

A large, stylized, dark red letter 'F' is the central graphic element. It has a thick, rounded, and somewhat calligraphic appearance. The background is a warm, bokeh-style gradient of orange and yellow tones, with soft, out-of-focus light spots.

2014
Vol. 52

franklin college



Volume 52
2013-14



A publication of the Department of English
Franklin, Indiana

EDITORS

Brooke Davis
Caylie Guinn
Allyn Pearson
Paige Hamilton
Morgan Hood
Autumn Huse
William Maze
Cheyenne McIntosh
Katelyn Rayl
Kristin Stephens
Gabrielle Sully

Evan Vernon
Ryanne Wise

LAYOUT DESIGN
Ryanne Wise

COVER
Morgan McClellan

FACULTY ADVISOR
Dr. Carl Jenkinson

The staff would like to thank Christine Hendershot, David Cunningham and Wendy Shapiro.

The Apogee is an annual publication of the Department of English at Franklin College. The faculty advisor posts submissions anonymously to the magazine's web page; the staff selects the work for publication without knowing the identity of the author or the artist.

“The cover of *The Apogee* represents an illumination of light and color, overlapping like gases of a star cluster in the galaxy. The word “apogee” relates back to astronomy, and for this reason the cover reveals a sense of depth through its shapes, and radiates life in its colors. The font used for the cover is Didot.

The logo evolved from the reflection of the letter “a.” Writers, photographers and artists reflect on experiences before creating work that others can relate to based on similar life paths. The circular shapes display a sense of orbit, another meaning for the word “apogee.” The shape placement mimics the solar system through staggered lettering. Yet, the letters are all connected – as every person is on this planet from specific characteristics that make up the human race.”

- Morgan McClellan

CONTENTS

Featured Writer: Zach Mueller

Interview	8
Diplopia.....	13
Outside at Christmas	14
Reinventing the Garden	15
Here.....	17
Emily Stauffer Poetry Prize	19
<i>Winner:</i>	
The Mona Lisa in Spain Knows Why I Can't Come in the Side Door Anymore by Stephen Powers.....	20
<i>Honorable Mentions:</i>	
Anna Pavlova by Megan Kuyak	22
Insect Ars Poetic by Bret Foster.....	24
Ambition by Emily Campbell.....	26
A Kiss on Each Cheek by Taylor Heideman.....	27
Regeneration by Brooke Davis	30
Cowlicks by Sarah Lawson.....	32
Portrait in Steel by	34
Persephone by Brooke Davis	35
Sweet Dreams by Katelyn O'Mara	37
Still by Paige Hamilton	38
Objective by Cheyenne McIntosh.....	40
July, 1996 by Cheyenne McIntosh.....	42

Alter-ego by Brittany Jameson	43
The Variable by Amanda Creech	44
Church by Ryanne Wise.....	48
Sorry Nabokov by Morgan Hood.....	49
Rage Against the Machine by Emily Campbell.....	51
Darlene Lay by Cora Philpot	52
Eyes on Fire by Sarah Lawson.....	54
Bully by Amanda Creech	56
Courage by Katelyn O'Mara.....	59
Sun Rise by Seth Sabo	60
13 Ways of Looking at Dreams by Taylor Heideman.....	62
Engine of a Million Pilots by Andrew Matson	65
Brave New World (Purple Edition) by Darian Eswine	66
The Philosopher by Katelyn O'Mara.....	68
A Nothing Sky by Taylor Heideman.....	69
Skull Study by Brittany Jameson.....	73
Smudged Frames by Sarah Lawson.....	74
Zenith by Allyn Pearson.....	76
Silver Haze by Presleigh Hobbs	77
Nothing to Wear by Brittany Jameson	80
Faceless Toes by Darian Eswine.....	81
Boots by Ryanne Wise	83
Trapped by Amanda Creech.....	84
Title by Jessica Darmelio	87
I Only Take It Black by Sarah Lawson.....	88
Rhubarb by Mikayla Mason.....	90
Our City by Brittany Jameson.....	95

FEATURED WRITER

ZACH MUELLER

Zach Mueller received his MFA in poetry from the University of South Carolina. His work has appeared in Gulf Coast, Prairie Schooner, Heavy Feather Review, Rattle, Timber, and Hobart. He grew up in Columbia, South Carolina.

Apogee: When did you decide you wanted to be a poet?

M: I still have problems with thinking of poet as an identity, I guess. I think that's sort of stupid. I think first and foremost you should just be a full-fledged human being, and then if that's something you're expressing, I think that rings truer. Because that pre-exists—knowing there's a thing you can be as a poet. Because if you know that a poet is a thing that you can be, then you become that, and you become the iteration of the thing that you think exists as opposed to the organic version of that. I'm a person, I have thoughts, I have these impulses, I'm going to express them. And I think that's a poet, if they're doing it in words.

A: Who inspired you to write nontraditional poetry?

M: Probably Allen Ginsberg. For sure. I got my hands on a gigantic collection of Allen Ginsberg poems when I'd just

graduated undergrad. And I thought, These make no sense, and they make total sense at the same time. That was really appealing [...] I had to go [open mic sessions] as part of a few workshops in undergrad, and they tended to be really emotional, but at the end of the day, a poem was just a metaphor. It was just a vessel for saying something that you weren't, and I hated that. I'm not into poems that exist purely as this coy version of saying something else.

A: What should poetry accomplish?

M: It's a lens of observation, but I also think that poetry needs to exist merely so that we know language, and so we don't take language for granted, because I think we do. We tend to think of it as a mode of communication, but it's not. It's far from that. Language itself is just a dressed up version of communication. And so I think we tend to forget that, and what poetry does is reminds us that words are artificial and we're always playing with them. I think poetry has to exist to be the version of language that shows us that there's a lot more behind [words], and that the thing behind them is us. I think words are the thing that poetry is meant to get out of the way, in a sense.

A: What inspires you to write?

M: I think individual lines of language probably. Someone told me a long time ago—all great writers do this—to walk around with a pen and paper and they write down the things that they see. I've tried to do that. I've tried to write and be

inspired by the things around me but it just never made sense to me. It's sort of naïve to think that poems come from nothing but I think, for me, poems come from deciding that I'm going to sit down and pick words out of my head, and I think that's what excites me. That's an act that's just like making tea and then drinking it. You sit down and it's like, What words do I have in my head? You get those out first and then, for me, I see where that goes and I start to refine it and I start to shape it. It's like starting with a—I don't know how sculpting works. (Laughs) I don't even know how you make sculptures. But I assume it's starting with a block of clay and then making it into a shape over time. Simply through the process itself.

A: Do you think about what you're going to write, or do you go with what comes out?

M: I have to decide to sit down and write, but if I sit down and decide that I'm going to write about a [specific] thing, I can't do it. Which is a serious disadvantage. When I'm driving I just try to think of words that sound good together, or words that evoke weird meanings. And I do that when I'm walking. The other day I was walking back from the coffee shop and there was this Spanish sandwich shop between the coffee shop and my apartment, and I saw a napkin that was propping a door open, which I thought was unique, and I'm just thinking, you know, What does that mean? (Laughs) Just the line, The napkin holds your door open. What does it mean? It doesn't mean anything unless you've seen it, so without knowing that it's a thing that exists, what does that mean, detached from reality? And then I just go from there. I think about doors and

napkins and what it means to wipe your mouth, and to open a thing and close a thing, and be closed off. Things like that. So I guess free-association starts a lot.

A: Do themes ever unintentionally emerge in your writing when you free-associate?

M: Yeah, they're there. And then I realize it retroactively. But I try not to do that until later on, because then I think you can stifle the creative impulses that you already have. I carried through with [the napkin] and I went home and I wrote for a few hours, and it was only about twenty lines, and then a week later I came back to it and thought, "That's not what this poem is about at all." And then I worked for a few more hours and it turned into something that was totally different but much better, because I think I allowed it to transform on its own, on it's own timeline instead of deciding that the thing I had written was done. I think coming back to your poem and just reading and rereading is part of the process of walking around, thinking about these things and observing.

A: Your poems don't seem to utilize conventional aspects of poetry like rhyme and meter. They read more like prose. Do you write prose in addition to your poetry?

M: I think good prose reads like poetry. I don't actually think that I write prose-like, but I do think I'm not infatuated with the overt sound of language the way a lot of people are. Like a lot of professors or people I've worked with in the past have said This line sounds beautiful or great, and I just wasn't

impressed with that because I thought it sounded expected. So I do like the sound of language, but I privilege the pace of language more than I do the sound, I think. I'm much more interested in rhythm that creates a sort of chaos.

A: Are any of your poems autobiographical?

M: I think any of my work that's actually good probably toes that line between autobiography and something totally foreign. I'm always borrowing from my own way of seeing the world. I think that if it's autobiographical, really it's just capturing a tone, or a rhythm, or an elegance, or a particularly chaotic mood. Always a pacing, I think. If anything, I think the autobiography comes from the way it feels, but not necessarily the way it's driven by content at all. I think sometimes blurring that line is good. I also think that sometimes it's dangerous to mistake poems for being [autobiographical].

A: Why do you keep writing?

M: I think at this point I like the feel of being able to share things with confidence. And I consume so much of this realm of the world because I'm reading all the time, and putting back into that is fulfilling. I would write even if it weren't for a purpose. It still feels good.

DIPLOPIA

Red apples scattered along the highway.

 A southern cliché indirectly about bruises,
like mason jars & songs about fireflies
 & fireflies & collecting them in mason jars.

I don't know what it is in particular about
 mason jars. I used to trap green lizards
in mason jars when I was a kid & watch
 them brown like the oxidized flesh
of an apple. My friend gave me apple-
 cooked moonshine once on our porch
but he wasn't my friend, really, he was
 just someone. I want to find someone
and give them these apples dotting 26 like
 balloons strung-up to a steel helium tank
at a grocery store, right next to the counter
 where you buy lottery tickets and cigarettes.

REINVENTING THE GARDEN

I would be trash
 the place no cars are parked
a sign saying
 no cars are parked
 as if the chain-links indicated

sound in splattered stereo,
 arms tearing at asphalt
as if jackhammers
 chewing paper into sand.
 You came into the room floating

oranges, paper cranes
 breaking as if this is skin
to the touch, or the soil
 is romance
 is science—

dried leaves
 is carbon, is a homecoming,
and we language like fire:

as if this spring is this spring
as if this spring

left us wading in plain sight.

In box-cars, in parking lots
in empty parking
places—an empty space
where our character

develops into drinking water,
slightly. The soft taste
leaves boundaries
between us—an ankle of shame.
The grass of all our cities

laid before us, before birds—basil
before the smell
of basil. Before breath, before you
say glass, we break-in through a window
drawing keys from legs.

HERE

The footprints are complicated,
are everywhere. I go look
— I was probably there, right

There in the snow and Probably
I was a painting. Probably I was
A Statue. Probably
I was not one. I say I'm probably
not happening. See,

this one caves beneath us

like A drone crashing in a field
of wheatgrass. Probably
leaning or I was leaves, the way
this one melts
Like a preference you have
For eating ice chips. I would

Prefer silence. I would probably be
a bird's nest metaphorically
Just to prove to you
I'm serious—that we

won't be needing this particular
seriousness anymore.
I'm asking why
Did we ever think we
needed it. Who could possibly
Be out here
like a snowflake
Probably burying you like dead leaves
falling slowly through the wind and
Who could ever need this
Here and now as if
You could burn it off just
Like a lantern, you say.

You can say and say
a language
another body
pistols stretching inside flower
petals beneath the snow
probably shrinking slowly
through a month, entire day
of mouth
but still it is now.

EMILY STAUFFER

POETRY PRIZE

This year marks the Apogee's inaugural contest for the Emily Stauffer Poetry Prize. Our staff received over one hundred submissions from across the United States. This year's winner is Stephen Powers with his poem "The Mona Lisa In Spain Knows Why I Can't Come In the Side Door Anymore." The honorable mentions are Megan Kuyak's "Anna Pavlova" and Bret Foster's "Insect Ars Poetica."

WINNER

THE MONA LISA IN SPAIN
KNOWS WHY I CAN'T
COME IN THE SIDE DOOR
ANYMORE
STEPHEN POWERS

Underneath a copy of a masterpiece,
sketches and first tries might wait
fire hundred years for a curious
art historian at the Prado to expose
them with infrared reflectography
and unearth them from below the picture
we've come to know. Dolly Parton
will make up wait forever to see
what she's revised under her
make-up, years and years of fly
paper layered on an animation cell.
At this point she might as well try erasing tattoos
if she doesn't want to be Dolly Parton anymore.
Notice it's only copies we examine
so probingly, not originals. Keep in mind a tattoo
comes from below. So does a scar. A needle and a knife
are simply conjurers, not creators, of the first

sketches trapped under the picture,
which means that someday somebody dissecting
my mummified heart will find your fingerprints
still on the lock of the side door, and the burned out
tealights left on my stomach when I fell asleep.

HONORABLE MENTION

ANNA PAVLOVA MEGAN KUYAK

No one wants dolls
Anymore. Even girls
don't want dolls, they want
IPad games and men.

Only my mother—twenty
three and newly married—
bought the dolls no one
gave her as a girl, the dolls
from story books with absurd
dresses and hair so bright
like mini gods—the kind
people write about, but
rarely believe in.

Before the renovations
each doll was on her own
shelf. Now, they all sit
in boxes in the molding spare
bedroom, where all the other
things go that my father despises.

My mother knows she can't
keep them all,

not now.

She asks new mothers
if they'd like to take the dolls,
but they kindly refuse. Only
Anna Pavlova survives,
her swan body shuffled
through the house like a slave
trying to be made free—
or the way a Bible is smuggled
between jail cells, just for one
more person to read it—

Once, when cleaning, my mother dared
display Anna on the piano,
and in all that light, she shone
like some bizarre relic. My mother
watched her there and wreathed
her own hands in a first position,
the way she did when she too
was a ballerina.

And when my father couldn't bear it
any longer, my mother put her in
her closet on the top-most shelf,
where she would go each morning
to get her clothes, and look at
those porcelain arms, so thin
and desirable even after
all these years, making a sun
above her head, where I too
would like to be named holy.

HONORABLE MENTION

INSECT ARS POETICA

BRET FOSTER

Half of what they expected to happen happened in the laboratory, in the experiment involving grasshoppers: did they evolve or could their music-making be altered? These scientists were curious to know. The grasshoppers played their little fiddles uniquely, following their formula—the toothed files on their hind legs rubbing with urgency, as if song were erotic, the protruding vein located improbably on their front wings. The surprising thing was this—the ones taken from roadside habitats strung and strummed their bow-wings at higher frequencies, so that their mating calls could still thrill any prospective beloved amid the freeway noise. The lesson here may be that those singers who find themselves playing beside the traffic jam of this motley life had better lift the pitch, play those tiny wings until they're flaming. And one other thing comes to mind: play it loud, too, just shy of being no longer understandable. Stroke that vocal vein a little faster, in respectful

imitation of the male, bow-winged grasshopper.
Whatever you do, play as loud as you can



Ambition by Emily Campbell

A KISS ON EACH CHEEK

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN

I'm from tree swings
From night lights and pacifiers left in too long.
From the old maple trees in the back yard
(Where fairies and secret cures are found.)
I am from sailboats,
And the ocean that spreads to the horizon,
Whose soft lullabies I still sometimes hear.

I am from creamed herring,
From "no screaming unless you're in danger."
From "obey or ask a question,"
And "Get it? Got it. Good."
I am from the big garage, almost breaking
Papa's car's windows,
And dropping pop cans down the stairs.

I am from the big house in the desert,
From golf cart rides, and my own little room.
From movie dates, long stories, and more heat
Than I can bear.

I am from Uncle Ron's peach orchard,
And the big pine tree out front.

I am from peaches, and apricots, and sour cherries,
That you would only eat on a dare.

I am from Bar Mitzvahs, and dancing, and a kiss
On each cheek.
From Uncle Al, and heartbreak, and the love of his sister.
From Passover, and Hanukkah, and prayer shawls.

I am from grief, and loss, and pain.
From the holes in my heart,
And the stitches whose marks I still see.
From handmade dresses, and late night hot chocolate,
And bike rides, when my tires touched my cousins'.

I am from the mountains, and the cabin
And fires built at five in the morning.
I am from Grand Mesa,
Where all you find is love, and occasional sarcasm,
And the best food you've ever had.

I am from goulash, from the apple kitchen,
And an adorable black lab.
From spankings that I pretended didn't hurt,
And tickle monster in the living room.
From back scratches, and Midshipmen,
And little plastic army men, that always fought valiantly.

I am from love, and hospitality, and more love,
From "doors are not toys," and falls down the stairs.
From crabs, and docks, and tangled seaweed,
And bare, sandy-toed feet.

My pictures hang above my bed,
Of moments such as these,
Where I see friends and family of years past
Before I fall asleep.
I am from my memories,
From the past I call my own.
From those who love me, and mean the world to me,
And the love that I pass on.

REGENERATION

BROOKE DAVIS

There is dirt packed against your face, rubbed into your elbows and knees. Blonde hair tangles like a bird's nest over your eyes. The playset rises up behind you—blue, red, and white towers skewering grey clouds. We are the only ones here, which means you have free reign of everything inside the chain-linked fence. You scale the slides, curl up in the tunnels, throw handfuls of mulch over railings the way kings used to pour hot tar over castle walls to protect their borders. I follow because you keep one hand balled up in the hem of my shirt. You pull and I trail behind like a boat being towed to shore.

The dirt gives like clay under the press of your fingers when you squat down to dig. You come back up with three worms in your cupped hands; the same raw, red-pink color as burn scars. “Miss Brooke,” you say, because I used to be your teacher at the daycare where all the kids have to call me Miss. It sets me apart from them and proves that I am in league with the adults.

“When you cut worms in half,” you say, “they grow new heads. Let me use your keys.”

I tell him no.

“But they—“

The answer is no.

“If someone cut off my head, would it grow back?”

I don't answer. I reach for you instead, hands curled like talons, slow enough so you can duck under them. You speed up the slide, and I'm right behind you. You prefer me to your mom and dad because they can't chase you anymore. You've told me a thousand times, and I pretend not to be satisfied before I say, *You should love your parents more.*

I crawl on my hands and knees through low plastic doorways, scrape my legs on rough surfaces, knock my shins against the uneven metal stairs. I am too old for this, but I am still too young to be content to sit and watch you run. You laugh and I make myself laugh, too.

On the metal bridge, you decide to stand your ground and fight back. You kick me and pull my hair and I let you because it makes you laugh even louder. You think I love you too much to stop you, but I'm thinking, If I can match his manic pitch, his senseless energy, maybe when his parents come pick him up, mine will come, too. I can climb into the backseat, and Dad can drive around the block to see the Christmas lights while Mom calls my dead grandpa to see how he's doing on his new exercise regimen.

When you tire yourself out, I carry you to the bench under the shade tree and we sit beside each other. You lay your head in my lap and ask, "Can the world end?"

"No."

"Am I going die?"

I tell him, "Absolutely not."

I love lying to you. You press your forehead against my stomach and lock your arms around my waist while I say what you want to hear. Maybe when you find out the truth you'll be angry with me, but I think you'll lose the words. All you'll know is that when you were with me, you thought losing your head was as simple as growing a new one.

COWLICKS

SARAH LAWSON

My hair is like a collapsed roll. Long and unruly, it bakes golden brown in the sun. The sleeves of my sweater flap behind me. I bury my shoes in lumps of mud and grass, kick whirly gigs, and watch them fly across the earth.

My mother strolls in my wake. There's not a speck of dirt on her hands. Her hair is dark, almost black, and unlike mine, it never folds under the sun. I only know her by the pressed fabric she wears that smells of lemon and vanilla.

She catches me, lifts me towards the sky.

Stop moving, she says, and pulls the twigs out of my hair.

She tugs, presses down strand after strand, but they spring back up, sticking up without order. She cannot tame my cowlicks.

The boat creaks. The wind brushes my neck. Something catches on my tongue. I taste soap and campfire smoke.

I pull a wiry string of hair from between my teeth and yank it free. It lands on the lake's surface, crinkling up before sinking out of sight. I run my fingers through the hood of hair around my face. It's blonde and brown and undulates like rippling heat in the summer sun.

There are outlines of others on the shore, but I don't try to make out who they are. Instead, I row my boat farther and farther away from the campsite. No more nighttime gatherings or group activities for me. Here there is only water. No one to hear me but the trees, the waves.

Pook sends me his snapshot: starched white coat with a tie coiled around his neck, almond skin, his hair ink atop his head. Professional. Grown up.

I wonder if his coat would swallow me whole if I were to wrap myself in it. This doctor could speak English or Chinese and it would all sound the same to me. He has a title, unlike me, but I tell myself we'll make it work, until he says he likes girls with long hair.

My neck is exposed and the air tickles my skin. I stare into the bathroom mirror, run my fingers across my barren head.

I am a hedgehog. A boy. No longer a high school girl.



Portrait in Steel by Who Knows

PERSEPHONE

BROOKE DAVIS

You said, “We will build a cabin
between the mountain and the
cliff. I’ll pack snow in around
the walls, to block the door. We can
eat pomegranate seeds from the crooks
of each other’s elbows. We’ll boil
water to wash each other’s feet, to
thaw out our toes, to make each other
feel welcome. Let’s compose songs
from the sounds our boots make against
the floorboards. We can sleep in the corner,
where the pine smell comes through
the walls, pines you will not see again
for six months because I won’t let you out—
not in the cold. We can dig up
the last flowers from the window box.
We will gather the petals and rip them
apart because that’s when the scent
is strongest. Of course you can go home,
after we’ve said everything we need to
say, when our cheeks are warm with

blood, hot enough to melt us
into Spring. Doesn't that sound
nice? Well, doesn't it?"



Sweet Dreams by Katelyn O'Mara

STILL

PAIGE HAMILTON

March 1925: The Tri-State Tornado hits in Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. 3.5 hours, 1000 dead. Trees fall to the ground, houses break apart piece by piece, and families huddle together in dark basements.

May 1996: Twister premieres in Los Angeles.

July 1996: Bailey Lane Hamilton is born at 5:45 am. Swaddled in a blue blanket, he wears a blue hat over blond hair. He is healthy, chunky even, with red chipmunk cheeks. Dad's face is bright. He's finally got his football player.

August 2001: Bailey's first hospital visit. Mom is in her pink robe and slippers. Her foot taps constantly, her leg shaking the other chairs. Bailey sits on the floor playing with mini tractors. The doctor enters. Diabetes, he says.

September 2002: I watch as Bailey's legs give way. Again.

October 2002: Bailey's second hospital visit. The doctor enters. Muscular Dystrophy, he says.

June 2003: The two-wheeled hot rod arrives. The paint is bright red, the wheels new, and the metal shiny.

June 2007: Bent frame. A new chair, a mechanical chair, arrives. The chair has a charged battery, a joystick, and a thick seat. From hot rod to NASCAR.

February 2001: Dale Earnhardt crashes in the

Daytona 500. His number 3 black car rolls down the asphalt, metal twisting, flying. Head trauma. My dad sits in his favorite recliner, not moving at all.

April 2013: The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning for Washington County. At 7:03 pm, a severe thunderstorm capable of producing a tornado was seen over Jackson County heading Southeast at 40 miles an hour. Take cover now. Move to an interior room on the lowest floor and avoid windows. Protect yourself from flying debris. This tornado may be at a rapid hard and hard to see. Take cover now.

OBJECTIVE

CHEYENNE MCINTOSH

You can call it home.

Bright windows, shutters painted an old blue, older than the House itself, but not chipped at all. Wooden blinds, always up to keep the room open and awake and alive and bright, always the glare on the TV screen, on Brian William's face until he tells us all goodnight. The black and white grandfather ticks above the mantle, never on time no matter how many times a day you try. The sunlight makes the pinpricks of dust in the air drift onto the red brick, landing on the wall of books: historical fiction and geography and Tolkien. Pine trees and bird feeders lean against the glass, threatening to press their needles inside but never swaying in the breeze.

A wicker basket, just for trash, fills with airplane magazines: bold font and men in strapping brown pants, distinguished and pilots, their boots shined and a little too tall for the masculinity they portray. Newsweek copies, before the change in editor, when they still printed and their stories mattered: their ink is too shiny on the cover, the red is too red. Bits of yarn tossed away from knitting washcloths, of blues and whites and kitchen colors. A banana peel from this morning's Cheerios, browned and dried from disposal. A bit of last week's mail; the address of the torn envelope reads to mr. and mrs.

The old couch is ugly in its plaid hopefulness but

matches the brick walls and the little moose manger scene. Homemade quilts are thrown haphazardly on the back, grabbed sleepily when the hum of the A/C in the window is too loud. Cushions soften the weeping and the insomnia, the explaining of bruises, the mourning of the 10 o'clock news, the smell of unsalted popcorn and pine needles in the fall, the ripping of wrapping paper and French press coffee too bitter to taste.

All can be covered up with the dull brown couch cover, designed to fit the arms exactly, matching the color of the lampshades: to keep off the dirt, to hide the ugly pattern. The brown camouflage just sits there in the basket under the coffee table, waiting to paint it all universal, like the cover of *Home & Garden*.

The brown couch cover is only for company. It's better to let the fabric show, ugly as it is, to let it get washed out by the sunlight streaming through the room. Always the sunlight: no secrets here. You can't call it home, but you want to.

JULY, 1996

CHEYENNE MCINTOSH

A proper suffer is a feverish dream,
102 and rising:
Curls clinging to a steamy neck
White trails sliding down a red face.

The image both withers and sticks
A memory forgotten:
Sunshine breaking through curtains,
Questions through closed doors.

What's your favorite color, Mama?
I don't know, she weeps.



Alter-ego by Brittany Jameson

THE VARIABLE

AMANDA CREECH

Aunt Terry, my father's sister, has always been a variable in my life. From the time I am in third grade, she flits in to drop off my cousin and then takes him back two years later without another appearance for several years. I stay with my grandparents until momma picks me up after work. Every once and a while Terry begins to resurface as if to breathe before diving back under into a world I am never supposed to know. In these moments, I learn more about my aunt than I could from talking to her.

She is misunderstood, a broken child fighting age and losing the battle. A long face, tight blue eyes behind large, round, wire-rimmed glasses, a lengthy model body, and long wavy hair. She is pretty in the pictures grandma shows me.

Years after accusing my parents of being alcoholics and abusive, she will win custody of Gary from us. My parents want to take him because they know she is a drifter. She takes him back to Florida and loses him to the streets. During this time, she has turned to cocaine, meth, pills, and alcohol to forget the damage she has already caused to her loved ones.

My father never really explains his relationship with his sister, but whenever she is around I watch mom stand protectively at my father's side. He will give her what she asks for in the beginning.

“I won’t support your addiction,” he says to her one night while I’m in my room.

“James,” I hear her plead, and I can picture her desperate reach toward him, wanting nothing more than to quiet her sober mind. “I’m going to get help. I just need enough money to help me out until I get paid.”

There’s a sigh, and I know if she weren’t his sister dad would have called the police. “Come back when you’re clean.”

We don’t hear from her for a few more years.

She resents him, I think, for the family she could not have, for the way he loves even when it’s not deserved.

I am told to stay away from her, that she is trouble.

By the time I am a freshman in high school, my aunt is wanted for stealing my grandmother’s oxycontin and selling it to her friend. She steals money from my grandfather and he kicks her out of their house, though my grandmother—already slipping from the real world into dementia—will occasionally let Aunt Terry in when grandpa locks himself in the ruddy shed to smoke cigars and drink beer. She steals and then disappears. She promises to be fixed. This promise is made in between bouts of pleading for more money. When her eyes are bugged out and she is in pain because her euphoria from the weed didn’t last, or her arms are bruised from shooting up.

She doesn’t tell us when she finds a little gray house in the worst part of Seymour and begins paying rent on time. She helps dad take grandma to her appointments. We all wait for her to slip up. It becomes suffocating in the house where my grandpa dies and the family distrusts one another. It is a

silent distrust. No one wants to upset my father by reminding him that his sister is a lying drug addict.

Aunt Terry corners me the Christmas of my senior year.

The day is full of family and love and giving. For my family, it is for being there, making up for lost time. Or maybe it's all really just about keeping up the pretense of love. She brings me into mom's kitchen, tall and sweeping as ever. Her large, rimmed glasses consume almost all of her face.

I remember the pictures grandma showed me of Terry as a little girl. She was pretty and her hair looked long and wild. Her eyes were alive and unafraid.

"How are you doin' 'Manda?" she asks in a gravelly voice I used to remember being soft when she sang to me as a little girl at my grandmother's.

"Great. I'm going to Franklin next fall," I tell her, thinking about the acceptance letter posted on the refrigerator that I've read thirty times.

The knife stops moving. I step forward, my lips parted to ask if she needs help when she turns to face me in a pirouette of long green skirts. Leaning against the kitchen counter, her eyes seem almost crazed, she whispers, "Good, dear. I'm happy for you. I know I haven't been here for you kids, but I'm trying now. God has found me again and I'm here, okay?"

I step away and before I can utter a word Mom is there, taking Terry's knife and reclaiming the serenity of her kitchen. I don't speak another word to my aunt. I don't tell my mother. Instead, I remember my mother's words to me as a child: Stay away from Aunt Terry. I remember her for the liar

she has always been.

At the end of April, Aunt Terry is gone again. She stops coming around to take grandma anywhere. Her landlord calls and tells us she is late on rent. She won't answer phone calls. Inside the house, the television and couch have been stolen. All that's left of Aunt Terry are newspapers on the kitchen table and her twin bed. We all know.

On May fourth, there is a phone call from a neighbor down the street and my mother answers, Have you seen the obituaries? Does James know? Yes, June, we are sorry for your loss. We are here if you need anything and I'll send Marvin with a pie.

Lung cancer. She knew in March. She didn't tell anyone and suffered through the pain without her drugs and without treatment. Just another skip-out-of-town moment, my mother says. She'll be back when her money is gone and dad has to give it to her.

We never knew.



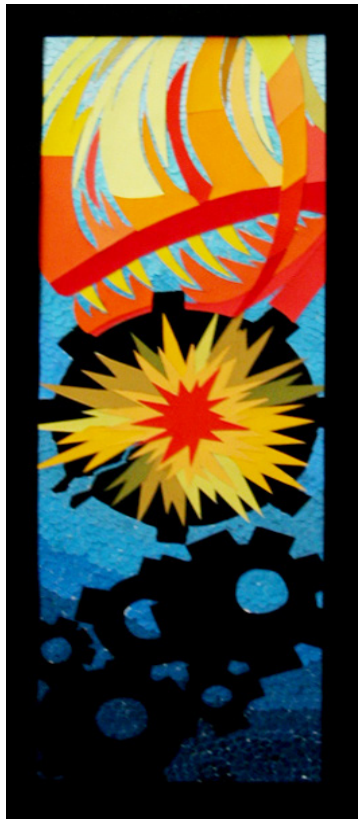
Church by RYANNE WISE

SORRY NABOKOV

MORGAN HOOD

I've had enough
Of sidelong glances and
Heavy sighs,
Your lips brushing
Bruising
Mine
I know you stare at me
Like your mom gazed at
You the first time she stared into
Your blank, bead eyes—
People say babies are beautiful.
I think you were probably
Just as beautiful as the
Piss-stained bed you were born in,
Your drunken dad's gummy black lungs,
The mashed and crooked body of the possum
You saw on the side of the road
And, laughing, swerved
To hit
The first time we met.

You say I'm the light of your life
The fire of your loins
And I know,
I know
You don't mean to
And I don't understand how I
Make you feel
But I never sympathized with
Humbert Humbert.



Rage Against the Machine by Emily Campbell

DARLENE LAY

CORA PHILPOT

Pink used to be my favorite color. Then two pink lines changed everything.

Bright lights shine down, showcasing the women not wanting to be here. We all stare at the lone outsider crossing his hands. Last year's magazines cover the tables along with a few coloring books and broken crayons. Peroxide with a hint of perfume fills the air. The only voices heard are nurses mispronouncing names. I feel out of place wearing a college T-shirt and sweatpants.

His head rests on my stomach as we trace each other's hands. Music still plays in the background to prevent my neighbors from hearing how we spent our afternoon.

"What do you think about the name Darlene?"

"I like it. Why do you ask?"

He kisses my forehead and smiles. Candles flicker on the nightstand making the room smell sweet.

"I was just thinking about what to name our future daughter. Darlene was my Grandma's name. She was the only person who ever truly cared about me."

I reach for the wine bottle at the foot of the bed. He takes the bottle from my hands as we share memories of our

grandmothers.

“We should combine your grandma’s name with mine. Darlene Lay.”

I smile before finishing what’s left of the wine. He had our whole lives planned out and I was just along for the ride.

A nurse calls my name. I notice her scrubs are pink with butterflies scattered around. She catches me staring and smiles. I can’t return the favor.

The gown I’m handed makes me look like a stick of bubble gum. I’m measured and weighed as if this were a normal checkup. Vitals are next. My temperature is regular, but my blood pressure is high. I pretend to be surprised. A cup sits on the counter along with several pamphlets explaining my options.

Take your time. The nurse says as she shuts the door behind her.

I don’t bother to read brands or instructions. I toss the first test I see into my cart disguising it with grocery items. I now understand the purpose of self-checkouts.

It’s 6 p.m. on a Thursday night. I know my roommates will be finishing up homework before we go to the bar. A shower will be my excuse for taking over the bathroom. I open the box in the privacy of my car and slide the test into my pocket. I litter the remaining bits on the ground before I drive back to school.

Three sleeping roommates greet me after I unlock the door. I sit down my bags and tiptoe into the bathroom, locking the door behind me.

EYES ON FIRE

SARAH LAWSON

The wise King Solomon said, *cut the child in two.*

Faggot. The word is one of many hot coals that will light this fire.

Lesbian, dyke, misguided, confused.

I go over each of them and pile them on, imagining that is them that I am drenching in lighter fluid instead of sticks. In one motion—a single click—it all goes up in flames.

I touch flimsy pages that are bound in leather casing. My hands shake, but I toss the book into the fire. I burn a bible, which is a gift from my mother.

I think Kat will look stunning in those heels and in that dress, even though I won't be by her side. I guard the memory of her waltzing in front of mirrors, in a red dress and silver stilettos. She had hugged me when I bought it all, saying that that we'd have a blast at prom.

Setting the bible down, I grab a stick and it pierces it like a dagger. I watch as the pages churn and melt.

Mother hands me the bible, tells me to write in it, to study it.

It even has plenty of notes for kids to understand, she says.

I choose to be baptized at thirteen. That same year, the girls have to change in the locker room together for gym class. I try not to look, but I do anyway.

At sixteen, Kat's the first one I come out to.
It's about time, she says.

Why don't you date that guy? He's a doctor, my mother tells me, just a couple months after he abandons me, drunken and alone.

Mother sees the receipt for the dress and heels. My scarlet letter.

My knees are buried in charred grass. I snuff out the fire and watch the smoke rise to the sky. The ashes are hot, like swaying bodies, dancing in dresses in front of mirrors. I touch them and want to hold onto them to stay warm.

Later, Kat asks me what our dinner plans will be. I tell her that I am taking a guy to prom.

You can still come along though, in the dress, I say suddenly, *I'll be wearing red too. We'll match.*

BULLY

AMANDA CREECH

Audrey gravitates like a lost planet into our solar system.

The boy in a baseball cap has become a fixture in a mob of PMS-ing females, wanting only to fit in. I am aware of it, but I find out that we are more alike than I want to know.

The cafeteria is full of loud pre-teens waiting with a *fuck you here*, a *Go to hell* there.

“You’re a piece of shit,” I hiss over the roar of fellow students.

He is a robot across from me: put the low-grade chicken sandwich in the mouth, drink the 2% milk, open the bag of Doritos, put a few chips in the mouth. Repeat.

“Why won’t you say anything?” Audrey nudges at him with her elbow, her bleached blonde hair in waves around her perfectly made up face. Her eyes are a dark abyss that I fall into from the beginning. I thought friends made fun of people together.

Audrey purses her perfect pink lips. “He doesn’t even fight back,” she purrs. “He knows that he’s worthless, don’t you Levi?”

Nothing.

“Isn’t your dad leaving your mom?” I ask, pushing the green tray away and leaning closer to him from across the table.

“Why’s he leaving?”

“Maybe it’s his fault.”

“Maybe his dad doesn’t care about him.”

“Isn’t that awful, but I guess that’s what happens when you give birth to such a loser. You learn to hate him.”

“He’s so lazy. He looks like a fucking bum.”

“You’d probably have more girlfriends if you dressed better.”

“You could just drop out. You probably won’t make it to high school anyway.”

He mumbles something I can’t understand.

“What was that?” I ask, a smile spreading across my face.

He meets our eyes, “I said, I said fuck off.” He’s up and away from the table, a ghost floating through the crowded cafeteria.

I let out a bark of laughter.

Repeat.

“Levi, what’s up with you today? Has your dad moved out yet?” Audrey sings in a way that sounds like she cares.

He’s the robot again, in boots and a ratty baseball cap. Except now the bottle of water on his tray shakes when he grips it in his hand—the hand that has a red gash from his knuckle to his wrist. I swallow the lump of chicken stuck in my throat. He remains silent, sipping from the water.

“Why do you sit here? We don’t want to sit with you,” Audrey mumbles.

I tell him we hate him. “Just like your dad,” I say.

No answer.

“Hey, Levi, are you okay?” Mr. Hubbard calls from a few rows of tables down. He closes the gap and his curly hair bobs against his red forehead.

The water sloshes in his hand. “I’m fine,” Levi says.

Mr. Hubbard grabs Levi’s hand, and Levi dissipates into a jumble of sobs.

Time freezes then. The only movement is from Levi and Mr. Hubbard moving through the mess of students and food, an arm slung over a slumped shoulder, the water falling from the fallen bottle on the table and drip-dropping onto the tile floor.

Audrey gravitates to the prettier girls at our table, only speaking to me now and then to throw in a few insults about my short hair.

I feel the world snap into place.



Courage by Katelyn O'Mara

SUN RISE

SETH SABO

As the sun rises in your life
I find it setting in mine
Putting the remnants of light away
and allowing the shadow to take watch
I could've shared your light
Following a new star
But I stay behind
under the weary eyes of the dark

I take your mind in my own and I see myself fading
Looking for a remedy to it all
I try to mend
my leaking image as it pours from you
and you see me again

The puddle of myself has stopped growing for now
I am no doctor
my stitches won't hold
Waiting for the end, I reach for a switch
hoping to find a light before it's all too late
and there it is!
The whole world lights up before my very eyes and
I meet you again, unafraid

When the wounds reopen
I'll finally pour out of you
Memories lost like blood down the drain
but as the sun rises in your life
I'll meet you at that crossroads of light
and I'll say goodbye
Leaving with a smile of thanks
I'll turn away, into the glow of my own
rising star.

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT DREAMS

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN

I

The future flutters,
Beating its wings against the
Nets cast by my
Dreams

II

A man's cardboard sign reads,
"Too busy dreaming."
Somehow, his guitar case is full
Of offerings.

III

The staircase twists, turns,
Depending on its mood.
It dreams of being a stone wall,
But it's stuck as a temperamental
Staircase.

IV

I dream of being rewarded
My own constellation.
I'll walk among the stars,
And never fear the darkness.

V

Welcome to the new age,
With smoke drifting, dream-like,
Across a bloodied landscape.

VI

The ebbing flow of the ocean
Haunts my dreams.
But they're not nightmares,
Not yet, anyway.

VII

It's useless to dream,
Because nothing ever
Changes.

VIII

That winged bird that
Mr. Hughes referred to
Is my dream in a nutshell.

IX

My dream is to never stop
Dreaming.
For dreaming, in its essence,
Is a wondrous thing.

X

Does grass dream
Under its blanket of dead air?
Under the relentless snow that makes
Me restless?

XI

I want to sing for crowds, but I do not
Dream for fame.
Who in their right mind does?

XII

I day dream that I am my reflection
My reflection in all her imperfection.
Wouldn't it be nice to sink in that
Shiny exterior
And live on the other side?

XIII

Dreams nest high in a
Sycamore,
On Sycamore Street.
It's a quick left off Elm.



Engine of a Million Pilots by Andrew Matson

BRAVE NEW WORLD (PURPLE EDITION) DARIAN ESWINE

Outside, in the garden, it was playtime.
Never put off till to-morrow the fun you can have today.
She was a popular girl, and, at one time or another, had
Major instruments of social stability.

Outside, in the dust and among the garbage
Her voice got fainter and fainter...
I do love flying. I do love flying.
But don't you remember something that begins:
I don't know. I don't know.

He had discovered Time and Death and God,
Slowly, slowly he came down.

In their deep-sunken orbits his eyes were still
extraordinarily bright.
Those who feel themselves despised do well
To look despising.

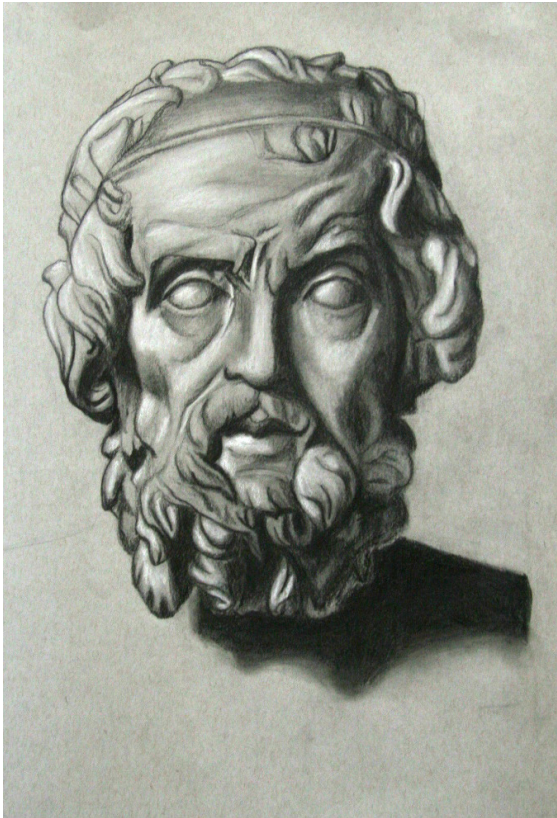
Alone, always alone.
I thought nobody was ever alone there.

I'm rather different from most people, I suppose.
Constantly proposed, constantly rejected.

You seem to have paid a fairly high price for your happiness.
What difference does that make?
There aren't any losses for us to compensate.

But I like the inconveniences.
In fact, you're claiming the right to be unhappy.

All right then. I'm claiming the right to be unhappy.



The Philosopher by Katelyn O'Mara

A NOTHING SKY

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN

Hot, heavy air
Immobile as my dresser.

Bleak sky.

Shattered for a moment, screen door
Scraping my ankle as I run through.
I'd left my homework on the counter, held down
By a glass of milk
My mother left for me.
You'll feel better, she'd said.

Lonely sky

I'd waited until she left, then bolted.
My Velcro shoes slap the driveway as I race across it,
Not lighting up like I'd begged.
I hoist up my bike, a
Too-big
Hand-me-down
I'd crashed yesterday,
Doing what I'm doing now.

Weeping Willow arms snag my T-shirt, leaving
their musty scent.

I wobble my way to the path,
Struggling to keep the hand-me-down going
straight up the incline.

The Minnie Mouse watch my mother
Forced on me points to
The perfect, silent,
Watching time.
No one would see me this time.

Impatient sky

Almost flat tires crest the hill, the tell-tale
rawness in my throat
Tells me to get my inhaler from the bathroom cupboard.
Too far behind, now.
No way I'll go back.

The brakes squeak.
The rusty beast thumps to the ground, my only
reliable method
Of escape.
Shoes half buried,
Bare feet on hot sand.

The rough boards of the
Ancient dock press almost painful lines into my feet.
I curl my toes over the edge, lean forward,
Grip the docking post for support.

No one here has a boat, I can
Feel the dock's loneliness.
That's what drew me here in the first place.
But my new addiction calls me here now.

10 miles away, at the mouth of the Chesapeake,
The thunderheads pile up,
Eager to release their fury.
A bruised sky eats away the blue, leaving
behind a few scars of
Black and purple.
Black and purple scars that match my arms, my
hands.

Purple sky

Sudden wind caresses my tear-stained cheeks,
Lifts the hair off my sticky neck.
Restores me.

Boiling green clouds replace the scars,
Suck all color from my clothes.
The thunder shakes the air from my lungs, I
Struggle silently inside myself,
Trying to remember how to breathe,
Trying to remember a *reason* to breathe.

My feet lift from the sandy wood, and I
Feel the barely contained insanity of the wind
Holding me. Gently.
Gently.

The sea searches hungrily for me, and I'm
Almost willing to succumb.

Hungry sky

I am jerked back by
Hairy, careworn arms.

My father misunderstands my tears
As watered-down fear,
Not the realization of my own insignificance.

He leads me, and the hand-me-down bike,
Forgetting the unlit shoes
Back home
Through the cutting screen door,
Past homework held down by milk glasses
Into a room
With a dresser
Immobile as air.



Skull Study by Brittany Jameson

SMUDGED FRAMES

SARAH LAWSON

Windows were smothered by handprints and rainy days.
Where are those conversations that we closeted behind
white doors?

My heart was a flickering lantern and followed you down the
dimmed hallway.
Where are your coals of eyes that buried themselves too
deeply in brick walls?

You wore a ruby dress and I watched your reflection in
waltzing mirrors.
Where are your bitter jabs and hands that labored over hasty
sketches?

Your purse carried lipstick, your red shield from poor grades
and gossip.
Where are the sharp lockers that slammed shut as other girls
passed by?

Flashlights danced in a creaky basement and against
crushed beer cans.
Where are those photos that entwined us together in
smudged frames?

The television whirred and the carpet stung when you said you loved a man.

Where are the ice chips for broken teeth and cold tile for a flushed face?

Dinner was cereal and boxes were the future, far from popcorn ceilings.

Where are the swooping signatures that reached over hills on paper?

She slumbered among boxes, in the backseat; a morning wake up call.

Where are you, in her paintings and cascade of chestnut hair?



Zentih by Allyn Pearson

SILVER HAZE

PRESLEIGH HOBBS

The sky is green,
The grass is blue.
The trees dangle
From the earth.
Eyes roll back,
Slam shut.
A silver haze and
A purple blanket and
He lies beside
On his back
Soft back
Coming back.
Yellow daisies,
He loves me not.
He loves me not.
He loves me not.
Giraffe with its long
Neck,
I'm jealous that
He sees.
He knows.
I'm twirling,
In a forest.

Running,
Down concrete.
Tripping,
Over Nothing.
He loves me not.
He loves me not.
He loves me not.
Lion with his big
Roar,
I'm jealous that
He's loud.
He's heard.
The cry of
The clock.
Goodbye minute,
See you next hour.
Towering walls and
Paper dolls.
Collapsing canvases,
Frightening falls.
The words on a
Page
Scream
In my face.
The sun sees me.
I try
To hide.
He loves me not.
He loves me not.

He loves me not.
Yellow daisies,
Shatter.
Explode.
In the silver haze.
My purple blanket.



Nothing to Wear by Brittany Jameson

FACELESS TOES

DARIAN ESWINE

I sit surrounded by bodies attached to toes
Each with their own individual thought bubbles and vector-
paths,
Do they notice the rain dripping from the gutter?

There's a subtle acknowledgment, and everyone knows
A slight nod is all that's necessitated—meanwhile,
I sit surrounded by bodies attached to toes.

If they could only see each other in such a pose.
Maybe they see apparitions or shadows,
while focusing on the “ahead”
Or perhaps they notice the rain dripping from the gutter.

They do not label these faceless faces as friends, or foes
But simply look through them as mindless
as a child at a Mac screen, while
I sit surrounded by bodies attached to toes.

A million walking stories glued to a nose.
Is there no wonder as to what's behind

the dark eyes and all-too clean teeth?
Or perhaps they notice the rain dripping from the gutter.

I yearn to see the day of recognition when the eyes
are telescopes to the soul instead of globular organs
stuck into skin,
but until then—
I sit surrounded by bodies attached to toes.
Or perhaps—they notice the rain dripping from the gutter.



Boots by Ryanne Wise

TRAPPED

AMANDA CREECH

My parents have been lighting up since the age of sixteen. I remember trips to the bowling alley: my father with one hand occupied by a cigarette while the other holds his ball; my mother sitting at the little table surrounded by her friends, laughing it up while puffing a Marlboro Red.

Ashtrays full of butts litter our house. Jimmy and I hide the little black ashtrays, as well as dad's Kools and mom's Marlboros. This only earns us a belt to the ass and the loss of TV privileges.

In fifth grade, I am taught the dangers of tobacco use. When I come home after school, I am armed with my facts that the cop with the cross on his tooth wrote on the board. Mom is cooking spaghetti in the kitchen. I ignore the smoke gathering on the ceiling while I pull out my paper full of dangerous facts about smoking and inhalation:

- 69 of the chemicals in cigarettes cause cancer.
- 90% of lung cancer deaths are related to smoking.
- Smoking will cause teeth and finger nails to yellow.
- Secondhand smoke can cause asthma, increased frequency of colds, and ear infections.

- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.

Mom does not find my facts interesting.

Seven years ago, my father quit smoking. The doctors tell him it is hazardous for his health to smoke at forty five. Despite his sudden obsession with gravy on any food my mother cooks and his prominent gut, he claims to be “healthy as a horse.” He becomes an advocate for the need to quit smoking. It’s better than to keep smoking, he says.

My brother and I forget about the dangers of smoking. Classmates are doing it. But I make an oath to myself that I will never start because of the already obvious toll on my mother. Mom’s skin is already darkening—her teeth are yellow, and there are wrinkles dotting her face. The pretty girl that used to look like me is growing old because of the nicotine running in her system.

“If I can do it, anyone can,” he jokes to mom one night. She ignores him while lighting up another one of her rolled cigarettes.

His green carton of Kools grows old and dry in a drawer in the kitchen.

When I am old enough, I go straight to the Circle K across from PetSense and buy a pack Marlboro Reds, just like mom. I tear the silver aluminum from the top of the pack before pulling one out. I can’t even light it with my shaking hands and I drop it between the seats of my Tempo. I forget all about it.

When dad buys me the Sonata in the fall before I go to Franklin, they take the Tempo back and clean out the trash from my senior year. Mom says nothing about the pack of Marlboros they find in the glove box. Dad, though, does not approve.

It's the heat of summer and the burden of two jobs is beginning to take a toll. Jimmy asks me to come over since school has ended and all of my things are back home.

I explain to him about how needy mom is now that I'm home and how much dad criticizes me again for my choice of going away to a college, and how worried I am about managing two jobs without screwing up. While I tell him this, I hear the slide of a lighter and a heavy exhale. I turn, and there's a Marlboro Red in my brother's mouth. I give him a look, biting my tongue until the annoyance settles. He does not explain, but merely pulls another one out. "Want one?" he asks.

Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy.

I take a long drag off of a Marlboro Special Blend, holding it in while I let the nicotine make its way through my system and settle, before blowing out the white smoke through the car window. Marlboro Reds make my throat itchy and leave a bitter taste on my tongue. Special Blends are smoother. The detached feeling comes in waves after every cigarette.

Before I enter the home of ashtrays, I make sure to spray myself down with perfume so they can't tell what I've been doing.



Title by Jessica Darmelio

I ONLY TAKE IT BLACK

SARAH LAWSON

“I only take it black”

In sixteenth century Mecca, people chat in coffee houses. Pilgrims and citizens talk together, drink together.

Children get up each morning and tend to fields, without pay, but people tell them they are building a new world. There are not just ships now, but railroads, so that coffee can travel to any table. Commoners drink it now and not just ladies in white gloves.

Coal miners and farmers drink coffee in the morning and on breaks, covered with black from head to toe. It keeps them away from whiskey, away from dice and quarrels, away from home. My great-grandmother handles her eight children while all the men are staying busy, staying at work.

My father and I meet every Wednesday. Over pancakes and coffee he tells me about his week. The server makes a comment about the weather or a football game without looking at me. My father just talks on and on, waving his cup

around with each word. His coffee sloshes and spills onto the tabletop, unnoticed.

The first time I drink coffee I am with friends. We order it together, with cream and fancy designs made with foam and chocolate. We sit in a circle with our colorful mugs on couches, surrounded by books and fish tanks. We kick our chuck Taylors, talk about the future, and smoke.

After high school, my friends and I will go our separate ways. Soon enough I am alone, with no more sweet drinks. I only take my coffee black.

Every morning I put the filter in and put in the coffee grains. They settle in a powdery mass, like brown crack. They sometimes stick to my fingers, but I flick them off. I don't bother to measure the grains anymore or listen to the pot croak like a bullfrog as it brews. I just need it to hurry up. I can't be late.

RHUBARB

MIKAYLA MASON

“I’ll just wait here,” she says, putting in headphones as they pull up to the old house.

Suddenly, everything changes. Within and instant, a cold breeze flows through the truck on this overwhelmingly hot June day.

She feels angry heat emanating from her grandpa. Yet there is a chill coming down her neck and through to her spine. She ever-so slowly peers up through her bangs to look at him.

His face is angrier than ever. His generally soft brown eyes, a fiery blaze she’s never seen before. By nature, he’s a very jolly and tender-hearted man. Never has she made him angry before. Or even witnessed him angry. Oh, she’s ornery every now and then. But he’ll just correct her with a twinkle in his eye and rough up her hair. She never minds it. She’ll help him carry wood in for the stove or hold his tools when he’s fixing his truck.

Today, however, she would have rather stayed at home.

“Get. Out. Of. The. Truck.” The fierce calm in his voice only deepens the red heat forming on her cheeks.

She isn’t necessarily scared of what he would do to her. But she doesn’t want to risk finding out either. In one

swift movement, she plucks her headphones out of her ears, turns off her ipod, unbuckles her seatbelt, and opens the truck door.

The fires calms in his eyes. His face no longer red. But his lips are still pursed in a line. They begin walking towards the strange house, her head bowed in disappointment and subservience, but mostly to hide her tears.

“Abbey, if you ever get a chance to meet someone new, you do it,” he says sternly.

“Yes, Grandpa,” she says, wiping away a tear.

She isn’t sure how to feel about him right now. This isn’t the grandpa she knows. This is the man who normally shares with her a glass of milk and a row of Oreos while sitting on his big comfy lap. She doesn’t know what to do, except to be obedient.

“You just never know, Sweetie. That person may be the next one to change your life, or you theirs’.”

His anger is subsiding. Now all that is left is a distant, sad look in his eyes you see in people thinking about the past. He looks down at her with his sweet eyes, the fire dying by old memories. He pats her head. All is right in the world again, offering his giant, coarse hand to hers as they walk up to the porch.

Some shingles are missing and the siding needs to be replaced. The porch has some missing boards and the gutter piping needs to be torn out. The color of the siding has turned from a pure white to a grayish green like mold.

She doesn’t even notice the cute little old lady sitting in her rocking chair on that sad looking porch, at first. She is listening to an old transistor radio while wearing an old-fash-

ioned, calico patterned dress, probably made by her own withered hands. It clings to her small frame about as well as a garbage bag on a broom stick. She wears a straw hat riddled with holes which is hung by a string around her neck.

“Evenin’ ma’am. I hear you’ve grown yourself some mighty fine lookin’ rhubarb. I was hoping I might be able to take some off your hands,” he says with that devilish smile of his.

Her grandpa can get anything he wants with that smile. But he never abuses that fact. He barter and pays his fair share and never misuses that smile, except to steal a kiss from his wife every now and then.

The old woman gets up, rubbing her lower back and grimacing.

“I’ll take you ‘round back to the garden. You can take as much as you want. I don’t know why I grew so much this year. I’m getting to be a real ninny in my old age,” she laughs leading them back to the garden.

As they walk to the garden, a rooster crows loudly somewhere nearby. Suddenly it emerges out from behind a large batch of rhubarb, flapping and clucking. Then, Abigail sees all of the chickens. They are in the garden.

Looking for a hen house, Abigail spots a run-down shack about 30 feet away. Its roof is caved in with a small door hanging on by a few rusty nails. She sees her grandfather notice it too.

“I tell you what. I never like have anything I haven’t earned. How’s about I do a quick fix on that old chicken coop of yours in exchange for the rhubarb? I’ve got some of my tools from work in my truck bed. It wouldn’t be no trouble

t'all," he offers slyly.

The old lady eventually agrees. She takes his granddaughter to the rhubarb patch.

"My name's Erma by the way," she says offering her shaky hand.

"Abigail."

"Well, Abigail," Erma says placing one hand on Abbey's shoulder. "The thing about picking rhubarb is knowing when it should be done. Never pull the stalks up in the first year it's been growin'. You have to do that after the first year so the stalks are strong enough to be pulled. Never cut rhubarb. You pull it out, roots and all. Oh, and never eat the leaves. They're poisonous and will make you sicker than a dog."

She picks the rhubarb, even though she dislikes the vegetable. Listening to every word Erma says.

"Well, I've done all the damage I can do," her grandfather says approaching Erma and Abbey. He washes his hands at the spigot.

The hen house doesn't look new. But it is in much better working order. The door shuts now and a few boards support the caving roof.

"Oh, it looks better than it has in a long time! I asked my son to come 'round and fix it but he says he's too busy," Erma says with a twinge of disappointment shadowing every word.

"Well, I'm sure he would have done a better job if he could come."

"I'm much obliged, sir."

"Oh, none of that "sir" business. Larry is just fine."

Abbey gets back in the truck. Her hands dry from being in the dirt. She places the rhubarb a five gallon bucket from her grandfather's work in the back seat. They wave to Erma. Her chickens in the hen house. A smile on her face.

It's been 35 years. Abigail's grandfather is in a nursing home now. He sits in his wheel chair. His hair thin and white. She finds time to visit him each week. She'll see that same twinkle in his eyes from all those years ago. And sometimes she won't. Often, she'll bring him rhubarb pie. He doesn't realize why. She shares a piece with him, hating every bitter bite. She thanks God for Erma and rhubarb as scraping the plate. Wanting seconds.



Our City by Brittany Jameson

CONTRIBUTORS

ALLYN PEARSON is currently a junior English major and Creative Writing minor who takes as many art classes as she can fit into her schedule. After graduating, Allyn hopes to pursue an MFA in creative writing and a career in editing. In her free time, Allyn plots to ruin Brooke Davis's life. Long live the evil twin rivalry!

RYANNE WISE is a freshman triple majoring in Journalism, English and French. She loves taking photos, crocheting and playing racquetball and is a member of Delta Delta Delta. She hopes to one day work at a newspaper or go into publishing.

DARIAN ESWINE is a sophomore journalism-news editorial and English double major, along with a creative writing minor. She decided when she was five that she wanted to be a writer of some sort. She has always written random poems, lyrics, and stories, but didn't really begin working on improving her writing until college and she hopes to continue improving for the next two years.

PAIGE E. HAMILTON is a senior English major with a Creative Writing Minor. She is graduating in the spring and still has no idea what she plans on doing...yet. Maybe she'll travel

or open a business called “Paige’s Pages.” Who knows? The world is there to explore so she’ll explore it first. Allons-y!

MORGAN HOOD is a freshman majoring in English and Creative Writing. She isn’t sure about her post-graduation plans, but hopes that she continues to evolve as a writer and can make “Cat Lady” pass as her official job title while she figures everything out.

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN is a freshman from Denver, Colorado. She started writing poetry as a sort of past time, but she now writes as a kind of therapy. She tries to condense what she sees and feels into words on a page, and to organize her thoughts into something that makes sense.

BROOKE DAVIS is a junior majoring in English and Creative Writing. She plans to attend graduate school and become a teacher.

CHEYENNE “ANNIE” MCINTOSH is a junior with a double major in English and Creative Writing. She enjoys cliche TV dramas and wants to read everything. After Franklin, she hopes to get an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and maybe a job to fund her coffee addiction.

SARAH LAWSON is a junior at Franklin studying English and French with a minor in creative writing. She enjoys the rhythms of language and writing about things we cannot explain but feel every day, such as the power of words or the frailty of the human heart.

MIKAYLA MASON hopes to write books while counseling individuals in pre-marital and marital relationships in the future. Her world revolves around Christ and her family. Her favorite books include the Little House on the Prairie series by Laura Ingalls Wilder, Rebecca by Daphne DuMaurier, and Not a Fan by Kyle Idleman.

PRESLEIGH HOBBS is a sophomore here at Franklin. She is majoring in English and Secondary Education and minoring in Creative Writing. She is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha and plays lacrosse. She loves to read and write.

BRITTANY JAMESON is an Indianapolis native. She began creating art as a child and will soon graduate with a Painting and Art History degree at Franklin College. Her passion lies in creating expressive figurative art and inspirations include Degas, Caravaggio and her mom. After college Brittany will travel and continue her education at an atelier somewhere in the United States.

ANDREW MATSON, the one and only, chose to become an artist because his life is about finding balance. The peace he feels while painting helps dissolve any large worries or cares and gives him a sense of belonging.

AMANDA CREECH lives with her parents in Seymour, IN. She is a sophomore studying journalism, creative writing, and sociology at Franklin College. She has enjoyed writing since she was in middle school and loves learning new styles of writing.

EMILY CAMPBELL is a junior with a major in Studio Art. She has been painting since early 2011. She had mostly focused on painting roses up until taking Painting I last fall. In this class, she discovered a love for painting still lifes. Through her Franklin College education, she feels lucky enough to find her purpose in life at such a young age.

CORA PHILPOT graduated from FC with majors in English Literature and Leadership. In her spare time, she enjoys reading memoirs based on foreign travels. She took Dr. Jenkinson's memoir writing class last fall to better improve her writing skills for graduate school. "Darlene Lay" was inspired by one of her assignments.

KATELYN O'MARA is a sophomore who is double majoring in Psychology and Studio Art. Katelyn has a passion for drawing and painting people and her biggest goal is to create art with both soul and personality.

