

Stillpoint Literary
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Masthead

Anna Goellner

Senior Editor-in-Chief

Rachel Warner

Arts & Design Editor

Summer Porter

Submissions Editor

Isabel Davis

Arts & Design Editor-in-Training

Anika Echampati

Submissions Chair

Hwain Mun

Website Chair

Ayanna Daija Funmilayo Lonon

Young Dawg Intern

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Bridget Blanchard

Whitney Bramlett

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Ezi Ononuju

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Emma Rasmussen

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Hannah Rieder

Zara Saberi

Russell Spearman

Nicole Spektor

Dalton Sweezy

Mann Chung Hak Sy Tha

Arya Telang

Samantha Thompson

Jana Wrenn

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To the Reader:

To the Reader –

We are no strangers to change these days. Everything around us, from our surroundings to friends and family to daily routines, is subject to change. Growing up, I used to think change was frightening; something that would ruin the good things I had within my grasp. I would hold on to the things I knew out of comfort and familiarity, finding safety in the known. As I began to age and experience life outside of the walls of my childhood bedroom, I found that despite the uncertainty that came crashing in with change, there was always something wonderful that weaved it all together. I saw it in the changing of seasons – nature’s steady way of teaching us that things die, regrow, and never stay the same, but something good will always return.

In the change of the seasons, there is an assurance that spring will blossom, the sun will rise, and goodness will come and surprise us with its blessings. Darkness will always shy away from the light. Trees will lose their leaves and grow them back again – the endless cycle of bright reds and oranges, to forests of sticks, to green buds and lush warmth. There is beauty to be found in change, a wonderful uniqueness in the differing phases life brings us through.

In this edition of Stillpoint, we have chosen to organize the flow of submissions through a seasonal change of its own. It is my hope that through the outstanding poems, short stories, and art from the University of Georgia’s students, you are able to reflect on the beauty of change within your own life. Literature is something that continues to unite us – that is a constant we can always hold on to!

It my great honor to present to you the 54th edition of Stillpoint Literary Magazine!
Enjoy, and happy reading!



Anna Goellner
Editor-in-Chief

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Part 1

summer

Summer

Fiery-hot passionate love, raging like wildfire and the heat of one-thousand suns

Prominent hues of gold, orange, and pink like the most magnificent sunsets

Picture perfect paintings of evening skies hand-painted by the two of us

A utopian islandic paradise of lavish allegiance; we pledged every individual piece of ourselves to each other.

Sandcastles constructed of reasons why we were absolutely perfect for each other, every single grain of sand holding a million possibilities for our future.

You the moon and I the sun, we were figures of grandeur, nobility, and royalty; infinitely reigning over our custom-crafted palace of prosperity and perfection.

Immersed in the oceans of adoration, I still managed to keep my head above the water.

We never drowned in the abyss of infatuation and lust; we were both our own anchors and buoyancy devices that kept each other afloat, even amidst the summer storms that wrecked our sea every so often

Frolicking through vast fields of strawberries that stretched beyond as far as the eye can see

The midsummer harvest bearing seemingly endless amounts of sweet fruit

The vibrant berries glimmering with mother nature's kiss of dew in the sunlight, emanating an aura of cultivation and freshness

The air crisp and cool before the sun's luminous haze of warmth engulfed it

Heatwaves beginning to melt the scenery and blurring the clover greens of the grass and the trees with the azure blue of the vacant sky

Blending together aspects of one another to produce a smooth turquoise, just as how we meshed our personalities together as one

Little did I know, the exuberant earth tones that we had once created would regress to a desert of destruction

The dog days were over

– the four seasons (Shelby Williams)

Desert Shores, CA



by King Smith

airports in the afternoon

by Dalton Sweezy

"I've heard an old westerly breathes of peace"
said those who've shed shoes for dirt with
their eyes tied tight with sure.

They spoke of it as searching for us, it just wasn't sure of
who us were.

Caught up on an answer we couldn't adhere
you and I alike in this transitory trance.

Golden chains eloping with diamond eyes
worshipping an airport at 2 in the afternoon,
or maybe the fluorescent findings of a flashlight in the

sky. ***

Somewhere off I'm told of a westerly that lies all alone
while I scoff at the mystics and their magic tricks.

I'm on an island all drenched in weekday sun, I'm just not
sure of which one.

Figured I should call and see how you are today
but I've forgotten the numbers that mean home
and now whose really all alone?

I'll tell you now my stomach starts to twist
and I realize that all I've said to this point
didn't account for all of this.

Lost like the westerly east does run, I'm on back to the
airport at 2.

not looking for peace
not searching for truth
just sifting like the breathless wind
for a forgotten piece of you.

Andromeda

by Riya Sachdeva

Chained to this rock, I watch the skies again,
Following the dance of Andromeda,
Finally free, regal and powerful,
Away from the sea that would've swallowed her, and the
earthly wars.

But the princess brandishing a galaxy in her palms,
Poised to defend herself from men and monsters,
Owes her freedom to knowledge,
Who placed her in the sky out of spite.

Trapped not only in the sea but by her mother's words
From an obsession with beauty, dimming her light.
Did she resign? Or wait for her savior?
Did she lie limp or thrash in her chains?

Did she scream at Cassiopeia and Cephus?
What did she say to Perseus when he unchained her from the
stone?
Was she grateful? Bitter? Smitten?
The sky doesn't answer, serene and obscure.

Ironic then,
How the sea is most beautiful as it reflects the stars.
Ironic then,
How Andromeda and I still have to escape
After a thousand years.

Ashes Are Falling Onto Grass

by Trey Arnold

Catfish glowing golden
from a paper towel calling,
and its welcomingly warm
cornmeal popping off it
like a log crying music in a fire

it looks so good,
and I want it, momma
please with some hot sauce
and for free, like I'm a child
and adult worries have none

I think about your cooking
all the damn time and not
only cause it was good,
but now because I can feel
myself binding like dough
and stewing, gushing steam
on the fan, saying something—
is happening here to this that is
yet uncooked

for it is becoming something
and I did all I could and
cast in all my spices to make
it worth a damn.

Candy Jar

by Eve Heslin

I can see you chewing on my heart
You're not trying to hide it
One of my veins is caught between your teeth
and my blood trickles down your chin like ice cream in
mid-July

Your fists clench at your side
I watch your eyes sharpen like a blade on a stone
You say you're not angry
but your words drip violence

Fire leaks from your ears
suffocating us
and all of a sudden

You appear like a child, kneeling on the floor
The glass candy jar from the kitchen cabinet
Toppled over in haste
Incriminating yourself with blue teeth and tongue
and cut up hands
Harboring cruel intentions and a bitter taste

Capri Sun

by Anna Goellner

when i was small
i ran from what i feared
shame bubbled into desire
and back again.

my eyes corroded
with glaring television screens
and crumpled capri sun packets.

i'd
never
be
like
them.

pink failures
and yellow tears
pissing on my dreams of tomorrow.

virginal fantasies
of one day
amounting to something.

i followed the rules
and they followed me home.

look
away
from
my
youthful
innocence.

are
you
proud
of
me
yet?

Cherry

by Kaya Groff

Sit in the sun
Cracking split skin
Watching blood run
Red, sticky, and thin

Call your mother
Try and explain the stain
Crimson through the fur
With calmness you'll feign

And at your age
You can never understand
Your mother's rage
Or your dad's shaking hand

And the blood on the carpet
Remains awful and red
And the blood on the carpet
Is always cherry red

So sit in the sun;
Burning reminder
Of all you have done,
Of your Mother and Father.

doorway



by Anna Goellner

Flightless Birds

by Kaya Groff

I love the same way that
The broken wing'd bird
Fights to escape traffic.
I love as though with
2 wounded wings
Under the gray swallowing sky
I love in the same way
That destined to die
Child of God
Beats its torn wings -
Furiously and futilely -
In the face of oncoming traffic.
I love from the edge of the road.

I took the long way home from the dentist's office.
I saw the hysteric bird just to the left of the
White Lines, which demarcated the length
Of time until that poor flightless bird died.
I thought it was a merciful act,

To save a desperate bird.
Be solace for the desperate,
Salvation amid the doomed asphalt.
Swerve, hard, left, and bring it
to death's open, hungry, waiting hands.
It was quiet in the car then.
She probably died, or is dying now,
In the frosted grass on her belly.
Now, growing colder and stiffer still,
With half her body crushed like a tin can.
Wasted, on the side of the road.

Fruit Poem

by Jason Hawkins

I lost a watermelon sprout when I was a child,
And, not understanding how things grow,
I thought I could just wait and find the fruit all
Swollen and green in my backyard, as if never lost.
But now I know that it died and that Kore buried it
In the dark soil, amid the corpses of weeds and
Beetles. The rain raged on. The sun was merciless.
Either too dry or too wet, things were always slipping
Or cracking or dying or molding, finding excuses to fall
Apart. It was the way of the house—of all homes.

I never quite did learn how things grow, and I
Now I find a bite-sized hole in my apple body
Where I feel that something essential should be.
The backdoor ripens in the summer and traps me
Inside, makes me look through the window at
How the garden snake avoids the mower but
The dandelion accepts decapitation. It was just living—
Just trying to grow a little—and we took away its green.
I think things grow by dying and die by growing. They
Fall apart: fall into and out of the places they call home.

I was deaf to the sound of things falling apart. Our Earth
Is green, red, brown, bending its bough. Too dry and too wet,
It waits for the day we all die and it can drop into space at last,
Laying itself among all the other withered bodies.

Lamentations From Behind the Kudzu

by Trey Arnold

This land is always altered,
Always jagged from a human
touch that doesn't know the trick
Grasses too long pruned, this
endemic sadness, this perpetual
reconstruction
and the forgotten not knowing
of their growing obsolescence like an
old, sun-yellowed
cotton shirt whose closet-stay
given way to the unrelenting moths

And it withers, and it withers,
and I rage after it like natural
things do not do this and
am I not also natural?

Weight is bearing down on the air
above this storied land who has
no sons to claim it, they are saying

There is nothing for me here,
I cannot be seen here, all
horrors bleeding into clay
have turned my hands an uncomfortable
red and I cannot do it, I can't

They are too afraid.

Claim it, claim it, claim it all,
say we have done—we have done it
and we stained this clay horrific red
so our cotton failed forgetting
atrocities in its name —

This solemn, necessary war against
a cause so lost and strangled deep
in kudzu that it grows a sickly green

It's deep so it must be mine

The Drunken Urban Dream



by John Idell

midnight mania

by Sam Yi

90

on the highway.
tap dance on the median.
breathe down the back bumper
of the car before you. check your
mirrors. stomp on the gas. play
with the ac. blast some metal and
do your best death metal growl.
miss your exit. (oops!) now do it
again. imitate your favorite
character. strike some
poses! cut off that
cadillac.
promise yourself
that you'll finish that
story when you get home.
monologue about the meds
you threw out. dig your nails
into the steering wheel. grit your
teeth and shake like a rabid dog.
curse at the sky like you're in a
greek tragedy. how about you
check your mirrors? 60 going
local now. pull into a
drive-thru.
swerve,
hit the
curb.
tell the

drive-thru
worker all about
how excited you are to
spend all of your family's hard-
earned money on junk food and
how you're gonna eat 'til you vomit
even though *throwing up blows*
and the last thing you wanna
do is make your mama sad
but you dunno
what to do
now
since you
haven't eaten
in, like, two days
so why not, right? tell
them how much you hate
money and how you hate the
world under capitalism and how
you and your friends keep joking
about *creating a commune in*
the woods but don't worry,
we're completely
normal,
and
no,
it's not a
fucking cult.
get (rudely!) told to
leave. run three reds in a
row. squish a squirrel, scream.
skip this song and that one too.

recite a stand-up set. pray to god
that this high never ends. pray to
god for one more minute of sleep.
pull over and puke. lie on the side
of the road for a little. become a
bug. did you check your
Mirrors?

Night Moon

by Ainsley Cole

Hey night bird, come and fly with me
Up into the sky where the stars are free
Down on the ground, it's too hard to breathe
But I think I'd feel better up above the trees

Hey night fish, come and swim with me
Let the waves carry us into the sea
Standing on the sand is too hard on my feet
And I've got a lot of friends that I'd like to meet

Hey night wolf, come and run with me
There's still a lot of hills that I'd like to see
The light show from my window doesn't look as pretty
I'd rather howl at the moon than stay in the city

Oh, I feel so free when the world is so quiet
When everyone's asleep, I can let go of hiding
So night moon, take me higher or lower, or wherever you please
Free me of my skin, and show me something bigger than me

Spin me in the wind, and show me rain worth pouring
And grow my arms their own wings and show me skies worth souring
And take my heart's broken strings, and play me music worth a listen
And take all of the world's evil things and make them angel kisses

Show me waves worth their roaring
And rivers and caves worth exploring
Show me snowcaps worth their freezing
Paint me a beautiful map of tales worth believing

I want to see what lies beneath the earth
And what happens to me after the hearse
Tell me where souls go before their births
And if it's too late for those there under prison's curse

Oh, man on the moon, tell me you'll be here soon
I could run out in the sun, but it burns at noon
I would rather let the day set than watch it rise
When I stare out at the stars, I don't have to cover my eyes

I'll build a fire out of sticks
Let go of my walls made of bricks
Let my lungs breathe nice and slow
If you never rest, then you will never grow

I'll make friends with the crickets
We'll lose track of the minutes
And if the wind sings me lullabies
I might just close my eyes

ode to woman stars

by Olivia Graham

circled by pine trees, feet on protected lands, we look up at
the Stars. They are national treasures too.
Their beauty, drawn by our anticipation;
shuffling lines entering stadiums. acoustic bowls
waving iconic pitches astronomically high.
true-born extra-vocal pop athletes
attain distance, celebrity. vanity halos enshrine
Their refraining personas, bleached bright
like plastic sequins encased in wig glue.
 bangers dwindle, heard
 in decades of glittering shower steam,
 where Divas become real solo artists
circled by arena seats, praise-blown diva heads unveil
human talent.

On Foxes and Freeways

by Caroline Osborn

Street-side saint

Sickly, sticky with sanguine slick
Smear'd stains, skin sinking to show
Skull to sacrum, scapula and sternum
A sacrifice to the spin of wheels

V. vulpes

Vulcanic in your spattered spray
With valves and veins in spread array

Rivulets that drip and sing
To vultures, wine in hand— or wing

Matted fur and rotting flesh that fold into the field and
thresh
A golden blanket wraps and swaddles around the rusty
crimson puddles

Cicada song and katydid cry
The world rings out and drives on by

In rhyming couplets red and roan
On teeth and claws and flesh and bone

And in your desiccating dance among the fungal growth
and plants
The viscera ebbs and flows in trance through undergrowth
and hills of ants

The coyote weeps, the eagles screech, the jackal's baleful
moaning creaks
The game-bird cheers, the rabbit jeers, the squirrels all cry
their joyful tears

There is not a sound you hear— of friend or foe or pain or
fear

No daring escape, no cunning trick
I hope the break was clean and quick

And there you rest on rain-slick tar
Outrun, outfoxed, under a car

Orthodox Paradox

by Ainsley Cole

I love how saturated the trees look when it rains
Their roots cling to dirt as they thrash back and forth; their bark
is stained
With wet beatings and painted bullets. I wonder if they feel pain
But at least my windows look a little less plain

I marvel at the sparks reviving the dead's storm with light
I wonder what it kills out of my sight
I bask in the sun, and I forget that it burns
I hear songs from the ocean, and I forget what I've learned

Stingers are so malicious until the bees are dying
Mirrors are so beautiful until they are crying
Your lips are so pretty when they sit there in silence
Nobody wants to see the storm that's behind it

Death is so cruel until it grows up and needs things
Screaming is only okay if it looks like you are singing
I've never understood what makes sitting still so appealing
If you share a similar soul you may find this more healing

I loved my painted lips until they were smudged by a trespasser
I loved the beginning until I couldn't find the answer
I loved you until you put my fear to shame
So now that it's done, how does anyone know who to blame?

Saturday Morning

by Jamie Dicello

a paper airplane
folded crisply and confidently.
board games left strewn about on
the floor below us.
You always told me that sitting on
the floor for too long hurt your back.
a book left unattended,
coffee sitting next to it on the table
cooling ever so slowly.

Our favorite cartoons,
fading into background noise
as I slowly drift off to sleep at your side.
Our old couch cushions,
flattened by the weekly weight of us.
Our spot.
technicolor wonderments fill my vision
as your warmth cradles me.
I always felt safest here.

Memories from long ago,
but looked back on with a soft-hearted
fondness that I shall never be without.

shedding the skin of a forgone conclusion

by Dalton Sweezy

it was so confusing to see the sleeves of my skin
The wrinkled colors of offended conclusion
It's disinterested wariness of time gone south
Where the sunburns smoked cigarettes
To lament the heat of cemented timestamps

And then I thought of that coastal town's blurry beach
Back when the waves seemed to curse at my
Cynical misunderstandings of what it was all about
Announcing themselves proudly to the shorelines' deafened ears
Oblivious to myself and my lone companion's ramblings

I wasn't afraid of eternity then
The waves came and went like a 3-day vacation
And I could tell by her nostalgic smile
That she knew we weren't coming back again

Now it seems I've shed the sleeves of that skin
It was so many years ago that I'd forgotten it hadn't end
I guess all tomorrows define change as sharp and gradual
Like the flipbook sunset as it flickers as quickly or slowly
As the beholder decides to thumb its pages

In the end, aging is a choice made by secret reflections
Lonely suicide notes lie upon lipless self-portraits
You have to kill yourself to start again
And that's why today I cut the sleeves of my skin
Until I bled out all over the summer cement

Just to know exactly what I meant
When I left that blurry beach and
Murdered my nostalgia-sick friend

Maternity

by Sophie Belnap

Nobody asked you to be a mother
and yet here you are
waking up early to do the
dishes,
that you yourself dirtied cooking,
in a desperate attempt to
nourish some sad body.

And like a true mother
you must carry the weight
of your children's choices,
as if they are a reflection of you.
Their rebellion is a
scorn,
after all you have done.

You're swallowing as
much hurt as you can,
an antacid for
all the pain that
is ladled out to
children everywhere.

What they don't tell you
about being a mother
is the futility of it,
the endless striving
against entropy and
your own fragile
humanness,
how this is a fight
that you will always be
just barely losing.

The Stranger Danger Game

by Liana Jordan

We used to play this game
on long car rides to the beach
about men in white vans
with free candy and lost puppies.

What do you say?
with naïve excitement we'd yell back
adults ask adults for help, not kids!

We won the game
we thought.
My kids are safe
she thought.

But the dangers of the world are not confined
to slides and swing sets and shopping mall racks.
They lurk beside your nightstand
and hide at your dining room table.

And when someone
who is not a stranger at all
hurts you in a way
that a stranger never could
you wonder why
you never learned
how to play
this game.

The Weeping Willow

by Jana Wrenn

There's a sparkling pond in the meadow
that's fed by a bubbling stream.

 I laid in my boat
 and I set it afloat
and I drifted away, in a dream.

A willow hunched over the streamside,
her laments I could just barely hear,

 I watched her leaves flutter
 right down to the water
and cross the pond's face like a tear.

The pink clouds provoked me to wonder,
as beneath me the waves gently lilted:

 what could lead an old tree
 who's both grounded and free,
to weep 'til her leaves have all wilted?

A zephyr brought realisation
and stirred from her branches a groan--

 she's no friend or flower
 to brighten her bower,
she's stuck to her spot, all alone.

Now I visit my old friend the willow,
and join in her quiet despair,

 at dissonant peace
 as we wait for release,
and silently long to be elsewhere.

Tiamat lives at the bottom of the ocean

by Rin Greco

I, Eve, sit under a tree, close to the shore, listening to the waves lap at the sand.

Sunlight through the overstory dapples my bare skin and I can feel the rough bark against my spine. Detritus and salt mingle in the air and hang in the back of my nostrils.

I was born from rib and dust mere days ago and I am in the truest state of innocence I will ever be. I haven't known pain but because I have never known it. I live a sheltered life, one of lethargic bliss and pleasant emptiness. I have no idea the paradise I am living in.

A hiss and a rattle echo through the trees, atop the shh-shh of the waves. This is a sound that will strike fear and make all my sons and daughters wary; but I don't yet know enough to be afraid. I open my eyes and smile. I wait for the creature to make itself known.

Over a tree root and through the dead leaves, a black rope with eyes and a smirk sinuates towards me. I hold out my hand and let it coil around my arm, the rough, dry scales scraping against my skin.

Serpent is pleasant and new, an odd creature. Alluring and impressive, there is a sharpness in its eye that I lack in my own.

“Has God not said that you shall eat from all trees in the garden?”

I smile, delighted. Serpent talks.

“I can eat from all trees save for the one I sit under now. I am not to eat from it, or I shall die,” I answer.

“You will not surely die,” says Serpent. “Do you see not this blade in my gaze? Do you not see that my tongue is of silver and my eyes of diamond? I see. I know. I taste.”

This all sounds tempting enough. For I too want to see, to know, to taste. For I am asleep, but Serpent is awake.

I stand and reach above my head to a branch laden with fruit, red and firm. I pluck one and the leaves shake as the branch snaps back into place. I bring the fruit to my lips and my teeth break the crisp skin and pierce the soft center. Honey bleeds onto my tongue and drips from the corners of my mouth, down my neck, over my chest.

My eyes are wide and unblinking. I see, I know. I taste.

I am aware, I am awake.

I am conscious. I have choice. I have pain and I have joy. I have sweet and sour, bitter and salty. I have high and low. I have white, black, and grey. I have a thousand colors, amaranth and peacock, emerald and ruby, saffron and amber.

I know everything all at once and it is daunting and exhilarating. Knowledge comes to me instantly, a close-knit fabric of millions upon millions threads of, a forbidden tapestry.

This tree is God's greatest gift but why has he withheld it?

Somehow, I think he wanted me to take this bite, I think he knew that I would. He placed this tree here, as it is now, with its fruit. Perhaps, the bite itself is inevitable, a point in history predetermined and planned.

If this is the fall, then I do not want to get back up.

My heart is threshing, and I begin to dance through the forest, towards the sea, feet stomping and hands clapping. The fruit falls from my grasp and rolls towards the trunk of the tree, bumping against the wood. Serpent is gone but I do not notice.

The sky above my head grows dark and the wind turns cold. Lightning white and hot cracks against the sky. I know now to be afraid. The euphoria has not faded, and I dance still. The earth beneath my feet rumbles and it is from my footsteps and something deeper, ancient.

The ocean splits and from the depths an arm of obsidian scales and basalt claws breaks the surface, reaching forward and anchoring itself onto the sand. Using her claw as leverage, Tiamat pulls herself from the deep and the waves that crash against the shore are tall, taking chunks of the land with them.

Her head sways before me, higher than anything I have seen before, eyes of magma and teeth of mountains, a dragon of havoc, calamity, and disorder.

Fear foul and sharp starts in the roots of my scalp, trickling through my skull to the canals in my teeth. My legs are shaking, not with rhythm and dance, but with horror.

“God?” I whisper, a plea, a warning. Does he not see her? This leviathan, this behemoth, this monster?

Tiamat, who lives at the bottom of the ocean, has left the recesses of the deep and it is my fault, my dancing, that has woken her.

Tiamat rears her head and strikes, before I can inhale my next breath, before I can scream, before I can run. Her mouth opens wider and wider until I understand that it is not me she means to swallow, but the whole of the earth.

Her maw closes around me, around everything, and God tuts above.

Still, I don't think he is too disappointed. His purpose is clear now.

I fall, flying through darkness until I land in the pit of the beast's stomach.

In Tiamat's belly, the people are building a great boat. When I arrive, they give me cutting, annoyed looks.

“Oh, here she is,” a woman says, a scowl churning in the lines of her face. “You just had to eat the fruit, didn't you? You had to see, you had to know, you had to taste.”

I apologize, stuttering, face red. I ask to borrow some clothes. I suddenly remember I am not wearing any. Reluctantly, they offer me some. “What can I do to help?” I ask.

“You can start by lining up all the animals, if you please. Two of each. No more. We are going to have a hard enough time fitting everything onto this boat as is.”

I do as they ask, hoping they will have enough room for me when I am done.

It takes great time, gathering all the animals in Tiamat's belly. She swallowed everything and it will take many days to sort through it all.

All three to thirty million animals in existence are loaded into this vessel.

It is a big boat.

I ask if they have room for one more, but they tell me stiffly that they do not. I cannot be mad, not really, since it is my fault that we are now living in Tiamat's stomach.

"What is the boat for?" I ask, looking around. There is no water.

"Tiamat is thirsty. She is going to drink."

The last two animals, two ugly roaches, scuttle up the ramp and the door is shut and sealed. I settle on a portion of Tiamat's stomach lining and wait.

I can hear her jaw click as she opens and takes a large gulp of water. It rains down upon my head and down the sides of her intestines. My new clothes are soaked, and I am cold.

The memory of sitting in the garden under the tree, warm and innocent, is far. So far, I have nearly forgotten. Knowledge creates distance.

Eventually, I am forced to tread water to stay afloat. The water rises higher and higher, and I begin to hope that it will rise high enough for me to swim up Tiamat's throat and out of her mouth.

Something dark moves in the water below me, so large it looks to be a shadow. For a moment, I am worried it is Tiamat. Then, I remember that she already swallowed me and as big as this creature beneath me is, it is not nearly large enough to be Tiamat.

Peering closer through the frothy water, I can see that it is a large fish swimming up towards me, closer and closer, mouth open.

I began to paddle frantically but it is hardly any use. The fish swallows me with a gulp of water. Misery loves company and I have found companionship in this fish.

There is not much to do inside the fish. Mostly, I sleep and pray to God. I do feel bad about eating what wasn't meant for me, though I can't say that I am truly sorry. I ask for God to make me sorry, but I am starting to wonder if he can hear me inside a fish, inside of Tiamat.

I suppose he can, because I wake to the fish's belly shuddering and shaking. With a groan, the fish expels me from its mouth. It takes me a moment to reorient myself and adjust to the bright sunlight around me.

When my vision clears, I see the shore ahead of me. I swim to the beach and heave myself upon the warm sand.

I see the remains of the great ship ahead and I make my way towards it. There are some children playing, running in and out of the ship's frame, all that is left of what once was the largest man-made creation I had ever seen.

"How long has this ship been here?" I ask.

The children stop playing, starting at me with wide, curious eyes. A boy with dark curls shrugs and says, "It has always been here."

"How did we get out of Tiamat?"

The boy laughs. "What do you mean? How else does water leave a body?"

This must be very funny because the boy and his friends laugh in short, rapid, bursts and scamper off towards a city, much larger than what remained of that old boat.

I walk many miles through the desert to reach this city. The sun beats overhead, and my clothes stick to my back.

It is only when night falls that I can see the gates of the city, nearly a few paces away.

The gates open and a cacophony of screams and clamor pours from the entrance to the city. A small group of people squeeze through the gate and rush forwards, frightened but thankful. The gate shuts with finality behind them.

A man reaches my side and grabs my hand, pulling me to face the opposite direction. We run together with the

crowd. The bottoms of my feet are cut open by sharp stones and too rough sand.

“You smell like fish,” he says.

“I’m sorry.” I don’t know what else to say. I think about telling him that I was swallowed by a fish, but I don’t want him to figure out that I am the one who awakened Tiamat.

I feel a searing heat at the back of my neck and start to turn. The man squeezes my hand tighter. “Do not look back. We are not supposed to.”

The screams behind me are louder, amplified by the crackling of flames and the smell of smoke and something foul on the desert breeze. “Why not?”

I do not get an answer.

Then, I hear an ancient voice, older than old, deeper than deep. It is Tiamat’s voice, and she calls for me specifically.

I wrench my hand free from the man’s grasp, and I turn, looking behind me.

The city is in flames and Tiamat is curled around it, her tail coiling around the walls of the city before tapering off into the sea.

Eyes wide, mouth open in horror, I crumble. I disintegrate, my fingertips turning to fine white salt as I reach forward. I try to scream but my tongue is dissolving and tastes like the sea.

Uranium Glow

by Trey Arnold

I glow a soft glow underneath
like uranium glass
longing to be under a blacklight

Green, glowing difference
like an antique sickness
kept around to ponder
long in the dark like a
premier cigar —

Like a thinking thing, or
a wonder-about-me —
Trinkets and uselessness
find my friendship easily
for my home I have made there

Uranium glass, so
passively radioactive such
that you are not glowing
until you decide to
through your skin
finding your own subdued hue
irradiating air around you

Under a blacklight, do you shine?
Are you sick like I am?
and withering away?

When Lightning Strikes

by Liana Jordan

It is not a looming cloud
no constant drizzle no ceaseless drown
It strikes like lightning
shocking, painful, fast, fleeting

His hand on your thigh
Red hot burn creeps up your neck
Tingling shards of ice run through your fingers
Pressing weight of his body against your back

and then it's gone
for now

Rent due on the first of the month
Tomorrow is mom's birthday
2:30pm dentist appointment next Tuesday
Need eggs and milk from grocery store

Myth
that lightning never strikes
the same place twice
lightning can, and often, will
strike the same place
repeatedly

Man's stare from three seats down on the train
Professor's seemingly innocent hand on your shoulder
Boyfriend starts to remove your shirt
Familiar fiery blaze on your neck

and you remember
that you will never forget

Desert Shores, CA



by King Smith

Young Soldier¹

by B Carrie-Yvonne

Attention

Pour over and spill the remains of yourself

Watch. Ashes sit on clay

Red hands, red remains

Read the land well

Zone 8a²

Swell when wet

Figs ahead³, apples back⁴

Wear your *Forces*

Catch a frog in a mason jar

Ants march to its funeral

Feast on limbs

Saw a shooting star that night

¹ Name given 12/2/21 from tennis player the first night of living on Beatie

Ave² Georgia State USDA Growing Zone

³ Fig tree in Aunt Laura's yard

⁴ Apple tree in Granny and Gramp's yard

Part 2

autumn

Autumn

The brisk air flowing amongst and around me
Engulfing my entire essence and creeping into my nose
Weaving its' way through my body and infiltrating every vein,
down to each artery and capillary
The cold felt new and different, with its' own twang of charisma
But I liked it
The chills were the good kind
The chameleonic trees presenting warm saturated pigments of
burgundy, tangerine, and gold
A stark contrast from the leaves falling off the trees and evolving
into a burnt sienna brown
Withering and wilting in upon themselves on the ground
Even in the face of mortality
You brought color and liveliness to something that resembled
death
Giving me a new beginning although nature's cycle was ending
Everything around us was easing into a state of hibernation
But we ran against nature's clock
The same way a fish would swim upstream
Not following the typical ebbs and flows of earth's rhythm
Never ceasing, pausing, or even thinking about dormancy
We ran through the sharp autumnal wind
The land beneath us littered with leaves
Crunching with every light footstep we took
The susurrous rustle of various flora laughing along with us
Our faces glowing of the pure euphoria of being present with each
other
Only needing each other to stay warm
No fire, no extra coats, no artificial heat needed
The thermal energy we had manifested ourselves was more than
enough
Little did I know, in our case, energy could in fact be destroyed

– the four seasons (Shelby Williams)

trungus



by Rohini Bose

A Teacup

by Anna Goellner

What are the politics
of exclusion?

The place I was brought in

Entered an institution
of competition

And turned to articulate
comradery.

My tea's gone cold.

The cup was meant
to be emptied years ago,

The crystal paint chipped

from my fingernails.

I hate Allen Ginsberg. He saw Walt Whitman in a grocery store. I just saw him in the Dumpster out back. He taught me chaotic jealousy, but I wish he had kept his mouth shut. His howls awoke a beast within me, a beast of truths I never wanted to know. I deal with language through grief, and vice versa again. Inky smudges from fingers wrapped around my neck, when the pen broke. The spot stained the paper. Can a fish swim in a teacup? Sluggish greens and rancid caffeine. Reach up your palms and soak up your wonder at the moronic future I wrote for myself. My metamorphosis began when my head fell from my shoulders. Dance for men and drink your tea! You kicked yourself out
And forgot about me. I'm left to submerge and saturate.

Cigarettes

by Gene Carbonell

I've been here before.
I've known this haze, grown from
crooked smoke and lit by
the fire of the moon--
Where there's only a summer breeze
and a name that once belonged to me
but now rests in the
palm of your hand--
Where the silk of your shirt floats,
caught in the
grasp of languid sprites,
the ones that are mistook for starlight,
and kiss your nose before they leave--
Where I lean back in a hardwood chair
that smells of older stories than ours,
and holds us like
children hold fireflies.
Don't look at me just yet,
keep staring into that night,
the one that paints over your eyes
with blue fingertips,
and keeps my eyes lost on the
pale curve of your neck.
And when you're ready,
yes, when you're ready,
come into the shade and rest.

I'll be asleep there,
with dreams a bit dimmer
for having spent them apart from you

Comfortably Close

by Shelby Williams

every day as soon as i wake up
i make sure that the windows are closed and my doors are
shut
i lock them twice and put the deadbolt on
so that all chances of intruders entering are gone

with my walls boarded up and interior closed away
i go about my secluded day
secretly in hopes that someone will eventually show
and get to know all of me before they go

the welcome mat at the foot of my heart is worn and wear-
ing
but the strings inside it keep tearing and tearing
because as i continue to stare out of the peephole on the
door
i find that no one even knocks anymore

i blame myself for sheltering the innermost parts of me
but i yearn to be able to set those parts free
i want someone that holds the key to my heart
to gently unlock it and bring light into the dark

i want someone to take the time to learn every nuance of
every inch
but do so in a way where my nerves no longer have to flinch
i want a type of closeness that i've never had before
not physical; but a kind where my trust has been restored

an intimacy where i am wholly discovered from the inside
out

a sense of security that overtakes me without a doubt
someone who crawls into my rib cage and breathes fresh air
into my lungs

who doesn't turn every moment into a tragic hit and run

a person who connects where they no longer have to even
lay a hand on me

a person who becomes acquainted with all the subtleties of
my body, mind, and existence

not too close for [comfort]ability

but from a comfortable distance.

gas station hot dog

by Sam Yi

On sleepless nights, I toss and turn in my bed, serene despite the severe strain in my eyes and the knowledge that within the next few hours I must be productive. I rotate, much like the way that gas station hot dogs dance on their thick, metallic rollers as they cook in preparation for culinary mediocrity. I glaze myself in the dead skin cells, half-curled hairs, and crumbs from late night snacks to build a sapid layer of myself, a distraction for you while I try to mimic of the perfection you covet most. At my core, I am soft and raw, immature and imperfect. I ask that you eat me regardless. You say whoever deemed gas station hot dogs safe to eat clearly hasn't tried one. I continue to roll.

Ghost

by Hannah Rieder

There is an empty space beside me as I fall asleep, sheets flattened that once lay strewn on the floor. Silence is no longer broken by the sound of your labored breathing, my protests. My only solace is found in the cold air that pinches goosebumps onto my skin. I am safe, you are gone, and here I lay in my bedroom that is haunted by the memory of you

Harvest Moon

by Riya Sachdeva

The moon rises high, and I shamelessly stare
Into the darkened sky,
Free from last night's glaring lights
And shouts of drunken students in the air.
I watch the maple seeds spiral down,
And wonder how their constant spinning
Gives them more time on their aerial journey
Before they're buried in the ground.
I wish this fall were eternal,
I wish the air would forever turn crisper.
And the wind would always rustle the dried leaves,
Music in the quiet land of the nocturnal.
But I can't stay leaning against this tree,
Captivated by the moon and the quiet,
While time races away through my fingers,
Faster than those spinning maple seeds.
Time runs faster than the breeze,
And I can only chase it,
Relentlessly pursuing the day and night,
Racing the colors in the leaves.

in obscurity, you rest

by Caroline Osborne

vengeful and vacant. you are strangling nightfall.
apparition, what do you need to salve these wounds
that weep from your soul?
dust and rot settle your tombstone. you ache,
Extinguished.
where is your community? who reminds You
of the taste of sunrise?
have you scared them away?
your howling screams and chilling
bites that leech the life from your aisles-
stone streets of the since-passed.

hear this, ghost. i amend the shattered promise.
votives, penance grace your grave.
warm your hands by my candlelight.
this specter is abjured from wanting.
no covetous nightfall; this is my oath for the rest of my days
its dry tongue wets. its old lungs wrest the air in gasps;
its pale eyes uncloud. the first blush creeps up the horizon
when i join this shade, i know that its open arms will embrace my spirit.
and i will greet my friend in death.

daybreak.
how brilliantly could you shine
and turn to glint— catching light on your diamond wings,
folded multitudes that shiver in the cold sun?
prismatic refraction. you scorch
in stained glass crystallinity.
how bright might you bleed once again?
feel the fire flow through your veins,
the adrenaline strikes you!

lightning!

gasp- sting and cry- remember what it is to need, to want!
sprint wild among the horses and hoards— desperate footsteps
 swallowing the ground beneath you,
 longing for the freedom of freezing air and aching muscle.
 the chase to seize fleet morning
reflected in water that ripples and dips, caught in snippets and drips
caught with bare hands that grasp and splash. no ghost, no shadow.
 dream of frigid air, how it pierces and pulses,
 dream of your white-knuckled clutch on dawn
 you will not be alone for the rest of my days.
 i promise to you, my friend, my shade.

The Window



by Rachel Warner

in the eye of the beholder

by Dalton Sweezy

the floorboards moan
as her shadow
follows fleeting steps.
she's on her way
now
and she holds a picture
in her hand.
a trenchcoat lay
on a hanger that can't
know
the importance of
how strong
it holds the shoulders.
its entire meaning would
collapse
if only these definitions
weren't binding
it into form.
she's here now
and
her hands are

fully outstretched.
the picture is placed
into the hand
of
a seven year
old boy
who asks,
“is this it?”
glancing
at the photograph
displaying trees in silhouette,
he sees a tangerine
skyline that seems
to
contradict the darkness,
in which the trees
are forced to rest.
as the trenchcoat,
falling
from its hanger
meets the floorboards,
she whispers to the boy,
“I don’t have much, but please

listening to dad's music

by Olivia Graham

teal CD tracks carousel on the LED display of our six-slot stereo altar.
It regulates my system,
always in motion, as It guides us higher with Fortunate Son.
It tells me how to feel. It tells me how you feel, too.

a dial turned all the way is always right.

our stereo altar stands stacked on the microwave, upright;
seemingly secular, but we look up to it.
we put it somewhere with sound safety:
in bodies that chant to an earth beat,
release their weight in smooth colors,
and find space in our kitchen.

Allman Brothers long jams blend with microwave vibrations;
those songs take longer to cook than frozen vegetables do on high.

my voice met its acoustic match in the speakers.
the throat is a powerhouse, and I live to swing hard.
is the air strong or greedy?
somehow it can always hold more sound.

when the crowd makes themselves known to their hosts
in a moment,
of authentic, disorganized cheers,
they pray with colliding hands to briefly hold
the consciousness that follows a well-lived song.

Freedom amplifies the sounds of the creatively softened;
we know the liberation of volume in a risen chest.
exalted on our stereo altar,
their personal expressions comfort us,
on a loop of the same catharsis.

Movement

by Erin O'Keefe

Green-gold ever-leaves catch
drops that harmoniously slip to the ground.
Hilarious sounds do not echo
like the locking of the latch
gate shutting sharply, instead:
acorns abrase metal cars,
hitting hollowly—
flick-flack
pit-pat—
petrichor moving slowly
from outside into my domain:
the stage I created for myself
to watch myself dance.
Moving still despite
the relentless pull downward,
into my center,
which grounds me into my floorboards.

Should I be
etched into eternity?
—Or should I pass sweetly,
like a song sung,
a word spoken,
a singular second,
destined to become dead.

my mother asks me if I am afraid of god

by Anika Tarannum

my mother wears god like a warm sweater
and wraps him around my neck like a noose

she asks me every day if I am afraid of him

I've never felt god's presence
but I've felt the Devil dancing on the tongues of men
He held me under the covers and held the knife to my throat
The all consuming pain of ecstasy in my mouth as I utter the lie, "Yes."

Praise to Death

by Ayanna Daija Funmilayo Lonon

A New Comer

First, it was the sound of wind chimes. Every Sunday, it rains in the sanctuary.

Then the bass drum, symbols, snare. The piano, the keyboard, a holy alto saxophone. The choir.

We all know the words. We lift our opened hands; try to soak up drops of God. Bow our heads, pray, sing, cry in the presence of strangers. The choir sings a canon, the key changes, and He turns it up. It starts to thunder and you have to choose to stand and dance or sit still.

Some of us know better than to cower in God's presence because we've begged him to show up, some of us are afraid to be seen with Him in public, but everyone in the Church house is so caught up on how Odelia died.

I think that Church is just as good a place to die as any.

I met Miss Odelia on the second Sunday of June when I was a first time visitor. She was the head of the welcoming committee and it was just me and her in the visitor's lounge after service, drinking coffee, eating bacon and toast, discussing where we'd been and what we'd seen. She mostly listened, and I mostly talked about the Church I grew up in in South Carolina. She told me she hoped I'd stick with 1st Methodist, and I did in the end because it felt like home.

So I didn't know her well, but I'd known women who wore hats like hers. Some women know that you don't dance because you caught the Spirit, but that you catch the Spirit because you're willing to dance and I think she just met God where she knew to find him.

I think she must have checked beneath the bass drum, between the symbols, behind the snare. She probably looked along the piano keys, above the keyboard, around the sax, trying to find God.

Then, the wind chimes again.

The Devil in the 4th Pew

Even Jesus had more pride than Odelia.

She was prone to act a damn fool. It was always such a performance. She wore these big custom Church hats with netted veils and ribbons and polyester flowers. Then she'd go and sit in the third row so no one behind her could see nothin but that hat. You couldn't even hear the sermon or the choir if you sat behind her because you'd start to wonder, "How come that hat ain't heavy 'nough to put a notch in that boneless chicken neck she got" or "Why don't that hat ever fall off when she's up stomping and cluckin'?"

Well let me tell you, I ain't never known no good lady to die in Church. I ain't never heard of nobody doing it at all, and I wouldn't believe Odelia'd done it 'cept for I was sat behind her on first Sunday and watched it happen.

Since the first time she showed up to 1st Methodist, I dreaded every moment of that damned circus act- the stomping, the hollering- it was a mockery of my religion.

I'd been sitting in the same spot on the fourth row every Sunday for seventeen years and she, on her first day, sat in the third. Every Sunday, a different hat, bobbin and tiltin, but never falling off.

On the first Sunday of July, when that hat started to really lean to the side as she stomped, clucked, fluttered, I thought I might get to witness a miracle. And when the brim of the hat was touching the blade of her left shoulder, I sat up straight to bear witness. And when I saw that she wasn't gon' reach up to catch it before it fell, the Hand of God pulled me to my feet. The way feathers fall from eagles overhead, the way leaves are wisped to the dirt by the wind, I saw that hat drift to the floor. I hunched over the pew to pick it up, to smell the sweatband, run my finger along the brim, clutch the big blue thing to my chest; it was worship.

I expected to see that her head had been cone shaped, sharp and pointed at the top. I thought she might be bald at the center or even better, she'd have a hole that she had to cover for fear of people reaching in and snatching out her brains. But when I stood back up and looked, she was laid out down beneath the pews. It was just me and her daughter, looking at her, waiting for her to get up and dance again.

She didn't get up though, and on my way to Church second Sunday, I passed Gloretta Phillip's nephew's pawn shop with the "WE BUY DEAD PEOPLE'S THINGS" sign on the door and six big ass Church hats in the window.

The Daughter's Eulogy

Church has always been a stomping ground for the women in my life.

My Aunt Sherly used to tell me stories about my grandma running laps around their old Church during praise breaks. She said that my grandma would make her run too, dragging her along by the wrists, and when she got pregnant with my mother, she ran with one hand holding my aunt's arm and the other hand holding her belly. It's really not hard to believe if you ever saw my mom during a praise break.

I have these memories from when I was only about two or three years old of my mama dancing up in the Church house. And the dancing wasn't like when she and my daddy moved slow around the kitchen with Erykah Badu counting their steps. And it wasn't like when she held me by the arm with one hand, twirling and twisting me, whooping my behind with the other. It was like she was trying to shake something loose that was grabbing at her ankles to keep her on the ground.

There were things from her past that she wouldn't talk about with me. Sometimes I would try and get her to tell a story about her childhood, and she'd turn stone-faced, silent. Some days, she woke up and it was clear there was something on her mind, affecting her body, making her voice weak and her feet drag, but she wouldn't never tell nobody what was the matter. She'd just wait til Sunday came around to tell it to God. I'd watch her sing and pray and stomp that devil near to dust. After Church, her Spirits would be so high, her feet hovered over the ground- more of a glide than a walk- though she never managed to hold on to that borrowed strength. She just couldn't keep herself afloat on her own.

But since I was about two or three years old, I believed that if my mama stomped hard enough to shake that devil at her feet loose, she could fly.

24-Hour Oasis



by John Idell

Red-Tailed Hawk

by Rainey Calhoun

this is how it goes.

there is a hawk flying. there is often a hawk flying, against or with the wind, something, somewhere. always circling around the updrafts off the warming road and the clear clouds above. isn't that what happens? a hawk and the wind. a car and the highway. the wings for the sky.

this is living as:

a hawk with a broken wing. hopping across scrubby ground, easy target for a predator that might think this is their chance, but she flares her good wing and hopes, and hopes, and hopes. maybe one day, it goes, always, maybe one day this wing will heal, and i'll make it. isn't that what happens? i regrow and i make it.

this is the sky:

but she is trapped on the ground. but her skin is bare and her talons blunt. but she rolls onto her side and stares up at the sky and stretches for it, and that is a hawk. isn't that what happens? the hawk yearns for the sky. the rest doesn't matter. there is a hawk. *there is a hawk.*

this is a hawk:

shrieking. always loud and bursting red and brown feathers shed like fallen stars kicking up dust and dirt

glowing golden eyes that shutter shut talons gripping
a branch keeping steady wings spread against wind
that blows through them and this, and this, and THIS,
and the sky of brilliant stars burning this is a hawk, and
there are no other words for it, for this hawk, a hawk,
maybe the hawk, beak to the sky and gleaming in the
light.

this is the rise and fall of:

waking up. ceiling above. staring. clenching hands.
thinking damn, this is it? thinking i try so hard, feel so
much. this is where it takes me? wings that unfurl and
catch only the ghost-wind, echoes of echoes, and is that
all there is? echoing echoes. gravity pulls and contorts
my shape pressed into the ground, featherless. is there
a way out? there is always a way out. i must be able to
find it. to spread my wings into the sun.

this is how it goes.

there is a hawk. she reaches for the sky and hopes she
makes it.

Sestina on a Cabin Retreat

by Mariahnna Means

Here, my chest loosens, so I may breathe
Both empty and full these woods
In walking I find my rest
I have felt such a burden in my soul
But there is some sensation in the mountain air
Which cleanses me like holy fire

As it washes through me, all this fire,
I can see the smoke curling as I breathe
Out. A dragon inside me, warring with the crisp air.
It is lucky I have no fire for these woods,
That the fire remains trapped in my own soul,
Pushing the boundaries of my rest.

I have to remind myself “rest, rest”
Do not feel that raging fire
Lest it burst from your soul.
Take deep breaths. Breathe. Breathe.
Your rage could destroy these woods
Set an inferno with all this air.

Let it not be fuel, the air.
Let it serve you in finding rest.
There is a peace in these woods.
Not tinder for your selfish fire
It is most unselfish to breathe
Douse the rage in your soul.

But if not rage, there is only heaviness in that soul
Which seems to not fully lift with any amount of air
No matter how many times I tell myself to breathe
I am faced with the fact that I cannot find rest,
If I let go of all the fire.
There is no peace, not for me, in these woods.

No amount of burning myself out walking in the woods
Will save me from the desperate feeling in my soul
But I can distract myself with this fire
If I can fill, with smoke, this air
(in the true sense), I may find some rest,
Maybe...if I cannot breathe...

This fire I can set to choke the air
The woods can have the rage from my soul
And all the rest will see, I can indeed breathe

Stars

by Sam Yi

you spoonfed me
that fell from your cupid's bow

your chest cavity, inner galaxy,
hides shards of cyanide

painful to eat

tongue burns
throat turns
stomach churns

to swallow your stars 'cause
they're a part of

lately you stopped speaking

and they'll kill me if i

i know it's best that you
but

saccharine stars
sickly sweet
sweetly acidic

like apple seeds
and cherry pits
it's
too much

but
i
love

you

sweet little stars you speak supernovas, blackholes;
stay i want you to
stay i want you but
the stars will swallow me whole if i
stay so

go

go

please,

leave me

just a spoonful of stardust before you

go

The Boulder

by Sophie Belnap

I need to tell you about self-love And
how it's Sisyphus hard every day. How
a single fumble can cast you to the
Bottom of that hill you've been Trying
to conquer your whole life. How there
are serpent roots hidden Under the
ground to snatch at you. How that rock
sometimes
Crashes over you.

Broken bones, bleeding mouth.

I need to tell you to pick the rock up
Again.
That not all battles can be
Won the way you think they can be.
That Sisyphus suffers forever,
And that is his redemption.

The Cruelty of Skyscrapers

by Jason Hawkins

Ten thousand mirrors
And not one reflection:
This is the revenge we take
Against the clouds.

Do you think the people below noticed
The eye that has dared to open?
One casement ajar
In a school of glass oracles.
A panel of silence in the great wall
Of *busy, busy, busy*.

They're not quite blind—
Something bigger occludes them,
Too big to pass through the gap.
But you are very small.

A penny off the Empire State!
He's been promoted.
She's been engaged.
You are the arrow, the dew
That hits the vast, stone umbrella
Of indifference with a muted
—.

And you thought you could *kill*.

You roll off the canopy and
Into the drain without ceremony,
And the glass oracles chant:
Busy, busy, busy.

Ten thousand mirrors
And not one reflection:
This is the revenge we take
Against the soul.

They are Just your Type

by Ezi Ononuju

(I)

Archetypes, no matter how familiar to our souls, are strangers.

Regardless, we're never taught how to love people. Just how to love things. And so, from the first coauthored word, many turn their lovers into stock characters:

The Hero. The Whore. The Hag.

(II)

The Lover has eyes on something larger than themselves. They ignore the pulsating vermilion walls, the innumerable bloodied fangs, and the horrid flaps of crimson fluttering in the air so they can do the right thing: Fighting tooth and nail for your love.

The Lover beckons you to take a bite of them. They're supple. They're savory. They're red meat ready to be pulverized. One feeling is on both of your minds—though you only imagine it on the tip of their tongue before beckoning them to supper: Fullness, however brief.

The Lover. Single-handedly, they've crossed the stars you shared. Now it's time to purge yourself of their wretched poison: Tear the scarlet thread, spill the pages for tinder, and string that voiced stopping witch up to its eyes.

(III)

Does love have to be a grim fable? Where it simply begins, is middling, and ends?

Perhaps somewhere in all that middling, we all inevitably become heroes, whores, and hags.

Every story needs an antagonist, after all.

Untitled

by Janessa Harris

The clock at my mother's house never changes
Its metal hands stay stuck on twelve and two
And sometimes I wonder if it knows that it too is
supposed to be moving. Why does nobody think about the
clock?

Hands of twelve and two must need a little shove in the
right direction A little bit of tinkering and tattering of
its tactical box could help Why does nobody think
about helping the clock?

Tick Tock.

The construction work at my house never stops
Rolling pavement with the burnt smell of rubber
lingering in the air Maybe the gravel is tired of being
pressed and flattened into pavement Why does nobody
think about the pavement?

Beep Beep.

Each spoke of the tire rolls tirelessly over it
until it cracks Then and only then is when
people think about the pavement Why doesn't
the pavement speak up?

Car after car use it without even a thanks
The pavement can never recuperate for it has
served its purpose But when the pavement speaks
up, it is still not a defender of itself Because its
potholes are run over just the same
Car after car complain without the

thought of an apology Beep Tick Beep

Tock

Why oh why does nobody think
Oh god, I Beep can't Tick Beep Tock
Think.

Walking Song

by Jason Hawkins

From the underside
of Paradise,
A yew tree grew
Upside down—crooked.
One cold day,
It rained its blackened leaves
Upon our blue-green Earth.

We were walking from the valley
When it happened—we knew
Nothing. Could only watch
With children's eyes
As darkness flittered through
Clear air like an eclipse of moths.

I caught the first leaf
as it fell—
Withered, black. It crumbled be-
tween my fingers, and I
Cursed my habit
of holding on
too tight.

I cried, and you—
The stronger always—
Waited and watched until
I quieted,
and we continued
Our uphill trek.

Years and Yearbooks

by Thomas Elson

They took no classes together, and, after that first year, never attended the same school, but somewhere, inside the scattered mess of their lives, there were yearbooks.

He drives slowly now, much slower than he used to, and even more slowly today through the empty parking lot for the first time in fifty-eight years. Windows not yet boarded; walls not yet graffitied. His cane balances an unsteady walk as he inches toward his youth.

His raised left hand shields his eyes from the windows' reflection, then steadies him against the window as he searches for their two adjoining lockers - where she had slammed her locker door and it hit the side of his head - which caused him to look at her for the first time.

Somewhere at the end of another hallway, he's forgotten in which direction, was the lunchroom where one evening, at the end of the school year, he walked toward her sitting atop a long table with her legs crossed, and, after she said, Yes, handed her his yearbook which she placed on her lap, and wrote, Well, Mike, we met when I hit your head with my locker door. Hope we get the same lockers next year. His yearbook, now lost. His words written to her now forgotten.

He remembered how she held his yearbook - softly cradling it on her lap - how her hands gently smoothed the blank page, and his not wanting her to release it.

He remembered her all that summer. Wished he could be with her, but their district split and sent them to different schools.

That September he called. She accepted. And they grew into a couple - every Friday and Saturday together and three nights a week on the phone - through difficult classes and summer jobs. Their parallels as a couple abounded - she

the cheerleader; he captain of football and basketball teams. Both college bound.

Lives side by side until he discovered the world, and she preferred a classroom. He wanted her to change. She wanted peace and security. He traveled the country. She moved to a farm and taught in a small school. He continued to feel her presence decades after she returned his ring.

He saw her once after that - from afar and was forced to lean against a railing to quiet himself - as now when he looks at her senior photo, then drives past her old house - where they parked for hours and where they last met when she said good-by. As now when he drives to the high school and searches through the window for their lockers - where for a moment he is seventeen without pain, and they are intertwined.

###

Part 3

winter

Winter

Sweater weather and evergreen trees
Decorative lights illuminating even the darkest areas
Emanating and radiating warmth during the blustery frost
The snowflakes lightly drifting down to our feet
As if hoisted up by mini invisible parachutes
Each one unique and intricate, delicate like a vintage doily
Yet merging together to create mounds upon mounds of twinkling
bright white snow
The powdery blanket that covered the ground made everything
silent
But my winter song to you could still be heard
As soft and faint as the silver bells that rang throughout the city
Yet louder than any caroler in the town
But you seemed uninterested
No longer wanting to listen
So quick to put your earmuffs over your ears
"It's cold," you would say, with a halfhearted smile
As an excuse for justification
But you just wanted to ignore me without feeling guilty
We used to be warm on our own
This was never an issue before
You complained of not being able to stay warm despite all the
layers you packed onto yourself
So I transferred my warmth, all my fire,
To you
But you used it all up
And now we're both just frigid glacial figures
Going numb
Only piercing and stinging each other when trying to interact
We were simply burnt out
Our perfect snowglobe of a fantasy simply smashed into and broken
Our hourglass of time together had simply run out

I was told that seasons change, but people don't
Little did I know, people and the seasons have a lot in common

- the four seasons (Shelby Williams)

Big Sur

by Riya Sachdeva

Passing under the towering redwoods
Felt like visiting friends on the cliffs.
"Hello Karl", I whisper to the fog rolling
Over the chilly San Francisco waters.
I've been here only once before, but since home
Is wherever I wander, I decided I'm here.

I worried about the wildfires here
As I saw smoke among the redwoods,
And a soaring owl, evicted from its home.
The once blessing-turned-cursed ravaged the blazing cliffs

Ironic against the waves in the blue waters.
The Great Pacific helpless, only crashing and rolling.
The vision captured like a camera rolling,
"Cut!" I blinked and suddenly the fire wasn't here.
The vision banished, I turned my gaze to those waters,
Scanning the serene horizon covered in old redwoods
Surrounding the winding Highway 1 on the cliffs.
Watched over by those who call the fragile land home.

Far away from the house called home,
I watch a rock descend into a meadow, rolling
In a moment of peace in the land below the cliffs.
Calla lilies and ice plant grow here,
Whispering a sorrowful song with the redwoods.
"Save me!" their voices carry out over the waters.

An icy gale welcomes me on the cliffs,
Carrying the coolness of the winter waters
It's the same wind that eroded the stone here,
Weathering the mountains it calls home
Into hills all the way to the South, rolling.
But for now, it whistles in the redwoods.
I returned to Atlantic waters, to the house I call home.
Here, I watched that haunting vision of fires rolling
On the cliffs come to life, burning the great redwoods.

Every step I Take, you take too

by Janessa Harris

Your weight combined with its gravitational pull
Centers and collects itself at the ball of my foot
So much so that my foot begins to curve
Like the apex of a northern grassy hill

Sometimes I forget that you are there
Maybe it's because you are such a part of me
that i do not see you as apart from mee
Waiting odly by
Light on your toes
right on my toes

When my lips cannot part
And when tears well in my eyes
I begin to feel the gravity of
your weight slowly pushing me down again
Flattening the apex of my hill
Furhter and further until it begins to collapse and invert and
collaspe
Waiting to swallow me whole as if I never stood as something
stronger

Climbing up my limbs
You find your way to the shaky hollow trunk of my body
Fiercely grabbing onto the nimble branches of my arms
Slowing crawling into the hollow you find you home in my
larynx

Almost as an act of love
You tie your body around me
Tighter and tighter and tighter

Almost as an act of care
my lips cannot part and have no need to
matter of factly
because you have silenced me

And when that oh so familiar
choking sensation constricts my body
Is when i remember that you are here

I never know how long it'll be
Until you decide that it's time to disembark from your station
And leisurely trot over to my mind
Where you do your most diligent record-keeping
Of every failure and minute mistake
Oh, what a good notetaker you are!

You sit at my feet preparing for next time
Interweaving the laces of my shoes together
So that when i take a step, i will always trip up
To you this may be an act of care, a constant reminder of love
that
Every step I take, you take
too.

Forgiving

by Sarah Reck

Acoustics

Acoustics

Acoustics

Acoustics

It's all about the acoustics.

Right here, they are poor and unforgiving.

But leap down four lines and right two more

And they have recovered.

Here the acoustics are loud, forgiving, and
truly magnificent.

Acoustics are the all-important beings.

They will

Break you and love you

Teach you and banish you

Nourish you and fault you.

Acoustics

Acoustics

Acoustics

Getting Better

by Ryan Bohn

The gentle moment when the
Heat of the cup spreads through the
Palms just before first
Sips are made. Bitter coffee in a
Red ceramic mug so early on a
Wednesday morning that we still call
It night. Sugar packets are at the ready
To cut the sharpness if needed, but,
Sometimes, a good life is savouring
Something bitter at your own pace.

Goodbye:

by Ryan Bohn

I just wanted to call and say
Thank you for being a friend.
It's crazy, these past couple of days
Have been so hot, so
Heated, these December rivulets
Of pure humidity crossbreeding
With my sweat as I trudge up hill.
Man, I'm tired of it.
I just wanted to call and say,
Well, a few things. I read a few
Books recently I really think you'd
Like. Really modern shit. Really
Cutting edge. Nothing much happens
In them though. I'll have to tell you about them
Some other time. Let me just tell you, they're weird,
Actually, maybe you wouldn't like them after all,
But I liked them. They were good.
I just wanted to call and say that
Maybe I still love her. I know,
But I also love her. These are confusing times.
I'm not really sure what to do about it
Maybe I should call her and say something,
But, well, I've just been caught up with things.
Anyways, I called you but you
Haven't called me in a while.
In fact, it's been weeks. Have you been
Busy? I haven't really been doing
Anything myself. I'm sad I didn't
Catch you today because I was
Just calling to say goodbye.

Exit to Nowhere



by John Idell

GOOSEEGG!

by Anna Goellner

the wheel of my roller skate broke off.

metal bolts flew off the leather shoe
catching in the laces.
time seemed to slow
sticky and thick
as I watched the world flip
upside down.
the resounding bang
ricocheting off the concrete walls
as i collapsed to the floor.
my head hit first.
to think
hitting your head
is the least painful part.

a blistering white
took over my vision.
no one heard that.
i forgot who i was
and what i was so afraid of.
a freedom found
in the goose egg
rooted on the
back of my head.

in that pain
i remember thinking
finally someone will notice me.
they have to.
right?

police car drove straight by
not seeing me
on the floor,

something better to be ignored.

it makes me dizzy
just to think about.

Lessons in Flight

by Lauren Girod

Slackened grip as he breathes a last sigh,
I cannot cry anymore. All tears I
had were left thirty-three thousand feet high
in joyous shrieks.

moments

by Shelby Williams

Pictures and memories
Of old times
Savoring a sliver
Of what once was mine

Reminiscing through the good
Letting all the moments linger
But in the quickest of an instant
They're slipping through my fingers

Missing out on the present
Because of being stuck in the past
Trying to remember
The special occasions behind the flash

A pause for a break
In the mayhem of life
Grasping onto flashbacks
Where there was no semblance of strife

The recollections flood in
Causing longing and yearning
For that twinkling of yesteryear
But the pages keep turning

Sometimes it's saddening
That I can never go back
To the rich, vibrant parts of living
That I now seem to lack

Mona Lisa

by Ainsley Cole

A new art exhibit on display:
A painting hanging in a golden frame
Do not touch; the sign says do not touch the art
But little boys, well, they think they're so smart
He's reckless and bored, and the gift shop sells sugary concessions
So he reads the sign and still touches the impressions

One after the other, boys touch and leave fingerprints
Invisible to a bystander, but the paint is damaged and cannot be
fixed

When we are kids, no is one of the first words we learn
So when I said it, you just must not have heard
You were overcome by the sugary concessions at the gift shop
But so was I, and I still knew that I wanted you to stop

Stop, stop, I said stop and you didn't
I am scared for my life to leave my house; do you get it?
Do you think it's fair
That I suffer for your crimes, or do you just not care?

To care would be to admit to your crimes
I can feel you undressing me with your eyes
Are you even listening to the words I am saying
Or is this just another silly game that you're playing
To see how long it takes to touch me
But I am still equal since I can own property

And if I ever do dare to still complain, then I just want attention
But his arms were too big, and I never asked for the affection
I am an object, an image, I exist for your pleasure
When I look in the mirror, I know I am there, yet I still can't find her

I am covered in so many dirty fingerprints, and it's getting hard to
hide it
But in a world run by men, I must sit in my frame and be quiet

No Phoenix

by Caroline Osborne

Matchstrikes on boxstrips, scrape of red on rough
Like a skinned knee bleeding fire and smoke
The matchstick consumes itself in its reverie

Sparkwheel striker from a dollar lighter
Clicks to life after a few flatlines
The scorched metal leaves a scar with square angles

A hiss sneaks up the throat of the snake and slithers out its teeth
The traitor is bound in a cloth prison, dripping with venom and spit
Crushing the rebellion with another brand

A school of ember-bright fish swim across my fingertips
They flutter their fins in sway with my breath
And I want nothing more than to touch them

Smear of ash and aloe on the patchwork welts
I melt like wax and drip down to a puddle on the floor
Malleable, I cast my remains into a new shape

I am no phoenix. My death will be true
But fire bites back at the winter-frost sticking to my skin
Soot-coated hands leave stains as I crawl forward

I scrape on the boxstrip and I strike the sparkwheel
I am no phoenix

On Youth

by Sophie Belnap

Maybe being young is just struggling to understand your life is a liminal space.

An example:

You drive home after work. January air whip-fast across your face and you bask in frostbite relief. Solitary cars and gas station signs go by indistinctly in the aftermath dark bubble you have created for yourself. Music drops down onto the asphalt behind you like a bread crumb trail, little bits of your soul set free to the world for others to feast on (but only if they're paying attention (very few people are paying attention at this hour)). Your entire life is in your hands and in this moment and you are startlingly aware of it.

Another example:

You are at a party and all at once realize you cannot talk to anybody there. Slowly you feel your section of the floor dissipate away. Time-space alters to allow for this distance to seep out into the void. And you can't recover from this. Not tonight, maybe not tomorrow night. The maybe it'll take your whole life to get over it. You think maybe when you die that you'll be thrust into that void of collect loneliness, a chore to sift through every social situation perceived as something you need to redeem.

A conclusion:

The in-between alone balloons outward and swallows you and you're not sure what to do with all of this space that you can't bring to fill with doings so you fill with things like guilt and obsession instead. And you decide that you can live there, in that great space that has expanded so much but you can't. And you decide that you can live there, in that great space that has expanded so much but you can't. And you theorize, from this mind-space-cave you've burrowed down into, that maybe that's what growing up is--- knowing when to exist in the collective reality and when to inhabit your own intimate bubble of numb emotion.

Roadkill Lullaby

by Rohini Bose

your body is curled
into itself
your head
nuzzled into your paws
as though you chose to lie there
as though you were only sleeping
i wonder what you would be dreaming
if you were not lost to the Long Sleep
wonder where all your friends think you've gone
wonder if the forest is quieter when it'
s grieving
I hope you were loved
I hope you were happy
I hope there is a heaven
I'm sorry
I'm sorry
I'm sorry



scene IV, exit left

by Whitney Bramlett

You always hated the way that i quoted
shakespeare

told me that i was being too pretentious
but in those lines i only ever saw You

oh, You

You who ruined every inhibition i ever held close to
my Heart

i sit and read

thinking about 'You' versus 'thou'

formal versus informal, but what dictates formality?

politeness? respect? reverence? who knows

You never did like my odd lecture

i remember those lines that prance around
my Head

wrapped in perfect iambic pentameter

You told me that nothing in the world was poetic and

i remember those sonnets

the ones i read aloud to You when You told

me that shakespeare must have been one "pretentious
bitch"

You pretended not to hear my voice shake

or maybe You didn't care at all

and on the day i came home to find
my Books, my work, all of it
gone
You never said a word about how You threw them out
told me all the shakespeare had made me overdramatic
that my books meant Nothing but
morphemes and metaphors, my lifelong friends had
loved
me more than You ever had
we had communicated across continents of separation
or maybe we never understood each other at all

But now Your absence hangs over me
an omniscient audience watches enraptured
as, i sit and i read those lines
over
and over
reciting, repeating
over
and over
and I think

*"i do love nothing in the world
so well as You. Is not that strange?"*

Shifted Center

by Alexis King

Do you hear that?

Silence right? Sometimes I want to have silence forever.

You know like the silence you have when you sleep, and then you wake up.

And you're right back to reality.

The type of silence where you can hear a coin drop.

Have you ever thought about not being here? Yeah, me too.

You know the room was dark like this, there was a painting of Maya Angelou on the wall.

That picture was always crooked and we never straightened it.

When I asked why we never straighten it out, you told me "Life will never be as straightforward as it seems".

But somehow I thought as my mother you'd help me navigate through it.

The window was over there, the tv was right there because he had just mounted it on the wall.

He even asked me if I thought the placement was right.

Then I remember seeing you, you peaked your head around the corner off the staircase

And yet, you did nothing.

Why was that? Was I such a terrible daughter that you wanted me to feel some of your pain.

That's why I had to do it
I couldn't bare the pain anymore
And because you wouldn't do it yourself, I did
I would just hear his voice in my head, all I wanted him to do
was shut up.

He had no choice but to go
Why didn't you protect me?
When I told you what he was doing to me. You just stood
there and cooked your head like the picture on the wall.
You just stopped noticing that it was crooked didn't you?

Look at me
Look at where I am, am I now shifted center enough for you?
Am I your perfect little girl who could never do no wrong?
No, of course not because you've tried to hide what hap-
pened to me and pretend like you didn't see it.
Just like the picture on the wall.

It was always, hey a black women should act like this and a
black women should act like that
You would have me stand in front of the picture and repeat
affirmations after you
"We stand on integrity, we are strong and we are indepen-
dent and wait on no one"
That is what you engraved in my brain as a child
It's too bad, because you don't even represent the epitome of
a black women
Little did I know that the picture would raise me more than
you did

You know, now you are able to feel my pain
Because I'm glad that he's dead
How'd it feel to have to go identify his body?
Something you'll never get out of your head right?
Just like me, who can't get what he did to me out of my head.

I took joy in watching him die, even more joy being the one
who killed him
I even carved his eyes out, but you knew that already
Now you have something you can't get out of your head.

I took joy in watching him die, even more joy being the one
who killed him
I even carved his eyes out, but you knew that already
Now you have something you can't get out of your head.
You never loved me, you never wanted me to succeed, the
only good thing you taught me was that painting
And just like Maya Angelou said "We may encounter many
defeats but we must not be defeated".

Soap and Water

by Liana Jordan

trembling feet and shivering nerves
step into the shower
wipe your face
turn the faucet

steamy daze and empty soul
water burns but feeling cold
reach for sponge
erase it all

scrub and scrape and scratch
ripped and raw and red
your skin and spirit
forever shredded

his touch his smell his glare
scars on your face
his fingerprints his sweat
wash it away

defeated sigh and desperate cry
a mark that
soap and water

The Agony of Antigone

by Zara Saberi

Now I've become Fury, beating my chest
Where is my brother I screech
Where did you leave him,
His body to rot,
The carrion birds to feast on?
Where did you abandon his body
Begging to be buried,
Begging to be grieved?
His head knows no rest
His soul no sleep
That you, Creon, discarded to wander
Eternally to find no peace.

He, whom I was born knowing
As well as my grandmother-mother, my father-brother,
They too are gone, only I remain,
There is only I to bury them.
Was it a crime?
A crime to have led the dead?
It cannot have been a crime,
To love a brother,
It cannot have been a crime,
To grieve one.

Dark Academia



by Addie Baer

Thoughts on Fiction

by Dalton Sweezy

Listening to listless conversation light the way
She questioned a life spent in speechless observance
Her last illustrated breath made love to cold air
As visibility left for the reach of an eternal faith

Her body lie bare and bruised in evidential
Peace or pieces of a life's story that's told
Through perceptions of well and wasted words
To end in the anonymous grave of ambitions

Names and numbers are all left to the interpretation
Of a constellation's calculating census figure
But its known her face was veiled in infinite question
And her nails were painted in worldly damnation

Is the self created through the thoughts that she claimed
Or is it the fiction played by her inevitable occurrence?
To twist her fingers again and again in every direction
Searching for answers in the souls of false expression

The same actions that caused her early exit reaction
Were tethered to the presupposition that she was
Somebody or someone else's idea of a person
And that she could never live in a world like this

Part 4

spring

Spring

Poignant warmth and love like a beacon, brighter than the glistening rays of the sun in the early morning

Sugar-sweet cherry blossoms that started as mere sprouts but steadily bloomed into buds of romance

Light and lofty butterflies causing commotion in my stomach, migrating up to my brain without hesitation whenever I fantasized about you.

The vibrant hummingbird fluttering in to hum its' solo symphony, so simple yet arranged with phenomenal intricacy.

The same song you'd hum to me whenever the crickets and the creek would hush to a serene and halcyon calm, bringing all noise to a bashful silence

Each resonant note calculated and melodious, and the beauty of the ballad tugged at my sinewy, entangled, vine-like heart-strings.

The light lullaby of love coaxed all my worries to rest, easing my troubled mind overgrown with wildflowers

The soothing lullaby would eventually evolve into a sorrow-filled lament-

but only I would mourn the loss of our lush, flourishing, sun-kissed enchantment.

Only I would long to once again experience the feeling of weightlessness I felt when I would rest my head on your strong and sturdy chest-I was clouded.

The sensation of floating around in a cotton candy-cloud-filled heaven was something I could only achieve when I when I was next to you.

Bundles of luscious chrysanthemums bloomed wherever you touched me, their rich and full petals mimicking how my heart felt when I had you.

Little did I know, the vivid assortment of flora you planted there would not be perennial.

- the four seasons (Shelby Williams)

Astrophysics

by Sophie Belnap

Oh beautiful girl, dance with me awhile
Grab my hand as if we know we won't let go

In this moment the universe is condensed into my heart
And you are there, too, a part of it all, pulling me into the sun.

And the moment I let go the sun burst
Condensed,
Twisted and warped me into the black hole of memory in my
wretched heart.

Oh beautiful girl
Oh wondrous grief
Oh violin song voice
There are no songs in here to wish upon.

And outside are you in another sun?
Are you wishing on your own existence, burning alive.
Dancing on the edge of the world, almost to the point of forgetting?

I could never forget you.

If my heart is a black hole, how am I to leave this bed?
Gravity is the only thing I know.

Sunshine girl, come through the blinds and fall upon my un-
speakable face
I am memory-touched every morning by you.

And at night I gaze at the stars
What sun are you on, Love?
What an awful venn diagram the world is, the sky on one side
and this bed on the other,

The entire universe between us.

Oh beautiful girl
Sunshine girl
Love,
Find another star.

Find a place as full of light as you are.
Leave a map of footprints in the sky and call it a constellation.
I will watch your path every night from this Earth
Catch the gleam you leave behind and use it to keep warm
But only the bits you dropped on your way

I will not follow you, Love.
There are no ends of the Earth for you.

Go be who you were made to be.

Blue Morpho

by Riya Sachdeva

Has your eye ever been quick enough
To glance at the wings of a blue morpho?

You've probably seen them before, camouflaged
As the surface of a tree or a leaf.
Or maybe you've flinched away from their haunted eyes
Glaring at you and shielding themselves.

But have they ever opened their wings before you,
Revealing the vibrant blue scales, delicate, yet draconic,
Pulsing, almost glowing with power
On this small creature that I once mistook for a worm?

The velvet panels fan before you, outlined in black
Like dramatic eyeliner for the stage lights
Or charcoal shading summoning shadows to a page,
Applied with a swift and steady hand.

However, the most beautiful wings are the rarest,
Mixing the styles like patchwork quilts,
The soft and sharp, the performer and creator merging
Into glorious imperfection and balance.

But in the end, the wings become nothing but a blur
When the blue morpho takes flight into the canopy.

Christ

by Sophie Belnap

I think Jesus is a fat black woman
who wraps us all up in her honey sugar sweet-pea love
who sings along to songs in the car.

She has given up more for us than
the white-man-Jesus ever did. By living in this
world she was forced to make sacrifices.
sacrifices no less meaningful because they were not her
choice.
she never chose to be born here on Earth,
here in America.

It is just what you do with the life thrust upon you.
and fat-black-woman-Jesus has filled hers up to the brim
with family, and love, and chili with cornbread,
and zucchini warm from the summer sun,
and laughter and all the bad things too.
All the things that a fat-black-woman in America must face.
the fad-diet ads on recipe websites, and the actors who
are never as dark as her, and the way nobody in
high school would want to partner with her during the
unit on the civil war because they were scared she
wielded some self-righteous morality sword.
The way a white man makes a dollar,
and the black women make 64 cents.
All the suffering for no redemption.

The generational memories of someone whose ancestors built this country on their backs and received nothing.

Worse than nothing. Hell.

Whose crucifixions were in rivers or street corners.

Generations upon generations whose history is less known and less revered than white-man-Jesus whose suffering was a show.

Fat-black-woman-Jesus is a product of all of it.

She was molded from people who were children when little-black-girls couldn't go to school, who were children when little-black-girls were nothing more than a stray dog, and a mutt at that.

That's more miraculous than anything white-man-Jesus ever did.

Death's Asymptote ("Here and Now and Nevermore")

by Ezi Ononuju

Our ship is boundless, but we must stay Here as the river continuously flows. We ride along its path, every moment thinking about being Here and Now and Nevermore: Afloat, then, at some instant, returned to the river.

We measure our progress discretely along its length: Nautical miles, yards, decimeters. They're not real, but they're ours: Around for us to use while we're Here, then, Nevermore.

Some day, this boat will sink. The waves will wear away at it as torrents strip paint, then metal, then defenseless planks bare.

When Now means we're no longer Here, perhaps then we can count up the river's molecules, atoms, quarks: Determining the bit that finally breached us—exactly where and with what momentum now extractable, exorcizable.

Once we're Nevermore, we may discover that the nature of the Now after death isn't so different from the Now before it: That a gentle calculus reveals death to be as gradient as light dispersed through deep water—That a non-zero amount of life exists in death, just as we know death pervades life.

But for Now, the river unceasingly carries us to a fated point. One of infinity that lie between this ship and its end and yet, at some infinitesimal cross section of time and position, our boat sinks with Everything inside.

Here, Now, Nevermore, and Everything, Everything, in-between, as the river continuously flows.

do you like what you see

by Sam Yi

do you like what you see?

the
opalescent
glass you
stumble
through
stretches like
freshly-spun
taffy a most desperate lover
it clings to you memorizes
your shape your
harlequin reflection
lurches
to life it whispers *do*
you like what you
see?

Duplex: The Birth of Venus

by Jason Hawkins

Over the hill, they are falling in love.
I climb for days to find hyacinth waiting.

Hopeful, I don't mind hyacinth, waiting
For the mark of some or titan.

My father once devoured me, man and titan.
I saw the testes crash - blood into love.

Venus had no adolescence. Born into Love,
She didn't have to rehearse the face

Or ribboned braid. I have to want the face-
Smugly understading how to use the heart.

Fourteen, I understood it hurt to use the heart
When no Hour was waiting with a cloak.

Hours too late, I sit waiting in my cloak.
I watch as, over the hill, they fall in love.

Excerpt from a longer work: spring

by Hannah Rieder

She missed spring. More so, the beginning of spring, before all of the flowers have bloomed and the trees would snow pollen from their nebulous array of limbs and leaves, giving the surfaces of the town a jaundiced aura. There was something about the way the tiny granules of pollen congregated in the inner corners of her eyes and coated the airways of her nose and mouth. She drank it up like sweet ambrosia. The thickness in the air, not unlike an upheaval of dust on a back road after a dry spell, was irritatingly invigorating. Its invasiveness, relentlessness, carried life, an aspect of vitality that was not present in the confetti bloom of flowers that emerged in the following weeks. In the few days that the insidious yellow dust hugged the world, she was at ease knowing that these gritty, suffocating, wheat-colored specks of dust illuminated the contours and folds of the people in this town. Like foundation coated thickly on the face, there was comfort in imperfect perfection, and to her, seeing everyone's ugliness was more beautiful than fresh-faced and perfectly painted blossoms. It was an act, all of it. There was no purity hidden within the white petals of a lily, nor was there innocence in a daisy or love within the crinkled folds of a carnation. There was nothing except for a promise hidden behind a lie. Flowers in a vase, their stems severed, a gift that had been killed before it had even lived.

Green

by Shelby Williams

the hushed hue envelops me like a hug
i melt in its' essence of forest spice
parsley, sage, rosemary, and the time that
i spend in its mirage of meadow takes
me to dimensions unbeknownst to us
the transcendence of time is a crane fly
iridescent emerald wings littered with
the color of ivy and eagle ferns
landing upon bashful bushes of jade
chartreuse labyrinths of vines that can only
be unraveled by the hunger of the
pine that dusts the copious woodland floor
thick with deciduous herbs and flora
a perennial pigment of bearing
nature's gifts that feel like mint tea as i
drink and digest a sacramento sea
of aventurine agate among a
hypnotic trance like medusa's pupils
but i refuse to ever part my ways
with the green; the color that grows with me

How to Miss a Cherry Blossom

by Dalton Sweezy

When I was young I used to pick fruit from
my grandmother's tree in the farmhouse yard.
I would place cherries in a bucket before forgetting
to eat them later as they aged and turned brown.

Those days it seemed as if the sky was friends with
the ground and the sun held hands with the stars.
Later my parents would call me in and remind me
that they were preparing a retirement party for dinner,
and that unwashed hands led to drug dealing.

In Japan, cherry blossoms are born in the spring and die
in the spring, falling anonymously into the unknown
shoe sole heaven of busy men on their way to work.
Perhaps the flight was enough to justify landing.
Or maybe the freefalling gave them perspective and
a chance to fly freely into the breeze of death after life.

It reminded me of when I would promise you that
something was true even if you looked at me as if to argue.
I had continued to rearrange the television set by then
and there was a really strange song on the radio yesterday
calling to tell me I'd forgotten it in the car outside.
I tried to explain the meaning of its lyrics to you and
you just sat there staring into my eyes with authenticity.
Watching me rearrange the television of course.

We were so surprised while watching a deer outside
that someone would ever shoot it and take pictures with its corpse.
And right there we decided that the only logical course
of action was to buy customized jewelry engraved:
“I will never shoot you and take pictures with your corpse”.

There were several nights earrings were lost in the couch
and tempers would flare in the wake of the settling dust,
couch pillows being tossed into the frenzied searching.
We’d laugh as you remembered they were hiding in the back pocket
of the jeans you’d worn on the 19th of June.
Although, now I believe they were placed there intentionally,
signifying the superiority of presence over absence.

It seems two weeks isn’t enough notice
when quitting the job you started a 401k with.
Like the night you started crying when I told you
tomorrow was the first day of summer
and that there’s been a deer killed out of season
in the town that we grew up.

It doesn’t seem like a Hollywood ending to me
to let things be as they are and cherish the essence of memory.
But I wanted to say goodbye to you before leaving for Japan
and tell you that even as things are, you’ve given me
the meaning I sought in the beautiful violence
of flying through the air without knowing how to land.

Liar Sun

by Caroline Osborne

The liar sun sits crouched, knees to his chest
He huddles around the milky way, it flows like thick mist
The liar sun stares with his many hundred eyes
At the heavy liar daytime in his bowl

The liar sun stares forward with his many hundred eyes
His heads all turn to face his cupped hands
He does not blink and his faces are blinding
And all his liar stars lay down around him

The liar sun is an Athenian Colossus
And the scattered constellations around his feet spell danger
His titan-body is a solid omen
He rises at nine at night, fooling the masses

No name

by Janessa harris

I just called to say “hey..”
But what i really mean is i
just called to say i love you
For i am indebted to you

from the moment of my birth
i have owed you everything and more

I don't know how to say thanks
Xs and Os don't suffice
But hopefully this might

my first best friend

Over-Fishers of Men

by Trey Arnold

I am not saying this, friends
If I did not think it would help
And it comes from a place
That can only be love in the absence
Of any intentional hate —

— Is it raining or is he sweating
Not sure
But those desperate beads clinging
to his forehead are too much to ignore

are you looking, like *really* looking
or — Are you listening,
friends? Is it too much to
ask that you accept this
greatest of bargains ever laid at
the unworthy feet of man, so —

That suit must itch so bad
How can it not?
It falls on him like too thin
Polyester and frankly I
wouldn't even call that "wearing it,"
As loosely as it hangs upon him
like a halloween costume a late blooming
third grader just had to have —

For the fires below burn hot
as hell, and this is a serious matter
so so serious, and you laugh —

because I realized, yep,
it's just sweat

The Natural World Harmony



by John Idell

plant killer

by Janessa Harris

Gazes of gentle greens slowly soaked in the yellow opacity of the
subbeam

with a youthful glow they look healthy, ripe, full of promise
with every breeze they hear talk of good news, new beginnings, and
more sunny days to come ahead

My finger grazes the skin of each leaf tactfully analyzing each
change in

texture, firmness, and length

I think they look bountiful, trusting, and patient

breathy repetitions of “how prettys” remind them of a beauty
they do not have the privilege of recognizing

I’ll take care of you.

Breezes turned to violent tornadoes of volatility and they wondered
when they would hear about more sun-days to come ahead

If only they could be treated

like a baby in a warm bassinet, pre-soaked in the love of the sun.

Grotesque greens and browns

piled underneath poorly pruned leaves

sullenly sat in the shade

slowly rotting.

Now all they hear are whispers
as they solemnly sit
patiently waiting for sun-days and gentle grazes, and lowly whispers of
“how prettys”

Footsteps crackle into the distance
and with the click of the lock in its frame
Four last words sway them for one final goodbye
take care of yourself

i am no gardener.
and you are but a plant.

Proverb of a Peach Tree

by Trey Arnold

Often a tree bears more than it
even naturally should have
and leans so nearly like a
wind has bent it

But that young growth is
heavy laden with worm-stricken
peaches ripened to mush and
painted liberally over every branch
and he groans like failing steel
announcing its collapse

My mother, having seen this,
went out and bought a rope
with which to lighten up this burden
But she — doesn't eat peaches
She didn't plant him, she merely
came across him
in her own bending moments
Tethered him tightly to an old
sweet gum and watched all
his peaches drop
like festered, golden thuds of
soul all shed and strewn
upon the ground

The Biscuit Factory

by Jana Wrenn

Kneading
Her fluffy dough,
Hard at work,
Careful and slow,

Needing
A break
— awake—
From pastries
She'll never bake.

Speeding,
With every crumb,
Her eyelids close,
She starts to hum—

Sleeping—
Her work is done.
Such is a kitten
Under the sun.

Sweet Dreamer



by Rohini Bose

The Lodgepole Pine

by Rohini Bose

the lodgepole pine is made to be burned.
its jaundiced bark is far too paper thin to withstand
the flames of a forest fire
especially when compared to other pine trees:

The Longleaf Pine

with its canopy that grows
far too high to be scalded,
its needles accustomed
to being pruned by flame

The Douglas Fir

and its toughened bark
meant to weather the war of nature
as though wearing armor,
scorch marks and all

the lodgepole pine
yields to the wills of strong winds
and withers in the shade,
waiting only to be set ablaze
for when it is burned,

it comes alive.

the cones that have clung
onto the branches of the tree
for the duration of its life
 fall to the ground
 for the first time
amidst the embers of burning grass
and wood
the petals of the cones unfurl
and thus emerges the seedling—
an infant otherwise destined to be stillborn
cries out to its Earth Mother
amid the great rapture
the ravaging inferno
and sows itself into the promise of a new life.

a seedling newly planted
a tree born by death
a forest made to be burned
but never smothered.

The Vows of an Oak

by Gene Carbonell

Grow with me,
pulling each other upwards in the
singular motion of intertwined opposites,
orchestrated by time, for the sake of knowing heaven in
one another.

Seek the sun with me,
even once it licks across our worn shoulders
and colors them with the darker hues of soot and sap,
decorated with wounds in the form of folding leather as
flesh.

Root the earth with me,
pull upon the professions of our blood,
driven far beneath the rivers of leaves and loam,
and carve from the clay a semblance of your lineage as a
seed.

Rot with me,
beckon the hands of older gods
out from the shape of a life we shared.
Let the passage of time drip across our fallen limbs
In a blossom of grim mosses and gills, until our form is
one in the same.

Value Slips Between Our Fingers and Past the Strings of Your Guitar

by Ezi Ononuju

We say we don't value art and music enough but maybe art
and music aren't meant
To be Valued the same way *we* Value a french fry from the local
pink slime factory.

Art isn't valueless, but maybe it's inValuable: *We* cultivate a
Value system that seeks to appraise art,
But that Value system makes it's value unassailable.

A spirit that can't be seen cannot be Valued. But don't let robber
barons, captains of pirate-ship
Industry, tell you ghosts aren't real. That they aren't valuable.

So, play your tired little fiddle. Sing a tune for the bar, bard.
Make zines no one has seen,
Since we define "no one" as everyone you know and love
while the Invisible Hand is "someone."

Cultivate your soul and remain steadfast in the knowledge that you're
no "richer" for choosing to do so.
Make no mistake. You're picking up pennies for art while they make
millions off mortars.

So why care about being rich from their Valuables? Who cares about their Value system?

The one they manufactured consent for so we could become a subset of *we*.

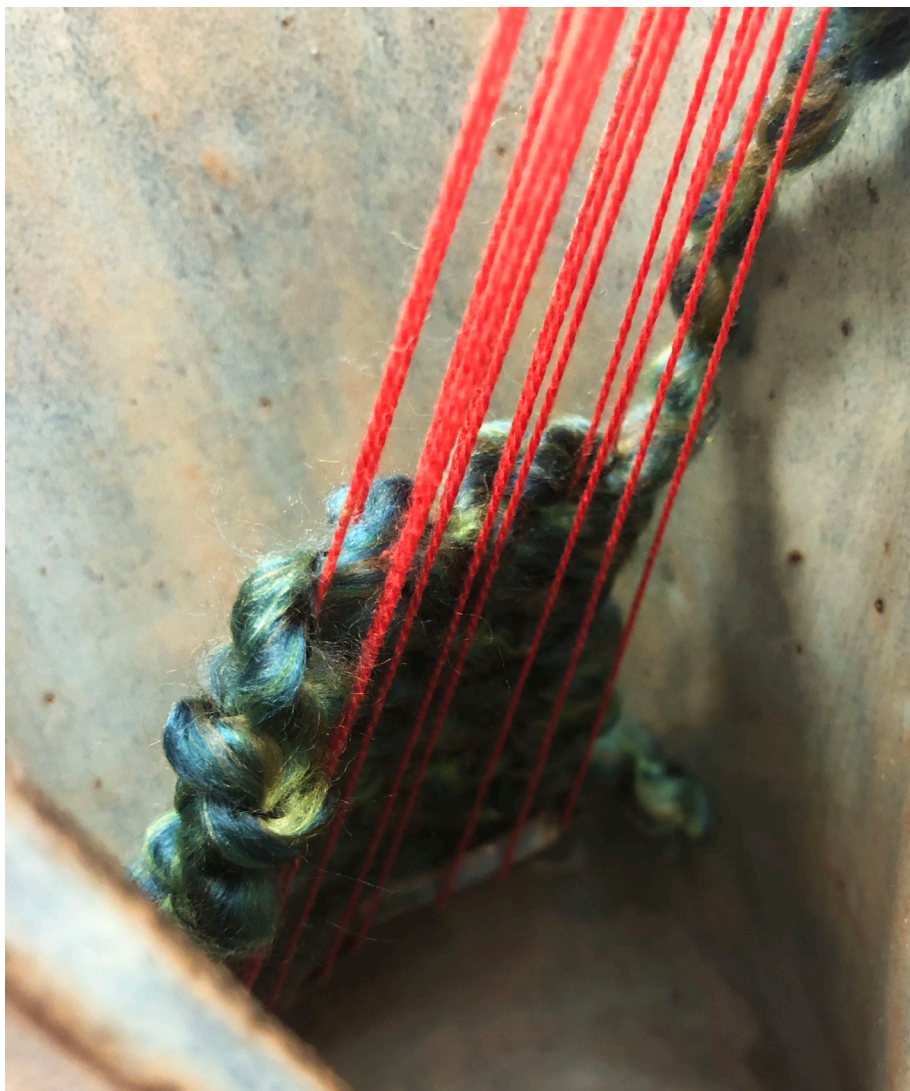
Their Value's suffused with misery and smog. Our value is made up of community and art blogs.

They're choking themselves out in the process of squeezing every ounce of Value from life. Let them.

Focus on the value of the paint on your canvas. Focus on the value of that guitar on your wall.

Focus on your guitar. Focus on your guitar. Focus on your guitar.

The Loom



by Rachel Warner

what does a forget-me-not remember?

by Rohini Bose

Often a tree bears more than it
even naturally should have
and leans so nearly like a
wind has bent it

But that young growth is
heavy laden with worm-stricken
peaches ripened to mush and
painted liberally over every branch
and he groans like failing steel
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My mother, having seen this,
went out and bought a rope
with which to lighten up this burden
But she — doesn't eat peaches
She didn't plant him, she merely
came across him
in her own bending moments
Tethered him tightly to an old
sweet gum and watched all
his peaches drop
like festered, golden thuds of
soul all shed and strewn
upon the ground

You Make a Fool Out of Her

by Eve Heslin

Your heel presses into the mud
and your mother flinches in disapproval.
She raised you to watch your step,
but your eyes follow your finger
dragging an ant
across the kitchen counter.
“It’s my house,” you think,
but it’s only your home.
She loves you, still.
She loves you when you look her in the eyes
and stomp on her,
she loves you when you leave
the faucet leaking,
she loves you when
you leave her bleeding.
A mother’s love is
gentle, not fragile.
She raised you in a house
you had the privilege to call home
and you make light of it.
You make a fool out of her kindness.
I wonder if you know that
when she leaves, you will too.
If she dies, will you know that you killed her?
Watch your step, restrain your hands.
She’ll love you, still.
Give her reason to.

Contributor Biographies

Trey Arnold is a fourth-year English major at UGA. He has lived in six different states across the South, and has a special affinity for Southern literature and culture. Apart from the normal trivialities that life requires, he enjoys writing poetry and watching the world go by on the porch. The slower life goes, he thinks, the more it can be understood.

Addie Baer is currently a freshman at Georgia College and State University. She is studying to get her major in psychology with a minor in painting. "Here For The First Time," is an acrylic piece that represents overcoming struggles and growing into the best version of yourself. "Dark Academia," done in charcoal, simply represents my love for drawing skulls!

Ryan Bohm is a second year English and Romance Languages double major. Ryan enjoys reading, writing, and listening to good music.

Rohini Bose is a fourth year public relations and philosophy student at UGA. She likes to spend her free time playing music, drawing, writing, boxing, and cooking with friends. She's recently discovered that she's actually more of a morning person.

B Carrie-Yvonne is a Master of Social Work student, multidisciplinary artist, and birthworker. Carrie-Yvonne's creative interest lies in the intersections of Black Southern space-time, memory work, and archival documentation. This practice of theirs relies on poetry, film photography, and music as technology. By weaving rhythm, sound, and imagery in meter, Carrie-Yvonne's footnotes become visual markers of language. At the core of these dreamscape transitions are temporal sites of memory. It is here where they make memory tangible and

find spirit, this embodied space being in arms reach. Carrie-Yvonne's process of citational politics (e.g footnotes) serves as both a bibliography and record of home – experiences, geographies, language, and state of being.

Rainey Calhoun is a second-year Wildlife Sciences major at the University of Georgia, a writer of both poetry and prose, and, presumably, a hawk.

Ainsley Cole is a 3rd year Fashion Merchandising student at the University of Georgia. In her free time, she loves writing songs and poetry, running, listening to music, and exploring new places. She also loves designing and sewing clothes and is working to pursue a career in fashion design.

Jamie Dicello is a third year English major in the Franklin College of Arts and Science.

Thomas Elson's stories appear in numerous venues, including Ellipsis, Better Than Starbucks, Bull, Cabinet of Heed, Flash Frontier, Ginosko, Short Édition, North Dakota Quarterly, Litro, Journal of Expressive Writing, Dead Mule School, Selkie, New Ulster, Lampeter, and Adelaide. He divides his time between Northern California and Western Kansas.

Lauren Girod (they / them) is a third year English Creative Writing undergraduate student at the University of Georgia. When they aren't people-watching in Athens, they are often nose deep in a recommended book in a coffee shop, living the dream.

Olivia Graham is a first year English master's student in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.

Kaya Groff is an English and Spanish student in her 2nd year at the University of Georgia. She is an aspiring writer and professor. In her free time she likes to paint and spend time with her dog, Rex.

Liana Jordan is a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Georgia majoring in Finance with minors in Theatre, Film, and Spanish. It is debatable if she should also graduate with a degree in indecision. She enjoys afternoon naps, laughing at herself, and the Australian television show *Bluey* that is “technically” made for children.

Janessa Harris is a third-year undergraduate student at the University of Georgia studying Women and Gender Studies.

Eve Heslin is a first year at the University of Georgia and she majoring in Biochemical Engineering. She enjoys all forms of art, but spends a considerable amount of time reading and writing poetry. She is also a sucker for Special K with berries.

John Idell is a third-year student at the University of Georgia majoring in cognitive science. In his spare time, he volunteers with Students for Psychedelic Advocacy, Research, and Connection. In addition to coordinating meetings and events for each semester, he assists with maintaining the organization’s social media presence. When he is at home, he enjoys capturing his perception through photography, reading philosophical prose, and listening to music critically. John aspires to create additional photo series that blur the boundaries between liminality and southern photography

Alexis King is currently a third-year transfer student majoring in English. Alexis attends the University of Georgia and is in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences program. She enjoys all kinds of writing, such as poetry and screenwriting. She is also a working actress and plans to advance her career in the film and television industry.

Mariahanna Means is a fourth-year English major at UGA.

Erin O’Keefe is from Kennesaw, Georgia. She is a third year at The University of Georgia pursuing two Bachelors of the Arts degrees in Dance and English with an area of emphasis in

Creative Writing. She started writing when she was 13 years old. She has since finished three full drafts of the novel and hopes to have it published one day. She enjoys writing about dance as well and specifically trying to describe the feeling of movement. She loves writing and its expressive capabilities, which closely mirror the art form of dance.

Caroline Osborn is a third-year English Major at the university of Georgia, and a member of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. They are also minoring in Anthropology and studying for a certificate in Archaeological Science.

Riya Sachdeva is a freshman Biological Sciences major at the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences who enjoys creative writing, fantasy, and naturalism.

King Smith is a Christian filmmaker, photographer, and poet, currently a sophomore at the University of Georgia, intending to major in Entertainment and Media Studies at the Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication — while King currently serves as the videographer for The Backpack Project Inc. and as a worship leader for various Christian organizations on campus, he also does freelance videography and works as a contract video editor for a small video company in Athens.

Anika Tarannum is a 22 year old girl lost in life and trying to figure things out. She's not sure what she's figuring out but she'll figure it out.

Shelby Williams (she/her) is a second-year student currently pursuing her undergraduate degrees in both Psychology and English at the University of Georgia. After obtaining her undergraduate degrees, she plans to acquire her Ph.D. in psychology and work as a developmental psychologist or therapist. Additionally, she plans on publishing various works of her own, ranging from psychological content to poetry and prose. She has always had a persistent passion for writing from a young age, and she highlights her creative reflections with her

peers and the public through an Instagram account she created under the handle of @odetoprose. Aside from writing, she has another passion for dancing, and dances with both Pamoja Dance Company and FSA at UGA. Expressing herself through arts such as writing and dance are very important to Shelby, and it brings her an immense sense of contentment.

Sam Yi is a fourth-year English major at UGA. Still a novice to the poetry world, she is greatly fascinated by shape and repetition. She wishes to be able to bring an “artsy” flair to her otherwise plain prose through writing poetry.

Staff Biographies

Anna Goellner (Editor-in-Chief) is a senior English and Religion double major who loves matcha lattes, stickers, and poetry. You can find her at Molly's Coffee, Trader Joe's, or making her way through the overly large pile of to-be-read books on her night stand.

Rachel Warner (Arts & Design Editor) is a third year English major with both an emphasis in Study of the Novel and in Medieval Literature. She may potentially have a Linguistics minor and a certificate in Medieval Studies. Without a doubt you will find her in a bookstore with a stack of books while skillfully balancing boba on top.

Summer Porter (Submissions Editor) is an English major and film minor who impulsively buys a surplus of books, bread, and tattoos and loves funky trees, her people, and genuine smiles. Please feed her addiction and send all story recommendations her way.

Isa Davis (Arts & Design Editor-in-Training) is a second year majoring in English and Comparative Literature, who loves speculative fiction, a fine cup of coffee, playing trumpet, and dancing.

Anika Eechampati (Submissions Chair) is a third year International Affairs major and English minor. She loves reading contemporary and historical fiction and you can often find her listening to Sufjan Stevens or Hozier.

Hwain Mun (Website Chair) is a first-year English major who loves plants, boba, true crime, and Taylor Swift. She has way too many stuffed animals, but that doesn't stop her from constantly buying more. She can be found at any AASA event (come join!!) and at Bolton, munching on desserts.

Sophie Belnap is a first year majoring in English whose life mission is to be half as talented as Joan Didion. She will not shut up about the joys of reading in a hammock, and is known to haunt the third floor of the UGA library when she has an essay due.

Megan Berry is a first-year student majoring in Psychology in Franklin College. She loves spoiling her dog, listening to music, and laughing at terrible movies.

Bridget Blanchard is a first-year Theatre and English double major. They're a party animal and a novelist who's never written a novel or been invited to a party. But they're most passionate about making niche Pinterest boards, analyzing obscure theatre, and writing bad poetry.

Whitney Bramlett is a second year English major with a minor in Theatre. She is an avid reader of Shakespeare and loves finding new productions of his plays to watch. In her spare time, she enjoys grabbing bubble tea with her friends, going to record stores downtown, and rewatching Star Wars.

Gene Carbonell is a fourth year Cognitive Science major who enjoys consuming copious amounts of fantasy / sci-fi media. He also loves language more than anything. However, if plants could talk, he'd probably never speak to another person again.

Courtney Carrington is a second-year Entertainment and Media Studies major and English minor. She spends most of her time dreaming up stories for the long list of characters she's created over the years. Spellcheck is her best friend, and she can often be found drinking excessive quantities of caffeine, listening to her extremely eclectic playlist, or causing chaos with her best friends

Mikayla Connolly is a junior majoring in English with a certificate in Music Business. She enjoys writing poetry and playing guitar, and can usually be found in spin class, drinking coffee, or listening to Joni Mitchell.

Meredith Eget is a fourth-year English, Spanish and Women's Studies major with an emphasis in creative writing and a minor in Latin American & Caribbean Studies. She loves poetry, YouTube film analysis, and podcast-length voice memos almost as much as she loves her cat, which is a lot.

Caroline Estes is a senior majoring in International Affairs and minoring in English. She enjoys loving (and hating) *Twilight*, chipmunk watching on North Campus, and daydreaming about fighting in a fantasy war while working out.

Nicole Ganelin

Daniel García-Pozo is a sophomore at the University of Georgia, and is an intended EMST major with an English minor. He has previously served as the writing editor for the award-winning *Iliad Literary-Art* magazine, and has attended various conferences on creative writing. In his spare time, he enjoys contemplating the universe.

Rin Greco is a junior majoring in English Education. She still hasn't read anything better than *Harry Potter* and she enjoys writing, true crime podcasts and reading a Stephen King novel.

Jason Hawkins is a UGA student majoring in English and minoring in Computer Science and Japanese. He loves reading and literature as a whole but is particularly a fan of poetry and speculative short fiction. Additionally, he enjoys movies, video games, overanalyzing every piece of media, and learning other languages.

Yunju Lee

Ayanna Daija Funmilayo Lonon is a high school senior interning with the University of Georgia's Creative Writing Department. Her genres of choice are narrative fiction and prose, and she appreciates narrators who never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

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

Sarah Reck is a junior majoring in English with an emphasis in creative writing. She loves watching bad movies, drinking coffee, and her dog Lucky.

Hannah Rieder is a senior majoring in English with a certificate in Creative Writing and a minor in Fashion Merchandising who loves espresso, psychological thrillers, and Poirot. You can find her binge watching Game of Thrones, baking, or both at the same time!

Zara Saberi is a second year majoring in Classics with minors in Classical Culture and Korean who loves Persian poetry, Pokémon, and telling people random animal facts.

Russell Spearman is a senior majoring in English who loves all things reading, writing, and editing. He is also a member of the Creative Writing Club and hopes to one day join the publishing industry.

Nicole Spektor is a fourth year English major with an interest in law and publishing. She loves to write short stories, draw comics, and has too many playlists for her to count.

Dalton Sweezy is a fourth year philosophy major. He can read and write and hopes to one day say something true.

Mann Chung Hak Sy Tha is a third-year student of Cambodian and Chinese heritage pursuing his bachelor's in English and Comparative Literature. He loves to immerse himself in speculative worlds and new cultural contexts. At the same time though, he likes to think that he can still find joy in his mundane.

Arya Telang is a first-year majoring in Business Management Information Systems. She enjoys listening to Imagine Dragons, writing depressing poetry, and trying out new recipes in her free time. With a strong passion for literature and film, you can find her curled up with a good book or watching her favorite movies late at night.

Sam Thompson is a third year English and Comparative Literature double major with a minor in Law who drinks way too much coffee and is an obsessive organizer. She loves rainy days, baking pumpkin chocolate chip muffins, and any opportunity to be creative (and to use a hot glue gun).

Jana Wrenn is a third year English major with an emphasis in creative writing. When I'm not reading or writing, you can find me singing with my a capella group Noteworthy or working on set as a background actor. I'm so excited to be a part of the Stillpoint staff this year!

About Stillpoint

Since 1967, Stillpoint Literary Magazine has served as a forum for undergraduate writers and artists at the University of Georgia. The pieces featured in the 2022 issue of Stillpoint were selected from a pool of blind submissions. Names were omitted during review, and staff members did not judge their own work. This issue was arranged by the Arts & Design Editor and Isabel Davis using Adobe InDesign CC and Photoshop CC on a MacBook Pro. The type is set in Palatino and Apple Chancery.

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

**“I was told that seasons change,
but people don’t
Little did I know, people and the
seasons have a lot in common”**

the four seasons (winter)
by Shelby Williams