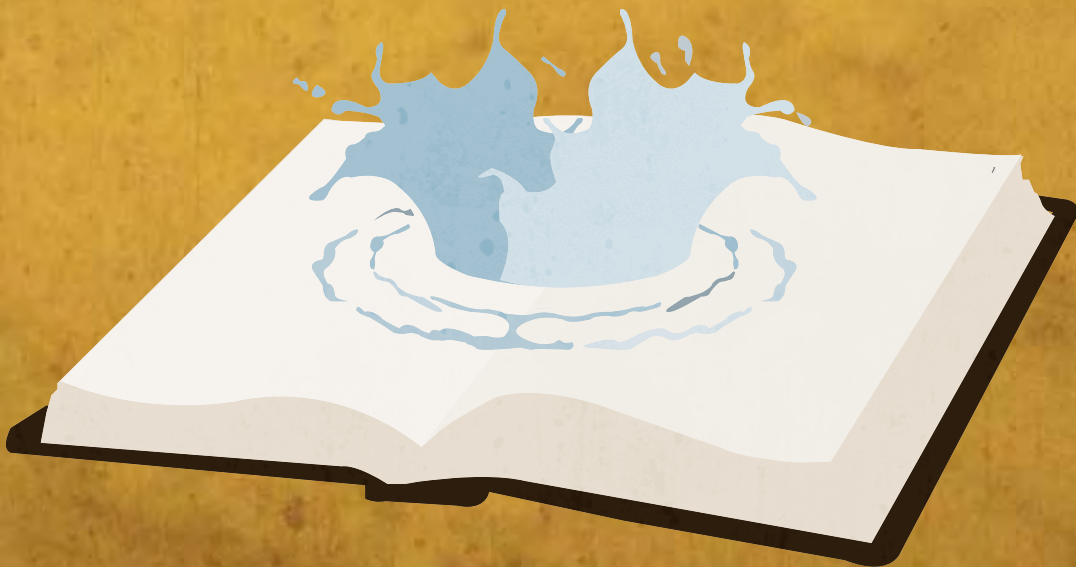


# The Aerie

Volume 17 · Spring 2016





**aer • ie**

also **aer • y** (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*

Concordia University's Literary and Arts Publication

Volume 17 · Spring 2016

Concordia University, Irvine, California

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# Acknowledgments

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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 Minion Pro and Avenir.*



If Whales Could Fly  
*Digital*  
Jenica Shipley '17

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# Contents

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## Prose

A Moment in Space.....	5
Marnie Salvani	
View-Master.....	7
Mary McQuistan	
Then and Now .....	11
Samantha Gross	
Disbanded .....	16
Spencer Lane	
Just Keep Saying You're Not Losing Your Mind.....	23
Samantha Gross	
Strike .....	29
Elisa Andersen	
Until I Moved.....	34
Cathryn Kruger	
The Black Box.....	37
Kendall Gallegos	
Martha's Visit .....	43
Kyleigh Hoye	
105 Memories From the Homestretch.....	51
Elisa Andersen	
In the Fields .....	54
Samantha Gross	
What's Your Relation? .....	56
Piper Walker	

## Poetry

Of Near-Forgotten Library Books.....	2
Lauren Taylor	
Verbal Tea .....	9
Katherine Dubke	
My Boots.....	9
Cameron Cooper	
The Hunter's Sword .....	15
Elisa Andersen	
Adventure on a Page.....	20
Megan Carbiener	
Quiet Things .....	24
Spencer Lane	
Summer .....	27
Marnie Salvani	
Petrichor .....	33
Lauren Taylor	
Fractured .....	41
Paige McCauley	
Delivery .....	46
Lauren Taylor	
If you love me give me an owl .....	49
Marnie Salvani	

## Art

Between the Pages .....	3
Jenica Shipley	
Untitled.....	4
Chantelle Crupi	
Kaleidoscope.....	8
Chiara Kohler	
Summer Lovin' .....	10
Stephanie Rodriguez	
A Brand New World.....	13
Halo S. Clair Baird	
Eve .....	14
Bethany Proctor	
1984.....	19
Josephine Thompson	
Through the Looking Glass .....	21
Kara Der	
Pears.....	22
Jaclyn Pennington	
Steller's Jay .....	25
Stephanie Rodriguez	
Gentrification .....	26
Dane Vande Guchte	
Canoes.....	28
Bethany Proctor	
Ghost Turtle .....	31
Sofia Speakman	
Flower Fields Forever .....	32
Courtney Sundin	
Cast and Shadow .....	35
Tiffany Rahmati	
Untitled.....	35
Chantelle Crupi	
Self-Discovery .....	36
Mariah Kohl	
Dopamine .....	40
Brandon Sutliff	
Panoptic.....	42
Chad Barretta	
Locked Out .....	47
Josephine Thompson	
Eiffel Tower .....	48
Jessica Clark	
Waiting for Seconds.....	50
Patrick Padiernos	
Columbia River Gorge.....	57
Courtney Sundin	
CU Pride.....	58
Miguel Mejia	

## Of Near-Forgotten Library Books

Someone is coming.  
Not the steps of an underpaid summer worker  
who calculates their worth into Dewey Decimal digits,  
but a wanderer—a girl who is prone to tapping  
unfinished concertos onto the rows of their spines.  
They struggle to uncork their voices,  
to prepare the centuries-old serenades that have aged  
along with the copyright dates printed on their inside covers.  
She can hear the whir of pages, the near-imperceptible crackling  
of the tiny neurons firing inside the dashes and semicolons.  
Crouching now, she begins to scout them out,  
tasting their titles on her tongue like some people do with wines.  
She wonders if they would taste right when paired  
with the novels and poetry collections that she has at home.  
She peels one of them open, admiring the line of due dates  
arranged like seeds along the rind of the paper.  
The best juices are dripping from the page numbers  
that have rarely glimpsed the outside world since they've been shelved.  
The book cinches its neighboring lines together, trying to conceal  
the ounces that it has added from years of no exercise.  
Distraction comes, as it inevitably does, in the form of a text  
from an impatient mother. Hesitantly, she slides the book back,  
adding another stamp of disappointment to its vast collection.

Lauren Taylor '16

*Poetry*



## Between the Pages

*Digital Montage*

Jenica Shipley '17





Untitled

*Oil*

Chantelle Crupi, visiting student from  
Curtin University Perth, Australia.



## A Moment in Space

All I feel is the warmth of the cigarette between my fingers. The lit embers shine bright against the night. I watch the ash drift down into the dark, and I see other lights, other people on the hotel balconies beside and below me. The party has dispersed through the hallways of the hotel like balloons in a closed room. The view from this height makes me feel like an observer, removed from the earth. I imagine myself floating in an imaginary hot air balloon. The wind rushes through my t-shirt, and I shiver.

“Can I ask you something?” he says.

For a moment, I had forgotten that Q was here.

I remember that I have to answer.

I shrug, careful not to burn myself. “Sure,” I say, as I track the path of a racing car below.

He stands closer to me and props his arms up on the balcony railing, clasping his hands around his cup as if his words are piled high there. Time is hazy. The length of the cigarette gives me an idea of how long I’ve been standing here: too long.

He asks for advice about his girlfriend. This is one of those times when I answer questions, and I don’t remember who I am or who he is, so I give him honesty. I tell him about balance. Independence. Life. About happiness. What I believe they are like.

He looks at me. I look at the lamppost across the street. Even from this distance, I can see the cloud of gnats revolving around its bulb: a chaotic mass of movement. I explain my position. My argument. “You should give her a chance. There is a reason you like her and you can’t like everything about a person,” I say. “It’s impossible. It just leads to . . . unhappiness. Those high expectations.”

All of a sudden I feel heat in my cheeks—the same heat I felt when my mother hiccuped while she tried not to cry in front of me. The sorrow when I realized who made her cry. Then the anger. Then, I saw the birds outside the windshield as my mother told me what my father did. And I am no longer surprised, just empty. Flashforward and I see the cracked ceiling as I tell Q about the separation of my family, the moment of separation between me and my ability to trust.

“I guess,” he says.

We stand together in the silence, settling in each other’s company like sand on a beach. I see a fire pit lit below, and high pitched voices slowly rise in snippets like crackling audio. The little dots of people blend and merge into an array of patterns or constellations. I’m no astronomer.

Q shifts a little. After a moment, he asks, “What would make you happy?”

“In a relationship?”

“In general.”

I attempt to calculate the number of reasons why he is asking. But Q is calculus, not arithmetic, and I’ve never been good at math. I sigh and say, “Being satisfied with what I have.” It’s moments like these when I feel a blanket of expectation has wrapped itself around me. He looks at me like it’s his birthday, not in a creepy way, but as if he doesn’t know if there’s a surprise party waiting behind the sliding door. But there are no balloons. There are no wrapped gifts.

I shrug and shift to find our arms are touching, but the wind has swept feeling from my limbs. I am suddenly aware of the dull sounds of everyone else behind the glass door of the hotel room, like a television on low volume.

I think about another moment at another time and place. . . .

We walked together. No, we were walking in the same direction. Toward our cars. In the suspended atmosphere of late night and early morning. We had stayed the night for a birthday party and slept like children in the living room. Bodies laid out in different angles, a jumbled math problem. I was the acute angle to his straight line, but like parallel lines, we didn’t cross.

We reached the vertex, where the rays of the line go off in their different directions. Since we had begun walking, the question had been bouncing around my mind like electrons in an atom until it escaped my mouth.

“Do you have a girlfriend?” I said.

There was a moment of space.

“No,” he said.

One step taken down the angle and he turned back to me and asked, “Do you have a boyfriend?”

“No,” I said.

We moved apart, hoping to bump into each other again in the infinite void. . . .

The metaphors have gotten jumbled, I realize. Our roles have changed. Math and science cannot define a relationship that changes as quickly as the wind and as slowly as the burning ember.

He is Q, and I am no longer his answer.

The sounds of the people below and the dying light of the fire fade away like a blaring siren moving farther and farther away. The balconies have become empty. The height no longer feels miles above the earth.

We look at each other. We look away and outward into space. The moment passes.

Marnie Salvani '16

*Fiction*

## View-Master

“See Pictures ‘Come To Life.’”

I bent my magazine away from the light to make sure I had read the caption right. The glare that cut through the image immediately disappeared. The ad contained a smiling woman holding one of those image toys that parents were crazy about these days. If the woman’s exuberant expression wasn’t enough to intrigue the consumer, then the yellow bar at the bottom did. It announced “We Are An Authorized View-Master Dealer.” Of course, whenever it came to “authorized” or “certified” corporations, parents were eager to pounce on the product, getting what they thought was best for their children. Too bad Karen and I hadn’t gotten to the point of having a prepubescent kid running around the house. We were still working on the first.

Maybe it would be a smart idea to buy a View-Master. Sure, the child wouldn’t be old enough for a while, but buying one of those things now would surely come in handy in the long run. I had heard a lot of good things about them. They may not even be around eight years from now. I reached for the still-open magazine and meticulously tore around the square containing the ad. I placed it in my pocket and planned on talking to Karen about it once she came out. She usually had no problems with my ideas.

I rubbed my sweaty palms against my jeans. This was probably the last thing I should be thinking about right now. I should be in there with her. It had been a long time since any of the doctors had come out to give me an update. Earlier that afternoon, I had gotten a call about Karen being rushed to the hospital while I was at the office. I wasn’t given many details besides the fact that the matter was pretty serious.

My head turned to the sound of a door opening. A nurse entered and smiled sympathetically as she saw I was the only occupant in the waiting room. “Mr. Davis? The doctor and your wife are ready to see you.”

\* \* \*

The next two hours seemed to blur by. I was directed to Karen’s room by the nurse and was surprised to see that my wife was sitting up. A doctor was nowhere in sight. I was blinded by all the whiteness in the room. The white walls, the white bed sheets, the white coats of the hospital personnel. It was barren wasteland. I could feel myself grow nauseous just from being exposed to the harsh whiteness.

I tried to be funny by saying that adding some stripes could help brighten up the place, but Karen only gave a small smile. Usually she would give some sort of chuckle, no matter how crappy my jokes were. I then noticed how tired she was.

I sat down on her bed, my hand smoothing out her sweat-dampened hair. “How are you feeling? I’ve been worried sick.”

Karen bit her lip, moving her head away to avoid looking me in the eye. I used the hand that had been touching her hair to grasp her chin and swivel her face back towards me. “Karen? What happened?”

Her eyes started to swell with tears, her mouth quivering into a mournful whimper. “I’m so sorry, Jack...”. The tears streamed down her flushed face. “I lost it.”

\* \* \*

I wanted to stay with her all night, but our dog at home needed to be fed. Plus, I was probably not going to be much use to her anyway. Karen avoided saying anything else to me that evening. The doctor came in twenty minutes after she broke the news to me. He said something about how Karen’s uterus had become inhospitable, that her body basically rejected the baby.

I was distracted from recollecting the recent events as I attempted to trudge through the parking lot and get to my car. Outside, the winter winds were in full swing, and my shoulders hunched against the biting gusts. I observed how the evergreens surrounding the perimeter of the lot had been stripped of their needles.

When I finally reached my Sedan, I wasted no time pressing all of the buttons and flipping all of the switches to get the heat blasting in the car. I pressed my fingers against one of the vents, frowning as I felt nothing but cold air choking out. I started rummaging in my winter coat for the clipping I had torn out. Pulling it out, I stared nonchalantly at the stupid smiling woman, excited to see the new life contained in that little device. With another hand, I rolled down my window. I crumpled up the ad and tossed it out into the storm, watching it fly through the blistering wind and disappearing within one of the many piles of snow.

Mary McQuistan ‘17

*Fiction*



## Kaleidoscope

*Digital Montage*

Chiara Kohler, visiting student from Paris-Lodron  
University of Salzburg, Austria.

## Verbal Tea

*After Dr. Suess*

Umpteen dollars a pound,  
It's the rarest around.  
Icy hot, steaming cold  
Fragrance brash, flavor bold.

The inside of a brain  
That has drunk from this vein  
Is a mine of fine words  
Mute—untapped, undisturbed.  
Every thought will just flow,  
Besting Shakespeare and Poe!

“That’s absurd,” you might think.  
But a drop from this drink  
Will unleash every word  
Flighty, vague, and absurd  
Perfect, pristine, and proud  
That your fears have restrained you from writing out-loud.

And from drink down to pen  
Words will swiftly descend  
Without fear, without fail,  
You will string clever tales.

No more need to read books!  
No more days spent in nooks  
Crying tears of despair  
For the phrase that’s not there.  
No more sly snobby sneers  
From your writerly peers.

Verbal Tea - don't delay!-  
Must be taken each day!

Katherine Dubke '14  
*Poetry*

## My Boots

Sometimes I wonder, “What if...?”  
But then I take a look at my boots, my master, his princess, and our castle,  
And those thoughts escape me.  
There may have been some trickery  
And deceit  
But it was necessary. And by necessary,  
I mean for us. After all,  
Who doesn't trust a cat to be sly?

Cameron Cooper '17  
*Poetry*



Summer Lovin'  
*Photography*  
Stephanie Rodriguez '17

## Then and Now

I'm nine years old and my grandfather is the tallest person I know. He hunts deer and pheasant through the thick woods of Minnesota, his big brown dog, Moose, at his side. Moose is the biggest dog in the world and loves to run around us when Grandma lets us take the bikes to the Dorset Corner Ice Cream shop. We suck ice cream out through the bottom of our cones before pedaling back down the small, unpaved road toward grandma and grandpa's house. Wild raspberry bushes line the winding driveway, and sticky juices coat our hands as we slap mosquitoes and eat more berries than we bring back.

My cousins, Zach and Emma, know the best lakes for swimming. Even though they are younger than me, I follow them because I only get to see my cousins during summers like this; our parents laugh with each other while we race out to the floating dock.

The fireplace in my grandparents' yard makes the best s'mores. My cousins and I burn marshmallows to eat as many as possible, while my mother and her father compete for the best golden brown ones.

The candy shop my grandfather owns is the best store in town, and we eat taffy and pixie sticks and melty mints until we're sick.

Zach is still shorter than me when my sister and I hug him goodbye, already making plans for the next time we see each other.

\* \* \*

I'm fifteen years old and my grandfather is one of the tallest people I know. He fishes in the lakes near his house in the thick woods of Minnesota and throws tennis balls for his big black dog, Bear, to chase after. Bear is wilder than Moose, and we have to keep him in the garage when we ride quads in circles around the dirt roads. We ride those to the ice cream shop but eat our cones from the top down now. When we pick raspberries there are fewer berries and more mosquitoes, but we playfully slap the bugs off each other and eat the berries we find, hands stained sticky red.

Zach and Emma still know the best lakes for swimming, but they have to go between their parents' houses to find their suits. My mother is now the only member of her family, since my great-grandparents, who is not divorced. I am in high school now, but I still follow my younger cousins around because it's been years since I've seen them and during summers like this you don't waste the time you have. My aunt and my parents float on the pontoon with my grandparents while my cousins and sister race with me across the lake to the shore, where we catch leeches with our bare hands and coax minnows toward our toes.

The fireplace in my grandparents' yard still made the best s'mores, only now my sister is competing with our mother and grandfather for the best golden brown marshmallow. Zach, Emma, and I still burn them and mash the gooey sugar to our graham crackers.

The liquor store my grandfather sold the candy store to buy holds no interest for us, but we still visit the candy store and my grandfather gets a discount on all the taffy and malted milk balls and melty mints we eat. Afterwards, Grandpa lets me sit behind a steering wheel for the first time, practicing on straight paved roads tracing through towering trees.

Zach is still shorter than me when my sister and I hug him goodbye, planning out the possibility of future summers in California, where the beach is much bigger and the trees way thinner.

\* \* \*

I'm nineteen years old and the same height as my grandfather. He plans fishing trips to Canada and looks at houses in South Carolina where he and Grandma winter some years. They don't have a dog anymore, but I'm allergic anyway. The Dorset Corner Ice Cream shop burned down last summer, so Zach drives Emma and me to the pizza place and we play arcade games instead. We're too busy to go down more than twice. It's too early in the season for wild raspberries.

Zach and Emma are still in school, so there's no time to go swimming. Zach's high school graduation and subsequent party are set up instead. But in between talking to strangers and carting large dishes of food around we drive down dirt roads with the windows down and talk about the future. I am in college



now, and have traveled the world, but I still follow my younger cousins around because it's been five years since I've been out here. Zach is joining the Marines, so during summers like this you can't waste the few days you have. I'm restless anyways, my body unsure of what time it is, and my mind unwilling to sit still. I follow because I have nowhere else to go.

My aunt is remarried, and already her husband feels like part of the family.

The fireplace in my grandparents' yard goes unused this year, but since it's just me out here this time it doesn't really matter. My grandmother and I play Sequence on the deck and she lets me win a few games. I borrow books from her because I fare better with words than with people I hardly know.

My grandfather is retired now, but we go back to the candy shop, where I get enough taffy and caramel turtles and melty mints for my family back home. My cousins don't come this time, but I appreciate the time with my grandfather, who is gruff and quiet and unsure of how to talk to me. We drive in silence most of the way, but that's all right with me; I'm unsure of how to talk to him too. Growing up half a country away will do that, I suppose.

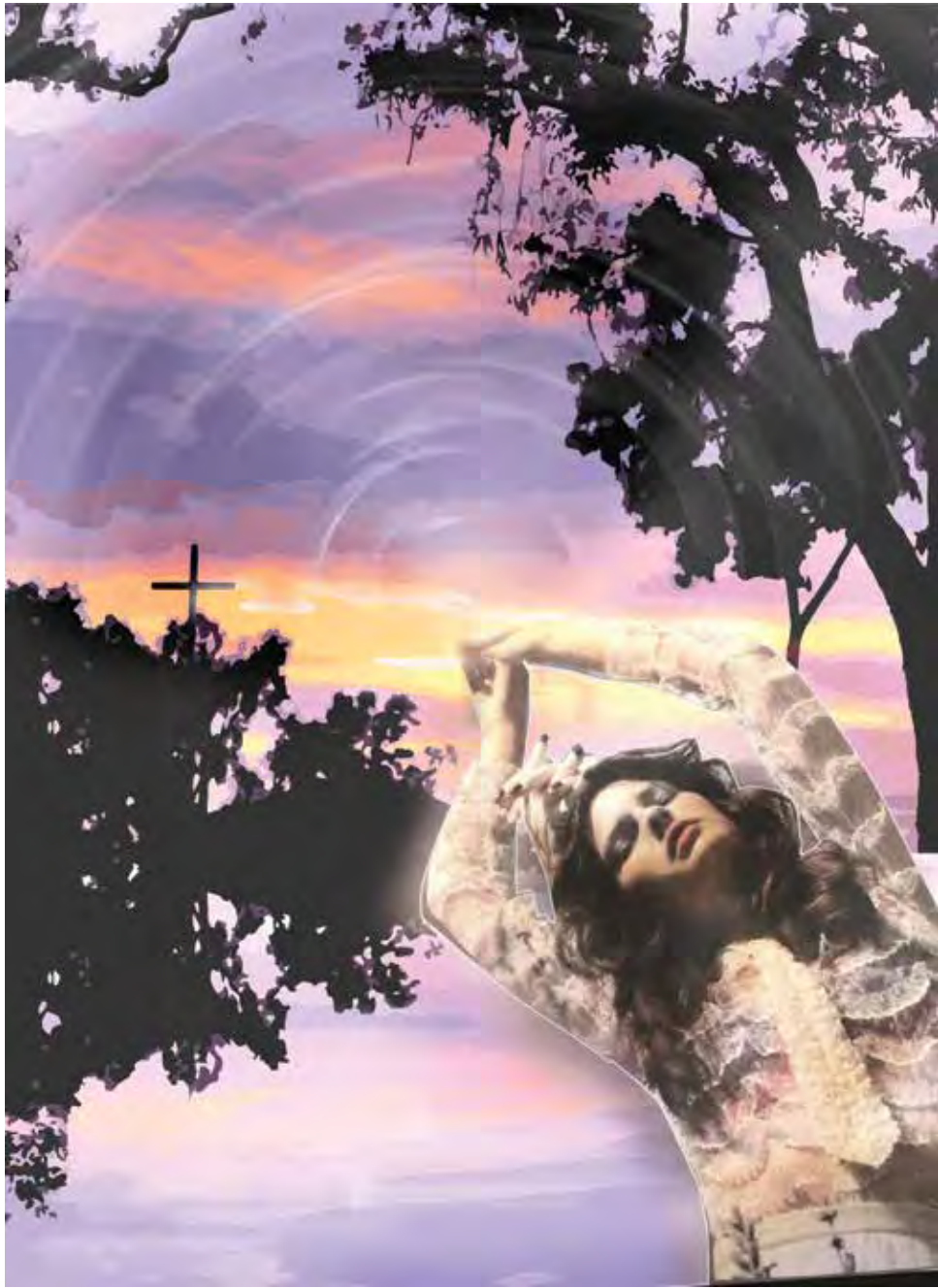
Zach is taller than me when I hug him goodbye, knowing that in three months he'll be training in San Diego with the Marines. I ask him to come visit me if he has time, but I know that he won't, just like I know that even if my summer has just begun it is already over.

Samantha Gross '17

*Creative Nonfiction*



A New World  
*Photography*  
Halo S. Clair Baird '16



Eve  
*Collage and Digital*  
Bethany Proctor '16

## The Hunter's Sword

stars reflected into the  
lake—creating a pool  
of constellations

were I to take the  
plunge—I would  
swim among these  
stars—these relics of  
gods and goddess that  
once walked this earth

I would swim  
between the twins  
Gemini—past the lion  
Leo—greeting the  
seven sisters Pleiades  
as I pass—asking  
Sagittarius if he ever  
escaped his pain

I'd meet Orion—  
we'd swap stories  
of hunters and their  
prey

both of us too greedy  
and willing to take  
more than what we  
deserve

Elisa Andersen '17  
*Poetry*

## Disbanded

“You know, at night, when something wakes you up?” she says, looking at me over her glass of water. “You don’t know what it was, but it was something. It’s dark and quiet and you think, maybe it’s just the birds waking up, calling to each other. Or maybe it’s your neighbor, going to work early. Or maybe it’s the girl down the street, sneaking her boyfriend out of the house. Whatever happened in the world, it woke you up and took you out of your dream. And you lie there, suspended almost, wondering.”

She takes a sip of water and looks out a yellowed window. The sun peeks in on her wrinkled eyes and catches the grey hairs she’s stopped trying to hide.

“That’s been happening to me lately,” she continues. “Your father’s always asleep next to me. Sometimes he breathes like a damned train. He won’t say a word for hours when he’s awake but he’ll wake up the neighbors with his snore. Anyway, you know when nothing or something wakes you up, and you just need to get out of bed? Get some water? Pee? When you leave your room, you’re always afraid. I was afraid when I was a girl and I’m still afraid now. You walk into the hallway and you don’t want to look left or right. You don’t want to look at the ground or in a corner. You just want to walk straight ahead. Because what if, that one time, when you looked into the shadow, something horrible was looking back?”

Her eyes turn back from the window and search my face.

“You wonder that, every time,” she says. “You fight your eyes, trying to keep them from looking in that corner. But they do. Even though your brain says, ‘No, what if there’s something terrible there?’ Your eyes give it the finger and they look.”

I watch her watch me. I nod and she looks at the faded tablecloth. “Is something bothering you, Ma?” I say.

Her head snaps up, as if I had shouted. “What?”

“Is something wrong?”

“Oh, no,” she says, swatting the air. “Nothing’s wrong. I was just thinking about it.”

“About what?”

She pauses for a blank moment. “You know. The shadows. Things that go bump.”

“You’ll give yourself nightmares.”

“Don’t mother me, son.” She stands to rinse the lipstick from her glass. Beside the sink is a small band my sister used to hold back her ponytails. The sight of it wrenches the air from my chest. My mom hears my breath and sees the band. Throwing a glance at me, she picks it up and stows it in her pocket.

I feel my face pull together and I look out the window so she doesn’t see. Watching the sun blink between the bobbing branches of the family orange tree, I clear my throat. “Where’s Dad?” I say as she returns to the table. Her knobby, arthritic hands grip each other on the blue placemat in front of her.

“He’s at the store,” she says, watching her hands.

“Is he cooking dinner?”

“No, he’s just getting, you know, this and that.” Her eyes remain on her wrestling hands for a moment. Then one hand leaves the fight and flees to her necklace while the other falls alone to the blue placemat.

“When did you get that?” I say, gesturing to the jewelry.

“Your father got it for me.”

“When? I don’t recognize it.”

“Oh, it must have been seven or eight years ago. For our thirtieth, maybe.”

“It’s beautiful.”

“It really is.” She holds it out in front of her and stares at the diamond. She wipes her eyes and turns them back up to me. I want to ask about the band, but instead I wait for her to say more. No words come.

“How has the house been holding up?” I ask.

“Oh, you know. Your dad says he’ll get to this or get to that but nothing really gets done.”

“What does he do all day since he retired?”

“You know your dad.” She stands and walks across the kitchen, opening the refrigerator. “Do you want a sandwich?”

“Sure. Do you have salami?”

She nods and starts making the food. I examine the kitchen, my gaze pausing on the hand-sanded wooden spoons that stirred so many pots of pasta and the fire-faded pans that fried so many slices of bacon. I feel something pushing at the back of my eyes while my mother spreads mustard on the sourdough bread. She throws a question about my job over her shoulder as if she’s asking how my day was at school or if my sister had any homework she needed help on. She drops the empty mustard bottle into the trash and my eyes stick there. Next to the trashcan are three paper grocery bags full of crushed beer cans.

“Did you guys have a party?” I ask, still watching the cans.

“What’s that?” she says, turning to me.

“The cans. Where’d they all come from?”

She glances at the brown bags and then her eyes flick to me. “Oh, you know your dad,” she says with a chortle. Then, with another quick look in my direction, “He just can’t seem to take the garbage out.” She slams my sandwich closed and slides it in front of me. “Eat up.” I watch her gather up the bags and scuttle out the back door. The cans crash into the container and my mother hurries back inside.

My question from earlier has remained unanswered. “So what’s Dad been up to lately?”

My mom says nothing and leans on the counter.

“Ma,” I say.

“You know, he plays golf when he can and he likes his football and baseball.”

“Is he looking for any other sort of work? To keep him busy?”

She picks up a sponge and scrubs the counter. “I guess not.”

“Why? Not even a hobby?”

“He just doesn’t want to. I’ve tried but he says he’s happy.” She continues to run the sponge over the counter.

My eyes fall to where the bags of cans had been. “I think he should try to find something to fill his days,” I say.

“You can bring it up to him if you like, but he’s refused whenever I tried.”

“Does he actually say that he’s happy?”

“He says he doesn’t need that stuff, whatever that means. According to him, he’s got all he needs. You know how he is.”

“What about you?”

“What about me?” She stops scrubbing.

“Are you happy?”

“Of course I’m happy. I have you. I have your dad. I’m alive. I’m happy.”

“Ma,” I say. “Do you still think about—”

“Don’t.” Her voice stings me. I watch her hand touch her pant leg over the covered ponytail band, as if to check if it were still there. “Please.”

I stand and walk into the living room, where an empty beer can sits on the coffee table. Beside the couch is a half-empty bag of crushed cans. I sit opposite that couch in a recliner and stare at the lone can on the table. Soon I find my eyes roving this room, too. I note the framed photograph of my father in a suit, tie loosened, arms around cronies that he hasn’t called in four or seven or fifteen years, and another of both parents now, leaning close, with New Year’s hats on. Above the television is a family picture from when my sister and I were children. We both are missing teeth and our parents both are missing wrinkles.

I let the minutes pass, looking around the room but always coming back to the photograph above the television. Finally, I say, “At night, when you look in those shadowy corners, do you see anything?”

From the kitchen, my mother’s voice says, “No. Never see a thing—nothing but darkness and emptiness. But, you know—” Her voice stops as a siren shouts outside and both of our attentions turn to the windows. It’s not a police siren, but an ambulance. It fades like a dying gust of wind, brushing our ears until the room is silent again. My mother continues, “I want something to be there, in the dark. When my fear amounts to nothing and there’s no monster in the closet, I can think of little else than where in the house the monster

might be. It wasn't hiding in the closet today—maybe it was under the bed. You know?"

My eyes remain on the beer can. "I can see what you mean."

I can feel the carpet swallowing my breaths, the room falling still enough for my thoughts to seem screams. The refrigerator grumbles to life in the kitchen and I'm thankful for the white noise to shake the stillness. My mother walks into the room and sits on the couch in front of the beer can. She picks it up and holds it, looking at it without expression. She says, "When is the last time your father said anything interesting to you?"

"What do you mean?"

"When did he last say something that meant anything to you?"

"I don't know—" I begin.

"He hasn't told me anything interesting in three years. Everything he says is empty."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't know," she says, dropping the can onto the table. It totters a bit because of her haste and falls onto its side. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out the little band. She stretches it in her hands, letting it snap back into shape, and says, not to me but more to the band or to the empty can lying on the table, "This is the last one. I've thrown out all the others. I had thought that I'd gotten them all. But then I found this one under her bed. I was just vacuuming, and this one stopped up the machine. I was so mad, so angry that the vacuum stopped. But then I saw that this was what did it." She holds the band up. A tear runs over the lines on her cheek and the trail of moisture it leaves seems to smooth her skin. "I took it to your dad and he looked at it for a moment before yelling at me to throw it out. I tried. I just couldn't."

I watch the carpet, feeling it swallow my breath again.

"I can't throw it out. I need it. I need something to hold. I guess your dad doesn't. Either that or he doesn't want it." Her eyes fall to the can, still on its side, right near the edge of the table. She hardly breathes. The sun reflects as a pinpoint of light off her wet cheek.

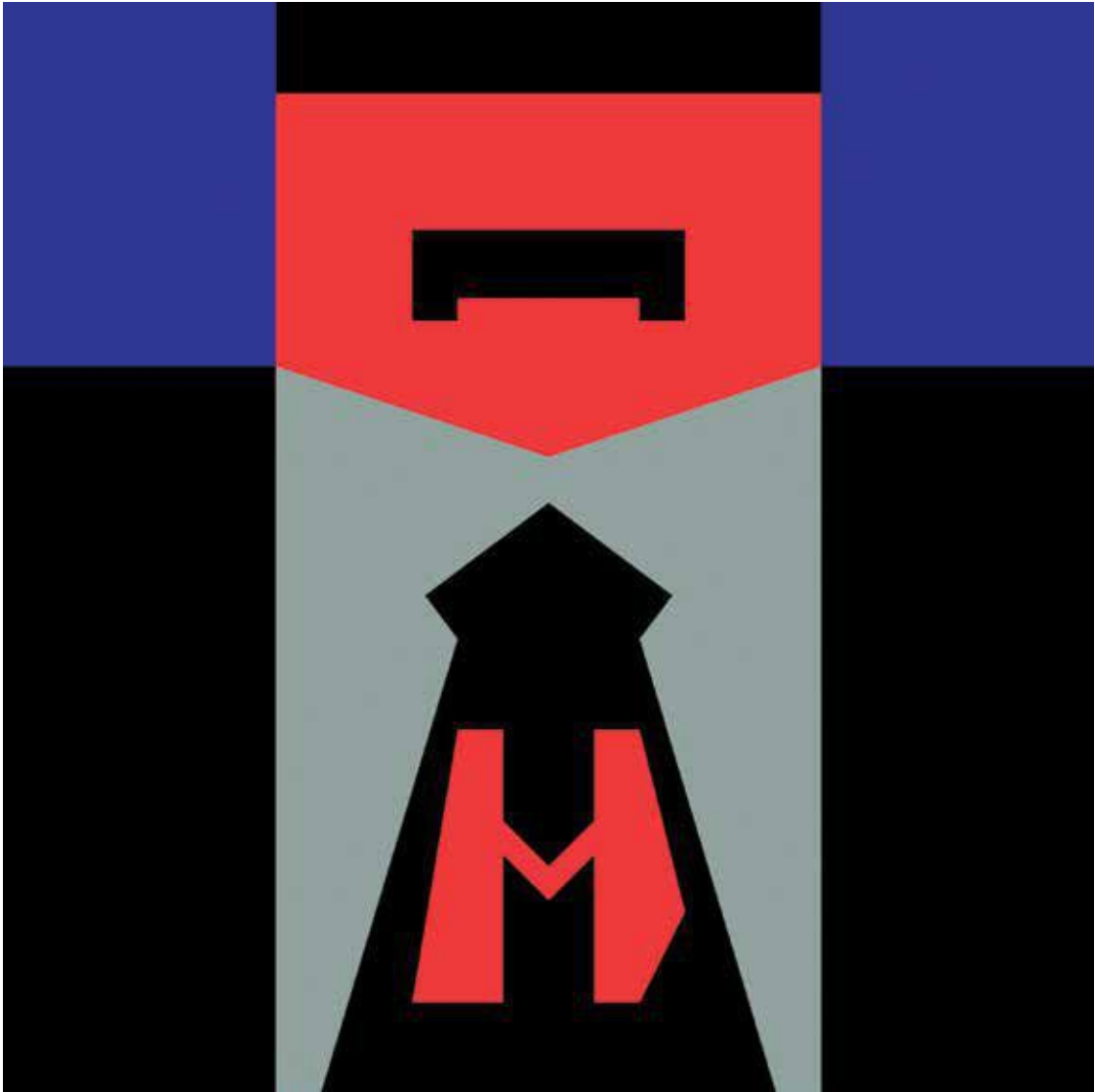
I feel a question ignite in my chest, the sweet combustion of a pressure that has been growing since I walked into the house. "Ma," I say, drawing her eyes and, probably, her thoughts from the can to me. "Is Dad—" The words that had seemed so sure an instant ago die on my tongue. "Does he—" I breathe for a moment. The question dances away from coming to life.

My mom watches me struggle and give up. She nods and wipes her cheek dry. The wrinkles show again. Then, standing, she picks up the beer can and sets it on the ground before crushing it with the heel of her shoe. It falls into the bag with a crunch. "I hate beer," she says, and leaves the room.

Spencer Lane '16

*Fiction*





1984

*Digital Illustration*

Josephine Thompson '18

Adventure on a Page:  
*A Fibonacci Poem*

I  
Am  
Alone  
The sweet smell  
Of the fresh grass and  
The chill of the crisp breeze soothes me  
Laying on the green blanketed earth I open my book  
I become one with nature and the characters in the novel are my companions

The  
Birds  
Titter  
Bees buzz by  
And as I explore  
This literary world unfolds  
Books come alive and when investing in a good read  
Expect nothing less than freedom, adventure, fulfillment, knowledge, and joy to ensue

Megan Carbiener '18  
*Poetry*



## Through the Looking Glass

*Digital Montage*

Kara Der '18



Pears  
*Oil*  
Jaclyn Pennington '17

## Just Keep Saying You're Not Losing Your Mind

You aren't sure when it began. But that isn't entirely true. Things started appearing in odd places; sea shells under beds, beads in the kitchen drawer, bottle caps in the shower settled around shampoo bottles and soap bars.

You didn't think that was too unusual. Things show up, things disappear. You lost hair ties and socks growing up; how was finding things any different? You think it's normal, until suddenly it's not.

And that's when you aren't sure of the beginning—where that shift from ordinary but unusual to paranoia and uncertainty began. You become more perplexed as time goes on, certain that you didn't leave those things where you found them. Your husband is just as adamant, your daughter just as confused. Books on the roof, power tools moved from their spaces in the garage to the second-floor bathroom, all of the cutting knives stabbed into the grass in the backyard, grandma's platter, the silver one you put in the attic several months ago, perched on the fireplace mantel. You start to doubt your own actions—did you move these items? You start to question things you didn't use to.

You start seeing things. From the corner of your eyes, never where it's clear enough for you to be sure. Shadows that flicker in the hallway, darker movement in your periphery. Nothing is there when you turn your head. Nothing ever is, but you look nonetheless. The air tingles with something more and it makes your skin crawl.

Work becomes not only an escape, but also a new place where no one knows. And when you say something, a hushed whisper to co-workers who watch you with concerned stares, they offer you the vacation hours you've saved up. You don't want to take them—that means spending more time in the house—but you have to relent after a while. It's either that or stop talking about it, and talking is the only way you know it isn't all in your head.

You start hearing things. Rattles the house didn't make before, shifting floorboards, and creaking ceiling panels. You've checked every corner of the house, but there aren't any bugs or birds or rats of any kind. Even the exterminator says there's nothing there. So did the woman whose ad you saw in the paper, the one who carried crystals and spoke of auras. Your daughter refuses to talk about it, though you see her eyes widen when you mention it in passing, so you think she knows. She must feel it too.

Bigger things begin moving. All of your husband's ties hang from the lamp in the den. Your daughter's favorite pair of boots go missing, and the left one is found sitting perfectly in the fireplace, wire screen locked like you left it. You come home from the store one day to find the living room in an entirely new formation, the furniture a bit too close to the walls, the space in the middle just a little too wide, a little too big. When you try to move it back the furniture is too heavy, the wood too solid, so you leave it where it is and walk through the kitchen to get to the rest of the house instead.

Your husband denies the mystery in the changing things, claiming that you must be forgetting, you must be sleepwalking, you must be lying, you must be losing your mind.

You vehemently deny this. You aren't losing your mind. Just keep saying you're not losing your mind. If you say it enough then you will continue to believe it.

You aren't sure when it began. But that isn't true. You know when it started; you just aren't sure when it's going to end. All you can do is hope that it will end, before you find yourself someplace you didn't plan, before you yourself are left somewhere unexpected.

Samantha Gross '17

*Fiction*

## Quiet Things

*After James Tate*

My plants are whispering to one another:  
they breathe silence amid the wind  
they are planning a little party  
to which I am not invited  
later on in the week about watering time.  
My keys make no noise, tossed on the couch, for  
I have quilts on beds and walls  
that suck up all the sound, quiet things  
that think it is still the nineteenth century.  
I watch the television light play on their backs.  
They know nothing of automobiles and jet planes.  
They know nothing of me.  
For them, a wheat field in January  
and a lunch spread across their shoulders  
is their mother and enough.  
Where is my mother?  
I've discovered I don't need  
a white picket fence, three kids and a dog,  
a retirement plan, a plan to succeed.  
I dream amid whispering wheat fields.  
A snow leopard sleeps behind me  
and his voice pushes me  
like a slow, warm breeze.  
I doze in an embrace that is gone forever,  
and I can hear the inner birds singing  
a lullaby, and it sounds like her, while I sleep  
alone in this house I love.

Spencer Lane '16

*Poetry*



Steller's Jay

*Photography*

Stephanie Rodriguez '17





Gentrification  
*Digital Montage*  
Dane Vande Guchte '17

## Summer

Summer  
The smell of warmth  
Baked cement

The air becomes tangible. Heavy on the shoulders  
And on the eyes as the view in the distance shimmers and shakes  
With each blink

Summer nights  
The smell of dry  
Cooled earth

The air becomes packaged, manageable. I feel faster at night  
Limbs unburdened by shawls of heat and the shadow  
Of the sun

Dog days become languid like cats  
The satisfaction, relaxation of breaking a fever  
Everyone sick with muddled minds and hazy breath

The sun sets and our temperatures drop  
Everyone has awoken  
Hot-blooded no more

Then  
sleep and an open window

Marnie Salvani '16  
*Poetry*



## Canoes

*Photography*

Bethany Proctor '16

## Strike

*“For just as the lightning comes from the east  
and flashes even to the west,  
so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”  
—Matthew 24:27*

When I was a little girl, my Nonna told me that every rumbling roll that accompanied thunder was God bowling with the saints, and every bolt of lightning was the pins clattering in a strike.

Sometimes I wondered how she knew for sure. Maybe she was an expert bowler. One time I went with my *Nonnu* to pick her up from work, and I was amazed to find that she worked next to a bowling alley. I wondered if she ever stopped by during her lunch break and grabbed a lane for herself. Maybe she was an expert on rain. She worked fixing wetsuits, and the difference between seawater and rainwater isn't all that obvious to a child. Or maybe she was an expert on God. She grew up in a little town in Sicily where it was never a question whether someone would be attending Sunday mass, just like they never questioned whether there would be thunderstorms in the summer.

I still don't know where she heard it, but I guess she's always known the sound of pins and praise better than I do.

God didn't bowl much in Southern California, but when he did, I would sit by the window and wait for the sky to celebrate another perfect game. God didn't seem to win much in Southern California either.

That never surprised me, though. For some reason, everything about Southern California was troubling, or at least that's what I saw on the news. A new celebrity overdose, fires raging among the wildlife, protesters lining the streets with hatred scrawled on their hearts. Then there was “The Drought,” one that never went unnoticed to the little girl waiting for God's next rendezvous with St. Peter. The rain was seldom, but clashing echoes and flashing reflections only seemed to happen when a fire truck came thundering down the road.

For a while, I had faith that the new rain would bring a new game, and I was always worried I would miss it. When I was in fifth grade, we read a story about a little girl who lived on Venus. The rain only stopped for two hours every seven years, yet she believed in the miracle of sunlight more than her classmates who locked her in the closet so she couldn't see the sun. Afterward, I had this irrational fear that one day thunder would finally come back to Southern California, and I would be stuck in a classroom where I wouldn't even be able to hear it.

My school, like most schools in Southern California, wasn't trapped inside a singular building with endless hallways of classrooms. Each classroom opened to passageways of real air and sky, which wasn't a problem 360 days a year. On the days when it was a problem, they would make us sit inside the classroom for lunch. Only a lucky few who bought their lunch would line up at the door to be led to the cafeteria and back. I always felt blessed to be able to escape the classroom. On the way back, I would linger, sticking my head out from under the overhang and letting the droplets soak into my skin.

In those few moments, I would wait for a strike that would never come. The rain never brought flashes and crashes, only wet socks and frizzy hair. If the sky cracked, it went unheard by me. Whether I was far away in sleep or distance, my ears never peaked when the clouds wailed. My theory was heaven was avoiding Southern California, but sometimes I thought heaven was just avoiding me.

I was eighteen the next time I saw the clouds roll in with God at the helm, but this time I wasn't in Southern California. Sitting on a windowsill in my great-grandmother's little house in Sicily, I watched from my bedroom as gray and black molded together, swirling and spinning until it touched the Mediterranean miles away from me. It must have been a game of Blitzkrieg bowling because the sound never seemed to stop. Bolts tossed in the air, and they fell like rain onto the sea, scattering the waves.

Outside my window, the locals watched without fear. They were used to this sort of weather, the same way they were used to going to church on Sundays. Downstairs, my *Nonna* watched from the kitchen window, right below my window. I wondered how long it had been since she had witnessed a storm. I wondered if God knew that she was waiting for a new frame. I wondered if that's why God brought his league back to my hometown later that year. I wonder what I did to miss it.

"The Drought" temporarily ended in my hometown unlike the rest of Southern California. I had just stepped off the plane from Italy when it lost that classification. Less than two weeks later I moved to a new city, one that was just as barren. One where people preached of conservation but acted with carelessness. Where rivers of water rushed down the pavement, feeding what could not be saved. Where water levels were lower than the temperature and baptismal fonts were hardly being filled anymore.

It was dry, even where the coast met the sea. It was light, even though everything seemed dark. It was mine, even when I hated everything about it.

I was happy for my hometown, though. That my parents wouldn't have to pay higher water bills anymore. That my brothers could swim in the summer. That my Nonna didn't have to fly to her hometown anymore, even though my mind flew back to mine whenever I went to the local lanes. Their "Drought" was over, at least for a little while, even though I was still alone wondering how Jesus could return to a place where he couldn't walk on water.

Elisa Andersen '17  
*Creative Nonfiction*



Ghost Turtle  
*Mixed Media*  
Sofia Speakman '17





## Flower Fields Forever

*Photography*

Courtney Sundin '16

## Petrichor

Definition: The smell of the earth after it rains

Southern Californians love the rain, when it comes.  
To them, it is an event worth printing on postcards  
and selling cheap to tourists in In-N-Out t-shirts.  
Every storm peels back the blue nail polish of the sky  
to expose something more raw and rippled.

This time it lasted no more than ten minutes, but it was a downpour.  
I teased it in front of my friends, insisting that, since I lived  
in the Evergreen State, I could tell one shade of rain from another.  
I claimed that this was an angsty teenaged kind of rain, rebellious  
but desperate to prove itself. I hated the rain when I lived up north,  
when it was all damp sneakers, upturned collars, and sticky gray sameness—  
yesterday's sky chewed up and spit back out again.

As the water descends, I see them all lean out over the balcony  
of our dorm. They were all outstretched arms and extended fingers,  
naming the constellations of dots that appeared on their clothes  
and rattling the globes of water that hung, suspended, in their hair.  
They scooped the air into their lungs like children in a sandbox,  
trying to figure out what the rain is seasoned with: sea salt, vanilla,  
or trickles of pine sap? I joined them, hesitantly, feeling the wind  
chill my nose and plaster wet tendrils of hair to my forehead.  
Maybe, I thought, the rain tastes sweeter  
when it goes undiagnosed.

Lauren Taylor '16  
*Poetry*



## Until I Moved

*After Kathleen Norris*

Until I moved to Michigan, I did not know winter, that it could come too intense, too mild, too early, too late. That it could strike suddenly and without warning, and leave with as much abruptness.

I did not know that an evening frost that has come too late can devastate entire crops, literally sucking the life from plants.

I had not seen leaves abandoning their trees, becoming the bedding for a squirrel's long slumber.

Until I had seen a blizzard bury our house in snow, I did not know the ache in my back from shoveling snow in the walkway, the sidewalk, the parking spot. I did not know the comfort of a warm bath or a hot fire.

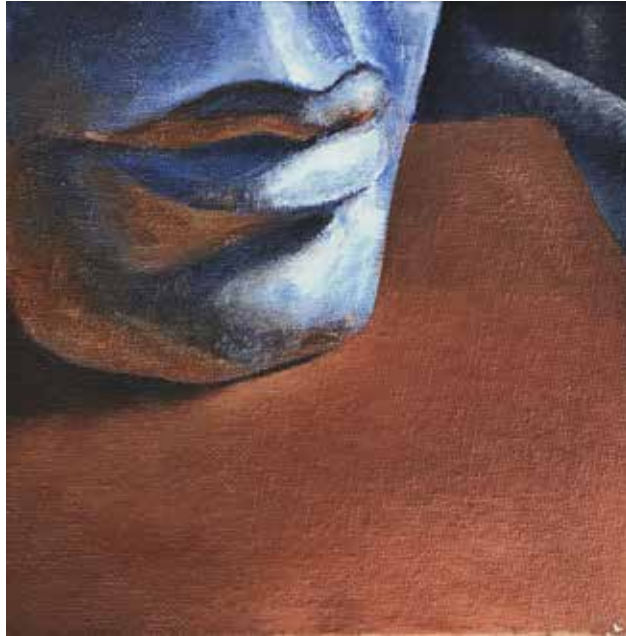
I had not seen the miracle of snowflakes; did not know that rain can freeze mid air, that you can watch droplets crystallize before your eyes as if you were watching a magic show. That transformation is commonplace and metamorphosis is as simple as watching ice form thinly across water.

I had not realized that seedlings are so tiny when they sprout, that one thin strand can break through a ground so hard and barren. That things endure, and cold, dark days eventually give way to springtime.

I once met a man who asked me what was most memorable about Michigan. "Winter," I answered. "The feeling of winter."

Cathryn Kruger '17

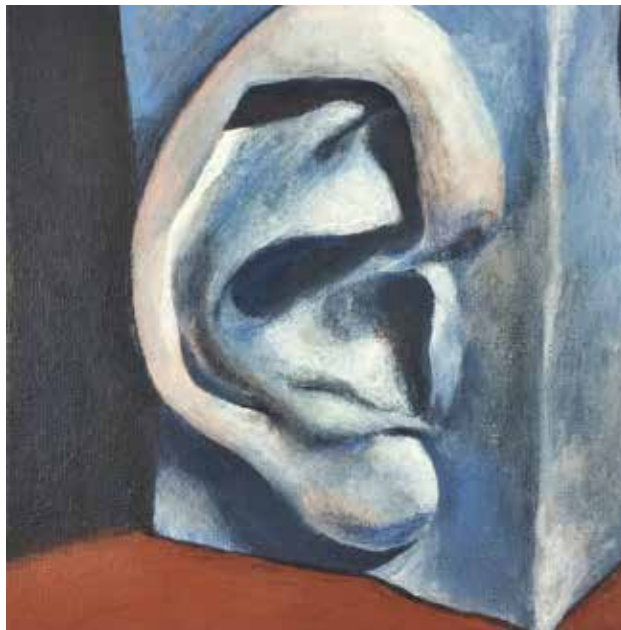
*Creative Nonfiction*



## Cast and Shadow

*Acrylic*

Tiffany Rahmati '16



## Untitled

*Oil*

Chantelle Crupi, visiting student from Curtin University  
Perth, Australia.



Self-Discovery  
*Charcoal*  
Mariah Kohl '18

## The Black Box

*“We found him in the attic, his face hidden from the light of day. Bones protruding, bloated belly, arms as big around as quarters. He was just eleven years old, seventy-five pounds, and living in his own filth like an animal. Of course, the psychological damage was already done. You could see it in the way he resisted the light.”*

*-Deputy William C. Davenport*

Most college graduates aspire to make their margins at the far ends of the Earth, but for Beau Kraepelin, there was only one place he needed to be: Ivy, Virginia. If any outsider cast unfavorable words about Ivy, Beau was quick to defend his home; only those accustomed to a small town could understand its sublimity, its vanishing sense of urgency, the warm security of an open door, and the nights spent in his backyard.

His troubled beginnings did not burden his spirit, for within him lay a strong sense of purpose. You could see it in the way his eyes held to yours and how he spoke confidently about the future. Upon graduating college, he quit his job, packed his car, and headed home to Ivy. Beau had not felt quite the same sort of boundless attachment towards any place since he left. It was his memory, however, that stripped him of any feelings of contentment and reminded him of the childhood that was taken from him.

His confidence did not last for more than 73 miles, when he had seen the chiseled words “WELCOME BACK TO IVY” sticking out of the soil. An uncontrolled rush of both duty and death stopped him and his car on the side of the road where he purged his stomach of its contents. Then he wiped the sweat from his forehead, reentered the car, gripped the wheel tightly, and headed for the police department.

The people of Ivy looked to the station as a man of faith would look to a church. It was where prayers were answered. He had felt somewhat underdressed as he approached the front doors, though he knew he had no choice but to stand out in a crowd of uniforms. Not for his appearance, but for his name.

A woman with a wad of gum lodged in her cheeks welcomed him in while sitting behind her desk.

“Can I help you, son?”

“Yes ma’am, I am here to see Deputy Davenport.”

“And you are?”

“Beau Kraepelin, ma’am.”

She straightened her spine and opened her chocolate brown eyes wide. “Uhh...yes honey. He’s right back there in that room to the left of you,” she said while timidly extending her finger.

“Thank you.”

“And son—” Beau looked back at her.

“Yes?”

“It isn’t Deputy no more. It’s Sheriff.”

Indeed, good had come from the Kraepelin incident. Davenport was granted promotions for his contribution to the case as well as public admiration, but he did not boast about the reasons for his good fortune. In fact, he found it sickening to think of Beau’s story bringing him something cheap like fame. The case humbled him, or rather haunted him, along with the rest of Ivy.

Davenport did not question Beau when he stepped into his office. He had been preparing himself for this bittersweet reunion since the day he saw him off to a better home. There was a certain comfort that breathed through the calamity. One could hear it in the way the men loosened their language, slow to fill the quietness that cracked in their conversations.

After all the talk of school and work eroded, the two were left in silence. Davenport explained that he was on his way out the door to visit a family who had filed a noise complaint and if Beau wanted, he could come along for the ride. “You can sit up front like before,” he said with a playful laugh. Beau agreed.

Beau fidgeted in the car for fifteen minutes until Davenport finally came back. There was a different air about the Sheriff now. His shoulders were tense, brows arched, lips formed in a straight line.

“What is it, Davenport?”

He had received a 10-53 immediately after leaving the family’s front porch. The road they had used to come from the station was currently blocked due to construction. He would have to use a detour.

“God, I don’t really know how else to say this, but the only way back is past your house.”

Beau knew he would have to confront this issue eventually, but he was not prepared for it to be today. He slicked his fingers through the brown strands of his hair.

“Well, go on then. I wouldn’t ask you to pave a new road just for me.”

Davenport had meant to drive on through, but Beau had other plans.

“Wait! Let me out for a sec,” he said while nodding towards the house.

The building remained untouched by potential buyers, but marked with the anger of the town. Shards of glass spiked out of the windows like sharp teeth, and old egg yolks stained the wood. The only life left showed in the trees hovering over the slanted green roof, as if it was slowly swallowing the home back into the ground with it.

“There was a time you would’ve never known what was going on in there,” said Davenport. Beau looked up to the second floor.

“Yeah, well even salt looks like sugar.”

Beau entered into the living room with Davenport trailing behind him.

“What is it you wanted to do again with your degree, Kraepelin?”

“I’m going to be a teacher.”

“Oh, yeah? Why is that, kid?”

Beau picked up a book left on the shelves by the sofa and read the cover: *Troubled Adolescence, by Geoffrey Stillman, Doctor of Psychiatric care.*

“To save them.”

“Maybe a doctor would be more suitable, then?”

“No, I’ve never trusted them.”

The last time Davenport was inside the house it was day seven of the search for Beau. He had stood in the living room while Beau’s parents crumpled over like balls of paper into the couch, Beau’s beautifully primed mother crying as mascara smeared across her face, and the father, white and flinching at every sound, his fingers twirling his thick brown hair as he sucked in the smoke of his cigarette. Davenport had been fiddling with his badge when the strange thud had come from up above the second floor. They ascended the staircase, Davenport searching each room for the source of the noise. He knocked on the walls with his knuckles until they heard the thud once more while standing underneath the string hanging from the ceiling. He pulled it down and felt as though he was peeling hell open. There was the boy, cradled in the corner with such floaty, unresponsive eyes, ones that looked ready to roll back into his head.

Some folks questioned the parents, and some questioned the world. Beau questioned himself. He could not recover the memory of the abuse, the punishment, the feeling of death. Nothing. He had unconsciously blocked it out. Beau was burdened by not knowing what he had done so wrong. If he could only remember the fine details, maybe he could have been a better son.

Now Beau stood beneath the string again, his heart sluggishly beating deep and strong. Waves of guilt passed over him. Why had he felt such guilt? He pulled the string as if pulling the pin of a grenade and suddenly recalled the feeling of tugging it before. How odd. He ascended the ladder into the other side and felt the heavy weight of darkness, but no mental images of his parents having been in this room surfaced. Something wasn’t right. He could not remember his mother and father putting him here. There was not even an ounce of painful affliction left in his memory. Only him here in the dark alone.

Some thing was surfacing. An ugly truth. A grotesque side of Beau Kraepelin. Mr. and Mrs. Kraepelin were painted as the villains of Virginia, the monsters keeping Beau in the dark, black box above the second floor, but Virginia did not know that Beau Kraepelin had given himself the title. Yes, indeed it was true. The boy from the attic was not a victim of child abuse. It was the opposite. He had abused his parents. He

remembered now pulling down the string himself, locking himself in the attic away from his mother and father. He hated them. His mother's long red nails and his father's deep tobacco voice. He remembered the months of psychiatric treatment, the tests, the experiments, and the diagnosis: schizophrenia. He remembered how the name kept him from school. He had begged his parents to let him go back to class, but they had feared what he would do around the other children. They planned further hospitalization and so Beau decided to hide from them. Beau Kraepelin had lied.

Davenport shone his flashlight on Beau's back and then squeezed his shoulder.

"You all right there—" Beau walked towards the corner of the attic where he had lain before and wept into his hands, suddenly feeling like a child.

"I shouldn't have been here."

Kendall Gallegos '17

*Fiction*





Dopamine  
*Charcoal*  
Brandon Sutliff '18

## Fractured

Broken mirrors and shattered glass  
Glass turns to blood  
Blood becomes a mere stain  
Stains and shards like rain drops  
Rain drops to disguise the streams of tears  
Tears should be hidden. Don't let them see you cry  
Crying is for the un-together, for the undone  
Undone and broken like the shards, like the glass.  
Glass frame and blue eyes  
Eyes are the window to the soul (aren't they?)  
They try to tear you down, so you better build your walls up  
Up, up, higher, stronger  
Stronger than those who throw sticks  
Sticks and stones won't break my bones  
Bones and thick skin is all you need  
Need to be strong and show no weakness  
Weakness is hidden inside along with beauty.  
Beauty within the beast  
The beast of fear  
Fear crouched outside every door, knocking  
Knocking, asking, seeking an answer  
Answers.  
There are none.  
None that can be heard.  
No one.  
No one there.  
There  
is  
no one.  
There.

Paige McCauley '19  
*Poetry*





## Martha's Visit

It was your typical asylum, if such a thing existed. It had that “please believe I’m a calming place” vibe, the exterior trying so hard to look normal that it looked weird. The building looked recently painted, even though every other building on the road looked worn from sea spray. The front steps of white concrete looked completely unused, the hedges that skirted the edge of the property were much too geometric. But the one thing that stuck out to me were the curtains: on all but one window they were drawn, a thick periwinkle sheet separating its inhabitants for the outside world. That was the one thing that always perplexed me about asylums—why spend so much time with exterior maintenance when you never allow anyone outside?

Briefcase in hand, I strode to the front desk. The plump secretary was expecting me, I could tell, for her eyes widened when I mentioned the last name “Rosenburg.” I looked at my reflection in a silver flower vase while she gathered up some paperwork for me to sign. I always had to make a point in telling the staff I was a health inspector—my smooth porcelain skin and stout height made me look like a loitering teenager, despite my pantsuit and wedding ring. She guided me through two white doors, both of which opened into the rest of the East Wing.

“Here’s the motley crew,” the secretary mumbled, opening a large door marked “cafeteria.” Suddenly the peacefulness of the hallway was interrupted by the roars of hungry patients, some hollering in low tones and some yipping at the top of their lungs. I immediately tensed upon the sight of hundreds of rambunctious women, my claustrophobia making its home in the back of my consciousness.

“Don’t worry, they don’t bite,” she assured me, already backing out of the room. “These ones don’t, anyway.”

And with that, she was gone. I thought it odd that she would depart from me so soon with so little instruction. I figured a government official or security guard would accompany me soon. I stood as calmly as possible, making sure my air entered and exited my lungs at a slow, steady pace. Despite my slight apprehension, the cafeteria smelled much better than I expected—the aroma of baking bread and local jams blanketed the room, an occasional whiff of arugula or pepper detectable from time to time. I had judged the women too quickly—many of them ate their food quietly, staying still save for the arms bringing forks to their mouths. Only a few of the women’s voices were loud, but theirs were the ones that carried, especially in a room mostly composed of polished linoleum.

After minutes of silent searching for a subject, I zeroed in on a woman slowly prodding at her rice pudding, probably in her mid-twenties. I sat down slowly, so as to avoid startling her.

“Hello, my name is—”

“I know who you are!” she exclaimed, all of the sudden springing to life. I jumped in my chair, altogether unprepared for this level of enthusiasm.

“You do?”

“Yes. You’re Martha Rosenbaum, the health inspector!” she shouted. I quickly glanced down at my blouse for a name tag. A couple women at the nearby table looked in our direction to see what purpose the yelling served, looking altogether very confused.

“How did you know—”

“Everyone knows everyone here,” she explained matter-of-factly, sipping her orange juice. I was not satisfied with this explanation, yet I could not help but relax around the woman. She had an air of familiarity, as if I had everything in common with her. I decided she was an appropriate person to interview on the quality of the food they serve—all I needed was blatant honesty. “I’m Rachel, by the way.”

“Hi Rachel, I wanted to ask you a few questions about the foo—”

“Do you want some?” she asked, handing me a chicken leg. It did not look disgusting, but I preferred not to eat on the job.

“No thank you...”

“Here, let’s share,” she instructed, pushing her tray toward the center of the table. This was odd—I

couldn't remember that last time somebody shared something with me before. I actually couldn't remember the last meal I had with another person, despite the fact that I was married. I shook off this thought as I considered her plate of food.

I was there, after all, to inspect food. What better way to inspect it than to consume it? I smiled, and to Rachel's delight, sunk my teeth into a chicken leg.

And just like that I had a full meal in the company of a new friend. I admonished myself for thinking such a place was cold and harsh—I had made a careless mistake by judging the asylum by its cover. We discussed the food at some length, but we mostly discussed far more intriguing subjects, such as our struggles with insomnia and living vegan lifestyles on a small budget. Every personality trait I thought to have been specific to myself she shared. Everything from my hometown in Massachusetts to my German heritage. I knew she was lying a few times, but I didn't care. Who would have thought I would have so much in common with the mentally disabled?

"Here, we're going to the rec hall now. You should come!"

"Oh, I really should be getting back," I told her, though I had not even sat up from my chair.

"Oh come on, we just started getting to know each other! Besides, it'll be great material for your interview. You get to live with the patients and see what it's like. How many other people get that inside scoop?"

She had a point. It would be quite off the beaten track from my health inspection, but I had always wanted to be a journalist. What better way to start a career than with an inside-look article?

Rachel took my lack of response as a "yes." With that she led me by the hand out of the mess hall and into a complex network of hallways, one that would have been impossible to navigate without her guidance. I looked around feverishly as white door after white door flashed before my eyes—this can't be allowed, I thought. Someone will separate us and make me go home. But no such intervention was made. She brought me into a large room full of games, mostly foosball and ping-pong tables. The game room was teeming with life, and its inhabitants seemed tickled with glee at playing the games. I was confused as to how everyone acted so normal, even back at the mess hall. One would think that they would see a few more women shaking violently in the corner or starting a scuffle with the staff, but this was not the case. All their actions were justified and reasonable.

Not a single one seemed crazy to me.

After a good two hours of ping-pong and The Game of Life (without the small pieces so no patients could choke on them), I glanced to the outside window.

"What time is it?" I asked Rachel.

"I don't know, they don't really do clocks here."

"Crap, I gotta get home," I told her, hurriedly putting on the jacket I had removed during our tournament. Though as I did, my arms began to feel very heavy, as did my legs. The walk to the door started to look like a mile long hike, and I couldn't even imagine the walk back to the front desk.

"No you don't! You should stay here!"

"I can't do that," I found myself saying, even though all I wanted was to stop moving and sleep.

"Sure you can! Here, I'll help you," she explained, putting her paddle back on the table. I felt someone come under my arm and guide me out of the room into more hallways. Though half-opened eyes, I watched a small bedroom get bigger and bigger as I was led into it.

"I need to get back to Mark...the kids..." I mumbled as I crawled into a small cot.

"It's ok, they know you're safe here," a woman's voice said, one I didn't recognize. I wanted to sleep but the curtains were open, letting in blinding amounts of moonlight.

"Can you close those?" I muttered, slowly losing touch with where I was and who I was talking to. Darkness fell over the room as I drifted to sleep.

"It's ok now. You're safe, Ms. Rosenbaum. You're home."

Only out of pure curiosity did I hear the hushed conversation outside my door that to this day will never make sense to me.

"Poor thing, been talking to no one all day. Had full conversations with her food. We even saw her

playing table tennis by herself, God knows how.”

“The health inspector thing was brilliant. Who thought of that?”

“No idea. But I think it’s their way of introducing the place more subtly, like it’s a brief visit. Works well with multiple personality thing too. Poor thing went bonkers after her daughter Rachel died in a car crash. So young, so young...”

“What’s gonna happen when she wakes up tomorrow and can’t leave?”

“Same with everyone. She’ll get the hang of it.”

I lurched out of bed and grabbed the doorknob, but the door didn’t budge. The last thing I heard was the sound of my briefcase being slowly dragged down the hallway, until I couldn’t hear anything but a terrible, perpetual silence.

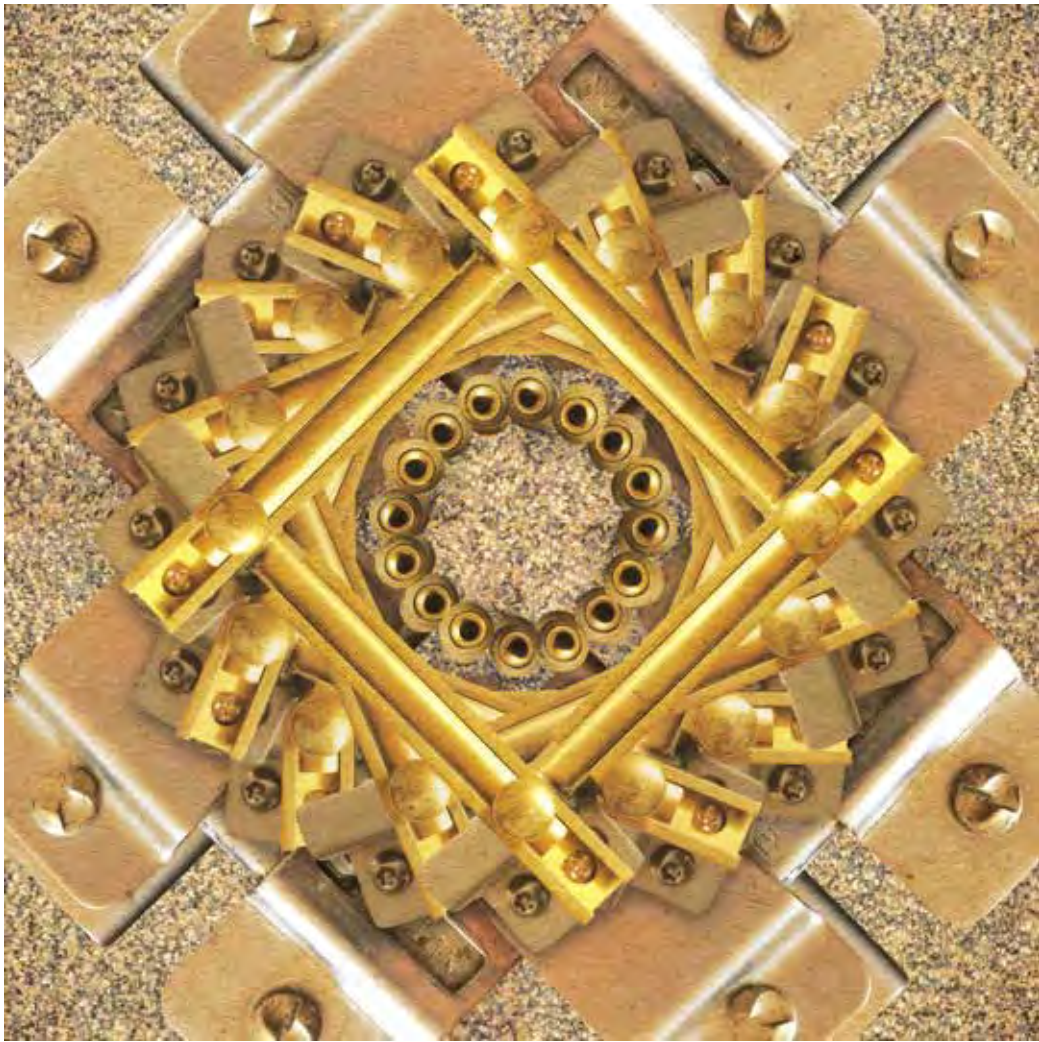
Kyleigh Hoyer ’18

*Fiction*

## Delivery

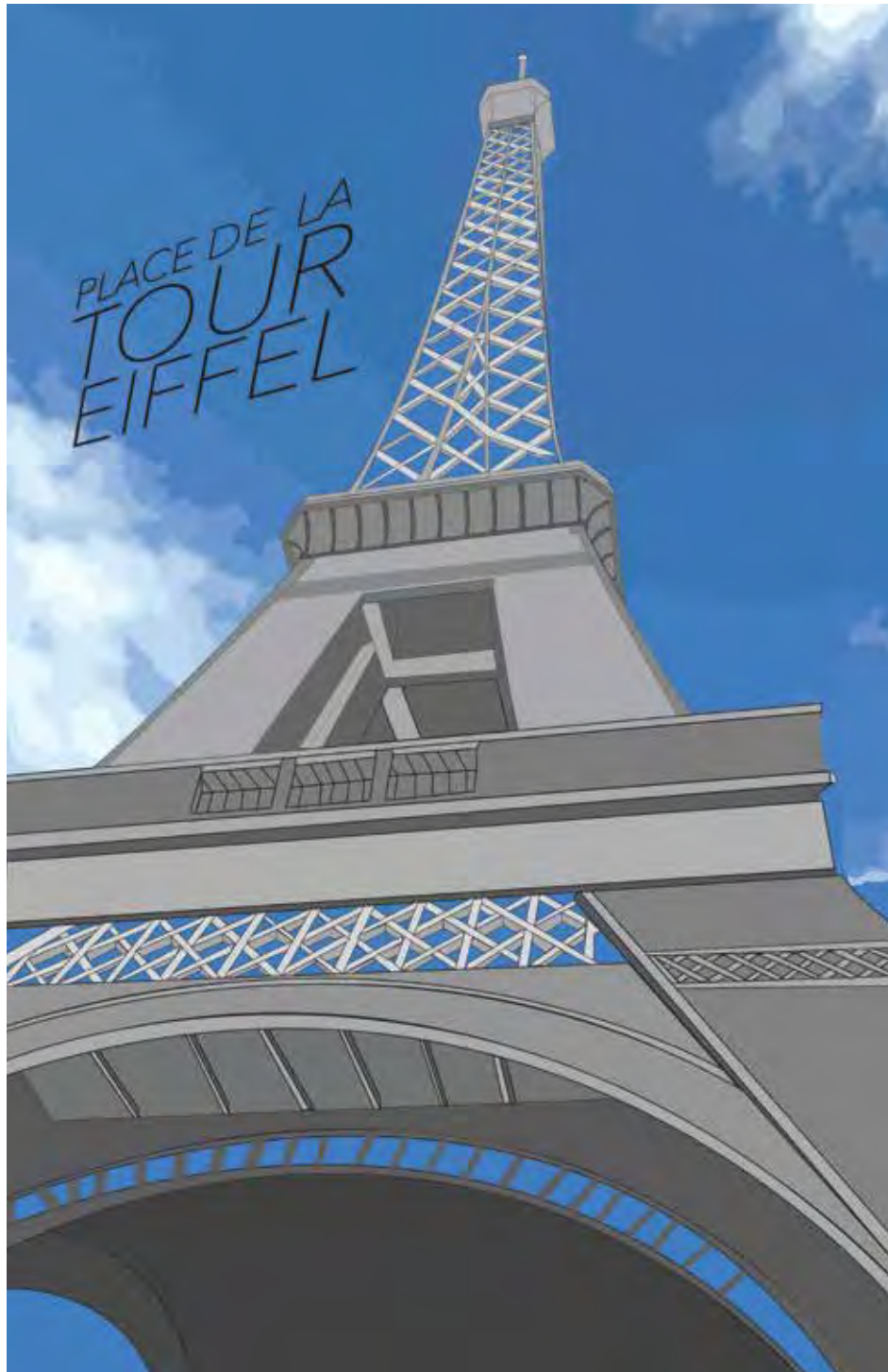
Sometimes in the evenings when the air is stuffed  
with the remnants of the afternoon's ninety degree heat,  
I like to slip out in the middle of the hum of space  
between dinner and sleep. I wander outside to watch the sun  
get flattened and folded up like a cardboard box.  
All that is left is a sliver of tape, straining to hold the borders  
of daylight together. The minutes dissolve into the faint  
stenciling of the night. I admire the strips of cloud  
that float above the horizon like warm blots of breath  
on a train's window. I imagine the sun being shipped first class  
as it sits in a nest of newspaper or packing peanuts. A foreign address  
lounges on its cardboard shell, inhaling the scent of the tropical  
flower that sprouts up on the stamp in the corner.  
The box warns "Fragile!" and "Handle with care!"  
as well it should, for by the time it arrives in its new destination,  
it has already melted the zip code and given the content description  
a sunburn. The sun will get plopped onto somebody's doorstep,  
its rays burbling into the rooms of people who would rather  
smudge out the light with a pillow than get up and go to work.  
I wonder where the sun will get shipped off to next?  
Russia? Japan? Or maybe an island obscured by one of the white,  
jagged creases carved into my map of the world?  
Well, whoever ends up with it, I sure hope they appreciate the fact  
that sending the sun by mail must cost a fortune in postage.

Lauren Taylor '16  
*Poetry*



Locked Out  
*Digital Montage*  
Josephine Thompson '18





Eiffel Tower  
*Digital Illustration*  
Jessica Clark '17

if you love me, give me an owl

if you love me,  
string an owl around my neck,  
not cold metal  
bent into the dull shape of a heart,

this symbol is not even anatomically correct,  
twisted into a vision more satisfying than valves and veins.  
it's an organ that can be played,  
well or badly.  
a pendant solid as stone and just as unfeeling will choke  
me.

but owls thrive in the dark like persistent thoughts at midnight.  
the size of their eyes exposes the extent of their longing.  
the owl asks the same silent question,  
over and over again,  
like the pulse beats,  
over and over again.

who? who? who?

three hundred sixty degrees is not enough to see the answer.

Marnie Salvani '16

*Poetry*





Waiting for Seconds

*Oil*

Patrick Padiernos '18

## 105 Memories From the Homestretch

1. My name is Melissa.
2. My favorite color is yellow.
3. Yellow like the sun.
4. I don't see the sun very often.
5. I live in Seattle.
6. The space needle is just as tall as it looks.
7. I always wanted to go to space.
8. My mother always told me it was a pipe dream.
9. What does she know?
10. My brother wants to be a baseball player.
11. Apparently that's more realistic.
12. I've decided not to argue.
13. There's a spider in the corner of my room.
14. His name is Cosmo.
15. I enjoy swimming.
16. Even when it's cold outside.
17. My parents don't want to pay for a heated pool.
18. Neither does my school.
19. The batting cages are heated.
20. Both the ones at school and the one at home.
21. I'm thinking about dyeing my hair black.
22. That might be a nice change.
23. My mom said I shouldn't get rid of my natural blonde.
24. I said she was being hypocritical.
25. There's a reason her gray hairs keep disappearing.
26. My dad killed Cosmo.
27. I'll have to give him a proper burial in the garden.
28. Cosmo, not my dad.
29. There's a 5% chance my brother will be drafted by a major league team.
30. There's a 6% chance I'll be accepted into NASA.
31. I should probably start working on getting my driver's permit.
32. I'll get to it eventually.
33. The sun came out today.
34. I think I got sunburned.
35. I don't really care.
36. My brother has always dreamed of going to UCLA.
37. I've never really had a plan.
38. The stars would be a nice place to start.
39. Shakespeare is the bane of my existence.
40. Why do scientists have to take English classes anyways?
41. The school system is stupid.
42. The other day my brother drove me three hours to see Lori Garver give a speech at the University of Portland.
43. I wish I could hate him, but I can't.
44. My friends keep saying that Sophomore year is too early to start looking at colleges.
45. What do they know?
46. I dyed my hair today.

47. I may have also died when my mother found out.
48. She'll get over it eventually.
49. Baseball season is about to start.
50. My parents talk about it every day.
51. My brother is spending more time on his swing than he's spending on his homework.
52. Swim season is also starting.
53. My parents have nothing to say about that.
54. Last night my brother stayed up late reading Shakespeare to me so I could understand the dialogue.
55. Thank goodness one of us is good at English.
56. Google tells me that the best schools for astronauts are MIT, Purdue, and Stanford.
57. My future seems a little more certain now that I have plans.
58. I'm convinced that there are only two seasons in Washington:
59. Rain or snow.
60. I'm not sure which one I hate more.
61. The other day I found my brother crying in the batting cage.
62. He didn't get an offer from UCLA.
63. The thing I love the most about swimming is feeling weightless.
64. Like I don't have gravity tethering me to the ground.
65. Surrounded by nothing and everything at the same time.
66. I imagine that this is what it would feel like to be in space.
67. Unbounded and limitless.
68. When I was thirteen, I caught my brother kissing a boy from his baseball team.
69. It didn't make me love him any less.
70. My friends invited to have a Star Wars marathon with them.
71. Why would anyone enjoy such a blasphemy of space?
72. I take it as a personal insult.
73. I've been spending my extra time helping my brother.
74. He has me recording videos of him practicing his swing.
75. 50% of the memory on my phone is now videos of him.
76. It's the least I could do.
77. "Mortal as I am, I know that I am born for a day, but when I follow the serried multitude of the stars in their circular course, my feet no longer touch the earth..." — Ptolemy
78. My brother came out to our parents today.
79. It didn't go well.
80. I've been listening to a lot of Alanis Morissette music recently.
81. She's convinced me that no one else understands me but her.
82. Isn't it ironic?
83. It's been a few weeks since I've seen my brother.
84. I think he's staying with a friend.
85. My parents don't seem to care.
86. I added red and blue highlights to my hair.
87. It looks like a galaxy.
88. Now if only I could get the chlorine to stop ruining it.
89. The varsity baseball coach is my P.E. teacher.
90. He asks me if my brother has been acting strange lately.
91. I tell him that I honestly don't know.
92. My parents went to my swim meet today.
93. I don't think I've seen them at a meet since I was in middle school.
94. I don't know if I like it either.

95. At midnight, my phone started ringing.
96. It was my brother.
97. He said he was outside, and he wanted to talk.
98. I met him on the driveway.
99. We got in his truck and drove to the beach, Denny Blaine Park.
100. The drive was silent.
101. We parked in an empty parking lot facing the beach.
102. He watched the sea and the shore playing catch with the waves, tossing them back and forth.
103. I watched the moon swim among the stars as it fell beyond the horizon.
104. I don't think we said a word.
105. I don't think we needed to.

Elisa Andersen '17  
*Fiction*

## In The Fields

*"I need to tell you something."*

The cornfields of Canton, South Dakota were full of whispered secrets. When autumn fell upon the city, the painted sky not quite ready or willing to give up the last few wisps of summer, the cornfields held the last of people's secrets, clinging to the words.

Whenever Addy came to the fields, clouds of scattered fireflies twinkled between towering stalks, leading trails like a million tiny will-o-wisps. The wind brushed through the field, creating a rise and fall of leaves that Addy had once compared to rising dough beneath the sun's oven but now saw it like a green rolling sea. The closest South Dakota could ever get to the ocean.

*"It's something I've been dealing with for a long time and I feel like it's finally time I told you."*

Before fall took hold of the earth, Addy liked to lie on her back between the stalks, staring up at the cloudy sky during the day and picking twinkling pinpricked pictures from the stars at night. Sometimes she'd remember her book of constellations and lay it open on her stomach, tracing the ridges of the diagrams under her thumb while her eyes created patterns of their own. But those were only in the times when she came to the fields alone, when a high-pitched voice and uneven braids didn't accompany her on her winding path between the stalks.

*"I don't want you to worry, and I think that's why I waited so long to tell you."*

Erin preferred catching fireflies over counting stars, catching glimpses of the tiny lighted bodies when she peered between the cracks of her small hands. She was getting older every day, to the point where she didn't really need a babysitter anymore, but Addy enjoyed her company. Erin didn't seem to mind if the evenings her parents went out she spent with a high school senior. She especially didn't seem to mind when Addy brought her out to the cornfields to run around between the stalks, Erin's long braids flying and sneakers kicking up dust.

Addy would chase after her, enjoying these small moments of bubbled laughter and delighted shrieks, pretending that their games of tag and hunting clouds could last forever. But Erin was growing up, Addy had to recognize that, and growing up meant being more aware of things Addy didn't want her to know about.

*"Are you okay, Addy?"*

*"Not really. I haven't been okay for a while now."*

They had a spot, about halfway through the field, where the corn was cleared and the dirt packed tightly. Addy kept an old plaid flannel blanket in her trunk just for this spot, so that they could point out stars and Erin could vent about the trials of puberty and middle school. It was refreshing to hear about her young drama because Addy could remember being twelve and how immense everything seemed.

The seasons shifted and Erin grew and Addy felt herself begin to fade. Things were changing all around her; the creek by her house grew colder each time she dipped her toes in the brisk water, and her father had been slowly pulling sweaters that still smelled like Addy's mother from their summer storage in the basement. Then again, she'd been wearing thicker sweaters long before the sun gave up its fruitless endeavor to warm the hardened earth.

*"Does this have to do with why we couldn't go to the park last Friday?"*

*"Yeah, kind of. Do you remember when I had to leave the state for a little while? To go see a doctor in St. Paul?"*

*"Are you going away again?"*

Canton was a small town, where everybody knew everyone else, and news spread faster than a California wildfire. When Addy's mother had gotten sick the whole town had known within a matter of days, adults clustering around their porch for chance to peek at the woman defied by her own body and the husband and child she'd leave behind.

In a similar way, all the town parents, the apathetic farmer who owned the fields and the entire town police force (consisting of a plentiful six patrolmen) knew that the teenagers went out to the cornfields after

curfew. But no one did anything beyond the occasional drive-by for security, a thankless but appreciated act that let the youth of Canton learn independence and responsibility, all the while believing that what they were doing was a form of rebellion.

Addy didn't like to bring other teens with her to the cornfields. The sky seemed much more consoling and vast when she was the only one staring up at it. She liked bringing Erin, though, because she pointed out things that only innocence could find.

*"You can't leave!"*

*"I'm not going anywhere, not for a little while. The doctors in St. Paul did what they could for me, so now I'll only be as far as Sioux Falls for my appointments."*

Sioux Falls and St. Paul didn't have cornfields; the cities were too big to accommodate for sprawling fields and soaring fireflies. People usually only went into the cities for the big shopping centers or hospital visits, and they always returned from the four-lane streets wondering how they'd ever made it a day in the sky-swallowing asphalt-laden city.

In Canton, fields extended all the way to the horizon on either side of the dirt roads, stars brushing the tips of the fields at night, the empty road like a string threaded between the oceans of waving green. When Addy stood at the very edge, just before taking the plunge among the stalks, she imagined that this was what it felt like to stand at the very edge of the world, not knowing what lay on the other side but too afraid to turn around and face where she had come from.

*"Appointments for what? What's wrong, Addy? Are you sick?"*

*"I have cancer, Erin."*

The secrets that the cornfields heard were turning points in people's lives. A precipice of possibility surrounded by the most boring crop the state had to offer. Addy recognized the ridiculousness of this city-wide connection to the fields, but if everyone felt it then was it really something outside the realm of the ordinary?

*"Like what your mom had?"*

*"Yeah, just like what my mom had. Mine is a little bit trickier, though, because nobody can pinpoint exactly where it started, especially since it's spread so far. They don't really know how to treat it, but my dad is really optimistic about everything."*

When autumn came completely to the cornfields, and the stalks were finished drying from green to brown, the farmer would rope off the dirt road and harvest his crops. The fields would be off-limits after that, and the first snowfall of the year would follow not long after.

Addy's flannel blanket did nothing to fight off the freezing air, and the secret trysts and star gazing hours moved indoors. The cornfields and their secrets were forgotten for the time being, waiting patiently for the snow to melt and for a new season to begin, when their leaves would once again be filled with whispered words and anxious phrases.

*"Are you going to die?"*

The cornfields didn't tell the secrets they heard, but sometimes, when the wind kissed past couples and gatherings of students and a babysitter with her young friend, it seemed like it was trying to whisper something back.

Samantha Gross '17

*Fiction*

## What's Your Relation?

“What’s your relation?” The immigration officer demands, her stern eyes flickering to my friend before they return to stare the secrets out of me.

“Relation?” I glance at the girl standing next to me, the one I know so well. I encounter a dilemma—what is our relation? I have known this person for over a decade and a half and we’ve been close friends for a majority of those years, but what is our relation? I take in her tousled copper hair, her lean frame and her signature black combat boots, searching for a word to describe us. I could say we are friends, but “friends” is no longer the word I can use to properly describe what we are.

I have known this girl longer than some people have been alive. I remember the days when she was merely a freckled tomboy with crooked teeth who enjoyed bossing everyone around on the playground. We were not friends then. She was mean and I was intimidated by her brash confidence. She would launch herself straight into the action and hold her own in every game she was in. Meanwhile, I was the meek thing who liked to watch the others play on the playground while I twirled my hair. No, we were not friends then.

We became friends later. We bonded in our middle school years when we were two awkward girls against the world of boys, school, and the drama that always managed to accompany puberty. We’ve been friends ever since.

“What is our relation?” I say aloud, rather dumbfounded. I could tell this immigration officer that we transitioned into high school as best friends. We both grew into our bodies but out of our personalities as we tried to figure out who we were as individuals in the seemingly high-stakes world of high school. We never managed to outgrow each other, though. I was there when she had her first serious crush and she teased me mercilessly when I had mine. I was the musician, and she was the talented sports girl. I cheered loudly for her at her home games, and she made a sign to cheer me on at a talent show when I played the piano. We were opposites in most every way, but it worked. It still works.

Together we transitioned to college and moved away from home, both of us aching for independence and a new crowd to get lost in. She went to another school, but because she had a car, she was able to visit frequently. Our friendship was tested by the distance at first, but her blatant stubborn streak combined with my determination to preserve our friendship ensured that we remained friends. We would call and video chat whenever we were apart as we both tried to figure out what was expected of us and how to navigate the different worlds we had entered.

“What is our relation?” Time is passing and I still don’t have a good enough answer. *How do I even begin to qualify and quantify the relationship I have with this human?* is what I really want to ask the immigration officer. How do I describe a relationship that has been so strong and varied for so long? With this girl next to me I have backpacked across the Sierra Nevadas for days. Dug and slept in snow caves, and traveled the Oregon Trail as pioneers. We ran, walked, limped and laughed our way through miles of countries. We have eaten quality, handmade food and drunk cheap wine. We have convinced each other to spend money on dessert first, and nearly been sick because of it. We have slept nestled against the Earth in sleeping bags; and we have been forced to sleep against each other, sharing a stranger’s couch as we explored new continents. We once even slept on the floor of an airport, leaning against each other and our suitcases, not long before we encountered this immigration officer.

Not everything in life is fun and adventurous; neither of us is naive enough to believe that. I was in the hospital with her when she nearly lost her father in a terrible accident. I was there through her first heart-break. And though we both like to think this tough girl never cries, I have seen her cry over something as mundane as losing a childhood stuffed animal. And she’s been there for me. She was there when I lost myself and was drowning in clouds of darkness so thick I was struggling to decipher day from night. She was the one who drove to collect me and was willing to just be with me at a time when I couldn’t stand to be alone with myself. She has attended all of my pet fish funerals and not once has she laughed at me for bawling over their short lives as I flush them away.

What is our relation? How do I fully name who this girl is and what she means to me? She is my friend. The one who is not content to take life as it comes. She instead pushes forward and dares to try new things and be herself. She is my traveling buddy who explores new places always a step behind, complaining I walk too fast and also teaching me to slow down and fully enjoy an experience. She is my ally, she is my sister, she is my protector.

“What is your relation?” The immigration officer repeats the question. The officer has gotten more irritated and suspicious of me because of my delay. The girl standing next to me also is looking at me, brows wrinkled in confusion by my sudden inability to form an answer. I know I must respond, or else I may not be allowed to enter the country; but what word is there to possibly describe what this person means to me? Will there ever be a proper word to quantify the amount of joy, frustration, and love a person can bring into your life?

“What’s our relation?”

I feel the automatic answer fall out unchecked.

“We’re friends. Best friends.”

Piper Walker '16  
*Creative Nonfiction*



Columbia River Gorge

*Photography*

Courtney Sundin '16





CU Pride  
*Digital Illustration*  
Miguel Mejia '16



## 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: 115 (Percentage of Faculty with Ph.D. or other terminal degree: 64%)
- The number of FTE (full-time equivalent) faculty is 216.
- Student to faculty ratio: 17:1

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