamps, laugh lines prominent as ever as she waved one last time and disappeared into the convent. Marcel smiled, looking on at the Pyrenees and, as the sun went down, the last shadows of Castilian roses consumed by night.

“*Au revoir, Soeur Claudette.*” ♦

Contributors

MATÍAS ALVIAL is a first-year international student, originally from Chile, concentrating in the artistic and commercial aspects of marketing. His studies focus on the relationship between creativity and money, and how artists thrive in a capitalistic society. More of his work can be found at his Instagram: @m.alvial

EMMA BIGELOW is a first-year Gallatin student pursuing a concentration in social activism and visual arts. She is a professional dancer and choreographer who has performed at Harlem's Faison Firehouse Theater and the Apollo Theater. Currently, Emma is working on photography which provokes societal and political consciousness.

ALEX BOLLINGTON is a sophomore at Gallatin concentrating in environmental photography with an emphasis on climate change and sustainability. Alex is a freelance photographer with hopes of one day working with National Geographic. His work has been shown at the Gallatin Arts Festival as well as in the *West 4th Literary Journal*. He is honored to be a part of this year's Gallatin Review.

DAVID BRAKE is studying English and Creative Writing. His focus of study is fiction in the 20th and 21st century.

SOJOURNER BROWN is a drama major at the Tisch School of the Arts with a minor in creative writing through the College of Arts and Sciences. As an actor, poet, composer, and playwright, Sojourner is continually interested in the power that words hold. She feels called to storytelling as a platform to promote empathy, to uplift marginalized communities, and to create artistic spaces of inclusivity.

STEWART CARRIER is a Graduate Assistant in the office of Student Life and Vice President of the Gallatin Graduate Student Organization. His Gallatin research interests include political history, individual rights, counterculture movements, the roles film and television play in shaping political ideology, and the convergence of these themes on social media.

EVA CHEN is studying the environment, architecture, and creative writing, all of which will result in a concentration entitled "Writing Fiction about 21st Century Spaces." She will graduate in May 2018.

ANDREA DE VARONA is originally from Miami, FL. She is a junior in Gallatin concentrating in exploring the self and the other through sonic and written expression. Her studies draw from the disciplines of creative writing, songwriting, and music business.

EBRU ELTEMUR is a freshman at Gallatin concentrating on art history, curating, and arts administration, with a minor in studio art. Her works have been featured in the Gallatin Arts Festival and *Doomsday Magazine*. Currently, she is working on a new zine from her sketchbook drawings and designing her own skate-wear brand.

ALEXANDER GEISEL is a junior at Gallatin studying “music and meaning,” which is an interdisciplinary approach to semantics in a musical context. He is interested in the role that silence and absence play in communication. That interest manifests itself in his audio and visual artwork.

DAYSHAWN GILLIAM is a 26-year-old songwriter and poet. He was born and raised in one of the roughest neighborhoods in the Bronx. Besides writing music and poetry, he enjoys singing and strength training. His dream is to be a Caribbean food chef.

KENNETH HARDEN-SMITH is a 28-year-old poet, writer and NYU student. He was born in New York City and grew up between the Bronx and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He enjoys playing sports, exercising, reading, writing, and watching television occasionally. He is currently studying liberal arts.

HAJRA JAMAL is a sophomore concentrating in “Narrative Medicine and Medical Narratives.” She is also interested in writing bilingual poetry and stories.

MICHELLE JOHNSON is an artist interested in how public works can serve the social and environmental needs of an urban community. She works primarily in sculpture and installation and also studies the politics of film and photography.

MIKUS KANNENIEKS hails from Riga, Latvia and studies at Leonard N. Stern School of Business and Courant Institute. His main interests include photography, mathematics, and finance.

EMILIE LAROCK's concentration is “The Psychology of Design and How It Fuels Consumerism,” which focuses on marketing strategies that businesses employ when designing their advertisements. She is currently exploring all that NYU has to offer while taking classes in photography and web design.

ABE LIBMAN completed his undergraduate studies at Gallatin in May 2016. As a student, he primarily combined world languages with psychology, philosophy, and religion, and minored in

studio art to form a concentration called “Expression and Human Constructs.” He is currently in Gallatin’s MA program studying education and social work. He plans to write a thesis on the topic of mindfulness and meditation in early childhood education.

MATT LITMAN is a sophomore in Gallatin concentrating in creative writing. Along with writing, his interests lie mainly in photography, film, and music performance. This is his first published work and he could not be more grateful for the opportunity.

HUNTER MCLAREN is a senior studying political narrative and environmental science. He writes science fiction and political commentary, and is interested in working with educators to build political literacy and environmental awareness in students from a young age.

KYLIE MCMANUS is a sophomore from Los Angeles. Her concentration is still undeclared, though she primarily studies art, design, and new media. Her visual work mostly features organic forms, especially women. From her heavily matriarchal upbringing, she has become very interested in the roles and portrayals of women in American culture, and how they differ from her own perspective.

YONATAN MEDINA’s concentration lies at the intersection of computer science and philosophy. He is especially interested in A.I., theories of mind, and the social implications of automation. Last spring he lived with the Dalit Caste of rural Nepal where he took the photo printed in this issue.

DANIELS MEKŠS is a Gallatin junior, and is interested in art, cinema, literature, philosophy, photography, and spirituality. Daniels enjoys Italian cuisine, the music of Philip Glass, leisurely walks, and yoga.

SHAWN PAIK is a guy from Chattanooga, Tennessee. He studies history and journalism. He is doing his research on North Korea.

PAUL PINSON studies religious literature, particularly the relationship between aesthetics and ideology. He is especially interested in the formal decisions religious poets have made to effect healing, entrancement, and terror. He graduates in May.

E.R. PULGAR is a junior in Gallatin concentrating in content, image, and performance curation. He has contributed arts journalism to *Popdust* and *Highlark*, as well as poetry and prose to *Play(ed) Boy*, *Dion Ys Us*, and *The Gallatin Review*. He is currently working on a memoir about his time at the Bowery Poetry Club, where he currently works the open mic on Sundays.

ELENA CABOT RODRIGUEZ is a sophomore in Gallatin. She is studying English literature and photography, with a minor in creative writing. She has been published in *West 10th Street*.

HENRY SHEERAN is a junior at Gallatin studying scriptwriting with a minor in German. Although music and theater are great and all, he knows it all boils down to poetry. Catch some more poems in last year's *Review*, Vermont's *Zig Zag Lit Mag*, and WNYU's *The Write Stuff* with Rachel Gilman.

FALLON SMALBERG is studying psychology and anthropology in CAS. She developed a love of creating visual art while studying in Madrid. This is her first time exhibiting work.

ILANA SPIRGEL is graduating from Gallatin in May 2018 with a concentration entitled "The Art of Perception and Persuasion in Media," which combines design, marketing, and the psychology of consumer behavior. She also minors in studio art. She loves the design styles of Pop Art and Russian Constructivism and aspires to one day paint one of those murals on the side of a building that people glance at briefly on their commute.

LILLIAN STARBUCK will graduate from Gallatin in May 2017 with a concentration in "Post-colonial Autobiography and Poetry in the Francophone Caribbean" and a minor in French. Her poem riffs Suzanne Buffam's syntax in "The New Experience" from her book *The Irrationalist*.

JIMI STINE is concentrating in "Narrative Design for Interactive Media." He likes to take pretty pictures.

VINCENT THOMPSON is a resilient, 28-year-old man who learned from his trials and tribulations with the injustice system. Now he is not only looking forward to earning an associate's degree this summer from the NYU Prison Education Program, but also is anticipating his release from prison. His future goals consist of one day earning a master's degree in social work and becoming a youth counselor. Vincent feels that young people could relate to and learn from his story.

HANNAH TREASURE will graduate from Gallatin in May 2017 with a concentration in "The Classroom as a Model for Society," which examines the creative writing workshop model as a way to educate citizens for a democracy. She will also have a minor in Mandarin Chinese. Wherever her postgraduate plans take her, she hopes to continue finding poetry and pleasure in everyday life.

KATERINA VOEGTLE's research currently centers around photography, visual arts, gender, sexuality, and Latin American and Latino studies. She has exhibited and published written and visual work centering around the LGBTQ+ community, immigration, violence, and masculinity.

WENKAI WANG is concentrating in mixing the study of analytical philosophy, evolutionary psychology, painting, and digital art, and minoring in Business of Entertainment, Media & Technology (BEMT). Wenkai is currently working on a manga project called "Weirdo," which centers around capturing people's daily eccentricities.

JAMES WORLEY is 50 years old and currently enrolled in the NYU Prison Education Program, studying liberal arts. His hobbies are drawing and making greeting cards. He also enjoys watching sports and has a strong passion for helping others.

ADAM YOUNG is a junior in Gallatin concentrating in poetry, math, and economics. He has had poems published in the *Gallatin Review* and the *Bellevue Literary Review*. He is also an intern at the *Hudson Review* and a poetry editor for *West 10th*.

ALLY ZHAO will graduate from Gallatin in May 2017 with a concentration in “Art, Design, and Self Construction in the Digital Age.” Her artistic practice focuses on self representation through illustration, photography, painting, video, and performance.



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**GALLATIN SCHOOL OF
INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY**

Volume 32 • Spring 2017

