

TYGR: Student Art and Literary Magazine 2018-present

Volume 2019 | Issue 1

Article 2

2019

New Grace

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Recommended Citation

Singleton, Danielle (2019) "New Grace," *TYGR: Student Art and Literary Magazine 2018-present*: Vol. 2019 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/tygr/vol2019/iss1/2>

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The Tyger

WILLIAM BLAKE

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? And what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?



Vine | Andrew Geiger | Photograph

9-18-18

KILEY BRONKE

I drank three cups of coffee,
Was visited by Mother Nature,
Didn't read for class,
Got a phishing email,
Missed a period on my resume,
Thought about working out,
Ate three pieces of candy for dinner,
Felt electricity in my fingertips
as they shook,
dangling in mid-air,
reaching for
Nothing

in particular;
reaching for the planner
that I lost:
Hours, days, weeks
Gone.
I forgot, and I lost.

24 plus
24
-1
12:01s and
11:59s

I thought of you in fractions,
in fragments:
5 fingers
5 toes
7 pounds
2 eyes
2 lungs, Breathing air outside the womb.
The first time.

After I got your picture,
your dark hair
like your sister's before you.
I put you in compartments:
after meetings,
after appointments,
grad school,
or workforce,
or childhood bedroom.
'Til I remembered
that I forgot

to think about you all day,
wondering what your cry will sound like,
what your five fingers will feel like around
my index finger.

I'll be begging your forgiveness
all the days of your life
for the things I forgot

on the day you were born.

New Grace | Danielle Singleton | Photograph

Too Much RACHEL HARMET

Our Sun is glorious,
but it is also stark and glaring,
no one escapes its bright stare,
too bright.

The same way a glittering river
has its graceful, rushing beauty,
but so easily drags us under,
too strong.

How we ascend trees and mountains
only to stiffen like stone
when we glance back down;
we've gone too far.

The same feeling I get
when I look up
and meet unfamiliar, or perhaps,
too-familiar eyes.

The Sun, the rivers,
the trees and mountains,
unknowing and knowing stares.
Anything (everything) can be
too overwhelming.



An Object in Motion

ERICA GARCIA

The wind blows, the sands shift
Drifting like waves that search the shore
Sifting for shells and sand dollars to consume.
Hungry hands reach out foamy fingers
Lingering as long as the tide allows
Gliding constantly like gulls.

White feathered flocks turn beady eyes
Upon burning sand where sticky hands have
Dropped french fries and plastics bags.
Beaks thrash and stab, snatching bits
From other birds, always shrieking,
Shifting constantly like sand

The sand is a field of burrs
Clutching at everything it touches,
Prickling and sinking, yet burning
The sand is a field of suns
Torturing everything it touches
Scorching and broiling, yet turning
With each step, constantly, like clouds.
White weathered clouds hang softly,



A backdrop like a drop cloth
Accumulating and adjusting appearance as
Paint drips off God's walls.

The stone is still and solid in my hand,
Newton's law of motion not yet applied.
I rub the water-worn surface against my palm.
My arm pulls back, my wrist flips
The stone jumps away,
Skipping constantly like waves.



NYC Shoreline | Amberly C. White | Photograph

In the Heart of the Storm

LAURA E. BAUGH

Autumn's Embrace

In the forest resides,
Imperial hues of red and gold together;
The cloak of autumn fluttering in the soft wind,
Joining hands and dancing,
They are one.

Fox Eyes

Within the sun glows,
Igniting the hues of amber and gold, so bright,
Speculating in shades of wisdom and cunning,
Two sides of the same coin,
Innocence.

Heart of an Eagle

A soft light, a halo in false-night,
His frame slight, eyes alight,
With the knowledge of an ancient world.
One that goes further than parchment and ink,
An engravement upon one's heart, their soul:
Wings folded inward, Cradling the fragile heart of a songbird,
That longed to be an eagle.
A hero in my eyes, But not one in his own.



Falcon | Emilee French | Watercolor

Panama Express

ASHLEY JEMMOTT

Luck favours the bold,
And grandfather was as bold as they get.
He sat at the door smoking,
Smoking that old pipe,
Puff.
Puff.
Puff.
I had seen him do it countless times.
He made it look easy,
And he made leaving look easy too.
He left with his hat and pipe at the
Toot!
Toot!
Toot!
Of an old red truck.
Leaving was easy but coming back,
Coming back was the hardest thing.
I never saw grandfather smoke again,
His arm gone and his shirt sleeve
Swaying,
Swaying,
Swaying,
In the wind.



These Two Days

MICHAEL JORGENSEN

The last two days have been a family.
Like a father and his son.
The father quickly went in passing,
The child blinked and it was done.

The next two days will be a memory.
A reflection in a stream.
A haunted winter forest,
In a half-forgotten dream.

These two days have been a green light,
Right before my clouded eyes.
Gone after I'd noticed.
From perfection to goodbye.

These two days have one another.
These two days,
These two days.
We no longer have each other.
These two days.



Rainy Day Reds | Abigail Baker | Acrylic on Wood Panel

An Artist's Composition

KYRA BLAIR

perhaps the greatest feat
of these nineteen years
is finally being able to look
into the mirror
and see the finesse of divine creation
the ease with which i was composed
rather than averting my eyes
i have taught them to recognize
the loveliness of grace
as it has been drawn
instead of focusing on the delicate shape
of my shoulder
or the fair locks of femininity
that fall like water
down my back
distaste has been replaced
with a quiet acceptance
of mindful intention
to silence the riot of misjudgment
that inhabited my mentality
each blemish that was once perceived
as a stain on a white canvas
is not a stain at all
but rather
a significant stroke in an artist's hand
a small part of a composition
that is not yet finished



Straight to My Head | Sara Easter | Photograph

Solar Powered ERICA GARCIA

You don't complete me.

I wholly existed before you and I wholly exist without you.

I dance on my own like the plastic plant on my window ledge

waving at the hedge outside, unencumbered by batteries

or blinking gas lights or bundled power cords

and instead, being plunged into life by yellow rays

blazing through the window.

But sometimes, clouds come rain runs snow stills hail hurls
shade stays blinds close.

You always know when my petals slow.

You don't complete me, but you keep me in the sun.



Wander

KELSIE DAVIS

To wander is to wonder
What it is I'm missing out,
To search for something I can't name
And supposedly can't live without.

The naïveté treasures satisfaction
That lies within this place.
I crave a high of fresh goodbyes
To give me some escape.

The chasing, though, won't be enough.
I'll search for something new,
And end up right back at the start
To see that all I need, I knew.



Winding Road | Elizabeth Kijowski | Photograph

The Body

ELISABETH GARRATT

Fire

descends

Penetrating the water

Extinguishing the day
on the bed of the horizon

sending ripples

and sensuous sighs

heating

beating

her bare body

She thirsts

for the waters of the earth

Reflecting

Every inch of

her mountainous body

its peaks

and caverns

Teeming with life



Series 1, Are You Sure There's Hope? | Hannah Mobley | Acrylic on Canvas

To The Soul

MARCELLA AXELRAD

Iridescent bubbles
In a milky snow

Glass enclosed universes
Centered around black holes

As mysterious as the
Depths of the sea

But they are no longer
Mysteries to me

I know every sparkle.



Father and Son

JACOB BERGMAN

Dust hissed through the knee-high grass and eddied into hot convulsing columns of grit that prickled Albert's face and made him grimace and wipe powdery mucus out of the corners of his eyes with his kerchief. He rubbed his lips and spat. Grains of chalky dirt ground between his molars. He spat again, then squinted at the plain from beneath the punctured shade of a sagging leather brim. Beyond his father riding ahead the earth sprawled in an undulating mat of baked grass and then bulged with rock-studded hills made gray by the distance and the dust. Above him the sun shone with no clouds to filter its heat.

Albert loosened the straps on his saddlebag. The leather was hot. He lifted the flap open and reached inside and pulled out a wooden canteen of water. The cork released with a squeal. Albert drank. Sparkling beads traced wet veiny trails through the dust on his chin.

Albert's father twisted on his horse to look back at him. The man's beard was powdery.

"Get up here close to me, son," he said.

Albert nudged his horse to a trot.

The man pointed. "See that break in the grass up there?"

Albert nodded.

"Could be person." The man reached for the rifle slung on his back with thin rope and lifted it over his head and held it across his saddle. "You stay right here by me."

They approached the spot of depressed grass. A shaded dimple in a rasping yellow ocean.

Albert wiped his face with his sleeve.



Some Horses | Emilee French | Block Print

His horse blinked away flies.

As they neared the spot the man stood in his stirrups and craned his neck.

“Ho,” he said. He sat down. “You stay right there, Albert. Don’t move.”

Albert brought his horse to a stop.

The man went on, slowly, then stopped too. He tilted back his hat and surveyed something in the grass Albert could not see.

The man grinned.

“Would you look at that. Still gasping. It’s all right, Albert. He can’t hurt you now.”

Albert eased his horse forward and halted beside his father.

There was a thin young man lying on his back in the grass. He was naked. Sweat glazed his brown skin and caught the sunlight in rhythmic glimmers on his stomach as he sucked in air with hurting, panicked heaves. A neat hole in his side oozed blood onto a congealing stain in the dirt. More blood ran from the corners of his mouth as he opened it and closed it, open and close, open and close, flicking his enormous animal eyes from the man to Albert and back again.

“You know what that is, son?” the man said.

“No.”

“That’s an Indian.”

Albert had never seen an Indian before. He had heard men talking about them in Independence and calling them names he did not understand. But this one didn’t look cruel like the men had said. He looked very small and very afraid.

Albert’s father dismounted and stood over the Indian and looked at him for a while. The Indian’s long hair laid around his head in a wispy oil-black puddle. A bubbling sound escaped his throat. He clutched at the grass.

Albert watched the Indian.

A wounded dog.

Choking and bleeding and dying.

“They really are as beastly as they say,” the man murmured. The man licked his lips and blinked. His trembling fingers

reached for his knife on his belt, stopped, then reached again. The blade was so bright it hurt Albert's eyes.

The man blinked once more, then pressed his knee into the Indian's chest. He grabbed a fistful of the shiny hair and pulled it taut. The Indian gurgled louder, gripping the man's forearm. His bare feet writhed weakly.

Albert sat atop his horse and did not move.

The man's blade slid into smooth skin just above the forehead. The Indian tried to scream but only choked. Veins in his neck jutted like huge pulsing worms and his eyes rolled like a horse's and he arched his back in a maniacal contortion of agony, kicking up clumps of earth with his heels.

The man pressed his knee harder. His nostrils flared. Sweat quivered on the end of his nose.

A strip of scalp peeled away before the knife's sawing blade. Steel knocked against bone.

The Indian coughed a spurt of blood.

With a final jerk of the knife the strip broke from the bloody skull. The man stood and stepped back and nearly tripped, holding the flap of flesh in his hand. He gaped at the Indian, panting, then looked at his trophy. The hair fell through his fingers and fluttered in the wind.

For a long time the man said nothing.

At his feet the Indian clawed the grass and opened his mouth full of bloodstained teeth as if to scream then closed it, his lips convulsing, sputtering red foam. A tear rolled from the corner of his clamped eyelid.

"They do it to us," the man said. He looked at Albert and smiled faintly, showing his gums. His eyes bulged. "They do it to us."

The man re-sheathed his knife and smeared his hand across his mouth and walked a wide path around the Indian back to his horse. He stuffed the dripping scalp into his saddlebag.

"Let's go, boy. The buzzards will take care of him now."

The man spurred his horse to a trot and did not glance back.

Albert watched his father, then looked down at the Indian dying in the grass. Its eyes were open. It looked at Albert. A fly twitched on the blood drying around its mouth.

“Wa...”

It raised a sinewy arm.

“Wat...”

Its mouth opened and closed again, blood rattling in its throat, fingers grasping at nothing. The sun glowed on its skin.

“Wat...”

Albert kicked his horse and rode to catch up with his father.





there's this

Thing

inside of me

i want it gone

but i don't make it go away

in fact

i encourage it to stay

My Love

STEPHANIE LEVASSEUR

Be still, my heart, do not cry
Thus, bleed my soul back to life
Do not sob, shatter, or break
Agonizing time it will take
To breathe again
Sweet oxygen
For now, in dark stillness lay
Faint steady beat for company
Be still, my heart, know your worth
Life is love and love hurts



Look Up | Elizabeth Kijowski | Photograph

Lipstick Stains

ELISA KLAASSEN

I remember the red lipstick stains
of the kiss marks on the mirror of
my high school bathroom.

Shaped like pistachio shells—
ready to be cracked
and consumed.

I think of the girl I barely knew—
fresh-faced and quiet in my geometry class.
The whispers about the baby she conceived
in that high school bathroom.

Smudged lip marks on the mirror
ready to bare their teeth at her
as she kissed the chapped lips of the boy
who would make her happy
this time.

A symbol of love left by one of her friends
who would ruin her reputation—
a friend who had learned her own botched-up form of love
from her daddy
when he crept in her room in the dark—
where no mirrors could reflect the truth.

In the hallway,
quiet whispers that she heard and tried to ignore
as she stumbled by—clutching her textbooks—
belly swelling like a tumor that she wanted to cut out.
Now, remembering the rounded shapes of those lipstick marks,
I recall the leaves on my little plant cutting in its brown bowl
shaped just like the bloodred lipstick stains,
curved on each side, coming to two points,
with a crease where a mouth can open
to speak or scream or kiss.

Green this time—fresh and new, with no smudges.
Only two leaves have sprouted from the stem,
vulnerable amidst a world that moves to crush them.
With each new day, the two leaves stretch
towards the light of the sun on my balcony,
like that girl whose name I don't remember
and her little baby, who sprang up out of that not-love.
The leaves reach out in hopes of a heaven
and a love that lasts longer than the
lipstick stains that the janitor washed away
in the morning.



Sweet as Honey | Marcella Axelrad | Photograph

Inner Eyes

ASHLEY JEMMOTT

When facing the eventual decision,
To release the person inside you
Take a seat and do careful revision,
Clear your mind and think it through.

To release the person inside you
The conundrum that consumes your thoughts
Clear your mind and think it through
or take a chance by casting lots.

The conundrum that consumes your thoughts.
She has been down there for way too long
and this thought keeps your stomach in knots.
In your mind you always knew it was wrong.

She has been down there for way too long.
But she has eyes on everything you do
and whispers to you what you did wrong
What do you expect from the real you?

She can do everything that you do
But can you trust her not to cause confusion?
Maybe give her a chance to be you
and then let things come to their own conclusion.

When facing the eventual decision,
take a seat and do careful revision.



For Freedom's Sake

KYRA BLAIR

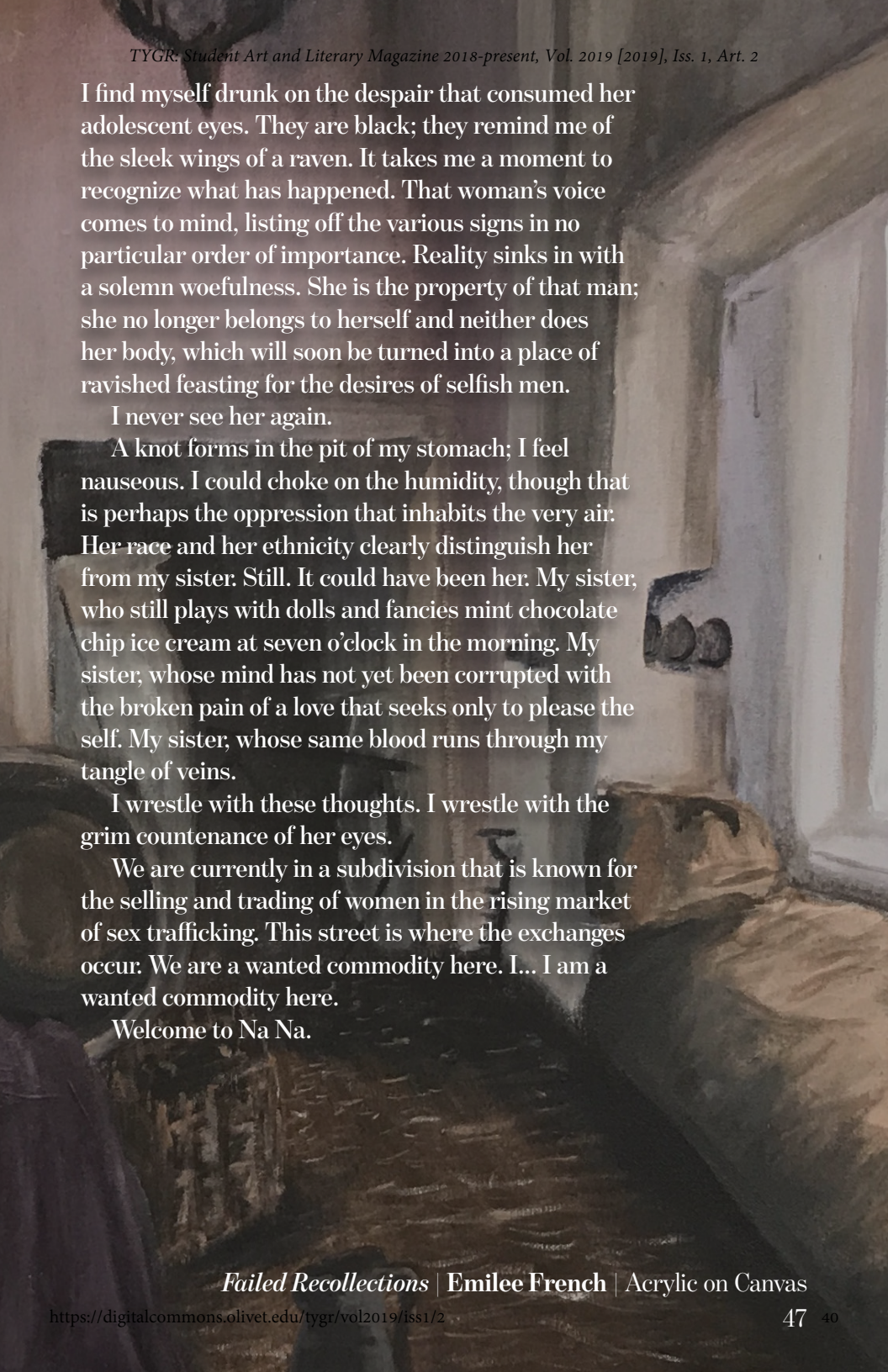
I am not quite sure what I was expecting. It was not this.

The compact avenues of Bangkok, Thailand do not resemble the familiar city streets of Chicago. Here, the buildings are dense and compact; the worn concrete and plaster that was used to fabricate each edifice is unkempt and falling apart at the touch. The paint is sweating in the thick afternoon heat. I think of myself in the same manner, shedding parts of myself as my body perspires. This is a fitting home for the manifold of bars and strip clubs that inhabit this particular area of the city. Their very presence screams of their inner vulgarity. A multitude of vehicles crowd the narrow streets, attempting to weave in and out of the busy, midday traffic. The sidewalks are filled with a moving sea of dark skin and the consistent hum of a language whose sound is foreign and unknown.

I am a minority here. I find this to be a strange concept.

I walk behind the others, careful not to fall too far behind. We are supposed to be praying in silence as we journey back to the train station; I cannot bring myself to do so, and even if I could, I do not believe my words would suffice. My attention is suddenly commanded by a young girl of southeast Asian descent. Her youth beholds her. She appears to be the age of my sister; perhaps even younger than her thirteen years. A white man takes her from the doorway of a dingy, dark building and the two begin to walk side by side down the street. His hand is pressed against her back, guiding her. This insignificant gesture is demanding of his authority. He is clearly older than she by a number of years; his fitted, gray suit is a stark contrast to her patterned smock. Its contents, both faded and threadbare, consume her petite frame with little effort.

Within moments, they disappear from my eyesight.



I find myself drunk on the despair that consumed her adolescent eyes. They are black; they remind me of the sleek wings of a raven. It takes me a moment to recognize what has happened. That woman's voice comes to mind, listing off the various signs in no particular order of importance. Reality sinks in with a solemn woefulness. She is the property of that man; she no longer belongs to herself and neither does her body, which will soon be turned into a place of ravished feasting for the desires of selfish men.

I never see her again.

A knot forms in the pit of my stomach; I feel nauseous. I could choke on the humidity, though that is perhaps the oppression that inhabits the very air. Her race and her ethnicity clearly distinguish her from my sister. Still. It could have been her. My sister, who still plays with dolls and fancies mint chocolate chip ice cream at seven o'clock in the morning. My sister, whose mind has not yet been corrupted with the broken pain of a love that seeks only to please the self. My sister, whose same blood runs through my tangle of veins.

I wrestle with these thoughts. I wrestle with the grim countenance of her eyes.

We are currently in a subdivision that is known for the selling and trading of women in the rising market of sex trafficking. This street is where the exchanges occur. We are a wanted commodity here. I... I am a wanted commodity here.

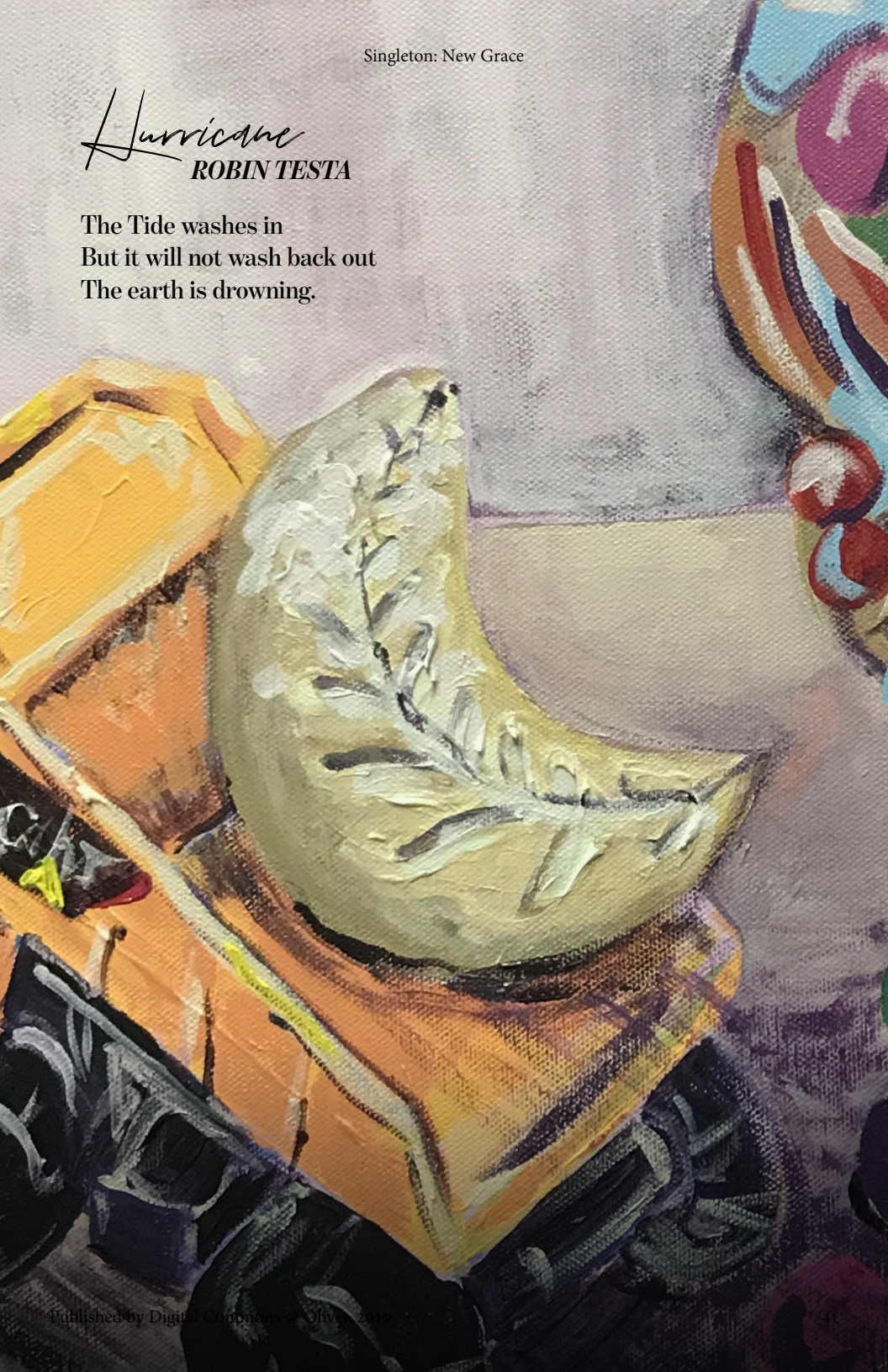
Welcome to Na Na.

Singleton: New Grace

Hurricane

ROBIN TESTA

The Tide washes in
But it will not wash back out
The earth is drowning.





DUMP | Emilee French | Acrylic on canvas

Protection

DANIELLE SNUCKEL

The higher I climbed, the freer I felt.
The sky was a breathtaking blue, perfect for a cool
January day in the mountains.
Those mountains stood taller than
the most confident beings,
as if they were shielding me from
what lay beyond their peaks.

I could feel the sweat slowly dripping down my brow.
The heat of the sun engulfed itself
around my green sweater, the kind of green
that can only be found in the lush of the trees.
I didn't know whether to look up above or around me;
I feared missing out
on even the smallest sliver of the terrain.

The clouds hovered over the mountains
like a soft blanket of protection,
accompanied by the sun that gave life to everything
below it.
It was as if God was the sun and He used His creation
to protect me from what lived beyond the walls.
At that moment,
I knew what it felt like to take a breath of fresh air.



Marta's Ghost

CARA TRIEBOLD

Mom decided to sleep on the couch again. She swore she could hear rustling by her window and dragged her comforter and pillow over to the couch. I watched her shaky little body under the covers, barely making an indent in the soft cushions. She was just scared of sleeping alone in the room Dad had deserted. Maybe she felt guilty. Maybe she should.

She called to me, her voice small and scared.

“Marta, check by the window. There’s something... or someone.”

I crossed my arms.

“Mom, seriously, what do you think you saw?”

A ghost?”

She didn’t respond. Only sank deeper into the couch until I couldn’t see the outline of her body at all.

There was nothing to do in the house. Dad’s things were packed in old cardboard boxes, crowded in a heap by the door. It was raining out and I didn’t feel like moving them out to the dumpster yet. I imagined how it would be if it was Dad who had stayed and Mom who had gone. Maybe that would have made more sense. And then I imagined if I left. I knew I never would. But sometimes I liked to imagine what I would do if I was as tired and old and fed-up as Dad had been. I liked to imagine what I would do with no one to take care of. No one’s paranoia to wrestle with every moment of every day.

Mom called to me again from her nest.

“Marta, there’s someone there. Please check. By the window.”

“No, Mom,” I said. I watched the stain on the ceiling drip silently into the bowl on our kitchen counter. It annoyed me, like everything else. Mom called to me again. I am sure as hell not going to feel guilty, I thought.

I sat silently using my reading light, flipping the pages of



Fill My Soul | Abigail Baker | Charcoal

my book quietly. She would be asleep soon. By the time she was really asleep, I wasn't tired anymore. The full moon shone through the front window like a giant yellow eye, wide awake. I wandered around the house. There wasn't really much room to wander. I ended up in my mother's room, half bare now with Dad's bookshelves gone. Moonlight lit the room in a dirty yellow glow. The curtains blew back from the window as the air vent started to hum. Across the street, Mrs. Hamm's porch light was flickering as it always did. She'd forgotten to take in her trash cans again. My eyes followed the shape of a raccoon as it passed across her garage door. As I leaned against the window sill, a pale woman stepped in front of the window. Her nearness made me jump. Stupid, I thought. Mom was making me jumpy now. It was ridiculous.

The woman was in our yard, looking, as I was, at Mrs. Hamm's porch light. There was obviously a normal explanation to this. The woman turned, her face filling the window. It was heart-shaped with huge, perfectly round eyes. She reached her hand to the glass. She had my mother's thin lips and pointy chin. She had my father's long nose. Her messy hair was like mine. I recognized the look of guilt in her eyes, the one I pretended not to see in the mirror. She shook her head, her hand was splayed across the glass.

The bushes rustled as she disappeared.

"Marta," my mom called from the next room. "I heard something again. Can you please check?"



Pieces ABIGAIL BAKER

Just as air gives life yet exists invisible,
Though vital we are never to be seen.
For what is a looking glass,
Without a face on which to gleam?

You see, our purpose is not in ourselves,
It's in the hand that holds us up.
The glory belongs to the king,
Not the bearer who holds his cup.

We are 9 billion shards of glass,
A fragment of a mirror:
Meant to come together, you see,
To make the image clearer.

So let us rejoice in a truth once spoken,
Though shattered, and scattered, and wretchedly
broken,

In a day to come we ragged shards
Shall come together one by one,
United to glorify the Son.

