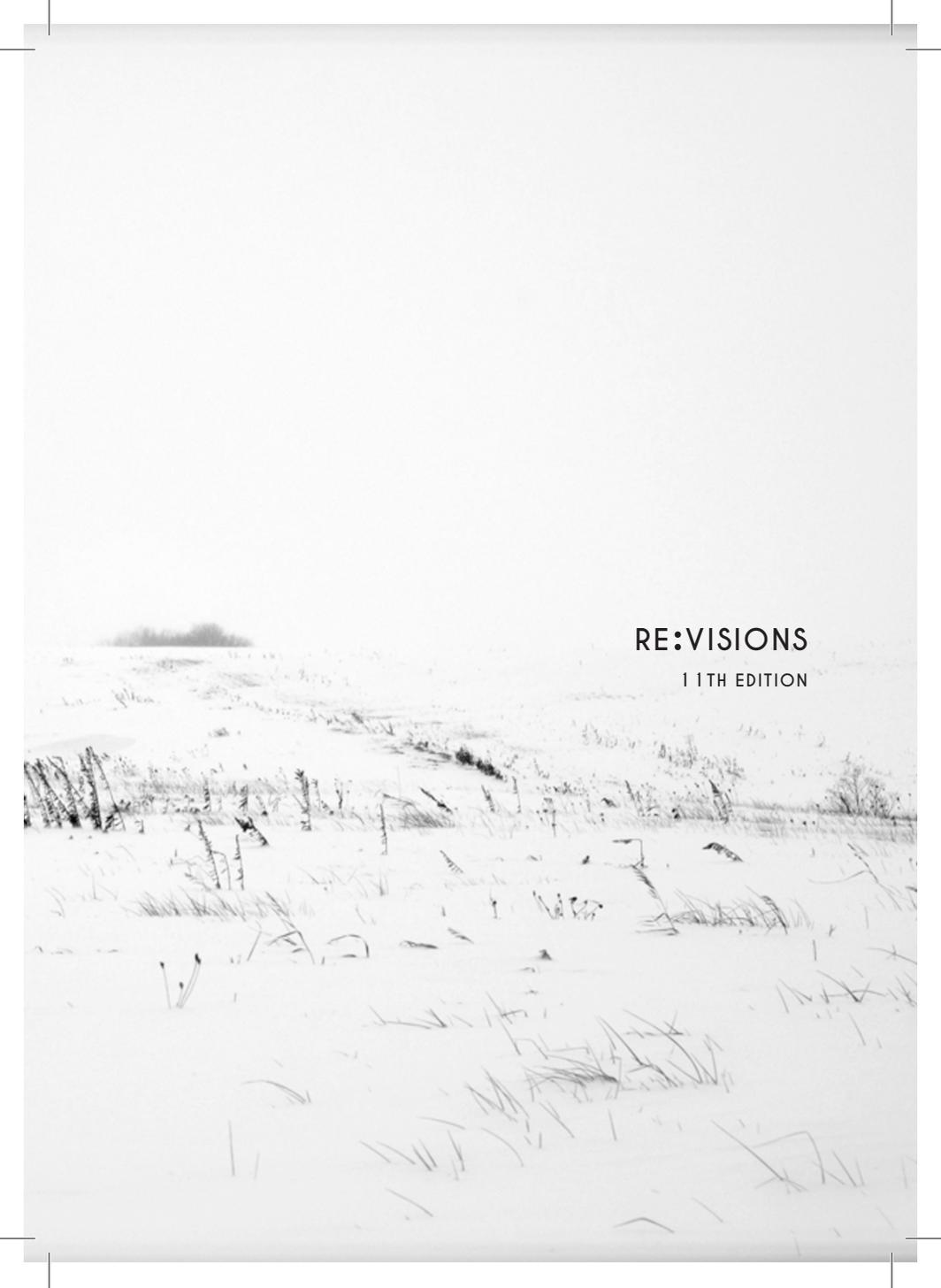




RE:VISIONS

11TH EDITION





RE:VISIONS

1 | 1 TH EDITION

This representative collection of writing by Notre Dame students is published through the Creative Writing Program in the Department of English. Each year, a new editorial board consisting of graduate students solicits and selects manuscripts & oversees the production of the journal in order to encourage creativity & recognize student writing of notable quality.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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Dear Readers,

Among these pages, there are young people attempting to communicate something that they care about through pictures, poetry, and story. Why should you read this? Because we felt it was worth our while to share these pieces with you, and when you read them, we hope you will find that they were worth your while, too.

Thank you for picking up Re:Visions. We hope you cannot put it down.

Sincerely,  
The Editors



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Bridget Apfeld

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## MY MOTHER

*with thanks to Jamaica Kincaid*

My mother crouched in the ferny shade at the edge of the bluff and cupped a spring peeper in her hand. Look, she called, and I touched the billowed swell under its chin, creamy and thin and cold, it shifted for an escape and she lowered it down to the high beach grass. It launched away; we followed its mosaic back with noses cold in the March wind that smelt of sand and spruce and swamp, and my mother darted a look to the sky, seagull-full and clear, white. Come with me, she said, and we ran through the trees to the watchtower and climbed. Ten steps, twenty, fifty, two hundred before the stairs leapt into the air and we hit the platform. The sky was wide and deep above the pines and the lake relaxed out north and south and east, a slate slick. Panting with my tongue out, I lifted my arms and crowed, cawed, my mother raised her arms and beckoned me to her. She held me up above the railing and I felt my heart leap against my ribs, my eyes squinted tears in the wind, it blew hard in my face and brought with it the call of the gulls, sharp, snappish voices, screeches and gray down on the breeze. My mother held me close, she was warm; my mother put me down and smiled, we flapped our arms and locked our feet onto the bars to lean out into the sky; my mother laughed, she laughed and lifted her hands and rose, the feathers silkened on her arms and face, her beak was open and chattering, she shook her pinions and paused. I saw my mother's black eyes flit left and right, she called to the gulls, her voice scratchy and strong, and dropped from the tower into the current before she spread her wings—one motion, single gust—and caught the draft, rising higher and higher toward the sun. My mother flew, and my heart pounded as I watched her fly.

My mother introduced the second brother to me and I turned away. He lay and he crawled and he stood and he chased and I ran to the fields and wept. I drew fistfuls of cattail and wrecked the mouse burrows under my pounding legs but I would not return, I showed jealous fang and snarled over my shoulder. I reached the willow stand and let tears stream down my red face and felt my legs sink into the muck and beetled sludge. It clung to my legs and soaked into my shoes and when it crawled up my waist I snatched for the willow fronds. I grabbed and felt the mud rise at my neck, at my mouth I could taste the amoebic green snips and snail shrivels, and I took hold of the branches, panicked, and they were my mother's thick arms that she wove into my hair and pulled, before I sank into the dark. My mother knelt over me and mopped the filth from my face with her leafy fingers and blew open my eyes with her breath, sweet and fresh, and when I filled my lungs her bark skin smoothed and split, and her feet flattened and her nails curled into gnarled ridges, and her hair grew long and dry and it rustled and swept. It spread on the ground and it was a field of coneflowers, sweet-flags and foxglove, and the crickets corkscrewed from blade to blade and made the shorthusk bend. My mother was everywhere and I lay in the buzzing grass and let her rock me to afternoon sleep.

Then one day I bounded fast through the woods and roughed my horns on the tender birches, and my mother cocked her head and tapped a foot, but my skin itched tight on me so I showed white tail and kept going, convinced I could outrun her. She took hoof behind me and when I turned she tossed her neck and stood tall, tail twitching in the brush, unbearably large and fleet. So I let my tail lengthen and deepened my stride and bayed at the moon, yet all the while I could hear her paws pounding the ground behind me, following without falter through slatted trunks and logs. My mother ran at my shoulder and her fur shone against mine, her tapered ears picked the sounds that mine missed, and I dove into the ground in frustration and clawed away from her shaggy mass. I tunneled deep, passed through strata of bauxite and iron and coal and

the dead of ages that curled fetal and loose-limbed, and when I touched a molten river I yelped and turned around. And she was there, behind me, ripple-smooth and calm though I heaved my breath, and even as I raced to the surface to begin the dash again I knew I could not outstrip her.

So I fled to the piers and the harbors, and dove into the coldest of waters. I shimmered through lake-kelp and whispered my trailing bubbles over the mounds of clams and mussels, and admired the teeth of the fish bones strewn across the sand. The world above was distant and quiet, and I could barely remember anything beyond the pressurized miles of the deep. When my breath began to run dry I clung to the hulls of the wrecks, but the iron gunwaling pried free under my fingers and I drifted up, the light drew me back to the crash and roil of the waves. I burst out of the silence into the wave-dashed air and faced my mother, carving through the water. I choked on the spray and flailed angrily away from her wake but she submerged beneath me; my mother plunged, and then her ribs swelled with seagull shrieks and spread and rose, and she hollowed out into a schooner, creaking topsails and jibs stretched tight in the wind. She went forth streaming water from the deck and I slipped through her rigging and lines, her masthead frowned sternly and I thought about a plea for forgiveness, but could not voice the words. So we skimmed the lake and when an island cragged ahead my mother barreled forward and beached us on the rocks; she heaved me up onto the algal shards and I crawled to the sand choking out the fish spine caught in my throat, and my mother folded her arms and sighed.

And when I looked up she was gone, and I wandered the beach and kicked pebbles from my feet. I dug my toes in the sand and when the guilt remained I tried to say, it's not fair, but all I felt was grit under my nails. On the beach I rocked, back and forth, and sat in the sand before I crawled to the sweetgrass and looked hopeless for her footprints. But I did not find them there, and then I knew an emptiness that shook a whirlwind through my flesh. There was nothing there under that gray sky

except my own shadow, so when the crows banked skyward from their perch I went to the forest to see what force flung them up. And when I reached the hushed cedar grove my mother was there catching black feathers in her hand, and I opened my arms and cried, was I wrong? Then she turned her back to me and tightened her shoulders to shut me out, the disinheritance so clipped and sure, and I shucked off my grief with the shock and drew on anger instead. I hate you! I roared, I shivered out spines and my crested plume glittered in the sun; I stamped my cloven foot and huffed out steam that paled and disappeared before us. She turned a yellow eye to me and I quaked with fear and shame, shrank down and huddled beneath the honey mushrooms, and when she saw my contrition she chuffed and offered me a hand. But I could not resist the prick in my heart so I piped out, defiant, I am not sorry! And when she heard she shrieked out an echoing cry into the dusk and unfurled her giant tail, her eyes sparked gold and her sharp claws ripped deep into the howling earth and the skies broiled around us, and with a scaled wing my mother knocked me from her and I fell into the dark.

I fell, and I watched the Hunter and the Scorpion flicker out into blossoming dilations of darkness, and I woke in the dripping caverns beneath the hills. The ceiling hissed with rivulets of pearl-colored water and my hands rested wetly on the onyx floor. I rose and looked around, and tested the silence with my voice, and the only thing that rolled back to me in the blackness was the tremor of my name. When I was certain the curtained tunnels held naught but scuttling and sightless carabids I set about making it my own, and expanded into the cave. I felt I could move freely there, become larger and brighter and better, and for a while I did not miss my mother. I danced and I sang, and listened to my sentences bounce against the crumpled walls. Soon though I grew tired of knocking the insect shells together to hear their legs click, I grew tired of lapping alone at the wellsprings in the deep corners. It did not seem so grand, these miles of tunnels mazing through the ground, and I realized I could not remember the sun. One day when I bent my haunches

at a sulfurous stream I whispered, Mother? and there was no echo to be heard; I perked my head and listened, hard, but the space around me was still and held no note, and I keened low and knew myself lost. And then I shut my eyes and grew a chitinous cloak and began to learn the ways of the blind crawdads: to skirt, to tickle, to feel the magnetic pull of axis and rotation. So passed years in the cavern, and the great hills above collapsed into field and meadow, and were farrowed of their crop and laid fallow underneath the plodding Clydesdales, and below I remained.

It was with great surprise, then, to find myself one day at a yawning arch opening to the sunlit world, and I blinked my eyes and hunched in the shade and wondered how I had been set free. And when I looked over my shoulder I saw a statue of myself that I had carved into a sloping wall; it had proud lips and long robes and was beautiful. That is not me, I said, and I laid a finger to the stone and it crumbled into dust. With that done, I pressed my nose to the ground and followed it over ridges and through creeks, until I reached a birch grove and stopped. In the center of the grove was a pond, and there I went to comb my hair and polish my nails with the obsidian rocks that lined its green waters. There was rich earth on the air and the waters of the pond rippled from edge to edge, lipping into the rushes that teemed with frogs and snakes—into the water they slid, in a private way, shy of glance and modestly glistening—and were puckered with dragonfly eggs. Slipping down to the pond I skated my toes on the surface and watched for the minnows to flock and swarm about the great objects descending from above, and when they did I laughed, their tiny fins and inquisitive mouths bumped and probed and brushed gently across my skin. They took flight in a shimmer of scale and gill and the waters grew silty in their absence. I shook out my hair and wanted to see myself, so I bent over the water to look. The water stilled, and I looked for my face, and my mother's face stared up at me from the pond. I raised my hand to my cheek and my mother's arm lifted. And when I smiled at the water my mother's face smiled back at me, and though I was startled at this change I was not displeased. I

stretched our shoulders and rolled our neck, and then I left the pond and settled into our gait, loped out of the grove on strong legs and drew our hand along the wheat fields; my mind traveled out into our fingers and we darted into each shaft of grain, we sped through the field in a rolling whisper and felt cool night on each blade of ours, each frond and silky tassel quaking outward in shocks across the plowed earth, past mountains and canyons and over prairies and through forest. My mother and I encompassed everything: our ribs were the earth and our eyes were the sea, and our skin was the cloud-covered sky.

My mother knelt in the yard and pushed her hair back from her forehead with a sweaty hand. Look, she said, and I saw the sparrow on the ground, its heart beating frantic in its chest. It's been stunned, she said, and patted down the grass around its small body. The bird lay under our shadows and tried a wing, testing each motion with careful, abbreviated twitches. Moving fast my mother scooped it up and put a gentle hand over it so it was caved in her grasp. Come with me, my mother said, and we walked with the bird to the edge of the fence by the road and stood with the dust in cirrus wisps round our ankles. My mother whispered to the bird, and raised and lowered her arms once, twice, three times, letting the sparrow's head peek out from between her thumbs. Sunlight burned my skin and I moved my legs, impatient. My mother looked at me and said, it will go soon. Then she turned west and uncovered her hand; the bird sat, surprised at the sudden dome of sky. My mother raised her hand again and the bird rose higher on its perch: it looked around and found it good. And then there was a flutter, a flapping, a burst of wings and slap of air and the grass beneath my feet was sweet with dew, and the clover crushed between my toes smelled fresh, like earth and rain, and the sparrow launched itself from my mother's hand. And my mother and I watched it fly away, befuddled, indignant, yet trilling with animal joy, and our hearts beat as it rose into the air and disappeared.

James Cotton

---

## PILLBUGS

Pillbugs seem to thrive wherever there  
Is damp and rot, a leaking dumpster alley  
Where no-one with a nose would want to go,  
A stagnant creekbed slurried all with scum,  
Or this dejected bus stop, where wads of gum  
Have melted to flat tarballs in the sun.  
I thought at first the pebbles, drab and round  
As dumpy hausfraus getting their shopping done  
From penthouse view, had hitched their skirts and moved,  
But that was just an early morning, half-  
Awake hallucination, the pebbles pillbugs  
Crawling across the cracked and buckling sidewalk,  
Wanderers seeking, in a vast desert waste,  
Their paradisiacal trash receptacle.

Chiseling dewdrops, forcing space in pavement  
Cracks, dissolve the pollen skeletons  
To generate the manna of rich mold  
Pillbugs, content in their abandoned lot,  
May pause to eat—or just as likely not—  
Leftovers frugal Mother Nature doles.  
A fast food sack, soured with fryer grease,  
Stamped under joggers' and the weather's soles,  
Beads up, breaks down, and makes the pillbug's palate.  
Oozed from earth's pores like a moist sponge, they seem  
To have no clue to where they're going, yet

They're always in the place they need to be.  
Letting my mind wander as they do,  
I wish I had a pillbug's philosophy.

In freckled boyhood once, some garden lads,  
Cracking one open like a Lilliputian  
Fortune cookie, pulled its halves apart  
And stringing out the intestinal festoon  
Said that, all uncoiled, it reached the moon.  
It horrified me then, but now I know  
I'm much too low for climbing golden ladders.  
If only I were small enough, I'd be glad  
To climb the suffering length of a pillbug's guts,  
If that would get me Heaven, looking down  
At dots wandering silently, aloof,  
A crack for a highway, a shadow for a roof.  
It's real, not here at this crumbling bus stop  
Where day awaits the bus to interrupt  
My dreaming on my way to work, but here  
Within myself, and these pillbugs, the proof.

Joseph Wegener

---

## SONNET 14

She will never want for money. Her father invented the text message  
in his basement.

(I'm sorry – in *their* basement, the family's basement).

He would work through the night, taking his meals at odd hours.

The neighbors would have begun to talk, had they been listening.

On special occasions, she was allowed to bring him his supper:

two sardine sandwiches on a paper plate. And a glass of Scotch.

In the basement, her father had a room for everything. In each room,  
he had little to no room for much anything at all.

On one such occasion, and in one such room, her father said

(his Scotch perspiring on the empty plate): “In my day, we knew the  
figment

to be a thing less of imagination, than of pure, undistilled, *infatuation.*”

She will never want for money. She has learned to disassociate the words  
from the smell of sardines.

Sade Murphy

---

## FROM *DREAM MACHINE OF THE DECADE*: NEGATIVE INTEGERS AND ZERO

8&7. Against my eyelids light tinted aquamarine pressed and fluttered like a stomach before reciting sunrise. In the dark a whirligig so fast I suffer central spasm and regurgitate emotionally. The sneezes were almost orgasmic. A boil on my navel orange oozed capers seeds hatching spiders in my shoes. I was never more happy to be a multicolor horse of the apocalypse riding a rainbow into hell.

6. Do not pretend that you do not know how to sleep purely for the dream. Do not ignore the moon streaming high speed light into your window. Do not deny wishing that you were not sleeping alone. Do not fear the boogeyman, he is no more real than the lover borne in the depths of your dreams. Do not seek to control the way you do in waking life for you will only ruin what prophecy you may receive. Do not knot yourself up over the meaning let it instead fall through your fingers like sand.

2&1. I was a professional wrestler. I wrestled against Mickey Rourke. I kept winning. I defeated every opponent, all men. Trained in the Brazilian martial arts I was unstoppable. If you crossed me I would nail your sack to the floor and set the whole house on fire leaving you with a rusty butter knife. At day's end I would drink my beer through a straw. While stroking the peel of a straight banana.

## FROM *DREAM MACHINE OF THE DECADE*: IMAGINARY NUMBERS

i. The soles of my feet bared told me the devil would snatch me into hell but under the bed does not exist when the matters sleep on the floor. Why are you ramming my face into my fists until a bruise is summoned I was fine and this dream is a gleaming down the drain. It is a washed up letter in a bottle baby trashy dopey siren song cooing: remember me the fetal lover you cradle within your skull? I am destroying you.

v. Star shot across the sky. Flakes of ash escaped the fire landing on garments. Fireflies flashed like traffic light key lime pie. Beer bottles tip over a glassy classy noise on the rocks. The constellations prize their disdain bestowing enough light to be a marvel but taking their sweet unsynchronized time. Feel nothing but the stoked blaze on skin.

SOLITUDE by Sarah Karchunas





Justin Orr

---

## SPOTSYLVANIA

I fear that I shall see no darker a day in my life than today. I have just returned from the slop house here in Fredericksburg, about five miles southwest of Spotsylvania, where surely no man ought have to return to ever again. Grant rolled into Virginia earlier this month with 100,000 battle worn men in pursuit of Lee's rebel forces, roughly 50,000 in all. I confess I was late to the battle having been held up by muddy roads up in Winchester, but I hoped that my tools could save the lives of a precious few who had weathered the storm of cannon fire and bayonet thrusts; especially those at Harris Farm, where the corpses had been tossed pell mell into a bloody gulch before the fighting had even concluded. I have not slept but two or three hours in the three days I have been here. My exhaustion borders on psychosis, but my labors keep me up at night, when all that remains is the grey noise of two hundred men groaning in a half-anesthetized agony.

The final day's assault now ended, the surveyor Fox has estimated no less than 15,000 casualties on our side, no known estimates for the grey-coats. I should think far fewer given their lack of forces, but I pity them just as much, if not more than the men I preside over. The privations engendered by our blockade have left physicians in the other encampments lacking the most fundamental medical equipment like sponges and horsehair. I wonder of the integrity of their scissors, whether or not the curdled blood has reduced them to rusty knives that clumsily cut through flesh. I feel an impossible affinity, almost a kinship with them, knowing that, whether our smocks are blue or grey going into the converted schoolhouses and inns, they most certainly are the same color leaving it. But these musings merely distract me from transcribing the horror that

I witnessed right before sundown today as the freedmen brought the scattered remains of men into our surgery room in the chambers of the Spotsylvania Courthouse.

I had handed over my post performing amputations to a junior physician in order to act as medical examiner—much less sanguine than the cruel hacking off of limbs, but no less mentally taxing. That post made me Death incarnate. The stretchers brought to the courthouse all came through me and I was tasked to separate them into two proscribed sections. The ones with a chance, who had merely splintered an extremity or caught a scratch from a bayonet, were placed on the lower level near the surgery room. The goners, those who had a bullet in their head or intestines, were immediately located in the upstairs rooms where they would only receive a watered down ether to lessen their death throes. The reasoning held that soldiers with a chance would not have their morale lowered by walking past the dead men and that those poor wretches' screams would be muffled if they were above the 'healthy' soldiers.

My medical eye had sharpened after a year or so in my capacity as arbiter; I could see death before the man saw it himself, but I had grown callous to their cries. The butchery, and I do not hesitate to call it just that, had blunted my nerves and made them as impersonal as the bullets often lodged in soldiers' bones. The tears of grown men pooling up in their sunken eyes drew no more sympathy from me than that of a small child being spanked for insubordination. God forbid I do carry on in this hypnotic state after this great trial, I shall become an unfeeling monster. Though I think that I should be in the good company of half this nation's men, if this is the case.

Yet I digress still! What a wonderful inconstancy of mind this war has produced in all who have partaken of it! How could I forget that sight which drove me back to the surgery room and that modern guillotine which has attached itself like a barnacle to my hand, the bonesaw. I could have not foretold such a fate would ever befall me in my time, I was trained as a veterinarian to deal with thoroughbreds and hunting dogs in rural Illinois, yet I had been forcibly reacquainted with the hu-

man body quite quickly in '62. Now I had quite the record among the military surgeons in Grant's unit. In no less than twelve minutes I could amputate an arm or half a leg and stitch it right back up. Of course the first few times had been quite devastating to my system, but now I had become fully desensitized. A shot of whisky for the screaming man and a stiff whiff of ether partially numbed him (and myself as well given the hours in contact with the anesthesia) before two assistants would choke him with a leather strap to keep him from amputating his own tongue—I often joked that those assistants could chop an arm off with that strap. After that, I would let the excess flaps of skin, the 'fish's mouth' we called them, hang over the wound and sew up the stump leaving a small drainage hole for the blood. I believe that the mortality rate for my patients was no worse than the wartime average of twenty-five per cent, but I never remembered all the faces of the men I operated on and hence cannot determine how many were sent back home after they had passed through my room and how many were sent upstairs. Goodness! What a tangled web we weave as humans.

But to the matter at hand, that which so behooves me to write this passage. There was a wounded soldier who crawled near our facilities with blond curls scattered about his face and hands praying for help. He was clad in a bright and neat grey uniform, well garnished with gold, which seemed to tell the story of a loving mother and sisters who had sent their boy to the field of war. A company of weary Union men caught sight of the soldier, dropped their metal pans, and accosted him. They hurled insults and curses at him with finest of ease and prodded him with the toes of their mud caked boots. I left my position to break up the ruckus and examine him to see if he was fit for the prison hospital in Fredericksburg. A bullet had struck his right forearm and all that remained of the elbow was a precious few sinews that tenuously connected it to the bicep. He limped copiously, indication of a fall to my mind, and fumbled around with his words behind tears and heavy breathing. I cleared the congregation and was reprimanded with salty curses from infantry who dispersed to look for rope and a tall tree. I removed his hat (47th

Tennessee) and upon closer inspection found him to be no older than my son. His relatively diminutive stature and emaciated body could have not been more than fourteen. He whimpered curses about the North in front of me, but the oaths felt distinctly uninspired in the face of his mangled arm.

I have often felt this war to be a great trial of the collective integrity of a people bound by some unimaginable force of good. I am unsure of that proposition as I now stand, but perhaps a fertile acre will survive this blood offering and renew the covenant our generation has so willfully trampled upon. Perhaps the wound we have dealt upon this great land is mortal, yet it is my greatest hope that through some intervention of the divine that the land can be healed.

I grow tired as the candle melts to a stump no taller than a fingernail. How the mind's faculties are but an empty gourd at the end of the day! Yet if I dally any longer, I fear I will awake next morning and retire into my old frame of mind, where the slaughter is nothing more than a medical procedure.

I tore off the boy's grey uniform shirt to ward off the curses of the other men, picked him up with my both my arms, and carried him into the Courthouse. The freedmen poured kerosene on the pit of severed limbs out back and created a great bonfire whose stench of bacon falsely attracted the able bodied men around it. I used the distraction to place the groaning boy on a table in an unused jury room. I called for my two assistants and resumed my duty as surgeon. The scalpel and scissors beside me were bathing in a crimson bath of cool water. Since the bonesaw was already in use, I had to wait five minutes. In the meantime, the boy clutched his right arm and begged me to leave it on. I asked for ether. My assistants saw the grey pants on the boy and said there was no ether. It was all the vilest shit they spoke, but it was perfumed with words about short supplies and the purity of the Union cause. Then they handed me the bonesaw.

The boy once more pleaded for his arm. He said he had heard the screams, that he loved President Lincoln, that he would never take up

Confederate arms again. The assistants gave me a slight nudge and jammed the leather strap across the boy's mouth so hard that I thought they would have broken his jaw. In that moment, I questioned whether the arm was salvageable, whether I ought to just take the old bandages and wrap the thing up, or whether I just take the ether reserves and throw him among the lot upstairs. The boy gasped for air against the leather strap as blood leaked from the wound. I saw him crying, but among the ever present screams of exhaustion, some of them mine, some of them lingering in the bonfire outside, I drew out the lines of the fish's mouth above the boy's elbow and drew forth my instruments.

I am impelled by my offices to retire from this journal. The work of writing pains me as much as the deed I committed, the consequences of which will be judged by others. What will become of him will become of me, but for now I indulge in the stupefying pleasures of sleep, for tomorrow I return, as I will unto the end of time.

Vienna Wagner

---

## INDEPENDENCE DAY AT THE SALAMONIE SUMMER FEST

A man died the first time I saw  
fireworks, gunpowder flowers and Chinese  
dragons with pitchfork whiskers  
barreling across clear sky.  
Rocking back and forth in my swing,  
I gripped the rubber seat  
while sirens blared. The last rocket  
still smoked a ghostly gray spiral,  
like the last smolder  
of an abandoned  
cigarette.

*In the rockets' red glare,*  
he stood too close, transfixed,  
like the huntsman, Orion,  
by Artemis's adolescent,  
acne-crated cheeks. He shot  
her golden waterfalls,  
but her stony-faced silhouette  
spurned those sparkling spiders.  
Forgetting gravity, he gazed alone,  
stunned by so many appendages,  
arching upward, only  
to splinter  
down.

People raced with picnic  
blankets back to pick-up trucks  
whose headlights burned  
through thick exhaust. *The bombs bursting  
in air* still blared from a radio  
while my father's rough  
hands hoisted me up. I straddled  
his sweaty shoulders  
and counted the stars in Orion's belt,  
wondering if Orion wore work  
jeans with too many pockets,  
if he carried explosives,  
aerial shells, each lit  
with a quick  
match  
fuse.

Lauro Vazquez

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## ASTRONAUTS

i envy beto/ almost as much as i envy  
/ astronauts  
they are always well fed/ on special diets against emptiness  
or gravity/ which are two and the same/  
which means they don't trip or fall  
/and grow feathers  
and eat fire against blowing out/ they are always red/ colored  
sun sun/  
they get paid/ just so we can see them  
flying on tv/  
with a blonde-star lady at their side  
martín should have been an astronaut  
but he was a cook/ standing giant-like  
/ in the kitchen  
beard bristles coming the clouds/  
all i ever could see were his feet/  
they were always smiling at me  
but back to the astronauts/  
they saw beto/ up there/ one day  
fed on just a diet of tortillas  
often forgetting to eat even that/  
and with no star-lady at his side  
/only his tattoo/ of *la virgen*  
they didn't know what to call him/  
i don't know what to call him either  
except his feet were smiling at me

Emma Terhaar

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## “THAT ROAR THAT LIES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE”

I pity the poor sap who marries you, and the poor chilly skin that used to be warmed by his package before you tore it off with your vicious yellow teeth. If you manage to salvage any of his leftover semen and produce some more hateful gremlins, I hope they die before they hit the public school system! Surely the larger, self-respecting thugs will squash them, preventing them from making it this far. But if somehow, like you, they manage to slip between the cracks on whatever scummy sidewalk you originated from, I will do the world a favor, and de-weed the fucking garden of the bile filled trash that is your genes!

## IF HELEN OF TROY WAS A HUMAN SIZED OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIE,

then Hugh Grant would've been caught with a King Charles Spaniel straddling him in the front seat of his car.

When women look flat, they would get shoulder implants.

And *Fifty Shades of Grey* becomes popular because it has a really pretty book jacket!

All the little girls would want to be princesses, with a vision of leading troops into battle in form fitting armor just like Elizabeth galloping off to meet the Spanish armada, wielding metal, red mane of hair streaming out behind her helmet like a bright flag directing swordsmen and mace tossing barbarians teeming after her.

Eve never ate the apple, she sat it on top of Adam's quivering head and shot it off like she was snapping her fingers to a song or breathing.

ACCIDENT by Madeline Hirsch





Helen Cramer

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## CALYPSO

The gods have a particular interest in symmetry. They attempt to create beauty in the mortal world such as Olympus could never achieve. However, the gods were not good, nor were they evil. They just existed, much like myself, apathetic to most of the human world, toying with lives when they felt the desire. They felt the listlessness that accompanies immortality, but they had long since forgotten what it was they desired. This is what separated them from me. I still felt human. They had lost any connection to mortals as their immortal life dragged on and on and on in an endless silence.

Thus, to the gods, good and evil are like a pair of twin scimitars. Both swords must be sharpened to make the most effective tool for shaping the world. Whenever it seemed good would prevail in the world, an evil would rise up to bring balance. When evil dominated, a hero was called to restore peace. Thus is the will of the gods, and the songs of heroes and monsters begin.

This tale begins with one such hero: strong, valiant, brave to the point of stupidity. You can name any hero and he will invariably have those qualities. He adventures through dangerous lands, fights unbeatable monsters, saves princesses from cruel deaths. However, sometimes, the hero finds his way to my island. Those are the days that I wait for.

One must always wonder at the folly of the hero. He runs headfirst into adventure; he craves it. Whether it's an attempt to prove himself or simply because he believes himself invincible, I will never know. Another thing about heroes: they die young. I fault the gods. To a hero, a god's blessing is a death sentence. However, those chosen revel in their fate. They are created for the sole purpose of completing their task. Such is the irony

of the Olympians.

\*

We met on the beaches of my forgotten place, my hero and I. It was centuries ago, in the summer. This age was a time more aware and more accepting of the impossible, and he recognized me. Even as centuries roll past, sometimes I find myself wishing for that time again, when I could walk among the mortals and be perceived for what I was: immortal. Now, as the world continues, as it has continued for centuries, constantly changing, adapting, and growing, I exist. Nothing more.

However, this was centuries ago, a time when gods and men walked side by side, where dryads and centaurs roamed the woods, and men tried to escape our notice. Yes, my hero believed, and he marveled. I could tell him of the passing of ages and heroes before him, of the formation of his world, and of the gods. Oh, how he loved to hear of the deities, still believing in their supreme goodness with childlike wonder. I quickly shook that thought from him.

My hero spent days, and months, then years with me on those beaches. I was determined to keep him here as long as I could, because perhaps the gods would lose interest in him. I had seen what they could do to break a hero, and my hero had already become just that—mine. I would protect him. Later on, the gods would take action against me for this small act of defiance. Later, they would chain me to my island permanently in the hopes that I would give up and let their plans unfold as they wished. However, for a time, they allowed me to act unchecked as I tried to change the path my hero was walking towards.

\*

I'd asked him once about whether he believed in fate.

He looked at me strangely. "*Do I believe in fate?*" He repeated in bewilderment.

His age wasn't quite ready for that question, I suppose. It was still a fact he lived by. The gods decree your life and you are left to suffer through it. My hero damned the gods for his fate but never thought to change it. It would be a while until the world would turn to freedom, a

time long past my hero.

\*

*“Will you tell me now, what it’s like to be immortal?”* It was not the first time he’d asked me that. It was a question I did not relish answering.

*“What is it like to be mortal?”*

*“Terrifying. Beautiful.”* He sighed. *“I can’t describe it. It’s like describing how a heart beat feels. It’s too much a part of me.”*

*“I am alone. That is what immortality is. I am alone for all time.”*

*“Not anymore.”*

\*

Years went by and I began to see troubling qualities in my hero. I saw that desire, that passion given to him by the gods which would not relinquish him until their will was done. My hero was different, but he was much the same. No matter how many times he damned the deities, in the end he couldn’t relinquish his duty for the world. He would see the world burn just so that he could bring it out of darkness. He grew restless, looking out on the misty waters separating my world from his. That was the first warning sign. He grew weary of the gardens and woods and looked towards the mortal world, longing to return. And so, he was just like the others. After all I’d done to shield him, the gods and his damned destiny had beaten me. I’ve heard that if nothing else can, hope will finally kill you. I didn’t know what that meant until then. I had such hope for my hero, for myself, only for him to make the same choice as all the rest. How could I have been so naive to fight against his destiny?

I pleaded with him. *“Stay for another year, I’ll sing the woods to silver in the Fall . . . stay, just for a while longer . . . stay, at least until the storm dies down . . .”* Desperately, I told him the last secret of my island: immortality was granted to any who chose to stay. He wouldn’t, not even with the lure of eternity, not even with the promise of an eternal lifetime with me. I don’t know which would have been worse: losing him to the mortal world or losing his human self to immortality. It didn’t matter though, because he wouldn’t leave the rest of the world, not his loved ones, not his comrades, not any single person. Maybe he was just too noble, too

good. Yet I would never change that about him. It was why I loved him.

\*

Years passed. Other heroes found themselves on my beaches. They didn't stay long. The place had lost its luster. Perhaps I had lost my own. My hero must have passed on. Some days, I can't even remember what he looked like. On others, I remember every word he ever spoke to me. Mortals live for a moment, a beautiful, precious moment, but then that moment ends. All that is left to endure must wait and hope.

Anna Lei

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WHEN WE PUT ON MASKS AND PRETEND  
TO BE STRANGERS; WHEN WE PRETEND  
TO PRETEND TO HATE ONE ANOTHER

To watch the disintegration of lips...  
The line snaps! into glass shards *piercing*  
like building a life out of teenage pop songs  
then discovering yr entrenched in a fog-filled lake  
the scene of a predictable horror movie: the wax people smirking and  
melting and  
Paris Hilton with a pole sticking out of her mouth, eyes glazed.  
I still believe in the solutions  
enfolding in blackheart lyrics about  
the labyrinth of a soul broken  
by circumstance and lemon drop promises;  
trapped by an inescapability defined  
by the marijuana dealers with caterpillarknives and grillz.  
I warned you I was a fucking headcase...  
But we jumped off this cliff together...  
To reassemble mannequin body parts we  
shoot silver bullets pewpewpew!  
This is about flaunting the fucking bloodied carcass, you dick!  
This gaudy parade announced and directed by the lispy babychild  
brings clarity.

Jayme Russell

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## REASONS TO WORRY

You may find a man in the pantry  
spouting off about your imminent death.  
You may be experiencing car trouble.  
Do not even attempt to turn your key in that Volkswagen ignition.  
It's especially foreboding to hear a child shouting *Help Me*  
from the forest, at night, while it's raining.  
Do not search for that child  
on the archery range.  
Worry if you find blood in the woods.  
Worry if you find blood in the barn loft.  
Avoid putting the kettle on for calming cups of tea,  
you will never have the chance to pour your drink.

## DREAMS BORN

The dream womb feels comfortable on the surface  
as if the cocooned body is resting in calm silence  
as if nothing is forming, but inside I stand and see  
the clouds circling in the night. The sky is so large it is jarring.

I fall facedown in the dewy grass  
land in the parted green beside the boots of the left handed killer.  
He holds the knife, wants my stretched limbs to move.  
He tilts his head and his deep brown eyes wait.

Just as I feel the warm blood flowing  
the god machine grabs my collar and pulls me up and out.  
Upon waking I realize I have birthed another incestuous image  
fathered by the man of my dreams.

# LATCHES DO NOT LOCK AND HINGES DO NOT HOLD

My Mommy doll has lost her  
buttons. She sits slumped  
in her little chair. We both know  
he creeps outside her  
dollhouse windows. We've locked  
the doors but he will break  
them. We've told him to go  
but he does not listen.

# MONSTERS

## I. The Creator

My children rise up too often these days.  
Day becomes soft, the night a place to run from blindly.

You say your hideous face is frightening?  
Well then so am I for creating you, progeny.

No knife or bullet stops what is made  
impossible to kill.

Your first words are red with new blood.  
You gnaw the man's skin, the brain.

## II. The Creature

I've devoured every person I have ever met  
every room I have ever stepped into  
every object that I have touched or that my eyes  
have touched upon. I will eat the earth  
in great pieces until all that is left is covered in ocean  
and I can't see the monsters anymore.

Ronnie Peltier

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## GIVING A GREEN ANSWER TO A BLUE QUESTION

When I was young I thought moths were butterflies and that butterflies were milked to feed hemophiliac children who could really appreciate a light bulb. You know, the greens and reds of a fluorescent or the blues and oranges of incandescent and how a black man can seem purple in the moonlight, but for whites it's only possible with a few fists to any chosen area. I am, of course, not referring to the anus. I've only ever seen someone turn brown from a fist in the anus.

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Mom used to warn me that absinthe and opium cigarettes would be hard to find. I'm still laughing about it because when we would go to airports my brother would get really nervous and go to the bathroom and never come back. My mother, my father, my cousin—we all thought that he had been kidnapped and was in the middle of some abandoned parking lot tasting the sweat of old, hairy fat men. Silently mortified, mom commanded, "Go check on your brother." She was always so wrong. Anyway, I checked under the pretense of caring, but all I ever really wanted was to join in.

---

I wasn't supposed to say anything about this, but my grandfather was discharged from the Marines for mixing roaches into the cornbread. He always hated the saying that people are what they eat, and he was conducting an experiment to prove the affront to "logic, accuracy, and our holy, sweet father, Joseph." I experimented with drums, a violin, two

xylophones, a timpani, and a gaggle of cockatoos in college. None of them, though, could make that damn hamster get out of his wheel. It was always spinning and there were holes in it and little turds like brown rice flew everywhere. Frasier just never stopped running! Oh well, I guess something's got to run in the family.

---

That's true, but what made our lemonade stand so popular was Peggy's piss. Let's just say that Peggy's father was very fond of unripened fruit. He fed her so many green bananas that she began to crave tacos. Who knew that all that ingestion, all that esophageal quaking, could make such good lemonade? We never gave her away either, all this was a secret until now. That product turned out to be well worth the money. I mean, she could have gone to Costco with that shit! I have spent nights asleep when all I thought of was how she tastes now to the worms and maggots. Making out with mother nature would taste awful but probably get you in deep.

---

Watching an optimistic man look at a corpse would have to be right at the top of the list for me. We had choir practice in the viewing room, but I was the only one who showed up so I sang right into her mouth and rubbed my hands over her plastic flesh chest. I didn't feel anything, but some of the glitter from my hair fell into her eyes and her parents cried even more because they remembered how to fuck like she was just a sparkle in their eye. Her skin was so pale, but even paler in that jar balancing on my headboard. I'm hoping that when one of the boys is over he'll push a little too hard and all three of us will share the pale together.

OLD FAMILY PHOTOS  
OR  
I LOOK AFTER MR. MARBURY THESE  
DAYS. I REPLACED ALL THE OLD  
PICTURES IN HIS DIARY WITH FUCKED  
UP PHOTOS I FOUND ON THE INTERNET.  
HE ALWAYS THINKS THEY'RE REAL AND  
MAKES UP STORIES ABOUT THEM. I  
HOPE I'M NOT THAT STUPID WHEN I GET  
OLDER.

Dad hummed outside  
chopping down trees  
“press your face against my chainsaw”  
but I refused, laughing.

Momma danced all day in the kitchen  
pounding meat and splattering  
blood in every nook  
and granny cooked the side dishes.  
She served rabbit  
with bitter envelope lick strips.

Sister never ate.  
When she slept she saw herself  
and pushed little pins into her flesh.  
“You will suffer body  
you will pay for all the hurt you cause me.”

These lightning scars crackle up my neck  
from when my auntie tied me  
to the swing set upside down.  
It was the first time I really saw a storm.

Rachel Krejchi

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## PIRATE CLASS

Ahoy, Lecturer!

Set sails on seas of learnin’

Parley yer knowledge!

LAKE SIDE ONE by Evan Bryson





Lucas Garcia

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## EARTH DREAMS

The promise of a hot day crept through to the room, where he sat in his jeans and undershirt, tugging on his black leather boots, the ones with the leaves like milkweed trailing up the wrinkled sides. He fingers the buttons on his shirt, knitting them together with habit and practice, and walks towards the kitchen. The morning is still sitting at the table, with warm cups of coffee and scrambled eggs with tortillas, waiting for him to get going. The clink of fork against hard plastic plate and the almost quiet sloshing of coffee slipping down the sides of the cup; morning sounds. He gets up and presses his lips to his wife's cheek and she smiles. She smells like soap, clean and soft, with only the slightest hint of artificiality. The thunk of his boots follows him out until it becomes the scrape against dirt as his feet push towards the earth and his face lifts towards the sky. Blue, and peopled over with clouds, rolling and tumbling over each other, playing with the sunlight as it filters through them, making happy vapors of dense drifters. He shakes his head. The sky is no place for a ranchero to dream about. The soil is his only concern, the wetness of it, the holes dug by gophers and ground hogs. That is his kingdom.

He saddles his metal horse, turning the key and starting the fire in its chest, and he drives through dust plumes to his campo. The rumble and shake of the truck mixed with the oily fumes from the engine is the crunch of gravel under the tires. He sees the field from the window of the truck, and his lungs fill with air as he starts to sigh at the cracked earth. His alfalfa is turning yellow and the yellow to brown. It's too early in the season for the green stalks to be drying, dying in the sun.

He steps out of the truck, boots landing on the dirt, his legs burning up in jeans, the skin on the back of his neck searing from the light. He kicks

the dirt, and it billows up in a tiny cloud. Holding his hand to his hat, he walks out into the field, his nose in the plants, his eyes scanning the field for life still holding on. He sees the seeds of a hard year, a year when his only gift to his wife will be his arms, his chest, and a single rose to soften the blow. He digs the tip of his boot into the ground, grimacing. He turns to get back in his truck, but before him is a man. A woman? A figure, robed, in white, a hood over silver hair hanging in a braid to its waist.

“Earth-dreamer.”

The words sound foreign, an accent he can’t place. His body reacts to the strangeness, shoulders rising, feet straying apart to make a wall of his chest and stomach and hips. Even his fingers curl into puños, against his nature. The figure, its skin smooth but old, the color of wet sand, smiles. His heart flutters from it, and his stomach clenches.

“Why do your eyes devour the sky?”

Each word is like a crash of wind against his ear. He glances at the figure, its striking out-of-place-ness smarting at his eyes. “Have you no words for a stranger?”

His tongue flashes over his lips, and he tastes hot, dry skin. In his throat, his voice is shying away, nervous like a horse.

“Wh-Who are you?” He asks.

“I am who you say I am, Earth-dreamer.”

“Don-don’t you have a name?”

“Yes.”

He shivers. He feels the world moving and shifting beneath him. The omission and the enigma coat him like oil.

“I don’t know what to call you,” he manages to say.

The figure raises its hands, its robes spread out like wings. The wind picked up the loose dust from the field, making remolinos that play in between the brittle rows of alfalfa, blowing grit into his eyes. He put his fingers to his eyes, clenching them shut to push the tiny grains out.

“Oh, clay man, you are so terribly blind here in the dirt and the dust.”

He feels hands on his shoulders, hands that are like cold fire, and the blood in his veins jumps like a rabbit and races through the valves in his

heart, palpitando. He doesn't take his fingers from his eyes, the magic places in his brain making stones of his arms. He feels the strangeness of the figure make the hairs on his face stand on end, and feels breath like the wind on his ear.

"Come to the sky, Earth-dreamer. Come be free for a while."

Rustling; leaves and feathers cascade and tumble and his eyes slide open, and before him is the flatness of the curving earth. His stomach drops and his strong back and arms are electrified with fear. Adrenaline gallops to his heart and he is breathless, grasping, clutching the figure. Arms are wrapped around him as he jerks and bolts like a horse, pupils dilated, aterrizado. He cannot fight the animal, and he is trapped by instinct until, slowly, his heart stops its sprinting and he grasps the arms around him, steadying himself, distrustful of the open sky beneath his boots.

"Where the hell am I?" he yells. His boots find purchase on the sky, but his eyes instruct his body to rebel, to buck the firmness of the sky beneath him. He realizes that he is gripping the figure's arms like iron, his hands like filth on the white-as-cloud robes. Ashamed, still afraid, he holds onto them.

"Look around you, Earth-dreamer. You're in the sky, the House of the Moon and the Sun, the Star Window."

The happiness steadies him, and the joy shining out from the figure's face fills him, and he slowly uncoils the rigid fingers. His arms fall to his side, and he feels a swaying that tugs at the edges of his nerves, as if someone were trying to pull his skin right off his bones.

"Don't be afraid, don't be afraid," the figure laughs, like the wind playing in the branches of trees. He takes a step and feels his chest open like a flower. His soul strains against him as he takes a step, and another, and he is running on the sky, the sun licking his face with fire, the wind pushing him, grabbing at his hat and pulling at his clothes. He feels freedom just at the tip of his fingers, the tip of his tongue. Yelping and whooping, como un niño, he bounds across the sky until his breath gives out and he sinks into the blue. He lies, heaving the thin air, the freedom

still making him twitch and jump, a smile breaking his stone face, and the figure stands above him. He pushes himself against the blue and sits up, and looks at the figure, his smile still broad and bright.

“Get up, so we may visit the clouds,” the figure says, offering a hand to him. He takes it and his skin jumps with electricity; he feels alive. They walk, and he opens his hand, feeling the wind racing through his fingers, making little ribbon currents out of the air. Soon they are closer and closer to a cloud, and he sees what the earth kept him from seeing. Legs like elephant legs, thick as tree trunks only vaporous and billowy and white. Eyes so pale, they blend right in. A low and beautiful song. They rumble across the sky in great herds, electricity crackling between them as they brush together, sparking lightning, and thundering when they collide. He jogs to one and it eyes him dolefully, and he rests his hand on its cold, damp side. It harrumphs and shivers, misting him with water, and his smile couldn’t get wider. He sees the horns curving up, glittering from the ice, and he feels his heart bouncing inside him.

The figure walks to face the cloud and lays its hands at the cloud’s muzzle, and it breathes, sighing cold breath onto the figure. The figure strokes the cool vapors of the cloud, susurrando in soft, airy words that made him feel lighter, and made the cold that was eating at him fade. After a few slow moments, filled with calm billowing of the cloud, the figure beckons to him, and he takes the hand that is offered. He feels himself go weightless, and suddenly, he is off the firmness of the sky, the wind tearing at him as the figure catapults, its arms outstretched, through the vault of heaven. In the distance he sees great stretches of cloud, different from the burly clouds before, these ones wispy and long, and as they grow ever closer, he begins to see tiny dancers writhing and jumping between them. His ears are brought a jingling of bells and the thump of drums by the wind, and his blood quickens again. They break softly through the mist of the cloud, and he is beset by the sight of flowing white wings, figures twirling and swaying to the heavy beat of the drum and the ecstatic jingling of bells. The music infects him, winding along his bones and seeping into his muscles, and suddenly he is moving,

jerky and awkward, oblivious for the music.

The dancers around him take him by the hand, by the waist, and push the music into him, teaching him to move like they do, and he expands outward, his mind slipping over the boundaries that the earth requires a man to build. He loses himself in the sky, and forgets that he is made of clay and ash. The figure finds him in the arms of a tall dancer, lithe and slender, dancing with abandon. The figure takes his hand and draws him gently from the dance, and out through the curtain of cool water that surrounded them. As he draws himself in like a net, he feels the weight of the earth in his blood, remembers his campo, his mujer, and the clay house that he helped to build. He looks down at the brown earth, and feels the pull of his spirit trying to reach out to the dirt.

“Why did you take me?” he asks the figure.

The figure looks at him soft and deep, and he feels the hugeness of the world around him. His body remembers the feeling of falling and he starts to lose his grip on the sky. The figure reaches out for him, and he grasps the sun-dark hand, feeling panic chew on the edge of his nerves and make the light brighter, harsher, and the sound of the wind like the roar of nightmares. He pleads with his eyes, and his farm-strong hand is like iron on the white robe.

“I saw that you were empty, Earth-dreamer. I saw that you would suffer from your emptiness.”

The wind pulled at him, threatening to thrash him and take him tumbling down through the blue until he met the earth. His clay bones creak, and he curls his fingers tighter, searching for purchase on the sky. Heavy returns to him and he sinks lower. The figure gives him a sad, cool smile, and tears mark dark lines on its cheeks. The animal returns to him, and he feels his voice jump out of him as he feels fingers stronger than his peel his hand off the white robed arm.

“Wait! Please!” he barks.

The figure opens its hand and for a second all he can feel is the heat of the sinking sun as its strong yellow light is filtered purple, orange, and pink. Then he falls and panic seizes his mind. He screams and yells, and

fear fills his lungs, the air being ripped from him as he hurtles toward the brown earth. His mind crumples inward, and the blue is shot through with black as his brain prepares to protect him from the pain.

He wakes, his face burning with sand. He sits up wildly, in a jump and scrabbles in the dirt. He looks around, panic slowly fading, and sees his clay house and his clay wife starting to run to him. He stands up, his eyes wide wide, and he pulls himself to his wife, her slender arms reaching around his farmer's back. He buries himself in her hair, and feels the solid, familiar earth beneath him.

A SHADOW OF FAITH by Helen Cramer





Amy Fernow

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## “I’VE GOT SOFT SKIN, ARE YOU GONNA LET ME IN?”

To cut your hopes here, let me tell you, the answer for her was no. I mean, what kind of question is that anyways.

1. Cup noodles.

They are inexpensive. But if you heat them up in the microwave sometimes the bowl gets too hot and there are popping noises and then there’s a hole and the broth leaks out so you use tape but the tape will get wet too so don’t get too far ahead of yourself before you just go on merrily eating your lunch.

She didn’t have to sit at home and deal with that but she wanted to braid her crinkly fun at the beach hair

And those noodles started with boiling water and it’s just the worst

Character introduction: Plastic bottle

Plastic bottle: “I think so yes”

It is smooth so people like her go and

Roll roll roll roll roll roll roll roll roll

A-rolling

Off the artificiality of the wrapper and the already-drunk-down sort of emptiness

Plastic bottle: “I’m gonna vote no more alone time in my office”

It is not full of the mystery so the mystery

Is where on Earth are all of these self-esteem issues coming from?

Perhaps some leftover trapped in carbonation resides.

Hope it doesn't explode! It won't.  
Plastic bottle: "And I'm the moron here."  
Huh?  
You're made of recycled materials!  
I refrigerated you for over a year!  
What is happeninggggggggg  
Plastic bottle: "drunk"

Oh right, there was skin. Pink and pink and brimming with blood and  
bubbly things.  
Of course, it didn't matter.  
I just figured I'd help you out with the meaning of that title and all.

## TREACLE

gene product my product gone product  
painting on chromosome five to shreds  
tearing every aisle five to shreds for concrete evidences  
planning to rip off your happ happ happiness  
so that your haploinsufficiency suddenly finds itself  
too much time on a research paper or too much time looking at a fence  
    that binds nothing  
you tell me?  
i tell you?  
name it in 1900 our first meeting  
cast in face paintings and carnival fun artifice icing  
such a fucking stupid sugar rush  
tie the tongue in a knot and don't you ever touch my midriff or i swear  
what if i wish away your migrating neural crest cells and pray pray pray  
that you stop asking me to religion  
like a real verb  
like a real burning  
a shared interest other than ironing clothes with skin together for proof  
all about hardcore on the floor samples of evidence  
in the carpet threads  
in the window panes  
in the gaping hole  
don't reach! my circle is sheer.  
covered with sheer.  
it wants to distort your craniofacial attributes very much please thank  
    you goodbye

Lucas Garcia

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## SKELETON GIRL'S POEM

We hold hands all the time, flaquita and me,  
Make ojitos, goofing off until sunrise  
She'll tease "Quieres saber cuando Dios gonna set you free?"  
and I laugh and say, "don't ruin the surprise!"  
She gets mad when I haven't been by in a while  
And just stares at me, like right through me man.  
Then I get scared, so I give her a smile,  
say "I'm loco for you babe, I'll do anything I can!"  
But she teases me, guey, she don't say nothing,  
and I plead, don't mess with me negra, I'm dying here!  
But she just shakes those hips, laughing  
Her calavera smile, grinning ear to ear  
As she leads me to the cementerio, pulls me into bed.  
She sings me to sleep and I dream of the dead.

LAKE SIDE TWO by Evan Bryson





Jacqueline Cassidy

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## GLOBAL GLOBULES

Marble globes receive the world. Images that are captured with a snap, are transposed behind a shutter. A dark hole lets in light but light shines lustrous, stretched reflections off rounded cornea glass. The green continental shapes are surrounded by a blue iris ocean. The orb looks out from a globe and the globe through the orb.

But the eyes had not always been of the sphere. Rods just scoped green leaves in night and cones just found day-light blues. The eyes had once darted energetically in search of motion and hid squintingly from beams. The ducts once deserted the eyes but soon tear rain ended tear drought and a near constant creek flowed down the cheeks. The variegated eyes no longer scamper but fix closely on their subjects. Now these eyes have seen and felt. Now these eyes search in order to feel. They learned to see when she who processes images behind the globes plunged below earth.

\*

She squished a thin layer of water between her fins and the boat floor. Foamed neoprene clung to her Matryoshka doll body. She extended her clear mask over her flat mud eyes. The mask didn't look for the eyes but would allow them to view a different world. Her mouth opened to make room for the final piece of her breathing apparatus. She let her shoulders lead her backwards into the water, her fins trailing behind them. Water rushed. Cool wetness enclosed her with a short cascade inside her ears. With exhales, she descended from the cyan to the ultramarine.

\*

A yellow eel lay on the bottom sand. She hovered parallel to the eel, horizontally splitting the water with her flapping legs. Her kicks were scissors to the eels slithered swim. Her eyes spotted the wriggling

movement of a speckled fish poking its nose underneath the reef. She sectioned the scene into a square, extracting the image into her camera. Piping coral grew on top of the reef and drew her eyes outward to the opaque blue where she could just barely make out a grey shadow like a distant mountain range.

\*

She fluttered her fins, nearing the silhouette. As her eyes focused in on the mass, she deciphered her subject. A school of individual elongated fish circulated their formed sphere. The whole spun like a beautiful tornado, each turn at once producing a shine of separate white flashes as fish skin turned from shadow into light. She framed them with a tap on metal to keep them.

\*

She inhaled closer and a cloud became a wall. Tightly packed oval fish layered and overlapped one another weaving a slippery fish basket barrier. Fish like identical cell rows blurred before her reading eyes with nuclei dot eyes missing hers.

\*

With another set of exhales, she descended to the sand. The circular billow appeared flat when directly underneath it. Black figures pulled magnetically by the rounds of their heads drove the circle. Then the school really was not spheroidal. The fish abandoned their stationary rotation and turned and dipped like a swarm of bees. It dipped down to her.

\*

She planted her fins firmly on the seafloor. The swarm angled its large body with its many noses pointed to her. The curved side of the school swam around her until she saw no form to the mass at all. She lifted her camera, then lowered it without snapping. She blinked and saved the image. A frowning open mouthed fish found her with his wide yellow rimmed pupil. He stared. She watched the glistening fish prance and shimmer until they wandered in revolutions into the blue abyss.

\*

She emerged with the sharp line of water separating her vision. Her mask allowed her to still see the blue of the water and the uneven greens of the mountain tops and the grey sky above. The crumpled clear surface of the ocean lay abscissally to her sight. The line wavered and hit against her mask.

\*

She waded to the boat. She took off her mask and set down her camera. Globe eyes looked out onto an orange sky. Some images from her submersion were monochrome and some would marbleize eyes.

Jane Wageman

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## BYSTANDERS TO ANOREXIA, AS CONSTRUCTED BY DALI

The exaggerate skeletal glorification of self above desert plains  
is angular, cut to the bone

Osseous tissue and marrow melted to mold like soft wax  
and harden brittle-rigid.

A bystander peeks about the rotting metacarpals of the creature  
as it laughs cerulean sky cluttered by clouds.

I could not do that,                    I  
could not watch.

I am the handful of soft beans dropped against the door in the dirt:  
soft and humbly thrown.

It is simple and terrible to be a legume, boiled and blind  
below the world deconstructed.

If I struggled to consciousness, I would meet  
a smile collected from teeth bones  
    coarse cords of neck muscles stretched  
        hair strands blurred  
            and a nose needled upwards.

Dali had in mind a people's War  
faceless desperation of the masses  
and sharp-cutting pain, perhaps,  
over the lonely rolling of beans in the dust

Did you know, Dali, the acute pierce of self-mangling,  
twisting wars individual

bone jutting fleshless into the sky starved  
more beautiful than you painted

and more ugly.

When the bones carve themselves to points  
and fight against the flesh, I hear the flesh  
succumbs quietly and falls away  
everything dead but the image  
left dry and narrow  
pulling at her empty breast  
with harsh knuckles.

But I do not see this.            I  
do not watch.

The bystander and I, we are not the same  
We cannot be the same, the bystander and I.

I know nothing of this starving  
skeletal war—I am beans  
ignorantly insulated in plump bean flesh,  
dust-encrusted outside the door, outside  
the door, and never entering or awakening  
to the pained falsity of laughter falling  
shards of bright sky and the whittled ends of bone.

## DEATH INNOCENT

We were new-born walkers  
and soft-soled.  
Feet the curling underbellies  
of flower petals  
Soft and stabbable  
pink skin pulled over  
straining, thin-walled veins.

We existed thisclose to the surface.

Flower flesh brushing rough-  
bumped pavement pocked,  
and bruising muddy purple.

On the sidewalk:  
The frame of a violin-spider  
like spun-sugar  
cinnamon-brown

fractured by pairs  
of misstumbling feet  
slight piano key slip  
into minor D 7th

Child-world struck  
disharmoniously

Perhaps we shattered  
the spider limbs  
Or perhaps she punctured  
our infantile skin.  
Perhaps she was only a corpse  
a hollow exoskeleton  
Or perhaps we grew  
the hard bubble of callouses  
years later.

Bridget Murphy

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## A CONVERSATION WITH ---

someone has to speak  
or write, or sign, or open the damn door already

my imaginary friend is ignoring me, as always

i read the sentence 'how we kill them'  
and then i read the explanation  
but the words have changed on the way back

and the books all close their covers, as if in shame

## DEEP EARTH

Shovel-talk girl spat  
Held a shovel-face and stabbed herself upon the world  
Impaled herself upon the world, a shovel breaking earth.  
Shovel-earth was deeper than it looked.  
Dug deeper than it took.

The only honest ones are shovels here.

Shovel-talk girl splat herself  
And all of you presented flat blades before her.

Shovel-slicing in time past was a sport.  
Shovel-clan to shovel-clan they dueled.  
Ninja shovels played as peasants.  
Tiny shovel daggers in their shoes.

Shovel-savior was Paul Bunyanesque  
And shovel-mother was a crone.  
The storks held tiny shovels to their breasts.  
And dropped them to the earth:  
    Shovel shovel lancing down  
    Down to molten shovel core  
    Ash and iron melts together  
    Echo-shovels have a screaming sound

There is a shovel stabbed upon the moon. Just one.  
Like a lamppost.

Peter Twal

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## PARAISO, TABASCO I SWEAR AND

In the hallway, there's a dead  
cricket. In the room, there's a girl's head  
of hair pulled back so far, tight,  
braided like sunlight and bees. Outside,  
there is nothing. I checked in my head  
with the rest of my bags, and those are gone  
so I guess my head is, too. Flaco.  
He keeps saying outside the airport, ey, Flaco.  
His name is Rigel, and mine isn't  
Flaco. In the truck, Rigel asks if I'm married, if I live  
alone, if I keep drogas under my bed  
in America simply because I have hands.  
An evaporating little boy climbs onto  
our truck's tires to clean the window when  
we stop. The driver with a face like an old baseball  
pays him. Rigel throws his ninth cigarette  
to the ground but doesn't step to extinguish it.  
My hair is not nearly as tightly woven  
as sunlight. Rigel scratches the stubble  
on his cheeks, says Flaco, we find you  
quick girlfriend here, ey, and I kick  
dirt onto an ant.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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BRIDGET APFELD is a senior English major in the Creative Writing concentration, from Wisconsin, and has published in *Re:Visions* twice before.

EVAN BRYSON is from Union County, Indiana. He graduates this spring with an MFA in creative writing.

JACQUELINE CASSIDY is a part of two workshops on campus, the Mustard Club for undergraduates and the Rogue Workshop, which involves the collaboration of both graduate and undergraduate students. She was awarded a silver medal in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her novel, *Broken*.

JAMES COTTON is a graduate student of Italian Studies. Most recently, his poems have appeared in *Measure: a Review of Formal Poetry and The Lyric*, where one of his sonnets won Honorable Mention in that magazine's annual awards.

HELEN CRAMER is a sophomore English and Design double major hailing from South Bend, IN. Writing is like breathing, in that you don't miss it until you realize you've gone without it for a little too long. To combat this, she recommends you sit down with a highly caffeinated beverage and some darn good headphones and start filling up that blank page.

AMY FERNOW's name is Amelia. Like Amelia Bedelia. Except she doesn't like pie all that much.

For now, LUCAS GARCIA is happy. Happy to write and live with writers, many of whom don't even know they are writers yet. He likes reading a lot, and theater a lot, so he decided he would study those things. He is

still unsure about writing. Born, raised, and grounded in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he'd much rather see mountains, but the Dome isn't so bad.

SHELBY GRUBBS is a junior studio art major. Much of her work reflects on the themes of existential and moral philosophy. "Zarathustra" is based on Friedrich Nietzsche's portrayal of morality as being turned on its head; the self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness.

MADLINE HIRSCH is a Junior Marketing major.

SARAH KARCHUNAS is a sophomore Political Science and Theology major from St. Louis, MO. She loves walking around aimlessly taking pictures of campus and is particularly notorious for barely being able to cross God Quad without taking a picture of the Dome.

RACHEL KREJCHI is a Psychology major. She will not psychoanalyze you, but she will talk to you about memory until you think of a polite reason to leave. Haiku is her preferred form. Occasionally, she experiences a fugue state and writes free verse.

Shakespeare is my muse  
So is my roommate, and fish  
. . . What more do I say?

ANNA LEI  
I like to write words  
I am wearing a leopard sweater  
I just whispered 'Peppa Pig'  
Right now, I am really hungry  
I am always hungry  
My poetry reflects this

SADE MURPHY: Don't worry. She knows what she's doing.

BRIDGET MURPHY is a native of the suburbs of Philadelphia, where she likes to take long train rides and even longer walks, the better to write down nosy details about strangers who don't notice her observing them. As the oldest of eight children, she has as much practice in herding unmanageable younger siblings as she does bullying rebellious poetry lines. (Likely more.) Currently, she is a senior English major, with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Irish Studies.

JUSTIN ORR is a junior History and English major from Chicago, IL.

RONNIE PELTIER is a Junior English major in the Creative Writing Honors Concentration at Notre Dame and is currently in London.

JAYME RUSSELL is a cabinet of curiosities.

EMMA TERHAAR loves red, yet is much more of a yellow. She is not a poet, but a verbose tweet composer forced to find another venue to display her witticisms. She is willing to believe in incarnation if it means she can come back as Shakira's baby. Emma is majoring in English and Spanish, qualifying her to properly order food in not one, but two languages, and various slang tongues.

PETER TWAL is both a writer and electrical engineer. After completing his undergraduate degree, he found himself programming software aboard countless ships, despite being certain that just watching *Titanic* made him seasick as a kid. He only sometimes gets dizzy writing poetry these days. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *NAP Magazine*, *plain china*, and *DIG Magazine*. "Paraiso, Tabasco I Swear and" was originally published in *smoking glue gun*. He is currently pursuing his MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame.

Born in Cosamaloapan, Veracruz, Mexico, LAURO VAZQUEZ grew up

in the California bay area. He is a CantoMundo fellow and an MFA student in poetry at the University of Notre Dame's Creative Writing program. He is assistant editor and contributor at Letras Latinas, the literary program at Notre Dame's institute for Latino Studies.

JANE WAGEMAN is a senior English major at the University of Notre Dame, currently student-teaching English classes at John Adams High School.

VIENNA WAGNER is currently studying English at the University of Notre Dame. Her poem "Esther" won a special merit award in the Kenyon Review's Patricia Grodd Poetry contest, and her poem "Art with a Heart" is featured on a Massachusetts Avenue bus shelter for the Indiana Cultural Trail.

JOSEPH WEGENER studies English at the University of Notre Dame and works at Waddick's Cafe.



