

**XXXII.
REPRESENTATIONS AND
REPRESENTED**

multilingual poem by Julieth Albanez B.

With representations and as represented,
Each of us is identified.

From characters in books and movies,
to objects thrown from the sky,
With one object we have all been related.

A medal of a triumph achieved,
It shows what has been achieved with pride as a family.

While for some diamonds are precious,
For others, they are the object of a love that has marched.

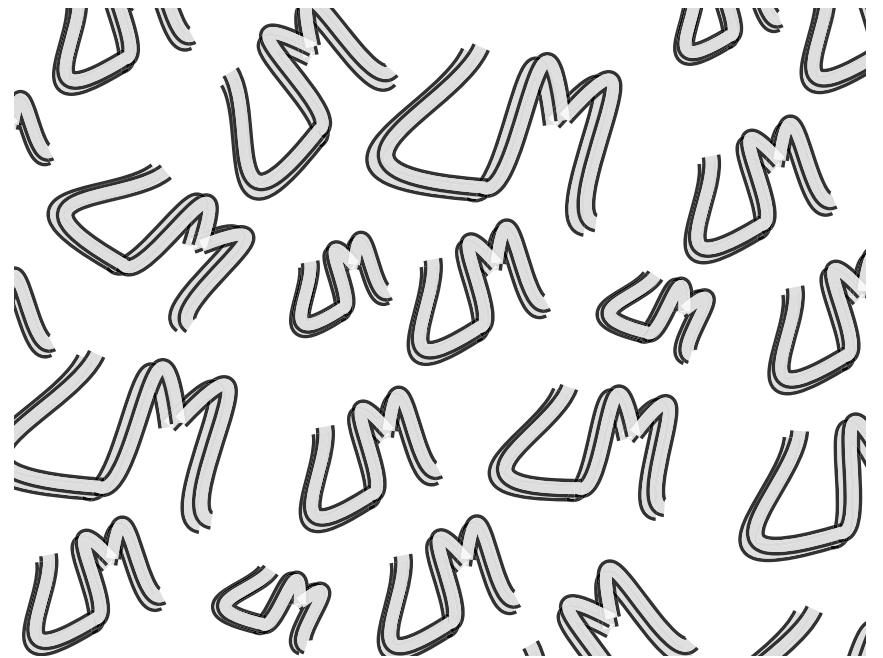
A love that was marked by tears,
Of pain, anguish, and also pleasure.



Tears that we shed when we longingly remember,
in a photo to that being who has left.

There are other kinds of tears that are shed when remembering,
as if thinking of times and places that have been visited and
dazzled us,
to which we may not be able to return.

In the end, we are all memories and remembered,
for an object, time, or place that has passed through our life,
For we are nothing more than that, representations and represented.



PATTERN BY PERRY PALACIOS

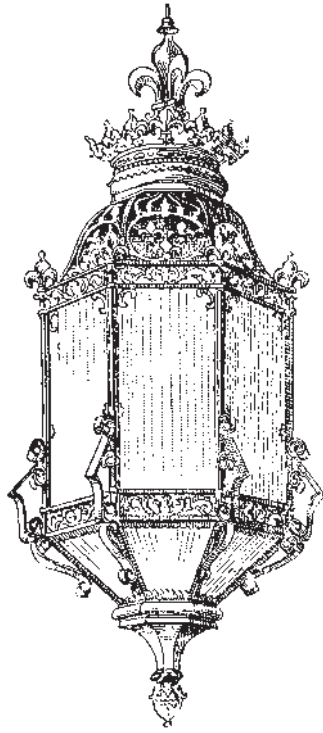
XXXII.
TONGUE AND CHEEK

poem by Isabel Flick

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Racism/cultural insensitivity

some days i wish i could cut off
 my mother tongue-
 my extra limb of foreign pain.
 a white man asks me
 what i think of donald trump.
 i tell him,
 i don't know *who that is,*
 to see if he will leave me a l o n e.
 i can taste the blood
 pooling in my mouth
 as my teeth take a piece off
 of my mother tongue
 while he laughs at his reaction
 to my *joke* - and asks me again.
 a boy once asked me
 if the candy cane scar
 on my mother's leg
 was from it being cut
 o p e n
 when she jumped the wall.

i gnaw on my tongue with
 aching teeth as i hold back
 from asking if his father
 is proud of
 the colonizers in his bloodline
 while he laughs
 and claps my shoulder.
 i chew through my tongue
 like a wolf with its leg caught
 as my father in law's fiancé
 speaks to me in b r o k e n spanish
 and tells me her nanny
 was mexican, too.
 mexicana - she calls me
 as i choke on the blood
 that has started to run down my throat.
 ignorance - is not bliss, i know.
 ignorance is the weight
 my atlas tongue carries
 as i struggle to swallow the blood
 while i laugh - again - at the jokes
 some people make.



*SHINE A LIGHT ON YOUR FEARS:
DOODLE YOUR MONSTERS*



**XXXIII.
Spillers**

oil painting by Cynthia Kathryn Richele Nathan

XXXIV.

Retro Manic

digital art by TutuArchive



XXXVI.

IN LOUD ROOMS

poetry by Abigail Wetteroff

In loud rooms
I fade fast.

You look like a God up there,
not mine,
but somebody's,

and I can see it now,
as the hero-worship-contagion settles in--
It's hard to silence the groupie mind
when a guitar burns white-hot,
the war drum calls, and bass echos
through muscle and bone--

You holler anthemic;
You are the center of all fantasy.

In loud rooms
I live the loose love logic
and forget
my self.

XXXVI.

ON THE NIGHT BEFORE YOU LEFT

poetry by Rebecca Hanneken

On the night before you left
 we walked the long way from the bar to your house

we used to never run out of things to say
 but we were quiet
 so quiet I could hear the church bells dripping down the street
 and across the park,
 down the bleachers, down the hill,
 across the road to where we stopped
 the last bit of light was burning out beyond the trees
 children were belly laughing half a block over
 my brand-new shoes, crisp and white
 turned green with each step as we cut through the damp grass
 of the park

You tried to make a joke, but it just made me sad
 I hoped you knew that I thought it was funny
 it just felt wrong to laugh, so
 instead I stared at our feet and noticed
 that your strides were twice as big as mine
 and anywhere we'd go in life
 you'd get there in half the time
 noticing felt a little like crying for joy
 but being able to taste the sorrow in the back of my mouth
 so I took a drink of water

when we arrived we sat on your stoop
 I didn't swat at the mosquitos biting at my ankles
 you didn't cry but
 I didn't take it personally-
 like summer warmed that dulling day,
 you made me feel a certain way
 but I can't seem to write it down.

instead I closed my eyes and waited
 for a beam to come out of the sky,
 for a spaceship to land on your front lawn,
 for it to shake the ground as it hit,
 for it to take us back to where we both belong;

above the cars, bars, shooting stars
 above the body heat and brilliancy
 of the people we loved, but never as much as each other
 above the icecaps on the mountains you would've moved
 above the city glowing like lamplight from a distance
 above a sublime view of the earth
 they'd say we had taken for granted

I wanted to wait a while longer for it to come

but instead, I stood up.
 We hugged and walked in two separate directions.

XXXVIII.
MERI DOST KI LIHEIN

multilingual poem by K. C. Terra

Ye meri dost ki lihein
Uski avaz itni khoobsurat
Shakal vi...
Maine kathi nahi itni kothi nahi mili.
Aur ye bhi hein ke
Ek din maine khuthafiz bhi keni hein.

Main uski liya both kiya tha.
Parati, kani, parahi, rori – sab kuch.
Oh pehli kudi thi jo mujhe samaj thi ti...
Mere bolne ke vegaar.
Uski paas ek ajeeb si hath ki zubaan hein
Jo baas mujhe samaj anthi hein.

Oh pehli viakati thi jo meri ligakata ko patha tha.
Meri parivara menu ek roga kende ne
Oh meri naa meri se boldi...
Main marni waali thi.
Para oh meri liya ayi thi
Aur kanthi hein ke mein pyaar de yoga.

Hum college pe gaye te August 2021 mein.
Main ghar pe thi
Oh ghar se nikagi thi...
Mainu ahisasa hoiya ki ikalata ki hondi hein.
Khali aur tanda si
Jesay main mari gaye thi.

Mainu pasand nahi kardi jab hum khuthafiz kende hein.
Mainu yaad anthi hein ke ye hamesha ki liya nahi hein
Oh ithe nahi hogi...
Main pahilam parivara gua cuka ham.
Main peerse nahi karni
Lekin uski liya karsakthi hoon.

Ek din, oh meri se puchi
“Agar tuhade ek kitab likari thi
Jadon tuhadi ek both special viakati gaya,
Uski atama vaka ki hoga?”
Main tusi ank mein deki aur kaha tha
“Teri gaal thi honi hein.
Aur maine keni thi...”

Tusi siraph meri dost nahi ho;
Tusi meri sab se jangi meimori ho.

FOR MY BEST FRIEND

multilingual poem by K. C. Terra

This is for my best friend.

She has a great voice

Her face is pretty too...

She's the biggest idiot I've ever known.

And it pains me that one day

I will say goodbye to her one last time.

I've done a lot with her.

Partied, ate, studied, cried – everything.

She was the first person to truly know me...

Even without me saying anything.

She has a weird sign language

That only I can understand.

She was the first person to know my sexuality.

My family called me a disease

She called me by my name...

I almost lost myself.

Yet she came to me

And told me I was still worthy of love.

We left for college in August of 2021.

I stayed home

She left home...

It was then that I realized what loneliness was.

It was empty and cold

Similar to being dead.

I hate saying goodbye to her.

It reminds me that this isn't forever

One day she won't be there...

I've lost some great people before.

I don't wanna do it again

But it would be worth it for her.

One day she asked me

"If you were writing a book

About losing someone special,

What would the very last sentence be?"

I looked her dead in the eye and replied

"It'd be about you.

And I'd say..."

You're not just my best friend...

You're my best memory.



WRITE A ONE-SENTENCE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

XXXVIII.

Koi

digital art by TutuArchive



XXXIX.
Road to Salvation
photograph by Ian McCann



XL.
IRAQ

poetry by Jay Houghton

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Allusion to war

Iraq steps into my memories,
my war, a dusty flashback.

I always hated the disorder. Now I hold
those sweat stained tents in my mind. Sand
forever pouring out of my pockets. Spilling out
of my boots to remind me

This isn't home. But it's the closest
I'll ever be to hell. When I return,
the adrenaline won't be so sharp,
the colors, so brown.
The shower's pressure so weak,
so stingy. My safety
so vulnerable.

And my hearing will be a little
out of order, in it
a constant ringing, low
and nasal, forever reminding.

XLI.

AFGHANISTAN

nonfiction by Jay Houghton

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Experiences of war/
threats of death

“INCOMING INCOMING INCOMING”

The “God Voice” - our early warning missile alert system, blared mechanically over dented speakers throughout the base. The automated voice pierced the early morning darkness, ostensibly giving us time to react and move to safety. We had been hit by plenty of rocket attacks before, they were almost a daily part of our lives in Afghanistan. At this point,, it was so commonplace that we sometimes barely reacted to it. Usually, they just fired one or two over the concertina wire--topped fence from somewhere,, and the rockets and mortars fell somewhat harmlessly on our side of the wire. It was a running joke for almost all of us that their aim and the equipment they used both sucked. During the day they liked to target the airfield I worked at; all those fat civilian helicopters sitting on the pad made for easy targets. They never hit any, at least while I was there, but they damn sure tried. They might not be able to hit what they aimed for, or anywhere near it for that matter, but that just meant you never knew where the damn things would come down. I'd had to make more than a few bunker runs at work. During the day we were vigilant. At night though, laziness and apathy set in, and lots of guys barely moved from their bunks or tents, especially if it was only a single rocket.

No one in my tent was reacting to this one. I rolled over in bed, cursed at the intrusion to the peace and quiet, and tried to go back to sleep. I grunted again, pulled my blanket up around me, and closed my eyes. Looking back at it now, it sounds insane. Who would just lay there in bed while being attacked? Pretty much all of us to be honest. It's crazy how quickly you get that attitude--that fatal nonchalance that soldiers get. Temporary invincibility, at least in their own minds. We weren't suicidal,, just too tired and worn down to care.

BAM!

The rocket struck somewhere inside the compound, but a little too far away for me to give a shit. Groggy and half awake, I managed to open my eyes and look around. *Ah fuck it, I'm going back to bed*, I thought. I wasn't going to go through the trouble of getting up and walking to the bunker for something that hit halfway across the base. It wasn't an immediate concern, and in my limited experience, they only usually fired one or two at night just to piss us off. *Not today assholes*, I thought. Going outside to crouch into a concrete bunker when I could be comfortable in bed? Bed wins every time. No one else around me was reacting either, except for a few grumbled curses I could barely hear through the plywood walls that separated our little rooms in the tent. We had to get up in a few hours anyway, and sleep was a precious commodity. The next morning, we had a PT test to take - sit-ups, pushups, and a 2-mile run. I've always hated running. Even now, when I look back, it's one of the first things I don't miss about the Army. I closed my eyes again and rolled over.

BAM!

The next rocket slammed into the ground with a deafening roar. Scattered pieces of the rocket, dirt, and gravel were thrown in every direction. It hit much closer to our sleeping area. **Too close.** Too close and too loud. “*Oh shii...*,” The words barely started to form as a coherent thought before my instincts for self-preservation kicked in. My eyes snapped open and I was immediately awake. My body tensed up; adrenaline surged through it. In one motion, I threw off the blanket covering me, swung my legs over the side of the bed, and landed my feet in my sandals. My hands were already grabbing my glasses off of my laptop. Standing up quickly, I snatched my rifle out of the corner and paused for a second to grab a pack of smokes before rushing into the hallway. I could hear everyone else scrambling around too, bodies moving in the darkened tent. Someone dropped their rifle and cursed when it apparently landed on them. Someone else laughed at that, a disembodied voice giggling in the darkness. I yanked open my door, while slinging my rifle over my shoulder and headed outside towards the heavily reinforced concrete bunker, a few steps outside of our tent. The “God Voice” continued to blare on, repeating the phrase as if no one was yet aware of what was happening.

“Incoming. Incoming. Incoming.”

Yeah, no shit.

BAM!

The third rocket hit as I made it into the hallway. Closer still. It sounded like it landed almost on top of us. The force of the explosion turned the tent into a nightmare. Everything tilted 45 degrees. The canvas of the tent ripped and snapped from the pressure wave. The plywood walls bent and began to splinter. The metal support poles that ran along the center of the tent swayed and strained like blades of grass in a tornado. Noise was everywhere. Shit was falling off the shelves in everyone’s room, bodies were slamming against walls and support poles. Debris rained on top of the tent like the world’s worst confetti. Staff Sergeant Burks, our acting platoon sergeant, came screaming like a banshee out of his room at the back of the tent. Breathing heavily, his eyes white with fear and most of the color drained from his dark face. His room was closest to where the rockets hit. His muscular legs carried him as fast as he could move while he yelled at us, pushing the mass of bodies towards the door, sandals slapping hard on the floor.

“Get the fuck out of the tent! Now!” Cuppler, a quiet kid from Pennsylvania, was right in front of him and slipped when the tent shifted. Burks grabbed him by the arm and pushed him forward. I was right behind Sergeant Washington, his usual smile and easy laugh were nowhere to be seen. Fear was plainly written on all of our faces. My feet skidded across the floor as the tent surged against the force of the rocket. My momentum carried me into one of the shifting plywood walls and I scrambled for footing. Burks and Cuppler were now right behind me. My balance restored, I shot forward again. Luckily, we were only a few feet from the door.

BAM!

The fourth rocket hit just as we made it to the bunker. We could hear the impact of the pelting gravel and debris it kicked up. The noise was deafening, especially as it echoed down the bunker. “Y’all get the fuck back from the edge,” Burks snarled at us, waving us deeper into the concrete tunnel as the debris continued to rain down. We pressed in past the people already there and huddled together on the small wooden benches covered in graffiti, watching as others from nearby tents poured in as well. As they all shuffled in, crouching for the low ceiling, we all patted them on the back or shoulder as they walked by. Whether it was a “glad you’re safe” kind of pat, or “thank God someone else made it too” kind of pat; I don’t know. Still don’t. Maybe both. Feet and knees were moved to the side so people could pass by. No one complained if a toe got accidentally stepped on or a rifle banged into a knee. Outside, a cloud of smoke and dust began to drift by the entrance, turning the world beyond the bunker into a sickly shade of yellow–brown. The “God Voice” began playing the second part of its message, repeating the words into the now shattered quiet.

“SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER.”

Burks got a head count as all our people made it to the bunker. We were all there, bleary-eyed yet still coursing with the jagged spikes of adrenaline rushing through our systems. Scattered among us and the other soldiers were a few of the civilian contractors that worked on base. Our clothing was a hodgepodge

of pieces of body armor, uniforms, PT uniforms, civilian clothes, and pajamas. We must have looked ridiculous sitting there. I can still remember how damned heavy the Kevlar helmets feel, especially after wearing them all day. Or the relief you get when you finally unstrap your body armor and let it fall to the floor, the ballistic plates inside clacking together. I was just in PT’s that night. Shorts and a t-shirt. Only about two people had boots on, the rest of us had dust-covered feet rising from our flip-flops (or “shower shoes” as they were sometimes referred to.) Some held their weapons tightly. Others casually laid them across their laps, careful not to point the muzzle anywhere near someone else. None of the contractors had weapons, though one or two had on their body armor. One had his helmet on and took it off to run a hand through his sandy hair. Feet and knees bounced up and down the line of benches, a jangled symphony of nerves. Hands either gripped weapons, folded in prayer, or picked at invisible strings as the fear and nervousness took hold.

Too tall to sit comfortably on the benches (my knees were almost in the lap of the guy across from me), I stood at the entrance with Burks. The sandbags on top of the bunker supported me as I leaned against them, and my hands shielded the flame from my lighter as I lit a cigarette. Loose particles of sand spilled onto the concrete and were carried away by the wind, sharply stinging my arms. Taking a long drag, smoke filled my lungs as I scanned what little I could see of the base. Alarm sirens rang out sharply through the night. Exhaling, I took a deep breath and tried to let some of the tension leave my shoulders. The “God Voice” switched back to the first warning

“INCOMING. INCOMING. INCOMING.”

Burks and I ducked back into the bunker entrance, hoping the round wouldn't land near us. This time the missile never struck down. The Phalanx crew had finally made it to their posts and targeted the incoming rocket.

Brrrrrrrrrrrt. Brrrrrrrrrt. Brrrrrrrrrt.

The gatling gun-based system shot thousands of rounds into the sky, tracer rounds carving a blood-red path through the night sky. God, what a beautiful sound. Burks, Cuppler, and I scrambled back out of the bunker. I finished my smoke, stubbed it out against the wall, then “field stripped” the burning embers and ground them into the dirt. Everything was so dry here; the risk of fire was great. Tents would go up in a matter of minutes from anything, and I definitely didn't want to be the cause of it. Burks and Cuppler were talking about the PT Test we were all scheduled to take later that morning.

“Fuck it. We ain't doing no damn PT test today,” Burks grumbled.

“Yeah, I bet no one at BAF would do shit either,” Cuppler agreed.

BAF was Bagram Airfield, a few hours almost directly north of us and home to most of the rest of our unit. Here at FOB Shank, we only had a small team working the flight line operations. Bagram was much more secure and heavily defended than Shank, being one of the two largest bases in Afghanistan at

the time. Lucky bastards had it made there. Paved roads. Around-the-clock post office. A huge Post Exchange area with a shopping center you could buy almost anything at, from jewelry to area rugs. Multiple dining halls. Restaurants (Burger King! Pizza Hut!). And barely any danger. I think BAF might have got hit twice during the whole deployment. We averaged one attack a day at Shank, and the days they missed they made up for with nights like tonight. Any of us at Shank would have traded places in a heartbeat for the food choices alone.

The only thing we all agreed that sucked about BAF was the overload of officers there. You could barely turn a corner without having to salute some Major or Lieutenant Colonel. And the stupid dress code rules were ridiculous. Always had to wear a reflective belt and have your eye pro (Army-issued eye protection) on you. Walk around with your promask (gas mask) strapped to your leg. Full uniform. Blah blah blah. All that brass walking around had turned BAF back into garrison life - people more worried about looking pretty than being ready for war. Hardly anyone there ever left the base, and yet they all somehow got awarded “Combat Action Badges” (a military award for receiving direct or indirect fire, like the mortars we suffered at Shank so often). Officer life, I guess. For those of us stationed at Shank, seeing any officer over the rank of Captain was rare, and salutes were frowned upon, as it gave enemy spotters people to target. Uniforms weren't strictly enforced either, and it wasn't uncommon to see guys walking to and from the showers in just their uniform pants, a t-shirt, and flip-flops. No one wore eye pro, and my mask had been safely tucked away under my bunk since the day I had arrived on base.

We all resented the fact that our counterparts there at BAF were all getting fat and lazy, sleeping away safely in their barracks rooms. They had hotel-like barracks, actual concrete buildings with multiple floors of rooms that opened to balconies and stairwells at either end. A far cry from the tents from the 1980s and plywood walls we slept in. Bitching about the disparity between our command team at BAF and the living situations here for us at Shank was a common hobby. Same as all the other small FOBs. PT tests were one more measure of the disparity. Yes, technically they were required to be done twice a year by regulations, but there's a big difference between working out on a garrison base like BAF and running two miles on hard-packed dirt and gravel roads. Shank's roads were in terrible condition. Too narrow, with deep potholes, choking, thick dust constantly being kicked up by passing vehicles, and, oh yeah, the constant threat of being attacked. I hated running there. I hate running anywhere, but Shank is easily the worst place. I still can't shake the dust either. 10 years later and it still sticks to my clothes, my boots, my lungs, my mind.

Another round of warnings from the "God Voice." One more strike soon followed. This time the Phalanx missed and the rocket sailed deep into the base. Burks, Cuppler, and I stared in disbelief and terror as its silent shape cruised through the air above us, close enough to see the fins sticking out at odd angles from the long cylindrical body as it briefly cut through the moonlight. We dove together inside the entrance of the bunker, yelling at everyone to get down. We braced for a moment, then—

BAM!

It came ripping down about 100 yards away, punching flames through the roof of the only place we had around that passed for a restaurant: a cheap Afghani interpretation of pizza. Hard to get quality ingredients halfway up a mountain in the middle of a war zone, I bet. The plywood building immediately caught fire, burning down before anyone could put it out. Not that anyone even attempted. Everyone was more concerned with staying alive at this point. Priorities. Time slowly passed. We all were on edge, waiting for the next strike.

After the dust settled, our hearing and heart rates returned to normal. Burks turned to us again and repeated his statement from earlier. "We definitely ain't doing no damn PT test today." Everyone laughed, including the guys from the other units and the contractors.

"What, Sarge, you don't want to dodge some mortars on the two-mile?" someone joked.

"Hell nah. I'm trying to keep my black ass in one piece," he replied, drawing out the words for the crowd he was playing to. Laughter again rippled through the bunker, the brief moment of levity bleeding off the adrenaline. A few minutes later, though the wait made it seem like an eternity, the "God Voice" spoke up again.

"All Clear. Repeat. All Clear."

We headed back to the tents, and spent a few minutes picking up our belongings that had fallen off of shelves and nightstands. Burks called us into his room. "Look at this shit," he said, shaking his head.

A ragged hole had ripped through the canvas tent wall, and a twisted piece of metal (probably from the mortar round) lay in the middle of the floor about a foot from his bed. We all shook our heads in amazement at how close we had come to serious damage. After a minute or two of talking about putting us all in for the CABS, we made our way to our own rooms and bunks. As I laid down to try to salvage the few remaining hours before I had to get up for work, I felt grateful to have survived another day. Eventually my eyes closed and I drifted off to sleep.

And no, we never did take that damn PT test.



XLII.
Edge of the World
photograph by Drew Ryherd



XLIII.
Bryce Canyon Peekaboo Loop
photograph by Adri Buhse



XLIV.
THE GIFTS OF THE COYOTE
fiction by R. G. Weismiller

A coyote meandered in the desert. The animal stared at the moon and bayed at the orb.

“Mother Earth,” the coyote said, “why do I cry out in the stillness of the night?”

“Father Creator blessed you with a melody that mesmerizes all nocturnal creatures,” Mother Earth answered. “Without your music, there would only be the wearisome noises of the night.” The canine howled, his magnificent aria charmed the beings of the night. “What a voice I have!”

Still, concerns troubled him as he journeyed among the sparse vegetation. “Mother Earth, why must I roam by myself? My rivals, the wolves, travel in packs.”

“My son,” Mother Earth said, “Father Creator made you self-sufficient. You do not need others to survive.”

He pranced past tumbleweeds and cacti. “That is true! I’m not dependent on others. I make my own decisions and do not rely on someone else’s.”

A sudden gust of wind chilled the air. The canine’s body shuddered and cringed with each step he took. “Mother Earth,” he cried out, “why must I endure such harsh elements?”

Mother Earth answered in a loving voice, “Father Creator covered you with fur to keep warm for when it is cold. Then, He enabled you to shed your coat so you may tolerate the cruel summer days.”

His body no longer trembled. He marched past the dust storm and beamed. "I can endure the extreme conditions of my surroundings."

A falcon shrieked in the distance. "Mother Earth," the coyote said, "if I had wings, I could fly."

"Coyote," Mother Earth said, "Father Creator designed you to be swift. Your speed is quicker than those who soar above you."

The canine scanned the vast expanse. He pressed his paws against the sand and sprinted, pushing himself to go faster with each step. When he stopped, he turned to look at the distance he covered. "I am fast," he said.

The coyote resumed his stroll. Still, he seemed troubled. Before he could ask another question, Mother Earth spoke.

"My son, Father Creator made you with gifts to aid you through the passage of life. You are unique compared to the other animals. They are jealous that they do not possess your talents.

"Be proud of your gifts. Employ them wisely. For Father Creator bequeathed them only to you."

The coyote paused to reflect. "Mother Earth," he finally spoke. "I came to you with what I thought were my shortcomings. You revealed that Father Creator nourished me with abilities that the other animals do not have. I will honor these gifts and utilize them as I face difficulties."

"I am delighted with your enlightenment," Mother Earth said. "Always remember that whenever you question the unfairness of life, Father Creator provided you with unique traits to guide you through the journey of life. You are unique to other animals. Be proud of your gifts."

XLV.

Eco Fem

oil on canvas by Bob Madden



XLVI. SIMPLE SELF LOVE

digital art by Isabelle Herman



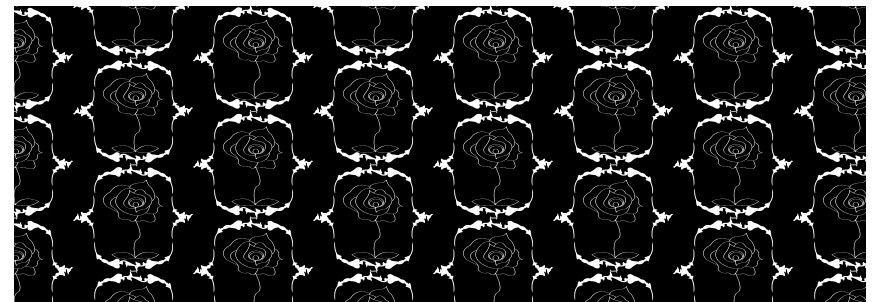
XLVII. REACHING

nonfiction by Amy Chamberlain

She was fearless with her hands. Scraggly weeds that looked like an old man's eyebrows? She pulled them. Tortillas from a smoking skillet? She flipped them, no spatula required. My mother dug her hands into the dirt with more boldness than I could manage with a shovel, and she did it thoughtlessly.

Apparently, I paid attention. One of my first assignments as a fully-fledged kindergartner was show and tell. I wanted bugs, my father says, and I spent a happy evening plucking them from our basement walls, the cinder blocks slick with summer sweat. The multi-legged, the fuzzy-haired, and the slithering were all equal victims to my chubby paws.

That basement and house were sold long ago, but my mother still boldly reaches for what she wants. I think I remember this story because of her. It's a wry bit of proof that I am her daughter. Though I'm taller now and far more bug-shy, I carry the echo of that brave girl in my hands.



PATTERN BY LANIE DOYLE

XLVIII.
OPEN MY MOUTH AND
OUT COMES MY MOTHER

poetry by Isabel Flick

i have inherited my mother's grief.

i have inherited my mother's mother's grief.
 my mother was born with her grief.

so was i.

the grief has eaten me to the peach stone of my heart

and shit me out.

i fertilize the soil and all that grows is another version of my mother
 or perhaps a version of her mother.

perhaps i am the copy of a copy of a copy

and my trauma is not my own.

i am full of my mother's blood - all of her illness too.

i vomit and out comes her food.

i speak and out comes her voice

and her vile attitude.

my mother swears she is not her mother

(i say that, too)

my mother holds a grudge against her mother -

but i do not hold one against my own

((though i write this poem))

i am better than my mother

even though in fights my husband tells me

i crack open my jaw

and all he hears is my mother.

perhaps he is right, perhaps i hold not only her grief but her rage.

i look in the mirror and all i see is her face.

my mother disowns her mother

and for a moment i disowned my mother too.

when every mother disowns her mother —

is it coincidence or hereditary?



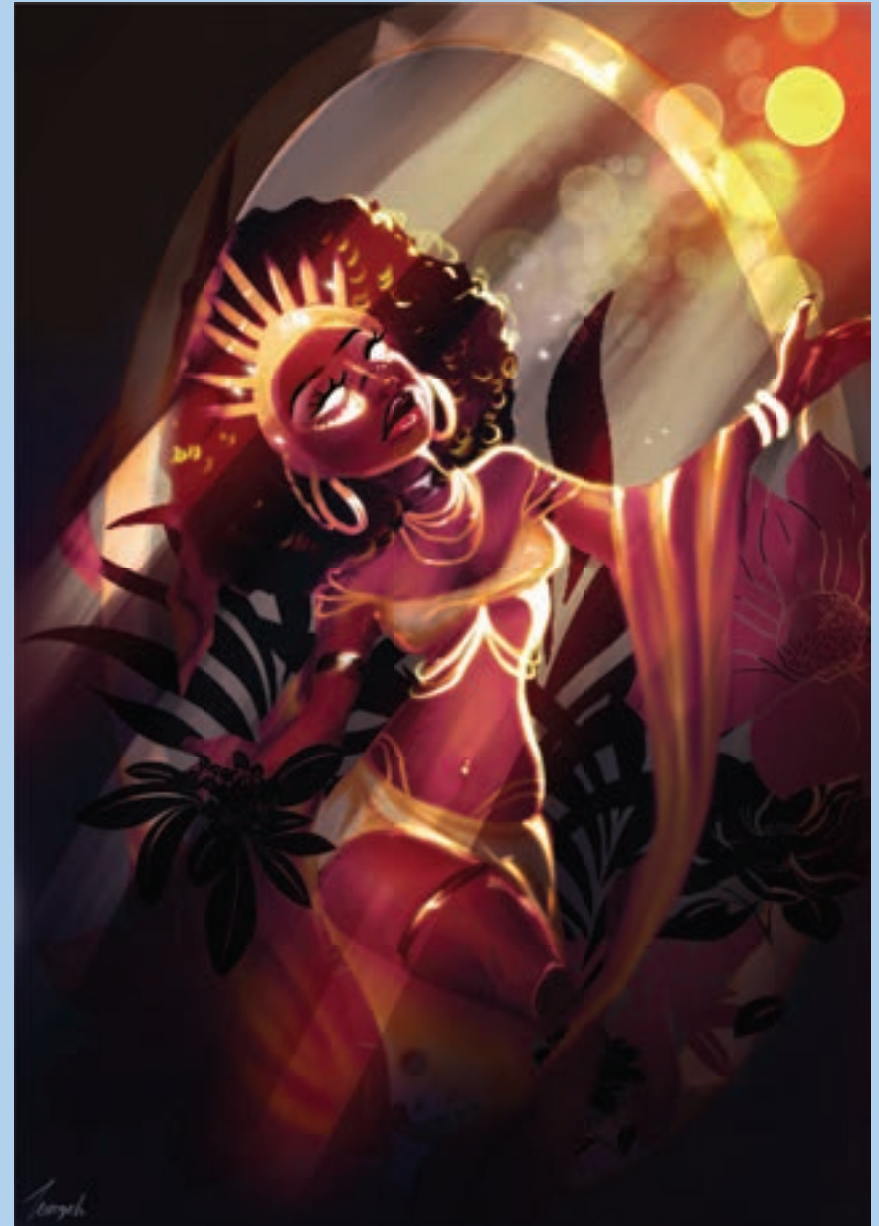
XLIX.
LOVE, RAIN, AND THE
RESTRICTION OF TIME

poetry by Catherine Howl

You sent me a vase full of tulips
 The week before we parted.
 I thought of you the night I remembered
 To bring my flower printed umbrella to class.
 I heard a subtle scatter of drops upon the roof,
 I also smelled rain filtering in from the hallway,
 A scent that seemed to clear the stale air.
 With the other students I learned
 It had been pouring while we read aloud,
 Noticing not only the body of water that formed
 Creating a restriction of time but the wall clock
 That told us when to return home.
 I left late for the metro platform,
 Growing slick as I waited alone
 For the last train. After removing my glasses
 My surroundings turned blurry, an unlikely
 Opportunity for me to see more clearly,
 That you remained in a layer of my imagination
 Saved with romantic ideas of what
 I wanted to believe
 As true,
 My only reality being
 The way I am left longing
 For you,
 As more than my muse.

L.
Goddess Woyengi

digital art by TutuArchive



LI.
The Star

🔥 photograph by Nicole Brunette



LII.
SOCIAL MEDIA
poetry by Liana Valle

When I imagine
myself feeling beautiful
i don't even picture my own face



FREE YOUR MIND BY LANEY DOYLE

LII. HYACINTHS

fiction by Amy Kenny

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Implications of a home intruder

Hannah's fiery appearance didn't seem to quite match her personality. It was the way her smile never really showed her teeth and how her mossy green eyes were never fully engaged in the conversation; like she was always thinking about something else. But of course, these small gestures were quickly glossed over with a toss of her long hair, a thoroughly convincing smile, and a laugh that sometimes even she couldn't tell was fake.

Hannah hated school. Not because of the homework, or the teachers, but because of her friends. She had first come to Lakewood High School flaunting her naturally red hair like a fashion accessory, and the group of popular kids had quickly crowded around her to tell her how pretty it was; how she was the first redhead in the school. Before she knew it, she was part of the 'in-crowd': a popular kid. Her new friends taught her what clothes to wear, what to talk about, who to avoid, and all the other things a popular kid needed to know. Now, maintaining her position was just another chore, like doing the laundry or putting the dishes in the dishwasher. Monotonous. Repetitive. Habitual. It almost faded into the background as just the way things were.

At last, she was able to bring the evening to a close, pay

the check, and summon the nearest Uber. “So much fun,” she said, giving Tyler a half-hug. But it was all an act. The instant she was alone her bright mood evaporated and she let out the sigh she had been holding back for the past hour.

God, is Tyler boring. Despite what anyone said, dating a jock got dull when the only thing he could talk about was sports. She survived the date but didn’t want to bother with the texts, the missed calls, or the picture flip books of Alyssa’s meal eaten one bite at a time she knew her phone held. She spent virtually every waking moment going to movies, texting, chatting, and plastering on a fake smirk and attitude with some “friend” or another. Her only solace was that behind her computer screen and her username, “Veritas63,” no one knew who she was. If it wasn’t for how cut-throat she knew her fellow 16-year-olds to be, she might have been able to tell Alyssa or Tyler about her love of gardening instead of only relying on the support of her faceless confidante, “Allegro42.”

The jolt from the car pulled Hannah from her thoughts, signaling she had finally returned home. Stuffing her phone into her bag, she paid the driver and trudged up the stone steps to her house as he drove away.

God, it’s already 11:30? I wonder if mom’s home, she thought as she fumbled with her key before swinging the squeaky door open and stepping inside. Noticing her mom’s keys missing from their hook by the door, she headed straight to her room, throwing her bag to the ground and falling into her desk chair in one fluid motion. *I wonder if he’ll still be on? I would have checked on my phone but...* She thought again about the notifications and social

media backlog she definitely had as her computer buzzed and whirred to life. It was much later than they normally talked, and Hannah hoped, not so secretly, that he waited for her.

Enter login information. Opening Chatrooms Anonymous.
Enter Login information.

Allegro42 status: Online.

Hannah felt her chest swell with relief as she entered the chat and immediately sent a message, “Hey, sorry it’s so late. Thanks for waiting for me!”

“No problem! It’s not like I’ve got anywhere to be.”

“Lol, I just got back, and let me tell you, it’s been a LONG day. Alyssa wanted to go shopping, so I got to get up early to spend 6 hours with her at the mall, and then Maggie called right after I got home about homework, but somehow we started talking about our new teacher’s haircut? Idk, it took forEVER and THEN I only had 45 minutes before my date with Tyler, UGH.”

“That sucks! You should have dumped him a long time ago!”

“I know, you’re right. But what would Alyssa and Maggie think if I dumped the hottest guy in school “because he has no brain?”

“Ha! It doesn’t matter what they think, they obviously don’t know you anyway. Not like I do.”

“I guess you’re right, but it’s easier with you. We’ve been talking... wow, has it been 6 months already? And... I dunno, I can tell you the truth without worrying or hiding things.” Hannah smiled, watching the three little dots incessantly appear on the bottom of her screen.



“I know. That’s because we understand each other. I know the real you, and they don’t. They don’t know you at all.”

Frowning and furrowing her brows slightly, Hannah thought, well that’s a little strange. *He’s not usually this... well, rude about things.* She took a moment before responding, “I mean, that’s a little unfair, they know me...”

“They don’t know your dad left because your mom kicked him out. They don’t know your favorite music is classical because you don’t have to listen to any words. They don’t even know you like to garden! Your hyacinths look so healthy too, you must check on them constantly. What kind of friends don’t know about something you do every day?”

Hannah’s heart seemed to stop beating as she slowly typed out her next message.

“What do you mean? I haven’t sent you any pictures since I planted those... How do you know that?”

“I know a lot about you, Hannah, because I care about you. The real you.”

“What? How do you know my name? What do you mean?” Hannah’s whole body tensed as her mind flew to her phone on the ground two feet behind her, but her eyes couldn’t move from the screen as Allegro’s messages continued.

“They don’t know you like I know you. They don’t care about you like I do.”

Hannah’s fingers shook over the keyboard as she heard the high squeak of her front door and dull thuds of someone ascending the stairs before silencing outside her door.

Veritas63 has logged off.

Veritas63 status: Offline for 217 days.



PATTERN BY ASJA COLEMAN



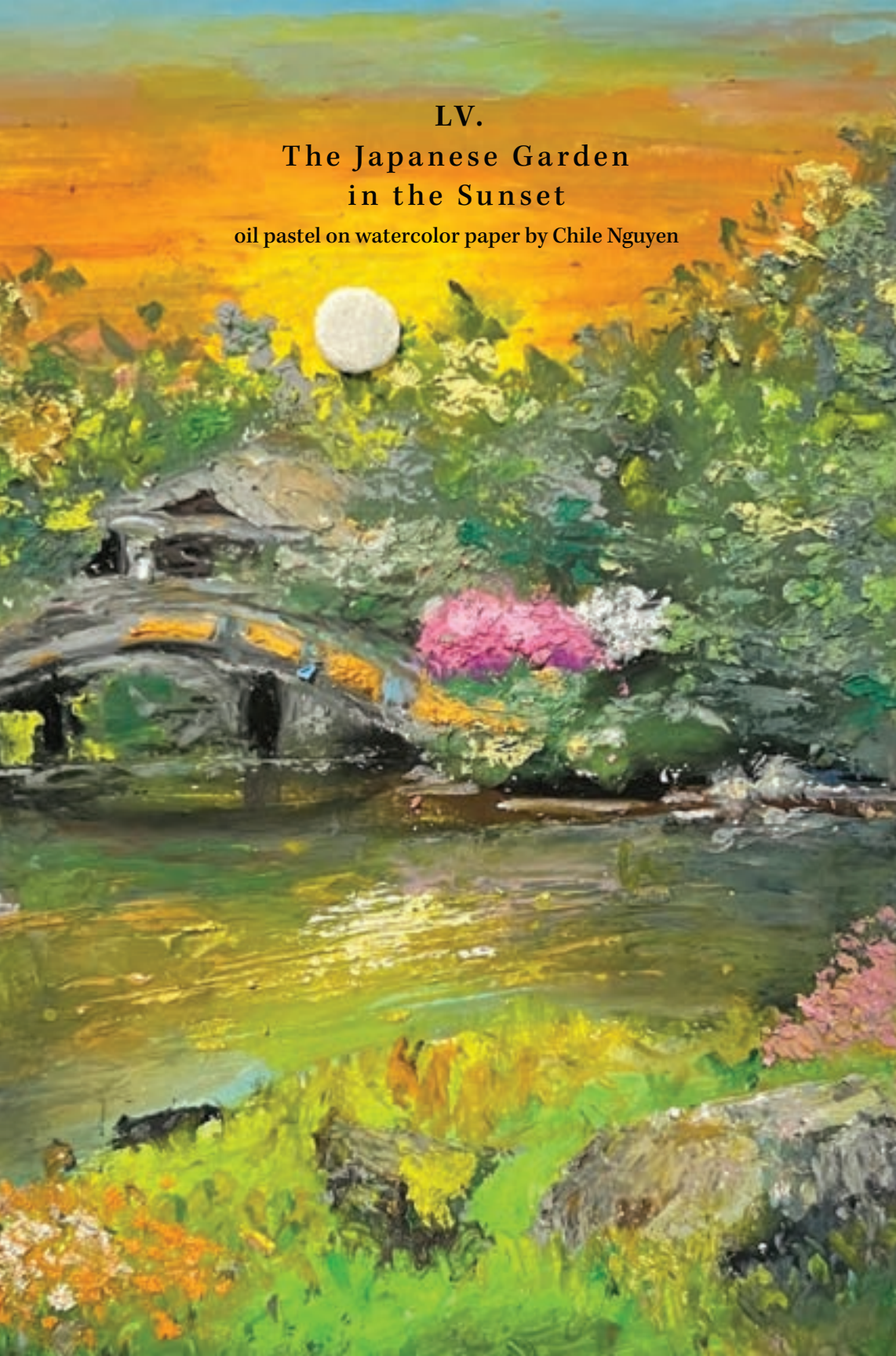
LIV.
Predictions of 2050
oil on canvas by Jess Boyer



WHAT ARE YOUR PREDICTIONS FOR 2050?

LV.
The Japanese Garden
in the Sunset

oil pastel on watercolor paper by Chile Nguyen



LVI.
POOR RED BLOSSOM TREE

poetry by Ginger Redden

Poor Red Blossom Tree—
Spring had just arrived
but Winter had to send
one more Assassin
to stomp out your Youth.

The Sky mourns your Death
as Tears fall into your Cold Hands—
Hands that were burning with
Passion and Excitement.

i stroll by the Poor Red Blossom Tree
looking in awe at the Corpse before me.
i hate that i must leave it
to suffer alone.

LVII.

MILE 38

poetry by Aurora Blanchard

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Poisoning/kidnapping

Just past the pile of green rebar
 Phoebe took off running
 Westward, slapping mile marker 38—
 The metal shimmying in the wind tunnel—
 Populating her hand with white and yellow dots
 Fading down the gravel trail
 Out in the open, an easy escape from the man in the white van

She passes a semi-circle of benches and thinks of covens,
 Outdoor classrooms, and the open sky
 Holding space for birds and fire smoke
 But instead of those things, a billboard advertising a boat show
 pulls into view

Towering above a highway
 Built on stilts over the riverbank's sweaty lagoon
 Littered with moss, QT cups, and soggy shoes
 Across from the scrap yard lined with buses
 Intended for Church on the Rock

Reclaimed by graffiti artists 1 Up, Sero, and Gayray,
 All friends or rivals under the highway bridges
 Missouri River inlets slogged to a halt
 Frozen over by the January snow,
 Trapped behind opaque glass
 Until Phoebe throws a rock
 Shattering the chrysalis as sunlight trickles through the cracks

And it's here that Phoebe stops to puke up the diner food—
 The last remnants of poison from the white van fool

No longer in danger, she puts down her hood
 Numbing her ears against the clipped breeze
 Magnified by the sound of the water rushing to the west
 Energized by the vigor of plants
 Wondering if this is how it feels to make chlorophyll
 And then it seems possible again that someone would renounce food
 Like the cult of breatharians, living on the sun, wind, and rain
 Porous to magical elements, carrying the power of destruction,
 Control, and rebirth for the human race, meanwhile petting squirrels,
 Luring lost souls who have given up
 Thoroughly exhausted, not unlike her, having nothing better to do

LVIII.
ELEANOR

fiction by Isabella Cortese

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNING: Kidnapping implications

The rain was starting to pick up. Eleanor realized that she should probably start her journey homeward. After securing her bucket hat onto her curly brown head, she rose from the curb, grabbed her glittery suitcase, and marched forward. The cold raindrops on her shoulders sent shivers down her body, reminding her of the time her mom forced her to stand outside the pool for ten minutes – drenched – after she punched her boy cousin in the nose. But it was worth it – he laughed at her mermaid tail.

Just as Eleanor was entertaining this flashback, she heard a voice call to her from behind.

“Hey there, little lady! Where are you headed?” The rough voice came out of a man whose appearance was rougher. He was standing next to a bench nearby, and Eleanor wondered how she had missed him before. She stopped in her tracks to stare at him. She had never seen such poor fashion choices before. He was wearing a dark green polo with visible holes in the seams. His curly brown chest hair emerged from an opening where he forgot to fasten a button. His sagging jeans reached past his holey shoes, getting drenched in the puddles on the sidewalk. His bare scalp was visible in patches and what little hair he had was of different

lengths and reaching every which way. He took a few steps closer to Eleanor. She noticed a bump on his large nose, like it had been broken before. She wondered, did he have no wife to tell him that he smelled?

“Home,” was Eleanor’s short response. She considered ignoring the question, but she didn’t want to look rude.

“Home? Don’t you have somebody to walk with you? A pretty girl like you shouldn’t be traveling alone, especially not in weather like this.”

Eleanor wondered why men are always so concerned about the business of girls. He reminded her of her father, who was always prying into her private life. She was nine and didn’t need an adult to supervise or tell her what to do.

“No. I am traveling alone. As I prefer.” She finished her sentence with a toss of her head.

“And where have you come from?”

“The train station. I wanted to escape. I was tired of being treated like a child,” she told him, resting her suitcase on the wet ground. She placed one hand on her hip and stared the man directly in his eyes, challenging him to pity her. He didn’t.

“Well, what changed your mind?”

“I miss my family,” was her quick and shameful confession. She focused her gaze on his shoes, embarrassed at the thought of seeming weak.

“But you just said you like traveling alone,” the weird man pressed.

“Well, I guess I lied.”

What was originally a mild shower transformed into a torrential downpour. Eleanor picked up her things and scurried underneath the nearest tree. The stranger followed.

“You know, you’re a very bright girl. You’re independent. I see why you don’t like being at home,” he told her. “You deserve to be treated as a big girl.” He crouched down in front of her, speaking eye-to-eye. Eleanor liked speaking eye-to-eye. It made her feel like his equal. Her parents never treated her as their equal; they treated her like someone without a brain, someone who couldn’t think for herself. They dictated her every move.

“Yeah, you bet.” Eleanor began to truly understand the saying about judging a book by its cover. This man was smarter than he appeared.

“Do you really want to go home?” He asked her, reaching for her suitcase. He wrapped his fingers around the handle and for some reason Eleanor loosened her grip.

“No, I guess not. They’ll just poke fun at me for leaving.”

“Exactly.”



LIX. Juicy

oil on canvas by Jess Boyer



LX.
Miniature Life
 photograph by Bailey A. Greer



LXI.
INNER CITY
 poetry by Rebecca Hanneken

I don't know how to explain
 how I grew up
 like if we were rich or poor
 But when my sister and I
 would take walks

we'd walk the few blocks over
 to the "nice" part of town
 Where the lawns were perfectly green,
 and they looked like soft blankets,
 perfectly taut
 And the neighbors would all wave
 across the street to one another
 over the barks of the dogs
 that were all "inside" dogs

Then the other way,
 just another few blocks over
 to the "bad" part of town
 to where the dented cars
 sounded like freight trains
 And hostess snack cake wrappers

and mini liquor bottles
lined the gutters
Neighbors lock themselves in
with padlocks on their gates
and with
the old comforting remark
“Well it could be fireworks”

Then home
somewhere in The Middle
where we weren't afraid to play
outside after dark
But our parents slept in the living room
of a two family flat
where we shared a room
and toys
and clothes
and sometimes we were hungry
but never for love
or laughter
or music
or a blockbuster VHS
or a secondhand uniform skirt
(for a catholic school that would withhold your diploma
if your parents were behind on tuition,
how Christ-like)

And yes, friends would spend the night
and their moms would call to check on them
(sometimes twice)
And the other girls at school would ask
“Why do you want your license”
since there's no car to drive

And yes, I'd study hard for a college
I couldn't afford to go to
and sometimes we were embarrassed
but never without love
or laughter
or a thrifted guitar
or a piano that our dad built from parts
or a prom dress that my mom sewed
with her bare, arthritic hands

I don't know how to explain
how I grew up
but when my sister and I
would take walks
we'd walk to the nice part of town
then to the bad part of town
and then home.



ARTIST AND AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

♣ **JULIETH ALBANEZ B.** is a Colombian Spanish and ESL teacher. She graduated from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana and came to the US to learn more about the English language and American culture. She decided to stay in the U.S to teach Spanish and spread her knowledge of the Colombian culture. She is currently taking additional classes at UMSL so she can teach in public schools. Thanks to one of these classes, inspiration came to write the poem “Representaciones y Representados.”

JAMIE AYDT is a rising sophomore at UMSL majoring in accounting. She is from St. Louis and works at a daycare in Ballwin, which she has so much fun doing. She loves creative writing, and both “Fugitive Beach” and “It’s Just Water” were products of Introduction to Creative Writing with Professor Watt. Jamie hopes to keep her passion for writing forever and looks forward to sharing her works here in *Litmag*.

AURORA BLANCHARD earned her BA in English at the University of Missouri - St. Louis after earning a culinary degree at The Culinary Institute of America. Her work has appeared in *Litmag* in 2021 and the *Arkansas Review*.

JESS BOYER enjoys conceptualizing her personal experiences into all things drip and dream. Oil paint in particular provides a soft texture to welcome anyone who feels called by the pieces. Follow her on Instagram @jboyerart.

♣ **NICOLE BRUNETTE** is a first-year Master of Fine Arts student at UMSL. Typically, she spends her time writing, but during the weekend, she’s out photographing St. Louis’ touring bands. The photo featured is a part of her Tarot collection of photos. Find more of her work at nicolebrunettemedia.com.

ADRI BUHSE is a student at UMSL. In August 2022, she made her first solo trip to Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, after planning to do so during the four years leading up. She went tent-camping and took many photos while walking down the Peekaboo Loop Trail.

AMY CHAMBERLAIN did not provide a biography.

ASHLIE COLBERT is an UMSL alumna with an Elementary Education BSED, with an emphasis in Middle School Education. Since Ashlie was young, she enjoyed getting lost in a good book, and later found her passion for writing when she reached middle school. She writes mostly poetry, but has recently branched out into composing short stories. “Wherever ‘Here’ Was” is a tribute to Ashlie’s mom, who passed away in 2014.

Some **BELLA CORTESE** Fun Facts: she is a junior at UMSL with a major in English and a minor in Art History. She enjoys hiking, picnics, drives with the top down, and giving high fives. Her favorite author is Oscar Wilde and she’s been listening to The Killers a lot lately. She hopes everyone has a fantastic summer.

♣ **ISABEL FLICK** is a 22-year-old Mexican American artist and poet based in Saint Louis, Missouri.

ABBY FOUST is a sophomore majoring in Business Administration. She writes in order to escape reality, and/or to procrastinate from her homework. She dabbles in many different writing styles and genres, but her favorites are her hopelessly messy YA novels. Her least favorites are academic essays, sorry, professors! Abby hopes you get some enjoyment out of her poems, or at least that they don’t make you want to claw your eyes out.



ANDREW D GALANTOWICZ is a graduating senior majoring in Criminal Justice. He enjoys cooking, drinking coffee, playing hockey, and treating his grandmother like the queen she is. His biggest accomplishment in life is coming in second place in his age group in a Girls on the Run 5k.

Originally from West Palm Beach, DANIEL J. GRASSO received his MA in philosophy from UMSL in Fall 2022. Immediately after graduation, he sold out and took a job at Boeing. To compensate, he spends his free time reading about the metaphysics of angels, walking around Forest Park, and watching pretentious movies.

BAILEY A. GREER is a child at heart who wants to soar past the moon and be president of the world. She is a student who found one of the many paths to something new and wants to share. She struggles doing taxes each year and has no idea what she wants to do when she grows up. Advice: take every opportunity you can because you never know what will help you get to the far island.

GWYNDOLYN HALL is a dedicated teacher of teenagers, both at school and at home. She is currently going back for her MFA in poetry from the University of Missouri - St. Louis. She is interested in beautiful language and feels compelled to write her own.

ISABELLE HERMAN is a junior at UMSL working towards her Bachelor's in Fine Art/Graphic Design degree. You might see her around campus carrying a fishing pole with a sign attached to the end of it. She is known to be a rambunctious person that is full of stories, ideas, and a lot of jokes. She enjoys her time with her cat Maisel, watching shows, and drawing her webtoon comic series called "GuBert Comics."

♣ JAY HOUGHTON is a St. Louis area native, and a 2022 graduate of UMSL with a BS in Supply Chain Management. He is a retired US Army veteran with multiple overseas deployments. In his free time he enjoys reading, writing, spending time with his family, and his rescue dog, Cash.

CATHERINE HOWL earned her MFA in creative writing and poetry. Since 2014, she has frequently contributed to UMSL *Litmag*. In 2017, her story "The Desert" was chosen as the "Best Fiction" contest winner. To date, it is the only piece of fiction she has ever written. Catherine was a resident of California for over twenty years. She currently lives in the Central West End of Saint Louis.

DANIEL KHAN is from Eugene, Oregon, and is finishing their BA in History, Political Science, and a certificate in Labor Studies. They are fascinated by systems of oppression and pathways to liberation; and thus, are a critic interested in rebuilding society collaboratively, truthfully, peacefully, inclusively, and in good relation with nature. They are happiest when hanging out with their partner, listening to music, and eating yummy foods.

ABIGAIL LOLLIS is an expressionistic painter, currently located with her husband and two little girls in Shiloh, Illinois. With a love for color and a desire to evoke emotion in the viewer, she has a strong interest in expressionism that is getting started.

♣ EUGENE MACLEOD has lived in the St. Louis area his entire life. He is relatively new to UMSL after going through many changes in life. He hopes that things can hold steady for a long time and he hopes to stay at UMSL. This is his first foray into creative writing. Hopefully it remains fiction.

BOB MADDEN is in his junior year at UMSL, earning his BFA in Studio Art with a Minor in Art History. He is an active member of several Student Organizations including “Artist’s Anonymous”, which works on community art projects along with creating events and opportunities for students on campus. After working with a few Non-Profit groups, Bob decided to focus on art and utilizing creative skills to bring about positive change.

IAN MCCANN is an aspiring author and artist who believes in the power of Unity, Glorious Optimism, and Radical Practically to create a kinder, more loving world.

ROXANE MCWILLIAMS is an arts educator, musician and theater artist. In her spare time, she enjoys capturing glimpses of nature through the lens of her camera. She is currently a doctoral student in education and plans to graduate this spring.

HEELA MOMAND is a third-year Psychology major at UMSL. Daughter to Afghan immigrants, she is a recipient of the Opportunity Scholars Program, a four-year scholarship dedicated to St. Louis area’s first-generation college students/students from underrepresented communities. She hopes to become a Trauma Psychologist to aid in the understanding of trauma and to secure access to mental health resources in immigrant communities. In her spare time, Heela enjoys spending time with family and friends and composing poetry and short stories.

CYNTHIA KATHRYN RICHELE NATHAN is an artist. She is going to graduate school somewhere and hopes to one day find happiness, loads of money, and a hot piece of a wonderful human being to share her dreams with.

CHILE NGUYEN is known as a traditional realist painter. Her art is a mixture of European and Japanese art, depicting her intense feelings for the great nature and the people around her. Chile uses her brushstroke technique to create texture and detailed works revealing her passion of beauty. The themes in her paintings constantly challenge the viewer to reflect on the human perception of beauty.

ZACHARY PRATT’s focus may be in applying mathematics through physics and engineering, but his love for adventure, expression, and art expanded his interests into poetry and writing. He currently serves active duty in the USMC while attending online classes in pursuit of a BS in Physics. Zach dreams of working in the aeronautical industry after he graduates, and he strives to use the lessons he has learned about compassion, hardship, time, and grief to better his community.

JEFFREY PRYOR is an UMSL Student Veteran alumni. His writings are select moments in time from his childhood to the present, as he shows us a path from “victim” to “survivor” to “thrifer.” He has been a member of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse (www.ascasupport.org) since 2013. Currently, Jeffrey is a camp host at a small campground in the mountains of Tennessee. He has plans to open a campground specifically designed for adventurers with disabilities.

DREW RYHERD enjoys trespassing, changing their mind, and spending time with their snake, Lady.

SUNNY SOBOLIK (He/They) is finishing up their second year at UMSL, looking to graduate with their BFA in Studio Arts. His focus has always been illustration, but his drive leads him to other art forms like painting, sculpture,



and printmaking. “Case of Goldfish Brains,” a self-portrait made for his final, encompasses the feeling of being overwhelmed and stupid. But at the end of the day, we are stuck with our thoughts and might as well watch them like fish.

K.C. TERRA is a Pre-Dental BCBT major at UMSL. While she strives to one day have a successful career in dentistry, writing has always been her creative outlet to not only express her thoughts, but also her personal connections to people, places, and purpose. She hopes that her poetic pieces touch the hearts and souls of readers like her.

As a digital artist, TUTUARCHIVE has recently been experiencing a creative block and self-doubt about their abilities. He worries that his art style is inconsistent and that he’s not good enough. To reignite his passion, he plans to share his work and remind himself that his art doesn’t define him as an artist. He’s determined to push through his fears and continue exploring the wonderful world of art, regardless of any setbacks he may encounter.

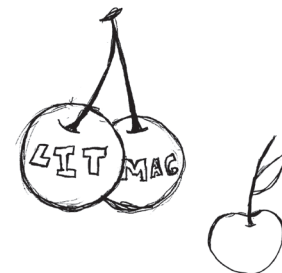
LIANA VALLE is a model, singer, actress, and artist. She has been writing poems since the second grade and songs since she could sing. She carried her poem book wherever she went, and found inspiration everywhere. She wrote her first book all throughout high school and the start of college, and she is currently working on her second edition. Dreaming big, she hopes to pursue her artistic endeavors and bring light, hope, and education to everyone.

R. G. WEISMILLER enjoys the art of storytelling and entertaining readers. After more than forty years in the Information Technology field, he is living his life-long dream as a full-time writer. He is grateful to *Litmag* for selecting his story. This is his second story published in the magazine. “The Bells of San Bernardino” appeared in the 2014/2015 edition. The author appreciates all constructive criticism and may be reached at rgwstl@gmail.com.

TAYLOR WEINTROP is a St. Louis native and second-year graduate student working towards her masters in English composition and rhetoric at UMSL. She is currently a GTA in the English department who splits her time between teaching one section of First-Year Writing and working as a consultant in the Writing Center. Besides reading and writing, Taylor loves being outdoors, watching hockey, and playing with her pets. Lastly, Taylor thanks the *Litmag* staff for their hard work.

ABIGAIL WETTEROFF studies English at UMSL. She writes. She has hobbies. If you enjoy her work, you should consider sending an enthusiastic testimony to your connections in the media industry, of which you, reader, surely have many.

STANLEY WILLIAMS is a junior at UMSL and is pursuing a Graphic Design degree. He recently started getting into 3D modeling and 3D animation and really enjoys adding it to his graphic design elements whenever he can.



STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**FIRST ROW - PR COMMITTEE (LEFT TO RIGHT):**

Lily Tredway, Jayla McDonald, Samantha Peters

SECOND ROW - PRODUCTION COMMITTEE:

Olabode Fatoki, Ozoya Alao, Steve Harvey, Amy Kenny

THIRD ROW - SUBMISSIONS & COPY EDITING COMMITTEE:

Sarah Hartung, Ginger Redden, Mars Taylor, Rebecca Hanneken

FOURTH ROW - FACULTY ADVISOR:

Kate Watt

OZOYA ALAO is a Senior and an English major at UMSL, a lover of fiction and fantasy, and has had a deep passion for reading and writing from an early age. He has been trapped in the *Litmag* classroom for weeks on end, and dear God somebody let him out.

OLABODE FATOKI is a Senior and Liberal Arts Major at UMSL. He prefers non fiction over fiction. He's excited about graduating and grateful for the positive experience that is *Litmag*. He strongly recommends that anyone with an interest in editing take the course and contribute.

REBECCA HANNEKEN is Senior majoring in English, also completing her Creative and Professional Writing Certificate. She loves to read and listen to music, and she thinks the new boygenius album is really good. She's a crazy dog lady and loves her dogs more than her husband (Not really but kind of). She thanks Mars for teaching her a lot about economics this semester and for encouraging her to keep contributing to her Roth IRA.

SARAH HARTUNG is a Senior at UMSL and majoring in English. She graduates this spring and is excited to start her next adventure. Most of her life revolves around school but she takes care of her dog Maisie. Sarah is a big foodie and loves to discover new places.

When **STEVE HARVEY** isn't working towards completing his Creative Writing Certificate from UMSL, he's either watching sports, TV/movies, playing video games or reading anything from novels to manga, and anything in-between. He will be attending UMSL in Fall 2023 as a graduate student seeking to complete an MFA in Creative Writing. His professional goals are centered around the idea of being paid to "make stuff up all the time."



AMY KENNY loves animals, singing, video games, and drinking tea while it rains... oh, and creative writing! She's a psychology major with a strong passion for writing and an appreciation for all of the arts. She has always loved creating poems and stories and plans to continue exploring her literary skills while pursuing a Ph.D. in social psychology. She highly recommends *Litmag*, especially to people who read all the way to the Staff Biographies!

JAYLA MCDONALD is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology with a professional writing certificate this Spring. After graduation, she is pursuing a career in law as an attorney. *Litmag23* is one of her favorite highlights, a journal that reflects the heart and humility of UMSL students across campus. Jayla is also excited about being present as the lead character in her story and seeing where the next chapter takes her.

SAMANTHA PETERS is a Junior at UMSL majoring in English and is pursuing a career in Journalism. When she's not at school, she loves to go to concerts, play with her dog, Luna, and explore new places in St. Louis.

GINGER REDDEN is a lover of poetry, and an aspiring poet herself. They graduate UMSL in May with their bachelor's degree in English, with hopes of continuing their education towards a master's in library sciences. Outside of these passions, they enjoy video games, seeing what's new on Netflix, and exploring the world of music. In the future, Ginger would like to pursue a career as a copyeditor or a librarian.

MARS TAYLOR is a sophomore studying for her bachelor's degree in English and Economics. She enjoys writing, reading, knitting, and making a playlist for every situation. After getting her bachelor's degree, she plans on applying to graduate school and studying literature, creative writing, and economics further. Being a part of *Litmag* has allowed her to explore the creative side of curating literature. She's grateful for the new skills she's learned from working on the magazine.

LILY TREDWAY is graduating with an English degree this spring. She hopes to work in editing and publishing in New York after graduation. Outside of school, she is either with her niece and nephew, planning her dream garden, or thrift shopping. She loves blueberry macarons, Frank Ocean, and sitting on the beach.

KATE WATT has been the advisor for *Litmag* since 2013. When she isn't teaching, she enjoys writing poetry, coaching youth sports, gardening, and eating ice cream for dinner. Dogs, especially Great Danes, are also a favorite. She is currently a poetry editor for *Great Lakes Review* and interim Writing Program Administrator at UMSL.

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TO BREATHE.

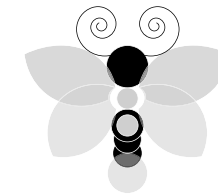




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English 4895 Editing *Litmag* is offered every spring as part of the English Department's Writing Certificate Program. For students interested in creative writing, professional editing, and publishing, this class provides an internship-like experience that can also be used as a capstone for the certificates. Supervised by a faculty advisor, students in these courses are able to take charge and experience the full scope of creating *Litmag*, from fundraising, solicitation, marketing and promotions, copy editing, document and graphic design, distribution, and publicity. Fall internships may also be available by contacting Kate Watt at katewatt@umsl.edu or Jeanne Allison at allisonjea@umsl.edu.

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