

HIGH GRADE 2011

Layout by Jack Crockett

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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Staff

Letter From the Editor

Dear Readers and listeners,

It is with a much-disheartened keyboard I type up this letter, which acts as my last duty of being the editor-in-chief of High Grade before graduating and moving on with my life and career. I've had tremendous joy in the past three years working with the High Grade team. But there is an end to every journey. And while it is sad, I still get to keep the so many happy memories I've created along the years.

I hope and I know that High Grade will continue to shine light upon the literary magic of this school and its staff and students. There is a poem beneath every boulder in Kafadar commons. There is a short story waiting to be told in the basement of Meyer Hall. A simile hanging from the towering bell on Guggenheim. A metaphor lying among the test tubes of the mercury lab in Alderson Hall. And many, many pencils waiting to be sharpened and put to use.

I leave this team with much comfort knowing that Professor Toni Lefton is still here as an adviser. Despite a broken leg, her support never broke. Even from the hospital bed. Nearly sedated and soaked with morphine, she continued saying "High Grade!" Thank you!

So it is a goodbye time for now. Thank you to everyone who gave me the opportunity to steer the wheel. At times we had to maneuver steep corners and slippery roads. But we've always come through. Thank you for reading and listening to us year after year. I hope you enjoy this 2011 edition as much as I did. Be safe and take care.

From the desk of Abdullah Ahmed

Letter From the Other Editor

From the Co-Editor

The human brain is a complex machine that can process and analyze data better than any computer on the planet. It is also capable of unique and beautiful ideas and art. It is within these pages that we will show you the product of a great analytical machine, set to the tune of creation and beauty.

Like any mechanical device, High Grade is composed of many different moving parts that have to work together to run smoothly. This year we have kept the gears oiled and have finished one of our most polished journals to date. This would not be possible without our marvelous staff and their genre editors. Another big thanks goes to our hard working Co - Editor in Chief, Abdullah Ahmed, who will be leaving us this May. No machine would function without a driving force, and we have our amazing advisor, Professor Toni Lefton, as our sustainable source of energy and guidance. Thank you all for making High Grade wonderful this year.

To those who submitted, congratulations on your accomplishments and continue to create; there is never enough art in this world. To the reader, thank you so much for loving High Grade as much as we do.

It has been a remarkable year and I look forward to helping make this journal continue to be one of the best things coming out of the school, aside from the brilliant graduates, of course.

Keep your wheels greased,
Shane E. Schrader
Co-Editor in Chief

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January Morning

SARAH POST

Do not compare for me these snow covered mountains
to cake with icing, nor the crystal blue
juxtaposition of the sky on white and green peaks with a painting
— rather, that cake, perfectly frosted, should compare
to this, so that you are afraid to bite into a piece
lest icy powder be scattered on your lips;
rather, that a painting be so perfect
you are afraid to stand before it,
to feel the still, frozen air
pour into the room,
afraid to touch the sapphire sky
for fear your hand reach past mountains into blue

Charlie

RACHEL RYAN

Every decrepit, blue vein shows through
translucent, spotted skin
which drapes off the long, frail fingers
As he refills the syrup bottles
slowly
careful to wipe the table underneath
when it sneaks up on him
and comes out too quickly

...

Palm trees burning
treading quickly through
the thick haze of
an endless jungle to the sound
of helicopters and gunfire

...

I ask him what he's still doing here
filling syrup bottles,
Couldn't he have retired by now?
Without looking up, he chuckles
"You'd never guess what it looks like,
the blood,
when an M48 rolls over a pile of flesh."

Lost in Elsewhere

TONI LEFTON

Feel the minutes ticking
like a pulse, of being alive
in the very skin you are in,
don't think about tomorrow,
next week, next year, next
wonder, scheme, guessing
what has been misplaced,
misaid, missing, or gone.

But currently my feet are cold
and the picture above the mantel
hangs crooked, my leg is broken
in three places and I cannot straighten
the tilt of the room, cannot delineate
its corners from its walls because
they are all boundaries to me—
a demarcation of obstacles
in my here and now so I fall away

to somewhere else, a relocation,
a tail gate party, a gypsy road trip,
a traveling show, where the walls
of the city and corners of town
are heavy with sandalwood,
where women turn persimmons over
in baskets, cobbled alleys fill
with the caterwaul of crooks and vendors,
cheap silver trinkets and old wooden carts,
where the days' task is to wander in the sun
and sort through the exotic, changed

by that moment of theft, of stealing
another life lingering on a foreign street
and far-off pretending, cheating the present
with an impossible or at least unlikely desire.
I return from my lollygagging to the unchangeable
room, to the attendance of now where my feet
are cold and my limbs lie in repose,
the sweet juice of persimmons on my lips.

The Flow of Time

MARIAH STETTNER

Drip,

Drop, Tick, Tock

The endless monotony of those
everlasting onomatopoeias. Second by second,
minute by minute, day by day. The drone of past,
present, future. Day after day, year after year.

Nothing changing.

Time flows by, just as the drip-drop water,
tick-talking from the tap.

Drip,

Drop.

Tick,

Tock.

Day by day,

time flies

by.

The Purple Dinosaur

SHANE SCHRADER

In his dressing room he sweats
as if on safari. His hands shake
cold, betraying his quest to relax.
Set manager calls 5 minutes til cameras roll.

He unzips a small black case slowly wishing
he didn't need that needle.
Shaking, again, he purifies the syringe
that will corrupt his consciousness.

Taking his hit of heroin in the left arm
the right quivers afterwards, guilty, and falls.
His exhale is death-rattle cold,
empty-coffee-mug shallow.

He hides in the costume with pretended vigor
and fake confidence. Waddling as a giant
purple penguin he wanders on set. A tail wag
for good measure, as the children sing

“I love you, you love me....”

Sweet

LILY NYGUYEN

i am a sweet

kind of girl

i like honey on my

chocolate

chip bagels

chocolate-covered

strawberries

raspberry chocolate

cheesecake

mint-cheesecake-

strawberry ice

cream with Kit Kats

but then I like coffee

just straight, just

dark

black

burning

bitter

no cream, no

sugar for me

just give me the cup!

yet-

who is this?

i am a sweet kind of girl

i like honey on my chocolate chip bagel

chocolate-covered strawberries

raspberry chocolate cheesecake

mint-cheesecake-strawberry ice cream

with Kit Kats

i think the child in me is messing with
the college

student

sleep-deprived

am I growing UP?

or slowing

D

O

W

N

rush through life — that's why

I like the black liquid now

What if I mixed

coffee with honey?

Magnificat

KELLY CHIPPS

Some people swore that the house was haunted.

There may have been something to the rumor, I suppose; cool summer evenings with the window open, the breeze, never steady, would maneuver into the room and toss the paper-lantern light like the proverbial park swing devoid of a child. Hell, some people swore the whole city was haunted. There were six distinct “World Famous” ghost tours one could join on any given night.

It had been a cold year in the north of England. The usually prolific blackberries were few, small and unpleasantly tart. A weak sun hardly broke the clouds, I swear not even trying, despite the elongated hours between sunup and sundown. The whole year seemed to merge into one damp, milky twilight. I was forced to rely on externals: so many cups of coffee, so many hours with the SAD lamp, so many pints of beer at the local pub. Heavy British ales almost as depressing as the weather. I was a child of the desert, solar powered, so what was I doing here in this soggy, godforsaken flatland where the daylight was simply a milder shade of grey? In those awful early hours of the morning, everything seemed so soft — and here I was, incessantly smothered by the unending greyscale softness.

But I knew why I was here: that grand and imposing Gothic cathedral. I was here to study the intensely colorful and iconographic stained glass windows — one cannot do it from photos alone — and though I made a point to visit other smaller churches and chapels, ruined abbeys and cloisters-turned-libraries, the draw of the Minster was like a drug. I chose this flat because I could see the Central Tower from my bedroom window, lit from below like some ghostly movie set, towering over the Victorian houses and Georgian market streets that filled the intervening two miles. Around my neck, a tiny piece of purple glass set in filigree; it was a polished, thousand-year-old chip from the Five Sisters window in the North Transept.

And, of course, you were here.

I first encountered you during an Evensong that summer. There was a benefit to my arriving under academic auspices, for I was able to move freely throughout the ancient building, into the Chapter House and undercroft without paying admission; but I tried weekly to attend a service, to see the warm trimmings of the Anglican Church festooning the cold stone and feel the reverberation of the gilded organ in my chest. I noticed you immediately, across the Quire, obscured partially behind a lectern. You glanced up, and I caught the emerald shimmer of your eyes and held it for one ecstatic, eternal instant.

I choked; a searing pain welled up behind my ribcage like a fanned flame. The whole chapel was suddenly alight, walls crumbled, ceilings dissolved. Was anyone in the whole of England but you and I? I don't know what happened next – all I could recall was the deep, living forest in your eyes, and then the organ voluntary. You had disappeared, along with everything else, into that murky, overcast twilight which eventually tainted the whole of life.

“Of course you were here,” I thought, but were you? I never saw you again. I was convinced the entire occasion must have been mere dreaming, my subconscious acting out against the mundane, colorless circumstances of my conscious life, except for one thing. Since that night, when I had arrived home, the chip of stained glass around my neck was green.

Nothing was ever the same again after that.

Color Matters

MATTHEW CANNIZZARO

after Virginia Woolf's "A Room of One's Own"

In a gorgeous bunch of bright green grapes
the purple pigment was suspicious.
It took courage to cleanly twist and taste
to find it too, was delicious.

She lifts a heavy lid to look into the trash
finding shriveled sisters on skeletal stems.
They had hung themselves atop
their vines, wasted gems.

She caught a peak of the clever cook's salad—
all green grapes served as superior fruits
oblivious to their missing colleagues
grown from identical roots.

In a gorgeous bunch of bright green grapes
the purple pigment was suspicious.
Because the clever cook took no chances
the patrons will never know

purple was delicious.

Today,
I wrote my feelings
ERIN SMITH

Today, I wrote my feelings
for you on a balloon

and watched it disappear

into the clouds.

Now only God and I know.

I hope He tells you.

New Years Resolution

CARRIE SONNEBORN

HAIKU JAN 1, 2011

Buzzards circle low
What's past has died — celebrate
The new with a feast!

HAIKU JAN 4, 2011

A young boy sledding
in the snowy yard today
or 100 years ago.

HAIKU JAN 8, 2011

Gunshots and hatred
In Arizona tonight
Cry my country cry.

Surviving an Immortal Flight

MARIA GALLASTEGU

*Gilgamesh was king of Uruk, a city set between the Tigris
And the Euphrates rivers in ancient Babylonia.*

I remember when I was strong and daring, when selfish desires and simple satisfactions filled my life.

*Son of Lugalbanda – Gilgamesh is the pattern of strength,
Child of that great wild cow, Ninsun,
...Gilgamesh, dazzling, sublime...*

*Two-thirds of him is divine, one-third human.
The image of his body the Great Goddess designed.*

Those first years were stable and lived without surprises. The days were shared with three beautiful brothers with whom I played out myths and games. Dad died.

That did not seem to be a problem, we knew of the “secret cause.”

But the world started to get chaotic at a slow and sticky pace. We met then.

*Enkidu was ignorant of oldness. He ran with the animals,
Drank at their spring, not knowing fear or wisdom.*

My brothers disappeared from my view one by one. Then it was the house. That did not seem to be a problem.

*Then Gilgamesh stood still exhausted.
He turned to Enkidu who leaned against his shoulder
And looked into his eyes, and saw himself in the other,
Just as Enkidu saw himself in Gilgamesh.*

I was taken into the shadow corner of normal life. I spent some years in a house for the underage. And at the bargain prize of two tokens: my voice and my freedom, I discovered a new wild being within myself. I was strong and good, I was also dark and wild, and we were one. Together we lost the only things we had left: our trust, our illusions, and our feelings.

One day we were told we were grown ups and could leave.

*Gilgamesh spoke then: We go to kill the Evil one, Humbaba.
We must prove ourselves more powerful than he.*

We went back to the world of the free people. But the free people did not want to know of the dark sides, and you died because you could not speak their language. I saw you, dark wild me, lifeless.

*Gilgamesh wandered through out the desert alone as he had
Never been alone
When he had craved but not to know what he craved;
The dryness now was worst than decay.*

I learned to live and talk like the free, to feel and laugh again.
But life was a problem.

*His life became a quest to find the secret of the eternal life
Which he might carry back to give his friend.
He yearned to talk to Utnapishtim,
The one who had survived the flood and death itself,
The one who knew the secret.*

*The scorpion interrupted him and laughed,
Being impatient with such tales and fearful of sentiment:
No one is able to explain,*

*No one has gone beyond these mountains.
There is only death.*

I wanted to have an answer... at any price.

I went to India. That was a shared path with the free. They spoke many languages, although they all shared the one of commerce. But they did not speak mine and I lived in silence being eyes. They were blind, I found out, because their gaze, turned inwards, was wrestling in a swamp of confusion and self-absorption while the world around was pointing dark bony hands at us – “Country coin, madam. Country coin...” It felt as a warning call to the paradoxical in our ways. I wanted light... at the risk of darkness.

*I only want to speak to Utnapishtim, to reach his shore.
Can you help me?
Perhaps, the boatman said, but I have a few questions
To ask first. Why are your eyes so full of grief?
What have you known of loss that makes you
Different from other men?*

I came back with empty hands; hands so empty they held a mystery that could only be lived. And the search became more urgent and dangerous.

*Now Gilgamesh was alone. The boatman's voice
Could still be heard, but faintly, from the shore.
Don't let the waters touch your hand.
And Gilgamesh drifted on the sea of death.*

I went to the world of high-rises, speed, and abundance. It was not a rich or liberated world; it was a madness of waste and disregard. I used the language of commerce, and I laughed and I lived. And I loved...

But darkness was infinite. And I had to return to India.

*Utnapishtim stood in the other shore. He wondered
Who the man was that resembled loss itself.*

I had to go back to understand the empty hands.

*I know your pain too well, said Utnapishtim.
I will tell you a secret I have never told.
Something to take with you and guard.
There is a plant in the river. Its thorns
Will prick your hands as a rose thorn pricks
But it will give you new life.*

And I went back to the high-rises and to the love of a man that knew of deep waters and calmed my internal storms.

*He stopped to drink and rest beside a pool
And soon undressed and let himself slip in
The water quietly until he was refreshed,
Leaving the plant unguarded on the ground.
A serpent had smelled its sweet fragrance and saw
Its chance to come from the water, and devoured
The plant, shredding his skin as slough.*

We were two then, and I was he. We left the high-rises in search of mountains and snow. I had never known before of so many years without chaotic events. And slowly, the boundaries of the free world and the wild one started to melt away.

*His naked body glistening and refreshed,
The plant was gone; the discarded skin
Of a serpent was all he saw. He sat*

Down on the ground, and wept.

It was then when I learned a language, the language of art, which took away the last veil of misunderstanding - I had always had the experience, we all had, but we lost the meaning. When was my quest transformed to an immortal flight?

I am back, Enkidu. You lie dark, lifeless, and I cannot bring you back. There is no need, Gilgamesh.

Life is not a problem.

She Wanted to Save Me the Sky

SHIRA RICHMAN

My first word was north. I knew it
would be, but not what it meant
until I said it. I said it when I saw a white

speck in the blue-black sky. That's when
my mother said, Pack up. It's time
we move. South, and drove us down to Aberdeen

where the clouds perpetually cover the face of the
sky.

That winter she announced, Four-thirty
is the new magic number, your new bedtime.

I knew she knew I shouldn't see
the dandelion seed shaped light.
That's when north started multiplying in my dreams
until it undid the dark, undid the night.

Twat Monster

RACHEL RYAN

On a special Christmas Eve
in the little town of Bore
(where the people never leave
and the time is always four)

there appeared a certain monster
that will never be forgot
and when they asked his name
he told them it was Twat

This particular Twat monster
had traveled coast to coast
for several years at least
in search of raisin toast

The poor people of Bore
all stood and stared in fear
as Twat monster demanded
enough toast for a year

“But we will surely starve”
said the timid mayor of Bore
who had never once encountered
such an evil beast before

Just then there came along
a woman, quite austere
who tried to hug the beast
and Twat monster disappeared

Hoots and cheers arose
from the people down below
who began to ask the hero
just how did you know

The woman turned and spoke
as her steed began to trot
“I’m familiar with the type,
my boyfriend is a twat.”

Proteus among the Reeds

DAVID SOMMER

Along a ragged coast,
among the reeds and the rocks
and shallow, pebbled water
stands a boy,
waist deep
cold
listening
to a strange voice in the misty silence
at dusk
to words receding slowly into the vast expanse
still
and waiting, a throbbing and sputtering form with-
out shape
taking his hand.

Among the pretense and illusion,
among the dying Spectation
and the cacophony of the intrusion
whispers
from an old crane in an old season
break lazily on an eroded shore.

Not So Far Off

KELSY KOPECKY

“Let me play with it,” the little brown haired, blue eyed boy pleaded to his older brother.

“This isn’t a toy,” the brother replied with annoyance. His hair was darker than his younger sibling, and eyes a typical brown. His hands were fumbling with the knobs on the front of an old radio. It has intricate designs carved into its wooden frame and a light wood mesh speaker. Their father was going to throw it out until the brothers expressed an interest in it.

“You’re playing with it!”

“No I’m not; I’m trying to get it to work.”

“Well let me try!”

“No, you’ll break it.”

The younger brother huffed and crossed his hands over his chest. The older ignored him, and continued to twist the old dials, trying to bring up some sort of sound. It should still work, but who knows if it could even pick up a signal anymore. He leaned back slightly in his chair, thinking about what else he could try.

In the few short moments he was thinking, the younger brother grabbed the radio off of the table and clutched it close to his chest, turning quickly and running down the hallway. The older stood up quickly, tipping back the chair and running after him.

“Joseph!” the older yelled after him. The younger slid with his socks on the hardwood floor around the corner of the hallway. Pictures of the

two siblings, their parents, and their grandparents lined the light blue walls. Reaching one of the last rooms in the hall, Joseph turned into it quickly, moving behind the door and closing it just as the older slammed into it. The two battled with their weight against the door, the older brother having opened it again. Taking a final push, Joseph was able to push the door closed and, still using one hand to hold onto the radio, pushed in the lock. Noticing the door could no longer be opened from his side, the older brother banged his fists on the door as a last desperate attempt to make Joseph give in.

“When mom gets home, you’re going to be in trouble,” he said, finally giving up and going into his own room. Joseph listened with an ear to the door for the sound of his brother walking away. Satisfied that he was now safe in his room, the blue eyed boy walked over to his desk at the corner of his room and set the radio on it. On the walls above the desk were posters of space shuttles, solar systems, and constellations, along with a calendar dated 2048. Beside the desk facing out the window was a telescope.

Joseph sat down in the chair, head on an arm folded on the table, and fiddled with the dials with his free hand. He mindlessly made adjustments, realizing there wasn’t really any use for the radio and so there really wasn’t any reason for him to have taken it other than sibling rivalry. The boy sighed, looking up at his posters while still messing with the dials. Daydreaming, he almost didn’t notice the small static that came through the radio. A large smile spread across his face, revealing the empty space of a newly lost front tooth. He listened to the static that came through the radio, and began to notice it was actually a short series of clicks that repeated over and over. He grabbed a piece of paper that had some of his school notes on it and flipped it over. He wrote down the settings on the dials so he may be able to find it again.

Shoes clicked over the linoleum floor at a fast pace. The short man hustled down the bland hallway until he reached the room he was heading towards. The door was left open letting others know they were free to come in, which the man did. Three people, two men and a woman, sat at a table, each using the touch computers that were built into the table. One of the men looked up. He had short dark blonde hair and blue eyes, and was wearing a blue military uniform like the other two were.

“Patrick, right? What’s up?” he asked with a raised eye brow. He interlaced his fingers in front of him.

“Well, Sir,” Patrick said, turning and closing the door behind him. “There was a signal that has come through an unused frequency. We’ve checked everything on this earth that is letting out a signal and none are using this frequency.”

The man looked at the other two and they leaned back, allowing him to use the entire table computer. Patrick ran through a series of files and passwords on the computer and brought up a recording of the signal. The four people listened quizzically at the series of clicks that sounded very close to static.

“Sounds just like some sort of interference to me,” the woman said, shrugging. Her long black hair was pulled back into a pony tail. The other man, who had short brown hair and blue eyes leaned back in his chair and began to bob his head slightly, finding a rhythm in the sound.

“Joseph?” the blond man questioned his friend’s odd behavior.

“Andy... I-I’ve heard this before,” Joseph said, still keeping the rhythm with his head. “When I was a kid listening to an old radio that was my grandfather’s.” Andy, Patrick, and the woman looked at each other with confusion. Joseph sat back for a little while more before sliding his

chair forward and began typing on the screen, slowing down the recording to be able to pick out each individual beat.

One. One. One. One two. One two three four. One two three.

“I never could figure out what it meant,” he said again, looking at Andy. Andy leaned back in his chair and stroked his chin a few times before turning to the woman.

“Julia, get a small team together and try to send a signal back,” he said.

“Yes Sir,” she nodded. “What signal?”

“The same thing back.”

She stood and hustled out the room. Andy looked back over to Joseph who had both of his hands folded under his head.

“Out of an old radio?” Andy questioned again.

“Yep. I was already into space, but that made me really want to get into learning about satellites and how they work,” Joseph said with a slight laugh. After listening to the radio for a few nights when he first found the frequency, he began to think he was crazy for even thinking it was important. But now, 24 years later, here was evidence that he wasn’t, and that he had a true reason for joining the space program.

The stars seemed so far off in the distance even though they were closer than back on earth. In certain places, Joseph could pick out where a galaxy was, the spinning group of stars hanging in the dark sky. He

walked to another window, looking at others up on the viewing deck of the space ship. The advancements that man had made in the past 100 years was astonishing. They were traveling between galaxies!

He looked out of the other window, barely picking out the Milky Way among the stars. Every ten years the crew of the ship were woken up from cryogenic sleep to stretch their muscles and rebuild their strength, and also check up on their progress. Already they had been traveling for over a century.

Moving to the front view, their destination could be seen. The large cloud of stars swirled, two large “arms” of more stars reached out, spiraling around it. Joseph smiled. It took them eight years to get an exact location of the signal, but they had it. A small planet near the edge of a neighboring galaxy. It had been overlooked due to its oxygen absent atmosphere. But after sending a fast satellite back over, a community complete with buildings was able to be seen. The satellite wasn’t equipped to be able to land and get a better view, but that was what made this expedition so exciting. Joseph was the first to be asked to come on the ship. Next was his brother who shamelessly admitted to not believing his younger brother when he was 10 years old and saying he got the radio to work. The two had joked about the matter for years.

“Next time we wake up, Jeremy, we’ll be there,” Joseph said to his brother who walked up beside him, also leaning forward on the railing.

“Just think of everyone back on Earth waiting for word. They don’t get a system of sleep like we have,” he replied.

“That’s for sure.” Joseph stood with a smile on his face as he examined every inch of the galaxy. Once they landed on the alien world, he wanted to find the man—or thing—that sent out the signal back in 2048.

The crew of the ship looked out the windows with awe despite them being nervous. The sky was a green color with dark gray clouds, and the ground and vegetation below was varying shades of orange. The planet was a bit closer to their sun than Earth was to her's, but it was the first planet in their solar system.

As the ship got closer to the surface, a few moving and shifting figures could be seen. It took a few more moments to make out their shape.

The aliens had flat, triangle shaped heads. On each side were long pits, but they had no eyes. Their thick neck looked similar to a chest cavity as it bent in near the bottom. A single front leg with three hoofed toes came from the base of the neck. Their large bodies ran back to two single-hoofed back legs. Their colorations were mostly red and yellow colors, with a few extreme shades here and there. Not until the ship landed, could the crew determine that they were about the same height as themselves when they were down on their front legs. A few of the aliens were standing on just their back legs.

Joseph took a deep breath and smiled, laughing. It had been 152 years since he first played with the radio, and now he was going to meet aliens. It was first contact. He turned around and looked at the crew who all smiled at him as well.

“How’s the air?” He asked one of the people sitting at a computer as they tested the atmosphere. Unfortunately it wasn’t suitable for humans, so they would have to wear space suits. Luckily they were less bulky than the original suits astronauts had to wear. They were still a bit baggy, but the helmet was just glass all around giving peripheral vision. Joseph would be the first to go as he was the commander of the ship.

Joseph took a deep breath to calm himself, opened the door in the air lock, and stepped out onto the orange-hued planet. One of the aliens stood in front of the rest. He had deep red scales on the top of his head and stripes on his back in the same color. Those stripes were separated by light orange ones. His hooves were bright red. Around his chest-like neck hung a green piece of cloth with various groups of dots in different colors weaved into its thread.

So they have cloth, Joseph noted as he approached the alien who he assumed to be the leader. He looked at the alien who lowered himself from off of his back legs down to all three, making their heads level.

Can it see? It doesn't have eyes... but those pits on the sides of its head. Maybe it's like a snake, he concluded. It seemed to be able to sense movements in the air through those pits. He was curious as to what it actually "saw."

Bending its knee down low to the ground—the alien didn't seem to have ankles—it was able to reach out its front foot towards him, bottoms of its hooves forward. Joseph did what he thought was best, and touched the tips of his fingers to the bottom of the hooves. The alien opened its mouth—which held no tongue and appeared to have two throats—and let out a series of click sounds, similar to that in the signal.

"Hello," Joseph said, not knowing how else to respond. The alien tilted its head and lowered its hoof. Joseph began to panic slightly, wondering if he had done something wrong. The alien turned around to its people, standing up on its back legs again, and made a different, deeper clicking sound. Joseph looked behind him at some of his crew, who stood just outside the entrance of the ship. Looking back to the alien, it motioned for Joseph to step forward. Taking a deep breath he did.

The other aliens stood up as well and began to make clicking sounds.

After a few moments, the leader stood up as high as he could and let out a single, loud click. The group was silent. He let out a few lighter clicks and another alien walked forward and then lowered himself onto his front leg. This one wore a deep blue cloth with a different series of circles and colors in it. It looked at Joseph and extended its front foot like the leader had done. Joseph made the same motion he had before.

Blue-cloth lowered his foot and looked around Joseph at the other people, and motioned for them to follow him as well.

The buildings appeared to be made of solid pieces of stone, draped with red cloth. None of them were more than a few stories high, which would probably equal two stories considering how tall the aliens were when they stood. The vegetation was much different as well. Tall orange stalks stood with large yellow and red flower-like ends. The ground was all stone, and the plants seemed to grow out of long, straight cracks. Without a doubt those cracks were hand made, much like how people dig holes to plant trees or flowers.

In between the buildings stood lines of other aliens. As the group rounded a corner, they were very close to one group of them. Joseph stopped and looked at the aliens, smiling. Looking down, he noticed what was probably a baby or young alien—how old these creatures lived he had no idea. He kneeled down, smiling. The young alien backed up a bit. He had two additional front legs for a total of three. Maybe they couldn't stand on their hind legs till they reached a certain age?

“Its alright,” Joseph said softly, knowing that it couldn't understand, but the tone of his voice may help. He stretched out his hand. After a few moments and some prodding from what Joseph believed was the baby's mother or father, the baby stepped forward and lifted its middle front leg.

Right after its hooves touched his fingers, the baby backed up behind its parent. Joseph and his crew laughed, and even the aliens seemed to have a click sound similar to a chuckle. Joseph stood and saw Blue-cloth standing with a slightly tilted head and slightly open mouth. To him, it seemed like the alien was happy.

Eventually the group reached a building which was made entirely of stone instead of having the hanging cloth. Their doors were still made of cloth, probably because of their lack of gripping hands. Joseph began to wonder how they even made the buildings without proper hands.

Inside the building were what they would consider computers, and surprisingly, robots. They were hands consisting of three fingers. That explained how they would be able to make buildings or the cuts in the rock, but now Joseph wondered how they made those. And if they had robots, what about other technologies? They seemed less advanced in some aspects, but more in others.

Blue-cloth stood next to a table which was filled with a light dusting of yellow sand. The alien folded back his two outer toes and made a series of dots in the sand with his middle toe. From a camera above and from four other smaller cameras in the corners of the table a hologram appeared above the marks of a markingless alien. Confused at what Blue-cloth was trying to tell him, Joseph shook his head and shrugged his shoulders at the alien. The alien moved over to a smooth area of sand, and made a different series of dots. One of their flower-like trees appeared.

“I think,” Joseph said to his brother besides him, “They are trying to teach us their language or learn ours.” His brother nodded and Joseph turned to one of his crew members who held a small computer which had uploaded pictures from Earth on it. Taking the computer and moving to the same side of the table that Blue-cloth was on, Joseph brought up two pictures: a flower and a tree. Then in the sand he wrote the words in Eng-

lish.

Blue-cloth clicked a few words to the others in the room and they brought up a digital version of words with their own language next to it. They were making a dictionary.

Joseph and the crew stayed on the planet for over a year helping make the dictionary. Luckily they were able to eat the “fruit” on this planet which gave the travelers a break from their space food. There were other species on the planet of course, but the aliens—who the humans began to call Throts—seemed to have no use for most of them. A few of the smaller ones were kept as pets. This planet seemed to have mostly a three-leg system, much like Earth had a four-leg. Most also had their brain in their throat, the reason for the thick, chest-like neck, and also was reason for their flat heads. Why a system with no eyes had evolved was a mystery even to them, but the sensing pits seemed to work just fine.

The dictionary was hard at some times, having so many differences between the worlds, but the vast number of similarities made up for that.

The humans were able to communicate with the Throts through the dictionary. A keyboard was able to be connected to their system so a human could type, and it would output the translation.

Joseph had many conversations with Blue-cloth who they named Tour. Most were about their individual worlds: what it was like, the creatures that lived there and what technologies they had. But this time, Joseph decided to ask the question he had been wondering for a long time.

“Who sent the original signal?” Joseph typed. The words appeared in front of Tour on the other side of the sand table. He put his answer in the

sand.

“I did/want,” Tour replied. The translator wasn’t exact enough yet so it showed the various options for each word.

“I thank you then. I wouldn’t be here if you hadn’t done that,” Joseph replied with a smile. Tour seemed slightly confused at the statement but opened his mouth slightly in his species’ version of a smile.

Poem Cycle

FATIMA AZZAHRA EL AZZOUZI

CALL

A sea of ceramic rests in the heart of a pure wall
Stranger secrets whisper a virgin call
Go alive

AROUND

A truth circle for the lost host
A far destiny for the open guest
Up there

PIZZA

On the way, its charming smell will await
Too close, the upper piece does not fit
It's elsewhere

REVOLUTION

The free thread oscillates in revolution
Her happiness accelerates motion
Till zero

THE WAY TO GO

Peace lies on the sofa
So stylish and easy-going
It doesn't need answers
For there are no questions
Maybe it's the way to go
The last examination before that is
Finding war and killing it
So funny how the circle is drawn
Leave it to justice

Tangled

KEVIN BARRY



Iron Gaze

MARIAH STETTNER



Broken Lines

ANDREW SUDERMAN



Mud Hut Frame

BRENT GOODLET



KUNAR, AFGHANISTAN

Deadly Beautiful

BRENT GOODLET



THE WAYGUL VALLEY

Man's Eyes

CARLY PAIGE



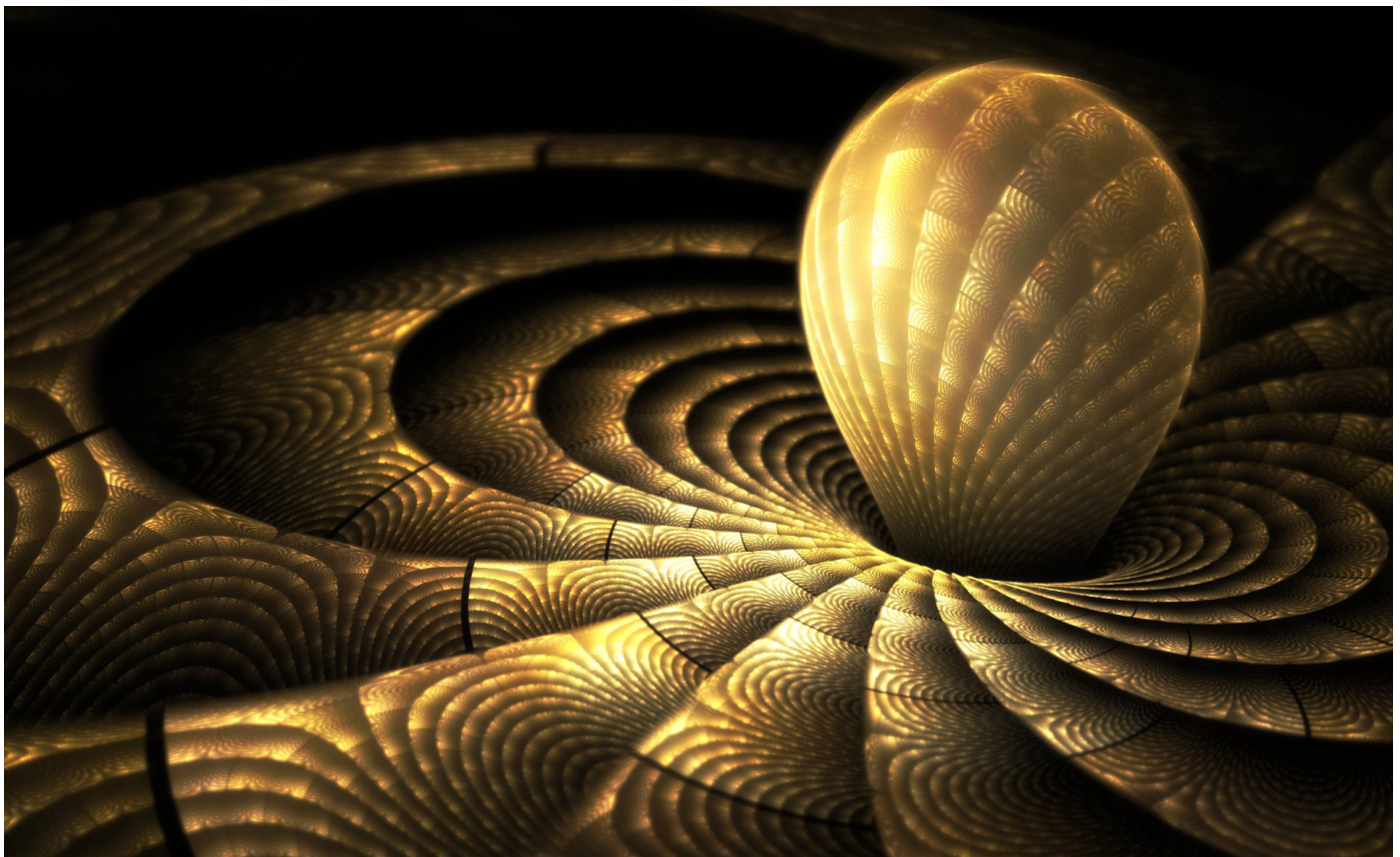
The Great Unfolding

KATHERINE BACHMAN



Vorpals Reflection

JOHN PIGG



Grandma

FANGYU GAO



il est blanc

ZULHILMI YUSOP



Abandoned

ALAN NGUYEN



Storm Rising

IAN STONE



Lux Aestatis no. 2

IAN STONE



She holds our hands

SARAH McMURRAY



AND LOOKS OUT.

It's beautiful, but it hurts me

SARAH McMURRAY



AS WILLOW IS GROWING, GRANDMA IS DYING. I THINK I'M HAVING TROUBLE COPING. ONE MINUTE, I THINK I'VE ACCEPTED REALITY - BUT WHEN I WALKED INTO GRANDMA'S HOUSE DURING THIS VISIT, SMELLED THE COMPLETELY UNIQUE SMELL THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN GRANDMA'S HOUSE, AND SHE WASN'T THERE SITTING AT THE KITCHEN TABLE TO SMILE AT ME, I BURST INTO SOBS. IN FACT, I'M CRYING AGAIN RIGHT NOW REMEMBERING IT.

Autumn Bubbles

PAUL HOLCOMB



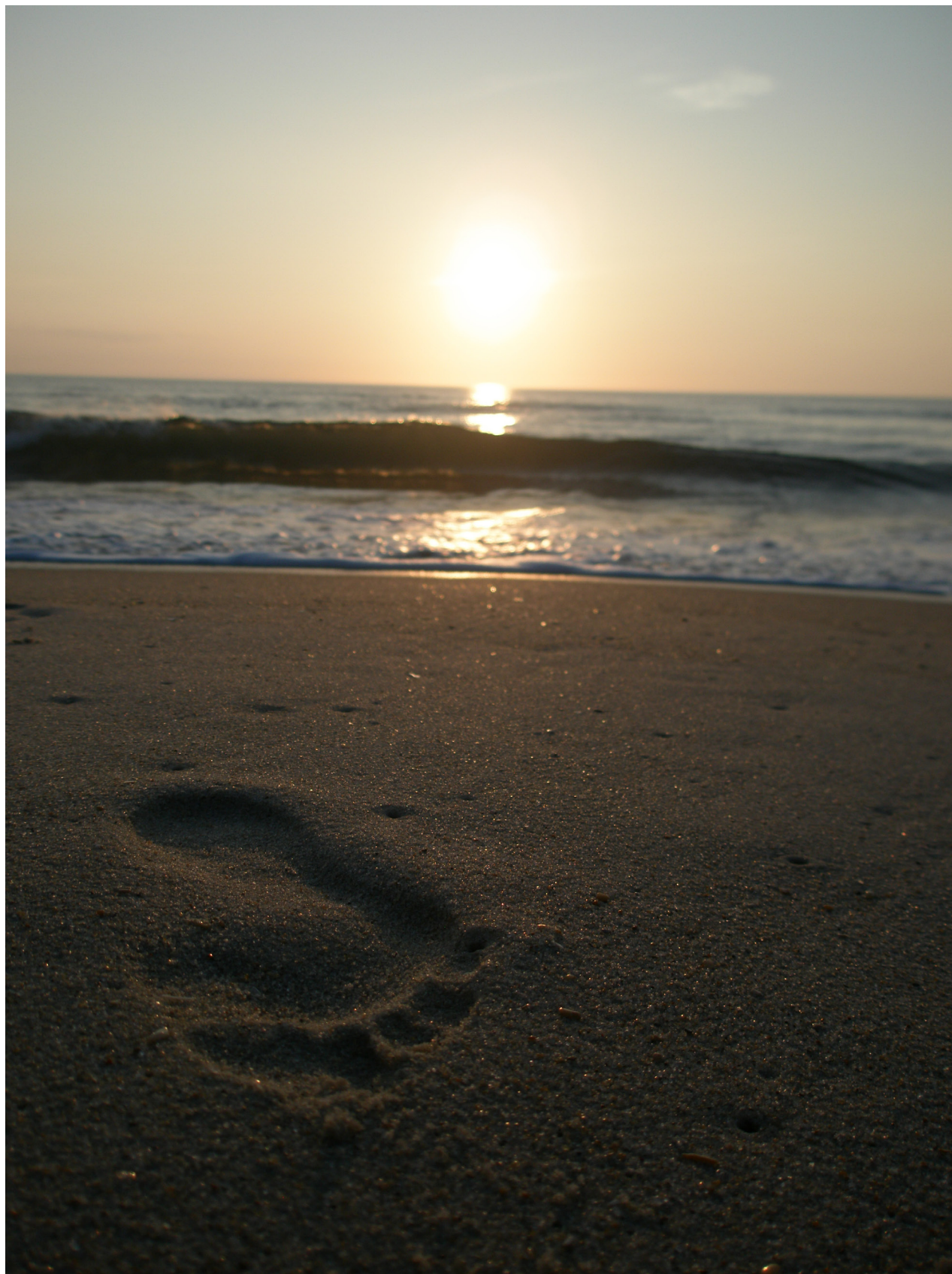
North Shore Sunset

BRIANNA RISTER



A New Beginning

KRISTEN HEIDEN



Ms. Holmes

KEVIN BARRY



First Impressions

RACHEL MADLAND



Beauty in Black and White

MARIAH STETTNER



Hell's Engine

JOHN PIGG



Strasbourg Walschaerts

PAUL SZUHAY



Lost in Translation

CHRISTINE HRDLICKA



Desert Night

CHELSEA PARTEN



Aspen Lined Trail

MATTHEW LEMKE



BIG Fish

PHIL ROYALTY



The Power of Pink

KIMBERLEE LAMPHERE



Tea Time High

KYLE SCHULZ



Sunrise over a Seashell

KRISTEN HEIDEN



Chronos

IAN STONE



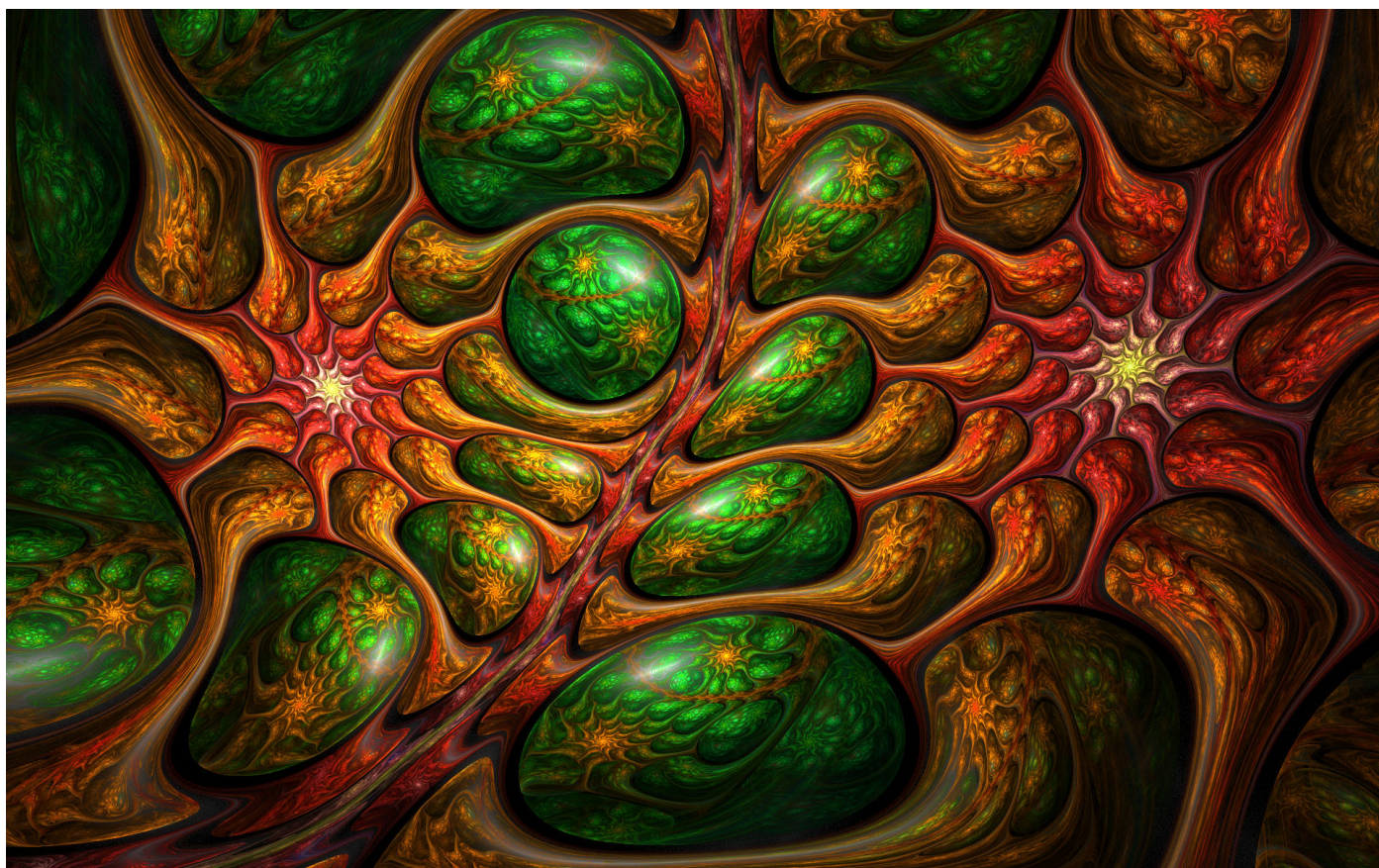
Sap Reflection

PAUL HOLCOMB



Summerfruit

JOHN PIGG



Fox Moon

KELSEY KOPECKY



Frozen Waterfall and Waterwheel

OSCAR FERUT



Don't Leave Me Alone

ZULHILMI YUSOP



Toro Nagashi

BRYAN KANG

Toro Nagashi – “a Japanese ceremony in which participants float paper lanterns down a river. This is primarily done on the last evening of the Bon Festival based on the belief that this guides the spirits of the departed back to the other world.” (Wikipedia)

When time is darkest
and the sea

 once tranquil
cries enough tears to flood my world
and take from me my family
 love
 and home

I light a weak flame
and begin crafting a lantern.
It's a slow process,
the flickering and fluttering flame
and my steady flow of tears
adding to the flooded waters,
blind me from my work

Too many times
the wind threatens my flame
but the cries around me,
the yearning and weeping
nurture my candle light
keeping it lit

Piece

by

Piece

I craft the beacon
from the rubble around me
trying to rebuild hope
and as time passes
and the lantern becomes whole
the flickering flame grows brighter

Then, on the sides,
using mud and blood

I paint my family

love

and home

I place my candle,
shining brightly,
into the crafted lamp
and rest it on the rising water

unsure

if the debris can drift
on the sea that once destroyed it
but it does

and as it floats out to the world
the tears stop feeding the flood
and eyes follow my bright flame

It is only one out of the thousands more needed
to help those who perished to find their way to peace
but now, my flame is not the only one
that brightens the dark sea

Manifesto

BENJAMINE CONLEY

Who am I, this face in the crowd?

If you do not understand me, do not worry; I am one of the harmless lost, the damned. If you understand me, you are already lost like I am; do not worry either, I bear no compass.

Call me Shadow, for I am the shadow of no one, a simulacrum with no original. Who I was has no meaning as it is not who I am now. For such a reason that my name has no meaning beyond what I call myself; call me Shadow.

I hold a job, I pay my taxes, I appear on the street, but this is where the similarity ends. When I disappear from your peripheral vision, I am gone, I am dead. You go on, you live, but I have died long ago. I have left your world.

I retreat to my cave, my lair. That small dingy apartment is my own. From its condition you might presume I rent from some slumlord; in truth I own it. I choose to live in this midden heap.

This room, my room, is packed with bookshelves and odd junk; all is covered in a suffocating layer of dust. But, this is the state of nature: decay, corruption.

The bare, dim light of the incandescent light heats the nearly unheated room. Light of day does not pierce this place; the bent window blinds block revelation. The only stars I see are the scattered small lights of the assorted towers, monitors, server racks, and power strips. But this itself is the state of nature, my state of nature, for I left the world of the living long ago.

This cave of steel and silicon is my home and reality. This is my realm.

I sit and connect and I am everyone and everywhere at once.

I see, hear, and read a thousand tales every night. I read a thousand epitaphs and hear cries of millions suffering with deaf ears and feel nothing. I feel the pulse of nations and merciless march of commerce. This surge courses through to my cave, like in a tide pool, I too am drawn out to sea. As an angry storm, I scream a thousand tongues of discord, all of them

my own; I echo the cry of the proletariat and the call to arms of the reactionary. I command all to assemble in mass, bring arms and chaos to the streets. Let the blood flow through the gutters and I will cheer in the screaming mob. I weep for a million murdered martyrs and hold vigil for those immolating themselves at the altars of hate. Yet I do not take the streets, I do not join the crusade.

I stare into the flickering light of a monitor, my form a shadow, a silhouette against the wall.

Join me.

Death of a Graveyard

LINCOLN CARR

The old cemetery leans into the skyscrapers
The tombstones stretch and moan
The grass scrabbles at its borders
A wasteland of cleanliness to keep out the ghosts

My children, be silent
Do not disturb the living
They will not thank you for your reminders
For your underground museums

The trees spring up and
Are cut down in their prime,
Rain pools in this little green space
The bulldozers are coming
And the dogs will have your bones yet
To crack and slaver over

Your whispering will be
Torn by the wind
Your mysterious night movements
Wrapped in ferroconcrete
Your shrieks lost in the
Dull hum of machines

For just a little longer, though
I'll let my bare feet sink into your stronghold,
My fingers trail over your names,
Carved in moss-covered stones

I'll cache the smell of your fertile ground, a hint of

mold,
In the secret crevices of my brain
Where the extinct beasts still warble and croon
And gallop wildly, in a land without flowers

The City and Man are hungry
They want to swallow up the both of us
Bones, ashes, worms
Even the fragments of our coffins

So let them
Let them come
I am already gone.

The Split

RORY OLSEN

I was looking at the bathroom mirror
when I noticed
a faint crack on my forehead
looking like a jagged, angry hair

I leaned in closer,
to see the crack run further like
the next frame of some high-speed camera's
photos of a lightning strike

So I jerked my head back
and you know what, it cracked more
if my head had been an egg,
it would've been almost time for omelets

Struck with horror and stunned with
fascination, I watched on, open-mouthed
while I became much more
open-minded

Dedication

DAVID SOMMER

For our empty heads and swollen dreams
For our cage bodies and freeform spirits
For our days of Golgotha
 and our nights of Gethsemane
 and the birth
 and the light of our souls
For thoughts that move the earth
 and the moments we stand still, enraptured
 and the kiss that stole our breath
 (But who needs to breathe?)
For the breakers of chains
 and cries to the moon
For the rain
For the sweet serenity and the horrible pain
For lost time and conquered space
For long days when the sun hangs
 limp on tangled strings
For melody without sound
 and the words we could not find
For howls that tore the mechanic silence
 and chasms that shattered
 at the soft touch of hands
 and the warm embrace
For lifting fog and falling snow
 and lonely graves
 and blooming flowers

For the thinkers the drinkers the poets
and the lovers
For the fragments that may assault eternity
For the birds
And for you, my friend,
who will understand

Aesthetic

TAYLOR EMBURY

a response to "Composition" by Kay Ryan

I think she's saying
language is one of the paint chips
flecking off the South-facing wall
of a driftwood boat house.

The kind
with barnacle toes,
rhythmically lapped at
by the wake of bay boats
licked by salt water's
chapped smacking lips.

The kind
basted with lazing butter beams
of a late summer sun
and left to roast.
Walls bowed as the hammock hanging from them.

The boathouse yawns like
"Sittin' on the dock of the bay"
a splintered row boat tongue
trolling between hollow cheeks
collecting saliva suds at the corners of the mouth.
That kind.

Not a Love Poem

CHIN ISAAC-HESLOP

I had a poetry class last semester. I think words whether spoken or written if ordered correctly can say more than any picture or translation but finding that order is sometimes more laborious than child birth - not that I would know but just for example. One day I took a poem to the professor (not teacher because it's college) and asked how I could find the order that I sought. She said it was ordered wonderfully, fluid as a lovepoem ought to be. I told her that it was not a love poem, just thoughts. She was silent and puzzled, then she said "Chin, are you sure you're not in love?" and I fell silently into this thought:

Love means truth that I'm fighting back tears that have already clouded my eyes and cast shadows over a heart forlorn into shambles like shattered glass from a car crash. And I'm not invincible like I was once when chug was my first name and shots was my last thought and sense became 90 degrees on the end of a boot that kicked my ass in the street and the first step out of the second story where I leapt, saw faith and demanded that maybe it's not the end but just that I stockpile emotions like (USA/USSR) nukes easily set off by something as simple as standing up with your trigger finger on the bottom of all that exists as is... sleeves clad with feelings so I hope there is an excuse for lust won't let me leave and I can't love that which I don't know. I need an answer but no response has blessed me with her presence. I want to write because spoken word gives expression that love cannot vice versa I write to express that only released when our bodies touch and the collision cracked face once cold to the crooked smile you find endearing... dear (call me, text me) something and let me know that I can learn to trust that I know you more than by expressions kept in the pockets of my jeans, impressions last longer anyway but still right now I can't trust my senses cause I'm numb like an icebox.

I want to feel again

I want to smell roses and not sneeze like I did when I germ-ed up your ice cream and you laughed at my elephant-like exhalation because you

thought it was cute. I thought you
were cute then and now

I want to hear again not broken melodies but flats and sharps in harmonic intervals contained in contrapuntal cacophony like dimples at the ends of your smile. Notes that force love upon each other like a pen does ink to page upon page of love notes and poems passed betwixt our eyes. I hear your voice still but I want to see again past lustful locks, lengths only dreamt about for fairy tales atop mountains where we looked out and rainbows soared above us and I heard bells in the distance. Distances traveled my hand in yours and your hand in mine with a bow-tied teddy bear on your other side. I... I think but only thoughts of you come to mind. I try to put them behind me though you boomerang and GOSH my heart pounds back hard the beat we laid to in foundation of melodic intervals unsurpassed passed the end of my nose where I'm shivering in your absence, longing for a warm summer's past. I... I thought therefore I am and we were consumed in a fire unquenched by salt waters, bodies entwined in quiet conversations moving... moving anything but wrong. And kisses like bread crumbs trailing sighs like sheet music of thoughts of traversals I'd made a little more than tangent to your curves. Oh my! We thought, maybe you more than I cause my mind just melted when our lips touched but my heart though straighter than I'll ever love lines like those traced in night skied void of stars without consolation. Hearts are human parts and all the 30 thousand some odd cells in my body unified not to think but know that although all the world lay out ahead like a dream all I saw was you through eyes glossy with awe of a moment I can only hope now to escape so I can taste anything but your lips (and tongue) on mine like chlorine is to the swimming pool of realization that I may no longer touch you. Not lust, not like, no... for this was not love. It was so many things I cannot explain through anything but adjectives for inaudibles and remember none-the-less and I am lessened thinking nay dwelling on what was lost when... hey, lets just say it's over, I've been drained and want to feel again only without you (who tied me to the chair and let be beat out confessions of a lover lost).

She asked if I was in love and I said no cause love was something I had never truly known.

So “Yes,” I told her, “I’m sure. It was not a love poem.”

Lament for the Lucifugous Dead

TONI LEFTON

From six feet under the dead lament the rising sun,
turn in their beds of soiled silk and moss,
shift the weight of thinning bones from left
to right, strain vertebrae and stretch
spines, crook their necks eastward, sitting
up on elbows to feel the earth turn towards light.

Don't we all love a sunrise, its symbolism
and archaic measures of hope? How such
luminosity raises flowers from seeds,
or makes lovers lean in lambent light
for each other's mouths, feeling its heat
on bodies curved in work along
the orange stitch of harvest fields.

From six feet under the dead lament the rising sun,
as an ambulance weaves onto the narrow streets
between graves. A misplaced metaphor among
the departed who have turned east in the night,
turned back towards the rising years of their life.
The irony is not lost here, nor are they angered
that the rescue is not for them. Sirens off, red
light breaking like a sun across granite headstones,
its embers caught in the stone etchings of their
names.

When the Sun gives up

MATTHEW CANNIZZARO

My children will ask questions, “Why’d they stay behind?” I’ll tell them they liked the desert and hated baby polar bears. They’ll laugh. I’ll smile but stop after I think about the baking streets and buildings—the emptiness. Every day for the last 200 years the news’ doomsday clock counted down. Eleven billion people ignored it.

Burned inside their homes
knowing life had lost meaning.
Trapped forever.

Three quarters of the world watched instead of digging, building, saving, living just a little bit longer. We had time, help and everything we needed to build The Underground. But they said there was no point hiding from the horsemen. Life went on like cinema in fast motion—there was love still fighting behind the madness and dawning doom.

No flowers for you.
A feather to remind us
how birds used to sing.

She had striking wit and long blonde hair that made most people jealous—everyone cut their hair short because of the heat. Today, it was announced that at our latitude, sunrise tomorrow, the surface will be too hot for human life. We held hands as we waited in line to enter The Underground and watched the

sunset. I kissed her forehead.

That was the last time
It was only beautiful,
the stars could be seen.

As the last ray of sunshine touched her locks of
golden blonde hair there was no sobbing, no
weeping, for we knew Earth was finished. It was
lost before the Sun gave up, to billions of bright
galaxies glimmering so far from home. Hope had
hid somewhere in the vast void between our worlds,
frozen and dying with every scientific discovery.

My children still laugh
My wife and I will smile
just a while longer.

Tides in Winter

SHANE SCHRADER

wet ice on my face

eyes closed in the torrent of

white diamonds in flight.

My Pet Rock

CALIN MESERSCHMIDT

I am so like parquet floors, covered in green moss
That aged wooden ceiling soused in bone white
moon light
Broken elevator doors at the base of that redwood

I am white Sea mist, water broken on soft white
sand beaches
That creeping feeling of sand in your toes
I am hurricane wind, started on a butterfly wing

I am encroaching moon grass, enveloping your toes
That Colorado blue turning those hills purple
Behind the bars of that yew tree is where I hide

I am red poison like cherry drops, so wanting to be
picked
That blue of midnight and the cool it brings in your
city center
I am spring cherry blossoms visible in that reflecting
pool awoken by the song bird

I am charades, acting as incandescent light, I float
and flow
That brown love with yellow sun flowers growing

Back I lay and my children run about, looking for
that yew tree in the clearing

Thoughts on Proximity in Vietnam

DAVID SOMMER

At daybreak in Can Tho, the sun forges its way through mist and fog to the peak of Vietnam's summer heat. It is in the stillness of the dawn and the sun's laborious climb that one can feel the country and its people stirring again from the tranquility of a deep night. With the day comes a return to life, to work, to the humidity and the hum of old machines and old conversations, to one's burdens and hopes. Here traditions are resumed, new paths born. An old woman smiles at a passing tourist, with missing teeth and a crowded myriad of wrinkles. A young boy wanders through the streets of a fish market, used to the potency of the smells and the crowd of people setting up stalls for the coming day. The symphony of traffic and movement has begun. The river, the streets, the buildings come to life, and one becomes hard-pressed to slow down and take it in. There is something mysterious and difficult to articulate about these scenes in Vietnam, as if the truth and the meaning of what one sees and hears are lying just below the surface, just out of reach. If one is willing to look, if one is willing to hear, this tantalizing mysticism becomes palpable no matter where one is, from industrial cities to the vast expanse of the delta rice patties. It is a mystery that we must try to understand.

Conrad speaks of the darkness of the world, of a primal force that constitutes a formless struggle with the lives of men. We cannot speak of this struggle as good or bad, for these are matters to be settled among men. What we are to understand of Conrad's notion is more fundamental. He speaks of proximity, of closeness, of the dissolution of boundaries we have imposed between ourselves and the natural world. It is a return from artifice to the origin of civilization, to the heart of what it means to be human. It is always this closeness that brings it out. On the bus traveling north from Saigon, I can think about these things. In the distance are farmers dwarfed by the vast expanse of rice patties. In the city there is only closeness, a sort of claustrophobia, but this is only a re-imagining of the farmer in the rice patty. There is, in both, an undeniable sense of proximity, to the land, to the people of the country, to each other. When

we think on the closeness of the Vietnamese to their country, we can begin to understand who they are. They speak of the flavor of rice in terms of the water it was grown in. One can, in this sense, return to one's family, to one's ancestors, by tasting rice grown in the waters of one's homeland. History and identity are inextricably tied to the waters of the delta and the heights of the central highlands.

At the foot of a massive staircase in Da Lat stands a woman balancing fruit at the ends of a bamboo pole resting on her shoulder. One can imagine her waiting there for an eternity, forever ready to ascend despite the weight and the tightness in her body. Her physical burden is a scale on which she measures the limits of the world and her potential for happiness. On the river in Hoi An, an old man beckons for a ride in his small and aging boat. In Ha Noi, a young man began to repair my shoe (which I was unaware needed repairing until that moment) without waiting for my permission. It seems that anywhere you go in Vietnam, everyone has something to offer. In the depths of the Mekong Delta, an ancient man sells moonshine out of old water bottles. In the rice patties, one can see the tombs of ancestors long passed, participating still in life's communion with the land. The people of Vietnam live closely to what sustains them, and this indicates something essential about how life is valued. There are floods. There is urban crowding. There is poverty and sickness and a host of governmental and infrastructural problems. There is a constant, formless struggle with the natural order of things. One always returns to one's burdens, says Camus, but this return can be performed in happiness just as much as in sorrow. Waking in the early morning to the hum and humidity, one greets the sun with the people of Vietnam, in the parks, in the rice fields, on the river, in the street, hurrying forth into a new day. This is life here, constantly on the move, constantly challenged by proximity and the limits of the world.

Speed Bumps in the Lines

JILENE OAKLEY

A poem
so fast
continuously
gaining
Mo
men
tum
But then,

BUMP AHEAD!

there it is, *Ice*, crystallizing, encasing
the very fire — Words — on the Page.
Speedbumps.
that slow you down
when you're
continuously
gaining
Mo
men
tum
and can't

STOP!

the Words from falling
slowly, now, on the black page —speed—
with yellow, or white,
Stripes—glazing over —*bumps*—
in Bands,
of Strong
Stoppage.

America's Pastime

SHANE SCHRADER

Here I am again
at this lame game.
His stupid team won't win
but to him it's all the same.

It's that bad hot dog smell
and the stale wind in your hair.
It's my drunken uncle's yell,
shit! there's gum. in. my. chair.

It's that obnoxious kiss cam
and those blaring coca cola ads.
All sprinkled with the scalpers' scams
and those dumb backwards-hat fads.

I can't even dissuade him with sex,
he just has to go.
So, I sit here and text
and wonder what's on TiVo...

Whale Bound

SHIRA RICHMAN

what is whale and where
does it end why
didn't baleen
sort us out inside is safe
and deranged we could die
never knowing
our own ninevahs
or even if they exist
that we float in bellies of yeses
we traded for nos not so
unlike jonah
who also might grade
papers on saturday
papers on sunday
monday eve tuesday
no time to muse
on what one should write or
not write no time
to hear his own
alien echo on taste
budded tongue where
whale begins and where
he surely must end.

Biographies

Fatima Azzahra is pursuing a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering at Mines, and holds a B.S. degree in Computer Science. She is from Casablanca, Morocco. She likes writing and exploring different cultures. She speaks English, French, and Arabic fluently, and has a basic knowledge of German and Spanish. She is actively involved in CSM student organizations such as IEEE and the Society of Women Engineers.

Kate Bachman, M.S. Applied Mathematics, M.B.S. Basic Science, B.S. Chemistry, CSM Physics plasmonics/photonics research faculty member, enjoys science, mathematics, computer programming, and many other activities, including music composition and production, art, writing, ice-skating, and biking. The original guitar version of the featured song, "Invitation", was recently transcribed, with the addition of the interlude, for keyboard. <http://vimeo.com/8426784>

Kevin Barry is an Engineering Physics major from Minnesota. He has many passions—almost all involve building, playing or thinking. An avid outdoorsman and Eagle Scout, Kevin loves to ski, climb, and play in the snow. His entire life, he has been working to get what is in his head, out. Slowly, he is getting better.

Matthew Cannizzaro is the poetry editor of High Grade this year. He came to Mines for a Chemical and Biochemical Engineering degree, so if law school doesn't pan out, he isn't up the creek without a paddle. He enjoys writing poetry and watching good cinema in his free time.

Lincoln Carr is a professor of theoretical physics who recognizes the value of intuition and the irrational, not only as sources of the mysterious hypothesis in the scientific method, but also in poetic expression.

Kelly Chipps is a former student of Toni Lefton and suffers constantly from loud, raucous arguments between the left and right hemispheres of her brain. She enjoys physics, the symphony, hiking, debate, taunting theorists, cucumber salad and good (in other words, expensive) Scottish whisky. After being granted her PhD in nuclear physics from CSM, Kelly spent some time living in the north of England, and then returned to the States to work at Oak Ridge National Lab in Tennessee.

Benjamin Conley is a Mechanical Engineering undergraduate student. He enjoys reading in a diverse spectrum of fields and following current events as well as cyber-culture. He currently writes short fiction and poetry but does diverge and hosts a radio show on Mines Internet Radio as the Man in Grey where he often does live readings of original pieces and works in progress. He also notably carries a number of small, often battered journals to capture ideas, experiences, and thoughts as they come rather than try to recollect them later as he lives his life.

Taylor Embury is currently a graduate student at Mines, studying Engineering & Technology Management. Taylor grew up on a horse farm in the northern Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. An avid skier, lacrosse player, and outdoorsman, Taylor loves Colorado. He intends to stay after he graduates and become a teacher and lacrosse coach at one of the local high schools or universities.

My name is **Oscar Ferut** and I am a Sophomore here at Mines. I am involved in the Navigators and the Shooting Sports Club managing and competing on the shotgun team. I enjoy fishing, hunting, camping, and just being outdoors. I used my cell phone camera quite often to take pictures because it takes decent pictures I always have it in my pocket. If someone would make a digital SLR that is also a phone, I would buy it in a heartbeat!

Arantxa Gallastegui is originally from Spain, but has lived in India, England, and New York City. She has studied yoga and eastern philosophies for over fifteen years. She has also studied art, both classical painting and modern art forms. Now, in Colorado, in what appears to be another flight driven by curiosity, she is an engineering undergrad.

Fangyu Gao is from China, loves music, art, plants and animals.

Brent Goodlet is a US Army Reserve Staff Sergeant who served combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan as a member of the 324th TPC. His tours presented him with exceptional world perspective and the opportunity to influence the tides of a dangerous, yet paradoxically beautiful battlefield. He has since returned to Mines to finish his degree in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, and aspires to work as a metallurgist in the aerospace industry.

Kristen Heiden grew up in Greeley, Colorado and is a junior majoring in Civil Engineering. Her passion is to one day use her education to design and build hospitals. In her free time, Kristen loves participating in sports as well as outdoor activities such as hiking and camping.

Paul Holcomb is a native of Colorado Springs. In addition to photography, this electrical engineer enjoys backpacking, reading, and robotics.

Christine Hrdlicka was born in Arvada, Colorado and has lived there ever since. Since sixth grade, she knew that she wanted to go to Colorado School of Mines and become an engineer. She loves traveling and takes pictures from all around the world. This specific picture was taken in Morocco.

Chinyere (Chin) Isaac-Heslp was born in London, England. She moved to the U.S. at age 10 and is still adjusting. W.I.T (Writers Inspiring Truth) is where she first learned to express her creativity although she has played the piano and cello since early childhood. In her spare time, Chin enjoys playing rugby and recently appeared in an environmental debate as a fire ant testifying against the use of DDT. To her own dismay, this city kid

realizes she may very well be an environmentalist and feminist hiding behind her urban dictionary. Or at least she lets her favorite English professor think so. Chin is also a computer science major that is not good with computers and she hates to type.

“...diversity team, like congressional black caucus...” In 2002, a friend and I successfully pioneered the wave of MLK day celebrations seen at CSM, but were still unhappy with the state of CSM’s campus diversity. Quoting the song, “... so the kid was real sentenced, it’s a real Birmingham, it’s got no pretty blocks but it’s made him write this song ...” - jKiD

Bryan Kang: Though my parents originated from South Korea, I was born in Denver, Colorado. Then, at a very young age, I moved to Korea and lived there for about 5 years. Besides poetry, I also enjoy writing fiction. I love spending time outdoors doing activities such as hiking, camping, and exploring. I believe my fascination for writing was borne because of my disability. I was born deaf and, because of it, progressed through life as a very silent child. Instead of expressing myself out loud, I learned to write out experiences and always enjoyed exploring different ways to bring text to life.

Kelsey Kopecky is a sophomore majoring in Computer Science. Along with web design and other programming, she enjoys reading, writing and art (using any medium she can get her hands on).

Kimberlee Lamphere is from South Dakota. She graduated from Green Mountain High School, where she played soccer and lacrosse. Kimberlee is currently studying Civil Engineering and will graduate in May 2014.

Toni Lefton teaches creative writing and literature at CSM and buys pizza for the fabulous High Grade staff, who reminds her every day why life in Stratton Hall is bliss. Her work has appeared in the Crab Orchard Review, Kalliope, The Kudzu, Thin Air, Ellipses, on National Public Radio and Ms. Magazine, among others. She is currently working on a new collection of poetry, *A Little Bit Goodbye*, as well as a memoir, *Backyard Rogue*, which recounts her story of growing up in West Africa.

My name is **Matt Lemke** and I am a junior studying geological engineering. I am really enjoying Mines and am very active here. Along with the school work, I spend my free time competing for the Mines varsity swim team, hiking/climbing and photography.

Rachel Madland is currently pursuing her master's degree in Metallurgical Engineering. She is studying the creep-fatigue properties of nickel-based superalloys for use in the intermediate heat exchanger in a generation IV nuclear reactor. Besides school, she is an avid skier and snowboarder. Also, photography has always been one of her loved hobbies.

Sarah McMurray received a BS in Photojournalism & Physics from Western Kentucky University. She is currently a graduate student in Materials Science. Her photojournalism projects center around long form documentary. Her materials projects center around microscopy. The two published selections are pieces from her current body of work, documenting her grandmother's descent through Alzheimer's disease for the past 6 years.

David McQuade: I've been making electronic music since middle school and love exploring all different genres and styles. "Reflections of Raindrops" came about as an experiment to combine breakbeat and dubstep with classical instruments. "Futurebound" was my first real foray into uplifting trance. I hope you enjoy the tracks!

After internationally touring as a rock drummer, physics major **Jeff Munn** traded in his drumsticks for guitar picks and recorded "Everywhere in Between", along with keyboardist Duncan McElfresh, lead guitarist Jonathan Keller, and Todd Lilienthal on banjo. His new band, The Dots, began performing live in and around Golden, CO in April 2011.

My name is **Justin Neal**. I am originally from Texas and the song "What's Love" comes from a three-year relationship essentially gone bad. There was too much distance and too much interference from outsiders: girls in my case, and a guy in her case. A story of love lost, the "Man" that got played.

Alan Nguyen is a junior here at Mines pursuing a bachelor's in math & computer science. He plays tennis and does photography if/when he has free time. Takeru Kobayashi is his hero.

Lily Nguyen is one of those crazy ones. She decided metallurgical and materials engineering was a good major because metals are shiny. She likes poetry because while math and science are fun, there's nothing like a good liberal arts education. She likes rock climbing, playing Ultimate, hiking, snowboarding, slacklining, you name it. Adrenaline junkie.

Jilene Oakley is a senior working toward a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering with a Bioengineering and Life Sciences Minor. She will be employed by Firth Rixson when she graduates, working in their Graduate Leadership program. Jilene plans to go back to school at some point to earn a master's degree in Biomedical Engineering in order to fulfill her dreams of designing artificial organs and prosthetic devices.

Rory Olsen grew up in South Routt, Colorado, where he learned to hitchhike during the winter with a grappling hook and a snowboard. He is currently a computer science major at Mines and breeds wolverine-porcupines in his free time.

Carly Paige is a freshman from Littleton, CO majoring in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering. She likes drawing, painting, and photography and owns four cameras. She will spend money on paint before food. She has a tattoo of a meditating Buddha on her ribcage. She is addicted to Post-It notes. She's played soccer for 11 years. Her favorite TV show is Grey's Anatomy, and she wouldn't survive college without fruit snacks.

Chelsea Parten is a senior geological engineering student at Mines. Originally from Dallas, TX, she has enjoyed creating artwork her whole life. Her greatest inspirations come from human interactions with nature.

Jon Pigg is a junior in computer science. He's been making fractal art for several years, and recently has started writing code for some of his pictures. In the little free time he gets here at Mines, he enjoys making fractal art, playing computer games, hanging out with friends, and talking long walks on one of Colorado's many beaches.

Sara Post is a recent graduate of CSM, working in Boulder, and still trying to write poetry worth reading.

The three members of **Really Big Tickle**, Marcos Lucero (guitar), Tony Monasterio (bass), and Mike Plampin (drums) met while living in Weaver Towers in 2006. Their music is all about feeling and expressing whatever it is that tickles them.

Shira Richman has been published in Third Coast, Spoon River Poetry Review, Knockout, and PopMatters, among other places. She teaches literature and writing at CSM. Tuesdays she blogs for Bark at: <http://thebarking.com>.

Brianna Rister loves to stay busy; she divides her time between nuclear engineering research, teaching piano, and caring for her small zoo of pets. She has always been drawn to photography, although lately she finds very little time for it. In the future she hopes to make more time to enjoy and capture the beauty of the world.

Shane Schrader is the Co-Editor-In-Chief for High Grade. He transferred to Mines his freshman year, making the switch from English and Literature major to Chemical and Biochemical Engineering. He spends whatever free time he has writing poetry, reading, doing activities outdoors and surrounding himself with good friends and good times. After graduating he plans on breathing deeply and relaxing, something he has not had a chance to do in 3 years.

Kyle Schulz is a professional concept artist who loves art, gaming, multimedia and (of course) dragons. He hopes to someday apply a computer science degree to a field involving multimedia or entertainment.

Aura is a piece that reflects **DJ Shrug's** view on cool, breezy spring/summer afternoons. The feeling of kicking back and watching clouds pass by was my inspiration to this song. This piece has slight influences by atmospheric/trance/hip hop genres.

David Sommer has worked as High Grade's lead editor for fiction since 2007. He will be graduating this May and will continue on to graduate school in physics. He considers art and literature to be an essential part of his life and tries to convey this passion in his own writing. He does not like to throw language around all willy-nilly.

Carrie Sonneborn is an Adjunct Professor at the Colorado School of Mines, teaching in both Liberal Arts and Engineering Design. She'd been writing poetry for decades when parenthood intervened and writing poetry became a rare luxury. In 2011 she decided as a New Year's Resolution to write a haiku a day—on the basis that they are short—despite the fact that she had never written haiku. It has been an amazing journey of discovery of the elegance, simplicity and profundity of this literary form. She publishes her haiku on-line daily on her Facebook page.

Mariah Stettner is a junior in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering. She is very involved on campus, including High Grade. She loves to read, write, and take photographs in her spare time. The two selected pieces were two that she took for her friend's senior pictures, and everyone seemed to love them.

Ian Stone makes pictures.

Andrew Suderman has been taking pictures since he was a young boy. His first pictures were taken on a Baby Bessa bellows camera shooting large

format film. The photograph published here was taken in New Orleans not long after hurricane Katrina. It displays the chaos and disarray that were left after the flood waters finally drained away. Andy's other hobbies include rock climbing, snowboarding, hiking, and camping, which offer numerous opportunities to capture the beauty and power of nature.

Paul Szuhay is a junior in the Petroleum Engineering Department. He is an avid rail fan/model builder and, in his spare time, volunteers at the Colorado Railroad Museum. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Paul enjoys history, amateur photography, and the restoration of antique railroad equipment. He is also a model ship builder and vintage car enthusiast.

Timothy Tribby - I wrote this song trying to capture the beauty of the Earth's complexity and perfection. Sometimes I forget that not everything can be expressed only in numbers. I believe God writes his biography on Earth through mathematical means and beauty from creation of objects like rainbows and snow, hence the name "Written on the Clouds".

Brant Wiedel is a local singer/songwriter and graduate student at Mines. The song "Why Not Today" is an expression of that frustration that comes with whatever issues we face—why wait to fix them?

Zulhilmi Yusop: I have no idea why/how I ended up studying at Mines, but I praise the Lord for His doings. I'm a sophomore in Petroleum Engineering, and have been creating photography and paintings since high school. I love bright colors; I wish one day I could turn the grass blue and sky green.