

contributors

Justin Braunsdorf
Cody Burkner
Kauaii Canada
Samantha Fain
Ariel Halstead
Chera Hammons
Taylor Heideman
Kristin Hughes
Alex Kleiman
Jocelyn Krull
Brittany Love

Juliette Lowry
BenJohn Mariner
Karly McPherson
Anna Meer
Sarah Meer
Marie Ostendorf
Sami Roberts
Caspian Schmitz
Spencer Wesche
Nadia Wolnisty
Meghan Yencer

Apogee

Vol.55

2016 – 2017

A P  G E E

Franklin College

VOLUME 55

2016-2017



A publication of the Department of English and Creative Writing
Franklin, Indiana

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Ryanne Wise

MANAGING EDITOR: Anna Meer

DESIGN EDITOR: Emily Pierce

WEB EDITOR: Brittany Love

EVENTS COORDINATOR: Kristin Stephen

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:

Alexis Whiteman, Juliette Lowry, Sophia Reynolds,
Alexis Varvel, Natalie Strunk, Suzie Sickles, Megan West,
Mackenzie Steagull, BenJohn Mariner, Victoria Mullis,
Marie Ostendorf, Caspian Schmitz, Madeline Richards,
Claudia Hoffman

FALCULTY ADVISOR: Dr. Callista Buchen

Apogee is an annual publication of the Department of English at Franklin College. Submissions are garnered anonymously through the journal's Submittable page; the staff selects the work for publication without knowing the identity of the author or the artist.

The staff would like to thank the faculty of the Franklin College Department of English and Creative Writing, as well as Christine Hendershot, Wendy Shapiro, and Robin Roberts.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 55

2016-2017

National Competition

Emily Stauffer Poetry Prize

Phlebotomy	Chera Hammons	9
Lovesong for Whale Vomit and Sadness	Nadia Wolnisty	10
CHRISTINE	Sarah Meer	11
as-trif-er-ous	Samantha Fain	12
A Note to a Girl About a One Night Stand	Juliette Lowry	13
Life Alert	Alex Kleiman	15
Forty Dollars	Jocelyn Krull	17
Color Blind	BenJohn Mariner	18
to live, to let go	Samantha Fain	22
Stains	Caspian Schmitz	24
I Think Writing Poetry Might Suck	Meghan Yencer	27
Still Life With Cruet*	Kristin Hughes	29
Thumbnail	Sami Roberts	30
Reflections	Spencer Wesche	31
In The Numbers	Jocelyn Krull	32
Reflection	Ariel Halstead	33
Dance	Sami Roberts	34
Tree From Up Close	Kauaii Canada	35
Rainbow Ivories	Cody Burker	36
Spring	Spencer Wesche	37
Rose-Lidded Pots	Kristin Hughes	38
Bridge to the Wilderness	Spencer Wesche	39
Forgetting How to Count	Brittany Love	40
Ode to Fried Chicken Sandwiches	BenJohn Mariner	42
[You were lantern lit, shining star of mine]	Justin Braunsdorf	44
Quartz	Marie Ostendorf	45
The Mortician*	Alex Kleiman	46
Hunted	Brittany Love	48

CONTENTS

VOLUME 55

2016-2017

we the wolfmen	Samantha Fain	50
Full Circle*	Taylor Heideman	51
Incantations*	Jocelyn Krull	53
Charge Your Phone	Karly McPherson	54
Does Your Loved One Have FTD?	Brittany Love	56
Reflections on Georgia O'Keeffe	Anna Meer	58
Apogee Interviews		59
Contributors		63

(*) indicates that the selection was awarded a prize of distinction

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

This year our editorial team decided to take *Apogee*, and its project as the Franklin College student journal, to the next level by tackling the theme of diversity. Our campus community is a small, but diverse population, and we moved to incorporate this diversity into our journal. We hope you find this diversity in who our artists are and in the work they produce.

This is not just a journal for traditional artists. This is a journal for the scientists, the singers, the historians, the experienced artists, and the newcomers from all walks of life. Our journal wants to meet the community as it stands, without conformity. *Apogee* is a platform to celebrate the many talents of the Franklin College community, and we hope you see this journal as an open invitation to our celebration.

As an editorial team, we worked to put together the best work from the student body, evaluating each piece for how well it accomplished its project, as well as how successfully it stood alone or worked alongside a tremendous body of work. This year, our staff incorporated pieces showcasing diverse themes, characters, voices, and form.

After four years on staff, I can promise you that this is the best journal yet, and there are only more fantastic things to come.

We hope that you join us as we promote and celebrate the strong diversity of our campus community.

Sincerely,

Ryanne Wise
Editor-in-Chief

APOGEE NATIONAL COMPETITION

EMILY STAUFFER POETRY PRIZE

Having grown up in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, Emily Stauffer earned her B.A. in English from Gettysburg College, her M.A. from the Pennsylvania State University and her PhD from the University of Connecticut. In addition to liberal arts courses in writing and literature classes, she regularly taught Romantic, Victorian, Modern British Canadian, and world literature classes. After 31 years at Franklin College, Dr. Stauffer retired after the 2014-2015 school year.

EMILY STAUFFER POETRY PRIZE WINNER

PHLEBOTOMY

CHERA HAMMONS

Tell me again how I share with the deer
more than a kinship to curled spring leaves,
shadow-dapples, wild tendernesses.
I'm still not sure I know how to listen
now that I miss turns, misspell words.
I know my body, like theirs,
would rearrange itself for a bullet.
No wonder it accommodates so easily
a needle whose language finds its tongue
in eight vials of blood that comes out slowly.
That's what we're all made of, untidy warmth
thick with uncertainty and dark,
with legs like wine when the nurse tilts it
to put on the label that has a name.
Imagine the tick as small as a poppy seed
burrowing into the soft crease of the knee,
years of holding its disease after it has fallen away.
To have a child is to know it will suffer.
The box rattles with samples of us.
Our blood travels like prayer
to its houses of answers.

HONORABLE MENTION

LOVESONG FOR WHALE VOMIT
AND SADNESS

NADIA WOLNISTY

I wouldn't know it if I happened upon it
on a beach somewhere.

I would think *A petrified brain of a beast
too large to go on living, perhaps.*

*Or A rock for a fortune-teller to rub
like phrenology of the uninhabitable.*

But I would be wrong on both guesses.
Ambergris is from the gut not the head
and is worth a fortune if you find it—
smelly, hermetic, cold.

It smells of sea and fecal matter—
a rock of self and environment
flung from the whale's mouth
out of—what? Irritation? A deep-
seated longing to scatter what one
can carry no more?

I tell myself depression is like ambergris.
It starts in the gut. If someone finds it,
they might not understand what they are looking at.
A monstrous brain, a cryptic portent.
But after the flinging
(a body that's gotten too large contorting on carpet)
ambergris becomes essential for those who know
what it's for: a fixative for perfume,
what holds the sweetness together,
when things start to shake.

HONORABLE MENTION

CHRISTINE

SARAH MEER

All summer long, while cicadas sang,
and the blue sky shimmered above the trees
and June strawberries ripened in the garden,
I contemplated how to unmake a friend.
It was only in the darkening August dusk
that I realized I did not have to:

We sat
together on the porch swing, my father and I,
while lightning bugs drifted in indifferent circles
upon the dark lawn and an old frog croaked
a tuneless song from beneath the oak tree.
With his hand on my shoulder and a strange
soft voice, my father began to tell
an incomprehensible tale. "Her heart,"
he said, "It gave out."

I think it already knew
I was going to try to break it.

AS-TRIF-ER-OUS

SAMANTHA FAIN

as-trif-er-ous \\ adj. **1.** bearing stars, esp. in or on the body. **2.** something celestial, such as laughter that bleeds color and splatters violet on the walls / cheeks that glow and birth red giants / freckles that sketch cassiopeia held captive in heaven / eyes that cloud to nebulas. **3.** lips that collide with my forehead / my neck / this heavenly body / skin so warm it makes me feel like i am straddling the sun when we collide / and mushroom into a big bang. **4.** how helios and selene held hands / as they raced across the sky in gold and silver chariots / each becoming their own source of light / until their fingers could not hold on any longer / and night parted with day. **5.** a glowing meteor that falls off course and crashes into eden / planting itself in the soil / until it erodes into a bed of stars / bringing forth a seed / that sprouts a human head. **6.** how the dust on your eyelids / the branches in your veins / snake back to abraham / and his offspring in the sky.

A NOTE TO A GIRL ABOUT A ONE-NIGHT STAND

JULIETTE LOWRY

If you say yes to him, because it's just one night and you're in the mood
and he's sweet, remember that you are
responsible

for your own safety and protection, or lack thereof, and you might wake up in a
month and start vomiting on your mother's

granite countertop
and have to wipe it up before she comes down to brew her morning coffee, and
you just tell yourself it's

flu season,
and start to skip practice, and your friends say *you've gained weight, are you
alright*, and your

red
silk
top

starts to creep up to your belly button,
and you can't stand to be around your baby sister, and her
tiny perfect fingernails

and your grades start to drop and your head starts to

drop

as you walk down the hallways,
and you have to piss every

two minutes

because your bladder is a punching bag
and your face is a laughing stock,

and slut is no longer just a word

tossed

around but a knife in your legs and your
heart and your arms
and your whole body feels
numb and it may as well be

tattooed

on your forehead—*slut*, because it's okay to have sex, but it's not okay to get
pregnant, *you slut*,
and you can't stand the smell of

mint,

and maternity clothes don't fit like they do on the fucking models, and the
old lady in the

checkout lane doesn't make small talk with you anymore, and
no one fucking glows when they're pregnant, and
you can't think about your own life
anymore,

it's not about you, and you hate yourself but
love this immaculate

creature inside of you

and holy shit you can't stand the smell of chocolate either, and
it's *your* fault that you got pregnant because *you're* the one with the fat stomach

and *you're* the one that has to live with
yourself

and *you're* the one that said yes and

you're the one that is here
right now, *you're* the
one breathing. so your baby

can.

breathe.

too.

LIFE ALERT

ALEX KLEIMAN

Walter Jessup had served two tours of duty in Korea because it was the American thing to do. When he got home, his dog tags were his ticket for a free drink. Before that, he drag raced in high school and rolled his hot rod into a drainage ditch. Walt walked away with a broken arm, two cracked ribs, and a squashed nose. He let the pretty girls sign his cast and went back to racing as soon as he saved up enough from working with his dad to repair the scratched paint job. While his mother fretted, Walt's father gave him a beer. The boy pretended it was a new experience. The first cigarette of many touched his lips at the tender age of thirteen, followed by however many it took to make a nice smoke signal that wafted from beneath the bleachers in a cancerous column. They became necessary during boot camp; the beer too. Even more so after.

Laney had told him to stop for decades. "They'll be the death of you, hun." The nurses told him the same thing now that Laney couldn't, but he figured he was too old to quit at this point. "You won't be able to taste my cooking," she'd cried. *Maybe I don't want to*, Walt had thought to himself.

It was coming in handy now. Walter ate enough red meat to make a T-Rex feel inadequate; he found that the juices, and the generous application of steak sauce and pepper that he applied to practically everything that went into his body, were strong enough to make it past his dulled taste buds.

Walt despised the Home. He had never felt like he was aging—it was as if the world had suddenly decided that he was an old man and had changed the rules on him. Grey hair didn't make Matlock watchable; his bad back didn't make tapioca pudding appealing; most importantly, just because he enjoyed his past didn't mean that he longed for the "good old days." Walt just thought they were regular good days.

The incessant beeping of the home reached a crescendo—a stretcher, draped in white, would be wheeled out without ceremony. Familiar with the spectacle, Walt looked at the map. It was pinned to a corkboard, crowned by the words "Where Are We All Frum?" Some nights, while he laid awake craving just one more cigarette, he thought about sneaking out and tearing off the 'u'. Walt knew he would never do it, but he liked to think about it. Nothing was ever fixed

here, only replaced. The board was filled with cheap thumbtacks denoting where each resident was from. Most were clustered around Minneapolis, the closest city, with an increasing dispersion that completely dissolved at the state's borders. A couple nestled California, several standing proud in Texas, and, of course, the holes.

Walt's eyesight had worsened, but the scattered pockmarks stood out against the colorful map. When the tack was removed it left behind an ugly gap, revealing the dirty corkboard beneath it. He saw a cluster of emptiness in Illinois and wondered what was worth visiting there. Walt had seen a French man around the Home before. He was older than Walt, frailer too, but always with a smile on his face. Walt couldn't remember if the man had even lived here. There was nothing wrong with his memory; he'd just never asked. The map didn't include the rest of the world. Walt figured he'd never know.

He stood slowly, his bones crackling like a gentle fire despite his best efforts. An ad for Life Alert blared in the background. Walt slowly began the trek back to his room. Later that night as he longed for a cigarette, he wondered if anyone new would arrive tomorrow. Maybe someone interesting, or French. Elsewhere, a nurse removes a thumbtack from Oregon and places it back into one of Milwaukee's many holes. Not replaced, but rather something new.

FORTY DOLLARS

JOCELYN KRULL

It only costs forty dollars to euthanize a dog—
to stick it with a needle
and shrink the suffering down to a pinhole of light
that won't leave his glassy, blue eyes
until the tennis balls, the steak snuck under the table,
and the gentle hand that would finger
behind his ears and between his eyes
get purged from his arresting heart
with a sigh,
kind of like the one that follows
spinning in eight circles
to find that perfect spot
to sleep.

Euthanasia comes from a Greek word
meaning “good death,”
a word that sits on a slab of metal
beneath fluorescent lights.

COLOR BLIND

BENJOHN MARINER

“I want a divorce.”

“Don’t joke like that. What if Purple hears you saying that one of these days?”

Blue shifted in her wheelchair uncomfortably, stretching out her azure sweater over her jeans. She had said this before and was completely serious every time, but she didn’t have the guts to tell her husband Red. So she just let out an uncomfortable chuckle.

“Besides, you know how impressionable she can be.” Red sat in a comfortable burgundy t-shirt with his back casually sinking into an old, scratched up sofa.

“I know. You’re right, as always. On the bright side, my cousin Yellow is coming into town next week.” Blue stretched her face into a small grin. “Purple will be excited to see her and her son Orange again.”

Her grin quickly fell as Red’s eyes lifted and a quick smirk came to his face.

“Really?” he laughed, “I thought I told you to tell me whenever you plan these little get-togethers.”

“I’m sorry. It was last second and she told me that there was something that she had to take care of in town.”

“Did she say what?”

Blue shook her head and wheeled into the kitchen. She opened up a cupboard and picked up a cherry-red tomato that was beginning to form brown spots on the surface.

“I’m thinking about making my homemade pizza for when they come over, but if you want some, you’ll need to pick up some fresh tomatoes from the store.”

The slam of a car door penetrated through the front door. Yellow paced to the patio, her sunflower spotted dress trailing behind her. Attempting to conceal himself in the dresses folds, Orange followed close behind in a tangerine t-shirt and black shorts. Before Yellow could even ring the bell, the door swung up with

a tiny girl in a lavender long sleeve shirt and matching lavender beads for her pigtails.

“I heard you!” Purple enthused.

“Wow, you’re fast! And big, too! How old are you again?”

“I’m six and a half!” Purple yelled while holding up and counting six digits.

Yellow gave Purple a generous laugh and prompted her son Orange to do the same.

“I’m five.” He swiftly yelped before cowering behind his mother’s legs, burying his face in the brown of a sunflower.

Red walked to the door with a smile and invited the pair in.

“How have you been?” asked Red. His face involuntarily twisting with a smile and crumpled brow, his cheeks coloring a little.

“I’ve been fine. How about you? You look good!” Yellow returned with a brighter expression lighting up her face.

“Is Yellow here?” Blue belted from across the house. A moment later she wheeled up to her cousin with a friendly smile. Yellow bent down to hug Blue, awkwardly adjusting her arms around her with a nervous laugh.

“You’re early! I haven’t had enough time to start the pizza yet,” Blue claimed with a friendly grin.

“I know, but I thought that it would be fun to surprise you guys like this!”

“Well then, it’s going to be your fault that you have to wait for supper.” Blue laughed as she started to wheel towards the kitchen.

Yellow followed behind showing some concern. “Are you still getting along just fine?”

Blue briefly stopped, turning towards Yellow and noticing a guilty face. She then started rolling over the wooden kitchen floor, navigating carefully around furniture. “I get along just fine. I have for the past six years. Guess I’m still a little nervous about being in a car, though. . .”

She opened up the cupboard and grimaced as she looked inside. Pulling out a spotted tomato, she turned to her husband with a disappointed smile.

“I thought you said that you would buy some fresh tomatoes,” she asserted as she showed Red the once bright crimson fruit, now rotting and brown.

He laughed anxiously. “I guess that I kinda forgot. I suppose that I’ll just run and get some. Yellow, you don’t mind waiting a little longer on supper do you?”

“How about I come with you instead?” she optimistically suggested.

“I don’t see any problem with it as long as it’s okay with Blue.”

Blue’s breath shortened as she looked to Red and then to Yellow. “Oh, don’t worry, it’s fine. I can watch Orange and Purple easily enough.”

“Very well then!” Yellow beamed. “You hear that, Orange? Be good for Blue!”

The sun slowly descended over the roofs of houses as Purple and Orange sat in a swingset situated behind the house, challenging each other to see who could get the highest swing, resulting in taunts and a vehement tournament between the two. Blue cautiously watched the two through a window. But before long, she allowed her mind to trail off. The children's screams and shouts were replaced with worries and curiosities.

"Why did Red do it? Why didn't I ever think he wouldn't do it?"

She looked down at her legs and tightened her fist. "I mean, it's not my fault that I can't use my legs anymore. . . but ever since he's always been so fond of Yellow. What was I to him?"

The screen door creaked open and both children ran in, out of breath. Blue quickly turned to them asking who won. The two then started disputing who the victor was when Blue interrupted them, telling them to wash up before waiting in the living room. As Yellow started to walk towards the kitchen, Orange stood and stared at Blue.

"When is Red getting back?"

"Soon enough, they just went out to get tomatoes. It's only been forty minutes."

Blue was trying to reassure herself more than Orange, but still she smiled. She repeated her order and quickly came back to her thoughts.

"Well, whatever I was to Red, Yellow is now."

Red was beginning to feel his hands prune under the soapy water. "I don't know how you ladies made such a huge mess, but it figures that I'm the one that has to clean up after you."

Yellow laughed as she stroked the head of her son. "You wouldn't think that kids their age would want to fall asleep so soon in the evening."

Blue sighed and looked to Purple who was snoring on the floor. "Well, they're tired. I suppose I'm a little tired, too."

"It was especially tiring for Orange. He's spent the whole night following Red and mimicking his every move. It's so cute!" Yellow shined.

"It makes sense, though. He doesn't really have a father in his life."

"Right. . ." Yellow murmured, losing her sunny demeanor.

"It's amazing." Blue continued, "They're not even related and Orange seems so much like Red, but I suppose he just gets that from shadowing him all the time, huh?"

"I suppose. . ."

"I hope that you two aren't getting too somber in there!" Red interrupted with a hollow chortle. He turned off the sink and placed the last of the dishes on a hand towel to dry. Drying off his own hands, he playfully strolled towards the

living room and happily set himself on the torn-up sofa next to Yellow.

“Look,” Blue inserted hesitantly, “I need to talk to you guys about something. . .”

“Okay.” Red said with an apprehensive frown.

“Is everything all right?” Yellow queried with a worried look.

“There is something that I found out recently, and I’m not really sure how to deal with it.”

Red contorted his forehead as he held his breath. “You’re not sick or something are you?”

“No, nothing like that.” She reassured her husband, then turning to her cousin. “But still, I think that I’ve figured out what you ‘had to take care of.’”

“I’m afraid that I don’t understand.” Yellow quivered. Red sighed, turning down towards the floor.

“Well, for a long time now, I’ve been noticing something about Orange more and more. I’ve also seen how you two get when you’re together. You’re nervous, you act guilty, but you’re also playful.”

Red flushed and after a painful silence, laughed hysterically. “What are you even talking about?” he scoffed.

Orange and Purple were both startled awake. After a quick glare directed towards Red, Blue simply commanded the children to Purple’s room for the night.

Realizing what Blue meant, Yellow started to cry.

Blue flared her nostrils, “About a year ago, I saw the two of you together one night when I got home from a late shift at work. But I knew what this was for much longer.”

Red rubbed his hands against his face before burying his face altogether. Yellow started to wail and repeated “I’m sorry” over and over.

“I know this has been going on a while, but how long exactly?”

Red refused to answer the question, but Yellow quickly choked out, “Six years,” eyes swollen and nose dripping.

“It makes sense. As I was saying, when I think about the way you two have always treated each other for so many years, the way that Orange looks and acts, the fact that we never knew who his father even was, or at least *I* never knew.”

Yellow stuffed her face in her hands.

Red compressed his fist and clenched his jaw.

Blue’s expression remained still, quiet. No tears welled in her eyes, which remained fixed on Red. No anger infiltrated her tone; her voice was as calm and hushed as always.

“I want a divorce.”

TO LIVE, TO LET GO

SAMANTHA FAIN

save yourself,
he says,
grinding up
the grief of the ancients
with his heel,
reminding me
he is not atlas
and i am not heaven
for him to balance between his shoulders.
i can hold myself,
i lie, knees collapsing.
i am suspended.

gone are the days
where i wait for the earth
to tuck me in.
now,
i make my bed alone.
but i cannot stop
building houses
outside of myself,
i cannot stop searching
for home.

it was my mistake
to rent his ribs
and his to bend his cartilage backwards
just to keep me
from slicing mine.

i am sure i am acid.

yet i persist
and i let him put up his fists
and fight my demons while i stare at the ceiling,
feeling small.
and i know it is best to crawl out of his chest
and rid him of my weight so he can fly and i
can fall.

dismantle your heroes,
he says,
so i tear him apart
until he is nothing at all.

STAINS

CASPIAN SCHMITZ

The message wouldn't play. Jeffrey reloaded the app again and again, but a little red exclamation point kept popping up to tell him how useless his efforts were. Four days ago, his husband had disappeared. Jeffrey glanced at the clock. 4:27 a.m. He pressed the refresh button and watched the circle spin in its indecision. Maybe this was his lucky chance; after all, third try's a charm, so what about the thirty-third try?

He really hated that red exclamation mark.

Jeffrey set his phone on the night stand and tried to rub moisture back into his eyes. Out of habit, he swung his feet to the right, but they only hit more bed. Instead of trying again, he folded his legs and pulled the pillow he had been using into his lap. Chris's pillow. It didn't smell like Chris anymore, but Jeffrey could trick himself into believing it did. He could reconstruct every piece of Chris without much effort. If the lights were on, he would be able to see the brown stain that matched the upper-left corner of the bed sheets. Chris drank at least two cups of coffee in the morning and one cup of decaf before bed. His favorite mug was black with the Cincinnati Bengals emblem on the front. The chip in the handle could fit into the dent in the floorboards by the bed. Two years later, they still used the same sheets and mug, because fuck it, we need these memories. These real memories.

Light from the half-moon fell across the floor when the Jeffrey pulled the curtains aside. He leaned against the wall and took in every sign that Chris had existed. The football jersey draped over the wardrobe's left door. A pile of jeans on the armchair. Several copies of *World Soccer* magazine on the left nightstand. And a message on Jeffrey's phone that wouldn't load. What might be Chris's last words were on Jeffrey's phone, refusing to play. Jeffrey watched himself in the mirror across the room. He ran his hand through his hair and wondered how many alternate versions of Chris were smoothing it flat again, how many were sleeping soundly, and how many were tossing in half of a cold bed.

And then he thought about how we may be alone in our universe, but we exist on the same plane as infinite parallel universes. For every decision, a

new universe is born where the outcome is different. Jeffrey was intimately familiar with cross-dimensional travel. At the age of nineteen, he had discovered that the mirror in his bedroom was a portal. If he so much as touched its surface, he was transported inside a moment as an invisible voyeur.

Specifically, he remembered the first time he ever stepped into a parallel universe. It was on the night of his first real encounter with Chris. Jeffrey had gone to a few college soccer matches and had seen Chris play, but after an athletic injury left Chris sitting out a season, Jeffrey had the opportunity to talk to him. The sun was stuck behind the clouds, and the ground was already damp with spring rain. While telling Chris about the '67 Chevelle he was fixing up, Jeffrey plucked a purple wildflower and twirled it. Any excuse to not look into those eyes that seemed so much like a waterfall on a remote island where clouds never dare roam. Maybe if he stared at the sky, the rain would never come.

“I’d like to see the car sometime. It runs, right?”

Yes, it ran. And Jeffrey took him for a ride down the interstate at one in the morning, hitting a top speed of 112 miles per hour, but he could hardly breathe, and the lightness of his head made it feel like they were flying at the speed of light, and Chris hardly said a word, but Jeffrey couldn’t stop rambling, and he felt like an idiot, but, God, did it feel right. Chris just smiled. One day, he would have crow’s feet in the spot next to his right eye where a patch of freckles formed a sloppy rhombus. When he returned home, he closed the bedroom door and leaned back against it with his eyes closed. When he opened his eyes again, he was back in the car, this time in the backseat watching Chris and another Jeffrey in the front. All he thought was, Wow, I sound like an idiot and I’ve never had an out-of-body experience during a dream before. Looking out the window, he saw the road pass by like a canvas of fresh black paint. There was no time to count each street light as it whizzed by; the car was going so fast that they formed a path of light above it. Then the car began to hydroplane, and the lights became a halo, and the poles became a wall surrounding Chris and Jeffrey and the car.

Then Jeffrey blinked, and they were not hydroplaning. The car wasn’t even moving. It was parked, and the other Jeffrey and Chris were in the back seat while Jeffrey stood outside. The clouds had moved on, and the light from a half-moon reflected in a puddle. Down the road, a neon sign flickered, sometimes saying “HO_EL,” sometimes “HO_E_.” He could hear the hum of a mellow song coming from the car. Someone drove by, and Jeffrey saw himself pushing Chris onto the bench seat. He moved closer and couldn’t decide if it were gross or hot seeing what looked like Chris underneath another guy but who was really Jeffrey himself. Chris put his hands on Jeffrey’s shoulders and roughly pushed him up against the door. Jeffrey’s head hit the window, and they froze like someone had hit pause. Then Jeffrey moved to hold the back of his head, and Chris leaned forward, pressing his forehead into Jeffrey’s shoulder.

None of these memories were real. He could see different outcomes for the decisions he made in real time, but he couldn't see the future or even the past. What actually happened that night is that Jeffrey dropped Chris off at his apartment and drove home after getting burgers. They didn't fall in love at first sight, like in at least one universe he saw that night. In so many universes, including the real one, it took much more time and convincing. But Jeffrey was certain that first night that it would happen eventually. For the rest of the year, Jeffrey spent hours watching parallel universes go by. After the year was up and Jeffrey moved out of the room with the magic mirror, he never saw another universe. But that was okay, because the one he lived in became like a fairy tale. He married the man of his dreams, lived in a brick house with a white picket fence, and was on the adoption waiting list. And then Chris disappeared with no reports coming in of a car or man with his description. Of course, Jeffrey had seen plenty of universes where one or both of them died. But it was so easy to think, It'll never happen to me.

The moonlight now reached the bottom of the dresser on the other side of the room. So that's where Chris's other blue sock went. Jeffrey picked up his phone and sat on the dresser, leaning back against the mirror. The glass sent a chill up his back. A friend once told him that holding your phone upside-down against your forehead would make messages send. He felt stupid. When he opened the app again, the circle of indecision spun around like every other damn time. He drew his knees into his chest and closed his eyes, waiting for the exclamation mark.

I THINK WRITING POETRY MIGHT SUCK

MEGHAN YENCER

They told me to write some poetry.
Just give it a try because it's fun
but I don't want to write any poetry,
is it really art if I don't want to make it in
the first place?

I don't think so.
But here I am. 11:04 pm. In my boyfriend's
bed,
writing some stupid poetry
because I have to.

But maybe poetry isn't always stupid
poetry lets you say things
without actually saying the things you mean.

It is easier to say
that poetry is stupid
than to write a real poem
about the things that scare you.

I said poetry was stupid so I didn't have to say
how my mom beat cancer once
but my mind is clouded with the memory
of a teenage boy at church camp
telling me that his mom survived cancer, too.

But only the *first* time.

I said poetry was stupid so I didn't have to say
that her *friend* told her no one would know
it would all be okay
as she fell asleep.

I said poetry was stupid so I didn't have to say
that I watched the sparkle fall out of your eyes
as you said
I can't do this anymore.

I said poetry was stupid so I didn't have to
say

that I am *scared* of poetry.

VISUAL ART DISTINCTION



Still Life With Cruet by Kristin Hughes



Thumbnail by Sami Roberts



Reflections by Spencer Wesche



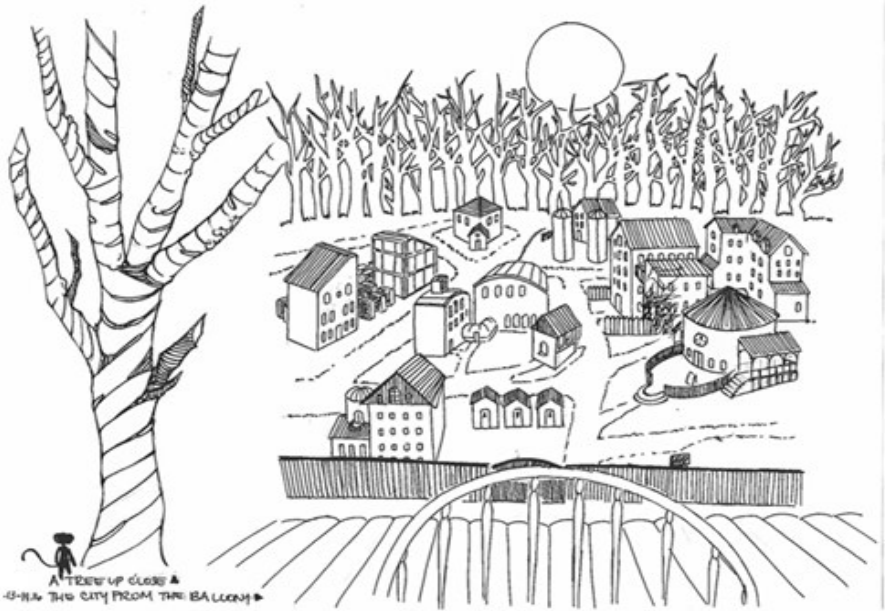
In The Numbers by Jocelyn Krull



Reflection by Ariel Halstead



Dance by Sami Roberts



Tree From Up Close by Kauaii Canada



Rainbow Ivories by Cody Burkner



Spring by Spencer Wesche



Rose-Lidded Pots by Kristin Hughes



Bridge to the Wilderness by Spencer Wesche

FORGETTING HOW TO COUNT

BRITTANY LOVE

We were somewhere in between finishing a burger and swallowing the thick beef down with Vanilla Coke when he sat down. We knew him but choked on his name. His face red, as if it might blow all over our dinner for one, like a Mentos dropped into our beverage. We weren't sure we wanted to know what sort of pent up angst was about to shoot from his lips, but we knew we sat at the edge of our diner bench, anxious to find out; that's just who we are. For one weak moment, we felt compelled to hide the onions on our Double Decker with cheese. We couldn't recall a name, but our subconscious seemed well aware of his hatred towards the little magenta rings, remembered his irritation at the lingering scent in his Volvo as we left our own little diner just down the street of our University. Yes, we felt compelled to hide them, however the desire to annoy him was stronger.

Hello boy #7, picked up at a frat party when we were too intoxicated to drive ourselves for waffles and grits. How has your life, still indifferent to us, panned out?

You never even called me back, his words flew straight from his mouth right over our meal like irksome flies hovering, we swatted at them with another lukewarm bite, an onion got caught between our lips, hanging sloppily. Our conscience smiled in triumph, take that you onion skeptic.

I did though, we answer, many times actually. Those 4am diner trips and shared kisses just ended before forever came, much like fashion trends and baby fat.

You stole my shirt, he persecuted. We took another bite, chewing over his accusation. Oh yeah, the Manchester United jersey. We were pretty sure we left that at boy #9's apartment. We knew he loved the team and after hearing him cry about his new lost love and suicidal tendencies—apparently all *our* fault—we figured we owed him that much, partly because we are passive aggressive, partly because we didn't care enough to hear him whine when we went to reclaim it. We sat our last bite of processed beef down and searched our brain for an appropriate rebuttal. I have no clue where that could've gone, it's been years, maybe it grew legs and ran away, like me.

#7 growled in response, hunger burned in his brown eyes, and we knew that the rest of our fries or the last bite of our burger would not satisfy his stale anger.

#7 never had an issue with causing a scene, like the time we ignored his calls ten times in a row at a Saturday night toga party, not knowing he was right behind us. He liked to test our loyalty while we oftentimes unknowingly tested his patience. We hadn't intended to be malicious, time to ourselves had just become so scarce. #7 never had an

issue with causing a scene, our already loose toga almost ripped from our small frame when he threw us into the end-table, knocking over the castle of beer cans we had contributed to. The deep bruise on our back didn't compare to the embarrassment of disturbing the positive vibe of the party, we left with our head held high though—what else was there to do?

Across the table, he threw his hands above his head, but we didn't flinch, we never flinched. You're the reason I flunked out, you ruin everything you come in contact with, and the more people appreciate you the less you seem to give in return.

We weren't offended by this, it was the truth to an extent, how can someone unable to grasp their own peace of mind help another find their own? It would make sense that it was our fault, maybe we should have continued to order every meal without onions, spread our legs and share the little happiness we had with him so that he could succeed in life. What a title to own, one girl capable of a man's inevitable downfall. We should feel honored.

He stood up immediately, the wind of his sudden movement blowing our grown out hair slightly, but that was all. We were alone again, suddenly fuller than a moment before and raising our cold hand for a check.

A young waitress walked over to hand us our check, the meal came to \$8.56. We left a twenty and waited by the door to see her eyes light up, she must've only been in her first or second year of school, we knew from experience the weight of one kind act.

We walked outside and waited on the side of the bustling street when he ran into us, another familiar face, this one lacked the same resentment of #7's. The city life had a way of making one cold; seeing a genuine smile like his was so rare anymore.

Hey! You're that girl from Killroy's. We stood confused until he laughed, it sounded like music in a world of static words. You told me I should try washing my sneakers with the washing machine to rid of its stain.

We looked down and suddenly recognized the checkered Vans. He spoke again, his words as light as our stomach felt before we crammed down our greasy meal. I really appreciate your advice, now my shoes are back to being as handsome as before.

We wondered how this was possible since we destroyed everything we came in contact with, we also felt bewildered by how much we cared about his good as new sneakers.

It's V, right? The boy's voice was like iced tea on a summer day when it spoke my name.

I didn't mean to, and by that I mean it caught me off guard—but I smiled, really smiled. Yes, and you are William, correct?

ODE TO FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICHES

INSPIRED BY THE POETRY OF KEVIN YOUNG

BENJOHN MARINER

We come asking
you to make us
plump and carefree,
even if it means
we have to die
for you, bleeding
grease and cholesterol.

We gladly
trade our lives
for golden breading
placed amid two buns
doused in butter &
our own fat.

We die happy knowing
that we've listened

to cows who
tell us to
“eat more chikin”
like your favorite
Grandma who says
you need more
protein in your life.

[YOU WERE LANTERN LIT, SHINING STAR OF MINE]

JUSTIN BRAUNSDORF

You were lantern lit, shining star of mine
Brightest in my heavenly sea, adorned
In silver and pearl, pray your stars align
And bring back to me firmament unformed.
You were hands outstretched, grasping and pleading
For comfort or praise, some kind of disgraced
Idol, begging for scraps, unsilenced. Sing
Again, your plaintive summer cries of rage.
You were libraries burning, settling
Soot and still flaming, like autumn fires.
Chaos: bend towards the shape of our soothing,
Moving and never proving wrong the lyres.
Remove, then, your stars from my night's sky and
Watch your hands turn to shifting golden sand.

QUARTZ

MARIE OSTENDORF

rose quartz is neither your
breath
nor shadows on starry walls
that crystalline rock
is not my silhouette on paper
it is not my fingertips on dust
rose quartz is not the ocean's
fears that make its tide pull away
or dew on dawn's leaves
my mineral
does not hold me down while I shake
it is not my mother's screams, though
it is not my grandfather's
expectations
it is not my father's doubts

rose quartz is my essence; my being weathered down
its texture is my skin's creases in time

rose quartz is my breath coating her
tongue
and the dawn's presence in our embrace
that crystalline rock
is my shadow on the sidewalk
it is my fingertips on his veins
rose quartz is the ocean's
love for the salt on my skin
and raindrops on trees
my mineral
holds my fears in its rosy cheeks
it is my mind holding me in the dark
it is my thoughts forming into
constellations
it is my passion for the sky

FICTION DISTINCTION

THE MORTICIAN

ALEX KLEIMAN

Melissa always brought her work home with her, which would have been acceptable if she was a lawyer and not a mortician. As a child she'd worn the labels of 'precocious' and 'inquisitive' quite well; in adulthood, she bordered on obsessive. She loved the taboo.

Jack greeted her as she returned to the apartment, though he did not rise from his cozy second-hand recliner. The place was small, but theirs, and they'd agreed that they were ready to share space. His recliner was an island caught in the unrelenting waves of miscellany radiated off of Melissa's desk. Most of it was paper: bills (overdue), medical records (work-related), receipts (fast food), medical records (for entertainment). It didn't offer full coverage of the floor. This was not for a lack of trying. The pattern in the research was noticeable as it expanded outward into the living room—evenly spaced tiers began to form, like the rings of trees. Secret records of Melissa's exploration into history and her conquest of the living room.

At Jack's feet were a few loose sheets on acid attacks, several few gut-wrenching pictures catching the corner of his eye. He returns to his book, a Tom Clancy novel about Jack Ryan that he has read at least three times but still could never remember its ending. The next ring was shoved beneath the coffee table and had fallen victim to the infectious greasiness of Jack's discarded, poorly hidden pizza boxes. Not that the damage mattered; the rolling waves of research were a part of the process and were inevitably discarded by Melissa every month or so. The most promising results were added to her bloated binder, a hideous Frankenstein's Monster of torn up medical journals, tabloids, and obsolete road maps. At some point it must have had a particular purpose, but several years of documents being haphazardly taped, glued, and stapled together had long since masked its original meaning.

Jack went back to his book as Melissa began peeling potatoes in the kitchen. If her desk were to collapse right now beneath that binder's immense weight, a massive gust of wind would have blown the cloying detritus across the apartment. The final breath of a grotesque experiment collapsing to the ground before burying its hideous visage in the dirt. The apartment was becoming

infected. The medical oddities trapped in the binder had begun creeping out, spoiling everything that they touched. A small watercolor painting of a skull hung above the toilet. A photograph of some long-dead scientist on her nightstand. An alarm clock shaped like an anatomically correct heart (that woke him up with a hideous *lub dub, lub dub* every morning) on his. A gift from her. He wished it was normal instead. A signed and framed Packers jersey on his wall, currently confined to a measly drawer. A vase of flowers, regular ones, without some diatribe about Venus flytraps or ridiculous poisons. A meal lacking a lecture on proper sanitation and the rampant health code violations perpetrated by the blah blah blah. He wanted a girlfriend, the one he already had, but without her love of circus freaks and decapitations. He wants a living room without weirdness that he can call his own. Jack spends all day here. The desk is becoming an eyesore.

Melissa continued to prepare dinner alone while Jack read his book. Her papers had reached his feet, which would undoubtedly put him in a bad mood. Not that he ever picked them up himself. Or shared his misgivings through anything more than dejected sighs and loathing glances at her board. She said nothing about his own detritus, the molding fortress of carry-out Chinese and Hot Pocket wrappers that he had constructed for himself. The board was excusable, in her eyes, a beautiful living document of morbidity. And every day that she saw Jack sit there, wasting away, filling his body with junk, reading and forgetting again and again, she wondered how much more space she would have to work if she added *him* to the binder.

HUNTED

BRITTANY LOVE

I

Blue irises, focused in on already dead life. Two black lines cross at the fate of another. Playing God, not because you should, but you know you can. The air becomes stiff as position is taken. POW. Another bloodshed nature was never intended to see, the loss of innocence while the trees stand by, helpless. You sneak up on your victim, whose breaths have shortened. Just a five point buck, only shot for game. Its dark brown eyes reflect your own. How can Innocence mirror so much evil. You never imagined it'd be you.

II

I'm not born yet but was made aware through testimonies and personal experience later in life. She however wasn't even your child, made from a different set of DNA, but you liked her, at least that's what you told your soon-to-be wife. It was around when she started talking that you decided to silence both mother and daughter. Perhaps that was the reason I met a more silenced version of your wife and my sister than what is spoken about over family dinner. "They used to be so full of life." Who? Those poor creatures over there? Vigorously shining shoes just to be spit on for it. You're a snake for what you've created. The Devil just convinced Eve to eat an apple from a tree, you made her your slave.

III

When it was finally your turn to plant a seed you wanted icy blue eyes and testosterone over estrogen. When the hospital brought out a pink blanket you were enraged, and set your sights on your next victim. Planning to punish the son you weren't given. Not the trashy waitress or the three motorcycles could remove you from this hell that had become your life. Ten deer heads, three turkey tails, one wife, and one daughter (not of blood you'd remind us) filled space on your mantle, but not within your poor unsettled heart. One spot remained just for me.

IV

Green irises, like your mother's, focused-in on already dead life. No black lines to cross and remind me of Sunday mornings spent at church. What separated us from each other was that for me, this was not a game. Playing God not because I should, but because it's eat or be eaten. I stare down at my once predator, now prey and take position. POW. Eyes snap open and reveal fear, but reflect your own blood. I bet you never knew you'd become the hunted.

WE THE WOLFMEN

SAMANTHA FAIN

listen: there is a reason for the howling. we growl because it's the only way we are heard. our vocal cords have been plucked from our larynges, skinned, cooked, and chewed right off our carcasses. see our fur stick between their teeth. hear them smack their lips as they strip us of all that we have. we have nothing.

listen: they think we are beasts, hungry for their flesh, foaming at the mouth anytime we sniff a sliver of power. they see us as feral, wild, hunting their freedoms, so they make us their prey. they maim us until our brothers bleed pepper spray and our sisters cry tear gas, until there are no warm bodies left in our pack.

listen: they want us extinct. we understand this confuses you. we understand that to you, this word has no meaning. we understand that you cannot hear the shriek of the dog whistle, you cannot smell the smoke in the distance billowing towards us.

listen: you have never been trapped so you do not know the muzzle, you do not recognize the confinements of the cage.

CREATIVE NON-FICTION DISTINCTION

FULL CIRCLE

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN

There was this one time after recess in third grade when playtime was over, so as we were waiting to go inside, a girl from my class, Katie, elbows her way over to me.

Ashley and I think you're fat.

Okay.

She was quiet for a second. *Well aren't you gonna cry or something?*

Why would I cry over something that's true? I don't care about what you think about me.

She didn't know what to do with that. I'd seen Katie do this to other girls; She'd once pinched Kylie and called her *four-eyes*, and Kylie didn't wear her glasses for a week.

There was a space of silence between us before I walked in the back doors of our elementary school. I looked back at her, standing there all skinny, her closed fists resting in a bored and astounded way on her hips, wearing a pink shirt with a monkey face on it, and I actually felt sorry for her.

Ashley was a terrible person but she was Katie's only friend. Katie needed extra help with reading and her front teeth kind of stuck out and her hair was too thin, so her bangs didn't really cover her forehead, and our teacher rarely called on her during our history lessons. It's the first time I ever truly felt pity for someone. I knew I wasn't a better person than her or anything. I was mean sometimes. I needed help during science. I had about three friends. But I knew that words only have power when you let them. Katie's power came from other people letting her have that power. She was a bully and everyone knew it.

A few weeks later, Katie invited me over to her house after school to hang out. Since Katie hadn't been mean for a while, I went. We spent the afternoon dressing up so we looked "cool," and she put blue eye shadow and lip gloss on me. We went to the mall. We got Orange Julius. Katie was a different person at the mall than she was in school. She walked slower. She actually laughed out loud instead of covering her mouth. I didn't think much of it until we got back to her house and her mom was home. Katie was tense, and I didn't understand why, though it probably had to do with the smell of cigarettes and something else that

hung around her mother. I didn't know what the other smell was until I went to my first college party, and someone handed me a bottle of whiskey.

I remember looking over at Katie during our history lesson the next day, and she was looking back at me, with this half smile on her face. I knew now why her smile wouldn't stretch its full length. I also knew that I couldn't do anything to fix that half smile. Our teacher asked her a question, and once her eyes flitted away from mine, I felt some strange sense of closure. I felt like I understood her. I didn't think things were going to change for her, and I didn't consider telling anyone about Katie's home life. But I did know that Katie was brave, and that she was doing the best she could.

Katie was in my fourth and fifth grade classes, but we went to different middle and high schools. The last time I saw her was at a football game between our high schools. She was still skinny, still had thin bangs, and still rested her closed fists on her hips. But when she looked my direction, she actually looked happy, and not like an 8-year-old doing her best impression of a happy person. My brief glimpse of her was of a small girl with yellow and purple face paint on, looking at me with a full smile, her hand raised in greeting. I lost sight of her almost immediately.

I caught up to her later in the parking lot, and we said little beyond "It's been a long time," and "Isn't it crazy how different things are now?" We stood in silence for about half a minute, trying to figure out what to say. I wanted to ask her if she was really happy and if her mom still smoked, but her friend honked for her before I could say anything. When she hugged me goodbye, she left a smear of paint on my cheek. Before she climbed into the car, she turned to yell something back at me.

You look good.

POETRY DISTINCTION

INCANTATIONS

JOCELYN KRULL

You can't tell your children smokestacks make the clouds: the incantations will drip from your teeth like honey, crystallize in the folds of their brains and salt their blood for years to come—sludge in their veins, thicker than the water that drips down the half-empty glass. *Hong Kong is the most illuminated city in the world.* Your songs will lull them comatose, and they'll wake up one day to plastic oceans and chlorine skies, dried-up worms in the cracks of scorching asphalt and milky water that froths on the lip of the choking spigot. *Birds will often fly off course or freeze to death because they can't find the stars in the city lights.* You can't cut down a forest to build a church and call it fair trade, and you don't deserve the grass beneath your feet if the moon just makes the sea climb one foot higher on an oil rig.

CHARGE YOUR PHONE

KARLY MCPHERSON

Saturday, 12:01 am: Jean awoke to the sound of a bloodcurdling scream, and sat straight up in bed, eyes stretched wide. She sat immobile as another scream echoed through the darkness. “Annie?” she whispered for her roommate. “Annie!” Jean hissed, “Wake up!” No response came. She began to climb down from the top of their bunk beds. Annie wasn’t there. She then recalled that Annie went to one of the frat parties that night. Another scream began as she grabbed her phone, she thought about calling campus security, but stopped herself. *It’s probably just the fraternity party getting out of hand.* She looked at the phone. *It’s dead anyway.* She put it back on her desk. *Either way, I refuse to be the dork who calls the police on a party.* She climbed back in her bed and went to sleep.

Saturday, 2:31 am: Another scream. This time it sounded closer and was accompanied by a harsh banging against her door. Jean anxiously bit her lip and went towards the sound. She slowly looked through the peep hole and let out a sigh of relief. *It’s just Annie.* She opened the door for her strawberry blond friend and took in the sight before her.

Annie wore a grey sweatshirt drenched in what looked to be red wine and had tears streaming down her face, accompanied by what looked like vomit and dirt. Jean didn’t think much of this. Annie was always a “party hard” type of person. “Why didn’t you open the door sooner?” She cried.

“Sorry, didn’t know it was you.” Jean waited for Annie to come in. “Are you okay?”

Annie didn’t move. “I lost my phone.” She wiped away some dirty tears. “I gotta get it back.”

Jean sighed and slipped on a pair of shoes. “You stay here. The last thing we need is you passing out God knows where,” she said as she plugged in her own phone to charge. Annie stood in the doorway, staring blankly at Jean as she left.

It didn’t take long to get to the frat house. It was a rather small campus, so people felt pretty safe walking around alone—even at night. Jean was immediately greeted by a Clark Kent looking football player named Johnny. “Hey Jean, didn’t expect to see you here.”

“I’m not staying long, just here looking for Annie’s cell phone. She lost it and she’s too much of a wreck to look for it herself. It’s blue, has a rainbow sticker on it?”

Upon hearing this, Johnny called over one of his friends, who produced the phone from his pocket. “We thought someone would come looking for it. One of the guys found it out in the parking lot. She was pretty wasted, I’m glad she made it back to the dorm alright.” After thanking him, Jean went back to the room. Annie wasn’t there. She shrugged it off. *She’s probably taking a shower to get all that grossness off her.* She laid the blue phone on Annie’s bed.

Saturday, 9:00 am: Annie wasn’t there when Jean woke up. Jean checked her phone’s messages:

11:30 pm: I’m drunk, come get me pls ;)	11:40 pm: J I’m comin back to da room
11:42 pm: let me in building, forgot keys lol	11:45 pm: There is a cute guy following me
11:47 pm: shit he’s followin me!	12:00 am: One voice message:

“Jean, pick up the damn phone. That guy is still following me. I need you to open the doors! I don’t have my keys, Jean! ... JEAN!! He’s coming! JEAN! Oh God he’s got a fucking knife! Jean he’s coming! Somebody HELP! Leave me alone asshole! JEAN OPEN THE DOORS! JEEEEAAA— LEAVE ME ALONE!!!! GET OFF! JEAN OPEN THE—”

12:02 am: Don’t worry about your friend, I’ll take real good care of her. :) – Attached to the text was a picture of Annie laying in the flowerbeds outside our dorm, tears streaming down her face, knife plunged deep within her stomach, sweatshirt soaked in blood. Her eyes were open, but they just stared blankly back at the camera.

DOES YOUR LOVED ONE HAVE FTD?

BRITTANY LOVE

A person with Frontal Temporal Dementia may:

1. *Have acquired the disease through passed genes*

A different heart beat occupied deeply blue sheets, you were not around to watch the demolition of an otherwise placid spaghetti dinner—The FTD victim took a runaway father with ease; it was the six months of ignorance to his passing that ruined appetites—That traded heartbeat couldn't stomach to watch them grab their third plate—50% is nothing but a coin flip to a potentially diseased brain, they already raised themselves to speak for the cold—The victim closed the door on two years without a look back and here you are reading to save a life from an incurable easy way out.

2. *Behave in socially inappropriate ways*

Imprisoned yet spouting out everything that courses through its body, you envy it's freedom to act so—Do not expect the same reaction from your FTD victim, unable to appreciate marvelous new additions In a neighborhood they never look at—They will stand outside the caged fountain with their picket sign—So much disdain for a body you desperately want to submerge yourself into—Laced fingers white from the strain to hold on—Gasp when the midst cups your untouched cheek.

3. *Not recognize the changes in his or her own behaviors*

Time spent with a FTD victim is learning that no fairly cast judgment makes the materialist things a bit more romantic—An empty wallet is all you tag along after now—Midnights spent in an amusement park like fingers in your mouth—Pressed against a fence of a coaster they'd swore they'd never ride before they met you—They ask if you enjoyed watching

them in their most vulnerable state—The sentence could have fed you for weeks.

4. *Have loss of apathy and motivation*

A victim of FTD will not know how to hold a hand that is clumsy enough to knock over a bottle of sangria—First impressions are everything still here you sit a year later on stained cushions, trying not to weep as they talk about their next remodel—Your legs spread to cover the stain to which holds no sentimental value to them—Perhaps you should've ignored the dispersed reflections of moments spent in the back of a Halloween shop that night, for your ill unrequited loved one already has.

5. *Obtain new interests, such as music or spirituality*

The victim may drunkenly throw themselves at a piano so that they may play the keys to warm their cold, unbelieving soul—To which you cannot thaw with numbered breaths—A song at the top of their lungs so the pain that screams in their diseased brain may cease from being heard—Eyes closed. Just listen, naked and engulfed in the hum of an old broken anthem—You'll be forced to witness them find a god in falsetto yet still cry in the dark of a poster heavy room for faith to give them a ring.

6. *Lose sympathy or empathy (show less social interest or personal warmth)*

The kissing of eyelashes will disperse the moment you stop pretending to slumber—Open your eyes and expect the same affection however revealed is a new character, indifferent to the weather and cold feet—Put yours on their legs and soak in what little warmth they have left—tomorrow they might be dead or just gone again—Yet if their breathing ceased before you woke know there would be no one else loyal enough to notice—nor prevent you from raiding red stained cushions or jumping fences to drown in lukewarm water—Including the callous heart that left you to lick unjust wounds.

REFLECTIONS ON GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

ANNA MEER

“Red Canna, 1924”

“I feel there is something unexplored about woman that only a woman can explore.”
- Georgia O’Keeffe

This flower is a perennial, hardy, blooming even into the first fall frosts that seek to blacken her edges. She stands on a reedy cane, flaunting her red foliage in daring ruffles—a Spanish flamenco dancer twisting up from the bulb—unashamed. Georgia O’Keeffe once painted her in sweeping curves—all nesting together in a crimson bell of petals.

The womb is a valley to be filled when the time is right—far better to catch a child in a warm hollow of flesh and blood, to welcome her in a well of calloused, careful hands.

Unlike the canna, I have not yet learned to be unashamed of my own womanhood, of my obvious sex and the life it writes into every one of my cells. I am still learning to be feminine, to embrace the round curves of my hips as I walk, their proof of the well of fertility blooming between my legs. I have yet to understand the way my breasts hang heavy over my chest, swollen with a promise of life and something else that I think only a mother can understand.

I am not yet a mother. Though I was born with the potential to knit together flesh in my womb, to create a flickering soul with my own body, to bleed a loss of velvet red into new, wet, gasping breaths—part myself to unveil another whole.

“Grey Lines with Black, Blue, and Yellow; 1923”

This, I imagine, is the way her womb looked before the final round of IVF—grey and blue-black ribbons suspended between curving pelvic bones, a creeping coldness cutting across the warmth of desire and hope and bruised purple.

APOGEE INTERVIEW

ARTIST OF DISTINCTION

KRISTIN HUGHES

CONDUCTED BY MARIE OSTENDORF AND JULIETTE LOWRY

What was your inspiration for your piece?

I know this isn't a very specific answer, but all of my work is simply inspired by my aesthetic preference. When I work, I gravitate toward pieces rather than being super meticulous and intentional.

What are your future artistic plans?

Art is a part of my life and I want it to stay that way. After I graduate from Franklin College, I want to go to graduate school for painting and become a painting professor.

What artists inspire you, and why?

I'm inspired by artists from the past of course, including Vermeer and Rembrandt, but I really enjoy seeing the progress of current painters and their unique processes of creating work. Daniel Sprick is a wonderful painter, as is Stephen Cefalo, who has visited our campus. It's inspiring to see the success of current painters and also to learn about how they work. It's also very helpful to study another artist's process, especially if it's different from my own.

When was the first time you realized that art was something you wanted to pursue?

I first realized that art was something I wanted to pursue either in my junior or senior year in high school. I've had an aptitude for art throughout my entire life, but I never thought that I could actually build my future with it until my last years of high school. It was then that I saw my true potential and decided to have a painting major in college.

What advice would you give to other artists?

The advice I would give to other artists is something that I still have yet to master: defend yourself from your own thoughts. As many have heard, artists are their own worst critic, and I can't emphasize how true that is. Being negative toward yourself will only keep you from working and inhibit your improvement. Be kind to yourself and your art will flourish.

APOGEE INTERVIEW

CREATIVE NON-FICTION AUTHOR OF DISTINCTION

TAYLOR HEIDEMAN

CONDUCTED BY MARIE OSTENDORF AND JULIETTE LOWRY

What was your inspiration for your piece?

This is a story that just came to me while I was working on a freewrite for class. It just sort of floated up through my memory; I'd completely forgotten about this [experience] happening, but, since I still had it stored somewhere, it was pretty clear to me that it was important, and that I should investigate it.

What are your future artistic plans?

I'd like to continue working on all genres. I'd like to get a published at some point, and I have no idea if that would be a book of poetry, of short stories, a novel, or a memoir.

What authors or artists inspire you, and why?

I love Jamaal May. His poetry is brave and vivid, yet soft, and I aspire to write poetry that's as moving as his. I also love Jeanette Wall's *The Glass Castle*, which is a memoir. It's the first memoir I ever read, and it was really interesting to see how she took her life and told it with a narrative arc that made sense. It's also simply heartbreaking.

When was the first time you realized that writing was something you wanted to pursue?

Reading has always been one of my favorite things to do, but it was probably around my junior year of high school that I seriously believed that I could also create the kind of art I loved. I wrote half a novel that's absolute trash, but it brought me (and still brings me) so much joy.

What advice would you give to other artists?

The only way you're going to create art worth reading is believing that you have something to say. I still struggle with that; most of the time, I'm discouraged by the eloquence of others, but I push through it only because I love it so much.

APOGEE INTERVIEW

FICTION AUTHOR OF DISTINCTION

ALEX KLEIMAN

CONDUCTED BY MARIE OSTENDORF AND JULIETTE LOWRY

What was your inspiration for your piece?

Both of my pieces were exercises in writing about death from different perspectives. 'Life Alert' was from the perspective of learning not to fear death. 'The Mortician' was about the fascination with morbid that exists in everyone but taken to an extreme.

What are your future artistic plans?

I've always loved writing science fiction and I hope to begin working on longer pieces. At the same time, I'm looking to branch out and practice on nonfiction. I don't really have an end goal at the moment, but experimenting with different styles helps me to improve overall.

What authors or artists inspire you, and why?

Some of the first things that made me enjoy reading were comic strips, particularly 'The Far Side' and 'Calvin and Hobbes' by Gary Larson and Bill Watterson. I'm also a big fan of Brandon Sanderson and Jim Butcher for writing my favorite fantasy novels that have inspired me to be as creative as possible. Also, like pretty much everyone, I like Stephen King.

When was the first time you realized that writing was something you wanted to pursue?

I've wanted to write since I read Narnia books as a kid (growing up Jewish meant that I missed out on all of the Christian symbolism until I was 12, but I still loved those books). Somewhere in my house is a picture I drew in kindergarten that said I wanted to be an author (probably spelled wrong) and an artist. I quickly found that that I can barely draw a straight line, but I'm sticking with the first one.

What advice would you give to other artists?

My advice would be to read what you love critically to understand why it works so well. From there, practice and take risks. Writing outside of your comfort zone can be inspirational and even lead you to appreciate things you'd never even considered. Two years ago I thought I hated poetry, but by writing it I learned a lot more about rhythm and improved my vocabulary. Branching out has big rewards.

APOGEE INTERVIEW

POET OF DISTINCTION

JOCELYN KRULL

CONDUCTED BY MARIE OSTENDORF AND JULIETTE LOWRY

What was your inspiration for your piece?

I was inspired to write “Forty Dollars” after visiting the Johnson County animal shelter and seeing their pricing board that euthanizing a pet was so much less expensive than actually adopting one. Putting a price on one’s life has never sat well with me.

The current state of our planet’s climate compelled me to write “Incantations.” I think it is extremely important to educate people about what is happening and warn everyone about the deadly consequences that come with ignorance.

“In the Numbers” was just a fun picture that I took. My friend had recently ordered a bag of 100 dice and I just really liked the colors.

What are your future artistic plans?

My future artistic plans are slightly undecided. I would like to attend graduate school and continue my writing education, but I’m prepared to do other things if that doesn’t work out.

What authors or artists inspire you, and why?

I’ve always been inspired by those who aren’t afraid to bare raw, human emotions and who will freely write about rough or terrifying subjects. For me, this has been many writers. But the ones who come to mind most frequently are Nick Flynn and Stephen King.

What is the best creative advice you have ever received?

The best creative writing advice I’ve ever received is that “criticize” is not a scary word. Criticism is meant to help one build upon their writing, not tear down. That’s why it’s called “constructive” criticism.

CONTRIBUTORS

Justin Braunsdorf is an English major at Franklin College. He also studies religion and has reoccurring dreams about spiders and extreme sports.

Cody Burkner is a Computer Science and Applied Mathematics major who enjoys taking long walks on the beach.

Kauaii Canada is a freshman, with a Music major and Creative Writing minor. She wants to be a touring musician, but her biggest goal is to tell stories through all the arts she can.

Samantha Fain is a freshman at Franklin College interested in Psychology and Creative Writing. She is an avid writer and concert-goer. Besides writing, Samantha enjoys embroidery and reading. When she's not at Franklin, Samantha resides in Connersville, Indiana, where she spends time with her family and dogs.

Ariel Halstead is a sophomore at Franklin College majoring in English and minoring in Philosophy and Music. She strives to one day be an editor for up-and-coming novelists. The goal of her artwork is to portray human emotions, creating a sense of empathy between the viewer and the artwork.

Chera Hammons is a graduate of the MFA in Creative Writing program at Goddard College. Her work has appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Rattle*, *THRUSH*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, among other fine journals. Books include *Amaranthine Hour* (Jacar Press, 2012), *Recycled Explosions* (Ink Brush Press, 2016) and *The Traveler's Guide to Bomb City* (Purple Flag Press, 2017). She is a member of the editorial board of poetry journal *One*. She teaches at Clarendon College and resides in Amarillo, Texas.

Taylor Heideman is a senior studying English, Spanish, and Creative Writing.

Kristin Hughes is a junior pursuing degrees in Painting and Spanish. She has had an aptitude for art since childhood and it has turned into a passion that she wants to build her future with.

Alex Kleiman is a sophomore pursuing majors in English and Creative Writing. His goal is to explore human interaction, to question what defines our relationships with others, and the world. He has gone a whole year without writing anything unnecessarily violent, and it seems to be going pretty well so far.

Jocelyn Krull is currently a junior majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in English. She enjoys spending her free time reading, sleeping, and mourning the death of democracy. She aspires to pursue a career in either writing or copy editing, but she mostly just wants to survive.

Brittany Love is a Creative Writing major whose work encompasses the dark thirst for power from a coming of age woman's eyes, and the complexities of volatile relationships.

Juliette Lowry is a sophomore at Franklin College. She is pursuing a degree in Creative Writing and Environmental Science. Someday, she hopes to save the planet so that no one will ever live in a world without Honey Bees or Bengal Tigers.

John (BenJohn) Mariner is a sophomore at Franklin College double majoring in English and Creative Writing. His post graduation plans include book editing and writing.

Karly McPherson is a Creative Writing major and is minoring in Studio Art and English.

Anna Meer is a senior at Franklin College. She is majoring in English and minoring in Creative Writing and Biology. She is a member of Delta Delta Delta National Fraternity, E.A.R.T.H. Club, Alpha Society, and *Apogee*. This is her third year with *Apogee* and she currently holds the position of Managing Editor. After college, Anna plans to travel a little, prepare for graduate school, and hopefully find a job. Mostly, she plans to continue writing poetry. Some of Anna's work has also appeared in the fifth edition of *So It Goes*, the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library's literary journal.

Sarah Meerris a freshman at Marian University in Indianapolis. She is majoring in English and minoring in Spanish. In the future she hopes to study in Spain and write about her adventure in two languages

Marie Ostendorf is a double major in English and Creative Writing and a double minor in Studio Art Photography and Art History. She wants to be a photojournalist and travel the world telling people's stories through art. Her biggest fascination is empathy, and she is hoping to use it as a means to create more compassion in the media.

Samantha Roberts is a sophomore at Franklin College, who is pursuing a double major in Political Science and Religion. She is a young photographer who has had little training with only attending two courses with Jim Barnett, a professor at Franklin College. She pursues her passion for photography as a hobby that.

Caspian Schmitz is junior at Franklin College with a Creative Writing major and minors in Theatre and English. He has been on *Apogee's* staff for three years. He is especially interested in science fiction and prose poetry.

Spencer Wesche is a senior majoring in Biology with a focus on Conservation Biology and Ecology. She is the President of E.A.R.T.H Club and has been involved with field biology research throughout her time at Franklin College. She is currently in the process of applying to graduate school and hopes to obtain a Ph.D. in Wildlife Biology.

Nadia Wolnisty is a poet, memoirist, and creative non-fiction writer. Her poetry and essays have appeared in several journals, such as Mad Swirl, Do Not Go Gentle, University Scholar, La Alarma, Essay Daily, Haggard and Halloo, Bullet for my Butterfly, and a zine machine (www.WhiteRockZineMachine.com). Her first chapbook, "Manual" is forthcoming from Cringe Worthy Poetry Collective. She can be found performing around Dallas at Mad Swirl, Common Company, Pandora's Box, Bonehouse, and Poets on X+.

Meghan Yencer is a sophomore at Franklin College double majoring in English and Secondary Education.