



PRISM

2012

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# PRISM 2012

A publication of the LTU Artists' Guild, Spring 2012

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Founded in 1978 by Professor Paula Stofer, PRISM is a journal of art and literature featuring work by students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Lawrence Technological University.

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# FROM THE EDITORS

A prism is defined as a medium that changes the appearance of what is viewed through it. In many ways, the same can be said of this collection of works that has been titled "PRISM". Here is a collection of short stories, poetry, drawings, and photographs contributed by students, staff, faculty, and alumni of Lawrence Technological University. Each individual piece offers its own interpretation of a subject through the eyes of its respective creator. Much like a physical prism can separate white light into colors, this copy of PRISM has separated the static of everyday life into various themes, as told by pieces of literature, pen, paint, and lenses. The entire spectrum of emotion is accounted for.

PRISM was founded in 1978 by then-student Paula Stofer, who would later go on to become a faculty member. It was only printed for two years until Dr. Melinda (Weinstein) Phillips, with generous backing from the College of Arts and Sciences, resurrected the dormant PRISM in 2000. Since then, every year has led to a more refined collection. The Artist Guild continuously strives to act as a creative catalyst for students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

We would like to sincerely thank the College of Arts and Sciences and the department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Communication for their amazing support. Additionally, we give special thanks to Sara Lamers for her guidance in completing the finished PRISM and to all the contributors who submitted pieces, which made this publication a possibility. We hope the university and students will continue to support PRISM for years to come.

Enjoy

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**TAUGHANNOCK** SCOTTSCHEIDER



# AWAITING LETHE

TANJAKRUPA

Some nights, I reconsider my selfishness of delivering them into this place I will become; the shell of me forgetting and within disappeared, slips beneath. My sorting buttons. My endless stitching returns and returns waxed thread. My children, abandoned in their prime of wanting a mother, and my husband, a wife, and my not being. Finally past the fears of knowing what's forgotten, slipping. My remains.

At this very moment small tangles form tight neural patterns, ink blots atop folded and gray matters, and it seems smart to record everything, each paragraph and syllable that was my life, to keep neat files in chronological order (just in case). The way an animal sees it is dying and on foot, drags itself, methodically, to a quiet and darkened space, I bend too.

In drafts, I will somehow salvage the pieces and baste together a narrative. With sheer will, I will pink and steam the plaque, from such darling synapses, destroying the last scenes of me. I will pitch my head gracelessly and with prescribed purpose into dark waters, still grafting childhood and loose fields of reality, and emerge the reincarnate of myself, the perfect pattern of her.

I will be gone long before I am gone, and my daughters, carrying a mind shattering inheritance, will one day hate me for giving them what my grandmother's mother ferried into her.

# AMENDS

MELINDAPHILLIPS

Come in. Make yourself at home.  
Have some tea: silver needle jasmine.  
Cake? Slices of lemon poppy seed.  
For you, the delicate china, the roses  
fragrant in a vase. We are sisters  
become strangers, older now, the book  
we read aloud yellowed with age.

Whose fault this long silence, we shall  
not say who did not follow, who did not wait,  
who snuffed the candle, then delayed  
in sending the letter. What is not done  
is a broken bracelet in a closed fist.

You sit, poised in your seat, pleasant,  
talking of things I am not a part of.  
When love could have ripened our regard  
like late strawberries into something sweet.



# DELICATE

ERIKAZAJAC

# A LOVE SONG FOR JOSEPH LEASE

DAVID TOENNIES

He was not standing with the bum  
Off the dead freeway overpass.  
He did not offer his spare change.  
He was not sitting  
in the tattered back seat  
Of countless junkers  
Owned by countless junkies  
Feeding addictions behind  
Countless dumpsters.  
He was not in the prisons.  
He was not in the sick wards.  
He was not down at the station  
Identifying the shooter.

He spends his time in the suburbs  
In the cookie-cutter homes  
Of the upper-middle class.  
He champions the cause  
of high school football teams  
playing games in November  
who believe a state title  
will define the rest of their lives.  
He throws invitation only parties  
With red plastic cups  
and upstairs bedroom getaways.  
You will find him  
In the presence of the haves  
who could give two shits,  
but no more than ten cents a day.  
He cosigns loans of the affluent  
So they can buy their Cadillacs,  
Audis, Benzes, and Porsches  
And display their nameplates  
as merit badges of prosperity.

He hasn't once attended a rally at the clinic  
And he never takes his turn on the neighborhood watch.  
He didn't march with the masses on Washington,  
Hasn't postulated on the state of the economy  
And refuses to comment on the war.

He owns timeshares on both coasts  
And drinks martinis poolside with the rich and famous  
on their sun-bleached patios  
behind their multimillion dollar mansions.  
He attends galas thrown to celebrate  
the non-profit organizations of movie stars  
Who think their money entitles them to a cause  
And their movie roles make them relatable.

So life goes on in Birmingham  
And the world still spins on 8 Mile.  
But God's Lincoln doesn't go that far south.



**CRUMBLING** ALLISON KASPRZYK

# THEM DAWNPECZKO

We came  
upon  
the stone markers  
laying yellow flowers.

Wind  
cannot brush away  
the buried  
names.

Laying still  
among wet leaves  
and black dirt  
in cold November.

No  
visitors pass through here  
to weed  
the overgrowth,  
To polish  
the stones,  
or to remember  
them.

# CLIMBLING VINE

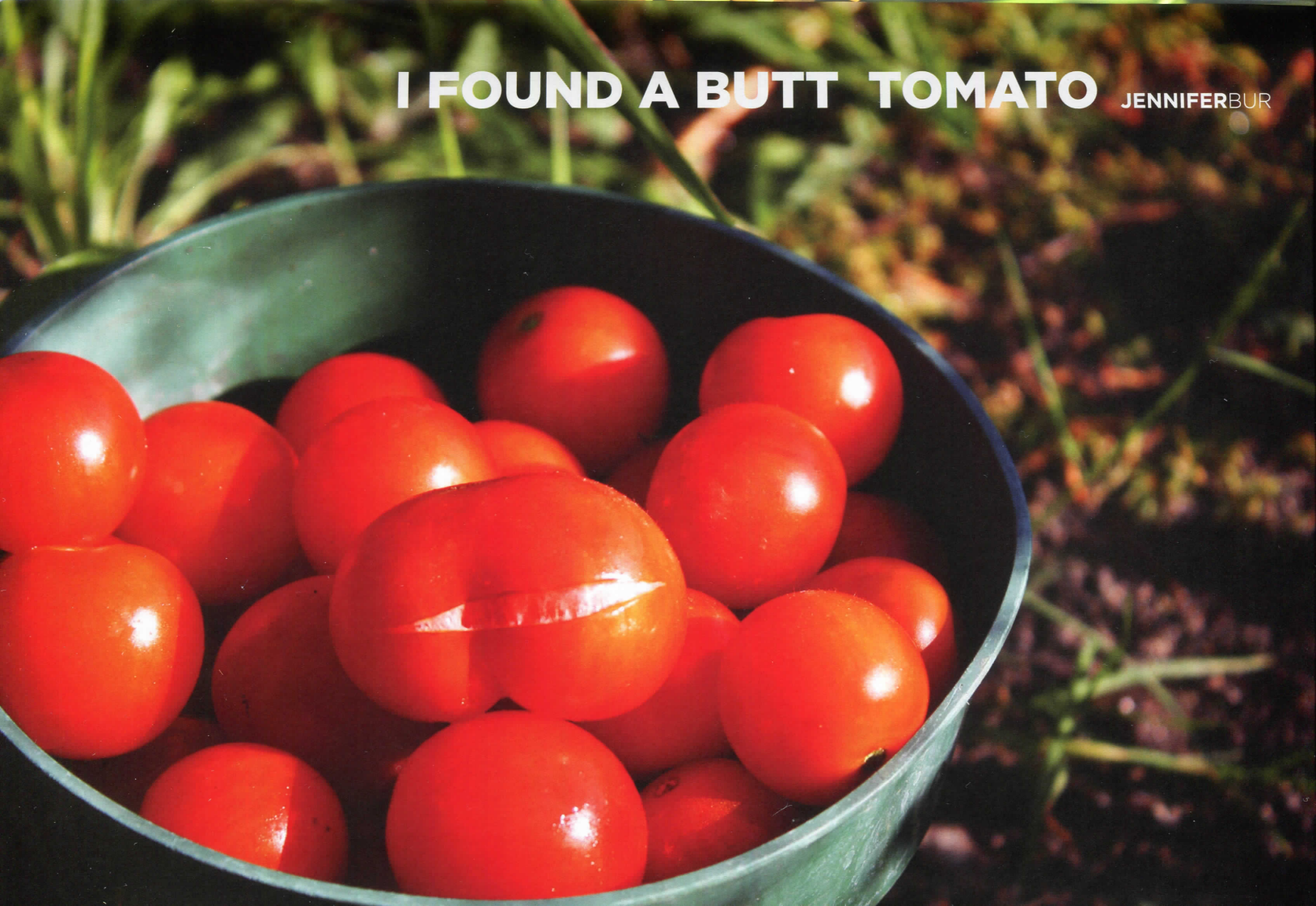
SCOTT SCHNEIDER



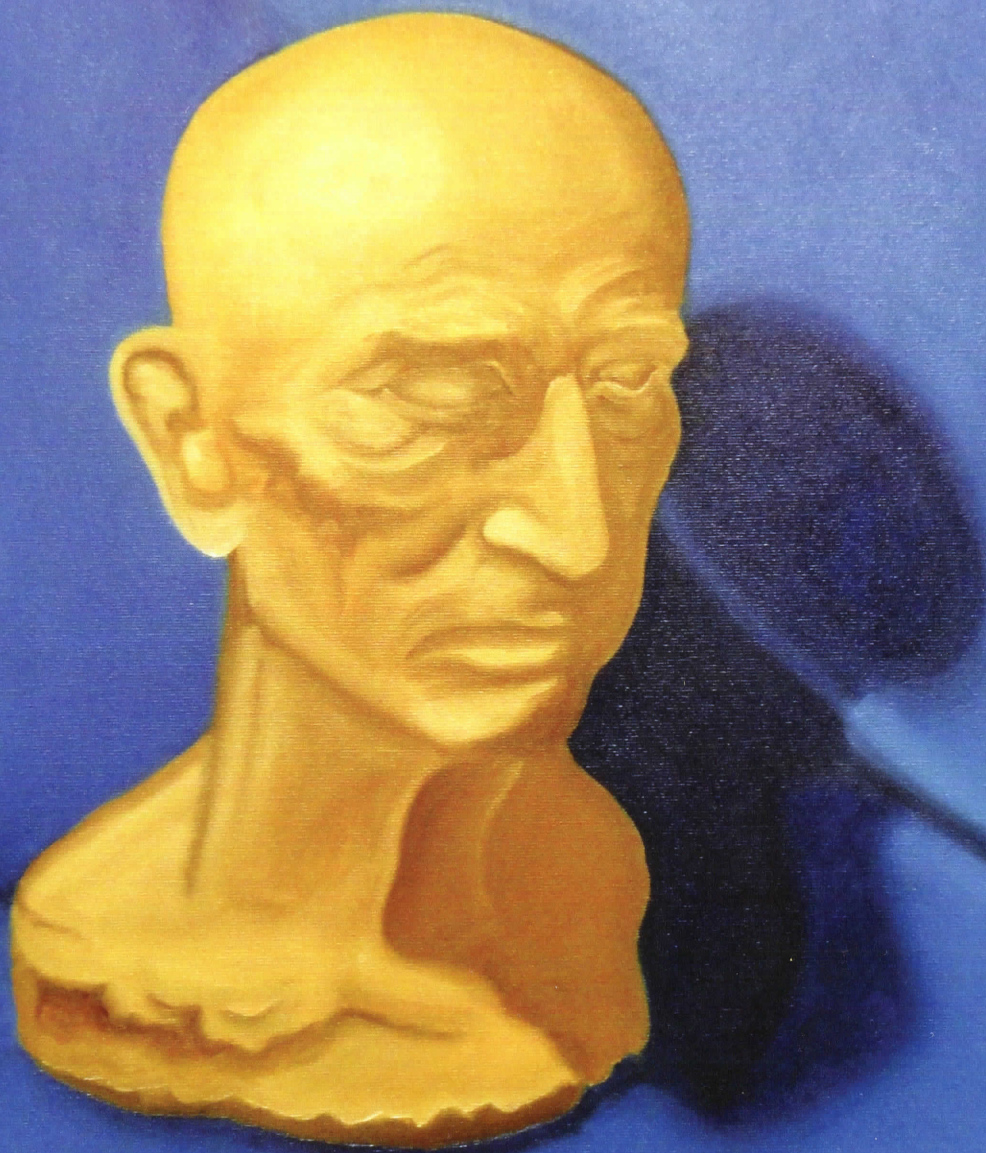




**LET'S SHARE** JENNIFERBUR

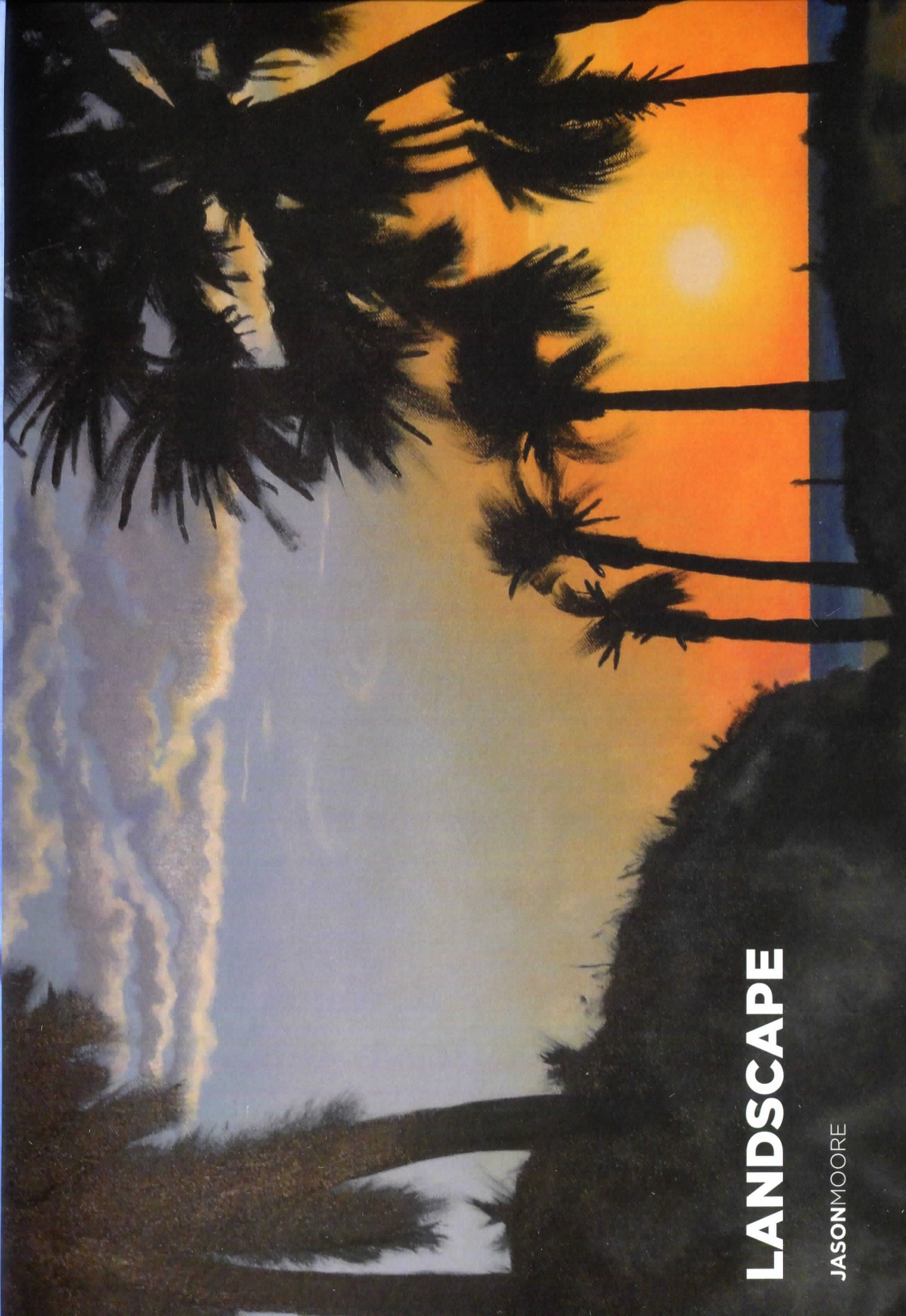


**I FOUND A BUTT TOMATO** JENNIFERBUR



**STILL LIFE**

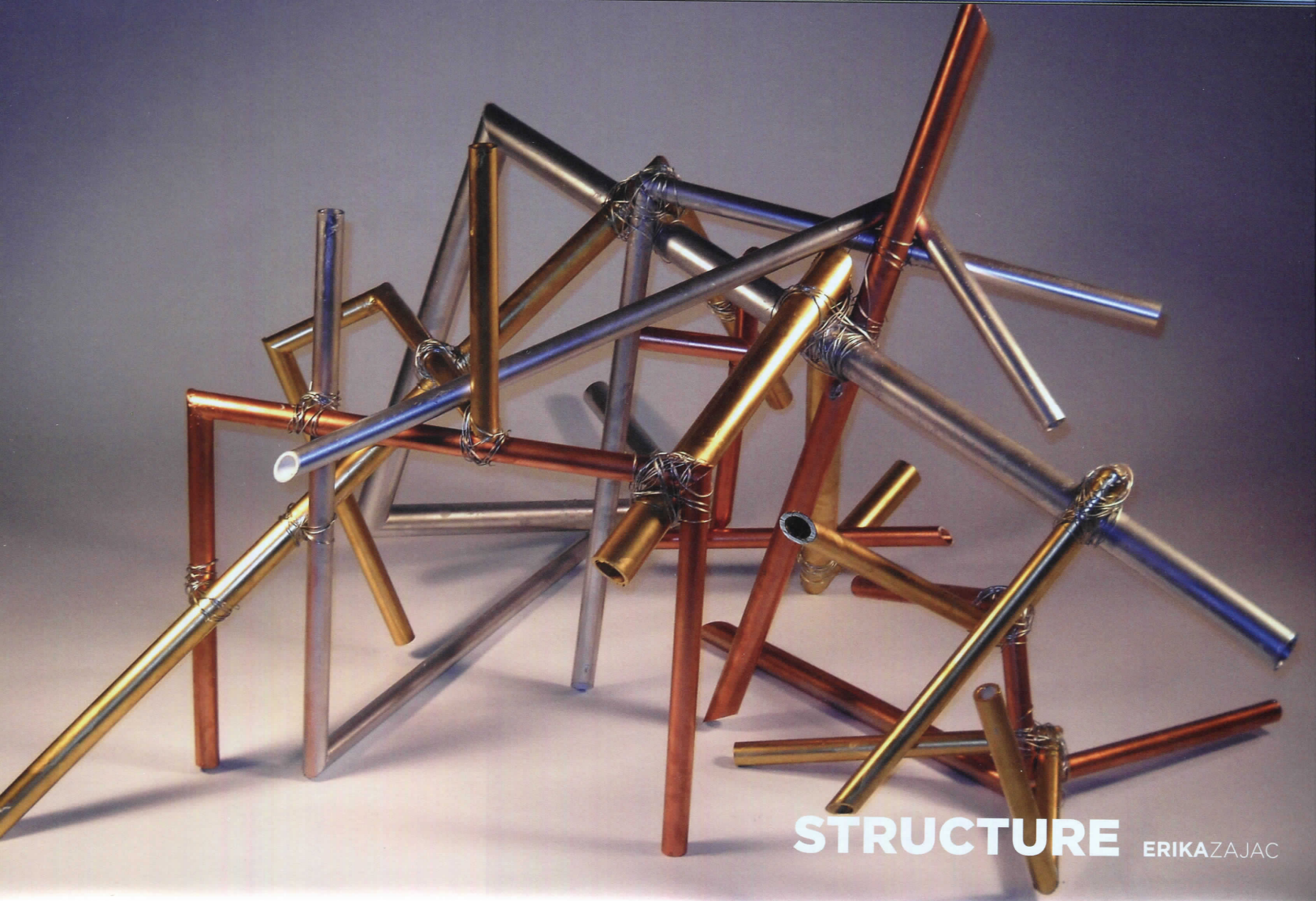
JASONMOORE



**LANDSCAPE**

JASONMOORE





**STRUCTURE** ERIKAZAJAC



**SWEET PEAS** JENNIFERBUR



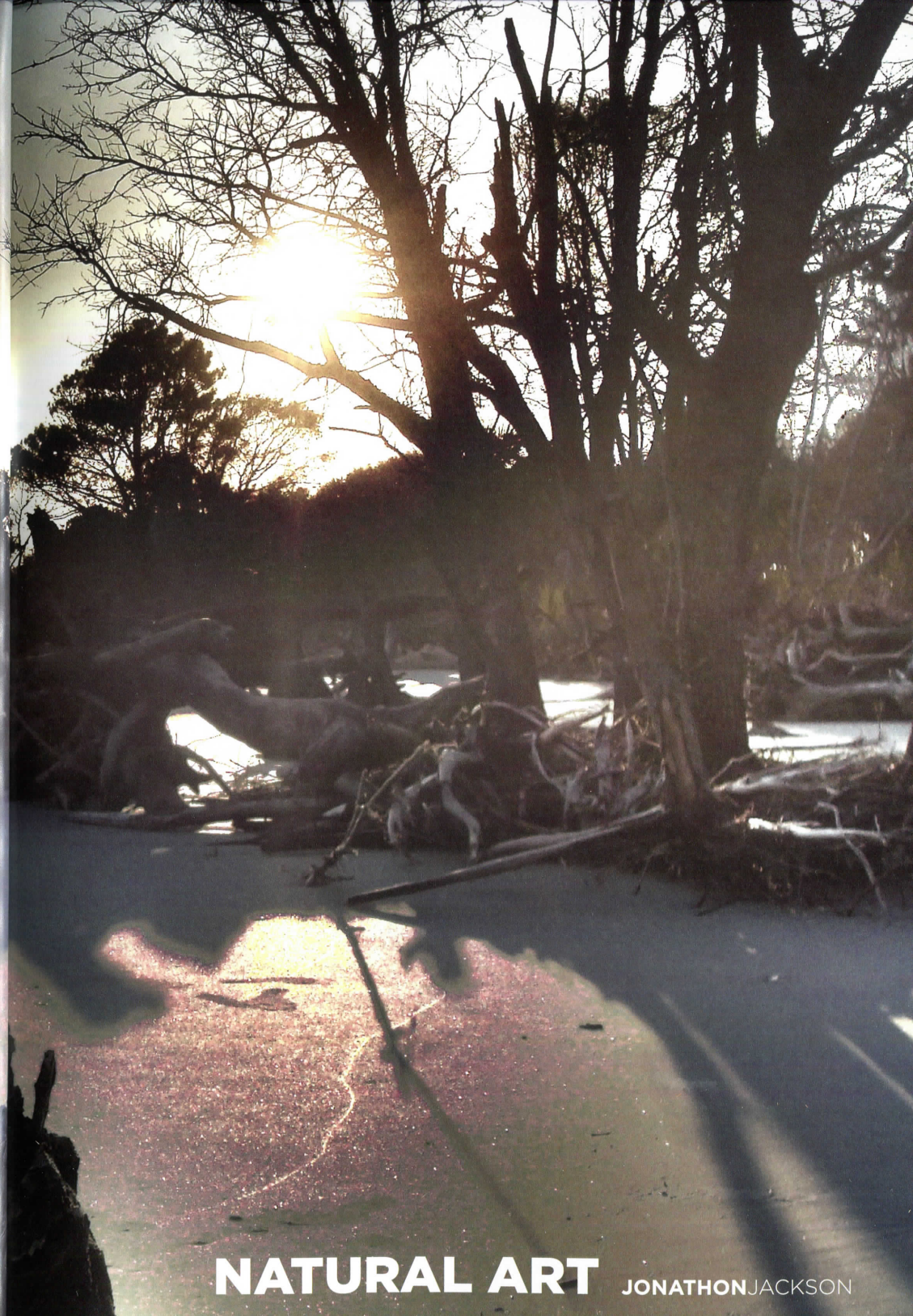
**STRAND THEATRE OLD  
FORGE NY**

SCOTT SCHNEIDER



**WAITING FOR A BLUE BOX** JENNIFERBUR

**WASHED AWAY** ERIKAZAJAC

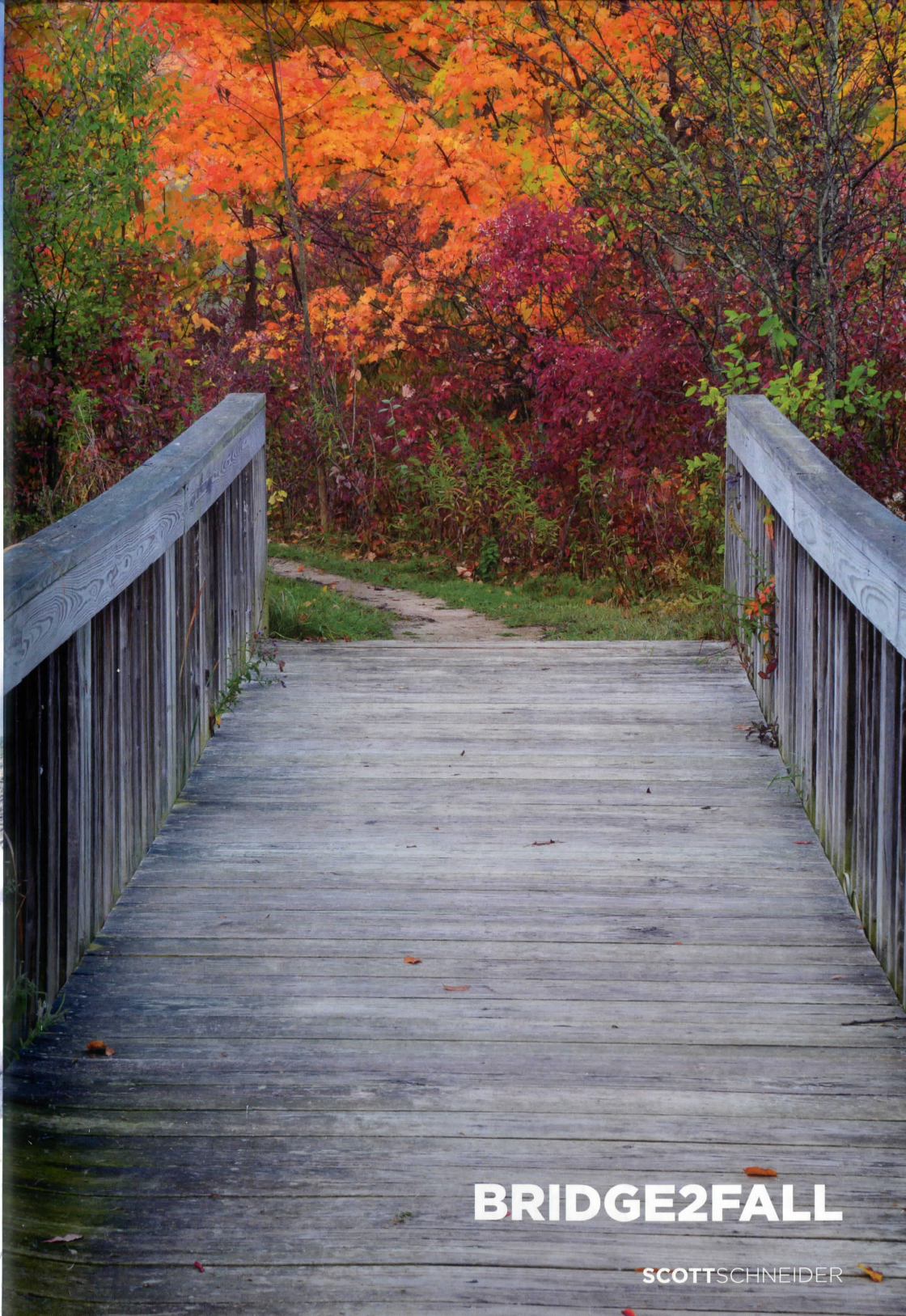


**NATURAL ART** JONATHON JACKSON



# TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

ALLISONKASPRZYK



# BRIDGE2FALL

SCOTTSCHEIDER





# LOST LOVE

JENNIFERBUR



# STERLING FOREST FURNACE

SCOTTSCHEIDER

# ENTELLUS' BOXING GLOVES

KATHERINE CHARBENEAU

*Entellus is a character from Virgil's Aeneid who appears in Book 5, "Funeral Games for Anchises." He is the old fighter who beats Dares in the boxing contest. In their bout, they wear equally matched gloves, and at the end, instead of killing Dares, Entellus kills the prize bull with one blow, squarely between its horns.*

Through a steady haze  
The giant recalls,

"We were bored, see? Nothing to do, just waiting to make port.  
Most times it'd be Norfolk or Brest, loading coal or men,  
Back and forth, back and forth ... nothing to do ..."

So! Throw down your gauntlets!  
"...massive weights that violent Eryx used to sport," \*  
All hail the U.S.S. Huntington and the U.S.S. Frederick alongside.

Send your best men -  
Let the fisticuffs champions duel  
As a thousand throats cry, "Fight!"

And the sun blazed unforgiving on the Atlantic,  
Their blood hot; youth and eagerness spur them on.

The deck is spattered, not with brains,  
But surely, blood and teeth.

Have them men fight out their heat before the battle,  
In the clinch, they will not fail or faint, they'll keep their heads.

I never saw him fight, never saw the blood and teeth,  
Only the punishment of a half dozen broken noses,  
The bare knuckles champion's fists like rawhide bound in iron.

I didn't know about 'board ship, except for carefully crafted stories of  
Coffee pots dancing on boilers when the shelling came too close,  
Or inklings of endless boredom, waiting for engagement with the enemy.

I do know the endless years of easy chair rocking, waiting, watching,  
Musing through wreaths of pipe smoke and waking dreams.  
A whole life lived in two short years, enough to last a century.

No one would want to glorify such fighting, and like Entellus,  
"There, in victory, he laid down his gloves, his skill." \*\*

So much better to dash out the bull's brains on the sand  
Than lose one more man to bravery.

\*5.449

\*\*5.538

## THREE DEER BEHIND THE RUSTY NAIL

MIKE GIRARD

"I saw three deer behind the Rusty Nail yesterday."  
That's a derelict bar on  
The other side of town, where  
The woods have begun to reclaim  
The scores of whitewash-brick buildings  
Sitting, bleaching in the sun.

"I used to drink in there. They didn't have A/C."  
Neither do deer, but they seem to stay cool.  
They shed their spots in autumn,  
And the trees lose their leaves,  
And the Rusty Nail watches them,  
But in the spring it stays the same.



**THE LIGHTHOUSE** STEPHANIEKOLPACKE



**QUEEN ANNE'S LACE** ALLISONKASPRZYK

# BLOOD ON THE BANYAN TREE

DAWN PECZKO

The boat softly bobbed against the crashing of the nightly waves, as Shep laid faithfully at Eli's feet, just as he always did. The only difference between now and the days before was the fact that Shep was alive then, although if Eli closed his eyes long enough he could imagine the sensation of feeling Shep's deep breathing against his sneakers. But it only lasted a moment. Now the lifeless body of Eli's five year old beagle was wrapped gingerly in a black garbage bag, slowly on its way to a destination of eternal slumber.

The three boys kept silent during the ride across the Gulf. Eli, Jake and Hutch were raised in a small port town off the Gulf of Mexico, a tourist destination during the busy months. Afterwards, life became quiet and routine. Jake's step dad owned an arsenal of boats, although the small motor boat was the only one Eli and Hutch were capable of weaseling Jake into sneaking away for their nightly rides. Jake was nervous, not bothering to hide the tapping of his own foot. His tall, thin frame sat rigidly against the back of the boat. One hand fidgeted with the pant of his khaki shorts while the free one held tightly against the handle of the humming motor, delicately maneuvering it like a newborn baby. This was a favor to a friend, he had to keep reminding himself. The trip would be quick, just to one of the islands. Then they'd be back.

Hutch sat to the left of Jake, attending to his own nervous ticks. He held a flashlight in both hands and continued to click it on and off, partly finding a way to entertain himself which it managed to do successfully. He continued to fix his worn Marlins baseball hat, pushing the tufts of curly red hair behind his large ears. With a quick wave of his hand he flashed the light in Jake's direction. "Do you remember which one it is?"

"Damnit, do you mind? I'm trying to steer."

"Sorry, didn't realize you could run into anything out here."

"Do you want us to capsize?" Eli and Hutch were familiar with Jake's dramatizations by now. "Yeah, I remember. It's the island to the north east of here." Jake's attention went back to steering, and Hutch went back to clicking the flashlight on and off.

Eli looked ahead to see the shadow of a large mass slowly emerging from the horizon of the ocean. It was sprinkled within a chain of islands, none of which stood out from each other. "We've never been there before, have we?" Eli looked to Hutch.

"Nope, but I did, once. With my older brother. That's where he caught that barracuda that one time." Hutch had done his bragging as a child. According to him it was as tall as his seven year old version of himself. "It's a small island, but I don't think a lot of people go there. I thought it would be a good place, you know, to bury Shep."

Bury Shep. One day ago that wasn't on Eli's mind. One day ago Shep was sleeping at the foot of his bed, lazily kicking Eli in his sleep. Now his dog was gone, a limp body was left at Eli's feet. He wasn't there when Shep died. Eli came home late from school that day. He tossed his bicycle to the side of their two bedroom ranch home like it always did. It fell against the fraying, bright yellow siding like it always did. Hurrying inside he looked through the rusted screen door, but he didn't see Shep lying patiently in the foyer, like he always was. Eli could hear soft sniffing coming from the kitchen where he found his younger sister, Lisa. She was crying uncontrollably and Eli couldn't get a word from her. Their father was in the living room, reclining in his La-Z-Boy. Eli could smell he was already on his fourth beer as his father called him into the room. A sense of dread was already spreading over Eli, and he could already figure out what his father was going to tell him. Shep had gotten out of the yard late that morning, and was hit by an oncoming truck.

"I tell you to lock that gate, every God damn day, don't I?"

Eli could feel the rush of guilt brought on by his father's words. It was salt in an open wound, although Eli tried to reason it to his father's self medication. His father had Shep in a black garbage bag in their garage. Eli pulled open the string to see Shep lying quietly inside. He looked as he always did at the foot of Eli's bed, peaceful. Eli stroked the short brown fur of Shep one last time, feeling the rigid body beneath his hands. His father was going to have a family friend take the bag to dispose of it, like a piece of trash. Eli wanted something better than that,

and he knew his father wouldn't agree to bury the dog in the backyard. He would never agree to anything sentimental like that. Taking the bag in his arms, Eli would find a place for Shep.

The boat slid against the sandy beach of the island, coming to a soft landing as Jake continued to precisely shut the motor off. The three boys piled out of the boat, each making splashes into the shallow water.

Trees and vines draped around the sand and stony beach as the three boys pulled the small boat across the sand. Jake made sure to weigh it down with a large rock, even though there was no one around to steal it and the tide was far too low to pull it away. All the bases were covered, nevertheless. The island wasn't massive. There were others far larger. You could easily walk the diameter in less than an hour. They each began walking off in different directions, surveying the area, following behind the white light of their flashlights. Eli still carried the bag with him.

"Maybe we should find a spot close to the shore." Hutch called out to Eli and Jake from beneath a tree. "You know, so it's easy to find."

"Not on the beach, obviously. The tide'll eat it away," Jake called back.

"Yeah, obviously. I didn't mean right on the shore, just far away enough to still see it." Hutch wasn't trying to hide his annoyance, Jake's tone was beginning to wear thin on him.

"How about over here?" Eli stood beneath the boughs of a massive banyan tree. The twisting and curling of the roots were mangled about the earth and around the trunk, as if some unknown force was choking the life from the real tree beneath it. The canopy spanned far around the island. Jake and Hutch hurried toward Eli instantly in awe of the tree as well.

"Shit." Hutch murmured.

"Yeah, I think that'll do." Jake nodded.

They each found broken tree limbs scattered about the ground. They were thick enough to use as shovels and picks. Eli and Hutch began digging a small hole between the twining of two of the tree roots while Jake collected stones. The night wore on, and they hurried as each minute passed by. The sun would be rising in a few hours. With their faces and hands smudged with dirt and sweat, each one began placing

rocks on top of the hole until a small mound of stone was created. "There should be a marker," Hutch wiped a dab of sweat from his forehead, smearing a line of dirt in its place.

"I got it." Jake reached for a low branch from the banyan tree, at first having to jump a few times until he could grab for it, despite his towering height. Having the bark beneath his grasp he pulled a swift yank until the snapping of branches and Jake's sneakers hitting the dirt could be heard. The sequence was followed by a quick yell of "Gross."

Confused, they looked to Jake who was quickly rubbing away at his own sleeve.

"What is it?" Eli asked.

"Did a bird shit on your arm or something?" Hutch laughed loudly at his own joke, they didn't indulged him.

"No!" Jake stated adamantly. "I mean, I don't think so. Something dripped all over my arm." Lights flashed toward Jake's arm and at the ground below him. A small puddle was collecting in the dirt. It was the same color that was smeared against his cotton sleeve. It was red. The flashlights were kept on him, as they all looked at each other and back at the puddle.

"Is that blood?" Hutch broke the silence.

"No, it's not." Jake tried to reason, his voice unsure. "Maybe something's dead up in the tree?" The lights darted up into the dark shadows of the canopy. There was nothing visible, but the dripping could still be heard. Eli followed the drops with the light until they reached the broken limb above them. They could see it clearly. As each second ticked by a drop fell from the tip of the cracked limb. It was dripping from inside the tree.

"The tree is bleeding."

The ground didn't soak up the blood. It collected in a thick sticky pool against the dirt and leaves on the island floor. Each beam of their flashlights met at the center, illuminating the bright red of the blood against the paleness of their skins. Eli bent down, he was inches away from it. They thought it could be some weird type of sap, or tree substance unknown to their adolescent minds. It couldn't be blood.

Eli extended his free hand and reached for the pool. A nervous yelp was heard from Hutch and Jake. His fingers dipped into the red and for a moment he could see his skin reappear, only coated in a thick coat of syrupy liquid.

It happened so quickly. The difference was a blink of his eyes. When Eli looked up his surroundings were covered in a bright yellow glow. The island was gone and so were Jake and Hutch. The only remaining familiarity was the towering banyan tree. A presence was coming toward him, which became less fuzzy with each step. He felt the arms of someone wrap around his body, but it wasn't binding. It was comforting and warm. Eli could make out the face now. The eyes of his grandmother looked back at him. Her wrinkled skin, like folded satin and her snow white hair was so real. He couldn't make sense of any of it. His grandmother had died when he was five years old, and although memory of her was fuzzy, her presence at that moment was vivid.

She held Eli closely, brushing away the messy strands of brown hair from his eyes. Fear seemed rational, but he couldn't feel anything but comfort and safety at that moment. He turned to face her, nestling his face in her shawl as he wrapped his arms around her frail body. She held him closely for a few moments before stepping back and releasing his grasp, before giving him one last kiss on his forehead.

Behind the old woman stood another figure. She was younger, and appeared to be a younger version of Eli's grandmother. She shared the same dark brown hair as Eli and the same almond shaped blue eyes. He didn't hesitate before wrapping his arms around his mother's body. She instantly cradled his head against hers. He remembered last seeing his mother when he was six. She looked exactly as she did at that moment under the banyan tree. Her pale skin was sprinkled with freckles and the hints of lines around her soft eyes, like folded paper. She wore the pair of pearl earrings Eli and Lisa had given her for Christmas when he was five. She was real.

Eli could smell the familiar fragrance of pineapple against her dress. He wanted to say so much to her. He wanted to tell her about his life, about Shep and about Lisa. He wanted to say how much he missed her, but nothing came out. No sound, despite his efforts. They couldn't speak. His mother could see his anguish, as she held his hands tightly and gave one last stroke of his face. She softly let go of his grasp before stepping back.

The light dimmed as quickly as it came. With a blink of his eye Eli was sitting in front of the red pool again. He could feel his body slouched

over and the force of hands shaking him back and forth. Hutch and Jake were panicked, but relieved to see Eli moving again.

"Are you alright, man?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. I just blacked out for a sec."

"More like five minutes. We didn't know what the hell happened to you." Jake looked back to Hutch, both relieved their friend hadn't gone into a permanent coma state.

"What happened to you?" Hutch readjusted his baseball cap, having taken it off in stress.

Eli wasn't sure what to tell them. He wasn't even sure what he experienced. He saw the ghosts of his mother and grandmother? They probably would have laughed it off. "Nothing, I just blacked out."

The three boys began climbing back into the boat as Jake lifted the stone and took his seat by the motor. Hutch and Eli pushed the boat away from the shore, before hurrying across the shallow water into the boat. They slowly made their way across the Gulf, Eli stared back at the shadowy island mass behind them. The ocean breeze was cooling off that night and Eli could feel the drop in temperature as he huddled to keep warm. He recalled the warmth against his grandmother's embrace and the safety in his mother's hands. Would he ever feel that again? Hutch and Jake looked ahead toward the port as the boat sped across the ocean water, yet Eli kept his gaze back on the island.

# WEATHERED NOSTALGIA, AN ESSAY

MELISSA GRUNOW

The summer I was five, it didn't rain. It refused to rain. Everything was brown: the grass, the trees, the bushes. Even our house was brown, a two-toned aluminum gradation, which my parents referred to as "russet" and "tan." The brown, I remember. I don't remember much of the inside, except for wallpaper of varying prints, vaguely reminiscent of paisley, and a bright orange couch that felt like what I thought was velvet. It wasn't. My mom vacuumed that couch at least once a week, sometimes more, but I never understood why. We didn't have any pets—they were banned in the mobile home park—and we weren't allowed to eat in the living room. The vacuum cleaner wasn't going to take away the cigarette holes burned into the cushions. It wasn't going to take away the smell.

My friends and I swapped trash bags of our mothers' old clothes and played dress up with oversized ruffled gowns, shoes, and costume jewelry that hung all the way to our knees. It wasn't long before we started building makeshift shelters out of old blankets, lawn furniture, my plastic picnic table, Dad's saw horses. It was even less time before our forts became masterpieces with hallways leading to multiple rooms, designated entrances, and even a few home accessories. Every day was a new palace. We had blankets that made better "carpeting" than "roofing", and each of us had a carefully selected set of blankets to contribute that we kept stashed in the outdoor shed in every yard of every mobile home in that community. We would wake up early and spend hours making these forts. We would put on our costumes, and spend our days out of the sun in our little bungalows, telling stories, doing each other's hair, doing whatever to hide from the heat.

My yard was the preferred yard for our forts because my mom checked on us the least. She was always inside, cleaning, listening to records, not allowing us to come inside because my running from room to room and slamming doors would make them skip. Occasionally we would see her shadow move in front of a curtain, hear the drone of the vacuum fade away from the open windows, the subtle flick of a cigarette lighter followed by a gentle inhale.

Summers were my most favorite time of the year. At least, that's how I remember it. We rode our bikes without helmets, dug holes in the name of exploration (we actually thought it was possible to dig to China), made an attempt at fishing in the tiny creek on the outskirts of the

trailer park, and didn't think about sunscreen. I would wear the floral sun jumpers that tied on each shoulder, and spend my days tearing through the neighborhood. The only rule was I had to be home by the time our streetlight came on. I usually made it home on time, peddling my big wheel as fast as I could, balancing a cabbage patch doll with only one shoe on my lap. I would hop off the bike and run into the house, letting the screen door crash behind me, and stand in the living room beaming. My sap-covered, sunburned, tired, dirty self was proud of arriving on time, relieved to avoid a slap or a spanking for even a minute of tardiness.

But it was the afternoons we spent in those forts that we felt the most sure of ourselves, the most natural, and the most defiant. We made up stories, told each other lies, and pretended to believe each other. There were four of us: myself, Kathleen—an only child—and sisters, Chrissy and Amber. In our costumes, we could hide the torn hand-me-downs we wore underneath. Shoes weren't necessary, so it didn't matter if the sandal buckle was broken or they were half a size too big.

Did we know we were poor? I don't think so. My only sense of commodity was cleanliness. My mother would often remark about the dirt, clutter, disorder of other people's home. We were better because our house was cleaner; it was that simple. In our forts, we were all royalty, all snobs, all wealthy.

When school started, the weather changed, and we stored our blankets in our sheds and forgot about the outdoor furniture that braved the rain. All summer long we grew accustomed to the sounds of distant lawn mowers, baby birds chirping from an unseen nest high in the trees, bees circling our heads on their way to the next dandelion. By August everything around us went so quiet we could almost hear the air getting thicker just before the rains came, followed by the imminent threats of tornado warnings that flashed across the bottom of the television screen. They always seemed to come just as we were finishing dinner. After we changed into pajamas, my brother and I would sit on the floor in the living room and try to ignore the snowy picture that the antenna just couldn't fix, and he would nudge me every time the map of our part of the state would change color and ask me if that mean the tornado was coming for us. Outside, the wind would blow harder as the sky got darker; it would get under the siding of our trailer and howl throughout

the living room. Lights would flicker. The tree in our yard would shake. Then the rain would fall, harder and harder, and we'd listen for any sign that it was getting worse, until we had to go to bed.

For a while, once we were in bed, we thought we were safe, but there were many nights that year when my mom woke us up and made us hunker down in the hallway because it was the only space in our trailer that didn't have a window. I had learned how to do tornado drills in school, so I coached my three-year-old brother. Face the wall. Knees tucked in and head tucked under. This was to protect us from flying shards of glass and other bits of destruction. Don't talk. I never fully understood how silence was going to protect us, but we shut up anyway. I usually spent those tornado drills watching the ants crawl across the floor, or counting the number of dots in the speckled tile, all the while grateful that I had gotten out of math class.

At home, it was a different kind of fear. We brought our pillows and blankets into the hallway, sat on the floor and stared at each other, our eyes wide, our mouths closed, and our ears tuned in to the wind crashing up against the side of our trailer, howling, howling, the sky too dark to warn us if the tornado was on its way.

The tornado never came. I never saw it. The tree outside never crushed our living room. My dad's car never blew away. The shed was still standing in the morning. Things were always fine in the morning. It was just getting through the nights that the storm seemed scary.

Worms always came out after those storms and would stretch themselves long and skinny across the sidewalk. It didn't smell refreshing after those storms. It smelled like death and rot.

Shortly after I was old enough to ride my bike around the trailer park without land-marked boundaries—not that I had ever obeyed them anyway—my parents put me in charge of cruising around to look for the sheets of skirting that we had lost during the storm. Mobile homes sit about two or three feet above the ground to make space for water pipes and wiring. Skirting is used to keep animals and trash from getting underneath the house and to make it look less like, well, a trailer. The skirting were simply large slabs of metal that matched the siding of the trailer. Their edges were sharp, and the corners usually left me with scratches. They slid on a track underneath the house, and when it got windy enough, the edges would be caught just right that they would pull away from the house and collect with tree limbs, discarded toys, other debris. So, the morning after bad storms, my friends and I would get on our bikes and pedal around the neighborhood looking for slabs of

skirting that had blown off our house. They were heavy, big and awkward and we could usually only balance one at a time on our handlebars, and even then it was wobbly and slow-going. There were usually quite a few neighbors out looking for their own skirting, and sometimes we brought back slabs that didn't belong to us, sometimes someone else took our slab when it didn't belong to them.

I hated chasing the skirting. I dreaded those storms. I hated the soggy ground and the mud, mud so thick and so black that it would ride up my back bike tire and leave a spotted trail down my spine and all over the seat of my pants, a trail that stained itself into my clothes, clothes that I didn't have very many of, and rarely saw new ones. I'd aim my bike tire at those worms that lost their way onto the sidewalk and I'd run them over. I'd feel especially pleased if my tire severed them, as if it were some kind of retribution for the gashes on my hands from the skirting's sharp edges. Anything, everything, can cut something else.

I can't remember all of it. I want to remember many autumns spent hunkered in the hallway, the sleeping bag pulled up around my shoulders, the pillow bunched under my head. I want to remember that it happened more than once, but I can't be entirely certain. But I can be sure that the tornado warnings were at their worst after that summer I had spent hiding those forts with my friends. I felt like those tornadoes—always in the distance, always threatening—were punishing me. I was being sought out, I knew it. I had done bad things, told horrible lies, and those twisters were coming to get me. They tried to take my house apart, skirting by skirting, and it was only a matter of time before they'd find me hiding pathetically in that hallway. Maybe that is why you weren't supposed to talk during a tornado drill. If you didn't talk, the tornado couldn't find you.

It was winter. My birthday had come and gone twice, and my mom had gone, too. She had left in October, and the last memory I have of her is watching her from across the living room as she pulled photographs away from their sticky album pages and shoved them into a pocket on the side of her purse. I remember knowing I was supposed to feel something, knowing I was supposed to cry, but I didn't do either. I stared. It was like I was performing, that if I sat a certain way, looked a certain way, caught her eye a certain way, that she would look at me and see me there, see through me there, and tell me she didn't want to leave me behind. I can't remember ever being surprised or shocked by circumstances as a child, and to an 8-year-old me, my mother leaving was just that: it was a circumstance, a situation, a bigger something that was beyond my control. It was as intangible as because I said so, like the weather and the tornadoes. There was no aftermath, no skirting to be recovered.



I was quiet around adults when I was a child. Always afraid of getting in trouble for something, I kept my mouth shut around them, and they often forgot I was there when they'd start talking to each other. And after my mom left, I heard other mothers say that my house was dirty. Parents whispered at the bus stop about our soap-scum bathroom, the dust, the dirt. My mother, the person whose job it was to kick us outside all day long while she scrubbed the house until her hands bled, the only absolute in her darkening world, was gone. We had a string of babysitters: fat, ugly, crass-voiced women who watched TV all day (my mom only listened to her records) and ate snacks in between meals, the crumbs falling between the cushions (my mother could sustain herself on coffee and cigarettes until dinner). Do I remember the dirt? Not really. I only remember the neighbors talking, and my friends not being allowed to sleep over anymore. Something I knew that they didn't was that at night, after work, my dad would play Barry Manilow on his reel-to-reel and sing along with it. I could sometimes hear the churning of the washing machine or the clattering of dishes being loaded into the dishwasher. In between wash cycles, I would hear my dad crushing ice cubes in his hand with a spoon, drop them into a shallow glass, and pour a caramel-colored liquid over it, sipping, sipping, until it was nothing but a watered-down dribble of scotch in the glass, in the sink, in the morning. My dad would stay up really late, the reel-to-reel playing the same songs over and over, the washing machine agitating and churning, a faucet running, a closet door closing and his music and his noise would put me to sleep. In the middle of the night, my dad's silence would wake me up, and I would look around my room, listen for my sister's breath as she slept on the bunk bed below me, wonder where my mom was, what she was doing, why she didn't miss us. I never wondered if she did, I only wondered why she did not. I would lay there, in the dark, the objects in the room changing shape in front of me, the noises of the neighborhood folding into themselves until there was nothing but my sister's breathing, my own breathing, my restlessness. It gave me a sense of comfort when I felt alone, missing the noise, pulling the blankets up to my chin to create a fort just for me.

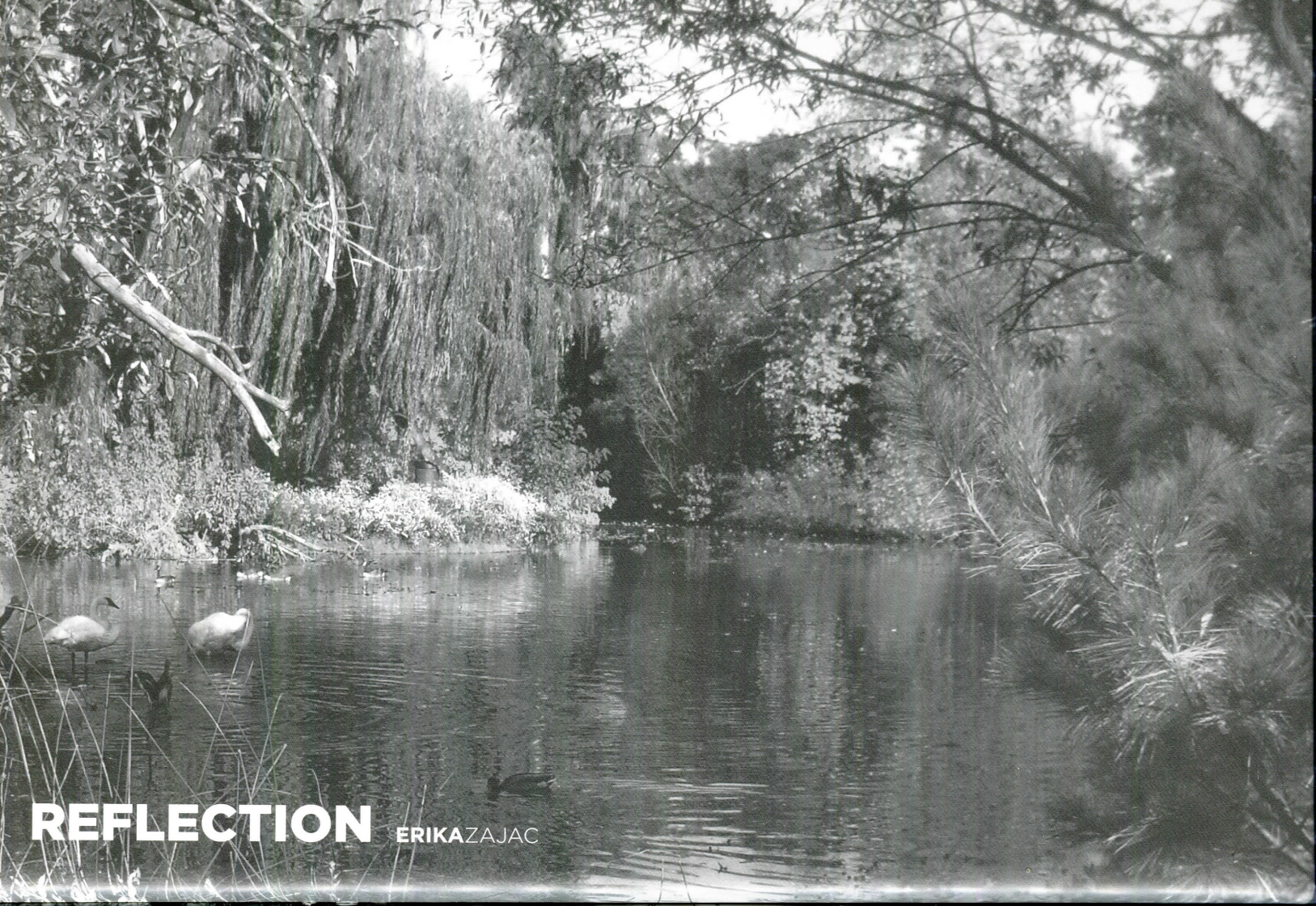
I was lying in this position the first and only time I saw the ghost. It was a head, a white head that I could see through, and it glowed at the foot of my bed. My breath was trapped somewhere between my lungs and my throat, and I let my body hold it hostage. I wasn't moving. The head floated. It hovered. It seemed to pulse in place. A tiny breath squeaked out of my body and the head moved. It floated slowly toward my face, we were eye level, this head and me. I tried to say, "Dad?" but I couldn't. My dad was all the way at the front of the trailer, I was at the back. The head moved closer and closer, but I didn't let myself scream, and just before it got to my face, it disappeared. I ducked my head under the

covers, breathing, breathing, until my ears couldn't hear my thumping pulse anymore.

My dad remarried and we moved out of Bellevilla Estates when I was 9. Years passed, and I forgot about the summers inside the forts. I have a lot of forgotten memories from the time before my mom left us that come back to me at strange moments, intimate moments, moments when I should be paying attention to something else, moments where I am prompted to interrupt a conversation because I get a flash, and then like a crack in the planet, I get these images, bits of conversation, memories of other's faces, a lingering smell long forgotten.

It's been more than ten years since I've spoken to my mother, but I think of her sometimes and wonder if she actually knew about what was going on in those forts, why we felt so compelled to create alternative worlds in my yard, just under the window, the sound of the vacuum off in the distance. She probably knew. And like so many other things in her life, she probably denied it. My mother, the compulsive liar that she is, deep down, I think had an unquenchable desire to save face, to remember her daughter as a happy child who never gave her any trouble, and she's welcome to those memories. What I remember is spotty with blurry moments, forgotten conversations, a false sense of time. Some things I leave out intentionally. The stories change every time I tell them.

Including this one.



**REFLECTION** ERIKAZAJAC



**ROCK** ALLISONKASPRZYK

# BLACK SHEEP

KATIE HENDRICKSON

Shoe just stepped in a puddle of oil,  
Footprint tracks as it heads for the toil.  
Sun beats down on the aching backs,  
Underneath, blood begins to boil.

All I want is a change of scene,  
Too bad they're just too damn mean.  
Freedom's what my body lacks,  
Without it, I feel so unclean.

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?  
Yes sir, right here, chain my soul.

Too long I have sown this grain  
From which I get nothing gained.  
Not sure why I can't rebel;  
I guess that I'm just too well-trained.

Raised to be a brick in the wall  
And tone-deaf, except to the call.  
Can't be selfish, what the hell?  
Everything belongs to all.

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?  
Yes sir, right here, chain my soul.

Want it all for you and yours?  
Wish we could settle the scores...  
I earned it all for me and mine,  
But you've the key to all my stores.

Feel the whip upon my skin,  
Breaking it, breaking me in.  
Like a pickle in the brine,  
Not sure where I did begin.

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?  
Yes sir, right here, chain my soul.

Can't ask questions, cannot learn,  
Or I might think the tides would turn.  
Stuck inside this ring of fire,  
All the books will soon be burned.

Just then, a voice from far away  
Reminds us of a better day,  
And to this day we will aspire  
Until our slave-lords we betray.

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?  
No sir, not here. Free my soul!

# ACCIDENT

ASHLEYMAIER

I wish you would've told me  
That you would become a ghost.  
That you would haunt me.  
You know I didn't mean to kill you.

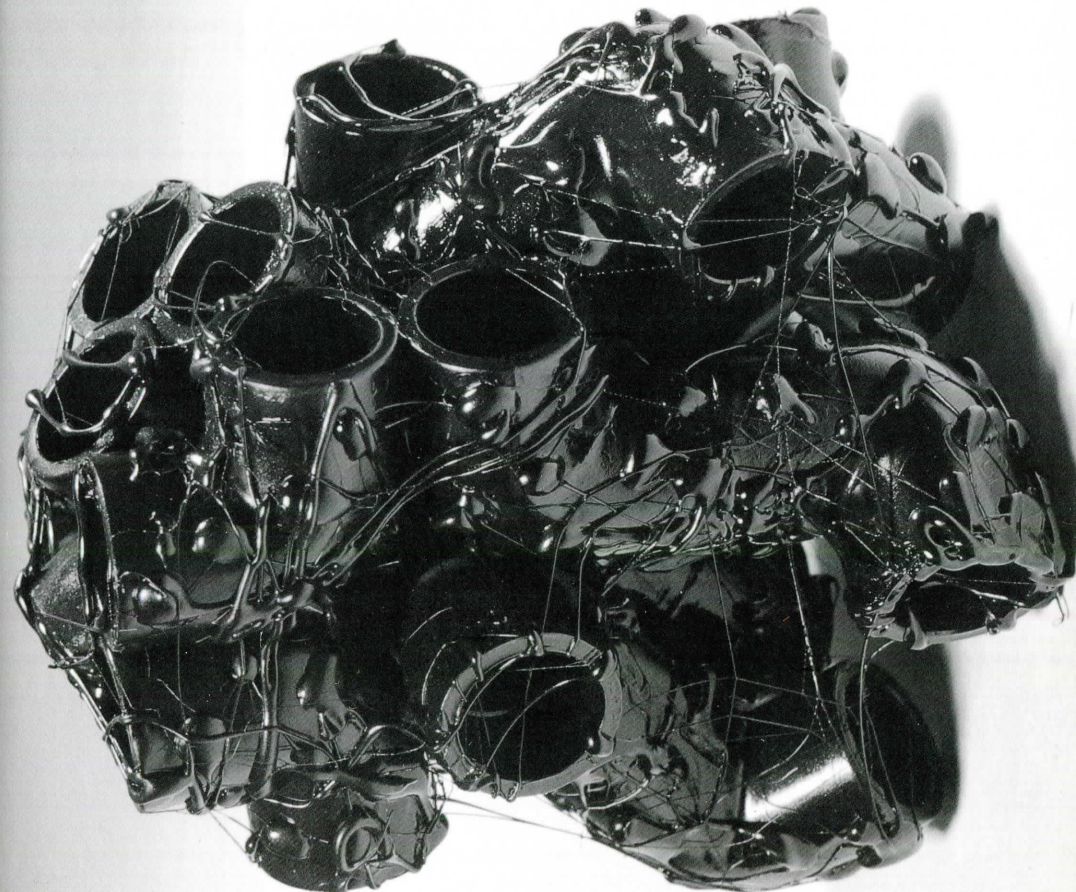
It was an accident,  
I only meant to push you over the edge.

You speak at times,  
When I wish you wouldn't,  
Because it spoils the jokes  
When I hear you laugh at them.

I forgot your favorite color for a time,  
Which is funny because it's the same as mine.  
I hope you know your hair looks stupid.  
I hope you know that's the short list

Of things I'd like to say but won't.  
Since, of course, you can hear,  
Because though you haunt me,  
You're not dead.

Yes it was an accident but  
You pushed me over the edge.



ENTWINE  
ERIKAZAJAC

## RED AND GOLD KATIEHENDRICKSON

Firelight burns the trees tonight,  
fueled by the golden ball of the West.  
The flame-colored glow licks the branches  
like children do candy,  
eager to find the sweetest spot.

Like arms, the branches' arts  
Embrace the playful wind,  
reaching higher and higher,  
as if to join their brothers in the sky,  
changing in hue as they ascend.

Then, piece by piece,  
the leaves, turned crinkled ashes,  
Drift to the ground,  
once they have spent the juices  
of their mother tree.

And what is left is barren,  
but still graceful.  
A twining, twisting work of ages,  
left to rest from growth  
until the Spring.

## CONJUGATION AND THE PRESENT UNKNOWN PAST

### TANJAKRUPA

*from the Finnish*

Tulen

*I come*

I'm drawing the water,

Its triangles

Lover says everything

Is a triangle

Only brighter for

Whatever reason

I am not able to see

Tulen

A drake and his darling

In the pond today

Plotting beneath

A tree

The demise of geese

Tulette

*You all come*

And again I know

Water makes diamonds

Under the sun

A sliver of you is

Always there

Pushed down books make stairs

Tulette because

Composition is his mate  
Composition is a collapsed angle

Tulin

*I came*

To a bench  
Placed in the center

(Because)

I can't translate this landscape

My surroundings

Configured round mouths

He tulevat

*They come*

In the falling of blue

Tangled spaces

I want to shade

Make them muddy

This tree is above

Their profiles

He tulevat

At night

In stacked speech

Into this place

Foreign mine

White ghosts

Emerald eyes

Tulemme

*We come*

Blank and glass  
The sky is cut for

evidence

Paused reflection

Rings

Make halos, make paths

Tulemme

Spit across canvas

Devouring rations

Here is blue and white

Here there is no red

Taunting

Tule!

Into softness

Tule!

Into leaves

Come

Into softness

A last time

In childhood I found myself

Realizing seasons

Lost walls

Translating the meaning of rings

Tulla

*To come*

# THE SKIRT

ASHLEYMAIER

Ed gave her ten dollars to go shopping,  
and twenty minutes to pick something out.  
He rarely let her go by herself,  
so she wanted to make this count.  
Her stride was always stiff,  
whether from the freshly ironed pants,  
or the pain, she couldn't tell.  
She tried to look casual  
walking through the store.  
Racks of clothing with price tags  
that taunted her, left and right.  
Except for the skirts.  
Oh purple, the familiar color,  
she would regret it  
if she didn't try it on.  
A perfect fit,  
and long enough  
to cover her punishments.  
The fabric caressed, or she thought it did,  
because she had never known  
a careful touch.  
Back in the car, he asked what she bought.  
He looked without seeing, and she  
looked the other way.

The next day her children,  
for that is what she called them,  
told her how pretty  
her new skirt was.  
She winced inside as they said  
"Mrs. Smith! Mrs. Smith," but gave them  
gold stars and answered their questions.  
She was a stranger to her name,  
but she had been a stranger  
quite some time now.  
As she sent them to lunch,  
she thought of a different skirt.  
Her sister gave it to her for  
graduation. For beginnings.  
Dark purple, the school colors.  
Tommy from down the street

started going by Tom  
and telling her  
she looked pretty.

But Tom joined the Navy  
and she went to college  
and Ed seemed like a good idea  
at the time.  
Ten years later  
they had no money.  
No pets.  
No kids.  
No photographs.  
Ten years later  
Ed was the worst idea.  
Ten years later  
she was covering her pain  
by covering herself in lies.  
She had a scar from burning dinner,  
another for staying out late,  
and bruises from  
"Falling off her bike"  
or "Tripping on the stairs."  
Ten years later all she had  
was a pretty purple skirt  
that would end up  
in a thrift store  
and kids that weren't hers  
who would soon leave her.



## THE LOST MUSIC

ALLISON KASPRZYK

## ARTIST BIOS

**JENNIFER BUR** Fashion and photography are her loves in life.

**KATHERINE CHARBENEAU** still thinks about her Grandfather, George D. Brown (1897-2001), who was the bare knuckles boxing champion of his part of the Atlantic Fleet in World War I, serving on the U.S.S. Huntington in the boiler room tending the engines, and in the gallery, peeling potatoes.

**MIKE GIRARD** can't write a biography. His Peruvian racketeering essay is due in 32 minutes - He's sweating profusely. Succumbing to rage, he sends his laptop flying across the libra-

**MELISSA GRUNOW** is fascinated by our selective memories, how we build our narratives through experience, and how our experiences are shared through narrative. "Weathered Nostalgia" confronts just that. Is it true? You decide.

**KATIE HENDRICKSON** is a junior in the Humanities program with minors in Spanish and Technical and Professional Communication. She finds her inspiration in a very special place - Life.



**JONATHON JACKSON** is currently working on obtaining a masters degree in Architecture, is happily married, and is trying to find a cheap flight to London. So far no dice.

**ALLISON KASPRZYK** is a junior Architecture major who loves reading, trees, arts and crats, attending concerts, and photography.

**STEPHANIE KOLPACKE** is a junior dual majoring in Architecture and Interior Architecture.

**TANJAKRUPA** teaches writing and literature at LTU and holds an MFA from UMass - Amherst, where she also studied the Finnish language. Her poetry has appeared in *The Kennesaw Review*, *5\_Trope*, *Maverick Magazine*, etc. She is also a freelance writer in public relations.

**ASHLEY MAIER** is a sophomore majoring in English and Communiation Arts. She might take over the world someday, but for now she'll continue writing.

**WARREN MESIC** is a senior in Computer Science. He enjoys spending his time learning new things, making video games, thinking, and being outside.

**JASON MOORE** is a sophomore in the Graphic Design and Imaging program and likes to learn all mediums of art: painting, drawing, photography, typography, graphic design, animation, filming, and...

**DAWN PECZKO** completed her degree in Interior Architecture in December 2011.

**MELINDA PHILLIPS** is the chair of Humanities. She has been teaching English at Lawrence Tech since 2000. The three people she would like to meet in heaven are Plato, Shakespeare, and Dante.

**LYLERED** is a sophomore working towards his degree in Computer Science with a focus in Game Design. Lyle has always enjoyed zombie video games, movies, and books.

**SCOTT SCHNEIDER** Thirty words or less is not that many for a blurb from a photographer. It is hardly enough space to let you know that the secret of excellent photography is ...

**DAVID TOENNIES** has a degree in Horticulture and is well known in Canadian topiary circles and is a champion glass-blower, famous for his versatile but elegant shot glasses. He also draws cars.

**ERIKA ZAJAC** Likes pomegranates and drawing.

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