

HighGrade

2012

Submission Guidelines

Please make all literary submissions to *highgrade@mines.edu* as a Microsoft Word document. One submission per document. Note any special formatting needs. Art and music submissions will be handled through the High Grade office.

Copyright remains the property of the creator

We reserve the right to FoRMaT all submissions as needed

High Grade
Stratton Hall 412S
Colorado School of Mines
Golden, CO 80401
highgrade@mines.edu

© 2012 High Grade, Colorado School of Mines

2012

Staff

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Shane Schrader

FICTION STAFF FICTION EDITOR
Nicole Johnson **John Zarra**
Denis Litvak

LAYOUT & DESIGN STAFF LAYOUT EDITOR
Syania Tifani **Jack Crockett**

POETRY STAFF POETRY EDITOR
Chinyere Isaac-Heslop **Calin**
Shane Schrader **Meserschmidt**
Kari Kron

ART STAFF ART EDITOR
Kelsey Kopecky **Mariah Stettner**
Chris Pederson
Zulhilmi Yusop
Ian Stone
Michael Slepicka

MUSIC STAFF MUSIC EDITOR
Cooper Newby **Jeff Munn**
Tyler Anderson

WEB MASTER
Kelsey Kopecky

Letter from the Editor

Dearest *High Grade* Enthusiasts,

So, it's come to this. Four and a half years ago I gave up my English major and transferred to Mines, thinking I was leaving my creativity behind forever. Then *High Grade* found me. Over the years I have experienced great joy in working with the staff to create this diamond in the rough, this art among science. Although I move on to graduation and my career, I will never forget the fantastic times I shared with this group; those memories will stay with me forever.

Every year, *High Grade* is pieced together by the careful hands of our staff and eventually we have this magnificently warm quilt, ready to be spread over the hearts and minds of our readership. Even though I step down from my position in the sewing circle, I know that capable hands are moving in to fill my gap. This year's staff has worked hard and shown great dedication in making *High Grade* something that Colorado School of Mines can be proud of. I wish to thank all of you for the reassurance that *High Grade* will continue to be as polished and refined as the journals I have helped build in the past.

Without Toni Lefton, our advisor, friend, and guiding light, *High Grade* would not be the same. Every year she dedicates more time than seems possible to this journal and staff, and without her this program would be but a shade of what it is today. I know I will miss you as much as I will miss this journal, and I want to thank you for everything you've done and all the time you've given to this staff.

I am very proud of the work we have done this year, and I hope that all of you will enjoy this journal as much as we have enjoyed creating it. It's been a helluva ride.

Thank you and Godspeed,
Shane E. Schrader
Editor in Chief

Table of Contents | 2012

Introduction to Physics	1
A beautiful woman trapped in a mans body readying herself for the ball, directions from her inner voice	2
Irresolution, On Display	4
To the Chair: Insights from Ted Bundy	5
Dragon Tales	7
Let it Rain in Revolution	8
0, 1, 2's complement	11
Oakland Studio	12
Untitled	13
Heartbeat	14
HIC SVNT DRACONES	15
Tumbleweeds	16
Miss you	18
The mistake of falling...	20
Thoughts on Rain, Part 2	21
Deafening Silence	22
Songs of the Heart: Side A	23
Songs of the Heart: Side B	61
Sleep tight	63
Cloud Bed	64
Once upon a time	65
Surfacing	66
Cleansing	76

Collecting Bounty	77
Orange	80
Summer Lane	81
Tomorrow	85
Archimedes' First Eureka	86
Five to Dirt, A Tribute to Halo.	88
she died twice	89
Give me a Creek	90
Breakfast: Quantum Mechanics	91
Lunch: Philosophy	
Dinner: I'm not hungry anymore...:	
A completely bogus proof	
I burn it down	95
How You Activate My Catalyst	96
#!	98
Bee Lessons	99
Muse	101
Blackwell Prize	103

I ask them to look at physics
and break it down
like a fissioning atom

or press an eye upon its scope.

I say drop physics' knotted yarn
and watch it unravel to basic theory

or walk in to the physics realm
and get a feel for its laws.

I want them to play catch
with the great theories thrown
by physicists from across space and time.

But the only thing they want
is to duct tape physics to the wall
and stuff numbers down its throat.

They beat an answer out of it
without actually caring what it means.

**Calin
Meserschmidt**

A beautiful woman
trapped in a mans body
readying herself for the
ball, directions from her
inner voice

Back Room Kama Sutra alleyway City Park bathroom
7-Eleven Conoco dumpster love
corner pick up, 10 for a suck, 20 for a fuck

Need 40 more for rent
Dreams moving to the click of six-inch high heels
ready move to the corner

Sashay cachet move to the center ready to vogue
House of Fire and Beauty
remember that mirror look
I am real.

Ready your lipstick
make those eyes pop with that jet black liner
make those checks sparkle with a bit of shimmer
cover those man brows, this is the real me
duct tape is a girl's best friend
my new tits are wonderful.

Don't forget the purse with the black sequence it has your 45 in it
Don't forget the foundation to cover that black eye love
Don't forget that freedom is the sound of a size 12 clicking in the street.

Sashay, cachet, work it
sway these foam hips like they are yours
turn your hair at the end of the stage
remind them your tits are real.

find the light
find the center
find the real
find the color in the shade of your mother when you were twelve and she
said you could be anything
find the smell of your father's breath when you were ten in the tree house
find the look of your grandmother when you were six and she would call
those men dressed up on the corner faggots and dirty sinners
find your reality and own your real nature.

Move move turn, make those bitches burn
 throw that boa to the ground
You know you are beautiful,
they won't notice your too big hands under these stage lights
take that trophy.

Walk home, take the back way to avoid the cops
Look in that mirror, take your painted woman off, and feel the warmth of
 your almost complete body
feel the outlines of your softening features
feel the outlines of your growing breasts
feel the smoothness of your hairless belly
feel the weight of these hormones
feel the raised letters of the news of your freedom in two weeks

imagine myself complete.

Ready that lip stick and hide those man brows
 Because I am beautiful — I am real.

Katie Welch

Irresolution, On Display

“I’m made
of so many girls I can’t get them all
drunk at once or they’d mutiny.”

--Anna Journey, “Letter to the City Bayou by Its Sign: Beware Alligators”

The scar tissue in my lungs belongs to the stoner in me,
when, on weekends, I wear tie-dye and like reggae

and make you key lime bars from scratch, citrus juice misting in the kitchen,
little rainbows filling the air. The marks stretched on my stomach

are “tiger stripes,” you say, smiling. They glow pink and silver and
belong to the mother in me. The same shade is on my wrists:

those scars belong to the teenager in me, and the nights
I took Ambien and dragged thumb tacks roughly

over my skin. Last summer, your motorcycle ended up on top of me,
the exhaust pipe branding me part badass

on my ankle; I didn’t even cry before I passed out from
the searing smell, almost tasting it. At the hospital they didn’t ask about the

yellowed rope burns on my wrists or the magenta bite on my neck
that reminded me that I am a lover, too, often on the same nights

that I am an alcoholic, and all I remember is the
smell of plastic cups and the salty taste they each have

when I press my tongue to them, right where another wet
mouth touched. The mornings after I am always

a writer. The calluses on my fingertips are where I’ve been
welded together as one girl, the place where all the
parts of me are sutured together and become single flesh.

To the Chair:
Insights from Ted Bundy

**Mariah
Stettner**

What is this thing they say I should feel-
Remorse
*I haven't blocked out the past. I wouldn't trade
the person I am, or what I've done-
or the people I've known-
for anything.
So I do think about it.
And at times it's a rather mellow trip to lay back and remember...*

The thrill of it pervades my mind, my senses
Thrill of the catch
Thrill of the kill
must have looked pretty useless
leaning on my crutch
asking for a hand.
Ha, any girl would help Me
It wasn't difficult, bending them to my will

Memory invades my head like smoke
ever-present but barely there as

Slow

m o t i o n

s t e p s

lead to the chair
With each step I remember
another face, another girl

It had all become routine
*You learn to kill and take care of the details
It's like changing a tire
the first time you're careful
by the thirtieth time,
you can't remember where you left the lug wrench*

TO THE CHAIR:
INSIGHTS FROM TED BUNDY

A lug wrench-
that's right-
just like the one tucked
away in the trunk or
in an evidence bag somewhere

Long brown hair
parted down the middle
just the way I like it
Doe eyes plead
up at me
My laughter rings
against the trees.
I grab the wrench

S

W

I

N

G

Bone crunching as I connect
with her skull
Blood
like water from a spray bottle
Sickly sweet metallic
permeates the air

I smell it now
walking down this
sterile hallway
to my end.

I sit
Relax
Relish in my accomplishment
"Ready?"
I smile
always a charmer.

They flip the switch.
White hot sears through every muscle.
And the world
goes
Black.

Clank, Chink, Fsssht...
Clank, Chink, Fsssht...
Metalic drones labor on,
Clank together,
Chink closed,
Fsssht rivers of boiling plastic.
A chorus of cold gods
sing to their creations,
Clank, Chink, Fsssht...
Clank, Chink, Fsssht...
The factory hums.

Warm plastic turns cold.
Thousands of twins
are shipped in waves.
Hundreds of duplicates
crated in clusters.
Dozens of copies
are displayed in dusty heaps.

Small, pliant doppelgangers
that await a dreamer
to break free from uniformity

No longer a clone,
the three-headed Wyvern
scours the Earth
for a knight to combat,
or a princess to take captive,
as it soars
through a child's Imagination.

**Calin
Meserschmidt**

Let it Rain in Revolution

This will be a simple story. A story about a Man, that man will be named Joe, his last name is not important. He is middle aged, everyone is middle aged at some point because you can make that any age you would like, not old, not young, not free in imagination or carefree in reality, just in the middle. He lives in Civilization, a product of it, part of the machinery, like all young born, he is dependent on it, he has spent his life raising it to heaven.

He walked the negro streets at the invasion of dusk, crack addict begging, Jazz filtered though plate glass, cold metal window frame, sidewalk edge painted in red, hazardous waste dumpster, junkies worshiping under street light. Neon reflections of media, plasma screen, billow of taxicab, flashes of police aviators, pizza delivery boy speed bump for city bus. Filtered cigarette blue under 17th street and 10th, missing poster cash reward, alleyway. Rain drops, black cloud, thunder, gunshot.

City Park is flanked by guards of aging hotels, once promising housing projects, broken window warehouses. He enters on the Westside, the raindrops are small pockets of freedom, they make a popping noise as he steps. He is searching for the oracle of the city center, a vagabond with only a push cart filled with jewels cast down trash shoots tossed into gutters.

Clanging noise of aluminum cans, squeaking of stolen Wal-Mart shopping cart wheels invading whispers of nighttime trees. Seventeen jackets to hold back the plasma screens of icy land escapes, three pairs of red socks just incase

the city floods, smell of brown earth smeared to appease the soft green of City Park's grass, black bags filled with teddy bears' missing eyes, stained coffee cups, phone bills, electric bills, house bills, water bills, buckets collecting the rain. One eye patch to cover the good eye, keep it safe, the other eye white, bleached, always darting around. The offering is not gold, not material; the oracle has everything he needs. Just Joe's words, light, floating and flying like bees avoiding the rain.

"I have a question for you, what should I do?"

Cart shifting, looking through papers, dotted with the crying rain. Can music, orchestra of rubbing trees, dogs shaking dancing in the rain. Teddy bear jargon, Starbucks stains, this cup will tell the future. His eye patch moves, to cover the bleached eye, eye lid heavy, moving deliberate, cracking defenses, moaning of the guards of City Park, echoing of present madness.

The rain heavy now, they move across the only river left, flowing raging beckoning. A thick grove is ahead, dead, once apple trees, poisoned, it harbored worshipping crack addicts. They enter the edge of the hollowed out temple, it slows the rain, but puddles have begun to invade the city.

"Ask for it to rain." words clear un-impeded by this rain.

Lightning crack, vibration of thunder, blue of midnight. Rattling of aluminum cans, transformation into a fox. Joe is alone, in the temple.

"I'm only asking for rain"

Puddles becoming lakes, filling the city, they flow spilling through plate glass windows, through brown stone front doors, covering plasma screen illusions, neon colors mute, hipsters diving off roof tops swan dive belly flop cannon ball, worshipers floating swaying, civilization hum under water.

"I'm only asking for rain"

The city lifted off its foundation, screams of the beast of Wall Street, fashion Street, Capital Hill, no one notices they continue the hum.

“I’m only asking for rain”

Marching steps of floating hipsters, floating worshipers, floating lovers, floating humans, civilization hums.

‘I’m only asking for rain”

The city reaches the sea, plunges in, it’s three heads of fire breath gasping for air in this revolution. Awoken cogs enter this temple, they paint it green.

0, 1, 2's
complement

**Chinyere
Isaac- Heslop**

threes company but twos compliment
nibbles, bits, bytes, computer science shit
left or most significant is the sign bit
but in excess notation, it is the opposite
binary translations, go for it
helpful in real life situations, highly doubted
can't teach you how to dougie, but sets you up for code
how the two relate, consult the ISO
basically we force life into numbers, but not like calc "fun"
and map them to alpha numeric characters, no standards budge
there's unicode not unicorn though both may seem gay
i guess you could mess with floating point's 3-way
but for adding and subtraction, what computers do best
three may be company but two's complement

Jack Massey | Oakland Studio

zero minutes on the microwave
blinds closed

refrigerator buzzes
cats sleep
macarthur blvd shadows awake

gum stains the sidewalk
ink communicates
and silent disposition dominates

bus frequency slows
alertness grows
and i laugh softly

the moon above
has no appearance
only orange flush on the asphalt

sidewalks continue to crack
and weeds find a new path
the lone passenger stares

an occasional loud engine
guns with ammunition
sirens
silence

secure in my box
when daylight hits my face
i will step out
and read the news
printed in the air

Untitled | **Molly McIntosh**

There once was a booger named Bert.
He fell out of your nose and got hurt.
In the tissue he goes...
Out of your nose...
Life as a booger blows.

Jesse Earle | Heartbeat

And I've been told my heart beats quite loudly in my chest,
but I say it's just trying to talk to you.
The words fall easy when your ear is pressed,
listening for the whisper but, at this distance (and it feels so far)
it's fighting to be heard. I see no solution other than:
Come lay with me and let me whisper my proclamations and
palpitations that have
collected while you were away as
you fall asleep.

HIC SVNT DRACONES

Joel Slack

Three grass blades ween for eternal green,
On sere and arid steppe, with a breath,
I winnow, Blaze with unknown brio.
This is terra ignota, The still upon the sill,
Of the western window to the eastern slope,
Where Brownian krill graze and I am crazed,
We are golden, hungry, Suffused and diffused,
Aži Višāpa's pact at dawn,
Steeped in her Siamese suns.

Tyler Scott | Tumbleweeds

I always thought that tumbleweeds had a mind of their own with a destination that only they might know. Perhaps they are in search of water or food; or maybe, they look for something more significant like bluer skies and cleaner air. Either way, they are all I have in this vast desert land -- an ocean of dusty waves.

One hundred years ago, I began my walk, and unlike the tumbleweeds, I have no destination. Some might ask, "How does a person live one hundred years in the desert?" or "How can someone live to be a hundred anyways?" and my answer to them would be *They wouldn't. They don't.*

Perhaps I once enjoyed walking, but I've done it for so long that it seems to be without a purpose. Worn away from the long walk, I don't even have feet anymore -- at least I don't think I do. Perhaps I should ask someone if I have some feet. Someone else might know, or maybe I will recognize a feet when I see one. For now, feet and hands and arms are all the same; just parts of a whole that may have once served a purpose.

On a day like any other, I came upon a body, which had been concealed by a tumbleweed for many years. I stared into the deep, hollow sockets, which were once eyes, and when I came upon this, something within me sparked.

What is your name? There was no reply.

Where are you from? No reply.

How are you doing today? Still no reply.

Though he was silent, he was my only companion.

For many years, I slowly watched the body fade into the sands. Eventually, I realized that I must part from this being and do what I do so naturally -- walk.

At that moment, the bush that hid the man, decrepit and dry, broke from the soft sands and began his journey as well. Since I had walked for so long without a purpose, I decided to follow this weed until I discovered its secret destination.

For what seemed like an eternity, we journeyed side by side. Each day was lonelier than the last, and I began to weep for a friend. I had been forgotten by now -- any loved ones that once knew me must be dead by now -- even by God. I never thought that a soul could tire, but I feel it consuming my body. I wish to rest every minute, but I know I must not, I know I must discover this destination.

Fatigue consumed me, and with my last ounce of strength, I stood atop a tall dune. I peered into endless sands and finally discovered what the tumbleweed wanted me to know. *I am not a walker.*

**Courtney
Judish**

Miss you

The tears fell down my face as I packed my bags and had
to say goodbye
You promised not to replace the plans we made as I
looked into your eyes

I was scared to death taking my first steps to try to live
life without you
And I never told you enough about all my love, but I
never knew quite how to

All of the things that I try to say just don't come out quite
right
You're the light in my eyes, the fire in my soul you're
everything in my life
You're the beat of my heart, the spin of my world, you
never leave my mind
I wish you were here, I love you and miss you and I'm so
glad you're mine.

I worry I'm losing you, I know that I'm crazy too, I want
to see you smile
I feel like I'm second best and you've lost your interest my
thoughts of you run wild

The inevitable heart break the choices that we made I
never thought I'd feel this way
And as I cling to you faster and life falls to disaster there's
nothing else I can say

All of the things that I try to say just don't come out quite
right
You're the light in my eyes, the fire in my soul you're
everything in my life
You're the beat of my heart, the spin of my world, you
never leave my mind
I wish you were here, I love you and miss you and I hope
that you're still mine.

I walk up your front steps, take a deep breath in hear
familiar steps towards the door
And my heart seems to beat less, my sleep's not so
dreamless the way it was before
And you hold me and kiss me and say that you missed
me, and I want to know it's true
It's pretty much impossible, though you may think it
plausible, you can't miss me more than I miss you

All the things I want to say can't come out quite right
Loving you fed the fire in my soul, and may have saved
my life
I need more than the music beating in my chest to tell me
I'm alive
All I know is I miss you I wish you were here And I love
you. And I hope that someday you'll still be mine.

Brenna K.
Kimura | The mistake
of falling...

Suspended in
Air taken from
Lungs holding on
Nothing...

Lactic acid builds
Hope brings false
Sense of fulfillment
Is lacking where
Solid ground should
Exist a ripple of
Euphoria dissipates
Reality grows to...

Grasping for
Something breaks the
Statue gasps as
Legs kick, arms
Swing for the
Desperation in...

...Love

Life on a pair of slicks over the limit,
rain layered over asphalt.
If the markings are there to guide me,
I can't see them past the glare.
So why not accelerate into the corners,
and brake when I shouldn't?
The road is narrow with sharp bends,
the signs don't make sense.
Water gathers on the roadway ahead,
glorious hazard to be sure.

I feel the motion moving through life,
hydroplaning without control.
It steals the breath and for just a second,
any possibility may come to pass.
Heart tightens and reaches out for someone,
but the passenger seat is empty.
Everything could end now accepting euphoria,
because nothing would be lost.
Yet it holds on through this desperate fight,
for one who may one day be next to me.

Mariah Stettner

| Deafening Silence

Eerie blue flickers. Stiletto heels click as point taps cobblestone pavement. There is a man, a shadow down the alley to the left. The shadow is the only indication he is there. He moves ever so slightly and lifts, a gun, pointed at her in her short leather skirt and demands she give herself to him. “A prize,” he hisses through yellow, rotten teeth, “for waiting so long for a pretty young woman.” He lunges; gun alternating between her head and your heart. Grease stained fingertips grasp pale, bare skin, and you are powerless to save her. Heels dig desperately, failing to cling to pavement. Her screams silence breaking glass. She falls; the rip of fabric fills the air as he tries to claim his prize. You stand there motionless, unable to process the defilement of she, your so-called one and only. What do you do? Do you stand there powerless and in fear of your life, or do you risk yourself for she, whom you wish you loved as much?

Songs of the Heart:
Side A

**Shane
Schrader**

I am not a plan
to be drawn out
and kept, unaltered.

I am not the rule
to guide you and leash you,
to walk in single file.

I am a detour
I will mislead you and lose you
distract your mind, let you forget to breathe
and then I'll evade you.

I am not calm
the peaceful resting in harmony.

I am not careful,
to keep you passive and bore you.

I am Impulse
a spontaneous jerk behind your navel
hurtling you past comfort
and into dangerous uncertainty.

I will not let you sleep;
I will rouse you.

I will not placate you;
I will tease you.

When you see me coming
I will not ask politely,
I will violate your senses
until I have consumed you
and I will spit you
out.

But I am your warming light.
I am fire in your veins, heating your eyes
into volcanic eruption, making you
burn, your hands full of ice and your body quivering
with passion.

I am your air, your suffocation.
I will make you a comet and a corpse
and you won't know the difference.
You will sacrifice your sanity and hinder your health to
sate me.

I am not the Dawn.
I do not creep through the clouds,
predicted to the second.
I am not the Sunset,
a slow decay gone with a whisper into the folds
of the earth.

I am lightning.
I strike from the night with roaring thunder
blinding you to the world, my fire
scorches and leaves in an eye-blink.
I give nothing from my passing but a crater
and the goosebumps crawling up your back
leaving you to spasm in the wake of my aftershocks
as your world grows quiet.

I am Lust.

Through Her Eyes | Chelsea Panos



**Thomas
Rapstine**

What Floats Around



Bella | Alan Nguyen



K. A. Bachman | Gray Matter II



Lurking Finches | Jen Finch



Emily Jane Hart

Twice a Horse's Heart



Boxwood Barn

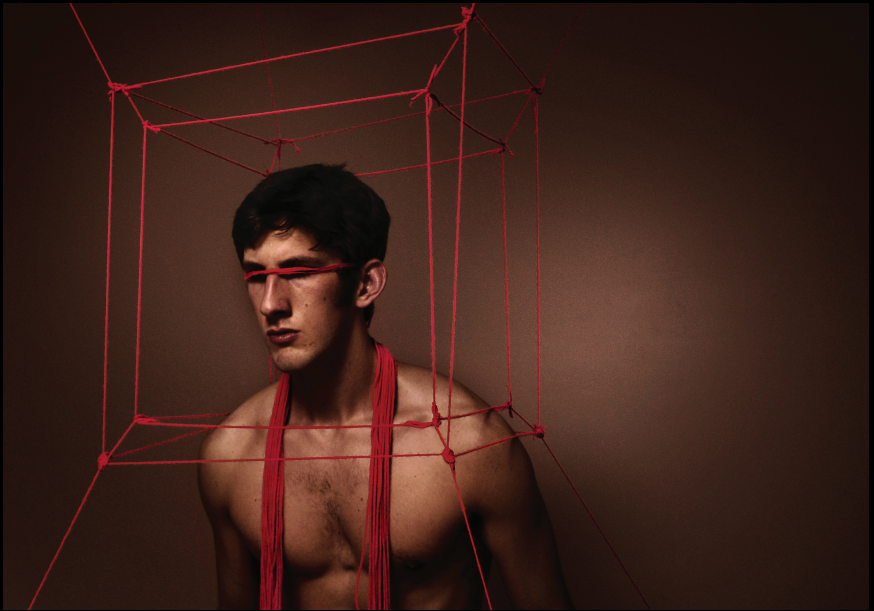
Emily Jane Hart



Kyle Schulz | Portrait of a Dogman



Shift | **Ian Stone**



Hyung Kim | John Nash

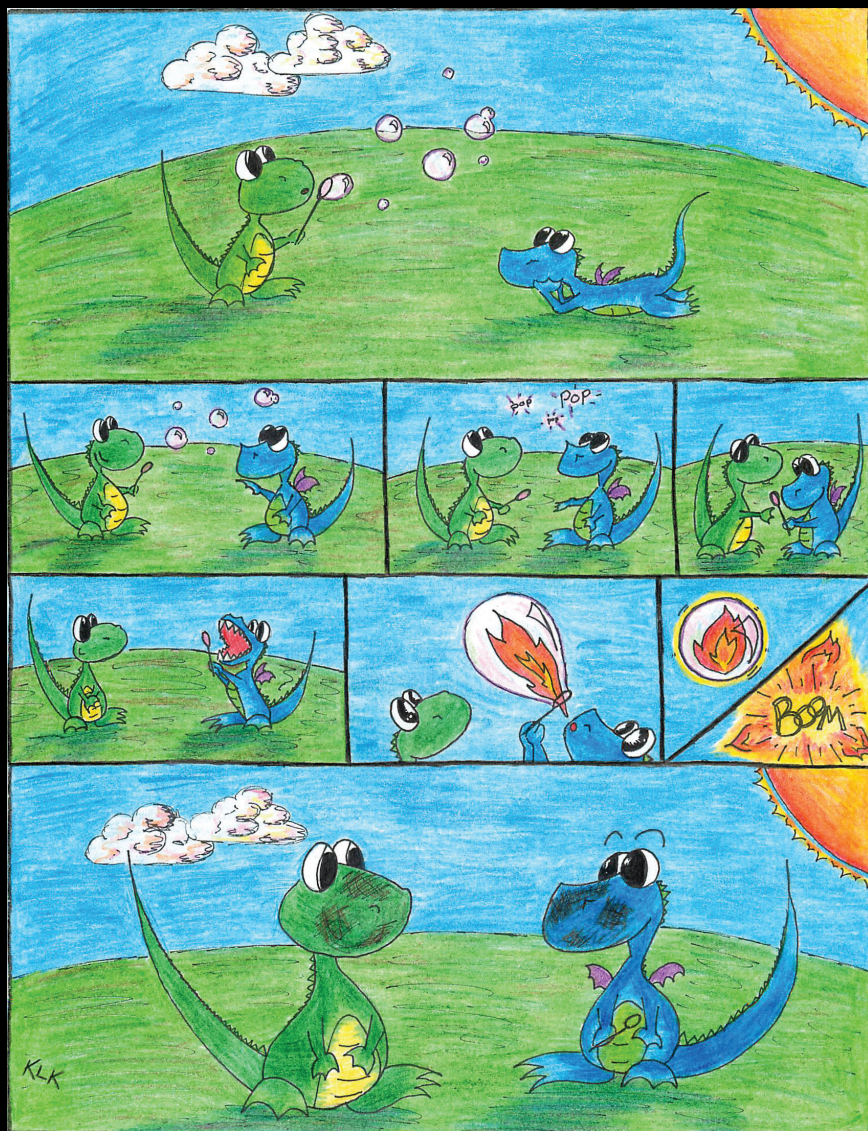


Superman | Alan Nguyen



Kari Kron

Dragon and Dino,
Exploding Bubbles



Back to Old Habits | **Zahi Masri**



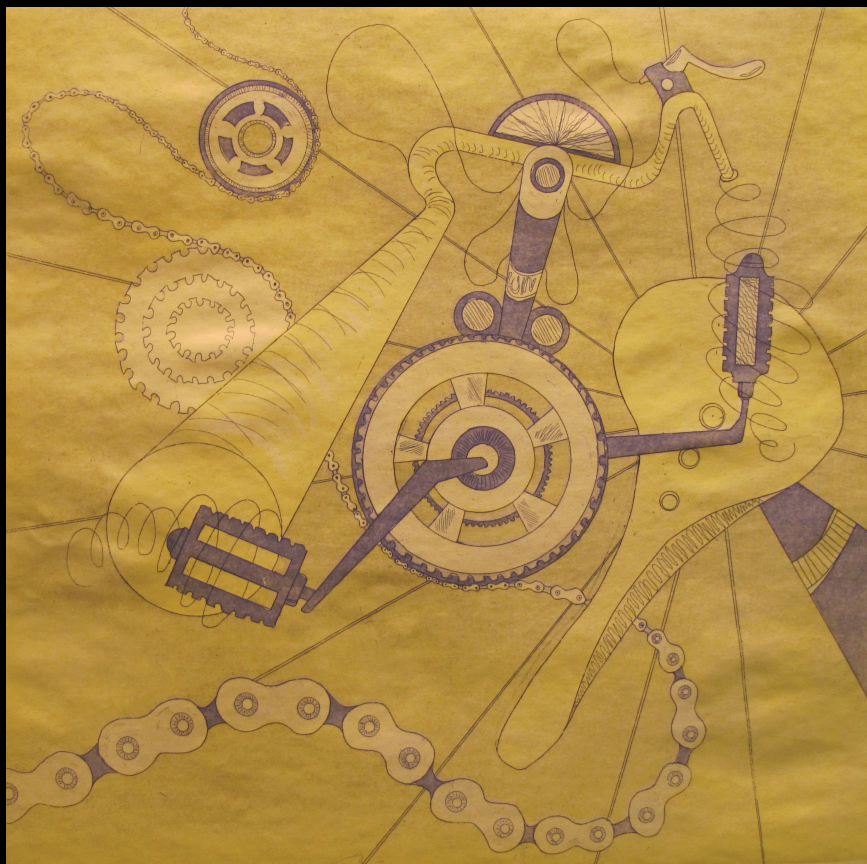
Kelsey Kopecky | Fire Nine-Tailed Fox



Dragon Treats | Kyle Schulz



Rita Kowalski | Cycle Ride



Breaker | Kyle Schulz

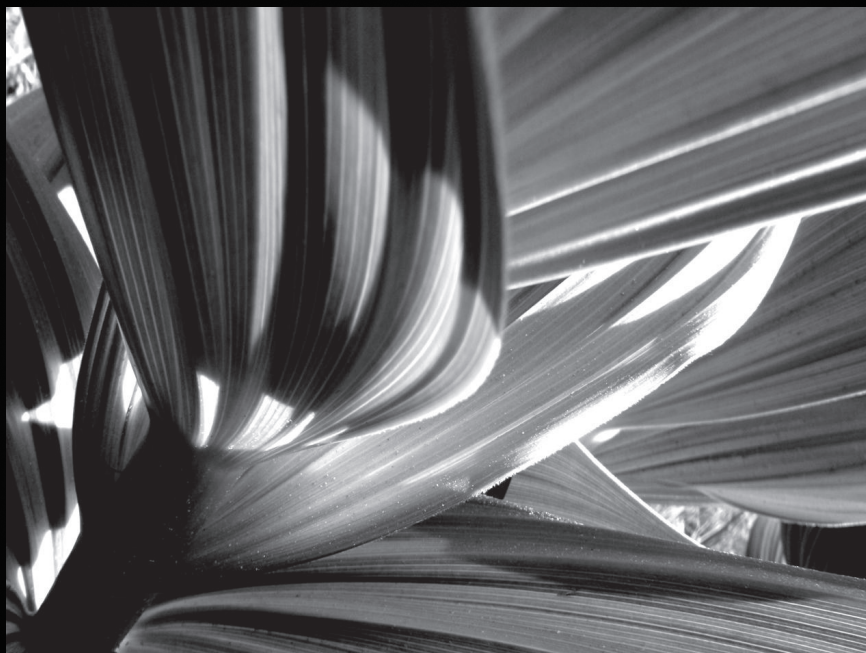


Kelsey Kopecky | Reaper



Secret Life of Plants

Chris Pederson



**Thomas
Rapstine and
Cat Harney** | **The Kraken**



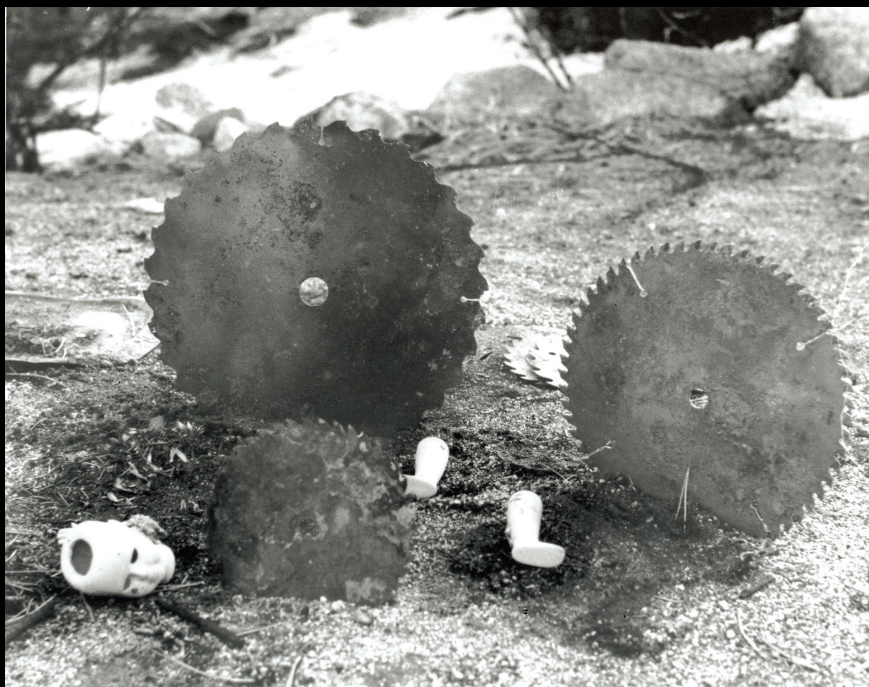
Sugar | Ian Stone



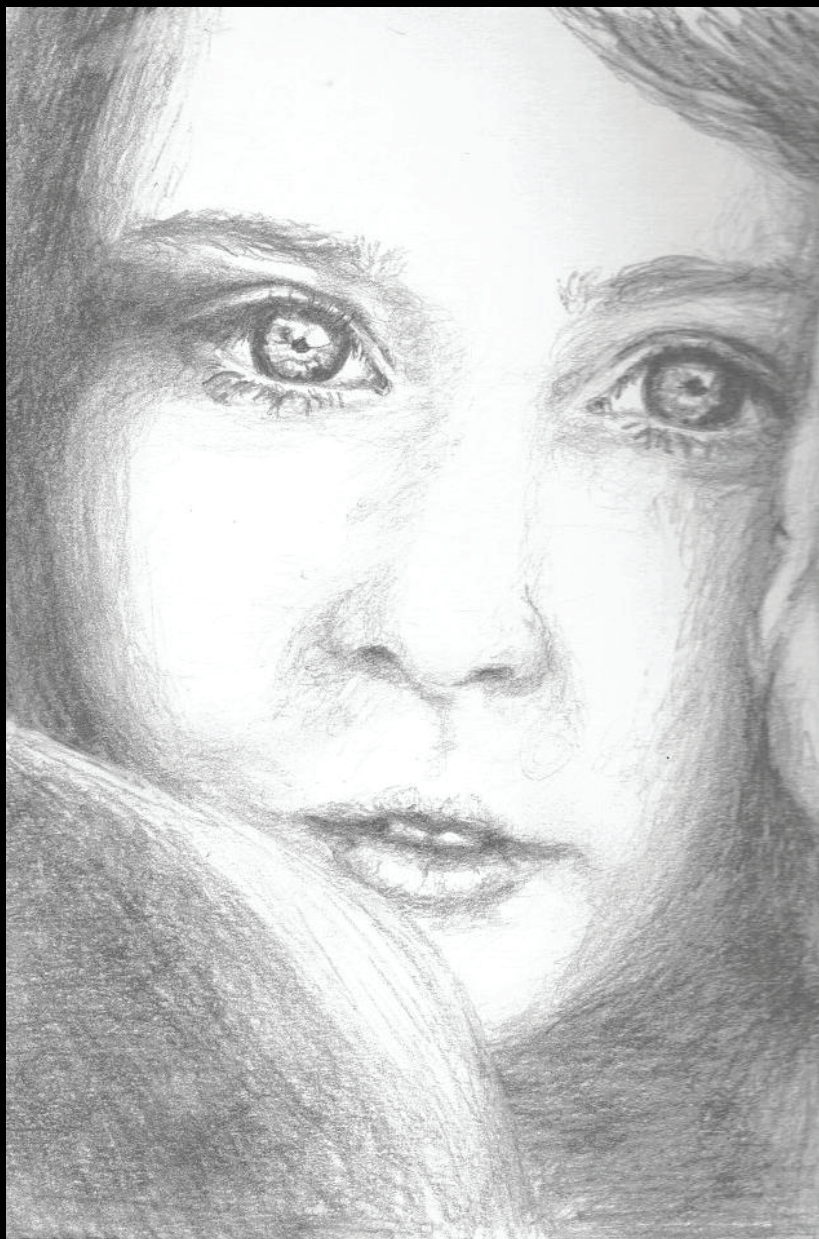
Paul Holcomb | **Suspended Explosion**



Baby Lost His Head | Meghan Helper



Kaitlin Hedberg | Focus



Christine
Hrdlicka

Daisy



Madeline R.
Lamb

Owl



Bear Basin

Matthew Lemke



Marco Hierro | Howling Pup



Wishful Thinking | **Jon Pigg**



Aubrey Preble | Brittney



Earthly Socket | **Chris Pederson**



Lauren Sepp | The Little Lizard



Under the Sea | Caitlin Sellers



Stephan Wilson

River of Ice



Entreaty | Ian Stone



Chelsea Parten

When Are You Coming
Home



Songs of the Heart:
Side B

**Shane
Schrader**

I am not the wind
to blow you around
and buffet you, press you.

I am not a summer's rain
to wet you but not soak,
to flee as the clouds pass.

I am a monsoon
I will push you and drench you,
chill your bones in July, burn you in
November,
and I will last all year.

I am not a break in the clouds
a peak of warmth to interrupt the cold.

I am not a mountain breeze
to blast you with frost on a sweat-soaking day.

I am Tundra
a thick blanket of permanence
enveloping you not in safety nor security
but in finality.

I will not make you whole;
I will erode you.

I will not give you closure;
I will make you question.

When you seek me in the dark
I will not lead you out,
I will take you on a journey to
your darkest and deepest
and I will leave you
lost.

But I am on your lips.
I am in your chest, beating your heart
into a musical calamity, making you
perspire, your hands shake and your pupils
dilate.

I am your adrenaline, your lullaby.
I will make you a hermit and a whore
and you will beg my forgiveness for both.
You will cry to me in climax and whisper
my name in mourning.

I am not mortal.
I will not pass with time
and the ravages of age will not taint
my grace.
I am the eternal,
longer lasting legacies have left and grown tired
as I endure.
Look on me with prideful eyes,
I will humble you.
Use me with malice,
I will break you.
Come to me in innocence
with truth in your eyes,
I will give you wings to fly
as the world sinks around you.
I am Love.

Sleep tight

**Randy
Cannizzaro**

Let reality come loose—
wiggling
each cautious poke of the tongue
tear closer to separation

twist, pull, wince
cool air spilling into the gap—
tuck it under the pillow
and see what comes for it.

Kimber O'Brien | Cloud Bed

If only I could make a bed
Woven from the clouds
With every strand like gossamer
Not anchored to the ground

My bed would brush the tops of trees
As I drift near by
And when I needed deeper sleep
I'd rise into the sky

My dreams would be enchanted
When I hang above the Earth
Just above the normalcy
That I have known since birth

The towns below would throb and hum
Full of sleepless life
But I would doze above it all
Completely free of strife

Once upon a time

Erin Stephens

Perhaps someday we will be friends
Perhaps one day you'll remember me
Perhaps somehow I'll pick up the phone
 And hear your lonely voice
Perhaps sooner or later you will think
 To read those letters
Perhaps you'll write
Perhaps I'll forget...

Maybe one day someone will replace you
Maybe someday my replacement will leave
Maybe you will pick up your phone
 And dial my short number
Maybe sooner or later I'll delete
 All those emails
Maybe I'll stop crying
Maybe you'll start...

But I'll never regret
And you will never admit

We were friends
Once upon a time,
We were friends.

Nicole Johnson | Surfacing

Darkness crushes Will under its massive weight. Sweat beads along his brow and neck, blurring his already screwed up vision. He squints at his tiny hands as they tug frantically at the unyielding seat belt. Meanwhile the car's engine sputters to a halt as the water chokes the life from the machine. The murky demons sneak through every nook and cranny, gushing around his ankles. Wisps of frozen breath escape from trembling blue blips. Hands now shaking, his grip on the seatbelt loosens as his waist succumbs to the watery sludge. He calls out in a hoarse voice, "Mommy". The figure in the front seat, already buried, rolls her glazed eyes upward to meet his. A small surge of water flings her free arm back just beyond his limited reach.

"Will! Wake up!"

"Mommy!" Will's eyes flew open but his mind was stuck in the sinking car.

"Honey. Look at me." When the images cleared, he met her warm green eyes. Forehead furrowed, Kara held one hand to the side of his face and wiped away the tears with her thumb. Will pushed himself to a sitting position, slumping forward with his face in his hands. His breathing slowly steadied, but his heart continued to pound, wild and unrelenting. He sighed, leaning back and massaging his temples.

"Want to talk about it?" Kara leaned into his chest, tracing circles over Will's heart. "Maybe you should call in sick."

"Wish I could." He wrapped his free arm around Kara. "I have an appointment with Dr. Wanna Be." He felt

the boring heat of Kara's scowl. "Don't give me that look. Shrinks are not real doctors."

"How about some breakfast for my real doctor?"

"Sounds great."

She kissed his cheek before throwing on her fluffy rose colored bathrobe and headed off downstairs. Will smiled and swung his heavy legs over the side of the bed, pausing as his mind wandered back to the nightmare. It'd been years since he thought of that night. Stumbling to the bathroom, he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. Shadows played across narrow cheekbones, deepening the wrinkles under his bright but hollow blue eyes. Thin, crisp lips turned down into a glare as he noticed more of the hair at his temples fading to gray.

"Jesus Christ, I'm only thirty-two," he spat at his reflection and climbed into the pelting hot water. As the hot shower washed over him, the nightmare gunk flowed with the water and down the drain. Stepping out of the shower, he felt his mind wander to the checklist of things to do for the day. Pulling on one of his many perfectly ironed white dress shirts and plain navy blue pants, Will took a quick look at his appearance in the mirror before darting downstairs. As he drew closer to the kitchen, Kara's blueberry pancakes wafted through the air followed by the sweet but salty apple bacon and her homemade maple syrup.

As he rounded the corner, Kara was balancing two plates of pancakes while flipping on the small TV in the corner. "Finally," she said. "I was about to send in a search party. Pancakes ok?"

"Sounds great." Kissing her cheek, Will grabbed a plate and drowned the pancakes with the goopy syrup.

"Will..." Kara held an envelope, twisting it in her hands. "We, uh, got another letter from Scott." When Will didn't answer, she cleared her throat and tapped her foot until with a heavy sigh he put the fork down and looked

at her. "Says he's volunteering at the aquarium as part of his rehab and he'll be around for a few weeks. I was thinking..."

"Kara," Will pushed around the remaining bits of pancake and bacon. "You know how I feel about him."

"It's been four years, Will. You two are best friends."

Will scoffed. The lights of the interrogation room flickered at the edge of his memory. "A best friend wouldn't smuggle drugs in my suitcase and try to frame me."

"He's gotten help." She moved to block Will's line of sight to the TV. Crossing her arms so they rested on her bulging belly, Kara raised an eyebrow and leaned slightly forward. "He's trying to make things right."

Will slammed his fork on the table. Kara's hands flew to her stomach. "He stole them from my god damned hospital!" He shuddered under the memory of Scott's ghostly gaze. "There is nothing he can do to change trying to send me to prison."

Silently he brought his plate to the sink, leaning against the gleaming metal and sighed. He turned and brought a hand to Kara's cheek, pushing it through her dark brown hair. "I trust you, but Scott isn't who we knew in college. I just want you and the baby to be safe. Please, do this for me."

The reporter's voice caught their attention.

"...another two bodies found along the coast. Although their identities have not been released, Federal Agent Jacob Glauch announced that similar markings on the bodies confirmed these are more victims of Gravedigger. Police have asked if anyone has any information to please call..."

"That's what, ten women now?" Kara shuddered against Will's chest.

Will kissed the top of her head. “Don’t worry, love. We’re on the other side of the country. I’ll be home soon, ok?”

Kara watched from the living room window as Will drove down the street, disappearing from view. Rubbing her stomach, she returned to the kitchen and sang while cleaning the dishes. She had just finished when a hurried knock came at the door.

The hospital was in complete disarray when Will walked into his office. Seemed like today half the city decided to get sick with the same strain of virus. Same symptoms, different faces swirled together until the whole morning became one big blur of fevers, aches and vomit. He was too deep in thought to notice the FBI agent leaning against his office door.

“Dr. Huntington?”

Slightly crusty lips turned down into a scowl as the suit's eyes, hidden behind large black sunglasses, appraised Will's slightly disheveled appearance. The man reached into his coat pocket, revealing cool black metal secured at his hip. Will swallowed back the tingling in his throat. The coat fell back over the weapon just as quickly as it had been revealed. The man flipped open a badge with his picture, grim as he was now. Jacob Glauch was printed in small black letters under the picture.

Will snapped out of his daze. “That’s me. How can I help you, officer?”

“You need to come with me. I’m sorry to tell you this, but your wife’s been taken by the Gravedigger.”

The doctor’s heart nearly stopped. “Excuse me?”

“I’ll explain on the way but right now you really need to come with me.”

Jacob led Will to a black sedan parked outside the hospital. Will barely had enough time to close the passenger

door before Jacob slammed on the gas. The Sudan's siren blazed over the hum of traffic, allowing a straight shot to the highway. Like a massive game of leapfrog, they darted for any available space.

"Backseat there's a Kevlar vest. Put it on."

Will reached back for the bulky garment. Without warning, the car jerked to the right and slammed Will into the doorframe. He braced himself while maneuvering into the stiff vest. Tugging on the fasteners, he threw a scowl towards Jacob.

"You going to tell me what's going on?" His mind flashed to the news report this morning. "The Gravedigger has my wife?"

"We tracked him to an apartment not too far from here. The lease was to a Scott Mariner." Will's gag reflex went spinning. "We found several sketches of his victims and your wife but when we arrived at your house, he'd already taken her. He left a note at your house. Says you're the only one he'll talk to."

"That bastard was in my house?" His mind flashed to Kara and his unborn child. I should have just called in sick. Scott, when I get my hands on you. . .

Another sharp turn slammed Will into the car's doorframe. Signs depicting smiling children staring at throngs of fish filled the surrounding area with arrows pointing toward the oncoming exit. Jacob flipped on his transmitter. Holding the hand held device to his mouth, he steered through traffic while relaying instructions to the available units in the area.

A sudden stop jerked Will from his thoughts. As he hopped out of the car and followed Jacob, he stared at the glass and metal towering over him but unlike Will, Jacob hardly noticed. Jacob ran up to the two squad cars while Will stood there, unable to budge his heavy legs. Why did it have to be the aquarium?

Jacob returned and placed a hand on the doctor's shoulder. "You listen good, I'm only saying this once. If I tell you to get down or out, you do it. Understand?"

"Yeah." Swallowing past the hard lump in his throat, Will managed to jerk his stubborn feet free and follow Jacob into the watery death trap.

Beyond the clear front doors, a vast lobby full of tapestries of multi-hued sea creatures exploded into view. Beyond the ticket station Will saw the beginnings of the exhibits. The empty cave of a lobby sent chills down Will's spine. The two men pushed through each exhibit one by one until Jacob stopped shortly before a sign depicting rainbow colored fish. To their right was an employees only door.

Jacob cocked his gun and held it close to his side. "Christ," Will whispered.

"Don't worry. Keep him talking, I'll handle the rest." Will wiped away the sweat covering his face and neck. A wave of black dots ebbed and flowed from his vision, sending a prickly numbness through to his fingertips. "Let's go."

Only emergency lights lit the narrow staircase leading to the second floor. Jacob took point with Will following closely behind. They emerged onto the second floor, which housed specialized labs for the tanks below. Jacob grasped Will's shirt and yanked him to the floor just as a gunshot whizzed right above their heads.

"Oh god," Will whispered into the grating. A thin piece of metal and five feet of air separated him from a clinically sterile, fish infested watery hell.

"Will? Is that you?" Scott's hollow voice brought Will from his daze.

Jacob crawled behind some crates and mouthed, "Keep him talking."

Will nodded, pushing himself to his feet. The creak in the metal grating spiked his pulse. "I—I'm here Scott."

Scott paused. "I thought they'd lied to me again. Will, is that you man? Come on out. I wouldn't have shot if I'd known it was you."

Heart pounding in his ears, Will forced his gaze straight ahead. Scott, smiling that same goofy grin from college, waved from halfway across the catwalk over the tank. His other arm was wrapped around a figure slumped over in the chair, clutching a pistol. The cool black metal gleamed from the light bouncing off the water. The figure in the chair groaned and lifted her head. Purple and black bruises covered the whole left side of her face. Her eyes, half open from the bruises, cringed when they met Will's.

"I wanted to surprise her. A friend of mine had keys to the place." Scott traced a finger along Kara's jaw. At the first sign of resistance, his grip tightened and forced Kara to stare into his eyes. The black depths warmed as Scott admired his handiwork. "You have to know I love her." His right hand, still clutching the pistol, trailed along her collar bone and up the undamaged side of her face. Duct tape was stretched tight over Kara's mouth, muffling her pleas. "You've gained some weight, my love, since I saw you last." She jerked against the bonds at her wrists when Scott pressed the gun against her bulging stomach. "Don't worry, I'm here now. I'll protect you, and Will is going to help us." His shifty eyes locked onto Will. "Aren't you, Will? You know that I forgive you for that misunderstanding with the drugs. I understand now you weren't yourself."

"Scott, if you love Kara, you need to let her go."

"I tried to find someone else." His face softened a bit, curling into a lazy smile. "There were ten gorgeous women, very talented mind you. Some weren't all that right up here," he twirled his finger next to his temple. "That just made it easier, you know? No one to miss them." Scott turned his attention back to Kara, burying the gun in her hair. "But in the end, no matter what I did, they weren't Kara. I tried switching their eyes around. I tried

dying their hair. I even taught one of them that quirky smile I love so much.” His eyes closed, bringing each girl’s face back from the dead. “Can’t you see, I need her. She’s the only one who understands me.”

“Scott, we’re having a baby,” The laughter fled Scott’s face.

“Is this true?” His eyes flickered to Kara’s stomach. Dropping to his knees, his hands gently touched the top of her stomach. His black eyes flashed with anger as he threw back his head and howled. “No! Kara, how could you do this to me?” His fingers dug into her throat, yanking her to her feet. He turned so his back was to the crates, leaning Kara halfway over the railing. The gun in his hand clattered against the metal grating. “I loved you!”

He stepped back, his fist poised for her face, when a shot rang out in the air. Scott’s eyes widened, glancing down at the blood spilling down his shirt. His weight fell against Kara, digging the metal railing into her back. Her numb fingers slipped over the ice cold metal, but it was too late to stop her and Scott from plunging into the water below. Jacob stripped off his jacket before diving head first after Kara.

Will ran to the railing with his arm stretched as far as it could reach. Scott’s body floated at the surface for a moment before it sank beneath the surface. Pressure built around Will’s legs, gluing them in place. His knuckles whitened from his death grip on the railing while the floor rocked from side to side. Will’s mind raced to Kara’s face, frozen, gasping for air amongst the rainbow colored fish.

“No!” He screamed, tumbling over the railing. The water was tolerably warm but stung his eyes like a badly cleaned community pool. Through the haze of fish and decorative coral, he could make out two figures slowly sinking to the bottom. Strength flooded his arms and legs as he propelled himself to Jacob’s side.

Kara's body convulsed, struggling against the hands trying to grab at her. Her lungs screamed, burning with need. She groaned as thousands of needles pricked the inside of her throat and a great weight pressed against her ears. Darkness circled the edges of her vision, closing in just as another figure reached her side.

With one man to each arm and Kara no longer struggling, Will and Jacob managed to drag her back to the surface. They broke free with a sharp gasp and several wrenching coughs.

"There," Jacob pointed to a ladder leading into the tank. After the two men lifted Kara onto the catwalk, Jacob ran back to the pile of crates, barking orders into his radio. Will pushed the slick hair back from Kara's face and placed an ear to her mouth. Nothing. He placed two fingers to her throat. Again, nothing.

"Oh, don't you dare." His hands moved to three inches above where her ribs joined and pressed down. "Come on, Kara." Closing her nose, he took a deep breath and expelled the air through her mouth. Kara's eyes flew open and her body jerked from the bile she coughed up.

The door to the lab burst open as a team of EMTs with a hand stretcher knelt down beside Kara. They placed an oxygen mask over her mouth and nose just as pain exploded in her abdomen. Her shrieks felt like a punch to Will's gut.

"She's going into labor." An EMT radioed instructions to the ambulance waiting outside.

Darkness lifted under the few sun's rays that stretched lazily through the blinds of the hospital room. Will's mind swam through a haze accompanied by the steady pelting of the rain against the window. His gaze turned to Kara's watery face, still sparkling with sweat. After half the night in labor, Robert John Huntington

had come into the world only to be swept away by frantic nurses.

“They’re good people, Kara. They’ll fix him.” As if in response, the rain surged in intensity. A low rumble echoed Kara’s heart monitor.

She couldn’t bring herself to look at him. Tears burned her cheeks. “It’s my fault.”

“No.” Will slid onto the bed next to Kara. He pushed a hand through the hair plastered to her forehead. “Whatever happened yesterday, today we have Robert and he needs both of us now.”

Kara bit back the knot surfacing in her throat. Before she could say anything, the door to the room clicked open and two nurses guided a cart into the room. The tiny child was nestled amongst a baby blue blanket bunched up to hide the wires. Kara laced her fingers with Will’s as he placed his free hand on top of the glass box. His breath caught as he was lost to the crystal blue ocean in his son’s eyes, knowing that for the moment nothing else mattered.

**Shaun
Strombeck**

Cleansing

Lying on the futon, boredom begins to set in. I watch the fan spin back and forth, trying to count the individual paddles. I hear the pitter patter of rain caressing my windows, the gentle sound of utopia. Searching for an escape, I walk out into the warm starry night, thinking of the future while each rain drop cools, cleanses, and creates my moment of sublime.

Collecting Bounty

Matt Taulton

-after "Once Upon a Time in the West" by Dire Straits-

Parched from the desert ride
arriving to the silence of wind,
the streets empty, except
for a population of tumble weeds.
The badge couldn't impress a soul
if its gleam caught no one's eye.

Tethering my horse I strode in
swinging doors a formality.
The piano sat dead in the corner
gunned down before its prime
probably by the miscreant at the bar
throwing back a cool yellow brew.

A field of cactus prickles on his chin
a young three week beard left to fester.
Clear, blue, unfocused eyes.
A city of lice, built upon his scalp
pressed by the tattered leather hat.
This was the man I'd come to find.

Now sitting between me and a beer
he eyed my reflection sizing me up.
Spurs rebounding off hardwood floor
crossing to the rickety, warn stool
that moans in pain beneath my bulk.
Easing down next to him I wave for a drink.

Careful as only a bar keep can be
the mug is filled with perfection.
A shaky hand nervously sloshes,
my frothy mug hammers the counter.
I drop a saloon token and take a drink
before the warmth ruins it.

A mutual understanding reflected
off the polished silver saloon mirror.
We make for the door.
A purpose driving our steps, knowing
only one of us would visit again
and we were both still thirsty.

I've spent my life collecting bounties
roaming from hovel to whorehouse,
I put a noose around their neck, and
left them swinging for crows and coyotes.
I had no concern for this reward,
the value was too low to be wary.

This young man would never feel
the swift tightening of the hemp.
Collecting this bounty would be a mess.
The rustling, raping, murdering bastard
must have never heard my name
his cocky grin gave that away.

Even the weeds were gone now,
Shutters closed and eyes peered
as we walked out our paces, turning.
We took positions and eased our pieces.
Civility has its place and even us two –
bandit and lawman show respect.

MATT TAULTON

The tick of high noon was coming
and the wind held a deep breath.
I heard the first resounding chime
my brain didn't need to tell my hand,
it knew its duty, and went on its way,
but it never got the chance to draw.

Lead homesteaded in my chest,
Blazing a thick bloody trail
down my vest and through my shirt.
My peacemaker had never failed before,
and now it was leaving my hip,
to serve the quicksilver outlaw.

After dark he took a woman to his bed.
Then the carpenter scattered the dogs,
he had measured me up as well.
The taker introduced me to the family
up on top of the hill, joining with them.
Another unmarked cross, over turned soil.

Katie Welch | Orange

I remember you in the middle of the McDonald's: a too-young, too-thin man weeping with me, your three-year-old daughter. We didn't know each other, not nearly well enough. I had asked for orange to drink for breakfast, and you didn't know that I only drank orange soda for a whole year. As the pulpy orange juice hit my tongue, acidity like napalm in my mouth, the porcelain doll I cradled in my unwashed hands careened to the ground. Her head shattered, breaking the silence simultaneously with my shrieks. I watched through squinted, tear-filled eyes as her skull spread across the linoleum floor, crunching under the feet of those who passed us. Your voice trembled as you picked up the pieces, saying, we don't know each other, not nearly well enough. The whole way home you cried, apologizing, and it's my first memory. Orange in my mouth and in my clothes, and your hands riddled with cuts that we didn't have the money to stitch up.

The Victorian ghost house had lost most of its shingles, yet certainly none of its pride. Defiantly it resisted the onslaught of rain, torrents railing down on the warped wood. Pools gathered in muddy pits and spilled over in streams, escaping to the road under the leaning picket fence.

He wasn't really quite certain what had brought him again before this house on Summer Lane. After the city had installed a new bus route that ran right by his apartment, he'd had no need to walk down this street anymore. He'd nearly forgotten it even existed.

And yet here he stood, drenched, suffering the cold of a late autumn shower. The bus had been out of commission, and work would be expecting him, so he'd set out to walk a familiar path. Yet he hadn't felt put out... he rather considered it a chance to revisit an old friend, this routine he had enjoyed so many years ago (though if he was honest he would admit it was taking much longer with his seasoned pace).

Even still, he had forgotten this house.

The water poured over the contours of his face as he stared, washing over deep wrinkles in rivers. He didn't notice. He wasn't even there.

The sun poured over the roof of the great structure, past the chimney and through the clothes hanging out to dry. He loved the shadow of the wash on the line in the summer morning, painting long, lazy lines in the grass. Robins called out from the trees and cars whooshed in the distance as people flew off to work.

He found himself standing in the yard. He should have been surprised. In all the years of walking by he had never once passed through the white wooden fence that

enclosed the yard. Now, standing in the rain, he surveyed the muddy landscape. Two pairs of sunken four by fours walled off a barren garden near the corner.

Her small, rose spotted gloves were covered in soil, but her face still resembled a five-star green: exquisite and meticulously groomed. She looked up long enough to smile, but her affections remained with the mums she was nursing. The sunlight glinted off of a spade before it was buried in the dirt.

A sudden light threw a new shadow on the ground, a twisted, haunting shape that snaked over the puddles and rocks. It was the old sycamore in the front yard, swaying like a ghost in the wind. The crack of thunder came much sooner than anticipated, though in his trance he didn't seem to notice.

He was so busy scanning the porch that he almost ran into her on the sidewalk. She hugged two large bags of foodstuffs in her arms, peeking over one side from under a large, flower-decorated straw hat. He tried to apologize, yet the words escaped him as they always did. Instead he blushed, clumsily moved out of her way and looked down, seemingly finding the white concrete below much more interesting. She smiled, always a smile, and continued on into the yard. Why hadn't he asked to help her in?

Though the patio was technically covered, it afforded him no escape from the elements. The cracked and rotting floorboards groaned under his step, afraid of his broken, ungainly walk. A very particular planter sat on the railing. He absently trailed his knotted, unadorned fingers over its broken rim. There was more life in a cemetery than in this wretched pot.

She lifted the large, green water canister over the tall arrangement of flowers, singing softly to the blossoms through her smile. He couldn't make out the words, but

he was happy nonetheless, envious of the plants for her attentions.

Droplets trickled over leaf carvings on the grand arch that hugged the front door, which wasn't locked. In fact, it wasn't even latched shut. The frame had distorted so dramatically that only the weight of the door itself kept it closed. He took a step and slipped, catching himself on the doorknob. There was water on the once-polished hardwood, leaking down from the dying roof. The wooden floor threatened him with a creak as he took another step.

He was late that evening. By the time he got to Summer Lane the sun had set and a chorus of crickets had replaced the distant drone of traffic. A single light shone through the left eye of the house. He heard the faint tune from a radio, or perhaps a television (maybe even in color!), but he couldn't see her.

He knew he shouldn't be in here, but he felt powerless to resist. The house would not relent. She wished to draw him deeper into the crevice of her life. He entered what was once a kitchen, now only a room with a sink and a table. As if defying the very laws of gravity, this dinner table stood perfectly level on two and a half ornately carved legs. No tablecloth decorated its top, no chairs accompanied its sides.

He resolved to tell her his name. At the very least. His walk to work was brisk that morning and the hot sun encouraged him, giving him strength. Surely he could muster the courage, that the words would not fail him! He turned the corner of Main and saw Summer Lane, the great Victorian house standing proudly at its side.

The door to the cellar was missing. The bottom was bankrupt of light, a musty mildew wafting up from the void. He was curious. He was terrified. He was driven. The first step creaked. The second step groaned. What was he doing? What was he looking for? He was grinning

to himself, somehow, as if he were a young boy again, on a mysterious adventure, searching for a lost treasure. And yet, like the old steps beneath him, his smile suddenly collapsed.

A large and ugly "FOR SALE" sign rudely interrupted the green of the lawn. There were no gardening tools on the lawn. There was no singing, no smile. He turned and went home. He didn't go to work that day.

There was no one at home to wonder why he did not return that night. The phone rang a few times, messages from work left with polite inquiries as to his whereabouts. The rain had long since dissipated, and the old house on Summer Lane stood quiet and still.

Today, sun beam smiles meet the fading rain drops
refracting ribbons of color across the horizon
as the damp earth dries.

Today, children race through play grounds,
chase butterflies past swing sets,
laughter painted cherry on their lips.

Today I could leap out of windows and never fall –
held up by warm air and light breezes,
drifting gently through blossoming branches on trees.

Today is sidewalk chalking weather.

I carry a box of potential across the park to the spot facing west.
The pavement fresh and wanting. Remnants of rain smell of
cool dust and warm grass.

I look at the scene in front of me, and begin –
smearing technicolor across the canvas of concrete
until my fingers bleed over multi-hued mountains,
adding a little red to my sunset.

And when the last crevice is coated,
I glance at the whole nine yards of pastel portrait,
wipe my hands on my skirt and leave before it
rains again.

Today a girl will drip chocolate ice cream on the cloud I put
in the left corner.

Today a boy will smudge the green fields as he runs to
catch a Frisbee.

and tonight it will rain, and I'll have fresh canvas for
Tomorrow.

Christina Bailo

Archimedes' First Eureka

It was especially balmy
that spring day
with the new buds of
pink, yellow, red,
popping up all around
my bathtub.

The delicate blooms,
the only witness
to my mid-day soak
with a most dear
golden crown
floaty.

The golden pennant
skimmed the water's top
as I contemplated
life,
love,
the number of grains of sand
the universe could contain...

When along trod a vermin
with a white beard
and greedy lips
that ate up the
pink, yellow, and red
with an innocent "bbhhhaaa!"

When the blooms couldn't satisfy
the monstrous appetite
greedy goat come after
a golden crown floaty.

As his gnawing teeth
closed in on their prize
I desperately pulled
my treasure below water,

and in doing such
the water rose
to hit the demon
full face.

Like a flash
it hit me –
almost like water
hitting a startled goat
in his muzzle –
as the crown fell
the water rose.

I had discovered
something, at last
amidst the countless hours
of contemplation
in my bath.

So I rose from the tub
and exclaimed to the heavens
“Eureka!
Now my mother cannot complain
of long baths again!”

Jacob
Neumann | Five to Dirt,
A Tribute to Halo.

“We have five to dirt” the pilot just said
As our ship flew towards the battle zone.
All of our guts filled with a brick of lead
But we knew we were not fighting alone.
We are brothers in arms, a sacred bond,
It would bind each of us through death and pain.
If a brother was hurt, all would respond,
Nobody here cares for personal gain.
Though each one knows we may not make it back
We still willingly charge towards the night.
We are not here for some nice fancy plaque,
That's not why we face the Covenant's might.
The foe will burn all our homes to the ground,
We fight so that our families may sleep sound.

**Aubrey Marie
Preble**

she died twice

she died once
but they reached out and caught her
squeezed her back into place
she smiled sheepishly
apologetically
embarrassed to have died

she died twice and they let her go
arranged her body on the pillow
then opened her up and let her fly
i watched her breathing because
i couldn't bear to watch her eyes

i died twice inside

Jesse Earle

| Give me a Creek

I don't fancy the wind.
It listens and bends as I move through it,
but
There is no strength in a breeze, and its kisses blow away
in the gusts.
No, give me a creek to caress me, to wet my skin.
To understand my tears, to lull me to sleep.

Breakfast: Quantum Mechanics Lunch: Philosophy Dinner: I'm not hungry anymore...: A completely bogus proof	M. A. Patton <i>¹Department of Physics, Colorado School of Mines</i>
---	---

Any halfway decent Quantum Mechanics course should begin with the Schrödinger Equation [1]:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi(\mathbf{r}, t) = -\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \nabla^2 \psi(\mathbf{r}, t) + V(\mathbf{r}, t) \psi(\mathbf{r}, t)$$

Where $\psi(x,t)$ is the particle's wave function. Here, I will mention something forgotten by most quantum textbooks (and philosophy ones too, for that matter): Don't Panic. I will call this the DP Principle and/or Theorem (DPP, DPT, respectively).

At this moment, you have two choices:

- A. Search out a quantum mechanics textbook and/or Wikipedia help and follow along, or
- B. Invoke the DPP

Assuming most of you don't care enough to choose option A, I will assume for a brief moment that we are in a state described by option B.

What you may not realize is that a binary quantum event just occurred.

WHAT?!

For a minute, take a deep breath, get a cup of tea, and try to follow: pretend that such a particle exists, and it has a name that rhymes with "quanto-decisitron," and that perhaps it can exhibit qualities of either a wave or a free particle.

Going back to fundamentals, there is also some wave function to describe the quanto-decisitron that can be

determined by solving Schrödinger's Equation. Let's further assume for a moment that ψ can be described as a linear combination of the eigenfunctions ψ_A and ψ_B .

So how does ψ help us?

Calling on the DPT, I'll use a wonderful analogy devised by a genius. ψ can be described as "a liquid [that is] almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea" [2], in other words, "useless".

Thus, our quanto-decisitron is described by some wave function involving both decisions A and B.

Letting that sink in, allow me to digress briefly: as is often the case in physics, the "math" tends to work out only under certain assumptions, some of which fall under the theory of foreign names, namely, "sometimes we [physicists] invoke foreign names to lend credibility," (Lusk). In this case, we assume all decisions are "Real", and, invoking the credible theory of foreign names, simply ask the French for verification.

As a result, Schrödinger's Equation is time-independent (if you don't believe me, you have two choices: A) find a bloody textbook, or B) invoke the DPP and learn French).

Assuming (a common word in quantum) you haven't abandoned the proof and/or made a cup of tea, I'll remind you that the wave function includes both possible states A and B; now, I will further argue that at some point about 4.2 minutes ago, you made the decision to invoke the DPP whenever you didn't understand something.

Aha! Do you get it?

.....

You chose decision B.

In other words, our wave function ψ is now solely determined by a linear combination of itself – describing decision B – thus it is no longer "a liquid [that is] almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea". Therefore, simply take the Fourier transform of this liquid and get something that is

almost, but not quite, entirely accepted by mathematicians called a Dirac delta function [2].

The quanta-decisitron now acts like a particle rather than a wave (mostly). But soon, ψ will return and we will have some goopy, useless liquid called the wave function – a substance not entirely understood by anyone except for David Hume.

If you know anything about Fourier transforms, then I'm sure you know where this proof is going.

David Hume, an 18th century Scottish philosopher, may have never heard of Joseph Fourier (who was 8 years old when Hume died), but he still managed to describe the philosophical equivalent of quantum goop.

Based on skeptical tradition and empiricism, Hume reached the conclusion that perceptions composing an object are the only things that exist. For example, visualize a Granny Smith apple. This apple is not really an apple, but rather a collection of properties like “round, green, shiny, and revolting” [3]. This idea of properties was given the highly-credible foreign name “Bundle Theory”.

Without these properties, the apple would not exist. The perceptions of a Granny Smith apple, however, can live full happy lives in a quantum goop world, or you could call it ψ , or the wave function, or whatever you so fancy.

The same is true with you. Without your properties, you don't exist (try imagining yourself without properties) [3]. But, when you observe the apple, or yourself, or you make decision B to invoke the use of the DPP, you collapse the wave function into that Dirac delta almost-function mentioned earlier.

Therefore, following the logic clearly laid out in front of us, God has not observed everything in the universe, especially not the properties that comprise the apple or the wave function, or else neither could be present in reality. This is an impossibility; nobody can know what resides in

the properties, the quantum goop, or ψ , all of which are “almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea” [2].

Herein lays the contradiction: tea does indeed exist.

Granny Smith apples, you, and God cannot exist.*

QED

*This conclusion is not supported by the author. All claims are made based on mathematical and scientific principles only. Also, don't panic.

References:

[1] Griffiths, D.J. (2005). *Introduction to quantum mechanics*. New Delhi: Pearson Prentice Hall.

[2] Adams, D. (2002). *The ultimate hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy*. New York: Random House Publishing Group.

[3] Davis, S.P. (Producer). (2009). *Three minute philosophy: david hume*. Retrieved Mar. 24, 2011 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3QZ2Ko-FOg>

**Calin
Meserschmidt**

I burn it down

*—For that, sinewy, muscly, boy, beautiful across the room
with, lovely, red, lips, and perfectly, fit, jeans—*

I see the forest burning against the backdrop of time that is the glow of supernatural night. I grew this forest with others gifts to paint him mute, he my Seraph of saintly cock. So I move the slow feet of reverence toward the insanity of this construction with large fearful eyes of false taught morality. I go to dance in it; whisk-fully intruding the earth, penetrating its hard brown beauty, I sway along with the falling embers painted in an illusionary permanence of starry moments, moving to the heart beat that is crackling of ancient lodge pines, dust embracing my ghostly human form, I am a hunter of future memories, these great horned beasts will roam in the center, Desire is the color of the sound of the burning forest. I am spurred on by the rushing hum of my saintly dynamo of heat. I douse my watery form in gasoline replace my legs with matchsticks my hands with flint. I am headed back to the center, and escaping to the holy that is this, I want to feel like I am glowing.

**Shane
Schrader** | How You Activate My
Catalyst

Time Equals Zero:
We were thrown together
Mixing unevenly
but we all assume well mixed;
it's for convenience.

Initiate Stirring:
Our atoms start colliding.
We mix electron clouds
and van der Waal predicts our attraction,
our dipoles instantly induced.

Ignition Source Engaged:
Our particles start to dance.
As we reach higher peaks of excitement
the reaction has potential but
something holds us back.

Catalyst Added:
Activation energy bars
ideal equilibrium.
Catalyst helps me find your active site
and we start changing conformation.

Residence Time:
Fluxing, forming, intertwining,
twisting, turning, binding, burning
we're DNA's doppelganger;
a helical exothermic vitality.

Steady State:

Popping bubbles, blowing smoke
the physical definitions have transfigured.
A plus B went to C plus D, irreversibly;
we've become something else entirely.

Conclusions:

Catalytic, continuous flow reaction with an
instantaneous reaction time,
measured in units of [a moment].
For optimal results,
repeat experiment exclusively,
without pause, for eternity.

Chinyere Isaac-Heslop

#!

```
it all starts with a spark
touch completes circuit
electricity surges
OFF turns to ON() {
o becomes 1 //bits
1 AND 1 // [flood] gate open
chmod 700 Your.cpp }
JOIN You and I if consent = TRUE // SQL
greater than one, logic implies base 2
and i read the braille of your [dirty] bits
/* which is more like [fluid dynamics, than computer science)
at this interval we've opened IDEs to that language and
transcend natural [use her] interfaces
like confused CPUs we thrash but with reason */
cout << endl; //TODO: finish
typewriter instinct together we return
advanced *touches learned and transitory gestures follow
muscle memory, fingers move on their own
accord to code an all nighter
synapses fire => development_agile
initial approach top down turned bottoms up for awhile
synchronized, though we bear all as if without protection
while (pleased){ continue(); }
exit that partition reenter main
body demands more
if (your.expression->Big O){ break; }
o XOR 1, OFF replaces ON
some programs need only run once to get the job done
```


This steady garden has been calling me for centuries
Through factories and lovers
Through dreams of the Gestapo like shards of glass
Through relentless grey skies and gangs of angry ghosts
Moaning and pleading
Watching the clock
Raking their clammy fingers over past and future

Frogs sprout like grass and sing
Love-songs, night-songs, truth-songs
The birds chuckle and titter
Dip down to drink from last night's rain
Sigh happily
Scratch their name-shadows in the sliced stone
Laid out in a fine smooth path
so my awkward feet do not stumble

i come to rest in bare dirt
dig my toes into thick wet soil

Bright yellow Echinacea flowers shoot like fireworks above me
Their roots tickle the small of my back

The Campanula Pyramidalis becomes my arms
Heavy with dew,
Splayed out lazily in the cold summer morning

The resilient Verbena
Thrusts clusters of fine purple blossoms skyward
Flicks water from her sevenfold leaves, over my supple skin
growing younger by the moment
Bumblebees play
on the spiky white heads
of Echinops Sphaerocephalus

BEE LESSONS

The bee-minute is a man-year
I give my thoughts to their dance
that my careful arguments, my deductions
My secret cries of distress,
May become sweet and ephemeral as their honey
Soft and gentle and subtle
as their furry yellow backs

Fuck Helen,
 girl whose face could launch a thousand ships,
 I will launch a thousand pens
 But mostly, I want to launch yours...

“Write me a poem”
 I’ll say, with the voice of an angel

And your pen, possessed, will follow my command

Write me a love poem
 that tells me you want to dance in the rain
 until our laughter turns to kisses
 and the water on my eyelashes twinkles like the stars in my eyes.

Write me a sonnet
 that remembers smiling
 until our faces hurt
 and the lingering laughter that sticks to our cheeks like chocolate icecream

Write me a haiku
 That is reminiscent of the nervous looks you send across the room
 Until our eyes meet
 and you know I was steeling glances at you too

Write me a poem

I want the tips of my nipples to feel your tongue flick language over them until they are hard
 The veins in my neck pulse
 with the excitement of your expressions of my radiance
 And the air to come in gasps to my lounging lungs as your voice engulfs me

I want my back to
 arch
 hungrily
 into the touch of your words
 The tickling of your talent tightening my muscles
 making me call your name out to the celestial heavens

I want to hear your longing
to gaze at the length of my legs.

Your wanting
to trace my collar bone
feel my soft skin
run your fingers through my long hair

I want you to write me out of your dreams and onto this page.
the gap between my legs
the curve right below my belly button
the cup of my breasts

Write me a poem about the time
I covered your body in chocolate chips
and ate them off one at a time

Or the time you tied me to the bed
wearing a blindfold and outlined my hips
with the watery trails of ice cubes

Or the time you ripped my stockings with your belt buckle
on the trunk of my car while I still had on
my sea green dress and four inch heels

Write me a poem about the time I licked your ear lobes
and played with the line of your pants
until you moaned into the darkness and pleaded for more

Or the time you played your favorite song
while I modeled thongs and skin for you
on the catwalk of your bedroom.

Or the time you asked me to make you a sandwich and I did it...
naked.

Write me a poem

I want to hear my eyes become skies to bask under
I want to see my hair flow melted chocolate and honey
I want to feel my cheek in your hand like this paper on my palm
I want to smell like the roses, jasmine, and hope written for me
I want to taste your words on my lips

Write me a poem
about what you love.

Blackwell Prize | 2012

Creativity. Imagination. Inventiveness. These attributes are among a growing list of extra-technical talents that are considered vital for 21st century engineers and applied scientists to be successful professionals in a world of constant and complex change.

Thanks to the generosity—and imagination—of Colorado School of Mines alumnus J. Michael Blackwell, Class of 1959, the Division of Liberal Arts and International Studies acquired the capacity to recognize superior student performance in the creative arts with the establishment of the Blackwell Award for Excellence in Creative Expression in 2006. The Blackwell Award recognizes those who have excelled in the evocative representation of the human condition through the genres of poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, film, music, or the artistic representation of academic inquiry. The winner of this award will have produced a creative work in the fine arts, literature, poetry, music, film, or technical arts of stunning originality.

It is a distinct pleasure to be able to showcase the work of this year's recipient, Rachel Ryan—Engineering Physics, Class of 2011—whose poetry appears on the following pages.

Rachel Ryan | Appleseed

Trees yield
unforeseen blossoms in passionate spring
where insects prey on flowers
until conservatives flood the street
with signs and banners

I long to pick the burdens off stems
off branches
set them in jars along the windowsill of my kitchen
they remain beautiful until the petals fall one by one
to the tile floor

but they leave me with no other choice
than to watch spring turn summer
blossom turn unripe fruit
which drips from strained limbs
snapping under the weight

of apples, left trampled
and rotting
amidst the warm asphalt

The Way We Fall | **Rachel Ryan**

What can I say, my love?
I taste the bitterness of your absence
while the warmth of
your hand presses into mine.
I fear we hold each other so close
to look out in opposite directions.
A string in my heart
will always hold tension for you
and I'd rather leave now
than have it snap in frustration,
because, at times, its resonance
evokes such a beautiful tone.
So let the autumn wither us down
and blow us apart like leaves.
I can only hope
the fall will be more graceful
than our prelude
winters ago
when the frost tugged at our cheeks
and I offered you a ride home.

Rachel Ryan

Contrast, a pantoum

It's the contrast in the shades
that really gets me.
As if the memories of you and I
somehow faded in the sun.

That really gets me.
And now I lay there,
somehow faded in the sun,
casting shadows.

And now I lay there
in a sepia of change
casting shadows
with intent to illuminate.

In a change of sepia,
I spark a flame
with intent to illuminate,
Until I realize:

I spark a flame
to the memories of you and I
because I realize
it's the contrast in the shades.

The Safeway workers whisper
amongst themselves
as they watch the grown woman
pile can after rejected can
amidst the soup aisle

Golden locks of hair fall into her face
as she jumps to grab another chicken noodle
off the top shelf
only to throw it down in frustration

Her low rise, size three jeans
reveal a tattooed grizzly bear:
perfectly centered between her hips

Meanwhile, other customers
must maneuver their shopping carts
around the woman who,
sprawled out on the tile floor,
has begun to pout
as she reaches out to tell every passerby

of the soup with too much beef,
the soup that's too salty,
and none of them-
none of them are the right size.

Contributors

Kate Bachman, M.S. Applied Mathematics, M.B.S. Basic Science (Mathematics/Physics), B.S. Chemistry, CSM Physics researcher, enjoys science, mathematics, computer programming, and many other activities, including music composition and production, art, writing, ice skating, and biking.

Christina Bailo is a Senior in Engineering Physics and an Athlete on the Varsity Swim and Dive team, and I was also Geek of the Week in the 2011 Halloween edition of the Oredigger (something I've been trying to get since I found out about the Geek of the Week articles in our school paper). I have been writing poetry since high school and was very happy to have three of my newest poems accepted for publication in *High Grade*. I hope everyone who reads my poems can have a little laugh at their nerdiness :)

Tyler Bank - The 10:39s (Holly Bender, Parker Murphy, Pierce Murphy, and Tyler Bank) formed in a basement in Littleton, Colorado in the summer of 2010. Truth is, it was never supposed to go past that one fateful jam, but when the songs started sounding good we decided to take it more seriously. Since then we've played shows, recorded and released an EP, and made a YouTube video and stuff.

Ryan Brusca - I wrote "My River" when I was at a really low point in my life. I was down on myself in every way possible and the song became an outlet for the emotions I was experiencing. When I play it now, I reflect on that period in my life and the things I learned, and the song will always represent something very deep and meaningful to me.

Randy Cannizzaro, chemistry major, graduated in December 2011. I plan on going to graduate school in the field of organic chemistry. I thoroughly enjoyed taking Poetry I and will continue writing poetry in grad school whenever I get the time.

Lincoln D. 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.

Dylan Cobb & Maggie are an unsigned couple finally beginning to record and release their original music, and this is the first production and official release of these two songs. Written by Maggie Lyons in 2008, “Burn it Down” features lead guitarist Dylan Cobb and studio percussionist Jeff Munn. “Raindrops” was written by Dylan Cobb in 2010 and features Maggie Lyons on vocals and piano.

Jesse Earle is a first time submitter, Chemical Engineering Major, and member of SAE. I'm originally from Ogden, Utah, but I wanted a change in scenery. I started writing in high school after discovering some my favorite poets: Pablo Neruda, Taylor Mali, and Langston Hughes.

Jen Finch is an undergraduate in Engineering Physics. She has an African Grey Parrot and the painting is titled in her honor, since she had to go without my undivided attention while I painted it. She felt she needed the paint brushes more than me and often would sneak off with one.

Chinyere (Chin) Isaac-Heslop is an astute Mines senior majoring in Mathematics and Computer Science with minors in Economics and Business and Literature, Society and the Environment. Yes, that is a mouthful.

Although she looks forward to graduating in May, she will miss the late nights of coding via Facebook, CSMWRFC, Toni untying poems from chairs and the fire ants. "Rhyme is like the thread in the sweater of my life. I don't always need a sweater but the warmth is comforting." Chin has very much enjoyed being co-poetry editor of *High Grade* this year.

Emily Hart is a freshman seeking a degree in geological or environmental engineering. She loves to let math consume her thoughts, but art and photography have always brought her great peace. Emily was born and raised in Cypress, Texas and has been loving her horses and her barbecue since she had two front teeth. Texan at heart, she has fallen in love with the Rocky Mountains and may never live in the south again. She plans to move her horse up to Golden next year.

Kaitlin Hedberg is currently a sophomore studying Electrical Engineering. She has always loved sketching during the many, many math classes she has taken in her life. She once ditched her classes to go pose as an art student in a typography and design class and she had the sweetest taste of being a traitor. She hopes to move to Europe after graduating.

Baby Lost His Head, is one photo from a series documenting the Four-mile Fire in 2010 by **Meghan Helper**. Meghan is a senior in geophysical engineering. Black and white film photography was introduced into Meghan's life in high school and her interest progressed throughout college.

Marco Antonio Hierro is a senior in Mechanical Engineering. He enjoys drawing. Marco finds it relaxing and it just so happens that he's kind of good at it... He

really likes video games; he's a HUGE fan of Castlevania. He does fencing every once in a while too.

Paul Holcomb is a junior EE student who also happens to have a digital camera and a love for the outdoors. The photograph "Suspended Explosion" was taken while climbing Pikes Peak.

Christine Hrdlicka has lived in Colorado all her life. She is majoring in Environmental Engineering, but she also loves doing photography as a hobby. God's creation is so beautiful and abundant; it inspires many of the photographs she takes.

Nicole Johnson is a junior in Engineering Physics at CSM. She enjoys writing science fiction but has recently discovered a love of poetry. She particularly enjoys studying Ancient Egyptian culture and one day wants to visit the Valley of the Kings.

Courtney Judish is a senior majoring in civil and mechanical engineering. She plays rugby for Mines and is in the CSM band. In her free time she enjoys playing guitar, hiking and camping. She loves Colorado and the mountains as her backyard.

Matthew Kalhoff- The members of the Golden, Colorado band, C4C —Alex Giebler (pipes), Matther Kallhoff (guitar 1), Brandon Oliff (guitar A), Joey Oertli (slapper of bass), and Graham Knussmann (war drums)—grew up going to shows at Red Rocks and dream of one day playing a show there. The song Just Don't Care is about how all of us (audience included) can be judged wrongly, but we need to move forward. Don't spend time caring what anyone else thinks about you or your reputation; just make sure that your character is true.

Hyung Kim is a junior in petroleum engineering. He's been drawing since he was a senior in high school. He doesn't particularly enjoy drawing but if someone asks him if he enjoys drawing, he usually says he does.

Kelsey Kopecky is a computer science geek who loves dabbling in various forms of art, tending to paint on whatever she can find or is given.

Rita Kowalski is originally from Chicago, she used to design matchbook covers. Now she's enjoying life at CSM in the Controller's Office. Yoga, hiking and rediscovering her love of art, thanks in part to the mini art sessions held by the Creative Arts Club, are a few of her passions.

Kari Kron- When she walks in a room, exciting trumpet fanfares play. She colors with sidewalk chalk in the rain then dances through the multicolored puddle. Chemical Engineering at Mines wasn't enough, so she also is getting a minor in BELS, and a qualification in Broadsword. She is... the most interesting girl in the world. "I don't usually drink, but when I do, I drink Kool-Aid. Stay thirsty my friends."

Madeline Lamb has always had art as a hobby since she was born into a family of artists. Throughout her school career she has practiced many different styles of art through a variety of mediums. She prefers surrealism for its capacity for creativity and imagination.

Matt Lemke is a senior getting a Geological Engineering degree this May. He's working towards getting a full time job for a mining company working as a geologist. His passion revolves around the mountains and mountaineering is his lifelong sport. He is living life to the fullest and is always

climbing and traveling around the world. He is constantly guided by his eternal desire to climb, his past experiences, his future goals, and his love for nature.

Conor Lenon was raised in the hard-knocks town of Madison, WI, where he learned his mad rapping skills, yo. He plays piano, strums easy chords on guitars, and can't whistle.

Hannah Lewis - Murdercide Up, a rare serious song in Ska Skank Redemption's diverse discography, describes a recent murder in Lafayette, CO, the hometown of several of the band's members. The murderers were a teenage girl and her boyfriend who planned the killing in an IHOP and then partied in the house while the mother's body was decaying in the garage in the trunk of the car. Enjoy.

Zahi Masri is an international student here at Mines, originally from Saudi Arabia. He is currently a freshman majoring in petroleum engineering. He is into sketching, drawing, sculpting, painting, and photography. The drawing style in the picture was improvised by Zahi himself, and the photo was also taken by him.

Jake Massey is from Washington State, but lived in California most of his life. While in Washington, Mt. Saint Helens erupted, and while in California, he experienced several earthquakes (including the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake). Nature guided Jake to study and work in the field of geohazards, which is why he is pursuing a graduate degree at CSM through the department of Geological Engineering. He is blessed with a super wife and an amazing two-year-old son. Creative outlets are essential to his functioning.

Molly McIntosh - I am the middle child of three girls and grew up in Colorado. I plan on graduating in May 2012 as a Petroleum Engineer and will work in California. I am a hopeless romantic, love to read and play the clarinet. I love to travel - I have been to Europe and once played in Carnegie Hall in New York.

Calin Meserschmidt is a Junior Chemical Engineer and the Co-Poetry Editor for *High Grade*. He thinks art is key to being a scientist—at its core creating science is the same as creating art, both are a drive to illuminate our reality, they may use different methods but the end goal is the same, understanding. He also thinks poetry is an act of revolution, and each work is a marching step, and each syllable a man on the street, each line civil disobedience, every stanza a battle cry, each poem an argument from something new.

Jeff Munn - “Quicksand” is my first attempt in many years to create music purely as art, not worrying about commercialism or accessibility. It is an unbridled, unplanned studio experiment that journeys from desperate to uplifting and from bluegrass to hard rock. Featuring Todd Lilienthal (banjo), Cody Sickler (acoustic & electric guitars), Dean Cutinelli (electric guitar), & Ryan Cook (bass)—some of whom had never heard the song before the day they recorded and have still never met each other—“Quicksand” might be the most honest piece of music I’ve ever written.

Jacob Neumann is a freshman from Aurora, CO studying Engineering Physics and Mechanical Engineering. He always loves a good challenge and works very hard to overcome each one. He loves to acquire knowledge but he knows how to relax, too. In his free time, he enjoys playing Halo, reading books, and being in the outdoors.

Alan Nguyen is a graduating senior who can't wait to wrap up his undergraduate here at Mines. In his spare time he enjoys exploring Colorado and pretending to be a photographer. He plays tennis whenever he feels like being out in the sun; otherwise you can find him hiding in his hole, far, far away, sleeping.

My name is **Kimber O'Brien** and I am a junior in Geological Engineering. I am a native of Golden, CO and I am proud to be a part of the Mines community after attending high school just a few blocks away at Golden High School. Writing has always been an important part of my life. I wrote my first novel when I was in sixth grade and I have written three since then. I have been published several times for my poetry and stories in such publications as the Table Mountain Tales, The Golden High School Trident, and an NHV textbook entitled A Student's Guide to Nature and Human Values.

Chelsea Panos is a freshman at Mines looking to major in Engineering Physics. She became interested in photography her freshman year of high school. She became obsessed with it her senior year when she completed a 365 project (taking a photo every single day for a year). Overall, in an environment of endless equations, numbers, and science-y thingamajigs, photography keeps her relatively sane.

Chelsea Parten is a Geological Engineering student from Dallas, TX. In addition to being a rock hound, she loves to draw and paint. Saint Bernard dogs are her favorite.

Marie Patton has enjoyed the adventurous terrain of Colorado for the majority of her life, though exploring and traveling are among her favorite hobbies. She studies

physics at Mines, while outside the classroom her medley of interests range from philosophy, swing dancing, hula hooping, and scuba diving. The rest of her time is spent running with the track and cross country squads here in Golden - or with Hannah Schuster on the Mt. Everest marathon trail when possible. She is also hideous at bowling.

Chris Pederson is a graduating senior in Geological Engineering. He can honestly say he's never fallen asleep in class, a feat attributed to his crazy doodling addiction. Sometimes he feels more like an artist trapped in an engineer's body, but overall he thinks it just adds an interesting perspective particularly in the field of natural art interpretation, geology. If the engineering gig doesn't pan out, stay tuned for the animated comic adventures of the Geology Penguin!

Aubrey Preble spent the last four years working as a deckhand on tall ships. Today, she enjoys dancing, painting, and geophysics. One day, she'll sail around the world.

Rex Rideout - My grandmother, Norma Lynn Rideout died in the fall of 2002. My grandpa, Howard, had died over two decades before her and she never remarried or even courted another man. In her last years she would imagine she was back on the farm with him. I felt that when she was released from her bonds on this earth, they were reunited; I wanted to write a song about them and my father, Bob, who in dying last summer rejoined them. Rex, in addition to working in the labs at Mines as a classified technician for thirty years, is a long-time student of the music and songs of the 19th century American West. He has performed at countless historic sites and museums.

Shane Schrader is a senior in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering and will be graduating in May 2012. Poetry has helped Shane stay sane, battling the math and science tides with levees of alliteration and allusion, barricades reinforced with slant rhyme and synesthesia. *High Grade* has been an amazing outlet for his creativity and while he is sad to be leaving, he is ready for the next great adventure. “It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.”

Kyle Schulz is a professional concept artist who loves gaming, art, multimedia and dragons.

Tyler Scott - A couple of years ago, I couldn't tell you what I wanted to do in life. Now, after being inspired by my digital logic class, I now know that I want to design circuits. I work at the electronics lab in the physics department and love every second of it. I am also involved in five campus organizations. Outside of school, I enjoy snowboarding, playing ultimate frisbee, slacklining, and above all, being with my friends and family.

Caitlin Sellers was born and raised in Washington State and moved to Colorado for school. She is a senior in Geological Engineering and will be graduating in May 2012. Other than school, she loves playing sports, including rugby, IM football and IM soccer. She also enjoys photography, astronomy and spending time with the people she loves.

Lauren Sepp is a second year Mechanical Engineering student. Hailing from the royal province of Genovia, she enjoys playing badminton and riding royal ponies in her free time. In addition to her royal duties, she also enjoys knitting, singing, and a great cup of coffee. She has raised

baby polar bears, hiked Mt Everest twice, and fought off numerous honey badgers. Photography is merely a side-interest.

Cody Sickler - The Reckoning—Matthew Glazier (sax, vocals), Kameron Kincade (guitar, vocals), and Cody Sickler (guitar, bass)—wrote and recorded “Rock Bottom” in their home studio in Denver. Also featuring drummer Jacob Harris, “Rock Bottom” is about those times in life when you hit a low point and are ashamed to let anyone know, but you are constantly searching for a glimmer of hope, spiritual or otherwise.

Joel Slack is a loner and a no-body, a hopeless romantic and a delinquent, a tripled shape shifting shadow of a man. When the lights are trained on him, he dances with these shadows and rejoices in their multiplicity, but at night when the lamp lights strike at him from ghostly angles... He is watched by them, mimicked by their grotesque falsehood. He wants to run for his life and throw them asunder, to leave them forever in the past. Joel Slack writes poems to satisfy these strangely angled shadow men, but always erases any living memory of their transcription once the shadows grow long and retreat from under his feet. This is the first, and only, poem that will escape from his lips and into the world. The shadows are always watching.

Mariah Stettner is a senior in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering who graduates in May. She started writing poetry this year as she thought she hated it before her class. She is the *High Grade Art* Editor and loves being involved in liberal artsy things to escape engineering every once in awhile.

Ian Stone takes pictures.

Shaun Strombeck is a fifth year student at the Colorado School of Mines majoring in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. My hobbies include IM sports, billiards, golf, and video games. I also love to write poetry in my spare time. My poetry reflects my past experiences, things I enjoy doing, and places I want to go. I enjoy writing abstract poems and conceits. I would like to extend a special thank you to Toni Lefton for her inspiration, help, and positive attitude towards life.

Matt Taulton is inspired by Clint Eastwood and his success both on and off screen. Originally from Livermore, CA he attended high school in Parker Colorado. He then went to CSM to get a degree in Petroleum Engineering. Matt has an interest in experiencing new things as well as a desire to travel around the world. To achieve this Matt intends to become a field engineer with Schlumberger.

Katie Welch is an English-Creative Writing senior at the University of Colorado Denver. She is married to the wonderfully kind and good-looking Nathan Welch, a senior Chemical Engineering student at CSM. She enjoys spending time with her family, playing piano, working at a local coffee shop, getting worked in MW3, and continually enjoying beautiful Colorado. She would like to thank her entire family, especially her dynamic mother, for all of their love and support.

David M. Williams is an accomplished pianist and synthesizer performer who has been playing keyboard in excess of 25 years. He records most of his music on an iMac using Propellerhead Reason 6. Arranging and composing covers to popular and obscure songs is his current pastime. Mr. Williams believes that music is the language of emotion and thus he strives to be an effective conduit of that language.

Stephan Wilson grew up in Cleburne, Texas, and moved to Colorado to study environmental engineering. He enjoys climbing mountains, cycling, sailing, skiing, and anything else in the outdoors.

Heroes and Superheroes

We would like to give a very special thanks to the
champions of *High Grade*:

The Associated Students of the Colorado School of Mines.

Without the generous support of ASCSM we'd be
scribbling on the sidewalks.

The Division of Liberal Arts and International Studies.

Thanks for the office space, photocopies, and providing
an advisor
who gently cracks the whip.

The Hennebach Program in the Humanities.

You allowed us to transform the ArtiST conference from
a dream into a reality. Thank you so much for your
generous support;
we could not have done it without you.

A warm thank you goes out to the Board of Publications
and the Student Activities Office.

We would also like to give a heartfelt thanks to Prof. Jon Cullison
and his students in the LAIS Music Technology Program.

SOUND BETWEEN THE STATIC

1. Kari Kron

“Muse”

Recorded & mixed by Tate Nazarro and Charles Laufert,
CSM Recording Studio, Golden CO

2. Rex Rideout

“Ride Out to the West”

Recorded & mixed by Don Richmond at Howlin' Dog
Studios, Alamosa CO

3. Jeff Munn

“Quicksand”

Recorded & mixed by Jeff Munn at UnitedWeRock Studios,
Denver CO

Produced by Jeff Munn & Toni Lefton

4. Ska Skank Redemption

“Murdercide Up”

Recorded & produced by Chadzilla at Monster Island
Recording Studios, Denver CO

Mixed by Josh Molyneux & Christina Ochoa at CSM
Recording Studio, Golden CO

5. The 10:39s

“Want Not”

Recorded & mixed at FTM Studios, Lakewood CO

6. Ryan Brusca

“My River”

Recorded & mixed by Ben Makuh & Daniel Hepting at
CSM Recording Studio, Golden CO

7. Maggie & Dylan

“Burn It Down”

Recorded, mixed, & produced by Dylan Cobb, Lakewood
CO

Additional recording by Jeff Munn at UnitedWeRock Studios, Denver CO

8. C4C

“Just Don’t Care”

Recorded, mixed, & produced by M@ at C4C Studio, Golden CO

9. The Reckoning

“Rock Bottom”

Recorded and mixed by Cody Sickler, Denver CO

10. David M. Williams

“Battle of Mortals - The Dirge”

Recorded & mixed by David M. Williams at Nevir Wolf Studio, Golden CO

11. David M. Williams

“The Rain Song”

Recorded & mixed by David M. Williams at Nevir Wolf Studio, Golden CO

12. Chinyere Isaac-Heslop

“Fragile Fruit: Good Thoughts”

Recorded, mixed, & produced by Jeff Munn at UnitedWeRock Studios, Denver CO

13. Maggie & Dylan

“Raindrops”

Recorded, mixed, & produced by Dylan Cobb, Lakewood CO

14. Conor Lenon

“I’m a Gangster”

Recorded & mixed by Conor Lenon, Golden CO

CD mastering by Josh Molyneux & Christina Ochoa at
CSM Recording Studio, Golden CO