

stillpoint

Undergraduate Literary Magazine
The University of Georgia
2011-2012

Front Cover

Sore Tongue

Ally White

Mixed media on wood

Back Cover

Untitled No. 2

Rosalee Bernabe

Gelatin silver print

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Stillpoint

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To the Reader

The 2012 *Stillpoint* staff is small enough to meet in a living room furnished with two velveteen rockers, a scratchy 1970s futon and some dilapidated wicker chairs. This year, I thought that we might more efficiently assemble a cohesive magazine with fewer members. Nine of us met in a squatty yellow house nestled against railroad tracks. The intimacy bred the hearty exchange for which I had hoped. That comfort also led to more open divergence than I anticipated. And produced a better magazine.

As we debated which submissions to accept for publication, we realized we needed a new way to include the student body. We wanted to expand our interaction with the artists, to be in more collaborative dialogue. On page 92, you will find our “Found Poem.” It is a collection of poetic excerpts from pieces we could not accept. We are pleased to include more talented writers, as well as to engage in their work by marrying it with other works.

Well-intended and fierce competition are themes in this year of political races and Olympic games. 2012 also possesses mythic qualities: the fiery apocalypse that seemed unlikely and did not occur, the missing, blustering, February day that was not supposed to be on our calendar, but still tickled our cheeks when we stepped outside. These qualities inform this issue of *Stillpoint*. I hope you find the submissions in it as delicately inimitable and competitively strong as we do.

Vivian Prosper McGill Hedges
Senior Editor

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The Auroch

Jessie Merriam



must have sunk through the water like a truck full of spearheads
but with just one in his rib was he found,
after some centuries, meatless
his bones never grazed by teeth,
pristine among fine metal razors
with horsehead handles,
among antlers, mandibles,
spiraled bangles and dishes.



What pale, bloated deity
was pleased
by submerged baubles and carcasses?
Maybe Odin
crowned with fingerbones
regal in sphagnum,
a stiff cloak of reindeer ribs,
and a viscous manner of dismissing his attendant,
the serpent who the Nords knew
to enact the end of each day,
coiling the sun in darkness.



Each dawn the deceased row the boat of morning
out of unreasonable night:
the noble, their young, the hanged and the bogged.



The sun rolling faster
with so many dead.

Loch Ness Monster

Letitia Carelock

I like the ladies wet
Slick legs, thin feet
Hair like the fins on my back
Men are too hard
They give me stomachaches
My burps bubble up to the surface
Trick the silly tourists
Intrigue the conspiracy nuts
I'm just trying to make a living, man.
Put the frickin' camera down.



mmm-nnn

Laurel Denham

Ink on paper

Navajo Nation, 2004

Jessie Merriam

I am going to Mars.
I am coming to Tuba City
where a sign by the highway says

“DINOSAUR TRACKS, come see,”
where everything, from ages to carburetors,
is fossilized by aridness,

men too. Everywhere tumbleweeds:
I pluck the shallow root of one—the branches have thorns—
and set it loose.

It scuttles away, then sits by the water, tipping,
indicating, introducing the foreigner and the water
and pulling my eyes over the water

raw and watching now
and sensitive to every grain of primeval glass
that is molting and unmolting

the landscape where clouds sublimate
from vapor to the solid state
of pure black shadow.

A man with articulate cheekbones said
they believe gravity does not exist,
which may be—

I see the sand make bold to leave the desert
I played Texas Hold'em with the children of pride
who are looking for a rocket out

to a life without homage,
to some new tribute;
Texas Chainsaw Massacre is a favorite

though it looks like yesterday's paint of the reservoir tower:
NATIVE PRIDE.

I think a family man with a spray-paint can
came down from the ancestral constellation in revolt.

Walking back to town and past the new junior high
I see the three-court gym has a sign:
DJ N-R-G will be here, tonight:

Homecoming.
Inside they are putting up the disco ball,
at nine o'clock it will be on

and all those white celebrities
will circle the ceiling,
a toy

planetarium
where even mars
is indistinguished.

Bodycelli Presents: The Birth Place of Afrodite

Vivian Prosper McGill Hedges

They woke up happy Neanderthals. He blearily blundered about Nell's body.

"You smell like morning,"

which is pretty and putrid.

Colt's copper back erupted, alert, from a whipped cream swirl of sheets. Nell did not stir from her supine sprawl. It was usual for him to awaken first and wait long. Often he was still and patient, but this morning he crumpled the sweet, 1000 thread-count froth, sleuthing along her body as though it had committed a crime. Shoot, dat ass was a crime.

"It's really hard to keep my eyes open. But I'm trying so that I can see you." Her eyeballs felt as though they'd developed a rich curd coat underneath their lids.

Colt tilted his head backwards and forwards, brushing his nose down her arm. An elephant trunk seeking an elephantine rump.

"You can close your eyes, Nell."

Once, Colt had appeared kaleidoscopic to her. But now she knew all his hues: the sky's grey the day his father left, the piss-dark olive crotch of his 7th grade pants. Eventually the rainbow mandalas coalesced into a human face: just a sack of pink over some pretty bones. That's when he stopped being Him and started being Colt.

"But I want to see you. And you want me to see you."

The curd continued to pull her lids down several times. Colt's investigations took him down the confectionary tunnel, and soon he was tracing the lines of Nell's toes. He mulled over them, magnifying glass in fist and pipe between firm lips. He decided that all clues pointed to a serious case of digit-sucking and undertook the task enthusiastically. Then he wound up and turned into a great fan, rocking over her and drying out the eyeball whey. The pale sunlight seemed to blanch them together.

Afterwards, her eyes were aired out thoroughly enough to keep them open. She knew he'd fall asleep inside her if she let him.

“C’mon. Up. I want a beignet.”

bei·gnet [ben-yey; *Fr.* be-nye]

1. a fritter or doughnut.

2. *French Cookery* . any fruit, vegetable, seafood, etc., dipped in batter and deep-fried.

Origin:

1830–35, Americanism ; < Louisiana French (def. 1) , French (def. 2) , Middle French bignet pastry filled with fruit or meat, equivalent to *buyme* literally, bruise, lump from a blow (of uncertain origin; compare bunion)

Visitors saw the green and white stripes of Cafe du Monde as prismatically as Nell had first seen Colt. But they were much more distinct in her mind: green fingers clasped white thighs over the River Walk location. The many mall cafes were teeth gnashing less and less money. Did Colt know the pieces of Lady du Monde’s sprawled physique, or were they all these same stripes to him?

The original French Market du Monde (stripes: albino-sausage toes surrounding green flipflop thongs) was well-violated by tourists and manicured by employees. This one was smaller, with fewer camera-necked diners and more exhausted faces. They sat on the patio and shared a beignet. It was delicious, but Nell didn’t like the powdered sugar. Colt ate it with his fingers.

Something smooth and confident pressed along Colt’s leg. He looked down and discovered that it was not Nell’s calf, as he’d hoped, but a grey cat. Nell cooed at it, but it curled more possessively around Colt.

“You have to treat cats like women.”

Nell laughed, “Ignore them?”

He nodded.

“You don’t ignore me.”

He nodded again and flicked at her hair. “I only want to be sadistic to you sexually.”

She wondered if he’d gotten sugar in it, and whether it would look more like dandruff or dried skeet. She also wondered which she’d prefer. Twisted around his fat digits, her black strands looked like veins.

“Yeah?” The corners of her mouth were sharp little arrows, arching up

and back.

He'd moved his finger to hers, and she could feel the remaining spitty sugar gel onto her skin.

"Baby girl, I just want our screams to harmonize. You know it's a dialogue."

Nell was not treating the cat the way you treat women. Her free hand dangled near her ankles, beckoning feline affection.

"I do not know about that. There's an exchange, but it's not a conversation. It's not like your cum is a carrier pigeon."

"Yeah, more like a stork. A chef stork. Serving up baby batter."

The waitress chose this inopportune moment to sidle up to their patio table. Nell retrieved her failed cat-bait hand and sat up uncomfortably straight. The waitress's name tag said Scarlet but her face Bertha. Scarlet's uniform included a white hat that looked, unfortunately, as though she had placed a paper cake on her head. A strained black bow tie beneath her corpulent neck indicated that she'd probably preferred cake in her belly. The tie threatened to unravel when she asked Nell and Colt if they'd like anything else. Colt watched the jiggling pink tsunami feeling horrified. He surveyed her chest for potential victims. The neck would probably just slop over her equally rotund breasts, but he feared for the tiny "Scarlet" placard. Swiftly, he stayed the dam by interrupting her.

"An au lait for me and a coffee for Nell, here."

Scarlet didn't make eye contact at all during the exchange and turned curtly after Colt placed the order. He wondered if she knew of the kindness he'd extended to her. That's probably why she'd scuttled away so quickly: she just didn't know how to thank him. What a sweetheart!

Nell was still blushing from Scarlet's appearance mid-baby batter babbling. Colt was grinning. His use of her name when ordering had not been thoughtless.

"Stop looking pleased with yourself. That lady's not impressed that you have sperm."

"Everyone is." He was still feeling like the little dutch boy who put his finger in the dyke, holding back the whole sea of waitress neckfat.

"Oh." Nell suppressed her laughter, but Colt's penis heard it. His grin widened and he leaned back in his chair.

"Anyway," she was back to business, no longer laughing, "I see what you're saying about yelling at once. No one is saying 'Oh, thank you for

that! How lovely. Now here is this!’ It’s communication, but it’s not, like,” she shrugged, “in turns?”

Scarlet brought them their drinks. Colt took a sip of his frothy au lait. Nell’s black coffee was too hot, and she rested her parallel forearms atop the table. She didn’t mind the wait, though, because Colt was musing quietly, probably thinking himself quite important, while obliviously sporting a ridiculous milk mustache.

sphinx [sfinks]

noun, plural sphinx·es, sphin·ges [sfin-jeez]

2. (initial capital letter) Classical Mythology . a monster, usually represented as having the head and breast of a woman, the body of a lion, and the wings of an eagle. Seated on a rock outside of Thebes, she proposed a riddle to travelers, strangling or devouring them when they answered incorrectly, as all did before Oedipus. When he answered her riddle correctly the Sphinx killed herself—by some accounts, devours herself.

“Yeah, that’s the thing,” he continued a moment later, the milkstache a fluttering dove’s wing, “I mean, I think that’s why violence is fetishized. It’s a reflection of that kind of chaotic, clashing movement.”

Colt’s pride was on parade. Gold, green and purple streamers flew back from his shoulders, flung so far behind his chest. Nell was just enjoying the milklip.

“And that’s good, because . . . why is that good?”

“Hell if I know why it’s so good.” He put his hand on her thigh.

“You look like a suckling babe, tough stuff.”

“I am.” Colt stopped tilting his chair back and leaned forward to let her wipe his mouth. “Did you know I was breastfed til I was four years old?” The lip she’d wiped was red, roughened from the napkin’s frictive surface. He looked like he’d eaten a really rare steak.

“No. I’m surprised you haven’t mentioned it.” Nell’s mother was a midwife. Breastfeeding and mothering weren’t infrequent subject-matter in her conversations with anyone, particularly lovers.

“It was pretty funny, you know, cause I could speak at that point. So, I’d come up to my mama and very firmly tell her, ‘I want. To nurse. Now.’”

Oh Lord. Was this a turn-on? Yes, she liked it. Nell could see that he

hadn't noticed. She maintained her calmness. Her sphinxhood.

"That's probably why you're such a smartie. Did your mama know about that?"

Colt shook his head, "She was just really passive. I don't think it dawned on her to initiate a change. I stopped because kids at school teased me."

Colt's mother, Maybel, died in a car accident when he was in college. Nell hadn't known him then. She had only seen photographed Maybel, semi-smiling and in crappy apartments.

Colt's orphanship preserved Nell's kaleidoscopic view of him longer than anything else. He just plumb-appeared, clean and alien out of the foaming sea. Her Afrodite.

"If I'm Afrodite, it's because you birthed me that way, Botticelli." his hands were conveniently cupping her arched neck and back. They'd been on his sinking porch. It was summertime.

"Aphrodite sprang from the disembodied testicles of Uranus in the ocean, not Botticelli's brushes."

"But I'm talking about Bodycelli, girl."

Gym

Matt Burns

Forty rough-legged women are frozen in the downward-facing dog
Stuck for seven weeks now, their tendons stiff and their cartilage calcified
Waiting patiently, painfully, for their master to return

The yoga instructor flew back to Bombay to solve a child's pose crisis.
He didn't inform the class he wouldn't be back
One day as he waits for rice to boil, he feels like he forgot to do
something
But he figures he is thinking of the film Home Alone and he happily
munches rice

Lopsided musclemen glance each other over in the mirror as they
Heave dumbbells in side-lifts the unstoppable way they've been at it
For two consecutive years, each pledging mentally to finish his set one
rep after that loser gives up on his. Each has a gargantuan right side,
toned and bulky
But a skeletal left – hollow and forgotten as their speech since they have
spent so much time grunting at the dumbbell rack that half of their
English vocabularies
Have atrophied and all that remain are expressions of
Holy Shit When Will This Asshole Be Done

A mirage runs on the track
Two blonde tongue depressor sticks thin as rods spunky as lightning
Their ponytails bounce in perfect mirrored harmony. Out in out in out in.
Fleeing from each other, then running back to kiss and make up only to
flee again
I want their ponytails to be a dumb and obvious metaphor for a flawed
relationship,
But as these two high-five after a good run, all I can think is that maybe
giving up your identity has its upside in a dependable workout partner



Doily

Anna Schoenbaechler

Pastel on paper
18" x 24"

Trash Horse

Rachel Stoker

The marsupial mouths of trash
trucks grumble the black asphalt
a low purr in the night, feeding
off of engorged trash bins, the
throwaway days' waste and sins
these merchants of deletion
I shed my disposable shell
husk my mollusk casing
and take out a life insurance policy
on my fruit bowl
I'm an addict of
change if it keeps
the shadows in stasis
When they take the trash bags sometimes
a bit of spit remainders
And I wonder if in the ancient city
people hop-scotched over vomit
tracing rivulets of liquor
to the mouth spout of the sewer
into the spines of those lead pipes
that I have heard wasted an empire
When the Trojans came, where did they bury their dead?
When the monstrous morgue
of the wooden horse crept into the city
blushing at the clean beauty
of the Athenians' gracious pleas
for a spot inside the Escape Management Machine.
"Don't you see, we've been under siege!"
We have no dead, only hidden bodies.
The invisible city is immaculate.



Sheets No. 1

Kory Gabriel

Graphite on paper
76.5" x 58.5"
2011



Untitled

Isabel Schneider

Ink on paper
18" x 12"

Skip Around the Sun

Laurel Denham

Skip around the sun.
One million Italian men.

Melted marble tessellation.
Me in a blender.

Molten mixture, more or less.
Not my self.

Wonder what I once was
When I had time

Now I know
I am an ape.



Le Marais

Rosalee Bernabe

Oil on canvas

Yamakasa

Kieran Maynard

NB: The reader is invited to rearrange the paragraphs as they like.

At last I find the sea, the shore flashing tiny fireworks; arms from yukata clutch sparklers and the swell licks the shore. Sand fills my imitation-leather boots, sold at a mall on the bayside that greets the barbarians not killed in the typhoon. I gather the trash and stare at the sea: ancient host of Chinese junks and Mongol fleets. Hideyoshi's expedition sails and Tang emissaries come twice a year with gifts, sandalwood, kanji. The metal fleet sets out again to enslave the peninsula. I sit on the sand tromped by hundreds of years of continental trade and the sea-night hides the thousands of ships making their rounds to bring plastic goods back from developing economies. I rode the rip current under mass cultural importation of translated manga and anime on kids' TV to float up on the shore like a lost Heike clansman. A bottle rocket burns a hole in my shirt. Clouds float over Kokura, hiding the bomb that never fell, the override fruit. By the sea, the docks are fluorescent; the waves break in the bomb-light: some guy my age flips a switch and shuts off the lights of Fukuoka, his B52 droning overhead.

We drive to Iizuka. Bare-assed men in mizuhappi and shimekomi march on the narrow small-town street; an old man sprays them with hose water. The greens flow, chanting, past other teams blue and purple clustered. We duck under the curtain of a ramen shop. The counter stretches deep and the sauces smell of Sino-Japan. We, the only customers, slurp from bowls baked by Pyongyang slaves. The soup is thin but satisfying; after dealing with imperial bureaucrats in Dazaifu we savor the continental aftertaste. At road's end the mikoshi lumbers on the backs of tiny runners. The superhighway rumbles beyond a rice field. Girls in dresses and makeup spectate with children, mothers, and old men. The green curls of a giant asparagus bob over the trees, the hair of a bronze Buddha big as a house. The earlobes droop longer than my body; each curl is bigger than my head. He reclines, rests his head in his palm

and watches the leaves on the opposite slope fall as Zeros tumble from summer skies.

At 2:00 am we try to hitchhike, take a cab and rendezvous for crepes in Hakozaki, catch the train at four, and walk to Gion in the rain. We drop by a combini, buy drinks bottled overseas and wave plastic cameras, phones and umbrellas at the half-naked runners. Thousands of spectators take ten thousand blurry photographs while salarymen lean out of office windows and the vanguard children appear waving wooden signs. The shrine sweeps around the curve as the elders riding it beat their batons against the beams to replace tired carriers. Runners with kanji on their backs and chiefs in red headbands heave the ferocious image of the gods, placid on its wooden throne, crushing shoulders that shudder under its weight; arms strain to keep the god aloft as the red sun rises, illuminates the mikoshi carried on the continent by soldiers, their mizuhappi tied with regulation belts, asking the gods to ensure the amalgamation of Asia into the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The grandmaster fingers a tea scoop and answers a student's query. Checks the records, answers. An undeclared ten million yen changes hands. I thank the clerk. No, I don't need a bag for my yogurt, muesli, and miso. In a flat with bleach on the walls and mold in the bathroom my Chinese roommate and I cook couscous and kimchi, trading gossip picked up along the Silk Road over the roar of tricked-out bikes and loudspeaker-vans proselytizing on the street. The summer rain retreats, the umbrellas collapse and the flow of shrine-bearers rush on, sweep around the hairpin curve into a world where men eat their prisoners and mushrooms bloom in city skies. The swarms of teams in the Oiyama, chanting with one mouth, heaving, grate their flesh against the beams, heave the ferocious image of the gods, placid on its wooden throne, crushing shoulders that shudder under its weight. The cannibal licks their flesh while painted lips sip tea on battleships and watch Yamakasa on plasma-screen TV, bites while Korean slaves sweat at the potter's wheel, changes the channel; juices ooze through teeth while flames lick Nanjing.

I put the finishing touches on the constitution and hand it to the translators. "I rejoice that the foundation for the construction of a new Japan has been laid according to the will of the Japanese people, and hereby sanction and promulgate the amendments of the Imperial Japanese Constitution..." The seal of the emperor stamps in tandem

with executives greenlighting contracts, on state-of-the-art factories built in the wake of the bombs, “Made in Japan” on cars that sail abroad. Hideyoshi’s ships return from Korea, meet the frigates of MacArthur’s withdrawing occupation and argue deck to deck as the coming Mongols fight the current. Pokémon surf toward North America and peel up the sea, a mat on the kabuki stage. Goemon appears on a golden gate, fails to knife his childhood friend and we part to fight again another day. I exit stage left, a knife in my beggar’s bowl, in search of another sea.

Shell Point Community

Alyson Pittman

The little gray hairs stand matted
in the drain. I suck them out
with a coat hanger.

There are Christmas lights
strung around and through
the palm trees. One of the
trees is split open by lightning.
Its burnt flesh screams
in the warm afternoon sun.

A ring of picnic tables
offers orange silk flower
centerpieces to their guests.
I shake hands with all
the visitors. Thank you
for coming.
He would
have loved to see you
before he passed.

Everything We Do Is a Selves-Portrait

Laurel Denham

Do you want to share some hate?
Wrap it up, first time
Or any time. We hate time.

Aw

We know it's bad
Real bad, puppy cryin'
Don't make a pow wow pooch.
Real bad poochie bow wow wow.

Hey, your eyes are sliding
Into mine, you come here again
Meet me here behind the
Meet me here behind the
Wall, Your fur, in my fur
Makes souls sweat
Guzzled us down and deep under
Heavy sweat, heart sweat.
My angel even cried.

Can I take your photograph?



Carissa Pfeiffer

Room

Etching with aquatint

Sonnet

Olivia Clark

i think i used to do my homework here
the cool stuff, i'm not talking Minute Math:
where i sat at the counter, fighting red
rapidly changing angry red digits
that hung from the white mounted coffee pot.
no, i am sure i did my homework here
wrote in my journals, colored some pages,
took some notes from fat and glossy hardbacks.
here where i spread out my work in circles
and folded out the leaves at this table.
the shiny smooth coat that covered the wood
it never bumped my letters or my lines



Untitled No. 19

Rosalee Bernabe

Gelatin silver print

Travelodge

Alyson Pittman

She chose the Travelodge for reasons both aesthetic and functional. The manager had elected to decorate the rooms with purely modernist art, which she examined should she get bored, an unfortunate but altogether inevitable occurrence. The Travelodge was also removed from the city center, should traffic ever become a concern. On this particular evening, she was quite aware of a certain staleness lingering in the lobby, as if she had been here before, or one too many times, or not at all. Her gaze lingered on the sofa cushions, well past their prime, once dancing daisies now trudging along more like pimpermels, and followed the slope of the wall up to a large mounted clock steadily counting the seconds in Tokyo. She was not in Tokyo, nor had she ever travelled to that particular city. But, as she supposed, seconds in Tokyo were no less like the seconds in Tulsa, although neither was she in Tulsa. The seconds, unaware of her exact location, continued their rhythmic and arbitrary beat. Content with the time, she turned her back to the clock and watched the sliding glass door.

Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close.
Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close.
Open. Close. Open. Close. Open. Close. Open.

The door opened fourteen times before the man she was meeting quasi-casually strolled across the Travelodge rug, tapped his loafers on the tile floor, stood at the refreshment counter to consume a chocolate chip cookie, and nodded in her direction. She took her cue seriously and headed for the exit just behind the check-in counter, taking caution not to touch the door handle.

Once outside, she placed a spare room key on the window ledge of Room 4 and continued her funambulist stroll towards Room 16. The odd numbered rooms were on the outside wall, so she had only to pass five doors after number four before reaching her own. Sliding the key into the lock and turning her hand sharply to the right, she entered the room and closed the door behind her. She walked to the sink, turned on the vanity

bulbs, filled a glass cup with tap water, and swallowed two aspirins. She paused for a moment, glancing to the left, to hear the slow hum of the air unit below the window, over her shoulder. She had paid for two hours, or any fraction thereof. She prodded a small, red blemish on her chin in the mirror, was satisfied with her appearance, and turned off the light.

The room, though unlit, felt warm and full. She settled herself on the bed, legs crossed. Three minutes passed. The door unlocked and opened with a none too noticeable *klak*. The afternoon sunlight disturbed the warm darkness. Close the door quickly, please, you'll let out all the air. The man walked to the bed and placed a box of Krispy-Kreme doughnuts on the bedside table. Is it the doughnut routine, then? She was fond of his particular affinity for doughnuts and pubic hair. She was not in the habit of wasting time and had no intention of paying for the third hour. She let him take off her shirt—careful with the buttons, if you don't mind—and touch her hair, although his hands were sticky with the faint smell of petrol. It was the small gestures that made the encounter more reassuring, more promising of another. She let her head fall back on the pillow, without desire of enlightenment. It will be over very quickly.

It was not.

Darling

Aaron Sayama

I burned my fingers
making dinner for you
and fell in love

with the cold,
kept touching
frost-filmed windows

slept tangled in a sack of ice
and awoke with shining scars,
no feeling in my hands—

saw you downstairs
pouring cereal,
you came to me
silently pressed my palm
and kissed it

still numb,
I chopped lettuce for lunch,
the leaves crackling
and frozen,
knuckle-white.

The Sidewalk Bleeds in Weeds

Megan McHugh

In case you were wondering, I dreamed of you recently. At least I thought it was you. I thought I could make out your disheveled brown hair from a distance. See, you were standing at the end of the sidewalk I was traveling on, beckoning me to come nearer. It turned out to be one of those dreams— you know the type— where you pump your legs like well-oiled pistons, yet never move an inch. You reach and stretch and groan, hoping to meet the horizon, all while remaining trapped in one location.

In one moment.

Nothing else existed in my dream but you, me, and that cemented trail. At one point my feet forgot the pace and stumbled over one another, making me fall on my knee. I remember the crimson streaks trickling past my sock and filling in the pavement's crevices and indentations like empty ice cube trays.

Do you remember those popsicles we used to make from colored Kool-aid? How we would grow impatient as we waited for them to solidify in your mom's freezer? My blood is the same color as the punch flavor. In case you were wondering.

Maybe that means something. Maybe I'm stuck remembering you as you were: eating frozen red deserts with me on the trampoline in the backyard while counting the bugs that ran between our outstretched toes. Maybe I just don't want to accept you as you are now.

Maybe I don't know who you are now. I keep thinking I see you everywhere:

The Home Depot worker salivating over a tight pair of jeans instead of mixing the store's paints correctly.

The crack dealer that lives behind the old restaurant on Main Street with different forms of hunger in his eyes.

Even the old broken sidewalk in my dream, covered in so many

cracks, blemishes and imperfections that the people of the neighborhood have given up trying to fix it, because they finally came to the realization that it's beyond repair.

I doubt I'll have that dream again, because I think I've finally come to grips with its meaning. You are unreachable, as is the carefree childhood we shared. You refuse to come closer, so instead of continuing to chase you, I remain sitting on the sidewalk, the blood running down my knee turning my sock black.

They don't make a kool-aid flavor that color. In case you were wondering.

I don't really know why it is I'm telling you this. I suppose it's because I keep trying to reach you and tell you how much better you are than them.

The horny Home Depot worker.

The hungry drug dealer.

The sidewalk.

I just want you to know I still believe in you, even if I can't be by your side. Even if you run away from your past, your home, your family. I'm still chasing you all the while. I'll keep trying to close the distance, even if I don't understand your destination.

I want you to know how much my knee hurts, because maybe then you'll slow down and stop. Maybe then you'll see the color of my blood, remember our childhood, and run in my direction down the disheveled sidewalk. I want you to know that I would embrace you. Even now.

I really just want you to know how I still believe in the Kool-aid popsicles and the bugs around our feet.



Sheets No. 4

Kory Gabriel

graphite on paper
39" x 60"
2011

All Around Me, Buzzing

Alyson Pittman

Clonazepam (klonopic)
Lorazepam (activan)
pulse... pulse... pulse... putter...
a pounding reverberation
sca-ratching gold
(&leopardprint)
pill box
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |

No pills on Sunday;
morning praise the fall—
rather false equivalences
thrust as an effigy, the Christ-Barbie strung
on a clothesline through her
plastic uterus.
The street smells like rain and cheap Chinese
Food—fried; like matches.
Dry mouth licks the asphalt throat
stuffed open to suck suck suck
half-naked Transeptic lightning scars.
Breathe deep the corn-colored air:
dizzying,
drowsying,
frequently urinating,
bare-handed improvisation.

My baby she come home with me
My baby she come home with me
My baby she dip her hand in the river
How do you reckon it do

a razor-blade inside my thigh and
a syringe trembling full-o-Novocain
Slides warm and wet...
burn clean—burn clean—BURN CLEAN.
A bricklayer and a jar full of salamanders
A salamander and a jar full of bricks,
bricks like corpses, floating in orange juice.

A (shard) jar
a —jar



Jaded

Michael Noeltner

Acrylic paint and shredded canvas on a stretched canvas



Block Beauty

Joseph Perry

Cellophane/ink

Wonderbread

Alyson Pittman

Strange to squeeze the white stuff
in his sweaty palms; kneading balls
into little bread bullets –
little bread bullets swaged with
the taste of his hands.

His mother had an appointment:

burning spider webs with a magnifying glass
counting soup cans like unclaimed cremation urns
rolling candy cigarettes between twisted teeth
spinning pennies rolling by two by two by

Heat dropped on the asphalt like
honey, dropping slow.

Licking salt from his lips, licking
starch, licking white stuff
from his fingers, the color of black coffee
dipped in skim milk.

Cloudy storm sags hot—full—bloated—

His mother had an appointment.

Night of Belladonna

Jason Longoria

I had always known her: the woman, standing on the sidewalk, minding her own business, in the border of that Christmas photo from some-year. I never knew why Mother had insisted on framing it. I didn't like it. I did not know why it sat on my desk.

I could see the three of us: Mother, smiling; me, staring; my father, grimacing. We were all wearing white. I was wearing a wool sweater which was too big and scratched against the bottom of my throat. Mother stood cocooned in an ivory dress. The cords of my father's neck fought against his turtleneck collar.

My parents stood behind me. My father's right hand gripped my shoulder, the rings inverted.

It was an awful photo.

The only consolation was her, on the outside looking in, a part and apart—a red rose in an ocean of orchids.

Ben held out the twenty dollar bill.

She only stared at him. She was an older woman, with saggy lips that pooched out around the corners of her lips. Her lipstick was one shade of red brighter than he thought appropriate. Her dark eyes, circumscribed with glasses, glinted in the light.

For one brief moment, he knew she had figured him out.

"ID?"

She sounded unconcerned.

The terror subsided.

Ben showed her his license. She pressed a button on the register; he looked away, only looking back when she handed him his change.

As he grabbed the bag, she smiled.

"I hope it gets better."

He stared at her. The terror had only stepped outside the room.

"You're sick, right? Or you have allergies?"

He couldn't speak. His mouth was glued shut.

She was staring at the bag. He glanced down. *Of course.*

“Yeah. Thanks.”

He departed from the register.

“Have a nice night,” she called, but he was already out the door.

I didn't know what had happened, only that they were gone.

It had been quite a surprise, really. I was sitting at my desk, fiddling with my laptop, when the windows burst open and the birds flew in. At first I thought they were songbirds—nightingales, come to bid me to bed—but further inspection revealed them to be unlike anything I had seen before. They lined up perfectly on my windowsill, staring at me with dead golden eyes. They had the long, arched necks of swans, but their faces were hideous, like buzzards. Their lightless feathers oozed with darkness. The very air around them seemed warped; parched, the feathers drank the surrounding light. None of the birds made a noise.

That was when my alarm clock joined the discussion. It had been twittering angrily at me for some time. Now seized with violent tremors, bells aquiver in anticipation of purpose, it began to bounce along the edge of the table. I knew its plan, its destiny: I swiped at it anyway. The white cord looped for a moment in the hazy light—the clock swooped down and collided with the wooden floor. The bells sung still, then silenced, and the clock ceased moving.

This was the birds' call-to-arms, the shofar they had traveled so far to heed. In an instant they were airborne.

Suddenly, cacophony: the birds were shrieking. They were not songbirds. Their shrieks were not birdcalls.

They were screaming, screaming like cattle at the slaughter, squealing like pigs plunging over the edge. I could even see the demons in their eyes, cackling with every glimmer of that dead gold.

I wanted to vomit. My throat was closed tight, and I realized I had never been thirstier.

All I could do was swat at the air. I was standing now, and yelling, I think; I felt the vibrations in my chest, at least. My attempts were futile, because I could not touch them. No hand of Man could end this devilry.

I screamed for Jesus, asked him to deliver me. I screamed so hard I couldn't breathe. My throat was on fire.

And then they were gone.

The first thing Todd learned about Ben was his cleanliness.

The first day they had moved in, Ben had scoured the entire first floor of the apartment, mopping and sweeping. The air stunk of Clorox but at least there was no dust on the floor.

Ben's room was a temple, with every icon, every candle in its preordained position. His desk was his altar. The laptop sat in the middle, always open, almost always on. Behind it sat his tin of pencils, his stapler, his earphones, his alarm clock, and a single picture frame.

Ben liked order. Todd knew that much, at least.

For the most part, Ben kept to himself. Todd had known him only for a year, as long as they had roomed together. He could only name a handful of facts about the other boy's life. Ben kept to himself.

He knew Ben was a light sleeper, or an insomniac, or, at the very least, quite restless. At all odd hours of the morning, he knew he could find Ben prone on the couch, quietly immersed in the glow of his laptop. He had ventured out for a glass of water enough times to know.

On one occasion he found Ben doing pushups at six in the morning. The smaller boy merely explained that he could not sleep, resuming his activity without further explanation. As slight as Ben was, Todd was surprised by his form. Ben's elbows narrowed to knives as he lowered to the ground, his nose a hair from the hardwood, his breaths still smooth.

He knew Ben had few friends. Todd never thought of Ben as particularly unfriendly or unsociable, only that he was the type of person who kept to himself. Kat had told him that her brother was much the same way; some people, she explained, are just loners. Todd had always wondered if that was the real answer to the question. Ben was by no means unattractive, if a bit scrawny.

He knew that there were no girlfriends, no high school flames to speak of. Todd had asked him multiple times about his forays with girls. Ben always sidestepped the topic with a slim smile, simply responding that he didn't "kiss and tell." Todd had once thought to tell him that they were guys—they were friends—it didn't matter—but he decided against it.

As much as he knew Ben, which, admittedly, was not very much at all, Todd had noticed the idiosyncrasies.

When his mother broke her leg, Ben did not clean the apartment for a week. That was the one time Todd had ever had to take out the trash or

clean the dishes. He had undertaken the tasks without a word; he had no room to speak edgewise, anyway.

One night he had returned from the gym to find Ben perched on the front porch, smoking a cigarette, spitting circles at the sky. The pack in his right hand was half-empty. Todd had never known Ben to be anything more than a two-beer queer, much less smoke cigarettes. Yet the boy's knees slung outwards, his left hand propping the arch of his back against the concrete, sucking quick drags. It was if he stumbled upon a deer in a clearing. Where a deer would have frozen, the transcendence in tatters, Ben remained stationary, not even glancing up.

Todd asked Ben how his day had been. Ben told him that his father died, abruptly flicking the butt of his cigarette into the darkness. He lit another and inhaled deep, smooth synchronicity, blowing the smoke into black envelopes, turned away from Todd.

It was the only time he had ever seen Ben smoke cigarettes.

I was on the ground, naked.

My right arm was streaked with blood. Every movement felt like a thousand bee-stings.

And then I knew I had disturbed the hive.

They had enclosed me like a letter in an envelope: a blanket of bees, buzzing around me, vibrating me to death. Their hum shook my brain, whorled into my ears. It was a raving, writhing vortex, an inferno I could not escape.

I screamed for deliverance. I screamed for Jesus, for God; now, He closed His ears. Mine remained open.

The pack was nearby, the lighter atop it. I scrambled for it, nails gnashing against the hardwood.

Smoke would scatter the bees, and I could think again.

I lifted my right arm. In retribution, the bees stung me a thousandfold; I screamed again, thrown to my back. The fan was on and strobed the light. I knew I had changed my light bulbs recently, but the room was cast in a sunset haze. My right shoulder wetly kissed the hardwood floor.

I snatched the pack, biting a cigarette with my teeth, bringing the lighter to my lips. The bees would tolerate no such nonsense. Pulsating with the strobing light, they hummed furiously as I flicked for the flame. The gust could not be overcome.

Writhing overtook me. I thrashed against the cloud of bees, chewing my lip during their barrage. I somehow find myself on my knees. Blood dripped to the wood in rhythm that defied the fan, the bees.

I flicked the lighter again. The bees whipped into a whirlwind, Hell-bent on anaphylaxis. I swept my right arm, immune to the pain, and flicked the lighter again with my left.

The cigarette crackled into life.

The bees were gone.

I was sitting naked on the floor. I could see several splats of blood, dark even against the hardwood. I was holding a lighter in my left hand.

In my right hand, I clutched the photo, free of frame, folded, us elided, thumb pressed against Milady's red-silked breasts.

Next to me was an empty pack of cigarettes.



Apophenia

Carissa Pfeiffer

Silkscreen

Syrupitious

Grafton Tanner

Coated in the thick gauze of
Hollywood soft focus
One picture of me in
Happiness feigned
A copy of a copy of
A copy
Tear it into the tiniest bits
Of paper nothings
And hide them away—
Where the hell have you been?
I fell in fool's love
Drippy syrup smile hanging
Crooked
Now that time spans its arms
Between us,
I feel as if I
Am
Looking at you through the wrong end of the telescope
A copy of a copy of—

Zeus, Counting on Deer Collision

Chris Lott

Red truck down orange road from sun
 pearly in oyster clouds,
sunflowers ascend length of green spine to sniff and shake hands with
star going cold.
(Does electricity exist here, in Nature.)
 Streaming roots, cicada-sound.

Past the house and county line,
looking out at sunflowers, little waning sun faces.
The blue mind devours flower and road,
eyes still, everywhere indifferent, not rearview.
 The truck is too long a skirt for wind:
 The mind is too deep dug to heal, “

Yeah I reckon I could come up with electricity—
(Chameleon atoms awaken luminescent in his firefly beard while moon's
melodic humming, wistful percolating of ice cube dresses)
—If'n I had enough time.



Untitled Dream

Laurel Denham

Oil on canvas



Seabeds Newborn

Ally White

Mixed media on wood

Vajroli Mudra and the Failed Forces of Gravity

Aida Curtis

I tell you not to come because I think this will make you not leave. This will make you stay because you are bound to earth by pussy. By bicycles and hot tea. I pulled you and I kissed you when you had wet feet. You turned me and eclipsed me so I would not see your face. I told you not to come because you thought this was ecstasy (like a drug you took when you were nineteen, like your mother's breast, like wind speed). You are sick with endpoints, you seek infinite trajectory. You are moving away so I tell you to come because I want the (wide-eyed) endpoint, that might lead to more (wide-eyed) endpoints, so that we might form triangle (soon diamond) moving endpoint to endpoint, digging trenches with our knees. But these are shapes you do not love. They are rusted emblems hanging on a mobile above my sheets. You bow your eyes at the sight of them. I am quiet like a child. I place an egg between your teeth.

I Love You This Big

Matt Burns

We are walking home after seeing a morbidly obese comedian tear the house down. She laughs out of the blue. What is it, I say. That one line, the one about how having sex with him is like riding a tsunami, she says. We laugh. I wonder what sex is like with someone that big, I say. I mean, how do the mechanics even work? She smiles. I don't know; I mean, it might be kind of satisfying. I run my finger along my belt; it's cinched on the tightest hole. But I picture myself with a heavier lady and yeah, maybe that extra flesh would feel nice and warm. I guess you're right, I say. Maybe it wouldn't be bad at all. She puts her thin fingers in mine and we pause under the orange glow of a streetlight, lit up like hams under a heating lamp. We smile and start at the same time: Can we... We laugh. We nod and pick up our pace towards home. It's time to get fat.

We kick in the door like a SWAT team and storm the kitchen. She raids the pantry and I the fridge; she crams Honey Flax granola bars down her gullet while I funnel a quart of apple butter right into the ol' pie hole. We finally release our animal instinct to build up a store of calories for times of ill harvest, except our caloric excess will be exclusively for bumping and grinding. She is a lioness devouring Frosted Flakes, then six bagels, then handfuls of white flour. She may look dusty now, but I know in a few weeks she will be my dusty, rotund princess. I lick the mayonnaise crust from the rim of the jar and my head disappears back in the fridge like a starving ostrich.

One month later, she's up thirty and I've got forty-five. We crash our Nissan Xterra through the side window of Golden Corral and stumble in growling like a pair of plump pirates. We pillage the desserts and rape the condiments and at the meat carving station we request not slices, but the entire beef shank cut in half; a romantic dinner for two. We came prepared. She sucks on the business end of an industrial-sized funnel while I cram mashed potatoes down it with a shovel. She is full for now so she loads her Super Soaker with a mixture of artificial maple syrup and margarine. I stand on a table and she blasts me in the face like I'm a

burning building and the only flame retardant is made by Aunt Jemima. After a gallon of goo fills my belly, I announce to the manager we are done. It is time to fuck.

Our love making smells of go-kart exhaust. We are naturally greased and our tubby tummies grind together until they are the rotund red cheeks of Santa Claus. Where we were cut and fit and sensual we are now warm and soft and slick with peanut oil. Ecstasy flushes us, taking an extra minute to reach the furthest outskirts of our new territories, and I lean in to kiss her puffy lips but our bulging stomachs prevent it. I teeter atop her, our roundness wearily balancing on one tangential point, until I roll forward, head-first onto the floor. I see under our bed a range of upside-down Pop Tart wrapper pyramids and I hear her crack open a can of Dr. Pepper. The sound triggers an erection.

One year later, I am pushing her in a wheelbarrow through the doorframe of our hotel. It is our anniversary and as I suck in my gut to fit through the door I see the hotel screwed up my request. I had asked for a trail of Gushers leading to the bed, instead they have littered the floor with flavorless roses. The bed aches when I dump her slug-like body onto it and when I sit next to her the bed says fuck this and we explode onto the floor. She opens her suitcase and reveals a treasure chest: eighteen footlong meatball subs. I tell her I love her as we pound sub after sub into our muddy lips. Our mouths sprout sauce goatees and just at the moment I had planned to ask her to marry me I remember my suitcase is full of brisket sandwiches getting cold. I dump the stash onto the bed and we descend upon them, vultures too fat to fly pecking on cattle tucked between buttered bread. She mumbles something to me and I think there's a Happy Anniversary buried somewhere in there between the three layers of cheese, so I nod and mutter back. We stuff ourselves sweaty until our bellies can't take it any longer and we pass out.

I dream of our former slim selves and vague glimmers of feeling cloud my vision like blobs of gravy. Fear? Regret? Something about pain? But the smell of ribs overtakes my memory. My thoughts are coded in smells now and those baby backs are my chief priority. She is miles away, riding her own tide of broths and stews, and I descend into my catatonic slumber praying for this place to have a free breakfast buffet.

We wake to the sound of the TV. I struggle to turn up the volume with my hands that look like inflated latex gloves, the sausage fingers

jutting out at deformed angles buffered by pillows of fatty flesh. It's the obese comedian's hour special and he's getting into his bit about his sex tsunami. I look at her and she looks at the mesquite brown smear on my face. We hear the graphic description of intercourse and we nod silently, unsheathing from our pillowcases a pair of pepperoni pizzas. We devour them and no one laughs.

Dream Digestion

Rachel Compton

Nineteen-year-old Celeste sprawls across the desk. The alarm clock on her bedside table displays the time in red, flashing digits, but Celeste's eyes are sealed shut. Her chemistry notes are scattered across the floor along with three, empty soda cans and a cardboard pizza box. Beneath her cheek: a list of terms and a hand-drawn diagram of an atom. From this perspective, it doesn't look like much is happening, except for maybe a little drooling, but deep in Celeste's subconscious, something hairy is going on.

In the first room on the left at the top of the stairs behind the central cortex, the little people are just getting started. That is, the little people that control our dreams. They are sitting in swivel chairs, typing on keyboards, pressing buttons and scanning screens. In the room's center, a trim woman in a tweed business suit barks out orders.

"Someone get me an emotive reading! I want to know exactly what Celeste was feeling when she fell asleep," she shouts in a crisp, clear voice.

"35-27-90," a man in a swivel chair calls out over the hubbub. "Boy, was she stressed! And—hey, looks like we've got a visual on camera 5!"

"Time of capture?" the woman asks, crossing the room to peer over his shoulder.

"9:30 am," he replies.

"She would have been in Sociology class," the woman says, pursing her lips. "Okay, run it on the big screen." The little man complies and presses a switch. A moment later, the mammoth projector suspended from the ceiling crackles to life. Everyone stops to watch.

They see through Celeste's eyes: A classroom of about thirty students, slumping in desks arranged in rows of seven. A gaunt, ghost-eyed man pacing in front of a white board. His hands are the most animated thing in the room: now hacking, now clawing, now tearing at the air. A classmate whispering in Celeste's ear, "God, he's so creepy!" Celeste's hushed voice shooting back, "I know right? He looks like a zombie."

“Pause!” the woman’s voice breaks in. The image freezes obediently. “Play that part again.” Someone types a command into the computer, and Celeste’s voice rings out a second time, “-ow right? He looks like a *zombie*.” The woman’s eyes brighten.

“Quick, what was that movie she watched the other day, mutant-zombie something or another? I want it on screen, and someone scan an image of that professor in red and black, pronto!”

The room snaps to life as everyone races to obey. Seconds later, a girl with a white-blond ponytail shoots her hand into the air, screaming, “Got it!” She flips a switch and the screen comes to life.

They see through Celeste’s eyes: the inside of a crowded movie theatre. The room is dark, the only light coming from those little lamps under the stairs. The screen is also mostly dark--only blurred, humanoid shapes and shaky camera movement inform the audience what is taking place. That, and the nightmarish cries being emitted by the larger-than-life, surround-sound speakers.

“Get me an emotive reading,” the woman says, without stopping the recording.

“21-55-55,” a man’s voice replies.

“Hm.” A moment of thoughtful deliberation. “All right, use the film as a backdrop. Layer the audio with some white noise... the bedroom fan should work. And what was that guy’s name, the one that took her out for coffee the other night? Kirk! Kirk gets a cameo in—” something catches her eyes.

A theatre employee is escorting someone out of the movie, a middle-school-aged boy who must have slipped into the theatre without a ticket. The employee is wearing a brilliant red suit that practically glows in the dark. As he descends the stairs, gaudy tassels can be seen dangling from his shoulders and breast pocket. A tall hat completes the hideous ensemble.

“—Kirk gets a cameo, and I want him wearing that,” the woman orders, pointing at the screen. Someone snickers, but she doesn’t bother to acknowledge them. “All right, team, no time to loose! We’re on in three, two...”

The alarm clock by Celeste’s bed shrieks, jolting her awake. One hand shoots up to cover an ear, the other grasps the table, trying to steady herself as she tumbles--still bleary-eyed--from the chair. She reaches the alarm clock in a second and shuts it off, then turns to survey the room.

It's in that moment she remembers her dream, flashing through her mind like a slide show, each image frozen in time, as clearly as if it had happened only moments before. Zombies, professors, and—what the heck was Kirk wearing?

Celeste's eyes light on the soda cans and the pizza box strewn across the floor, and her eyes widen with understanding. She groans.

"I guess that's what I get for eating pizza before bed."



Drapes of Fortune

Ally White

Antares

Rosalee Bernabe

what more can there be to the sputtering
of dove-like clusters dusting
the black vacuum?
i raise my chin to them, i watch them pulsing
softly, twitching like children, tiny fists rubbing
the ink of sleep out of stinging eyes that leak,
heavy as plums.
these incandescent masses burn quietly
against the monstrous drapery oiled with tar;
scorched and torn and breathless, there is no echo—
after the cudgeling of titans, not one exhale,
only the icy prickle of a needle lost in hay.
yet upon this dewy grass is the apex:
the crest of all mammalian life,
an opera in three acts.
my hips arch in the direction of
your animal breath, which hovers
softly, skimming the plush articulation
of rainy thighs.
it is the fog and the collision and the settling,
and i am sinking into damp earth,
through an eternity of mud, bearing witness
to the first gasps of earthworms, shaking hands with
tree roots—the dust of doves on my tongue like snowflakes.



Self-Portrait

Kory Gabriel

Oil on canvas
24" x 30"
2011

Do I Have to Buy a Ticket for My Right Hand?

Matt Burns

Two hours on this bridge and then the rain comes
Drowned roses and my dad's shoes are ruined
"Prom?" melts into teary streaks
I realize the riddles were way too hard
What sixteen-year-old girl knows who Weezer's original bass player was?
At best you're on clue 2 of 16, buried in a thesaurus
Looking for a seven-letter version of vampire
Or maybe for gentler ways to say no



Self Portrait

Anna Schoenbaechler

Oil on panel
16" x 20"

Dead Girls

Jason Longoria

*Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With little bells and cockle-shells
And pretty maids all in a row.*

I worked today.
I spent the better part of my day at work at one duty:
Cleaning chickens.

I did not know what cleaning chickens entailed
until a helpful cook's assistant showed me.

Here, stick your thumb like this,
he said with a smile—I
could see the glint on his
Roman nose—
squeeze out the red stuff.

What?

*Sometimes when they cut along the spine,
—Caligula grin—
the innards get wedged in
the space between the leg and the thigh.
So it's really only a problem with the legs, not the breasts.
Keep a steady tap going and rinse
out the red stuff.*

And so:
My thumbs plumbed chicken thighs.

At work we're not allowed to listen to music,
unless it's on the radio, but the radio's on
some unfamiliar hip-hop station
and so I pop radio in my head:

Madonna's on.

Pink elephants and lemonade,
she sings, & I wring strawberry
gizzards out from under chicken
hips, the cold pink wet
even with double gloves.

I'm down on my knees,
I want to take you there—
as I slap a clean chicken
on a slicked Pammed tray.

One done.

We are living in a material world, and
I am a material girl,
she sings, & I think
of a girl
in a pink dress
oozing strawberries, then slapped fishly
to imperial
bedroom floor.

oOoOO

You'd be surprised at how many
guys like you
get grossed out by it,
he says, looking over at me,
grinning.
I ignore him.

Cold wet pink
flesh melting from the bone
arcs to my thumb:
smells like China,
rosy river dolphins'
aborted corpses
lined neat in little rows
to be mummified by mermaids
on the greasy riverbank.

Gross—thumb—splat—slap—
Four done.

Then, epiphany:
deeper & deeper &

Twelve done.
All arranged neatly—
four to a column
three to a row—
on the slick Pammed tray.

All done?

*Now take the tray, put it on this rack
and take another tray, set it down next
to the sink, spray it with Pam. Then start again.*

I—I,
oh, but—
oh—

Again.

oOoOO
[laugh track]



Notre Dame de Paris

Rosalee Bernabe

Gelatin silver print

Amsterdam

Matthew Noxsel

The white seagull,
still, atop the
blanched buoy:
his assigned post
for counting
the blonde cyclists
whirring, crossing the bridge. Even
he suspects
rain.

Walk It Off

Margaret Chwat

We're Skyping right now
and I want to tell you
you're beautiful or...something
but I hold words in myself the way we've never
held hands

Two springs ago
I spent a lot of time walking this off
kissing words in the direction of the pavement
counting rotten flowers on the sidewalk
And yet and yet and yet
I didn't get any
further

I run yellow lights
burn grilled cheese
I have a host of acronyms holding me back from spontaneity
I'm kind when
I think Jesus is the only one who's looking
But I'm good at what they pay me for
and
I love a young woman
She has warm hands and stays up all night
when she can
Her eyes fill my heart with root beer

Her eyes aren't the color of the ocean
They are simply brown
and yet and yet and yet
she reminds me of the sea
She's a mystery

and each thing we share is a wave being born

Every crest, something new:

Everything reminds me of her

and so

I keep my heart for a root beer-eyed girl



Butterfly

Lia Malihi

Photograph
November 2011
North Carolina

Curse Poem

Rosalee Bernabe

He was always slugging along, trailing his slime through the piss-covered cellars of bars in Seattle and looking for the next quick trick. On soggy mattresses he slept fetus-like, chewed booze caps off bottles, spat brown goop in coke cans, wore three little hoops in his left ear. He'd slap waitresses' asses, kick dents in parked cars, feed chocolate to dogs, and hide cigarettes in his grease-covered mop. On Mondays he'd order the rib special, he'd crunch on the bone, coat his face in the sauce, and suck on his dirt-caked fingers. On Tuesdays he'd curl up in booths and close his beady eyes. Drool would leak out of his wheezing mug. Sometimes I'd see him in the street and he'd cat-call passersby, cough up mucus in his hands and smear it on benches, scratch his crotch outside of the local creamery. The cops once snagged him for public indecency and he spat the sludge in their faces, but then for three weeks it was quiet, and no one had seen him dragging his hoofs through the mud, mouthing indecencies to speeding vehicles. One breezy day in April, a kid playing near the train tracks found his hip flask in the dewy grass, dotted elegantly with hardened blood. A mud-crust ed ear made food for ants a twig's throw away and three small hoops smiled proudly at the sun.

Sphear-metal

Will Walton

Thackeray, Thackeray,
I dreamed you were but a bird
Kept in a cage, sat 'top
Antoinette's head; when
They cut it off, you fell.
Oh, Thackeray.

Knew such beauty, such heartache,
Such an end to your tune.
Oh—

Thackeray, Thackeray.
I'm no better you,
But a bird-chested boy,
'Til they chucked the ball
At me too fast. And I coughed up
Some blood and two feathers.

Dead was the song. Dead were you, too,
Thackeray, oh—

I keep your bones, still.
Bird bones in a cage
That I built. Not the heart
To bury you yet, Thackeray.

And I wrap them in quilts,
When the weather gets cold,
Because one night I lie awake,
And I heard them shake.
Thackeray, Thackeray,

Oh—

She dead carried you.

Now I alive carry you dead.

When I dead am gone too,

Thackeray, then where will be you?



Universale

Isabel Schneider

Oil on Canvas
32"x24"

Iluron

Aida Curtis

Proceeding south along the Iluron valley, the maize fields are peopled by telephone towers with voltage limbs that elbow bend and point down as if to say “Yes. Here.” The city is a series of circles, radiating with alleys, playing the eye with heights. At its foot, the town sits in the hot sun to watch a man devoured by a demon, to watch another trampled by a horse. Smoke pours from the lips of the jam seller. The mad man prays at church door. In one hand the city holds the doorknob to heaven, in the other it holds the knocker to a cellar below. Living between these doors, the city is a railroad, a river, an endless churning factory. A maker of metal, of monastery, a catching and snagging in wool.

It is said that in the crevices of the Iluron mill, the oracles found deposits of things to come—berets, fibrous and sticky, lodged in the layers of chocolate sediment. The black fabric and striating sugars had stopped up the wheels and turbines, had leaked from the ovens’ edges and crystallized there. Further below they found an army badge, a pistol, a handkerchief, a door.

At the center of the town is a bright yellow circle, a peak of hill, a cross. Lining your way are terraced gardens, ovens filled with sunflowers, lace curtains, glass and upturned eyes. In the center dust pit where right and left hands fought, a child drinks from a fountain. It is from here that the city spreads and retreats. In one alley, a cat bathes beneath an engine. In another alley, a cat no longer breathes. In another alley, among many, Saint Benedict sleeps.

Dreamingong

Chris Lott

Birds flash off in strikes of palm
And reassemble for the sound of stone—
The dream a fish and a floundering fist fight.



Untitled

Isabel Schneider

Oil on canvas, ink on mylar
26" x 18"



One Lost Limb

Michael Noeltner

Acrylic paint, wire, and duct tape on a stretched canvas

Snake Oil

Jason Longoria

I didn't mean to do it.

No one ever does. No one ever thinks that if you keep tugging at the lid that maybe it will pop off completely, a fact which flies in the face of physics.

I was just so tired of Darkness. Darkness had seized me by the heart; with every beat, I could feel the claws thumping against the inside of my ribs. I could walk through every day, and it would be fine. It would be so fine that I would go home after work and sit in front of the television and eat dinner and stare around at my one-bedroom apartment and conclude that it was all so fucking fine. Darkness would never let me have pleasure in a world so fine.

I had to do something. I could not live any longer in the dark.

And so I ripped off the lid and filled the can with rainbows. The rainbows splashed around inside and I loved the lightshow.

Oh, I so loved the Lights. Their whirling dervish dance peopled my world with the divine. I became friends with nymphs and dryads; I listened to the music of elves. I heard their harps, and I liked them for a while. My world was filled with Lights. I could stare into the night sky and always see fireworks. I could see the little shadow dragons winding through the treetops and in the dark cracks where walls met floors. It was a constant circus, an endless carnival, amusement in a world devoid.

Darkness was vanquished. A new world order had arisen, and my reality was the worship of the rainbows.

It was all wonderful. It was more than fine.

But one day, I thought, what if I stopped pouring in rainbows?

The irreverence baffled me. I had rebelled once; now twice? But something told me I should.

I didn't sleep anymore.

That was the paradox. I had parched my world of Darkness, and now it was all that I craved. I wanted sleep—thick, oozing, velvet sleep, draped in slabs across my eyes—to take me away from the carnival. I wanted an

escape from the light, but my world was a star, eternally luminous.

I stopped pouring in rainbows, but it was too little, too late. There were more rainbows than I could ever gaze at, now. I had overflowed the can with rainbows. The pantheon had grown too numerous. The mythology became unfathomably vast—there were too many incarnations and reincarnations—I couldn't keep track. My world—their gift—began to slip at the very seams.

When I stopped pouring in rainbows, my world lost its meaning.

I knew they were a cancer: metamorphic, incessant. Nothing could douse the Lights. I could feel the lattice of the lasers, the phantom pattern burned in my brain—mandalas too precious for human eyes. I was tired of the constant prophecy. The lights never faded. I never slept anymore.

When I tried sleeping more, the Lights disagreed.

So I tried Church. I liked the atmosphere but I could not watch the priest, not when elves were clambering over his pulpit, not with dragons slithering in the shadow of every candelabra. Sometimes the priest would speak a lie—Polaroid smile, eyes aglow, but always the sweat shimmering on the folds of his neck. No one would believe such rubbish! I would laugh, and the children would join me, complicit in this gnosis; the mothers and fathers and the priest would stare at me. Sometimes I saw the fear in their eyes. Other times, they were incensed; they were in it with the priest, I knew.

I wanted to tell the priest he was a liar. I approached the altar after Mass and opened my mouth to speak when he asked my name.

I didn't tell him. He invited me to the pancake brunch.

I didn't say anything. I could see the elves' eyes peeping at me from behind his shoulders.

This man was no prophet. If God was Truth, he could never speak of Him.

So I left Church. I was desperate, then.

I plunged my can in Lethe, in Styx. I drank whatever sludge I could pack into my gullet. I didn't know it was oil. I filled myself from the bottom up. The oil gathered in my legs, flowed into my heart, filled my lungs and claimed my brain. I kept pouring it in; I was insatiable.

My life fell into the same loping rhythms; this time, I ignored it. I

slept constantly, only pausing for more elixir, draughts of Hades. I was beyond caring. Lethe mollified my brain to clay. The lights began to whorl away, submerged in oil.

But it was not enough. The Lights dimmed, but they would not die. Sleep began to evade me. I had to kill the Lights. The only thing I knew was to drink oil, and so I drank it. I prayed and wished and dreamt of sleep but the gates were closed. When I gave up worship of the Lights, I flew to God; He embraced me, and even then I turned away.

The Heavens were now empty. The choirs of elves and dryads fell to a hush I could only hear on the winds.

The Lights dimmed but they would not die. So, I continued to fill myself with oil until I short-circuited the Lights.

Then, I self-ignited.

The Lights were gone, the rainbows silenced, the concert ended, and now I was myself a light, burning for all to see. The star, once eternally luminous, gazed into the eyes of fate and became a supernova.

They put the fires out far too late.

By then I was nothing but a charred stump with a toothless mouth and coals for eyes. No one talked to me. The rainbows had abandoned me. The oil left me scarred and scorched and I could not recover. They dumped water on me and left; how could I? How could they expect me to pick up the remnants?

I was a stump.

I was halfway out the door; the fire immobilized me. It left me a stump and stumps cannot walk through doorways.

So now I sit on this bench and watch the families walk by and whisper to their children not to talk to me, not to talk to stumps, I pay them no mind because the birds are out and the wind is blowing so I catch the echoes of the nymphs' flutes, the elves' tambourines. I stare at the sun and watch it wobbling, a sizzling yolk, every color all at once. It is an echo of the world I knew: a byproduct, a reverberation, that would breathe into every day forever.

I feel a rainbow without a rainbow—I convince myself I can and so it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. I can stare at the families eating their picnic lunches and it's fine.

Who am I kidding?

I have a can of oil in my car. I can even taste it on my lips.
I never noticed it before, but rainbows dance on oil.

I guess I never had a chance.



The Hillbilly Davidson

Lia Malihi

Photograph
November 2011
North Carolina

Dracula

Letitia Carelock

Keep the Thermostat low
I like it cold
Like the marble of my skin
Or the linoleum of your floor
Don't latch the window
It screws up my mojo
To crouch like an idiot and pick the lock
Your husband is out
You're lonely
You need me
Just a nibble
Your left earlobe
Your soft stomach
Slurp, slurp.
Delicious.

The Carver

Melissa McDaniel

Bernard looked at the block of ice and tried to imagine a crystal tree in its place, branches stretching out like long, delicate fingertips. Instead he saw a blurred reflection of himself, his bright red parka a stain on the glassy surface. His chainsaw hummed to life in his hand. He could hear the steady buzz of the other competitors already gnawing away at their ice blocks. Somewhere a holiday radio station was playing a country cover of Jingle Bell Rock.

The tree was in honor of his daughter, Holly. Of course, the five thousand dollar cash prize would be nice, too—college money, maybe. Holly was only nine, but kids grow up fast these days. He'd have to talk to Michelle about it.

He had three days. He had spent most of the first one staring at the two meter block of impenetrable cold. At six o'clock that evening, he was done for the day. Back in his butcher shop, he removed his gloves and was pleased to find that his hands, although pink and dry, no longer smelled like meat. He had closed the shop for the weekend ice sculpting contest, a big deal in town, but this still felt like the closest thing he had to home since he had stopped living with Michelle. Also, he had plenty of room for his beer. Endless refrigeration. He kept his coat on as he dialed his ex-wife's number. His fingers were sore and numb from his tools, and he clenched and unclenched his fist to soften them as the phone rang.

"I want you and Holly to come see my carving," he told her. "At least for the final judging."

"You know we always go see the ice sculptures. It's a Christmas tradition."

"Well, I just wanted to make sure."

"I think it's good that you're doing some kind of art again. You've been spending too much time with all of that meat without taking any time off. It isn't healthy."

Michelle was an amateur vegetarian. It made sense that she would

prefer the cold, pristine beauty of ice to the dead weight of his butcher shop.

"I'm feeling pretty confident," he lied. As he had walked back through the park that day, he had noticed a crowd forming, surrounding an ice creature with sharp teeth like jutting icicles, a dusty snowstorm of ice surrounding it like smoke. The monster seemed to emerge from the ice as if it had always been there, lurking beneath its surface. Thinking about it, he shivered, and took another sip of beer.

"It's not done yet."

Holly was spinning in frantic circles, catching ice on her tongue like snowflakes, while Michelle studied his carving.

"You know, if you win, Holly's been asking for an mp3 player for Christmas." She lifted her eyes, and they flickered towards him briefly before returning to the sculpture.

There was only the rough ghost of a tree, but the cuts were smooth and well-placed, and he felt like he was making progress. Slow and steady. If he won, he thought, he would not only buy an mp3 player—he'd buy presents for the whole family. They could have a real Christmas dinner. Holly wiped her nose on her scarf, and Michelle fished a dollar out of her purse.

"Let's go get some hot chocolate." With a half-smile, she offered her gloved hand to Holly's mittened one, and together they walked away, leaving him alone with the incomplete frozen tree.

He had saved the last day for the more particular work, the shaping of the leaves and the berries, perfect marbles of ice. He enjoyed it, and as he worked he thought about how much better it was to see himself as a carver of ice than of meat. When people came to order their slabs of beef or lamb, he wrapped them up tightly in wax, hiding the greasy red, living wounds. But ice was pure, glittering translucence on all sides.

He was nearly done, and Holly was suddenly right behind him, inches away from the blade.

"Dad! Did you see the dr—"

He jerked his arm away, and swore, too loudly. A loud crack, like glass shattering, filled the area. Faces turned towards the sound.

"Sorry!"

No. It was fine. Even if the branch he'd been meticulously perfecting had been lost, the tree was still salvageable. But as he carefully swept the sharp nub off of the trunk, he noticed that it looked more uneven, more barren than before. More like a sick vegetable than a tree.

"I'm so sorry, Dad."

He shook his head and frantically continued to carve.

His apron was white as snow, cleaned with bleach twice a week to retain an aura of cleanliness in his shop. After making a cup of coffee, he settled down at one of the few barstools by the counter with the daily newspaper.

"FIRE AND ICE!" exclaimed the headline. "Ice dragon wins annual sculpting contest! More on page A7." He flipped through the paper until he found the tiny pictures of the second and third place winners. They were only a few inches large—mostly there for politeness, like the hundred dollar check he had been given for third place. In the picture, he and Holly posed in front of the tree. He didn't notice until now that Holly smiled with her mouth closed, almost like she was grimacing.

Bernard wondered if \$100 was enough money for an mp3 player. He squinted at the pixelated grey version of his lopsided tree, and it may have just been bad photography, but it appeared to be drooping already, sweating fat beads of water in the late afternoon sun.



Spirilla on Tables

Ally White

Mixed media on paper

Two Places I Woke Up

Jason Longoria

I. A bed with Grandma:
 Oaken time made
 oak and thyme
 too stringent for the muscles:
 No rosaries, just
 tight corpuscles
 No fever, only
 osteoarthritis—

I prayed for God but wished for Midas.

And thus I fairytaled my world to stone:

This medusoid monarch could not see
this frost queen's incessant cavalry.
Skyward did I heft my shield—
only in did I yield.
 falling

Sorry Grandma I could not pray but hope to try

II. A bed with
 Pythagoras could never trace
 those sinful sines
 nightfevered spines
 Phrygian biceps
 idol hands
 and falling

Montanus

Aida Curtis

Montanus always had the best pot. He would show up, broad shouldered, looking hefty and plaid clad beneath those Greek letters, not one of the brothers but not needing be with that zip-loc bag and the bigmouth laugh. Those nights were always the same, stickyhot after days of neck sweat coating our collars, when heat glued cotton to our backs and we smelled like earth. Like earth and pavement, like dust and hot brick. Those nights with girls showing up all skin and denim and long, long hair, loose in their limbs and hot ha-has.

In the web of heat and gnats and beerstink, in the radio pluck of songs everyone knew the words to but he, Montanus would whip out his pack of Marlboros, the box with the red-clad man, the rope swinging sonofabitch, and he'd give a gaptoothed grin, sticking the dust colored filter between his two front teeth. The grey that pooled out his lips met with the earthgreen sweat and blue night and was lost within it and he wasn't home.

He wasn't home below the tilted shapes of Sigma Fuck, or in that blue grey heat—gnat streaked, or by the pavement, brick, or doggy-bagged sticky leaf. He hadn't been home in the Vietnam camps with the flat land of grass and no grass, of the monotonous here and there, in the bunk beds twitching and squeaking with lonely boys' lonely heat, with the same darkening of the cotton like sweet Georgia seeping from their skins. No, he wasn't home there. He was only right within the iron skin of the iron beast, only right with the air thump and rise and flight of that helicopter heart beat. He missed how that body would rise, how he could ground himself in the groundless thing, pressing and swaying and beating and beating.

He had been the helicopter gunman—the tall, thick man that killed on one knee. And before they'd all climb into the hot, iron hide, they'd sticky their fingers breaking apart that Vietnamese green, licking paper edges and would have one joint each. And the campgrounds of dust and tarp and more cementborn dust would be littered with white patches

of their roaches, clumps of white and browned paper like Georgia's whitebrown petalflesh of the great Magnolia trees. Then they'd board that quaking metal heart and he'd clasp onto his gun like a new-found limb, kneeling and now extended, hovering over the brown land and sudden green. Overhead he was only the shake, only the beating of the bullets pounding against the shoulder as though they streamed from the right-hand heart. And they were only the dark masses, collapsing in and over themselves into their land, into their dark and bloodied green.

But he didn't tell us about that, or the pulsing metal, or of nightborn metal-full dreams. He just laughed and smoked and blew it all through his two front teeth with one constant exhale stream. All he'd say is "How the fuck they expect me to get to class on time, eh Cummings!" and wrap his thick hands around some girl's thick thighs and he'd roll another and another and then fuck her in his Jeep. We wanted Montanus there not only for his cultured-foreign-I-don't-know-where-the-fuck-he-gets-this-shit green, but because he had seen what we hadn't seen. Sometimes when his grin would fall and his marbled eyes would shift to the ground and earth and leaves, we saw he didn't know where he wanted to be.

Found Poem

Matt Burns
Rachel Compton
Laurel Denham
Crystal Desai
Adrienne Hamil
Andrea King
Jason Longoria
Joe Neubert
Cruz Obi
Random.org
Richard Scott
Grafton Tanner

I...FEEL...NOTHING!

we will spend a night as wolves

In fact, your life is a lie in pants.

In fact, your life is a lie in pants.

Real bad poochie bow wow wow.

That which Carlos called homologous mate

shall we invite my tounge into the fray? he

too is anticipating your arrival

the XY has emptied itself into the XX

but that's just gerontocracy

Finally he looks at me and pops the question.

Can you get some ice my dick hurts.

What sixteen-year-old girl knows

who Weezer's original bass player was?

(the man with the dog at his feet,

selling clocks and flowers,

and we were sweet to each other then)

A dog is in my morning trash this Sunday-

And drag themselves across the floor

sloshing goo with hawk wings

I lied about your party I'm sorry

So now I know why babies cry

They just want a little more

Clank Clank!

carving malcolm lowry in your chest you haven't

read a single thing by him

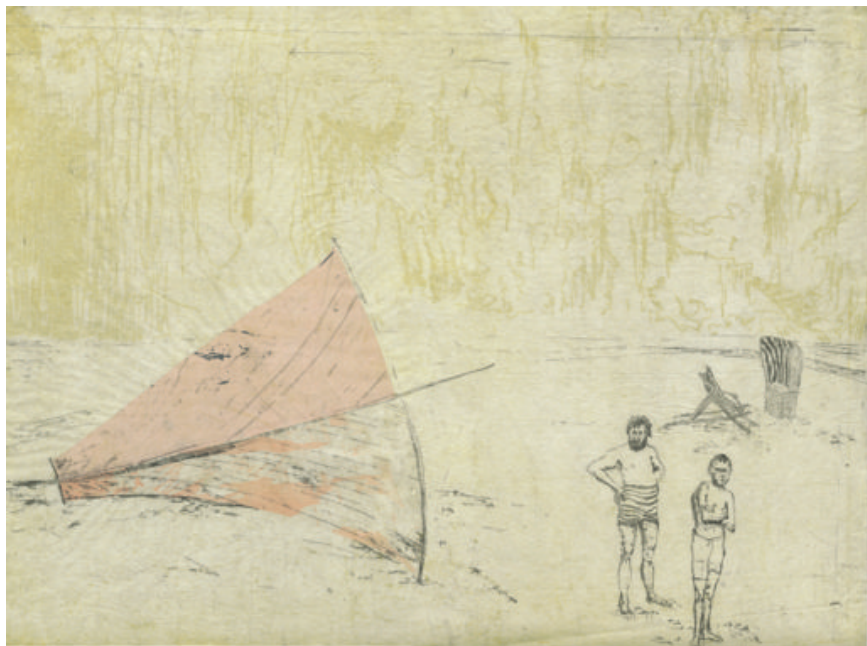
mother-hen-never-to-be.

You gave it your best shot, Mr. Schneider,

the Sacrifice has been made, the offering given

but maybe landscape architecture just isn't for you

WHO IS CARLOS?



Sail

Jessie Merriam

Intaglio with chine collé

Biographies

The Stillpoint Staff

ADRIANNA GREGORY

is a junior studying comparative literature and Russian.

VIVIAN PROSPER MCGILL HEDGES

The parents of Vivian Prosper McGill Hedges gave her three family names consciously and one inadvertently. She sometimes works an afro and always enjoys pork.

JEANETTE KAZMIERCZAK

is in a back alley on Alpha Centauri IV, waiting for her contact—phaser in one hand and sealed packet of documents in the other—she hopes she remembered to unplug the coffee maker.

JASON LONGORIA

is now a fourth-year English and Psychology major at the University of Georgia.

KIERAN ROBERT MAYNARD

is a graduate of the University of Georgia class of 2012.

靡不有初，鮮克有終
None lack a beginning—
few can have an end.
—*Shijing*

MELISSA McDANIEL

was raised in captivity in Marietta, Georgia and aspires to be the first intergalactic bestselling author. She has written 47 award-winning novels on 47 ground-breaking terrestrial topics, and she plans to expand her

audience electromagnetically by the end of the century.

LIAN PETERS

is a rising senior from Marietta, GA, majoring in English and minoring in Biology and French. She enjoys reading, music, and jogging, and finds something particularly meditative in a good cup of tea.

LINDSAY POTTER

is a staff member on *Stillpoint* Undergraduate Literary Magazine.

ALEXANDER REUBERT

is 6'6" with brown hair, brown eyes, and a bubbly personality.

About the Magazine

Since 1967, *Stillpoint* Undergraduate Literary Magazine has served as a forum for undergraduate writers and visual artists at the University of Georgia. The pieces featured in the 2012 issue of *Stillpoint* were selected from a pool of blind submissions. Names were omitted during selection and staff members did not judge their own work. This issue was arranged by the Design Editor with the help of the *Stillpoint* staff and others using Adobe InDesign 5.5 on a Windows PC. The type is set in the Adobe Caslon Pro typeface.

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Stillpoint Staff

