

HIGH GRADE



COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES JOURNAL OF THE ARTS

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

May I place you while the world comes into its own. you . . .
Ever unreeling ever tirelessly
immense in passion, pulse, and
power,
would pull the roots of all my plans.
from the moon, I ascend
and swiftly leaping beyond, A reminiscence sings.

* The above blackout poem was crafted by Alex Leto, the editor-in-chief of this year's edition of High Grade. The text used was generated by a computer program written by Leto; it was trained using all poetry and literature that appears in the journal.

CODE RED
AURORA BORGHI

When I grip a pitcher of cranberry juice
and stare through the glass
in hopes to see granules,
crystalline-cubed sheets suspended
in garnet, I am met with onyx
not crystal.
Back in Salida with no exit signs,
gripping the wheel till my knuckles shine
like diamonds
and I fade into a crash.



MORNING BLISS

AUDREY FORD



HAIBUN FOR AN EVENING WALK

ERIKA STROMERSON

My dog's back leg ails him, so on walks he chooses a soft spot of grass to stop, slowly stretch, cool leg with ground. Morning rushes prevent these pauses, but tonight is temperate, the sky like dark glass as hot day slowly fades into languid, sanguine night. He lies down (looks up, guilty), wanting to smell the dusk and the noises of neighbors and the lights of stars above and city below. See clear to Boulder from his favorite spot by a pine tree, where the grass is cool and green: the top of a small hill from which Golden tumbles down and away to the north. Sit and hear crickets chirping, someone coughing, a dog barking, leaves falling, the stars overhead winking their presence as they step out from that blue glass. Watch cars pass, watch scant clouds shift shapes over the ridge where three radio towers, like sentries, announce their stands with slow, blinking red lights. Perhaps a breeze sweeps through, tickles the trees as it tickles his nose and causes ears to prick, alert, and perhaps he sees a rabbit or smells one on the wind. And it is quiet. And I think of dusks like this where neighbors and I would play kick the can until the last light faded well into the chill of evening. Those evenings smell like this one: green of leaves on summer-dressed trees, though none of the blackish-purple cherry trees standing guard by every home. My dog would love to chase all the delicate pink petals they let fall at the end of spring. They would catch on his nose and he would sneeze, and then look up and smile.

Sky like light through leaves, soft, so like the busy ground which we occupy.

BEFORE SLICED BREAD

JIM STUDHOLME

In some households
offering the bread-loaf heel

was sacrosanct
A holy politeness.

An ancient sacrament.
Breaking Bread.

A communion before the rapture
of sliced bread.

Another familial ritual
digested by

The allure
of convenience.

FISH OUTTA WATER

JOHN WHATLEY



LIKE EVERYDAY

TALA TAHERNIA



TWO GODS

KYLE MARKOWSKI

it is enough to say
two blackbirds might dance
to the caws of their friends

under the street light
the night of a birth or death
and in dancing bequeath grief

behind the church
the blessings carved into stones
carved into the bones

of three children
discovering death is a kiss or a wish
or a knife to the night

PIECE OF SHIT

ALEX LETO

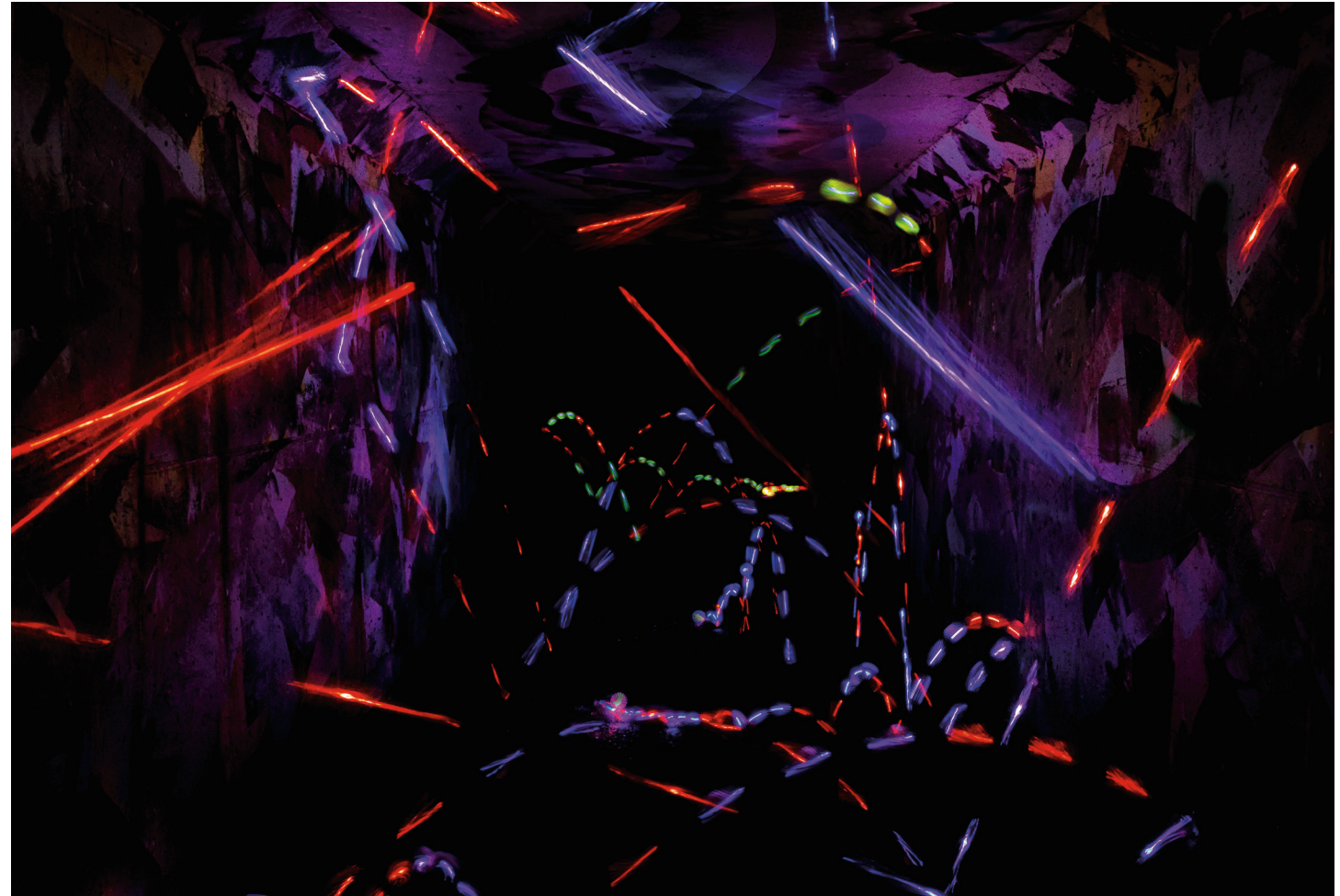
Black paint curls around bent doors,
fingertips grasping, trying to hold on
a losing battle with 90-degree heat

Two dents in the front bumper,
One in the back.
Another in the side that
you swear wasn't your fault
one more on the side gaping
spilling secrets of an abusive
teenage driver

It actually laughs aloud when you
try to put it in first gear at the same time as turning down the stereo and rolling down
the window
with your whole arm and say '10-piece chicken McNugget'
but the girl on the other side
of the neon sign only hears your surprised squeak
and a screeching of tires.
Revenge.

BOUNCE

RYAN PARK



HOMO TECHNICUS

K. VULETICH



BALANCING ACT

CHELSEA PEARSON

I do not recall that which turned me stone.
Once I was young, and innocent, and brave;
Then the change of seasons, and I
Am no longer innocent, do not remember
The unabashed happiness with which I lived
When I knew no better.
Once I was a girl, smart and quick to temper;
Then April came, and no longer was I a girl;
Neither a woman grown, caught in-between, held
Where I could not breathe for fear of choking.
Once I lived each hour, enjoyed my days;
Then the wind blew, and I
Now only survive.



ROAD STOP

KEARA BARRON

I like it when you look up and can only see the tops of trees hemming the sky. You could be anywhere—in your backyard, the middle of the mountains, a field lost to memory. No space for city movements, life routines, worries of the real world—there is only sky and trees framing the bottom of your vision, perhaps waving in a detached, unbothered, uninformed manner. The sight holds a certain peace. Silence amidst the noise, save for the gentle wind. A window to another world while yours rocks in the storm.

I stared out the window as the car drove by the grove of trees, my head tilted up so this view was plastered before my eyes. I could almost feel the sun skimming directly over my skin. The AC, cool but artificial, prickled my arms with goosebumps. In retaliation, I thought of the sun and heat. It didn't really work. The car sped down the pavement and my trees were gone, left behind. Grass lined the side of the road, no trees for a few more miles. Only grass. And sidewalks and occasional storefronts and that one gas station.

“Can we stop?” I asked. I was still staring out the window, my nose nearly pressed against the glass. Green blurred by. But not the darker green of trees.

“No. We'll be late,” she replied, lips pursed. Not in annoyance, not in arrogance. Her knuckles whitened as she gripped the steering wheel and her shoulders were tense. I began to wonder if my abrupt question was the reason for the stiff posture, but that thought quickly disintegrated. I imagined water hissing on a stove, twirling into steam and disappearing in air. One of the world's magic tricks.

It was not me, I was sure, though I wasn't making things easier for her. I twisted my lip and looked at her own perfectly colored lips, sleek long hair pulled back all professionally with gel or hairspray or whatever it was. A natural makeup look spread over her eyes and highlighted her pretty features. White button-down blouse with a high collar. The purple rings still peeked out, crawling slowly, steadily, quietly to her jawline. *Don't worry*, she had said with a smile. *It's like I've been kissed by a grape. Grape-kisses.*

“Please?”

I wanted to go outside and feel the sun. She was the one who had started the tradition: we would be driving to anywhere, and she would pull the car to the side of the road and we would emerge from the tangle of machinery, out into grass or a parking lot, just to feel the breeze or see a brilliant view. The mountains were just half an hour to the west, after all. She liked exploring, taking in her surroundings, stopping to smell the roses and all the other sweet floral scents weaving through the fields. Our little road stops were good for me too, and I think that's why she did them.

“Not today, I'm sorry.”

I shut my eyes so my eyelashes pressed against my skin, fluttering lightly like thin feathers.

“I feel lightheaded,” I said, still trying.

She grimaced. She knew what I was trying to do, but there was also a smidge of genuine worry reserved for me. “Not right now, please. Please, just hold on. A couple more minutes.”

I took a deep breath to steady myself. I really was lightheaded and my chest was already beginning to rise and fall more rapidly. The car was a thief of space—it closed you in while the world beyond was so open, so endless. I was trapped in that thing and I didn’t want to be.

“If we’re late, he’ll—”

“Please!” I gasped. I couldn’t stop now.

“If we’re late he’ll be angry!” she shouted quickly, a scramble to get all the words out.

Everything was wrong and terrifying and horrible and overwhelming and I just couldn’t—

I couldn’t get air in.

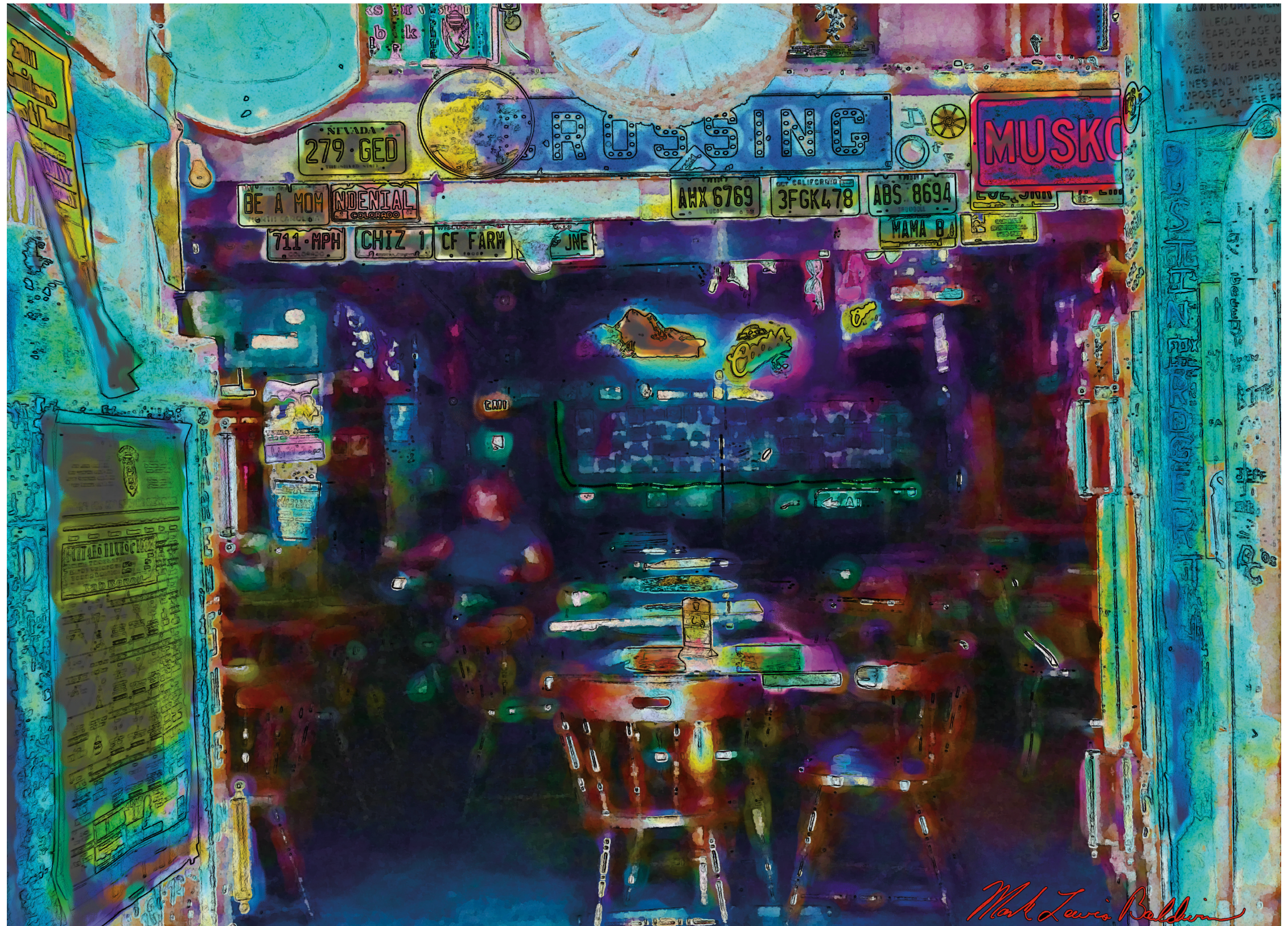
She pulled over and put the car in park. Shakily, I threw open the door and staggered out, onto my knees but still feeling that relief of evening air. After I could breathe again, I felt sick to my stomach and tears pricked my eyes and my head buzzed—but I looked up and saw trees. I adjusted the angle at which my head was tilted so I could see the very top branches brushing the sky. There was a red glow from the sunset. Which meant we were running out of time. I glanced back to the car where she still sat, fingers nervously thrumming on the dash. *Thank you. For this sacrifice.* I felt awful. I would feel worse when the grape-kisses were higher the next day. I tried not to think about it, but all I could dwell on was how she never got out of the car anymore when we stopped.

SPIRITED AWAY

JOHN WHATLEY

A
perfect day
to set my spirit skyward
made from scarlet paper skin and a
balsawood spine it’s adrift amongst the endless blue
and here i am earthbound with a thin length of
twine the only thing tethering my soul to the
the companion i set into that sea of air
i wish to set it loose letting my
spirit drift away in
freedom
A
thought
whispers
to me
that i should
let go of the
the string
and set
my soul free
lost of its anchor
spinning wildly
it spirals
downward
crashing
to
the
ground

LITTLE BEAR
MARK BALDWIN



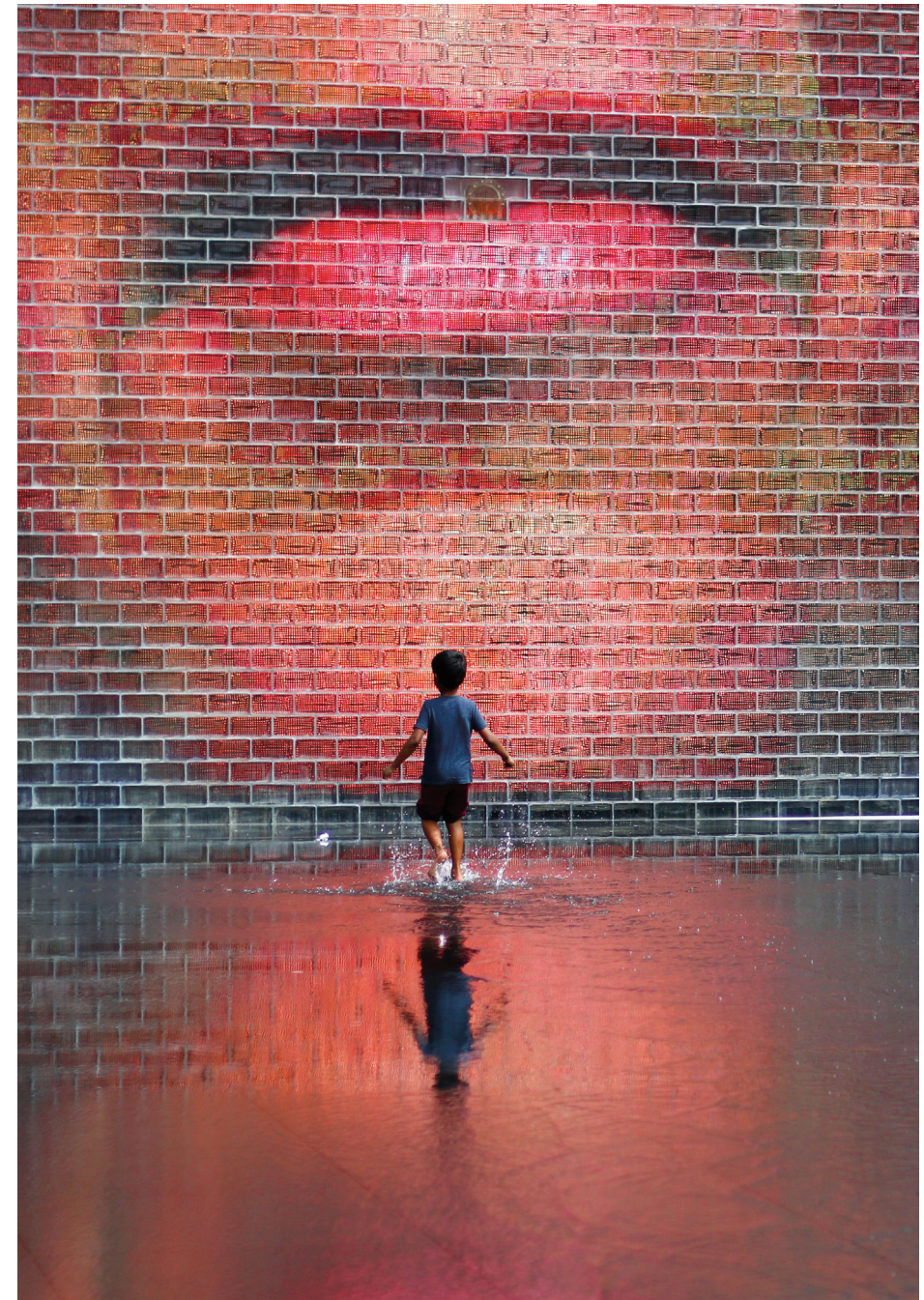
MANGO

JORDY LEE

Running around the uneven cobbled streets of La Paz with yellow hair and red skin that looked like I had been licked by the rough tongue of an orange cat, I was dressed in browns and greys to match the old stones and bones of the city. Perpetually ancient, the altitude made you wrestle clouds to breathe and I was already a pudgy marshmallow of this interracial marriage. Like the whites of the clouds with the browns of the earth, like oil and water, there wasn't a name for my mixture, so most people just called me mango. I didn't mind. I liked mangoes. I liked biting into them and coming up with a sticky indecisive halo; a foreign reminder of what my fathers had done to theirs; a color that no one wanted.

GO GET YOUR DREAM

TALA TAHERNIA



AMERICA, I DON'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE

ALEX LETO

I.
You gifted me a birthright
of cul-de-sac summer nights
the bliss of wasting away the time,
Bike carelessly dropped
to concrete, spokes
spinning in place:
a blur of mosquito repellent
and sweat.

II.
For you, my dear,
I have worked my hands
into a Caffeine shake
Five nights in a row: I know
in every pyramid scheme,
there are winners
and there are those waging war
with the rent, nothing
to protect them save
cubicle walls and liberty.

This love affair has met its end
I've called your bluff,
punch card threats disappear
into spacious skies
and white lies turn transparent.

DISRUPTION

SULTAN ALSUWAIDI



SHATTERED

RENATA BOYD



BLACK BOYS ARE MOONLIGHT BLUE

WENLI DICKINSON

after Tarell Alvin McCraney

in moonlight black boys look blue
as indigo textiles, signified riches
forgotten (read: erased) from Our names

blue like azure bled from hands as
wealth cruised from Spanish colonies

blue like dyed cotton yarn
from raw bolls browning in the sun

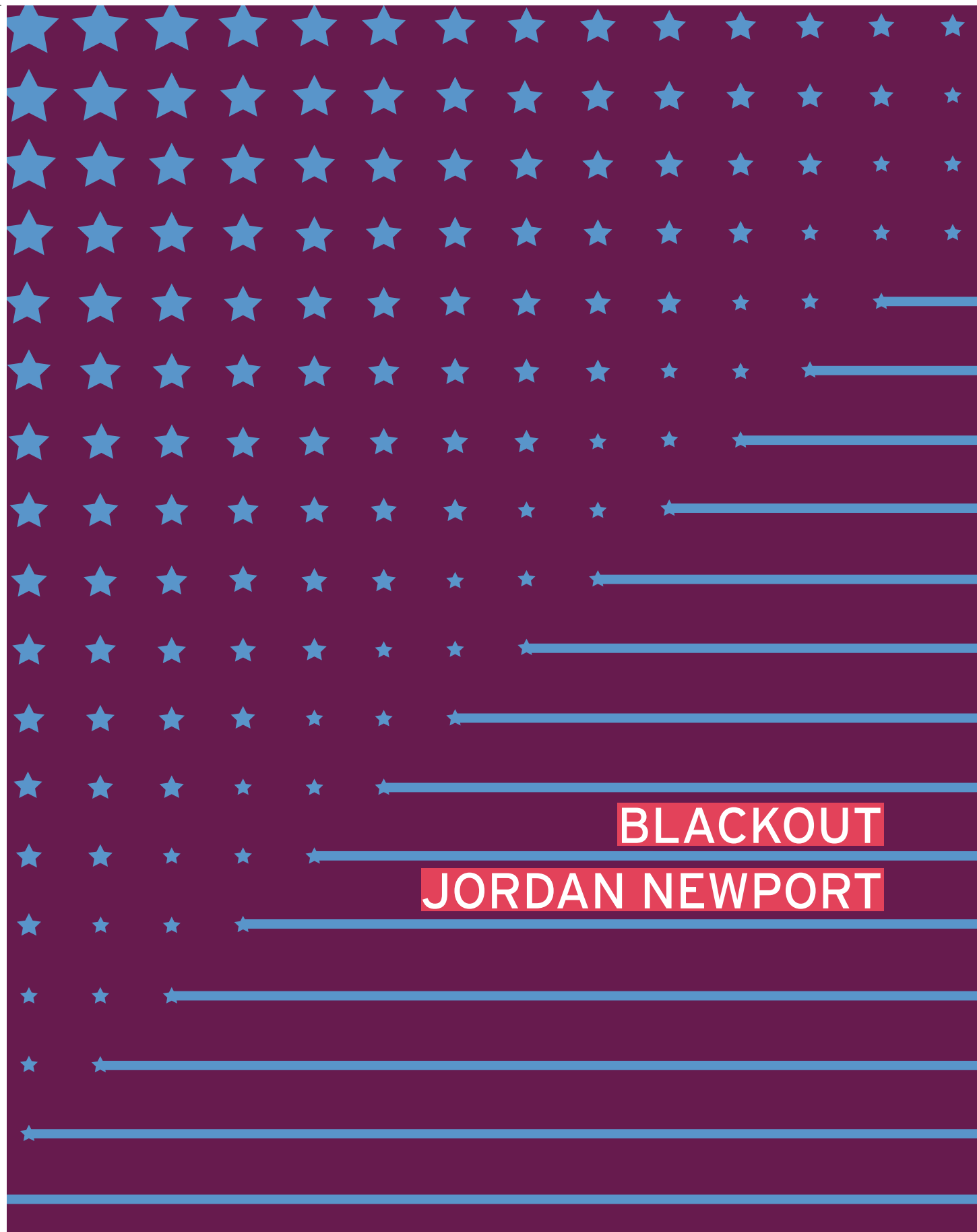
blue like midnight ink on paper stark against
the redline bound around Our homes

blue delineating one white rectangle
in a blueprint: one room in this housing project

blue as the denim of your jeans, could be
a weapon (read: hand) in your pocket

in moonlight black boys look blue
skin like coffee brew could be just skin
in the cool patina of cosmic light

today at the barber's: \$20 ALL-OVER HAIR COLOR
call it unprofessional, unkempt (read: afro-textured)
—or better: call it blue.



The stars are so bright tonight. That is the first thing the astronomer notices when she steps out on the deck of the isolated observatory. She can make out all the constellations she knows from that class she took in undergrad.

The stars disappear, all at once. In their place is a flat darkness. It is as if a blindfold has been put over her face. She looks around and notices that the light on the radio tower is out also. The total darkness is so disorienting that as she turns her head, she loses her balance and almost falls down.

The astronomer recovers, and she starts calling everyone she knows to try to find out what happened. Nobody picks up. Eventually, she realizes she has no service. This far away from anyone else, there is nothing she can do, and she quickly reaches a state of acceptance.

She sits down and enjoys the darkness and the quiet.

•••

The hacker is satisfied. Denials of service are just so easy these days. Trivial, really. Just overload any system, even a power plant controller, and it can't do its job anymore. But the hacker still gets a measure of satisfaction from pulling off a good attack.

He checks his monitoring software and sees that the last worthwhile power station has gone under. Some controllers are so overloaded that even generators will struggle to bring them back online. He sends a quick encrypted message to his employer over a hardened line, telling him the job is done. Then he thinks for a moment, at a loss for what to do. There certainly aren't any clients who would pay for him to hack something now that most networks are down.

The hacker goes outside. He looks up at the sky, towards the stars, but they're gone. This isn't something he did, but he finds it hard to trust in coincidence.

He rushes back inside and sends a panicked message to his employer, but there is no response. He grabs his phone and dials the number for the police, but then he realizes the layers of irony involved in his own isolation.

Worried but helpless, he lays down in his bed in the pitch dark. He tries to sleep, but he can't.

•••

The agency director is woken up at home. One of her deputies is banging on her door, shouting something about stars and power plants. She rolls out of bed, finds some clothing, and gets in her deputy's car. It's strangely dark on her driveway, but she's too busy to worry about that right now.

She is briefed on the drive back to the agency office. Thankfully, her deputy's car runs on gas. When she asks, she is assured that the stars going out is real and not just weather: they disappeared all at once.

They stand outside the office building. The power is somehow still down, so they can't open the electronic locks. Secretly, the agency director is relieved. She hasn't the faintest idea what she would do if she were inside.

There are protocols for power grid failure, and those are being followed. Fuel is being distributed to facilities with generators. Internet and phone infrastructure is being restarted on backup power. Investigations are already beginning into how and why this attack occurred. Eventually, the full power grid will come back online.

But she still has no clue what is going on with the stars.

Just as the agency director begins to walk in circles outside the front door, the lights inside the building click on. The backup generator is finally back online. It took long enough.

She scans her card, and they walk straight to the elevator. The elevator takes them deep underground, to the secure room.

As they arrive in the secure room, the lights flicker and go out. Somehow, the generators simply failed. In the darkness, the agency director is overwhelmed by her own uselessness. She has to fight back both tears and screams of rage.

Falling back on training, she asks for situation reports. There is no internet connection or power, so there are none.

Her deputy begins to climb up the stairs, to see if he can find any help. She stays safe underground, straining to keep her worries in check.

•••

The cultist smiles smugly. The job is nearly done. His attack is going smoothly. One by one, power stations are dropping offline. The horror he knows is coming might yet be mitigated.

The next message he gets from the hacker tells him that the job is finished. He knows that batteries will last a little while longer, and eventually generators will be turned on, but for the most part humanity has been saved. They are seeing one moment without distraction, one moment where each is alone, or with the people they love and trust. Some of their souls may survive the coming of the Veil.

The cultist looks outside, and he sees that the stars are gone. He knows the Veil

has arrived.

He takes the little case out of his pocket, takes out the capsule inside, puts it in his mouth, and swallows.

He is dead before he hits the ground.

•••

The Veil enshrouds the Earth, claiming all energy from within and without.

In a matter of hours, the shroud moves closer until the moon is obscured.

In a matter of minutes, the shroud moves closer until mountaintops are obscured.

In a matter of seconds, the shroud moves closer until buildings are obscured.

As the shroud passes through each person, they are claimed. The last person to be claimed, deep underground, is the agency director. She never knows what hits her, although in the last seconds of her life she comes up with a passable guess.

The shroud continues moving downwards until it reaches the center of the earth. As it compresses down to a single point, it claims all of the earth.

Only the cultist knew what will happen next.

AMERICAN COMPOSITION

GINA HEINSOHN

An Active Shooter Creation

Reflections off golden horns
dance across desks
In unison, bows rise and fall
to the chiming of a school bell
Shuffling sheets of paper
settle in the stands
as seats begin to fill
and with one collective breath—
a pre-performance hush.

Crashing of symbols
and smashing of tambourines
erupt through silence –
Automatic rattle from the shiny snare shoots out –
A high-pitched piccolo – pleading
Mighty cello strings, taut as triggers,
PLUCK. PLUCK. PLUCK.
echoes ricocheting
in a single shattering second

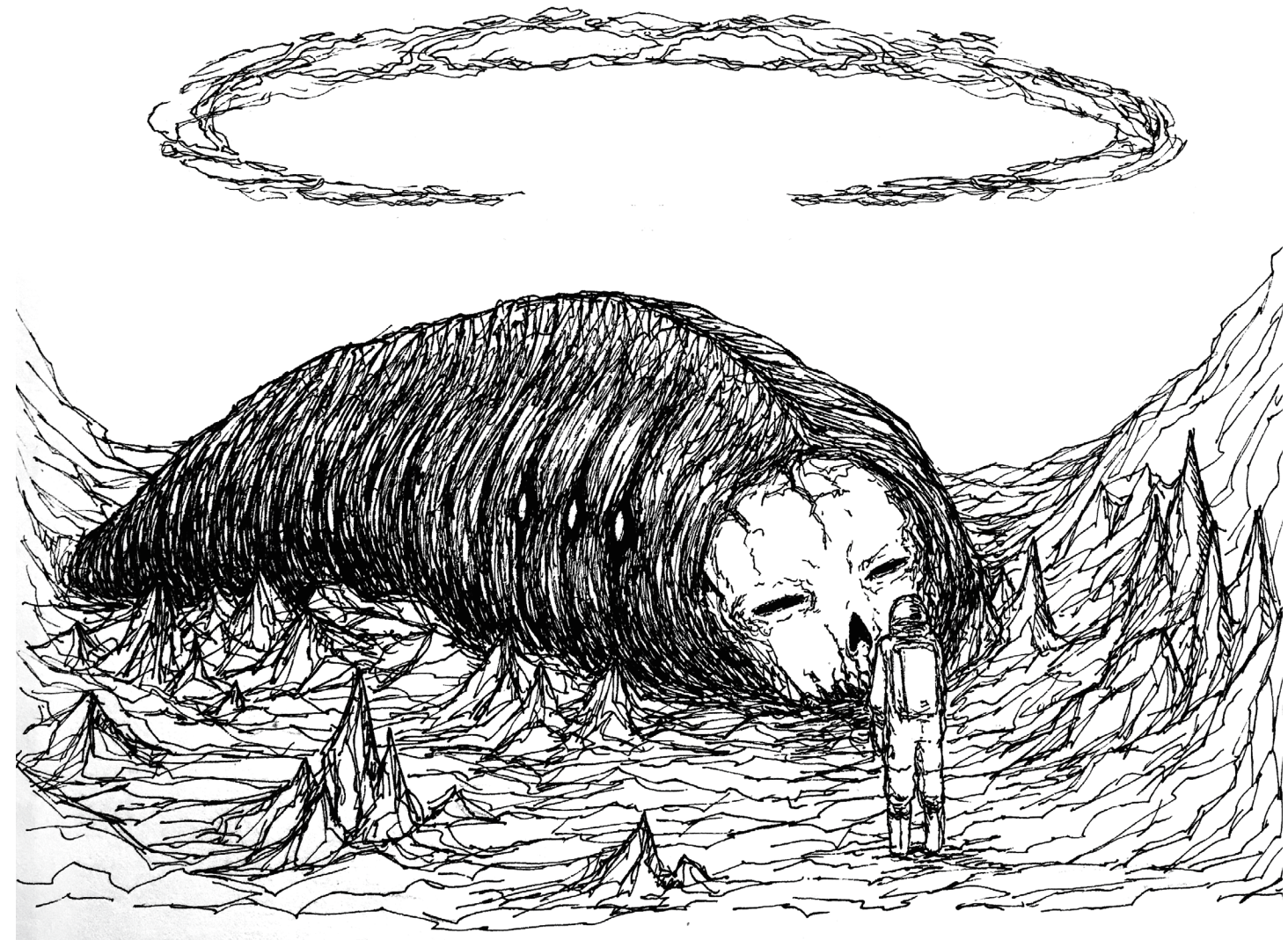
No one dares exhale,
sullen eyes on the conductor
Baton up as if to take command –
but he doesn't move
a muscle.

A stand is re-erected
papers shuffle into place
a lone clarinet whispers a familiar tune

reflections off golden horns
dance across desks.

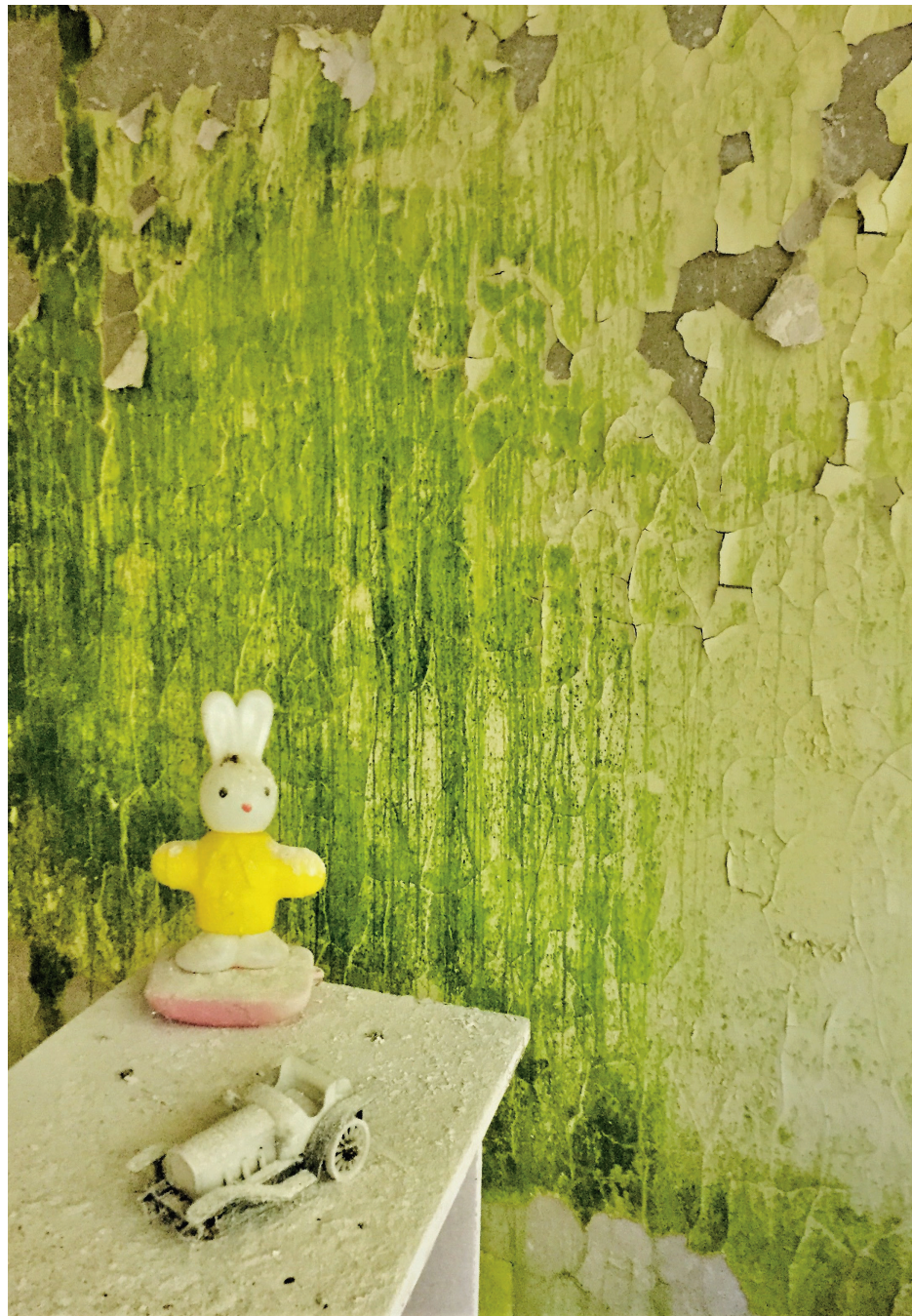
IT GOES ON FOREVER LIKE THIS

JOSEPHINE WESTARP



PRIPYAT

CLEMENS RAINER



CRASHES TO CRASHES, RUST TO RUST

JOHN WHATLEY

the chain-link gate the only entrance
offering a glimpse into the world beyond
the obstruction of corrugated siding

will it be there or gutted like almost everything
bits and pieces spirited away by scavengers
not wanting to leave empty handed

the air thick with rust and spent oil row after row
endless skeletal remains of cars panels doors
glass springs strewn about in haphazard whimsy

various fluids dribbling from open hoods
like drool hanging from slack jaws
flowing into a rainbow cacophony in the

muddy puddles formed from melting snow
slowly seeping into the ground contaminating
everything with kaleidoscopic tentacles

countless lives carried by countless wheels
over countless miles crashed here to leave behind to decay
and picked over a glimmer of hope a final use for others

plodding through the corroded maze shoes
encrusted with grime stopping at aisle 30 bin C
it's the right make and the right model and

it's completely wrecked
but still has the part i need
a working tail light

HIGH HOPES
KASRA TAGHIKHANI



PULP-FREE

ORANGE SUN

RUNS THROUGH

MY WINDOW

SHINING

DIRECTLY ONTO

MY CAT'S

PAJAMAS

parcels of tempest

throw around his words

for us to tear

into morcels

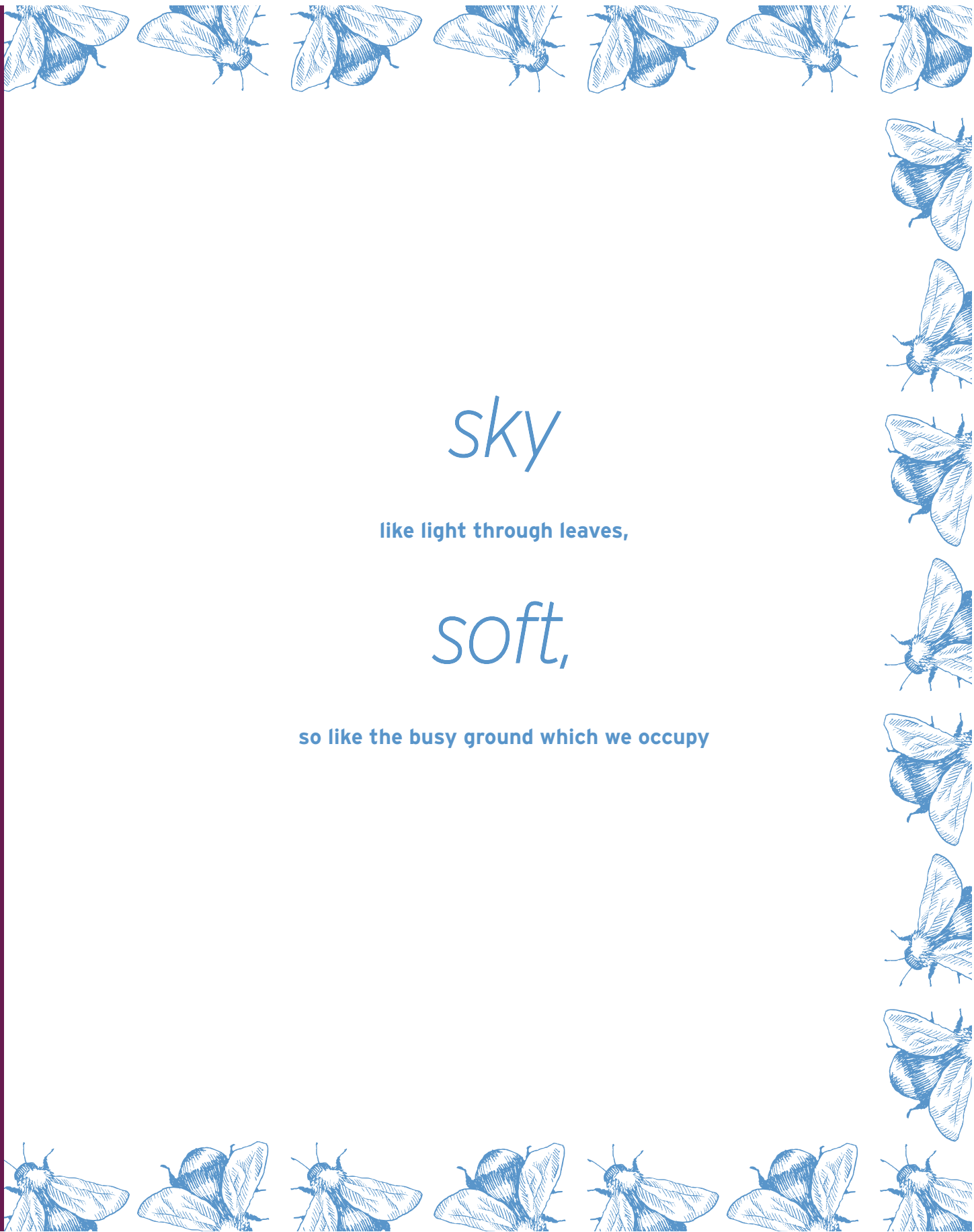
Discovering death is a kiss or
a wish or a knife to the night

sky

like light through leaves,

soft,

so like the busy ground which we occupy



RUTLAND

KAIT MCNAMEE

I don't know how he did it,
and I don't want to ask.
I want to remember him
in Vermont, the green mountains,
where I slaughtered a rooster named Big Boy
and he helped me dress the body,
gently plucking its feathers
with a respect he could not give himself.

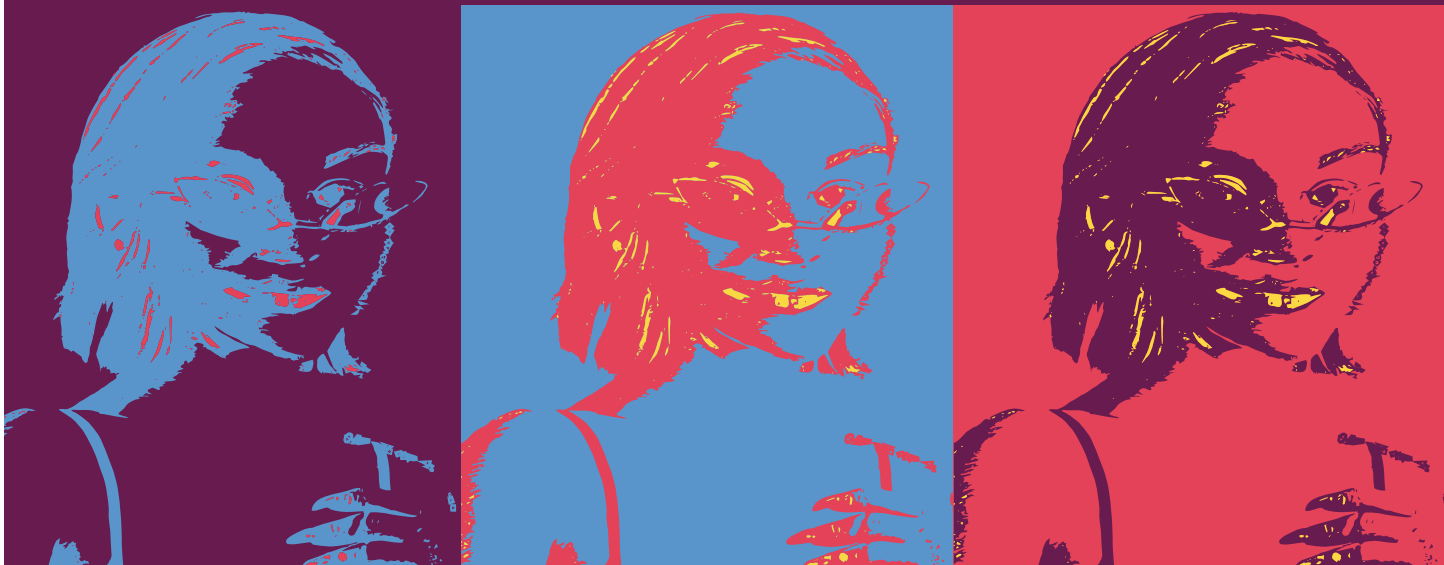
STREBEN

SULTAN ALSUWAIDI





COLD FEET
JACOB PROUTY



I threw on a blue jacket over my pajamas and slipped my feet into some shoes, not stopping to tie the laces, before following my sister out into the cold motel parking lot. It was snowing and I could already feel the little stabs of cold piercing through my jacket. I almost went back inside to put some socks on, but they were currently sitting somewhere in my suitcase. A couple inches of snow painted the ground and I could see my sister, Phoebe, standing beneath a light in the middle of the parking lot wearing her winter coat and a bright red scarf. The snow was already beginning to dye her red hair white. I had the urge to go back to bed, shove my feet into some heavy socks, wrap myself in the warm covers and sleep. But that would leave Phoebe out here all alone playing with the ends of her scarf. We stood there for a couple minutes, my feet frozen in place and Phoebe seemingly unaware of my presence.

“You said you needed me for something,” I finally said, the sound of my feet crunching in the snow and drawing her attention. Her gaze swung around to face me nervously and she took a quick breath.

“Well,” she said, drawing out the end of the word in that way kids do. “You know that picture that I used to keep in my drawer? I was sort of out here looking at it. Then that stray cat we saw earlier came up to me. And it was purring and it was super sweet, but when I went to pet it, it took the picture.” The picture she was referring to was a copy of a drawing that Phoebe and our older sister, Eliza, had made of the three of us when Phoebe was six.

Phoebe looked at me expectantly, like it was obvious what she wanted me to do. After a period of silence filled only with her growing annoyance, she urged me to help her find the cat and hopefully the picture. All I could do was sigh in response and look around for any signs of the cat.

There was nothing in the snow to show where the cat had gone. Any tracks had been covered up and wherever the cat was, there was no way it still had the picture. But I didn’t know how to tell her that. So, we searched. Phoebe and I split up, with Phoebe near the motel room while I did a sweep of the surrounding parking lot. Phoebe wanted to come with me and I could feel her staring at my back, but I also knew that she wanted to talk. I didn’t know what to say though. How do you explain to a twelve-year-old girl that one of her treasures is gone forever? So, I searched.

While my numb feet failed to feel the ground beneath them, I thought of Phoebe’s lost picture. Despite Phoebe having had all the artistic talent of a six-year-old, it looked pretty good. Probably because Liz had penciled in all the lines and helped with some of the details. But the coloring was all Phoebe’s, which explains why the three of us were purple. Purple was Phoebe’s favorite color and, as she put it, why can’t her favorite people be purple? It had put me off at first, the way the color clashed with the realistic sketches, but it grew on me as I got older. There was a certain charm to that contrast

between childlike imagination and the hard lines of reality. Liz always got it, though.

Despite being two years older, Liz seemed to remember being a kid better than I did. She was the kind of person who was just as happy painting still life as coloring a picture with crayons. She always knew what Phoebe was thinking and was always coming up with places for us to go. Usually, she would invite me to come with them and I would hesitate, but she would just grab my hand and pull me along anyway. She's dead now. About six months ago she had an allergic reaction to some painkillers and by the time the paramedics got there, she was gone. We had thought she was sleeping in when I went to wake her up, but my stomach fell when she failed to stir. I remember a muted call to my parents as I fell against the wall next to a stack of her sketches. My parents made their own vain attempts to revive her, but I think by that point we could all tell she was dead. And while my feet stood there uselessly, my hands were restless and my eyes needed to look at anything else. So, I began looking through that stack of drawings. Scraps of ideas and unfinished sketches were the majority, but one drew me in. It was a sketch of Phoebe and I. There was a rough outline of what our upper bodies would be, but she had already finished our faces. Phoebe's bright eyes were only matched by the smirk on her face and somehow, Liz had managed to make my eyes almost as bright as Phoebe's. My smile was still just as subdued as ever, but I sort of preferred it that way. It almost looked like a stylized photograph it was so good. For the rest of the day I kept going back to her room, back to that picture until, finally, I just kept it. I could still feel it in my pocket like the paper had been made of lead.

After that, Phoebe's picture seemed to serve a similar purpose to my own memento, but it had been six years since Liz and Phoebe had drawn it. Phoebe's daily routine of folding and unfolding it as she took it in and out of the drawer she thought served as a secret hiding place had caused it to tear. Luckily, our older sister kept a portfolio on a flash drive of just about any piece of artwork in which she was even tangentially involved. So, before our trip, when Dad saw Phoebe's drawing barely held together with some scotch tape, he looked through the flash drive and printed a copy of it on some nice cardstock, hoping it might last a bit longer.

Of course if we couldn't find it, the replacement would've only lasted a couple days. We spent another half hour looking for that damn cat. By now, any plans for how to find it had fallen apart. Phoebe had grown tired and was halfheartedly following me around, hanging onto the edge of my sleeve with her fingers. My hands were in my pockets messing with my wallet and what little else was there. My thoughts were scattered and the search was more of a distraction than a goal now. Absently, I noticed that my feet were crunching the snow beneath them creating a rather annoying beat in the dead night. It made the cold just that more tangible and every time I raised a foot, my shoe would stick and a bit of snow would make its way into the gap between my heel and shoe. There was a massive tug on my sleeve and I turned to see Phoebe looking at me.

"Jay." There was a pause as she played with the ends of her scarf like she was hoping to find her lines stitched somewhere in it. "A cat didn't take it. Nothing took it. I..." There was another pause as she took a deep breath. "I actually had it here," she said, holding out pieces of cardstock. There was a bit of a quiver in her voice as she continued, "I'm sorry."

To be honest, I had already figured that first part out. The whole story was sort of ridiculous and there was no sign a cat had even been here. The picture, though, was a bit of a shock. I had assumed she had just lost it and was looking for a story to explain it away. I guess the only question I had was: why? I looked at the scraps of picture not knowing whether I should be angry, but I thought it might be good for her to get it off her chest.

"I'm sorry I lied to you and dragged you out here. I'm sorry I ripped the picture. I was just..." she paused, not quite sure what to say. My hand started to make its way around her shoulder, but stopped as she looked back up at me. Tears had started to form in the corners of her eyes.

"I was looking at it earlier and thinking about Eliza and I was thinking about the picture and then how Dad printed a new one and how the old one is gone and I was so angry. I was just, I was just..." she was talking faster the more she went on and almost hyperventilating now still repeating 'I was just...' as if the rest of her story would follow those words like it had before. Tears were running down her face and she was sawing her scarf around her neck and I acted without thinking. My arms wrapped around her and pulled her close to my chest. "I tore up her picture," she whispered after a little pause.

"No, you tore up a copy. Now c'mon let's get back inside. Dad can get you another one when we get back home," I said. Angrily, she pushed me back and glared at me. Then she shook her head slightly and began silently trudging back through the snow, dropping what was left of the copy in the snow. "Phoebe," I said so softly that I wasn't sure if she was ignoring me or if she hadn't heard me. For the second time that night my feet felt frozen in place. As the snow continued to fall on top of me, I couldn't even feel the cold. All I could do was stand still.

Flakes of snow had already begun to fall on the pieces of cardstock. Motionless, they stayed there in the snow as more of it came to bury them near my feet. I wished the wind, or something, would come and move them away from the frozen ground. But the night air was still and the only thing I could feel was Eliza's sketch in my pocket.

A little cough from Phoebe broke the silence and drew my gaze away from my feet. She let out several more coughs as she continued to trudge forward. As the cold began to hit my body again, I tore my feet from where they stood and quickly made my way over to Phoebe, leaving behind the scraps of cardstock in the snow. "Hey, Phoebe," I

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

K. VULETICH

called.

“What?” she snapped, turning so fast she started slipping. Automatically, I placed my hands on her shoulders to steady her. She leaned into my hands, but avoided my gaze, choosing instead to focus on her feet. “You don’t understand,” she mumbled. “It was our picture.” Her voice hitched a bit and her eyes locked onto mine. “We drew it together and Dad just printed a new one...”

I wanted to cover my ears and hide from her pained words, but there was no hiding from her eyes. Giving up, I pulled her close and swallowed hard. I stood like that for a long while, trying to comfort her and not knowing how. Trying to fix her grief. But I thought again of the sketch in my pocket, another one that Liz drew with her own hands, that had been my own memento for the past six months. I looked at her tear-stained face and for the first time in a while, I had some confidence in what I was about to do.

“Listen, Phoebe. I’m sorry too. It hasn’t been easy for any of us recently and I know I haven’t made it any easier. I do, however, know something that does,” I said as she lifted her head up a little. There was only the sound of her sniffing as my left hand moved to the weight in my pocket. I took the sketch that had been my constant companion for the last six months and pressed it into Phoebe’s hand.

There was a sniffle from Phoebe as she shakily unfolded the paper showing sketches of our faces. Her face currently was a mess of tears, snot, and confusion and I was scared I had upset her even more. There was no way to tell, but after a moment, I had a feeling that she was happy. Seeing her staring at that picture, though, I knew that I was happy. Probably the happiest I’d been in my whole damn life. Maybe you just had to be there, but even writing this down now, I have a stupid grin on my face.

“Now let’s get back inside,” I said, scooping her up into my arms. I carried her back to the motel room to the rhythm of crunching snow. The numbness creeping through my body made it difficult, but I didn’t care. It would disappear as soon as we got back inside. Phoebe was so tired that she was falling asleep in my arms, but I knew it would take me a while longer before I could get back to sleep. As some snow slipped into my shoe again, I made a mental note to ask my parents for some warm boots when we got back home.



THE BONES BENEATH OUR FEET

K. VULETICH



Acrylic on Found Copper Plates

CALCINE

LAUREN MILLER

Walk into the desert, sandblast
my body, reveal my bones.
Become the skeleton, pretty

white rods, jewelry for fair maiden
land, when she marries the night
sky. Let my skin burn to ash

in the sun as it's torn away
and flats above the desert
floor. Make me the knot

that binds the sand
to the air and the dirt
to the cosmos,

the wedding ring, mirrored
by an orbit not that different
from the birds circling above,
as flies dance on my bones.

VARI(ABILITY)

WENLI DICKINSON

From afar, he has the silhouette of a man seated, at peace, wheels hidden perhaps by shadow. Much like the shadow beneath the table, concealing motionless legs. He is reminded of light. The naked bulb on the ceiling (out of reach). The lampshade on the bedside (within reach). How warm incandescence casts home from room to room. Easily traversable with the correct turn radius. Left hand pauses, right hand rotates the wheel. When the summer sun rises (out of reach), the mountain cowers only, and cannot move away. He imagines how the mountain prays for its foothills to become feet which walk. He wonders at the motion of photons, at the ease experienced by some particles. How they would bound freely upstairs, how they shoot through ponds, across knotted earth. How other particles, in their stillness, are reminded to be thankful. Thankful for working hands, for strong arms, for eyes which perceive variability. He thinks perhaps winter light may be slow to reach us, but reaches us all the same.

REACHING HAND

THOMAS LAING





THE ROAD TRIP

ANLI NI

The last bits of sunlight underneath the Earth cast a bright blue across the sky. In the distance, almost on the horizon, the red lights of cell phone towers beam out like lighthouses across a sea of barren land. To the right and left of this endless highway are the blinking lights of wind turbines in otherwise empty space. Straight ahead and tailing behind are the red taillights and white headlights of other travelers, if that's what we can be called. The inside of the car is only lit by the dim orange glow of the car buttons. Within minutes, the sunlight is gone, the moon and stars are long forgotten, and all that remains to break up nighttime darkness is artificial light. I let my eyes close, let my body give into fatigue, and sleep as he drives us along the endless highway with one hand on my knee.

When I wake, we are pulling into a campsite somewhere in southern Wyoming. The car doors open and a sudden silence and cold September air rushes in. I step out and shine my flashlight around an almost completely desolate campground. The only signs of human life are the subtle sounds of the highway in the distance and a camper van parked about 50 yards away, but it appears long abandoned.

"Alright," he says with a kiss to my forehead, "let's set up this tent and get to sleep, so we can get out of here early tomorrow morning." He pulls the old, worn-down, somehow still functional tent from the car and we piece it together silently as if it's an involuntary act of our bodies. The same drill as every day for the past two weeks: set up the tent in the dark, wake up in hazy twilight, drive through daylight to a new spot, stop where we can, when we can, repeat.

"Are you hungry?" He asks as I throw the pads and blankets into the tent.

"No."

"You've barely eaten anything all day."

"What's the point?"

"Hey," he grabs my shoulders, "don't do that. I didn't take you all the way out here just to let you die of starvation." Immediate sadness forms in his face at the thought of his words so he pulls me in and says much calmer now, "We're going to make somewhere a new home. A fresh start where we can forget about everything that happened in Florida. Come on, I'm making myself a sandwich with whatever we have in the cooler. If you want one, you have five minutes before the offer goes away." This last part he says with a subtle smile that softly loosens my aggression.

After we eat, we lie back on the hood of the car for as long as the cold will allow. I want to crawl into the tent and sleep, but I know he looks forward to looking at the sky every night, insisting that each place we stop is new and completely different. I turn over on my side and stare at the abandoned camper van trying to make out what I can in the

dark. I can almost make out the name of the brand on the side of the van when he shakes my arm and says with startling excitement, “Ari, Ari look! Look!”

“Fuck, what? You’re going to make me think something’s wrong if you...” My annoyance takes a sharp turn when my eyes meet the sky above. At some point since we arrived at the campsite, the clouds thinned to air revealing an infinite number of stars. Even the milky way is visible, stretching across and illuminating the dark.

“I’ve never seen...”

“Me neither.”

“The world feels suddenly...impossibly large. Doesn’t it? I never thought anything would make me feel smaller than looking out at the ocean, but here it is. I feel like an atom! Not sure if I should be terrified or relieved. It’s fantastic isn’t it?” He speaks with such a hopeful tone and I secretly wish I could miraculously lasso in that kind of hope as he does. And as beautiful as the sky is in this moment, its touch does not reach beyond my eyes the way it does with him. With him, the image strikes some spark already within his soul, but the only thing I feel is fear that I am missing something—that without him, I might fall completely numb.

We finally get into the tent and under the warmth of the blankets. I fall almost immediately asleep although I’ve been sleeping for most of the drive today. Head resting on a pillow of clothes, the hard ground below the pad, complete silence and darkness lulls me into a deeply vivid dream. I’m in the kitchen of my parents’ house in Florida with my whole family: my mom in her bright red sweater making a grocery list, my dad leaning over her shoulder telling her what he needs, my 10-year-old brother walking in the door from school. The summer sun fills the room as it always does in the afternoon.

“You know when I go off to college, you guys will be all on your own for meals. No help from Chef Ari.” I remember saying this before, in real life, and how they all laughed and teased me for all the times I burned dinner. This time, my dream family does not react, they do not even look at me. I realize with a pinching dread that they cannot hear me. Then, I noticed their bodies start to float up towards the ceiling. The whole kitchen is filled with murky water. The water carries their lifeless bodies up and terrible howling hurricane replaces the sun outside. I start screaming and crying but the water blocks the sound. I swim towards my family’s limp bodies but the current pushes me away. It pushes me out the front door and into view of the pile of wood and glass that was once a home. The scene suddenly changes. I see Spence now, after his father’s funeral punching a wall and falling apart when he thought he was alone. I want to hold him and say something uplifting like he does over and over for me, but just as it happened before, I am frozen and unable to find my voice.

I begin to hear Spence’s voice yelling my name, I feel his arms holding me and

then my awareness is in the tent again, still crying but audibly now and he’s yelling, “Ari, Ari! It’s a dream! Calm down, it’s a dream.”

“A dream?”

“A dream. A nightmare.” My senses start to come back, I remember to breathe instead of cry, but the images will not go away.

“We’re never going to find a place.”

“We can always go back.”

“There’s nothing there. You saw it. Why weren’t we there when the hurricane came? Why did we leave that week? We should have been there. I should have anyway. Not you.”

“No, you shouldn’t have. Because if one of us were to survive, we would both have to.” He speaks so confidently, that I start to believe him. He holds me for a while until I notice that it is not dark anymore. I unzip the window of the tent and morning sunlight enters through the mesh. I look back at his face now glowing in the light, blue eyes illuminated, natural red highlights shining through his brown hair. I lean over and kiss him because I suddenly remember that I haven’t in the last two weeks.

“Let’s go. We’ll get breakfast on the way. I’ll drive,” I offer because I don’t feel like sleeping anymore.

I drive us and all our possessions in the world past the camper van, out of the empty campground, and back to paved roads. I pull onto the highway that cuts through the barren land but in the daylight, the faraway faded peaks of a mountain range begin to appear. And we push on towards them through an ever-growing network of highways surrounded by an electric supply of light. We fight through the consuming darkness, sometimes numb, sometimes fully aware, driven by an odd and unexplainable desire to cling tightly to love and life.

FOLIE A DEUX

ALEX J. WATERMAN



CRAFTSBURY

MARY COLLINS

suck(ing) peach pits in the swelter of summer
her lips taste like salt and sweat
it's so hot I'll never get the dirt out from
under my fingernails,
it's made its home there, as I have made mine with her.
I'm gay. I tell her, tongue lolling
my arms are burned and fingers sticky
"sure," she smiles.

FRAGMENT

ALEX J. WATERMAN



Concrete & Copper

SPEAKER OF THE WORLD

NICHOLAS WOODWARD

I bear witness to the Speaker of the World:
parcels of tempest throw around his words
for us to tear into little morsels
and stuff between
our sealed lips
tasting sweet of remorse

his sweet sad medicine birds
whir their eucalyptus wings
deliver the prescription
toss it
haplessly through our
windowless heads
and each letter
tears
a way back
out

he folds our words in ha
lf and cuts us with their co
ld edges.
he doesn't thi
nk they chill us to
the bone like
they d
o

i—
is—
is it because we don't list
en?

THE THOUGHTS THAT ARISE

KEARA BARRON

In a slurry of accidental sleep, in the thick haze that clogs your mind and scatters your half-conscious thoughts—that’s when I find myself to be the most honest. The most authentic and raw and bare and somehow philosophical, if that’s the correct term. Minutes later when the fog clears, I ponder on those recent befuddled thoughts, wonder how I could never think of something so beautiful yet startlingly true when my mind was sharp and awake. Perhaps when the deep recesses of sleep come to pull like the tide, the heart and mind fold together, meeting and falling on top of one another like a sigh of content.

Here is what I mean:

The world is so full of hate; wouldn’t you rather be full of love?

I see myself murmuring it through half-closed lips, brushing movements like gentle, in-between kisses.

And the honesty, the self-revelations?

All doubt and current worry and frets for the future poured aside—and I mean completely poured out, like a brimming bucket of rainwater emptied after months of sitting forgotten, pointlessly on the back porch—

I love you.

ARYA

JADE NJO



TIGHTENING

JORDY LEE

What causes that sound?
The broken mixture of friction and strain.
The last gasp of leather
as you pull on your laces tight.
The groan in an old branch
protesting as you push past.
The throe in your chest.
The tightness that makes all of us
ready to spring or ready to break.

SPRINGTIME

LAINE D. GREAVES-SMITH





WANDERER
KASRA TAGHIKHANI

**BUBBLE
BUG**
MEGHAN SLOWEY



Colored Pencil
& White Ink

AQUEDUCT

JED WILSON



ANOTHER MONDAY

LAUREN MILLER

Pulp-free orange sun
runs through my window
shining directly onto my cat's
pajamas (that are much cooler than mine).

Outside, the breeze carries
The hope of flowers in the air
if you wanted to, you could even
glimpse the bee's knees poking
out through petals.

Something that's just exactly
my cup of tea made from
water warmed with a smile
dancing through my herb garden,
and right into my cup.

The mica in the dirt and rocks
drifts into the air, holographic
technicolor, dusting the world.

Bow to the trees and they
bow back, rustling grass
trumpeting the presence



SUPPER TIMES

TOMHENRY REAGAN

Course 1 — Haddock

Dad says that Arundel is where the fisherman live. “All the way from 1630 up until I was in my 20’s, the fisherman lived and fished in Cape Porpoise. But things are different now, sonny, it ain’t like it used to be, all those from-aways have driven up the price of coastal land and made the fisherman move inland.” When he was a kid, he says, all the big “cottages” on the coast were shake-sided houses, lived in year-round by regular people. He makes air quotes over the steering wheel when he says “cottages”, because a real cottage, he says, does not have three floors or columns out front.

It is a bitter cold day in February, and we’re driving to Arundel to buy haddock for supper. Dad just picked me up from preschool, like he does every day. I am excited, because he says we’re having haddock for supper. Dad’s baked haddock is my favorite.

The old fisherman at the lobster pound is pointing at the fish under the glass counter, telling us where his son caught each one.

“Well, Chris, if it’s haddock ya want, I reckon you probably go for this one, just caught this morning off Jeffrey’s Ledge”. While he talks, he gestures with the fish in his rubber-gloved hand.

“Gimme a pound and a half then”

I think the fisherman went to high school with my dad, but he looks more like my grandfather.

Back at home, I get to help Dad crush the crackers. We put them in a bag and roll a can of baked beans over them until they look like salty bits of sand. The rest is Dad’s work, but he lets me play with the potato peels while the fish is in the oven. I arrange the little slivers on the table to make shapes and letters. Mom’s not home yet, so we get to listen to The Beatles as loud as we want. Dad does all the cooking, because Mom has to work all day. But also his brother is a chef, so I think he knows more cooking anyways.

Dad is home all day to cook and play with me because he doesn’t have much work to do. There used to be a bunch of guys that worked in the back room with him, sitting at their computers all day and playing jokes on each other. But now it’s just Dad. There’s a fancy hotel near the beach that needs a website. A nice engineer named Jerry wants a computer built. The animal shelter asked for an online adoption form. Dad says the other contracts went away. I don’t know why.

I like it when Dad is home all day. We get to watch surfers at the beach, play on the big rocks near the fancy cottages, listen to rock ‘n’ roll, and go on the Internet. Dad really likes the Internet, he even gave me a computer from his office so I could go on it,

too. He showed me how to look up dinosaurs on Wikipedia and find our house on the satellite map.

Mom comes home at 5:00, while dad is boiling the potatoes. She uses computers too. She is in charge of all the computers at the middle school. She is always upset that Dad doesn't have much work to do.

"What'd you do today, Chris?", she asks him.

"Worked on the hotel a little bit, read the news. I picked up TomHenry and we went to the store. Stopped at Spouting Rock since the tide was coming in, and there were big swells."

"How many jobs did you apply for?"

"None, today."

Mom thinks that Dad should be looking for jobs every day. She says he spends too much time in his office, "reading the news". I guess I don't really know what he's doing in there.

Supper is tense. Mom and Dad are upset about money. Tomorrow, Mom is going to help our old neighbor Ken with his printer. Hopefully he will pay us with a meal or a check. That's after she gets back from working at school all day. I ask Dad for more mashed potatoes because he makes them just right, with lots of pepper and sour cream. He puts Jeopardy! on the TV so that we don't have to argue any more. Some day, I want to be on Jeopardy!.

Course 2 — Pesto Tortellini

I toss gob after gob of basil pesto onto my plate. Everything must be covered — the chicken, the tortellini, the plate itself. Pesto is a special treat for when it's just Mom and I for supper. Dad is stuck at the call-center still — he works late, until 11:00, all day spent helping old people fix TV remotes and setting up sports channels for football dads. Dad doesn't like the basil acidity of pesto. But Mom is Italian and she knows what's good.

Tortellini and pesto is easy for Mom, because you don't have to cook much. The tortellini comes frozen. The sauce is in a jar. Just fry up the chicken, and you're good to go.

It's 4:30pm, early to be eating supper. But she has to go back to work after we eat — her second job is the photo department at Wal-Mart. We like to eat pesto on nights when she works two shifts, because it makes a rough day a little bit special. We are both going through rough times, and we take it out on each other frequently: I am going through middle school, which is fun for nobody; Mom has to work two jobs and doesn't

get any time to herself. She'll chew me out for not checking the mail before she gets home from work, and I retort that maybe I'd check the mail more often if she didn't yell at me so much. That is one of many classic arguments — tonight, we have just wrapped up the canonical "Don't leave dishes in the sink" argument, even though she was the one who left the dishes in the sink.

Even though we fight a lot, Mom and I are closer now than we used to be. In sensitive moments, we can open up to each other and talk about what's wrong. My problems, for the most part, are at school. I am skinny, so I am bullied. I don't like sports, so I am bullied a little more. I have some good friends, though. Zeke and I spend our daily, hour-long bus rides listening to metal on each other's iPods. I showed him and our other friends how to install video games on their computers, so we can play online together after school. Often, we'll play eight hours in a single weekend day.

My parents' problems are at work. Mom works as an admin assistant now. And then there's Wal-Mart. She hates working two jobs — hates always being short on cash, always counting the minutes to the next break, always feeling the bone-aching fatigue of 14 hour days. Dad only works one job, but he is just as unhappy. It is hard to have a good day when you've got a graduate degree and you're stuck working late nights at a call-center. I am scared that we will end up like those fishermen in Arundel — pushed away from the coast by the rising tides of property taxes that the summer people bring with them.

I am getting used to seeing my parents less. Dad gets home after I go to bed. I leave for school before he rises. Mom comes home for supper, then she's gone again until bedtime. It's not too bad, I think. I get to listen to loud music and play video games whenever I want. Plus, on nights like tonight, we eat pesto while Dad's at work.

The last drop of pesto is just enough to season the last piece of tortellini, which washes down with the last glug of milk. Mom sharply corrects my placement of our dishes in the dishwasher, then, with a hug and an "I love you", she's out the door to work. I head to my computer, my strongest connection to the outside world. Dad taught me long ago that being at home doesn't mean you have to be at home — my computer can take me anywhere I want to go. Usually, it's to play video games with Zeke, but I'm bored of games for tonight. I pull up Wikipedia in one tab, a satellite map in another. I zoom in on a far away place that I have never heard of before — a tiny island called Tonga. I trace the cellular outlines of its Pacific lagoons with my mouse, my eyes stumble over the alien placenames floating around the map. I copy one of them into the search bar in the other tab, pull up its entry. I am a watchful falcon scanning the Earth from my computer chair perch. I have never been on a plane, but I have travelled to every corner of this planet. I have walked the crowded streets of Taipei, traversed Andean mountain roads, gazed at every wonder of the world in satellite view. Zoom, search, read — I repeat this process all

night long.

Course 3 — Ramen

The preparation of instant ramen is surprisingly similar to that of fine steak, at least in that each diner demands their portion cooked exactly to their preferred doneness. Perhaps you prefer a medium-rare steak, but I am a devotee of the 3:33 ramen.

Andrew prefers his brick rare at 2:30. He pours $\frac{3}{4}$ of the water out before adding the sauce packet, amplifying the umami flavor of his tepid broth. I am the middle of the scale, at 3:33 — a perfect harmony of salty broth, tender noodles, and artificial preservatives. I replace $\frac{1}{2}$ the water with cold sink water before adding the sauce packet to reach that perfect, just-above-room temperature. We give Corin endless flak for his overcooked taste, clocking in at a whopping 7:20 per brick. We tell him that it simply cannot be right if it requires pausing the microwave at 6:00 to replenish the water which has all boiled away. He adds the sauce packet before microwaving, giving his noodle-reduction an overpowering, meaty taste, that, paired with its baby-food consistency, attracts ridicule even from the non-ramenists. Nic has pioneered perhaps the most controversial method of all, which we dub the afterburner: a single brick is cooked to approximately 3:33, then eaten quickly; a second is tossed in the remaining lukewarm broth and allowed to soak until it reaches a vaguely edible consistency.

“Don’t get hooked on afterburners”, we joke, “or you’ll contract ramen lung.”

Every weeknight, we gather at 10:00pm — when the residential supervisors pry us apart from our girlfriends and lock us onto the wing — in our cramped dorm lounge to fuck around and eat ramen. Tonight, eight high-school dudes and their accompanying noodles (cooked to preference) are crammed around the TV for an ironic viewing of WWE SmackDown. Andrew, Corin, and I are discussing how one might record a video inside an operating microwave; Ben is showing Gaynor a magic trick that involves a hammer, two nails, and his right nostril; Oliver and Max are practicing ollies in the hallway; Nic has just added a new entry to our running database of bug-in-microwave survival times (00:32 is the record); our residential supervisor is probably off masturbating in his apartment, or whatever — no one cares as long as he isn’t bothering us.

10:00pm Ramen Lounge is — despite the acute lack of nearly everything that constitutes a family meal — the best family dining experience of my life. There is no cooking, no setting of tables (hell, there’s not a table at all), no worrisome talk of finances, no arguing about nothing, and no real family to speak of. But, at 17 years old, I could not ask for a more supportive and loving family than these oddball friends currently erupting in laughter as real-estate magnate Donald J Trump beats The Undertaker over the head with a folding chair on national television.

Course 4 — An After-Supper Stroll

Though I have been living away from home since I was 14, my dad and I still observe the tradition of the after-supper stroll every time I come home to visit from college.

The after supper stroll is, in my family, the best part of supper. In the ramen lounge of my high school years, I experienced the familial bond that to most is synonymous with a homecooked meal. But in my real family, supper is a test of the interpersonal tensions that fester in the back of your head all day. It means arguing about money because the potatoes came out wrong, or arguing about the potatoes because money is tight. Or, as is often the case, putting on Jeopardy! and trying to forget about it. Meanwhile, the after-supper stroll is all about one thing: chilling the fuck out.

Typically, there is more sitting than strolling — on any cliff, pier, bench, breakwater, outcrop, or patio furniture that will give us a good view of the ocean. If it is winter, we drive a coastal circuit south until we reach the Mousam River, then circle north and cruise down Ocean Ave to Turbats Creek where we can see the tops of lobster boats through gaps in the trees. Or, if it is the summer, we may well dip our toes in the water while we spot surfers chasing swells. My dad never fails to comment on his symbiotic relationship with the hermit crabs that hang out in the shallow water: “I get my heels exfoliated, and they get a tasty snack of dead skin. It’s a win-win!”

A proper after-supper stroll is a complex preparation. I have prepared the following recipe, should you like to try one yourself:

Ingredients

- one car, windows down
- a good spot to sit, unoccupied
- sunset (purple/red/orange preferred)
- at least one ‘back when I was your age’ story (found at your local Dad)
- something personal you’ve been meaning to bring up

Preparation

1. Propose to Mom that it has been a long day, and there is going to be a good sunset, so of course you’d like to go to the beach with Dad to watch it. Get approval before walking out the door.
2. Select an appropriately raucous or interesting album to listen to, depending on

mood. Rage Against the Machine's self-titled release is a personal favorite. At least make it something you wouldn't listen to with Mom in the car.

3. Hop in the car and take off towards the coast. If it's a summer night, leaving at 7:20 will get you to a good viewing spot right when the clouds erupt in flame. Rock the fuck out the whole way there.
4. Park at your favorite sunset-viewing spot. We prefer the southwest side of Cape Arundel, one of the few spots in York County where one can look west over the ocean to see the sunset.
5. Take a seat. May I recommend skipping the park bench and opting for that dark ridge jutting into the ocean? The smooth basalt traps the midday heat in its joints, reserving it just in case you come to borrow it.
6. Watch the sunset. Point out the things you see — arctic terns, passing boats, parked cars, and distant rooftops are all likely to engage that 'back when I was your age' story Dad has floating around in the back of his head.
7. Listen to Dad's story while red and orange flames dance in the sky. Watch the reflection on the ocean — it's the best part.
8. Wrap things up and head to the car as the red fades to purple fades to black. Put on The Beatles, or something similarly innocuous.
9. Now's the time to let out that something personal you've been meaning to bring up. Dive right in — Dad will understand. Hear what he has to say. Maybe he also has something that's been bothering him.
10. Pull into the driveway at home. Roll the windows up. Park the car. Go back inside and kiss Mom goodnight.

MUSIC

A moment MITCHELL CUTTS

Bins MITCHELL CUTTS

Ivy MITCHELL CUTTS

BC, Victoria MITCHELL CUTTS

Going On CONNOR MCCARRON

Heavy Dreamer - The Electric Army SHANE CRANOR

All's Well That Ends Well - The Electric Army SHANE CRANOR

wen ur near JACK PEDERSON

Please visit soundcloud.com/csm-high-grade to listen to all music

contributions listed above.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

SULTAN ALSUWAIDI

Sultan Alsuwaidi is a freshman Economics major (rare), who in his free time (also rare) enjoys analog photography. Sultan loves exploring urban jungles for street photography and country sides for nature photography. He is honored to be a contributor to the High Grade journal, and is looking forward to further collaboration in the arts at Mines.

MARK BALDWIN

Mark Baldwin earned degrees in Engineering Sciences from Purdue University. Before entering academia, he served in the United States Air Force as a missile man and worked at NASA in charge of ascent flight design for the Space Shuttle. Mark is also one of the early founders of the computer game industry having written, programmed, designed, directed, and/or produced over 30 award-winning computer games including “Game of the Year.” Mark has been teaching in academia since 2004, in computer science, engineering and computer games.

KEARA BARRON

Keara Barron has made her way to sophomore year and fortunately still enjoys her geological engineering major. When she was sixteen and spent less time obsessing over school, she wrote and self-published a fantasy novel entitled “Shadow of the Sacred Islands.” She also enjoys hiking, playing volleyball, and learning about the intricacies of math. Currently Keara is pursuing an appreciation and gratitude for life, no matter the circumstances. There is always something to learn.

“And we don’t care who’s looking / We trade no one for ourselves”

AURORA BORGHI

Aurora Borghi is a senior in Computer Science at Colorado School of Mines with a passion for the liberal arts. Originally born in the Netherlands to Italian parents, Aurora was raised in South Florida where she cultivated her love of literature and poetry. She left Florida in hopes to experience snow and fell head over heels for Colorado’s purple mountain majesty, vowing to stay for as long as the state would let her. If she isn’t writing poetry in a literary-inspired café or traveling around the National State Parks of Colorado, you can find her curled up on a beanbag chair with a good book or cooking Italian food with her partner.

RENATA BOYD

Renata is a freshman from Houston who is thinking about majoring in Computer Science. She possibly would have pursued a career in art if softball hadn’t have introduced her to Mines. You can spot her a mile away wearing her tie-dye Crocs.

TARA BUZINSKI

Tara grew up in Phoenix, Arizona and can be found most days shivering under a blanket with a cup of tea. In her abundance of free time as a Mines student, she volunteers at the Foothills Animal Shelter and tends to her succulents.

PAGE CIRILLO

Please take action
And help fix human-induced
Global warming
Enough is enough

WENLI DICKINSON

Wenli Dickinson is a water resources engineer. She graduated from Mines with degrees in hydrology and environmental engineering. Her poetry has been nominated for the Puschart Prize and been published in Red Paint Hill, The Louisville Review, and Alluvian. She is grateful to Kyle and her poetry doppelganger, Toni, for continually offering support and inspiration.

JORDAN NEWPORT

Writers are said to turn coffee (tea, energy drinks, et cetera...) into words, but Jordan prefers to skip all that and go straight to the source: deadlines. That's how he managed to submit a piece this year, despite finishing a BS and starting an MS in computer science and running the Linux User Group and Association for Computing Machinery. It was all deadlines.

ANLI NI

Anli is constantly overthinking, seeing everything in her surroundings as literary devices since she learned what those were in high school. She writes to make sense out of the very simple things in life and watches videos of cute animals when that doesn't work.

JADE NJO

Jade would like to thank all of her art teachers from elementary to high school level. To Mr. Beschoner, Mrs. Carey, Mrs. Beasley, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Westervelt, and Mr. Tiede, Jade wants you to know how important your encouragement, critiques, support, and creative spirits were to her as an artist. Though many of you will never see this, Jade hopes you understand that she would have never accomplished what she has artistically without you, including this journal. You will always hold a very special place in her heart. Her work to date can be viewed online at artbyjadee.wixsite.com/onlineart.

RYAN PARK

Ryan is a sophomore in chemical engineering. He engages in the arts with his photography and his favorite type is light photography. He also loves to hike, swing dance, snowboard and play soccer.

JACOB PROUTY

Jacob Prouty is Senior in the Engineering Physics program from Las Vegas, Nevada. Having finally gotten the time to write a contributor bio, he found that there was very little to write about himself.

CLEMENS RAINER

Clemens is a Petroleum Engineer from Montanuniversität Leoben. As an Austrian, he won't get homesick in Colorado as long as he hikes up or skies down a mountain every now and then. Photography is not a hobby, but merely a tool to record impressions of his real passion: traveling to unfamiliar and strange places. Most of his art is of a non-lasting nature, as he expresses his creativity while cooking.

TOMHENRY REAGAN

In 1997, a quantum neurological experiment went awry, causing Dr. Thomas Reg and Dr. Henry Gan to collide at near lightspeed. The resulting deformed mass slowly aged into what we now called "TomHenry Reagan" (and simultaneously kickstarted the field of cosmic reconstructive surgery). TomHenry is the only known living person capable of actual magic, after the Great Warlock Exodus of the mid-2000s. He is now a senior at the Colorado School of Mines, finishing a dual degree in Electrical Engineering and Guerllia Fanfare. In his spare time, find him penning Marxist critiques of board game instructions and carving homemade pizza peels.

ERIKA STROMERSON

Erika is ecstatic to be published in High Grade 2020. She wants to make a career out of creative writing in the future, and by this fall she hopes to be teaching ESL abroad. After that, she hopes to pursue a Ph. D in environmental philosophy and use it to write and teach about human relationships to the environment.

JIM STUDHOLME

Jim lives in Boulder with his wife, Rae. He has two adult children and one dog.

K. VULETICH

K. Vuletich is a Denver based muralist and multimedia artist. Often incorporating trash and found objects in her art, she aims to re-purpose and create something compelling from something that would otherwise be unwanted. In 2018, she received CCI's Career Advancement Grant and was a recipient of DAV's Urban Arts Fund. These grants gave Vuletich the opportunity to expand her collaboration with under-served youth and to continue experimenting with multimedia installations. In 2019, Vuletich began working with Chicago based sound designer, Sarah Espinoza, and Colorado based engineer, Perry Taga, on a body of work about our human identities in relationship to technology.

JOSEPHINE WESTARP

Jo likes punk and metal album covers, and thinks it would be cool to meet a creature from outer space. This is her first published work of any kind.

ALEX J. WATERMAN

Alex Waterman is a senior in Geophysical Engineering at CSM. His path to Mines was an unconventional one, in that he served as a torpedoman on submarines, even reaching the North Pole under the ice. He conducted R&D for the PV industry for half a decade and, in recent years, was tempted to satisfy his curiosity by studying geophysics. Naturally, his art-form reflects a similar diversity, where it uses media such as wood, metal, clay, stone, and the more traditional media. He is intrigued by projects that are challenging, fragile or experimental – he would argue that sometimes they coalesce and achieve some semblance of beauty.

JOHN A. WHATLEY

John is a national award-winning semi-professional photographer, amateur poet, and novice dog rancher. His work has been published in High Grade and The Progenitor, but mostly resides on his electronic devices. He has lived in Colorado for 11 years, and enjoys outdoor activities such as: hiking (horizontal surfaces preferred), winter sports (like driving in the snow and watching it fall from indoors), and hot springs (cook until heated through serve with veggies). He has been with his husband for 19 years and married for 6, so he obviously knows the secrets to a happy marriage, which he will gladly share with you for a nominal fee. His dogs' names are Minerva, who burst out of her father's head wearing full puppy armor, and Persephone, who is highly fond of pomegranates. If there is one thing you should know about him, which is of the utmost importance, it would be that.

JED WILSON

He really likes to ski and have a good time.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The call for submissions is open to the entire Colorado School of Mines community. Only original works are accepted. Submissions are taken year-round and considered for acceptance in the Fall. All literary submissions must be in a Microsoft Word document. Limit one submission per document. Art submissions should be in .jpg or .png format. Music submissions should be in .mp3 or .wav format. Please submit through our website, highgrade.mines.edu. Limit five submissions per contributor.

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Pg. 44, from “Another Monday”

LAUREN MILLER

Pg. 45, from “Speaker of the World”

NICHOLAS WOODWARD

Pg. 46, from “Two Gods”

KYLE MARKOWSKI

Pg. 47, from “Haibun for an Evening Walk”

ERIKA STROMERSON