



NIMBUS

spring 2015

All contents of the Nimbus, the Wagner College literary arts magazine, are accepted by anonymous judging. Works are selected based on content, originality and craftsmanship. While we would like to accept and publish all works we receive, please keep in mind that our publication is like any other: we function by budgetary constraints and certain editorial standards. If your work was not accepted for this issue, it should not discourage you from submitting in the future. Please be aware that since Nimbus is an uncensored magazine, some content may not be appropriate for all readers.

Thank you.

Cover art: Lauren Citarella

N I M B U S

spring 2015

(Noun) 1. An aura or halo surrounding a person or thing of literary quality.



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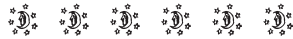
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Letters from the Editors



Well, this is it. My last semester, and my fourth and final Nimbus. I'm proud of each of these issues, and thrilled that I could be a part of this wonderful Wagner tradition.

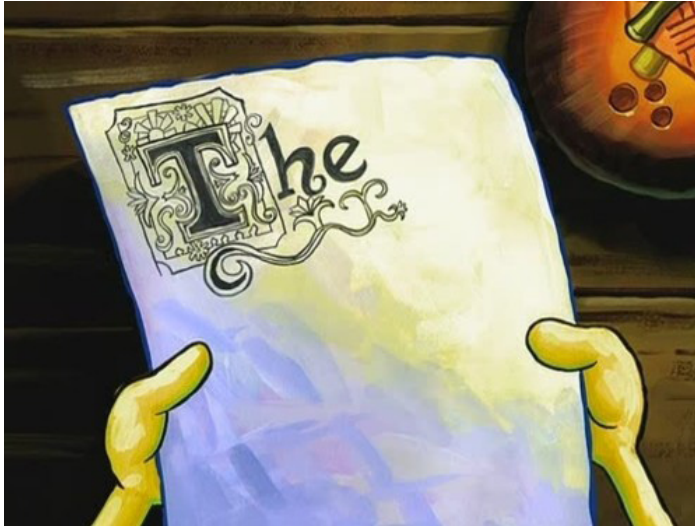
This Nimbus is perhaps the most...unorthodox we've released. There's a lot of stuff in here that we normally wouldn't include, but we tried to do something a little different this semester. Some eyebrows might be raised and heads might be scratched, but that's exactly what this issue is aiming for. I think people will really like how it came out. And I hope that for all its quirky charm, this edition will stand out as a memorable "odd duck" in the Nimbus family.

I must credit the peculiar beauty of this issue to the faithful Nimbus staff, our featured artist Lauren Citarella for her marvelous artwork, and all those who bravely submitted. I'd like to especially thank my senior staff for keeping this issue afloat. We've had a hell of a time working together (and oftentimes not working when we should be). Kellie, you've been an amazing design editor and a repeat lifesaver. Abby and Shannon, I'll miss being your sleepless leader, but I know I'm leaving the Nimbus in capable and caring hands. I'd also like to thank Professor Needle for his selfless involvement, as well as Curtis Wright and Maddy Sliger for always supporting us.

I am so grateful to have had this experience, and I will always keep the Nimbus in my heart.

Tom Scarcella, *Editor-in-Chief*

Letters from the Editors



SpongeBob SquarePants™

Also, I would like to give thanks to my amazing senior staff of Tom, Abby and Shannon, and my design team of Anna and Ariana. Without you guys, this issue would not be half as “gret” as it is. You’re all amazing and I’m so glad that I was able to share the Nimbus experience with you guys.

Joining Nimbus has been one of the best decisions I have made during my undergraduate career, and I am forever grateful to this school, staff, and of course, submitters for making this magazine what it is. I’m so proud of all we have accomplished and I have “total faith” in Abby and Shannon’s ability to continue the legacy.

Kellie Gainey, *Design Editor*

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An Extremely Short Story

Maddie McKnight

I grew up in a country home in a suburb of a city that was never supposed to be more than a river town.

I own cowboy boots. Real ones, the kind ya find at a feed store. I spent most of my childhood days barefoot and running on what felt like an endless plot of land. Barefoot is how I liked to spend most of my time; that remains true to this day. I spent my nights in my dad's workshop covered in grease and working on cars, accumulating only enough knowledge to identify tools and not much more.

I grew up with God in an Irish Catholic home with an Irish Catholic mother and a Mormon father with a good Christian heart. That's what my family was about: heart. It never mattered the size of the man, but the fight within him. Least that's what Daddy taught me.

I fell in love with a country boy who had the deepest urge to defend his country. So that's what he did. He went to war despite protest. Just about nothing could get through that thick skull of his. At least he was proud.

I worked job after job for minimum wage with even more minimal self-respect. I held out hope that so long as I believed it was temporary, then I was fine.

I liked picking up and moving to somewhere I barely knew. A new town, a new state; it didn't matter where. Not because I was running from my past but because it was...fun. It was self-discovery in its purest form. Not a challenge, not from fear, but because I could. Nothing felt better than packing up my bags, getting in my truck, and putting the car in drive.

Chasing a Dream in Trafalgar

Casey Schweitzer





One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Nicholas "Fuckin" Woodman

They called me crazy, Caroline.
The man in the white coat said so.
I could smell the aftershave on his breath
As he knelt beside my bed,
His voice dripping with contempt.

They told me that you'd fade away
With a well-rounded breakfast,
Proloxin, and Thorazine.
You mocked their foolish sentiments
As you leaned against my nightstand
And the stash of pills in my top drawer
Began to overflow.

I led them on as best I could,
But even actors flub a line;
The man in the white coat said that too.
I saw you cackle as he spoke
Your eyes hot coals in filtered light.

He said the ECT would feel
Like counting twenty sheep before
Slumber whisks them to other pastures.
But I saw you pressed against the door,
A thin slit of blood on your throat.
You mouthed a word: Was it “no”?
It was, in fact – you told me so
Afterwards, your singed hair rubbing
Against the pulsing veins in my head.

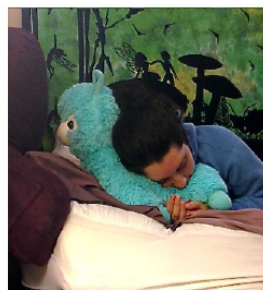
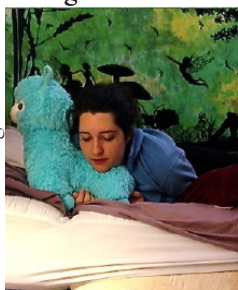
You came and went for weeks, I think,
With a swollen cheek one time
And a broken arm the next.
You were always a stubborn one.
Forever fearless, you felt no pain
Even as I watched you wither away.

But you’ve recovered, Caroline,
Back from the grave, a zombie bride
For a dejected, lunatic groom.
Reunited through a drawer
Once more overstuffed with pills,
And the penmanship of a man
In a white lab coat, looking grim,
Relinquishing me to a world
Occupied by only you and I.

Sarah Riley



Angela D'Amico College



Telos

Trevor Krafnick

We are art in our way
Both the expression and the noun
We are so conceptual
Something put us together
God
The universe
Natural order
In some way we were made
Stardust and galactic expansionism
Manifest destiny
We are the manifestation of progress
Literally
We have evolved from something
Some ooze and dust and slime
And some celestial paint brush
Some chisel to our raw marble states
Bones shaped from clay
Veins of oil
I am the impression of a human
Neoclassical man
Some Renaissance of ancient regimes
I am an empire
I am history and politics
I am language and the headwater of science
I am art
I grow and shape myself
A cast of reality
An imitation of the earth
Soil and breath
Air fire water earth aether spirit
I am the Big Bang
I am the Mona Lisa
We are art in our way
And every artist that loves or dies
We are art
And what is art for?

Follow

Connor Dobson

I sleep with the lights on
Even in the day
My fear is not that there is something in the dark,
Something in the black
But that there is nothing
No other heartbeat in the space
No one like me
No one to dance with,
No one to look upon me with empathetic eyes
But please, if you are there, turn on the lights
Do what I cannot do
Find what I cannot find
Be what I cannot be
Light a path for yourself, if not for me
Do what you can and I will merely hope that I can come with you
That I can follow the light you have
Hoping, just hoping that I can make such light as you

Goshen

Kellie Gainey





Erynn Turk

Here

mjr

Where the voices of the earth wake
before light floods the mountains—
Where hot, heavy air is laden with
dust and truth—
Where teeth gleam both joyous healing
and great loss—
Belonging here, where people timelessly
exist in a limited forever—
Where textured tongues mingle in
sonorous percussion—
And where days are measured in spiced breaths
and barefoot miles.

Here
Where mystery still dances in the starred
voodoo nights—
Where morals are malleable as
mud-masked visages—
and sweat drips
just to prove it can.

"Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Kellie Gainey

Face down in an alleyway that reeks of vomit and piss
(that may or may not be mine)
No one is quite sure when and where my left ear went missing
or my front teeth or my littlest toes on both my feet
But we all remember when she started shooting the heroin straight in my jugular
(because she got tired of draining the abscesses from skin popping)

And I'm pretty sure she left the needle in
And I'm pretty sure I'm bleeding out
And I'm pretty sure many regret nominating me for
"Most Likely to Travel the World"
"Most Likely to Receive the Nobel Peace Prize"
"Most Likely to Not Die in an Alleyway
Hopped Up On Drugs"

but they can go fuck themselves.

Kelly Glenn



A Leap of Faith

Tom Scarcella

I looked down anxiously at the 7-foot abyss. It seemed an impossible plummet despite the innocuous surroundings.

Tim and I were teenagers nearing our twenties, hanging out in a Staten Island playground known unofficially as the “Pirate Ship Park.” Younger kids and bored teens alike all enjoy the park’s pirate-themed bounty of jungle gyms, swingsets, bridges and chin-up bars. On this crisp, carefree November afternoon, Tim and I had been having a blast romping through the park, reliving our childhood. We might have been a little too old, but we didn’t give a shit; we knew those kinds of outings were coming to an end. But the momentum of the day came to a gripping halt when he discovered a little secret of mine: I had never ridden down the fireman’s pole.

Now, I have a mild muscular disability. This has made some physical maneuvers, easy for most people, either difficult or impossible for me. So, I had always preferred the slide as a quick exit. The fireman’s pole, ever since I was a kid, had seemed scary, something other kids could do that I couldn’t; so I tended to ignore its existence. But Tim—that good ol’ larger-than-life, orange-haired Tim—was determined I experience it that day.

“I just can’t do it,” I protested.

“Dude, yes you can,” Tim insisted.

“No, I really don’t think I’m like...physically capable.”

“That’s a lotta shit. It’s all in your mind, man.”

Tim had total confidence in my abilities, but a familiar black doubt anchored me in place.

“It’s so much fun dude,” he encouraged. “What’s the worst that could happen?” The red-bearded swashbuckler rode it down himself, quite gracefully even with his great heft.

Tim meant well, and a part of me believed he was right. But I remained still. Willing, but oddly terrified.

I might not often “look disabled,” but there’s a lot my body can’t do. Yet in this case, as much as Tim didn’t understand my physical limitations, I didn’t either. I’ve never had much of a problem with the things I knew I couldn’t do: running fast, lifting heavy things, beating the shit out of people, etc. It’s these instances, where I’m unsure of my capabilities, that can really get to me. Was my body truly unable to manage this diabolically simple (*or simply diabolical*) pole? Or was it just the flight instinct?—a gut response to simply avoid it because I was unsure. The height itself didn’t seem too bad, but I just wasn’t confident in the ability of my scrawny jalopy body to coordinate the way it should.

As I stood in uneasy hesitance, agonizing over the absurdity of my predicament, a spirited little girl who looked about seven jetted past me and slid down the pole with glee. I knew I had to make the damn leap.



Once my task was set and my mind begrudgingly resolved, a tedious run of aborted attempts began. I would dash to the precipice, hoping the sheer momentum would take me over, but I couldn’t seem to break through the thick membrane of apprehension. It was as if I kept hitting an impenetrable, invisible wall.

“C’mon already,” Tim groaned after about ten of these fruitless efforts. But each time I reached the edge, almost ready to make the leap, my mind would go haywire:

“How do I hold onto this? What do I do with my feet? Ugh—*fuck*. I’m too fucking fragile for this shit, man. I can’t do it.” Different forms of this uncertainty circled through my mind and sputtered through my lips as I seesawed between sliding and quitting.

Weary but hell-bent, Tim did everything he could to get me to jump past my insecurities. Soon he showed me the physical mechanics step-by-step, which most able-bodied minds can intuit and execute without much thought at all. So with his guidance, I gave it a heartier try. Trembling a little, I leaned forward and grabbed on to the accursed beam. Step one. Then I extended my right foot, with my black Nike sneaker making timid contact with the smooth silver. Almost there.

“There you go!” Tim said. “Now just put your left foot out and gravity will do its work.”

I sent the message to my left foot, but it felt cemented to the floor. I tugged and tugged, but couldn’t budge it. I tried switching feet to no avail, and then tried dashing away pathetically with great success.

This happened an embarrassing number of times. Though Tim was still supportive, this indecision grew to test his patience: “Don’t be a pussy, man. Just fuckin’ do it already.”

Nope. I was a cowering mess. My brain and stomach were in oceanic tumult. What started as a vaguely unsettling physical prospect, in a playground of all places, triggered deeply rooted insecurities that made me feel like some helpless child. Leaping forth and giving up both seemed nonviable, so I was stuck doing a terrible, ceaseless dance between the two.



The day dragged on and a tedious evening crept upon the Pirate Ship Park. I kept trying and failing. At one point, a small crowd gathered to see if I’d make the leap, exacerbating my anxiety. But they dispersed

when I refused to give them what they wanted, furthering the awkward anticlimax. After an unsuccessful couple of hours (yes, it really was hours), Tim had enough.

“Whatever man,” Tim said after a long while, tired of my ridiculous wavering. “Let’s just go home.”

And at that instant, the switch finally turned. The shackles broke. Faced with his giving up, I was strangely re-energized. I can disappoint myself and be fine, but disappointing others is absolutely unbearable. Tim had tried all day in full faith to get me to go down that blasted pole; I couldn’t just let him down like that. Plus, always literary-minded, I realized that the drama of the scene was set: I had to make the jump, lest the day’s narrative be utterly spoiled. So I paused, and relaxed a little. I breathed in all the courage I could...held it, held it...and exhaled the thick entanglement of mental fog into the wind. Residual distress loomed in the corners of my mind, but I was ready.

“No,” I proclaimed. “I don’t wanna leave yet. I got this.” He gave a slow, quiet nod.

There I was, a brave prisoner aboard the pirate ship, about to walk to the plank. Slowly (and with all appropriate melodrama), I approached the tormenting edge. Gentle autumn air nudged me forward. I looked at the fireman’s pole—darkened by the sky but glowing in my gaze—and I refused to let my mind turn back on. Intrepidly I hugged the cold metallic symbol of my indecision, leaned forward, put one foot out, and yes, finally, freed the other...

I gave my weight to the gods of gravity, and crashed to the ground in humiliating futility.

The deed was done, but far from a success. Time didn’t slow. The fall was clumsy and far too fast. My legs buckled in the botched landing, so my ass took the blow. The physical pain was negligible, but that wasn’t what really hurt. What should have been a smooth and triumphant

glide—a sweet little victory for the power of mind-over-matter and believing in oneself—turned out to be the exact opposite. It was a blistering defeat, a stinging confirmation of limitation.

“Hey dude, that was awesome!” Tim said shakily, as if feigning excitement over some terrible Christmas gift. “The technique was a little off, but you gotta just try again and it’ll be perfect. You ain’t hurt, right?” he added, helping me up.

“No, I’m fine. Just gimme a fuckin’ boogie, dude.” I was done. A broken Sisyphus, I did not feel like trying anymore.

Evening had faded into night. With resigned sympathy, Tim handed me a Marlboro Red. We left the playground and smoked in silence on our way back to his car.

Blessed Tim, he really tried.



Desperate to be Seen - Outside the Middle School

Casey Schweiger

✿ A Perfect Picture

Abby Creem



Editor's note:

This picture is even more perfect upside down.

A Perfect Poem

Dr. Marilyn Kiss

A poem entered my consciousness,
uninvited, unintended, but full-blown.

It arrived softly, slowly, taking its place
among the synapses, easing itself home.

The stanzas came, and the verses.

Rhyme was absent but there were
other attributes.

Several similes came rolling in, like clouds
across a late afternoon sky.

Onomatopoeia, sibilance, metonymy,
synecdoche, and of course, metaphor
swept gently across the tangle of neurons,
overpowering sleep, erasing dreams,
an invasion of vowels and consonants.

It was the perfect poem.

It would be read, memorized, and recited.
It would be taught in classes across the land.
It would win prizes, receive accolades, live on
in anthologies and reprints and collections.

Starlings chirped.
Light entered the bedroom.
The dog licked my face.

The poem disappeared
as I rubbed the dog's tummy.

The Grammar of Love

Anonymous

8:45 PM,
“i really miss you...”

12:43 AM,
“Miss you too.”

...??

~Type~

Darling,
The omitted pronoun speaks volumes.
This may be a ridiculous subject,
But is *me* the true object of your desire?
Although it's just a fragment, you've given me a sentence,
So I am imprisoned for the period being.

O enlightened Polyphemus, your I is missing,
And on this fact, I must capitalize.
If I may be so bold, I often wonder if I'm really your type.
But then again, it could merely be the way that you type.
Do these keys unlock the door of your heart's (caps) lock?

Darling,
I don't mean to be a possessive apostrophe,
Clinging to you like a comma,
But the question mark on our love is unbearable.
And it's making me feel tense.
So, here's my exclamation!

The game of love is just a mad dash,
And I feel like I've been punched in the colon.
Thus I beg you heed my preposition—er, proposition:
Fully embrace the active voice: write, "I miss you too!"
...But, no, even in the margins, I will be passive.

Here is my shift in thought:
I do not want to control you,
I just want to return to the way things were.
But here I am aching, and I feel there's no escape.
So, I guess I'll just start a tab at the space bar.


And to save what we have, I'll undo all I've typed so far...

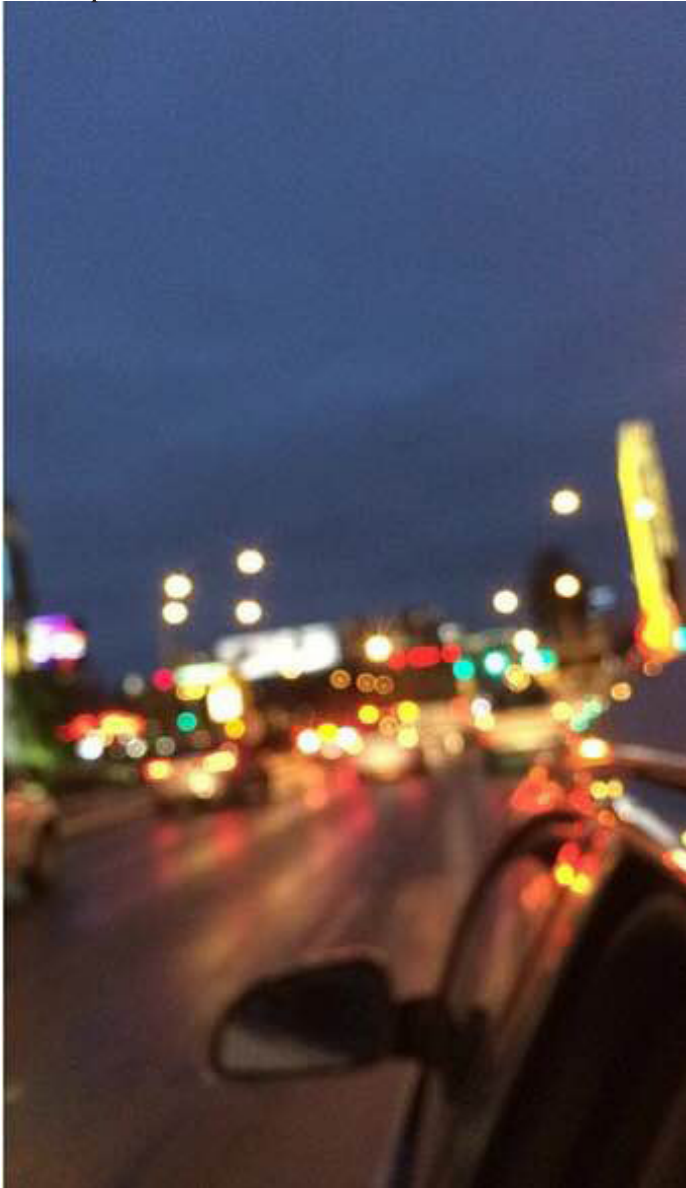
~Delete delete delete delete delete~

12:59 AM,
"<3 word. well i'm pretty tired. goodnightt"



Casey Schweiger

Kellie Gainey  The Strip



Bitty Bubble

Kelsey Hopland



Looking Up

Michael Rucci

Sometimes you get so high
You don't realize
That you're in your mind
Feel so sick
Like death's tight grip
Illusions that could hypnotize
You think you're done
Days left: none
But you begin to the lies
You're not blind
The truth you'll find
We're all just playing pretend
You've just got to remind yourself
"It's all in my fucking head"
And all of it always was
Social fabrications
Words
That's all that's ever separated us
Too concerned with what we aren't
Instead of what we are
Who we are
Comparison by negation
Idiotic ego inflation
Wondering if I am
And if I am what am I
And if I am what I am who am I
How am I
Where am I
Why is any of this
Instead of just being
Whatever it is you are

Human beings
Spend far too much time
Wondering why things are
Rather than just letting them be
We would find out
That a lot less people
Are out to get each other
Than we think
If we stopped trying to
Rationalize our lies
Make sense of our lives
And start living them
We'd be immortalized
Because a blissful life
Feels like forever
And death becomes
A cold, new friend
Who you won't mind sharing your jacket
Just as day and night begin
So must they end
So that they may begin again
For that is the way of all things
No energy is wasted
Plants prosper and shrivel
Seas rise and fall
And even volcanoes must sleep
But it all comes back again
The way walking is a repetitive motion
One foot in front of the other
So must the next step be taken
Why else would we
Have eyes in front
If we were not meant to look forward
This does not mean history is unimportant

But what it teaches us
Is how far we've come
The mistakes we've made
The trials we've faced
Our small triumphs
And surprisingly
Mankind's greatest threat
Has always been itself
No creature on earth
Has killed more people
Than people
This the very reason
For politics of every kind
For warfare on all fronts
Religion is all its forms
For mental and social decay
And in our wake
We leave ruins
Battlegrounds
Broken cities
Nuclear wastelands
History
Slowly destroying
Our only home
So eager to leave
Like angry adolescents
People need only to protect themselves
From those that wish them harm
For their own selfish gain
Refuse the people no weapon
And if we all end up killing each other
Good
The strong will protect the weak
And all that will be left

Will be the lovers
Those who want only to share
And to be shared
To enjoy what exists
While it exists
This is a natural state
The mind knows this
But society does not
All the walls that exist
Have been built
They're all in your fucking head
That's what it was
Trying to tell you
That feeling that
Keeps you coming back
Lighting up
Because the flame
Reminds you of your life
The way it flickers and disappears
Just another ruse
For even when the flame retires
It still exists
In some new way
Molecularly different
But things are supposed to change
And we are supposed to deal
Because even if we ignore this fact
It will continue in this way regardless
In the circular motion
It always has
Infinite, Eternal
There is no god
Because god is everything

Casey Schweiger 🦌 Camouflage



Erynn Tuerk



3:28 AM

mjr

Under the whole-punched sky,
my nymphomaniac and I, half doze
on the ferry at this blasphemous time of night.
Sailing with the Loonies and the Fools,
we trip over our toes and tongues into
Naked, Noted, Never Forgotten.
Obsession rears its ugly head



Patricia Zappone

Campaign

Lauren Klein

For who is it that willingly locks their minds away from the colors filling the window frame and loosens their breast of the deep pressures from vivid laminations of marble relations following the third day of their death-bed on the side of waking up early?

Wallow from the pits of your peaches on the tree in the yard resting on a hill I am searching for those small things wet and burrowed and crawling in the earth because my fingers are itching with unknown curiosity and shadowy nervousness.

Bombs of moisture hit my shoes from the somewhere high above notions that we are alone and offer no explanation for the clouds in the distance or for their rocking screams or for the moo-cows giving birth to their calves in the dead of night thick furred in the snow.

Younger than you I would step into an animal gorge, light as air and pale as a star, there were followers lingering in my footsteps and I ran from them lost but illuminated the branches reached for me in anguish and I collected myself in them quite comfortably.

Black and cold the limbs chip and tarnish as the basement fills secretly with outdoor ice moaning about the grand hotel ballroom once carpeted in red and gold embroidery silky as the robe of queens and kings in the halls of castles and foreign lands of plenty.

It had a memory once that it remembered belonging to someone it knew long ago who had tripped into a life off the path that was drawn for it around the familiar roads of home looking to grasp the twilight amongst the yew and scratching rough skin on quiet walks alone.

Weeping into the arms of a lover heat and breath steam from their mouths and cries hit the air dregs of their hopes are hardening and the passing train never stopped to take them far great plains of destiny tangle in the storm whipped winds and the memories, the memories run.

Gravels hit below my calloused feet in the dry air of desert sun orange and brown like I thought under the waves I swim with my tongue wrapping around particular facts which seem certain gobble down on red flounder that sing soft tunes in bubble language beneath the monolith.

Harness the whispers floating in the hollow scraped out of the throats of angels and birds with soft wings made of feathers and soot all around their feet from the fire sprinkle the sorrows around the globe like an Olympian with direction and power unknown.

There could be a reminder in the leaves that have fallen about a lesson taught in Sunday school and it buzzes around the lobes of children at the park making sand castles and stirring stews plump hands and lips are moist and sticky with potential of growing into the world.

In the Shadow of St. Paul's 



Casey Schweigter

House Hunting

Anonymous

They *ALWAYS* say: "when it happens...you'll know"

This _____
Doesn't seem like *love*

But how else could I explain

These *b u t t e r f l i e s* in my stomach

A **violent** heart, **raging** against my ribcage

The perpetual turning and churning of a simultaneously,
vacuous mind.

Is there no better word?
To describe this

Falling
F a l l i n g

F
a
l
l
i
n
g

Someone once told me:
love isn't found

It's
♥
B U
I L T

But it sure feels
Like I stumbled into you

I still don't know what *love* is
But of this I am certain:

H O
M E

is no longer a place
it's a person.

Christopher Rucci



One in the Chamber

Nicholas "Fuckin'" Woodman

Jackson awoke in a bare, windowless room. The walls, ceiling, and floor were of pure concrete, gray and cold. A dim lightbulb fixed in the center of the ceiling was the only source of light. A coarse wooden table and two metal folding chairs were the only furnishings. On the back wall hung a small white clock, ticking loudly with each movement of its second hand.

He was seated in one of the folding chairs, facing the clock. Across from him sat a man. He wore a brown tweed hat and suit, and a red tie knotted in a half-windsor. All of his features were a hazy black, translucent like a frosted glass window. He had no discernible eyes, nose, or mouth. Resting on the table between both parties was a loaded Smith & Wesson. The barrel of the gun was pointed away from both parties.

Jackson was too confused to speak. He had not expected to end up here. He looked at the shadowy figure expectantly, hoping that he would speak. But the figure remained silent. He waited for the figure to move, but that, too, was futile.

The room sat still. The only noise was the ticking clock and a low, monotonous hum coming from the lightbulb.

Jackson finally gathered enough energy to speak. "Where am I?" he asked.

"The Chamber," the figure replied, after a pause. His voice was a low rumble, like distant thunder.

"Why am I here?"

The figure laughed. "You know exactly why."

"No," Jackson said indignantly. "I don't."

"What's the last thing you remember?"

Jackson's face flushed. Suddenly ashamed, he couldn't find it in himself to speak. He turned away from the figure.

“Don’t be shy,” the figure continued. “Speak.”

Jackson took a deep breath. He spoke deliberately: “I was in my room. Nobody was home. I was feeling low, and there was a bottle of pills sitting on my dresser...”

“You overdosed,” the figure interrupted.

“Yes.”

“You woke up here.”

“Yes.” Jackson turned back towards the figure. “Why?”

“When you attempt to take your own life, one of three things can happen. The first is, obviously, that you fail. In that case, you go on living as you normally would have – perhaps changed by the experience, perhaps not. The second is that you succeed, and are one-hundred percent certain that you are making the right choice. In that case, you go on to your own constructed afterlife, whatever that may be. The third is where I come in.”

The figure paused momentarily for effect, sweeping his hand around the room in a dramatic gesture.

“You were sent to this room because you expressed doubts about taking your own life, whether you were consciously aware of those thoughts or not. I’m here to provide you with a second chance. If you wish to die...”

On cue, the pistol rose up from the desk, and rotated itself so that its barrel was eye-level with Jackson.

“...place the pistol in your ear and pull the trigger. There’s only one bullet in the chamber, but I can assure you that you will not miss. If, of course, you wish to live, please place the pistol back on the desk. You will wake up in your room slightly dazed, but otherwise intact.”

Jackson contemplated this for a second. “If I wake up,” he asked, “Will my parents know?”

“They’ll be none the wiser. For all they know, when they came home you were fast asleep. Of course, if you pull the trigger, they’ll find you dead the next morning.”

Jackson glanced at his palms and realized they were sweating.

“I don’t remember having any doubts,” Jackson stammered.

“Ah, but you did,” the figure replied.

The wall in front of Jackson shimmered. Before he could react, the grey concrete turned transparent. He could see his room, clear as day, as though he were looking out a large bay window.

“Come,” said the figure. He held out his hand. Instinctively, Jackson grabbed it, letting the figure lead him to the wall.



Jackson was sitting on his bed, hands resting on his chin. He looked out the window. It was an overcast November day. The large oak tree in his backyard, already sick, was barren of leaves. A single red sparrow flew onto his windowsill, looked into his room, chirped, and flew away. His phone buzzed. He checked his texts. In an instant, he flew into a rage, throwing his phone against the back wall of his room. It landed on the wooden floor with a crash. Dazed, he lifted himself off of his bed and retrieved his phone. The screen had shattered. He placed the phone where it had landed on the floor, as though he had decided that this particular spot was where his phone was meant to be all along.

He opened his bedroom door and checked his house. It was silent. Satisfied, he walked into his kitchen and grabbed a cup from the dishwasher. He walked into the bathroom and filled the cup with water. He walked back into his room and shut the door. From the top of his dresser, he retrieved a small bottle of pills. He swallowed the entire bottle with the water from his cup. His hand trembled as he placed the pills in his mouth. When the deed was done, he lay down on his bed and closed his eyes.



The wall turned back into concrete. The figure led him by the hand back into his seat.

“Your hand trembled,” said the figure.

Jackson said nothing.

“That’s why you’re here,” the figure continued, conclusively.

“And now it’s your turn to try again.”

Jackson began to sweat.

“It’s your decision. Should you choose to try again, your family will find you dead the next morning. The friend who sent you that text should find out by noon, give or take. Everyone else will find out soon after.”

Jackson reached towards the gun, then pulled his hand back.

“This is your last chance.”

Jackson trembled. His face was as red as the figure’s tie. Beads of sweat ran down his face and landed with a loud drip on the concrete floor. He stared at the figure, but the figure said nothing more. The clock on the wall continued to tick. With each passing second, the ticks appeared to grow louder and louder. The figure stared in silence, watching Jackson’s every move.

Jackson reached for the gun and put it to his ear. He rested his finger on the trigger, but he couldn’t push it any further. The gun was to his ear only for a minute, maybe for two, but to Jackson, it was his first glimpse of eternity. With a scream, he removed the gun from his ear and threw it on the table.



Jackson woke up with a start. He rolled over and looked at the clock in his room. It was 5:30 AM. His alarm would ring for school in an hour. He looked towards his window. The sun was rising and, just for a fleeting moment, he could swear that he saw a slim black shadow looking in from outside.

It took Jackson fifteen minutes before he could bring himself to cry.



Kellie Gaihey  **GRET**



The Hand (The Left One)

K.J. Kerr

Two young men crouched in the weeds
When the buildings were new to their eyes
And an endless autumn was summer's assailant,
And later, lying upon the grass forever,
With what few stars incanting hope before two towers,
One Protestant, one Catholic. An anxious remedy;
Absurd, confused, and innocent to the world.
No nostalgia, nor sentimentality
May compose the hand that can from afar
Caress and trace those rolling hills gaily,
Nor reach again those boys' field to mar.
Yet they and their beginning
I indicate all the same.

Its fingers long and knowing (sometimes),
It ties its lace neatly (as neatly as it can).
Yet the knots are always loosening (where it finds no rhyme)
And it pretends blissfully (from the Vedas to the Qur'an).
So brave in each night of luck
Until it in hideous day is sunk.
And yet how courageous indeed that night is,
Letting its dark fingers touch all without even looking.

Along its lace lay romances fallen,
In their dying days one boy slept outside a room
With a mosaic of collected tortures inside.
Along its lace lay loves born,
To which one boy gladly gave another
And trusts his health in her arms.
Along its lace lay days with just those two,
Making such passing hymns and understanding
A language unknown to a right-handed world.

Along its lace lay hours with company,
Spilling a soup of joys and fears
Through a lens of chemicals into the glistening void.
Along its lace lay scintillating windows,
And numbers immutable, forming a chant beyond sound,
And in that chant, the talk of revolution.

Oh, the unending talk,
That persistent talk of revolution.
Along this gleaming lace, conspiracies made
And promises kept; secrets told to no one
By one whose tongue is normally loose.
Along this sacred lace, evenings near life's edge,
With nausea playing its viola to the skyline, and
Delirious spasms from somewhere beyond the pale.
At the feathered end of this lace,
I sit and watch the hand that ties.

So not to sadden you, nor to your rejoice
Do I tilt my head at all this. Though to me,
This must be
What delight feels like;
To talk with you again.

Here in this vacuum,
My old friend.
"Yes, if only all friends were so loyal,"
All the monks whisper.
"Yes, if only icons were trees to the forest,"
All the dreamers agree.
So though I may to you be a thief,
Or perhaps a Cassius, Brutus, or even Judas,
The lace and the hand which is beyond my command,
Fills the space which I know apologies never can.
And those anywhere near me know what I mean,
When I say God, as I recall him,
Was known to sometimes play a 79 ML Dean.

I'm Nothing

Erik Parshall

How do *you* write about darkness?
Blonde hair, long lashes,
Cuts on my arms, thin as dashes.
Your heart and mine the color of ashes
I'm nothing if not a stranger.

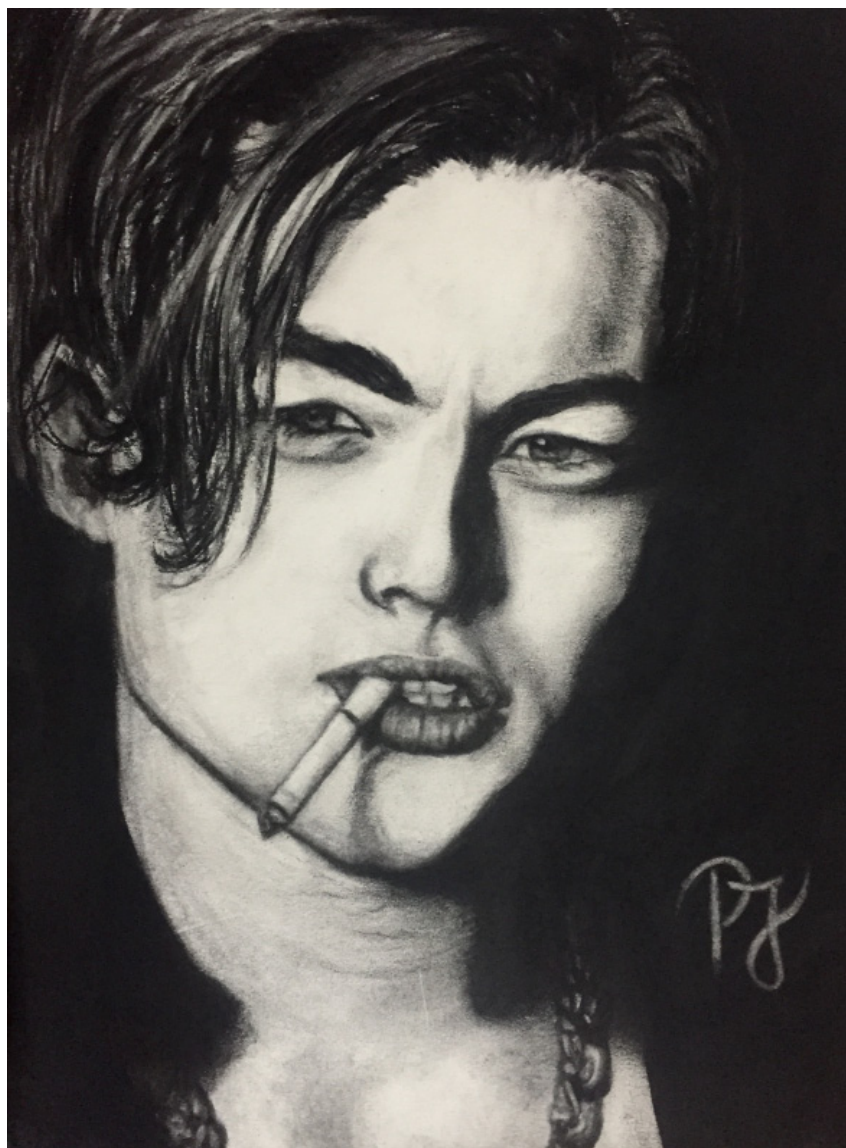
Blue Sky White Moon

Trevor Krafnick

I did not fall in love with you
Slowly and then all at once
But immediately
I fall in love the way a person wakes up
After sleeping through an alarm
And having a deadline to meet
It snaps into place from nothingness
Directly into everything
And then it settles
It is pouring chemicals together
And instantaneous explosion
Before settling into precipitate
And that sediment
The changed color of liquids
A new substance
Spontaneously created
Or two substances together
Reactionary existence
You snap awake and functional
But still unaware
I fell in love so fast I missed it
And then discovered it piece by piece
Too slowly to be counted or heard or felt

I lacked accuracy
I lacked vocabulary
But I fell in love the second I acknowledged the idea
When first I tasted lips in comfort
Without fear or nervousness
When first I tasted love
Then I felt love
Fell into love
It has been so long since that day
That dreary October day
When fall fell
And days fell short
So when I tasted it again
Spice sprinkled over new dishes
An alarm for another day
It was so different and so redefined
It wasn't the same
But this isn't about love not in love
This is about a king I once crowned
This is about flying
This is about the night
But the moon is out in daytime too
And all the more special for it
I miss more than being in love
I miss the object of my affection
I miss the creature buried in cold ground
I was am and will be whole always
But I can't share me that way now
I lack an outlet
For too much energy
Too much feeling
I will never tell you
And you will never hear it
Never read this
You stopped reading me a year ago
I think
And that's okay

But I want the universe to know
To maybe whisper in the breeze to you
How I do miss you
Never angry with you beyond a single day
Never hated you
And I still love though not in love
My heart still beats
And I miss you
And I'm okay with that
Because you were delicious
You were good
You were waking up refreshed
If late
And when I fell in love with you
Too quick for social standard
It was never a regret
It only reminded me of how the heart works
Beyond its muscled body
Where cages cannot hold
I have not been in love since then
But I have learned that other love
Can be as good as much
But still
A kind of love I lack and crave
Not for completion
But for expression
I want to be in love
To jolt from bed an hour late
Alone or snuggled to someone
But to wake up
For dreams are beautiful
But I cannot breathe as well asleep
And long for the light of the woken world
And the darkness of it
I am whole
But I feel more real
When I am wholly satisfied



WANTED



STINKIN'
LINCOLN

Grandma George

Dr. "Lil'" Dickie G.

My mother once told me: "Son, I'm going to give you the same advice your Grandma George told me: 'Always wash under the sack.' It has helped our family through very tough times."

The Mystery Musician

Amy Steinberg

While sitting in my room,
Feeling that I need something new
I listen closely in the dark
and hear someone playing the blues.
The music is lovely and sweet
and makes me feel love
hoping that we'll meet
Not far up above.
I listen closely to the song
Throughout the night
hoping I could meet him
with the sun shining bright.
"Who is this man?"
I ask to myself one day
"that's playing this song
so far away?"
I keep waiting for him to see me
with his sax and all
playing a melody for me
as we sit near the hall.
But for right now, he can't see me
his mystery I wonder
But if he sees me someday
I hope he makes some thunder.

Last Night

Sanjita Dham

Last night your faded memory came to me
As in the wilderness spring comes quietly,
As, slowly, in the desert moves the breeze,
As to a side man, without cause, comes peace.
All you who sleep tonight
Far from the ones you love,
No hand to left or right
And emptiness above
Know that you aren't alone
The whole world shares your tears,
Some for one night or two,
And some for all their years.

Erynn Tuerk



Dr. "LJL" Dickie G.





Penguin and Polar Bear Majestic

Emma McElwee



Agents of Dawn

Angela D'Amico

I have built the pyre,
used the bundled sage to start the blaze.
Wind and wood crackles and composes,
starting my neurotransmitters and syncing my synapses.
They wrote this song for ink-covered memories,
the rush of the feeling of the brush on the page.
Smoke like a promise, a whisper and a kiss.
The sky opens - a final gift.

Philly Fallout

Tom Scarcella



Tough Love

mjr

Teeth tasting metallic,
everything's looking phallic
and it's gonna be one of those nights.
Cause he likes his girls
easy on the eyes
but rough in bed.
Whisper hype
get dizzy in the head.
But when he paints their skin
with bruises
he just about loses
that pretty little mind of his.
I kneel like one praying for piety,
tip-toeing to the brink of impropriety.
Cause, hey, "It ain't gonna suck itself,
Right? Right?"
No. I still got some fight fight
still in me,
still got some bite,
bite down hard.
But wait, you're not gonna get off that easy.
You're not gonna get off at all
cause I'm not that sleazy.
I'll leave you with something you'll remember:
To fuck or to be fucked,
That is the question.
And I'm out of luck,
so I'm open to suggestion.

To Those Who Came Before Me

Lauren Klein

I AM A POET

she screamed

and everyone believed her

and she couldn't UNDERSTAND

I AM A POET

SHE SCREAMED

and still everyone believed it

I AM AN ARTIST

AND EVERYONE NODDED YES-

their yellow eyes

I AM an ALIEN

and everyone believed her.

And everyone smiled when she smiled

no matter how fiercely she was singing.

I AM ALREADY

and the yellow eyes smiled

I AM THE LAST AND ONLY ONE

and everyone believed her.

THERE IS A FIRE IN HERE

someone shouts

THERE'S STEAM IN HERE!

whoop, ow-ow.

THERE IS A RED FIRE ENGINE IN HERE

GET IT OUT OF HERE!

ya-yeah, ya, yeah, ya-ya

someone entered the backdoor,

someone entered the BACKDOOR

SOMEONE GET IT OUT OF HERE!

there were cats in the hallway- ya ya

there are so many

IN THE HALLWAY

hallelujah

There is no reply.

the lights have all gone out
I have gone all back to snow
I know nothing of the

AMEN!

I know NOTHING OF THE AMEN
I AM NOTHING BUT AN AMEN.

they ain't nothing
but I GOT SOMETHING
I GOT SOMETHING

I AM POET

There could be
CATASTROPHE!
I got nothing.

I COULD BE A CATASTROPHE I ain't nothing.
I found some treasures buried in the sand
and I buried them again and
forgot where.

HUMANITY I LOVE YOU BECAUSE
HALlelujah
HUMANITY I LOVE YOU BECAUSE
WE ARE ALL artists.

WE have poets, Hallelujah AMEN
We MAKE PRAYERS

WE MAKE PRAYERS
poetry.

We turn water into WINE with words of prayer.
We turn wine into BLOOD with words of prayer.
we look AT THE BLOOD AND SALIVATE
LIKE ARTISTS!

like poets.

Forget This World

Sarah Riley

This whole life thing, yeah we thought we had it all figured out.
We thought we had it all down.
But look at us now, trying to climb out of this mess.
You and I, we're not the same.
I pulled you down, and you pulled me further.
Yeah this whole life thing, we thought we had it all figured out.
Step back from the window,
Close the door.
Lay down with me and sleep some more.
We don't have to answer to anyone, we have each other.
Don't answer them, they'll only twist your words.
Come back, lay down, we've got it all figured out.
Broken, pieces strewn across the floor, but the tears don't even come.
This is what we've made.
You and me, yeah we're not the same.
We thought we had this whole thing down, but look at us now, taping up
each other's mouths.
You talk to me, all your words are knives in my back.
This whole life thing, yeah we thought we had it all figured out.
But look at us now.
Look at us now.
Lay down with me and sleep some more.
We don't need to prove anything to them.
Our words are our own.
We thought we had this all figured out,
But look at us now, trying to climb out of this mess.

Silent Night

Nicholas "Fuckin'" Woodman

There's nothing quite like being lost and alone at two in the morning.

I watch as the headlights of her Impala slowly fade into the horizon. I check my surroundings. Not a single house in the neighborhood has its lights on. This isn't surprising, considering it's a Tuesday night. The affluent soccer moms put their precious Timmys and Suzies to bed long ago, and their faithful husbands lie snoring next to them on Tempur-Pedics, catching some much-needed rest before heading off to their executive positions in the city. You'd think that some rebellious teenager reeking of marijuana would be stumbling back to their house at this point, but they, too, seem to be asleep.

I look at my phone. If nobody's around to help me, I suppose I should find a way out of here myself. I need to catch the ferry to get back to Manhattan, and then the PATH to get back to Hoboken. The ferry and PATH both run all night, which is good, but I have no idea how to get back to the ferry terminal. I open up Google Maps, and it tells me that I'm standing on the corner of Winant and Mason. I Hop-Stop the address of the house nearest to me – 274 Mason Boulevard. It tells me that if I walk a block over to Bloomingdale Road and take it down a ways, I'll eventually reach the train that takes me to the ferry. I'd rather not walk alone at night, but fuck if I care. At least I'm not in a sketchy area.

I check my texts. I'm not sure why I expect something from her – obviously she's still driving, presumably back to her house – but I'm still pissed that I see nothing. Whatever. If I don't hear from her by the time I get on the train, I'll start. Lord knows I have enough to say to her right now.

I find my way to Bloomingdale, check to make sure I'm going in the right direction, and start walking. Except for the occasional car, I'm all alone. There's nothing on this part of the island, just blocks and blocks of suburban housing. She may as well have left me in the middle of the Sierra Nevada. I could find her house, maybe, talk some reason into her. She lives somewhere

on the South Shore, and I know her address. But it isn't fucking worth it. I keep walking.

Throw me out of your car when I'm trying to console you. Scream at me when I try to talk some sense into your addled brain. Tell me I'm a horrible boyfriend, call me a cunt, go to slap me across the face. And all over what? Some rational advice about her sister. You were just fine at the diner, too. I'm done.

I finally see a house with lights on, an ugly two-family on the edge of a wooded area. The window is open. I peek inside. An elderly man is sitting alone in an armchair, watching television. It looks like an old western, but I'm not entirely sure. I wonder if his wife is inside. Did he fight with her, too? Is this the natural fate of man, doomed to fight with their significant others, forced to stay up well past their bedtime, left only to their thoughts? I don't dwell on it too long. Perhaps she's dead; perhaps he never married. I'll never know.

My phone vibrates in my pocket. I ignore it. She'll hear from me on the train.

I stop momentarily at a bridge above a deserted highway. I look down. A sports car – it looks like a Ferrari, but I can't tell from this distance – blazes down the highway going at least eighty. He's swerving slightly, presumably drunk. A few shots sound like a good idea right now. But I have a final tomorrow and, besides, there's nothing left in my fridge. That's the grand mistake of college. Chug it all on the weekends, and there's nothing left when you really need it. I leave the highway and continue down the road.

My phone vibrates again. I ignore it again.

You were fine on the PATH. You were fine on the ferry. You were fine at your house. You were fine at the diner. The fucking diner.

You wanted me to spend one last night with you before you flew to Chicago to spend Christmas with your aunt. You dragged me from Hoboken to Staten Island, when I had a final the next day, and begged me to spend the night at your house. You told me it was an easy class, and I could study on the ferry. You made me bring my notes with

me, and made me leave them in your fucking room. You threw me out of your car in the middle of the night, notes at your house, forcing me to hoof it back to Hoboken. You may very well make me fail my final.

Fuck you. I'm done.

I've reached civilization – a block of shops, and then the train station. To my right, I see an all-night deli. I walk in and try to buy a 40 of Fosters, but I'm carded. Fuck. Who gives a shit a 2 AM on a Tuesday? I storm out of the deli and walk to the station. The train comes as I'm on the steps leading to the platform. I sprint up the steps and slide into the back car of the train. My phone vibrates again. This time, I check it.

I'm sorry.

Fuck. I'm so sorry.

You left your notes in my room.

I respond.

I know.

There are only two people sitting in the train car.

Where are you?

The first is an elderly black man with a salt-and-pepper beard. He's carrying around an empty mobile cart. His clothes are faded and tattered, and he looks like he hasn't showered in days. He gazes out the window, stone-faced.

Headed back to the ferry.

I wonder what happened to him. Did his girlfriend – or, perhaps, his wife – throw him out of the house one day? Has this been his fate ever since, doomed to ride the island's sole train on repeat, day in and day out, seeing

the same houses, watching the same people come and go? Has he accepted his fate, or does he yearn for something more?

Why didn't you come back to the house?

The second is a sleeping teenager – I knew one had to be around somewhere – in a fitted cap and oversized jersey. He reeks faintly of weed, or maybe it's the homeless man. I'm too far away to tell.

Why did you leave me on the side of the road?

I look outside the window. More houses. Typical.

I was angry. It happens.

Another light is on, but I can't see who's inside. I imagine that it's another old man fighting with his wife. Or perhaps a teenager finally dared to stay up past their bedtime.

You're always angry. And shit like this doesn't just happen.

Another person gets in the car. It's a middle-aged Asian woman with an oversized pink purse. She adjusts the woolen cap on her head and reclines against her seat. There is a certain presence to her – she appears to command whatever space she occupies, whether it be her home, her job, or a late-night train.

Get off at the next stop. I'll pick you up. I promise.

The Asian woman closes her eyes and instantly falls asleep.

No.

Looking out the window, I consider doing the same.

Babe .

I decide against it. Too many interruptions. I'll sleep when I get back to my dorm.

Babe?

I put my phone on silent.

The train stops and starts, stops and starts, until we get to the ferry terminal. I pay the \$2.50 MetroCard fee and walk through the terminal's concourse. It's the liveliest place I've visited thus far, and yet it still feels abandoned. I sit on a bench. Nearly everybody around me is asleep, and half of them appear to be homeless. Fitting. It's been a repetitive night, both aesthetically and thematically. After a few minutes, an announcement comes over the terminal's PA system, telling me that the ferry is ready to board. I walk through the large glass sliding doors that lead to the dock and, after boarding, sit in the front of the boat. Against my better judgment, I check my phone. There's one missed text.

Please answer me.

This bitch isn't going to stop bothering me until I respond.

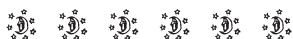
Look, I'm pissed off right now, if you couldn't tell. You left me alone in an unfamiliar city in the middle of the night, and I think that was a real dick move. We can talk about this tomorrow.

I put my phone on silent. She's probably going to respond again. I don't care.

I'm done. I'm fucking done.

The lights of the city surround the ferry. I feel the boat rocking gently up and down, up and down, and let the waves gently lead me to sleep.

Featured Artist



The intended outcome of a piece is not always what it ends up being. Drawing, to me, is one of the most therapeutic activities. I'm in my own little world for a little while to get my thoughts or emotions across. With every idea that I have, I write it down and eventually get back to it. Sometimes I never reach any of my ideas and they stay as sticky notes within my sketchpad.

My inspiration for each piece comes from a variety of things. It could be something someone said, an advertisement, a song or even just from a random thought. Most of my drawings are not just one object but multiple objects and ideas combined together, as well as various mediums put together for one drawing. It was just recently that I started working with color. I was always a strong supporter of black and white.

Sharing my drawings with people was another recent move of mine. Seeing people appreciate my work is a feeling I can't really describe. Each piece symbolizes something different to those who perceive it. Perception of art is unique to everyone and there is never a right or wrong interpretation.

The ability to never be wrong within art is one of the many things I love about it. The freedom of speech and creativity are endless throughout. In the words of Aristotle, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance."

Lauren Citarella

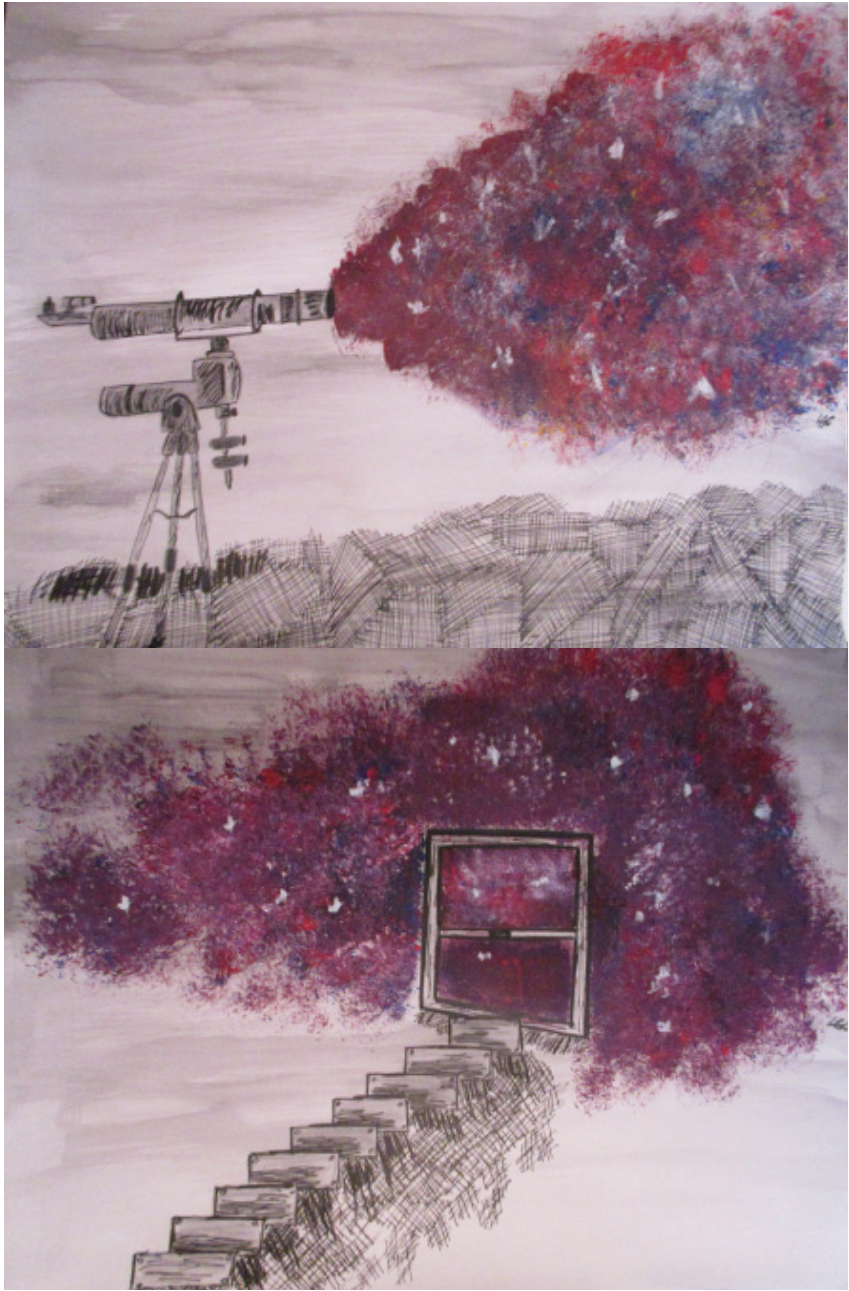


Lauren Citarella

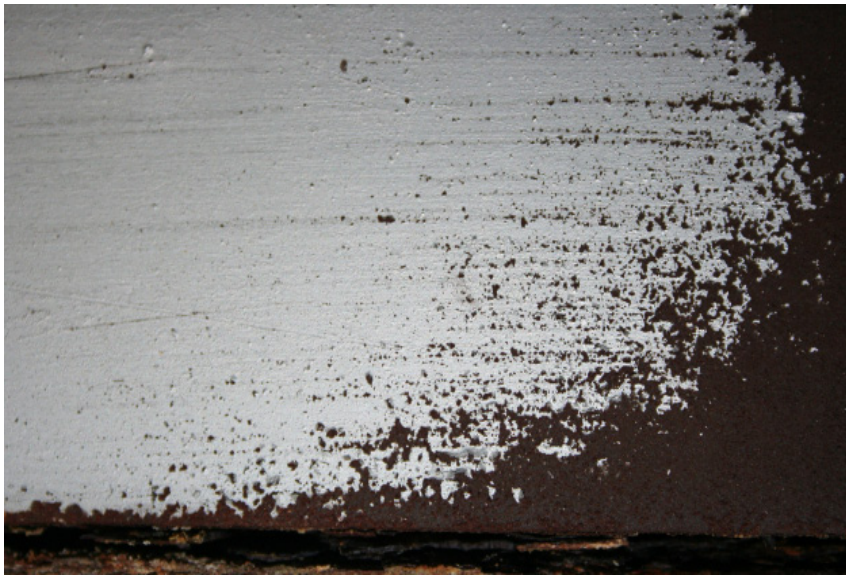


Lauren Citarella is an arts administration major with a minor in dance. She is from Mahopac, New York. She's the fundraising director for SAAS, on the e-board for Cause for a Cure, and is a student ambassador. If you couldn't already guess, she likes elephants and also painting elephants.



















EIN

Seven-Word Story Contest

Nimbus held a seven-word story contest this spring. The submissions could be about anything, but had to be seven words or less. Congratulations to our winner Megan Irving, who will receive the coveted prize: a \$25 Chipotle giftcard.

Winner:

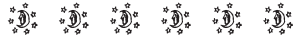
“Life imitated art. Art smiled. Life grimaced.” - Megan Irving

Runner-ups:

“Footsteps coming. Two pairs. Beware.” - Kelsey Hopland

“Fuck, there’s ink on my damn pants.” - Tom Scarcella

“Seven words??” I exclaimed. ‘But it won’t—’” - Jaquelyn Pharmakides



👉 Abby, Kellie, Tom, Shannon, poison water

Senior Staff, 2014-2015





If you would like to submit to the next edition of *Nimbus*,
send your creative work to nimbus@wagner.edu