

Gambling the Aisle



Issue #8

Masthead

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Contents

Words

Janne Karlsson	4
Glen Armstrong	6
Erin Pringle-Toungate	8
Natalie Jones	9
Renoir Gaither	11, 53
Lisa Laffend	12
Millie Tullis	17
Jesse Mardian	18
Tony Schanuel Interview	22
Brandon S. Roy	31
Michael Wilson	32
Meggie Royer	36
Koal Gil	40
Simon Perchik	42
Darren Demaree	44
Labecca Jones	45
Samantha Albala	48
Dylan Debelis	49
Chad W. Lutz	50
Alan Britt	55
Brianna Barrett	56

Images

Janne Karlsson	4
Alex Nodopaka	5, 41, 54, 56
Iryna Lialko	7, 15, 38, 39
Kelly Nulty	8, 34, 35, 57
MANDEM	10, 51
Steve Simmerman	16, 49
Dave Petraglia	21, 44
Tony Schanuel	24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
Tom Darin Liskey	37, 52
Vivian Calderon Bogoslavsky	46, 47

Janne Karlsson

Your Last Kiss

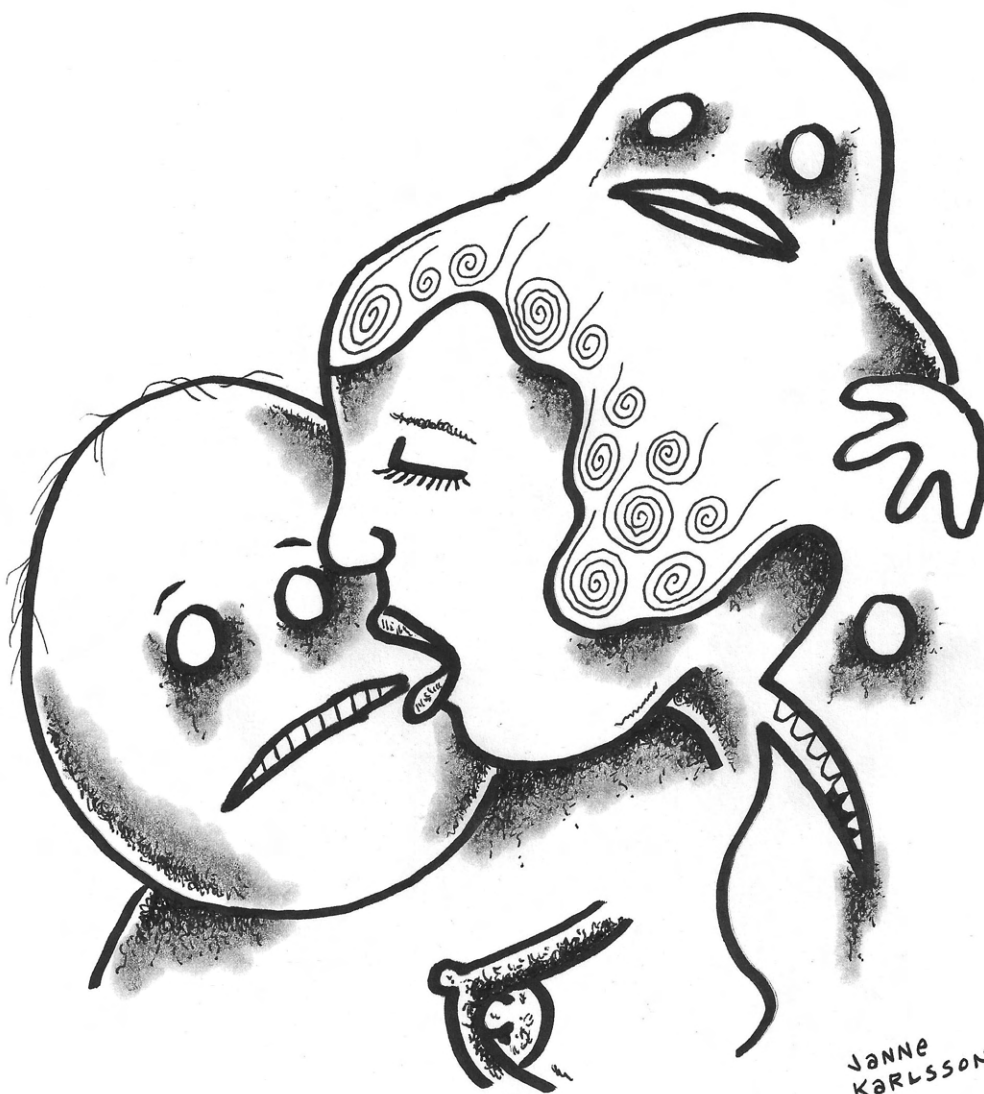
Your last kiss

produced ghosts & demons

and now

i'm not

all that lonely anymore.





Symmetry 1 by Alex Nodopaka

Glen Armstrong

Getting to Know You

Too many revelations
all at once: she considers

herself a dolphin, the world
a sentient oyster, those who succeed
in the world both lovers

and murder-suicides, paradise

a part of her body that whispers
to her when it rains.
She considers.
She considers.
I consider

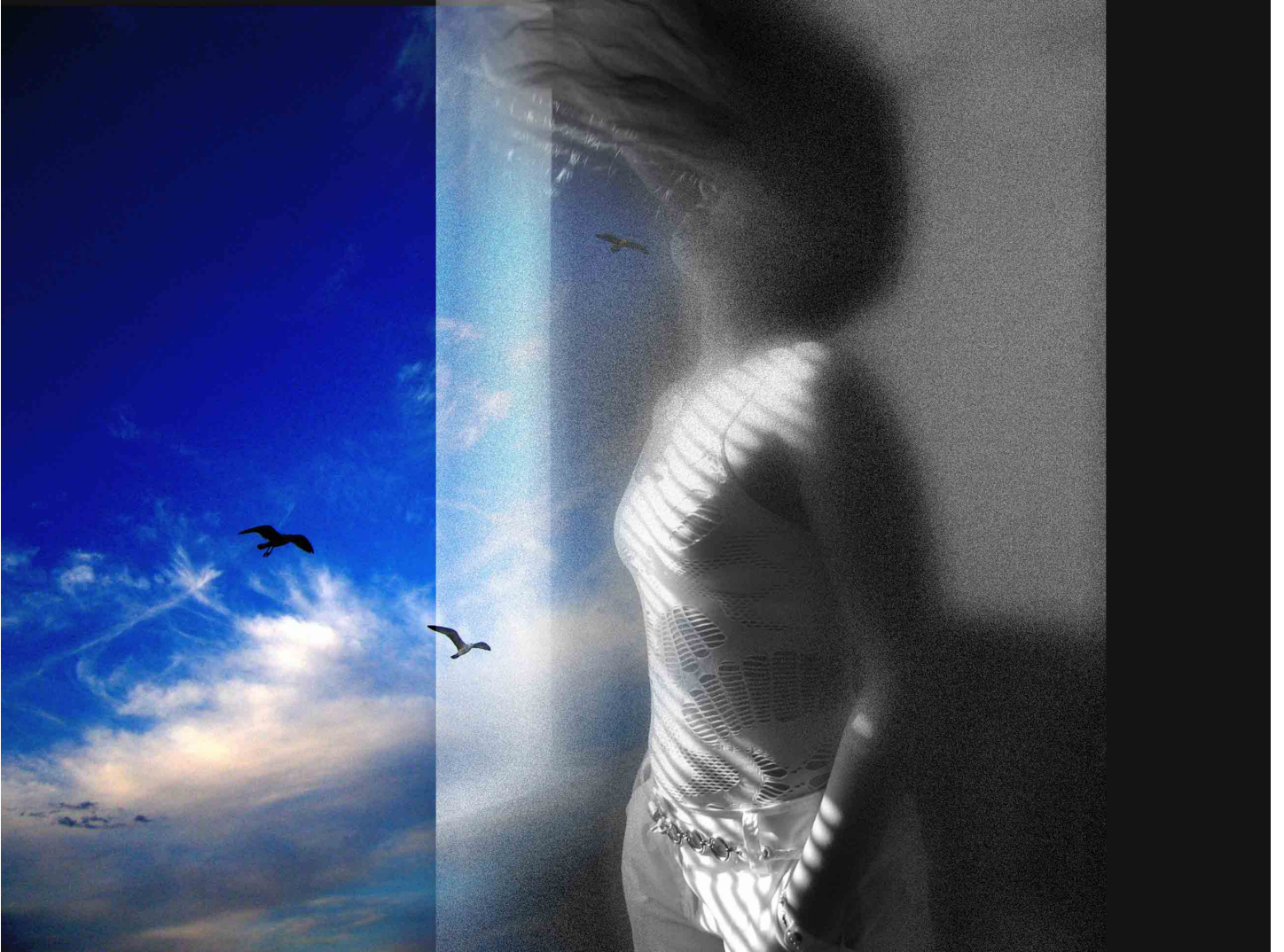
an ill-advised love affair
sung by a jittery pop star:
the one with the beautiful body

and the fucked-up childhood.

The song strips it down
to zero revelations
and a pleasant refrain.

Three minutes.
Body glitter.
I will always fall

for these kinds of love.

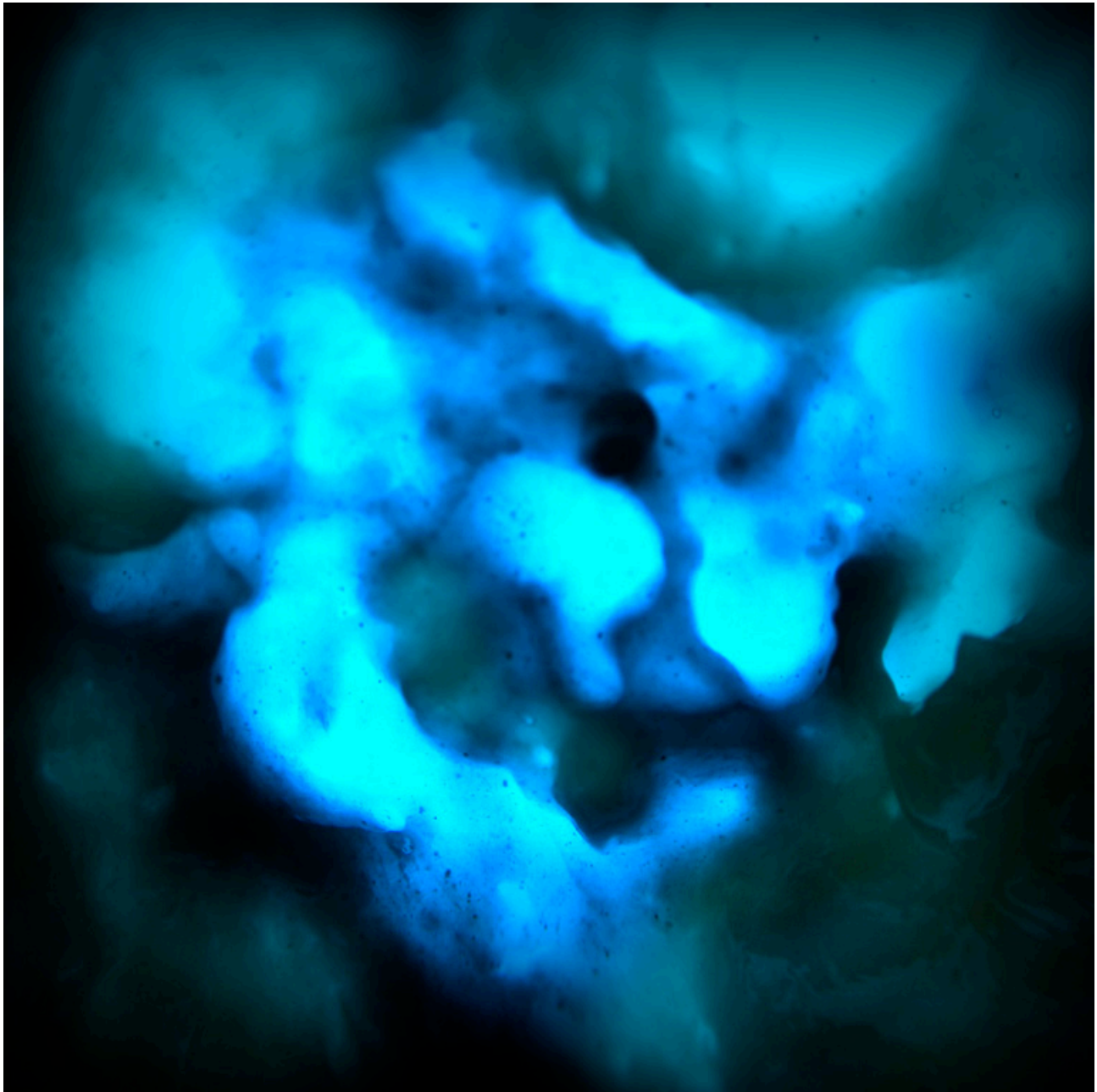


Soaring by Iryna Lialko

Erin Pringle-Toungate

What's Left

Like a raven who has made a friend, my father brings me things he finds that no one else wants. A ceramic leg painted white with a black shoe, box turtles, a rubber index finger on a keychain. I leave him each of my teeth under my pillow, and he keeps them in his dresser drawer, with his.



Pioneer 6 by Kelly Nulty

Quiet Once Again

Natalie Jones

I look up the phrase “cool dad” because I have finally run out of videos to watch on the Internet. The uploader has named the photo “cool-dad-and-daughter-with-sunglasses-on-checking-out-her-cell-phone.jpg” so I save it to my desktop and hope that if my computer spontaneously wipes itself clean, this photo will be the only remaining evidence of my online activity. I am happy.

I want a sense of positivity so overwhelming that it instantly drives people away from me. He still has his podcasts and I still have my novels and we had each other. I was always running late because of “traffic” and although a lot has changed, I am still stuck in traffic somewhere, still making excuses for my decisions. He always asked employees in chain stores where things were by saying the item itself. “Toilet paper?” he asked, instead of, “Where is the toilet paper?” This made me angry and he always laughed.

I drink the coffee at my therapist’s office even though it tastes bad. After I drink the entire cup, I realize that it probably wouldn’t have offended her at all if I chose not to drink it. For dinner, I eat some chocolate frosting straight out of the container. My side dish is some rainbow sprinkles. I make eye contact with my dog and I try to apologize, but he is starting to resent me and he walks away from me in the middle of my rationalization. I can say with total confidence that I have never felt truly clean in my entire life. After dinner, I disagree with my mother’s opinions regarding her favorite competitive singing show, and she grounds me for two weeks, which is total bullshit.

I still am not good at coming up with titles that don’t sound like every single one of my lovesick puppy-dog poems from middle school. A stranger on the Internet asks me what I am doing. I tell them, “It’s a fucking secret,” but really, I am just buying overpriced fruit from a convenience store and wondering what exists.

I tried to pray without taking a break to watch television. I told myself that I would pray to whichever god my relatives told me to worship if the commercials would just end a split second sooner. Now, I am full of life. Now, I can try to explain how it feels to like something without using the word “like.” Now, I can love someone without fearing their hatred.

He touched my hair in the shower drain, and I would always cringe. I still avoid people that I recognize in coffeeshops, but now he is one of those people. I still blot my lipstick on any surface available to me, leaving red streaks on everything I own. He touched the hair on my head, and I would always swoon. I still have a hard time following “the rules.” I am still allowing food to expire. He insisted that he could never smile in pictures, but I think he just never tried. I still end all of my physical exercise before it gets a chance to begin.

He always smoked his cigarettes down to the filter. I was always forcing him to watch films in different languages, but he never would. We tried to be civilized people sometimes. He was a cat person. I cannot look at specific fonts without feeling an overwhelming sense of disgust. I am, and always will be, a dog person. We watched action movies and laughed every time something exploded for no reason. We used to lie in bed at night and listen to the loud noises outside of our apartment. We used to wonder if it would ever be quiet once again.



After the War Lazarus3 by MANDEM

Renoir Gaither

bohemianloveaffair

no mem oryde serves the love it has sh e sa ys
 passion still mor phsin to fur ni ture I sa y wi pe the so
 lip sism from to day's box scores sh e sa ys a par ki ng me
 ter mi ght re sem ble a bud dha I s ay we tu rn ju nk m a
 il in to hai ku &go ld f i
 sh in to jazz li ck ing cr ac
 ker jacks from ou rwr ists &co nt em pl at ing how to
 ke ep th is romance from capsi
 zing into acci dental ob so les ence

Flock 'em

Lisa Laffend

“We cannot explain why someone would want to murder flamingos.”

In late October 2007, zookeepers at the Frankfurt Zoo witnessed something they probably wished they could forget. Three of the elegant pale-pink feathered birds had been decapitated and a fourth was strangled. Why would someone kill a flamingo? Why would someone kill anything?

There is only one species that goes by the common name of “red panda”; in fact, they are the only species in their genus and class. On the other hand there are animals like “ducks” which come in a variety of species, which we tend to understand, yet just not care enough to specify when referring to them on a day-to-day basis. When it comes to “flamingos,” most would probably assume the situation was more like the first. Yes, they’re birds. They’re large birds with long legs, and craning necks which is comparable to others, but when their pink-lemonade coloring and precise shape come into play, few creatures compare. To assume there is just one species of flamingo is to be quite mistaken. There are actually six different kinds, three of which aren’t even the hot and humid, tropical climate type that we assume when discussing the birds. These species live in elevated, cold climates, like the Andes Mountains, so high that researchers need to bring oxygen tanks. There are six different types, and yet we call them all by the same name.

Most likely when you’re thinking of flamingos, though, you’re picturing an American one. A bird with thin legs and knobby knees that don’t quite look like they should be holding up the weight of the rest of the bird. A bird with an oval body covered with big blush-colored feathers shooting out into a tail, dipping towards the ground. A bird with a long almost orange neck, starting lower than one may expect and stretching to an almost unreasonably thin size before turning into the head. A bird with little yellow eyes that look more like something you’d find on a stuffed animal rather than the real thing. A bird with a tricolor beak - white, orange, and black - curving on the bottom half as one might expect, yet bending up into a point in almost the center of the top half. These are most likely the birds you’re picturing, that is, unless you’re picturing the pink plastic kind.

Madison, Wisconsin’s official bird is the plastic flamingo. The decision was made with a vote of 15-4 in honor of the 1979 University of Wisconsin prank. Two student government officers dreamt up the scheme before convincing a friend to drive down to a Chicago suburb and buy up a truckload of flamingos, which they then spent the night assembling. Running out of time, they scattered the hollow plastic ornaments across the steep slope leading to the dean’s office. No one could figure out where a couple of college kids had gotten so many plastic flamingos in so little time. It wasn’t until thirty years later that anyone knew where the birds had come from. The pale pink blow-molded flamingos with large round black eyes and hastily painted fleshy yellow and black beaks, bent as though snapped, had been manufactured by Pink Inc. Having seen a commemorative photograph of the flamingos tossed haphazardly on the campus, the company publicized their claim to a piece of the Wisconsin history.

There’s a company in Arizona with a dead-end website called “Flamingos By Night.” Between 11p.m. and 6a.m. they sneak out and cover lawns in those plastic pink flamingos with the promise to come back and remove them by 7p.m. the next night, unless you’d like to rent them for another day or arrange a later pickup. They’ve been up to these pink plastic antics since 1994, adding various more lawn ornaments to their repertoire over the years. Despite the cheery tone of their website, one could only imagine the shock and potential bursting blood vessels of one waking up to find their yard staked with these metal legged, hollow bodied birds. Some sites call it “flocking” while others refer to it as “flamingoed,” either way a quick Google search reveals Flamingos By Night is far from the only company marketing this slightly more sophisticated rendition of “forking.”

Don Featherstone, the creator of the pink plastic flamingo, keeps 57 of them in his yard of his Fitchburg, Massachusetts property. Specifically 57 to commemorate the year in which he designed them. Of course, these are frequently kidnapped by college students, presumably from Fitchburg State University, but what else would you expect?

People, May 19, 1986: “Some things you cannot imagine being invented, cannot quite conceive being produced. Some things are just there, part of the American cultural landscape, as if they had been extruded whole from the popular psyche.”

In the National Mall on the third floor of the west wing of the American History Museum is the “National Treasures of Pop Culture” exhibit. An exhibit that, from my own personal experience, I had gathered to be notoriously frequently undergoing renovations. Two summers ago, before I left for college, my parents tried to squeeze in as many road trips as possible, since they saw this as the last chance to do so as a family. We woke up early one morning and drove down to Washington D.C. As we stretched our legs from the long drive, briskly walking across the grass my memory has undoubtedly made greener, we were given our assignment. While here, my mother declared, my sister and I were to learn something. Just one thing. She welcomed us to learn more, but later, she promised, she’d pester us about the one specific fact we had learned.

Don Featherstone designed the first plastic flamingo. Its legs were made of long thin poles that stretched up like a capital ‘A,’ but disappearing into the body before they crossed. He had been hired at the age of 21, after years of art school, by Union Products, a plastic company in Leominster, Massachusetts. Its plastic body is the shape of an arched teardrop, more deflated than a lemon with its end yanked into a curved point. Union Products had been making flat plastic lawn ornaments, but was looking for something bolder, eye-catching, three-dimensional. When silly putty is warm, it’s particularly gooey, and if you hold it in one hand, take a pinch, and pull you’ll end up with this long thin segment, threatening to break, that droops a bit from its source in your palm before reaching up; that’s how its neck curves, fragile, delicate. Before the flamingo, they had asked him to design a duck, which he named Charlie. The top of the neck peaks gradually, creating another elegant curve before bulging into the head. Featherstone bought a pet duck and studied it for months before beginning to sculpt the model. Its head is not a perfect circle, but more of a football shape, if the corners of a football were pressed in a bit more, but still far from a ball shape. Without access to live flamingos, Featherstone poured over issues of National Geographic when given his next assignment. The beak curves out like two-thirds of an angular banana, bending somewhere in middle as though it’s been broken, but not entirely removed.

Over twenty million copies of Featherstone’s models have been sold since its creation in 1957. The forms are intricately detailed – a small jet black eye pressed into the shallow socket, a mound below the body where the legs start etched as though covered in a type of down, long finger-like feathers carved into its body, the half-orange half-black airbrushed beak, and of course, who could fail to include, its Hallmark popping bright pink coloring. In his career, Featherstone created 750 different ornaments, but nothing caught on quite like the plastic flamingo.

In the 50s, suburbs were popping up all over the country with identical gingerbread houses lining the American Dream. What a dull world it would be if they left it like that. Plastic lawn ornaments were developed for the sake of personalization in this uniformity. Feeding off the late 40s romanticization of Florida as this commercialized tropical paradise, plastic flamingos became the ‘it’ item, blowing all other ornaments out of the water.

Mattel released “Barbie” in 1959. Built with softly curving legs that went on for miles. The company was formed by a husband and wife duo. A bust bigger than average, wrapped in the black and white angular pattern of a zebra widening as it plummets to her pin-sized waist. Based off a Swiss sex toy, the doll was named after their daughter, Barbara. Her neck, long and lean, like her toothpick-width arms, ready for carrying her woven pocketbook and wing-tip white sunglasses. The wife, Ruth, had seen her daughter playing with paper dolls with which she acted out her dreams. Her head is a smooth oval, far flatter at the top than the bottom, pinched in the middle to create a tiny, delicate nose. Her goal in the creation of the doll was to give girls a new canvas with which to widen their horizons, since baby-dolls just perpetuated dreams of motherhood. With tightly curled bangs, a “top-notch” ponytail of either golden-yellow or nearly-black brown, tiny gold hoops, sassy yet elegant cherry-red lips and arching eyebrows, heavy blue-shadowed black eyeliner rimmed eyes, matching red nail polish, and tiny, perpetually tip-toeing feet slipped into her black heels, Barbie was revolutionarily different than other dolls on the market. While Ruth later developed some of the first prosthetic breasts, her success manifested in the dolls, having sold 350,000 in the first year alone.

All Ruth wanted was something more for her daughter. In an age where a female entrepreneurship was a ridiculous thought and little girls were socially programmed into dreams of motherhood, Ruth wanted

to open a door to bigger dreams. Perhaps she did, perhaps she allowed girls to see themselves as more than their biological role, but these dreams didn't come without faults. The public took her sex-toy knock-off and opened the door for a world of criticism. A favorite being advocacy for eating disorders. Women starve themselves to look like Barbie; for where lawn flamingoes have metal rods for legs no one could ever mistake for reality, Barbie has long plastic limbs shaped like the real thing.

Originally complaints denounced her for wearing far too much eyeliner. I can't help admitting to having thought that of other girls. Then again, if and when I do attempt to apply makeup, the same could probably be said about me. Being raised my mother, who only wore makeup if she were going on a date with my father or a special occasion like a wedding or job interview, and even then wearing an extreme minimum, I never truly got in the habit of wearing it myself, although I've watched others go through the process.

I watch my roommate with a tube of concealer, "applying her face" as some girls refer to it. The key to concealer is to get an even, believable tone, like a thin mask or the hint of a lie. I remind her we're just going over to the dining hall, and she replies that it's impossible to tell when one will run into their future husband. The part that always gets me is the then-shared desire to find someone who likes you even when you're not wearing makeup; someone who thinks you look hot in sweats with your hair up like you haven't washed it in days. That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but still, there's that hope that once you find the right one and you grow comfortable in your own skin you'll be able to stop applying and reapplying the layer of mineral dust or paste across your face.

Most women don't want to admit their age. Most women hide their greys. My mom's always told me that when her hair completely fades, she wants it to be of a striking glistening white, if not she'll dye it something funky. Pink perhaps.

It's not often American men wear makeup. If they were Spanish flamingos maybe that'd be different. When it comes to flamingos, both genders make sure to get "all dolled up" before going out to attract a mate. Coming from one of the last places a human would want to extract a beauty product, a gland near the tail secretes their tailor-made pink pigment which they carefully apply to

their fading feathers. While this façade is regularly applied during mating season, once paired up, they simply seem to stop caring about keeping up appearances. Back to the pale, pale hint of pink and the mundane grey-white they fade.

Not all flamingos mate for life. Some pair up one season and are mingling with a new flock the next. Perhaps some become committed and upon the death of their partner begin anew. For Bermuda and Miami, this was not the case. The pair is part of a twenty-two flamingo flock at the Blackpool Zoo, where they've resided for nearly as long as the zoo has existed. Say what you will about the others, but these two have barely left each other's side since arrival. Nearly all the zookeepers agree, they've never seen two birds more in love. What started as summer love in 1973, lasted for 40 years as of 2013.

Upon the 40th anniversary in 1997 of the plastic flamingo, a flock of roughly 500 was assembled in Universal Studios Florida. Don Featherstone and his wife were in attendance, no doubt wearing matching outfits. Nancy, Don's wife, sews all their clothes, ensuring that they coordinate perfectly. She claims the duo has over forty different flamingo-themed outfits alone. Having been together for nearly as long as Bermuda and Miami, Nancy stated since they already did everything together, dressing alike just seemed right. Nearly every photograph of the couple displays a different crazy loud pattern, grins, and quite frequently their dog or one of the flamingos.

Room of artifacts. Chairs sat in by presidents. Flags tattered and worn. Lighting damaging nothing but your eyes as you squint to read the name plates. Not interested. Just like the last. Searching for the home of interesting facts. Cars from the 60s. Closer. Barstools sat on during the Civil Rights movement. Closer still. A replica kitchen full of pots, pans, recipes, notes, photographs all belonging to the late, great Julia Childs. Almost. Harsh museum light sharpening the pink of its color. Technicolor photos of white picket-fenced homes hang as a backdrop. Pink plastic flamingos. Found it. Lost American dreams. Unrealistic standards. This façade of happiness, staring blankly. Everything coming so easily. So carefree it's almost bragging. Wrapped so softly in blown pink lemonade-colored plastic. Legs literally thin as rods. Image of perfection. On a different day, I could've hated it, would've hated it, wanted to destroy it even, but all I could do was stand there, struck with awe, and stare. It was beautiful.



Red tears flying up by Iryna Lialko

probably it is a generation to write
the Democratic Review

English - person - show she is present
in County of origin -
parent - John Miguel

Confid Flag
Fellows (past is not dead, it's only past -
WNET NY)

Cholesterol - May 27 2000 NY Business News - CNN
moderation is key word - portion size of meat
use olive oil or corn oil for frying
sit away from TV
eat more fat - more protein - a potato
bad cholesterol - LDL - reduce it
HDL is good for you
triglycerides - go up with alcohol
monosaturated fat - olive oil (sausage)
Up in air - have some triglycerides

Book - by John Appleby - 'Inheriting a Revolution'
the colonial era - started in GB -
after C. Rev. exports - manufacturing
print & news - literacy
self-made men vs. men
health was weaker - effect of fathers -
freedom of thought was discouraged
It's not if it is

September - a nice deep day

black female
Tech Ward Sears - bridge -
17th May 2000 - postcard

20

Wario - tax cuts - Petacki say
Rick - ABC and out Clinton
14th - anti - and - Greenwich - bills
more - and - and - abortion -
expensive - and - write for
more - and - tight - space
Rick - more - acceptable - Hilary

Working Families Party -
saves money of \$2.75 like MA + CT
tax - and - 20% -
Who can - should - want - to - pay - for -
and - opening - in - call - performance

"The present is the future - happens -
as a man - present -
what are your wishes

Glen Bessie by Steve Simmerman

Millie Tullis

hannah Means God Favored me

I've gone through two black teapots.
The tea bag turns the hot water
to amber
and I drink
all of it.

Maybe I would have been fucked just by
being naked.
If I hadn't let him go down on me, put his tongue
into my vagina without asking, my rape would be more
legitimized.
By being in my bedroom and wasted and, alone
except for the stranger who kept taking off, my clothes.

I kept forgetting his name when he touched me.

He'd touch me and I'd forget and
then he touched
my breast with mouth and I
wondered where exactly my bra— *burn my tongue in hot yolk.*
I would remember his
name for four (dark)purple seconds then,
s(l)ipped like water
when I closed my eyes and it was,

Halfway through Saturday, pretty roommate
touched my eyebrow, all face without words, and I remembered.
Stranger in my room had even told me his middle
name, but maybe there is a God who
loves me personally because I
can't remember it now.

i only remember what name
appears on all of my formal rape
documents.
next to my legal name.
hannah, also
stranger.

AHS

Applied Heart Systems

Patient Diary

Jesse Mardian

Last Name: Hunt
Age: 28

First Name: Ted
Sex: Male

Date: 06/28/15
Indication: Bradycardia

Start Time: 6:00 PM

TIME and HEART RATE	ACTIVITY (I was...)	SYMPTOM (I felt...)
Approx. Time: <u>7:30 PM</u> Heart Rate: <u>50</u>	I was sitting on my sofa. Susie rushed by with the last box, family photographs (she left the ones of us in the trash). She looked at the Holter monitor on my waist. You got to make this thing smaller by the way, Doc. Susie glared as if there was one last fight in us. What? Like our collapse was just my fault? Too late for sorrys, too soon for reconciliation. "I hope your heart fucking stops," she said. Always over the top. The apartment door slammed.	I felt for the remote and switched on the tube. A show Susie liked was playing. Something about these contestants all vying for some rich guy's love. Or should I say wallet. It would be like her to watch filth like this. Absorbed in the lie that there are Prince Charmings in this world. Telling me I got to take care of myself more. Now look at me, wearing this stupid thing, as though something is wrong with me.

<p>Approx Time: <u>8:50 PM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>48</u></p>	<p>I was heading to Hannigan's. Whisky accelerates the ticker, right? Skateboarded a block, got tired, bought a taco, got diarrhea, stopped at a gas station bathroom. It's amazing how much time people spend tagging these restrooms. Who the hell would want to spend any longer than you have to in the john? A scrawl on the stall said, "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow—Psalms 51:7."</p>	<p>I felt a smell of feces clinging to my nostril hairs. Since there is more room in this box I guess I ought to keep writing, eh Doc? So my heart rate dropped... probably from the excessive clenching of my sphincter muscles. Or maybe from the extreme stench and the holding of breath. Or perhaps a malfunction. This thing appears to be from the 1920s or something. Some toilet water might've splashed on the wiring. Hallelujah.</p>
<p>Approx Time: <u>9:32 PM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>47</u></p>	<p>I was beating some veteran at pool. His beard was like sill dust. He didn't take kindly to losing to what he called "another cog in humanity." We went double or nothing. Scratching on the break, he looked at me with his shell-shocked eyes. A bet's a bet, am I right? I took his money gladly and grabbed a Glenfiddich neat.</p>	<p>I felt a river of burning surge into my chest. A cleanse. As though whatever was gripping my heart weakened. Sure, the Holter read a drop, but that's because I was so relaxed. If something was really wrong with me I'd feel it, Doc. Marathon runners have heart rates like this. I must be in pretty damn good shape. My insurance better cover this.</p>
<p>Approx Time: <u>10:46 PM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>48</u></p>	<p>I was enjoying my third whisky when I spied a decent blonde looking my way. Hefty love handles peeked under her shirt. Susie would hate this girl, so I bought her a drink. I told her to call me the bionic man. I answered her puzzled look by lifting my shirt. Have you ever been with a cyborg, I said.</p>	<p>I felt like a robotic James Bond. Doc, this monitor works wonders with the ladies. I mean, I was just standing there, and she gave me the eye. When I showed her the Holter she felt pity, I could tell by the way she touched my shoulder. I knew then the deal was sealed. The monitor read 48, or was it 43?</p>

<p>Approx Time: <u>11:22 PM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>150</u></p>	<p>I was doing my best to stop her from tampering with the wires. How do you expect a man to participate in his extracurricular activities with cords protruding from his chest? She insisted on missionary. I told her it was my dying wish to be... more experimental. Note that at 11:21 a wire was dislodged. My heart didn't explode. When we finished she turned on her side and asked me to leave.</p>	<p>I felt for my pants and scrambled. She was a good lay, Doc. The heavier ones always are. Susie was a sloth in bed. Always making me do everything. Always complaining that my mind wasn't in the right place. Or was it my heart? She said I was a selfish lover. Aren't we all? And see, Doc, my heart rate jumped. All is well in coronaryville. And here's a lifelike drawing: 8=====D</p>
<p>Approx Time: <u>12:02 AM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>45</u></p>	<p>I was walking through a scuzzy neighborhood on the eastside. Stopped at a hole called Jay's Liquor. Bought a tall-boy and a flask of Crown. Opened the beer immediately upon embarking through the threshold.</p>	<p>I felt lopsided. Probably from the drinking, but I've had a bum ankle for a while now. Do you know a good foot doctor, Doc? It always pops when I extend. Could be something serious? Is there ankle cancer? Maybe osteoporosis?</p>
<p>Approx Time: <u>12:11 AM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>40</u></p>	<p>I was drinking in an alley and trying to decipher some graffiti that looked like a Pollock combustion that Susie would of thought was "extraordinary." Really it was just a regurgitation of unskilled artistry. A cop came out of nowhere. He wanted to book me for a DIP, but I showed him the Holter. I told him I was dying. He drove me home and proved to be a nice fellow.</p>	<p>I felt for my wallet when he dropped me off. It wasn't there. Probably in a gutter somewhere. This might have to be pro bono, Doc. The officer gave me his blessing, saying something like, "I'll pray for you." What a saint. I would've tipped him, if I had had the money. I walked into the apartment. It was empty. I went straight to bed and reached for Susie.</p>

<p>Approx: <u>8:56 AM</u></p> <p>Heart Rate: <u>31</u></p>	<p>I was awaking to the drone of a flatline, thinking that it was finally all over. I turned off the alarm, called in sick, and lay like a gnat in a web. Maybe I could've moved, but it really didn't matter. I remembered a dream. My legs were backwards, taking me to all the wrong places.</p>	<p>I felt my heart beat with my fingertips. Doc, could this all be mental? My mind colluding with my heart? This all started when Susie got cold feet. Maybe she's the pacemaker I always needed? I lay in bed until the appointment, wondering how to avoid the drop.</p>
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Surf by Dave Petraglia

30 Days 4 Questions: A Non-Linear Interview with Tony Schanuel

John Cross

Thirty days ago, when I first contacted Tony Schanuel, I had no idea the strange path our conversation would take. I certainly had no idea that it would take Tony and I so long to conduct our chat or that the entirety of our conversation could be boiled down to just four questions with four fantastic replies. On a personal level, I found during the course of the past month that my daily life was oddly connecting with what Tony had to say about his art. I spent much of the last four weeks in the trees, hiking, trying to be in the moment and hoping for serendipity to act as my muse and allow me to see. The connections Tony Schanuel strives for with his photography lift the images from the mundane in an attempt to achieve the philosophical. The images ask questions, begging the viewer to take a closer look, to think about what the image is on a level deeper than simple object recognition. My suggestion? Take him up on the challenge. Spend some time looking beyond the surface. Allow the photos to work their magic on you.

John Cross: Tell me about the series *The Majesty of Trees*. What made you want to make the series? What does the series mean to you? What do you want the viewer to take away from the experience?

Tony Schanuel: The seed for *Majesty of Trees* actually was planted more than forty years ago, when I experienced a non-ordinary state of consciousness after ingesting magical fungi. That experience was a profound realization that we are interconnected with all of life. This impacted me in such a powerful way that I developed a very strong connection to trees and our natural world.

As I have gotten older and have seen what modern man is doing to the environment (and our tragic disconnect with nature), I find myself photographing trees more and more. To me, they represent an almost archetypal expression of nature itself.

It seems that today's fast-moving, data-intensive reality and the virtual relationships that man has developed through technology have led us to lose our connection with the natural world in which we live. Thus, many decisions are made from a place of disconnect from our environment, because we are not having direct experiences of being in nature.

My want is that this work (*Majesty of Trees*) will inspire and encourage the viewer to see and be in this world in a more mindful way, and to take responsibility for decisions that are impacting the planet.

And from the perspective of my Zen meditation practice, I share these photographs to alert the viewer to the beauty and wonder of the ordinary moments of life itself.

I find your response deeply philosophical, and I tend to agree with you. However, this brings up a recurring problem with contemporary art--one of communication. If art is visual communication, then it is one-way communication at best. In the case of *The Majesty of Trees*, as an example, how can you be sure the viewer is getting at least some taste of your message? How can you be sure they don't just look and think, "Oh, pretty tree"?

I can't be sure that the art is impacting the viewer. One reason is that we all have our own filters, biases, and life experiences that color our perceptions.

I realize that just because I have certain intentions with the work and my mission to awaken the viewer, those may not be enough to create the same impact as my experience.

For me, there is a mystery in the creative process. Some call it a muse or genius; the name is not important. This mystery for me is like a flower. It blooms and goes through its cycle without any agenda to communicate other than its own nature.

It really doesn't matter to me, nor do I feel an attachment to a specific outcome from this mystery.

My approach is to bring forth my visual experience through my photographic tools. My hope, at best, is to create a space of inquiry for the viewer, knowing that there is no assurance this will take place.

In this project, I used the abstract nature of

black-and-white, and in some cases infrared black-and-white photography, to create that “space of inquiry.”

My intention was to take the subject matter (trees) out of the normal, everyday perception (color) that most of us experience. That approach, I believe, can create a portal of inquiry...What? Where? Why?... the Question!

I find that a visual communication that engages the viewer with a question is much more interesting than one that gives a neat, packaged answer.

Such is life.

It is very interesting to hear you speak on the subject of trees, the nature of man, and the nature of connection in such eloquent terms, but isn't photography a mechanical process? How do you reconcile the dichotomy between your desired communion with nature as well as the viewer and the machine-made, digitally-enhanced reality of the process?

I have never framed this as a dualistic process, something to reconcile.

Not Knowing... again, I bring up the elusive Mystery of Life, maybe we have a classic paradox.

I see a great freedom in the Not Knowing: “When the student is ready, the teacher appears.”

It is ironic to me that I use mechanical and digital tools that seem so foreign to the natural world. It also is interesting to me that many of these visions and expressions had to wait 20 years to come into being because the technology was not available to plumb their depths, and I didn't have the life experience to marry them together.

Here is a side note that may offer clarity or confusion to the question of dichotomy and reconciliation. I came across this on Wikipedia: Wave-particle duality is the fact that every elementary particle or quantic entity exhibits the properties of not only particles, but also waves. It addresses the inability of the classical concepts “particle” or “wave” to fully describe the behavior of quantum-scale objects. As Einstein wrote: “It

seems as though we must use sometimes the one theory and sometimes the other, while at times we may use either. We are faced with a new kind of difficulty. We have two contradictory pictures of reality; separately neither of them fully explains the phenomena of light, but together they do.”

Perhaps the path of your career has diminished the idea of this duality. What I mean is, you started as a commercial photographer, shooting rock bands and trains. I would think that spending one's whole life behind the lens reduces the concept of the camera as a mechanical adjunct to the eye. Rather, the camera seems to have become an extension of you, in the same way a dog believes the leash is an extension of its human companion.

John, you are on point with your insight about the dog and leash. It really is about integrating experience (10,000 hours?) with the tools. In turn, the tools become a seamless extension of the creative process.

Tell me about the other series we are showing here. How does it relate to the *Majesty of Trees*? Is there a connection? Does your philosophical tide shift when the photos include people?

There is no direct linear connection of the two themes other than the IR photography.

The non-linear connecting thread with all my photography is staying fully present to those serendipitous situations that present themselves. My experience is it is happening all the time if one pays attention. Of course it is extremely challenging, to say the least, to be in that state of mind.

The *Stranger in a Strange Land* series is based upon those odd serendipitous and incongruous moments coming together; using IR takes them to a very surreal space, thus the title of the series.

The series came together after reviewing present and some past work. That is when the theme started to emerge.

To learn more about Tony Schanuel and to see more of his work visit: <http://www.schanuelphoto.com/>



Tree Farm by Tony Schanuel



Forest Floor by Tony Schanuel



As the Crow Flies 2 by Tony Schanuel



Fractal Trees by Tony Schanuel



Horses Running by Tony Schanuel



Exit Stage Right by Tony Schanuel



Dog by Tony Schanuel

Brandon S. Roy

Magritte's Man's Condition

The coins on the floor were for
good luck. I'm watching the woman

across the street undress. She wears red
lipstick her cousin bought for her while

she was overseas. I used to tell myself
that I was in love with her. Those lies

make me regret everything I ever did.
Her lips pucker for the mirror, cellphone

placed on her dresser, distorted light
glowing on her skin. Warm to the touch,

I wonder if I can sell the dream to the
highest bidder. Some days I question my luck.

Erotic asphyxiation: Let me place a
bag over ours head so that we may die

in each other's arms. If the voices
suggested to me that I cover the

walls in small orange skins carefully
placed according to my imagination.

Being wrong, I admit it when I'm right.
I'm entitled to my own destruction.

Michael Wilson

How to Gift Oranges

Begin by weighing each orange¹
 against floorboard photo albums
 then converting the difference into time²—
 mass is crucial, the color
 will come.
 Wrap them in empty bedsheets³ before
 walking, protecting them
 from outside influences like sun or locust
 or unwanted opinions.

Whistle a tune somewhere between nostalgia and hope⁴.

Choose a seat furthest from the east-facing windows
 and stare directly into the light,
 conscious that your irises are translucent
 and your face focal.

Enjoy the ironic blindness⁵
 in waiting for the same sound
 of her ancient Birkenstocks and
 sungrown freckles, you

know it well, you've
 expected to hear it
 every morning since
 dusk⁶.

Cut a halfmoon in the orange rind with your penknife
 and twist open with both palms
 like unscrewing
 a lid.

1 Mandarins suffice so long as they can trace their lineage. Arguments have been made against clementines unless intended for brief encounters with extended highs

2 Home-brewed equations suffice, though most scholars recommend scrutiny and consultation before a final draft is tested

3 Deodorant warm wash, normal dry cycle. If you've slept alone for more than four months, wash for two cycles.

4 Paul Simon's "Graceland" has proven effective

5 If the weather is overcast, try wearing suspenders that best compliment the inner iris color

6 Assume time is nonlinear in the post-modern fashion that eschews simplicity

Hold each citric breast upturned to some⁷ heaven
 and give thanks
 and let the juice run
 down your veins.

At no point are you to remove your headphones.

Gently peel the rind and navigate
 the individual slices into your empty mouth,
 visibly savoring each
 as one does
 on stage⁸.

When only a single slice remains, carefully extend it to
 the girl sitting next to you
 with the vastwood eyes
 and tie-dye backpack.

She will politely refuse
 every time⁹.

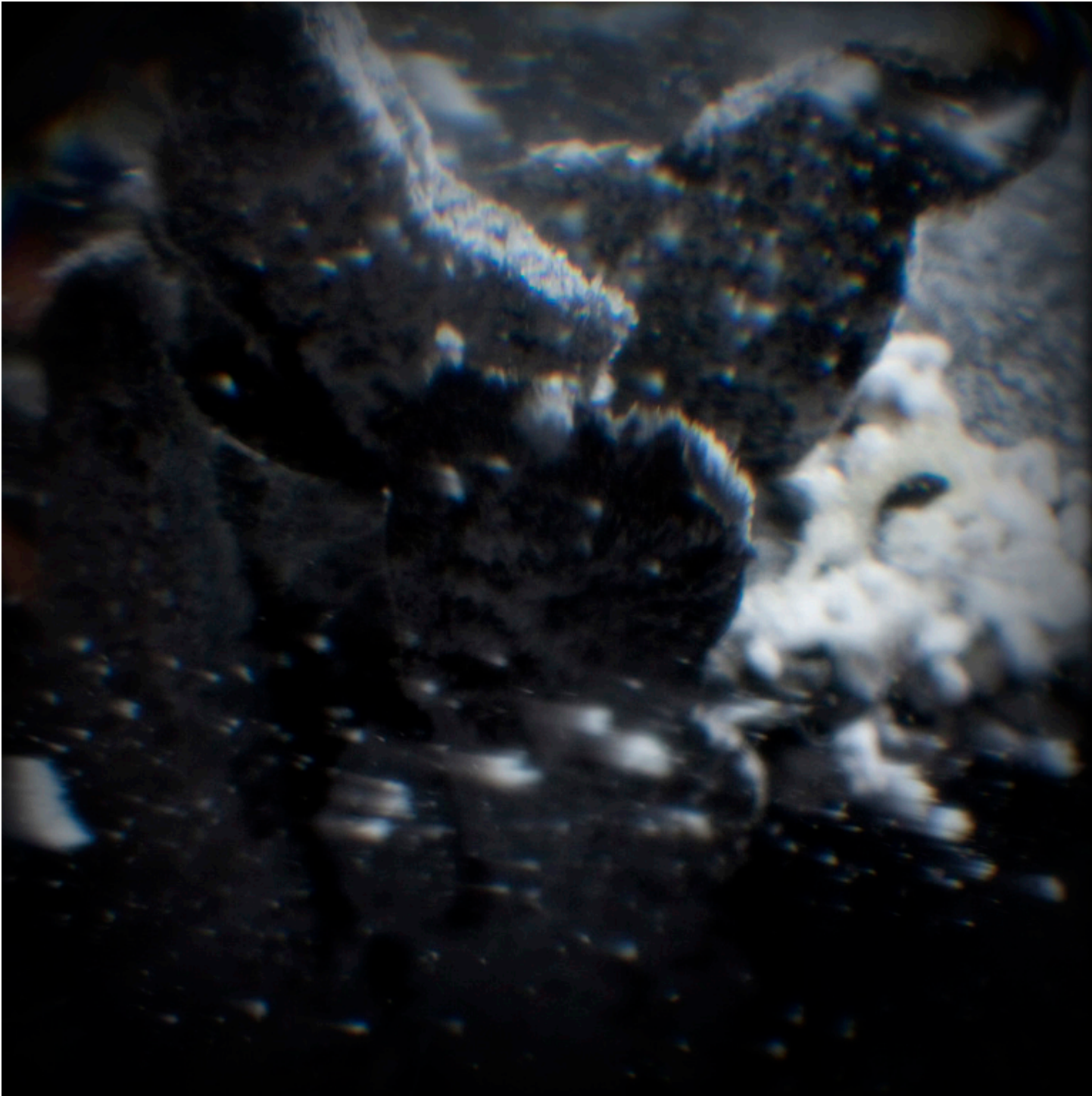
7 Any

8 Studies have shown that a majority of stage performers prefer lighting that renders the theatre unknowable, claiming that direct eye-contact with audience members runs the risk of breaking character

9



Pioneer 3 by Kelly Nulty



Pioneer 2 by Kelly Nulty

Meggie Royer

Mobius

1. Great-grandmama sailed in on a ship from Ireland,
planted orchids and daylilies by hand, eventually moved on
to bringing in onions from the garden, slid their pearled bodies
beneath great-grandpapa's pillow, strung them
from the ceiling like tender chandeliers
until there was nothing left
in that house but tears.
Survived the famine only to watch her brother die
by tumor, cell after cell gone to memory.
2. Grandmama sewed mile upon mile of quilts,
their patches ghazal and hurricane all in one
to keep the down beds warm whenever her sons stayed overnight.
When Grandpapa had his aneurysm she tucked one
round his feet, that great ruby stain pulsing
again and again inside his stomach
like a compass needle turned the wrong way.
3. Inside the womb, when we
were just tiny origami limbs made of skin
folding ourselves into something only a mother could love,
we learned more than we wanted to about loss.
The fourth child died.
Grief pulled out Mama's spine and left her bedridden.

4. When I was a kid, I swore I saw ghosts. The rippling of bathtub water without anyone in it, footprints climbing the stairs like piano octaves. I found the fourth child's hair in my bed, her breath evaporating from my mirrors, Uncle poised in the doorway, a pause, back half of his brain still missing Grandpapa reading in the armchair with a lit cigarette.
5. Just before Grandmama passed I leaned down to her ear so she could whisper how glad she was that I was adjusting so well to the afterlife.



Untitled by Tom Darin Liskey



Birds fly to the sun by Iryna Lialko



Spring by Iryna Lialko

The Bliss Motel

Koal Gil

Bliss, she called it. "Something a boy like you will never understand." It only took me this long to figure out what she meant by that. Mama was right...

...and, when I stood there...under the orange sun as it beamed through the green of the sycamores, as my black leather Sunday shoes creaked at the edge of the hole, watching Mama as she descended into the weeds below, I felt I got a bit closer. I stood by Carlos. I stood by Lucia. I stood by Mama. With each passing I grew warmer...and as they all keep falling around me, I only feel better. Better about death...I will if you will. I stand over them and I stand among their families as they weep and bellow out from between the catacombs of the sycamores. Time is a terrible thing...and they'll continue to laugh, they'll continue to drink and fuck and dance...if you died then, they'd be smiling by now...

...and now...now I sit in this clinic only to pray for a death...something that'll take my mind off these prescriptions that keep shuffling in aside the hypos and junkies...thousands of faxes and forms shouting on end in red ink that the mayor needs his insulin and the sheriff needs his testosterone pills and the hummingbirds scream for sugar in their water and your sister, her Valtrex and the waiting rooms fill like the last stop to Hell while the radio is still convinced it's Christmas and the nurses step out for a smoke and the doc takes a breather, lying back in his office with a saline drip to kill his hangover...

...and the News Anchor on the television set pushes that smile through those burgundy lips...each tooth projecting the images into the yellow eyes of the clap cases and diabetics, the lungers and the incontinent...the beheadings of the American journalists among the waterlogged effigies of Jimmy Buffet and the picket signs blaze with fag hate, nigger lynching, Coca Cola...and the chalkboards with the tally of the dead and all the empty cubbies filled with warm regards...that uvula swinging...that All-American wind still blowing...still wafting the stink of repent and cardboard cutouts of John Wayne...

...and the dead men in the corner of the clinic whistle "Greensleeves" as they await the Doc to drop the speculum and raise his thumb to their RX...and among the dead, Chuy rises...and I watch him from

behind my desk. O Chuy. Here for a blood sample? Tetanus? A booster shot? I can tell he recognizes me though he refuses eye contact. I lead him to the Lab, sit him down and lift his sleeve, searching for a line under the ant trails and bruises and the syringe spits. It spits like the syphilitic who continues to serenade your teenage daughter outside her bedroom window with cheap champagne and deep sensitivity...it rambles on and on like your drunken mother, weeping to Jesus with her finger in her ass...it looks you in that mug of yours and insults your intelligence with a rather snide remark and a tube of KY. Every man has his curse, though with him, it became the greatest conflict in all of his history. While we were growing up, the rest of us watched as he became so afraid of the possibility he might find an immoral being or object sexually appealing, that he manifested a perversion in which he had no control. It began with the children at the Y while he was in his early teens...as they would run wild and naked and swing from his arms and into the pools. He was plagued with the fear that even being near a child without clothes, the public would condemn him a depraved and famished pederast with an unquenchable thirst for the young. He would make no eye contact with any child anywhere after that, clothed or not...no eye contact with any man...even his ma...and so it began...his fear of being labeled a homosexual, a sodomite, a sodomee, his fear of the human foot, the human mouth, the human ass, the pig's ass, his own ass...he developed a twitch in the eye over time as he tried to suppress the urges that never existed...yet as the fear remained prominent in his dreams, so did the reality, blooming like an arum from his pants he could no longer stand to look at, as it would only smile back at him. He couldn't tie his shoes anymore...he wore Velcro. He couldn't bare to slide a belt through its loops anymore...he wore sweatpants and a drawstring. He had himself convinced and he could no longer control his erections, for now, he was attracted to everything...

...and as I watch his face disappear behind the bathroom door and the lock switch from vacant to occupied, I look out over the sycamores as everything concludes...as Chuy tries his best to look himself in

the bathroom mirror...cursing the motherfucker, the sheepfucker...sustaining the rage...and trying to keep hold of the values...I think of Mama. I think of Lucia. I think of Carlos, while he rots away in that box... and while the rest of us drink, laugh and dance. While the rest of us have unprotected sex in the orange glow between the green leaves and sip wine by the riverside. Though, I still see him from time to time...walk-

ing among the crowded Downtown plaza...his smile, reflecting from the dirty windows of the bookshops and bars...his eyes, shining from beneath those tattered gold locks in some phantom breeze. An epitaph...chiseled by his soft voice of drunken philosophy, but we raise our glass only to forget...

Bliss, she called it...something a boy like me will never understand. Mama was right.



Symmetry 9 by Alex Nodopaka

Simon Perchik

Untitled

*

The same dingy elevator
not in service
though to wish is the easy part
--once its doors are sealed
the gust likes it in the back
and you make good time
cut the sky in half :both doors
opening the way your foot
fell suddenly between

--you stumbled in front a butterfly
that no longer moves, its wings
folded over, changing again
into an evening spread out
from the bottom up
reaching across a road
that stays dark more than the others
lifts its dirt to your shoulders
and along the helpless buttons
lets it fall, bathing you
floor by floor, any day now.

*

Going somewhere with you
is all it holds on to
--a single blanket

the kind the dead carry
over them
--you can't tell the difference

though you wish there were
--to warm is all it knows
and you are led under

till your mouth opens
looking for her
--to kiss, empty her throat

with your own --on faith
you stretch out
bring back to the room

her damp scent
tied at one end
and not the other

--with both eyes closed
you show her her picture
without thinking.

*

The guy with the squeegee
has no idea how cold dust is
or why it's taking so long

for her reflection to cover the glass
with sirens, whistles, more ice
--he's nervous bathing the mannequin

half naked, half with water
fresh from your heart
--you're in the way! wedged

between her motionless mouth
and the shadow that is yours
--no matter how easy enough

you don't touch the window
ready to break open
wipe her breasts dry.

*

Both hands and this ink
the way the dead are sheltered
--you fill the pen

with slowly behind
loosen those tiny stones
you still drink from :you write

as if this shovel
had carried away the Earth
into moonlight where mourners

appear underneath your fingertips
 as words and rain and lips
 --there's always a first time

--the ink would overflow
 rush through the lines
 left helpless on this page

--you hold on --why not!
 --already a fountain
 digging for the sky

its unfinished grave
 and every evening
 is an everywhere her heartbeat.

*

This pot-luck maple
 --a baby! and already
 leaf by leaf collapsing

and though you bathe in ice water
 your only chance
 is from the silence

found in absolute zero
 whose undermining monotone
 is quieted the way a millstone

half streams, half churchyards
 half that sweet blossom
 every child is born as

carries around on its shoulders
 the unfolding whisper
 for heavier blankets, woolens --noise

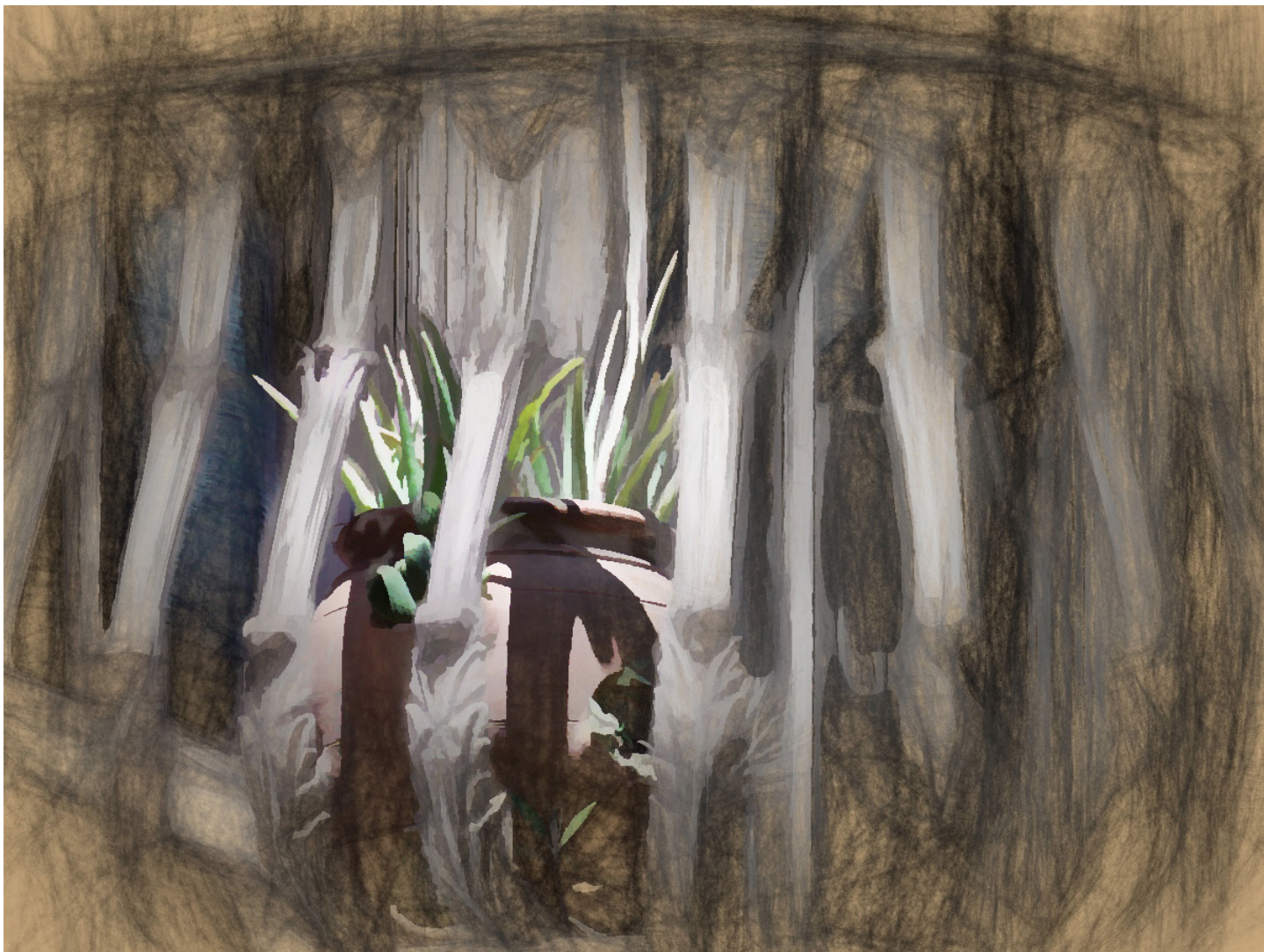
ages everything! this tiny tree
 trying to gag the Earth
 with dead leaves and hillsides

--with its molten core
 bubbling through the branches
 and nothing is cold enough.

Darren Demaree

Mazza's Vignette #30

I would love to pile all the rings of the men that worked there into one clear vase. It would have been a lovely, clanking bouquet, the promises they were willing to discard over the glass structure of their lives. I'd toss mine in there now. I'd go barehanded to my wife and tell her I love her. Several of them tried that when they lost their rings inside other women. I learned watching them how to use that smile that can wrap all the way around the shoulders of a woman. I learned that smile could crush whole families. I learned to smile small, to do it more often, to remove the ploy from my face.



Verde by Dave Petraglia

Labecca Jones

Blue Ribbon Babies

The Southern Baptist nursery
taught proper care
for foster babies
to girls who wanted
out of Sunday School
or choir practice.

We rocked, swayed, pointed
out windows at birds and bushes
listened to one-inch speakers muffling
a chorus in C flat, then sharp,
with too many verses.

Blue ribbon babies never
cried unless we held them
too long, rocked too hard
or if they had the hiccoughs.
We had to lay them down
in a crib, on the floor,
wait for the screams
to stop while we sat, silenced,
before moving the blanket,
pacifier, pillows, the way
foster mommies said
before onesies revealed
a straight-line bruise
from a wooden staircase,
the rounded swelling
from a fist, a belt or boot.

We hummed *Jesus Loves Me*
yes I know to bruised babies,
blue ribbons wrapped
around their waists,
reminders not to pick them up,
to burp them from the diaper up
and always set them down
on stacked pillows.



Desafio del tiempo by Vivian Calderon Bogoslavsky



Renacer by Vivian Calderon Bogoslavsky

Samantha Albala

Innsbruck

Crotches at eye level
 Other people's junk inches away
 Being tugged by the slowing of the train
 Swaying closer, further, closer further...
 X-ray vision surfacing in tight spaces
 The bulges slowly pouring out of the car
 Air thinning out over the yellow line
 Where on the other side
 There are city dwellers
 Shielding their eyes from natural light
 And blinding shades of grass
 Bumbling and weaving about one another
 Mouthing obscenities when squeezing past distracted
 tourists
 And palming exact change

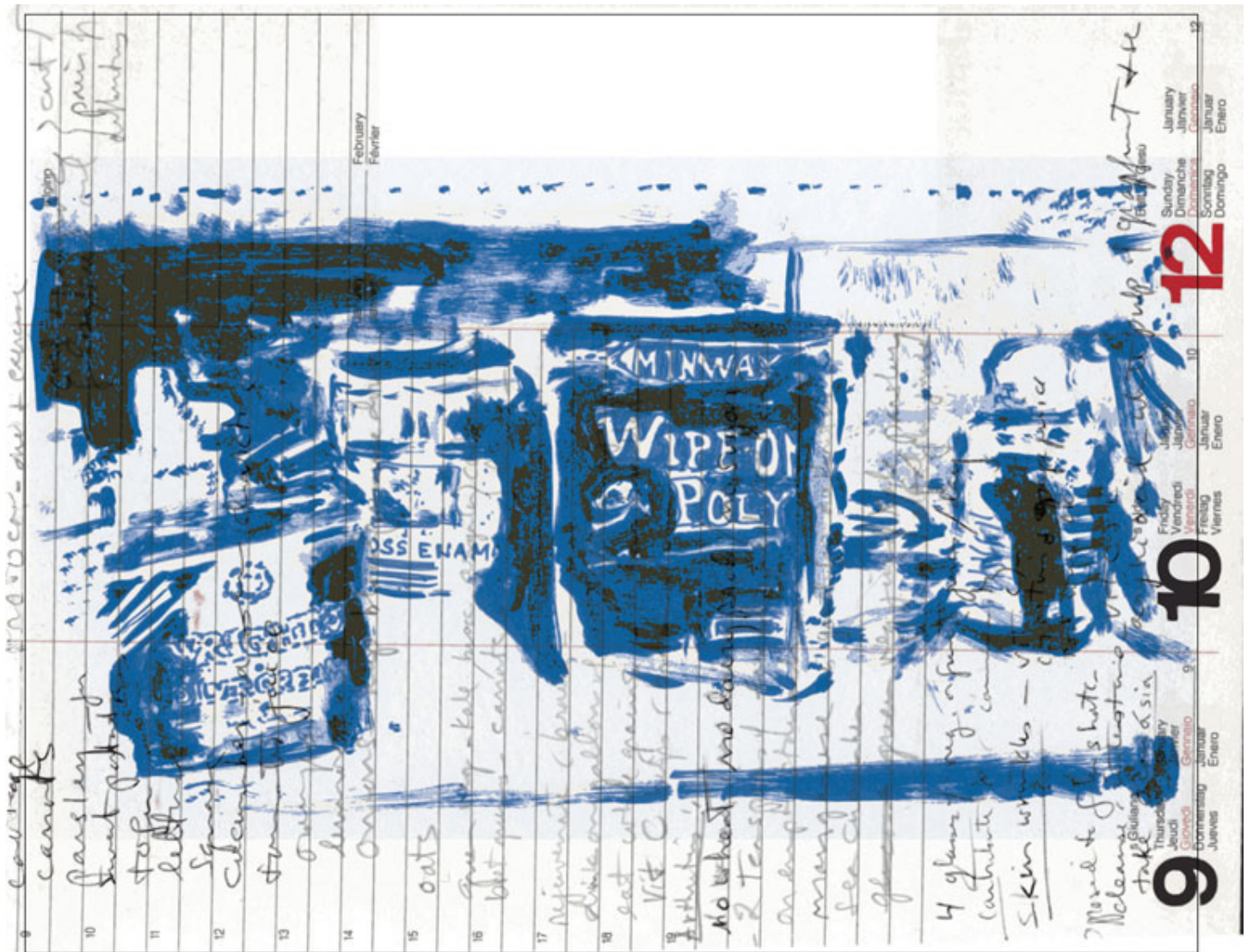
To be on the bus
 That slips past the shops
 Crowds on autopilot
 A pen is scribbling down
 Helpful German phrases
 But the only dictionary in reach
 Seems to be in Italian
 The driver makes a sharp left turn
 And stops
 More crotches
 Pushing in and out then
 Pour back out on the sidewalk
 Into the airport
 Filing into lines behind bakeries and cigarette shops
 Reading newspapers
 And chomping down sweets
 11:24AM
 three more hours
 of playing the guessing game
 who can understand what is being written
 on this page

Dylan Debelis

A Trauma Victim Remembers the Light She Walked Toward at the Car Crash

Solar flares, black holes, ant farms, magnifying glasses, Noah and the Flood. Pop Rocks, the ice cream shop in Burlington, the preschool sing-a-long. Our aborted baby's casket buried at Hart island, the American flag half-mast over Potters Field. Leaves turning in New England, sleigh bells in West Texas. Divorce, the odd silence of our walk-in closet, when his finger no longer keeps the rhythm warm. The rising hum of a swarm of wasps, my father cleaning out rain gutters.

And between the curves of my breath, I notice that it is snowing.



wipe on-poly by Steve Simmerman

Bear Arms

Chad W. Lutz

It's hard to remain calm when there are bears in your car. One of them rolled down a window, stuck an arm out, as if leaning against a post, and just growled, low, hard, and visceral. I stood there in my underwear wondering if they were going to void my warranty. They hadn't figured out how to start the damn thing yet, but I wasn't willing to find out if they could.

That's when the marshal drove up wearing a five-and-a-half gallon hat and red slickers. He stepped out of his car with a look oddly calm given the family of bears trying to change lanes in an idle Toyota in my driveway.

"You called?" he said flatly.

"Uh," his understated disinterest baffling, "I did." I nodded back.

"What's the trouble?"

"Well," I said, struck with considerable concern, "these bears are trying to change lanes in my driveway."

"Have they tried the ignition?" The lawman's delivery was almost cold.

"No," I said calmly, "but I'm afraid they're going to void the warranty if they stay in there long enough."

He drew a hard suck of wind and then scratched at his face a bit.

"What kind of warranty you have on that thing? Extended? Limited?"

"Limited," I shot back as soon as he said it.

"Ah, now the picture's coming clear." He walked over to the car, eyes on the bears, and hand to his face in thought. "A bunch of bears sitting in an idle car covered by a shitty limited warranty. Cryin' shame."



After the war Lazarus 2 by MANDEM



Untitled by Tom Darin Liskey

Renoir Gaither

Thug

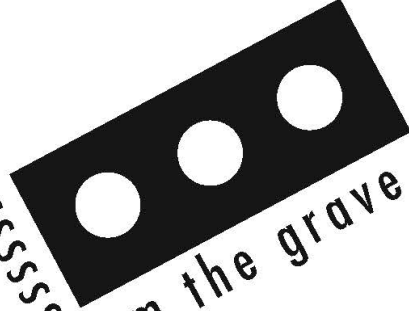
UR

my thug became your

M
i can't
i can't
i can't
BREATHE

thug became our thug

speaks ssssss



prices starting at 4/\$

12

when you buy 4

bright &

heyheyhey

beautiful

when tea first fell into the atlantic

IN HERE

RIOT

CUR
+++

when it happens in other parts of the world/the u.s. calls it "fighting for democracy" or "resisting oppression"/ the opportunity and pretext for riotous fun/thrill/risk/ and profit/my mother asked me if I were in front of that enormous fire/

FEW
++++



it ain't no race thing/it's not/ a race thing at all/a perfect boy?/no he's not/but he's mine/ history repeats itself/i guess/stop filming us/time to clean up/

! you sexy thing you

ignatz



Symmetry 7 by Alex Nodopaka

Alan Britt

Cubana Salsa

Domino papaya pelvis with legs & thighs
like coconut trees strangling a jetty
packed with tourists taking turns
with two bottlenose dolphins, one willing
& one whose psychology consists
of turquoise paint peeling from seawalls
& hand rolled cigars wrapped in newsprint.

We enter, as usual, naïve as goats,
hence, the phrase.

We enter with violins for backpacks
like shadows roaming the ether.

We had nowhere else to go.

So, we elbowed our way into the conversation.

Am I homeless or am I simply confused?

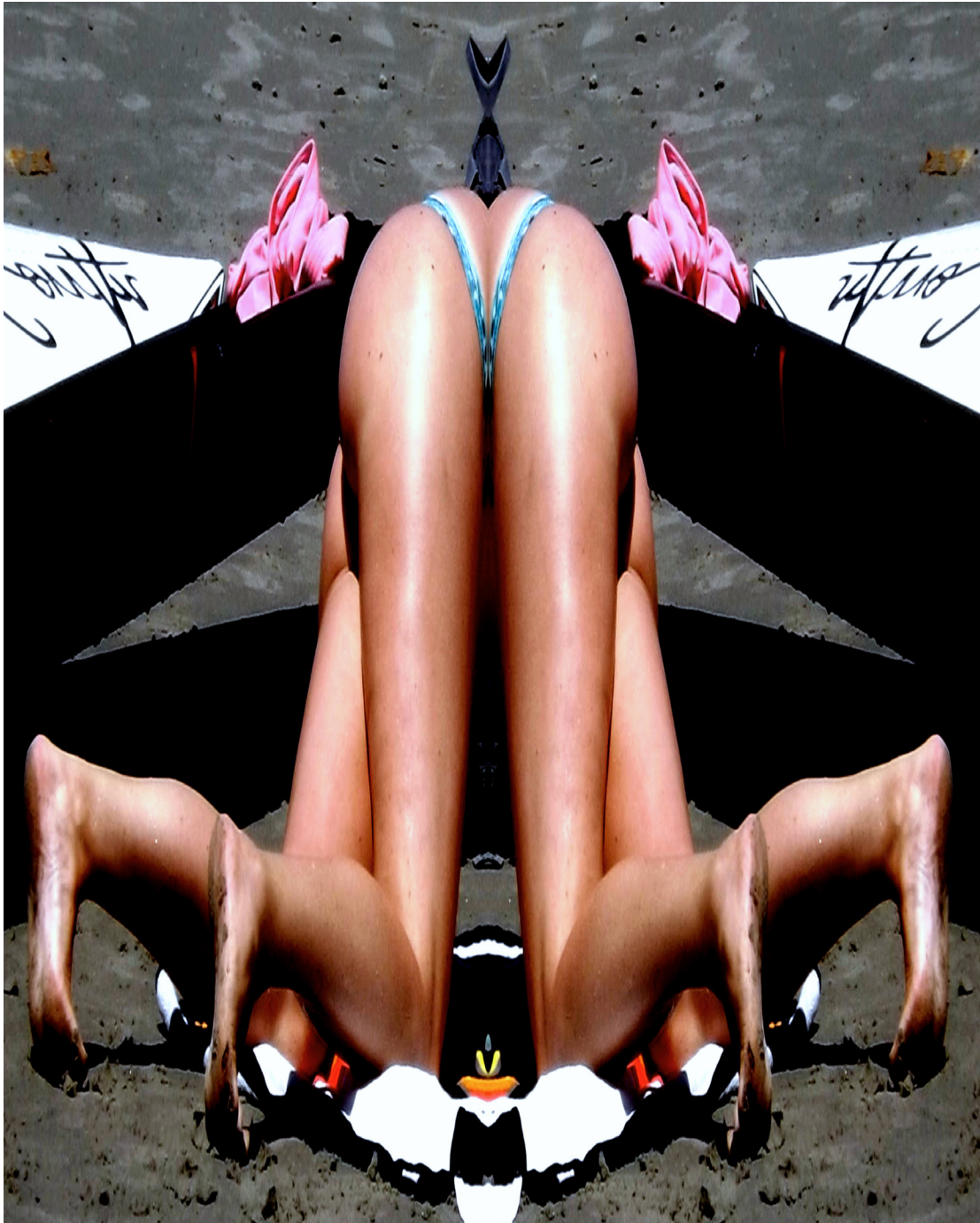
Radio waves like feathers falling through skylight
shatter our future religion of self.

Brianna Barrett

Rosalie was a Puddle

The boys who stepped inside her could
see their own
reflection

she grew muddy and was afraid of the sun.



Symmetry 8 by Alex Nodopaka



Pioneer 4 by Kelly Nulty

Contributor Bios

Samantha Albala has studied writing from the lineage of the Beat Generation at Naropa University, and the Lost Generation in Dorf Tirol, Italy at Brunnenburg Castle. She is a New Jersey native, and a poetry and arts education advocate.

Glen Armstrong holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and teaches writing at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters* and has three new chapbooks: *Set List* (Bitchin Kitsch,) *In Stone* and *The Most Awkward Silence of All* (both *Cruel Garters Press*.) His work has appeared in *BlazeVOX*, *Conduit*, and *Cloudbank*.

Brianna Barrett is a writer, filmmaker, artist, and performer living in Portland, Oregon. She beat cancer in 2013 and created a series of personal documentaries about her experience. She now performs as a member of the Portland Storyteller's Guild, telling live, autobiographical stories.

Alan Britt served as judge for the 2013 The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award. He read poetry and presented the "Modern Trends in U.S. Poetry" at the VII International Writers' Festival in Val-David, Canada, May 2013. He read poetry for the 6x3 Exhibition at the Jadite Gallery in Hell's Kitchen/Manhattan in December 2014. Also, sponsored by LaRuche Arts Contemporary Consortium (LRACC) he read poetry at the Union City Museum of Art/William V. Musto Cultural Center in Union City, NJ in May, 2014. His interview at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem aired on Pacifica Radio, January 2013. A new interview for Lake City Lights is available at <http://lakecitypoets.com/AlanBritt.html>. His latest books are *Lost Among the Hours*: 2015, *Parabola Dreams* (with Silvia Scheibli): 2013 and *Alone with the Terrible Universe*: 2011. He teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.

Vivian Calderón Bogoslavsky is a Colombia Native born to Argentinian parents. She holds a Bachelor's in Anthropology with a minor in history and a postgraduate degree in Journalism from Universidad of Los Andes in Bogota, Colombia. She has studied art for over thirteen years with a well-known Argentinian art master, as well as studies in Florence, Italy, and Fine Arts & Design in USA. Today she is in Madrid, Spain exploring her art.

Dylan Debelis is a publisher, poet, performer, chaplain, and minister based out of New York City. A candidate for Unitarian Universalist Ministry, Dylan embodies his faith in praxis through his pastoral care and social justice activism. In sermons, writings, and worship, Dylan weaves grotesque worlds, loving embraces, and an off-kilter wit to lead the audience or congregation in a very unorthodox prayer.

Darren Demaree's poems have appeared, or are scheduled to appear in numerous magazines/journals, including the *South Dakota Review*, *Meridian*, *The Louisville Review*, *Grist*, and the *Colorado Review*. He is the author of "As We Refer To Our Bodies" (2013, 8th House), "Temporary Champions" (2014, Main Street Rag), and "Not For Art Nor Prayer" (2015, 8th House). He is the Managing Editor of the *Best of the Net Anthology*. He is currently living and writing in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

Renoir Gaither is a visual poet who is very much interested in concretism, anti-capitalist art dissemination, and unpacking maginalization.

Koal Gil found writing at age fourteen, working for the school newspaper before he was banned a few weeks later. Now, some years later, he continues to write short stories, and whatever you call it and is currently working on a novel. He resides in Eugene, Oregon. You can find some of his work in *Misfit Magazine* and *South 85 Journal*.

Labecca Jones currently teaches composition, creative writing, and literature at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, CO. Her work has appeared in *The Cimarron Review*, *The South Dakota Review*, *The New Writer*, *Mad Poets Review*, *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal*, and *Switchgrass Review*.

Natalie Jones is a student in New Hampshire. Her work has been published online at *Eunoia Review*, *The Rusty Nail Literary Magazine*, *Fuck Fiction*, and in print at *Amoskeag Literary Journal*.

Janne Karlsson is an artist from Sweden whose dark and strange work is widely spread over the seas. His books and chaps are available at Amazon and Epic Rites Press. When this ultra productive maniac isn't busy drawing he's enjoying red wine. A lot. Wine ain't cheap. See where he's going with this? Buy ALL his damn books, now will ya. Does this guy have a website? Oh yes, here it is: www.svenskapache.se

Lisa Laffend is an undergraduate at Ithaca College studying Integrated Marketing Communications with a minor in Writing. When she's not at school, she resides in the suburbs of Philadelphia with her family, spending all of her time lounging on couches or adventuring with friends.

Iryna Lialko was born in the Central Ukraine in 1981. In 2006 graduated Ukrainian National Academy of Visual Arts and Architecture. Since 2014 is working and residing in the United States. Art works are located in the private collections of people from many countries. www.lialkoart.com

Tom Darin Liskey spent nearly a decade working as a journalist in Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil. He is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in the *Crime Factory*, *Driftwood Press*, *Mount Island*, *The Burnside Writers Collective*, *Sassafras Literary Magazine*, and *Biostories*, among others. His photographs have been published in *Hobo Camp Review*, *Roadside Fiction*, *Blue Hour Magazine*, *Synesthesia Literary Journal* and *Midwestern Gothic*. He lives

in Texas where he tells his children that he has done worse things for less money.

Chad W. Lutz was born in 1986 in Akron, Ohio, and raised in the neighboring suburb of Stow. His works have been featured in *Diverse Voices Quarterly*, *The Dying Goose*, *Haunted Waters Press*, and prominently on *AltOhio.com*, of which he serves managing editor. Chad currently works in North Canton writing content for an online job resource website. An avid athlete, Chad runs competitively for a Northeast Ohio running club and swims in his spare time. He aspires to run the Olympic marathon at the 2016 games.

MANDEM is the art name shared by Maize Arendsee (Studio Art MFA) and her life-partner, Moco Steinman-Arendsee. Drawing on an academic background in classical mythology, gender studies, and critical theory, MANDEM works across media and materials (painting, assemblage/collage, film, sculpture, and book-making), intentionally destabilizing genre in terms of content and media. While being widely published and nationally exhibited, MANDEM remains actively involved in the Tallahassee art scene. www.MythpunkArt.com

Jesse Mardian earned his MFA in Fiction at San Jose State University. He now resides in Los Angeles where he works as an elementary school teacher.

Alex Nodopaka originated in Ukraine-Russia in 1940. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Casablanca, Morocco. He is a full time author, artist in the USA. His interests in the visual arts and literature are widely multi-cultural. However, he considers his past irrelevant as he seeks new reincarnations in independent films if only for the duration of a wink... ok, ok maybe two!

Kelly Nulty is a photographer, folklore enthusiast and designer in the Hudson Valley region of New York. A graduate from SUNY New Paltz with a BFA in Photography and a BA in Philosophy, themes of war, wonder, and disjointed reality are prevalent throughout her work. For more images of corrupted reality, visit her website at www.Yllek.com

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, *Osiris*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *Almost Rain*, published by River Otter Press (2013).

Dave Petraglia is a Best Small Fictions 2015 winner, whose work has appeared in *Agave*, *Apeiron Review*, *Arcadia Magazine*, *Cactus Heart*, *Chicago Literati*, *Crack the Spine*, *Dark Matter*, *Dirty Chai*, *eFiction India*, *Far Enough East*, *Foliage Oak*, *Gambling the Aisle*, *Gravel*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *Loco*, *Marathon Literary Review*, *Mud Season Review*, *Necessary Fiction*, *NewPopLit*, *Olivetree Review*, *Petrichor Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Prick of the Spindle*, *Stoneboat*, *Storyacious*, *Thought Catalog*, *theNewerYork*, *Utter Magazine*, *Up the Staircase* and *Vine Leaves*. He is a Contributing Editor at *Arcadia Magazine*. His blog is at www.davepetraglia.com

Erin Pringle-Toungate lives and writes in Washington state, and has a son, Henry. Her first story collection, *The Floating Order*, is published with Two Ravens Press (Scotland, 2009). The title story of her next collection recently came out as a chapbook with *The Head & The Hand Press* (USA, 2015).

Brandon S. Roy has been published extensively over the years. He doesn't really like talking about himself.

Meggie Royer is a writer and photographer from the Midwest who is currently majoring in Psychology at Macalester College. Her poems have previously appeared in *Words Dance Magazine*, *Winter Tangerine Review*, *Electric Cereal*, and more. In March 2013 she won a National Gold Medal for her poetry collection and a National Silver Medal for her writing portfolio in the 2013 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Her work can be found at ritingsforwinter.tumblr.com

Tony Schanuel is an award-winning digital artist who has fused a professional background in photography with advanced digital technology to

create fine art that transcends both mediums. Schanuel has received extensive international recognition and honors. He was selected by an international panel to exhibit his work at the 2003 and 2005 Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea in Florence, Italy and honors from the International Digital Artists Association, *EFX Art & Design Magazine* (Sweden) and *Digital Photography & Design* (Australia). Schanuel has been featured in *Digital Imaging Magazine*, *Computer Graphics Magazine*, *Wild Heart Journal*, *St. Louis Design Magazine*, and is a featured artist in *Cyber Palette* and *Extreme Graphics*, two books showcasing digital artists and their work, with a guide to the creative process.

Stephen Simmerman has found that graphic design, whether in the form of a poster, magazine spread, or album cover, offers wonderful possibilities for word and image to coalesce into a message with impact. Among his inspirations are Will Eisner, R. Crumb, Gary Larson, Chris Ware, and Daniel Clowes. His work is primarily created with India ink, and he often digitally colorizes. Tinkering with this synthesis of hand-drawn sketches and digital manipulation, he continues to explore the rewarding, often meandering paths to visual narrative. He has illustrated two children's books and exhibited artwork in New York, Chicago, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Additionally, he has taught graphic design for thirteen years.
<http://simmerman.wix.com/sks-illustration>
http://simmerman.wix.com/cicada_creative

Millie Tullis is a junior studying English and Philosophy at Utah State University. She enjoys trees and confessional poetry.

Michael Wilson is a sophomore at Indiana University in Bloomington, studying English and Creative Writing. Former actor, athlete and guitarist; current necklace collector, interior designer, tarot reader, North American Marsupial observer, sentimental gift giver, scent enthusiast (flora or fauna), and camp counselor. Proficient in horse-based puns. Lover of poetry old and new.

