

S P I R E S

TWO THOUSAND FIFTEEN
Spring





S P I R E S

intercollegiate arts & literary magazine

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- Front cover: “Transmarginal Leap” by Isaac Howell
(collaged paper on canvas, Washington University in St. Louis, 2015)
- Front inside cover: “Beijing No. I” by Qiyuan Liu
(Acrylic, oil paint, casting wax, ink, candle wax on canvas; Washington University in St. Louis, 2015)
- Back cover: “August 29” by Jake Yoo
(oil on panel, Washington University in St. Louis, 2016)
- Back inside cover: “Untitled” by Adare Brown
(oil on canvas, Washington University, in St. Louis 2016)

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The Castle

I have to destroy The Castle. It's time; Sylvie's old enough. It sits, dreadful and insidious, in the center of our half-finished basement like a tumor. I think it might be growing. Whenever I go down there, for winter clothes or canned preserves, it feels bigger. A hybrid musk of cat piss and baby vomit enfolds it like a picket fence. The plastic spires meet my waist with the taunting pride of immortality. I would burn it if I knew the fumes wouldn't kill me.

On Trash Day, I watch her thin pigtails nod up the steps of the school bus before returning to the basement. I assess The Castle in the dimness of a single swinging bulb. No other way seems easier, so I grip the fetid toy tensely with spread fingers. I climb three steps before the damn thing slips through my palms. I pick it up again, tighter, and only make it one more step. I consider revising my strategy; I could dismember it. I stare down at the hunk of faded pastels. There are seams at every corner, small square notches hitched atop one another like vertebrae. I snap each joint until it exists in four manageably sized sheets. I climb the remaining stairs and drop it in pieces on the corner.

It seems so benign like this: in a pile on the road. When she first got it for Christmas – or was it a birthday? – she loved it so much she slept in it. She spent hours inside mumbling stage directions to dolls and pantomiming house chores. Occasionally her tiny face would fill the square window, framed by two blue shutters and a princess crown, to demand “More tea, Mommy!” and I would bring her apple juice in a child's teacup. Now it sits at my feet folding memory into itself like the pages of an unread diary. There is a mercy to this disposal, somehow.

At three-thirty Sylvie climbs off the bus with pale arms outstretched against some natural disaster unknown to my altitude. Her oversized backpack hangs off one shoulder, half-zipped, trailing spelling tests and candy wrappers. Inside, we drink chocolate milk at the kitchen counter. She pores herself over a Highlights magazine.

“Sylvie?” I ask her.

She does not stop to make eye contact, searching desperately for the last object in a puzzle.

“I had to throw away The Castle today. She was getting old.”

She looks up at me and I brace myself for the blitzkrieg of shrieks and tears. It doesn't come.

“That's okay, Mommy.” She smiles.

“It is?”

“Yes,” she says and considers her position for a moment. “I will throw you away when you get old too.”

*Caitlyn Gilvary
Rutgers University, '14*

Bones

You said bones are the strongest part of us.

So when I call you boney
I'm really calling you strong.

But,
when I say you're boney,
I mean
your hipbones stick out like guitar picks,
your tailbone is staccato,
sudden and drastic,
and when you yawn
I watch your rip-cage breathe
hear the skin sing over your chest
and squeeze into the space
between your narrow shoulders for me.

I fill out the hollow in your chest,
press my palm into the cup of your left hip,
pour myself into all your ditches,
lend my limbs to yours,
tangled up,
crossing bridges between us,
scraping my knees on your edges,
yet
there is some semblance of soft between all the branches—
even twigs sprout leaves.

And you are broader than just your bones
you are less of a skeleton
and more of a scarecrow,
I can squeeze the whole of you in two arms
that I never knew were big enough to hold sunlight.
but why keep you still,
when you should be dancing.

When i call you boney
I mean to say
I am kissing every bump of your vertebrae,
tracing a promise
that is not mine to give
and will not be yours to keep,
but still I leave it at your corners,
at right angles where curved slopes should be.

Selena Ross
University of California - Santa Barbara, '15

Godzilla Girl

She watched a lot of Godzilla movies when she was still a child, before she knew that she was a little bit strange. Before she had met any of the people who would tell her that, like the guy standing across from her and acting way too interested in her art projects. She was hosting her own birthday party, and thus obligated to go and talk to each group of people that staggered in. She had hung all of her paintings from the past year around the room. It is what provoked this dude to ask what this one was supposed to be, why her professor had criticized it so much, if the professor was a dick, etc. At their feet one painting was leaned against the wall so that only the wooden beams of the stretcher were visible.

“What’s this?” The guy tried to turn the painting around and look at it.

She stopped him; she didn’t think the self-portrait was good enough to be seen. He protested in an unsober whine—it was probably great. And so on. Eventually she managed to shoo him away.

That conversation gave her the feeling that she got whenever she ran over the big suspension bridge, at dawn, in the snow. It wasn’t a bad feeling in itself, felt like nothing. But it quickly led to another feeling. The one she got when she wandered home drunk, looking up in the air to see that the stars were extra sparkly that night, like they’d been rinsed in tequila. It was a feeling that came over her like a stormcloud and thoughts fell out of it like raindrops: thoughts about how if she made herself care again her soul would split from trying to encompass all the cares that were there for her to care about. It was a feeling no mature person ought to have. So she felt bad about feeling it.

She had that feeling the next time she ran over the suspension bridge. Halfway over she stopped and looked out over the water. She realized she was crying. One part of her was begging another part not to jump.

Once underwater, she wasn’t nearly as dead as she had expected to be. The river wasn’t cold or dirty. And she could breathe. So she swam down to the deepest part of the river, where she was totally in the dark. First she saw nothing then she saw a perfect replica of herself drifting towards her out of the darkness. She realized it was a reflection. She realized it was a reflection in an eyeball that was two stories tall.

“Hello,” said Godzilla.

“Hi,” she responded.

“What’s a human being doing all the way down here?”

“I’ve had... kind of a rough time.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Too many things to talk about all at once.”

They lapsed into silence.

“You know,” she said, “you were my hero when I was eight years old. My standard of what it meant to be a hero was a lot simpler then.”

“And now?”

“I don’t know what to think about anything anymore. I don’t know what a hero is and even if I did I couldn’t tell you what to do to become one.”

Godzilla grumbled pensively, and said:

“I don’t know if this will be helpful, but you know I destroyed Tokyo a lot of times before I realized why I was doing it. And I felt kind of bad about it. But then I realized that it was all just a metaphor for the atomic bomb, and for nature punishing man’s hubris. That didn’t necessarily make it a good thing. But at least it was for a reason. And then later I got the opportunity to defend Japan against other monsters, like King Ghidorah, and it was really rewarding.”

“I’m sorry but I can’t really empathize.”

Another silence.

“I think I always loved B-movies,” she said, “because there are so many B-people in the world. Maybe if I can love the failed stupid movies I can love the failed stupid people too.”

“Do you think you’re going to be okay?”

“No... but I’m going to be able to keep doing stuff anyway.”

She began to swim away.

“Be seeing you,” said Godzilla.

She swam back towards the shore again, and emerged, walking, from the surf. It was weird that all the houses were so small. She opened her mouth and found that she could make an electric blue beam shoot out. Gleeefully, she burned the whole city to the ground. But it was only a particular version of the city. The real one is still there.

Several days later friends and family went to her dorm and turned the self portrait around and it was not her face that was painted there. It was a Godzilla.

Caleb DeLorme

Washington University in St. Louis, '16

true religion

There's a sort of shrine in my home office that's comprised of a charred incense box, some faux gild, made-in-china buddha, a faded pink paper crane and one of those nepalese elephants with the curled-up trunk made out of (synthetic?) alpaca wool. To balance the color scheme, there's a factory-made beach glass rock with "believe" crisply stamped on it in arial size 48, approximately.

When the relatives come to visit—namely my fundamentalist grandmother—all evidence of that makeshift altar is shut up in a drawer. I'm not ashamed of my lack of (amalgam of?) religion, but my cousin's a buddhist and been the endnote of almost all the prayers uttered by my grandma in the last 22 years. I prefer to avoid the three topics inappropriate for the dinner table.

The stores in the mall peddle shirts with bedazzled crosses and fleur-de-lises. 'True religion' sells jeans with horseshoe stitching on the pockets and a guitar-playing buddha on the tag. The price read \$198. The catholic church used to sell indulgences excusing sins. The evolution of old ideas, apparently, is an ongoing crusade. Yet the swastika is now indelibly the symbol of all evil. The bible has been called the "greatest story ever told." But upside down crosses and flags—is there really a difference?

I was ten when I finally got a nintendo 64. I spent almost all my time thereafter happily developing carpal tunnel. On the fourth day, Grandma appeared and said, "It's like you're replacing God with that machine."

I acknowledged her with a see-through glance, then went back to playing.

*Laura J. Kostad
University of Washington, '15*

Transgressional Confessional

Entertain
the notion, the motion
of holding, withholding,
my hand,
or maybe just two fingers,
through the chain-link.

Laura J. Kostad
University of Washington, '15

- - - - -
 cat-calling, weighing value in swells of stomachs,
 the backs of thighs
 images of women jutting ribcages,
 hipbones,
 rifts between breasts,
 wrists narrow like children
 body as God every night
 praying forgiveness every meal
 religious rite
 spine looks like
 angry, bold,
 dashed line,
 where is the satisfaction
 collarbones
 protruding mantles,
 neck streamlined vase,
 where is the satisfaction
 jaw cut mount for
 taxidermy head stuffed
 thoughts of
 bony bodies,
 where is the satis-
 faction
 a thinner you
 on the
 horizon.

Abby Kosisko
New York University, '17

Dinosaurs

The bathroom had pink tiles. That was one thing. Another thing, I told them, was a squat, oblong window above the sink. Too squat to let a body through, but enough to let the Buenos Aires songs come in, and keep coming in. It was a Tuesday night. I remember because as I was peeing, a guy was walking by outside, on the other side of the wall, and he was singing, ‘Saturday, Saturday, Saturday, oh Saturday night is over.’ I heard him like he was right next to me. The window was just above my head and had no flyscreen or glass or anything. I remember because I was drunk and I thought, that at least is true, because it is Tuesday and so Saturday night is over. It is true like so very few things are.

But that’s what I was thinking, and I would have noticed if Gabo came in. Or if Gabo was there, because I would have wanted to talk to somebody about how it was Tuesday and Saturday night was over. I’m just trying to explain what I’m thinking when I’ve been drinking like that, because I think definitely, even if not properly. Definitely, Gabo didn’t come through the bathroom.

It was the night that Juan did a set on his own, or rather, with a different band. He was alright. He was doing acoustic, all soft and murmured, with choruses like a pop song and a guitar around his neck. That was around when he figured he’s a handsome guy and all the romantic guys were singing bossa nova like the Brazilians.

He brought around a new girl that night, this skinny brunette. I don’t remember her name. She was on the edge of her seat just listening to Juan, not talking to one of us even though she was sitting at our table. She had a real sad face, although she was nervous and laughed a lot, with a dainty chin like a bird and wet eyes. She looked miserable all the time, that’s just the way her face was. She asked me about Gabo, when everyone was talking about Gabo.

“You were with him that night, weren’t you, Manu?” she asked me.

“We were all with him. He was with us.” She had never said a word to me before, and here she was calling me Manu.

“But you were,” she stopped, “you were *with* him, weren’t you?”

Then I wanted to kill her and I must have looked it because she took off. I was on a short fuse those days. I knew everyone wanted to ask me about Gabo, but she made me really angry. Maybe she was embarrassed that she couldn’t outright say we were fucking, Gabo and I. But that’s all it was, and it wasn’t a big deal. Maybe it was just her sad bird-eyes.

We all met Gabo at the university. The student union Zapatas held a midnight rally, one of the first ones. Mostly speeches and poems, with all these young kids in jeans and a manifesto sticking out the back pocket. They asked us to do some songs. Rafael’s sister was in the Zapatas and that’s how they knew us.

I can’t remember the set list, because I already got high while the kids were doing their speeches and reading from Che or something. So we got up and in the middle of this song I forgot what came next. I was playing bass as well as singing, and I got stuck on two notes for about five minutes. I think it was d flat and e and I just played d flat-e, d flat-e, d flat-e over and over. The guys were freaking out and the kids were getting uneasy, obviously. Rafael’s sister was probably shitting her pants.

But then I started singing, ‘something, there’s something, something’s in the water,’ and I played

that infernal bass line again while I thought of something else. It sounds like it was all an accident, but I sung it because I'd been thinking about this stuff for a while. I said, 'there's something in the water, you know, something in the water.' The kids loved it.

We were doing what we'd heard was going on in Tucumán. Los Perros had a song about building a raft and escaping, and Almendra was doing this song about ice falling over the city, freezing the city when everybody is asleep, that was probably the best one I knew. The guys and I hadn't talked about it, but we played it and it was what the kids wanted, even though they hadn't asked for it. It was a time when nobody was saying anything, not really.

That was also before we really knew for sure that the kidnappings were real. We'd heard rumours about some activists and students in Rosario. But nobody knew their names and it was all very uncertain. Maybe they just read the Vedas and left for the Andes one morning, or got broke and went back to their mothers in Tigre. You didn't know who you could ask, either, in case it was true.

But at this point the vultures hadn't come after musicians yet, or city kids. It was early enough that everyone was perversely excited about being involved. The whole thing was thrilling. Something was in the water.

After the rally, we went drinking with some of the kids in La Boca. They were poets, carriers of the manifestos, and we had big conversations about things we didn't really know. Gabo was one of these poets. I remember the first thing he said that night, because it made me wonder if he was retarded, and that's why everybody fell silent when he spoke. We were all talking about Che, good Che, father of the young Latin American poets, saint of the Latin American bar room, and the baptism into his patronage by spirits, by which I mean fernet, loud and drunk, and suddenly Gabo said:

"I don't care if I fall."

He hadn't spoken all night. It was a high, stringy voice, like it had to be, to be squeezed out of such a skinny body. But it was lyrical, like he was reading poetry. Everybody stopped to wonder what the fuck.

"As long as somebody picks up my gun and starts shooting," he said.

Then another student, who recognized the Che quote, shouted out and squeezed Gabo's shoulders. It left his dark green sweater ruffled and showing a bit of his collarbone. I looked at him, and felt uncharacteristically embarrassed when he stared back at me. He was a pale guy, his brown hair so light that it sometimes looked ginger, and he was slim, no, slender with almond eyes like an Asian. He was the weakest person I've ever seen, and the most serious.

In bed, he embarrassed me with his seriousness. I took him with me, after the bar, thinking that his serious looks were seductive and wanting to reward him for his Che quote and the obvious respect that the other students had for him. But I was unsure, because I didn't get any other signals. Even when he started taking his clothes off, slowly, studiously, it was as though I wasn't there, like he was at home and didn't want to leave a wrinkle in folding up his green sweater, his khaki pants, his thin t-shirt, and his cotton briefs. I was embarrassed again of his skinny body. I stood watching him because I didn't feel like I could touch him, which made me strange. That was Gabo's trick, he made me strange and melancholy, although mostly I was just wondering what the fuck, is he retarded or a poet. Then I got mad at my own strangeness and went after him.

Gabo wrote a song for us in September, or was it November. He'd been at a lot of our gigs. He'd

come from the university and sit with the other kids, not drinking or talking with them, but they always saved his seat for him and fell silent when he spoke, like their secret god. I still don't really get it. We were hanging out with the university kids a lot by then, and some other odd people that talked about rock and poetry — and who drank a lot, of course — just hanging out, like we were all waiting for something to happen.

After 'Something In The Water,' the guys and I only played songs like that. New songs, nothing sentimental anymore, and about the thing that nobody was talking about. Pablo knew this other student poet, Maria, he was sleeping with her, and she wrote an insane song for us called 'Mister Scissors.' It was about a guy that worked in the theatre backroom, cutting out scenes from a film that starred his lover, editing and rearranging the clips, and at night he comes home and cuts her up in bed. It was good, really freaky. The first night we rehearsed it, Maria was standing right up next to the stage, in front of me, and she kept shrieking 'louder, louder, louder.' I listened to her, because honestly I was scared of her, and the song gets into a climax that is everything shrieking, like the lover in the song when she's being cut up. I don't know how Pablo gets into bed with someone like that, but good, because we started getting more attention with that song.

Maybe Gabo was jealous of Maria's success, and that's why he wrote a song for us.

"I wrote you a song," he said.

He got up in the middle of the night suddenly, like an alarm had gone off, and walked over to his window ledge where he had the piece of paper folded up. He didn't have handwriting like a poet, his letters were big and childlike, and the song was about dinosaurs.

"Read it slowly," he said. That wasn't hard because my hangover was coming.

"Imagine the dinosaurs in your streets, imagine the dinosaurs in your bed, imagine the dinosaurs disappear."

"Slowly, slowly."

"The dinosaurs will disappear, the dinosaurs will disappear," I read.

I didn't even sing it, I was too tired, but Gabo nodded, his eyes serious and his body naked. In my stupor, the song made sense, although in the morning it sounded a bit funny. But by then I had trusted him enough, this strange, skinny god of the young poets, and the song became our greatest.

We performed 'Dinosaurs' in Tucumán in November. It was a huge gig, they called it a happening, and all the kids came down from Buenos Aires and Rosario, even Santa Fe and Montevideo, for it. The greatest bands were there, it was a big deal. Almendras were there. They knew about our dinosaur song like we knew about their snow song. They even looked like us, these four guys in their 20s, haggard like they didn't have a mattress between them or a mother. We had Juan, though. Nobody had a handsome guy as Juan.

Gabo travelled with us, not anything special, by which I mean, not with me. A group of Buenos Aires students had started coming with us everywhere, including Gabo and Maria, who was sleeping with Juan by then. A couple days before we left for Tucumán, I passed this kiosko in Buenos Aires that had kids' books next to the chips and candy, like El Principito and Mafalda. They had a children's book about dinosaurs and when I saw it, I had to get it. But it felt stupid when I brought it home so I gave it to Gabo. I thought, he might like it, he's strange.

He took the book delicately like it was going to crumble, which made me impatient. I grabbed the book and flipped over to this page I'd flagged.

“This one is you,” I said, pointing at one of the dinosaurs. “*Apatosaurus*.”

It was one of the vegetarian ones, with a long skinny neck like Gabo’s or rather, like Gabo’s body, and scaly skin.

“You are not one at all,” he said. I was angry for a second, and then I realized it didn’t matter if I was not any of the dinosaurs in the book, it was a stupid kids’ book, but if I was, I think I would be one of the big flying ones, with bloody wings.

Things got really crazy after the Tucumán performance. There were thousands of people in the hall, and even more outside on the grass. Everyone was camping because the hostels were full and nobody slept that weekend anyway, except with each other. I didn’t see Gabo again because the band was constantly swarmed with people, and also I was blind drunk the whole time. We had made it then, really made it. We played Dinosaurs over and over, everyday, and it was great every time, everybody wanted more. The kids worshipped us and chanted our names. Different kids came back to Buenos Aires with us, though some of the same faces stayed, but it was hard to keep track because like I said I was drunk the whole time and there were a lot of people around.

Everyone saw Gabo for the last time on the Tuesday. We weren’t doing anything in particular that night, we were just out drinking at some bar in Palermo, the guys, Maria, and the kids that came with us. He didn’t come home that night and the next and the next and soon we realized that we had seen him for the last time. No one could talk about anything else, not for the usual reasons, but because we were really scared. They asked me about it. Did I know where he lived? Did he seem scared around then, did he seem like he knew what was going to happen?

Once, we all sat down and talked about what we remembered of that night.

“He left early.”

“He was acting strange that night.”

“He’s always strange.”

“The bathroom had pink tiles,” I told them.

I was passed out in the bathroom when Gabo left, on his own. It must have been a long time, because everyone thought I had left too. But I was sitting in the bathroom, staring at the pink tiles because I was dizzy.

In the end, we didn’t figure out anything and didn’t feel any better. We didn’t meet to play anymore, there seemed to always be something more important to do, although I didn’t really have anything to do, except drink.

By the end of the month, Juan and Maria left to go to Juan’s country home. They didn’t tell us where it was, exactly, and we didn’t talk about the band again. Nobody talked about much. There was a lot of moving around, and I saw Pablo and Rafael a couple more times. But then once, was it two months after or three, I came to knock on Pablo’s door and nobody lived there anymore. So then I was alone mostly.

One night, I found myself in the same bar again. I didn’t mean to come, I really didn’t want to see that place ever again, but I couldn’t tell at first. It seemed to be any dingy place in Palermo with a neon burger sign out front. It was the same neon burger sign as a couple spots I know in the city.

I sat at a low table, unreasonably low for a regular adult. It made me feel overgrown and sad. My knees hung out to the sides, bent because the seats were too close to the floor. I sat anyway and I forgot to order a burger so I had a lot of beer instead.

I must have been there for a while, drinking beer, because I began to feel very bloated. My stomach felt baggy and my knees were cramping like the table was getting even lower and closer to the ground. Yes, I must have been drunk, and the vertigo made me feel like I was falling into the floor, not like an upright person falling over, but like I was swelling and swallowing up the small furniture. So I made myself get up and go to the bathroom.

When I washed my hands, I looked up and saw the squat, oblong window and started screaming. The vertigo, or whatever it was, swelled up in me and I filled up the room. I saw the whole tiny bathroom from bird's eye view and it clearly had white tiles, and it was clearly the same bathroom as that night. I looked and even though I was swollen and giant, it was clear that the window could have fit a person through. Then I heard bird songs coming through it and a woman's voice.

"You were with him, Manu."

It was clear that it was Maria's voice, it was Maria with the sad bird eyes, but why didn't I know it? And it became clear why the tiles were pink that night and why I spent such a long time staring at them and never forgot that they were pink. The room swelled with bird songs, with Maria's voice, and I thought I might die but then it passed. I pissed. I was sitting back on the toilet seat. I kept pissing and the room deflated, so did I, and the bird songs wrung out dry. I smelt fried meat and remembered that I had ordered the burger after all, and that I was ravenous, so I washed my hands again and went back to the bar, which looked all the same, and it was like nothing had happened, nothing could have happened at all, not really.

Joey P.D. Bui

New York University - Abu Dhabi, '16

Post-Storm Narrative with Sugar

Babushka dolls wake to find smaller
dolls in their ribcages. When they look

for meanings they look for Leprechaun
footprints. It doesn't mean the world

is hungry, or machine guns, finally tired
of blowing up tomatoes, are on strike.

It only means every little sugarplum
is a fruity, pixie-dusted miracle.

The face you see on a rain-washed
bookstore window doesn't belong to you

but is beautiful. The pages on the shelves
have had their cheeks caressed by fingers

and are happy. I wonder how umbrellas
will survive when the rain stops working.

Sitting on a park bench on Saturday, I try
to put myself in the shoes of the umbrellas.

With their hand-sewn nylon faces, it is hard
to imagine what a frown would look like.

Not even the baby nested dolls' raindrop-
prattles will cheer up those shade-bringers.

No one calms their hearts quite like the rain
who whispers in their ears: *Be brave. Be brave.*

Gavin Gao
University of Michigan, '16

The Left Side Speaks in Lightning

Is there a world waiting for us
 on the other side of a rainbow?
If we have the dark side of the moon,
scrawled across a sky of splintered black ink
(as seen from our
lowly perspective),
then it stands to reason
that there exists the dark side of a rainbow,
devoid of all color,
painted on an afternoon chalked in monochrome.

Could this dark side be persuaded
to consume its brighter brother
if evoked by thunder and acid
the same way sunshine calls to its mirrored half?
Perhaps, like the moon
it would refuse to let both of its faces see us,
and the light side (the right side)
would bear the weight of our world
while its tumultuous twin hid, embittered,
a noncompliant Janus afraid to look twice
 at the mess we've made.

*Megan Brewer
University of Washington, '16*

Anniversary

It fell on a Wednesday.
Abbie had a late dinner meeting
to impress a new client on the only night everyone was “available.”
John had to pick up his brother from the airport
to get him home for “date night.”
No one asked if it was convenient for them.

But that’s not the point. The point is

John got his brother home safely and,
giving his sister-in-law an obligatory kiss on the cheek,
drove the return commute listening to Fleetwood Mac.
Abbie ate very little at the restaurant, often looking at her watch and
hoping there’d be something waiting for her at home.
Covering the bill, she made a rushed goodbye.

Abbie picked up chocolate from a twenty-four-hour pharmacy
and John managed to heat up some dinner from what was left in the fridge.
He said “You look gorgeous” as she tugged at her scarf
and sank into his arms. Exchanging gifts,
they ate a dinner of leftover K.F.C.,
sipping sparkling cider from tired paper cups.

Vinny Tangberlini
University of California - Irvine, '15

Smoke the Refuse

“Here’s bliss,” of course,
or the stiff-sigh ghost-shrug, or her spine
creased to the crux of a visceral sleep, the recipe being
abhorrence, or the cellophane fly,
or the cursive *Jesus Christ*,
you’re boring.
And oxygen—
which is never enough.

Ryan Michael Owens
University of Washington, ‘15



Curvilinear Depictions I44

Acrylic and oil on panel

Charlotte Spitzfaden

Washington University in St. Louis, '15



The Weight of Family
Oil on canvas

Ji Won Park
Washington University in St. Louis, '15



Curvilinear Depiction

Acrylic and oil on panel

Charlotte Spitzfaden

Washington University in St. Louis, '15



Sculpture Plan 2

Acrylic on canvas

Calvin Miceli Nelson

Washington University in St. Louis, '15

Introduction to Gravity

Warning! Warning!
Trigger warning!

Cannonball says *bi*
& *bye* to Earth's orbit

Love cares not about weight

The jockey does
a mid-air somersault.

Warsaw, Panie Kowalski!

With soap?
Will doe, my dear.

Because Santa misses
the sooty chimney deerly.

In the washing machine
oceans are falling...

Before planting itself in Jupiter's
overgrown backyard.

Now that little greenhouse
has a black lemon to hold back.

Only if you wear the right
-colored monkey suit.

What salt?

Mr. Painkiller, heal
my charred soul, please.

How come the reindeers
are the only airborne dears?

Gavin Gao
University of Michigan, '16

Andronica,
or the Peculiar Decadence of Repugnant Pie

*To My Dearest Azalea,
A soul too precious for this beautiful, maddening, complex mortal coil*

**“Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust
And with your blood and it I’ll make a paste,
And of the paste a coffin I will rear
And make two pasties of your shameful heads.”**
-William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*

The crowds bustled in *Nice to Meet You* as Gertie explained again the difference between prosciutto and pancetta. Though a vegetarian herself, Gertie had quickly acquired the expertise of a seasoned butcher after years of observing her husband, quickly becoming the most esteemed herbivorous charcutier in the West End. Her own interests lay primarily in pastry preparation and pigeoneering, though she reluctantly obliged to her husband’s interests, rationalizing that she could explore her hobbies on her own time.

A lone shopper shuffled nervously in the corner, pretending to compare the quality of two hanging cured meats. Gertie concluded that she’d been there for nearly twenty minutes, though she had not made an inquiry once. After a final rush, the shop emptied and Gertie approached the lone shopper.

“It appears that you may have come for more than just my cured meats.”

The woman shot a look down, suddenly fascinated by her taupe pumps.

“I heard you make meat pies.”

“This is true.” Gertie smiled. “Do you have a specific filling in mind?”

“I do.” the taupe-shoed shopper choked. “I do.”

Tuesday afternoon sun filtered through the curtains of the third-floor Marylebone flat as Lavinia prepared Afternoon Tea in the next room. Today’s meal would be taken alone as her downstairs neighbor Alton was away on business. She was only a sip into her Earl Grey when Evelyn landed on the kitchen windowsill, a canister fastened to her twiggy leg.

Unfurling a note from the canister, Lavinia inhaled slightly, stifling the emotions that come with the subject of such correspondence. It had been a while since she had received such a query, though it was far from her first. Acknowledging the devotion of her avian friend, Lavinia sent Evelyn back from whence she came.

Her baking group had gained a new recruit.

Elaine arrived at Lavinia’s flat around noon on Wednesday. There was still a good deal of preparation required before the baking group was to meet. She had a keen eye for preparing the perfect pot of tea. Lavinia drank tea voraciously and thus had none of the patience associated with perfecting

each brew. Marian turned up shortly thereafter, retrieving a cuppa from the kitchen and settled in the corner of the salon. Within moments she had settled into her Edith Wharton. When Clara arrived minutes later with cake, Elaine bounded from the kitchen, collecting the cake box and untying its strings. Gertie arrived next, a tad late, her taupe-shoed shopper in toe.

"This is Judith," the charcutier shuffled the new recruit into the salon, presenting her to the gathering's host. Lavinia rose from her chaise.

"Welcome, Judith," the hostess smiled. "My name is Lavinia. I'd love for you to meet Clara, Elaine, and Marian. Of course you've met Gertrude already."

"Gertie," said Gertie.

"Are we not eating pie?" The new recruit seemed thrown off by the sudden change in menu.

"On Wednesdays, we eat cake," Marian's clarifying voice rose from the corner of the room, cool and confident.

"Cake on Wednesday. Pie on Friday," Elaine offered from the kitchen. "You are returning on Friday, yes?"

"I hope to," Judith answered hesitantly.

"Wonderful. Most of our baking happens on Fridays. Wednesdays tend to be more, err, discussion-based. The group has decided that cake is more conducive to discussion," Lavinia shot a disapproving look across the room. "I'm more partial to pie in all circumstances, but clearly I'm alone on this one."

"I see. And meat pie—"

"We don't eat meat pie," Marian interjected sharply.

"Ever," Clara clarified.

"We *make* meat pie," Lavinia granted Clara a congenial glance.

"Right." Judith seemed suddenly fascinated by her taupe-clad feet again.

"You'll quickly learn our ways, unorthodox as they may seem. We're so glad you've joined us. Feel free to share as little or as much as you wish. We know you've been through—" Marian tried to console the new recruit.

"Who's ready for tea?" Elaine bounded from the kitchen, tea tray in hand, sensing a growing tension from the salon.

"Are you implying that someone won't be having tea?" Lavinia would never accept such a ludicrous notion. "All will have tea, yes?"

The query was met invariably by a communal nod. Casual conversation continued covering every topic from the shortcomings of husbands to fads in horticulture to the waning of local homicide. *Tragic, really.* Judith became visibly more distraught as the afternoon continued, shrinking into herself as an armadillo to its shell. Taking Judith aside, Marian offered a sympathetic smile.

"You're here. You're drinking tea. This is good."

The gaggle of women carried on nibbling cake, drinking tea, and recalling the triumphs of the most recent Wimbledon when at last Judith inquired to the origins of the baking group.

"What, exactly, are the origins of the baking group?"

"We used to be a reading group until our discussions became too impassioned."

"Ironically, our discussions of literature produce more heat than our baked goods."

“Oh? Whom did you read?” Judith inquired.

“Dorothy Parker.”

“Virginia Woolf.”

“Mary Shelley.”

“George Eliot.”

“Charlotte Brontë.”

“And Emily Brontë. No one has time for poor Anne,” Elaine lamented the plight of the forgotten sister.

“Nietzsche,” Marian provided the discussion its first male.

“I do enjoy Nietzsche, though I can hardly tell when he’s being facetious.” Lavinia winced a bit, before bending over to freshen her tea.

“Oh, you know I hate that word,” Clara was particularly distraught by certain words which she found pretentious, including facetious (and pretentious.)

“A bit of Shakespeare. *The Tempest*, *Ti*—” Lavinia continued.

“I was never really one for Shakespeare,” Marian interjected as Lavinia and Clara shot her a death glare.

“A few good lessons could be learned, though.” Elaine sought the role of moderator whenever necessary.

“A few good recipes, too,” Lavinia mumbled to her Earl Grey.

“Did you know that Alexandre Dumas wrote an entire *Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine*? Certainly puts any Shakespearean recipes to shame, no?” Gertie saw fit to offer culinary tidbits whenever relevant.

“Hardly,” Lavinia groused and turned back toward the group’s newcomer. “You’ll be back on Friday for pie, yes?”

“Pie-baking or pie-eating?” Judith inquired.

“Mmm, a bit of both,” the hostess clarified. “And who will be retrieving the filling this time?”

“I do believe it’s time for Clara and Elaine,” Gertie consulted a leather journal.

Exchanging furtive glances, the pair grimaced.

“Excellent. I’ll see you both at the shop tonight then, yes? And Judith, I trust you’ll be joining, as well?”

“Indeed. Indeed.”

**“Ensnared in the toils of unbridled desire, he’d commit any crime in the world;
he couldn’t control the flames that were raging inside him.”**

-Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Lavinia woke late the following Wednesday, her head spinning from a tempestuous sleep. Some days were more difficult than others. Mornings, typically, were the most difficult of all. Somehow this day proved especially trying.

Over the past five years, Lavinia had drifted in and out of cool numbness, this numbness acting as a tourniquet to an emotionally fragile state. Outwardly, Lavinia attempted a cool and reserved façade, relenting only for a necessary bit of wit and whimsy. Internally, however, Lavinia was not only at odds, but at odds with being at odds.

On this particular Wednesday, whilst walking to her local library’s cafe, she nearly collapsed

into a puddle of mourning dew. She mourned her experience. She grieved her subsequent infirmity. She grieved that time when her frail body could barely sustain one life, let alone two. She grieved her fractured sense of woman borne of the indulgence of man. Only the promise of her early-mid-morning cuppa roused her from her state of distress. *I have but one Lord, and his name is "the Earl of Grey."*

EXPERIENCE

**"Some men break your heart in two,
Some men fawn and flatter,
Some men never look at you;
And that cleans up the matter."**

-Dorothy Parker, *Enough Rope*

Alton returned on Thursday with flowers. Roses. Red roses. *Really, now?* Lavinia chose not to make anything of this, though she wondered if she should.

"Roses?"

"Roses. I thought they'd be nice for your reading group. Your flat is always so clean, both of dirt and of life. It could use some plants, no?"

"Noted. Roses it is." She set the bouquet near Evelyn's sill, hoping that the blooms would provide a necessary pleasure for group members—human and avian—rather than a flying impediment for the latter. "And it's a baking group now. It has been for the past three and a half years or so."

"Oh, that's right. I suppose I do smell pie on Fridays. Any chance you'd ever make me a meat—"

"No."

"Alright, alright. I suppose as a, what, strong independent woman you refuse to prepare pie for a man? Is that it?"

"Well, no. I wouldn't say it's that. We only have a certain clientele group to whom we deliver meat pies."

"Oh, and how would I ascend to such a level?"

"Ahh, I do believe you mean *descend*. It's far from an elite group. I would certainly not aspire to be among their ranks."

"But for meat pie?"

"Come over for meat. Come over for pie. This I can promise you, however— you will never, never be deserving of our meat pie."

Elaine and Clara arrived at *Nice to Meat You* just as the shop closed, their arms laden with heavy sacks of Judith's special filling.

"You ladies might consider coming through the back doors next time. I do believe the local constabularies are patrolling the neighborhood," the charcutier offered concerned advice as she answered the door.

The trio removed the putrid meats from their parcels. Elaine could hardly stand the scent of prime meat, let alone the rankness of their most recent harvest.

"This is awful."

"This *is* offal!" Gertie had grown rather fond of meat-themed humour.

"An apt observation." Clara rolled her eyes at Gertie's blatant pun.

“Heart, liver, belly. . . Where are the frank and beans?” Gertie examined her cutting board for a particularly revolting cluster of meats. “Ahh, barely saw them!”

The women continued their efforts. Sort. Chop. Slice. Vacuum-seal. Pack. Soon each bit of meat was tightly wrapped in its airtight binding and Tupperware container.

Gertie arrived first to Lavinia’s flat (*a novel occurrence, really*), toting vacuum-sealed, Tupperwared fleshy vileness. The others quickly followed. Apron-strings tightly cinched, baking commenced. Lavinia oversaw the baking, likely not as experienced as Gertie, but considerably more perfectionistic.

“Clara, let’s not overwork the dough.”

Marian took notice of Lavinia’s high-strung tendencies, empathizing with a kindred spirit.

“Lavinia, haven’t you helped enough?”

“But the pie isn’t in yet! I really should—”

“No! Not the pie. You see Judith in there. You’re helping her find her peace. Where’s yours?”

“I—I can’t. Somehow I couldn’t justify such a course of actions for my own benefit. It seems justifiable when in the name of others, but for myself? No, I couldn’t. I know it sounds insane, but—”

“You’re right. It does.”

Lavinia took another sip of tea.

“Also, it’s not just for your benefit. A ridding of vileness is a public service. You would be providing a favour to the community. See those women in the kitchen? They’re here because they support you. They support your efforts. If you allow them to help you with this, you’ll be aiding them, as well. That vile beast will never, *never* strike again.”

RÉSUMÉ

“Razors pain you;

Rivers are damp;

Acids stain you;

And drugs cause cramp.

Guns aren’t lawful;

Nooses give;

Gas smells awful;

You might as well live.”

-Dorothy Parker, *Enough Rope*

After the others left, Elaine remained to ensure that Lavinia was coping with the day’s deeds; at times she was prone to mortiferous musings. Her dealings with Judith reopened her crudely healed wounds.

“Lavinia, you’re trembling. You look terrified.”

“It’s not so much terror as an unrelenting numbness. The desire to feel something—anything—is irresistible. This nothingness is crippling. To be perfectly honest, the crying days are far preferable. The worst days are when the tears are dried up and I’ve ceased to feel even sadness or misery, but am instead paralyzed by fear and a sheer absence of emotion. Those are the trying times.”

“I hesitate to ask more but—”

“Ask what you will. I’m too numb to do anything rash, anyway. I will admit that it has occurred

to me—the possibility of ceasing to be part of this mortal coil.”

“To you, is life a game or a battle?”

“Neither. It’s more a labyrinth—One with many paths but no ultimate solution.”

“Does your labyrinth have an exit or entrance, or is it too vast?”

“No, not at all. At the beginning of one’s mortal life, one is simply dropped into it at random.

Then the mortal runs around, often in a circle, trying to find the path that leads to perfection, to enlightenment—except that it doesn’t exist. We spend our entire lives searching for the exit into this perfect realm, never to actually find it. Our death is the end of our journey and our cessation from the maze, but not the completion of the puzzle which has no answer. Thus, the only way in which to find fulfillment within the labyrinth is to achieve it along whichever path we chose to follow, knowing full well that it is our path and thus, our providence.”

UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE

“By the time you swear you’re his,
Shivering and sighing,
And he vows his passion is
Infinite, undying—
Lady, make a note of this:
One of you is lying.”

-Dorothy Parker, *Enough Rope*

Over the five years since “the incident,” Lavinia had recounted her story numerous times. It came down to an almost unwavering script after about a dozen tellings—the earliest, of course, presented to the other members of the baking group. Naturally, the vast majority of recipients of this knowledge were female—three of whom shared tragically similar tales. *One in four? And here—this is Marylebone for Gosh Sakes!* Lavinia lamented the ease of recounting this tale to her female peers, while her male acquaintances remained a far more essential audience. She noted a certain obligation to curb this trend and begun discussing this story with her male acquaintances, as well. On Friday night, Alton became the latest addressee.

She reasoned she must ease into the discussion so as to not spook her neighbor. The conversation began quite casually, and then turned to pie. *Admittedly, it often does.* On this day, however, the pair’s discussion of pie turned more sinister. Pie—Pie and its contents—Pie and its recipients—Repugnant Pie and its vile recipients, though reserving her own association. By conversation’s end, Alton fully comprehended his neighbor’s refusal to prepare him meat pie, thoroughly disturbed by its cannibalistic implications.

“Oh, so you disagree as to their final resting place, Alton? Where exactly do you think they belong?”

“Perhaps that is where they belong, but I don’t think I could ever stomach actually eating such a pie. I’d rather not have that vileness inside of my body.” Lavinia took a slow sip of tea.

“Is that so? If only it weren’t too late for some of us.”

“Oh?”

Again, Lavinia recounted her tale, mundane as it had now become. She always worried for the person opposite her. Ever conscious of the time she’d had to ponder her own circumstances, she knew

too of the turmoil it took on her audience. When she finished, Alton sat in stunned silence. Somehow men always do. Far more so than women, as though they don't recognize the ill-being in the fellow members of their sex. Fellow women, of course, come to expect hearing this every so often. *Tragic. How as this become so common?* Lavinia acknowledged a certain uneasiness across the table.

"I hesitate to call this a pregnant pause."

Alton met her eyes with a pained wince.

"Maybe I'm a romantic, but I'd always hoped my first pregnancy would result from something consensual."

**"'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more
That womanhood denies my tongue to tell.
O! keep me from their worse than killing lust,
And tumble me into some loathsome pit,
Where never man's eye may behold my body:
Do this, and be a charitable murderer."**

-William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus

Not quite the socialite, Lavinia rarely found herself in the pubs to which so much of the city flocked as magpies to a pasty, but on one particular evening, she obliged to join a few relative acquaintances at a small establishment called The Brown Bear, during, what she was told, was a particularly significant football match.

"This, Lavinia, is a particularly significant football match," an acquaintance shared before returning to the television set.

She was hardly in the mood to listen to sports, nor was she particularly enthused about the prospect of sitting with a raucous crowd. Regardless, this particular evening demanded she be surrounded by some level of acquaintance, no matter how philistine.

The beginning of the match was met with the realization that Lavinia was far from the typical patron of *The Brown Bear*. Beer-bellied men and gents with significant facial hair lined the walls chugging their ales in mammoth gulps, whilst her comrades sipped ciders and Pimm's with only marginally more reserve. For a moment, she considered ordering a precocious white, but hardly thought her drinking habits conducive to such an environment. She instead positioned herself well behind her group, now huddled round the telly, pen in hand, contemplating a recent production from Shakespeare's something or other.

After perhaps an hour, the group grew ever closer to the set as Lavinia became ever more shut off from the social situation. The closest of her acquaintances at once recognized her marked reclusivity and suggested Lavinia might leave were she not enjoying herself. She was not, in fact, enjoying herself. This was embarrassingly obvious not only to herself, but to the entire conscious occupancy of *The Brown Bear*, which mind you, now dwindled at only about fifty percent. However, she also knew that if she were to wander into the mid-summer evening, it would be mere moments before she would break into an incoherent mess of human emotion. It was not so much that she had a pit in her stomach, but that she had fallen into the stomach pit of some far greater beast, and long ago forgotten how to climb out.

On second thought, absinthe sounded quite nice.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

-Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Early on Saturday, Evelyn landed on the sill at *Nice to Meet You*, interrupting Gertie’s Bavarian sausage alphabetization. Gertie unfurled Evelyn’s memo.

Dearest Gertie,

I shall require assistance in collecting a special filling on the Thursday next and will be stopping in to retrieve our most recent bespoke creation. I know a person most deserving of it. Cheers.

—Lavinia

“Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it.”

-Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

B209. *Vile number.* Lavinia rapped on the flat’s door, pie box strings dangling by her middle and ring fingers. Her other hand nervously fidgeting as digits on a keyboard before flexing and coiling into a fist. The door opened to reveal an ominous silhouette. Lavinia stood her ground for combat.

“Pie delivery!” The pint-sized pie baker stepped into the foyer, wincing as a putrid scent of musk and sandalwood fill her nasal passages. Lavinia calmly set the pie on the counter. Retrieving an apron from her satchel, she tied its strings neatly behind her back. The ominous figure blankly stumbled to a wooden chair at his table, staring at Lavinia as though beholding a ghost.

“I certainly hope you’re hungry. You look as though you might deserve a pie. Ahh, indeed.” Lavinia untied the strings of her pie box and removed the pastry from its carrier. She carved a substantial slice of pie for the wretch and set it upon the table whilst a visitor rapped on the flat’s door. “Oh, one moment. Do excuse me, please!”

Lavinia answered the door and a group of women emerged from the corridor—Marian in the middle, flanked by Clara and Elaine. Gertie stepped out, rolling up the sleeves of her cardigan. Judith then emerged from the rear of the group, a now resilient form of her previously timid shell.

“Greetings, Ladies. As you all see, we’ve found ourselves a new filling. He has already enjoyed the supreme decadence of our most recent creation.”

The women bound his wrists to the arms of his wooden chair and his ankles to its legs—his torso secured with a hefty rope. His mouth was left unrestricted so as to permit any verbal objection which may then, of course, be promptly ignored.

“Vile beast. What’ve you to say for yourself?”

Too stunned to speak, the figure mouthed something undecipherable.

“Ahh? Nothing? He doth not protest, at all! Jolly good! You may listen to us, then,” Lavinia smirked at her army. “For We—We proud women are those of wit and whimsy—of aptitude and amiability. We daughters, We sisters, We mothers, We wives—We teachers, We writers, We proud bakers—We vigilantes, We warriors—We cult, shackled by domesticity—We labour in the nursery. We slog in the laundry. We toil in the kitchen. We bake *your* pies. We endure *your* inanity. We bear *your*

depravity. And now—*now* We come for our filling.”

The figure struggled on his chair, still silent, writhing to defend what shred of dignity remained in his person.

“You just don’t know what to protect, do you?”

Lavinia turned to glance at her cohort of women. “A pity isn’t it, Ladies? We couldn’t possibly imagine such pain.”

Lavinia grinned at her feminine militia.

“Prepare yourselves, Ladies. It’s harvest time.”

**“Three be the things I shall never attain:
Envy, content, and sufficient champagne.”**

-Dorothy Parker, Enough Rope

The following evening, the group gathered on the South Bank. Contrasting its typical crowd, *The Anchor* became overrun with jubilant women. The group assured Lavinia that after such a successful night, she deserved a spritely glass of *Dom Perignon*. She obliged, though still meddling with the events of the night previous. Lavinia downed her champagne in a gulp. Tonight she had little appreciation for its buoyant notes, her drink far more effervescent than her demeanor.

“Excuse me. I do need some air,” Lavinia shuffled out of her seat.

“Lavinia, you’re not wearing a coat. You’ll grow cold. Do take my jacket. That scarf couldn’t possibly be warm enough,” Elaine remained perennially concerned with Lavinia’s livelihood.

“It’s plenty warm. It’s a scarf, a shawl, a blanket, a hood, a cape. Please! Never underestimate the versatility of a Pashmina.” Lavinia turned, retiring into the balmy night.

Lavinia sat on edge, on the bank of the River Thames, gazing across to the dome of St. Paul’s, her scarf providing perfectly sufficient shelter toward the mild elements. A popping of rubber on cobblestone slowed as an automobile emerged behind her. The vehicle stopped to reveal a young couple through the windscreen. The man alighted from the driver’s side of his Cooper Mini, whilst his wife appeared mildly perturbed to pull over.

“Are you in any need of assistance?”

“Hardly. Just waiting for my friends.”

“You’re aware that the water’s not terribly warm, or clean.”

“Indeed. Cheers.” Lavinia offered the chap a piqued wince.

The young couple returned to their ostensible domestic bliss, Mini tracing the South Bank, borne westward toward Southwark Bridge en route to some magical suburbia—Finchley, or perhaps even Hampstead. That evening, the wife would obediently kiss her husband goodnight. The young man would settle into slumber, contented in his wealth, his wife, and his wisdom. However, on this particular evening, this wisdom failed as the young man had been dreadfully mistaken.

On this particular evening, the water of the Thames was sufficiently warm..

~ Rapist Pie ~

Ingredients:

Filling:

½ Tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Or any other current condition of Olive Oil. At this point, we'll take what we can get.)

1 Shameful Head, well-thrashed (Allow for absence of developed cerebral material.)

2 Garlic Cloves, crushed

2 Large Carrots, chopped into discs

1 (Mediocre-Sized) Frank, also chopped into discs and 2 Beans, crushed, then finely-minced (We're talking euphemistically here, of course. These are the naughty bits. Especially naughty bits, in our case.)

1 Large Onion, roughly chopped

2 Doleful Eyes, roughly chopped

Various Whole Cowardly Organs Including: 1 Chicken Heart, 1 Lily Liver, and 1 Yellow Belly (Don't be surprised if subject possesses little to no guts. Poultry may be substituted if necessary.)

500mL Fuller's 1845 Strong Ale

Palmful of Thyme, if you've any to spare

Cloves, to taste

Pastry Coffin:

1 ½ Cup Bones, finely ground to dust (Allow for weakness of knees and spine.)

1 Cup Flour

½ Cup Lecherous Blood

1 Teaspoon Salt, extracted from tears

¾ Cup Lard, harvested from kidneys

Method:

1. Preheat inferno to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. Mix dry ingredients (Bones, Flour, and Salt) in large bowl.

3. Add Lard to mixture, cutting into pea-sized bits.

4. Add Blood, one tablespoon at a time, gradually working mixture into a paste. If the mixture is too sticky or dry, add additional Blood or Flour accordingly.

5. Divide paste into two spheres. Roll each sphere into a circle on a well-floured surface. Dough will be ready when edges spring back ever so much. Be careful not to over-work the dough, or the pastry will become tough. The mixture should remain sufficiently pathetic.

6. Form pastry coffin in pie dish, fluting edges with forefingers.

7. Heat the Extra-Virgin (Bah!) Olive Oil in pan with the Onion and Garlic for 1 minute.

8. Add the vile meats (Head, Frank, and Beans) — Feel free to continue thrashing and mincing meats in the pan. Don't worry about bruising meats as they are, of course, merely meat. Cook until the meats are seared all over and there is no pink, dignity, or humanity remaining. By this time, there will be some vile juice in the pan which should now sizzle like the river Phlegethon.

9. Pour in half the Ale and allow to simmer for a minute longer, watching as the Goddess Styx, then pour in remainder with

Thyme and Cardamom.

10. *Feel free to consume remaining 250mL of Ale or comparable superior libation. (You likely now deserve a bit of Dom Perignon. Yes, you surely do!)*

11. *Pour the vile mixture into its coffin. Place upper crust on dish, now fluting the edges together. Cut suitable pattern or prose in top of pastry for venting. e.g. Rueful Haiku or Penitent Limerick, written on behalf of filling.*

12. *Place the coffin into its fiery kiln at 350 degrees Fahrenheit.*

13. *After 1 hour and 30 minutes, remove pie from flaming inferno and leave to cool, alone and forsaken.*

WARNING: *Contents of pie are thoroughly vile.*

Pie must only be consumed by those who are candidates to become filling themselves.

To Victims/Bakers: *You shall not want this vileness inside of you. . .again.*

To Candidates: *Bon Appétit!*

*Kirsten Elizabeth Collison
Seattle Pacific University, '15*

In Between Breaths

I drag the banana peel forward and lay it flat on the desk because the pasty part can't be face-down and I sit with my body crouched over like a turtle and my eighty-year-old self is going to curse me for this and I open my phone: "I miss you" and it makes me hungry and I'm craving pumpkin cheesecake specifically if you were wondering and I wing my eyeliner perfectly on one eye and now I'm afraid to do the second and whenever I'm on time for appointments, I feel like I have my shit together and I think that growing up is learning that it's okay to eat alone in a crowded room and I think that everyone should get a job as a security guard so they know what it feels like to be invisible and I do not miss you and someone told me if you repeat something enough times, you start to believe it and things change in a split second, but I think too many seconds can cause a split and I hate people who talk about logistics and one time my dad told me to sit slightly forward and steeple my hands in interviews because body language is important and thefreedictionary.com told me that a scatterbrain is a person incapable of serious, connected thought.

Sabrina Hilfer
Washington University in St. Louis, '17

State of Emergency

Today I'm talking trees stooped with snow,
the car that swerved and spun (rather beautifully)
before saddling up to the curb across the street,
a sunshine stripping the lawn to its colors,
the man's face in the swirling car, just like
these things happen,
the snow forgiving everything in its own way
and the blood clots that have been forming all winter
just like these things happen,
except they don't. I'm talking ice rinks of death
buses lodged parallel in the road, red-jeep boys like
Damn, did you see that?
CT scans, blood draws, the burgundy tubes labeled one
after another, black & white pictures of lungs like punctured insect wings
the difference between what you see and what you feel
the that's not me, but it is. The rush because you could die
human grenade stopped at a red light. I'm saying snow-bound
empty-bedded, empty-bottled, these crimson tulips
drooping globes, shadows on the kitchen counter,
of course the coffee, hot and full, cold and half-full, free refills, no refills,
again the man and his car which is towed today, his face
these things happen, a heart (my heart) beating on the big screen
making sounds like children chanting underwater
their slow lips, the bubbles rising & popping.

Liana Meffert
Emory University, '15

Alluvium

I remember the time I saw a coyote run to the edge of the sea. He broke from the rip rap and ran a straight line trajectory, stopping abruptly, just short of the water's lap. There he stood riveted, gazing from left to right at the endless shore that stretched away into the obscurity of low fog in the distance. For a long time he merely stared out at those ever-rolling and crashing waves, as if contemplating the edge of the world—the bounds to which he is subject.

I remember drowning once. Gaping at the azure, effervescent brilliance of an October sky streaked with broad exhaust trails and sponge-stamped clouds—all the while the edges of my vision darkening, the color scale dimming like the fadeout to the credits at the end of a movie. Ski goggles off. But after you're hauled back on deck, and you inhale that first revitalizing breath, a kaleidoscope explodes. And suddenly, everything seems precious. Inescapably fleeting.

I remember when I lost my grandfather's anchor charm. It dropped from my necklace chain, missed the net of my darted hand, and fell to the earthy ground (probably under some proverbial huckleberry bush) where its charming, tarnished patina was immediately rendered invisible. I searched frantically, but to no avail, and so resigned myself to the idea that he put down that piece of himself so that he would always be with us there. I thought I stopped being afraid of losing things at that point, because behind it all, there now appeared to be some divine reason. But then I lost the arrowhead. I still wear the one he fashioned into a pendant, but I fear for the day he decides to put it down somewhere as well.

I remember mountain lakes that wax in winter and wane come late summer. I stopped to walk the shoreline of one that hadn't drained in years. It was the day after Thanksgiving a few years ago. I remember looking up, and to my surprise, saw the first snow of the season falling flake by flake around me. And for a while, I was content to just stand in awestruck wonder, because, are there even words to describe that nearly mute sound? Any that even come close? But eventually, I had to go. I stood by the open door of my car for the longest time though, and simply watched the delicate fractals land on the contrast of my jacket sleeve, crisply cut just long enough to be appreciated, then melt away.

I am haunted by waters.

Laura J. Kostad
University of Washington, '15

CULPTURED

Mottled lipstick pressed to frost-nipped cheeks begins
the valiant battle of polite conversation,
Tongues armed to kill but set to stun into admission:

Our daughter got into her first choice school.
She's number two in the rankings now,
got waitlisted at the Ivies.
Her brother goes to Yale.
I visited him on his study abroad after we moved.
Oh, it went well. We
 flew from the city of
Loved to see the Mona Lisa
 mongrels east and
[Smiling] Anyway, we haven't seen you in a wild,
Not since we moved
Out to the county.

Yes, that's a new chopping block, bamboo.
The countertops are marble faced.
We didn't like the dark ones,
they showed us too much of ourselves.

Polished skins showing fingerprints
Smudges flowing down our sides like rain,
like tears, like blood, like sweat.
Hard sides fogged with panting breaths.
Stand up taller. Do not show your rough edges.
Give them nothing to grab onto.
Do not let them climb,
someone has got to be left behind.
Who else will polish our
manicured, thick lawns?
pour them over our skins like concrete?
Well-kempt skins keep the kids off the wrong streets.

Mottled lipstick, tears on rosy cheeks:
Kid Three just got a letter from Holistic admissions,
scored 2350 on the LITMUS test,
passed with flying

Jordan Victorian
Washington University in St. Louis, '17

Black & White

She never let me leave without giving me something—
A photograph of my mom as a baby,
article clippings,
wool socks and cashmere sweaters from former New York winters,
books she thought I might read,
folded maps of the world--seventy years old.

After she died I hung the world above my bed,
and when ants connect with the tea mugs I forget,
I trace their journeys as they head across the Atlantic,
to African countries that no longer are, the Indian cities are still English--
they go to Bombay, Poona, Madras.

I will never travel the world as far or as wide,
(neither did she)
yet there is something there in my grandmother's eyes
in the black and white photograph where she is a newlywed bride,
squinting in the sun
with her groom on the lawn
the skirt of her dress spread out in full bloom
her face
making lovely an understatement,
she smiles,

I used to think the world was once black and white,
when colored photographs came out they framed the birth of rainbows,
I know better now
But what a world to wake up and shed shades of gray for Cerulean blue,
jade, indigo, bright hues, but

Her photos hold a woman with silver hair and wrinkles,
My mom's childhood best friend didn't recognize them,
she told her:
"Your mother had brown hair and fair skin,
skirts with pleats so sharp they snipped the wind,

when she walked,
the world *begged* to greet her.”

Her hair faded from brown to grey to white,
skin folded a million times into tiny creases
like trade routes on the maps she gave me,
she never lost the “*aw*” when she said coffee,
her eyes were always that same, bright blue,
towards the end she told me the same thing
over and over again
but she only

Once told me this story:
When she was nineteen and the war was realer
than it seems our own decade’s own will ever feel,
even though it hadn’t yet sneaked to TV screens.
She had stopped at an empty intersection to cross the street,
but the light hadn’t changed and so she waited,
Waited,
Waited.
until a soldier laughed and asked if she though someone would hit her
if she tried to cross
She said she didn’t know, but she sure hoped not.
And he took her dancing that night,
she wore her hair in bobby pins
she re-used those pins
but never saw him again.
She wonders about him,
she thinks he died in the war
That took boys
who tease girls
who wait too long
to cross the street,

I don’t know what happened either.

My mother hates loud noises
and loud music
but she loves the movies.
My grandmother,
my mother,
and I went to the movies a decade ago one Christmas day evening
it was something with Nicole Kidman being vaguely British
I don't remember the title but I know the scene
when the bombs were falling loudly,
noises tearing everything in little pieces
even Nicole's British accent crumbled into rubble,
vowels cascaded with the shrapnel,
my grandmother next to me—
is sobbing.

I read if you watch the sunset too many times
it just becomes six pm
And I don't agree,
because my mother
can still count
both scars and shooting stars
And she couldn't sleep

In the weeks after her mother died.
I came home for the winter to my mom on her bed,
dressed like me in tall boots,
long skirt and red,
She looked tired and lost and far too much like me,
she said last night it was four am,
and she couldn't sleep cause something told her to go to her mother's old
apartment and she ignored it as long as she could
and then drove faster than she should
and walked in my grandmother's former door
to watch a light-bulb explode,
just in time to stop the fire alarm from blaring,
the sprinklers from spraying
All the things my grandmother loved
to give me.

I wonder
if love
can really only be one word
when it feels like
it is everything.

Selena Ross
University of California - Santa Barbara, '15

These Days

These days even Mondays make music
It seems impossible, but they do.
Pounding out a rhythm
Even a dazed downbeat can't ignore.
These days are so bright they make you squint,
And the ocean's still cold
But it feels like home.

These days, even though we really need rain
We're making do without.
This April our water heater broke,
And like the skies, we never showered,
And yet this May it seems our footsteps still sprout wildflowers
We leave orange polka dots of poppies in our wake
They take roots on our dirty feet.

These nights even when it's too foggy for the lunar eclipse
We'll still climb on the roof
And count the holes the stars leave
And point to the ring around where the red moon should be.

These days are already framed
Years from now on a wall,
On the way to the kitchen I'll stop
And remember.
These days are numbered,
But so is everything else.
These days aren't perfect,
But neither is anything else.

These days I'm wearing your socks
I found them on my bedroom floor after you peeled them off
And in the middle of English class today I catch myself
Admiring these stripes.
These days we're listening to voices made immortal
By scratched vinyl and fifty-cent tapes
Turn up your amp,
This room is cramped but we'll make space.

These days it's midnight on the library's eighth floor
But they haven't kicked us out yet
We made a dance-floor out of every desk
And turned up the music
We were the only ones left.

Selena Ross
University of California - Santa Barbara, '15

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