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## TYGR 2013: Student Art and Literary Magazine

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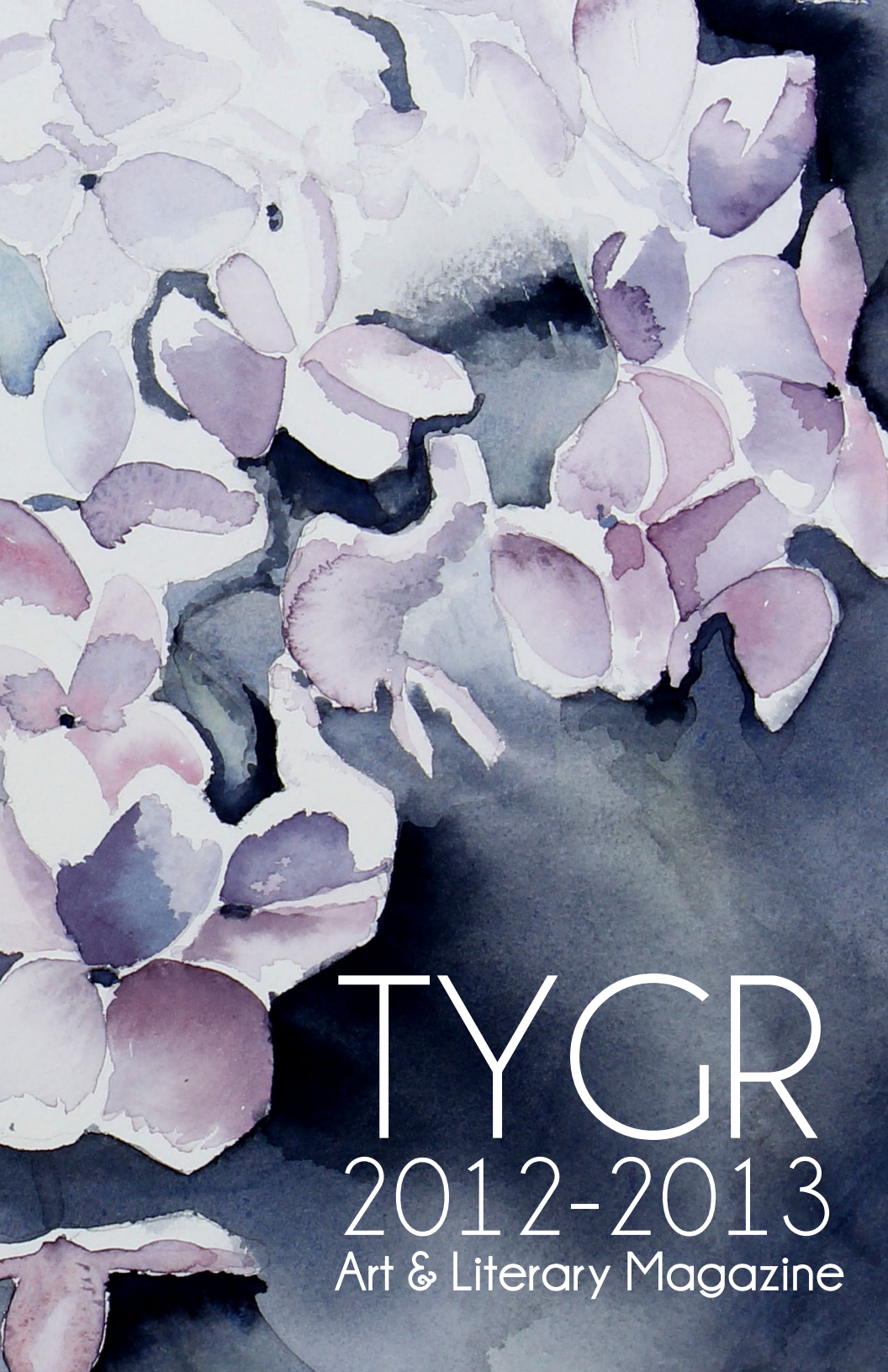
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# TYGR

2012-2013

Art & Literary Magazine





# TYGR

## 2012-2013

Art & Literary Magazine

Department of English & Modern Languages  
and the Department of Art & Digital Media

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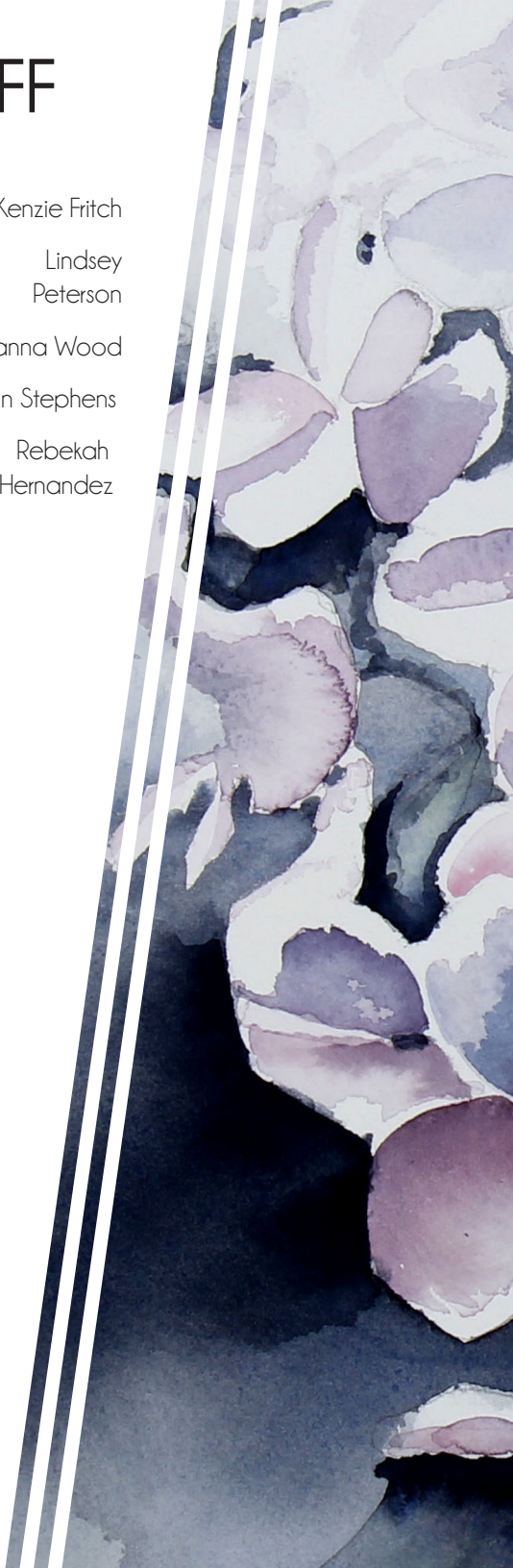
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COVER: *Hydrangeas* by Olivia Cheatham

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# THE TYGER

By William Blake, 1794

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 sieze the fire?  
And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? & 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 watered 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?

# LETTER FROM THE EDITIORS

Thank you for picking up this year's edition of the TYGR! The TYGR is Olivet's art and literary magazine, and every year it showcases the work of the University's top creative and literary minds. We hope that you will enjoy the variety of perspectives, mediums, and genres represented in the following pieces, as well as take time to consider the common strings that run across them all.

This publication is greatly indebted to its dedicated faculty advisors: Professors Jill Forrestal, Patrick Kirk, and Dr. Bill Greiner. Our student reader-scorers are another critical part of the TYGR, and we thank them for all their help. A final thank you goes to the rest of our staff: our art photographer Diana Wood, intern Erin Stephens, and photographer understudy Rebekah Hernandez.

Enjoy!

McKenzie Fritch and Lindsey Peterson

ARTWORK BY:  
Shanna Hoekstra







# SEVEN YEARS

By: Alexandra VanDehey

Your body rebuilds itself,  
All new cells,  
Every seven years.  
I had been reborn almost exactly two times  
before I met you.  
And if I do not see you again for seven years from this day,  
Then in November of my 24th year,  
You will not have touched  
a single piece of me.

And yet...  
And yet,  
In seven years,  
I know my skin will still be able to feel  
the smooth calluses of your palms  
the fog of your breath on my neck while you slept  
and the tears you cried, soaking my chest,  
when you could no longer stand your own mind.  
In seven years,  
my heart will still skip when I hear your name  
And the blood will still rush to my face  
at the thought of your subtle smile  
I'll still get high when I read the letters  
that I've pathetically collected over the course of our contact  
In seven years your words will still touch me, choke me,  
make my pulse race and my skin prickle,  
and bring you here, next to me, loving me, always.

I know this because I felt you before  
I've felt you for all of the years that I've lived.  
You are cells and I am cells, but We...  
We are souls, intertwined, outside of time  
Our breath and tears are imprinted in ether  
And no amount of rebirth has or will  
ever rip you away from me.

Seven years  
Or seven thousand  
The entire earth can be reborn  
And I will still feel you.



ARTWORK BY:  
Tori Miulli

[illegible]

Whatever the sex of the visage,  
Male and Female,  
Mother and Father,  
Son and Daughter.

11.

Fresh from the womb  
or elderly dilapidated,  
an age is untold behind this mask.  
The talons of Corvus dance across  
the eyes of the wise;

While new-born's skin as smooth as plush silk.

III.

Dark or light,  
Black or white,

A rainbow of shades.

From the Yellow of the East,  
To the Charcoal of the jungles,  
To the Chestnut of the West.

Does the color of a face  
Define our own true race?

IV.

Signs of age slice through the black,  
Drops of honey mist the golden locks.

Strings of grey lie lifeless and meek,  
curls of chocolate gleam glossy and chic.

Blazing reds burn bright in the sun,  
The shining scalp of a man who has none.

 $V_i$ 

Jagged flying Vs and bushy clouds of fur,  
As if from a bear,  
or wolf,

ARTWORK BY:  
COLIN MAHNKE



or hare.

When in a rapt contemplation of a thought,  
To the roof they often rise,  
Moistened with sweat,  
When the temple often cries.  
One may decide to augment,  
with a curious look of confusion.  
Whereas the other lies stationary,  
without a single intrusion.

VI.

Windows to the soul,  
Flooded in hues of cool ocean blue.  
Reflecting the earth and Mother herself,  
In rich greens of olive and pine.  
Melting caramel engulfing a cloud of ebony,  
Petrifying with a stare,  
Of umber and mahogany.  
Some must hide behind  
shards of healing glass,  
To improve the broken ball,  
or simply a touch of class.

VII.

The downward slope of a hooked,  
the shifting angle of a crooked.  
A Moses descendent is long and arched,  
A new-born's: small and buttoned.

VIII.

Specks of ginger  
from the sun,  
spackle the bridge and cheeks above.  
The auburn flakes  
rise from the skin,  
to dot the face  
from deep within.

IX.

Attached to head  
Or free to fly,  
Pierced to the brim  
Or hidden and shy.

The waves of flesh  
makes up the lobes,  
A cruise down the canal  
To the beating of the drum.

X.

Curled to snarl,  
Pursed to hate.  
Wide for joy,  
Gasped in shock.  
Smirk of Sarcasm or deceit,  
in hope, envy or defeat.

XI.

Engraved like divots  
On the mowed green grass,  
Like chips or cracks,  
In a smooth piece of glass.  
These craters of the damned  
Etched deep around the smile,  
In those fortunate ones  
Who have two or one in style.

XII.

Squares of ivory and porcelain,  
Fragile and frail.  
Tracks of metal align  
the jagged and twisted  
white or yellowed trail.  
Like pearls plucked  
from the oyster's hold,  
gaps from the missing,  
dingy, rotted, or old.

XIII.

Everyone looks different,  
Due to our heritage and genes.  
Everyone is changing,  
Likes the leaves of the trees.  
Everyone has their own,  
Identity, self, and place.  
Every one is unique,  
Your own,  
Your face.



ARTWORK BY: Shelby Lakins

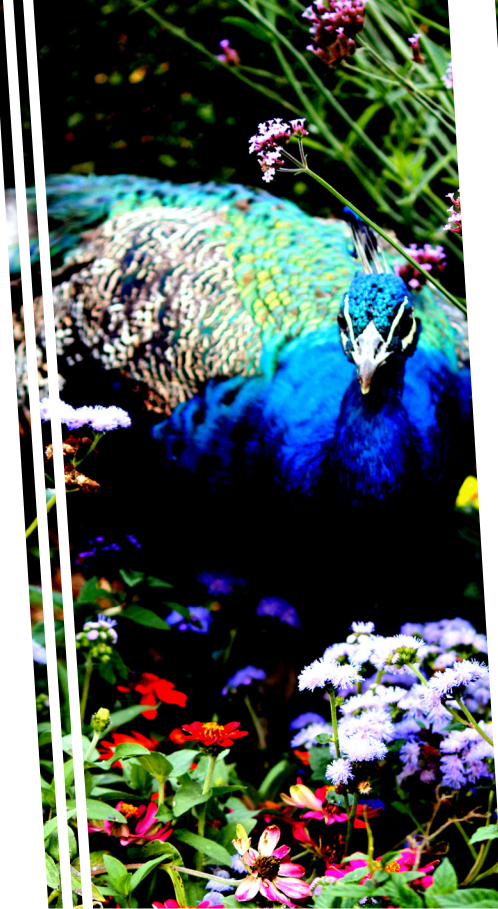
## PRIMA BALLERINAS

By: Shayla Hancock

Leotards becoming their blushing pink satin skin  
 The pretty damsels of dancing whirl.  
 Ribbon laced legs dainty and thin,  
 The bustling tulle of shimmering tornados twirl.

The pretty damsels of dancing whirl  
 Chasse, Fouvette, Releve, feet sickling  
 The bustling tulle of shimmering tornados twirl,  
 Jete, fondu, pile, self-portrait delicately crippling.

Ribbon laced legs dainty and thin  
 Leotards becoming their blushing pink satin skin.



ARTWORK BY: Shanna Hoekstra



ARTWORK BY: Dianna Wood

## A DYING BREED

By: Paige Thomas

What do polar bears and barbers  
have in common?

We're a dying breed.

We've become stranded on our  
own melting icecap of a business  
alone and abandoned  
but the WWF

is not going to try and save us  
nobody wants a stuffed barber  
to play with  
that's for sure

We are no longer wanted  
and we can't adapt

to compete with the grizzly bears  
of hair stylists and salons

Our habitat is getting smaller and smaller  
and one day we're just going to disappear  
What will the world do without us?





# CELL 2100

BY: RACHEL TIMMER

## Day - 6

The smell of cleaner, of sickness, and of blood floods into my nose. The guard nods hello to mom, now a frequent visitor. He won't be seeing me for a long time, maybe never. A pretty prison, that's all this is. Yeah, I know that it's for my benefit. Still who likes to be locked up in a small room, without having the chance to leave? A prison, but with windows, I can't leave. Yet what have I done wrong?

The room is nicer than I thought it would be. The prison installed cameras on the rooftop and around the outside of the building. I can watch the world going on around me. It's going on without me.

## Day -5

First thing, 0400 brings the sucking of blood. They draw my blood through the line that they put in earlier in the week. Funny, I didn't like vampires before this and I sure don't like them now. Stealing blood from one who needs more of it. Later they'll probably give me some more blood from someone else. Let me keep it and I might not need so much.

The pump starts with poison and fluids. The lady smiles as she hooks it up to me. "It's for your own good," she says smiling. How can she smile; she might be killing me. I don't want this poison. It should be gone, leave me alone. It might make me even sicker. Why are you trying to make me even sicker? I wasn't sick before this. So leave it alone, just let me live.

ARTWORK BY:

Carolyn Goettisch

trying to make me even sicker? I wasn't sick before this. So leave it alone, just let me live.

#### Day -4

It's only been two days, and I'm going stir crazy. I need to get out of this room, but leaving will kill me. Only a 2100 neutrophil count is what I need, yet that is days away, maybe even weeks away. They shouldn't have started to kill me. They should have left well enough alone. Yet they couldn't. And yes, I know that without this I would have died, died in pain and without the blood that I needed. Still why did they have to start now? Why did I have to be imprisoned now? I was going to go to prom with my boy. Now I can't. I won't walk down to get my diploma, but I'll still graduate. They do this to help me reach my college diploma. Still I just want to leave, leave me alone. Let me die. Life can't be worth this pain.

Prom would have been gorgeous. I was going to wear a forest green floor length gown. My boy, Andrew, was going to take me. Now we don't even talk. He doesn't want to be seen with someone who is sick. That's okay. All we had was fun together. Still, that green dress would have been so much fun to wear.

#### Day -3

Vomiting is the worst thing in the world. Vomiting blood even worse. I know that everyone has his or her problems, but theirs seem so much easier. Why can't I just have boyfriend problems? I know that I probably couldn't handle them. I know that I can handle this. They say it has to get worse before it gets better. All ready wardens. That's the light at the end of this tunnel. At least I can see it. Some kids can't. I wish that I could show it to them.

I can see that light at the end of the tunnel. The light that says freedom from pokes, prods, and prisons. Soon that day will come, then a yearly visit to see the old wardens. That's the light at the end of this tunnel. At least I can see it. Some kids can't. I wish that I could show it to them.

Someday I wonder if I could come back here. I'm sure that they need something that I can give. Wouldn't it be wonderful to find that I could help some of these kids? First I need to make it thru this. It shouldn't be that hard. People have done it before me, and they'll do it after me.

#### Day -1

My pillow is filled with hair. The hair that's left on the top of my head itches like crazy. My mom brought a hat to help cover it. Nothing helps the itching. It was one of my greatest prides, swinging past my waist. Now we have to cut it before it gets too annoying. One of the ladies brought in a pair of clippers. She runs it through my head. To me it just seems like a bad prison movie. Shave the head and hid the person away from the world. Make them feel like they aren't human.

I mentioned prison to mom and she brought over Tangled. This girl breaks out of her home and away from her mother. Here I sit and watch it with my mother in the chair beside me. I don't want to run away from her, but myself, my disease. Unlike Rapunzel I don't think that's possible, maybe someday but not today. If only it was today. I am tired. This body has been pushed and poisoned to the extreme. It can't be pushed much farther without

giving up. Now all it is doing is waiting, waiting to receive. While it waits, it rests hoping that the transplant will work so that it can live. I'm hoping with it as well.

## Day 0

They are making me wait for life. I know we've waited for months to find a donor. Still these last couples of hours has been torture. They say it will come at 2100. That used to be early, now it seems late. I'll make it though. I want to see it. Maybe need to see it.

Life flowing through. It will have a long journey, over and along the vessels. Soon it will find its way home, into my bones. It won't fix me, but maybe it will help. Soon, they'll start looking for cells, brand new cells, mine, whole and healthy. Yet the hardest part is still to come. Waiting for the freedom to leave, to jump, to breath unmasked.

ARTWORK BY:  
Dianna Wood



# TO THE WINDOW

By: Dana Peterson

A fistful of speckled dust was found  
in a scarred broken hand, clenched.  
Shards of shrapnel left no  
distinguishable trait;  
A dust-covered alphabet etched into metal,  
finally enlisted to serve its sole purpose:  
identification.  
A burned photo we believed could be you  
rested on cracked lips.  
Glittering dust, illuminating gun powdered smog  
across a chargrilled stain, once  
rolling carpets of green and gold;  
A mark of shame on human history.

To the sweet lady, a mother maybe:  
I was not there to pull him away,  
Out of the fire, through a cumbrous  
blanket of shredded metal,—grated like  
parmesan over spaghetti—beyond  
a choking haze, over hills  
teeming with vessels amidst red streams.  
Bile rising, stomach churning,  
head reeling, dizzy at the toll list...  
I keep recording.

The keys are my profession,  
Clattering on niceties of war.  
Clickity Clackety Clack. Click Click,  
Clack, Click.  
One, now two, three more.  
Rriipppp, crinkle, fold, seal  
and your note is ready,  
dearest madam. Signed, stamped and shipped  
with your address handwritten in  
neat cursive loops.  
My nimble fingers dance onwards,  
For I am merely the messenger  
of bitter contempt.





## RAIN AND BOW

By: Sarah Ready

The scent of rain and dew,  
Stench, yet sweet.  
Calm, the color of a baby  
boy's room in the sky.  
Thin cotton ball clouds,  
With a ruler slightly bent.  
The majesty,  
Fills me with  
Overwhelming joy.

Crayola coloring box.  
Magnificent colors of  
Roseberry and Tangerine,  
Lemon with Baby Royal,  
Sea Foam and a tint of lavender.  
Blended, mixed.  
Light and transparent, but bolder  
and bright.  
Not just a design,  
God's hand.

Promise, covenant,  
Yahweh made to His people.  
Full of hope of the  
Passage to heaven  
With the pull from the Father.  
Truth, reality.  
Only God.



# DECLARATION OF DECLINATION

By: Brenda Jones

I have refused to play my part,  
To say my lines,  
Or to wear my made-up face.  
I have been living the lie that de-  
serves to die.

My character is dead.  
I killed her myself,  
Murdered backstage  
Behind a blood-red curtain,  
Away from your prying eyes.  
You may have heard  
unscripted screams  
From us both.

Now,  
I sit quietly on the edge of the stage  
And stare back at the audience.  
Settled down  
To watch the real performance.



ARTWORK BY:  
Sam Wagner



ARTWORK BY:  
Hope Olsen



# ETHANOL

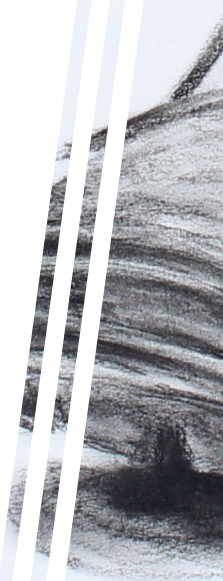
By: Andrew Leavitt

We were promised something more to love  
And something more to hold  
We were promised kids and picket fence and a woman  
to get old  
with us and watch the shining sun set down into the sky  
And instead we'll be content until we die.

-

We were promised money and success  
and American dream highs.  
We were promised cars and truth  
and honest people advertize  
Their materialist  
'merican dream  
and sink into the lies  
Of our fathers' broken weary dying sighs.

ARTWORK BY:  
Natasha Hojnicky





# Silver Lining

By: Nicole DeVries

We crayons have dreams  
to be grasped in grubby fists  
and smothered over paper-- ignoring the lines.  
Instead, imprisoned.

We have no chance for our dreams. We are  
all exposed, glued back to back and  
side to side. Hot air applied.  
Melting, dripping.

As if this destruction of our dreams  
is a torrential storm. Looming,  
with thick rain drops like our melting wax.  
Discouraged, drowning.

This storm cloud changing us  
and we are no longer recognizable.  
Pausing, thinking, finally realizing,  
Canvas, unlined.







# Compliments

By: Erin Stephens

*Dedicated to all those who love me anyway.*

Character

YOUNG WOMAN

Scene

The stage is completely empty and dark except for a single spotlight that shines brightly on the YOUNG WOMAN who stands front and center. The YOUNG WOMAN wears a black, floor-length gown and a string of pearls. Her hair is tucked up elegantly. The YOUNG WOMAN is smiling brightly as she looks directly out at the audience, nodding her head as if to acknowledge thunderous applause. She curtsies a couple of times and then blows the audience a kiss as she gracefully moves stage right out of the spotlight. The spotlight remains while the whole stage becomes dimly lit. The YOUNG WOMAN's steps slow to a brief stop and her smile fades as she glances behind her shoulder at the beam of light. She straightens, turns her attention forward again, smiling, and quickens her pace. The spotlight fades away. The YOUNG WOMAN speaks as though she is addressing a figure that stands far stage right; the figure is completely invisible to the audience.

YOUNG WOMAN:

What did you think? [She comes to a stop in front of the invisible figure. For a brief moment, she listens erectly as if it were beginning to respond but then interjects pleasantly] No, don't tell me. Don't want to spoil the moment. [She sighs happily] I thought my heart was going to flutter right out of my chest and flit up past the clouds. [Beat] Did you hear the applause? [Looks out toward the audience] The ceiling was shaking. They were calling my name and standing on their feet. [Beat. She looks slowly back toward stage right as she speaks] Were you applauding? Oh, [Laughs lightly at herself. Warmly with eyes averted from the figure] it doesn't matter. I know what you think. [The YOUNG WOMAN looks up quickly as if the figure were again beginning to speak. Suddenly course and fearful, she cuts it off with a quick elevation of her hand] No. [Forces a quick smile] Don't tell me. I—I know. [The YOUNG WOMAN turns fluidly to face center stage] When I'm standing there, [The spotlight comes up again, front and center] in that spotlight, you're so proud. So happy. I mean. . . [Turns quickly back to face the invisible figure, despair creeping into her voice] You are. [Beat. Then, taking a step back, with passion] No. Don't tell me. I can't stand to hear the words. I can't stand to listen. [Is choked up. Beat. Smiling, with tears in her voice,



ARTWORK BY:  
Lincy Panackal



more gently] You'll say I'm wonderful. I don't just wish it. I—I know. You'll say I'm wonderful [Beat. Whispers] and then I'll never be good enough again. [Her body grows rigid with despair. With a forceful hand-movement that strikes through the air she yells] Never! [The YOUNG WOMAN turns and begins to run, weeping, stage left. The stage lights dim to a faint glow. Suddenly, a spotlight is on her. She stops, startled. Her body crumples in on itself as she looks up at the light. She darts out of the spotlight and runs upstage. The spotlight fades but another appears in front of the YOUNG WOMAN's face. She stumbles backward but immediately turns to run downstage. The spotlight follows at her heels. As she runs, she strains her neck around to look back at it. Finally, with a cry, she sinks to her knees and buries her face in her hands. The YOUNG WOMAN is enveloped by the spotlight. She weeps as her body presses itself into a smaller ball. After a moment, a brighter spotlight lights the stage right area where the invisible figure stands. The YOUNG WOMAN quiets and looks over at it slowly. She rises; her posture is bent and her shoulders sag in toward one another. The spotlight in which she has been crouching fades. The stage lights begin to glow more brightly. She walks stage right with fearful, gingerly placed steps. She stops just outside the spotlight's beam, her weight drawn back as if the light were pressing against her. A beat. She straightens and addresses the spotlight. Rigid, venomous yet resigned] Oh! Go on! [Leans toward the light, yells] Go on! Tell me that I'm beautiful! [Spins quickly so that her back faces the spotlight] Tell me that I'm [Spits the word] splendid. [Her eyes slip toward the ground. A little softer, shaking her head, sadly] That, this time, you are so proud. I did it. You're happy. [Inclines her head tightly] But you don't want to be disappointed. [A definitive shake of her head] Oh, no. [Swallows hard, faces right again] Next time I have to be better. [With a sweeping arm movement] And maybe I'll do it again [Beat] but I'll always have to keep trying. I'll never be good enough. [She staggers, holding her chest in pain and turns to take a few steps away from the spotlight. Crying, to herself] Why do I care so much? [Beat. Laughs wildly with tears in her voice. Tosses her head and turns back. With a bitter smile] I don't. So don't tell me. [Walks slowly toward the light. Explaining with deliberate hand movements, bitterly] I don't care if you think I'm graceful and accomplished. I don't want to hear I'm lovely. Why would you do that to me? I don't want you to tell me I'm perfect. [Holds up a finger, dangerously] Do not tell me I'm perfect. [Beat. Takes a deep breath. Turns slightly, still looking at the place where the invisible figure stands but pointing front and center. Begging and growing in intensity until she yells] Just tell me that even if I walk into that spotlight and fall on my face and off the stage. . . [Quietly, hopefully pleading] That it doesn't matter. [Long beat. Her head and shoulders sag, she breathes hard. She looks up slowly at the spotlight and then straightens. The YOUNG WOMAN steps into the spotlight. The bright smile returns. She addresses the audience hopefully] Well, what did you think?

[The spotlight is extinguished]



ARTWORK BY:  
Alisha Evans



ARTWORK BY:  
Jenny Mercer



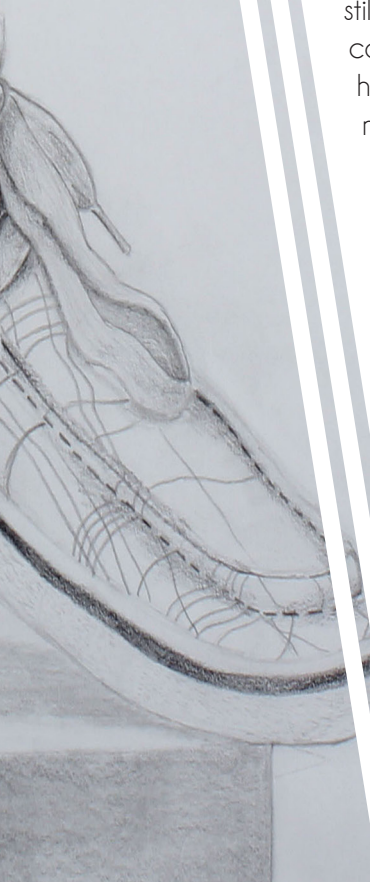




# Down By the River

By: Andrew Leavitt

We'll come with strips of clothing and cast them away,  
heaped in dirt and grass, under trees and hanging from  
reaching branches. We'll jump, make splash and touch and  
laugh and scream and swim and chase and love all that  
we're able. And as the sun falls beneath the sky, we'll shake  
in cold and build fire like little indians with red, dripping  
flesh and dark eyes painted darker who call nature as a  
friend or companion. Or mother. We'll dance around  
tongues of heat and laugh and sing and dry our skin  
with winds of frantic, apathetic motion, holding hands  
like little children clasping on for anything they can like  
infant's hand and finger, yours. We'll fall down in soft  
grass, in dim lit tents and sleeping bags with coals  
still smoldering beside, casting stretching shadows  
continuing our labored dances. We'll breathe and  
hold beside trees and night air, burnt leaf smell of  
natural destruction: beauty. We'll grab to skin and  
flesh and tongues and drink, be merry 'til waking's  
sung its lasting pure and waking image. 'Til drifting  
off and talking nonsense, tongues tied with the  
exhaustion. Of sleep.



ARTWORK BY:  
Megan Lingle



ARTWORK BY: Cassidy Glandon



ARTWORK BY: Joel Andrade

## Swum

By: Garrett Corpier

Swim, swimming, swum, I have swum.  
I have swum like the boy in the drainage ditch,  
I am penetrating the flesh of my peach,  
The water is amber.

I see translucent panels of faces.  
Swim, swimming, swum, I have swum  
In the deep violet of my subconscious.  
I am penetrating through the flesh of my peach,

And I have found chaff at the pit.  
I see translucent panels of faces  
In the nub of myself,  
In the deep violet of my subconscious.



ARTWORKS BY: Jacob Rattin

Swimming back through my awkward summer days,  
 I have found that there is nothing at the pit.  
 Those days spent alone, reading and secretly spying on the swimming boys,  
 In the nub of myself,

And the unholy thoughts I imagined them in.  
 Swimming back through my awkward summer days,  
 I emerge to the Id, floundering in a dank, jade lake.  
 During those days spent alone, reading and secretly spying on the swimming  
 boys,

I swim to the rusty ladder: my split double-helix,  
 In the nub of myself, in the pit.  
 I have penetrated the flesh of my peach;  
 Swim, swimming, swum, I have swum.



# “From Silence”

By: Erin M. Stephens

*Written for Dr. Meg Gray and dedicated to all those who inspire  
me to believe in myself.*

Trembling fingers hover, musing,  
over keys of black and white.  
Should the dark, imposing Silence  
be defied by these so slight?

There below, dread Unknown's churning—  
icy froth on blackened shore.  
Though shrill echoes frigid laughter,  
down they plunge into the roar.

Fingers—taught with tangled pounding—  
choke 'neath pressing of Despair;  
tiring sink; then, grasping Courage,  
from the vicious clawing tear.

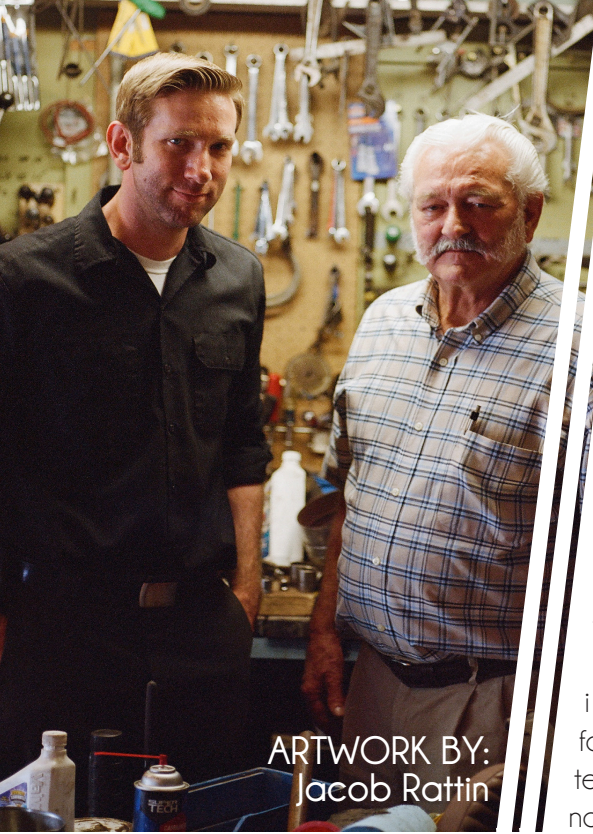
Now they—firmly and impassioned—  
racing, whirling, fluid glide.  
Dauntless wells their brilliant ringing.  
Smote is Silence, scorned the tide.

Were these fingers e'er so fearful  
that now dance with such bold grace?  
Surely, Strength is here awakened  
to reflect thus in her face!









ARTWORK BY:  
Jacob Rattin

## THOUGHTS FROM 8TH STREET

By: Jenny White

the whole world is corroding

i see it in the way the bricks eat  
away at my work shoes,  
every day the same holy  
pilgrimage forward and backward.  
the motions rocking into  
unconsciousness,  
the buses full of people lulled under  
the influence.

i fear water that's too acidic  
foods that contaminate a body  
teeth shifting in my mouth unevenly  
nails and hair growing out to no end.

i see it in the way a man's fingers trace  
my face  
describing the shapes i'm too con-  
scious of.

i see it in the way a woman pres-  
ence  
wages war from an unstable loca-  
tion,  
trailing the same empty gaze like  
an old flag,  
a voice that offers nothing as  
well,  
a mind that coughs up dead  
fragments of thought and  
won't allow sleep.  
it feels like time is displacing  
us.



ARTOWORK BY:  
Brent Brooks



# FOUNDATIONS OF THE CAIRN

By: Garrett Corpier

Grandmother's feet look like antique  
fragments of architecture.  
Her curled, Goldenrod toenails taper  
and form razor-sharp peaks  
Like the flying buttresses supporting  
Salisbury Cathedral.

Grandmother's feet feel like the  
chapped craters in the moon.  
The hand rounds the heel and feels a  
piece of ancient pumice,  
Or another hallowed rock from Pompeii  
or Petra.

Grandmother's feet smell like milk and  
honey,  
That primal scent that led the blessed  
Israelites to Canaan.  
Her soles and toes and ankles have  
been consumed.  
They have shriveled up into fiery nothingness,  
Like the scrolls of Alexandria:  
They are gone.

REALITY IS A LOVELY PLACE  
BUT I WOULDN'T WANT  
TO LIVE THERE



ARTWORK BY:  
Brent Brooks



ARTWORK BY:  
Lincy Panackal

# ESCAPE

By: Andrew Leavitt

Shadows of the sun surround. . .

I'm trying not to see the people in them I'm trying not to think, for in release, this is where I come to surround myself in nature, quiet babble of creeks and green grass; familiar smells crowd my nostrils. But signs of them are here as well, and though I attempt to shut them out, they follow me still. Their discarded, choking trash litters the ground and sends my mind on a journey, not of the enlightened peace, the satori contentedness that I reach desperately for with every breath of crisp autumn air, but of hatred of a condemning nature, damning the human race to a portion of my mind, viewing them as inferior to this immaculate beauty. This is the ideal. This is beauty, pure in greens and reds and yellows and textures, many with twisting vines and blades of sharp grass and roots that dig down to Earth's core. How sad that human brothers don't see, can't see. Through blinding shades of green paper, they don't care to see the world as beauty, but as something moldable, able to be formed to their liking. Mother Nature, I wouldn't change a thing. Your trees, their arms stretch in perfect angles to work with eager feet and hands, attain greater height, ascend to sky in sun and creaking branches, shaking leaves like dead tambourines taped to my feet. What have you seen, you bark faced shepherds of scurrying creatures? What have you felt, you packed dirt and jagged rock?

I feel release again, removal from society

I feel separation in adjoining my mind with the sublime,

removing masks of societal discomfort.

i feel my heart beat in sync with the wind, a drum to the flute that whistles

through spidering branch and bush.

I think to run

But they hold me down

With red tape disservice,

binding me

with cash and coin

And Material possessions

Failing social constructs

Failing social constructs

With satirical smile

of spite and helpless,

immovable block

of passion.

An hour has passed and I hate to return, but back to a car, and I turn a key and it chokes the air and spits smog into my home. The shepherds sway in my absence and weep for their lost brethren who swim and drown in industrialization; capital punishment means buy and sell and reach for more money made from their flesh. I drive and slowly lose my mind, replace the mask and let the block slowly return, and with remorse for lost thoughts and state of mind in nature, I return to heat and home cooked meals with stupid, self serving, haunting complacency of fellow beings.

ARTWORK BY:  
Shelby Lakins









# SEPARATION ANXIETY

By: Shayla Hancock

Heat-blasted and shrunk,  
Bellies peek out under  
Childhood sweatshirts  
Strangling grown bodies.  
We try to wear them anyway.

Plastic letters chipping  
From the fuzzed up lint  
Unstuck and missing  
Words only half readable.  
We try to read them anyway.

Seams unraveling from  
Washing and washing,  
Holes gape in  
Fabric formerly new.  
We try to mend them anyway.

Unwilling to let go  
Of the moth-eaten mementos  
Our bodies strain to move  
Against the tight polyester.  
Any way, we are stuck.

ARTWORK BY:  
Ashley Fletcher

# Portrait

By: Emily Roesslein

He looked down at the cushioned black chair to see  
Tiny imprinted stars staring back  
Mocking him.  
He could never join their ranks

He sat down to quiet their shrill voices  
And gazed toward the canvas filled  
With a face  
That was not his mother's.

The warmth and affection he usually found  
In an image of a comforting glance,  
Contorted.  
A dissatisfied ogress.

Musty yellow ochre, phthalo blue, and zinc white  
Reached out to ask why he had used them;  
Abused brushes  
Cowered in the muddy turpentine

The traded, jaded tools he had tasked  
With the creation of his art and opus  
Distressed  
By the lack of talent.

At the sight of her supposed likeness  
His mother would cry out to him,  
"Urchin child!"  
For the monster masterpiece

The bitter taste of drying pigments was replaced  
By the sour metallic realization of  
Displeasure  
At the thing of beauty he had not made.







ARTWORK BY:  
Emily Roesslein

# DREAMS OF THE DEAD

By: TJ Martinson

Susan says she can smell the wind. She says this with her head tilted in what I've approximated to be a forty degree angle to the sky. Most often there is no wind when she says this, just the stillness of the settled air. I always ask her to describe the smell to the best of her ability. It's always different: anticipation, happiness, rapture, complacency. If she is lying, I wouldn't know. I can't smell the wind. The way that she closes her eyes and savors the smell as if it rests on her tongue is convincing and I've never been one to doubt proclamations that don't affect me deeply. Besides, I like when she does it. The light from the sun always reflects off of her visage very well as she looks to the heavens, turning her face to the wind that isn't there. Her face is a natural canvas for spectrums; natural and otherwise. She comes alive when she smells the wind.

The first time she made this claim was after she received her new eyes. They're blue and her old eyes were brown with concentric green rings around the pupils. We keep her old eyes in a mason jar of synthetic formaldehyde on our bed-stand next to a photograph of our dead dog, Chip. She doesn't like having her eyes there, but I do. I insisted that they be there. Some nights, when she is asleep, I wake up from a nightmare to feel the calm emanating from the eyes that I fell in love with from across a parking lot when I was eighteen years old.

Her new eyes were the result of neglect. She went to our optometrist, who is also a licensed dentist with a missing upper incisor, with concerns of recent eye irritation. He asked her if she wore her contact lenses to bed and she said that she did,

but only on the weekends. He sighed and penciled her in for an eye-replacement surgery. The procedure was finished within the hour. She came home with a pamphlet describing the acclimation process for new eyes. Neither of us read it. We only looked at the picture on the front of the glossy paper: a boy on a swing set—his shoelaces were untied.

Her optometrist told her the new eyes she received were from a recently deceased youth. He hadn't told her how the youth had died. She assumed he had been a gang member, because that's really the only way that youths die anymore. I didn't doubt this theory. On Fridays she still wears her contact lenses to bed, though the prescription has changed from far-sighted to near-sighted. I guess this is a part of the acclimation process, though neither of us would know.

Now Susan spends two minutes more in the bathroom every morning before leaving for work. I don't know what she does with the extra two minutes. She closes the bathroom door when she goes in. I can only hypothesize using the sounds that come from behind our separation. A flush, the sink turned on, the sink turned off, the shower on, the shower off, the hairdryer on, the hairdryer off, and then silence for fifteen minutes. Absolute silence. It used to only be thirteen minutes of such resolute silence. Now it's fifteen and this has been weighing on my chest a great deal lately.

Part of me thinks she is counting wrinkles on her face. I've counted them before and there are ten; five on each symmetrical side. She could also be weighing herself and then reweighing herself. I saw a documentary on middle-aged women with unruly camera angles of women stepping on electronic scales. I don't doubt that this occurs.



on electronic scales. I don't doubt that this occurs. But I think that Susan is actually staring at her new eyes and how they look on her face. In my mind, I can see her doing this.

Recently she has been waking up at night. She thinks that I am sleeping as she rises from the bed, carefully rolling from the mattress as not to leave a sudden imbalance. I watch her with my old eyes half-closed.

She jokes about her new eyes sometimes. We will be eating breakfast—whole grain toast and strawberry preserves—and suddenly her face will fall into disorder, her jaw hung like a swinging cradle, and her neck going limp. She will come back to life to say she saw her disembodied, ebony hand with a spray-paint can, tagging a train car or portioning out illicit drugs on a miniature scale. She says that her eyes are experiencing the phantom limb effect; that she is seeing the dead youth's dreams. I always look concerned when she does this and then we laugh after a few seconds of feigned horror. Not real laughs, though. The kind of laugh that you give when you have been married for ten years. The laugh that says, "I heard you and I'm not in a bad mood today. I heard you. No fighting today."



ARTWORK BY:  
Dianna Wood



Last night I heard the neighbor's cat prowling outside of our home. I woke with thoughts to return it to its owners but instead I brought it inside. I decided to return it at first light. Susan says she is allergic to cats but her body was dormant in bed and surely her allergies were asleep as well. The whole world was asleep. As well as its afflictions.

It was an orange cat. No other hues striped to its body. Just monochromatic orange. I poured the cat soy milk and watched him or her drink it for thirty minutes, refilling the ceramic bowl to the cat's accord. The cat's eyes were blue, just like Susan's. I wondered if society would ever find itself in a shortage of eyes and begin taking them from cats. I didn't doubt that it would. I imagined what it would be like to be married to a cat. If I were married to this cat I would pour it milk every morning and then make myself coffee before locating where the paperboy had tossed the paper. I contemplated this future until the sun came up and I returned the cat next door. I saw that the neighbor was balding. I'd never noticed this before. He was wearing underwear and a tank top with a bowling alley emblem on it. He thanked me and offered me money which I flatly refused.

I found the newspaper at the feet of our lawn decoration: a concrete, naked boy holding a fishing pole over his shoulder, in mid-step to some pond with a picnic basket on his head.

I decided to tell Susan about the visit from the cat. She had just come out of the bathroom from her clandestine routine. When I told her about the neighbor she sneezed and then laughed. I counted ten wrinkles on her face.

I put the toast in the toaster and made coffee while Susan searched for matching socks in our bedroom. She sat at the table, resting her head on her palm and looking at me curiously, a smile supported on her countenance. She told me she was happy and I thanked her, spreading jam on the toasted bread, handing it to her.

She took it and nibbled at it with her lips pursed together. I sat across from her and when I was sure she wasn't looking, I stared at her new eyes. I tried to love them. I thought of pertaining sonnets and various conceits. But any progress I made slicked off the canvas of association like oil.

Her head dropped, nearly to her lap. Her mouth hung open. I imagined that her new eyes were rolling back in her head. I dropped my toast on the floor and leaned forward in earnest terror. She sat back up and picked up her toast from the table and began nibbling at it again.

"I was shaking hands with a Hispanic man. He had a tattoo of a Hispanic woman on his wrist."



I laughed. The coffee had finished brewing and the timer whined in syncopation with the garbage truck's wheels coming to a stop outside.

She took her coffee in a disposable cup and left for work. I followed her outside and asked her what the wind smelled like today. She said it smelled like nuance. I waved goodbye before completing my morning ritual. I sat in bed and stared at her old eyes, holding the mason jar in my hands. I watched the eyes shift in the thick solution, turning slow revolutions in unseen currents. I doubt they can see me.



ARTWORK BY:  
Brent Brooks













