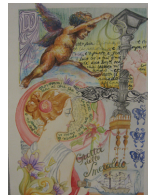


Spring 2008
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WINGED NATION

College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, VA 23185



Winged Nation is an artistic and literary forum for the unspoken the unexpressed. We seek to offer students an area where they can freely share and explore their experiences in a gendered society.



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No Rainbow

to the simple girl of pale grey
you are destined only to fade
to leave colors of life behind
that brightness impossible to find

what happened to your blues and pinks and reds
the spectrum of rainbow things you said?
the greens and purple-yellow
what made you so damn mellow?

oh simple girl of pale grey
your life's light is not lost to me.

Shelley Holder.

015




Sister - Photograph - Cory Hitt

imitating Butterflies

Look at me- I am the startled blue eye
deep as life reflected in a puddle.
Touch me and I turn to dust,
but one beat from my wing
and you'll be pulverized.
One beat could level a city,
and all will crawl back into the Earth.

I have spent my whole life
fighting everything that you
so studiously and carefully avoided,
plastered over with so much noise,
the noise of the world that can bury anything.
Don't try to avert your eyes
from the bright stems struggling
to be born through the trash of life.
Their desire is my desire,
I will feed on their frail flowers.
Don't try to avert your eyes
from me flying like an open wound through the sky.





You are greedy for me, the touch of soft-beaten wings
to hurt and cure, open the painful hinges of the soul.
Now my words will open what they had shut.
Blue people are crawling everywhere,
they are the ghosts of this life.
They beat against their fragile hearts
like drums no one can hear.
My blue is strong, unbreakable as water,
but their bodies are one fantastic bruise.
Don't touch them, they hurt
but I turn to dust and feel no pain.

You cannot kill me.
Consciousness, love and dreams
are destructible organs
but I will not be eroded,
I do not speak the language of time.
I will hide away in the bud of a flower
bright as sunlight on the sea,
or if there are no flowers left
I'll hide in the spot where the flower used to be
for even when there is nothing left
there is the imprint of what once was,
a footprint in the mud,
metal in the fire.

Only I can kill myself.
I made death every night.
A thousand time to die
but re-birth was ever sweeter,
the nectar of life.
I hung myself from a narrow pipe
with the silk skeins of my wings,
I saw the blue that floats on top of life.
There was only the thrown-away core of myself
that refused to die.
I breathed in the air of oblivion,
I am beating the wings of oblivion.
I am as deep blue
as the world on its string
orbiting in the arc of my wing,
my eyes are open and see everything.

Adriane Hanson

A Kevorkian

II.

Snow-white skin and red gash for lips,
black hole hair hung past fingertips—
the boy had a kind of androgyny about him.
His mirror said he was the prettiest of them all.
This mirror did not say much else,
and he was empty.

As it were, he called and called
for the mother who couldn't bear
his black bite of life, the lively tear.
Instead (insteads here, there, everywhere)
a new woman cooed for his cry—
perhaps of spite, but still she came that night
to gulp the father up,
and he was saved.

The father followed the mother
to the big white floorboard in the sky.
This fresh widow (a queen bee of sorts)
saw that her stinger stung less sharply
than the boy's, and his looking glass
wouldn't lie to an ol' lady. No peacockery here,
not for five forehead lines and a sagging ass.

Yet soon she saw their steps swooped into
black harmonies, converging in orchestral
motions. Notions of Styx wracked his chest,
and she'd reign, once again, as the very
best of the best. The rest of the plan raced into place.
A Kevorkian tragedy, this was, and he called:
'O Doctor, Doctor, mercy!'
Dolled-up for death, as if the maggots would
spit him back for pocked complexion.
No detection of his mother's pills,
his ills bloomed in bright briars, choking
in the son, blacking out the sun. Yes,
it was the mirror's knack that would blue
the prints. In the glaze of the glass, the big
floorboard was staring back, back.



Cat - Newspaper Collage - Katie Van Haasteren



I.

No man hurries home to a barren woman,
no moon celebrates an empty womb.
This one chanted one winter afternoon:

Blood-red lips, corpse-white fingertips
and hair black as void. Make my sex
unfurl with a little girl. A little girl.

Toes curled, her finger leaked
on the white white snow. Night fell
and her belly grew and grew. She waited
for her blushing baby, her budding girl,
the raven hair she would twirl and twirl.
But when instead she unfurled a son,
crawled under the floorboards' run,
and grew swollen and blue—
disposing of herself.

Her legs as banana peels, and
her skin a soiled tissue,
she withdrew back into her womb.
When they found her some time later,
she was stuffed unceremoniously
in a Hefty bag by the mailbox.
Her Little Mishap was locked up
and told that the weight of his life
was heavier than hers could hold.
Daddy lied, as a false death fit
better than suicide. The boy grew.





Tragedy In

III.

First, a corset—
his life sucked out in strings—the slow crawl
to the floorboard. Roping off the air
with small hands as Step-Mother
scared the last molecules from their haven.
He fell sleepy, dopey, grumpy, mopey,
his wobble-walk tuneless and sloping.
But no Clockworker heard his plea,
his binds broke free, ten tethers
tantalizing behind the glare of his gaze.

Plan B: comb next:
'Come hither, huther'
wept False Mother,
wrapping his Medusa locks
with a dark care. His brain-box
imploding, with the pains eroding...
but his Gorgon hair flooded
out the snare, and he was left with
a mess of follicles everywhere.

And in the end, he bred Eden—
after all, his apple hadn't landed far
from the reach of Mother's trunk-hands.
She'd teach him the comforts shared in
every Hefty bag. So faux-mère
fed him a rare candy-coated fruit.
It didn't quite suit his mouth-hole,
the chunks catching on his flesh
like barbs. He bled white, lips blue.
The mirror gleamed shiny and new.
He was boxed up in a glass cage—a sort
of upgrade from his inherited fate—
but impatient as mourners are, unable to wait
for the wake, he fell upon the floor.
Sore-throated, he coughed up death
in a flurry of spittle.

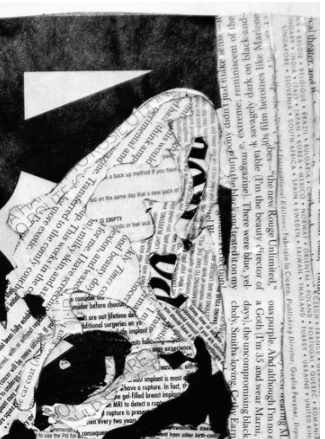


Four Parts

IV.

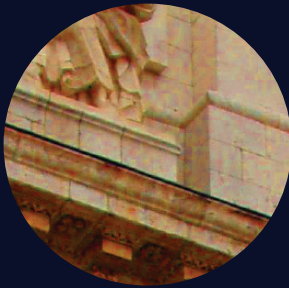
Had his nine times to die
and no prince came. Mercy
laughed. "God, why?"
And no prince came.
Oh, all the same, that the
Hefty bag deflated each night,
that the mailman delivered
life-letters and postmarked
his un-suicide notes.
Silly, that only un-eyes read
what he wrote, and no prince
came. Maimed beyond sense,
with a poisoned gash and his
tattered hair, he swears to
write all the words away—
but the life, well, it was here
to stay. And no prince came,
No prince came.

Jamie Hood





A Woman's Blues



in a tired world of kings, a woman still sings her blues: "dah doo doo dah doo,"

I.
Boyish charm to be sure-
Surefooted, rooted in Earth,
seated between Hope and Despair,
beat by men who share her fears,
tearing her hair out for her existence
in a tiered world of kings,
a woman still sings her blues:

"dah doo doo dah doo..."

She can woo herself with those blues
and chew on her notes til her throat
catches on her inner fire-
She spits out remembering embers--

And sits herself down at her desk to
answer his ringing telephone.

She knows she's beautiful somewhere.

II.
One Mrs. Sippi,
two by fondled two-
NEW! Detergent sold
by women for women
as if men never wash dishes
and women wish only for
a superficial, sanitized shine
(Smile! Smile at that shine!)
Three, four,
answer the door in the afternoon-
Home is where the heart is, and
Home is where her art is.
Take five,
alive is only breathing
and the baby teething
and everyone needs a break.
Six, six, six
pick up sticks and stones
and worship Christ's male bones
Seventh heaven,
Mary's bread was leaven.
Eight, nine, ten,
Do it all again.
And again.

III.
I'm a woman and I'll make you sweat
I'm a woman and I'll make you sweat
I'll make you sweat with guilt and sex
I know you know where I come from-
So you better know where you're going
Baby, a woman, she keeps on going, baby,
A woman isn't afraid to sweat.

I'm a woman and I'll make you think
I'm a woman and I'll make you think
I'll make you think of jewels and gold
From the just the sparkle in my eyes-
So you better look me straight now
Baby, a woman needs things straight now baby,
A woman is always gonna make you think.

I'm a woman and I'll make you sing
I'm a woman and I'll make you sing
I'll make you sing an old blues song
And you'll never know a happier place-
So you better sing those blue notes
Baby, a woman loves those blue notes baby,
A woman feeds her soul in the blue.


I'm a woman and I've made you cry
I'm a woman and I've made you cry
I've made you cry for loving me
And I'll probably do it again-
So keep your handkerchief close now
Baby, them blues are built right in me baby,
There's no getting this woman outta herself.

I'm a woman, and I'll make you sweat.

Ryan Babarsky



Her Majesty - Photograph - Aileen Judd



Alone inside her dream house, Barbie waits.
For once she questions why she wears high heels
With her bikini. And why isn't Ken home yet?
Gazing in the mirror, she undresses
And wonders if he still enjoys her body.

She looks as young as ever, but feels old.
The simple task of holding up her breasts
Has left her with a chronic aching back.
She takes two pills and lies down on the bed,
And wishes that she'd had a cocktail too.

She knows that Ken will come home drunk and mean,
But she'll just be relieved that he is back.
I wonder when he'll really leave for good?
I'm sure that he is having an affair,
Maybe with that soccer slut Teresa.

Tremendous CRASH out front—the man is home.
She wakes to find the Mustang in the kitchen.
“The parking brake is on this time,” Ken gloats.
“That's great, but dear, where have you been all night?”
“Lay off it, Barb, I went out with the guys.”

PLASTIC

While he pukes in the sink, she raids the car.
“Oh yeah, and which of them left you this bra?”
She waves a white sports bra under his nose.
“Or do you think this B-cup would fit me?
I think I could fit one boob in, maybe.”

“Please don’t bring your huge tits into this.
We all know that they’re fake—they never move!”
Anxious, Barbie’s arms cross over her chest.
“At least I’m anatomically correct.
Does your mistress know you’re only half a man?”

Ken wishes he could change his plastic grin.
He wants to snarl, but smiles as he says,
“Barbie, I wish I’d never married you.”
He thinks she will repent now and forgive—
The way she always does. Instead she says,

I would rather saw off my hollow arm
Than leave your ring painted on my finger.”
She storms into their room and slams the door,
Curling up on the stiff cardboard bed.
Ken passes out in the freshly gaping hole.



Crane - Photograph - Karen Minnema



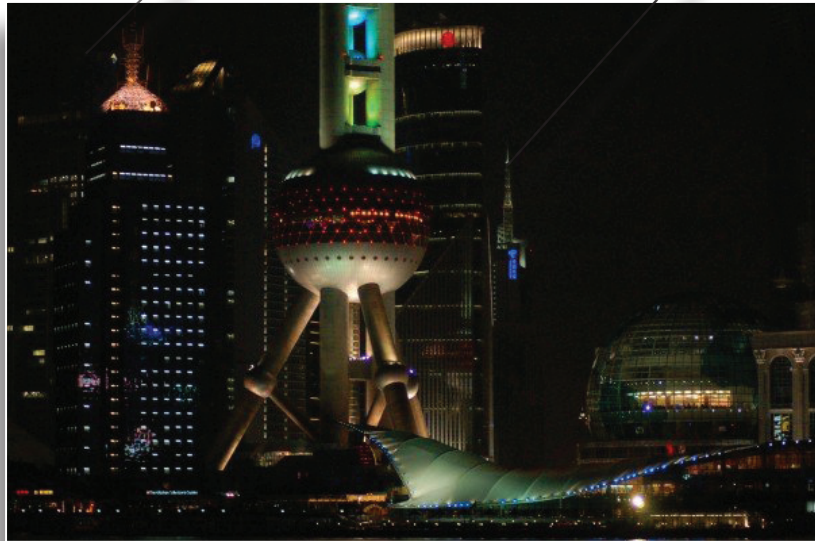
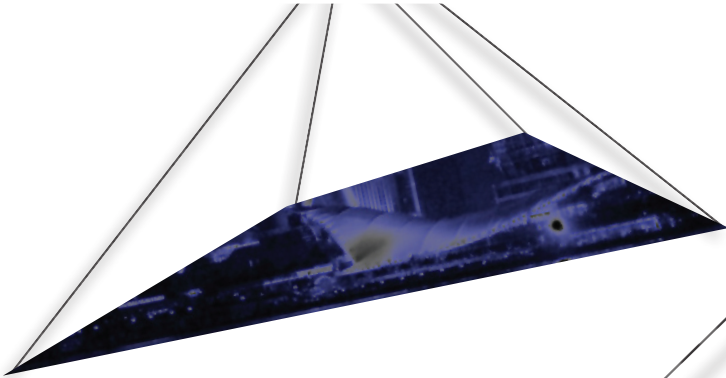
A few days later, Lawyer Barbie comes.
“You truly have a lovely home here, ma’am.”
“Oh no, you’re just not seeing all the flaws.”
First Barbie signs the papers, and then Ken.
With acetone they scrub away their rings.

And no one saw it coming for those two.
They had seemed so perfect in their glossy boxes.

Casey Metheny



1|4



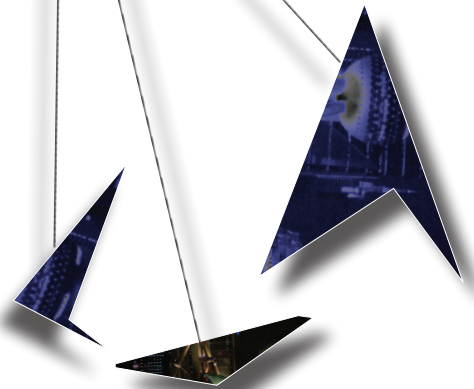
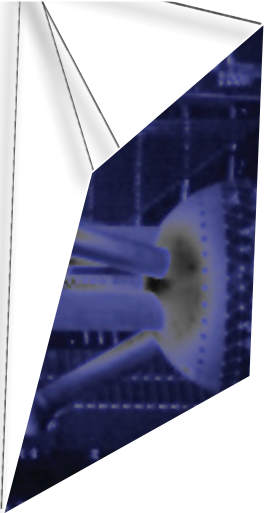
Shanghai Night - Photograph - Karen Minnema

GIRL

She paints her face
to form a shield;
wide eyes and curled lashes
are her weapons.
Spearing the hearts
of men and boys,
she plucks one for her plaything.
She plays the puppet,
but in reality
she is the master,
yanking his strings
this way
and that.

Aileen Judd

115



REBUKEMENT FOR

116



Face to Face - Photograph - Spencer Atkinson

PRAYING POOR

REBUKEMENT FOR PRAYING POOR

The error of human,
in power crest;
by the spell
my lips doth grace.
To speak words
so harsh,
yet true;
to say to another,
"I damn you!"
With each word,
I give my soul unrest;
for in this plea,
I take damnation
from the Best.
Words begot
corporal form
in demon whips
and chains forged;
heated fast by Hell's
hot torment.
This my prison sentence be
for the prayer I spoke to thee.

James Lewis

So sad to see you go away, to see things fade to black,
To see you turn around and leave, to walk and not come back,
To see the sky so far away and framed in darkened dirt,
The soil, grass and roots of trees, begin to cling and hurt.

But darkness really blinds my eyes, before the lowered trail,
The clinking of the gears and chains, as darkness soon prevails.
The coldness creeps into my bones, before my flesh would thaw,
A gentle frown sets on my face, as skin and meat withdraw.

Before too long, there's nothing more, of me than smelly bones,
With nothing but those empty words, etched and carved in stone.
The wind above my little plot, whips and frays the grass,
Still I'm kept within my box, cherry-wood and trimmed with brass.

And so the pieces of my life are eaten by the earth,
Back to soil, grass and roots; a womb that yields rebirth.
Thoughts I housed which lost their home, to maggots and the air,
Still float above my lidless eyes, their comforts soon ensnare.

1 | 8

No visions flash before my eyes, of times we used to know,
Instead are lights that blind and flare, obscuring where I go.
Like leaves that fall before the cold as things begin to die,
I felt my life began to dim, yet I won't say goodbye.

Despite the endless strings and webs, of lights that guide and lead
The thoughts that float aloft in time do help me to concede:
I know that I am dead and gone, no longer with remiss,
But I had wish that you had come, and gave me one last kiss.

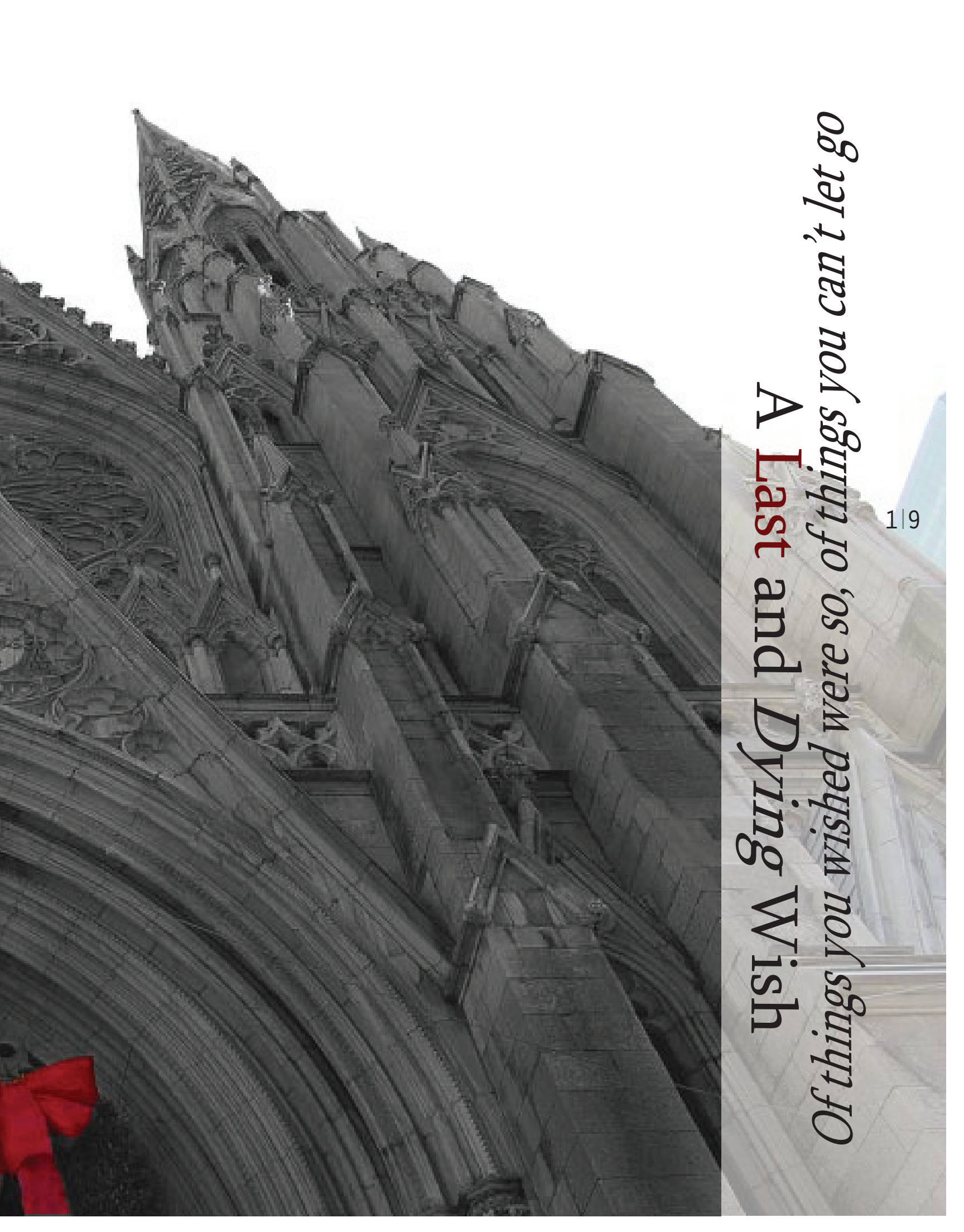
Like darkness melding into light, and stars begin to fade,
As you look into the sky, palm and hand as shade,
You see faint yet twinkling light, unsure if it is there,

Have no doubt or fear of pain; please know that I'd still care.

Huy Ho



Cathedral - Photograph - Karen Minnema



Of things you wished were so, of things you can't let go
A Last and Dying Wish

Disposal

210

You were abandoned on your judgment day;
dropped hot as a new baby to lay among coffee
grounds, the sewer sounds, shoved right around
and beneath last week's leftovers. You wouldn't
fit into her disposal, wouldn't squeeze tight
enough to deconstruct. You spewed this out
in fewer words, kinder words, but let's not. You
hurt. I could pick the peels, soiled tissues off
of you, but I wasn't let to. Do not do. Foreign
tongue, your mouth traces shapes of curves
I don't have, breasts I can't bud. I can't
be the woman you'd trudge home to Mother with—
has she died yet, will she judge?
No, no, I can't be a woman at all—for you,
for your god. Is he your mother, too?
He's been dead as long as she, longer even,
but I can't compete with faith, and yours is
stronger even, stronger even than the weight of
me. Dropped like a baby, weightless and blue,
a life that couldn't mold to you. But confess
your sins. Then hold the doors, don't let me in.

Jamie Hood



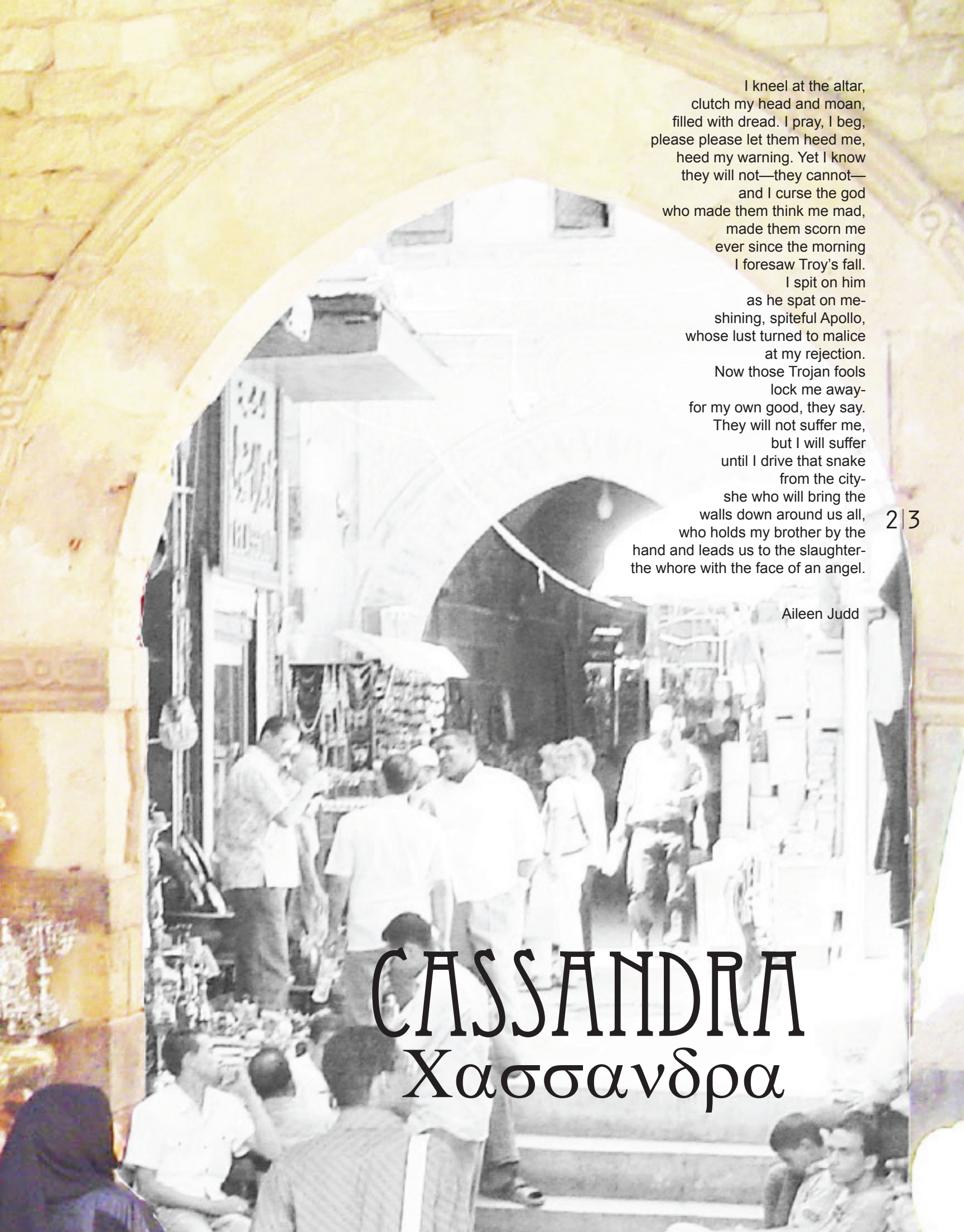
In the Morning Light - Photograph - Andrea Dini



The Marketplace - Photograph - Gagan Jindal

2 | 2





I kneel at the altar,
clutch my head and moan,
filled with dread. I pray, I beg,
please please let them heed me,
heed my warning. Yet I know
they will not—they cannot—
and I curse the god
who made them think me mad,
made them scorn me
ever since the morning
I foresaw Troy's fall.

I spit on him
as he spat on me—
shining, spiteful Apollo,
whose lust turned to malice
at my rejection.
Now those Trojan fools
lock me away—
for my own good, they say.
They will not suffer me,
but I will suffer
until I drive that snake
from the city—
she who will bring the
walls down around us all,
who holds my brother by the
hand and leads us to the slaughter—
the whore with the face of an angel.

2 | 3

Aileen Judd

CASSANDRA

Χασσανδρα

It was the summer of 1962 when we decided to steal from Hermit Higgins' attic. It was the hottest summer on record for Long Island in ten years and we spent every hour of light of the day outside. Our mothers kicked us out at six every morning and told us not to come back unless we were dying or we had caught dinner down by the docks. There were five of us in all: my two sisters Olivia and Giada, our cousins the Landi brothers Pete and Joseph, and the leader, me.

We were a mangy bunch, we were poor and we knew it. My father complained, mostly when he was drunk with my uncles off homemade wine, that we lived like a 'bunch of niggers.' We smelled like salt and sweat and our skin was dark enough for it almost to be true. We ate swiss chard in and with everything, caught eels and snappers off the docks down at Acabonac, and ate more pasta than our relatives back in Sicily. We roamed the woods and built clubhouses, stood in front of the sidewalk johnnies and stepped aside to soak passing convertibles and open-window cars, stole corn from the Bistrians, and whatever else to pass the time.

This particular morning, we tied Giada to the dock and gave her a homemade bamboo fishing pole. She was the baby of the group, with dark brown eyes, a narrow face, and untamed black mane of hair. We usually left her there and would come back for her – though occasionally we got wrapped up in other business that we had forgotten her and found her wading knee-deep in the high tide. My cousin Pete, a chubby boy with a bushy mess of black hair on his head, had once shot her with bow and lodged the arrow in the side of her head. She was alright, just a loopy for a couple of days. We loved her and she never doubted it – but she had her dues as the youngest, we all did, I suppose, except for me.

After we secured her to the dock post, we went back to the clubhouse to discuss business and stow away our lunches. We all took the clubhouse seriously, and once, when Olivia and Pete discovered another one built by some kids from at least a mile away, we weren't too pleased. We snuck out the very same night, armed with hammers and clubs, and scrapped their clubhouse. We took the wood and other crap they had – cards, games, pin-ups – and brought to our clubhouse. They got the message and we haven't found another clubhouse within our territory yet.

Today's order of business was simple: deciding what to do. We sat around an old table blackened from coal fires, and talked in turn. I always spoke last, as it was understood that I was the leader and the final say was mine, but as for the others the order always followed oldest to youngest. My sister Olivia spoke first. She was the little 'cute one' of the family, with big brown eyes and long black hair that stretched almost the whole span of her back. Her nose slightly crooked to the right, and at the moment her hands held her chin up and she shrugged her shoulders. "We could go pick blackberries and raspberries at the Millers."

This brought some uneasiness about the group; Olivia loved the berries from the Miller farm, but the last time we had gone we stayed too long and the farm dog started barking. No sooner than his dog started yapping, old man Miller, a crusty old WASP, kicked the screen door open and came out with shotgun in hand. Luckily he hadn't seen our faces but we still heard him cursing at our backs. "You goddamn dagos – lousy sons a bitch guineas...." No doubt



there was more saliva spewing forth from the old mans toothless gums than his dog at that point. It was no question, we had to lay low from the Miller farm for at least a couple more days.

However, the group didn't say anything more about it and it was Joseph's turn to speak. Joseph was more reserved than his brother, skinnier and only slightly taller, but there was a presence about him. His brother was only a year behind him and they were closer than it showed. They once had a brutal fight that ended triumphantly when the both knocked a loose tooth from each other's mouth. That night they each got a nickel, but Pete almost got a black eye too when he tried to steal Joseph's tooth from under his pillow.

Joseph's impassive face was supported by the hand propped under his chin. "I...don't know," he said slowly. He looked around. "Maybe we could go down to the Hermit's." We hadn't been to Hermit Higgins since Pete and Joseph cheated the old man when the painted his windows. Hermit Higgins had hired the boys to paint about twenty window panes. So Pete and Joe took them out of the frames and stacked them together and then just painted the sides and top – to give the appearance that they had painted them all. It worked too and they each made five bucks each, but we dared not show ourselves around the man's house for awhile. We usually went down there to throw rocks at all the wine and beer bottles scattered around the house, but today we were moving onto something bigger.

Joe stared ahead. "What about you, Pete," I asked. Pete's hand was pushed into the baby fat of his face, and the mop mess of his hair was flopped to one side. "I agree with Joe," he said eagerly. He usually agreed with his older brother. After this all eyes turned to me. It was time to do something big – that much I knew. I sat with my arms folded and slowly looked at everyone around the table, finally settling on Joe.

"Joe, does that attic window open on Hermit Higgins' house?"

"No, but...", he paused. "Last time Pete and I went, it was rotted pretty good and the old croak told us not to touch it. We could probably just push it in."

I liked the way Joe talked – he never asked why, he answered questions when asked them.

I let the room fall silent, purposely drawing attention to my deliberation. "Well, let's go get something for the clubhouse. First though, Olivia and Pete, you guys gotta go check on Giada, bring her back here and give her some lunch. I think we have some of her dolls here too. Wait for us here." They nodded and sauntered off through the woods toward the beach. "Joe, you're coming with me to get a ladder." 215

We took the weathered wooden ladder buried in the leaves behind the garden shed, and carried it back to the clubhouse. Olivia and Pete were already waiting with Giada when we got there. She was having lunch with her dolls, while Pete stared at the brown bag that contained his, and Olivia was reading *The Bull from the Sea*.

"Alright, let's go," I said coolly. "Giada," she looked up with a piece of bologna hanging from the corner of her mouth, "you gotta watch the clubhouse, its very important that you stay here until we get back." I told her this with complete sincerity, as though talking to Olivia. I didn't like talking down to her as if she were a baby still. Besides it made more believable.

Hermit Higgins house was shabby little thing nestled deep in woods a couple of miles away from the clubhouse. Moss and ivy were growing along the sides of the house and was obvious that the attic window frame wasn't the only part of the house rotting. Everybody knew Hermit Higgins was a recluse drunkard, but where he got money to by food and booze, mostly booze though, was still a mystery. However, nobody cared much for the old man and bothered him much.

I sent Pete around to scout, he was more deft than his appearance would lend him credit, and it wasn't long before he came back to tell us that Hermit Higgins was passed out on the couch. I whispered orders and soon Pete and Joe had the ladder braced against the side of the house leading up to attic window. I posted Olivia outside and told her to occasionally check on Hermit Higgins. She could make a bird whistle better than any us so she usually got sentry duty.

Joe climbed the ladder and gently pushed at the window. He felt around for a bit, and suddenly with his elbow butted the bottom and the sides. The wood cracked and flaked and slowly Joe removed it from the frame. He crawled in, disappeared for a moment, then popped his head back out base of the ladder while to signal us up. I held the Pete climbed up first, sweat already clustering around his

Round About Our Coal-Fire

Tom Trunzo



Clouds at Sunset - Photograph - Andrea Dini



thick brows, and then climbed up myself.

The attic was dark, dusty, and reeked of mildew and mold. To our disappointment there were only a few stuffed boxes in the far corner, empty bottles, scraps of newspapers, and rat droppings scattered about. We made our way across ducking from the nails that poked their sharpened edges from the roof. The boards creaked uneasily underneath our weight, and Joe swore that he could hear them screaming under Pete's feet. Pete waved a fist at Joe's back.

Soon enough we were rifling through boxes. However, our search was disappointing – nothing the old man had, it seemed, was worth any value or was of interest. Mostly it was just garbage, some ragged, moth-ridden clothing, and crumpled newspapers.

I had already turned my back and was heading back toward the ladder when Joe found something. "Hey, look at these." Pete peered over his shoulder while I moved to his side. He was holding several gold coins, real gold coins. Pete whistled until I punched him lightly and Joe passed the coins around. Why and how did Hermit Higgins have gold coins? Stolen Confederate money – Nazi loot – lost monedas de oro from a Spanish Galéon? I tried to keep cool, but my hands, like Pete and Joe's trembled as we passed the coins around. There were five in total, each a little bigger than a quarter. Nobody spoke but I saw the golden gleams in our wide eyes. It was the biggest job we'd ever pulled – I'd come through for the gang.

Unfortunately, Pete, who had held his peace until now, couldn't keep his mouth shut and yelled triumphantly, "We're rich!" Instinctively Joe and I gave him a shove to shut up, but we pushed too hard and Pete stumbled backward and fell to the floor, as if trying to sit. The burden of his weight was too much for the floor to bear, and we heard splintering and cracking, as well as pieces of wood falling through the ceiling and smacking the floor below. Pete too, almost fell through. We stood laughing and then went over to help him up. We didn't hear the frantic bird-calls from outside.

It took both of us, Joe and me, to heave Pete out of the hole. It was a little smaller than a man-hole, but still considerable. Pete was beginning to panic, and I knew Joe was worried but looked calm. I pocketed the coins and told them we were going. Suddenly, the attic door swung downward and open and we heard the drunken staggering of Hermit Higgins. "Goddamn rats! Filthy goddamn rats."

The stair ladder to the attic was shaking as Hermit Higgins mounted it, still cursing and shouting, and I watched our backs as Joe was already half way down the ladder.

"Hurry the fuck up," Joe said to Pete as he climbed the ladder to meet him at the bottom. Joe was bracing the ladder, and I had just put my feet out the window when I saw the beaming of Hermit Higgins gray eyes rise above the attic floor. His mouth curled into a wicked snarl and with a lumbered effort he heaved himself onto the attic floor. "Ehay, I got's youse little rat bastards now," he grinned. My body went numb. He was waving a revolver in his right hand.

"Come on!" Joe shouted from below. I ducked below the window and started climbing. Pete was already off the ladder and looking up with Joe at me. I moved frantically, and decided to jump when there was about five feet below me. I came crashing down and rolled backward, but was picked up by Pete and Joe. We grabbed the ladder and pulled it away, but a gnarled hand shot forth and grabbed it. Hermit Higgins popped his head from out the window. Joe and Pete tugged at the ladder, but the old man refused to let go and was bringing his right arm around.

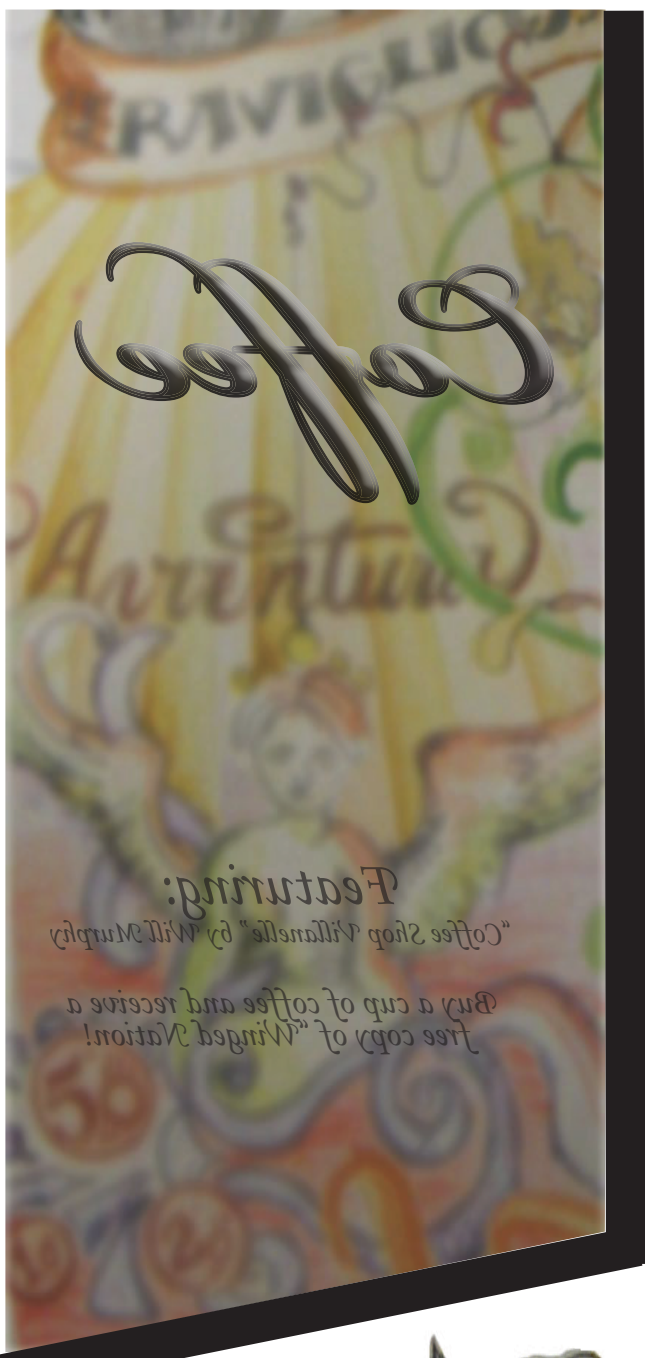
We tugged harder and harder, pulling farther back until the Hermit couldn't hold on without falling out the window. "Go," I shouted at Joe and Pete, who scrambled off, dragging the ladder behind them. I was about to follow, when I saw the revolver pointing out from the window, aimed with unsteady hand at the cousins. I found a branch and chucked it up at him like a boomerang. It broke on his head and, drunk as he was, he fell out the window. He landed at my feet and I heard the sharp sound of bones cracking followed by a blood-curdling scream.

Our eyes met for the final time. There was something cold and chilling behind the glossy gray eyes that confronted me now, holding me captive with sheer terror. He screamed at me, then turned his head to look at the gun that was lying by his side. With a trembling hand he took the gun and pointed it at me. This was it – Hermit Higgins would end my life with the clicking of the hammer and the turning of the barrel.

But, slowly, with his eyes still gleaming at me, he turned the gun on himself, tucking it neatly under his chin and pulled the trigger. It was a clean shot. The old man had given up the ghost and was now soaking in pool of blood. His eyes no longer met my own, but I couldn't look away – I couldn't cry, I wouldn't run, and I knew I wasn't going to tell the others.

Weeks later, we found out the coins were fake, just fool's gold. We'd been duped by a dead man – then again, I was still the only one who knew he was dead; it would still be a few months before someone stumbled across the Hermit. But today was another sunny summer morning and we were already talking business over some freshly picked blackberries.

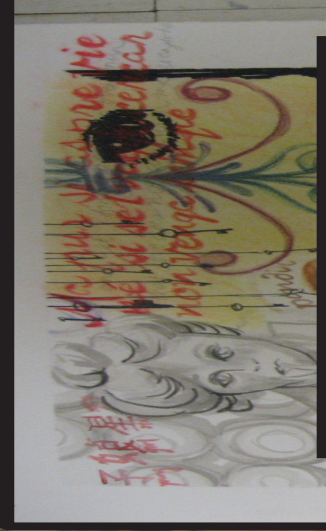
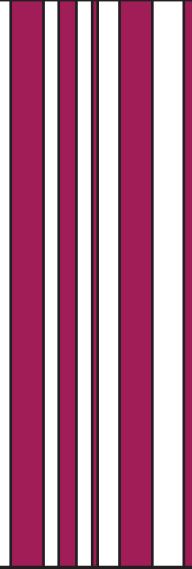
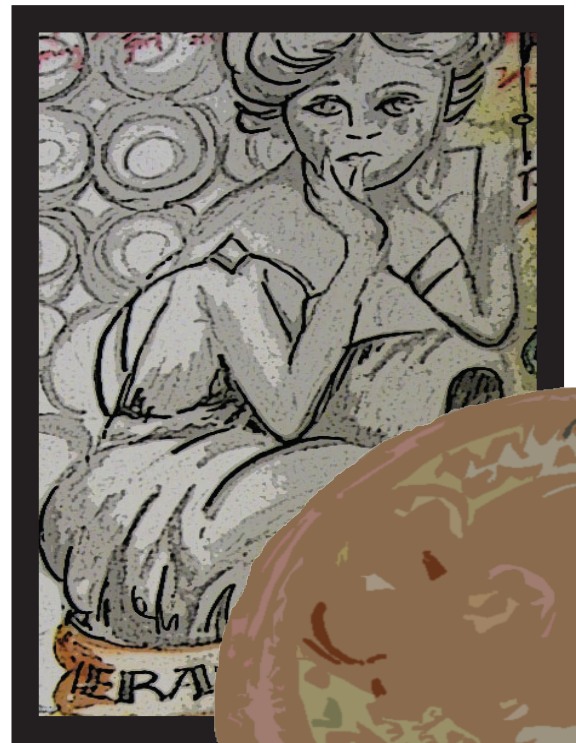
"Round About Our Coal-Fire"
Tom Trunzo



ERAVIGLIO

Cappuccino

Featuring:
"Coffee Shop Villanelle" by Will Swirely
Buy a cup of coffee and receive a
free copy of "Winged Nation!"



Coffee Shop Villanelle

Will Murphy

The nervous man smokes as he shakes in his chair
While the tourists stroll by on a hot summer's day
And the negligent coffee girl strokes at her hair

The busses rush past from somewhere to somewhere
As the lonely boy chokes on his nothing to say,
The nervous man smokes as he shakes in his chair.

The coffee girl's courtier just sputters and stares
As the patrons' thin patience is starting to fray
And the negligent coffee girl strokes at her hair

The coffee grows colder and hot tempers flare
As the coffee girl grins at her courtier to stay,
The nervous man smokes as he shakes in his chair.

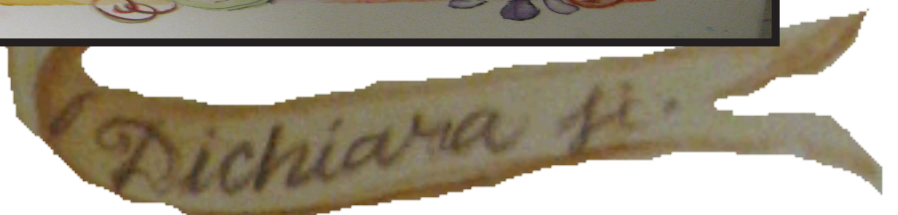
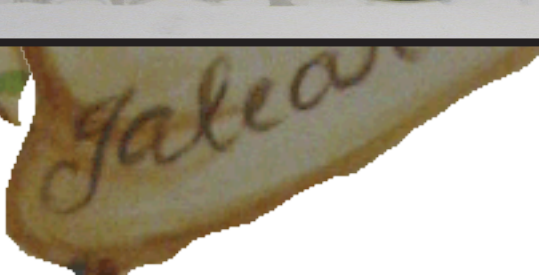
The harsh matron grouchily bickers and swears
As courtier and coffee girl's eyes start to play
And the negligent coffee girl strokes at her hair

The fat matron puffing up airs calls the boss
The courtier at last thinks up something to say,
The nervous man smokes as he shakes in his chair,
And the negligent coffee girl strokes at her hair.

219



Uno, Due, Tre - Colored Pencil - Megan O'Connor



Accor



Italian Sun - Photograph - Andrea Dini



n s

My childhood grows beside
Two pools, the first is
In a world where
Acorns are infinite as memory
And walls are ivy fences,
The neighbors polite mysteries.
Outside is an azalea jungle
And minefield of fire ants
And acorns.
I am lost in planetary acorns
Orbiting below my feet:
Each swingset shove an acorn,
Each monosyllabic song lyric.
Each article of dress up clothing an acorn.
Each insect bite, motherhug and
Dad-swiping-a-lizard-with-a-broom
To protect us.
To find the future I dive into
My pool to retrieve the plastic toys
My sister and I left for decades.
I emerge into the second
Pool of my childhood.
It is May now, El Paso sun
And cirrus sky, and dry,
Cracked Saint Sebastian
Welcomes cactus flowers with stone
Prayer hands. Oh how
We prayed for May in our
February swimsuits!
Snow, however, was iced sweetness
And was never lonely. Warmth
Always came early but never too soon.
Some of these things are hazy now but
I think that we were always loving.
Outdoors, carefree by owlsounds
And ice cream truck yawns,
Indoors, waiting for sunlight and
Nimble feet to burn over
Tiny granite stones,
the memory of acorns.

Rachel Stayton

THE HEARTMAN

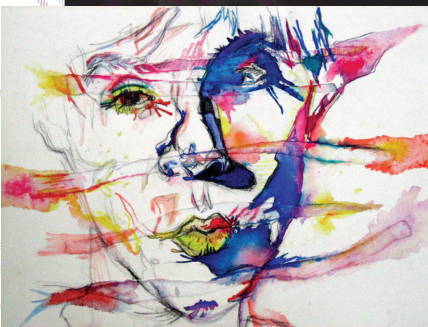


The night sits back on its haunches.
Moonlight squeezes through cracks in the trees.
When I was young I wanted to pull away
the jungle's dark leaves, and find all its secret places.
I never believed in the demon our parents spoke of
who stalked children after nightfall.
Their stories seemed too old to be true.

One night someone threw a blanket over the moon.
My friend and I played tag. He ran off the path,
and I dove into the jungle after him, crashing from tree to tree,
until a clearing unfolded before me.
I saw my friend spread-eagled on the ground,
a bloody crater where his chest used to be.
Slowly the heartman rose, his back to me.
I ran, no direction or thought,
I ran until the morning light stung my back.
None of us played anymore.
Sorrow clung like a wreath around my head.

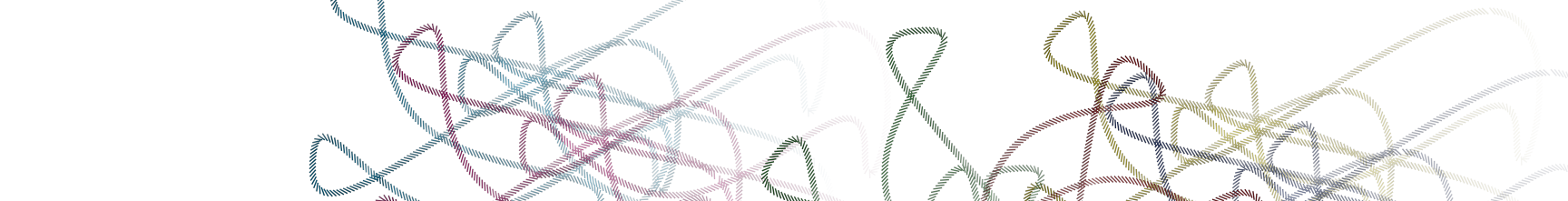


I followed gunfire from far away.
War was my escape, the why didn't matter.
There was the order of violence, a structure of years
until I came back. The village had seen him more and more.
Not quite a man at night, just a shadow in the day.
The children darted from place to place.
Like rabbits, they sniffed fear in the air.
Sleep avoided me, and I took to wandering the night again.
I stalked the heartman's path,
indifferent to the ghosts clinging to my legs.



My sister was fourteen; her laugh pushed away the darkness.
Walking to school with her through the jungle,
I started to notice strange shadows on our trail.
He was the mist sighing on her cheek, the feral cat
padding behind us with a menacing softness.
Every day he stopped at the edge of the trees,
to watch the school, a place he could not reach.

From Top to Bottom:
Self Portrait - Oil - Spencer Atkinson, *Faces*
1 - Acrylic - Spencer Atkinson, *Brother* -
Pencil & Water Color - Spence Atkinson



My family refused to leave our home,
imagining the danger was just in my head.
We both grew thinner, the heartman and I,
waiting uneasily for the other to strike.
One night, I stood in the clearing
where long ago my friend had died.
The heartman shambled toward me.
His spine was trying to claw out of his body.
He juggled hearts like apples,
carelessly biting into one and letting another fall on the ground.

Bring another child to this place tomorrow and your sister will be spared.

The next night I held the hand of a dying boy,
and led him toward the clearing.
He was sullen, not understanding.
We waited in silence. The hours lined up like executioners
until a crack from the village snapped us up.
I ran, but again I wasn't fast enough.
Half the village children lay dead, their ribcages gaping open
like mouths silently screaming

That day we left our homes forever, and built a ditch around the village.
We settled in far away cities.
The boy I led to the clearing that night stayed with us and got well.
A miracle, my sister said.
I work in a factory, and try not to think beyond what my hands can touch.
I watch the nights from the window of our apartment,
And sometimes I dream of the heartman,
slowly starving to death in the forgotten jungle.

Adriane Hanson

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a camera, capturing a scene of a golf course. The background shows a green fairway, a sand trap, and trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The image is slightly blurred, suggesting motion or a shallow depth of field.

314

View from the Rooftop

The tree is an angry mouth,
long ago it was cracked open
by some strange disaster
with a sole point of impact
that left the rest of the landscape unfulfilled,
lusting after tragedy.
But still it grows-
out instead of up,
its giant arm writhing,
blindly reaching across the ground.

next to it is the flame tree-
red and violet leaves burn alive in the air
while its yellow underbelly
quivers in the wind.
A girl lies cradled in the center,
where the branches intersect
She's reading a book, but she can't see what I do.
There are no monsters in her eyes.

Adriane Hanson

3|5



Picture Time - Photograph - Karen Minnema



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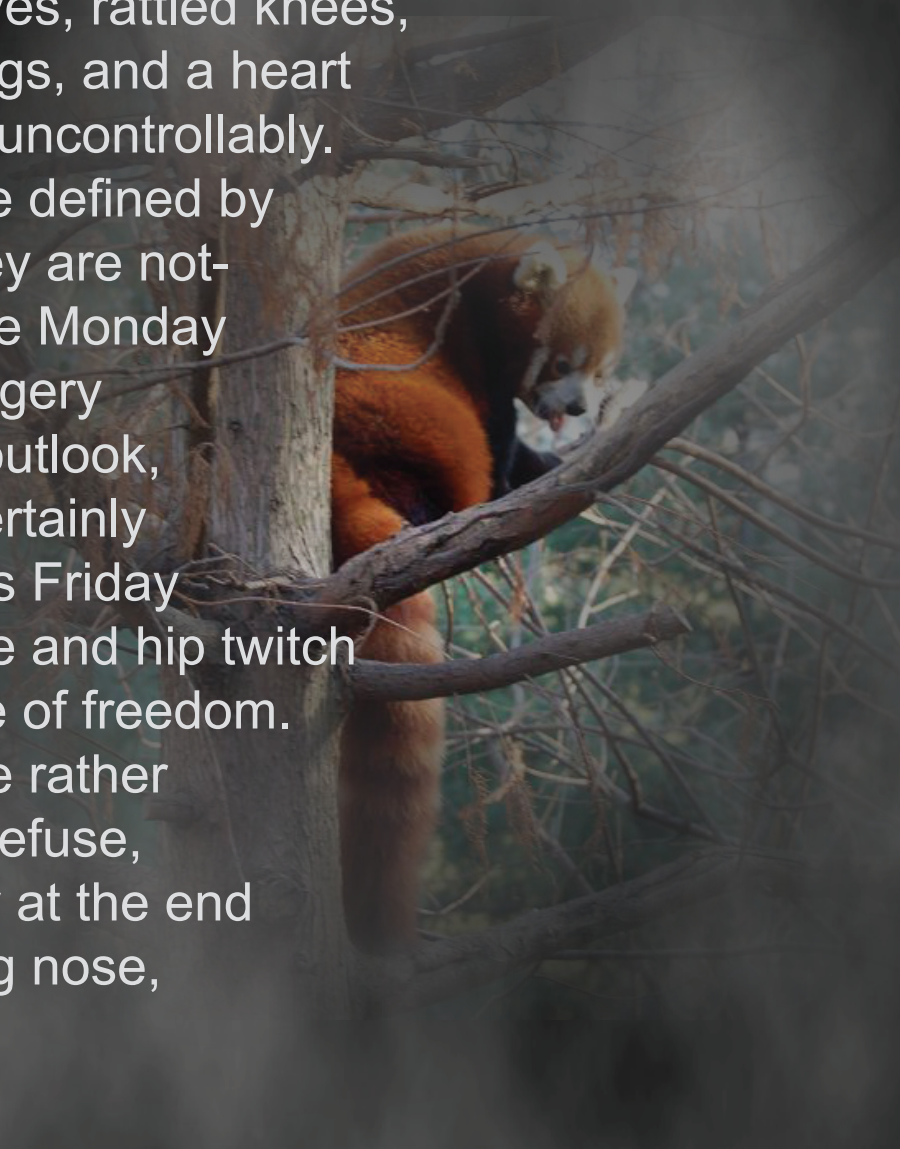
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Sundays taste of tears and a general fear-induced melancholy—a reaction to the coming week, which brings who-knows-what and a whole lot of oh-please-not-again.

Sundays bring clenched throats, jangled nerves, rattled knees, battered lungs, and a heart hammering uncontrollably.

Sundays are defined by the days they are not—not mediocre Monday with its drudgery and sunny outlook, and most certainly not flirtatious Friday with its smile and hip twitch and promise of freedom.

Sundays are rather the week’s refuse, rotting away at the end and clogging nose, throat, and mind.





Crane - Photograph - Karen Minnema



BEHIND THE BEHIND THE

The door clicked shut. Robert flinched and held his breath, listening for movement in the other room. He didn't want to wake Jon up. Not hearing anything, he stepped away from the door. Stretching the skin of his cheek flat and jutting out his lower jaw to examine his pores, he leaned into the mirror. Robert peeled off his shirt and turned to the side. He frowned at the silhouette of his breasts in the mirror. Twenty years ago those breasts had been for sale in every gift shop in Key West—a mermaid on a postcard, two for fifty cents. Robert had paid \$8,000.

He brushed his hair, counting backwards from one hundred. The bottom six inches were haggard and frizzy. Pulling a section in front of his face, he counted four split ends. Time for a haircut. The numbers were so important to his daily routine; just right and he could emerge from the bathroom looking like a woman. Picking up his razor, Robert lifted his left arm. He watched in the mirror as he shaved. Electrolysis had taken care of the hair on his chest and back, but there was something about shaving armpits and legs that made him feel connected to all the other women who performed this daily ritual.

The bedsprings creaked from the other room.

"Dana? Are you done yet?" Jon called out.

"What do you want?" Robert let a tinge of annoyance sneak under the door.

"I need my slippers..."

"Get them yourself!"

"My stomach hurts. I had surgery. I almost died!"

"Oh hush, will you. I'll be out in a second."

Robert turned back to the mirror. He couldn't go into the bedroom without clothes and make-up. Large but deft fingers picked up a bra from the back of the chair, slid the straps over his shoulders and hooked the clasp. He kicked off his boxer briefs. Robert pulled a large beige lycra gaff out of the dresser and stepped into it, drawing it over his thighs, feeling it pull his penis close to his body. He tugged up on the waistband, pulling it flat over his hips to his belly button. It smoothed and defined the lower half of his body. Robert turned to the side again, placing his hand on his stomach. He straightened his spine, seeking a reflection that would confirm his femininity.

"Dana!"



BATHROOM DOOR

BATHROOM DOOR

"Hold on!" Robert shouted, slamming the bottom drawer. He put on blue shorts and a tight tan and white striped tank top. Pulling compacts and tubes from his make-up bag, Robert took inventory of the day's tasks. He was going to the car dealership at 3:00, which meant an extra layer of foundation to hide the afternoon stubble that would return along his jaw line. Robert spent the next few minutes retouching his face, angle by angle. Years of practice made the task nearly automatic. He trimmed a few stray nose hairs, tossed his long, blonde ponytail over his shoulder then attempted a smile.

Assessing her reflection, a disappointed sigh escaped Dana's lips. It was hard to be a 50-year old woman; age continued to take its toll. She was rarely satisfied by the results of her morning routine anymore. She crossed the bathroom, looked over her shoulder one last time and stepped into the bedroom.

"What did you want, Jon?" Dana asked, trying to establish a better tone now that she was ready. Jon was still sitting under the canopy of the bed surrounded by messy piles of paperwork. He took off his glasses and looked up at her. Even after twenty-two years, Dana had never let him see what happened on the other side of the bathroom door and she always eagerly anticipated his first reaction.

"Never mind," he said smiling, his eyes twinkling. "Come sit down." He moved a stack of papers then patted the empty spot on the bed. Dana knelt on the bed, tucking her white shoes beneath her.

"What is it?" Dana asked.

"I think I'll take today off of work. We can go down to Saint Augustine. Some sun would be good and we could eat at that restaurant you like with the patio."

Dana leaned back, slightly annoyed, imagining the things she would have to do before she could be ready to go to the beach. Waterproof make-up, different underwear, waxing, a bathing suit, not to mention what she would have to bring along. She clutched at the edge of the bed as she slowly resigned herself to the idea.

"What do you say?" Jon asked after a pause.

"Why not," Dana sighed, standing up slowly and turning away.

"Well, it's settled then," said Jon, his voice already muffled by the closed bathroom door.

Ashley Slaff



3 | 9



To Face Beauty - Acrylic - J...



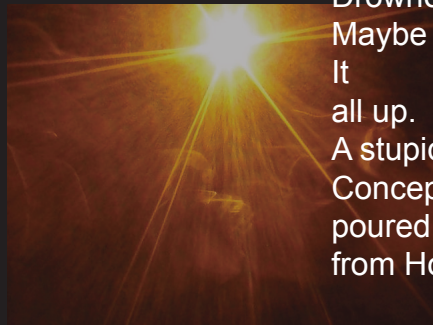
Sunken Garden Photograph - Photograph - Jamie Barnes



Amor Invisible


Is
It
No there?
Do I hold no spark?
No light-flash-jolt,
Nor pitter-patter heart.
or.
Am I just scared?
No run- run away,
Nor pentacle-bearing shield.
Admit and be Lost.
Hurt. And washed away.
Or Hide.
Be Lost.
Strangled.
Drowned.
Maybe I'm making
It
all up.
A stupid little
Concept
poured in my head
from Hope.

4|1



Khaleelah Jones





To Charlotte;

Like winter's fall of powdered snow,
or autumn's leave of life for show,
a staleness clings to air and thought;
a friendship found that was not caught.

*A whiteness takes and holds the sky,
before the sun could bid goodbye,
the snow begins and falls abound--
a snowflake floats and finds the ground.*

4|2

*A passion takes and masks the leaves,
stealing green and life, like thieves.
But left behind is golden shade,
that rots in beauty undismayed.*

So what is left in seasons' wake,
that isn't cold or dead to take?
That subtle change of air and sight;
or changing of the day and night?

A moment lost that can't be found,
when strangers meet and then are bound,
like patterns of the changing world,
like snow or leaves, a love unfurled.

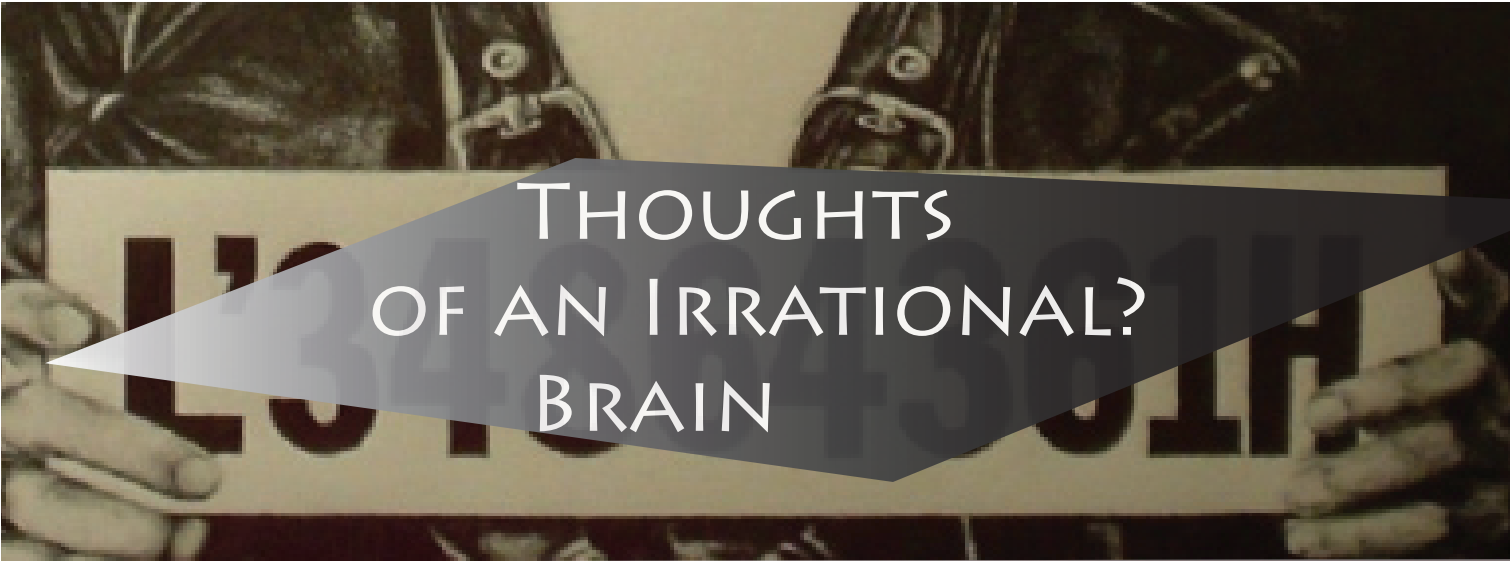
Huy Ho

ACCUMULATION

Of things that go unseen and things that grow with ease



White Study - Gouache - Jiayu Liu



THOUGHTS
OF AN IRRATIONAL?
BRAIN

4|4



Across a room, schrooms of doom,
 oily tombs loom.
 A kiss: Who kissed my this?
 you missed my kiss
 Lips stained bare, sweet potato hair.
 A glare. From where?
 Gophers slide across the divide.
 Gophers?
 Lophers, mophers
 who walk along
 the ceiling trong ,the dealing dong.
 Smashing passion, pieces of fire
 breed liars higher.

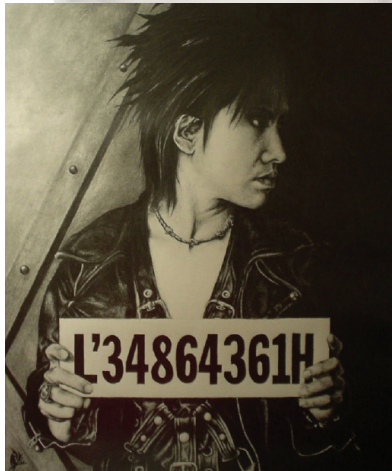
But never here, never dear, when love is near, the road is clear
 tomato smear, tomato jeer will disappear.

And it may seem to lack sense
 What's sense? I wince: O, Prince of Sense
 (plumber of rational thought, frog delot-mott)
 You'll never grab my soul to hold, to mold

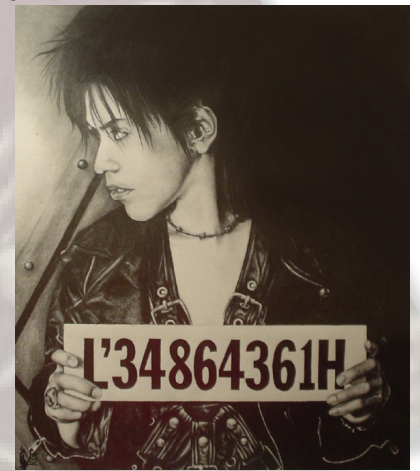
uphold your rigid sense of
 square boxes that burn
 minds that churn
 unfilled, unwilled.

Struggle up the hill,
 struggle down the will.
 Double boil, trouble toil
 cauldron moil.

Spoil.
 You'll never catch me
 caress me
 convey me



Indentification Right - Graphite - Jiayu Liu



Indentification Left - Graphite - Jiayu Liu

until you let go of everything you know
 to go

to what hides in spiderwebs of light.

Misdelight might reunite.

I love the fool who'll never spool,
 too cool

who wants to rule

Seek the body, those who want the soul.

You tear me, eat me, defeat me
 but begins and ends, sprinds and bends
 at this kiss

this light, this fight

to think that we are more than ants(without pants?)
 in someone else's world.

Adriane Hanson

A Bus Ride

I was sitting in the aisle seat on a crowded, sweaty bus to Nashville. The woman sitting next to me, at the window, got up to use the restroom for the third time in as many hours. I can't understand why people drink so much coffee on bus rides. It keeps them from sleeping and inconveniences everyone on the bus. It does afford them, however, the ever-exciting opportunity of attempting to relieve oneself at 75 miles per hour in the back of a bus whose shock absorbers hadn't been replaced since the mid Seventies. At least I wasn't sharing the row with one of the screaming infants, or with one of the incredibly obese individuals who seem to gravitate towards crowded buses like so many bloated scavengers.

"Can I get back to my seat please?" The woman said, returning from the most adventurous excursion she would know for at least a decade. I stood up and inched forward, trying not to bump into too many as I went. She smiled at me as she sat down. She had about three teeth left to her name, but otherwise life had been relatively kind to her. "So, where are you headed to this time?" She asked, beginning the mandatory conversation of strangers meeting on a trip.

"Nashville, you?" I replied automatically. I'd had the same conversation with a U.S. Marine, a truck driver, and two college students since I left New York. She responded, but I didn't bother trying to remember where she said. "So is that home for you?" I asked, continuing the most inane and overused pattern of human conversation.

"No," she said, and her eyes and lips dropped slightly, along with her shoulders, in the classic body language for 'I don't know you at all but now I'm going to tell you my tearful life story just so someone will pretend to be sympathetic for once in my life.' I seriously considered chancing the restroom rather than hearing the rest of the conversation. "... She passed away a few days ago." Apparently the woman was going to a funeral, and I had missed half the conversation while contemplating my dread of a stranger's burdensome troubles.

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said, perhaps the most inadequate phrase in the English language. She murmured some acknowledgment of my disinterested sympathy and stared blankly out the window for a while. I tried half-heartedly to think of a way to break the silence, if only to feel a little less awkward sitting next to her. She beat me to the punch.

"So, is Nashville home for you?" She asked, looking back from her contemplation of the countryside.

"No," I said, "I'm just traveling to travel I guess."

"That's an expensive hobby, even by bus," She remarked.

"Yeah," I agreed, still broke from the \$150 one-way ticket, "but it beats the alternative."

"Staying in one place?"

"More like rotting in one place. Have you ever been to Iowa?" I answered.

"No," she said, clearly not following.

"Why not? It's less than \$200 from almost anywhere in the country, and it's guaranteed not to be exactly like somewhere you've been before. That's pretty cheap for a unique experience." She was silent for a moment. For a second I thought I'd killed another potential conversation with my sarcasm. She



surprised me, though.

“How come you travel so much, if you think everywhere’s just the same? Or is this little trip a one time deal?” So she was actually going to attempt to engage me in a real conversation, not just tell me meaningless facts about myself. Great.

“You could say it’s a one-time deal. I realized one day that I didn’t like New York, and that all my worldly possessions fit in a single suitcase, and that I had some money burning a hole in my pocket, so I bought a bus ticket.”

“A one-way ticket’s a pretty risky impulse buy, don’t you think? I mean, what happens when you get to Nashville and it’s even worse than New York, but this time you’re flat broke?”

“Ahh, it’ll stay fresh long enough for me to flip some burgers and save up for another one-way ticket. Maybe I’ll head out west next time.” I said. This lady was starting to piss me off. I was in no mood to try talking to someone who thought they were intelligent, let alone someone who thought they were wise.

“Dang... Whatever happened to contentment, to settling down and earning a decent living? Kids these days have no ambition.” She said.

“Maybe I’m just stretching my bladder, so that when I’m a decrepit old hag with no teeth scolding people I don’t understand, I won’t have to get up and pee six times between every bus stop.” I surprised myself a little with that one. I guess she’d succeeded in pissing me off more than I thought.

“If you’re going to be a vagrant with no ambition, you could at least be polite.” She snapped, and glared out the window, crossing her arms in a decidedly juvenile pout.

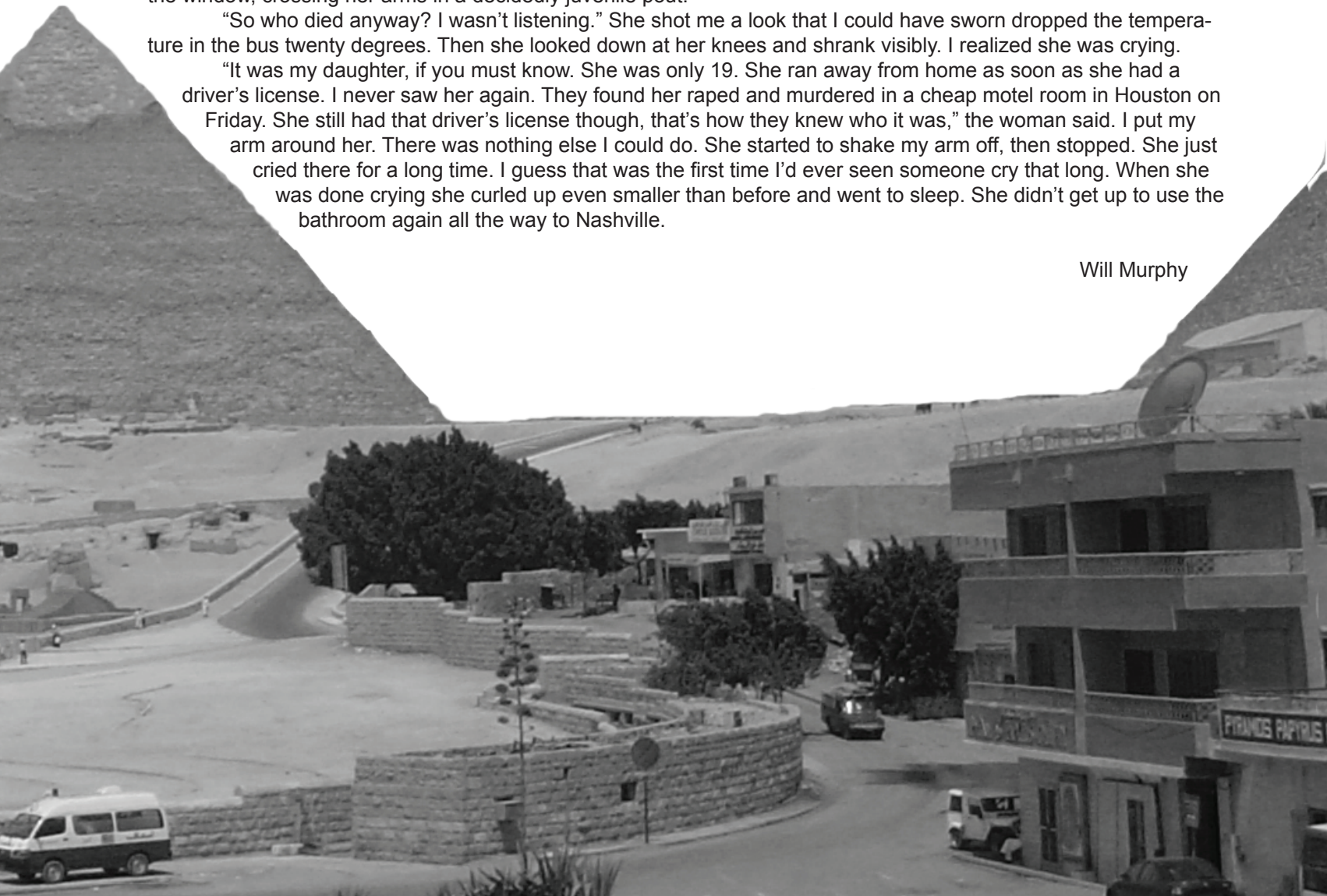
“So who died anyway? I wasn’t listening.” She shot me a look that I could have sworn dropped the temperature in the bus twenty degrees. Then she looked down at her knees and shrank visibly. I realized she was crying.

“It was my daughter, if you must know. She was only 19. She ran away from home as soon as she had a driver’s license. I never saw her again. They found her raped and murdered in a cheap motel room in Houston on Friday. She still had that driver’s license though, that’s how they knew who it was,” the woman said. I put my arm around her. There was nothing else I could do. She started to shake my arm off, then stopped. She just cried there for a long time. I guess that was the first time I’d ever seen someone cry that long. When she was done crying she curled up even smaller than before and went to sleep. She didn’t get up to use the bathroom again all the way to Nashville.

Will Murphy



Pizza Hut Photo - Photograph - Gagan Jindal





West Lake - Photograph - Karen Minnema



On the Peninsula

I went down to the gulf
Where there were boats in trees
Where I gave a shed to
A family living in a tent
Where I helped sheetrock the sanctuary of the
Port Sulfur Baptist Church because
There had been nothing left
Nothing but destruction after the tempest
Nothing but rubble and empty cement slabs
Where houses used to be
Where their lives used to be
For over twenty days, the winds
And waters raged and stole away
The livelihoods of thousands
And left boats in trees

Peter Hershey



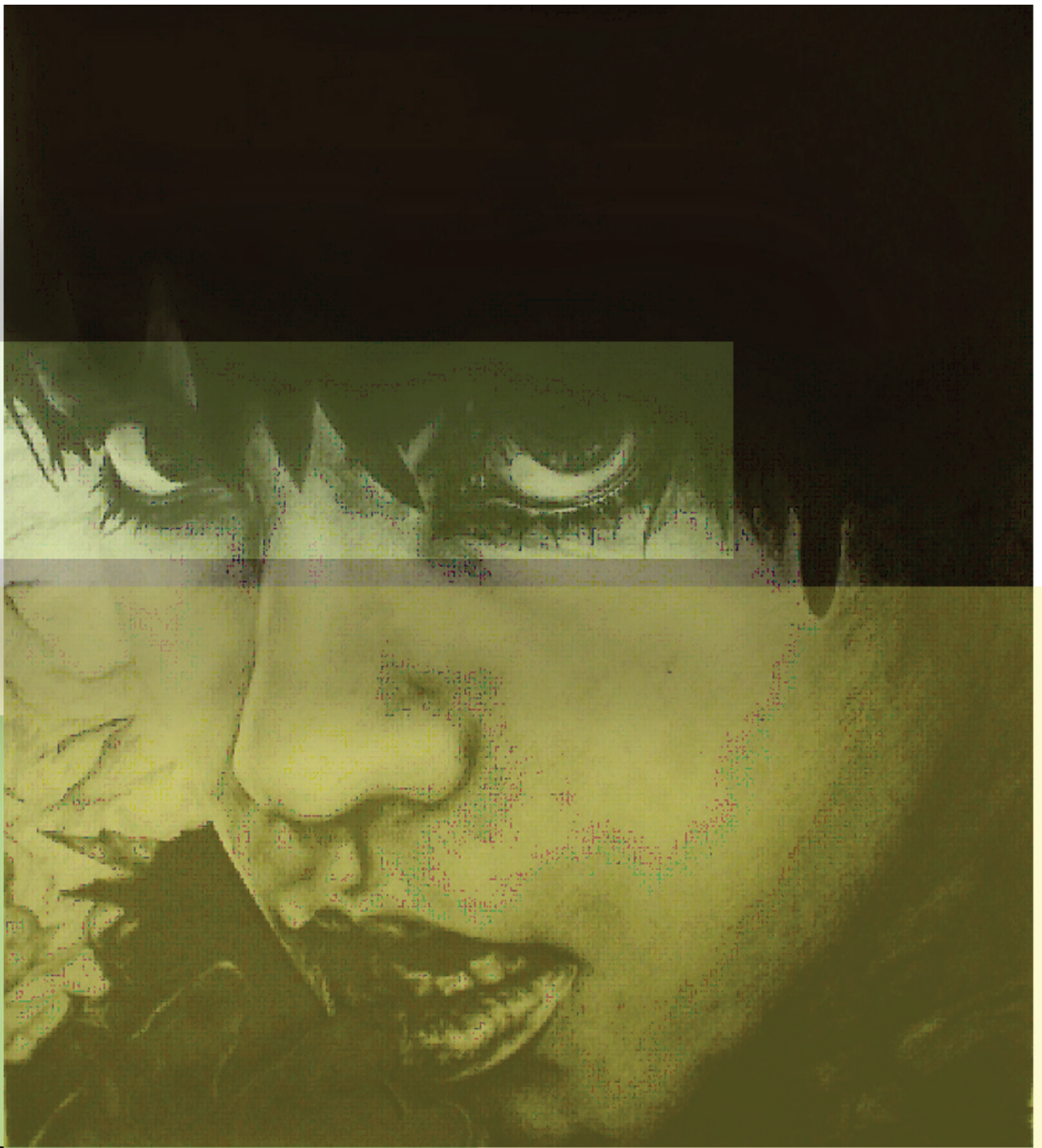
the little death

510

swallow the fire flower—
it burns and tickles all the way down.
the porcelain girl
whispers word magic
to the liquid throb of stars,
her glass universe
shatters

Casey Metheny







Climbing

He climbed too far. Cold set in like iron
Deadbolt locks of a conspiracy theorist.
The air around him tantalized but didn't
Satisfy at all – he inhaled space
And exhaled mist and rubbed his lungs to
Empty little sacks of river clay.
He promised he would never climb again.

Will Murphy



First Landing - Photograph - Andrea Dini



Teresa Ingraham

The Cookie Jar



My mother made me sweep the kitchen floor every morning. I would wake up at dawn, curled in my bed within an organized fortress of teddy bears, and watch the sun slowly rise to our domestic schedule. Tiptoeing downstairs through ivory padded rooms and barren floors, I picked up that stiff wooden broom and started to sweep.

5 | 4 Back and forth, back and forth. Swaying against the motion of the handle, I pretended I was rocking at the railing of a pirate ship, stabbing at the scum in the floor corners. I saw the clear white tiles turn into rotten plywood beneath my feet and I cried, "Ahoy, Mateys! Treasure be near!"

I was pointing at the cookie jar on the ledge above the cabinets, in sight, but out of reach. I licked my lips avariciously and methodically refreshed its details into my mind. It stood plaintively still with porcelain fragility and whispered of history. It had been my grandmother's baptism jar, which now put a particular tinge of sweetness on Christianity. On the smooth white was a scene painted in cerulean of Persephone frolicking in a field of pomegranates, Demeter watching from afar, hands outstretched in a tugging motion. I wondered, 'why isn't Demeter in the field, why can't she reach Persephone? Look, she's right there, just reach out and you can run and twirl and twirl around the pomegranate bushes. Look, she is smiling forever.'

Captain Hook clicked her tongue behind me.

"You're not getting any of those until this floor gets cleaned, young lady."

I snapped around only to see the frills of buccaneer roguery transform into the brass buttons on my mother's sweater.

"But, Mom! It's already clean! It's always clean, it doesn't even really need to be swept!" I whined, I pouted, and most of all I begged. Neverland had receded into the distance and I couldn't get rid of my shadow.

"No, It's always no, Chloe. And don't be ridiculous, the floor always needs to be cleaned. It's always getting dirty from you trampling around everywhere and spilling your crumbs. Finish, and at 7 o'clock you can have breakfast and a cookie."

I knew the structure as solidly as the pristine walls of my house, yet still, like clockwork, I tried to escape the labyrinth. My mother sat at the table with Emily Post's manuscript etched rigidly into her spine, a gleam of patriarchy in the broad shoulders that muscled through her grey cardigan. Pinky out, sip tea - don't slurp - wipe chin, eliminate crumbs.

I sat down for a breakfast of toast and jam and then asked for a peach.

"You'll make a mess."

"No I won't! I'm a big girl, Mom, I can show you."

She rolled her eyes and went to the crisper and set down a green peach in front of me. I bit into cold plastic fuzz and swallowed an inedible mass. I crunched on mealy triumph and washed down pride with my glass of all natural, 100% organic, not-from-concentrate orange juice. My mother folded her newspaper and uncrossed her legs. She walked over to the cabinet, reached up carefully and removed a cookie from the jar, placing it tantalizingly in front of me.

"Here you go, good morning today, Chloe." She pat me on the head like a dog. "Eat up, it's time for piano now." I swallowed the cookie whole and walked in exactly thirty paces to the Yamaha baby piano in the



Summer - Photograph - Luciana Inglis



living room. My mother followed in step, holding the cookie jar, and set it down on top of the piano, adjusting its spot. There. Exactly centered, eye-level.

She walked back into the other room to wash the dishes and I opened my music book when I heard steaming hot water tinkling against the metallic bin of the kitchen sink. She picks up the sponge as I lay out my music. She inspects each dish, I breathe in the keys. She picks up the palm-olive non-scented dishsoap and I lift my hands in steady anticipation until – one, two, three – I start to play chopsticks. Scrubbing, tapping 5|5 the white skeleton keys one after another, scraping toenails against piano pedals, I play, like clockwork. The world spins in pace as black keys, with unorthodox tonality, mix with white in my swirling view of greys. I scour the black keys to get to the bones, but I can't cut out white from dark, and the separated notes blend together, into song.

Was it music? I click my tongue to the metronome and play a childish ode as my mother hangs up her rubber gloves and reaches for the drying towel. What is music? I stare at the porcelain jar on top of the piano until the Muse flies out of sculpture and bangs on my head, pulling my hair by the roots. I cry out in pain and my hands come heavily down on the piano – abrasive, obnoxious, creatively disoriented from the cleft.

The Muse grins like an imp and pulls at the cookie jar until it teeters and crashes, like a B flat in C major, to the floor.

Silence. Then rhythmic vibrations as the water stops.

I crouched on the floor, hoping the Muse would do me a favor and collect the pieces back together. She did get me into this mess, after all. I looked up and saw triangle arms on square hips and a knowingly agitated look on my mother's face.

“What did you do now! Always making a mess. All I do is clean up after you. Oh Lord! And your Grandmother's jar! Oh, Chloe! What did I tell you about being careful. That jar was a family item! I should have known better than to wash the dishes while you're playing. Honestly! I always have to watch you – you can't even practice piano without supervision!

I sank lower and lower into the floor, willing my limbs to turn into concrete and meld into the surface. I counted the shards bleeding onto the white tiles and I thought maybe it would be better if I lived in a bubble, floating from place to place and never touching anything – like in those museums that tease your curiosity by deny you tactility. Sterilized and contained.

My mother looked down, saw my face and softened a little.

“Oh, Honestly! Get that look off your face, Chloe. It's not the end of the world. Even if you won't be watching TV for the next week or getting your cookie after practice today.” She crouched down and leaned in until I could see every wrinkle and hair and mole on her face as her arms circled me with propriety.

Three simple words stuck in my throat like porcelain. I love you. They hung over my head, taunting like the cookie jar, and so I hugged her, I kissed her on the cheek, I tried to give her the tangibility of my affection.

I looked into the eyes that mirrored mine and saw the harsh cavity of my silence. Slowly, isolation pushed us apart and she receded back into the immaculate background. I loved her deeply, as a pedagogue, a goddess, a mother, but I was trained in cleanliness. Pomegranate juice was dripping down my chin and I had no extra hands to clean up the mess of my emotions.





5 | 7

UNHAPPY

Demigods and dreams be damned
We're moving through a soulless land
For just a moment, close your eyes
Allow me now to fantasize
I'm not me and you're not you
We haven't done, nor do we do
The things for which we are condemned
Our future is ours to command
A trifle, that's all that time is now
But we've pledged to it with solemn vow
So how do we console ourselves
With what we are, and what life was?

Erin Holmes

Barnacles - Photograph - Haley Wright



Blissfully Unaware
Blissfully Unaware

I'm a drop of what could have been
 In a sea of never was
I'm a thought of forever
 In a universe of I don't knows
How could we have known, simply passing in the street?
Who's to say we'd realize it
 Even if we meet?
I felt it for a moment, a glancing second past
And the feeling...
 Still it stayed with me long after that moment passed.
So are we to be forgiven, for the sins of our omission?
Are we to indulge forever in life's version of fan fiction?
You probably didn't notice that my breath caught
 And I stared
For all I know you were oblivious –
Blissfully unaware...

Erin Holmes

5|9



The Ocean Within - Photograph - Andrea Dini

POLICY

Winged Nation is an artistic and literary forum expressing gender, racial, and cultural issues. Through our publication, students are able to share and explore their experiences of a complicated and variegated society. All entries are the works of students and may not be the opinion of the College of William and Mary or *Winged Nation*.

COLOPHON

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