

# stillpoint literary magazine

University of Georgia



2021

volume 52

# Masthead

Editor-in-Chief  
Dane Tillman

Assistant Editor  
Clarissa Bond

Submissions Editor  
Andrew Benzinger

Visual Art Editor & Design Editor  
Abigail Friedel

Junior Visual Art Editor  
Claudia Butler

Social Media Managers  
Will Lefforge  
Sam Thompson  
Isabel Hutchinson

Cover art: *tell all truth but tell it slant* by Alexa Pfeiffer

Design and layout by Abigail Friedel and Claudia Butler

© 2021 All rights reserved

# To the Reader:

I have been waiting to write you this letter for four years. I cannot be more thrilled that you are currently holding in your hands the 52nd edition of Stillpoint. I'm not going to do the meme and tell you that this year has been really tough for everyone, but I will tell you that Stillpoint 52 has been the most challenging edition of the magazine to publish. There were many times this year that my faith in my capacity as an editor wavered. It is not despite, but due to, the challenging circumstances in which Stillpoint 52 was published that it feels so special. In between these pages, you will find a prospering creative community. As I read through this year's Stillpoint, it feels like a song of victory.

Although this past year has led me to question my own ability, not once did I question the ability of the Stillpoint staff. Their enthusiasm and dedication to this publication is nothing short of inspiring. I'd like to highlight my gratitude to the entire Stillpoint editorial board, our academic advisor: Christine Lasek-White, and junior editor: Clary Bond (Oh Captain! My Captain!). Y'all are what make Stillpoint special, I can't wait to see what y'all do with next year's edition.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from *Spring and All* by William Carlos Williams: "It is spring : life again begins to assume its normal appearance as of ,, today ." I'm writing this letter on a sunny, May morning. As our world begins to assume its normal appearance, I hope you find a shady spot outdoors where you can touch grass as you leaf through these pages.

It is my pleasure to present to you Stillpoint 52. Happy Reading!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dane Tillman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dane Tillman  
Senior Editor-in-Chief

# Table of Contents

11:19 p.m. . . . .	1
A Grave Mask . . . . .	2
“American Dinner” . . . . .	4
Another Detroit . . . . .	5
another siren wails by . . . . .	6
Body . . . . .	8
chew, girl, chew . . . . .	12
like winter misses warmth . . . . .	13
Me and Earl. . . . .	15
My ancestors found . . . . .	20
salvation in different places. . . . .	20
Love Is a Myth and so Is Cabo . . . . .	21
Nineveh . . . . .	26
Photo Booth; After Walt . . . . .	27
Whitman . . . . .	27
Self Care. . . . .	28
Skeletal Pastimes.jpg . . . . .	30
Sonnet 4 . . . . .	31
SUNSET, INNER RING . . . . .	32
The Duality of Women . . . . .	33
I Feel at Home . . . . .	34
The Jar by the Door . . . . .	36
the window between us . . . . .	39
11:36 a.m. . . . .	40
A Letter . . . . .	41
ANOTHER RUNWAY . . . . .	44
Away . . . . .	45
cherry cross stitch . . . . .	46
Corpse Flower . . . . .	48
“Dead Space” . . . . .	49
depths . . . . .	50

DESPAIR IS STUBBORN . . . . .	52
DON'T DISTURB . . . . .	53
"Eden Rising" . . . . .	55
Eighting . . . . .	57
Gambler's Remorse . . . . .	59
god. . . . .	63
Hanging from the Sun: . . . . .	64
Happiness is a commodity . . . . .	67
hearts a heavy burden. . . . .	68
Honey . . . . .	69
if even only for a minute . . . . .	70
In Memory of Us. . . . .	71
in Dreams . . . . .	73
iron reaper whisk me away . . . . .	74
la llorona . . . . .	75
"Little Wounds" . . . . .	76
Manuscripts . . . . .	78
Miss the Mirrors . . . . .	81
Persephone's Nocturne . . . . .	85
prayer as a slumber party where me and god talk boys . . . . .	87
Q1 . . . . .	89
Queen of Carthage . . . . .	90
Ribbit . . . . .	91
rocks in the garbage disposal . . . . .	92
stillness, then, everything . . . . .	94
Storm Radio . . . . .	96
tell all truth but tell it slant . . . . .	99
The Harpist Spends Eternity Pondering Music Theory . . . . .	100
The House on the Hill . . . . .	102
The Depths . . . . .	104
Three Self-Portraits on Film from Other People's Cameras . . . . .	105
To That Place . . . . .	107
To Wintertide . . . . .	108
Untitled . . . . .	109

water . . . . .	111
Welcome Wagon . . . . .	113
What Will Happen . . . . .	114
when asked what i want to be . . . . .	115
you can't stop worrying about the soil . . . . .	117
Contributor Biographies . . . . .	119
About <i>Stillpoint</i> . . . . .	124
Acknowledgments. . . . .	124



# 11:19 p.m.

by Madison Dye

How strange it is  
To realize the sky and land  
Traded places.

Stars once only visible above  
Now live among us.

Mankind lassoed the stars  
And stole their light  
For their buildings and streets.

The sky, once alive with light  
Now dark and isolated.

The remaining stars above  
Mourn the loss of their sisters.

Is this progress  
Or deterioration?  
Is this beauty  
Or murder?



# A Grave Mask

by Daniel Powell

Supple pool of beaten gold  
Drawn from the corpse-well  
In the old town:

We haul it up staring,  
Shining death at us.  
Its eyes are spear-sliced

Wounds in cold flesh,  
Or pale plums, their pits  
Sucked out. This blank face

That slipped from cracked bones  
Like a yolk from an egg  
Is not the face of anyone.

At the far margin of my vision  
The dripping pomegranate sun  
Plummets to the shapeless ocean's

Garment-folds. The sky  
Persists in its geometry.  
The wind looks up.

After thirty aching centuries,  
Anyone in death is Agamemnon.  
This was not the face of anyone,

Said Iphigenia,  
Or would have, had she seen it  
Drifting in on stone-sided night.

# “American Dinner”

by Jason Hawkins

Empty light,  
Green, red, and silencing blueness,  
Carnage, conquest.  
You have brought me the aching of truth.  
Even without television,  
We have ways of bringing the war home.

I am always sitting  
Amid the shards,  
A clumsy child.  
My mother, like you, believes not in justice,  
But in retribution,  
In cursing and vilifying,  
In salting the wounds and the earth.  
Is there not enough punishment  
In the shrapnel  
Of manic white china? The Judge draws a  
Flower with the blood.  
Our stars twinkle in the red sea.

I could see myself fragmented  
If I scrubbed well.

# Another Detroit

by Marguerite Doyle

I caught the end of an urban tale on the mall.  
You need good timing here when the  
sliding doors slap open; shut  
on the yawning gap between Regeneration  
and Everywhere Else. The security  
guard coughs awkwardly,  
relocating empty pails to catch the drips  
that stain the tongue and groove  
of lives shattered, like promises  
from the council.

At the Colosseum's roof a gaping dome  
turns to heaven a bright oculus,  
but this is no Pantheon, no benediction,  
just scrawled obscenities for  
the condemned. I take a ringside seat  
at the parched fountain  
while shadows cheer on the spectacle.

# another siren wails by

by Tabitha Clara

another siren wails by  
just wait another will

just wait

just wait

my dad

*light as a feather*

*light as a feather*

*do you still deprive*

yourself of your own life

*to you*

*to you ten years ago*

ten years from

it's

was a fighter  
it's just weight  
watched fighting  
his favorite division featherweight

*i just want to be*

i just want to be fatherless  
my own being  
in my body

*you still deprive*

like it is not your own  
like it is not known  
to you

now

*just weight*  
*just wait*

for the light long  
down the road  
oh

wait

this is the  
epilogue this  
is the end. 7

# Body

by Trudi Sundberg

I've never had poison ivy. My mom has always been cautious to the point of paranoia about avoiding it. Often, she recounts the nightmarish experience she had with it when she was younger, when she was supposed to go to a concert. Instead, she got poison ivy, and was forced to lie in the car with newspaper covering her up so she didn't scratch her own skin right off. When I walked with her through the scanty woods behind our neighborhood, she made a point of showing me how to avoid every plant even vaguely resembling poison ivy (so in her eyes, most of them).

When she was busy teaching tennis, though, I was free to do whatever I pleased so long as it was within enough earshot that I could hear if she called for me. She never actually did, and instead, I just heard every instruction she gave to her many pupils (I could probably teach a tennis lesson in my sleep). Still, earshot is a wide range. Most of the time, I preferred to sit under the shaded bleachers and read whichever book had caught my eye most recently, or swing on the swing-set (since I didn't have the upper body strength for the monkey bars). Sometimes, though, I would explore the ravine behind the tennis courts, which was wildly overgrown with all kinds of plants. It was also littered with beer cans (and probably worse, if I had recognized what any of it was back then). If my mom had known the half of what was back there, I'm sure the earshot rule quickly would've become the "no fucking way, we're just gonna get a babysitter" rule. Nevertheless, I returned unscathed for the most part, occasionally sporting a scratch from a rock or particularly tough patch of thorny bushes. That blasted poison ivy never managed to catch me though.

I've never broken a bone. I hope it's because my bones are superhumanly strong, and not just because I don't play violent sports or hang unnecessarily from monkey bars. I did drink a lot of milk as a kid, so maybe that has something to do with it. Unfortunately, though, I drank vanilla milk (the super sweet stuff that Horizons sold in little rectangular cartons), so I don't know whether the syruped-up calcium actually did me any good. I don't drink milk anymore. I'm not lactose intolerant or anything, I just think it's vaguely gross.

My mom is lactose and soy and gluten intolerant. I'm fortunate to not have inherited her allergies; I can ruin my body with mac and cheese, milkshakes, and mozzarella sticks in peace. Eating out with her is always interesting. There are so many modifications that have to be made to her food (instructed to the server explicitly, but kindly). Still, the food inevitably arrives inedible. I have to ask the server to please take back the plate and bring us one with no cheese mixed in the salad, or with the chicken grilled instead of fried. My mom waves her hand and says that she'll eat around the it: the cheese, the croutons, the breading. If it's a chicken sandwich with no bread, and the chicken comes fried, pray tell what will she eat? The lettuce? Or is the gently wafting scent enough to satisfy her?

My mom tires of hearing her own repeated requests for her food to be prepared correctly. It rubs me the wrong way. I'm a server now, and yes, it's harder to type in 'no bun' 'sauce on side' 'grilled' 'no cheese' during a rush than it would be to press 'chicken sandwich' and move on. It's worth it though, because I've been at that table far too often, and I take satisfaction in ensuring I'm not the reason it'll happen to some other poor diners. I watch them check the plate, under the bun and the turkey, using their fork to move some salad leaves around. I hate that awkward dance where the person they're eating with says "Oh, no, they left the cheese on there," "Oh! It's fine, this happens all the time, go ahead and start..." "No, no! I'll wait! Of course I'll wait!" and so the offending plate is whisked away back to the kitchen, and the other person's food gets cold while they both just stare at it on the table. Nothing like that at



my tables. Instead they just eat, and nobody has to pick around the cheese. It's really not much to ask for. She just wants the chicken grilled instead of fried.

I've never had a cavity. By far, this is the most surprising. My family used to tell me that most people had a sweet tooth, and that somehow, I'd ended up with a whole mouth full of them. Every summer, I spent a week alone with my grandparents, and the big kickoff was a trip to the grocery store. I was given a cart and free reign over its contents. Inevitably, the belt at the checkout line would be loaded with cotton candy, Twizzlers, chocolate bars of every variety, ice cream, and for a few summers, an entire cake. There were some peanut butter crackers on top, but those were mostly for show, and probably to convince the cashier not to call CPS.

The irony in this is that both of my grandparents were diabetic. Genetically speaking, I'm sure I'll end up paying for my cavity-free set of chompers with quite a few insulin shots farther down the line. I don't spend a summer week with my grandparents anymore, but I still see my grandmother fairly often. I have the sneaking suspicion that she likes when I come around because I'm the youngest grandchild, and the only one who she still eats cake and ice cream and chocolate pie with. Whenever I join her for lunch, she's always convincing me to drive her to this bakery or the other one, and to get two slices of cake so we can try each other's. The other grandkids are in their thirties and have better things to do than sit around and eat cake, but it's still an enjoyable outing for just the two of us, as I'm too young and she's too old to have any sorts of responsibilities.

I've never been stung by a bee. This means that when I got my first tattoo, I had no idea what to expect. People always say that it hurts 'like a bee sting'. It's an unhelpful unit of measurement. We should standardize pain.

Even between tattoos, it's hard to gauge how much the needle will hurt. I got my first tattoo on the inside of my wrist, which is

known to be a painful place for a tattoo. Unsurprisingly, it absolutely was. I watched the tattoo gun trace searing lines on my skin in a sort of trance as pain and ink slowly sunk in, and then it was over. I was lucky to have chosen a simple design, and five minutes after the first prick, Saran wrap bandaged fresh ink.

My second tattoo took longer, in all senses. I waited a few years to be sure of what I wanted, I met with the tattoo artist ahead of time, and I made him try a few different placements with the pre-tattoo before I gave him the okay to start the gun. The beautiful piece on my ribcage is huge (at least by my wimpy standards), but still didn't take more than half an hour because of its minimalist style. It felt as though inking anything more than the minimum would bare more of myself than I wanted to. After I got it, I had to explain to my boyfriend why I wanted tattoos in the first place. He sees tattoos as unnecessarily permanent and brash, but I remember entering the tattoo parlor for my first one with the desire to be branded by it. To walk in to the tattoo parlor bare, and to emerge with a stamped with a mark that I could show to others and say, "See? This is who and why I am. Get it?"

With the second tattoo though, my reasoning wasn't as clear, even to myself, until after I got it. I was trying to get the outside of my body to show what was inside (the tattoo isn't intestines or anything gross like that). My body was starting to reflect the person inside of it. A way of reclaiming the mirror.

Another way to do that would be plastic surgery, which is something that I've considered for a long time now. In high school, my friends and I had hours-long conversations about what we would change about our bodies, given the chance. For the longest time, the immediate response was my nose. I always hated how it jutted out from my face, the gnarled horror that defined my side profile. I realized recently, though, that everything physical about me is in some part my father's, and he was very beautiful, and he is what I desire to carry with me all the time. If you drew a line along my side profile, from my hairline to my chin, I would be at one end and he would be at the other.

# chew, girl, chew

by Emily Tracey

everything you eat, you swallow whole.  
cherry pits peach pits sunflower seeds,  
when you jump, your stomach shakes like a rattle  
and it wakes you up in the middle of the night every time you turn over.

you were up all last night trying to find a reason for it,  
there isn't one. you just miss things when they're gone  
and your teeth are too big to bite.  
if you were a fish, you'd be the longest-living fish in the pond.  
if you were a romantic, you'd be sadder than this by now.  
if you were tied by your wrists to a hundred helium balloons, your arms  
would go up but you  
would not float.

cherry pits peach pits sunflower seeds.  
every day she asks you how you are and you never text her back.  
you remember when you could lay flat on your back and feel everything  
settle to the bottom  
except something running from throat to chest to open throat,  
and it felt like when thunder puts its hands on your ribcage and shakes.  
a bolt shot back.  
when you stand it's like an hourglass.  
when you throw up it's like marbles.  
when you hold faces in your hands it's just feeling for the hinge of their  
jaw,  
just tucking your thumb around the bone and pushing,  
watching what it is to chew.

# like winter misses warmth

by Clary Bond

I have slept in the desert,  
burned in the gold flame of fever;  
let the winds blow over me;  
*I have turned to glass to ash-*  
*we were never meant to last-*  
and I still see  
    your head of flaxen hair.

i have sung in the forest,  
tasted crimson on my tongue,  
stained the flowers with my blood;  
*I have turned to rain to grain-*  
*why does nothing good remain?-*  
and I still hear  
    you humming to yourself.

I have screamed beneath the earth,  
breathed the dirt into my lungs,  
felt the world go dark and still;  
*I have turned to dust, to rust-*  
*this is why I never trust-*  
and I still think  
    you loved me, for a time.

I have swum out to the sea,  
cast my waves along the coast,  
wept my tears where non could hear;

*I have turned to stone, to bone-*  
*I know how to be alone-*  
and I miss you  
    like winter misses warmth.

# Me and Earl

by Marshall Reed

We moved into a square farmhouse in rural Illinois, fifty miles west of Chicago. My parents, Earl, and me. I was eight. Earl was six.

I spent the first week we were there looking for the folding pocket knife I lost in the move. I found it in a box of stuff containing some of my toys and my correspondence with Steve Irwin, the conservationist. I had sent him a letter and a photo of myself holding a crocodile I sculpted out of clay. I'd received a generic response from the zoo. I was invited to join a fan club for kids and to come to a camp in Queensland, Australia that cost money. I kept the response. It hurt me that I didn't see a single handwritten word on any of the papers. I did not acknowledge this pain when I showed my parents the letter.

The year we moved was 2007. Soon after, my father's work became strained in the area. He installed signs for a company and would point them out as we passed them. He'd ask if I saw that blue one on the corner, and I'd say I did, and he'd say he put that up. I thought he built the signs too, and I could never connect the sheets of plywood in his shop with the shiny colorful things he pointed to as we drove by.

One day, my parents sat me down with my brothers and said that our dad would have to travel for work. He was going to be a jobsite superintendent, but he was to work for a company that operated nationally. They could send him anywhere in the country. I saw him a few times a year after that, when he could come home between jobs. I started school in the area.

My mom would talk on the phone while she was making breakfast in the morning, and I could always tell within a few minutes who she was talking to, whether it was my dad, a relative from far-off, or someone she didn't really know who she'd talk to in a different voice. If it was quiet, I could sometimes even hear the voice on the other end.

One day, I accidentally brought my folding knife to school. When I found it in my pocket, I got scared. I sneaked it into my backpack without anybody noticing. I didn't tell my mom.

In my class, there were two Kyles. Kyle P. and Kyle W. One day I walked into the bathroom, and Kyle P. was standing at a urinal with his pants around his ankles and his white butt cheeks facing out behind him. All the kids I met at school had pairs of pasty white hands that looked like they never touched anything but each other. It looked to me like if they touched a surface, the dust and grit would cling to them and be visible as if they had sticky pads like geckos.

When we'd line up to leave the classroom and go to the gym or the cafeteria or to assembly, I'd pretend that my classmates were all performing some sort of secret task. That they had to maintain cover by looking all around the room when they asked questions. That when they ran and jumped and landed on both feet so that their shoes would light up or touched their bent knees together when they raised their hand and asked to go to the bathroom, it was because they had to conceal their true characters.

Kyle W. rode my bus, and he'd always choose to sit next to me even though I'd pick a seat alone. He'd ask me why I dressed the way I did. He called me a few names I didn't understand, but I told my mom and she didn't like it. She asked me how I liked school, and I told her that I didn't understand why everyone was doing everything that they were doing when we were there. They had us read together, but I knew how to read. They had us play together, but I knew how to play. She said to try to tolerate school as well as I could.

In the summer, my grandparents came from Louisiana and visited for three days. It was between my dad's jobs, and he was there too. My grandfather said "Hey, podna." My grandmother said "Sha heart!" and she kissed my cheek. My grandfather brought two five gallon buckets with him. One had two bullfrogs in it and the other was full of floating water plants. The first thing we did was put these in our pond. My grandfather was a short man with one eye. He'd

kicked in the head by a horse. They talked like my dad.

I went with my dad and my grandfather to pick up a pig, and we kept it in a little pen until my dad shot it between the eyes with an air rifle the next morning. We built a fire. Earl and I watched while my dad and my grandfather poured scalding water over the pig and scraped all the hair off. When it was gutted, we pressed it between two metal racks and kept them together with wire. We ran metal rods through the edges and balanced these on two sawhorses over the fire.

My grandfather told jokes while it cooked. He said that Boudreaux was over at Thibodeaux's house one day, and he was admiring his horse. My grandfather said it, *harse*.

He said, "Thibodeaux offered to sell it to him. Boudreaux said he'd buy it, and he'd come pick it up the next day. Only when Boudreaux showed up to pick up the horse, it was dead."

My dad laughed here, and I did too.

My grandfather continued, "Thibodeaux said he wished he could let Boudreaux out of the deal, but Boudreaux said no matter and loaded up the horse anyway.

A few weeks later, they ran into each other on the street, and Thibodeaux said, 'Ay Boudreaux, what'd you do with that dead horse I sold you?'

Thibodeaux told him that he raffled it. 'Raffled it?' said Thibodeaux. Bet you pissed off a lot of people. Boudreaux said 'no, just one.'

"I don't get it," Earl said, but I nudged him with my elbow. My dad gave him the pig eyes to hold.

Before they left, my grandmother said she loved me so much, and she warned me not to go out at night because the devil goes out at night. She also told me not to wear hoodies, but she couldn't find the right word for them, so she made the motion of tightening the drawstring with her hands. She used to be a treateur, but she said she'd lost the gift. She no longer tied knots for other people above their warts to symbolically expunge them, but she still



used WD-40 on her sore hip a few times a year and drank her own urine. My mom told me.

My dad went to work again. He always worked somewhere new, usually thousands of miles away from the prior location. My fantasies in school took on greater vividness. Julia A. could make a machine-gun sound with her mouth that sounded almost like a sprinkler, and she'd do it with her hands in front of her like she was holding a gun. As her body quaked, she'd lose her position until she didn't hold a gun but pushed a shopping cart, then her hands did nothing at all and the noise continued. Zach O. used to be my only friend, and he had kind eyes, but one day he started picking apart the corners of my papers when I'd try to talk to him and he wouldn't respond back. I stopped talking to him. I knew what they meant when my classmates talked about video games and their aspirations to stardom, but I couldn't put myself in their place. I knew they saw this too. Colleen wore torn jeans and a pink fuzzy head set on dress-up day with a microphone extending toward her mouth, and she said she wanted to be a rock star. I thought at first that she meant some kind of glowing meteor.

I started asking my mom if I could stay home from school, and on the days she could not convince me to go, I'd accompany Earl and her to the horse farm where she taught lessons part-time. I did this so much that we began receiving notices from my school that a few more absences would lead to a visit from a truancy officer. My mom decided to homeschool me. It was late fall. I found the two bullfrogs dead and puffed on the surface of the pond.

In the winter, my mom's hours at work doubled because the horse trainer who headed the farm took the most dedicated customers to West Palm Beach Florida to continue the "A" circuit. My mom taught in an indoor arena with footing made from sand and shredded rubber, and I usually did my schoolwork in the tack room on top of her trunk. The barn was warm in the winter from the heat of forty horses, and hundreds of sparrows made their homes in the beams overhead.

Sometimes I'd talk with some of the clients, parents of the

girls who took lessons. I knew to act professionally around them because I represented my mom. The girls were not my friends. Their parents were even more important. Everyone in the business said the most important part didn't have anything to do with horses. It was about talking to people. Everyone called it schmoozing behind closed doors, but also everyone said that they didn't schmooze, they were a straight talker. My mom said that it was important to act right in front of the right people so that one day you could do whatever you want.

When my mom worked, Earl stayed with Mr. Salvador's wife, Mrs. Isabella. Mr. Salvador was the head guy at the barn. All the white people called the workers guys. They tacked up horses for the clients and were always quick and kind. They mucked stalls, rotated horses in the pastures, and maintained the farm. Sometimes one of the guys would vanish and wouldn't come back. Nobody would talk about this, they were just gone. There would be a new guy in a few days. A brother or a cousin. Some of the customers would say a few things to the guys, but most of them let them work like no one was there.

All of the guys lived in a set of apartments adjacent to the building where the hay bales were stacked. We lived in one of those apartments while we were looking for our house. Mrs. Isabella had a kid named Jorge who was about my age.

We'd go to the little creek behind the barn and catch frogs when it was warm or climb the manure pile or play hide-and-seek in the hay bales. Sometimes the guys would stack the hay bales in ways that would leave special hiding spots for their kids to play in. In the winter they would dig tunnels in the snow drifts. It was like they were playing with their kids while they worked.

I liked Jorge because he seemed like a real person to me. He had done things outside his whole life like I had. He said he could do a lot more things in Mexico than he could on the farm. He said he'd make arrow tips out of stones by putting them in very hot water until they began to melt a little and then chipping them against other rocks. He said that he and his friends would shoot so many arrows into a flock of birds that one of them was bound to fall.

I miss him now

# My ancestors found salvation in different places

by Grey Gregory

My ancestors found salvation in different places.  
Country stores and rock n roll.  
they sang while Mama played gospel hymns on piano.  
They couldn't have piano at church,  
But they could still have the songs-and they had more people too.  
They found it in a forged birth certificate,  
They got in the army a year early, and somehow  
Managed to stay out of Vietnam  
because two men took their place on the board.  
One of those men lived, and the other died.  
Some found their salvation in the Atlanta factory,  
they worked at General Motors and Levi's,  
and maybe they got lucky with a government job.  
They went up to clean up oil in Alaska.  
They found salvation in Social Security,  
a bit to put away for when they were older,  
not realizing it would never be enough.  
My ancestors found salvation on Sand Mountain,  
they took up snakes in East Tennessee  
and died drinking strychnine- or maybe it was the snakebite.  
They found salvation in warm pones of cornbread,  
Or poke salad or soup beans.  
They had their Paradise Valley, the wild peach tree  
And blackberry bushes and crabapple  
That leaned over the road when it rained.  
I found salvation dunked in a swimming pool,  
A great uncharted sea, and a map that had no cardinal direction.

# Love Is a Myth and so Is Cabo

by Trudi Sundberg

Rhonda sat on the floor. There wasn't anything else she could do at this point, she didn't think. Maybe she was in shock. In a state almost outside of herself, she wondered absently if she'd be able to get up by the time Jill got home. Get up vertebrae by vertebrae. Stacking them on top of each other one by one like she had learned in the musical theater class she took last year, took for fun when Jill had been working all those late nights.

Late nights. That's how it had started. A plate kept warm by the oven, hours after Rhonda had sat at the kitchen bar alone, eating her dinner, alone. Watching a rerun of a soap opera, alone. Showering. Alone. In bed, after that, alone, getting herself off and the way that it felt empty, a hollow warmth that spread through her and left an aftertaste of guilt between her legs. But what did she have to feel guilty for? It was Jill who should feel guilty, Jill who was slipping into bed hours later to halfway stir her awake, the way that Jill's skinny arms wrapped around her, whispering nothings into her ear, nonsense apologies and something about putting in the hours for the campaign. Rhonda had been so stupid. So sightless. It was textbook.

Angrily, she swiped tears off of her face that had begun to flow without warning. Vision cleared, she looked again at the tickets that sat on the floor in front of her. A 'work trip,' more like a two week vacation to Cabo. And Jill left three days from now, and Rhonda wasn't invited. No, instead Jill would be going with Kate. Kate. Rhonda said the name aloud a few times, listening to the tinny sound of her own voice in her ears, curling her tongue around the name like she was trying to familiarize herself with a greeting in another language.

another language.

Clem stepped carefully between Rhonda's legs, and her attention was drawn from the tickets momentarily as she ran her fingers through the orange cat's long fur. He purred happily, shoving his face into her hands. She and Jill had adopted him when he was just a kitten, and that was almost six years ago now. Rhonda remembered how enamored the both of them had been when they first saw his big green eyes staring out of his tiny orange face, and the excitement that they had felt picking out cat toys and a scratching post for him, although he'd destroyed the couch anyway. She looked to her right, to the destroyed gray couch in question, covered in scratch marks, and wondered again how she could've been so stupid.

The laptop pinged again. It sat across the room, at the kitchen table, and that damned ping was what had started all the trouble in the first place. Checking one text a week ago turned into logging into Jill's email, seeing the flight confirmation, seeing their photos together on a friend's Facebook, arms thrown around each other, Jill's face lit up like Kate was the only girl she'd ever seen. Kate's pretty eyes and pretty hair and pretty lips.

Headlights flashed across the window. *Fuck*. Rhonda pushed Clem off of her, getting hastily to her feet. She gathered up all the printed out documents and shoved them in the back of the filing drawer where she'd found them. She moved quickly to the laptop on the kitchen table, closing the open Messages window and a few others before shutting it. She heard the sound of the lock turning in the front door just as she rounded the last few steps up the stairs to their shared bathroom, and heard Jill's voice a moment later

"Rhon? Where are you?" she called from downstairs.

"Up here!" Rhonda responded, hoping that the volume of her voice covered its quiver. She swallowed and looked at herself in the mirror, eyes wild. "Just freshening up!" She heard the sound of the door closing and Jill setting her things down.

"Did you get a chance to start dinner?" Jill asked, still shouting. After brushing a few errant strands of hair out of her face

and using her thumbs to smear off the last of her running mascara, Rhonda made her way back down the steps.

“No, I’m sorry. I had a wild day at work,” she said to Jill’s back, finally able to speak at a normal volume. Jill turned to face her.

“Oh, hi! Sorry, I didn’t even hear you come down,” she chuckled and moved to Rhonda, giving her a quick, cool kiss on the cheek. A bittersweet ache spread across Rhonda’s face from the point where Jill’s lips had touched it. “That’s fine,” Jill continued, “we can do it together. I’ve got a *Southern Living* recipe I’ve been dying to try.”

“Okay,” Rhonda answered, clearing her throat of any residual tears that were trying to force their way up. “Do we have everything the recipe needs?”

“Yeah, it’s pretty simple. Will you grab some bell peppers out of the fridge? I’m gonna start making rice,” Jill said, already moving away from Rhonda to the pantry.

“Uh, sure. Of course,” Rhonda responded. She stood dumbly for another moment, watching Jill move cheerfully around their small kitchen. She snapped herself out of her weird reverie and turned to open the door of the fridge. Mechanically, she grabbed the bell peppers and set up a small prep station for herself. She chopped bell peppers for a few minutes as Jill alternated between stirring and seasoning at the stove. Jill’s quiet humming lulled her, and as her large knife made quick work of the peppers, she felt the tension melt away from her neck and shoulders. Stealing a quick glance at her wife, Rhonda began to doubt everything she’d discovered earlier. Maybe her unfounded suspicions were just that. Maybe she’d misunderstood the tickets she’d found, the messages, everything. Rhonda had been burned in the past. Was this nothing more than some internalized fear rearing its ugly head in her perfect relationship?

Jill’s phone buzzed twice in quick succession. Out of the corner of her eye, Rhonda watched her slide it out of her back pocket, and as Jill read the message, her face changed imperceptibly.

No, Rhonda wasn’t wrong. The certainty of her wife’s infidelity washed through her like

infidelity washed through her like waves, each one leaving a new part of her freezing cold. She felt drained, and very small. All she wanted was to turn to Jill and spill over into her, to be held and comforted while she sobbed like a child. She wanted to scream at her and fall to her knees and beg her for forgiveness. She wanted to tower over Jill and order her to get her shit and get out. She wanted to be ugly and cruel and unforgiving. She wanted reconciliation and softness.

She was surprised when Jill's voice sounded in the other room. Rhonda was snapped out of her own wicked confusion and tried her best to smooth her face out from whatever gnarly expression had been fixed on it. Turning to Jill, she cleared her throat again and stuttered.

"I Sorry. Which...what did you say?" Jill gave her an odd look.

"I was asking you what you wanted to listen to," the sentence ended in a question. "Are you alright? You've been out of it since I got home."

Rhonda sighed. "Yeah, everything is fine. I think I'm just tired. I don't care what we listen to. You choose." Jill examined her from across the room for another moment before shrugging and riffling through their large CD collection. She chose one and slid it into the stereo before turning it on. The music was quiet at first, and Jill twisted a dial to turn it up. She had been laying on the floor to power up the stereo, but now she stood.

"Come here," she said softly, extending a hand in Rhonda's direction. Rhonda hesitated. It was a slow song, made for a first dance at a wedding. She was still holding the knife, and she paused before setting it down and approaching Jill.

When her arms encircled Rhonda in a loose embrace, it felt natural. Jill was warm and solid against her body. Instinctively, Rhonda slipped one hand around the nape of Jill's neck, into her silky hair. She laced the fingers of her other hand with Jill's, and held it between their chests. Their foreheads bowed to each other, almost touching. They began to sway with the music, turning

slow circles around their yellow living room. Rhonda was close enough that she smelled the cinnamon gum on Jill's breath.

Rhonda shifted so that her head rested on Jill's shoulder, and Jill stroked her hair. Closing her eyes, Rhonda saw their entire relationship flash by on the backs of her eyelids. She remembered their first date, laughing too hard when they had both accidentally gotten drunk on mimosas at brunch. Shopping for dresses to wear to Jill's sister's engagement and coming home with five outfits each, leading to an impromptu fashion show in their bedroom. Jill singing quietly as she got ready for bed. Jill standing in the doorway with nothing but a blanket covering her naked body, saying "Take me darling, I'm all yours," mocking an old-timey movie star. Jill in the car. Jill at the park. Jill in the morning, still half asleep, kissing Rhonda softly before she went downstairs to make coffee for them both. In that moment, Rhonda couldn't remember who she was without Jill.

This was not part of the plan. To spend her life with empty space next to her. To laugh, and look next to her to share it with Jill, but Jill isn't there. This wasn't part of the plan at all. Rhonda swept the hair off of Jill's neck and kissed it. Her neck smelled like Lemon Lysol and warm vanilla lotion, and it tasted sour. It tasted bitter, of lies and trips to Cabo. Rhonda ached at the thought of having to figure out who she was all over again, alone, and she reached out and grabbed the ache tightly and wrapped it around herself like a mourning shawl. And the tears finally came, and they soaked into Jill's blazer, and Rhonda knew that they would be impossible to wash out. They stayed like that for a while, locked in their warm embrace, and kept swaying even after the music had ended



# Nineveh

by Caroline Beasley

here am I, send me  
back to my kitchen table,  
reheating leftovers and  
settling my parents' disputes.

here are You, standing  
even when no one notices with  
heads tucked inside our shirts  
hitting the columns yelling no other way to live!

here You are,  
even when I forget  
you brought me here and  
You'll keep me going  
because I can't (I won't!)

"this is your plan?!"  
"well I'm not going."

here I am, dispatched  
back at hell, (I fell)  
from grace into the belly of the beast  
please don't let me cry  
myself to eternal sleep  
I'll stay in emptiness forever & again

"collect my tears!"  
"come get me!"

but here am I,  
sent to deliver this news:  
you are loved and,  
mom,  
I forgive you.

# Photo Booth; After Walt Whitman

by Marguerite Doyle

I caught them between the Singer's yellowed leaves  
falling to the floor of a Dublin bookshop,  
and I scooped up an unexpected Song  
ringing, fresh, uncovered.

A couple framed in a brief snap of time somewhere,  
she was leaning on him in collaborative ease  
in an Aran jumper, *geansaí*, Sweater.  
His averted face; a Glimpse.

There was no dedication, scribbled names, or evidence.  
Was the book a secret gift from her to him  
this lover plunged in her auburn hair  
in the Dazzle of their love?

And to the poet whose book I am holding now in hand  
I hear the shouting Song of them, clandestine,  
and I know their tune will even elude  
with respect, even him

# Self Care

by Bertie Preston

I sweep hair at my job  
And I look like a blob  
And I can't work or chat  
Cause I'm so fucking fat.

But an idea, it came to me  
A way I could diet, and it would be free  
I'll eat the hair, that I sweep up  
And I won't even have to throw up

If I ate the hair I bet I'd lose weight  
I bet I would start to control what I ate  
An unlimited source with unlimited calories  
I get lunch at work while earning a salary

It's calorie free and it's protein that's clean  
And I have to tell you, dear god is it lean  
It goes down much smoother than what you'd think  
Don't try to chew it, just swallow and blink

I blend it with water and eat it as paste  
I've come to expect the aftertaste  
Each strand has a flavour, redheads are rare  
They all have a taste that I've come to savour

My secret diet, my fat melted off  
And being skinny is worth the trade-off  
I'm so out of breath when I climb the stairs  
But if I'm honest, I don't really care

I don't shit anymore  
it's hard to ignore  
But I forget all about it  
When I see my stomach

How many women have a body like this?  
How many women can't close their fist?  
My mom asked me to eat. She cried and she begged.  
You know what I told her? I'll eat when I'm dead.

# Skeletal Pastimes.jpg

by Alexa Pfeiffer



# Sonnet 4

by Emory Grace Doster

I said I couldn't wait to break your heart-  
How fitting it should be that you break mine!  
That pride in hateful self be pushed apart  
While you moved stars that I forbade align.  
October love, my fortunes I have lost-  
I never claimed to gamble well before.  
The cards I took for spite; the die I tossed,  
Then wrenched from tortured grasp was all my store.  
A fool am I! A plaything of the Fates  
Who rob me blind at every pass and turn,  
So never shall I trace those holy gates  
Of richest bliss, where tender eyes yet burn.  
Thus let me run, vile, unrelenting wraith,  
And I shall clutch this ageless forlorn faith.

# SUNSET, INNER RING

by Daniel Powell

The ripe-fruit skin of the world is the word in your  
mouth. The knotted-scar cloud on the sky's smooth flesh  
Is flushed with the late heat. On the pink air  
The hickory blackens, leaching up iron  
From under the hill, peeling away the light  
From the star-boned sky.  
Against the rising-ocean evening air  
Its writhing clotted mass of leaves  
Begins to float, diffuse: a thick and bitter  
Plume of smoke ascending from  
A silent burning hulk. Somewhere past  
The endless rolling asphalt-shingle-crested  
Waves of single-family roofs, receding  
Into distances interleaved with green,  
Deep into the bluing vacant night,  
The empty sky-shell pours out trembling  
thunder. Suddenly, all other sounds are stifled  
By the oceanic rushing of cicadas in the pines.

# The Duality of Women

by Sunny Hakemy





# I Feel at Home

by Anonymous

i. binge is an anagram for being

A second of control  
Over just one thing  
Feels like sweet relief  
Or sometimes savory relief  
Because nothing says stable  
Like a mouthful of momentary good ideas  
And a stomach full of regret  
It's a mistake after the fact  
But a reward at the time  
For winning the game of keep away  
For wiping that smile across your face  
For keeping up the illusion, fooling everyone and sometimes even  
yourself  
For making it through one hell of an afternoon

ii. Marked

A few years and some split mains have told you  
That stretch marks don't hurt as much as other scar tissue  
And no one cares when they don't smooth back into the skin  
It doesn't matter if they become a part of you like they were there  
from the beginning  
Because we were meant to bend  
But not snap, as you have so many times  
You are not an iron maiden, but a wooden one  
Splintering under each new pressure  
Fresh shavings tumbling to the floor every so often  
Just to remind you that there is always more to be taken away  
Even when a knick seems like enough  
To get you through one hell of an afternoon

iii. Collected shards

A life in perspective explains how  
You are a glass vessel for a diamond soul  
Cracked slowly and deliberately  
So that you only discover you(r/re) missing pieces  
When it is too late to get them back  
But you will find  
Although time itself is not a healer of wounds  
That good company will come without permission  
Casting slivers of sunlight on your broken angles  
And illuminating that crooked image in the mirror  
For you to see that  
It was always more than just one hell of an afternoon

# The Jar by the Door

by Emory Grace Doster

I mourn for the dreams,  
the sugared sunrises  
and the half-seconds  
but I didn't count on hours.  
I didn't trust how long a day could feel.  
Sometimes I blame the frayed brushes  
that painted like Michaelangelo  
and sang of endless daylight and love in fullness  
but I mourn  
that they never mentioned what it's like to go to sleep  
unsteady.  
Now, I see the sunrise  
tastes like sour coffee and the minutes pass like years.  
In an entire sea, I cannot find a drop  
and I might be blind  
or desolate  
but I'm surely not swimming and I've forgotten how to sail  
like I thought I could.  
The child that craved this since settled into a pine tree,  
pricked by rusty needles and coated in parched red earth,  
tethered to her cradle  
and terrified of more than fantasy.  
It doesn't fall together like we planned  
and I'm caught staring from a foreign window,  
breath tangled in my ribs,  
refusal filling my skull and my eyes,  
tumbling from my lips, dripping from my chin,  
and instead of twice a year,  
twice a day

I imagine that it might stay this way forever,  
that once I settle into these cracks,  
I will never be dug out. I can't let go  
of the dozens of fancies that might have come to pass  
had I never fooled myself into leaving,  
but would I be twice a fool to return again?  
Distantly,  
I want to take hold of something  
for this little while that I have it  
and adore it.  
I am one  
in scores of thousands whose hearts have gone hollow  
but there is no wine in place of my blood  
my veins are chilled with pulsing air.  
I might be better half-broken and hated  
than  
forgotten and forgetful.  
Will the beauty come back?  
Will the sun shine clean white again  
rather than dusty grey?  
Will the rain fall rich  
rather than thick?  
The very earth beats for me to tread it again  
and God knows how I want to.  
I am already an old woman,  
and these ashen bones keep me tied here  
and the sash to the frame.  
Someday, a breeze will be too little  
and I will pick up after a life poorly lived,  
bits on frozen ground,  
fragments of distorted memory,  
regrets and leftover love.  
I will never forget you.  
I am too young to be tired and too old to play innocent.  
I know the blue-eyed ghost.

I crave his false histories.  
Indulgence ceases to please  
when you taste it every morning  
and each time find that it's empty by itself  
and by yourself, you forget the nature of it with each dried-up day  
so that the sum of all i've learned is loneliness  
for missing myself, too.

# the window between us

by Claudia Butler

there is a window  
between me and you.

i peer at your image,  
the curves and lines,  
with crystal clear vision.

we can see each other's smiles,  
and we cannot keep our hands  
in our pockets.  
so we reach with outstretched hands,  
yearning for the other.

our desire is overwhelming,  
omnipresent and omnipotent.

but it is not enough.  
it never is.  
my hands will never  
find their place,  
connecting with yours.

i am doomed to a life  
of look, but don't touch.  
because there is a window  
between me and you,  
not a door.

- the window between us

# 11:36 a.m.

by Madison Dye

I dream of yellow fields  
The kind dripping in honey and Coca-Cola  
The sun, my only companion.

I dream of a place where I can write  
Symphonies of nature  
Uninterrupted, unparalleled.

Oh Nature! Please bless me,  
Allow me to speak your tongues  
And translate into mine.

# A Letter

by Meredith Eget

In the beginning,  
You'll believe it to be a dream.  
Settled into subconscious,  
A sleepwalker in the daylight,  
You'll lose feeling in your features, slowly  
Sense the sinking of the corners of your mouth  
And as if tethered to invisible anchors,  
You will find yourself incapable of yelling,  
Mayday!  
Frozen solid from the inside,  
Or turned to Medusa's stone,  
You too will sink.  
They won't see it,  
But you will feel it.  
And that will make it worse.

In the beginning, they'll look at you funny  
Name it protection or worry  
Yet you'll catch in their gaze the glare of a judge's gavel  
Eyes that linger too long  
On low-cut tops  
And painted fingernails.  
Eyebrows will scream:  
What could she have done differently?  
Pinched lips will assume  
The woman in you to be gone.  
And at first, you will bind yourself to such an absence



In the beginning,  
You'll believe it to be a dream.  
Settled into subconscious,  
A sleepwalker in the daylight,  
You'll lose feeling in your features, slowly  
Sense the sinking of the corners of your mouth  
And as if tethered to invisible anchors,  
You will find yourself incapable of yelling,  
Mayday!  
Frozen solid from the inside,  
Or turned to Medusa's stone,  
You too will sink.  
They won't see it,  
But you will feel it.  
And that will make it worse.

In the beginning, they'll look at you funny  
Name it protection or worry  
Yet you'll catch in their gaze the glare of a judge's gavel  
Eyes that linger too long  
On low-cut tops  
And painted fingernails.  
Eyebrows will scream:  
What could she have done differently?  
Pinched lips will assume  
The woman in you to be gone.  
And at first, you will bind yourself to such an absence

·  
Endowed with the safety of separation  
From the thing he paralyzed in the first place.  
No longer woman,  
No longer body.  
It will become a part of you  
Or drown you altogether

And at some point, it will be hard to tell the difference.

In the end,

You will live.

Find a moment in the early morning in which

You can drive past his apartment building and hold steady

Hear sirens without flinching

Cross the street without searching for his frame

Or take out the trash.

You will breathe a sigh on wings of freedom,

Exhale out all the difficult phrases.

You will tell them of all that he made of you

And they will tell you different.

That you are not the sum of his parts,

That you are something else entirely.

You will nod at them, smile

Picture for the first time,

A life outside of stone.

A song,

A great discovery.

A cycle,

broken.

A heart,

A little less so

# ANOTHER RUNWAY

by Tim Suermondt

I've been told  
the hospital I was born in  
has been torn down,  
nothing but air and space  
waiting for the building  
of something new.  
The airbase has been chopped  
down as well, except  
for a few hangars the weeds  
now patrol. At least there'll  
be no bombers taking off  
and landing. "Let's go to Paris  
soon," I tell my wife. "It's  
the best place to wave goodbye."

# Away

by Alexa Pfeiffer



# cherry cross stitch

by Clary Bond

there's a triplet cherry cross stitch  
that's hanging, for sale,  
on the wall of the coffee shop;  
and whenever I see it, I can't help  
but stop by and think of you.

it's been there for a year- or, almost a year-

(who can keep track of time now, with everything that's happened?  
how did we ever try to keep track of time before?)

it's been there for a while, let's say;  
I've spent many mornings  
with vanilla and cinnamon  
on my freshly-burnt tongue,  
starting at the cherries,  
remembering what we shared  
(*and what we didn't*)  
(*and what we almost did*)

would you taste like cherries on my tongue?  
would you taste like summertime, like when I fell in love  
with the way you fill the world,  
with the words you give the world-  
with you?

I'm glad she's with you now;  
I know you're bound to give each other

and yet-

each weekend I go in there,  
each time I stare at the wall  
and see the \$13 cherry cross stitch  
hanging over my head,  
I almost buy it. I almost do.

but then I wonder:  
should I really be buying memories  
I'm not sure I want to keep?

# Corpse Flower

by William Miller

Taller than the average man,  
it stinks like a dead man unburied,  
rots in the open air.

Seven years is the life span,  
full bloom three short days.  
Dung beetles, flesh flies

swarm to the deadly stamen--  
suicides who die on their backs,  
from eating the male and female

flowers, eyes to heaven.  
All is one in this odd plant, grown  
by the gardener who took his time,

breathed life and death into  
the waxy stem. The curious, the brave  
stand beside the shooting

burgundy leaves, drawn by  
the truth that rarely blooms,  
the sweet smell of decay.

# “Dead Space”

by Jason Hawkins

Your messages come in the form of snow,  
Glass swords falling and piercing soft.  
I see myself in the puddles they leave behind.

Bereft in cold Athens,

Iceberg clouds crash into the moon  
And kiss the grass pitch.  
The last time I saw the stars like this,

I wasn't so alone.

It would disappoint you:  
How unlike them I am.  
The dome shines. It does not twinkle.

The universe is rendered stagnant  
In my petrifying gaze.  
See, I am more like the moon!

I sink and turn everything to stone,  
Each planet a pebble,  
Each star a tombstone.

Still and unpristine.



# depths

by Clary Bond

I know the depths of the ocean (*the pressure, the weight, the bursting of lungs*),  
I know the crests of despair just as well as you-

I have sat upon the shore staring at the sun,  
and I have lain upon the shore with tears in my eyes,  
and I have crawled upon the shore spewing saltwater,  
breathing fire...

I've held the shells so tightly in my hand that they've cracked and shattered,  
splintered across my fingers, into my flesh,  
*a river of blood's just as god for the plan I pursue-*

did you think you were the only one?

did you think I'd never eyed  
the wine-dark sea?

the darkness is everywhere, filling the depths of the sky:  
it's yours, and it's mine, and it's choking the stars-

no, *holding* the stars-

that the sailors have always used  
to find a way home.

you were my home, once:  
    my Polaris, known to me  
    even in the tempests,  
    even in the flood-

and maybe our dreams of the depths  
aren't dark ones after all:

all we're looking for is an embrace.

*(all we want  
    is to exist with grace.)*

# DESPAIR IS STUBBORN

by Tim Suermondt

But I'm more. I tell it  
it has a choice: leave  
or help me in the backyard.  
It grumbles, says it sees  
nothing mournful about  
being in *any* garden.  
I stand firm and it relents.  
I hand it a shovel  
and we venture out, heading  
to the far side of the fence.  
"Why don't we plant  
an apple tree?" "You're  
kidding," it says, crestfallen.  
"Yes," I say, "I am."

# DON'T DISTURB

by anonymous

They didn't let you in here so you could act any less like the woman you're supposed to be, Marlinchen.  
You'll never know my frustration or the way you made me feel.  
The expanse was vast, calm and deadly,  
And you were too much of a deadbeat  
To look away.

Partially? I just felt the envy.  
I wish sometimes I had stayed.  
I'll trash my room  
And then  
In this holy space as I bargain with you, make my weekly trades,  
Reenact my rituals for your divine grace.  
Sun of the Morning,  
Daughter of Dog;  
We looked so incredibly lovely.  
But if you dove into me you would probably die a watery death.  
And they would probably lay you to rest,  
In an older, Southern, quiet place.

The dream where I walked by the sea:  
It was cold and covered in snow,  
And my bed was on the shore.  
And when the water tried to swallow the sheets,  
On that mattress I fought the storm.

I neglected myself for a year and a half  
Stagnated a little and felt bad.

The ground's mouth was open, and I foolishly stared,  
But cement and the rubble kept you warm,  
As is the case for most worms-  
I thought for a time, I stayed and I cried-  
I didn't know how to say it so,  
I sat back and watched it decay.  
I Swallowed the earth and I swallowed my pride,  
And the next time I look you in the eyes,  
I will not be kind.

# “Eden Rising”

by Jason Hawkins

Everything has toxic traits;  
I will go first.

I like to imagine that,  
While things wither and burn on Earth,  
Peaches and plums are growing fat on Mars.

The toxic trait of Earth is that it bore man.  
The toxic trait of man is that we ultimately bear nothing  
And we ultimately bare everything.

My toxic trait is that I like to imagine  
That everything will be okay;  
Roses and red grapes burgeon on Mercury!

And on Earth .

The toxic trait of prosperity is that  
It is hard for us to properly  
Distinguish it from gluttony.  
While we argue, the fig tree and its fruits  
Are swelling to life on Saturn.

The toxic trait of man is that we are always  
Trying to blame someone else.  
While we wage hatred and worse,  
Ash, oak, and thorn are kissing the face  
Of Ishtar, healing her cracked complexion

And serenading her rage to obsidian.

The toxic trait of time is its nature;

It is the blight that blackens all,

And while our blooms blacken and break,

Wisteria alba is whitening the jaundice of Jupiter;

Chamomile is saving just enough for a sunny glow!

My dreams color the cosmos completely.

The toxic trait of man is that we let time escape us;

We make an oasis of glass in the present.

Everything has toxic traits,

*And where the worser is predominant,*

*Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.*

My toxic trait is that, as our bared world

Is withering and burning,

I will imagine a meteor shower of technicolor petals

Flying down from Heaven like angels

To deliver us from our own insolence:

A firelight mirage on the cracking glass.

Everything has toxic traits,

But enough about me!

Now, it's your turn.

# Eighting

by Alex Coats

Was it the nature of things to  
forget you?  
But you are like a memory.  
And our tumbling

I could never trace a footstep  
without care.  
Forget you and our tumbling;  
I hold on tightly.

But grip is meeker than wisdom  
and I see  
without care I hold on tightly  
to meaningless things.

A bottle resting on the wall  
has it all  
and I see to meaningless things  
gone to waste away.

May I bore you with a question?  
Do you think  
has it all gone to waste away?  
I could get better.

To me it feels we've all gotten  
sour deals.  
Do you think I could get better



than those men leaving?

Your heart makes me wonder: am I  
just to know  
sour deals than those men leaving  
what it's like to be?

Be with me; I've nothing to say  
so I follow  
just to know what it's like to be  
in your stories.

For I was not adventurous  
but you are  
so I follow in your stories  
like a memory.

# Gambler's Remorse

by Chris Carringer

I

Somehow it all seems to fade back  
to morning

the sweet emboldening twinkle  
of a day's first breath,

as watermelon rays of sunlight pour  
through the blinds  
to remind me  
what it means

to start again. I remember  
pulling the covers away,  
old stains  
and smells  
become  
insignificant as

the rebellious corners

of my mouth  
can't help  
but reach  
towards  
the temples.

I can already taste that redolent  
roasted coffee  
that will  
pour

down  
my throat,  
gently, profoundly, pulling  
these eyelids open  
and inviting me out into the day.  
they know not what they do,  
and I smile because,  
although I do,  
I can't help  
but hope that this  
too  
will not  
be thrown  
away

## II

The day will pass.  
my back will begin to ache  
by noon  
my energy fade by six  
and on the fifth  
coffee it will  
become more fuel than  
friend.

At some point I will open  
the rusted cashier box  
on the bottom  
of the bookshelf I built  
with my father,  
and I'll pull out from it  
hiding  
underneath  
the lining  
that photo-booth print

of you and I, smiling.  
And, although I know where  
it will end,  
I allow myself a sip  
in lonely bedrooms  
to crowded bars  
with faces  
and friends i feel the novel  
-less burn  
of  
what's supposed  
to amount  
to a good time.

I'll find the face of some stud  
half -shrouded in bar-smoke,  
half -shrouded in blurred eyes,  
and i'll kiss it,  
grab it,  
pull it, out  
into the night,  
towards an apartment  
only blocks  
from here

### III

I'll walk out beneath the sweet release  
the stars of  
stupor'd nights,  
know  
that every kiss I wasted  
was one meant  
for someone else  
that every drunken evening snubs

another day,  
another morning lost  
to aches and  
endless carnal pains

But gambling  
away the past  
has never been my  
way,

and if each night tossed  
like this is another  
thrown away

even though it kills me  
to lay myself upon the  
line,

with the few stars that are left  
let me kiss you one more time  
to me,

# god

by Alex Sausa

Sex is just another place your body has been and age, just a timestamp: how long has your body occupied space? Its own dimension of autonomy? Granted, autonomy is fickle and malleable, wet clay in the hands of time and place; gender, religion, race. We never stood a chance, did we? Unknowingly genuflecting to what some call god, the intersection of circumstance. Not some man in buoyant white robes, no; everything you touch, and cannot touch, is god and god touches you.

# Hanging from the Sun:

by Trudi Sundberg

tankas from people I've loved, or at least taken quite seriously

Navigation rests on my thigh  
where I think your hand  
would fit quite nicely.  
Your laugh is like a pearl  
on a chain around my neck.

...

Your coffee mug left a ring on the table: use a coaster.

I hope you added salt and not sugar.  
I hope you burn your tongue.

...

I was hanging from the sun:  
You pulled me down and  
asked me to lasso the moon  
instead.

august twenty-first: a solar eclipse.

...

A bottle of tequila,  
Waves of murky saltwater mingle on our breath.  
Familiar face, foreign place  
(or vice versa).

...

Your fingers graze me with hollow bird bones.  
Wooden beads stain my wrist red yellow green,  
celebrating an absent guest of honor.

...

I mash avocados on toast and  
quietly adore you. You're frying an egg.  
Tonight, you will teach me how to bless the bread.

...

I am the sun once more,  
un-eclipsed.  
I am unlike the star: your shadow remains  
long after the briefest moment of darkness.

...

Ill-fitting curtains illuminate us  
languishing in bed.  
Tell me something I don't know about you yet.  
Skip breakfast with me.

...



How wonderful:  
I am undeserving of this love freely given.  
I take it greedily. I sit on the porch. I eat cake.

# Happiness is a commodity

by Kishan Patel

Let me dance in Wichita,  
where a Hispanic girl was hung,

to a wild cacophony--flurrying and furious--  
strangle strangle strangle  
a strange comfort for a sick woman  
who was later strangled.

Teach your children that happiness is a commodity,  
so they will learn to barter, sell,

and steal cheap liquor, fake flowers, and fights  
with your father with a father with no father  
a missed flight for a sick cousin  
who was later dead.

You cannot afford to be happy.  
This is all you can afford.

*Happiness is a commodity.*

# hearts a heavy burden

by Alexa Pfeiffer



# Honey

by Caela Gray

Golden.  
Caramel.  
Dripping sunshine.  
Crafted from thousands of hardworking hands.  
Only to be stolen away  
By greedy, destructive flesh bags.

Oh, but the taste!  
Sugary, sappy, ambrosia.  
What would a cup of tea  
Be without the delicate  
Addition in the morning? at night?

Cloyingly sweet, it teases me.  
Thick amber knows that irresistible,  
Smokey floral,  
Fresh as cut grass in the summer  
Scent.  
Melts on the tongue so  
Effortlessly.

Come back to bed dear.  
Bring that black market molasses  
With you.  
I can't live without it.

# if even only for a minute

by Dane Tillman

if even only for a minute  
can we be something  
other than disciplined

dont get me wrong -- life is beautiful  
at its heaviest  
verses read daily & nothing but water

but weve been waiting in this line forever  
& i really just want to dance

# In Memory of Us

by Meredith Eget

Auden laughed with me the day we died  
Stared at the hot beam in the sky,  
The terrifying, jolly blue,  
Said, *Isn't it funny how the world doesn't stop for us?*  
And wrapped me in lines of sweet elegy  
That name you impermanent  
And me silly

A loss the world and the weather won't care about  
I mourn the hollow absence of my own dear Yeats  
In verses only I will read,  
Eulogies only I can deliver  
As the love I bore was mine alone  
And guilty ardor has a way of hiding itself after all

You'd be happy to know  
My heart has its madness still  
As portraits of you do little to replace  
The breath and body of a first love  
Even more so a being as nebulous as you

I would guess your prestige rivals that of your metaphor  
As memory survives like poetry  
And awards me your Nobel smile in moments that sweeten bitter recollections  
To deny Ireland's wrong, to keep you infallible  
As you were always just as popular

Though I could never depend on Yeats for a back scratch  
And he couldn't have know about the freckle on my thigh

I dread the sinking of our casket into brittle dirt more than the words

*We should stop this*

That left us forgotten in the first place  
As if clutching the Rose and Rood of us  
And declaring it holy  
Could keep this alive  
As if I am more Yeats than you,  
And you, My persevering Ireland

In hopes of resurrection

I'd ask Lazarus how he did it

Look for Jesus on I-75

Or between the pews of your family's church

My love

I feel sick harboring you so

For poetry is nothing if not the people's

I ask of Wylan,

For we are on a first name basis now,

The solution to a problem I find myself so unwilling to solve

Delight at the prospect that my words will make nothing happen

And settle in the belief that such a nothing will allow us to remain

Me, hurt into poetry

You, eternal muse

Us.

# in Dreams

by Alexa Pfeiffer





# iron reaper whisk me away

by Kishan Patel

panic attacks inside fuzzy's  
working out why you don't love me  
yesterday, she said I was fake  
and today, my car had no brakes

iron reaper whisk me away  
onto the throes of buzzards bay  
far from people I think I know  
and people I need to let go

slammed against concrete meadows  
my blood mixed in with pale shadows  
of strangers circling my car door  
and filled cups on my kitchen floor

*iron reaper whisk me away*

# la llorona

by Annette Aguilar

*niña, para de llorar*

girl stop crying

don't you know what happen to women who only cry?

they grow their hair out so untidy and long

it reaches their ass

and you know what they do with the strands that fall out?

they tie them together into a noose

they start doing some *brujeria* shit

all that witchcraft

sleep with the lingering scent of frankincense

you know what frankincense is?

it's a small

makes you feel less lonely

apparently

and then they start wandering around

as if there ain't shit to do at home

or they stay in bed all day

*huevonas*

*niña*, didn't i tell you to stop crying?

*pareces a la llorona*

you act like the weeping woman

oh, you don't know who she is?

# “Little Wounds”

by Jason Hawkins

The other day, I read “scarlet,”  
And a shade of blue  
Came to mind.

What a privilege, I thought,  
It is to whisper red and  
Forget blood.

I remember when I said “crucifix”  
And you corrected me  
So gently.

“Cross,” you said, because a  
Crucifix shows the painful,  
Holy death.

Sitting in the grass, I saw  
Fire ants rush to bite me and the  
Little war.

Sitting in the grass, I saw  
Fire ants rush to bite me and the  
Little war.

I remembered the boys battling,  
The girls running: preparation for  
The future.

I thought about how wonderful  
It is that it was all play.  
Little strife.

I rose from the whispering grass  
And thanked the clouds for that they  
Meant nothing.

And then I looked up and down my  
Aching arms and the red faces  
Laughed at me.

The gingerbread brown peeled back  
To reveal the past, to unveil  
My scarlet.

# Manuscripts

by Karson Corbitt

I grew up in the land of rebel flags flying on front porches and people who make a living with their hands. My childhood home is nestled in woods that Sherman and his men marched through on their way to burn Savannah. Before the land overcame itself, there was the Denham plantation and a tannery that transitioned to making boots, saddles, and other leather goods for confederate troops. You can still see a chimney splattered with cannonball holes from the road, if you look just right between the trees driving down Tanyard.

I can remember sitting in Peepaw's shop, in the office he'd built for himself with a wood stove in the far corner and a mini fridge stocked with Bud Light. He shows me a drawer filled with composition notebooks, picking one up and thumbing through pages of cursive. His memoir, he said. Stories about living in the dorms at trade school in Clarkesville, family vacations to Daytona, his brother who passed a few years ago. Some I've heard dozens of times, and others that remind me of the man he is. He tells me to remember these notebooks when he's gone, and I say Yes, sir.

In the drawer below he pulls out a thick booklet held together by staples. The pages yellowed and worn, I can almost hear typewriter keys clicking. Inside is the story of the Denham's fleeing from Putnam County upon word of Sherman's approach, as told by the daughter of the patriarch. The rush to pack baskets of food and clothes into wagons. Burying silver and other relics. Loading the children into carriages, with the help of a "loyal servant", Epsie. The caravan heading to South Georgia. The uncle who stayed behind, hiding in the man-made swamp loaded with chemicals from leather treatments at the factory. The fear of what they might return to. The fear to lose the life so many people had worked so hard to build.

The Denham's return home to the ashes left behind of the tannery, the smoke stack still standing with the metal fish weathervane standing at the top. The plantation home still standing, but gutted. They find the rosewood piano in the barn, where it had been used as a trough to feed and water the Union horses. The china and crystal left in shards on the parlor floor. The valuables that had been dug from the dirt and taken with Sherman's men to Savannah. And they thought this was destruction.

The manuscript doesn't mention the sixty-three slaves left behind, expected to defend the property and fend for themselves. The slaves the family considered as "our people". The slaves who escaped the Denham plantation, never seen again. The ones captured under the guise of liberation and the few who returned later as "practically skeletons," accepting a place on the estate, because it was better than starving. What became of those who left? What became of those who stayed? Sixty-three human beings without a seat at the table, without a place in the story. How did they forget about sixty-three people?

\*

The manuscript doesn't warn me about how I will feel when I transfer to a public high school and have math class with a boy who has Peepaw's last name. And how I know he isn't a distant cousin. The pit in my stomach when it clicked. It doesn't tell me how to navigate making friends with the black girls in musical theater, and the shame I feel knowing my ancestors fought against the right for them to be in that classroom. Watching them braid hair in the dressing room, in awe at the speed and intricacy. How that must've mirrored the women in the slave quarters when they had a moment to breathe and just be women.

The manuscript doesn't prepare me for the fights I'll have with Momma at the kitchen table, when she tells me this is my heritage and I tell her I'm ashamed of it. And she says it would break

Peepaw's heart if he knew that. The man that taught me the importance of a skill and a smile. The man who goes to church every Sunday and invited my best friend to thanksgiving after she came out to her family and they shamed her for it. The man who could tell a story a million times, and still keep me hanging on every word. The man with a bicep tattoo of Brer Rabbit holding a Confederate flag. The proud member of the Putnam County chapter of the Sons of Confederacy. The man who raises sheep and competed in rodeos. The man I made a grandpa. The man who gives goodbye kisses on the cheek and finishes the day with a cigar.

The manuscript doesn't teach me how to balance the love for my family and the shame for our past. It doesn't prepare me to live through a second wave civil rights movement. It doesn't foresee how little really can change in two a century and a half. But the manuscript isn't a finished story.

# Miss the Mirrors

by Karson Corbitt

I started dance class when I was three years old. My mom thought it would be the perfect past time for a little girl in the South. And she was right. I was trained in ballet, tap, and jazz, contemporary and lyrical were added on with age. Some of my first memories are attempting shuffles, holding onto the barre, feeling vulnerable in my metal-clad toes and heels. The classrooms were empty except for a pile of pastel dance bags huddled in the back-left corner and a stereo system in the front right. The clacks of a dozen pairs of first tap shoes reverberated through the room, and occasionally the clacks would turn into a slide followed by a thud. The room felt stale after years of sweat and bare feet running across the room. It was the kind of stale where the beams of sunlight coming through the windows showed every tiny piece of dust suspended in the air. It was the kind of stale that felt comforting, like an antique store or great-grandma's house.

Dance never felt like a choice. I adored my ballet slippers dragging across barley dance floors and imagining holding a beach ball to perfect first position. The studio walls were lined in floor length mirrors, no blind spots in any room of the small brick building. As children in dance class, we'd stand inches away from our reflections, sticking out tongues and making silly faces at each other. Mimicking Ms. Christy's "potty-boo-rays" and leaping over dance bags.

I remember the first time getting ready for a recital. The tight low bun, bobby pins scraping my scalp as momma only pushed harder, suffocating inside a cloud of extra-strength hairspray. I remember her brushing too much blush across my cheeks and painting pink lipstick on my puckered lips. This was always one of my favorite parts of the process- it made me feel special and fancy. With my hair pulled back and my makeup on, I felt pretty and older. I always wanted to be older. I admired the older girls at the studio who looked so confident and could stretch their legs to their ears. I wanted their



glitter eyeshadow and satin ballet shoes that had blocks at the toes and strings that tied around the ankles. Older meant better. Older meant more.

I remember the mint-colored leotard and the feeling of white tulle at my fingertips. The blush pink pantyhose sliding up my legs and the pale ballet slippers pushed onto my feet. Feeling warm under the stage lights. Looking for my mom and dad in the faceless crowd and failing to find them. I never panicked like the other girls on the stage; I watched our teacher at the front left corner of the stage and followed her movements. Hearing parents laugh at their smiling children, while others winced at their child scream-crying in a pile on the floor. I never once felt the urge to walk towards the edge of the stage, like so many other girls did. The front row waiting with extended arms. I loved the feeling of the barley underneath my feet from my very first time on stage, until there was nothing left to love.

I was extremely aware of my body at a very young age. To dance well is to dance perfectly. There is no room for an out-of-place finger or an un-pointed toe. Pull your shoulders back to show off your collar bone. “Engage your core” mistaken for “suck in your gut”. Push your heels together and your toes out for first position. Pretend you’re holding a beach ball above your head for fifth position. Hold them up strong but make them look soft. Keep your chin up. Eyes forward. Smile.

The only wall of the class room not lined in mirror was the back wall with barres bolted in at waist-height. During every ballet class we would stand beside and rest one hand on the barre, the other extended past our shoulder in second position. We’d go through sets of pliés and tendus with our eyes fixed on ourselves. We were taught to use the mirrors as a tool for improvement, to scour our reflections, searching for a crooked elbow or an unengaged core. I spent hours every week staring into those mirrors looking for any imperfection I could find. Even at home I couldn’t escape. Before showers I’d stand in front of the bathroom mirror, listening to the

water run while I combed my body for new stretch marks or ingrown hairs. Or stare into the magnifying mirror I used to do my makeup, squeezing every clogged pore or slightly inflamed blemish on my cheeks. Those damn mirrors.

As I got older, I got bigger. I was tall and awkward but I didn't have the skinny frame to match. I had inner thighs that were striped with stretch marks for as long as I could remember and my stomach poked out further than my chest. My ribs and hips were nestled in more flesh than skin. I blamed my parents for the way I looked a lot of the time. They were overweight and never let me or my brother forget it. Momma still says, "I just don't want you to end up like me". She never saw herself as beautiful as a bigger woman, and she still doesn't.

I stood out in group routines and I lived in the back row. I was okay with that. I enjoyed the act of dance itself more than I ever cared for the recognition that came along with it for so many others.

I began to resent the petite bodies surrounding me while being willing to do anything to have one of my own. The girls beside me didn't feel the prickly tears in their eyes when they tried on costumes or the lumps that form in the throat when they hear the word "fat". Most weeks I spent more time with these girls and my teachers than I did with my own family. I never allowed myself to fully open up or speak without being spoken to. I was afraid I was the fat girl. That my body took up so much space there was no room for any more of me. Even though I would condition, stretch, and run routines for hours several days a week, my thighs still jiggled and my gut still protruded from the rest of my body. I would pray every night to wake up smaller. Repentance for a flat stomach and toned arms. I would cry and beg God for just this one thing. Offering my life and devotion to wake up in a different body. I never woke up skinny. I don't pray anymore.

By the time I was thirteen, I had fallen victim to Pinterest. I would scour my feed for ab workouts and hidden gem diets and cleanses. Apple cider vinegar and planks became my best friends. This is also when I found less *conventional* solutions to my problem.

lather my stomach in lotion then wrap myself in layers of saran wrap nightly in an attempt to lose water weight. It was likely a women's health magazine that gave me this idea.

I started high school a year later and auditioned for my first school play. Hairspray. From my first day in class, I felt welcomed. My classmates were from different backgrounds. I was surrounded by bodies that looked like mine along with those that didn't. These people weren't all women, all white, all privileged. I learned more from them in a few months than I did in a decade from my friends at dance. My director was just as intense my dance teachers, but more forgiving and sensitive to the issues for students in a musical theater class at a public high school in rural Georgia. I didn't feel the same pit in my stomach walking into the classroom that I felt every time I stepped foot in the dance studio. I balanced the two for a bit, but I was finding a family in my theater troupe and becoming more frustrated with dance. The dance family my teachers tried so hard to create in the studio just wasn't for me. I felt the pitiful glances from the mothers and disappointment from the teachers. I had to choose.

I quit dance when I was fifteen at the end of my freshman year. I still miss it sometimes. I miss the bass vibrating the floors beneath my feet and the sweat dripping down my chest. I miss letting my head drop back and closing my eyes while I just felt the music. I miss the few friends I had who made me feel loved when I felt unworthy of it. I miss the rides home at night with momma, playing her my "emo" songs and laughing at her not-so-silent judgement. I miss that wonder I felt the first time I stood up in my tap shoes, reveling in the noise I created. Being afraid to fall. I miss feeling so cathartic, tears would fall to the ground before I could stop them. I miss the memories I made in those theaters and auditoriums. *I don't miss the mirrors.*

# Persephone's Nocturne

by Rachel Pittman

Meet me beneath the worm moon in the unholy garden where all rivers stand still. I'll hold your face up to the light, study each shadow as it falls

across your eyes. Let's build a tower as tall as Babel, to reach that graveyard above where celestial corpses keep watch. Or rather, let us dig. We'll carve

a spiral staircase that spins eternal, drill down into earth's crust: a corkscrew opening champagne. I'd sink with you down to the underworld, if this winter

would just stand still. Be still long enough to unravel me from fragrant tangles of milkweed and larkspur. Be still. Let me marvel at your hands, how they land

on my skin like a pair of Atlas moths. When your body begins to fade and turn translucent, when the earth swallows you again, leave me just one of your marble

wings. I will bury it here among the asters and watch the snow melt. Not a funeral, no: this is the sowing season. With the next harvest moon, I will follow you home.

Let me winter here in the valley of your arms. Let these starless nights stretch to eternity as long as I am buried in your bed. And when my gold hair silvers

grey, when the ghosts all whisper, See how she has aged, I know that  
you'll smile and say how you love this color, how you wish I could  
stay. Too soon, I'll watch

the frost melt in your obsidian eyes. Whispers of spring will creep in  
again, sticky green fingers digging into the earth's skin. The sun will  
summon me

back to the world above, to daffodils and dogwoods. Before I go, give  
me a pocketful of pomegranate seeds for the twilight journey. Give  
me that

compass spinning dizzy in your chest, seeking north where it does  
not exist. Promise me rubies and emeralds polished smooth by the  
Styx. Until autumn,

I leave you this gift: a robin caged in iron. If you let her fly, then she  
will drownour kingdom in song. Let her fly and trust that she will  
always come back home.

# prayer as a slumber party where me and god talk boys

by Emily Tracey

if his hands still crack red on the lines of his palms  
i will be justified in having read them too soon.  
eating the seeds that spilled out from his heart line,  
making a home in the cavities that remained,  
that boy was so pale his hands looked like a pomegranate split open.  
    and you dreamt he was dead mute,  
    nothing to say  
not that he ever has anything to say  
    but no will to say it, either.  
    just pretty lips and teeth like I poured veneer into a har-  
monica,  
    you couldn't even hear him breathing,  
    like if he made a sound it'd be screaming at a higher power  
and God bless that boy, he's afraid  
    of his afterlife, of his appetite, of you and your open  
mouth.

there's an urgency in love. love is in a hurry.  
love had no patience for the way the light looked on him,  
melting his skin into the same white of the sky behind him.  
love demanded the shape of his arms,  
    even though our thumbs come from nowhere and our  
fingers come from  
    there, too,  
    those bleeding pomegranate hands bleached by the sun  
until i couldn't see him at all.  
    you couldn't see yourself, either,  
    all wet in the eyes, dripping red at the corners,

all wet in the eyes, dripping red at the corners,  
so convinced it was stigmata when it was nothing more than  
a wound,  
so convinced the fruit in his hands was for me.  
    so religious when you want to redeem something, baby,  
    it's not a sin to be wrong.

if he still cracks red on the lines of his palms,  
i'll run my thumb down his heart line, where it forks at his middle  
finger, and i'll press his left hand against his right,  
    sticky still with the crushed seeds you left behind,  
    shit, girl, if you won't tell him you miss him then I will,  
and i'll make that boy pray.

# Q1

by Patricia Quinonez





# Queen of Carthage

by Rachel Pittman

when I die  
please  
repurpose my spine into a  
candle wick.  
Fuel for fire. This body  
has always been a thing  
to be consumed. So let me dance  
and burn throw embers up  
gold confetti into the sky,  
scatter sparks like fireflies.

And let my absence be  
a reminder that even the dead  
can give us light.

# Ribbit

by Dane Tillman

When all of this is over,  
I'm going to a soccer game.  
In the beer-piss haze, I'll shout with fury.  
The heavens will tremble.

When all of this is over,  
my friends and I will throw a terrifying party  
celebrating every muzzled accomplishment.  
After three days of nonstop riot,  
the moon will step down from her mantle  
and ask us to keep it down.

When all of this is over,  
I'm stealing you away for good this time.  
Our fingers will form a thousand constellations.  
Our footfalls will be famous across the gardens  
and museums  
and whatever fate that brought us together  
will beg for forgiveness  
for ever keeping us apart.

# rocks in the garbage disposal

by Emily Tracey

i believe my roommates when they tell me they didn't dump rocks down the sink,  
but the dishwasher runs  
and rocks come up the drain anyways,  
little swamp right in the kitchen.  
when people ask me what i write i say love poems  
because when i sit at my desk i write love poems,  
and when he's asleep in my lap i write love poems,  
and i did not put rocks in the sink but if i did i would have done it as a love poem,  
little swamp in the kitchen, little tragedy for the repairman.

i write a little love poem for the garbage disposal,  
its faithfulness, its betrayal, the way we only miss it when it's gone.  
i apologize to the garbage disposal in three acts, three stanzas, twenty-seven lines.

i think my roommates think i put rocks in the sink.  
they left me alone for thirty hours and came back to me crying in the kitchen,  
me doing exactly what i had said i wasn't doing again,  
me playing with his hair while he sleeps,  
forehead on my thigh, arm wrapped around my crossed legs.  
i turned the power to the kitchen off a hundred times, i scooped out all the rocks,  
i held them in my hands for at least an hour and asked them what i did wrong,  
asked them so nicely to stop coming back,  
but if i were the rocks i would become innumerable.  
i would make a home in the little swamp in the sink,  
i would break the garbage disposal and the dishwasher and the whole apartment for  
hurting me.

i write a little love poem for the rocks and i scoop them out until there is nothing left  
but a rattle,  
and i wonder if i've ever made that sound in someone else's chest.  
the garbage disposal works fine again. my roommates flip the switch to test it and we  
watch the water run clear into the sink,  
watch everything drain so fast,  
hear the one rock left behind fling herself at every corner.

# stillness, then, everything

by Annette Aguilar

*stop-stop-stop*

when was the last time borders touched?  
like a hand grazing someone's thigh under the dinner table  
bodies shaping, morphing,  
motion, and lots of grazing  
tides crashing on shore to shore  
dancing!  
then  
stillness

*cancelled-death-nothing*

the ocean wants to swallow itself whole  
there is the quiet again  
screaming so loud into a seashell  
only heard when pressed against the ear  
only heard if someone is listening  
oh no!  
is this what stillness is like?  
please  
go  
away

*news-quiet-sound*

it is better to sit with the window open  
let the bugs in  
buzzing, keeping something  
anything

to make it better  
a company in swarm  
to get away from it all

*resilience-continuation-frustration*  
across the ignored moss-coated bridge  
hovering over the still stream  
the stream becomes a lake  
and then an ocean  
and then the end  
no wonder it becomes so angry

ah! there it is again!  
the breeze  
a breath of fresh air!

Hope!

# Storm Radio

by William Miller

In the white, plastic bathtub,  
in the center of a brick house  
with stormproof windows,  
my aunt crouches like a frail soldier.

The veteran of black sky days,  
black then purple, the rope cloud  
twisting from heaven's killing floor,  
she knew the drill.

Her girl cousins filed first  
into the pit, boys next,  
until her grandmother lit a lantern  
that shined on earthworms

crawling in the dirt wall.  
No freight train was louder, more  
a freight train than the wind  
that crashed through barns,

hurled a rocking chair to the top  
of the tallest pine tree,  
knocked gravestones over...  
In the bathtub, she is five

and sixty-five, thinks about the war  
God wages against his people,  
against her, how she was taught

to curse everything but his name.

Her husband was killed in everyday action.

She never got a three-cornered flag,  
only her son's faint promise  
to call or write when he could.

The radio squawks watch, warning,  
almost the half second her house  
is dragged skyward, her hair  
pulled up by the black roots....

The battlefield was combed  
for pictures, one picture a family  
on the porch of a farmhouse unshaken,  
waving from home.



week's grocery bill for him was enough to bankrupt a small business. It took only a month for him to lose his home, his ox, and most of his flannel shirts. The edge of the road became his sole domain, and the occasional look of pity became his only sustenance.

They say he still sits there today. Still holding his sign, hoping for employment. His beard has grown long, they say. His flannel is ragged and his axe is nothing but a brown wedge. The hearty meat on his bones has withered so much, they say he looks as thin as one of the sapling trees newly planted in the forests he used to romp in. His good humor is gone. The once-boisterous giant has grown bitter with age and delirious with hunger. He rambles, endlessly like he used to, about the days of the frontier. "The world was bigger back then," he says. "Now? Now I can't walk anywhere."

He shrinks by the day. Little by little his back curls outward and his head hangs lower like a lamp fixture. His eyes grow dimmer like the end of a sunset, and his red-apple cheeks sag with mourn. Soon, they say, he may dwindle into no-one. Yet he waits, patient and dying for his chance to swing again, believing, perhaps hopelessly, that there would be a corner of the globe still open for giants.

# tell all truth but tell it slant

by Liam Foster



# The Harpist Spends Eternity Pondering Music Theory

by Rachel Pittman

I am the woman sitting  
beside the Acheron  
combing my corpse-hair  
with brittle finger bones  
my white dress, woven  
from spider webs, glitters  
with dew, dragonfly wings

the woman crouched  
beside the dirty river  
choked with empty  
coffins, broken violins.  
I dip my feet in the grey  
water where tiny crabs  
dart in the shallows,  
seeking scraps of living  
flesh, always hungry

I, the woman strumming  
my ribcage with a rock  
trying to make music  
scraping scars into bone  
poor imitation of song  
scarcely remembering

a woman I used to be,  
who plucked strings

on a gold instrument  
I cannot name, baptised  
crowds in holy melodies  
    a goddess I was or  
must have been, how men  
marveled to hear me play, how I

woman scrawling music notes  
in the ashes, under starless sky  
ashes still hot from volcanic rains  
woman scribbling harmonic scales  
in the dust until I conjure them  
I am the woman Hark!  
I hear: trembling chords ricochet  
inside my skull lovely dreadful  
    cacophony

like birdsong in the land  
of the dead

# The House on the Hill

by Caroline Beasley

Someone walks over my grave  
When I peer past grays  
Shit porches and ugly bricks

Hear you me: still  
At the house on the hill,  
The stars in daytime that  
Break pages and  
Pass lines (not so much in between)  
Almost touchable, tangible, real  
But it is! Listen,  
Stand in the driveway but  
Ignore yesterday's leftovers and, and?  
Don't you see it?

Cold coffee beside three eggs pans  
At 4:27 P.M.  
I'm searching for another warmth:  
The collective since my internal is failing  
And you need someone to laugh at  
Though the signs aren't welcoming

Balance yourself on the edge, here.  
Poisonous plant (I think it's dead)  
Pollute my dreams of a college suburbia even though I  
Bought you a broom  
That they never use so I  
Avoid the kitchen; I refuse

To enable my gag reflex consciously

Hungry for cinnamon tea and stupid humor  
Aunty Donna's for dinner  
Clown shoes, mismatched, unpaired  
Propped on falling cushions and a three-legged chair  
Dental floss (a bow on my finger)  
Christmas lights (slow burn)  
Simpsons or Seinfeld  
Ashes linger as we take turns on  
Musicians and politicians and an environmentalist but  
Missionaries flee from here

Welcome, dark,  
The highway's headlights are nothing  
Compared to their shining sky  
We're glad I'm here!  
You are the brightest building  
At 1:58 in the morning

Denver in the sky and the Ganges full of slime  
Boston is freezing but tell Catherine I say hi  
Don't cry, sweet Caroline,

Remember the tiny hands?  
Remember your freshman year cover band?  
Do you remember when I yelled at you for wearing our rival's shorts?  
You broke my heart, but you put it back together  
Two years later  
In the place of giggles and snorts  
Kitchen fires and spaghetti on the wall  
(Thank God my bathtub was never filled with goldfish)  
They are you and you are they  
Since forever, until this May.

# The Depths

by Alexa Pfeiffer



# Three Self-Portraits on Film from Other People's Cameras

by Emily Tracey

My hands on the base of his throat at eighteen, hair hanging over the top of the lens.

He was holding the camera in the space under my chin looking up at me, had me squint through the viewfinder while he clicked the button.

Blurry. Grainy. Criminally overexposed. Hills and valleys of skin, can't tell what, and my nails painted black the only real shape in the photo.

All we ever did was lay on his couch while he talked. I got so used to him through the sound of his voice that it caught me off guard when he bought that shitty camera.

The first thing he wanted on it was a picture of himself so he rolled me on top of him and put my hands on his chest and got what he wanted.

I remember kissing him under his jaw and telling him I wished he liked me and I remember him locking the door, one hand full of my hair the other holding my hipbone, saying

I know.

Eighteen. I was just a baby.

Me with a fishing pole at maybe six, probably five. Tiny bangs under a baseball cap.

Little vest and everything, my dad squatting beside me. Picture taken from inside the garage,

us standing just outside on the driveway baking in the sun. Concrete in Georgia.

I couldn't tell you now if we ever even went fishing, but I don't think it matters.

My dad with his full head of hair, curly as sin, and me with these little cargo shorts that cut right above bruised little knees. All teeth and red shoulders.



So small and getting bigger, so small in the back of the minivan.  
I used to stick my head out the window driving over the lake to try and see  
the eagle's nest on top of the bridge,  
and I never saw it but I always looked.

Me in the passenger seat of her car at nineteen. Shirt wet, hair wet. Hair  
bleached. Car moving.

Trees in the window stretched long horizontally, lake in the window black  
under the bridge.

We were swimming in the lake if you could call it swimming, mostly just  
stripping down to the bottom layers and laying in the dirt while the water  
threw itself at our upper arms and the sun chased it away again. I got water  
all on her car seat.

She took one polaroid driving home, red lens extension. I'm smiling so big.  
I have so many freckles. It's the first time I've been back in that town since I  
left for good

and the picture is small and the lighting is strange and I'm covered in lake  
water

but I'm smiling so big.

We laid in her hammock that night and she asked me if I thought we'd be  
friends in ten years. Last time I was at her house I saw it in her bedside  
drawer.

I said ten years is too many. We'll be so old by then.

# To That Place

by Alex Sausa

Honey drips off the crystal moon, as bright as an idea. It comes steady, in full, heavy drops, falling into our secret pool, gold glow refulgent on koi fins. Come in the cool water with me, let's sink to the sandy floor. Let's submerge ourselves in honey luminosity and ink-black water. Let's surround ourselves with paper fins, floating like translucent ribbons.

# To Wintertide

by Caela Gray

When sinuses ache without repose and  
Lungs feel more akin to sandpaper than  
Silk  
And outside is bleak, misting ice-kissed tears  
To step, barefoot, on sodden ground  
And sip in air almost too harsh  
To swallow  
Is to smell the  
Sea  
And to remember  
From whence we came.

# Untitled

by Andrew Elliot

In Life's sorrows  
There beauty be  
If only one  
Looks carefully

To see the Rose  
Despite its Thorn  
Or glimpse the Sun  
'Neath Clouds forlorn

Helps us suffer  
Catastrophe  
Assures us Hope  
Of Remedy

# Untitled

by Andrew Elliot

How fast the flower fades  
That once we did admire  
When Summer was at its fullest  
And we did not yet tire

Its leaves were green and tender  
And like an amethyst  
The blossom on its slender stalk  
Glimmered gently in the West

And all the while we extolled  
The virtues of our youth  
And gloried in the beauty of  
A self-deceiving "Truth"

That youth would last eternally  
Our strengths would ne'er grow dim  
But Time has proved inexorable  
And taken all of them

Spring has passed Summer as well  
Now it is Winter's turn  
To raise his scythe one final time  
And bring his Harvest home

# water

by Chelsea Cobb

when i die,  
place my ashes where the chesapeake bay  
meets the atlantic  
bury me in the sand where the beach towel  
laid when I was nine years old  
and i didn't care how my body looked  
in a two piece,  
when i die,  
spread my ashes on the corner of murphy drive,  
next to the neighborhood swimming pool,  
and there is a corner of bike skid marks,  
and flecks of brown skin where my blood  
spilled and jacob gonzalez stood over me,  
scanned my body, and said,  
your legs are hairy.  
and i cared how my body looked  
in a two piece.  
when i die,  
sprinkle my remains in the gutter  
so i could waste my own time  
that no longer weighs me.  
i could still hollow and thin,  
not worry if I am hollow  
or thin  
when i stream into rivers  
and flow into oceans just so i could  
wade in the chesapeake bay.  
make me the red sea,

only part when i command.  
the nile,  
the jordan,  
when i die,  
make sure that jacob gonzalez knows that i could drown him  
and be beautiful at the same time  
and when they ask me how i died, tell them  
i stepped into the water and finally  
learned to swim.

# Welcome Wagon

by Mikayla Tribble

The Policeman asked for my ID but shook His head when I reached for my wallet. He pointed; black gloves trained at both my heart and my tongue. I told Him *No, please it's all I have. I'll give anything else.* I started to rummage around, holding up old receipts and my half-finished cup of coffee in desperation. He continued to point, non-moving, non-caring. Slowly I reached and grabbed. My tongue was wet, slick with the words and wisdom of ancestry. My heart was sticky, still beating on love's drum. I handed them over, now silent and unfeeling. With my self in His hands, The Policeman finally cracked a smile. It still felt hollow and superficial. *Welcome to the land of the free,* he said, *Have a nice day now!* I drove away, not knowing what to say in replace of my native tongue. The Policeman watched me drive off, my ID reflected in the deep dread of His shades.



# What Will Happen

by Daniel Powell

The cool dry light in late September  
Ringing through the air in waves  
Descends through seafloor shadows  
Spreading up the branches of the trees  
Descends like knuckle-cracking Theseus  
Down into the dirt. The mist comes up.  
The blind world shimmers like a gong.  
One day I'll be dead and then  
Some time after that, if not  
before, You'll die too. It won't  
matter then What anybody said.

# when asked what i want to be

by Annette Aguilar

I WANT TO BECOME SO LIGHT SO LIGHT SO LIGHT  
the weight of my chest no longer crushing only heartbeats  
my hands carrying nothing! but the creases on my palms  
the strands of my hair countable, manageable, loveable  
my blood rushing inside only inside not from my skin  
the scars on my body healing into blots of pink fluff  
my thoughts let out, no longer caged, free to dream  
the twists and turns of my tongue calmed to quiet  
my legs only taking steps towards the goodness  
the hollowness under my eyes made full again  
my teeth no longer falling during my dreams  
the skin on my body turned the same shade  
my fingers dancing across surfaces of joy  
the slouch on my back straightening out  
my ears filled with the colors of voices  
the shape of my face made more even  
my toes tiptoeing over shooting stars  
the pains in my stomach sent to rest  
my fingernails growing out healthy  
the bruises i often received healed  
my body morphed into a cosmos  
the prancing of insecurity gone  
my arms extended to holiness  
the fear i hold on conquered  
my lethargy sent elsewhere  
the need of desire fulfilled  
my success turning anew

the anger i hold soothed  
my insomnia lullabied  
the strugglings tamed  
my tears: condensed  
the shouts silenced  
my villain moved  
the aching cured  
all my feelings  
becoming so  
light they  
become so  
so light s  
light so  
I be-  
come  
so  
light

# you can't stop worrying about the soil

by Emily Tracey

you swallow with the smoke a feeling you don't need to get used to.  
you can trace it down your limbs like they're power lines,  
follow it from joint (slope down and up again) to joint.  
you want a feeling to either last forever or be over and done,  
but it's always three hours. two months. couple weeks of this  
and you'll have to chase it through the long grass again,  
little strip of clearing in the woods behind her house.

it's never an *if he liked me more he wouldn't be mean to me,*  
*but an if he liked me more he would feel worse about it afterward.*  
they clear the woods in long strips where the power lines run  
so that staring it down straight on it looks like  
a gap in your teeth, one girl one fence and one cigarette stuck in between,  
and if he liked me more i think he'd floss.  
one environmental science course and all i ever talk about is rill erosion,  
rill being the hurt, hurt being that cracked dirt that can't hold onto anything anymore.  
*(even the roots?)* what used to reach down into her;  
*(even the water?)* what used to seep into her very being,  
erosion being the bare stomach stretch marks of the earth when she finally rolls over  
and stays down.



# Contributor Biographies

**Alexa Pfeiffer** is a third-year Landscape Architecture student whose goals include filling an entire sketchbook, encouraging others to love nature and take care of the environment, and not forgetting their cup of tea before it gets cold.

**Andrew Elliot** is a recent graduate of the University of Georgia who currently lives in Franklin, TN. In a bid to escape his job in clinical research, he reads and writes and thinks of other careers he could pursue.

**Meredith Eget** is a second year English and Spanish student at UGA. She loves curated playlists, cats that resemble loaves of bread, and subtitles under everything.

**Annette Aguilar** is a fourth-year Chicana at UGA graduating in May with a B.A. in International Affairs and a minor in English. Please don't ask what she's doing after graduation. Her writing is based heavily on love, nature, movement, Mexican thoughts, repetition, and more love. Go check out her blog ([aneterz.wordpress.com](http://aneterz.wordpress.com)).

**Trudi Sundberg** is a second year student at UGA studying English and Psychology in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, she is pursuing a certificate in Legal Studies through the Terry College of Business. She is a member of University Judiciary and serves on the executive board of Camp Kesem.

**Mikayla Tribble** is a third-year at UGA, majoring in English and minoring in African American Studies. Besides writing, she enjoys snacking, reading comics, talking about fairy tales, and watching bad tv.

**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.

**Daniel Powell** is a poet and an undergraduate Cognitive Science student in his final year at the University of Georgia.

**Caela Gray** is fourth year senior studying French, Global Studies, and Digital New Media at the University of Georgia. She is an entrepreneur, storyteller, and passionate advocate for always nurturing a curious perspective of the world. You can usually find her enjoying a cappuccino at a café and planning her next adventure.

**Bertie Preston** is a sophomore studying English at the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, who can also squirt milk out of her left eye when prompted.

**Alex Sausa** is a poet from Marietta, Georgia. She is a third-year senior at the University of Georgia majoring in English. Her work currently explores themes related to oppression, gender, sexuality, and surrealism.

**Liam Foster** is a third year English major with a minor in Spanish.

**Sunny Hakemy** is a Marketing Major & anthropology minor

**Marshall Reed** is a senior English major at the University of Georgia.

**William Miller's** most recent collection of poetry, *LEE CIRCLE*, was published by Shanti Arts Press in 2019. His poems have most recently appeared in *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Flint Hills Review*, *The Santa Clara Review*, *Crossways* and *Dappled Things*. He lives and writes in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

**Chelsea Cobb** is currently an English Ph.D. student in UGA's Creative Writing Program. She holds a BA in English with a concentration in Creative Writing from Georgia College and State University, and a Master's in Theological Studies from Emory University. Her editorial work appears in GCSU's literary magazine, *The Peacock's Feet*. Additionally, she was awarded the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award in First Place for her short story, *In Memoriam*. At UGA, she is a graduate teaching assistant where she teaches First-Year Writing and Intro to Creative Writing. She also is a lab consultant in the Digital Learning Lab.

**Emory Grace Doster** is a chronically indecisive prodigal Athenian pursuing an undergraduate degree in English and Creative Writing at the University of Georgia. When she isn't indulging her fierce determination to write (poetry and prose alike), she may be found stress-baking, knitting, walking, making coffee, reading Keats, and staring out of windows.

**Karson Corbitt** is a third-year English major in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. Hailing from rural Georgia, she has an affinity for Southern writers and topics and how they fit into the world of literature. When she's not working on her studies, she can be found deep diving into true crime cases or bullet journaling.

**Jason Hawkins** is a freshman at the University of Georgia studying English and Management Information Systems. He has been passionate about literature and writing since he was a child and hopes to grow as a writer in years to come. He is from Macon, Georgia.

**Kishan Patel** is a third-year undergraduate student with a Political Science and English double major. He is in the School of Public and International Affairs and the Franklin College of Art and Science. Kishan writes poetry about mental health and growing up as a second-generation Indian American in the Southeast.



**Tabitha Clara** is a graduating fourth-year studying Theatre and English. Their work centers on the cultivation of creative ecosystems.

**Madison Dye** is a senior graduating from the University of Georgia with a degree in English and Public Relations.

**Chris Carringer** is a third year International Affairs and Romance Language major from Toccoa, GA. He's in love, probably.

**Caroline Beasley** is a senior at the University of Georgia, studying English. Her guilty pleasures are as follows: honey (on everything), "Scott Pilgrim vs the World", squishmallows, pink eyeshadow, and gluten-free brownies.

**Tim Suermondt's** sixth full-length book of poems "A Doughnut And The Great Beauty Of The World" will be forthcoming from MadHat Press in 2021. He has published in Poetry, Ploughshares, Prairie Schooner, The Georgia Review, Bellevue Literary Review, Stand Magazine, december magazine, On the Seawall, Poet Lore and Plume, among many others. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.

**Rachel Pittman** is an MFA candidate at McNeese State University. Originally from Americus, Georgia, she currently lives in Louisiana. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Creative Writing and English from Georgia Southern University. Her stories and poems have appeared in Gravel, Helix, Gingerbread House, and Miscellany.

**Grey Gregory** is a student at the University of Georgia studying Communications and Religion. He loves the mountains, old songs, sunrises, and various forms of bread. He was born and raised in Blue Ridge, Georgia, at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

**Marguerite Doyle** graduated from Dublin City University in 2020 with an M.A. in Creative Writing. She received a Special Mention for her entry to the Desmond O’Grady 2020 International Poetry Prize. Among others, Marguerite has been published in *Vallum: Contemporary Poetry*, *Vita Brevis* (Editor’s Choice Award), *The New Welsh Review’s New Welsh Reader*, *Reliquiae Journal*, and *Rue Scribe*. Marguerite’s poem ‘The Sawmill’ was chosen by the editors for inclusion in *The Ireland Chair of Poetry Special Commemorative Anthology Hold Open the Door*, published to mark the 25th anniversary of Seamus Heaney’s being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. It is published by University College Dublin (UCD) Press.

# Staff Biographies

**Dane Tillman** is a senior from Valdosta, GA studying English and philosophy. He's a thief and a shitkicker, and... he'd like to be famous.

**Clarissa Bond** is a third-year student 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** is a junior at the University of Georgia majoring in English with a creative writing emphasis and minoring in Criminal Justice Studies. He writes just about any genre, but his passion lies with stories rooted in psychological horror and surrealism. He also loves Athens' music scene.

**Claudia Butler** is a second-year Political Science and English double major. In addition to Stillpoint, she is involved in Delta Delta Delta sorority, UGA Foodzkids, and Young Democrats at UGA. She enjoys reading, writing, baking, practicing yoga, and indoor cycling.

**Alex Coats** is a second-year Math and maybe English major who refuses to make decisions. His favorite works include song lyrics, Merriam Webster's Twitter presence, and erasures, but only whenever the spaghettiios have been spooned carefully onto the page.

**Gale Evans** is a sophomore double major in English and Comparative Literature. At heart, they are the stereotypical English student who will talk your ear off about Shakespeare and makes the professor put a maximum page count on essays. In their spare time they like to write sappy, lowercase love poems, knit, and try to keep their houseplants alive.

**Anna Goellner** is a second year student from Cumming, GA, studying English with a minor in religion. She loves poetry and modernist fiction, holding an affinity for Sylvia Plath and Flannery O'Connor.

**Jessica Green** is a second year English major, minoring in Leadership in Student Affairs. Her deepest passions include analyzing the world through an excessively queer lens, traveling the state of Georgia to watch future Georgia Senator Jon Ossoff speak, and forcing everyone she meets to experience the cinematic masterpiece that is *Tag* (2015) directed by Sion Sono (not to be confused with the 2018 film starring Jeremy Renner).

**Andrea Gutierrez** is a second-year Journalism student from Savannah, GA. She enjoys proofreading, iced coffee, and sports podcasts.

**Isabel Hutchinson** is a second year English major with an unexplainable affliction for all things Joan Didion and Adrienne Rich. After college, she hopes to work in publishing, go on long sunny walks holding delicious lattes, and watch a lot of sunsets.

**Celeste Kazani** is a third-year English major with minors in Sociology and Transnational European Studies. She loves 19th-century literature and listens to way too much Bob Dylan.

**Rainey McBride** is a fourth-year English major from Dallas, TX. She has no idea what she wants to do after college but finds joy in writing and feels like that could be a good start.

**Quillen McKinney** is a second year English major with a passion for classic literature and film. She runs her own small photography business and enjoys art, fashion, music, and coffee.

**Will Lefforge** is a third year studying English with an emphasis in creative writing. His peers would describe him as an okay dresser and a bad driver.

**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.

**Jacqueline Reynolds** is a senior journalism major at the University of Georgia with a certificate in Interdisciplinary Writing. She attended the Juniper Institute for Young Writers in 2016 and the Aspen Summer Words writers conference in 2020. Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, Jacqueline currently lives in Athens, Georgia where she is the Opinion Editor for *The Red And Black* and a staff editor for *Stillpoint Literary Magazine*. Curious, conscious and creative, Jacqueline is an adventurer and a storyteller.

**Sam Thompson** is a first-year English major from Roswell, GA who drinks too much coffee and loves everything Jane Austen. She also enjoys crazy roller coasters, movie nights with popcorn, Pinterest, and playing wiffle ball.

**Henry Tollett** is a 3rd year English and Theater student who comes from the middle of nowhere. He once wrote a terrible play about Watergate.

**Emily Tracy** is a third-year student studying English and Linguistics at the University of Georgia. She loves books, coffee, and writing bad love poems.

**Savannah Jane Williams** is a second-year double majoring in linguistics and cognitive science. She enjoys discovering new music and is constantly in search of the best place to read outside, so if you find a good one let her know.

# About *Stillpoint*

*Stillpoint Literary Magazine* has served as a forum for undergraduate writers and artists at the University of Georgia since 1967. The pieces featured in the 2020 issue of *Stillpoint* were selected from a pool of blind submissions. Names were omitted during review, and staff members did not judge their own work. This issue was arranged by the Design Editor using Abode InDesign CC in iOS. The type is set in Didot, Palatino, Minion Pro, and Avenir Next from Adobe Typekit.

## Acknowledgments

*Stillpoint* would like to thank the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, the English Department, the Creative Writing Program, and Bulldog Print + Design. This issue was created with generous support from Dr. Hugh Ruppensburg and the Ruppensburg *Stillpoint* Literary Magazine Endowment Fund.

We would like to extend a special thank you to our faculty advisors Christine Lasek-White and Dr. Magdalena Zurawski.

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

