

NIMBUS

fall 2014



All contents of Nimbus 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 as well as a lengthy editing process.

If your work was not accepted 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.

N I M B U S

fall 2014

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

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LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

This has been quite a semester for us here at the Nimbus. Many core members have graduated, our office moved, and we convinced ourselves that our new home in the Kairos House is haunted.

Still, as always, the Nimbus staff came through and did a great job. Veterans and newcomers alike worked their asses off to put out a fantastic issue. The senior staff members have all gone the extra mile, and I'm truly thankful for it. I'm especially grateful to our new design editor Kellie Gainey, who spent untold hours making this issue a reality. And we all appreciate our wonderful faculty advisor, Dr. Needle.

Of course, the Nimbus would not be possible without Wagner's collective creative expression. This semester, we received more submissions than I've seen my whole time here, and we were thrilled. Also, it has been a true pleasure working with Kelsey Hopland as our featured artist—she's done a fantastic job.

To the whole Nimbus family and all who support us, I thank you. I hope you enjoy the latest edition of Wagner's decades-long literary tradition.

~Tom Scarcella, Editor-in-Chief



I don't think I quite understood what I was getting into when I agreed to help Tom with Nimbus design this semester. With that being said, I think it was one of the best choices I've made during my time at Wagner. The late nights and the long hours were rough, but the quality submissions and good company made the hours fly by like minutes. I am proud of the work the Nimbus family got done this semester and I greatly look forward to many more sleepless nights when we do this next semester.

I would like to give a special shout-out to the senior staff for dealing with the weird things I say after the sun goes down, Rebecca for being the best design committee a girl could ask for, and Mrs. Peterson for uniting the dynamic duo of Kellie and Tom.

~Kellie Gainey, Design Editor

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SMOKING



Lauren Citarella



FADE

Michael Rucci

I measure my life
In the amount of times
I've smiled and meant it
The sheer simple
Moments of happiness
The intricate little beauties of life
That make it all worth living
Now I can't say that
I've been anything but true
But the sweetest moments
Always seem the most fleeting
I know I know I know
You know
Break me down and build me up
I see a better man in your eyes
Same face, same body
Same attitude
But not afraid to face his flaws
Anything to see you smile
Even if it breaks my heart
Never have I ever
Felt this way, You see
We're all just a bunch of scabs
Trying to cover up wounds
That the world continues to pick at
In truth, infinity is just the result
Of placing an hourglass upon its side
And I could spend eternity
Trying to figure you out
Admiring the handiwork of whatever



God may have put you together
It has to be something spiritual
But it's the moments like these
Where every little thing
Reminds you of somebody
From the shirt they like
To the bracelet they made you
To the very fact that they like your poetry
That makes me believe something
Just might be out there
Pulling strings
Cause without those moments
I would not be here
Thinking these thoughts
Feeling these feelings
Tossing and turning
Sleepless over the fact that
I could lose you
Torture just ain't the word for it
Breathe in and Breathe out
Then surrender
I think I've said that somewhere before
But it's never been so important
Life will run its course
And all you can do is
Be honest with yourself
Be honest with each other
And never turn your back
Just hoping that everything
Will work out for the best
Surreal, isn't it?
When just one person
Can make the rest of the world
Fade away...





Sara Signorelli



THE LOVE SONG OF J. MANNHEIM BROKERMAN,
REAL ESTATE AGENT

Dr. Steven W. Thomas

*[with winking apologies to TS. Eliot, Blondie, Matsuo Basho,
Ezra Pound, and Donovan]*

Let us, you and I, lay ourselves down on designer sheets
spread across the bed like housing market woes,
fitted tight across the globe.

Though you ran away to Dublin to a once-cozy one bedroom,
now feverish and shivering with negative equity
from a subprime infection,

As feverish as far-away taxi drivers in New Delhi, holding their bellies
complaining of market influx, that sighs
and seeps like a colorless gas,

As subprime as the world's iconic lovers, no longer bubbling
in the alleys of Madrid,
their hearts as empty as housing units, swooning,
from mortgage malaise,

Yet will I dare disturb your musings on anticipated wakes,
to call you back and inflate for us an airy bed, as fresh and new
as my American dream.



At the office, the pamphlets come and go
speaking of home and Italian fresco.

There are promises, and promises, and promises for the faces that I meet,
faceless ripples on a moonlit pond, as Zen as the depthless
depths of suburban acreage.

First there is a mountain... and then there are promises. I exercise my
hours
in a swivel chair with arms of Burmese teak.
I exercise my hours.

Though you ran away to Dublin to a once-cozy one bedroom,
yet will I dare disturb your musings on anticipated wakes,
my heart as empty as a housing unit.

At the office, the pamphlets come and go
speaking of home and Italian fresco.
Please don't think they speak for me.



THE WRITING PROCESS

Nicholas “Fuckin” Woodman

First you get an idea
It's a good idea, maybe
Or perhaps it's a bad one
(It's probably awful)
But you don't like to think about those things
So you open up Word
And you type
 type
 type
Until you have a few hundred words
 (maybe less)

And you're feeling pretty good
You're Dickens,
Hemingway,
Joyce,
Meyer
All the greats – you'll be making bank.
Satisfied, you say “That's enough.”
And save your work
 (click, done)

The next day you chug along
And the day after that
 And the day after that

But with each day
Your excitement wanes
Your characters falter
Your mind draws a blank
You take a Reddit break after 100



50

25 words

(Are cat gifs not more
entertaining?)

And the adventures of Timmy matter less

You can't write Timmy

 You'll never be Wilde

 Only Wilde can craft a good Timmy

So you open your document again

And maybe type 100 words

 Erase those, type another 50

You watch two cat gifs and give up

It's hopeless

You'll never be famous

 (But did you ever have a chance?)

But wait!

What if Timmy was in space?

 (Chicks dig space, and so do you)

Excited, you hide your draft away

And open a new document

And you type

 type

 type

Until you have a few hundred words

 (maybe less)

And you're feeling pretty good...





Penelope Jungreis



THE MESS

Rebecca Barrett

you ask me to be messy
you look for it and you pull it out of me
you reach down my throat and
pull it to my lips and tell me to speak
I search desperately for the courage
down in the scary parts I don't visit anymore
when I break down the wall
and you go straight back to winter
in her cold arms
while I burn with messy spring
in a room with no doors
where you suffocate me
by trying to set me free



ALL THAT CAN'T BE WIPED CLEAN

K.J. Kerr

Once upon a time, and by that I mean any and every time, there was a monster that lived on the side of a mountain opposite a town. He didn't feel like a monster, of course, as all things feel they are human. And yet, with his red fur, and talons, and wings, I have no other word for him.

He never could fly. His wings were large, but not large enough. So he did not soar above the summit and about the sun, but would climb a short way up to ravage a goat during the day when hunger took him.

He was not of the mountain. There was a small meadow at the mountain's foot, and beyond that, the woods. The woods were his home. When hunger came at night, he would search for deer and rabbits in the woods.

Though it had been a long time, the only other beast with which he was familiar was the kind you and I know best. The sort that hunted with a machine that would throw a pointed sticks and then eventually, though later than his time (or one of his times), a louder machine that flashed and brought animals down all at once.

The monster killed these creatures when it encountered them. There was something not quite human about them, he thought.

He did not seek out mountain goats at night, because in the meadow between the woods and the first boulders, the smallest of beasts came out to glow, as if at a festival. You may call them fireflies. I call them lightning bugs. But we'll call them demons, because that's what he would call them. Something about them terrified him, so that he would not go near them. And nervous that they would invade the woods, he almost always stood near the edge. Watching them.



The townsfolk on the other side tended to stay there. They had their own woods to hunt in. And those hunters that had gone into the woods and around the mountain did not return, so as the town grew, they favored the opposite direction.

Few climbed the mountain, but when they did they would reach the summit and then turn around, as the peak was often snowy and cold and the climber would consider that going the full way over the mountain would make their journey a quarter complete when they could make it half. In time, those mountaineers that met and became friends built a cabin outside of town.

One night, as the climbers sat drinking and telling stories in their cabin near the fireplace, a mountaineer, among the larger of them, though not the largest, was drinking at half the rate he normally would. His hair was light brown and he wore a thick beard. His eyes were always distant. That night a bit more than usual.

What has you troubled? said the man across from him.

Not troubled.

Keep thinking and you'll start regretting.

Not thinking. Considering. Or maybe planning.

A few of the men laughed.

I'm going to try for the whole way.

Whole way? said the man to his right.

Over the mountain and then back.

They all nodded. Everyone was paying attention



to him now.

But why?

Because I want to.

You'll run out of supplies before you make it back.

Maybe. But I may run out just before the final stretch.

It'd be impossible to carry enough to last you the trip.

Maybe not if I ration what I can carry.

Dangerous stuff, one of the men smiled.

I know. But I've thought of it since I first saw the peak.

He received all of their blessings, though none wanted to join or follow him. A week later, in the early morning, he packed what he could carry. Food, flint, tinder, and so on. The climber grabbed his torch and started up the mountain. The ascent was easy. He was familiar with this half.

Several days later, he slept in the afternoon, almost halfway down the mountain. When he woke in the night he lit his torch and carried on. His legs were sore. This side was much steeper than the other. His food was beginning to dwindle but there was game everywhere. At that moment, there was him, and the rocks that glowed around him by the light of his torch. And at last, as he neared the bottom, a scintillating field came into view.

The monster watched the demons. There were more than there had ever been. They moved in waves and danced their macabre dance. A light brighter than any of the demons appeared in the distance.

Their queen, he was sure. This is the night they would charge the woods. Their numbers had grown over the years gradually, and now the queen of the demons would deliver the command to attack.

Yet they did not invade, and as the queen grew closer, the demons moved away. Then he saw that it was not a queen. As it traveled across the field, slowly, the demons left. This was another creature liberating him from the demons that had so



tormented him for so many years. He rushed forward to bow at its feet, this luminous savior.

As he approached, the figure beneath the light became clear. As it saw him, it fell backwards, still holding the light up. It was one of the beasts that carried machines, though this one did not. It was making desperate and wounded noises. A false savior. A savior like a trap. He screamed so that all may hear, and killed it. After it was dead, the light eventually went out and the glow at the end of the stick became dimmer and dimmer, and he knew the demons would return the next night. Or even this night. So he sank back into the woods.

That look you're giving me. Is it that you want to know how I know all this? All things considered, I suppose that's not an unreasonable question. Well look, I'll teach you that story next time around if you promise to help me unlearn it.



NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL



Rebecca Martin



A STUDY IN ANALOGUE: 1



Vicky Sun



BREAKFAST OF SHAME

Clarissa Jimenez

Crusty makeup and morning breath are two of the splendid things I have to offer to this party. If I had known upon waking up that I would be sitting at a breakfast table with James's and Morgan's families, I would have definitely washed my face, but there wasn't anything I could do about my disheveled hair and goopy eyes. I had already sat down. I was in too deep.

Right then I felt like someone was hammering a screwdriver through my eyeballs, but that wasn't the time to focus on my nauseating hangover, because somehow I was supposed to be tolerating conversation at 7:30 a.m., which is a struggle for me on a regular basis, let alone the morning after a wedding. And what a wedding it was.

I had already done the obligatory "Good mornings" and "How are yous" by the time the bacon and toast were being passed around the table.

"Don't worry, there's more coming!" Morgan's mother announced.

Everyone responded with the traditional, "This looks great!" and "Thank you!" type responses. Mary, the groom's mother, even went so far as to say, "Everything smells great!" I couldn't help but be bitter. Yeah, maybe it all smells great to you, but to me it smells like I'm about to vomit, so please, please don't comment on the fact that I am not eating.

"Aren't you going to eat anything?" Tom asked me. Of course. He's the father of the groom and also sitting directly to my right.

"No, absolutely not. I am hungover as fuck. Please don't ask me any more ridiculous questions or I will throw up all over the leftover wedding cake that your son's new wife's sister made."

I wish I was ballsy enough to say that, but instead "Oh, yes. Will you please pass the bacon?" came out of my mouth.



I was shocked. Somehow I managed to take what I meant and say the exact opposite, an unfortunate habit of mine.

Luckily the toast was directly in front of me, and I figured that might be a safe option, so I grabbed a couple pieces. Plus, one can stall by buttering toast for an awfully long time, but within seconds the bacon was being passed my way and I couldn't do anything but accept it. I took one piece. I wasn't feeling particularly ambitious. I just hoped that I would be able to maintain at least a little bit of the respect that I felt I had earned in the week leading up to the wedding and throwing up at the breakfast table didn't seem like the most dignified of options.

"How was your night?" Robert, the father of the bride, asked me. He was sitting directly across from me. In any other context that question would have been innocent enough, but at that moment I felt like drowning him in his straight-from-the-blender breakfast smoothie. Obviously I look like shit, and obviously I had spent the night in a suite reserved for the members of the wedding party. Maybe you don't know whose room I slept in, but I'm here. So obviously my night didn't go according to plan. My brain raced trying to find a suitable response.

"Well, last night, after drinking heavily at a wedding that I don't believe in, I had sex with one of the groomsmen in a room next door to yours." Nope, that just seemed a little too blunt.

So I went with the classic "I had a great time. What a beautiful wedding. You must be so proud." I tried to sound as sincere as possible, but Tom glanced my way.

5 days prior to the wedding, Tom and I were chatting, as usual, when Tom nervously changed the subject. The conversation went something along the lines of, "I don't know if anything happened between you and James, and I don't need to



know, but if you have feelings for him I wish you would tell him.”

After running through several responses I settled on, “I’ll tell you anything you want to know, but I won’t talk to him about it. He knows what’s up.”

Our conversation ended shortly thereafter, but I was shocked that the groom’s father wasn’t 100% behind this wedding either. I wondered if I should have told him more, but I’m over it now. Something about being told that you are “One half of the perfect person,” and that “If I could have you and Morgan I would be the luckiest guy in the world,” is off-putting.

And if I wasn’t sure I should be over James then, I certainly am now. I was invited to the wedding last minute, and only once I accepted the invitation had I been asked to run the sound system. I felt obligated to say yes, and then Morgan had the audacity to say, “Thanks, that can be your wedding gift to us!”

If I had known that I would be working this event for free, I would have rejected the invitation and bought them a goddamn toaster. Why on earth would I want to go to my boss’s wedding only to have to work it and not get paid? On top of that, I used to love this guy. Fuck that.

The open bar helped, or at least it did last night. My splitting headache and gurgling intestines were doing a fantastic job of reminding me how much fun it had been drinking only a few hours earlier, so naturally I wasn’t fixating on my groomsman—that is, until he joined us at the table. Jax sat to my left, and I was relieved to see that he was still above-average in the looks department.

“Good morning” was all Jax could muster before he started piling bacon on to his plate.

“Oh Jax, you’re just in time!” Mary said, putting a quiche on the table. “And don’t you guys worry, the crepes are coming out next!”

Everyone at the table called out “Thank you!” as the quiche was passed around. I took the smallest piece possible.



Jax threw me a knowing glance before doing the same.

“Jax, the band sounded great last night!”

“Thanks Tom! We had a ball, but we couldn’t have done it without this one.” Jax said, gesturing to me.

That was the absolute last thing I wanted to talk about. Sure the ceremony was lovely and cute and all that jazz, but did we have to talk about the crazy amount of sound requirements this wedding had?

When James was in college he was in a band, Sex Cab for Cuties, with his two best friends, who were the bestmen at the wedding. 5 wireless body mics, 4 instrument mics, and no paycheck later, Morgan walked down the aisle to an adapted version of Bruno Mars’ “Marry You” performed by the groom and his friends.

I chose not to regale them with the saga of how I set up all of the sound equipment single handedly. I responded instead with, “No worries.” The goal was for everyone to have fun and listen to loud music. I think that goal was accomplished, so there was no need for me to be an asshole, and anyways it wasn’t about me. Today, yesterday, last week, none of it was about me.

Somehow I managed to finish everything on my plate. When the crepes were being passed around, I made an excuse about having to go to work and left. I knew full and well that I would be spending the rest of the morning in my pajamas with my head in a toilet. I also knew that the only thing separating me from that bliss was the walk of shame. And after surviving breakfast, walking through a crowded hotel lobby while carrying my high heels just didn’t seem that bad.



THE LONELY WITCH



Thomas McCarthy



UNTITLED POEM

Anonymous

And then I realized I was reading instead of writing
Taking in other peoples' stories instead of writing my own
I want to create but I'm tired
And I'm tired of the world demanding the little energy I have
towards things that mean so little to me
I don't want to look through these glasses
At a picture you're telling me is important
The magic in my life is disappearing
The sparkle has been dimmed
and you told me it was immature
But I'm okay with being a kid
At least we're happy
At least we enjoy the sunshine
We need nothing more than to run and pretend to fly
I must find a way to keep the magic in my life
To keep the sparkle in the night
To remain capable of love even when it doesn't seem right
Because someday it will be and my eyes have to be able see
the right things

It's funny
I don't want this life at all
And you might call me a coward
You might call me stupid
I might call myself all the same things
But I don't want this. I don't like this. I don't believe in this.
I believe in the human spirit before corruption
In art and music and the moments that inspire it
I guess the "problem" is that I have a choice
Does that make me spoiled?
Or does it free my mind from what seems to be a systematic
approach to success
I never did like systems



COMPLACENCY

Rebecca Martin

All summer long you sleep you with your windows open, hoping that a breeze will pierce through the heat, just enough for you to finally drift off into a light slumber. Night after night, you toss and turn, wishing you could find some relief from this seemingly endless heat wave. And then suddenly, without you really noticing, the dog days of summer are over, and you find yourself reaching for a sheet as the morning sun begins to rise.

Chilly air replaces the humidity you had grown so accustomed to, and with the changing weather, you find yourself also wanting a change. You find comfort in the promise of a fresh start as the leaves begin to turn fiery red and gold and drift to the ground. – *Rebirth*

You decide that it's time to take control, or maybe to let go of it. You want to cut your losses, start again.

Do you recognize the person in the mirror staring back at you anymore?

Or do you feel even more yourself now than you ever have?

Do you even know the difference?

Is there someone holding you back from what you want?

What you need?

Is your past haunting you?

Yes. Yes, it's finally time. Time to invest in yourself. Go out on a limb. Go out on that date, cut your hair, make new friends. Forget the old ones. You were unhappy, remember? – *Revolution*



The trees may be winding down, preparing for the winter, but not you. You're unstoppable, you're living again. The sky is raining gasoline and you're setting yourself on fire. This is it, this is bliss, right? You're fresh, you're new. Your old friends wouldn't even recognize you anymore. You're masking your wounds. You're...happy? – *Searching*

And then, you awake one morning in a stranger's bed, like you have so many times before since the air became crisp. Except this time, instead of pulling the sheets up higher and grasping for anything that will keep you warm, you're kicking them off.

Just as quickly as summer slipped out of reach, it has returned, and you realize that your wounds aren't burning any less than they did a year ago. The past that you tried so hard to escape hasn't been any less haunting.

Suddenly you're screaming. You feel like you're on a train that's traveling at a speed you can't keep up with. It's bound to crash, or has it crashed already? At this point, you wouldn't know the difference. You want to get off and go home. The home you so badly wanted to leave last fall. – *Realization*

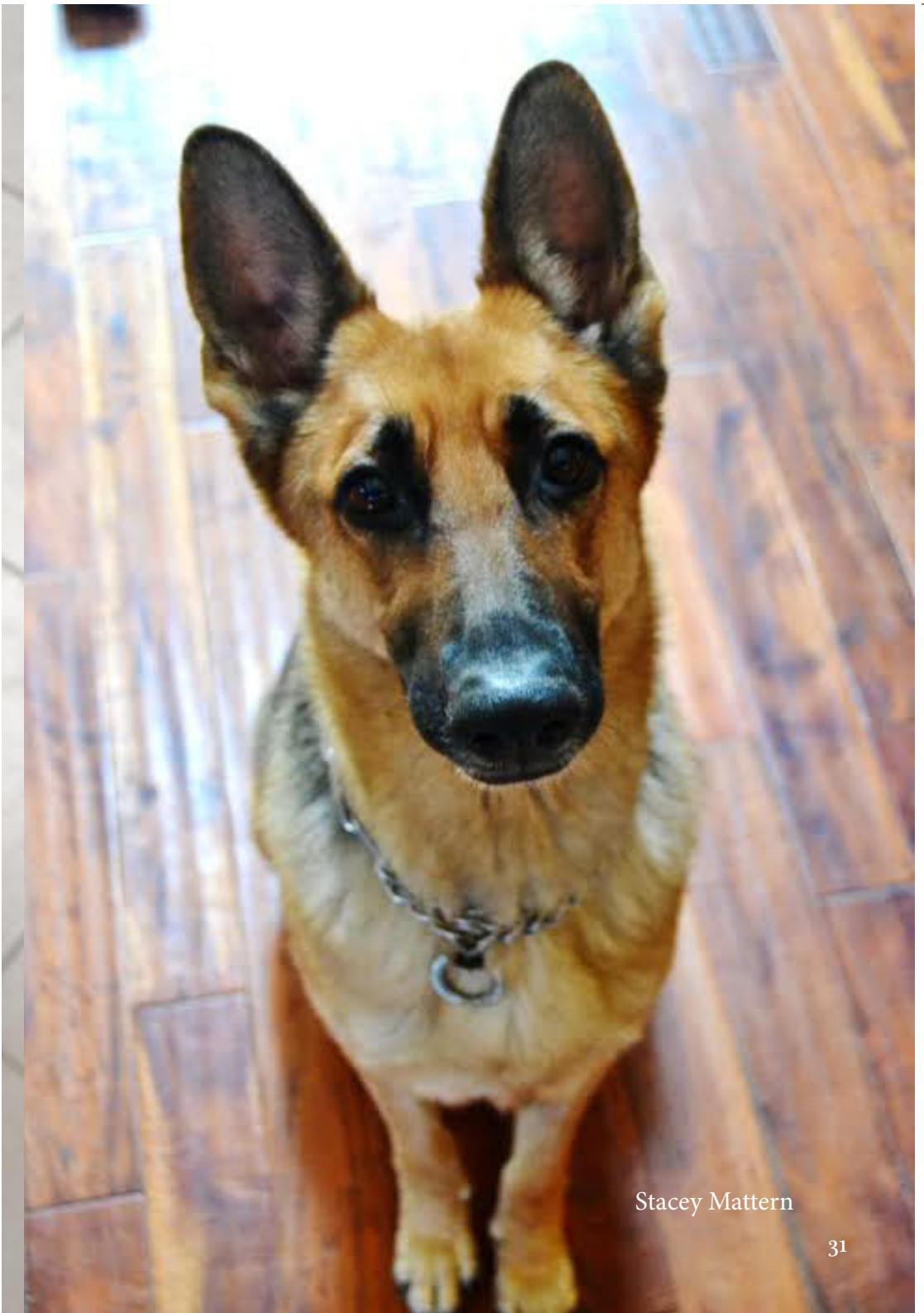
Finally, you're back in your bed, and you're back to the person you used to be. You grow your hair out because your mother always told you that that's what looked best on you. You reach out to your old friends. They're safe, they're comfortable and they know you—who you are, what you want. They love you. – *Security*

The leaves are changing again, the air is cool. It's back—that familiar feeling. You itch to cut loose, run wild and free. But this time, as the trees wind down and prepare for the winter, you do too. Because that's what's best for you, right? – *Complacency*





Stacey Mattern



Stacey Mattern

UNDER THE SUN AND OVER THE HEAD

Michael Rucci

Always missing the point. Blades of grass slip between my fingers. Hours spent sitting in the same spot, watching the world turn. People-watching, without a doubt my favorite pastime. It's places like this, college campuses, where one can see the most interesting things. Young people in the "prime" of their lives, and yet, for all that they have learned, how much do they really know? Better yet, how much do they understand? A lawnmower whizzes by for the seventeenth time. The grass looks cut to me but I suppose he gets paid by the hour. Though I guess the constant buzzing of the mobile mower can be somewhat soothing. I lie down, settle into the grass, take a deep breath and close my eyes. I like to think I see things a little clearer this way. In the distance I hear, "Dumb bitch!" immediately followed by, "Midget dick!" A couple of friends poking fun at each other, perhaps. No, their tones sounded heated, more likely a lovers' quarrel. I guess we can't all be blessed. The voices fade behind buildings and into the distance. Everything and everyone seems to be coming and going. In the same way that as we get closer to the things we want most, the further away they seem. There goes the lawnmower again. A browning leaf falls onto my face. I open my eyes as the wind carries it off. The leaf bounces, repetitively tapping the ground as it dances away and joins a troupe of its fellow fallen leaves. I push off the ground with my elbows and sit up while brushing the dirt off of the back of my head and shirt. I cross my legs and crack my back.

A small harem of women, approximately four or five, some sitting others laying, have adopted a patch of grass nearly fifty feet away. They giggle continuously. Their bubbly girlish laughter is then joined by a chorus of birds



and soon it all turns to soft chatter. The screeching of locusts goes on and off at random and indeterminate distances. I can never quite pinpoint them. The shadow cast by the canopy of trees above me grows outward as noon slips further and further into the past. This day will never come again.

Nineteen times.

The ladies have picked themselves up and seemingly walked off, joined by their friends and cackling down the path. Everything is silent now, besides the ever so delicate brush of the wind in the trees, the constant hum of the diligent lawnmower and the all too repetitive chuckles of insect and avian alike. The music of the world. The sound of life.

Sometimes I wonder, as one who has always considered himself an observer, how might the world view me? Some questions don't have answers; some answers only provide more questions. So it goes. To search for rhyme or reason is the human condition. To be aware of our own existence seems only to call it into question. I have always found this to be one of mankind's most puzzling phenomena. After all, what is the point of questioning existence when, regardless, you are aware of yourself and must therefore deal with your existence as you experience it. Do we have any other choice? Then again, I would never go as far as to assert that reality is what they say it is. After all, this may all just be paint on a canvas and I may simply be a part of the setting. But I digress.

Twenty times.

I rise to my feet and fix my sunglasses atop my nose and ears. I walk towards the pathway, scratching my head as I take in the scene. Sunlight filtered through a thick spread of



leaves, splinted across a red cobblestone trail. Just one foot in front of the other. Further down the path a couple is sitting on a wooden bench. They stare lovingly into each other's eyes as they whisper sweet nothings. It is cute, but I think they should get a room. They kiss as the hour passes, the chapel bell rings through the campus as they nuzzle each other and giggle. Maybe it's meant to be; maybe it's Maybelline, who knows. I've seen the guy before, in passing at parties. He is considerably loud and has a habit of talking vigorously with his hands. Spills a lot of beer. Not cool. The floor can only be so thirsty. I stroll on past them. A bee buzzes in my ear but I pay it no mind. Curious creatures. They leave you well enough alone if you let them do their thing. What I wouldn't give for an egg bagel, toasted with bacon and cream cheese. Need to stop skipping breakfast. A strong wind sends chills up my spine. The hairs on the back of my neck reach outward in desperation. I grab the sides of my jacket and pull them in a little tighter. Faintly now, the lawnmower drones off into the distance. I wonder if that job is ever finished.

Around buildings, down paths and past trees, far-off conversations can be heard. Drifting and dwindling away. Yelling, screaming, laughing. Who knows what goes on? I pull a cigarette pack out of my pocket. I've ripped the sleeve off, covered the name brand in scribbled black sharpie. I don't keep cigarettes in it. I pull one out, place it between my lips and inhale as I ignite the far end with a lighter. Just a little something to warm me up. I keep it in my mouth as smoke pours forth from my nose. Milk white, I love the way it hangs thick in the air before drifting off with the wind. Like a tangled mass of white vines spinning away, few things are as beautiful. I kneel down and pick a flower from a small bush on the ground. I spin it delicately between my middle finger and thumb before deeply inhaling the intoxicating aroma. Smoke leaks between the cracks of my teeth as I grin



and slide the flower behind my ear. Its purple petals tickle my temple. I think this is what love is supposed to feel like. Bouncing along to your own rhythm. Not caring what anyone thinks about it. Just happy to wake up and see the sun shine on another beautiful day. Sounds peaceful.

I walk until I reach the dormitory. I stand a foot away from the trashcan, smoke down to the end and flick the clip. Everything feels right. I walk through the front door and give an upward half nod gesture to the girl at the desk. We don't know one another but it's polite to acknowledge each other's presence. At the very least I have seen her face a few times. Such fleeting insignificant moments, yet they strike the strangest chord. I quickly traverse the lobby of the building and head for the stairwell. There is an elevator but it is as slow as a snail on a treadmill. Besides, ascending and descending stairs is an excellent workout. Or so I hear. As I head up the stairs I stretch my arms out and slide my fingertips along the walls. I pass floors of athletes; football players, lacrosse players, soccer, baseball, you name it. Each floor, just as loud as the last and filled with the laughter of burly men. I pass just as many floors of freshmen, sophomores, actors and actresses, the undeclared. These floors tend to drift away much quieter. This is not a judgment, just an undeniable fact. A pair of chicks are sitting on the steps and making out in the hallway. This is surprisingly, not as rare as you might think. I mind my own business and simply walk on by but in my mind I am high-fiving them both.

I reach the top of the stairwell and am faced with the locked door to the roof. I pull out my wallet, grab my school ID card and slide it between the doorframe and the lock. I jostle the handle as I work with the card. Within a minute the card slips through, the handle turns round and the door cracks open. I walk through and gently close it behind me. The wind beats strong against my face. I walk to the edge of the roof and stand there, only half my feet still on the roof. As a kid with a magnifying glass hovers over ants so do I watch the people of



this campus: students, teachers, management, administration, even the staff. In truth, we are all just ants. Crawling this way and that, scrounging up what little scraps we can, something, anything to bring back home. Trying to make something of ourselves. I see them run to classes, sit on benches, chain-smoke their cigarettes like they're dying. They don't even notice each other unless they know each other. And they really think they know each other. But I see them all. Petty, young creatures—trying to find meaning in every little event, making meaning where there may not be any. They find it hard to accept that life may in fact be meaningless. World-shattering. It matters not. The only way to change your world is to leave it. I grab the flower from behind my ear, ignite the petals and stem and drop it off the roof. I watch it fall, slowly as the flame engulfs it. A bird swoops by and lands on the roof next to me. Ah, to fly. What could be more beautiful? I close my eyes.



SIN CITY



Meghan Brown



DISCONNECTED

Sarah Hasselberger

Receiving a simple text from your parents that they need to talk to you.

It's serious.

It can't wait.

A wave of worry crashes over you.

Who's hurt?

Who's dead?

Is it my mom? My dad? My brother? My sister?

My grandparents?

You don't know because you're disconnected.

And when you finally find out, there is nothing you can do.

You're alone in your own mind.

People can offer you tissues.

People can give you a hug.

People can say that they'll be there; they're only a text away.

But you're alone.

And you're disconnected.

We live in a bubble.

That doesn't stop the real world from continuing on.

People change.

People grow.

People die.



Photo: Lauren Citarella



It's not until you go home after a few months and realize
your baby brother is a grown man
Or until you receive a text that your family cat is dead
That you start to realize how disconnected you are.

Breaks exist.
You can go home for a few days, or a few weeks, or even
a few months.
Fall, winter, summer.
But the time you spend disconnected,
The time you spend inside of this bubble,
You can never get back.
Enjoy it if you can.
Cherish it if you must.
But you'll always be disconnected.



BEAUTY WHILE STRIVING FOR BEAUTY



“Make-up is only temporary, try to enjoy the natural beauty below.”
-Kristen Gallagher

Cody Tarantini





“Shaving is one of the necessary evils of life.”
-Tony Tarantini

Cody Tarantini



HIM.

Sarah Riley

I saw Him again today.

A reflection in the window as I sat observing passengers bustling about, in and out of the subway.

It was a millisecond, but He was there.

The last time He appeared His stare was mocking me,
Calling me out on my bluff.

Today, it was a simple glance.

A forewarning that He will be back to taunt me.

I know if I keep running from Him, one day I will have to stop.

He thinks He knows what is best for me.

He thinks He can convince me He is right.

But I am not ready to let Him win.

I get off the subway and continue my day, not shaken by Future.
He will stop haunting my thoughts one day, when I can control
Him better.

Right now I keep glancing over my shoulder, waiting for His
return.

He knows I can't run forever.



We are staring face to face.
It has been some time since His last visit.
In the mirror, Future reaches out His hand.
Startled, I jump back and hit the garbage can to my right.
He promises me that all I have left to do is to trust Him.
But how can I trust Him when there is so much I don't
know about Him?

Future extends his hand another inch.
I worry someone will walk in to use the Ladies' Room and see me
cowering before a mirror.
How could anyone understand?

Future tells me to trust Him but my gut continues to question it all.
In a moment of bravery, I stick out my hand and clasp it with
Future's.

Future leads me to a place I have never seen, and tells me to choose.
He gives me a light push, and I am on my way.
There are many paths to choose from,
Each of which He promises me are potentially correct.

Suddenly it all makes sense.



ICARUS BEFORE HIS WINGS

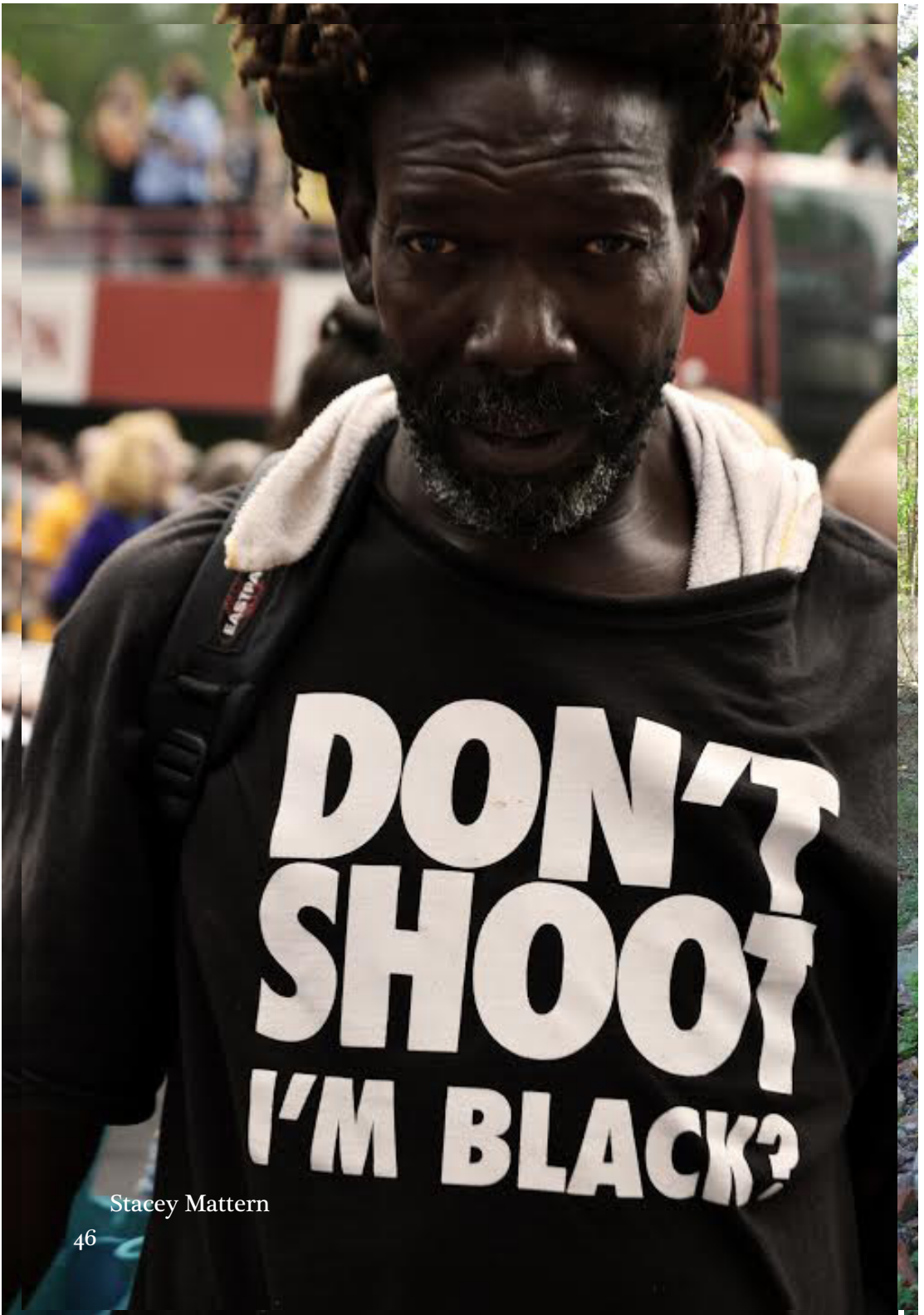
Trevor Krafnick

My body is a prison
Not a temple
A containment unit
Not a house for a god
This is no place of worship
This is high security
On lockdown
No altar for burning
Though there is an offering in fire
Sacrificed to anyone
For the sake of the damned
I am not sentenced to death
I love behind no rusted gates
No iron has been wrought
For my tomb
But still I am in a prison
Cage and crown
Forced into a position
I do not want
King of my life
And of my misfortune
Policy maker
Figurehead
My body made of cells is labyrinthine
Stopping what is hidden from escaping
Keeping invaders from finding it
Maybe it is not a prison but a maze
Easy for the maker to get lost
No red strings or fate
No Minotaur
No gods or altars
But still we pray
We pick a god



We follow his rules
We die
And we pray
For retribution and some kind of heaven
But my body is like hell
Like that prison or labyrinth
No glistening white chapel
No churchyard and no graveyard
But all the bones
The spirits and the dead
I am contained in a mausoleum of bars
It reads like a prison
Like an overtly complex metaphor
In a badly written young adult novel
Dystopian setting
Regime change
Revolution
Romance
My body is a joke without a punch line
Sad and unheard
Unspoken and unwanted
My body is a house of ill fame
Without clientele
I am its madame
A priestess of debauchery
The devil's bride
The warden
Daedalus
Worshipping a god I do not know
A government on the verge of collapse
A theocracy to a silent god
My body is not a prison
My body is a temple





Stacey Mattern



Lauren Citarella

THE BEEKEEPER

Lauren Klein

The whole house just caught fire and everybody died. No one called for help. Brothers called for their mother. Children clung to their sheets. The walls crumbled, charred chairs could not hold their own weight. It was hot. The smoke could be seen from over the mountains. “*So look there!*” the people remarked. “*Someone made a fire.*”

The Marble family was around their kitchen table listening to the radio program.

At eleven twenty AM, a blue whale was spotted off the southern coast of California. At eleven thirty one, another was seen. By two PM, check the television for images of the beasts. They are going to be captured. You can watch the event live from helicopter cameras.

There has been a cabbage recall. If you've purchased cabbage at your local supermarket, throw it in the compost pile: out of courtesy, mind the bodies of your former neighbors...bless your day, and remember: sometimes a hat is just a hat.

The man stood up at the end of the program and returned to his assignment. The remaining members swam in the echoing radio static. The house just caught fire and everybody died.

When a boy was born, they gave him a number to identify who his mother would be. They put in him in school. If he did what he was told, he was spared. He learned patriotism, deliberation, aggression, and obedience. He went to a strange country where the language was foreign. He was spastic at being so vulnerable. He had not been given instructions. He had not been given a weapon. He found a sharp stick to sleep with at night. Who knew what would come creeping.

The doctor suggests that becoming consumed with thoughts of personal doom is completely normal. He eagerly



suggests that in all his years of psychiatry he's found only two cures for mental distress: drugs and physical catharsis. So they give the remaining boys pills, and give the remaining boys girls, and give the remaining girls baby dolls, and give the remaining girls blindfolds. And so reveals the inner folds of the foundation of society.

The thing about psychosis is that it's never existed. The people who invented it were clever. It became useful. An explanation of the human condition. A gateway to that tender soft-spot in the mind and a rope to tie around the brain to tug from one side to the other. *Lead them in the direction most "beneficial" for the business of this place.* Muffle the soul because it only exists in the theory anyway. *The irrefutable answer to all the questions. The first to prove God cannot exist.*

Far, far away in the past, things were less artificial. Before wooden tools and spoken words. When the animal was terrifying, fierce...dangerous. When men cowered in holes, shaking from the cold of night. Copulating for warmth and company. When the precarious vertical spine was a burden—laughable to the creatures who acquired survival traits without having to think about it. People try so hard. Human. Humen. Huwo-, Human. Humans. The species became. They forced things into shape. Compensating their biological inferiorities, they centered their lives on common delusions. The animals rolled their eyes.

Ha! Look who is laughing now. Our homes and bellies are filled with the carcasses of them! We wear the skin we could not make ourselves. Too stubborn to die, we invented theft and murder and waste! It's been a tradition for too long now to ever change. The animals know they are doomed. The animals know we are doomed. They cannot cry as they watch their world burn.

The garbage truck was one of the most important inventions of all human history. It is fascinating, and without it, the human race would be different. Imagine if all the trash could



not be gathered up and dumped in a single spot? Imagine if people had to live in their waste! Humanity is my god. I marvel at the diversity and ingenuity of the people.

He won the race that year. Everyone voted for the Garbage Man. It was a real step in the right direction. Slowly, the country was breaking down the prejudice of stereotypes, strengthening their tolerance. Evolving. With a garbage man in office now, who knows who will win the next election? A plumber? Momentous events like it will always go down in history, because the event stands for something bigger than itself. Metonymy.

I too, take the pills. We know that they are necessary! We know that our species cannot survive without them! We cannot survive without progress. We would have died out long ago if it weren't for modern medicine. If the doctor tells you to take the pills, take the pills. He probably takes them himself. Save yourself, save your loved ones, save your neighbors and your gardeners. Medicine is the cure to your inner turmoil. Be the best you can be. Flush out the toxic doubt. I am proud to be here to tell you about my brother. The boy was uncompliant. He hid the pills under his pillow. He died by drowning. Only 18! Not yet a man! I've already forgotten his name! Don't let it happen to you! Death is an absolute. Life is a promise.

And so in this case, the taxidermist won his seat in council. Speak to and for the people and they will grovel. Speak to and for them with words that rise and float like little clouds of dust to settle in their hair and get caught in their eyelashes. They will be so busy batting themselves out like old rugs, you'll get away with anything.

Not long after, a queer thing happened. More surprising and scandalous than ever before. Who should



make a speech but the beekeeper? A single and forgotten position. One so curious that everyone waited, practically drooling in anticipation as he approached the microphoned podium.

I am a beekeeper, and I watch the queen grow fat. I am a beekeeper and I take the golden liquid from the comb and scrape it into jars. I am a beekeeper and I do this over and over, and every time I collect, many bees die. But there are always more hatched from the queen's eggs to replace them. And every generation grows more submissive. Less agitated when I reach my gloved hand in the box for the honey.

Yes, I've been stung in my life. The suit is not always enough to keep it from happening. The sting lessens and I grow tolerant to it. But each time it happens I awaken.

When I was an infant, I screamed in terror at my own existence and when I learned I was not alone in the world and when I learned I was an individual, and I cried when I learned I would die. The brain is just space and time. It's imagination and suggestion; when I scream about it, people forget it. No one pinches me, if I never wake up or fall asleep. And I don't ever dream, I'm only thinking about the future.

The beekeeper was shot on sight by militants. The crowd flew. Chaos. Screaming. The body hit the floor with an echoing thud.

Later that evening, The Apple family sat around their kitchen table listening to the radio program.

The shooting in the square resulted in the death of the beekeeper. We will be assigning a replacement in the morning. For the time being, conserve your honey. Tune in to the one forty PM television program for a replay of the shooting. For an aerial view, tune in at two PM...blessings.



A STUDY IN ANALOGUE: 2



Vicky Sun





Lauren Citarella



EXCREMENT

Michael Rucci

The whole world's gone to shit
I look around
And all I see is chaos
Bombs exploding
Markets crashing
People rioting
Tragedy
Why if
In our short, simple lives
With our rules to keep us safe
Our army to protect us
Our government to decide for us
Our options all dictated to us
Are we always running around?
Rushing this place and that
Worried about if and when
What we can afford
And how to pay the bills
Always focused on
Where we could be
As opposed to
Where we are
All while watching our backs
Never having enough
Our species is always
Trying to top itself
While it doubts
Its own existence
Its primary purpose
Harmony
The ability to
Find comfort in discomfort
Something we



Consistently avoid
With all of our
Toys and tools
To make life
A little easier
We've forgotten what it means
To struggle
To make truly hard choices
To take our own path
As opposed to
Traversing the
Pothole-littered road
That's been laid out
By our world's leaders
As complicated creatures
As we consider ourselves to be
We are still just animals
Killing our brothers and sisters
For territory
Scraps of meat
We have the opportunity
To be something more
Has higher consciousness
Granted us nothing
If not the ability to know better
To do better
To share a world
Meant to be appreciated
To be loved
As any person
Should love any thing
They cannot live without
The physical world

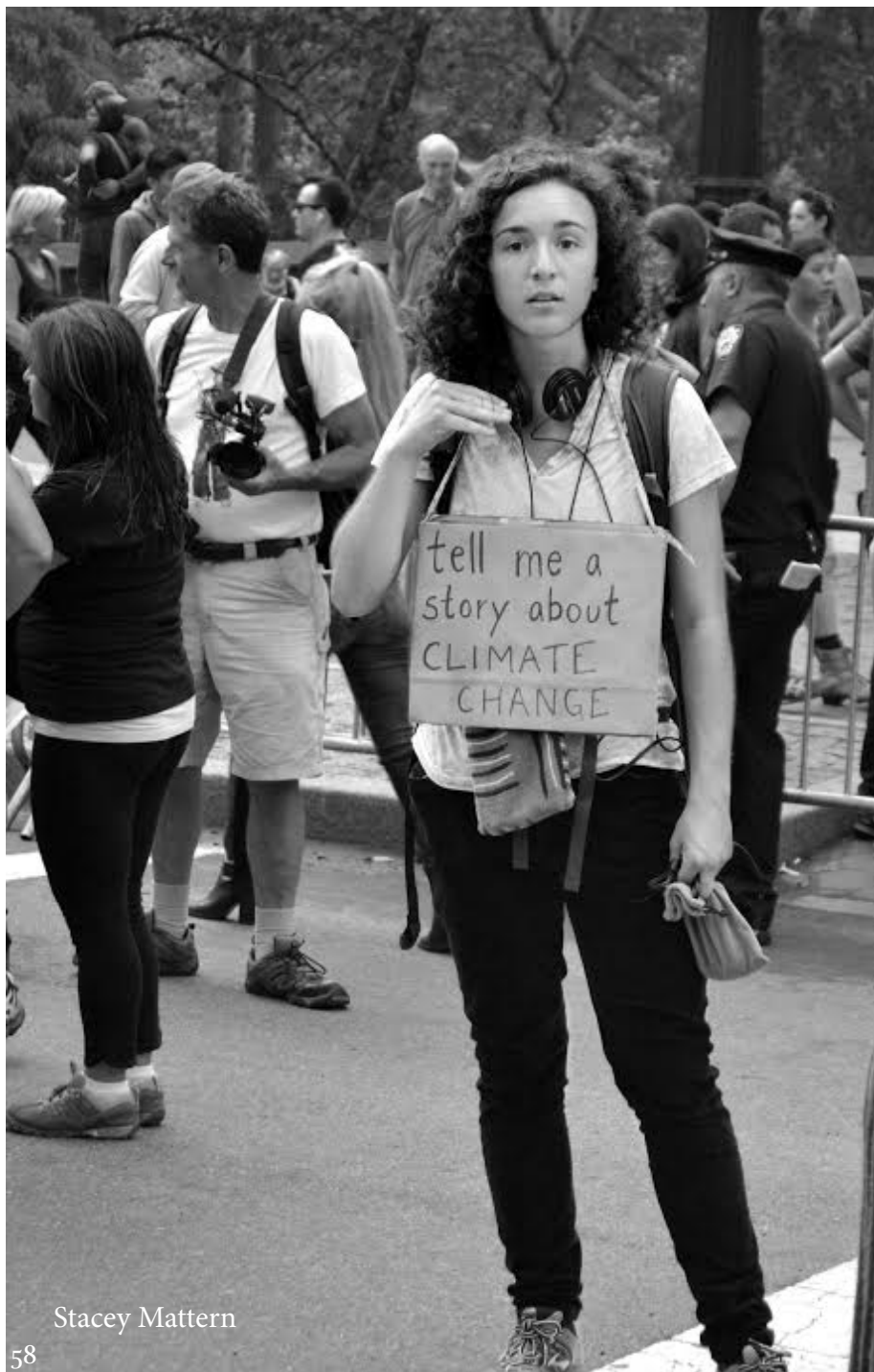


Has granted only a physical existence
To only be aware of what we can
See, hear, touch, smell, taste
Foolhardy
To assume the brain
Has any real power
It is simply a tool
The realm of the mind
A mostly untapped resource
Is a wealth of answers
For all sorts of questions
If only we had the will
To surrender to it
A vehicle
We can take anywhere
Be anyone
Do anything
The body is simply a vessel
For magic because magic exists
It is everywhere
The force that pushes and pulls
Flows through and around
It allows the plants to grow
The stars to shine
And creatures to live
It is the soul
The spirit
It is life
For life is a magical experience
And it is what you make of it



Good or bad
Two sides of the same coin
You cannot have one without the other
Pick it up
And put it down
On whatever side you like
But life isn't as full of random chance
As we perceive it to be
Everything that happens
To everyone
Alters everything
We are links
In a web of chains
And the reverberations
The shockwaves
Every little tug
On any and every link
Can be felt
Spreading throughout
Every god damn day
For all eternity
All living things
Are connected
By a force
I can only believe
Is magic
And yet
We have filled
Our world with
Excrement





Stacey Mattern

HOMAGE TO RC: 1907-1964

Dr. Marilyn Kiss

Bathed in birdsong
beyond beak and feather
beyond vocal chords and alphabet
beyond diachronic and dictionaries
beyond, beyond...

Into the plaintive note
Into the insomniac's call
Into the darkness harmonized,
the dawn, personified.

What scales are these?
What tones so vibrant?
What cacophonies so controlled?
What wonders so majestic?

Dear Rachel,
Dear Carson,
If the spring were silent,
we too would be voiceless
If the summer were silent,
we too would be incapable
of communication
If the autumn were silent,
we too would be colorless

If the winter were silent--

Quiescence would reign.



COLOR

Rebecca Barrett

People say it's like all the color has drained from the world,
Like everything is dark and solemn.
But it's really like the world has so many colors,
All so magnificent that they don't even have names.
Only, you don't seem to care at all.
It isn't dark, or black, or quiet.
It is so loud, and so bright, that you can't decide
Whether to cover your ears or shield your eyes.
You don't feel like you're alone in a desert, with no one around
Expanses of sky and land, or barren tundra.
It's like you're in the middle of a huge crowd
On the floor, being crushed by every single step
And no one sees you, or tries to save you,
But later, in the emergency room, they ask you why you couldn't
just get up on your own.

Empty isn't the right word, hollow fits better.
Then, it isn't really hollow because you are brimming with fear
And love, and anger, and worry, and memories, and hurt,
and happiness,
And stories, and goals, and problems, and dreams, and kindness,
and hatred,
And longing, and maybe even somewhere, a soul.
Why is it that full all of a sudden feels so empty?

Sometimes it only hurts inside your head,
It's just a thought you can push aside.
Other times, it's like a tsunami that sends pins and needles
through your whole body,
That sends a rush of pain to your weakest parts,
That debilitates you and makes you tremor.



It isn't that there aren't any options,
It's that there is every single possibility in the world to choose from
And you can see the bad outcomes for all of them.
Just that every time you walk by a cliff, you see five seconds into
the future,
With you falling down, breaking everything,
People watching in awe, crying, even screaming,
And you have to decide not to do it.

Premonition of negative outcomes haunts you,
Everything that could go wrong flashes before your eyes, but
None of it ever happens.
Vision is a haunting sense, and if I had the choice,
I don't know whether I would lose it or not.

Everything is a choice, they say, nothing is fate.
No one thinks of the kind of pressure that puts on us, as people,
When every possibility could lead you astray.
Everything is messy, and control is not an option.
The right kind of pills make it go away,
The wrong kind of pills make it worse,
Too much of a good thing makes you sick,
And not enough makes you sicker.
Identity is always a question.
When you are defined by your emotions,
Making them go away feels like a lie.
Then every single spiral, every single hurricane,
You blame yourself for not knowing better.
But what is gained by the warmth of winter,
When no one else has the beautiful, messy, overwhelming,
rewarding, special, crazy, colorful spring that you do?



THE SKY TO THE MOUNTAINEER

Trevor Krafnick

You climbed your mountain
Reached the top
You took in the sights
How the sun set from so high
And kissed the heavens with eyelids
Breathed in those clouds
Revealed the sky for what it was
Not blue nor clear
But every color of broken light
Constantly trying too hard to stay together
But most beautiful when broken
When the light is open and vulnerable
Cascades of ombres
In every pink and purple
And in the fieriest reds and oranges
Until it fades to black
It swallows its own light
And the sky becomes full of pin-prick suns
And you had the chance to live in it
I envy that
But you left the mountain top
Couldn't breathe at the altitude
The sun was too bright
The moon too close
The air too thin
The sky too brilliant
So you descend
But I hope you never forget what it tasted like
What it smelled like
To be in love with the sky
Because we have our mountains
And I am the sky
The sky has no mountain
The heavens have no peak



BUILD TREEHOUSES IN RAINFORESTS

Trevor Krafnick

Make me want to be yours
And I will never leave
Tame the wilderness in me
I'll be your garden
But leave a garden unattended
There's the forest back again
A jungle of weeds and wildflowers
Ravaging the grass
For remember even manicured landscapes
Man-made fields of oceans green
Are still of nature, quite untamed
As nature grows as nature pleases
Must be tamed each sun anew
I am fire and fire is drinkable
Water douses flame to ash
But in that mingling all is steam
And smoke will choke you back to death
So kill a fire and tame my garden
Slash and burn the trees to roots
And I will see you through the thicket
Wilted, burned, and tainted truths
Forced to claim your wicked hoots
Like owls who prey on squirrels instead of mice
Make me want to belong to you
And I'll be yours forever
But leave the gate open
The caged bird flies
And home becomes the sky
Just for contrast it must fly
Let the bird have branches
Let the owl have mice
Make me yours and keep me tended
Or the jungle must suffice



SIRASANA

Vicky Sun

Close your eyes.
Release your stresses.
Relinquish your prejudices
and feel your heartbeat.

Let your inner child rest,
far from judgement,
far from expectations,
far from fears of the future.

As you extend through your back,
extend into your past
and forgive yourself.

Let go of the weight on your shoulders,
as you shift your gaze downwards,
and rest your head between your palms.

Rest your thoughts in your hands.

Walk your way up,
step by step,
forward.

When you've reached your limit,
and you cannot advance anymore,
relinquish your fears
and your insecurities --

and lift.





Sara Signorelli

WHELK SHELLS

Kellie Gaaney

It's often said that creatures of the sea abandon their shell when it becomes too broken or too small or too ill-suited for whatever their needs may be. And thus, the creatures leave a part of themselves behind, buried in the sand and forgotten about, in search of things better.

Yet some of the shells are found, caked in the muck of the ocean, and the abandoned home finds purpose once more. In the delicate fingers of a child, the grains of sand embedded in the shell's outside get stuck in the ridges of skin. Eyes, lightened by the threat of mystery, tear apart the innards of the shell, memorizing every scratch and stain and hole, looking for a scar of its previous purpose.

And the child wonders, as he angles the shell in hopes of seeing what lies between the folds, how something so beautiful could be left behind as the tide slowly drops layer upon layer of sand into the shell's every crevice, as if the sea wanted nothing more than to prevent beauty from ever being discovered. Or maybe it's the Earth's way of preserving what is left of her magic, wrapping treasures in her warm embrace as a mother would when protecting her children from the evils that lurk in the shadows.





Lauren Citarella 67

*Lauren Citarella
Lauren Citarella*

FEATURED ARTIST



KELSEY HOPLAND

Kelsey is a junior double chemistry and biopsychology major hailing from Washington State. She is currently a resident assistant in Harborview Hall and serves as the president for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and the Pre-Health Society. Happiness to her is snow, scarves, tea, and stars.



I do not finish most of the things I start.

Please do not misunderstand me; I have my share of checks next to the ever-increasing number of responsibilities and obligations that adorn my numerous to-do lists. But, I am beginning to realize that the number of tasks completed is not an indicator of productivity or completion. As my mind races at the speed of light—the only true universal speed limit—darting back and forth between my past and present of unfinished projects, it dawns on me:

My inability to complete meaningful tasks is not a lapse of the mind or a default in character, rather it is simply the manifestation of the unfinished nature of my own human creation.

We as humans are inherently incomplete beings. Our stories continue to be written as we live each day, minute, second. I'll admit, at times I continue to live in one chapter, stuck re-reading the same material because I refuse to take the leap of faith and move on to the next installment in my personal story. But until I move forward, whether it be a leap, step, or perhaps just an inching forward, I'll never see the end of my own story. Unlike a book, however, one cannot skip to the conclusion of a life. Neither we, nor others, will see the completion of our stories until the exact day of completion arrives.

So, I ask, who is to decide when something is complete? We cannot truly decide for ourselves, nor others for us.

There is no law that dictates when a poem has enough stanzas or a song has enough verses to be considered “finished,” nor is there a guideline for the number of photographs in an album.

Ultimately, this is where I leave you. This is just a small part of an extensive body of unfinished work made by an unfinished creator.

~Kelsey Hopland





She turns her music loud
To drown out the sound
Of the cruel world spiraling
down

She seeks a release
A minute of peace
A full night's sleep
Silent serenity
Hiding behind a mask
It's slipping down
What can she turn to now?

The left is death, the right holds fear
Up is a broken promise, down is more tears
God doesn't answer when she tries to call
Does He even care?
She's bracing for her fall

Head just above water
Can't tread much longer



Debris

The mountain piles up
The volcano erupts
Hurricanes hit the beach
Tsunami just buries
The twister spins faster
Natural disasters
Headed straight for me
So just pick up the pieces of my debris



STAND WHERE I STOOD



WHEN THE WORLD
TURNS WHITE



Little bird sittin' on a wire
Little bird watchin' the world pass by
Little bird sings his heart's desire
Little bird has all the freedom to fly

So fly along home now
To where your dreams are found
Where you'll be safe and sound
Safe from the cold outside







WHEN THE WORLD TURNS WHITE





THE THINGS THAT HANDS HOLD



“Así que uno planta su propio jardín y decora su propia alma, en lugar de esperar a que alguien le traiga flores.”

-Jorge Luis Borges



“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands,
one for helping yourself,
the other for helping others.”
-Audrey Hepburn



THE THINGS THAT
HANDS HOLD



Handprints on windows
Warm breath in cold air
I'm quite positive I saw
You standing over there

Whether in person
Or maybe in form ghost
You were my dearest friend
The one I loved the most

You are no longer here
But with me you shall be
Here within my heart
Forever, eternity

So when I see our handprints
On windows in the cold
I will remember you
My love, my shared soul



CAPTION CONTEST

Nimbus held its first-annual Caption Contest this fall—and it was a blast. Congratulations to Daulton Gregory for beating out the many hilarious submissions and winning the coveted \$25 Chipotle giftcard.

To see more great captions for this picture and others, visit wagnercollegenimbus.tumblr.com

FIRST PLACE WINNER



She read my message but didn't respond.
~Daulton Gregory, '18





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