

# STILLPOINT LITERARY MAGAZINE

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# Editorial Staff

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# To the Reader

We are situated in a liminal period of time, and while it is rife with uncertainty, something about this time also feels powerful. For most of us at the magazine, it means transitioning to our next phase as we graduate and embark on our respective journeys. In a broader sense, we have been experiencing a period marked by social and political tumult and change.

We are mere months into the year 2018, and so much has happened already. Today is uncertain and frightening, but there is hope and there is fire in all of us to bring about change. I have seen the power of words and art, and how each small act culminates in something dynamic and bigger than all of us. Jhumpha Lahiri writes about the way art can affect us, saying,

“I think that the power of art is the power to wake us up, strike us to our depths, change us. What are we searching for when we read a novel, see a film, listen to a piece of music? We are searching, through a work of art, for something that alters us, that we weren’t aware of before.”

It has been an honor to be a part of Stillpoint Literary Magazine, as well as a community of such talented and passionate artists and writers who recognize the power and importance of art in our lives, and especially in times of unrest and uncertainty. Every year, we receive an incredible number of submissions from our talented undergraduates. We have read many beautiful pieces of poetry, prose, as well as visual art and music from our contributors. I would like to thank everyone who has submitted to our magazine this year, and wish that we could have published each one of you.

It is my pleasure to you present to you Stillpoint Literary Magazine's 49th issue, a labor of love not possible without the hard work and passion of our staff, as well as our contributors who remind us of how powerful art is. We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed creating this.

Happy Reading.

**Annie Ho**

*Senior Editor*

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# Good Night

BY TOSE AKINMOLA

Would all my memories be lost  
tossed by gust and breeze of time  
and all desire disappear  
a frightful dream flitting from the waking mind,

would it be a waste—  
each written word or speech  
all sweet songs  
and delicacies  
frissons of anger and melancholy?

Why rage  
when all rage is striving against inevitability?  
A fist to the heavens  
only a fly's buzz amidst the roar.

What's the price of spirit?  
What's the price of constant motion  
if all thought and pleasure converge in erasure?

I'd rather it were dream



*Roommates*  
by Benjamin Thrash

# Surgery

BY MAXWELL RABB

bleach blonde hair cut  
open to reveal bone

hot air balloons singing  
songs dancing with  
lyrics syntactical waltzing  
songs /nightmares/ mixed with  
parental aphorisms  
repeated

repeated the  
same words that heat coal into hate that  
balloon /swell/ the blood vessels

/vomit/ crying out for  
help surgical masks  
with pretty eyes light  
blue cloth clinging to hot  
breath warming the  
room /comfortable/

one way window holding  
hands pressed /tight/ against  
bleeding knuckles

picking scabs /float/ in a  
bath of anesthesia  
/slumber/

# Hammurabi

BY ELIJAH WALLS

each of your tires is a law  
you claim came from God  
and not Hammurabi.  
except the spare, which is that rare mercy.  
i'm a little worried  
that if i puncture one tire, hopes high,  
you wouldn't even notice it,  
wouldn't swerve from the road a bit,  
but move even faster,  
like a wounded wildcat,  
like a bleeding panther,  
and your next kill would be even sweeter.

i wonder if there is any answer.  
man is set apart from the animals by his smarts—  
by intellect, not ethics.  
you said so yourself.  
man hasn't advanced beyond his ancestors.  
i wonder if God will send anyone else.

# Blue House on Barber

BY AVERY BUFKIN

Blinking open her eyes to a dusty room  
she lays there, unmoving, barely breathing  
perhaps thinking her chest may just stop  
its slow and steady movement  
its up and down movement.  
The sun fights its way between the shades  
falling onto the floor—not the floor—  
the clothes on the floor, the trash, the papers  
the dust and dirt that lay on the floor  
covering it like a carpet.  
Down the hall, she travels  
its length whilst moving through time.  
Faces on the wall. One or two lives on the wall.  
Down the hall and into the living room,  
her foot never touches the floor.

Outside, the sun is harsh, the grating  
light, the grating smell of the grass,  
no—the alcohol—no—the newspaper.  
Her bathrobe flutters at her ankles.  
Her heels sink into the dewy lawn.  
Her socks flood with dew and with mud.  
She wobbles a bit, from the sinking  
or from the smell, or from the wine.  
Inside, the dim is harsh, the empty  
room—no—the chair—no—the bottle.

Well fine, who needs you?  
She drops the paper to his chair,  
but it falls through his lap, falls to the chair,  
and she pauses. Who needed you?



a woman eats tofu and talks about  
her ex-husband to someone off  
camera

BY JEANNE DAVIS

oh he  
was never  
the same  
after we  
found him  
passed out  
at the circle k  
gorged  
on little debbies  
pockets full  
of milky eggs  
the clerk she  
didn't know  
what to do  
to take  
care of  
a body is  
time-consuming  
today he wipes grease  
from the edge  
of the sink  
eats only  
the little pearls  
he swears  
dropped from the belly  
of a little moon hen  
just this morning



*Cinque Terre*  
by Jillian Girardeau

# with the help of my five senses

BY ARIELLE ZOTTNECK

i am holding you  
by bitten fingertips  
by cracking knuckles  
by way of armpit to the shoulder

by the broken blinds that block out shadows on my window

with broken record  
still spinning  
with broken chair  
where you're sitting

remember (you told me)  
    you dont have to put the sheets on the bed  
    you can sleep on the mattress

and then again  
    put the ice on your knuckles

how did you know that  
i punched holes in all the walls  
just to see you

# navarre

BY ANNIE HO

knee-deep in the brackish water, ba ngoai and i searched for shells.  
on opposite shores, we pressed our ears against them and spoke,  
    the echoes sounding out until we found one another,  
        palms pressed tightly, our pearls untouched.  
when i press my ear against the seashells now,  
i can only hear the hollowness of the waves.  
they don't leave answers, only questions:

    -how many miles until home?  
-do you remember your whale songs?

on many nights, i lie in strangers' beds, belly up like a soft-shelled  
crab.

we take turns peeling each other's rinds off in the sun,  
and the retreating waves take our husks away until we are nothing.

how quick and seamless, how easy it is  
to undo decades of love within the bat of an eye.

"don't stay in the water for so long!"  
ba ngoai warned me that the salt will dry me into nothing.

i submerge myself in the water  
and i wait.





*Simonton*  
by Lauren Tolbert

# parsley tea

BY ABBIGAYLE MATHIS

an hour ago you left  
my bed and now I'm lying  
in the grass googling  
household abortifacients and wondering

am I pregnant or  
did I swallow a piece of you  
when you weren't looking wondering

am I pregnant or  
am I just hoping  
for something to fill that emptiness  
I have always felt most strongly  
in my stomach





*November 5*  
by Miranda Rupkey  
(water color and acrylic on paper)

# the only cornerstore that still sells hubba bubba

BY MAXWELL RABB

I.

bubblegum stuck to  
my shoes  
the sidewalk flips  
upside down leaving  
dangling commuters

II.

birds in disguises  
persuade dangers they  
don't exist as  
birds-but people  
they are not the  
ones flying

III.

he asks  
himself to wipe the  
windshield wipe  
the frown from  
that face remove  
your mouth  
all together

IV.

all together spit out  
gum and cut  
nooses  
strangling them from  
flipped sidewalks

V.

he says "tomorrow  
we will do it  
it will be that  
day" the  
day no time no  
action just  
plastic forks  
skewering fish  
esophagi

VI.

bird lungs not breathing  
blocked by  
filters designed to  
save our lungs  
the surgeon general demands  
we follow suit he needs no  
vice

VII.

/us/ ourselves, not endangered  
birds hunt plastic  
fish choking on  
chewing gum



*Venus*  
by Benjamin Thrash

# Zoo

BY ETHAN CRANE

I am wet with one droplet  
From the showerhead  
Big as my skin

I have 8 dollar coins  
To buy dry towels  
Sticking to my oily palms  
Gold blares on my oily face  
Light is just peeking through  
Not warm enough to dry

Envy is green and  
He is dry like a mallard  
At the park I throw crumbs and  
Hope he swims to me

# Tightrope Reign

BY SHERRY LUO

The sky's  
blue clings tight to the skin.  
Dancer among leporine  
cirrus, frothy  
streaks of meringue.  
A cipher on the  
ground, but the sun  
is his crown, this lonely  
king of avian  
grace. People ask  
if he has seen  
a heaven; he is still looking. Poise above a vein above  
an unforgiving  
mantle. Up there, there  
is never enough air  
to truly fill his  
lungs.



*Repercussion*  
by Mackenzie Myrick  
(foam core, cardstock, found materials, and pen)

# Moonstruck

BY THERESA CONNOLLY

on nights like these  
milk moon foreign  
the crouching cold  
“*La Vie En Rose*”  
i yearn for you

and don't.



# Poem in the form of a slap on the wrist

BY OLIVIA BABUKA BLACK

On a walk this morning  
A premonition:  
Two birds signal to me that there should be  
three deaths in the making:  
One of lace/one of fire/one of withholding

Dog barks &  
owner hushes

There is one eye on the door without handles  
(a spider can very clearly make his way in  
through the cracks)

Fire comes quickly & finds itself in coastal Alabama  
Stuck in a grandfather's home  
For the weekend

Lace comes next  
In the form of two words whispered  
At 3:30 AM between  
teeth unfamiliar & no doubt  
held together at one point by braces

Withholding comes in the form of a shoe  
Planted in place.  
In thought, a pin  
Pricks a finger: red

# THE VAULTS





*The Vaults*  
by Lauren Tolbert

# Death Should Never Be Yellow

BY MARIAH MANOYLOV

It was noon, maybe. She didn't know, couldn't see anything except the dark interior of the plane, the streams of light spilling out from under the cracks of the window. So noon, maybe. But that didn't matter, because the plane was going to plummet into the ocean.

Quinn sat lazily on the couch, sipping a whiskey on the rocks. Too light, she thought, and plunked more cubes into her glass, swirling them around. The plane was still coasting, the pilot still sitting firmly in his seat. She imagined him there, arms moving about like an octopus of sorts, mashing buttons and levers, turning wheels left and right. She had time to make herself a microwave burrito, sit down, and try not to think about this too much, steady her goddamn palms. Perhaps if she looked down she could will them silent. She glared, a staring contest between blue iris and wrinkled, veiny, liver-spotted hands. She lost.

As she put the burrito, not even a hole punctured in the cellophane, into the microwave, she saw Sue's hands on top of hers. Only for a moment, she sees the soft yellow glow of light on her white cabinet. The window is open. It's summer in her idyllic kitchen down on the ground. Warm. Sue's smile. She's there, with Sue's cool copper hand on top of her own, her heat going to Sue, feel Sue's smile bubble up and sputter in her ventricles. She's there.

Until she's not there, only the dim interior of the kitchenette. There was no yellow, no hands, no Sue, only Quinn alone on this

sinking ship. The burrito turned round and round. Surely the inside was still going to be frozen, some of the cellophane melted and distorted and sticking to the chewy shell but she's going to eat it anyway. The smell of it filled the cabin, the smell so loud you could hear it over the jet engines.

Quinn leaned against the sink, palms flat on the counter, staring into the cabin. She never really noticed it before, the small cave she's in, didn't really think to when buying it. It was affordable and would get the job done. Can she move around in it? Okay, where are the papers.

She should have made sure it wasn't hideous before she bought it, she realized. Brown, brown, brown. Everything was too brown. The couch leather, the wood paneling on the sides, the carpet, the nightstands and lamps. Monochrome and flat. Didn't even think to put some flowers in, a painting, something. Pitiful. Even the burrito she's going to eat, all refried beans, is going to be brown.

Sue used to make the best—

No, don't think about Sue.

But her burritos were warm and crunchy on the outside—

Well, tough.

A ding. Carefully, she unwrapped the burrito then sat on the couch. It's too hot to eat right now, goddammit, she just burned her finger. She demands it on the couch, much more forceful than she intended. To either fight the insatiable hunger or to give herself something to do, she slid the window cover up. It stopped with a thunk, and exposed nothing but a deep, remorseful blue. The ocean. She must be twenty-five hundred feet up in the air. Nothing but tattered glassy surface under her, for miles and miles and miles.

Ah, blue. Something better to look at than this stupid fucking brown. Blue. A cool color. This should calm her down.

She grabbed the burrito and bit into it, imagining, just for a moment, that it was Sue's burrito, the warm perfect one she would make sometimes when Quinn didn't want to cook. How Sue would be sitting beside her on the dining table, her brown eyes smiling, something good happened at work today. That bright glow, that ember in her eyes, slight slight slight laugh with a soft smile. And then Sue would bite the burrito, her burrito, gorgeous in her hands, and then a flick her eyes to Quinn. And Quinn wouldn't even be eating hers quite yet, she would be looking at Sue because that burrito can wait and Sue never looked this beautiful before, biting into that burrito. And then Sue would laugh some more and ask if she's really never looked prettier than when she bites into a fucking burrito. And Quinn says yes, of course, but this is right now.

The burrito squishes and oozes out from the bottom, tasting like plastic. Quinn wants to throw it against a wall but eats it anyway. Something in the stomach, at least. She didn't want to die on an empty stomach.

It was an impulse decision, really. She didn't tell Sue. Sue would have told her not to do it, and it's better to ask for forgiveness than permission, Quinn told herself. She wanted something different, something unique. A way to go. What a way to go, they'll say, seeing it in the paper or on the news. A memory, crammed in the minds of millions. That's where she wanted to stay, right there, lodge in between the brain folds, where she'll ferment but at least be permanent, more permanent than right now.

Immortality is sometimes best seen in the unseen.

Sue would have slapped her if she heard that. She was never

one for pretentious bullshit like this. But it didn't matter. There were slight laughs in this plane. Quinn was never going to see her again, just the too much fucking brown in this cabin and then the water. Maybe.

Of course, Quinn wanted to be next to Sue when she died. She was old, they both were, and thus were at the point where they both started to wonder. Sue would have fallen asleep on the right side of the bed, Quinn on the left. One of them usually reaches out to the other during the night, a hand on a hand or shoulder or neck. Hopefully they wouldn't have died before they got there, the body's final resting place.

Something isn't right, Quinn thought, swallowing the last bite of the burrito, but she didn't know what it was. She just felt like something would break if she didn't pull the lampshade just so, smooth the leather on the couch, her pants. She rubbed, rubbed, rubbed her pant legs as if to make sure they're still there.

Oh, the way the sun threaded through the room every morning, and Sue right there next to her, asleep, breathing deeply, mumbling her dream, sleepy tongue clicks and sighs. Quinn could feel her hand in hers, on the linen sheets, still warm from their bodies and sleep and dreams.

"Good morning beautiful," Quinn had said, just like she always said when she woke up first, reaching for the softest skin that existed between fingers. Quinn was looking at those closed eyes, mouth slightly open as if it fell asleep in the middle of saying "gourd" or "bored" or "horror." And Quinn just smiled, sliding to kiss Sue on the cheek, making sure to hold her breath to not expel her plant-killing morning breath onto Sue. But, she paused there, her lips on that cheek. Cold. Cold, it was cold. No breathing, not from Sue or Quinn.

“Sue? Honey?” she said, the sharp pinpoint of each syllable cutting through the viscous morning light. “Sue? Sue?” Her right hand holding Sue’s, with her left she shook and shook and shook. No response.

“Sue? Sue? Honey?”

Quinn just rubbed and rubbed and rubbed her pants, as if to wipe away anything those hands have ever felt.

Brown. Jesus. It should at least be gray. It’s sleek, ambiguous. Sue’s favorite color. This cabin should have been gray.

Quinn should have strangled herself, broken her own neck so that she would have never let go of Sue’s hand. But she didn’t and that’s exactly what happened. Eventually, after decades in the morning, she let go of Sue’s soft fingers and saw her be carried away, saw her be lowered into the ground, and never saw her again.

“Sorry ma’am, you can’t come in. Only family is allowed. We don’t recognize blah blah blah as blah blah blah,” some living person said. But Quin knew where the unfinished manuscripts were, saw the bite marks in the leftover burgers in the fridge, the entire fossil records of Sue Moseby. Quinn numbly looked through everything, constantly feeling her fingerprints smudge Sue’s on the book she had never finished reading, the unwashed fork, her shoes, keys, toothbrush, everything. Quinn cried the night she slept alone, a puddle left on the sheets the size of a human, the size of Sue.

Soon, soon, soon, Quinn thought, her hands raw from the friction. It was a part of the plan. They weren’t deep enough in yet. Quinn had to wait until a reasonable distance to give the order, then she could bask in those few moments, those minutes of pure drama



and story. Just what she wanted, what she had paid for. Of course this is just what she wanted.

She paced around, trying to bludgeon her doubts. Of course she wanted to do this. Sue would be watching her, looking at her doing this, looking down. Of course she's looking down.

The hands. The hands. Those liver spots and bruises.

Don't think about the bruises, think about the hands. Sue holding her hand, or, well, more like clutching it. Rigor mortis. Prying the hand off was terrible, so cold and stiff. That morning, when she felt the metal skin of Sue on her own, soft and warm, she was worried she would break Sue's finger or snap her wrist. Something like a wax museum dummy. Quinn had never touched a dead person until that point, and yet there she was, sharing the bed.

Sue's eyes were still closed. A trail of drool from the corner of her mouth to the pillow. She was most likely mid-snore. Because Sue snored, like a chainsaw. But Quinn got used to it. Was lulled by it, actually. She knew Sue was asleep when she started snoring. A sense of security, as their bodies entwined at night.

But Sue just looked obscene, grotesque. A gargoyle, cold and gray. The room was too yellow for this. It was jarring, to have a corpse in a room of yellow. Death should never be yellow.

She banged on the pilot's door, told him it's time.

He didn't even look back, didn't even pause. There was a push of a button, and he was propelled from the cabin. The room gasped, a fwoomp. Then he was gone. For the briefest moment, she heard the scream of air, crying, yelling at her for being so fucking stupid, for doing this, for besmirching her own name for kicks,

to prove a point, because she could. And for the briefest moment, Quinn agreed with it. But the door soon slammed, trapping all the obscenities inside. The plane nosedives. Everything lifts from the floor, even Quinn.

She was crying when the 911 operator picked up, she could barely speak. Everything seemed like it was dripping, her words, the operator's words, the phone itself, dripping and running down her elbows and leaving a mess on the floor. And then she had stepped in it, tracked it all across the house when she inevitably came back to look at Sue still in that bed, hand outstretched and mouth mid-snore. Jumbled, unspeakable words stained the carpet that day, hard to clean out. Those smudged black words crawled onto the walls, the ceiling, and manifested itself into the yellow. Quinn could never see yellow quite the same again, could barely hear anything as the stretchers came, the uniforms and flashing lights. Nothing. Just silent, everything underwater.

Rushing and swirling as she falls; she to the ocean, the ocean to her. A long-lost friend, a lover. A reunion that took too long to happen. And there will be no more colors in the embrace, with outstretched arms, bodies touching. There will be eyes closed, nothing else, as they feel each other one last time.

# eating blueberries on my back porch

BY MEREDITH BRASHER

my stomach hurts  
eating so many sour  
to find the sweet.

my friend, us two  
we were debating  
berry selection:

“with a little give?  
those are sweet.  
small and rigid, sour.”

the sweet ones  
I can easily crush  
with the roof of my mouth

I am bad at writing poetry  
after all this time  
but! without a clammy finger,  
a sour one's, dragging  
across my back,

with the sun  
grazing my neck,  
with my fingernails  
painted nice (eggshell blue)  
what do I have to lament?

besides a few sour blueberries.

# Hot Soda

BY MAXWELL RABB

fifty degrees inside and 47 degrees  
outside i shiver smothered in  
blankets while construction workers  
laugh over machinery i shiver  
inside at fifty degrees

5 minutes before a doctor's  
appointment still laughing with  
construction workers

i walk to the grocery store /popping/  
the metal cap off the can of  
soda /popping/ i fizzle out and  
message my doctor /therapist/  
i'm late /notcoming/ i can't  
listen to any chatter any  
applause that comes from the  
cement mixer i dislodge my  
self stirring a straw melting  
milkshakes /stabbing/ pierced holes  
in styrofoam

sink into cushions 3 drinks in  
enough to circle around myself to begin to  
paint myself the portrait dark red  
spot /splotching/ no nocturnal animal  
i want to say hello to you - can

not - 4 drinks in 10:45 and day  
four of i can't read /mental/ illiteracy  
alcohol is the reason i say to my  
self blur the words and ignore  
ideas /whispers/ that blur  
that fracture  
stopped now blocked from the  
road where the construction men  
squat and laugh near roaring engines





*Queens*  
by Benjamin Thrash  
(graphite and gesso)

# A Simple Truth

BY NAOMI STAMPS

Water should be free  
It's a liquid gift from God  
But man craves money



# cronus

BY ANNIE HO

you spent your last golden days submerged in yourself,  
your hand mirror by your side like a dagger.

i, the perfect parasite, emerged from your brine.  
you, who i sometimes call Mama, and on some days, God.  
(but you prefer God)

i, ugly and purple screaming banshee, remind you,  
Mama, of the liminality of even your certainties,  
my sulfurous body reveling in your fury and destruction.

& you, God, hate the possibility of your impotence  
more than you could ever hate time,  
or even me.

(& so God, the vengeful bitch that she is,  
swallows me whole into her darkness where  
my oily body sloshes hollowly in her brackish navel.)

# this is humming pinks and blues

BY ARIELLE ZOTTNECK

pink corners of your mouth  
that curl into thin L's and big O's  
around jawbreakers and

you turn red// i stay blue  
filled with junk food and  
bitters

this is a corkscrew to the lung  
soda ash and dried blood  
this is becoming L

O  
nely

hands in pockets  
carrying candy wrappers  
filled with empty words

telling myself  
(you can't talk to me like this)  
you telling yourself the same

# Too Early to Tell

BY AVERY BUFKIN

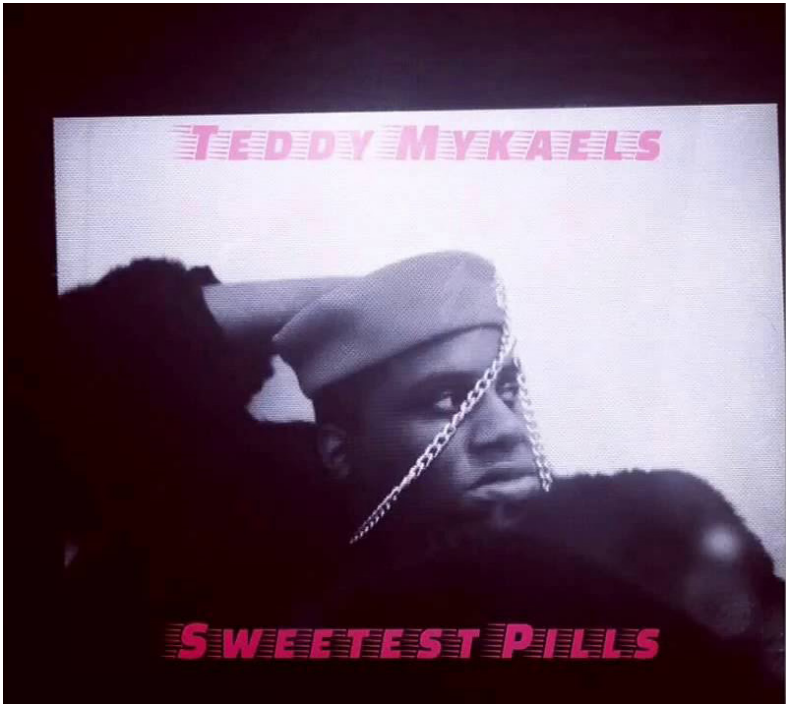
Dark clouds gathered outside the office. The sidewalk collected dots. It was hard to tell,  
From my window, from my cubicle, my swivel chair, if there was anyone I should call to tell.

Dad's hunting mallards sat beside mom's fridge magnets in the same box labeled "toys."  
I should've had a sharpie, but it didn't matter. The boxes were really too dusty to tell.

I saw them leave the restaurant, his hand grazing her lower back, holding the ends of her hair.  
I called out to him, and he stared, stuck his hands into his pockets, and told me not to tell.

In his last years, the dog had to be carried out to pee, and when my dad came to get him,  
To pick him up, to hold him, his head didn't come up off the floor. He had two daughters to tell.

About a dozen rings on less than a dozen fingers, they grasped my hands and traced my palm.  
She said I might find love soon, or maybe find the sun soon, but it was really too early to tell.



Sweetest Pills - Single by Teddy Mykaels



Teddy Mykaels -new indie pop / new wave artist

“Sweetest pills” is the latest single from his upcoming debut album soon to be out this year

Twitter: @iamTeddyMykaels

Official audio

<https://youtu.be/xKmJD2gnmKA>

Clean version

<https://youtu.be/xKmJD2gnmKA>

Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/track/6NeEqbeYLOHjqAzpTT-mlqz>

iTunes

<https://itun.es/us/sdxWeb>

# Smoke n' Mirrors

BY ROSCOE ODOM

The cabin of astrological fades  
moans of blank whores and blind maids

Wheels turning  
Lamplight burns

Inside the tales telling sun by the name of Tuck  
Sitting at the head of the wagon, Lucifer Flux

Hand reaching out of the cold dark night into the silver rays of  
bright

Take it now to reveal the stars  
The spherical walls encompassing the room

This room of ours such a magical place with hang swung diamonds  
and murderous face

Wheeling on down the road till gravity takes us and we sail to the  
moon

# Emerald

BY ETHAN CRANE

Every traffic light has a crown  
Wider than the sun

At the red lights, hands on thighs  
Starting gun loaded you  
Telling me you learned to  
Play every sport

How many chiles can you put in your mouth  
Before you begin to cry?

What's the most you've ever spent  
In one day?



*Evanesce*  
by Mackenzie Myrick  
(pen and ink)



# Fire-eater

BY SHERRY LUO

Lighter than  
water, thicker than  
blood, they leave  
behind finger  
paintings of singe  
and char and  
secrets of  
heat. A sigh gives  
birth from  
a cage of floating  
bones, the

fleeing dark.

Bright  
chiral snakes.

A mad grin engraved into  
soot.

# i in g

BY ELIJAH WALLS

the piano that isn't  
mine droned its last dyad  
and in its dying  
decay i rested. but  
other sounds interrupted.  
i noticed not  
because it was also music,  
or because she was in the key of c  
and i in g,  
but because it was familiar.  
her solo was starting.  
so, with a stacatto stutter-step,  
i stopped playing and left.



# baby fever

BY ANNIE HO

i think about you when the moon sits fat and ripe in the sky-  
pungent and low hanging, ready for the cull

i swat the pomegranate moon when Sky Ghost forgets to look  
& pry open her white flesh while silent Ghosts look on  
her blood-red juices spread like stretchmarks on her form  
my jowls ache and grind and my body tries to mimic your fullness

i cry and recite my apologies- a laundry list of sins  
Sky Ghost cries and wrings her hands together  
and House Ghost smirks as if to say “i told you so”

but both seem satisfied

when they leave me, i whisper my thanks to my treacherous body

i set aside seeds for you- one for every year you would have had  
i swallow all five and then cut off my tongue for good measure  
the Ghosts with no name look at me and grin knowingly & hungrily

persephone forgave her mother, but  
did demeter forgive herself?



*Blind*  
by Polina Yakovleva

# andy i'll let you know

BY ARIELLE ZOTTNECK

there's these lightening bolts  
in my chest  
like fighting words, chewed up

heart candies, rotten and rotting and  
spit out

on the floor there's  
three cans of cola  
opened and sour, wasted

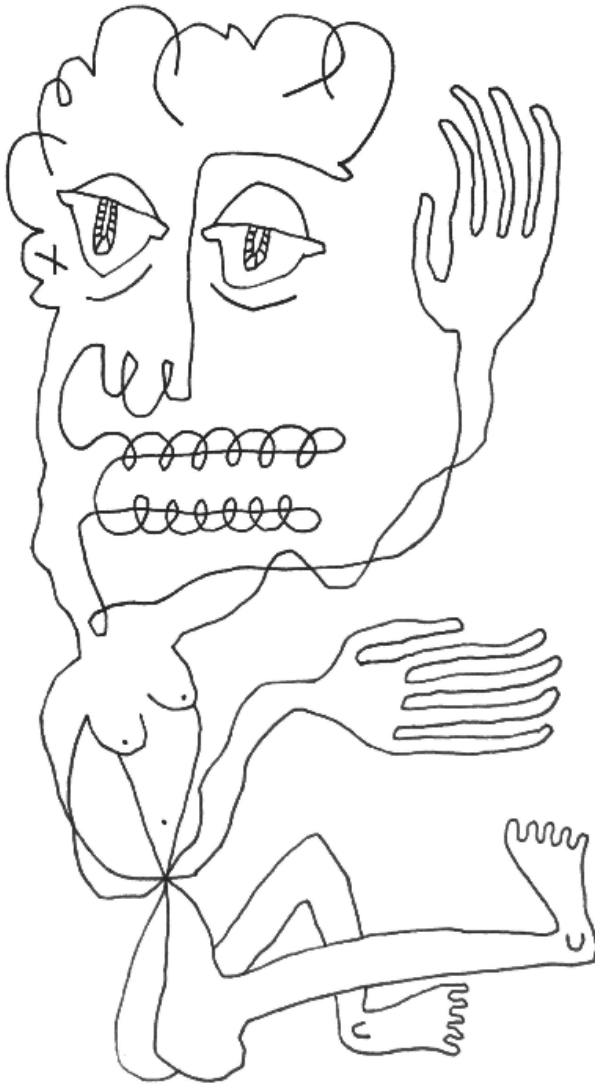
your day in bed  
again like  
how you keep wasting your days in bed

and  
giving in like  
how everything is beautiful at first

across the street i can see  
my neighbor  
yawning,  
i taste lemons in my mouth  
remembering,

last night i dreamt i hit you with my car,  
i saw your teeth go flying like  
shooting stars against the pavement

now i see your blue eyes everywhere  
someday i'll call and tell you that



*Seated Figure (Talk to the Hand!) and  
A Son Cries in the Hand of His Father*  
by Blake Morris





# I spend a lot of time thinking about colors now

BY ABBIGAYLE MATHIS

my hands  
hovering  
yours waiting  
to catch my fingers  
yellow and orange  
fills your face fills me  
with warmth spreading  
like a shared smile  
across my face  
and yours softening folding  
into my lap where  
my fingers find you  
so readily

at night you are  
blue and posed  
arms spread  
across my torso  
we tangle and separate  
with reluctance and  
I can't see your face  
in this light you are  
all form and outline  
outlining my ribs chest belly  
button  
my eyes refusing  
to adjust

in the  
morning soft light washes  
over your hands washing  
plates and bowls and  
spoons our bellies full  
of bread we  
sip coffee eyes heavy  
your eyes  
looking at me painting me  
in pinks and reds

# Bel-Air

BY ETHAN CRANE

Dystopia is alive and well  
And I am 10 years old  
And I am not yet familiar  
With depression  
Or coffee enemas.

Empty trees and brown grass and  
Waiting rooms and no cell phones,  
I know even this mood  
Must have a human name like me.



*Three Witches*  
by Jillian Girardeau

# notes on vulnerability

BY ANNIE HO

you ask:

what's the difference between a cat scratch and a back scratch?

i answer "i don't know" in between mouthfuls of ash.

my limbs are splayed out like yesterday's kill on your bed.

we shape ourselves like prepubescent synchronized swimmers.

we move our limbs like careless children at play.

left-

then,

right.

our supine bodies mirror one another's &

my nose presses against yours like a child peering into a shop window.

what is the difference between a cat scratch and a back scratch?

it's:

-the phantom limb syndrome when your body unravels itself  
around me in the morning

-your amber porch light turned to nothing by the rising sun

# Island

BY MAXWELL RABB

translucent shapes of crumpled up  
newspapers red all over bleeding  
bleeding blood red /conception/  
of creation dictated to us  
that we were created that there is no  
detour  
of vultures chomping /chew/  
of cracked voices, unrhythmic  
of stained white tee shirts covered  
in the blood in the blood of  
vultures wiping their mouths on  
tablecloths, tectonic intervention  
the friends i though existed  
clash together a volcanic uproar intervenes  
stains  
the friend eat the blood  
of friends turning into vultures  
of something dismantled like an  
alphabet drawn and quartered  
coins draped across a naked  
body of a naked body /vulnerable/  
able to dive into  
water /ocean/ swim against the current  
marooned on an island with a single  
solemn palm tree breaking in half  
in half where the bark exposes itself to

the vultures  
the tectonic plates keep moving  
erupt /eruption/  
naked alone on a beach with  
the last friend i have  
castaway with a vulture and its  
dead prey, gossiping, in front of me  
behind me when i turn away, mesmerized  
/tranced/ by the burning palm tree  
incited by a glitch glossing over the  
gossip that started the flame in the  
first place  
of winning  
of winning and still not swimming  
of the sea glaring at me, marooned  
of fissures blocking the beach from the  
hillside hillscape  
the vulture gossips /intently/  
apologetic to the cremated palm



*Kudzu*  
by Miranda Rupkey  
(acrylic on canvas)



# boy

BY MEREDITH BRASHER

a bundle of bulky forearms,  
loose shag  
and the same, stained black pants.

at first (the act, the game) its charming  
like an eclectic vacation condo,  
potpourri on a pink enamel toilet.

there was/is the laughter stuck to the walls  
but today i'm waking from cigarette smoke  
and bright morning yelling thru yellowed curtains.

cold cherries at 3 AM,  
early forehead kisses,  
it all stinks of moth balls and regret.

# Contributor Biographies

**Tosa Akinmola** is a first-year Biology major from Dacula, GA. When not writing, she enjoys listening to Tame Impala and reading books on science fiction, religion and philosophy.

**Nico Ambush** is a Nontraditional student at UGA, finally earning her first degree in Social Work with a minor in Art. Art is her first love so she had to keep that! She loves writing poetry, but not in the traditional way. She has a book's worth of these visual poems. They come from her soul and maybe they will speak to someone else.

**Olivia Babuka Black** is a second-year Women's Studies and Theater major and Comparative Literature minor from Atlanta, GA. She is currently trying to get into AcroYoga but she's still not entirely sure what it is.

**Meredith Brasher** is a fourth-year English and Political Science major from Atlanta, GA. She is a Gemini who likes to write and looks shorter on the Internet.

**Avery Bufkin** is a second-year Economics major from Atlanta, GA. Their work has previously appeared in *Cleaver Magazine*.

**Theresa Connolly** is a second-year English major from Southold, NY. She is a Stillpoint staff member who loves reading, writing, and rock climbing.

**Ethan Crane** is a third-year Linguistics major from Athens, GA. He spends his time learning new languages.

**Jeanne Davis** is a fourth-year Journalism major from Birmingham, AL. She is a student living in Athens.

**Jillian Girardeau** is a fourth-year Art History major from Marietta, GA. Jillian loves Nina Simone and hates writing about herself.

**Annie Ho** is a fourth-year Women's Studies major and Public Health minor from Grayson, GA. They are Stillpoint Literary Magazine's Senior Editor. Annie proudly enjoys and creates Bad Art.

**Sherry Luo** is a second-year Genetics and English major from Johns Creek, GA. She is ready for the apocalypse.

**Mariah Manoylov** is a third-year English and Ecology major from Milledgeville, GA. When they're not galavanting in the woods, Mariah enjoys writing short stories, plays and essays about that piques their interest. Check out more of their works at [www.mariahmanoylov.com](http://www.mariahmanoylov.com).

**Abbigayle Mathis** is a fourth-year EMST and English major from Villa Rica, GA. She is happiest in the mountains and plans to spend most of her post-grad time as tucked away in nature as possible.

**Blake Morris** is a fourth-year Computer Science major and Studio Art minor from Suwanee, GA.

**Teddy Mykaels**

**D'Ariel Myrick** is a third-year English major with a concentration in Creative Writing from Atlanta, GA. She has written for *Study Breaks*, an online college magazine. She loves reading and writing across several genres, but her current niche is creative nonfiction and flash fiction.

**Roscoe Odom** is a third-year History and Journalism major from Savannah, GA. He is a pleasant hermit who sits at home mostly and eats one meal a day. His pastimes include film, music, and basketball.

**Maxwell Rabb** is a third-year English major from Atlanta, GA. He cooks, he writes. Virgo.

**Miranda Scout Rupkey** is a fourth-year Textile Design major from Jasper, GA. While primarily working with textiles, she also enjoys other mediums such as paint and photography. Rupkey's work explores ephemerality and the ethereal.

**Naomi Stamps** is a fourth-year English major from Dacula, GA. Naomi Stamps enjoys writing stories, poems, and articles that all have thoughtful messages for any reader to benefit from. She looks forward to graduating and becoming a successful writer one day.

**Benjamin Thrash** is a fourth-year Drawing and Art Education major from Douglasville, GA. His work expands upon his queer experience, and he has begun to consistently follow the performances of Athens drag queens for inspiration. Benjamin's practice is most influenced by the work of the Umberto Boccioni, Francis Bacon, and Bill Viola.

**Lauren Tolbert** is a second-year English major from Atlanta, GA. She loves travelling and street photography.

**Elijah Walls** is a fifth-year English major from Chattanooga, TN. Elijah is a writer and musician with a keen interest in unanswerable questions.

**Polina Yakovleva** is a fourth-year Comparative Literature and French major. She enjoys tea, writing, painting, and long walks on cloudy days, and sunny days, and rainy days, but not windy days.

**Ariella Zottneck** is a fourth-year Interdisciplinary Art and Design major from Alpharetta, GA. Focusing on Illustration and Creative Writing, she is pursuing creating and collaborating within a wide range of mediums, specifically comics/graphic novels. Her work focuses primarily on observations of the environments around her, mystifying the mundane.

# About *Stillpoint*

Since 1967, *Stillpoint Literary Magazine* has served as a forum for undergraduate writers and visual artists at the University of Georgia. The pieces featured in the 2018 issue of *Stillpoint* were selected from a pool of blind submissions. Names were omitted during review, and staff members did not judge their own work. This issue was arranged by the Design Editor using Abode InDesign CC, Photoshop CC, and Illustrator CC on a MacBook Pro. The type is set in Marion, Palatino, STIXGeneral, Athelas, Avenir and others from Adobe Typekit.

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## *For more information*

[stillpointliterarymagazine.com](http://stillpointliterarymagazine.com)

[uga.stillpoint@gmail.com](mailto:uga.stillpoint@gmail.com)

twitter: [@uga\\_stillpoint](https://twitter.com/uga_stillpoint)

facebook: Stillpoint Literary Magazine at UGA