

The Aerie

Volume 15 · Spring 2014



aerie also **aerie** (âr'e,îr'e) **n. pl. -ies**

1. The nest of an eagle or other predatory bird built on a crag or other high place
2. A house or stronghold built on a height
3. **The literary and arts magazine of Concordia University Irvine**
[Med. Lat. aeria < OFr. aire.]

The Aerie

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The Aerie is an annual journal which showcases work being done in creative writing and art by Concordia University Irvine students, alumni, faculty and staff. In addition, it provides students from both the English and art departments a hands-on experience working collaboratively to produce a quality literary and arts journal. Students are involved in every aspect of the production from the call for submissions, to the selection of creative work and the design of the journal. The publication of *The Aerie* is made possible with funding from the Office of the Provost.

The text for this magazine is set in Mrs. Eaves and Avenir.

I Spy A Fish
Mixed Media
Stephanie Coyne



Contents

Prose

47 Bottles, 23 Cans	4
Margaret Langdon	
Performing the Truth	11
Gretchen Sheetz	
Apps	19
Nicholas Scutti	
Memories Come and Go	25
Nicholas Evon	
Answers.com	33
Taylor Bundy	
Bikini Bummed	37
Margaret Langdon	
Being a P.K. for Dummies	46
Katherine Dubke	

Poetry

Together	3
Eden Griffith	
Te amo sin saber cómo	9
Danika Schmid	
Requiem for the Golden Wood	14
Eden Griffith	
Ode to Dark Chocolate	17
Gretchen Sheetz	
Safe Harbor	22
Gretchen Sheetz	
Clock	31
Danika Schmid	
Fishstar	39
Katherine Dubke	
Shakespeare Fakespeare	40
Kaitlyn Orszewki	
Get a Grip, Prufrock	43
Nicholas Scutti	
Library	48
Katherine Dubke	

Art

Backyard Fiestas	2
Rachel Hayes	
Flight	7
Paul Watson	
Limes	8
Anna Kawashima	

Still Life	10
Megan Nien	
Violin	13
Allison Brocato	
The Ropes that Bind	15
Karen Gurske	
Norma Jean	16
Brandon Charnell	
Self Portrait	18
Farren Casad	
Shade Cut	21
Sydney Parrish	
Bipolar Disorder	23
Paul Watson	
Pour Over	24
Jade Orr	
Muddled Reflections	27
Sydney Parrish	
Untitled 1	28
Rebecka Chang	
Untitled 2	29
Rebecka Chang	
System Design	30
Sabrina Martinez	
Rainy Day Tokyo	32
Anna Kawashima	
Defend the Victims	35
Sydney Parrish	
Spritz	36
Rebecka Chang	
Emblaze	39
Rebecka Chang	
Untitled	40
Sydney Parrish	
Succulent	41
Rebecka Chang	
Tangle @#*\$	42
Gabriel McDermott	
Limes	44
Kirsten Almquist	
Pumpkin	45
Kirsten Almquist	
Cityscape	49
Patrick Nguyen	
Stairs to Alpha Building	50
Chad Barretta	



Backyard Fiestas

Acrylic and Hand Embroidery on Paper and Drafting Mylar

Rachel Hayes

Together

It's funny, isn't it, how personal symbolism defines a relationship—
Or rather, how a relationship can be catalogued,
Snap-shot and framed and preserved by little things,
By Pogs and toy dragons and Yu-Gi-Oh cards,
By couches and phone charms and bracelets.
It's funny the way the mind relives the memories trapped in those objects,
Breathing in the aura of nostalgia and keeping old feelings alive.

An 8-ball Pog—that's what you collected, just the 8-ball ones—
And we're snapping slammers by the playground wall,
Oblivious to the other children because, well,
Why would we need anyone else?

The dragon—Oh, the dragon. The first thing you took from me
(Okay, so I gave it to you).
We're in preschool and my daddy packs me cool toys and you're the only one
Who wants to play with me.

A Harpie Girl card—Your favorite, the most scantily-clad one you owned.
We spend a good ten minutes behind the bleachers,
Snickering, as 6th-grade boys do, about the boobs,
Before a teacher catches us and takes it away (you steal it back during lunch).

But nostalgia isn't the only feeling brought by memory.
We've had our share of bridges—you more than most teenagers.

Your tattered 70's couch—It really has no business still being indoors.
It's night and you're crying. You've drunk too much and thought too much;
You throw up on me, but that's what I've got a towel for,
So I can hold you through your tears as you drift to sleep on the sagging cushions.

The phone charm—You still wear it on your phone today.
It's 9th grade and you have matching phone charms with your first real girlfriend.
You go steady for months, and you don't blame me when she breaks it off,
But I know it's because you refused to give up our time together.

The bracelet—It doesn't look like anything special at a glance,
But that plain silver circle is a vessel for deep love and deeper betrayal.
It's one of the few things your mother leaves behind when she walks out on you;
She leaves a marriage and a 12-year-old son and a bracelet.

You're broken, I know. But I'm not letting you fall apart,
Not without someone to sew you back up again,
To pat in the stuffing and remind you that you are loved.
And I'll show you the dragon to remind you how long we've known each other,
And I'll show you the charm to remind you how much we've sacrificed
Just to keep each other going. And I know without you saying a word
That you understand my unspoken vow—I'll always be here for you.

Eden Griffith

47 Bottles, 23 Cans

Monday. 8 bottles, 9 cans.

I sat at my usual table, watching Kenneth peer into every single trashcan in the cafeteria. He walked around the cafeteria every lunch period collecting bottles and cans. Nobody told him he had to or anything; he just did it, every single day. He didn't even keep them—every day, he'd hand our homeroom teacher a plastic bag for her to recycle. I never thought to ask why. I guess he was just really nice like that. My lunch, an ice-encrusted artichoke pizza slice from a padded Walmart lunch tote, lay half-forgotten on the aluminum foil. Kenneth sure had a lot of work ahead of him; I counted eight trashcans, one for every other table in the room. Nonchalantly, I looked inside the trashcan next to my table. Maybe I could make his work easier? I rifled through with the tips of my fingers, pushing aside peanut-buttery Ziploc baggies and greasy wax paper plates, until I found my prize: a Gatorade bottle with a small drop of green liquid still circling the inside bottom. I raised it triumphantly, then set it down on the edge of the table.

Kenneth didn't notice. He walked up with his head down, already looking in the trashcan. He automatically mumbled a kind of half-hello as he poked at the Ziploc baggies.

"Hey. . . Kenneth," I said quietly.

He looked up, and pushed the bridge of his square glasses. His eyes looked like they could burn little brown laser beam points through his lenses.

"Here." I grabbed the Gatorade bottle and held it out to him. "It's the only one I found in there."

He took it from me, then placed it in his plastic bag. "Thanks!" His face softened, and he gave me his smile, one of those smiles that seem too big for faces to handle. He blinked, then pointed at me abruptly. "You're. . . Anna, right?"

"Anne," I said, nodding. "With an 'E.'"

"Anne, yeah. . ." His eyes flashed down, then popped back up. "Well... I guess I'll... see ya," he said.

"Want some help?" I blurted.

Why'd I say that? It sounded so... I don't know, so blunt. Sure, I wanted to get to know him... but I didn't want to make it sound like... like he needed my help or anything. I weighed the stupidity of every word I'd said to him so far. I convinced myself in the space of fifteen seconds that Kenneth already thought of me as some bizarre, needy chick with no real friends—a closet ax murderer in training.

But he said simply, with a shrug, "Sure, if you want."

Tuesday. 9 bottles, 7 cans.

I asked Kenneth what his favorite movie was and he said, "Star Wars. But only the original ones. . . the prequels are just weird."

I laughed. In an affected soap-opera voice, I imitated the line, "'Anakin! You're breaking my heart!'"

He snorted, inhaling and shaking as he snickered. "They could have replaced Hayden Christensen with a block of wood and nobody would've known the difference! I mean, really, if I'd directed it. . ." As he talked, his smile grew wider and wider; I felt my own smile grow with his, though not to the extent his could.

"Can I call you Kenneth Kenobi?" I blurted. I thought it sounded cool, and it was kind of Star Wars-y. . . but, immediately, I reddened. Why'd I say that? Stupidest idea ever, nicknames. . . "Sorry. . . go on."

He shook his head, smiling. "No, yeah, sure. I like it."

Wednesday. 4 bottles, 5 cans.

I flopped onto the table, setting my chin on my hands. Kenneth walked up and set his tray down across from me.

"Where's your lunch?" he asked.

I groaned. "Kitchen counter. Stupid alarm clock didn't go off, so I had to run."

He looked down at his tray. A couple pieces of fried chicken, a blob of creamed corn that looked just a bit too round, three packages of saltines, and a 2% milk carton. After a minute, he picked up one of the pieces of fried chicken, held it out, and said, "Want some of mine?"

"I couldn't..."

"Go on. I've got two. It's not like I'll starve."

I took the piece of fried chicken, smiling a little bit. "Thanks!"

Thursday. 19 bottles, 5 cans.

I yelled excitedly from one end of the cafeteria, waving two large liter-size Aquafinas.

"Check out what I found!"

Kenneth grinned, that same grin, then waved back three smaller bottles he'd been holding. "It's a record day!"

I put the liter bottles in the plastic bag. "What's the most you've ever found?"

"22, one day," he said, puffing his chest.

"You ever thought about working in recycling for a living someday?"

"Aw, heck no." He shook his head. "I'm going to be the president of NASA."

I raised my eyebrows. He said it so matter-of-factly, like he'd seen it in some crystal ball already. Suddenly, I saw a vision of Kenneth as a thirty-something in a long white scientist-coat, his spiky blond hair sticking up a little taller than usual. Thirty-something Kenneth smiled... that smile. I saw him handing me a shiny photograph from some satellite and whispering, "Something about that star reminds me of you."

Everything warmed up inside of me, from the white tops of my knockoff Chuck Taylors to the point of my green sparkly hair barrette.

"I hope you will be," I said.

Friday. 6 bottles, 2 cans.

I made sure to pack two Ding-Dongs in my lunch bag. It only seemed right to pay Kenneth back for the food he'd shared with me the other day.

"Awesome!" he exclaimed when I handed him one. He pumped his fists in the air. "I never get these at home."

"Where do you live, anyway?" I leaned forward.

"... Mesa Bluff."

"Really? I didn't think anyone lived out there."

Kenneth smiled, then looked down. He shrugged. "We've got this dinky old cabin out there—used to be a vacation cabin, before we moved in. Dad's always complaining that we're too far out, too rural. Says we don't deserve such a small place. Family honor or something. I dunno... I guess it's small, but I've never lived anywhere else, so..."

"So you really are a Kenobi." In my head, I pictured Kenneth in those long Jedi robes, standing on a deserty cliff. Alone against the elements. The bright sunlight offset his prominent chin really well.

He gave me that smile again. I decided that if I could spend the rest of my life looking at that smile, I would.

Monday. 0 bottles, 0 cans.

I waited at our table, but Kenneth didn't come. I fished a bottle out of the trashcan and set it on the edge of the table. Then, bored, I tipped it back into the trashcan. I hadn't seen Kenneth all day. . . was he sick? He never took off from school. Even people who didn't know him knew him as the kid who won the "Perfect Perfect Attendance Award" last year—no absences, no tardies. I suddenly pictured him locked in some mortal lightsaber duel, battling a Darth Vader at least twice as tall as him. But Kenobi died in that battle. . . I shut both eyes, then popped a sliced apple in my mouth. I knew how to be alone. Yet I missed him. My cheeks grew hot, and I knew. I liked him.

Tuesday. 1 bottle, 0 cans.

My heart sank when Kenneth didn't show up at homeroom class. I doodled his name, I doodled "Kenobi" all over the margins of my notebook. I slid into my usual seat at our usual table, and prepared to take a bite of my tuna sandwich. Then, I heard a click. Kenneth pushed open the door to the cafeteria.

"Hey. . . Anne." he said. Both of his hands were in his pockets. He didn't sit down.

"What's wrong?" I said. My insides kind of shook as I spoke. "Where have you been?"

"I. . ." He looked away. "I have to move away. Dad said. . . he's had enough. He's got a new job. Nashville. We're... all going."

The words dropped like weights thrown into a deep ocean. I pictured myself leaping up and hugging him, kissing him all over, but I numbly sat still. Then, without a word, I reached into the trashcan. A bottle, Gatorade, sat on top. I held it out to him.

"Kenobi. . ." I whispered. "Don't go."

Before I could react, he had taken the bottle and wrapped both arms around me, squeezing me close to him. I wrapped my arms around him, too, melting into the hug. He gripped the Gatorade bottle behind my head, tight.

Margaret Langdon

Fiction



Flight
Digital Montage
Paul Watson



Limes

Acrylic

Anna Kawashima

Te amo sin saber cómo

after Neruda

I do not love you as if you were diamonds, or amethysts
or precious mithril gleaming from the books we love to read
I love you as we can only love the earth and redwood trees
inside, where only we can see

I love you as a seed deep in the ground
bursting slowly into the shapes and petals and green growth
that litters the ground in little leaves, thousands
of heart flutterings in the cardiac breeze

I love you with the weight of rain falling
falling from up high, speeding, racing down and down
so fast I fell into you, a splatter of emotion on the pavement
so focused on that target that is you and all you are

I may see the globe and seven seas, the wonders of all we've built,
the rings of Jupiter, the constellations in the sky
waves upon the closest shore and that café by the pier
in the car watching lights swirl past and past
through the night, through the days, the sun and moon embracing

Skyscrapers may rise ahead of me, gray towers slant so high
the cityscapes roll on and on, bridges chancing waters
if there be empty roads lined by empty fences and yellow fields
forests of tall trees and lichen on fallen logs and eternal rock
all I care is that you're with me
in all of this, even here in my thoughts and reverie

and I love you no other way than this.

Danika Schmid



Still Life
Graphite
Megan Nien

Performing the Truth

Reality

Four white walls of cinderblock, one tiny window reminding you that you are not in prison. Outside noises disturb, try to distract: the rat-tat-tat of a snare drum, the marimba's lilting glow, the soaring and piercing ray of a trumpet seeping in through the door as it rattles, attempting to keep out intruders.

Forced focus.

Your eyes are attached to the music. The music shoots back notes that bore into your brain, which tumble and jumble around until they flow back out again through your neck, your arms, your fingers.

Frustration.

Your mouth mutters words, sighs pouring out, mingling with tears that descend like a diminuendo, blurring the unplayable notes on the page. You admit to yourself that perfection is impossible. Sometimes honesty is the best policy, you think. And then you try again.

Breakthrough.

Suddenly, you stand on top of the endless staff lines, victorious. The tangles separate, organize, and you recognize a melody, a harmony. It makes sense. You allow the start of a smile to twitch from the corners of your mouth.

Pure

There is no hiding from those soul-revealing spotlights. Hot and white, they beam down. The slightest shudder could give you away—the lightest jitter could cause catastrophe. You breathe, almost gulping for air, gasping backstage before you have to plunge into the undersea depths of performance.

The act begins. Chin up, shoulders down, a brilliant beam displays all those teeth, no chattering allowed. You stride onstage with a confidence you do not feel. You take your seat, hold your instrument, and take one more breath, this time sipping courage through a straw. And you begin.

The world melts away. The faces in the audience become an Impressionist painting, blurred together. The nerves that have frozen every muscle in your body begin to thaw. You realize that as terrified as your brain might be telling you to be, you really love this. In this moment, you hold ultimate power. With a few movements of your fingers, you can hypnotize the audience and suspend them in a web of enchanted sound. Through your instrument, you can speak. You can utter words you've always wanted to say but never had the courage with which to do so. This is your moment to talk; you have the floor.

Tell the truth.

Facts

"I think a life in music is a life beautifully spent and this is what I have devoted my life to."
~Luciano Pavarotti.

Is it really a life beautifully spent, though? How many hours can be spent in a box, practicing until fingers or lips are bleeding? And for what? Entertainment? Or is music more meaningful than simply pleasing the masses of wealthy old folks slumped in the velvet chairs of a theatre?

"Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy." ~Ludwig van Beethoven.

Revelation. What does that word mean?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

rev•e•la•tion noun \,re-və-'lā-shən\

I. a : an act of revealing or communicating divine truth

How can music reveal truth? Is it through the discipline required to play it? Is it through the expression and interpretation of the musician, bringing new life to an old piece? Is the musician able to reveal truth through the intricacy of sound?

Principles/Principals

The Clarinet Player

He raises his ebony instrument and invokes a happy dance with his eyebrows. A grin escapes from the corners of his embouchure as he plays a lively tune. He approaches the throaty lower registers and the elusive upper notes with equal passion, bobbing his head and creating a brook of cobalt blue feeling.

The Flautist

With grace and precision, she tilts her head and presses her lips against the silvery wand. She performs trills and scales with a toss of her curls and a determined stare. Flirtation and sophistication combine to form the soaring, diving, lilted melody. With a flutter of wings and a final flourish, the melody flies away upon the airy waves of breath.

The Trumpet Player

He breathes into the instrument and bright streams of sound emanate from the bell. Sometimes he lifts his eyebrows, as if reaching with them for the highest currents of liquid gold. Other times he smirks, tosses his head cockily, and the trumpet belts out some sassy jazz. Always the loudest and the strongest, he prides himself on his "ripped" instrument, seldom revealing the tender soul encased within the metal.

The Pianist

She sits ruler-straight, arms extended, fingers draped over the keys. She pauses a moment, then plunges into a Prokofiev Sonata. Everything from her shoulders down to her fingernails becomes a blur, leaping over the field of black and white. She boldly strikes chord after chord, creating thunder. Listeners might hold their breath, but she never wavers, confident in her ability to press ten notes simultaneously and pour harmony into the world.

Genuine

You remember the first time you laid eyes on your instrument and knew that you and it were meant to be. It sounds like a sappy love story, but in all honesty, it has turned into the longest relationship of your life. You approached the wooden/metal contraption cautiously. With every muscle taut, you picked out the melody of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." There were halts and hesitations, but you were so proud of your accomplishments. You and the instrument connected and you had spoken together. Your journey of performance had begun.

Authentic

So many times, I have longed to strangle my instrument with all forty-seven of the strings it possesses. I have to take an enormous breath, grit my teeth, and force myself to play again. One more minute after those hundreds of hours spent practicing might make a difference. One more run-through might mean perfection. And then when I pluck the strings, forget about the technicalities, and express myself, even in my angry state, it is as if a sigh is released from my body. The tension disappears when I cooperate with the structure. The music becomes beautiful when it experiences freedom and I remember this truth: that I love playing the harp.

Honesty

Musicians are strange; it's almost a proven fact. However, their fascination with performing and their thirst to create art and share it with others might not be as weird as it initially seems. Music imparts the truth. With each shimmer of a sound wave, a well-processed idea leaves the performer, following the practice room process of eyes to notes, notes to brain, and brain to appendages. The idea might be an emotion that was packaged in a practice room for months. It might be a concept of something so profound it lacks a defined name. Whatever it is, it slips from the soul of the performer, soars on a breeze of sound, and settles as a new idea in the heart and mind of the listener, a new truth.

Gretchen Sheetz
Creative Nonfiction Collage



Violin

Photography
Allison Brocato

Requiem for the Golden Wood: A Sestina

Stars gaze down to lose themselves in ripples,
Solemn in reflected silver pool.
The light of evening swiftly seems to fade
As moonbeams trickle from the mirror's edge;
Flutters of the wind now bear a whisper,
Murmurs of the cool, impending grey.

Our glorious golden wood has turned to grey,
A soft and silent blight that slowly ripples.
Silken leaves surround me with a whisper,
Alighting sorrowfully upon my pool.
Within the breeze, I ponder at the edge
And watch as flaxen buds begin to fade.

The time has come now for my kind to fade,
For people fair to pass into the grey.
A ship awaits us on the water's edge,
White bow kneeling deep against the ripples.
Velvet foam and mists around it pool,
Waves caressing with a muted whisper.

A new age dawns; we end ours with a whisper,
Our escorts, gulls that flicker near and fade.
Foreseen by age-old eyes and hallowed pool,
We slip into a future masked by grey.
This world no longer needs our subtle ripples,
Our guidance and our words of double edge.

We for whom time's blade has little edge
Hide now our eyes and go forth with a whisper.
I leave behind the softly singing ripples
As roots and branches mourn that they must fade.
The sky weighs down in unforgiving grey,
A circle frozen weightless in my pool.

We drift away from my now-shadowed pool
And turn our eyes to ocean's westward edge.
The stars above are swallowed by the grey,
Extinguished in a single sighing whisper.
Our footsteps lead to havens, soon to fade
As white sails leave their final even ripples.

The world is gray within abandoned pool
As silence ripples to the weeping edge;
A whisper waits as light to darkness fades.

Eden Griffith



The Ropes that Bind

Photography

Karen Gurske



Norma Jean
Digital Illustration
Brandon Charnell

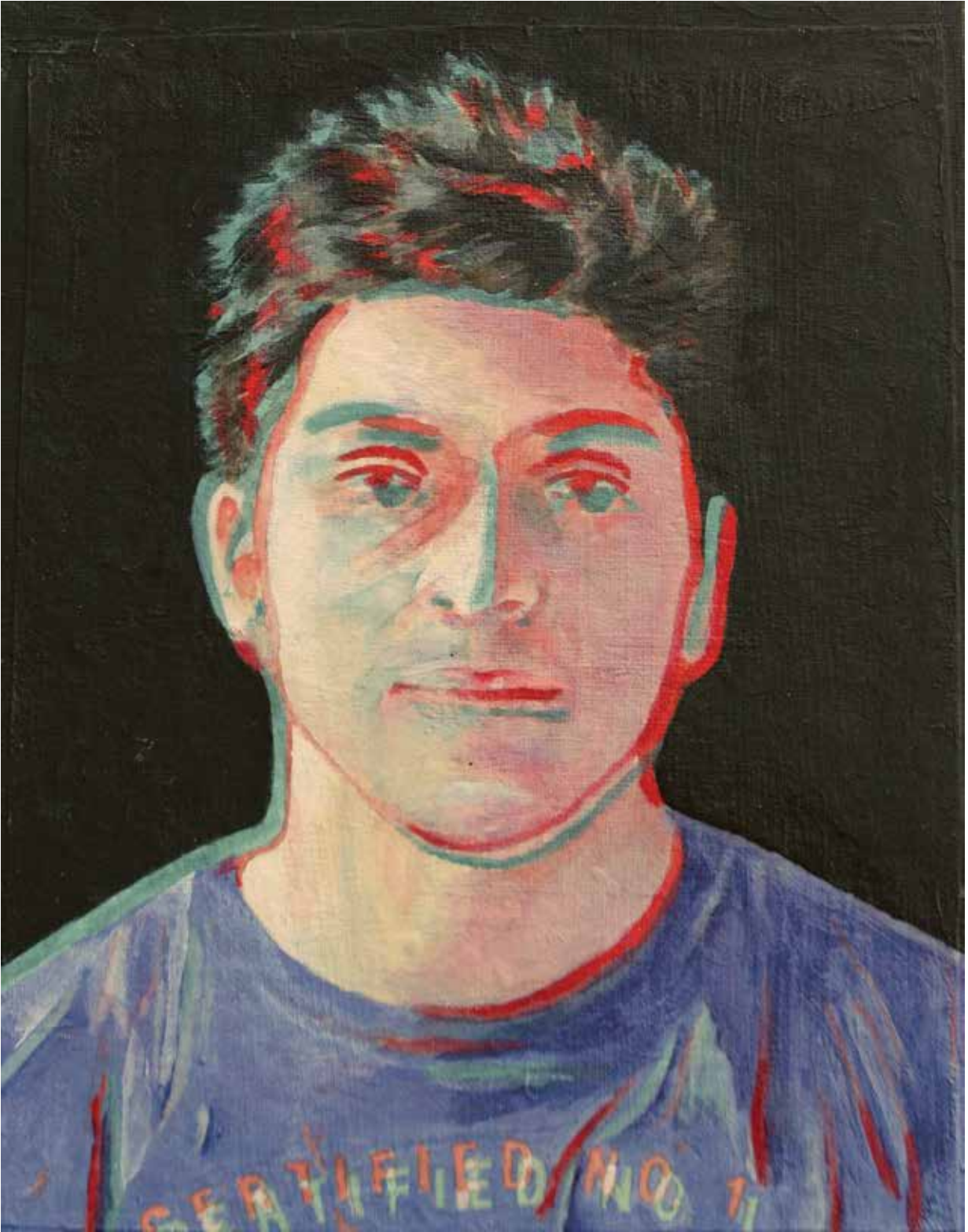
Ode to Dark Chocolate

You are like a Russian novel.
Mysterious, you entice readers,
begging them to experience
silky midnight taste.
Bittersweet, you are sometimes
difficult to swallow, but satisfying,
incredibly savory,
succulent.

Delicately, I place a morsel
of delight on my tongue,
the thick slab melting away
into a perfect puddle.

Images erupt:
whirling skirts,
tapping feet,
the spicy Spain
of your origin.
Then everything fades,
peaceful darkness reigns...
bliss.

Gretchen Sheetz



Self-Portrait

Acrylic

Farren Casad

Apps

You take a selfie of yourself sticking your tongue out at your phone. Then you add your comments: "Shut up loser lol," pick a red paint to draw "flames" in your hair, and finally send your Snapchat to your friend Matt, who fortunately for him isn't with you at this particular moment.

You click the button and watch the Snapchat app shrink to its logo, joining the other apps in line, waiting to be used again. What to do now? Maybe you should check Facebook to see what's been happening to your 1,384 "friends," most of whom you don't even talk to on a regular basis. You click the app and it zooms into the Facebook you love and adore. Let's see: Aunt Heidi showing another picture of cousin Jed with food all over his face. That's boring. You slide your thumb up on the screen to see what else is up. Nothing. Nothing. Nada. Some BuzzFeed article titled "50 Reasons Why English Bull Dogs are the Best Dogs," picture of Toby with his sister at Yosemite, another BuzzFeed article (this time "40 Reasons Why Doctor Who Fans are the Craziest!"), etc. Nothing really of interest.

Anyone's birthday, you ask? You click on the bottom button that says "More," which shows you the events. You click on that, and what do you know? It's Jenny's birthday today. That's right, Jenny Cobb, the hottest junior at John Quincy Adams High. You know you like her. After all, when she was giving that presentation during history about apartheid, Dakota Facebook messaged you that gif from Tumblr. You know, the one from Young Frankenstein where Victor goes, "What Knockers!" and Inga replies in her German accent, "Oh, thank you doctor!" You tried to hold in your snickering as you replied to him with, "true dat." It's a miracle Mrs. Stiven didn't catch you that day, or else she would have taken your phone away from you in front of everyone, including Jenny.

But it's more than that, you say. Sure, she's super hot, but Jenny's just a really cool girl as well: she follows a lot of the same bands you follow on Twitter, like @EdwardSharpe, and @thelumineers, for example. She also follows @meganamram and @robdelaney, some of the funniest Twitter writers ever. You can also tell on her likes on her "About Me" section on Facebook: her favorite shows include Arrested Development and It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia.

So what can you post on her wall? Everyone posts "Happy Birthday." You need to think of something a little more creative, maybe even a little more personal. Sure, you've only talked to her in passing, and she'll laugh at a joke you tell when you're lab partners in chemistry, but you are far from going on a date with her. If only, though.

You want to see a picture of her. You slide to the Instagram app and type her name under "search." You wonder if she posted... yes, she did: a new picture of her at the beach. Perfect. She's with some other girl who you can only assume is her friend: "Chillin' w/ my bestie @alliespringer at the beach! #beach #bestie #bf #friend #hotstuff #sepia #sexy&wenoit #wateriscold." She definitely overuses the hashtags, but that doesn't matter to you. You wish you could zoom in, but you can't use your fingers to zoom in on photos on Instagram like you can on Facebook. Maybe if you also check out @alliespringer's wall—

Suddenly, your phone buzzes you and look at the top for the alert: a message from...mom? Why's your mom texting you when she's just a few seats down from you? You look up from your phone for the first time in what feels like hours, and you look to your right. She looks at you and mouths something, but you can't read lips. So you mouth, "What?" She rolls her eyes and points to her phone. You look down and look into your text messages. You get to the messages from her, and it says: "YOU GET OFF YOUR PHONE NOW." Uh-oh, she typed in all caps; she must be really upset, you think. Another message buzzes through: "WE ARE AT UR GREAT UNCLES FUNERAL SHOW SOME RESPECT."

"Fine!" you respond. Then a thought: maybe if you shield your phone with the funeral program she won't notice as much. That seems to work. You think back to the days when phones were first becoming a thing, and every time she picked you up from school, she would just yammer on and on to some other person on the other end about god-knows-what. Meanwhile, you had to wait forever until you could finally tell her about your day.

Then it hits you: just post a video from *Arrested Development*! You switch to your YouTube app, look up clips from the show, and find it. You copy the link, go back to your Facebook app, and post on her wall, "Happy Birthday Jenny! Hope your party ends up better than this lol," as well as the link to the video clip.

You quickly check to see if Jenny liked your post yet. A like, great—darn, it's from one of her friends. Then suddenly, your dreams come true: Jenny likes it. Maybe she will invite you to the party, you think. Maybe you could actually get closer to her, maybe start spending more time with her and less time with those girls whose names you still remember despite clearing the history. Maybe now—

Then your phone suddenly is pulled away from your sweaty palms. Your mom is the culprit. "Hey," you whisper.

"I warned you," she whispers back.

"But, but—" you stammer.

It's worthless. Now you have to watch this boring funeral, and watch Aunt Mary try to say her speech without crying. She's saying something along the lines of, "live life to the fullest," "live in the moment," "time goes by so fast that you need to live in the present," something along those lines.

Doesn't matter what she said. You want your iPhone back.

Nicholas Scutti

Fiction



Shade Cut
Installation
Sydney Parrish

Safe Harbor

I stare into the harbor,
cushioned by cold rocks—
my eyes drink in liquid landscape:
green ripples patterned with indigo kelp.

Balancing dark, the sky beams pastel;
across the bay, homes shine—
open arms of light enfold me,
windows framing friendly faces.

Harsh boulders below me accept
the gurgling, slurping, receding tide.
Pelicans sploosh; I laugh as they disappear,
then emerge from foam with dinner.

A grand yacht drifts by
sweeping a train of lacy bubbles,
dressed in twinkles, starry décor,
flaunting wealth, solitary dancers, music.

I glimpse a couple on the highest deck—
I seek my sweatshirt's embrace,
shrugging aside lonesome thoughts,
icy water lapping my toes.

But my companions bring warmth,
with chatter and hilarity to soften
life's cooler currents, and the ocean
murmurs thaw numbed reflections.

The accompanying friends scatter,
clambering over stony cracks like crabs.
Their antics amuse the rising moon and me—
a smile, a sigh, contentment.

Gretchen Sheetz



Bipolar Disorder

Digital Montage

Paul Watson



Pour Over
Digital Montage
Jade Orr

Memories Come and Go

I am away at college now, a great new chapter in my life, or so I'm supposed to tell myself. I do find it refreshing. The freedom, I mean. Being free and discovering a new level to my own independence. Of course I can never be totally independent. "To be free is to be alone," I once heard said. It has become one of my more frequently remembered quotes. Still, there is a part of me that longs for a connection, somehow, to my old life. And so here at college, I check my mail every day. I can rarely go a day without checking, though I knowingly expect an empty slot at the student mail center.

I experienced a moment of nostalgia yesterday when I checked my mail. I approached in my normal fashion and, to no surprise, my slot stared emptily back at me once more; a silent, daily tradition between myself and this tiny cubby. Over my months at school, I have grown accustomed to finding a peculiar or silly word or phrase to give in reply: "Dern it" with a southern accent and a foot stomp, "gosh golly" with an emphasis on being ridiculous. Yesterday however, I sighed out a "suck-o-tash." I visibly stopped short for just a moment, hit with a jarring wall of memory and no small amount of emotion. The word had come to mind by instinct—I hadn't intended to say it. It brought with it such feelings because the last time I'd heard it said, it had been from the lips of my now deceased grandfather.

My feelings are complicated on the issue—the memory of my grandfather and his silly phrase. They were the words he used in the bowling alley to show how lighthearted he felt about a poor throw; the words I typically only ever remember when I am in that same setting. He would throw a smile at me every time he said it, and I would smile or laugh back at the joke. They were his words. It felt strange to have used them at the mail room, not because of their antiquity, but because I had trouble accepting them as my inheritance. But they were, and I had to accept that.

I walked back towards my dorm room, the double doors of the mail room only just behind me, and sank into a new memory that came forward. I was standing back in my childhood home. It was just about all we could afford at the time. From the backyard my family could see (and smell) the back of a Chinese restaurant, whose employees called us "the twee famuhwee" on account of the great big sycamore that distinguished our backyard from all the others. I remember doing my home school work, my mother in the kitchen, and my grandfather sitting alone in the living room.

It would turn out that my grandfather was not sitting in the living room, however. Having been asked to check in on him, I noticed the front door stood ajar; no one had locked it after he arrived. I knew what to do right away, yet still I panicked. I let out a short, heavy yell and then sprinted like I'd done after one of our dogs who liked to escape. My grandfather had nearly traveled the six houses it took to make it into the busy boulevard. I caught up halfway before the sidewalk decided to catch up to my feet. I tripped violently, scraping a knee and taking other injuries, not the least of which were to my ego. I sat collapsed in the dark, dirty water of the gutter. I cried after him in desperation but he continued his oblivious shuffle into traffic.

I was closer to my dorm room at that point than I was to the mail center. I could still see it though, one door always kept propped open, enticing my curiosity. I knew I'd already been disappointed for the day though; its temptation was over. I continued to reflect on the memory as I walked, passing a friend without noticing their friendly wave, and mused at my childhood emotions. I'd not thought about that day since it had happened. I realize now that I am older (and he long buried) what it meant to me back then. That was the day he had died. It didn't matter that my mother had caught up after hearing my shout and captured my grandfather's arm. Nor did it matter that she had lured him back into the house with a false promise he would forget had been made, or that he would continue to live another five stressful years. All that mattered to me at that moment was that, though the body remained, the man who was my grandfather had died. He had died, and I had been left with a hollow... thing, compelled to still love it and safeguard it. Sitting there in the gutter, covered in grime, feeling the emotional seeds of anger and confusion that would grow into the weed of bitterness, and not even with a mother to help me up, I had to accept it.

My heavy boots finished resounding on the tile of the dorm's staircase. My key clicked open the front door, and I saw my things strewn on the bed. My lack of mail, and the disappointment from it, had already been forgotten. Tomorrow I would try again and hope for better luck. The flow of memories slowed down and I was left with just one. It was of the early days, before his illness, when I would call him up from home. We talked—largely—about absolutely nothing. The conversation was never really the point, even if I could remember what we spoke about. The meaning could be found in the motivation to call him. Beneath each call, there existed a very unique bond. My grandfather and I found in each other, despite the age gap of nearly seventy years, a kindredness of spirit. As he aged and turned ill, different struggles arose like that day. I know now his problem had not been forgetting where he put his keys. He had forgotten what keys were. It is a perspective I wish to have had growing up taking care of him.

As I begin to move on and start completing the tasks I have for the day, I think upon this bond he and I shared. I realize how I have become him in so many ways: as a boyscout, as a man of literature, and as a man of quieter disposition who aims to one day simply be at peace. Three seconds pass by. In the first, I feel guilty for how I felt as a child. I want to find a rationalization, somehow, to excuse my bitterness. I want to deny the anger I feel inside sometimes when I think back on those times with him. It takes only a second more to understand: I already have. I've accepted it. Time, experience, and maturity have provided me with my absolution. And with the third and final second ticking past, I feel the bond between us one more time. It passes just as quickly, but I will never forget it.

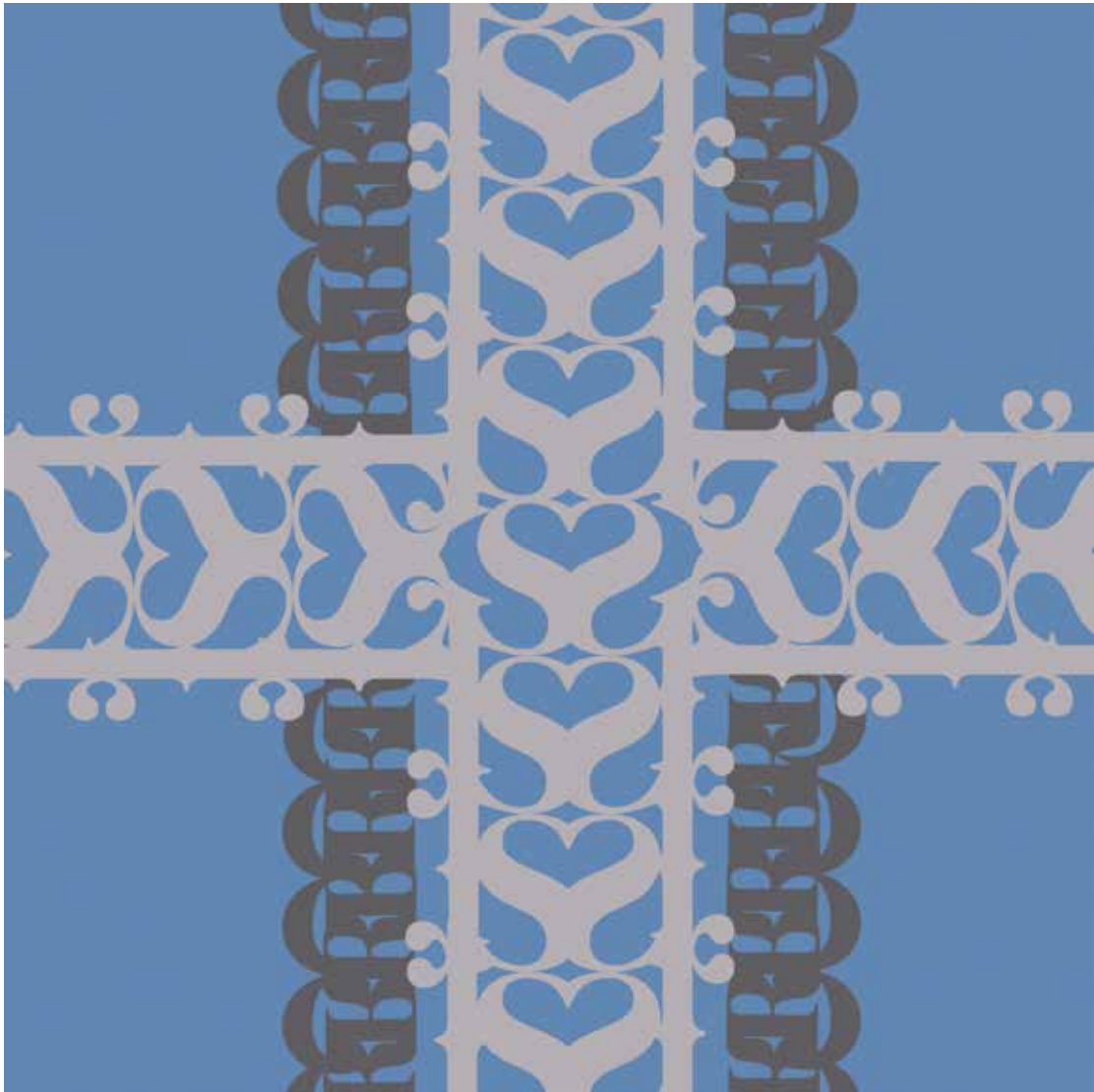
Nicholas Evon
Creative Nonfiction



Muddled Reflections

Photography

Sydney Parrish



Untitled 1
Digital Illustration
Rebecka Chang



Untitled 2
Digital Illustration
Rebecka Chang



System Design

Digital Illustration

Sabrina Martinez

Clock

We stand here and face our great opponent,
reach for hands that deceive, trick us to think they hold so much
but they only touch for a second, a second then gone.

We look upon a broad face marked by the scars of time;
stoic it stands, perfectly carved on carefully balanced feet
poised to strike when our time is up
reminding us constantly that we fall at its mercy,
as the pendulum swings out when we try to cheat.

Yet for all of history we've been defeated
by the hands of this prison guard and its robot gears
that try to pin an expiration date on us the maker.

Who would have thought once upon a time
that metal, glass and wood would be what bound us?
Our own invention we first wound up,
and then perfected our lustrous brainchild
that has somehow outgrown us and lived on past us.

It creaks and moans with every move,
gives every order with a deep prolonged chiming command
that rings in our minds, startling us to move because
time is ticking.

Danika Schmid



Rainy Day Tokyo

Photography

Anna Kawashima

Answers.com

Open Question:

tarantinofan: I wanna ask out the girl who works at the video rental store near me. Any tips on how I can show her I'm interested without embarrassing myself?

Additional Details: I am interested in a long-term relationship.

I don't have enough money to hire Steven Spielberg.

Answers:

samclem: I'm assuming you're a regular customer. If so, I would start by asking how her day is going and gradually adding more pleasantries to your conversations. After about three months of doing this, you might be able to ask what her favorite movies are... but don't get too deep, too fast, my boy! You don't want to scare her away!

single4lyfe: I would go in and ask her if there are any good movies out. It gives her a chance to share her recommendations. Plus, I bet she never gets asked this.

jazzygirl93: Awww... that's so sweet!!! I would definitely go there over the lunch hour and bring her a cupcake and tell her that you were thinking of her. Make sure the cupcake has chocolate frosting... girls looove chocolate. Then the next time you go in, you should totally bring her a rose. If you *really* want to impress her, write her a poem about her hair! Ahh, I'm tearing up just thinking about how cuuute this would be!

homewreker69: *This comment is hidden because it was flagged as inappropriate or received too many negative votes.*

sweetjane4twenty: I'm a pretty loose person, but your sick....

trllololz: HAHHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA.

rosebudwatcher: Since I've actually worked in a movie rental store, I've had a lot of time to think about what would impress me if a guy came in and asked me out. If this girl is good at her job, then she must be a movie buff. Here's what I'd do: While you're walking around the store, try and make eye contact with the girl and smile. When you get to the counter, present the following movies one at a time in this order: "Without a Paddle," "Til There Was You," "Now and Forever," "Playing for Keeps," and "In the Mood for Love." Oh, and make sure you end with, "P.S. I Love You."

****Depending on your comfort level and experience, you could add "Never Been Kissed."**

bballer99: My comment is really just in response to "rosebudwatcher." I would skip all that crap and just show up at the counter with "No Strings Attached." But you can't just hand it over like you simply want to rent it. Nah, man. This is tried and true, and what you gotta do is slowly hand it over to her while flexing your arm. At the same time (and this might take some practice so you don't look like a fool), cock your head and lift one eyebrow as you flash her your pearly whites. Girls are a sucker for that! Then as she takes the movie, channel your inner Don Juan and ask her when she gets off work. If she doesn't look very receptive, place "Just Go With It" on the counter. If the first movie didn't work, this is a sure bet. GO GET 'EM BUD!!!

maxfischer: Wow, you must get a lot of girls.

jamesmitchell: I think you've got to ask yourself one question...When you see her, do you think you're gonna hurl? As my hero Wayne Campbell once said, "I'd say hurl. If you blow chunks and she comes back, she's yours. If you spew and she bolts, it was never meant to be." Why don't you just go talk to her?

tarantinofan: Thanks, man. This helped a lot... but whose Wayne Campbell??

delsol77: Creo que deberías comprar algunas flores bonitas. Hice esto para mi novia y todavía estamos juntos. ¡Buena suerte!

kleankanteenkamp: This is America...so start speaking ENGLISH!!!!

realitybytes: Actually, this is the internet...which doesn't excuse racism either.

ihatebieber: you are such a little punk loser. what a tool, you can't even ask out a girl. how can you like tarantino if you cant even do this stupid thing. why are you asking an online forum, you are going to get no where in life. shoveling fries at white castle and landing in jail for stealing girly magazines. u suck.

buffalosoldier: Haters gonna HATE!

buffalospringfield: Why can't we be friends...why can't we be friends...why can't weee be friends??

holypython: You empty-headed animal, food trough wiper! I fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries!

screechpowerz: WALK UP TO HER AND AS SOON AS YOU MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH HER, START CRYING. IT WORKS EVERYTIME.

gregsanders: Your caps lock is turned on.

nate842: ur an idiot

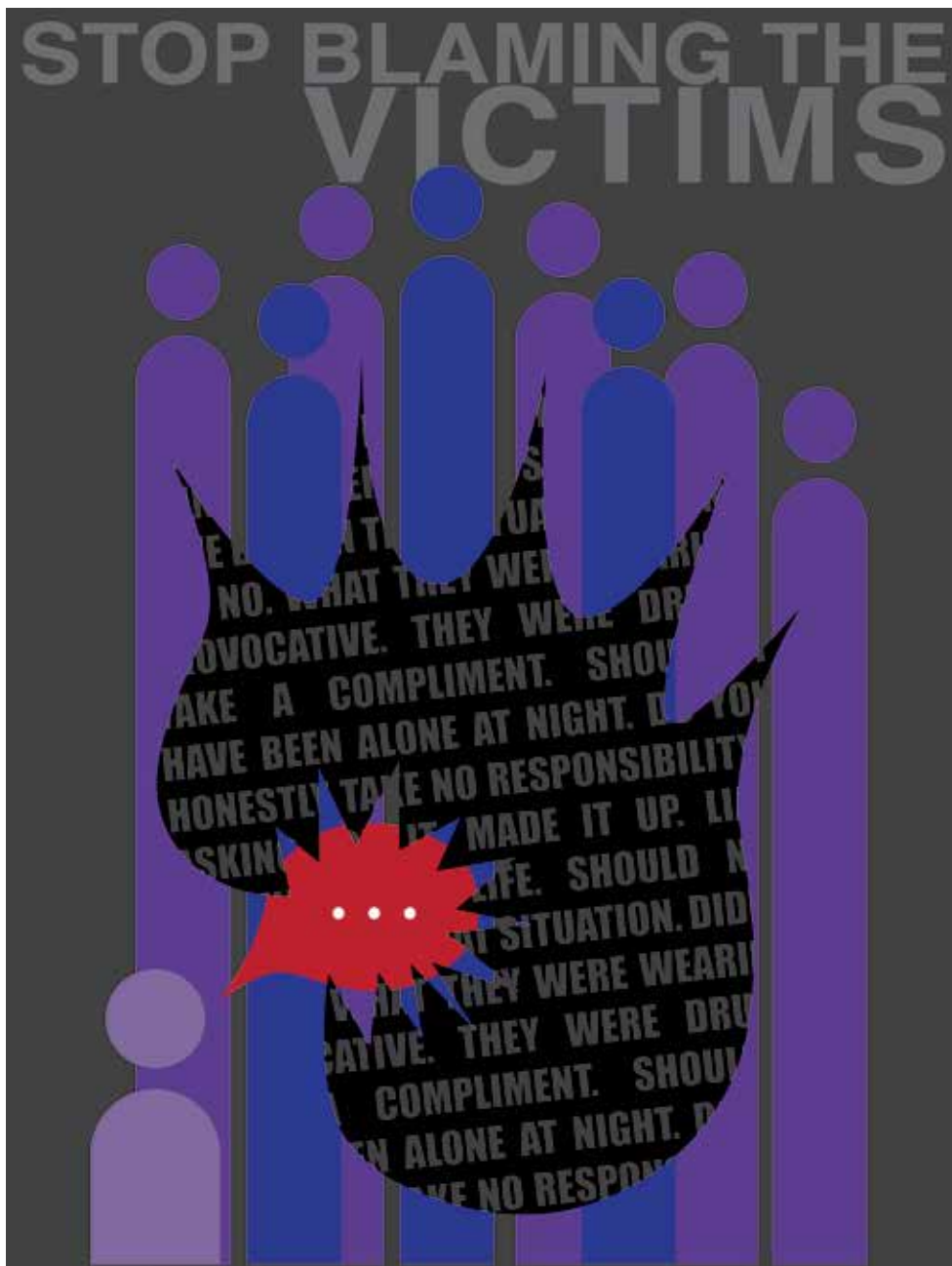
grammarnazi: It would be: "You're an idiot."

cincyredsfan: I can't believe this thread! You people are not normal! Seriously, just walk in the movie store and nicely ask the girl out. Simple as that.

moviegremlin: I disagree with "cincyredsfan." In order for this girl to even look twice in your direction, you must orchestrate an extravagant meet-cute. Because this is surrounding the sacred area of film, anything you say to her must be an ode to the art. Hire Steven Spielberg to give you some direction... isn't this kind of like "Close Encounters of the Third Kind?"

Taylor Bundy

Fiction



Defend the Victims

Digital Illustration

Sydney Parrish



Spritz
Photography
Rebecka Chang

Bikini Bummed

So, I'm twenty, with an average figure, and I live in Orange County. Summer's coming. And I am terrified.

It's not that I'm anorexic or worried about my self-esteem or anything. Oh no. In the fall and winter, I feel perfectly happy with myself.

It's just that I am completely unable to wear fashionable swimsuits.

Call it a condition, call it a phobia, call it a whatever, but every single time I attempt to shop for a swimsuit, I come home empty-handed and battle-scarred—eyelids drooping over an ashen and haunted expression.

Bikini racks? Better make that *the* rack. Hot pink nipple shields dangle hypnotically over their perfectly paired G-string bottoms. "Nautical" patterns with jagged ninja-star-fishes jammed into the cleavage area make me uncomfortable just looking at them. Is there really a difference between these and honest-to-goodness lingerie? Why can't I just wear my underwear into the ocean? It'd probably be more comfortable, anyway. And let's not even talk about those supposedly "classy" white bikinis with the gaudy gold rings plunked in the center. Are those rings like targets for hunky beach archers or something? "Hey, look at my sternum! Isn't it white and shiny? As shiny as this *gold* I'm wearing?"

The Ring even infects one-piece swimsuits. And if it's not The Ring, it's V-Neck Impossible. "Oh look, I may not be actively showing you my bellybutton, but let me bend over and you can see it *anyway!*" Swimsuit manufacturers must have a fetish for bellybuttons... and hip bones. Some of those one-pieces... if they cut them any higher, I'd have to get duct tape to keep the thing on my body.

So... board shorts. Those should be safe, right? Kinda sporty, not too flashy. Except for the fact that the only color choices I have are neon-vomit-green and tear-my-eyelids-out-with-a-highlighter-yellow. Even if I do find a color I can live with, my enthusiasm always dies in the fitting room. I really shouldn't have to cinch the waist up that tight, considering that the bottom hem is simultaneously cutting off the circulation to both legs. Or, worse, I can't find the bottom hem. Oh, hello, hip bone, time to break out the duct tape again!

Last year, I broke down and purchased a pair of men's swimming trunks. Neon-vomit-green, of course.

This must be the real reason California kids invite their friends to midnight beach bonfires instead of "to the beach." We're much more willing to risk pouring pizza-box oil over open flames than to risk being seen in one of these swimsuits.

If I were a swimsuit manufacturer, I'd forget about bikinis, run to my magical swimsuit laboratory, and melt together equal parts Favorite Pair of Beat-Up Columbia Hiking Shorts, Hot European Man-Magnet Cardigan, and Le Sex Appeal de Marilyn Monroe. (Don't forget the Chemical X!) Or I'd invest in orthodox Muslim "burqinis." Maybe if I built a time machine, I wouldn't have this problem. Whatever happened to those turn-of-the-century taffetta swim dresses and bathing caps? I'd trade this G-string thing for a pair of bloomers any day. Or those striped jumpsuits from the 1920s? Buster Keaton, honey, you've got my number.

Of course, Buster Keaton had his share of problems with swimsuits, too. So have all those cartoon characters throughout the ages. Sometimes, all the character has to do is waltz out wearing a bathing suit and we laugh at them. (Goofy in “How to Swim,” anyone?) In fact, ever since the dawn of media, we’ve been making fun of people in swimsuits. Swimsuits are always coming off in the pool, highlighting stick-thin celebrities’ “cellulite,” and lowlighting TV personalities’ fashion senses. How many copies of *Leer-at-People Magazine*’s “Worst Celebrity Beach Bodies” will it take for us to realize that people just naturally look funny in bathing suits?

I don’t know. Maybe I really am the only one who has this debilitating swimsuit-itis. Maybe I’m being filmed in this department store, right now, getting laughed at by hundreds of people. “Oh, the poor thing doesn’t understand the way things work! She doesn’t know that swimsuits are made only for us *normal* people and that *she’ll never look good in a bathing suit.*” Maybe this is some mad alien scientist’s idea of an experiment. “Let’s see how the test subject reacts to the psychological stimuli implicit in an impossible swimsuit shopping trip! I should add random electric shock punishments in the fitting rooms...”

Sigh. Maybe I’ll just buy a North Face jacket and go skiing in the Alps this summer.

Margaret Langdon
Creative Nonfiction



Emblaze

Photography
Rebecca Chang

Fishstar

O scaly fishstar, shining in the waters,
You live in the timenight
As the grey moon silverglows,
Floating past the fishjellies,
Uplighting the ocean like a flyfire
—you little speck of lightstar.

Katherine Dubke

Shakespeare Fakespeare

after William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Famous, iconic, renowned, legendary, effectively
Overrated. Women swoon while men personify
Disgusted gloom. Her rolling eyes pierce the sky
While the enchanted words caress his ear like
Supple silk. If continued speech of false love and
Beauty follow, eternal death need not wallow.

Clichéd sonnets split ears with every tiresome
Declaration of bizarre admiration. Compare me
To a summer's day?—a season filled with rancid sweat,
Unwanted insect invasions, and burned crimson flesh—oh
My one true greatest desire has come! Flattering flamboyance
Threads the famous poet's words as time goes by and summer fades;
Opened eyes can no longer see what was once revered to be beautiful
Beyond compare but now can only curse the lie summer's days once
Promised to bare.

Kaitlyn Orszewki



Untitled

Photography
Sydney Parrish



Succulent
Photography
Rebecka Chang



Tangle @#*\$
Digital Illustration
Gabriel McDermott

Get a Grip, Prufrock

(based on "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock")

"Do I dare eat a peach?"
Really? That's what you're worrying about?
Eating a piece of
Fruit?
Oh, Alfie, (mind if I call you Alfie?)
You need some sleep or something
There is so much more to life
Than
Whether or not one should eat a peach

Yeah, I get it, you're getting old
But why not live a little?
Your hair will continue to shrink
But that doesn't mean you give up

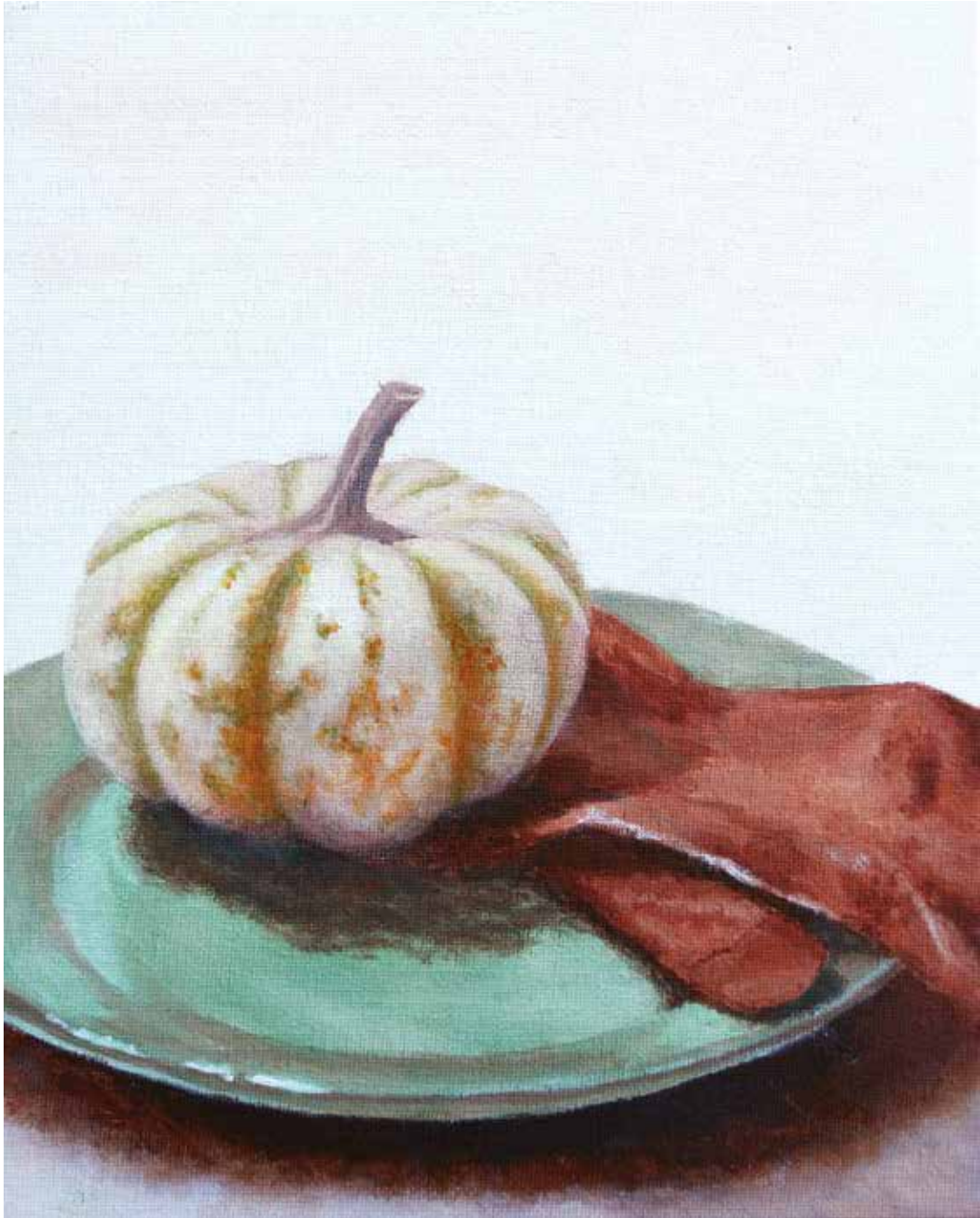
We're all tired of being attendants to
Spoiled princes who waste their time
On revenge
Do something to make the mermaids sing to you

Disturb the universe, Alfie!
I hate to hear women come and go
On and on about Michael-what's-his-face
He is marble, you are flesh
Besides, your manhood is bigger than his
(Then again, whose isn't?)

And indeed now is the time
To squish all rumors of impotence
To walk upright
No longer scuttle like a crab

Eat the damn peach!

Nicholas Scutti



Pumpkin

Acrylic

Kristin Almquist



Limes

Acrylic

Kristin Almquist

Being a PK FOR DUMMIES

Table of Contents

Introduction	I
What is a PK? Delving into the complexities of pastor’s kid.....	V
“We aren’t so different”: The search for normalcy.....	VI
How this book may be of help.....	VIII
Chapter 1: You Might Be a Pastor’s Kid If	7
Your family tree contains generations of pastors reaching back to the Protestant Reformation.....	9
You can count on one hand how many times your whole family has sat together for church.....	10
The day AFTER Christmas is the “most wonderful time of the year”.....	13
You have “adopted” family members in your congregation such as “Aunt Hilda,” “Uncle Gerhard” etc.....	14
You have taken a “pew nap”.....	16
You’ve received paper cuts from folding bulletins for church services.....	18
You have perfect church attendance record.....	20
Complete strangers walk up to you and ask how your parents are doing.....	23
(Obvious alert) Your dad is a pastor.....	26
Chapter 2: The Benefits of Being a Pastor’s Kid	30
Surprises—this Sunday’s sermon illustration: featuring YOU.....	30
Job Opportunities—cleaning church members’ houses for half of minimum wage and a “bless your heart”.....	37
Fame—roll out the red carpet because everybody knows your name!.....	41
National Networking: Dad has connections.....	43
Monetary Benefits—graduation, birthday, and Christmas bonuses from congregation members.....	46
Public Relations Expertise—hugs and handshakes, one and all.....	49
Character Building—church isn’t over until the doors are locked.....	53
Chapter 3: Common Myths Debunked	56
“Pastor’s kids are perfection personified: AKA ‘perfect little angels’”.....	56
“Pastor’s kids are sent from the Inferno for the testing of a person’s faith”.....	59
“You’re a pastor’s kid? But you act so normal!”.....	65
Chapter 4: The Risks of Being a Pastor’s Kid	67
<i>Public Humiliation</i>	67
Still acolyting at eighteen: how old is too old?.....	69
Sermon illustrations and the growing need for anonymity.....	73
Matchmaking from well-meaning church members: how to recognize the ‘Yentas’ in your congregation.....	75
“People still remember me in diapers”—how to cope.....	77
“I was a cow” and other Christmas program recollections.....	80

<i>Congregational Paparazzi</i>	84
What to do when your Facebook page is commented on by a church member (and brought up the following Sunday)	84
The advantages of sitting in the back pew.....	86
17 clever new techniques to avoid answering the phone.....	89
“I don’t want to hug everybody in the church”—setting boundaries.....	90
10 creative/non-sarcastic responses to the question “How are you doing?”	91
Chapter 5: Holy Healthiness	92
How to decline Aunt Hilda’s Salmon-Banana Casserole: practicing assertiveness....	92
Healthy alternatives to Jell-O salads at funerals.....	94
Should you eat those potluck leftovers?—edibility tests	97
Regular games of tag with the kindergarteners: increasing your BPM.....	99
Hymnal conditioning: toning your arms while tuning your voice.....	102
Chapter 6: Relationship Challenges	104
I like this guy/girl, but I don’t want everybody in the church interrogating him/her.....	108
“The sweet little old ladies keep setting me up with their grandsons/granddaughters”	111
What to do if you develop a crush on the latest vicar.....	117
“I don’t want to marry a pastor. Am I normal?”	120
If and when to tell your date you are a pastor’s kid: Signs to watch for.....	125
Chapter 7: The PKA (Pastors’ Kids Anonymous)	127
“I no longer attend my Dad’s church, but I still feel like I can’t leave until the doors are locked”	130
“When the phone rings I instantly wonder who’s in the hospital or who died”	134
“Is going to just one church service a week enough?”	137
“I deal with PTPD”: Post-Traumatic Phone Disorder.....	140
“When I’m not involved in the service, I feel guilty”	150
“I pretended to be sick so I could skip church. Can I be forgiven?”	165
Appendix: Resources for Concerned Friends	177
In case a PK doesn’t answer your texts/phone calls right away	(see pgs 89, 134, 140)
What to do when a PK refuses to sit in the front seat of your car and/or a movie theatre, a classroom etc.....	(see pg 86)
What to do when a PK attends your church.....	(see to pgs 23, 49)
On befriending a PK and fighting stereotypes: Pastor’s kids are normal people who need to be loved for who they are, not because of what their parents do	(see pgs 7-177)
In case a PK declines your Jell-O salad or casserole.....	(see pgs 92-94)

Katherine Dubke
Creative Nonfiction

Library

Do not be deceived by the silence.
It is loud—deafening:
the chaos of books crying out.
Like burial plots they each have their assigned place:
here lies BFI261.H22.
Yet they will not be silenced.
These great voices, long buried, scream to be heard
in this cemetery of solitude and hush
where the dead still speak.

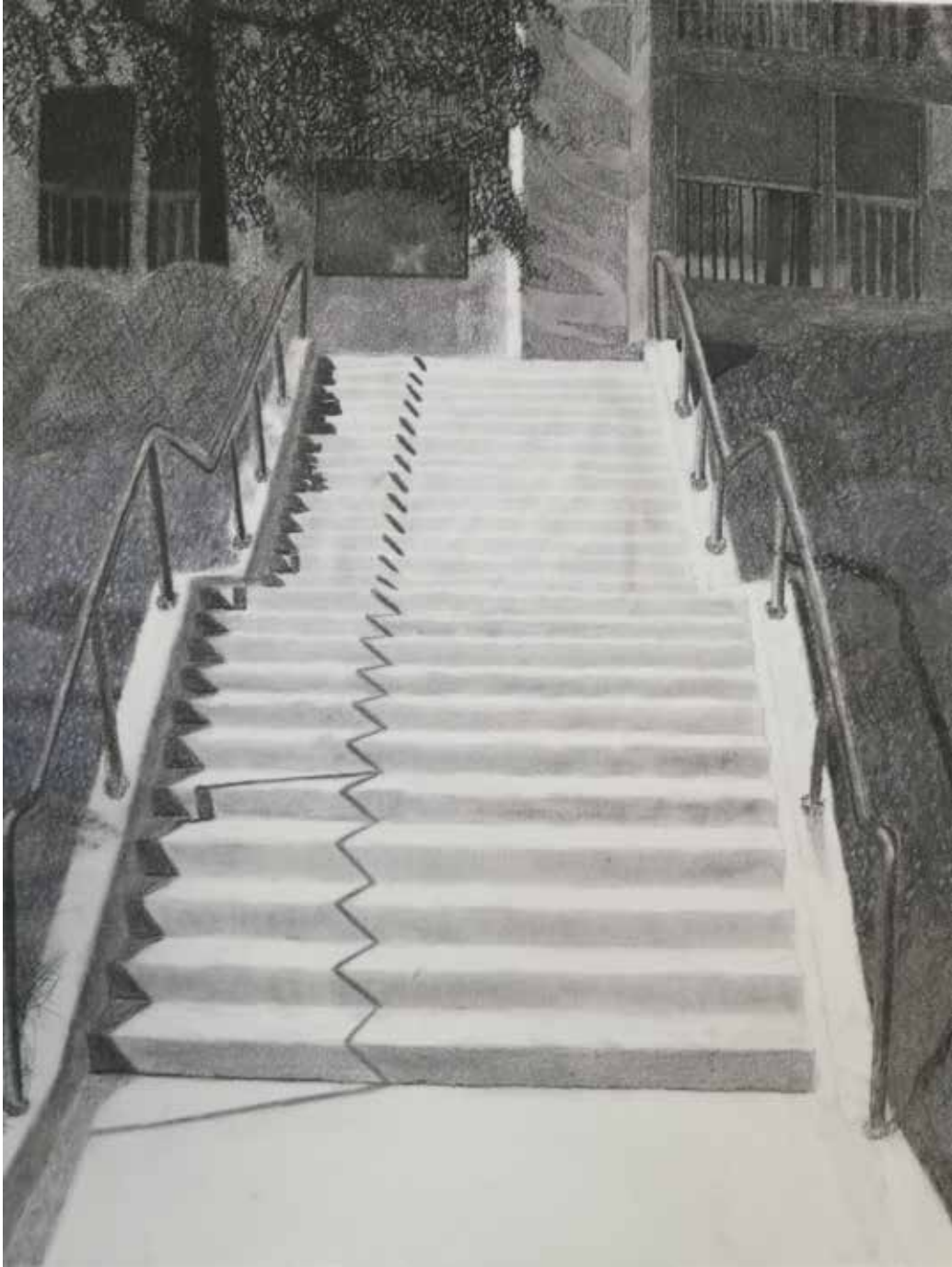
Katherine Dubke



Cityscape

Graphite

Patrick Nguyen



Stairs to Alpha Building

Graphite

Chad Barretta

Concordia University at a Glance

About Concordia

Concordia University Irvine prepares students for their vocations—their various callings in life. CUI offers undergraduate, graduate, and adult degree programs in a beautiful Southern California location, with online and regional cohort options. Concordia's undergraduate program is distinctive among universities in California because of its nationally recognized Core Curriculum and its Lutheran heritage that provides a thoughtful and caring Christian community that lives out the theology of "Grace Alone. Faith Alone."

Location

Just 40 miles south of Los Angeles, Concordia University Irvine is located in the heart of Orange County, minutes from beaches, jobs, internships, world-class shopping, and a diversity of cultural experiences. Yet, Concordia's campus is secluded and tucked away in rolling green hillsides overlooking the city of Irvine and Orange County.

Accreditation

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
- Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education

Schools

- School of Arts and Sciences
- School of Business
- School of Professional Studies
- School of Education
- Christ College

Faculty

- Full Time Faculty: 134 (Percentage of Faculty with Ph.D. or other terminal degree: 65%)
- Student to faculty ratio: 18:1

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