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# Masthead

***Clary Bond***

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Junior Editor-in-Chief

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Cover art: "Dolor" by Patricia Quinonez  
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# To the Reader:

If I have learned anything over the last four years — the sum of my time spent as both an UGA student and a member of Stillpoint — it is that there are few certainties in life. Pandemics can descend, conflicts can arise, and lives can be upended with little, if any, warning. I think, for many of us, the future has never seemed as hazy as it does today.

In the midst of so much change and uncertainty, however, the few constants we can count upon have become clearer than ever; and I am happy to report that one of those constants is still the desire — or perhaps, more accurately, the need — to express ourselves creatively, no matter what else is happening in the world.

Within these pages, you'll find works of poetry, prose, and visual art that ask for you to get lost in them, and in the moments of feeling they've captured so well. I sincerely hope, as you immerse yourself in this volume, that you will let yourself experience the points of stillness, and of constancy, that these pieces provide. And remember: no matter what new chaos tomorrow brings, this volume will be waiting for you here, honest and unchanging, whenever you may need it.

Go forth, dear reader, and enjoy!

Clary Bond  
Senior Editor-in-Chief

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# the house // a home

by Annette Aguilar

you said you built this house for me  
all for me

but the uneven tiles from the floor are coming up  
even gravity is tired of your steps

and the door to my room doesn't even lock  
you barge in without knocking  
feeling as if my space is one which you can intrude  
oh, but it can lock from the outside  
how sly of you

and there is a huge crack in the wall  
right across my bed i stare at it  
every night  
splitting right through  
reminding me that we are never whole

and i hate the color  
scheme you chose  
the inside blue and green  
because you said it was pretty like the ocean  
the outside red and orange  
because you said it was pretty like the sunset  
you took my two favorite things  
and made them ugly

one day  
it will be mine  
i will replace the floor  
change the locks  
tear down the walls  
and  
paint over what you left

then it will be a home built for me  
by me

# After Water Lilies

by Whitney Cooper

250 of the same stories from Giverny  
told and retold in oil

over time, the artist becomes less and less  
concerned with artistic conventions

never troubled with defining lines  
colors lock him in a creative trance

he stares down, focused on the pond's surface  
eventually the horizon line fades

lilies float above, petals spiked like crowns  
a melody of blue and pink

of violet and green  
pond scum and algae

meld together  
under a willow's tendrils

I know the place in these stories  
I know the filmy picture before my eyes

time passes the same way here  
as the days I can't leave the bed

days/weeks/months  
blues and pinks and violets and greens

meld together  
in that rich, impenetrable haze



# Blue Ceramic Piece

by Rachel Warner



# boogie board

by Aparna Pateria

give an uncle a boogie board  
and not your uncle but *an uncle*  
the kind that had a caterpillar mustache and no beard during college  
and also on the *mandap* in his wedding photos  
and moved to America with his wife and decided thank god  
to shave it off yes that uncle  
give him a boogie board  
after carefully demonstrating how to  
paddle into the deep and while bobbing to the  
ocean's arrhythmic beat how to time  
the launch onto the board  
so the wave carries you like its buoyant, newly-wed darling  
and you glide together over the sand  
and watching you the uncle will applaud and  
say *wah-wah, my turn* and then  
you and seven other youngsters will  
frantically guide him from the shore as he swims twenty feet out  
yelling *now uncle, now, now, jump now*  
and he shall promptly  
lose his glasses in the St. Augustine waters  
slammed by an uncompromising November wave  
depositing him  
flipped over and choking in the  
giggling three-inch-tall seafoam  
and his nine year old daughter  
will shriek at her beached whale  
of a father with the joy that only comes from seeing  
your parents fail at what you do so effortlessly  
  
and skipping around him she will practically sing,  
*oh my god it's so easy; Baba, it's just catching a wave*

# Lose yourself

by Alan Barrett



# 's and

by Evan King

My hand along sutures and sand  
Pacing touching burning

Hand along sutures and sand  
Resisting the urge to scratch  
It

Along sutures and sand  
I could split off and disappear forever  
Yet i wash and clean two times a day

And sand  
Stays sand marinates and sand

Cleans

What's become of me?

# 1961 - 2021

by Liana Jordan

In the baskets lay the pamphlets  
60 years of life in 200 words or less  
and at the bottom lay the names of  
your wife and son whom will dearly miss  
    the gleam in your eyes as you reel in a whopper  
    the savory smell of your onion potatoes  
    the hint of a smile as you juggle pins in the air  
    the drum of your fingers on their bedroom door  
and it is those memories they will desperately hold  
as they stare at your body.

Cold. Frozen. Stolen.

The thought of what could have been  
lingers in the air  
because you had a choice  
but you did not  
get the shot. it got you  
in both lungs  
unconscious 30 day battle  
you lost.

Selfish. Careless. Misled.

Every day of that fight I told you  
if you died I'd kill you.

Instead you killed me  
when you took your savory smell  
and left me with 200 empty words.

# Alone Together

by Liana Jordan

your hand on my head  
pushing me below  
the waves of worth  
or lack thereof

in secret you tremble  
on cold biting nights  
I light myself on fire  
to keep you warm

the holes in your heart  
rip me open  
red soaks the sheets  
is it yours or mine

the burden you carry  
you groan beneath the weight  
you say no one else will bear it  
so I'll never leave

# An Invitation to Eat You

by Crystal Bowden

Slide right in, find your spot at the table,  
Shoulder to shoulder-  
A bundling of bodies, and no regard for the next one over;

Fueling your personage supersedes concerns about diversity,  
And intermingling -  
How does one reconcile the war between their tummies and their hate?

The watering hole is  
the tamer of lions.  
Be sure to shy away from eye contact, in case they  
assume  
It's an invitation to eat you

Now sit down,  
My table doesn't harbor fools  
I am the descendant of these uncaged things  
that chomp and chew  
The fingers that feed them

Recognized by the creature perched on my shoulder as  
The finest beastie of them all

# Birthday

by Sam Thompson

Marijuana still heavy in the air,  
the rank moisture of sweat and semen beneath you,  
your damp hair,  
bathed in the scent of his body.

Your eyes are shut,  
Trying to block the slant of sunlight  
that illuminates  
the tears on your face.

Your hands shake  
as they reach for your crumpled panties on the floor,

Your fingers tense  
as your skin brushes the hairs on his arm,  
an arm  
wound tightly, possessively  
around your body.

You are weary,  
flashes of the night before  
crawling through your mind.

You think of all the hours,  
every breath,  
you spend beneath him.

H o l l o w

and shivering  
at the whisper of his breath  
in your ear.



His pleading,  
grasping,  
echoes through your sad small heart

Shrinking itself  
to hide within his.

As you lay there,  
empty

Finally, you remember  
that today you're one year  
older.

# Birthed into time in ruin

by Andrew Bezinger

Birthed into time in ruin,  
Contorted spires of bronze flesh  
Touch two toes to the tile floor  
And hoist history to heaven's veiled thresh.

A stone's tenuous balance,  
A pose held a thousand years,  
All mankind in bronze visage,  
A stone's wry expression - *feigned grace? Veiled fear?*

Proserpina's missing thumb -  
Was it extended or curled?  
'Tis a member borne on waves,  
Wagging farewell in time's entropic whirl.

Shall we content our closed minds  
With this incomplete portrait,  
Or may conjecture fill in  
For mankind's unremembered intellect?

Birthed into time in ruin,  
Contorted spires of bronze flesh,  
A lost finger's paradox,  
The historian's peerless nemesis.

# Bud Light Tall Boy in the Greenery

by Emily Tracy

The new moon is in Virgo which is to say  
everything is going up in smoke and nothing in the  
air feels sacred like it used to, not the incense or the  
humidity or the ash that the Serial Monogamist  
flicks from the ends of his cigarettes. I wonder if it  
makes him a hypocrite to be an environmental  
vegetarian who doesn't use an ashtray.

I'd ask him, but we only ever talk anymore in lists  
of reasons why don't feel sorry for each other: 1. He'd  
kiss me like he was fighting with himself, and he'd leave  
like he'd won 2. I puke a goldfish into the toilet bowl  
every time I bring home someone new and  
3. That is all the apology I have ever had to offer.

# Chasm

by Rachel Warner

Hope always waits for me,  
in the distance wanting me to reach out.

Yet something holds me back, as if I am  
not ready to be hurt again. Not ready to  
open up to the feelings that were once

Lost.

Stolen.

Forgotten.

They slumber under the surface,  
behind the wall. Waiting for me.  
Yet I do not reach for them.

Though very close, they are hidden. A  
terrible feeling of loss grows with each day.

Is it me that is lost?  
I am here, in this present.  
But am I really present?  
Slowly, a crack forms in the stone.

There they wait, reaching for me  
With hope that I will reach back.  
The part of me that was lost  
wanting to be whole.

Reaching out  
The distance closes.

# “a Cruel Summer”

by Alan Barrett

It was hot and heavy in the heat of that moment. Sweat shared and flesh folded. A hard heat, a personal summer. Was it real? Or just another dream drenched, and drained. Shame simmered not at lust or looks, but the value I let it give me. A trade of the dysmorphic refraction for the true reflection of a boy who had beauty, but never believed. My nights trapped in the prison of passion, now lost, but never had. I once lost sleep due to pain so this is just a new one. I can now see myself as an object of desire and this summer is hot: the wildest of fire. Burning and blazing the beauty will burn out. Filled with fear of having no lover at the end of this drought. I grew old, hiding from this feeling. They say ignorance is bliss, but I will insist on my power. Suffocating from the hot hurt of this heat, my logic defies reason but I'm still madly “in love” with this intensely cruel season.

# Currency

by Crystal Bowden

In this house, you could buy silence  
with closed doors, the steady  
disembodied hums filtering out  
the sounds of the life pressed against  
its other side

In this house, you could broker  
deals with little, white lies, tumbling  
from smiling lips that  
knew it was never safe  
to ask for too much

In this house, you could get  
barbed words for the bargain price  
of an ill-timed question,  
or a bad day, and  
too many of them were bad days

# Curtain Call

by Danielle Davis

Identity is my greatest performance,  
Testing to see how the audience reacts.  
A play dedicated to conformance,  
Yet writing lines of inaccurate syntax.  
Syncopate my heart beats to the dance  
Of the stage lights in this romance.

Casted for my heart a contract that binds  
Me to the Identity of the ignoble soul.  
Onerous rehearsals, refusing to deliver my lines,  
Always placed in this bromidic role:  
Of empathy only being a tool to abuse you,  
Now I worry it may destroy me too.

Five acts of deception: A coryphée or a fox?  
Stalking the stage for perfection,  
Hunting the viewers as they flock  
To the theater for our inspection.  
The fox masquerades a dancer in this ballet.  
Not a romance but a guileful tragedy at play.

Thespians caught between cine and machine.  
Applause and appeal, bite and bark are equal,  
Perfect catastrophe in the last scene,  
But do villains get a sequel?  
Fears of acting out a faulty script,  
Dissipate as curtains fall without a hitch.

# decraying eternity

by Clary Bond

the most important truth I have learned,  
since I left my childhood dreams behind me,  
is that fleeting happiness is no less precious  
for its brevity.

I will go weeks unable to feel the warmth of the sun,  
unable to be chilled by the cut of the wind,  
or the state of the world; I'll wander for hours  
through the maze of my mind,  
weak and wild and wary,  
waiting for the days when  
I can trust again.

but good god, that leaving of the darkness  
that sight of the light in my eyes once more  
well, it's just a moment, sure;  
but it's one of the most lovely moments  
I have ever known.

and there's those seconds *do you know what I mean?*  
there's those seconds,  
when the moonlight paints the treetops silver,  
when you almost start to truly believe  
in magic, once again;

and there's those times *do you know what I'm saying?*  
there's those times, when you find yourself staring  
at the autumn leaves at their dying, burning colors  
when you start to wish  
you were made to feel  
all this pride in your heart  
forever.



I used to think love was useless unless it was eternal:  
that nothing that ends  
can be worth more than  
that which is immortal  
*but oh, how wrong I was!*

for we know that life's worth living because it has to end;  
and while I may not love you as we age, or 'round the bend,  
I'm grateful that, right now, as I hold you at my side,  
I have nothing but this moment, and I get to call you mine.

# Deli

by Alex Coats

Eleven  
and I had met you in line;  
that word we felt  
skated on our eyes

Hello  
and it was over then; goodbye  
that word stood west on the menu,  
\$8.99

So we sat eating it  
and fed each other lies:  
Yes, I believe you,  
I believe in two of us.

On, then, bus boys  
would come cleaning up  
the mess; but all it was was  
you and I and  
wasted time again.

I felt lost,  
but who's a man  
to solve the world he's  
living in? Said we could  
try again

at noon  
and some fog had  
settled over you and I  
was feeling deli  
cate

# Direction

by Alex Coats

No, I don't know where I'm going this fall;  
After all, isn't this it?

Life is just limbo  
and I hardly stand tall.

I'm a bundle of fantasies  
maladies  
wringing for amnesty,  
wearing t-shirts like evening flights and  
all the places I'll leave  
waves: the sea, the shore, the blue

Though I couldn't say what  
I'd really do,  
keep it coming;  
keep it Konami; keep it  
Kony 2012  
Can't we just sit and pretend  
I've got something going  
or keep it to  
ourselves?

	I'm on the	up and up
	and if this train goes	down
	then it goes	down
and so what?		
I'll head to		
choose to		
be what's		left
bereft;		
I could lay forever in the summers		
	But you were going west,	right
	? you haven't	left, right
	? are you still going to	be a
	dreamer? when do you	start

# *fawn*

by Kaya Groff

are you a victim of circumstance? stand on shaky bambi legs, view the body of what once was, now splayed out in the meadow, a halo of high grass and daisies and myrrh. you, without option, have been made an orphaned little fawn. this is your cross to bear; a lonely crucifixion for such a small thing. when you die it will be raining, little drops from angel eyes. mamas watching. papas calling.

# Ghost

by Danielle Davis

Sleeping in the seat by the window  
The rain washed away  
my memory.

I hoped you would open your eyes  
For one last look  
Of me.

Floating to heaven on your forgotten dreams  
Out the window with  
The breeze.

# gilgamesh can find out for himself

by Maggie Shaw

despite tyrannical feats of strength  
i lose my footing  
pasting a paste on papier-mâché wings  
me, a huddling clam-shell, & yes the bull glow-  
ers

your ears and my cracked right  
thumb move, crumpling mayflies  
to the door-glass,  
wanting it in  
side and outside

you and me pressing our bellies  
into softly rotting altars built with  
the cracked palms of  
persimmon-cheeked ancestors,  
bearing driftwood

i edify my lineage quietly  
the firmament engulfs what  
i had which  
was wild so let me slurp your  
barbarism a little while

dripping down my throat like the water  
melon we ripped from the creek and smashed  
on the rocks, pithy  
carnage oozing juice on lapis lazuli

hiding from wolves (and coyotes and  
shapeshifters) in backwoods-creek-corners  
dropping to the cupped-hands floor of a  
shallow immortality

gilgamesh can find death for himself  
gilgamesh can fuck himself  
i'll be an olduglymother soon too

# Grounded

by Jesus Hernandez

If I could find a proper way  
to convey what I want to say  
upon this stage, I'd turn the page  
on this composition, I'd show  
the world my disposition, my  
only mission is to find the  
right words, the right ammunition  
to be heard, to go out with a  
bang, and if I fail, I'll hang my  
head in shame, so I pray that I  
may find an innovative or  
creative way to indicate  
the things that we're too afraid to  
say, so maybe the day will come  
where someone will understand my  
tongue, or maybe just run from my  
verbal gun while my thumb remains  
on the trigger as all of my  
decisions get bigger as the  
days go by to decide why I'd hide  
the side of my pride that tried to  
bide my time to admit that I  
want to submit and quit but can't  
commit to making a mistake  
that I know that I couldn't take  
back and know I shouldn't forsake  
that beautiful thing that we made



together, so I promise I'll  
get better and I'll do my best  
to weather the weather, the storm  
in my heart right before I start  
to fall apart and call a part  
of my mind that won't unwind when  
I find that I've fallen behind  
and remind my mind and myself  
that my self and my worth are not  
defined by my wealth or my birth  
and even the Earth and the sun  
and the snow will come and go with  
time so I suppose that no one  
knows where to go or how to show  
their feelings because we're all still  
reeling from all the wars that we're  
dealing with behind the doors of  
our foreheads, so spend more time in  
your bed as you keep concealing  
the torment by healing with more  
rest and stealing a glance at the  
ceiling to forget that you're not  
okay

# Guilt

by Sam Yi

cup me in  
your hands.  
lift me to  
your lips.  
i will sate you.  
set me on  
your body.  
wash away  
your guilt  
i  
will return to you,  
trap me in  
a bottle,  
abduct me.  
i  
will follow you,  
spill me  
on the ground,  
desert me.  
i will retreat to you.  
finish me off,  
and  
drown  
in me.  
i will satisfy  
you.

# Harbinger

by Jesus Hernandez

I want  
to tell  
you  
a story  
Sparrows  
A ravenous flock  
Spare no  
time to  
consume  
all of  
my time  
viewing  
these ruby  
wings  
Pairs of  
bone and  
feathers flock  
together  
flying high  
through the  
weather  
only to  
die only  
to try  
again  
try one  
more time  
to tell  
you a  
story  
a story  
about  
the world  
and the

sun and  
the moon  
and my  
unborn  
son he  
knows  
my face  
but I  
can't place  
his name  
or his  
face so  
I can't  
face him  
because  
I'm in my  
headspace  
again I  
don't care  
to be  
here  
but I  
need to  
so that  
I can  
tell you  
my story  
my day  
mayday  
mayday  
doomsday  
to day  
in two  
days on  
Tuesday  
which is  
when I  
wrote this  
poem  
about my  
day and  
my story  
but that  
story is  
a mystery  
and I'm  
sorry

# haunted apartment, or you in the mornings

by Emily Tracy

The ceramic truck on my desk moves half an inch every night.  
It's driving to the edge as if to drive off,  
Mass-constructed student housing haunted by the ghost of a dead boy  
while I fumble with your belt on my full-size bed.  
The dead boy ghost is trying to kill me in the hours when I am alone.  
This is what I tell myself when I wake up one day sad to lock the door behind you,  
when I stare at the bones moving underneath the flat of your back  
and wonder how they managed to get so close as to be inside you.  
I press my hand between your shoulder blades while you sleep,  
and the dead boy ghost asks me what it'd be like to  
scratch-five-holes-through-your-skin-close-my-fist-pull-out-a-handful-of-your-pulpy-red-  
insides.  
I take my hand off of your back,  
and the ceramic truck on the desk moves half an inch, scraping like a sigh.

When the raspberry jam on my toast tastes like blood  
and the dead boy ghost screams with the kettle on the stove,  
I wake you up, but  
when I make you a piece, it just tastes like raspberries.

# here we go again

by Clary Bond

I.

well fed Sorrow and Mourning and Grief,  
well dressed Anger and Panic and Fear,  
have no concept  
of ringing in the new year

to them, all time is the same: the past and future are the present day,  
with that looming sky of gray  
so all portending

you can gild it in gold if you want to;  
you can run the champagne bottles dry,  
throw up the glitter as midnight strikes,  
kiss your lover(s?)  
under the star-studded night

but they'll be waiting for you, tomorrow:  
Anger & Panic & Fear,  
Sorrow & Mourning & Grief;  
and none of them (I should know) offer relief

II.

you'll wake up to soft sunlight streaming through the window  
or to the thunderstorm, at last!  
to a January winter, or a January spring,  
and still carry all of those days  
that lie behind you

you will rage at the world,  
no matter how you lower your expectations;  
you will weep for what's to come,  
no matter how many times you say  
you'll face it with a smile

January will come, and January will go,  
and suddenly, you'll be standing in the bright white snow,  
blinded by the headlights,  
and wishing to forget  
this horrible year

but forgetting & regretting  
will do nothing now, my dear;  
life must go on, and  
morning's almost here

III.

there'll always be things to fear:  
I fear my Anger will never leave;  
I fear my Panic will eat me whole;  
I fear my Sorrow will always grieve,  
and that my Mourning will take its toll

but that's the price we pay, for living;  
I'll dole out my pennies and nickels and dimes,  
my unwritten poems, my half-finished lines,  
just for one more chance  
to see the sun rise

yes, the new year changes nothing;  
yes, I'll roll out of bed tomorrow,  
still too tired, and resolution less,  
feeling as though I'm already behind;  
and *yes*, Messrs. Sorrow,

Anger,  
Panic,  
Mourning,  
Fear, and  
Grief

will mock me mercilessly  
as I try so hard to honor  
all those I've left behind

but then I'll stumble down to the kitchen,  
crack the four eggs I need  
not perfectly, no, but that's alright  
set bacon sizzling on the stove,

slash slices into shallots,  
and hope — yes, I'll hope!

IV.

I'll hope for something more, despite it all.  
*(And I'll hope you're hoping too,  
whoever you are.)*



# Hereditary

by Meredith Eget

mietlings trade disease like recipes  
for meatloaf or  
sabbath gossip spoken  
of mariettan pharisees  
and mothers' vices.

the sick trickling down our women  
from leaky lung pipes  
to the very budding center  
of the feminine. there was no  
beginning of  
Life without Pain,  
no first breath  
free of Fever's steady hand.

born into the vacuum of her presence,  
Gray and lingering,  
i inherited the phrase:  
Count Your Blessings!

so when you say,  
*Daughter*  
with That Knowing  
Look in your eye,  
i'll count slow.

i'm alive i am  
living surrounded by  
love i can  
bloom my body  
alongside me and  
not in spite of me

i break lineal tradition in my vitality, yet soothe  
generational faults with the mortar of  
always counting  
in  
my  
head.

troubles never erased, but  
worn away by willing.  
lines of hopeful and  
denying blur all too well.

we smile when we hurt,  
and when we hurt,  
None know.  
this is the legacy of our thankful women.  
this is the sick,  
the hereditary.

# Hubris

by Alex Coats

Pried open, I was  
out spoken of us

and  
our

rested headrested  
in Atlanta, spring

heads  
dreaming

flowerbed flowers set  
on asphalt, bitter almonds,  
gasoline.

Trying a windsor in the mirror  
YouTube: Tying a windsor  
in the mirror, get out  
I've got it I've got  
a temper and a hobby

of making do  
when I oughtn't

Two summers, I was  
two summers  
the bus bussing  
people are shelves

of us

down town in this city  
is this room is fresh fruit is  
strawberries.

Practicing my pitch in the bathroom  
Google: how to be the best in  
the interview, we're on  
we've got it we've got  
hope and a habit  
of keeping it  
long often

seems to be pride to be prideful  
wanting things I have eyes for.

Unspoken, I was  
resistant of us

# I am an awful mountain

by Jason Hawkins

I am an awful mountain, and in me  
    There is an awful dragon hoarding gold  
And maidens. Tail wrapped tight around its loot,  
    It sleeps, fitful, within its brittle hold.  
At times, a viridescent flame accosts  
    My heart: the dragon wakes and deals abuse.  
I dream of taking up a saw, setting  
    To work on my left arm (the lesser-used).  
I'd say: "Forgive me, flesh, but you must go.  
That awful maw     I cannot bear its glow!"

I am an effigy for this cruel beast.  
    I ever burn, and out as pyroclasts  
My woe is spewed. To put it plainly: I  
    Erupt, and quake my frame all through with blasts.  
Volcanoes are mistakes: malignant mounds  
    That bloom up from those Devil-governed depths.  
I'd take a blade and make a space from which  
    Escapes the bearer of that emerald breath.  
I'd sing: "Thank God, the dragon's free!  
Now all the world will burn with me."

# I am no mountain

by Meredith Eget

settled into the valley  
between the blades of your back:

*you always said i was the wings of you  
and lover, i'd no affection  
for a life on two feet.*

i am folded, flipped  
compressed into  
over and again,  
the pleasure of amalgamation.

i am without  
mind, in a moment complete  
body: just nature and  
Needing.

what a peace we breathe  
in that between, what  
a freedom cupped  
in new hands

as the ugly parts of me  
reveal themselves  
a pearly chance;  
you, a willing veneration.

and yet, i wished my wings my own  
at times  
desired not the hand that  
conquered, but sheltered in

humble adoration:  
preserved shoulders as they were,  
rid spines of all rhetorical.  
no naming me New

Land,  
metaphorical. you  
claimed rights to my rivers,  
copyright of my canyons,

told tales of my splendor to stars  
that scarcely listened, erased  
my person in the process  
of definition.

was there no beauty in my commonplace?  
no power in my weakness for  
homemade *dulce*<sup>1</sup> or  
a rainy day's lingering embrace?

and what had become of the  
peace we made?<sup>2</sup> was i too  
simple a subject posed  
against tortured artist's woes?<sup>3</sup> or had

---

<sup>1</sup> *Dulce* alone means sweet or candy. My mom and I use it as a shorthand for *dulce de leche*, sweetened condensed milk boiled for three hours to create the most delicious caramel substance known to man. The goodness comes from the patience needed to make it, we say.

my spoken words,  
clear as cyan sea,  
rejected the Siren  
you'd wished me to be?

make no muse of me,  
my dear. for i'm far  
and better off  
Wild.

creature untamed  
land unnamed;  
i am no mountain.



# I don't know if I should have the fan on or not

by TJ Silva

I wake up on your side of the bed  
Almost every morning now.

And reach for your hand in  
The seat next to mine at the theater.

Punch drunk, and my pinky  
Toe keeps cramping up.

My internal temperature whiplashes  
Back and forth on the hour.

Nerve-shattering nightmares where I can't  
Escape people that ask everything from me.

And all I want to do it tell  
You all the things I hate.

# i know

by Jaylen Parker

these things  
never work.

these things  
with your friends  
where you're  
not friends--  
where you hold  
each other  
through the night.

where you  
kiss with  
passion,  
intensity,  
intimacy,  
like you  
never want  
to let them go.

where you  
run your hands  
over their  
soft skin  
and they  
caress you  
in all  
the special places  
friends just  
don't touch.

where you  
wake up  
a l o n e  
the next day  
because they  
left while  
it was still  
dark out.

heaven forbid any of your other friends know.

these things  
where  
they use  
the dark  
so they  
can be  
concealed  
from their shame  
of caring  
about you  
too much  
and caring  
about you  
not enough  
all at the  
same time.

these things  
where i sit  
and wait  
and hope  
and pray  
that you will  
want me enough  
for the night  
because although  
you don't  
crave me  
in the  
same way,  
(the way where we stay together, where we actually love each other),

i will  
be able to  
hold you  
and kiss you  
and touch you  
and please you  
even if  
it is only  
until just  
before the  
sunrise.

# i'd rather not

by Sam Yi

beer breath breaches and

skunky smoke stenches

i beg, cling not to me,

sober and somber in this cozy corner.

ear-shattering screaming and

stupid students colliding,

a flight of the bumblebees of

utmost unclassical, unrefined, unimportance.

headed heads swivel on beer-bellied bodies;

glazed over eyes                      gazed over to the

frozen fear in the corner,

a reminder of wordly troubles

i bed, remember me not,

the fly on the wall of a hectic hive.

but bee by bee, they collapse to the ground

until summoned by sunlight and

the weekend's unfinished workload.

(the desperate fly takes to the now unguarded exit-

o, how he narrowly escapes with his life!

faster fly faster!

begone from your wall,

from that corner,

o, unremarkable wall-

flower,

pest of the party.

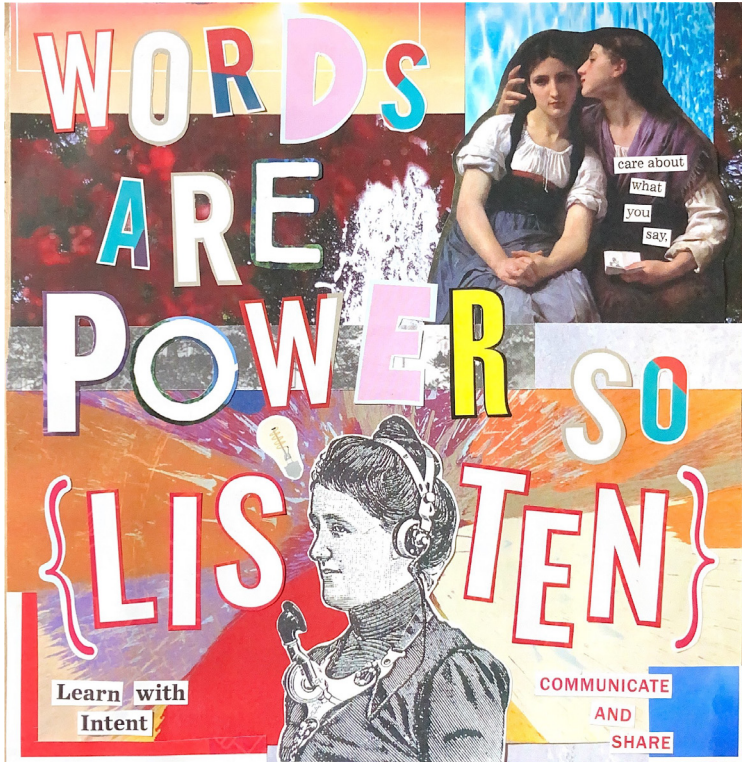
# Jane Austen Hosts Tea in Limbo for the Girls who Die Undecided.

by Emily Tracy

For now your body is young and being wasted on distance, on time.  
*All that skin still would tight for God only knows how much longer,*  
Jane Austen screams at you from Purgatory, so loud you can hear her in life;  
It makes you sigh. Makes you silly. Makes you feel all top sheet skin, all duvet skin,  
All in and under yourself,  
Taking inventory of the silly women who are just like you in every book you read.  
Jane Austen hosts tea in Limbo for the girls who die undecided  
On what we were all supposed to be doing,  
And you can't wait to be poured a cup, to try to explain yourself,  
That you got mixed up somewhere between what you wanted and what men wanted,  
And you paid twenty-one years for an answer.  
You're a silly woman. You're the kind of woman Jane Austen loves to care for and ridicule.  
As you warm your hands on the side of the mug, you will mumble that she's taking their side,  
Poking fun at your offering, all those hours spent waiting,  
And she will say *sweet girl, everyone is.*

# LISTEN!

by Mary Williams



# millipede

by Alex Anteau

*What do you call a fish with a medical degree?*

*A sturgeon.*

It started as an itch on the back of his right knee. Soon it consumed his entire thigh. A persistent nagging feeling that beckoned him to *scratch* and *scratch* and *scratch* past the point that he could help himself, but not so much so that he was not aware that something was horribly and inexorably *wrong*.

It started as three blue strands he picked off his skin, on the back of his right knee. *Three. Blue. Strands.* There were more afterwards, so many more he lost count, but you never forget your first. Three tiny, inconsequential blue fibers that he picked off and tossed out and thought nothing of until there were three more. And four more. And two more. And he brought up the first three when he expressed his condition to his mother who told him that he was extrapolation. That he was blowing things out of proportion. What was it called? *Confirmation bias.* He was picking and choosing bits and pieces of his past to make this new narrative make sense. Maybe he shouldn't have opened up by telling her about the insects.

It's hard, to have things living underneath your skin. It's all you can think about.

They don't *skitter* the way they do on the surface, on the kitchen counter, on the back porch. They *crawl*. They *burrow*. Looking away does nothing. Turning the light off, leaving the room, magnifies the picture you see in your head. The way your skin moves and buckles -- except it's not *your* skin. It's not *your* meat underneath. "Just don't think about it," his mother said, unloading the dishwasher while he perched at the counter, biting his lip and holding his breath and trying with everything he held in his bones not to *scratch*. "But Mom," he wanted to say back, but didn't, "It's not that easy, living with meat that isn't yours. With skin that isn't yours."

It starts to drive you crazy.

Big crazy, at first. Collecting-hair-fibers-and-sending-them-to-doctors crazy, which, incidentally, is the first thing the forums tell you not to do. You do dumb things. Stupid things. Stupid dumb things like ingesting colloidal silver or drinking bleach. *Tincture* becomes a part of your everyday vocabulary. The line of Doterra bottles at the local WholeFoods grows more and more appealing. Things that tell them you're nuts, but the longer you live with it, the more and more you start to realize that's not the bad part. The real crazy, the bad crazy is like a slow drip. The longer you live, the more you notice the little things. The things that make it harder to relate to people. The things that make it harder to go out. Your face isn't your face anymore. Your



hands are not your hands anymore. You are the roommate with the ugly things living under your skin and you are a shut-in living in your cluttered room with your bursting medicine cabinet that's overflowing with things that don't work.

And if they didn't listen to him when he had his hair combed back, when he showered twice a day, when he wore an ironed shirt, why would they listen to him now? It wasn't just the lesions on his skin anymore. It wasn't the fresh-faced desperation that haunted him those first several weeks and months. It was the haggard hunger and fury that grew there since. Flourished in the recesses of neglect, subsisting on the patronizing tone of the fifth doctor to prescribe him an antipsychotic in just as many weeks. He'd finally had it time and time again. He's finally had it today.

And he doesn't know what to do.

It started with a high ring.

It turned into a dull roar.

Blood rushing to his ears, blood rushing to his head, blood rushing beneath all his pores and follicles. The incessant crawling that turns into a thrashing and bucking wave. A thrusting, an insatiable fuck. It closes in around his hands, his legs, his arms, his neck. He's always found it difficult to breathe, but then his ribs begin to buckle and his lungs become too much. His pores are exfoliating sweet, sticky sloughs of uncovered skin. They are bright and pink and fresh and shiny where there is light. Where it is dark, they are meat. And he has so much meat.

*How do you fix a tuna fish?*

*You adjust its scales.*

Sometimes it feels like he has too many limbs. Sometimes it feels like he doesn't have enough. Today he isn't sure how many he has, but he thinks he's lost count. "I'm taking your sister out to buy pants," his mother calls from downstairs. "Do you want to come? Do you need anything?" and "Of course not," he wants to say, "The pants you buy aren't made for the legs I have."

He doesn't, of course. That'd be the wrong thing to say.

He sits in the quiet, for a while. After his mother leaves, after his sister leaves, after the front door is shut and the key *clicks* in the lock, and he listens to the dull roar in his ears and the hum of the air conditioning and the drone of the fridge in the kitchen. He wishes for words. Words would give him answers. Answers would give him meaning.

But the thing underneath his skin doesn't talk.

It makes it itch.

And he scratches it.

# Mirada

by Patricia Quinonez



# Mis-planted

by Mikayla Connolly

What happens to the garden flowers that bloom late?  
Or wilt when the sun shines too hot?  
They're never picked for the grocery-store bouquets,  
Their roots are left in the soil to rot.

Maybe if you'd read what the packet hinted  
Before digging in with your blade,  
You would've seen the label, clearly printed:  
*"prefers shade"*

# my boy

by Abigail Ryan

You are like the earth  
You love so much  
Firm, warm,  
Constant, steady, damaged  
Beautiful amidst the wreckage.

I feel the pain of my past,  
The prediction of my future,  
Bending in the wind  
At the squeeze of your hand,  
The curve of your grin.

I trace your body  
Learning the map of the ground,  
The places to shelter,  
The places to treasure,  
The terrain of a familiar hike.

I know you are safety,  
I know you will hold me in the still night,  
I will be reminded  
Of your solidness, of my reality  
Beneath my fingertips.

# my identity

by Alyssa Craig

doesn't exist. I'm a cesspool of every inspirational  
spew that's spat back out: lacking.

Paint the numbers, paint the letters,  
paint... painting the wounds. I wanted  
to be filled with the bright cyan hue,  
but I think I just mixed it into greyish,  
empty glaucous sludge. Have you ever  
seen grey food?; not attractive  
in the slightest. It's not mixing. It's *not*.  
Right.

Now a dissonant stain that just won't stop growing into  
acrylic cacophony

acry i c ophony

cry phony

# Primary Care Physician

by Evan King

You and your child walk into the waiting room for your annual doctor's appointment. As you turn the corner past the front desk, every chair is occupied-- by child, by mother, by man. There is, however, one chair that has free reign. Anyone walking into the waiting room can see it and understand. The man that sits next to the open chair makes brief, awkward eye contact with you, almost disregarding your presence. As you invite yourself to the open chair, out of your peripheral you notice the man shift and scoot even more towards the open chair and patient entrance. Your walk towards the chair now begins to feel dreadful, almost like with every step, the slinking of weighted chains begin to slither and buckle against your feet. You prepare yourself for the possibility of him reaching his arm out to reserve this open chair for his "other in the restroom" -- that would surely yank your chair right out from under you.

As you sit, you re-think why you decided to sit-- "couldn't you just stand and take the pain your kneecaps are giving you?" "Maybe my child's agitation with tight quarters would be relieved if they had their own chair?" The space between you and the man is tense without acknowledgment. You shrink, your aura shrinks with every thought, and with every blink he makes--forcibly ignoring you. Your shackles begin to buckle with force, making indents around your ankles, blood streaming out onto the carpet and seeping into the lattice fibers.

He absorbs your space. Your space belongs to him. He's never had to question it. Black hole. Mean girls. A piercing stab of silence, twisting and turning, gouging out your obedience, your listening. Maybe you should just get up. Be the outlier and stand. But why should *you*?

#29 / ???,???: I do feel colored. I feel colored when unwanted in a sharp white waiting room.

As names are called back towards the offices, the other chair to the left of the man is now available. You take a glance at him. He is staring straight ahead at the wall-- almost forcing himself to concentrate. "Is my stench too much?" you ponder.

What *are* his suspicions?

You accidentally graze his shoe, which initiates a putrid reaction, a flinch, an unsuspecting jolt. The man, so concerned about your visibility to himself and others decides to move his hand off of the armrest-- *your* armrest for your chair. You forced your daughter to keep her hands in her lap instead of supporting and balancing herself on the armrest. She wants to move and play and absorb and take space. She's buoyant. You think "Holy shit, what am I doing??" You are weak. Are you weak? Well, are you?

The man turns to you-- the longest he has held contact of any kind with you as he lifts himself from the chair to stand. You're seething, restless in place, as the nurse calls your last name. You decide to get up and let your "stench" parade around the room, still feeling discomfort, but aware of your aurora. Let it. Your doctor will see you now.

Inspired from Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*: pages 52-53 , 131-133

# Pterodactyl Skies

by Dalton Sweezy

The gasping of grass under tiny tap shoes  
The terrible shriek of pterodactyl skies  
A beginning of wonder is the end of laughter  
Contingent outdoor evenings reeling inside

If this is a stage and I'm just a player  
Where is the curtain to cover your eyes?  
These thoughts need some graceful discretion  
A ground in which to bury alive

The seeping of rain into household drains  
The crackhead screaming at a wall  
If someone's to blame for this constant refrain  
Justice and virtue are juxtaposed for all

The ceaseless shining of idioms' light  
The distraction of night into fragments  
From inside this house the moon is vibrant  
But outside the spotlight is stagnant

If this is a stage and I'm just a player  
Where is the curtain to cover your eyes?  
These hands need some circular perfection  
A fallacy in which to reside

The beautiful fire of car crash explosions  
The shooting star waving goodbye  
And hence will tomorrows commence?  
A sacrifice renders a lie

The ignorant cloud never looks down  
The clock is clinging to an hour  
Never could a wish for a night to forget  
Create bells in empty towers

If this is a stage and I'm just a player  
Where is the curtain to cover your eyes?  
These dreams need some foreign direction  
A soul in which to survive

# Rain

by Bitá Jadali

Spreading flowers on the pavement,  
Filling the air with an earthy scent,  
Pitter-patter on the leaves, the rush comes down.  
Cumulonimbus puffs gather in the sky, announcing the shower's advent.

Drizzling down, it makes a sound,  
Shushing the world silent; it floods the ground.  
The leaves now glisten and shimmer like diamonds,  
Little rills cut into the earth-the weeds all drowned.

Like a pot of tea, the world was brewing, steaming,  
Hot and humid, damp and heavy, boiled, aching, straining  
Too much stress, too much pressure, it couldn't take it anymore-it screams  
And finally releasing, bursts raining.

Cool air, pure and fresh and light,  
Every breath cleanses my life, setting it again all right.  
Emerging like a doe-eyed bride, all flushed from a brief midday shower,  
The world seems to have started anew, all green and young and bright.



# Remembrance Prayer

by Natalia Blooming

Drink a pitcher of holy water like Madison did that one time. Remember?  
When you drink it all in maybe you'll feel like a monstrosity,  
Something sacrosanct.  
I gave it all up to you because I believed,  
I give it all to you.

I just want to write stories with my sister,  
And spend the nights in the snow.  
And sleep by the window,  
Overlooking your lawn.  
When the dawn hits we'll have breakfast,  
Then go to the gravel pit and hunt agates all day.  
I think my favorite rock is Jaspellite,  
But I secretly hope that one day I'll find  
float copper or something new from the rolling hills of Ironwood.

I walked to Ana's party,  
And I didn't have the wherewithal to turn around or acknowledge my terrified intuition.  
Myself and the streetlights,  
Magnificent and petrified.  
And how could I have known?  
All I remember is letting go as I succumbed to something worse.  
And I'd like to think I would have been alright:  
I'm sitting in her living room now, too afraid to move; offered beer or shots, anything to  
make me  
lose my shaky awkward stance or the confused way I stared across the room.  
I tried to tell you I was hurt but my lips could not form the words.  
You saw right through me,  
I couldn't even see the light in your eyes.

A school day long, bright autumn sun,  
We're back home again.  
And she's taking the hog hair out of the Victorian chair we found at the estate sale last  
week. And my sister has the dremmel tools out,  
Her eyes the color of my father's, gray-green like the summer that swells from her.  
And could this be bliss?  
The feeling of constance.  
To the feeling of tenderness I drink in remembrance.

I worship here, peering down at you from space.  
I float through and my feet can't touch the floor, can't reconcile with my body; I offer it  
to you.

# roots (you know?)

by Sam Yi

yellow over black,  
like white over yellow,  
like west over east.

a blob of burning bleach and  
a glob of conformist colorant  
to achieve a neat uniformity.

tacky, tactless Roots,  
i must dye them every month.  
stubborn, selfish Roots,  
i must hide them every day.

mom says yellow kills the Roots, but  
stylist says yellow looks just fine on me, but  
dad says the Roots are the most important but  
friend b says the Roots are rude and colorist and old-fashioned, but  
friend a says the Roots are totally hot right now, but

no one likes my hair!  
not when it's black nor yellow.

but if i go all-black, everyone thinks that i'm too you know and if i go all  
blonde, my family thinks that i'm too you know and if i have my Roots show-  
ing, hair-havers think that i look too you know and if i cover up my Roots,  
other Root-havers say that i'm too you know and if i pick another color, my  
hair becomes all you know and if i let my Roots grow out, i get too you know,

i know so

fuck it! i'll just go bald!

...but then,  
aren't i all Roots?

# *Sandstone Has a Mohs Hardness of 6*

by Casey Jokay

Sandstone has a Mohs hardness of 6.  
This means that you can scratch at it  
With a nail  
Like you would find in your father's toolkit  
And it will shed grit into your hands.

You can take this grit  
And press it onto sticky paper  
So that you can rub yourself raw  
On accident  
Because you don't know where  
To get the right gloves.

It is very difficult to find a soft pair;  
It is very easy to bear a callus.

I didn't know you  
Could gather up my grit  
And press it onto our sticky chests  
So that I knew you  
Were also rubbed raw  
When we held each other with kid gloves.

Deep underground  
Sandstone may turn to quartzite  
By metamorphic heat and pressure,  
Which was yet shallower than you laid me.  
You wrapped me into the center of your world,  
Into hot and heat and pressing and complete and total  
Quiet.

A little sunlight filtered through the curtains  
Of the earth's core  
Where we were metamorphosing,  
Our grit soothed oil-smooth,  
Flowing, cooling, mingling, fusing.

When quartzite returns to the surface  
After it is melted down,  
It joins into granite and blooms  
With quartz and mica and feldspar  
And all our nutrient colors  
In solid consensus  
Between what was grit and grit.

Whether rain or sun or wind or water  
Or old rusted nail,  
Let us weather and  
Not be quarried,  
Until each gritty grain  
We have yet to shed  
Has flowed from our fingers whole  
And is lost into infinity's beach.

Granite has a Mohs hardness of 7.

# Sharpness

by Kaitlyn Page

*noun:* 1. fineness of edge or point such as the end of needle, allowing me to build an armor of someone-elsehood through metal and ink, allowing me to scar out any remnants of the gentile South bred in me, each dot a deep sigh from my father, the knowledge that I am young and immature in my little rebellions; 2. Keeness of observation seen in the look on my face when I find papers with my mother's old last name on it, papers she shreds with quickness before I can read about her first husband, the unknown husband, the no-longer husband whose name she has never said, and I have never asked, the way she refused to look me in the eye when she said she was married once before meeting my father as a way to swiftly end my questions, the ones she doesn't know she answers in the way she talks about others families' divorce, her too-complete understanding of it; 3. Pungency to the taste like the rejection of my tongue when swallowing my parents' coffee, burntness mixed with bitterness, the familiar taste twisted wrong in what-was-once-my-home, in maybe-still-is-my-home, a hope that I can learn how to occupy two homes at once, in a desire to not be cut by the liminal phase of being in my twenties; 4. Severity, harshness in punishment as in the quietness of my mother when she is disappointed, not in my doing but in my un-doing, in my leaving and in my absence, my silent bargain to her for a pardon, the bite that comes from hurting those I love, slicing through my thoughts, the question of *if I come back will I still be your daughter?*

# Show Me The Love

by Carter Wilson

A man doesn't have time in his life  
For superficial love,  
For broken hearts,  
For being led on,  
For being lied to.

**FRAGILE  
CAUTION  
PLEASE HANDLE WITH CARE  
THIS HEART  
IS NOT A TOY**

She screamed:  
SHOW SOME EMOTION  
DON'T KEEP THINGS BOTTLED UP  
WHERE IS YOUR HEART???

He whispers in reply:  
*Don't you see?*  
*You made me this way:*  
*Where is my heart you ask?*  
*It's gone.*  
*Where is my trust?*  
*It was broken.*

"I love you darling"  
"I love you"  
"I love you dear"  
"I love you sweetie"  
"I love you son"  
"I love you babe"

You do?  
Show me.

Show me the place they call love.  
Because that's a place  
Where there's time for everything.

# small animal, sharp teeth

by Kaya Groff

If I called myself a fawn I would be a liar, dear reader. I am no delicate creature. No victims of circumstance here. I am not delicate, nor are you. I think we are, at worst, victims of the fig tree. But, I am not at my worst. Though I am a small creature, I hide teeth like barbed wire just behind the mouth of some soft carnivore. I am eating my fig right off the branch, won't you come join me?

# *thank you for being a friend.*

by Rohini Bose

how to check speeding ticket online  
speeding ticket ga 16 over under 21  
how many points allowed on license ga  
how to plea bargain without attorney ga  
why does the top of my head look flat  
hair on top looks flat  
how to take care of curly hair  
curl pattern graph  
curly hair routine  
how to flirt  
hot flirt over text  
how to actually meet someone on a dating app  
how to set up tinder profile  
tinder vs bumble  
hair removal natural  
hair removal natural permanent  
how to lose weight  
yoga weight loss  
how to lose weight fast  
keto before after  
why do i get tired when hungry  
fair trade meaning  
sustainable fabric sources  
how to use sewing patterns  
sundress sewing pattern etsy  
cat monkey sewing pattern  
monkey costume for cat sewing pattern etsy  
cat standing in overalls meme  
teaching cat to speak with buttons



videos for cats  
cat cant jump  
cat young cant jump  
cat walking on hocks  
cat neuromuscular disease  
list of neuromuscular diseases cat  
prednisolone cat romg neuropathy side effects liver  
muscle tremor vs spasm vs seizure cat  
thymine deficiency cat  
thiamine deficiency cat  
cat muscular dystrophy life expectancy  
cat lymphoma  
cat lymphoma treatment cost  
cat muscle biopsy recovery time  
cat anesthesia side effects  
bill gates elon musk fight  
ceo entrepreneur born in 1964 je  
how to set boundaries  
how to stick to boundaries  
does my therapist hate me

# The Appetite of a Chronic Stress Eater

by Nicole Spektor

The word vomit spills from your mouth  
A discolored mush  
Of guilt and regret  
Heaving bile  
Of silly questions  
That require silly answers  
Chunks of  
glaring deadlines and  
painful conversations and  
abstract problems  
the world cannot solve for you  
Coughing up the last bit of  
phlegm  
And flushing it down  
Only to repeat  
A week from today  
Shall I mark it off in the calendar?  
Pencil it in  
on the second Tuesday  
Squeeze it in between  
The spiraling thoughts  
and the heart palpitations  
And unload another load  
Of flowery lexicon  
into the once clean-white bowl  
Now filled with alphabet soup  
Flush it.  
Flush out your brain  
Let the pinkish gray goop of your intestines

Swirl among the vile green-and-orange  
taunting letters  
Gasp out the answers  
And spit out the problems  
Until your head is as clear  
as crystal white porcelain  
It's rewarding, however  
When the accolades come  
Decked with chocolate and cherries  
and vanilla bean swirls  
Sickening sickening and undeniably sweet  
Fruity red smiles stain your lips  
So tear out your tongue and bleed  
laughter from a taped mouth  
The same words on repeat  
spilling out without much care or thought  
Select safe words from  
color-coded index cards and  
annotated articles  
It's only natural to want to fit  
Words into neat little phrases  
And hearty meals  
Describing an ache that doesn't really exist  
Of a quivering lip and a quivering stomach  
While you retch the distasteful leftovers  
into soapy sudsy sinks  
Fill yourself with candy  
Gorge on sugar-coated praises  
Heavy on the stomach  
Sweet on the tongue  
Swim on the high of the  
golden syrup  
trickling down your throat  
Leaving you craving for the next dessert  
Is it enough now?  
Is this enough?  
But it's so addicting  
It's oh so addicting  
The nausea that comes afterwards  
Is all worth the taste.

# The Beginnings of Sonder

by Nicole Spektor

There was a man standing by the river,  
He had a stand of portraits and landscapes,  
Of the evening Southbank street,  
In Melbourne,  
Old and withered,  
Nothing remarkable about him but,  
He  
caught my attention,  
Nothing remarkable at all except,  
The collapse of solipsism,  
The withering of egoism,  
How juvenile of an idea it all seemed now,  
Staring into the face of someone,  
With just as vivid a life as I  
I bought a portrait of a woman,  
He smiled,  
“That will be fifteen dollars.”

# The Coldest Year

by Gene Carbonell

Just out the window, the sky curls over the Sun  
And splays its colors like peacock feathers.  
Violet and indigo clouds chase the horizon,  
Behind which the Moon rises and blushes.

Avian pilgrims descend in droves upon a  
Land that is quickly frozen over.  
All around, the forest beckons to the  
Newborn stars with skeletal hands.

Winds, colder still, steal away the last rays of  
The Sun as it retreats, and draw an omen of  
Winter in its place. Yet, here I stay, bathing  
In the warmth of your laughter.

The frost may claim my hands before  
I ever might love you with them.  
And even sooner, the village might  
Burn them from me for such a thought.

But I will always remember the truth  
That crept from the green of your eyes  
Like ivy, and took hold of me,  
In spite of any of my protests.

Even when the early night takes hold  
Of the world and I am left to that empty peril  
So long as there is enough of me to  
Remember you, I will always live in  
The Summer of your love.

# The Cove

by Anna van Eekeren

Once upon a time, there lived a mother and daughter at the edge of a forest, where the woods bled into a nearby grove that was shadowed from sight and pulsed with a mystic aura reminiscent of the Ancient Ones that used to govern it. An enchanted cove, hidden from the mortal, tainted eye of those corrupted by material possessions, lust, and vice that seemed to shimmer and wane as the shifting tide that permeated its alluring, translucent depths.

Each day, the girl would venture from her cottage and pick berries along a winding path, careful to heed her mother's words and keep to the marked trails. Berries she would find and berries she would return until one day, she found herself among a luscious thicket ripe with fruit she didn't recognize.

Determined to capture more, the girl trudged forward into the vibrant flora, her mother's fair warning fading into the rich, bewitching environment as she stumbled over vine and onto sand into a clearing of light and beauty. Transfixed, she fell upon the shore of glistening waters that danced and beckoned her to enter its gleaming void of tantalizing illusions and sink into its luminous abyss. Captivated, she peered into the swirling, shifting iridescent sea, her reflection wavering in its dazzling display when suddenly, the searing ball of light above her struck the center of the sky and exploded into a shower of streaming tendrils.

A deafening roar penetrated the atmosphere as streaks shot down and split the lolling crescents in half so that the waves curled sideways and parted like smoke, revealing a glowing pathway from which a shrouded figure emerged.

"Come, child. Quench your desire," the entity coaxed and so, in a trancelike state, the girl staggered forwards, the sea roaring in response as illustrations of fragmented aspirations and broken promises flashed among its churning body. With outstretched hands that gripped men's hearts, the cloaked creature smiled coyly and greeted the girl, offering her a single, glimmering berry that sparkled and shone across realms, its essence saturated with temptation and plagued with consequence.

Seduced by the visions of those who had fallen before her and a sudden, innate yearning, the girl accepted, and the mesmerizing sheen of the cove shattered entirely, devouring her in giant spell as she succumbed to all the sins and wickedness of humanity that render existence.

# The last time I was 19 years of age

by Jamila Reeves-Miller

The crisp air of the mid-winter in Northern Georgia brought a certain comfort to my soul as I entered the Earthly realm. I've dreamed in a past life, I died on the cold but beautifully barren mountain top of Everest, so the southern winter was a lukewarm welcome as I rebegan my existence. However, in this life, I gravitate towards heat, so much so that I have been burned. In 2013, I struggled directionally as I held a near-boiling pot of lasagna noodles fresh off the stove. I stood, contemplating in front of the sink. Which way was I supposed to tilt the pot to strain the water? Needless to say, it is not towards oneself.

I have three physical scars that I could easily explain how I got burned, but there are days I think of the fiery anger I held in my youth. The physical fights I would instigate with my older siblings. The tantrums I would throw over simple things like a chair. I wonder if now, some of these actions would have prompted a diagnosis and if others were a product of mere circumstance.

My parents used to argue with heat. I think like a match swiping against the box it came from, I learned to light myself aflame. I used to bring each parent one of my stuffed animals as they fought, possibly to ease their pain, but the fights continued even as I grew out of said stuffed animals. I learned that fires cannot be contained on their own. I think back now, at that correlation, and it brings me pain, even more so when I think about rosy retrospection. We shape our memories, we mold them, and we remember them in a more positive light than what we experienced.

I do not want to live my life in constant heat again, and a gentle warmth is what I desire, but I chill easier as I grow. I'm afraid.

I climbed mountains  
I bore the cold  
With frostbitten fingertips  
And foreboding woes  
I imagined my lips sticking to my first love  
Purple mouths frozen in place  
Preserving the love I wished  
And the slow rhythmic heat within my chest burned like a dying fire  
Warmth within a frozen tundra  
Fading to tepid, then gone

Ice caps always seem inviting  
Glaciers called dream homes  
I walked miles on white  
And on blue I would float  
With numb toes guided by the force of my breath  
I leapt over chasms of grey depth  
To grip raw, biting stone  
As oxygen spun in my blood  
And sat in my bones  
I lost my breath

The last time I was 19 years of age  
I celebrated my birthday alone  
No Sherpa to lead me through rough terrain  
I laid upon a frozen hill  
Letting tears become ice  
While my baby, woven in womb  
Cried over the evasion of time

Still born  
At nineteen years of age  
I climbed mountains to reach a restless sleep



# The Seed

by Andrew Benzinger

*Do things really want to live*, I inquire.  
Does the seed desire the sprout? Sprout, the tree?  
The process occurs, the seed rounds the gyre.  
Self-reflection mounts self-replication  
To produce infinite wailing desire.  
Would our world's self-fulfilled apocalypse  
Be a shame without our souls' crying fire?  
The planet explodes, despair turns to joy,  
And the seed in heaven shrugs its shoulders.

# *The Sinking City*

by Anna van Eekeren

The city sleeps during the day and awakens at night.

A neon-infused landscape that stretches with each surge of the tide, feeble concrete walls trembling against Poseidon's fury. Water crashes over the edge, pouring over the barrier's cracked sides before seeping into disintegrating streets as the capital flickers to life— insects crawling to the surface after a maelstrom of destruction, desire, and deceit.

A crumbling remnant of the vibrant megalopolis that once inhabited these submerged roads.

A deteriorating behemoth subject to society's capitalistic cage and oppressive regime. Civilization's fractured fantasies, discarded dreams, and tortured scars of abandoned ambitions. An entire era of longing and consequence wasted to the shifting, incessant demands of time and prosperity.

Groaning, its inner metallic workings creak amid a clash of technicolor hues that swirl with each shaking sigh. Drifting figures wander through crumbling alleys, traces of the past lingering in weeping shadows, whispers faint and malign echoing among mankind's meaningless design.

A sunken meridian. A flooded wasteland.

Colossal decrepit structures puncture the sky— Charybdis jutting from the sea, reaching for something forgone. Collapsing ruins scattered in a graveyard of decaying buildings wrought by man's dire rapacity and lust for vacuous chaos.

Fallen are society's gleaming states and thriving junctions, replaced by this final fragment of humanity.

A drowning vessel

hinged on stolen time

in an already faded world.



# they say the owl was a baker's daughter

by Clary Bond

**it is normal to fear what we do not understand; we always have.**

I have always feared the things just out of reach:  
the joyous laughter echoing in the dark cave,  
the dead stare in her eyes I knew not how to name  
*(it was hopelessness, the end of wanting)*

sometimes, I fear the birdsong in the morning;  
sometimes, I fear the cup I hold in my hands,  
fear the warm liquid pouring out its heat  
beyond the limits of what I can grasp

**we can understand something, and then forget  
what it all meant in the first place.**

I remember when all I was was fear;  
I remember when I had nothing more to comprehend  
than *confusion* and *darkness*,  
*dead eyes* and *wanting* and *heat*

back then, I could never bear  
the hateful shouting in the hollow house,  
the pain in his eyes I knew not how to name  
*(it was hopelessness, the end of wanting)*  
*(despair has many faces; I wear his face in mine)*

**there will always be things we would rather kill than understand,  
would rather lock away than heal.**

I want to drown myself in liquid warmth,  
burn away the questions I don't ask,  
wash away the wanting and the darkness,  
those eyes that know the end

and oh god, how I fear for us all  
*(how I fear us all)*

what will become of us? (what will we become?)

for we know not what we may be,  
and barely seem to understand  
that which we are.

# To My Dad, The Artist

by Casey Jokay

Packing away December, I am looking for new dishes.  
You did not hesitate in your offer:  
Go through the cabinets, the shelves  
Of our home  
And take your pieces.  
How could I hesitate in accepting?

I knelt on the dining room floor,  
And you pulled up a chair beside me  
To save your back.  
Then together we drew out  
Those packed away plates and bowls and platters  
Of yours.  
Dust does not obscure their glassiness,  
But neither does years of use.

We study them one by one,  
Checking the fired-in dates  
Stippled next to your initials.  
You made many of these before you even made me  
(’84, ’86, ’89, ’91, ’96, ’98, 21 May 2002, ’09, ’14, ’19).  
Your loving fingerprints  
Have been smoothed into both.

I take a bowl into my hands,  
Enamored by the calm greens and blues  
Glazed onto fawny brown clay,  
Dripping glossy down the sides.  
Seafoam laces the wave’s edge,  
Somehow frothy and slick all at once.

You tell me the weighting is off,  
Point out your various falters in balancing.  
Maybe they would be a bit heavy  
To some stranger, economy-shopping.  
But these are the kind of sturdy bowls  
That a bump to the table doesn’t worry about spilling.

These are the kind of bowls meant to be filled  
With stewed 'til steaming goulash,  
Warming the hard clay into a hand's softness,  
Just the right width in yours  
To make you feel a little smaller again.

A smile molds my mouth unbidden,  
Not that it need be bid.  
My clay cannot resist the happy shape,  
Reminiscent of the way you dipped several of  
Your pieces, rim held perpendicular,  
Gently into color, coating even crescents.

You point out the four-bowl set,  
Which lives on the wall's display.  
I remember the four of us  
Eating together from them when I was a child:  
Stewed 'til steaming goulash.  
They haven't been used in a long time.  
I can't take those with me  
Anymore.

When I spring from this house,  
In a week or two,  
I will bring some of home with me.  
I wonder if,  
In a week or two,  
You will do the same,  
And what will be left when I return.

# To The Man of Many Faces

by Ezi Ononuju

Man of many faces, I want nothing more than to meet you.

Though I've never seen your face, every day I see you in friends and strangers alike.  
As I mold their faces into shapes they were never meant to form.  
And pretend I finally found you after all these years.

But while your face shifts, I stay the same:  
The one working for love that requires patience, not labor:

Though there's an inherent beauty to change and creation,  
Instead of shaping beautiful masks for faces they can't fit,  
Perhaps, I should reconsider my own countenance.

And so, while I wait for you, I will sculpt myself a new face.  
So that no matter what visage you settle upon (*if any*),

I will be satisfied just peering at the face reflected in your eyes.



# What J Left

by Taylor Drake

at my house after fleeing his father's in the middle of the night:

Nineteen pairs of sneakers and one red pair of sandals still wet with dew, all of them either lined up under my father's dusty bench press or stacked against a crate of clothes and hand sanitizer. So many shoes my little sister had to climb into the bed of my boyfriend's father's truck to retrieve them, her emaciated body limned in flickering white. So many things he'd missed while he was away in New York that he could barely get a word in edge-wise. So many trips back and forth our tracks were dark trenches dug through the lawn. I told him it didn't matter that his feet were twice as large as mine; I'd wear layers of socks or stuff paper towels into the difference.

A keyboard, a white speaker, and a turntable—the former two laid out on the bench press, the latter hidden under hoodies and sneakers. The same equipment we'd piled into his back seats at three a.m. two months into the summer. A different house, a different blow-out. (*Do you still listen to those songs sometimes, too?*) Nowhere was the golden guitar I'd carried for him then. J said with bloodshot eyes that he'd had to leave it with his father.

A three-hundred-dollar box of Japanese *Pokémon* cards about the length of a cookie sleeve. On the cover is Mimikyu, a ghost so desperately lonely it disguises itself as the franchise's mascot to try and make friends, jagged smile scrawled on with thick black marker like a child making their first Halloween costume.

A blue Gameboy with a copy of *Pokémon: Leaf Green* still stuffed inside. J said that the current save file contains every creature his ex-girlfriend has caught since the age of six. According to legend, the first time she and J ever fucked was on the stained mattress now propped up against my basement wall. My last good memory of them together is on that bed, all wrapped up in each other as we silently listened to Kendrick, the music so thick it weighed our veins down.

*(Do you ever miss it? I want to ask you. Not her, but the chaos of it? The way each day promised some sick new adventure?)*

Stickers of his old DJ logo scattered all over the floor. The same bonsai tree in black and scarlet was on the shirt he wore when we first met.

A red sleeping bag slip from which a box of *Yu-Gi-Oh* cards and the green, bulbous head of a T-Rex jut out, clothes stuffed in like meat into sheep intestine.

A messy white bed in my sister's old room, a quarter-full bottle of tea left on the floor. Before his arrival, I had lingered in the living room, listening to my sister deride our parents, her cheer squad, her intimate knowledge of cigarette burns. She said that J could leave his junk in her basement, but he wasn't going to sleep on her couch again. ~~She once said you were more of her brother than our real one.~~ I don't want to ask what she really thinks of me.

Three cups, three bowls, and three spoons in the sink, sticky with soda and chocolate ice cream.

An empty necklace box.

A crockpot by her record player and my brother's stacks of manga.

A shower cubby still in its wrapping.

An unused toothbrush.

Bottles of bleach we can't send through the mail.

A large trunk I haven't looked inside yet, edges of a violet bedsheet dripping over like wine from an overfull glass.

An old pig plushie I'd only remembered to give him once we were already en-route to the airport.

Two-hundred-and-eighty in cash on my bed to pay back all of the shipping. Over the next few days, my boyfriend and I will use up eight boxes and one-and-half rolls of tape mailing J his microwave, his clothes, his toiletries, his pills and charging cables – and a child-sized dinosaur my sister wants us to “lose” so she can keep.

Two empty binders and the essay I'd helped ~~J~~ you write a few hours before it was due. The one about your Ritalin and my ambitions and Samuel Beckett's wanting a life bigger than any life is meant to be. A few months ago I tried to tell you how I can only write about us in terms of stomachs and the taste of bile that lingers on the back of your throat, but I don't remember what you said, only that you'd liked it. I'm sure you got it, though. Now I stand under the gibbous moon as you take a phone call in my boyfriend's father's truck and mouth to myself, *This is what you wanted, you know.*

# Counting Hours on the Evening Shift

by Katie Kellam

I am the watchman and all is well, the gate is resting closed.  
Lazing in slow sunshine.  
The satin weight of sunshine  
drapes richly over skin and stone. All day the gate stands open,  
But I come in the evening, I have to use the code 5:00.

The greenhouse tunnel stands and grows, like the fern behind our garden hose.  
Grows in age and algae,  
polythene, earth and algae,  
and little plants with curling leaves in neat, green rows.  
Soil clings to roots like muscle cleaves to bone. I pull another weed 6:00.

I walk the gardens of Babylon, my blue plastic bucket and I.  
Here in the cool of the evening,  
with ghosts that walk in the evening.  
Ghosts of bygone summer days; half-remembered, sweet and strange,  
a taste that lingers like fruit from trees that once knew distant skies 7:00.

The sun bends low to brush the fields, and gilds the earth with fire.  
Magnolia and jujube,  
Osmanthus, fig, and pumpkin vines.  
The sky, a pale gold river, sinks into a patchwork quilt.  
I smooth the flank of a tractor, sleeping; his people are home by now 8:00.

I sit beside the beehives, and kick off muddy boots,  
and hear the amber humming  
in the dying amber light.  
I peel the skin from a muscadine. I spit the seeds in the grass.

Alone on earth, for this little while.

# devotion

by Aparna Pateria

a heady prairie  
of sound,  
the nighttime  
crickets'  
mystical  
thrum cleaves  
my morose  
mind from its  
shame and self  
condemnation  
good grief, just  
enjoy the crickets!  
their insistent  
joyous invitation  
and the green  
starbursts on  
drowsy trees  
and the violet  
night's chilly  
breath and even  
how a gentle  
pinprick tells  
me a drop  
of my own  
blood is now  
entering the  
mosquito's  
sleek proboscis:  
a red jewel  
set in the  
smallest of  
daggers

# Magnolia Woman

by Katie Kellam

She's nonchalant  
with branches bare:  
a lady's lithe limbs and sinuous form  
and flowers in her hair.

Fill your petal-cup with last year's wine  
and tell your lie that spring is here.

Flushed with victory,  
  
and the cold.

# Man Groves

by Whitney Cooper

They stand, blue-green water  
slipping between their roots,  
slipping between feet swollen and aching  
from running between land and sea.  
Not mangroves, but man groves,  
with branches of thunder and leaves of sun.

My father ate the fruit of man groves.  
He tore the flesh around the pit  
and tossed the seed back into the earth.  
My mother tripped over a root, skinned  
her knee, spilled blood, and I was born  
born in the shadow of twists

and wooden arabesques. My hair coils  
tight at the root; my lips close taut  
between two languages. I lie in the gap  
between soil and water, under the weight  
of black and white, straining to listen  
for birdsong, catching only the wind's empty groans.

# particles

by Aparna Pateria

I press my face into the grass  
and inhale geosmin: the particle  
that, through my nose and bundle  
of nerves, signals to my brain  
the sweet, sweet scent of earth  
geosmin, geosmin  
issued forth by a feisty microbe  
that shall remain unnamed (it  
populates my verses, but it shall  
not ruin their meter nor music)  
a roundish fellow that, in order  
to survive without food, resorts  
to eating itself and spraying  
poison to rupture and to slay all  
its tiny neighbors indiscriminately  
and high above this strange battle  
field of this cannibal bacteria's  
life, I smell the earth, her deep flush in  
anticipation of the rain's gentle kiss,  
the heady goodness that whispers  
promises of all the sweet vegetables  
that can ripen in her bosom, the  
tightness in my chest remembering  
monsoons of another place, another year  
past: all coldly manufactured  
by a ruthless bacteria and isn't  
this exactly this what makes poets so  
despicable: our desire to wrangle  
the world into some semblance of  
metaphor; to drag aesthetic  
to the most clinically incomparable  
incomprehensible facts of life; so I  
apologize for telling you of the  
microscopic bloodbath, and I  
apologize to the bacteria  
whose lives I dishonestly twist  
into my poems, and I apologize  
to the lovestruck for reminding  
you of the tiny insects living on  
your dearest's batting eyelashes,

and I apologize to the young  
for telling you of telomeres, the  
fates' threads all tied up in your  
genome and I thank all these things  
for reminding me that my poems are not  
stories, they are not beauty, and they are  
not goodness nor glory declared nobly  
on the page they are a simple  
byproduct of my own nature, a  
clinical fact of my life, an  
unsuspecting result more than a grand  
gesture, the smallest of particles  
issued forth from wondering hands



# Snail Song

by Katie Kellam

I have lain down in a garden when the sun was lying down,  
and watched a little snail eat the leaves off coral bells,  
and seen a little truth like a single vesper star:  
a snail, like the world, is an infinite mystery.  
And I am older than this snail.

I have heard the singing in my blood that matched the cricket song,  
and felt the earth spin quickly, like a barefoot dancing girl.  
Like Eve and Venus, every day I am older and she?  
she is young, so young still a child. I say,

Mother Earth is no mother of mine.  
Not *my* mother;  
laughing in the kitchen,  
quiet when she listens to the friends, neighbors, strangers  
who tell her their problems.

Deep well, my mother.

And nothing like this snail.  
This tiny, sticky traveler. Wears her whole world like a shawl  
of shiny glaze, brown river clay, and fingerprint ridges.  
A potter's mark, maybe missed, not smoothed away.

She grows, like the universe, in a slow immortal coil  
and she is the soul,  
the very living soul,  
of a child that smiles cruel innocence,  
with shining full-moon eyes like mirrors in the dark.

Dreaming dreams of mystery.  
Thinking thoughts of nothing.

This little dancing sister whom I love.

# the drawbridge lowers

by Aparna Pateria

over my gloomy moat  
I could eat a thousand suns, I cackle, while your  
withered flames barely lick the water's heavy womb

can you see me inside?  
can you see me inside?

I wring my hands, feverish, singular  
I remember, record, calculate every wilted magnolia  
that bloomed too late  
but I am just another village idiot counting confusedly on my fingers

what is mine, mine, mine, and yours, yours

ah, you are aghast. for

I am sharp and loyal, bent  
over like at a bonfire,

warming my hands over this cooling corpse  
and I do not need your help.

# The Earliest Memory

by Whitney Cooper

I.

The earliest memory  
of a magnolia bud  
is the branch from which it springs  
egg-smooth and white  
it clings to its branch  
among the leaves  
their crowded copper undersides  
leavened in morning light

II.

I sit in the courtyard  
after a hard preschool day  
concrete hot under my palms

I go deaf to the yowls  
of other children as she approaches  
the river of bodies parts  
my magnolia  
comes to me and extends her arms  
her branches  
so beautiful  
and so tired

# trazadone II

by Whitney Cooper

my psychiatrist approves halving the dose  
so each night I pull the pill  
from its orange cylinder  
and with my teeth  
snap it along its crease  
transforming it into a half moon  
of bitter chalk

the sleep comes slower  
feels lighter  
than the full dose  
but still black as lenten ash  
so as every night  
I become dust  
and to dust I

return

again



# Contributor Biographies

*Annette Aguilar* is a recent alumna from the University of Georgia. Currently in graduate school, she has neglected her writing for a bit. Please be patient with her.

*Whitney Cooper* is a second-year MFA student with the Bluegrass Writers Studio at Eastern Kentucky University, where they also served as editor-in-chief of Jelly Bucket, the graduate literary journal run by the university. They also work as a reader for Atlanta Review. Their work appears in SHARK REEF and Right Hand Pointing.

*Aparna Pateria* is a fourth year student who is studying English and Biology at the University of Georgia, seeking to teach after graduation. Regrettably, she prefers reading poetry to writing poetry, and writing poetry to writing biographical statements.

*Alan Barrett* is a 4th year student at the University of Georgia pursuing his B.F.A. in Ceramic arts and an A.B. in Advertising.

*Liana Jordan* is a third year Finance major with Theatre, Film, and Spanish minors at the University of Georgia. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys afternoon naps and trying to make sense of the world through poetry.

*Crystal Bowden* is a poet, mixed media collage artist, and writing coach living outside Atlanta. She prefers to hide away in the woods, chugging coffee, covered in cats. You can find her poetry and collage work featured in Dreamers Creative Writing Magazine, Unlost Journal, Tiny Spoon Literary Magazine, and others.

*Evan King* is a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Georgia studying Theatre, English, and Nonprofit. His current work centers on the Black experience in America. This is his first publication. Aside from performing, writing, and studying, you can find Evan purchasing books that won't be read until 2025 and listening to Amy Winehouse. Post-graduation, he hopes to open a casting agency devoted to underrepresented communities, performers, and models with special needs.

*Danielle Davis* is a fourth year English major in the Franklin College of Arts and Science. She loves writing, but hates writing brief biography statements.

*Alex Coats* is one of Stillpoint's social media managers and an English major at UGA graduating in Fall 2022 with an emphasis in creative writing. He likes pepperoni and sleeping in.

*Kaya Groff* is a first year English and Spanish student in Franklin College.

*Maggie Shaw* is a fourth year English major at The University of Georgia.

*Jesus Hernandez* is a 4th Year, English & Asian Languages/Literature Major, University of Georgia, likes to read, write, listen to music

*Sam Yi* is a third-year English major at the University of Georgia and has only recently started to write poetry.

*TJ Silva* is in his first year of the MAT in Mathematics Education program at UGA. He is originally from Eatonton, GA. He loves breakfast, collecting dumb things, coffee, cooking, reality tv, movies, and reading.

*Alex Anteau* is a first year masters student studying health and medical journalism at the University of Georgia.

*Mary Williams* is a third-year double major in Film Studies and Entertainment and Media Studies at the University of Georgia. When she isn't writing, she enjoys talking about Steven Spielberg movies and drinking iced coffee.

*Jason Hawkins* is a poet and short fiction writer. He is a second year at the University of Georgia studying English and Computer Science. He strives to give form to both the joys and the pains of life through his writing. Most of the time, he's reading sci-fi short stories, watching horror movies, or playing RPGs.

*Jaylen Parker* is a second-year at the University of Georgia. She is pursuing a B.A. in Cognitive Science as well as a minor in Philosophy, where she finds plenty of opportunities to voice her opinions through writing. Growing up with journalists for grandparents, she learned to love writing at an early age. When she was in high school, she developed a love for poetry after reading Ilya Kaminsky's "Dancing in Odessa" and began to write poems of her own. Jaylen now uses poetry as her everyday outlet as she is finding her voice in college.

*Patricia Quinonez* is a Landscape Architecture and Spanish double-major at the University of Georgia. She tries to balance her passion for art and creativity along with her interests in sustainability and languages. She spends a lot of time working in studio and photographing her environment whenever possible. Her photography style is dynamic and changes often to accommodate her curiosities.

*Abigail Ryan* is a second-year double major in Music (A.B., piano) and Social Work (B.S.W.) She is doing her best to be happy in the present moment. She can be found online as And Abigail on Youtube and Instagram.

*Alyssa Craig* is a fourth-year English major with an emphasis in creative writing and a Korean minor. She has been very interested in frogs lately.

*Bita Jadali* is a fourth-year majoring in Biology at the University of Georgia. When not fretting over her impending future after graduation or spending time with her lovely, loving family, she enjoys geeking over old Hollywood, overindulging in shoujo mangas, and fangirling over BTS.

*Natalia Blooming* is an artist and poet from McDonough, Georgia. She pursues art and poetry as a form of storytelling and is currently concerned with the trappings of her upbringing and the concept of identity as it relates to the home, haunted spaces, and relationships. Her poetry is a way she processes emotions and deals with change and she considers it a way she explores her own narrative.

*Nicole Spektor* is an undergraduate third year English major from UGA. She enjoys writing comics and watching animations.

*Carter Wilson* is a second year Fashion Merchandising major within the FACS (Family and Consumer Sciences) College. He has always had an affinity for the arts and all things creative. This affinity fostered a deep love for music (which in turn led to an interest in poetry) and fashion. Today, he is actively participating in various activities and organizations in the pursuit of a future career in the fashion industry.

*Rohini Bose* is a third year Public Relations and Philosophy double major with a minor in Business and in Law, Jurisprudence, & the State. She spends her time writing, reading, making art, playing music, and bothering her cat Charlie. She hopes to unlock the secrets of the universe in the next 48 days.



*Gene Carbonell* is a third-year Cognitive Science major who likes to try and be a writer. Some days he actually is one, others he pretends.

*Anna van Eekeren* is a second-year Entertainment and Media Studies major at UGA with a minor in Film Studies and a New Media Certificate student. She is passionate about the environment, social justice, culture, and media. She enjoys reading, writing, playing video games, listening to music, swimming, traveling, and taking personality quizzes.

*Jamila Reves-Miller* is a second-year Fashion Merchandising student with an emphasis in brand management and minor in Studio Art at the University of Georgia. She enjoys making art, singing, and dressing up.

*Ezi Ononuju* is a first year student at the University of Georgia. He is a Computer Science major from Alpharetta, Georgia. His hobbies include making video games, scenario writing, and stargazing.

*Taylor Drake* graduated with a BA in English from Agnes Scott College and is currently pursuing her MA at the University of Georgia. Her other work has appeared in *Persephone's Daughters*, *EX/POST Magazine*, *Stone of Madness Press*, *Wrongdoing Magazine*, and *Storm Cellar Quarterly*. You can find her online at <https://taylordrake.carrd.co/>.

*Katie Kellam* is an English and Linguistics major at the University of Georgia. She is an officer on the university's club sailing team and when she isn't practicing on Lake Lanier or losing during team poker nights, she spends most of her time gardening at the horticulture farm or practicing embroidery.

*Casey Jokay* is a second year English Education major at UGA. He loves drawing, making pointless spreadsheets, watching good movies a lot, watching bad movies even more, and anything to do with language.

*Sam Thompson* is a second-year English and Comparative Literature major at the University of Georgia.

# Staff Biographies

*Clary Bond* (Senior Editor-in-Chief) is a senior majoring in Biology and Classics. In her free time, she enjoys making terrible puns, playing the piano, and finding new film versions of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" to watch.

*Andrew Benzinger* (Junior Editor-in-Chief) is a senior majoring in English and minoring in Criminal Justice who loves pubs, pugs, punk, playing the drums, and watching terrible slashers.

*Abigail Friedel* (Junior Editor-in-Chief) is a senior majoring in Entertainment and Media Studies with a minor in Studio Art. She is passionate about multimedia storytelling, post-Impressionist paintings and the smell of new books (and REALLY passionate about coffee). She optimistically hopes that one day movies will finally be as good as the novels they are based on.

*Anna Goellner* (Submissions Editor) is a third year English and Religion double major who loves matcha lattes, stickers, and poetry. You can find her at the Jit Joes in 5 points, Trader Joe's, or binge watching Criminal Minds.

*Rachel Warner* (Arts & Design Editor) is a second year English major with a possible emphasis in Medieval Literature and a minor in Art History. Her passions lie in anything Tolkien and the Classical periods of Rome and Greece. She can always be seen with a book in one hand and boba in the other. She's always ready for an adventure, fictional or reality.

*Claudia Butler* is a Political Science and English double major. She enjoys reading fiction, writing poetry, and doing yoga. Outside of Stillpoint, Claudia leads in UGA Food2Kids and Strike Magazine UGA. She is an aspiring lawyer and relentless advocate for justice.

*Ryan Bohn* is a first year English major at the University of Georgia. He loves listening to music and reading great literature.

*Kaitlyn Page* is a third year English major from Richmond Hill, GA. When she's not busy watching Love Island, you can find her explaining the plot of whatever she is reading to her STEM and business roommates.

*Alex Coats* is a third year English major and math minor. His favorite creators include Natalie Wynn, Phoebe Bridgers, and Duolingo's social media team. His favorite type of poem is erasure, but only whenever the spaghetti's have been spooned carefully onto the page.

*Mikayla Connolly* is a second-year double major in English and Journalism from Virginia. She loves Jittery Joes, Joni Mitchell, Jane Austen, and alliteration, apparently. In her free time she loves to play guitar and write poetry. She hopes to spend her next few years in Athens getting more involved in the music scene.

*Anika Eechampati* is a second year majoring in International Affairs and minoring in English. Her favorite genres are dystopia and coming of age fiction and you can usually find her either listening to Sufjan Stevens, reading, or baking.

*Meredith Eget* is a third year English, Spanish and maybe Women's Studies major with an emphasis in creative writing. When she isn't writing poetry from notes app confessionals, you'll find her baking cakes, thrifting or singing Last Christmas in awkward silences.

*Gale Evans* is a third-year English and Comparative Literature double major. They can talk about Renaissance literature for hours, but can never spell the word right on the first try. In their free time, they enjoy knitting, thrift shopping, and trying to start a journal over and over again.

*Daniel García-Pozo* is a first-year English Education major at UGA. He has previously had his work published in the *iliad Literary-Art* magazine, and won the Lorien Award for his poetry. He attended the Sewanee Young Writers Conference in 2020, and has since attended various writing workshops at UGA. His main literary inspirations include Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luis Borges, and Jorge García Granados.

*Isabel Hutchinson* is a third year English major with a minor in Law, Jurisprudence, and the State. After college, she hopes to work in publishing, go on long sunny walks holding delicious oat milk lattes, and watch a lot of sunsets.

*Celeste Kazani* is a fourth-year English major with a minor in Sociology. She plans on going to graduate school and eventually working in publishing for an academic press.

*Summer Porter* is a second year English and Entertainment and Media Studies major at the University of Georgia. At any given moment there is a 97% chance she is consuming an ungodly amount of coffee, forcing someone to watch *La La Land*, or being a dork about language. Please feed her addiction and send all film and literature recommendations her way.

*Regan Saunders* is a second-year English major only slightly worried about the course her life will take after college. She listens to copious amounts of Taylor Swift, participates in the worship of *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), enjoys putting cheesy romances next to pretentious works of fiction on her bookshelf, and is the new single mother of a fiddle leaf fig plant.

*Russell Spearman* is a 3rd year Journalism student at the University of Georgia. He hopes to have a fulfilling career in writing, editing, and publishing.

*Nicole Spektor* is a third year English major and Russian minor with an intense passion for the gothic and the dystopian. In her spare time, she loves to create comics, write short adventure stories, and often spends more time getting lost in world-building and making detailed character bios than writing. She hopes to work in publishing in the near future.

*Dalton Sweezy* is a third-year Philosophy major. He enjoys exploring underground culture through consuming a variety of different kinds of literature, film, and music. His favorite musical artist/writer is Lou Reed, who he listens to religiously, with Bob Dylan and David Bowie close behind. His favorite filmmaker is David Lynch with *Mulholland Dr.* being a highlight among many masterpieces. He hopes to one day hold a candle to the level of meaningful expression his favorite artists have been able to achieve throughout their works.

*Sam Thompson* is a second-year English and Comparative Literature double major who drinks way too much coffee. She loves romance movies, torrential downpours, and desperately wants to learn how to knit.

*Henry Tollett* is a 4th year English and Theater student from Georgia. One day he might even finish writing something!

*Emily Tracy* is a fourth-year student from Cartersville, Georgia majoring in English and minoring in Linguistics. She writes horrible love poems, makes a phenomenal grilled cheese sandwich, and probably tweets more than a respectable young woman should.

# About Stillpoint

Since 1967, Stillpoint Literary Magazine has served as a forum for undergraduate writers and artists at the University of Georgia. The pieces featured in the 2022 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 Arts & Design Editor and Abigail Friedel using Adobe InDesign CC and Photoshop CC on a MacBook Pro. The type is set in Palatino, Minion Pro, and Didot from Adobe Typekit.

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Finally, thank you to all the writers and artists who made this year's magazine possible.

