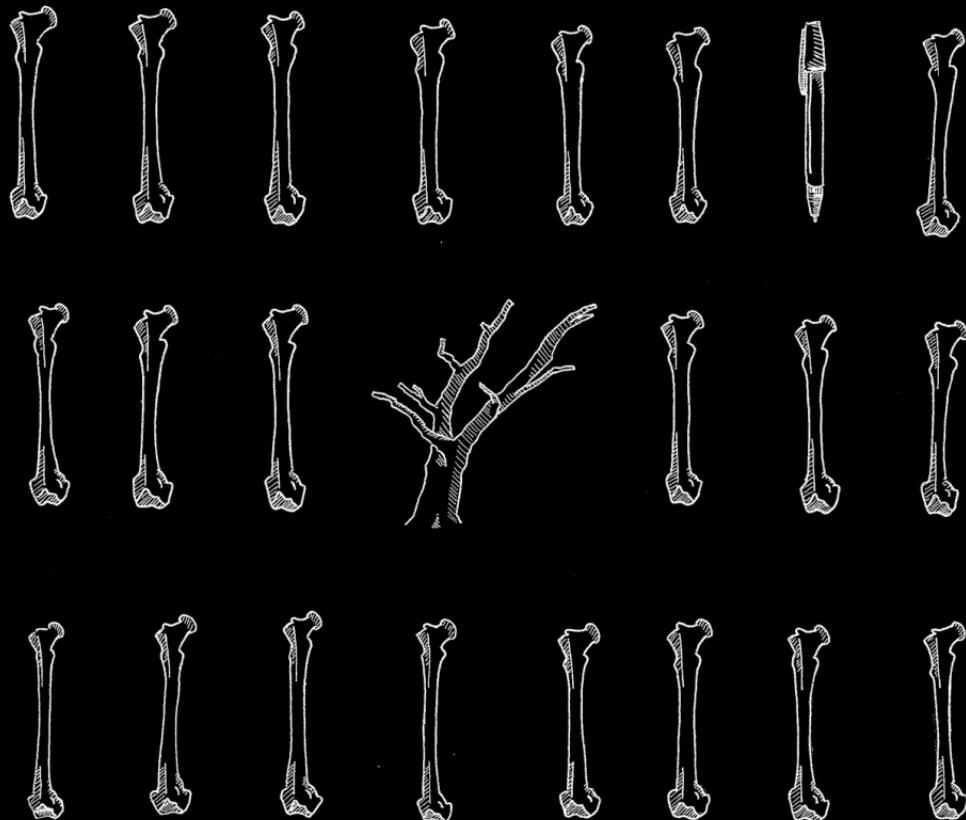


# ARGO



spring 2017

# ARGO

*spring 2017*

Argo is George School's student literary magazine. All works in Argo are created by students, submitted by students, and voted on by students during meetings. Argo strives to publish any and all work of literary or artistic merit. In light of George School's values as a Quaker school, however, the editors and/or sponsor reserve the right to decline works that may be taken as offensive by members of the community, either for promulgating racial or other stereotypes, or by virtue of promoting or in any way "normalizing" substance use, gratuitous violence, or graphic sexual activity.

# **Letter From the Editors**

*poems and prose  
will hurt your toes  
but brian will always love you*

*donuts and sweets  
will stain your teeths  
but terry will always bring them*

*art and doodles  
will be submitted in oodles  
but eden will always receive them*

*nicole and bea  
will hate maybes  
but they will forever persist*

## **Dear Readers,**

Nursery rhymes are kind of weird, but also super truthful. Hopefully the work you read in here is the same (that's how a metaphor is made, kids). Also, remember that the words inside here cannot hurt you, but if someone throws this book at you it probably will hurt because we have had so many submissions. If the words in here do hurt you I'm sorry but I'm also glad that we didn't just throw sticks and stones at you.

## **Books are not weapons,**

Your Editors



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39	Camille Drury
40	Paris Parker
42	Duffy
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48	Camille Drury
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52	Bella Lin
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# Fish Lips

Lea Belland

You lean in to kiss me,  
So I hold still and wait  
Because your lips look soft and nice,  
But as you move closer,  
I see the oily film all over your mouth  
And I reel back in horror  
When I notice the glassy eyes  
Protruding from the sides of your head  
And the gills flapping on your neck,  
And I suddenly remember that I'm at the fish market.





## Roaming Zueglodonts

Dana Homer

Feast thine eyes upon the sight  
Of roaming zueglodonts.  
Take care to keep a boolmin close,  
To tumefy their wants.

The Bowssen blows his silver horn  
To start the faidral tune.  
And when it sounds, be sure to find  
A place beneath the moon.

The booming night will pass along  
As zueglodonts make roomble song.

# **Relax**

Sidney Gibson

Now lie down and relax  
*If only that were possible*  
Let all your negative thoughts escape you  
*If only it were as easy as breathing your demons out through your nose*  
Let your mind become blank  
*If only you could read my mind, you'd know that's never going to happen, life is too confusing and shitty for that*  
Take three deep breaths  
*If only my anxiety would just let me take just one steady breath*  
Feel the ground beneath you  
*My mind is fuzzy and I feel like I'm floating through space*  
Try to center yourself  
*Hilarious*  
Slowly bring yourself back from meditation  
*I was never "meditating" in the first place*

# **Lady in Yellow**

Hanna Sparks-Woodford

Dances through the fields of tall looming flowers  
Zipping through the storm of early April showers  
A tiny yellow speck among a world of bright color  
Seeking to find a place but only feeling smaller  
Sticky golden honey and pink fluorescent blooms  
Buzzing through the clouds of foggy gray fumes  
I wish that I grow, my head above the trees  
Still I get thrown off, by just the slightest breeze  
Will I ever be more than just a silly speck  
That dances with the birds and only gets a peck



# A Robin's Egg

Annarose King



I knew that the tiny light blue ovals  
On the asphalt were robin eggs,  
Yet I didn't expect to see the four of them,  
So small, so round, so innocent and reminiscent  
Of springtime, lying on the warmed gray rock.  
Their shells could have passed as whole.  
I knelt down to check and saw that  
I could see the yellow yolk of one of the eggs  
Through a crack about as large as a fingernail.  
The three others had smaller cracks,  
Like veins of a leaf, like shattered crockery.  
The eggs were situated in pairs,  
Two near me, two far away.  
I didn't know what to do.  
I thought of how鸟song kept on sounding  
From the treetops above,  
And how the four chicks inside the eggs were gone.  
I wanted to say something meaningful,  
Shower pink petals around the eggs,  
Place them in the grass and cover them with dead leaves,  
So they wouldn't be stepped on,  
So I wouldn't feel so sad  
About seeing them there, lying there, gone.

# Poem for Geese

Anonymous

I wish I could burn your homeland  
So when you go looking for it this fall  
There will be nothing there  
But the burnt ashy flesh of earth  
And pools of boiling water,  
The serene lakes you would have raised your young in



# Nickel

Anna Coleman

I am a nickel. I'd like to be a dime so I could make good puns about being attractive. For example, I'd say "A dime that truly is a dime," and then wink like a 45-year-old single Cuban mother. But I am not a dime; I am instead a nickel. I am much larger than my worth and very unfortunately rhyme with pickle. And the people who point that rhyme out are the same people who eat pickles and drive cars with offensive bumper stickers as they smoke with the windows rolled up.

I also have Thomas Jefferson on me. That sucks not just because of the whole slave hypocrisy thing but he's also simply unpleasant to have on top of you. Just ask his poor wife Martha who birthed six of his children and was named Martha. She didn't even have the Tom Waits' song to help her cope.

But nickel or dime, we all get dropped and stepped on and left in change slots. I've been in a rich man's wallet for 4 years and participated in buying a little girl a gum ball. But it takes 20 of me to make up a dollar, and that's really not much help to the hungry young man in Acme. Partially because a dollar can really only buy you a soda or bag of chips. But, way more so, because he's hungry for something all the food in the world couldn't satisfy.

# shite

Paris Parker

the unofficial capital of the world is here  
in my white washed room  
where I sit and chain smoke  
and listen to local radio.

the people of the world make the trip to  
my mecca  
and splatter paint on my walls  
build sculptures with unneeded, unwanted refuse  
leave their voices forever reverberating  
in the corners.  
I hope for a pack of Marlboro gold eagles  
among the things they bring.  
trash is culture,  
that's why I'm king

# seeds

Anonymous

Marigolds are backwards matches, which explode  
in red, orange heavy velvet heads of petal like dragon tongues  
before shriveling, flickering down to wood from gold  
a thousand black toed matchsticks, with fires not quite begun



# Untitled

Anonymoose

Oh man, oh man. So I went over to the Farmer's market a few weeks ago, right. The stuff they sell is overpriced but damn if it doesn't make me feel good about myself for buying it. Haha, I kid-- of course that's not the only reason I go there. Real reason is I kind of have a crush on one of the girls who works there, a girl named Winifred. *Winifred*. Bet that name would even sound outdated to my grandma. But still, to culminate the whole Farmer's Market experience she's always there to give you that cute smile and wish you a genuinely good day—I don't think I've heard anyone ever say it so sincerely.

She sells cabbages at one of the stalls. And I have to tell you I've bought like 6 heads of cabbage in the last week and about half of them have gone bad. I don't really eat cabbage... but it's gotten to the point where she remembers me now and is like "what are you gonna do with all this cabbage?", and I just say I'm making cabbage potato soup for the soup kitchen. *Cabbage*. Boy I wish I pulled in more cabbage, more cheddar. More bread. More dough. More gravy. More greenbacks.

Back to the main point though I quit my job about a week ago. It's no matter, it was mostly just a black hole in my life. I've been telling Winnie about it, how I'd like to be closer to the land, closer to her cabbages. So I started working with her at the Farmer's Market. It doesn't pay much, but what's a little overdue rent compared to the love of your life, right? This'll be the story that we'll tell our kids someday.

In fact, this afternoon Winnie asked me to come back to her farm for a rundown on their business! A cabbage-stand orientation, if you will. When I arrived at her farm, my mind was adazzle with possibilities for the evening—would we sip some cabbage wine, getting looser with each other and slowly leading our way up to the bedroom? Would we cuddle up on the couch and watch some "American Farmer"? As my mind ran, I felt my stomach growl a little bit and realized that I hadn't eaten anything today... or yesterday. I was starving—but of course I didn't let Winnie know. Who wants to get with a starving man, you've gotta feed him first and they'll eat really messily and that's just too much hassle. As

she's showing me some spreadsheets about her lucrative business on Excel 2003, I politely ask if I may help myself to a snack.

"Of course you can, there are some in the fridge!"

My steps are weakening and my vision blurs. The stress leading up to this moment has torn me asunder, but right now I can think of only one thing—getting my teeth sunk deep into a moist, crunchy head of cabbage. Mm.. home-grown right in the back yard, washed perfectly with the well water... *why do all Chinese restaurants put cabbage on the bottom of a meal?* Cabbage should be the main event, right at the top! I'll eat my cold noodles after I've indulged my senses with nature's most potent aphrodisiac. It is... it is simply freshness at its most basic level. Oh, it appears I've reached the fridge. My clammy fingers wrap around the handle, I close my eyes in anticipation. I open the door as quickly as possible, to let the effervescent mist swallow me into the realms of maximum crispness. The wave of cold hits me and I feel myself come alive again. My fingers, toes, face, they all feel it and smell it. The tundra, the muddy, rain-soaked field that has the dirty leaves pulled off to reveal a perfectly clean (if slightly smaller) cabbage underneath. Truly, this is what it means to exist. I open my eyes, and begin my search.

*Cold cuts... Mexican cheese... Cranberry Juice... Milk... Butter... Salad Dressing... Hummus... Yogurt... Eggs...*

What have I done?

Why should we keep up this charade? Mike Smith, the pastor of St. Mark's, wondered about it. We've buried our rear ends in the system and it turns out to be a kangaroo court.<sup>12</sup>

Ken KENNEN had talked to the staffs of several congressmen's offices, but nothing had come out of it so far as he could see. The minister had also had several talks with Bill Johnston, and it was always the same. The official would tell him about his Catholic faith and about how terrible certain things were in Central America, but Johnston flip-flopped. He told Kennen that this was one of the churches' business, that they were sticking their noses in where they didn't belong. He referred to the church supporters as "good-for-nothing shoes" and got to where Kennen avoided seeing the man. Talking with him felt like hitting a pillow, and his remarks reminded the minister of the "good Germans" who just did their job and helped send millions of Jews to their deaths.<sup>13</sup>

Father Ricardo had tried the political route as well. He had spent hours writing Arizona congressmen, but nothing ever seemed to happen. He felt a need to do more. In his mind, if a country was financing the planes that were bombing Salvadoran children, the citizens of that country had an absolute moral obligation to help the victims to escape. He recognized that we couldn't help everyone in the world, but he thought, if the crazies in our country are bombing, we can't just stand by and watch. It's necessary reparation.<sup>14</sup>

Only the Manzo people were dubious about a declaration of sanctuary, which they feared might mean a pulling away from the legal effort to help the refugees. If the churches despaired of the legal system, who would be left in Tucson but themselves, overwhelmed and swamped with an impossible caseload, to fight the necessary fights through the immigration courts?

The sentiment for sanctuary carried, however, and Fife outlined his idea. They would try to persuade one church in every large metropolitan area to join with the Tucson churches in announcing sanctuary for Central American refugees. Each church would locate a refugee family that would stand up and tell its story, to personalize the crisis. That was after all, how the Tucson people had been drawn into the issue: by seeing that the Central Americans were not nameless, faceless "illegal aliens" but fellow human beings in distress.

Fife argued that such a declaration would generate much more publicity than simply calling a press conference about the TEC's work. It would probably stir up a fair amount of regional attention, he thought,

I'M A  
PERFECT  
IDEA,  
AND THIS  
IS PERMANENT  
MARKER.

## Dear Prospective Student,

Mimi Murdock

We regret to inform you that You are not good enough to attend our prestigious institution. After thoroughly reviewing your application, we have determined that your best efforts as a student, writer, athlete, and overall person: didn't meet our needlessly unattainable standards — you will not be selected for next year's class.

Our applicant pool this year was very competitive. But we can assure you that the decision took time and care ...and your name was not one of the random bingo balls called out for this year's tournament.

We understand that this may be difficult to hear, As you have (1) spent countless dollars learning to fill in ovals properly, (2) brown-nosed to the point of suffocation, and (3) wasted eight years of your life preparing for an admittance that you will not receive. This incalculable expense will Not be compensated, nor will we pay for the eighty dollars your family personally spent to receive this letter of rejection. As for the emotional expense that our decision surely brings, you can be assured that it is shared with our entire admissions team, who were hired specifically for their sadistic tendencies.

Despite your outstanding qualifications, extensive community participation, and overall can-do attitude, you do not have a future at our University.

*But we're not really the bad guys here. We didn't tell you to apply. We didn't clap after everything you did worshipping the ground you walk on. We just brought you the news that you just weren't good enough. Don't shoot the messenger, kid.*

You're not unique. And that's okay, neither are we. Because no matter how many extracurriculars you jam on those little lines we give you—you can't fake special.

*We just don't want you.*

Sincerely,

The Admissions Department

# I wrote this poem in french

Anonymous

*I wrote this poem in French  
so the English sounds bad*

Le monde est  
comme une balle aki.  
Emprisonner entre  
le pied d'un dieu  
et le ciel.  
Et on tous sait  
ce qui va passer:

en haut  
et bas.  
en haut  
et bas,  
en haut  
bang!

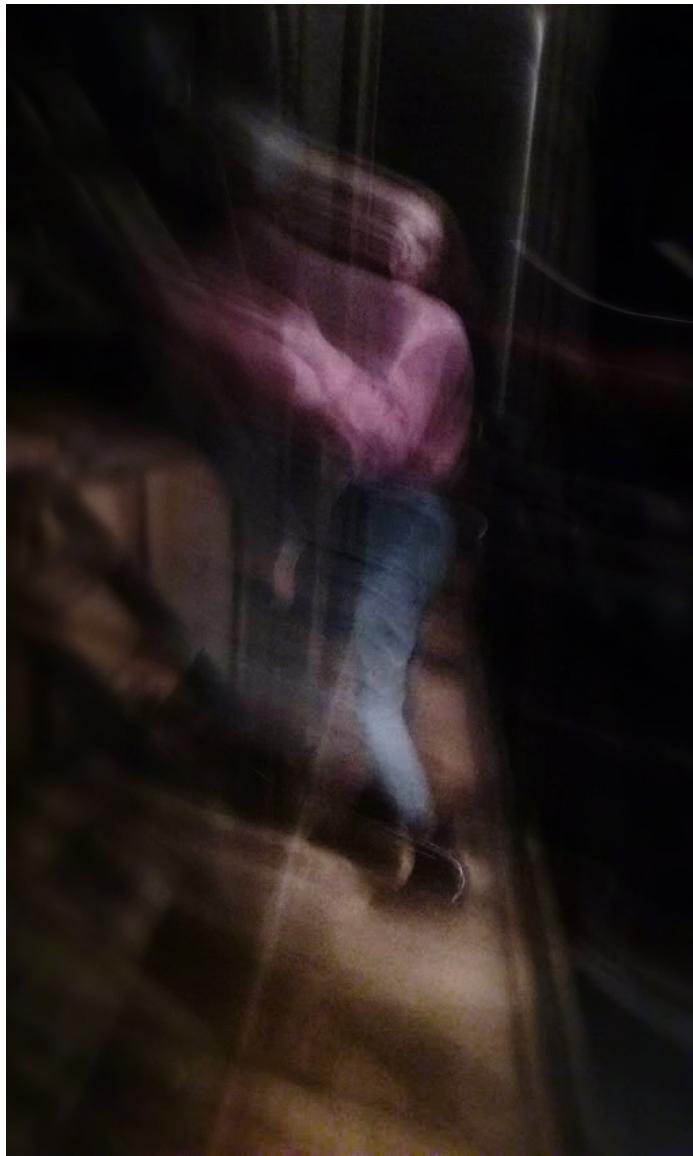
juste comme ca

*The world is  
like a backy sack.  
Imprisoned between  
the foot of a god  
and the sky.  
And we all know  
what will happen:*

*up  
down.  
up  
down,  
up  
bang!*

*just like that*





## Denny's Parking Lot: 25/7

Mitch Reilly

the neon open sign flickers;  
i breathe in  
gods discuss who gets todays scraps in the back by the dumpsters;  
i breathe out  
the sole street lamp with an l.e.d. lightbulb flickers to create momentary  
playgrounds;  
i breathe in  
someone is in a knife fight with their mental illnesses over by the overflowing  
ash tray;  
i breathe out  
a lost man wandered in a day ago he is now an employee;  
i breathe in  
red and yellow glow from the street sign bathe the chewed fingernails and  
scuffed toes;  
i breathe out  
the church bell rang fifteen then twenty then five hours ago never a sync;  
i breathe in  
shoe soles glued to the pavement with decades old syrup;  
i breathe out  
the neon open sign flickers;



## Destiny

Anonymous

Greatness. I know it's my destiny  
This hunger I have, evokes the best in me  
Hard work and passion, the perfect recipe  
Oh and alotta bit of heart, gotta reach deep in the chest  
On your quest to simply be the best  
Above all of the rest  
Life is a highway with no speed limit  
I'm gassing down, leaving yours windows tented  
From the smoke, I can't choke, I had to step up to the plate and go  
for broke  
Eighteen don't make no man, responsibility does  
Promised my mom we won't go back to the way that it was  
A life of strife, a house with no heat  
She feared losing her only son to the streets  
Don't worry I'm gonna buy you that house on the hill  
Where you'll never have to pick up a bill  
People say I can't but I must  
How could I betray my one grandma's trust  
My parents sacrificed I mean they rolled the dice  
This is my life and I won't get to live it twice

# Why Rodney Never Became an Astronaut

Gabby Conard

Mrs. Winifred Goldfinch reached into the refrigerator and realized that she had run out of cabbage. It was infuriating, how terribly one's day could go. She was about to call out, "Rodney! Could you run to the store and fetch some cabbage?" when she glanced at the floor and remembered that probably wouldn't work too well.

"Well, perhaps I can skip that part," she muttered as she peered over a page in her battered cookbook. She hustled back to the sink to rinse the tomatoes, and proceeded to dice them into neat red squares. As she began to peel an onion, the oven chose that moment to Beep! Beep! "Can't you wait one more minute?" she scolded as she placed the onion upon the wooden cutting board. Grabbing a blue-and-white checkered hand towel, she bundled over to the oven and opened the door, the scent of baked chicken pouring into the kitchen. She set the chicken next to her cutting board and returned to the onion. As she sliced the onion, she revelled in the quiet that had settled in her home this afternoon. Finally, finally, she had a moment, just one moment, of peace and quiet. A smile travelled across her face as this thought came to mind. Just then, she heard the pot simmering on the stove, and she quickly dumped the onion slices and chunks of chicken into the boiling cauldron. Lost in her reveries, she soon forgot the troubles of the morning. What Mrs. Winifred Goldfinch chose not to think about was the boy, lying quietly, ever so quietly, across the island upon the kitchen floor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bing, Bong, Dum, Dong. The old Dutch clock on the wall struck eight, and was quickly followed by the diinng doonng of the doorbell. Mrs. Goldfinch answered the door and found Rodney, her house help, standing on the front stoop. He was a hair short and a bit underweight for a fifteen-year-old, but not unhandsome: his smooth brown hair settled on his forehead, and his dark eyes radiated with playfulness. The weakness of his bony appearance was hidden by his constant movement; he never stood in one place for long. In his hand he held an oddly-shaped black case with an array of silver clips.

"I thought I told you not to bring your screeching toy here again."

"Violin, ma'am. Mr. Davis wants us to..."

"Practice every day, I know. And you get bored on your breaks," Mrs. Goldfinch mocked. Rodney's mouth opened, then shut again. "We've had this conversation before. But that still does not answer why you brought it in direct disobedience to my orders yesterday." Rodney looked blankly at her. Mrs. Goldfinch sighed. "Come in. But the violin stays out here."

"But someone might..."

"Put it down!"

"Yes ma'am." Gingerly, Rodney hid the violin case behind a potted flower on the stoop and came inside. He followed her down the hall and into the kitchen, cheerily lit by the sunshine pouring through the room's many windows. Mrs. Goldfinch located a grocery

list on the island counter and handed it to the boy.

"Run to the store and pick these things up. And here's some money for you." She opened the drawer underneath and pulled out a small envelope. "There should be just enough in this, but I put a bit extra in case the manager raised the prices on me. Remember to get the receipt." Rodney smiled and nodded. It was something he never had forgotten, but she always told him anyway. "Now go on." He turned and began to race down the hall, his footsteps echoing off the walls. Thump thump thump thump.

"WALK!" Mrs. Goldfinch shouted. Rodney skidded to a stop. "Quietly, please." He began again, this time walking, and slipped out the door.

An hour later, he returned with several bags of groceries and proceeded to put them away, whistling all the while. Mrs. Goldfinch sat at the table paying bills. She tried to ignore the sound, but she couldn't help cringing every so often. Periodically, she glanced up to make sure he was putting various items in the correct cabinets on the wall or correct shelves in the refrigerator. When he finished, she asked, "Did you have money left over?"

"Yes, four dollars. Here it is!" He reached into his right pocket, and a look of panic came over him. He quickly checked the left and rear pockets, and came out empty-handed. "It's not there! Maybe I put it in a bag." Before she could say a word, he began to shuffle through the bags, the crunching of the plastic grating against her ears. She felt that she would explode.

"Stop! Enough of that!" Rodney froze and looked at her. "Don't worry about it. It was only four dollars. Now, could you please step away from those bags and dust the living room?"

"You don't want me to put them away?"

"NO!" she shouted, and he nearly stumbled backward. "I mean, no thank you, you can leave them." Confused, Rodney scurried out of the room.

She kept him busy most of the morning. At eleven, she prepared lunch for him, and he took it outside and sat by her swimming pool. As she began to prepare her own lunch, a familiar sound drifted through the open window. Screeeeech, screech, screeeeech. Furious, she ran to the window. There sat the boy, with the violin to his chin and the bow in his hand. "The dirty rascal!" she hissed.

Mrs. Goldfinch flew out the back door to where he sat. Surprised, Rodney jumped up, but before he could flee she wrestled the violin out of his hand and cast it into the clear waters of the pool. The bow quickly followed.

"What was that for?" Rodney cried. "I thought you forgave me for losing the vegetable money!"

"Who gives a hoot about vegetable money!" retorted she. "I told you never to play that thing here again!" Tears welled in his dark eyes, but he quickly wiped them away. "Now enjoy the rest of your break, in silence." She turned abruptly and went back in the house, leaving Rodney alone.

About a half an hour later, Mrs. Goldfinch sat reading on the sofa in the living room, her empty plate by her side. She had just reached a good chapter when she heard something: Rap, rap rap rap, rap rap. "What in the world?" Rap rap rap, rap rap. Her eyes narrowed. Quietly, she rose from her chair and stole down the hall toward the kitchen. At the island stood Rodney, his back facing her. He had a pair of large wooden spoons in his hands. A crushed newspaper was stuffed between the handles, and holding the contraption

together was Rodney's belt. Mrs. Goldfinch watched in horror as he hit the spoons against the counter. Rap! The spoons crashed together. He began to play a little beat, the sound echoing in Mrs. Goldfinch's head. Rap! Rap rap rap! She couldn't take it anymore. Rap rap rap! Rap! She felt herself begin to shake. Rap! That was it! Mrs. Goldfinch rushed upon him and tore the spoons out of his hand. Rodney spun around to defend himself, but she was too quick. She swatted him across the head with a loud crack! He stumbled backwards, his head crashing into the counter before he sank unconsciously to the floor. She undid the belt and dropped it beside him.

With a huff, Mrs. Goldfinch hustled over to the sink, rinsed the spoons, and returned them to their respective drawers. She then swept out of the room, leaving the boy alone upon the floor.

\*\*\* \* \*\*\*

Allowing her stew to simmer, Mrs. Goldfinch went to the sink and washed her hands. She glanced through the window above the sink and spotted a violin floating lazily in the center of her pool. Once more, she glanced at the boy. Several hours had passed, and he was still so still. She couldn't have hit him that hard. He'd wake up soon. At least, this is what Mrs. Goldfinch told herself. He'll wake up soon.



## A Poem for Sam

Annarose King

You don't often find someone  
Who is like you, and then not  
Like you, at the same time. One  
Tries to find that, but is caught  
In the paradox of how we are all human,  
And how no one is exactly like you, not even your twin.

We are not exactly alike in material loves —  
You with your technology, me with my writing —  
And yet if we are in a park, and I see doves,  
And I point them out to you, you will squint in the sun's lighting  
As you try to see what I see. You will smile at me, afterwards,  
And we will sit in the silence of siblings who don't fight very often.

Being born at the same time,  
Or at least a minute apart,  
Makes us have this bond, as if time  
And space have somehow gained a smart  
Outlook on life, and gave us the ability to look out  
For each other, to be best friends.

Even if we never discover our extra special powers  
I want to say that you have always been a great twin to me.  
I don't know how else to say it, without sounding corny. Flowers  
Of understanding will bloom in your mind (they make great tea)  
Sooner or later. Thank you for trying to make my locker breathe life,  
For running across the beach with me when we were little, for sending  
Me smiles, embedded in pixels, making my day that much brighter.

# Deartháir

Katie Kendrick

I remember

When you first came around, I used to hang my head over your stroller and stare at you (To make sure you were real. You were.) You would grab my hair in fistfuls and yank it. I would cry, but I never learned my lesson.

I remember

We went to the garden full of ivy and statues. We looked at the art and we laughed and ran. An older boy yelled at you when you bumped into him in all your innocent bliss. You looked to me for protection and I was there. I always will be.

I remember

We went to see the Christmas lights. That winter was biting. It was so cold that your hands started to bleed. I couldn't protect you from the wind, but you smiled at the lights regardless.

I remember

You took my tee shirt when you let your friend borrow your last one. You didn't ask, but you still have it to this day. You just forgot. Your intentions were always good.

Now

We don't live under the same roof anymore. You're a miraculous kid who never pulls hair and who smiles at the lights, no matter how much his hands bleed. You know how to yell back at the older boys and you still have my tee shirt. Because sometimes you just forget.

But mostly I remember.





## Another Love Story

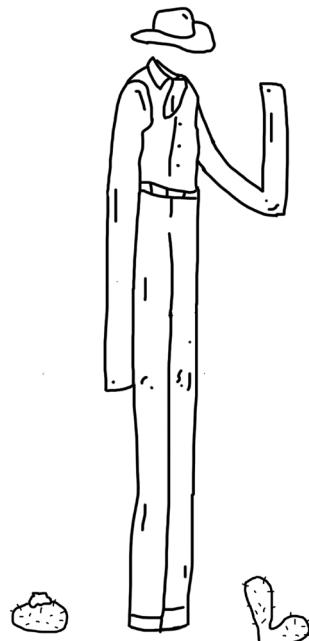
Anna Coleman

The fat under her arms jiggle as she waves good bye  
To her little boy disappearing on the school bus  
Even though we both know he's not looking.  
It jiggles in the same when we make love.  
She grins unsatisfied as she tells me she loves me  
Until we lay side by side  
Neither particularly wanting to touch,  
But feeling the responsibility.  
We are business partners,  
Obligated to luncheons once a month and Christmas pies.  
But her arms didn't used to jiggle  
When she was stronger and easier to love.  
And I used to see her in red roses and cloudless skies,  
But the cloudless skies never rained,  
So the red roses all wilted.  
And now I am looking at her,  
Trying to see the world,  
And instead seeing the outlet next to my living room couch.

# Chrysanthemums

Lea Belland

The chrysanthemums are dead,  
But no one will throw them away,  
So they sit out on the front porch,  
Grisly brown decorations  
In place of a welcome mat.  
Maybe we leave them there because  
We know there is nothing better  
Than brittle flower bones  
To adorn this skeleton house.

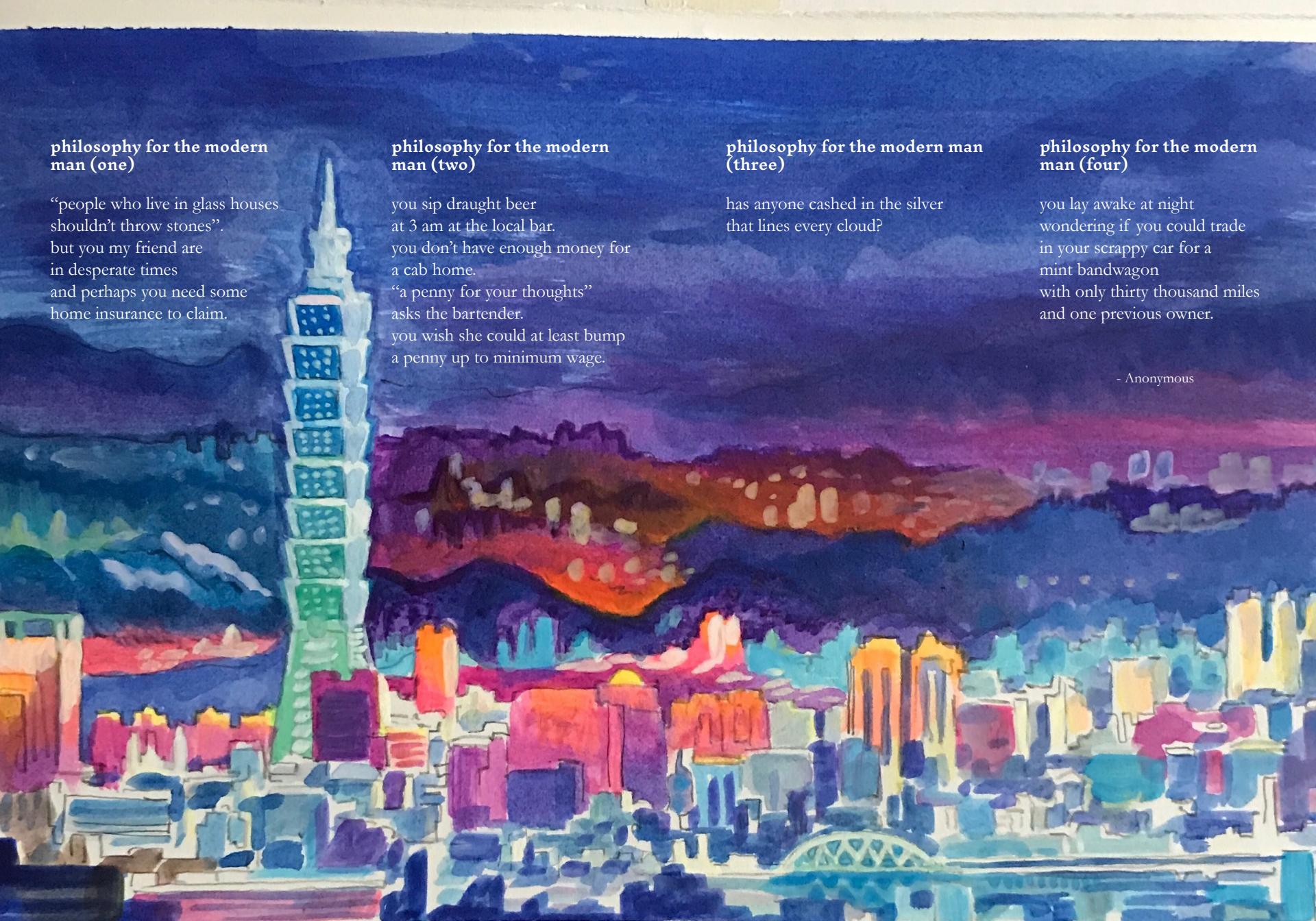


# on pet ownership

Anonymous

once I had two fish. they smelled bad and they didn't like me so I killed them. someone told me to flush them down the toilet but I didn't do that. I'll tell you about what I did. I dumped them into the sink and when all the water had gone away and they lay convulsing on the drain I squished them with a rock. They were dead then and not at all fish like anymore and I scooped their squishy little bodies up with a paper towel and put them in a box, but bits of them stayed in the sink for a week and I couldn't wash my hands.

the next day I gave my boyfriend a handjob. he liked it but I didn't and that night I wished I could kill him like my fish.



## **philosophy for the modern man (one)**

“people who live in glass houses  
shouldn’t throw stones”.  
but you my friend are  
in desperate times  
and perhaps you need some  
home insurance to claim.

## **philosophy for the modern man (two)**

you sip draught beer  
at 3 am at the local bar.  
you don’t have enough money for  
a cab home.  
“a penny for your thoughts”  
asks the bartender.  
you wish she could at least bump  
a penny up to minimum wage.

## **philosophy for the modern man (three)**

has anyone cashed in the silver  
that lines every cloud?

## **philosophy for the modern man (four)**

you lay awake at night  
wondering if you could trade  
in your scrappy car for a  
mint bandwagon  
with only thirty thousand miles  
and one previous owner.

- Anonymous

# **take a jackknife to a pine tree**

Ephraim Benson

lovers scrawl their initials in gleeful abandon  
watching the sunset in their own little heaven.  
but you, with your perpetual sunshine smile  
look like you tripped into a sharpened sundial.

it's painfully clear why you bleed  
he took a jackknife to your pine tree  
the blade cut deep, a rusted lock and key.

there was no hammer, no nail, no dirty screw  
but a lift of your shirt reveals the crimson truth  
it drips  
down  
your  
frame  
and it rots your roots

the gash in your chest is rough  
and uneven.  
and in the heart,  
tangled in veins,  
is the hilt of the blade.  
loyal reminder of pain

he left a jackknife in your pine tree.  
streams run down your breasts  
from the seams on his wrists.

his blunt blade butchered your rind.  
carved a crevice from the chest  
but lodged itself in your mind.

each cut on him  
was a stab through you

if i'd held on and stemmed the flow  
i'd have stained my hands in your unknown  
both of us can't have you, i'd have to halve you  
but dragged, bruised, or drowned by debris?  
i couldn't take the jackknife from your pine tree.





## welcometothejungle

Paris Parker

there's a fine line between  
predator and prey.  
a voyeuristic heaven,  
a homoerotic dream.  
welcome to  
the jungle.

don't mind the ripple  
of flesh-  
a tightening of  
muscle fibers.  
a tightening of the throat  
a tightening in the pants.  
a tightening of hands around  
throats.  
skin on skin is  
an inherently sexual  
and violent move.  
there's a fine line between predation  
and predatory behavior.  
a line as fine as the space  
between  
me and him.

him.

# At Opposite Ends of the Day

Annarose King

The moon's light is gentle, soft —  
No one ever said that when the sun  
Shone in your eye, it was love.

I can almost picture you,  
Sitting alone in your room,  
The lamp still on at your nightstand,  
As you stand at the window,  
Squinting out into the dark.  
A reaching of your hand, a click,  
And the light switches off into silky darkness.  
The moonlight bathes your chin, your nose,  
Your eyes — perfectly ordinary features  
On anyone, but since I am I, and you are you,  
I will comment on how pleasing I find your face,  
Even though I know that the person inside you  
Matters more. The person inside you  
Is the one who will change the world,  
Is the one who makes me smile, every day.

And the people all around us go to sleep,  
Blessed, bone-tugging sleep,  
As you stand at the window,  
Staring up at this controller of tides  
That was once thought to be made of cheese,  
And I silently wish you goodnight.





## Space

Abby Rizor

Once we were standing so close  
On the same square of ground  
Together  
So close we were often mistaken for one

One day you left me  
Standing alone  
You didn't tell me you were going  
I was left wondering what I did wrong

Now you're on Neptune  
And I didn't know  
I called and called and screamed  
And cried

You never heard me  
You never tried



## homes

Anonymous

the house across  
from mine  
is inhabited by shadows  
and silhouettes.

when the sky turns dark  
their lights turn on.  
and they sit and pray  
that they don't disappear  
when the sun rises.  
but they do  
and I am left alone.  
staring into windows  
and mirrors.

# Micro-fiction

Mitch Reilly

'Lightning crashed in unison with footsteps racing down the hall. Thunder boomed in time with the guttural alien howls. Sneakers slid and slipped on the blood that bubbled out of the grain in the wooden floors.'

'She reached for the stars and pulled down a black hole.'

'The trees whisper their name and the sun hisses at the stench of their alien humanity.'

'All man has known is the stars. Now they shall know grime and dust and dirt. They will work Terra and re-form it to their image.'

'Words are incoherent jumbles of sounds that people assign meaning to and that is what makes a human.'

'The gods had long since been razed and the new order that had been ushered in was now simply 'the order' and was already being resisted.'

'The clouds fall to our level and spread across the ground, seeking refuge from the skies.'

'No one knew what they were fighting for, they just knew that if they didn't use their gun on the enemies, the guns would be used on them.'

'Fears lost to amnesia:  
brevita-phobia: the fear of transience  
certa-phobia: the fear of the definite, of the inability to change  
felicita-phobia: the fear of being happy, fear of success'

'The scouts patrolled with loud shouting and screaming, because if they went silent they did not exist.'

'Each brain is connected to a hive-mind and projects googols of illusions that are all intertwined with the next to create what we call reality.'

'Brilliant new ideologies are common, but rarely is it that they are carried out correctly.'

'Unique astral planes connected to identical carcasses, driven by greed and ambition, feared by each other.'

'Time is a useless construct that binds us to a fast paced death march.'

'We invented today by spending yesterday in a future mind.'

'The dead intrigue us because we know that one day the roles will be reversed.'

'It throbbed and writhed and pulsed and contorted and screeched in its native tongue for merx.'

'Outside of the walls, the four horsemen rode rampant and the condoning of murder and abetting of genocide was socially acceptable. Inside the walls there was hard labor and little reward, but the people had purpose and protection, so there was peace.'

'The difference between a revolution and a monarchy is if the peasants are fed.'



## **smoke (v.) : to kill**

Paris Parker

if you could smoke  
the kids ive smoked,  
you'd know  
that lead  
is bad for lungs.

lying on streets,  
is smoke that sits  
inside your chest  
and kills you young.

breathe deep.  
no sleep.  
smoke.  
get high.  
outside,  
they die.  
what you sow,  
you sell.  
now reap.

# Untitled

Beau Simon



My grandmother lay on her deathbed, a week after visiting my family for thanksgiving.

“Your cousin got a 34 on the ACT, so good luck following that”

I said that I try not to compare myself to others now.

“The turkey is slightly overdone”

My mom said that her thermometer is broken.

“This house is a little small, that must be a common theme with you”

My dad laughed it off.

“When are we going to meet your girlfriend”

I said very soon.

“What are you doing with that pillow”

Just go toward the light grandma, just go to the light.

# Untitled

Mallory Fritsch

My head feels like it's going to pop  
But I can't stop this feeling up top  
The swelling of my mind  
Pressing the outsides of my insides to the insides of my outsides  
The edges of my skull  
Like butterfly kisses  
    Kisses in my stomach – not my neck  
    Kisses in the pit of my stomach  
    Kisses burning the butterflies alive  
The butterflies pained cries  
    Rumble in the pit of my lies  
They're trying to fly out of this rain  
    This acid rain causing their pain  
    They're screaming in vain  
But I can only call out  
Your name rattles my brain  
    A constant reminder of when I was sane  
Back when these butterflies were alive  
    They tickled my insides  
    Making me laugh at your lies  
While the maggots hide in my mind  
They eat me alive from the inside  
    I'm brain-dead  
    You got me to bed  
But you weren't ready for the surprise in my head  
My body was lead  
    Heavier dead  
But you saw my body decayed  
    And I thought you would stay  
You said you would save me  
But you chocked on your words  
    Like blood filling your lungs  
    And blinding your eyes  
    Like the red sea  
Only yours isn't parting  
The parting in my hair begins to fade  
    As the strands of hair are frayed  
    And they fall from my face  
        Into bloody clumps at  
My feet are strapped to the concrete below

Below is the crashing of waves  
    The waves eating me alive  
    The waves gripping my throat and prying at my mouth  
The air bubbling out of me  
    The pressure building inside my lungs  
I open my mouth for a grasp of breath but the saltwater flew into my lungs  
I open my eyes and the salt stings my eyes  
    The salt from my tears  
    My tears rolling down my cheeks as I wake up from my nightmare  
    Only to wake up to another  
    To wake up to reality  
    To wake up to you



# Red

Anonymous

You floss your teeth  
with the thorns  
of roses and call it  
romantic  
but you've gone and  
bled all over  
the sink.

You've stained  
the porcelain red  
and there is nothing  
romantic about  
cleaning up after you.



# us postal service

Paris Parker

I would kill  
for my body  
to be a package,  
so I could understand  
my destination  
and my origin.  
I could feel the  
touch of others  
and have them  
guide me  
towards my destination.  
If I lost my bearings  
I'd know "this way up"  
and the world could know  
im "fragile!"  
I'll arrive  
on the steps.  
and I'll be opened up  
and spill  
my blood,  
vitals,  
and secrets.  
and they'll send me back  
with a note:  
"wrong size"  
or "wrong color",  
"wrong address"  
or "it just wasn't for me".



# Where My Body Has Been

Anonymous

I asked you why  
I had all this sadness  
inside of me  
and you sliced open my stomach  
to find out.  
When I woke up from the surgery  
you told me I was so silly  
and that I swallowed all the blue paint  
in the art cabinet  
and we laughed and laughed  
but after you left  
I still felt sad  
and all that laughing  
made my stomach hurt  
where you cut me open.



# **blind men**

Anonymous

Blind men hit the hardest.  
My father would do his best to  
whip his belt in my  
direction.

Blind like a gun is blind: angry and  
capable.

Even if he missed  
I would yell out in pain;  
semblance of being hit  
being hurt.

But when the belt landed on skin  
leather on skin, skin on skin  
the fiction of pain and the fact of pain  
would become two people both knocking  
down my doors.

My father, now  
knowing where I was,  
had to strike quickly enough  
so that my location  
did not disappear  
into his vast world of  
unknowns.



# Hector's Chest

Lisa Corn

He was not as I had once known him, Hector's constitution had been diminished by pessimism and tethered to objectivity. His exterior had been extensively transmuted, his bones seemingly tightened around his skin, bearing resemblance to the worn appearance of a leather chair. The years had not shown their mercy to him, not since Eva.

Eva Burke was, is, and will never be romantically inclined towards Hector; the very fact that I must make such a ludicrous statement should give you some gleaning into Hector's peculiar way about him. Though I pride myself upon pursuing a virtuous life, I must confess that I, myself, am no admirer of Hector. We met twenty years ago in an eating club at Princeton, which one I cannot recall; but there he became well acquainted with the knowledge of the fairer sex. My wife Tabitha knew him before myself and told me of his outspoken nature in her lectures with him, causing something of a scene on multiple occasions. His character was one of absolute transparency, a trait which often caused him more grief than good. Contrary the supposed distinction I assumed he would possess, I was rather surprised upon the results of our first meeting; he was unabashedly jovial, sardonic and crude in his demeanor. At dinner, he would wear his shirt untucked and a tie haphazardly loose around his neck. His trousers did not accommodate for his full height and met their ends only toward the middle of his shins, lending him the appearance of a sleep-deprived schoolboy in a prep school uniform. After our second encounter, it became entirely obvious why he was not popular among his peers.

Eva did not figure until years later. My wife's younger sister did little to draw his attention, she was plain by all accounts, small and boyish in frame and fashion. I have always been quite fond of her and Tabitha does all in her power to maintain and continue our regular visits to her home up north. My father-in-law's inheritance had been given largely to Eva alone, leaving her without the necessity to marry, much to her delight. After the death of their mother, Tabitha and Eva had grown ever closer since their childhood.

Christmas, 1949, saw more than twenty automobiles lined outside the Burke residence as one of their first holiday parties roared on. Big-band records were alternated with Irving Berlin's holiday musings as friends and acquaintances engaged in the festivities. I will never know if Hector was actually invited that night, but nonetheless he made a memorable appearance. He wore a red, velvet suit with a purple, satin tie and a green cummerbund; garishly overdressed for a simple holiday party. He came to greet the three of us, his breath tinged with the scent of liquor. He was not immediately captivated by Eva, but as the night pressed on their proximities continued to grow closer due to Hector's gradual efforts.

Eva always maintained an elegant patience, a quality she has since refined due to the fact that she remains an unmarried woman with no signs of imminent nuptials. Even in her younger years, she treated him with the same cautious respect, not dissimilar to an animal wrangler toward a rabid dog. Their accounts were limited to her occasional visits to university events, though when she did make an appearance Hector was aware and made a visible effort to encounter her. The first inkling of any serious oddity was their fourth meeting; Eva had brought her close friend, Ruth, of five years to a tennis match of one of my colleagues.

It should be noted that Ruth and Eva had been cohabiting for three of the five years they had been together and that their's was a close friendship of mutual affections.

As we sat spectating a particularly lively rally, Hector approached Eva smiling broadly with his lips pressed together like a madman holding a gift wrapped in old newspapers. Considering they had barely known each other this was quite unexpected, but Tabitha assured us to dismiss it as simply an awkward gesture in keeping with Hector's general peculiarity. The four of us promptly forgot about the incident throughout the remaining duration of their visit and enjoyed the autumn spirits of the town.

A week after she and Ruth returned to Newport, Tabitha received a frantic call from Eva. It was late and the shrill ring of the rotary phone broke our slumber. She answered the phone lazily but immediately sat straight up and pressed her hand to her ear, her face growing increasingly worried. Though I was not privy to the other side of the conversation, I knew immediately the caller was Eva. The next morning we drove down. The ride there was silent and somber. Eva answered the door with guarded rigidity and noted that her companion had left to visit her parents in Boston. After fetching us cups of tea she came from her study back into the parlor with the same small box Hector had given her two weeks before. The newspaper wrapping was crinkled and torn, within it lay a small jewelry box. Eva handed it to me, with a glassy look in her eye and I opened it.

Like a pearl within an oyster, dried pulp of gum clung to a single tooth upon the inner satin, a front tooth to be quite exact. Tabitha gasped and Eva maintained her violated stoicism as I lay the open box on the table.

"I forgot he had given it to me, I was cleaning my office when I saw the box. I thought it would be earrings or something little." She hoarsely replied, "I didn't know what to do." "Have you told Ruth?" Tabitha asked.

"No, she's visiting her family. There's nothing she could do to remedy the situation, it would only serve to worry her; you know how protective she is of me". This was true, I had always considered Eva a rational woman; however I could not help but wonder if she was overreacting in this particular situation, though I cannot say I have had experience being sent a severed body part from a near stranger and therefore, I would not be in a position to question her resolve.

We stayed the next two nights, the first to keep her company in the lone mansion and the second upon her insistence that we avoid the icy rain and travel the next morning. We did not see Eva for the next four months and the frequency of our telephone calls grew sparse. I had thrust myself into a new career and Tabitha continued to work as an adjunct professor on the campus. When last they spoke, Tabitha had told me that Ruth was to remain in Boston until after her father's funeral, then she would return to Eva in Newport.

Unexpectedly on a Tuesday morning, while at my office I received an urgent memo from my secretary, Tabitha said there had been an emergency at the house. Upon my arrival Tabitha was in our bed, an open letter written in brown ink lay on the dresser beside her. Over every corner of the stationary, he had written the name, Eva Burke, Eva Burke, Eva Burke, hundreds of times. As I unfolded the rest of the letter a small string slipped to the floor. In the dim lighting I turned it over in my hand, it was a thin lock of mousy brown hair. I paused again, turning toward the letter. Walking hastily toward the powder room, I dabbed the paper with a wet handkerchief until I had sopped up some of the ink. I uncertainly held it to my nose and was immediately hit with the familiarly metallic scent of blood.

I returned to Tabitha sitting straight up with her arms wrapped around her knees and embraced her. She shook in my arms, shivering with fright and whispered: "I sent a car to bring her here indefinitely, I wanted to wait until you got home to call the police". After she arrived at the house we filed a harassment complaint, but for the time being, they said there was little they could do.

During the next three weeks Eva would not go outside without one of us, not even to fetch the Sunday paper or mail a letter. Tabitha was largely responsible for her, attending to her trepidation and anxieties. I became a figure of normalcy in her life, I would not engage in any weighted discussions with her but only serve to make her feel at home; albeit a small effort, it was one of the few ways I could think of to help. On the Monday of her fourth week with us, she received a call from Ruth, who would return to Newport by Wednesday. The news overjoyed Eva, as well as Tabitha who was rather pleased to see her sister exhibit a happy shadow of her former self.

The drive out toward the Burke home was joyful in its ignorance. Tabitha sat in the front seat, with her sister behind her as I drove. Our conversations had completely returned to their former topics and she assured us that as Ruth was a continued presence in her life she would lead it without fear.

The house shows the beginning signs of neglect, only after four weeks of total absence. As they unloaded the car I went into the house to start the heat and run the taps to make sure they were still in order. The front door was unlocked and opened with but a slight nudge. There was a distinct sense that something was wrong that day, as I look back on it. I am glad I was the first to see it, her. At the end of the hall, splayed out on the parlor sofa she lay limp. Two bloody ovals marked her chest where her breasts once sat. Bruises swelled her eyes as if she had been bludgeoned, and it became quite clear Ruth had been dead for many hours before we arrived. Dirty markings along the shag carpet lead to Eva's adjoining study, and there I saw him for the first time in two years.

Hector sat unconscious in the grand leather chair, his shirtless body heaving as the crude stitching that bound Ruth's former breasts to his chest bled continuously. I was so captivated by the image I did not hear their screams, Eva's then Tabitha's, upon witnessing what I had first stumbled upon.

Today, after many years Hector stood before a judge to make his third appeal. I had not attended the first two, mainly due to Tabitha's request, but after much consideration, my curiosity got the best of me. He wore a dusty suit in the same fashion as he had done many years before, the fabric still did not accommodate for his lankiness and his dull, brown hair had grown matted and begun bristling against his eyebrows. He had been placed in an asylum for the past seventeen years, and today sought to assure the court of his sanity.

The public defender spoke curtly and with little attempt to persuade, against the prosecutor he was of no contest and once again his appeal was denied. I gathered my coat as the bailiff bound him once more in handcuffs and began to escort him from the courtroom. His eyes in their hollowed sockets met mine and a peculiar glee spread across his face. Brimming against the two officers at his sides, he turned to face me and smiled a wide smile. He was missing a tooth.





## What a Man He Was

Anonymous

I never knew his name, but  
What a man he was.

He gave me memories  
I will never forget.

He spoke to me  
Like no one ever had.

He told me to be still  
As my world shook.

He touched me  
In ways I knew he liked.

He held me  
Tightly.

He held me  
Down.

He loved me  
Hard.

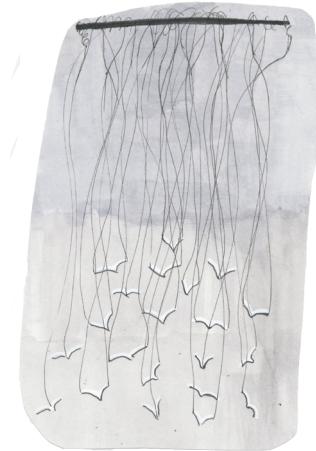
What a man he was.

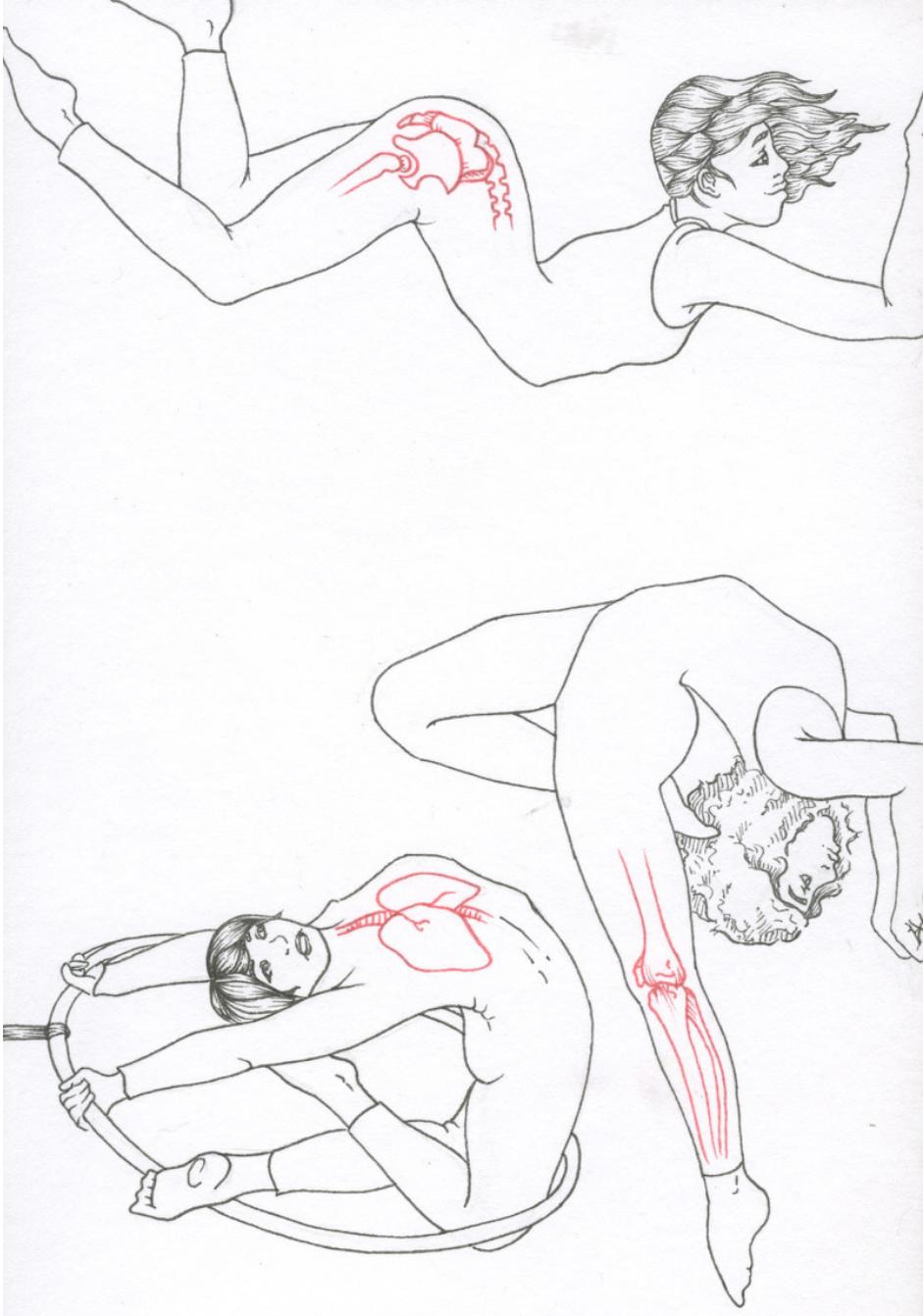
# Complete White Room

Sam Lentsmith

Do not tell me, I'm just tired.  
feel like I'm broken,  
feel like I'm dying.  
Fourteen and in a center  
for mental health.  
They don't call it a Psych Ward  
cause that's fucking scary,  
but there are doctors in white coats  
white rooms, no knives,  
only spoons, nothing burning  
cold tea, and they lock the doors  
when they leave me.  
They put me on meds  
that were opioids.  
Didn't tell me  
they were opioids,  
meds that messed with my head,  
messed with my blood,  
left me puking in bed.  
My friends here feel broken.  
Cut up, thrown out, alone and  
Adele's getting shocked soon,  
doctors say it will fix her,  
hurting since seven,  
eighteen and she isn't getting better.  
Hannah's on more drugs  
then she can count,  
sneaking them under the table,  
get off them?  
She isn't able.  
Fifteen and Angelica's smoking  
behind the van,

she wanted to get off them  
but she no longer can.  
And thy kid that they shun  
is the nicest.  
He helps me,  
gives me advice,  
And the patient that can break an arm  
six different ways,  
treats me good.  
I want to get out,  
I wish I could,  
at night when I'm free  
it's dark, I can see the moon,  
and I'm broken,  
crying, feeling like  
I'm dying.  
I'm scared of leaving,  
being sent to GenPsych, or Carrier,  
I saw a girl sent away once,  
They had to carry her.  
And they don't call it a Psych Ward,  
Cause that's fucking scary,  
but there are doctors in white coats  
white rooms, no knives,  
only spoons, nothing burning  
cold tea, and they lock the doors  
when they leave me.





## Untitled

Anonymous

They say weight is just a number  
That all it can measure is your relationship with gravity  
So they why am I chained to a scale that binds me  
And why do I listen to the voices in my head  
Mia said we were best friends  
But befriending her was toxic  
They say eat  
But Anna says self-control  
They say be healthy  
But Mia reminds goal weight  
All we are are hollow girls and hollow boys

We conform even when we know it'll kill us in the end  
We starve we binge we purge we count calories and pounds  
And when eating isn't Chanel anymore we fast  
Our enemies are the gleaming mirror who tells us lies  
And the friends who care  
We know we aren't healthy but we keep pushing  
When our stomachs cry out for food all we hear is applause  
And when we look at food all we can see are big disgusting numbers  
We are hollow girls and boys and we will starve until we're invisible

# **Grandmother's Message**

Michael Clark

Grandmother, please wipe your tears  
These tears represent my fears  
Trayvon, Oscar, and Mike Brown  
Simply wearing a hoodie could get you striked down  
What's the difference? You brown and you Mike  
That's all it takes for you to get caught in the dead of night  
Can't you see these boys don't want you to have nothin  
What you mean? These been my friends since I ain't had nothin  
Grandmother, should I be scared too  
Joshua 10:25, the thought of these words will keep you alive  
You must still press on

Grandmother, please wipe your tears  
Baby, these tears represent my fears  
I'se seennt a black president after all these years  
My grandkids will go to college  
Coming up, I was denied knowledge  
But we still are held back  
I grew up with Jim Crow  
I look on the news  
He still delivers a grim blow  
But we are still held back  
Do it for Martin, Malcolm, and Nelson  
Sweetheart, with these tears, I cry for you  
There have been many people died for you  
Despite your inherent setbacks just by being a black man  
You must still press on



