







*Ourglass*, now in its 38<sup>th</sup> year of publication, is the journal of the English, Graphic Design and Visual Art Departments at the Community College of Denver. We are dedicated to providing a forum for the poetry, prose, drama, design and artwork of our students.

### **Writer's Guidelines.**

*Ourglass* publishes the best creative work produced each year by CCD students. To that end, we accept submissions between September 15<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup> of each academic year.

**Submissions must be sent to: [CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu](mailto:CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu).**

Please submit one story, essay, set of 3-5 poems, or set of 2-4 short-stories, as well as any interesting combinations thereof. We aim to publish a variety of styles, voices, and genres. **All work submitted should include the author's name, phone number, and current email address. If sent as an attachment, your file must be named like this: yourname\_title.docx.**

To submit artwork, please contact the Visual Art Department.

Due to the sheer volume of work, we must consider, we can only notify the authors chosen to be published. If you don't hear from us, please do try again next year.

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If you have any questions, email: [CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu](mailto:CCD.Ourglass@ccd.edu).

Thank you | The Editors

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ALEX LARSON

BLEED LINE - ACRYLIC ON PANEL



WITH EXCERPTS FROM *MAD MAX: FURY ROAD*

*'You will ride eternal, shiny and chrome'*

Because as the drums rocked my bones

As the others run amok

As a rogue went off course

Just like my timed death.

I knew I was awaited in Valhalla.

*'If I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die historic on the Fury Road'*

I'm riding the Fury Road

I've called my life already

This is my moment where I shine

Like chrome, as I spray my mouth.

*'I am awaited in Valhalla!'*

The chain strapped onto me stripped me away from my moment.

The winds blew harshly at my whammed body

And I..

I fell.

*'Mediocre'* I heard Him say as he rushed past

*'Mediocre'*

*'I was awaited in Valhalla. They were calling my name'*

I was destined to be born again in Valhalla.

I cannot cry. I only bash my head in.

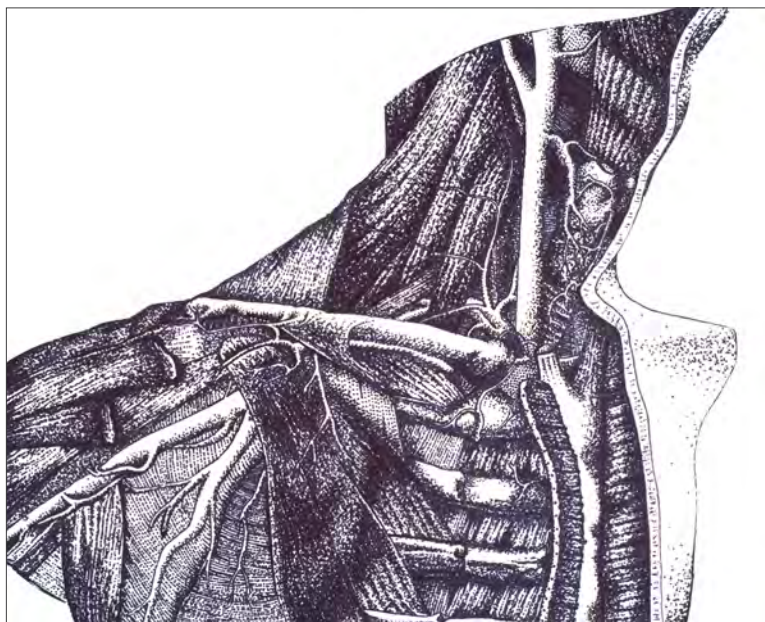
But she—the one with red—

Caressed me.

Her voice gentle and hushed.  
She *held* me with a lull of province,  
*'I'd say it was your manifest destiny not to'*

I've found my moment  
I've found it on the Fury Road.  
I saw it rise as he rose the engine.  
My life was burned in glory  
Flames, beautiful, ember flames roared.  
Before the final call  
I turned to the sweet red with my hand grazing our distance  
I sighed,  
*'Witness Me'*

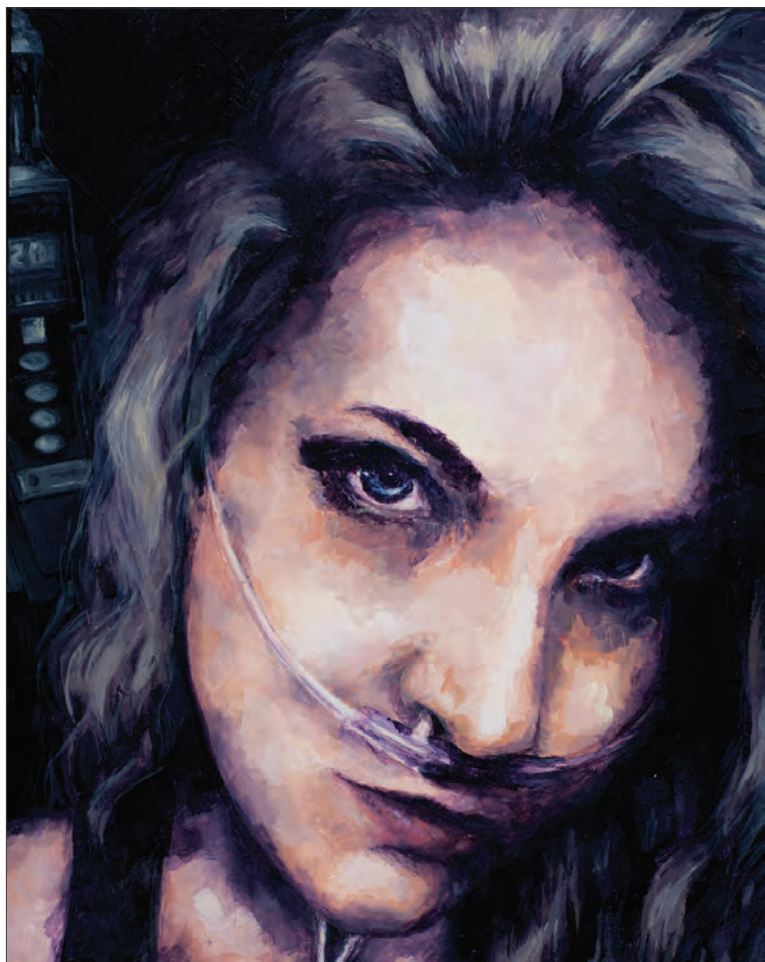




ELIZABETH SUMMERS  
TORSO - PEN & INK ON PAPER







BEST OF PAINTING LEVEL I

LAUREN KUHLMAN  
SELF-PORTRAIT - ACRYLIC ON PANEL





DIANE TATE

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL STAY

First, forget every insane asylum and madhouse you've seen in movies. Forget about warehoused people in tall red brick buildings hidden by trees, about spacious rooms filled with drooling patients watching dust fall. Expect something less dramatic. The place is one low story with high walls. It has a name like a midwestern subdivision. Maybe East Oaks or Aspen Park or Cedars South.

Also, forget about privacy. You wish you could unsay what you said to get here. About what you were willing to do, too. Instead, answer the questions honestly. Imagine you are talking about someone else. Report the facts. "Anna, we are so glad you're here and able to get some help," they say. Give them your insurance card. Give them your best friend's phone number. Sign the paperwork. Watch them take the laces out off your tennis shoes. The locks on the big metal doors click closed behind you.

Around the corner there are twelve adults watching "Night at the Museum." Pretend to be very interested in the movie. Sit in the chair in the corner. Study everyone without staring. There is a man with a tattooed neck, a woman wearing a camel colored trench coat, a girl with fuzzy pink bunny slippers. They are old and young and in between. You decide none of them are like you. You are in the wrong place. The movie stops and a loud voice cries: "Time for dinner!" Hesitate long enough to be the last in line. When your shoes without laces fall off, try to recover gracefully. Shuffle. The dining room is through the metal doors and down the hall and is already half full. Shuffle some more with an orange tray in your hand. Realize it has been eight hours since you last ate.

There is a steaming tray of macaroni and cheese with broccoli. A large man with a hairnet and a long metal spoon stands over it. Soon there is some on a plate on your tray. You suspect the cafeteria workers speculate about your particular brand of insanity. You imagine they will talk about you later. You imagine that everyone is wondering about you. Gripping your tray, aim for the long empty space at the table nearest the window. Later that night, smile at the man with the neck tattoo because you heard him quoting "Princess Bride" over dinner. Spend the second half of "Night at the Museum" pondering stereotypes.

The best friend calls, making the phone on the wall near the nurses' station ring. Tattoo man answers. "I am so proud of you for getting help," she says. You can hear her five-year-old screaming about broccoli in the background. It is Sunday evening. "I will bring you some clothes tomorrow," she says.

The nighttime ritual involves two paper cups for everyone — water sloshes in one, pills rattle in the other. "Something to help you sleep," says the tall nurse. Her brown hair is cut like Dorothy Hamill in the 1976 Olympics. Consider asking her what exactly you're swallowing. Decide you don't really care. Go to bed preemptively. Jeans are okay for nighttime if you're well medicated. Listen to the plastic mattress cover, complain and crackle as you turn. Sleep.

In the morning, Dr. Tran finds you on your way back from breakfast. You wonder if all psychiatrists look like geriatric racquetball champions. The scrambled eggs were light and fluffy. You have decided you like the food here. He guides you to his office. Walk responsibly, like you are going to a meeting where you will be giving a presentation. Project confidence. He says, "It takes a lot of courage to get help." You smile and reply, "I'm feeling much better, I think I should probably go home now." He takes notes.

In the hospital, you meet many people. At first you try to categorize them, but they do not seem to fit well. Some are nice, some are angry. Some are clearly preoccupied. You do not say much. You discover in yourself an uncomfortable wish to be accepted by the pack. Not as a full member, but as a tolerated outsider. Therefore, you smile occasionally. They start to call you Anna.

The days are scheduled like a package tour for seniors — activities, food, nap time, and medicine. You are informed that participation in activities is not optional. During art therapy, select a black crayon and draw a circle the size of the paper. Keep drawing smaller and concentric circles, then finally a heavy black dot the size of a quarter. Stare at it. The social worker will ask: "And how do you feel about that?" Tell her it represents your soul.

Then it will be Thursday before you know it. You have seen the best friend. You have a stash of clean clothes. Now there are seven pills worth of help in your evening cup. Your harsh is mellowing. You stop struggling. They call this acceptance. You understand now that the cafeteria workers do not care who you are. They care that they are getting paid over minimum wage and work reasonable hours in a well-lit environment. Realize that no one wonders about you as much as you think. Lay awake a bit that night. Ponder. Then it will be morning again.

Nora is one of the daytime social workers. She has pink shoes and conducts a group on naming emotions from 10 to 11 a.m. every Tuesday and Friday. Her husband Don owns a plumbing business. Their 19-year-old son Taylor is a disappointment. You know this because she talks to Don loudly on the phone at the nurse's station. On Friday, watch her carefully clean the dry erase board with a paper towel. Watch her write 'H-A-P-P-Y' on the board. She will sing, "Who can name an emotion they have experienced recently?" You know she will write each emotion on the board in blue pen. Groan inwardly. You have been inside five days. You are ambivalent about going home. Join the rest of the group in a two-minute silent study of the carpet. Nora is not put off: "Now guys, this process only works if you participate!"

You will be conflicted. Part of you is sympathetic. She is only doing her job. Part of you hates being patronized and wants revenge against the world. Take the opportunity to behave badly and see how it feels. Make eye contact with her and say, "Sometimes I feel disconsolate, you know? Like woebegone and melancholy?" She will not be able to spell the words. Feel delicious rebellion slide through you with a small side of guilt. You are learning things about yourself.

Nora forgives you by 2:00 p.m. At 4:00 p.m., she brings you to a windowless room. Dr. Tran arrives with your best friend and your brother. They are here to talk about how to support your recovery. "I was really worried about you," says the best friend. "I didn't know anything was wrong," says your brother. Dr. Tran explains your diagnosis. It is serious and requires accommodations. The brother checks his watch. Everyone agrees you will live in the best friend's basement for at least a week. Your cat is already there.

The next morning you wake up and lie in bed. It might be nice to stay here. Your insurance is excellent and you have already met your deductible. But half of the pack is gone. You have seen "Night at the Museum" three times. You feel better enough to realize just how bad you felt seven days ago. "We have helped you as much as we can," says Dr. Tran. You wonder if he ever takes a day off. Say farewell to your compatriots over breakfast. Thank the cafeteria workers. Tell Nora you know Taylor will straighten out.

The best friend is standing at the curb by the open trunk of her dark blue Impala. Your plastic bag of dirty clothes goes inside. An overly long hug occurs. "Anna, I'm here to help you," she says. You hear the five-year-old singing a rap song through the open back seat window. It is a bright morning and you have not been outside in seven days. Turn your face to the sun. In your hand are seven prescription forms, so ask her to drive you to the pharmacy. Decide to take the next, small, right step today. Decide to try and do it tomorrow, too. Decide to stay.







You were 14 when you swallowed the first rope,  
that time he told you to finish what you started.

The rope is rough,  
like the hemp threads from which it is made.

At first the rope is like a kind guest who unwillingly settles in  
and builds a nest,  
but the rope doesn't like to be locked up and doesn't approve of  
you swallowing it.

The rope thinks you shouldn't have done it,  
especially when you keep gulping ropes,  
one after the other,  
for 30 years.

The rope is stuck in and out and is inserted  
into your bowels,  
into your liver,  
into your kidneys.  
It spreads like a cancer devouring your blood vessels  
until there is no more space inside you,  
so the rope, in madness, is turned upside down  
and feverishly seeks a hole through which to escape.

And it begins to sprout from your nails,  
It begins to sprout from your eyes,  
From your nose  
from your mouth,  
and you can no longer scratch,

see,  
speak,  
breathe.

The rope is now twisted outside of you until finally you are 50.

And you, dear,

become a chrysalis of hemp, flesh, and  
what you once were.



HANNAH UNTEIDT  
CHAIR STUDY - CHARCOAL ON PAPER





FAITH BARELA  
DEAR FAMILY

I needed you

I wanted you

A lawyer told you no

Contact with me

I was 13

A longing for your voice

But legal power is stronger than humanity



JENNIFER HUDAK  
UNTITLED - PEN & INK ON PAPER





I had not slept. Strips of high-gloss magazine paper littered the floor beneath the small worn out dining table. I busied myself with a stick of cheap purple glue I bought from the Pakistani bodega down the street. I was mashing the glue between the edges of chopped up photographs from various magazines, mainly fashion magazines. I had created a collage of smiling feminine faces framed in golden hair. In the pictures they were throwing Frisbees and licking iced cream from waffle cones and sitting in convertibles with their red painted fingers holding down oversized hats. The coffee pot gurgled from across the room sending traces of steam into the air. I picked up and emptied the thick glass ashtray, sprinkling orange-brown cylinders amidst a cloud of black ash into the trashcan. My fingertips were sticky with glue and tar and my right hand hurt from the repetitive motion of opening and closing the dull scissor blades. The sound of fresh coffee roused me from my seat. I paused to survey the collage. It felt like the dream I always have, the one that's perfumed with lipstick smiles and flashing green eyes. Then it twists itself into an inescapable knot and always ends in a dark hole with the realization that I am alone. The collage took up the majority of the sea-foam green table-top, and some even spilled over the edge. I smiled open mouthed. With a crooked middle finger, I scratched my scalp at the apex of my head. A small croak came from across the room and I looked over my shoulder at Archie, the cat I brought in from the alley. Archie was lazing in the morning sun stretched out on the floor under the window and I nodded as if Archie had said something important. I reached over and scooped my #1 dad mug from the counter. "Well I like it," I said to the cat.

The apartment came to life with a knock. The knock sounded cartoonish, something like shave and a haircut. Most of the time it meant that it was my neighbor Leeroy, the only person who ever knocked on the door. When Leeroy's sharp knuckles struck the door I always wanted to yell two bits, or go away, or maybe just pretend that I was not at home at all. I focused on the door for a moment before walking the eight paces across the room to answer. When I arrived, I placed my right eye over the peephole and squinted my left eye in a long purposeful wink. I placed one hand flat on the door and the empty coffee mug dangled from my ring and pinky fingers in the other.

"Who is it?"

"You know damn well who it is, I'm the only one you ever talk to," Leeroy said from the hallway. Through the peephole I could see Leeroy's unwashed hair reflecting the dim light of the hallway. He was either nervous or impatient, I couldn't tell which. I opened the door and Leeroy stood before me with one slender hand in his pocket up to the knuckle, his wrist bent outward. In the other, he held a slim cigar box rimmed in gold leaf with flourished lettering at the center that read *Don Julio*. He tapped his sneakered foot on the hallway carpet, his bright blue eyes flush with excitement under busy caterpillar eyebrows.

"Hey man I got somethin' to show you," wasting no time he stepped into the apartment.

"I'm kinda busy here," I said.

"It's ok, this won't take but a minute," Leeroy stopped short when he saw what lay on the table. Archie trotted over to him, body checked his calf, let out a croak and then ran the length of his ribcage across the rough material of Leeroy's cargo pants. "You doin' some arts and crafts there bud?"

"It's nothing," I looked up at the ever-expanding brown rimmed stains on the ceiling. "Just a small project." Leeroy set the cigar box down on the beige Formica counter top and opened the lid.

"You gotta promise not to tell anyone." He removed a wrinkled red bandanna from the box to reveal a .38 snub nose revolver alongside a couple of loose shells. He looked up at me and exposed his remaining yellowed teeth in a wide grin. "Pretty cool huh? I got it from this wannabe gangster Pavlov downtown. He's a weird fucking foreigner but I thought what the hell you know?" I crossed my arms and stuck my fingers into my armpits. I shifted my weight from one side of my body to the other and chewed my bottom lip.

"Are you crazy? What if your P.O. finds that thing? They'll never let you out," I said.

"Terry couldn't find his way out of a paper bag, and I'm almost done with parole anyway, he thinks I'm a saint," he said. "Besides, I was thinking I could keep it here."

I stood at the window of the apartment, arms crossed. The sunlight had moved across the hardwood a few inches dragging Archie along with it. I stood there and watched the neighborhood wake up for the day. The cigar box lay open on the counter. The bums and the birds had started flocking to the parks and the old men were on their porches yelling at each other. The dealers were on the corners and the junkies were coming to life, ready to complete yet another cycle of catch and release. Then I saw one of them across the street, one of the men in suits. I started seeing them a couple of weeks ago, behind newspapers and tinted glass and bushes. A long, sleek car crept into view and two more men appeared from within and started for the building. I turned and tripped over my feet, my heart pulsing, sending all of the blood in my body into my head to flood my brain. I looked up from the floor and saw the cigar box above me on the counter. I stood fast and heard footsteps on the stairs. Before I knew it, the gun was firmly in my hand, then my pocket. I didn't know who these men were but I had to defend myself. I opened the door as quietly as possible and peeked into the hallway. I heard the overture of dress shoes ascending the stairs but saw no one. I crept into the hallway and into a dark corner on the other side of the hall where the men could not see me. I waited until they swung around the top bannister toward my door and kicked it in. Once they were in the empty apartment with their backs turned, I stepped into the void of the stairwell. The stairs were old and moaned under my feet, my right hand running the length of the bannister against the wall. Four floors down I ran to a window with a fire escape on the other side, opened it, and climbed out onto the rusted wrought iron apparatus and jumped to the asphalt at the bottom.

I walked out of desperation and the fear of what was to come next. Residential housing sprouted into high-rise buildings and back again in harmony with the sidewalks. Birdsong and traffic accompanied the coarse shouts of people and the buzz of electric wires overhead. The sun boiled the city and if I looked close enough, I could see insects riding heatwaves in the air. My hands buried in my pockets, I just walked. Everywhere traffic stood semi-stagnant, balking its horn-blaring



language next to thin pen-strokes of neon light humming the sad tunes of the glowing ghosts of commerce, selling cigarettes and sex and alcohol. Around corners and down alleyways warehouse workers blew smoke in front of red brick walls, people emptied trucks filled with almost rotten fruit, or furniture, or undelivered packages glossy with tape.

My eyeballs vibrated in my head and my vision blurred, my sleep deprived state drove me onward. I had the feeling that the men in suits were behind and my chest felt tight, my shoulders ached and my heart threw itself against my ribcage. I walked so long that I no longer recognized my surroundings. The buildings were unfamiliar and the people looked strange. At 4:43 in the afternoon, I found myself at a park lined with an army of sycamore trees. Like giants with their arms outstretched, they veiled the harsh rays of the sun under fingers of green. I was tired from my sweltering journey through the sludge and the city so I found a spot to rest. I chose a bench made of splintered wooden slats screwed into two turn-of-the-century cast iron legs. It leaned slightly to the left and looked as if it might topple under the weight of a sycamore leaf let loose from above. Next to the bench stood an over-flowing trash can, above it, a dogfight of flies and no sign of surveillance.

I sat down, released a sigh and settled into a moment of peace. I folded my hands into my lap and relaxed against the bench. My toe stopped tapping and my heart slowed. I gazed up into the canopy of leaves speckled with chlorophyll and closed my eyes. I entered the darkness, then I saw Ruby and her mother. I saw them on the dance floor at her brother's wedding reception. I saw them move the way swallows frolic in the sky. Their matching golden hair tumbled and spun in unison. They laughed and twirled and smiled at me. Ruby's eyes sparkled like her mother's and they had the same way of looking into me that made my heart swell. I sat languished in memory, in a place I rarely ventured for it was painfully difficult to come back from. A place in which I wished to live forever, the place that was supposed to be real life. I then saw a phantom, the memory of a person that never was. The phantom looked at me the way my wife and child did but had a face I could not recognize. It spoke to me from another dimension where things done here are undone.

When I opened my eyes, I reached into the dissolving pocket on my corduroy jacket and fished out a small bottle of tiny blue pills *marked R5, 50 milligrams of risperidone each*. When I took them, they made me feel as if my brain was a balloon full of helium, floating just over my head tethered at the stem. I opened the cap and shook two pills into the palm of my hand. I only needed one for proper dosage but decided on two, having missed the last few. *Perhaps I shouldn't take them at all. Maybe they are what's killing me*. I rotated my wrist slightly and the twin pills dropped to the ground. A crowd of pigeons gathered thinking that the pills were blue seeds ready to be plucked up by tiny grey beaks, when they realized the pills were not food they jumped into the air and flew off into the trees and the trashcans.

"Are you ok son?" said a man. I cocked my head up and to the right to look at where the voice came from. The man was old and appeared to me now how a longshoreman might, white chin strap beard, small brimmed sailor cap, and a dark pea coat complete with brass buttons sporting anchors. His eyes bore the weight of concern and he stooped over me, investigating my slumped figure. His intrusion confused me, and I wondered if he was real. I wondered if I should talk to him, how much of a risk I should take in engaging the old man in conversation.

"I'm not sure," I said, risking it. "I feel like I am on one side of a mirror and I can see them on the other side but I don't know how to get there to save them. Or if they can be saved."

"I see. You need a doctor? You don't look well" said the old man.

"No doctors, they'll just give me more pills" I said. The old man sat down, pulled out a plug of chewing tobacco and thrust a fist full of pungent tobacco in my direction, his chapped smile friendly. "No thanks," I said, waving a pale hand in decline of the old man's offer.

"What's your name son?" the old man asked.

"George," I gave a fake name. I did not plan on divulging too much information about myself, someone might be watching, or listening, or the old man could be a spy sent by the men in suits. I couldn't be sure.

"My name is Albert, but you can call me Al" said the old man. He chuckled to himself, and offered a tobacco-less hand for a shake.

I checked left, then right for the sleek car or any indication that this might be a trap. I was too careful and that's why they would never catch me. I would hide from them forever and the closer they got, the faster I ran. I decided that this Al character was not a threat and shook the old man's rough and calloused hand. Before the hand shake, I had not noticed that I was trembling and clutching my stomach. I sat there in a haze of memory and self-doubt, mired in between the past and reality. I hovered over the edge of space-time and watched myself dissolve from the inside out. I must have appeared crazy. "You know it's a beautiful day, the sun is shining and the city is alive. Yup, a glorious day. I don't mind tellin' you that whatever it is that might be wrong with the world won't last forever, there is always another day."

"How can you be sure?" I asked.

"I suppose you can't, you just gotta have faith," said Al. "You got somewhere to stay tonight? I stay at a shelter uptown, I'm sure they got room".

"I'm alone" I said. "Claire and Ruby were taken and now I am alone."

Al raised one dark grey eyebrow and nodded his head slowly as if he understood what I just said. Then he cradled his elbow in a cupped palm and chewed his knuckles. We sat there in silence for a few minutes. It was nice, to be quiet with another person and listen to trees talk and the electric hum of the city in the distance. I drew in a long breath and sat up straight. "Some assholes in suits have been following me the last couple days. I saw one of them this morning pretending to read the newspaper but I know better, he was watching me but I lost him," I said. In my pocket next to the pills, I stroked the cool barrel of the .38 snub-nose pistol with my index finger.

The old man sighed. "You sure you ok?" he said.

"Yes, I'm just fine, you aren't one of them, are you? You have to tell me if you are" I said.

The old man stood up. "No George, I'm not. You know you really oughta get some help, maybe somthin' to eat. If you change your mind about coming by the shelter, its St. Mary's on 42nd and Delaware right next to the chapel. There are some good people there that maybe could help you out. Remember to tell 'em Al sent you and they'll fix you right up," he said. "Have a fine evening George."

"Try the top drawer," she said.

"Found it" I gripped the butcher's knife and pulled it from the drawer. She hummed softly. I walked over, put the knife on the counter and leaned in for a kiss. She laughed a little because I caught her on a strange spot near her eyebrow with awkward lips. The baby cooed from her high-chair. She had Cheerios stuck to her fat pink fingers and somehow in the plush folds of her elbow. From the living room came the sound of bogus studio laughter at the un-funny jokes typical to prime-time television, and from the counter the soft popping of boiling potatoes.

"I hope this turns out good," she said.

"Me too, I'm super nervous since you are in charge," I said. Her head turned and her lip curved up at the corner in a half-smile.

"You're such an asshole George," she said.

"Hey watch your language, there's a child present," I said. She picked up the knife and started chopping carrots. I watched the pearls on her neck shake above her breasts. Then I turned to the baby and contorted my face at her. She threw her arms into the air and squealed.

Our home was situated on the north side of town, not far from the city center. The house was modest. It shed flecks of green paint in spots and the lawn was overgrown. In the front yard the dandelions grew knee high and bent in the breeze. Children ran about the neighborhood in the empty lots and dried-up creeks. They shrieked and played hide and seek and baseball and war. Shop owners swept sidewalks with bent brooms and the old people watched from their porches. People kept to themselves mostly, occasionally there was a domestic incident next door or a bar fight down the street. The city drew lines long ago that split

its identity into seven separate districts so as to govern more effectively. We lived in district 5. The police in district 5 seemed just corrupt enough to supplement their income. They confiscated money from low-level street dealers and enjoyed roughing up the occasional teenager, beating a growing contempt for authority out of them. Sergeant Perez was the head of district 5. He always set up on the corner of Wilshire and 105th with his flashlight in his hand and his firearm unbuckled. We were of no consequence to the police. They paid us no mind and we went about our daily business. They had bigger things to worry about and we had nothing they wanted to steal.

I worked graveyard security at the manufacturing plant that kept the neighborhood afloat. During the day they produced car parts, pre-fabricated bumpers and housing for rearview mirrors. They made windshield molding and hubcaps and little plastic fasteners that didn't look as if they could keep a car together but somehow did. Old women hunched over slow-moving conveyor belts and packaged the products into cardboard boxes, their thumbs bandaged with masking tape. Men ran large machines that pressed fiberglass and plastic into car shapes and others shot bright orange sparks into the air to refine them. There was a black dust that filled the air and most people had to wear respirators so they wouldn't choke and collapse and file workmen's comp claims. Once or twice a year someone would lose a finger or crush a foot under greasy machinery, take sick leave and come back weeks later defeated. During the day the floor was alight with activity. The night was for ghosts.

My shift started at 9pm and ended at 5am. At the gate, I nodded to Sam, a short balding man who grinned like Alfred E. Newman with ears to match. He always greeted me with a rigid hand cocked over his brow and all of the pertinent information for a smooth transition between shifts. He was a curt, military man unconcerned with nonsense. He told me often the story of how in the war he killed five Japs at once, that's right he would say, five Japs at once. One bullet straight down the line. Boom. Dead. Pure nonsense I would say. At night the factory was a dark labyrinth full of resting machinery that seemed to groan in their sleep. The building was old and filled with shadows and rats and emptiness. It was bearded on the outside with green vines of Virginia creeper that stood three stories high. I walked the grounds

holding a flashlight and tossed rocks around the dirt parking lot in between the front gate and the building. I recorded any important details of my rounds in the hourly log book and even the ones that were not so important. In the security office, I threw a small blue rubber ball against the wall over and over, missing the catch on occasion. I talked to myself.

That night was not unlike any other. I passed the eight hours in relative boredom and since the morning relief was on time, I drove through the gate at 5:13am. In my car, I turned the little silver radio knob until it clicked and the face lit up blue. The morning news was all traffic delays and weather reports. I yawned my way home and after 20 minutes of red lights and turn signals, I pulled into the driveway. When I stepped out of the car and stood, I noticed that the porchlight was off. The wind blew music into the chimes above the door and drew my attention to the fact that it was open, the hallway light was on, and the curtains were missing. I approached the door and saw a dark spot at stomach level and on the floor a trail of dark droplets that led out of the house. A twisted red hand was imprinted on the door jamb, the thumb pointed at the front door. Inside I could see that the carpet was stained the same color as the door, only much bigger and much thicker. Then I entered a space I would never come back from. My mind reeled and bucked against reality. It took on all of the chaos of the revelation of what lay just beyond the entrance of my house. My heart stopped for a moment and I could not hear. My entire body shook, my bones weakened, and my stomach turned. I sank into an abyss that swirled with questions and sorrow and guilt. I steeled myself against the weight of a life rendered pointless and pushed onward, for in the living room where the remains of everything that life should have been, lay my wife with our breathless child in her arms, her golden hair dyed red and her throat cut.



BEST OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

SENA BRYANT   
TCHAIKOVSKY - SYMPHONY POSTER - GRAPHIC DESIGN



There was a man a man who painted  
Smiles  
And gifted kindness  
Through his pearlies and the  
crinkles of his browies  
He had a sparkle in the dark of his  
eyes  
That warmed up my insides  
And had me falling at every twirl of  
his tongue

There was a man, that although  
slim  
He embraced me whole  
That it was hard to let go  
because paper can beat rock  
So, he covered my stones  
with this silk he called "love"

There was a man, a particular man  
That tested the limits of my mind,  
And then decided to let it go  
beyond  
of what I didn't want to see  
because he knew I wouldn't opt  
So, he took my hand and we both  
jumped



There was a man, once  
That gifted kindness  
Through his pearlies  
As he crinkled his browies,  
With a spark in the dark  
of his eyes,  
whom had me falling  
at the twirl of his tongue  
and had me feeling warm inside  
until it was time to jump.

There was a man.



ALON PAUL

WHO'S THAT GIRL - MIXED MEDIA COLLAGE

Been carrying around this match-book  
tiny, worn and torn; but it's  
heavy, heavy metal, anchoring me to you,  
you to me, either  
way, i keep moving on — step, step, step  
you're one length behind, so close  
i hear you, see you, sense you  
never close enough to feel you.

Gotta push through my own world  
fingering the match-book  
wearing it thinner with every stroke of thumb  
fading our shared mantra scratched in black ink.  
Have Faith, Stay Friends, Move Forward — a last ditch  
motto, a Hail-Mary slogan for remembering  
the force we almost were — together.

One flimsy match left in this maxim book  
i strike it against the heart i tried  
to keep supple — now almost stone, flinty,  
the match sparks and i hope it keeps  
us alive; one last cigarette longer i breathe us  
and slip the empty book into my pocket.



JAMES FLADUNG

INNER WISDOM - GRAPHITE ON PAPER

MARGARET LE 

**THE TIME THAT MARY WENT ON OKCUPID  
AND MET DANIEL KHONSYONY**

His OkCupid profile said he liked basketball, video games, and reading.

In other words, he probably wasn't an asshole, but that's always hard to tell.

They texted for a month. She thought she saw him everywhere, on the subway train, at the library where she worked, and in her dreams as a faded blur of colors. He was a mix of shadowed reds, yellows, and rough greens like the streets in the city on a rainy night.

A month after the first text, he took her out for sushi.

She wore her knitted white sweater and the red purse she stole when she was fifteen.

He was pale with long, thin bones and black hair that grew like a spiky shrub on the top of his head. He was kind to the waiter and told her stories about when he was in college.

There was the time Daniel Khonsyony rescued a puppy and it became a coyote. The coyote ran away and a year later brought him to meet her puppies. He took one to raise.

There was the time his friend fell out of a tree, landed on a hammock and found a fish in his lap. They were on the edge of a river. The fish was a red snapper- a fish almost impossible to find alive in the dry Midwest. His friend pushed it onto the floor where it flopped, writhed and wiggled for breath.

There was the time he got so high in his dorm room, he almost froze to death and said he talked to God for what seemed like an eternity. She asked what he talked to him about and he said the physics of basketball.

He had majored in physics and was fascinated by infinity and black holes.

She told him about her family. She was close to her mother but sometimes wished she wasn't and how her little sister was diagnosed with Glioblastoma or cancer of the brain.

The sushi was good. Once, he ran his thumb over her left eyebrow tenderly and removed a piece of her hair from the corner of her mouth. They held hands like school children while talking about movies and books. She thought they had a lot in common. For one thing, they both liked raw fish—

She liked him.

The first time they made love, he took her onto the roof of his brick red apartment building. The moon came out of the clouds and shined on their naked bodies.

He seemed to be able to control the universe. He came to visit her sister and she was discharged from the hospital the next day. The doctor could no longer find the dark masses of tumors. They seemed to have simply flushed themselves from her little sister's small body. She told him about how she lost one of the diamond earrings her grandmother gave her on the subway. He found it on his way back from work the next week. He gave it to her and told her he was in love.

She could listen to him talk about physics for hours and paid more attention than she would in her university classes. Today she was researching, about how we know gravity truly exists in order to talk to him about it. Every time they talked, her heart seemed to meteor out of her chest and land on the rusty planet of Mars.

The problem was that a curse seemed to follow him.

There was the time that Mary adopted a new kitten and left it at Daniel's red apartment building. It ended up choking on a furball and she had to bury its body.

There was the time that the highway bridge collapsed behind them while he was driving.

There was the time that the sign in the subway station said it was alright to walk and she was almost hit by the train. Apparently, the sign had never changed.

To be fair, Daniel Khonsyony tried to pull her back.

Mary realized that he never spoke about his family. When she asked, they somehow ended up talking about her classes, some other topic, or physics again. They were always talking about physics again. They fought about his family and he disappeared for three days.

When he came back, Daniel complained about how she didn't text him often enough.

Did she actually know Daniel at all?

In a fit of paranoia, she wondered if his name was really Daniel Khonsyony. After all, they had met online. She wondered if it even mattered.

She wondered if she even liked him still.



JAZILYNE S. HOUSTON

SUCCULENTS AND LEAVES - ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT





To experience such truth again,  
any sacrifice would be deemed superficial.  
I don't believe in evil.  
I do believe in misinterpretation.

If Pliny The Elder was honest,  
then I'll meet Dorothy in a soup kitchen in Downtown Detroit.  
It was only a few feet behind me  
To spin around on one's heels to reveal it was all an illusion  
to only see a dark sky  
in the realm of a Basquiat.

Adorn.  
Her touch in my hand is softer.  
Her echoing sighs are louder.  
Still.  
Keep still.

the ENDless sky, entrances, remembrance.  
She liked to play with my psyche.  
Hypothetically, freaking me out until she shut me up.  
With simple words.  
Enjoy  
or  
Relax.  
As a mountain, I stood. Invulnerable.  
Wet & Gritty & Difficult & Static.  
Scared to depart.  
I'm good at being myself, I've had practice.





In my verdant sanctuary of devotion to  
My sacred sunflower seed that never reached  
germination  
The polaroid of the past pinches my abdomen,  
It weeps, "Remember me!? Your little seed!?" —  
A gentle breeze embraces me,  
The power of breath,  
I gaze down upon the earth to see,  
The soles of my feet lay planted,  
My energy roots into the skin of Gaia,  
Relieved from the duty of circling the abyss in my  
mind,  
I breathe in the pine smell of consciousness,  
And the Spruce choir whispers in the sweet melody of  
om,  
"Be here now".



BEST OF PHOTOGRAPHY



CHRISTIAN MEJIA

UNTITLED - ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT



Up in a little golden-brown room, on the second floor of the tiny white, doll-like A-framed house that my sister and brother in-law own, I start to prepare for my upcoming flight to the area I will soon call home, the San Francisco bay area. South Bay, to be more specific. I'm too excited to sit still. Hmm, might as well use this energy to pack. I start to saunter about pondering what I need, and the smallness of the room becomes demandingly apparent. On the dull tan carpeted floor, I open up my silver roller carry on. The steep angled ceiling coupled with all the books, photos, and other objects my in-laws have decked the place out with, imposes a claustrophobic sensation. The full-size bed overpowers the majority of the bedroom. Opposite from the bed stands obediently, a skinny four drawer dresser, which my sister in-law emptied for me to use through my eternal three month stay to complete an associate's degree in psychology. To bring some color and art to this overpowered plain brown hobbit hole, I brought a colorful flower printed tapestry to dress the bedside table wedged against the only open side of the bed. I need at least one thing to represent my colorful wild personality as I trudge through this time alone. Everything in this room, brown, even the thick blackout curtain, brown. Why do my in-laws love brown so much? It makes me feel like I am in a cave every morning I wake. Yet, the commanding fullness of this limited spare bedroom makes the loneliness of my compliant heart a tad bit more tolerable.

Six months have now past since my partner Isaac took a job in Silicon Valley. Only six weeks have passed since the great adventure of moving all our belongings about 1,200 miles from Colorado to California. Except, once the move got completed, I still needed to go back to Denver to sleep alone, be away from my adored Maine Coon Rudy, and suffer without my found person, Isaac, all to complete my associate's degree. I suppose it is the appropriate *punishment* after not fully communicating after the Average incident.

Oh! I realize, I should put some music on. I twist around and open up my MacBook Pro. Click, Chrome from the pop-up icon toward the bottom of the screen and type 'mi' in the browser. History drops down. Click. Enter. Nothing in my life gets done in a timely fashion unless music plays. The right groove sets the tone for the right task. As Mixcloud loads, I move to

sit on the edge of the bed, my right leg bent under me as the left hangs off the side, its big toe grazing the floor.

I scroll through the feed of mixes. I should really take some time to clean out who I follow, because some of this shit I would not listen to if my life depended on it. Like Trance! How did someone get in here that listens to nothing but music with sharp midrange tones, lifeless static rhythms, and no emotional depth? Whatever, I continue to scroll and every so often setting the arrow over the preview on the album art, to listen to a snippet of a mix. Am I ever going to find the tantric mix my body wants to move to? Don't worry, the digging always comes through I remind myself. Yay, I find a Desert Hearts mix from Las Vegas 2017; this one, yep, the sexy, grimy, dark vibe that seems to fit this spunky mood I'm in. Perhaps some dance and pack action will help get this overwhelming excitement out.

As I move about the room continuing to gather my thoughts, a realization washes over me like a tidal wave. I get to be touched this weekend. I will be turning 30! The age I have been looking forward to, well, for as long as I can remember. I have not been touched outside of a quick hug in months. And, we are also celebrating our second anniversary since we will be apart when the date passes. Not even one platonic cuddle. I don't know when I would fit it in with the demand of my last semester class load. My body vibrates from the anticipation of being touched while naked with Isaac's strong compassionate hands. My thoughts stop me in my saunter, catapulting me into a dream state of recalling our steamy phone calls. Focus! I select various odds and ends not needed for the rest of my time in Denver. Wait, a list would be helpful. I stand at the skinny obedient dresser writing a, "what to pack list" on a yellow index card.

To Pack:

Clothes I don't want here any more

Phone Charger

Toiletries

O-Ring Gag

Purple Panther

Beckie The Dildo

CNF Journal

Crochet Project

Headphones

Clothes

Oh, I don't need to take clothes with me, the little reminding voice mutters. I'll just wear things I have there that I haven't seen in months. It will be like they're all new again. That sounds like fun.

Wow, hard to concentrate.

As I attempt to gather these listed items, my mind snaps back to the disorientation and dizziness of all the dirty talk conversations of the last few weeks with Isaac. This long-distance thing is difficult. I'm unaware of how well these items are getting packed. All I can think about is the phone sex and the sex we have planned for this big celebratory trip. First time being 30 means new sexual experiences, or at least I think so. The phone sex, is our attempt at finding a solution to continue sexy interactions and to get us through our time apart. I do not remember who proposed the idea of talking on the phone, masturbating and looking at the "favorited" images, probably Isaac. Regardless, I am quite thankful for it. My mind fills with dancing images of the favorites on our Tumblr. The feed, quite breathtaking. The Tumblr favorites in our profile, which Isaac titled "For Her from Sir" is more than just images to elicit the release of the happy feel good hormone of oxytocin.

How hot being on the phone with him having phone sex; looking at our feed filled with erotic art. Together looking, scrolling, and intimately touching ourselves. Each using only our hands, no toys assist in this session. I hear Isaac's breath change to short quick inhales and exhales. I recall Isaac asking me what I think about when looking at these erotic images. He asked if I imagine being them. It depends on the image and my mood, I told him. I continued, sometimes while looking at an image, I can flow through many different visualizations. My breath starts to shorten, causing me to stutter my sentences. Like.. Like this one, I want, emmm, you to tie me like that and, and it would be fun if we both got to, to play with another together hmmm ahhh, tied like that. I will sometimes imagine aaaaa, mmmm, different things you, you or I can do. I think him asking these questions made the orgasm that night better, like he touched my clitoris through the phone with the vibrations

of his voice. Do we really get to have conversations like these? These thoughts, distracting while I attempt to check the packing list.

To Pack:

~~Clothes I don't want here any more~~

Phone Charger

Toiletries

~~Θ-Ring Gag~~

Purple Panther

Beckie The Dildo

CNF Journal

Crochet Project

Headphones

~~Clothes~~

Incredible, how far we have come since choosing each other around two years ago. The discussion of polyamory, actually made our relationship possible. The one sentence that made everything possible? Isaac's response to the statement I made about looking for a primary partner. He asked, "do you know a book titled, *Sex at Dawn*?" Instantly the commentary in my head went something like this, *no fucking way, really this book?* In that moment, his handsomeness struck me. This man, bald, blue eyed, five foot six-ish, who kept up dancing with me, is my other. *Shit girl you are crazy!* This book, in my opinion, the only academic and scientific gathering of information arguing for the possibility of humans innately being polyamorous and descending from bonobos (that is an entirely other story for another day). It's because of this book by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha that I continue to believe that most humans are non-monogamous. I don't remember my actual response to Isaac that night. What I do remember, his brother isn't around this time to cock block him from getting my number like the first time we met here around seven years ago.

All of these thoughts have me excited and a tad damp in my undies. Wait, is that, or OHH NO... Nope, not entirely what I thought. I've gotten wet from excitement and my period. Ugh... Really!? Breathe. Consoling myself, face planted in hands. FUCK, FUCK, FUCK!!!! On repeat, at a full volume scream rattling inside my dead. My period for the birthday I have been waiting for my entire life?! Not only is this my get down an'



dirty birthday, I have been without sex and physical touch from another human for SIX WEEKS!! How am I supposed to be bound and have the sexual liberation that I have been longing for?

I've searched and searched for the right human I could tell that I like to be dominated, let alone actually have that person join me in these festivities. In the past, when just mentioning I desired other women, that normally did not go over well. For some reason, I believed if they couldn't handle that, no way could I share my desire for a Sir. The men in my past worried I would cheat with a woman. I gave up hope after my last separation, that a person like this existed for me. So much trust and communication must transpire before rope can even come out to play. I questioned if I could find one that would treat me like the filthy ethical slut that I am. I found him, we are sacrificing a lot, now let me have my special birthday!

My flow normally is light the first couple of days. Progressing heavier as the days pass, plateauing to a consistent stream. So, my menstruation might be heavier the day I arrive or, it may be light and almost be over. Let's hope for almost over. Because if menstruation ends there won't be bloating, no feelings of looking unattractive, no blood to be a disgusting mess which smells of rotting flesh. If no, then just makes it more legit of a dirty thirty? Ehh, I still feel defeated. Ugh, what if it's just terrible? If I am still heavily flowing, how can I be tied up? Blood would just drip out of me and down my legs wouldn't it? Conceivably the best-case scenario. Though what if it splashes? Just putting down a towel does not seem like the best solution, especially for our new bed. Because what if we slide off the towel and our new bed gets stained? How would that stain even get removed?

There is a reason why if a woman is willing to have sex on her period, the shower is almost always involved. True for me anyway. This thing us women do about every three to four weeks stinks, can be messy, and many female bodies cramp or have some sort of piercing pain (like little needles poking from the inside out trying to escape). And well possibly because I have been raised to think so, it is just down right gross. The widespread belief through many cultures and through many years of history is that women are untouchable/undesirable when menstruating. Therefore, women equal gross while bleeding from the uterus out the

vagina. I have no answer to any of these questions. The only time I have been bound with rope was for a photoshoot a few years ago and that was obviously timed better than my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. FUCK, I remember, gonna have to tell Isaac, lame.

As all this drama plays through my head, I take myself down the steep rickety stairs and into the bathroom. Little purple satin bag in hand containing my menstrual catch cup. After cleaning myself up, inserting the cup, I change into my favorite period panties. *Can a woman have favorite period panties? Hmm?* I take myself back up these dangerous stairs back to the brown hobbit room with devoted attention.

Okay, let's just be done preparing for today. There are two more days till I leave. Ugh, this really sucks. Will I be properly fucked and welcomed into the decade of dirty thirties as I have always hoped? I will have an amazing birthday if it kills me. I can overcome this idea of gross and embrace having the experiences that unfold. After all, I do remember reading once that Native American tribes believe women are their wisest during what they called their "moon." I zip up my carry on and set it in the corner by the foot of the bed in the only open corner of the snuff-colored room.

Now I have to tell Isaac that my birthday, is basically, ruined? Ugh, I sigh. My body, no longer vibrating with overjoyed excitement for the erotic adventure I daydream of. It trembles with worry of not getting release from these deep craving sensations, as I grab my Google Pixel phone off the bed to call Isaac. We talk every day since the transition to California began back in May, missing very few days, but today I want to miss. The call rings through, bzzzzzzt, bzzzzzzt.

Isaac answers, "Hi, honey bunny."

"Hi, my baby-baby," I say while sitting on the full-size commanding bed, folding myself, knees bent into my chest.

Once the words leave my mouth, I know he can hear the defeat of the day in my voice. We have our usual catch up of work and tidbits of the day for him. The idiot mediocrity he deals with from the management and coworkers day in and day out. I catch him up on the latest biology

teacher drama. That pestering voice inside my head gnaws at me, *you know you've gotta tell 'im.*

"You're not going to be very happy about this," I say.

"Not very happy about what?" Isaac asks.

Stuttering over my words "Not, not, very happy, about my, my, period starting today."

"This really sucks," he says. His words are the doom I do not want to hear.

"How do you think this is for me?" I snap in a sassy tone.

Each of us feeling defeated, we head the conversation to close. "Have a nice wind down and have a great trip through the land of nod," I tell Isaac. "You too, have a great trip through the land of nod. Talk to you tomorrow. Yeah, talk to you tomorrow. Love you. Good night. Bye. Bye."

I undress, except for the white bikini cut undies adorned with black lace detail and three little red mustached skull heads printed on the back. I climb into bed, under the covers. I move the 13" MacBook Pro so the screen faces the head of the bed. Open Chrome from being minimized, and type n into the browser. Click. Enter. A notification pops up, are you sure you want to leave this site? Leave, click. Netflix loads. I throw on some movie I've probably seen a hundred times. Get out my purple vibrator. Perhaps, releasing oxytocin into my brain will work out these frustrations that won't quiet, and sleep can be had by a Shandearan. Maybe, it will allow me to ignore the cramping in the front pubis mound area. Maybe, I will wake up and my period will have just been a dream.



Lost in thought, I reflect on my arrival and the first couple of days here. My arrival went just as suspected. Shower sex upon my arrival. Once, we laid a towel down. Though almost the entire time I was worrying about the mess this thing my body does could possibly be making. Why? Because even though I attempted a wishful outlook, my fear became reality; a consistent stream of blood continues to persist out my vagina. I doubt our plans of Isaac surprising me with transforming into

Sir Aslan. Tomorrow I loyally return to Denver to finish this associate's degree. What do other people who are into kink do? Maybe I should have looked into that before now?

In a blink of my eye, Isaac is standing in front of me. I stand by the round smoked glass table. Slowly, turn to face him, setting the glass bowl and lighter down as I exhale a hit of cannabis.

"Are you ready?" Isaac asks confidently.

"Yes," I say with a hint of nervousness tangled with excitement. A kaleidoscope of emotions washes over me.

Intense piercing, mischievous crystal blue eyes reach to my soul as he lifts my purple Lightshade Labs tank, up over my head. It is happening. The creation of Sir Aslan is here! I know what we are getting into. We have had conversations about this many times over the past six weeks. My heart thumps hard with excitement.

"Close your eyes," Sir Aslan demands in a tender tone.

I happily comply. Not realizing, I am still on my period and I have a tampon blocking a passage that will be used. I could care less about anything else happening in this moment. Sir slides a navy-blue satin eye mask over my eyes, asks me to make sure I cannot open them and if the mask is snug enough.

"Tighter please," I ask in a reserved tone.

With the mask securely taking eyesight away, Sir Aslan takes my right hand and leads me down the hall. We take the only left into the bedroom. Soft carpet smashes under my feet, between toes. Next sensation I feel, is the cool smooth honey maple Japanese slotted bedframe, hitting the base of my calf muscle. Fingers push my bare chest, at the heart space, challenging my balance. Back onto the (supposedly top of the line) foam bed, I fall. Hands grab the top of the black stretch pants.

Oh fuck, no, NO, NO!!! Screams the paranoid voice in my mind. Oh my GOD, there is still a tampon in your pussy. What are you going to do

about that? What is he going to do? FUCK! Never been in this position before, I have no clue. We are on the ride and I'm not stopping it now.

Hands travel across my torso till they reach fabric. Off come the stretch pants. A strong hand grips around my neck, carefully pressing the outsides, not crushing my esophagus. His mouth finds the pubis mound. Whhooo, warm humid air hits the black t-cross thong left on my thin light, muscle toned body. Light headedness, brink of pass out creeps in; in an instant, hand lets go. Aaaaaah haaaa, I gasp for air.

"WOW, YES!!!" escapes my mouth in overtaken ecstasy.

Without warning, I have been completely exposed during the cascade of sensation. A hand grabs my left leg forcing it to bend at the hip and knee toward my arm. Without pause or thought I grab my ankle. I think he is putting me in frog tie. Then the next arm and leg, bound. Movement is now complicated, limited, and remember, the safe word is gentle.

Straining my ears to hear anything, nothing. Instead, I feel a light brush across my perineum, then a tug. A tug on the string to the tampon blocking the desired passage. Shit, really? He is taking out your tampon. What the FUCK!? Okay, that wasn't so bad, right?

"How was that for you?" Sir asks.

I pause, attempting to get my thoughts in order to answer him.

"Um, Interesting?"

We continued to progress into full erotic ecstasy.

How Sir Aslan took me is a blur of moans, shakes, convulsions, and tantalizing sensations. I'm still attempting to grasp what all transpired. I still have yet to look up how other kinksters deal with the menstrual issue. Though, it seems I have some possible research to conduct into how the female body shuts down the period flow during arousal. Because, my flow was less, though previously like a babbling brook, but no mess was to be found. I do remember Isaac at some point

telling me not to worry, that the female body stops flow when aroused. Possibly true.

I do not have the answers to the questions I propose. It was a liberating experience and I am proud of Isaac and myself for how we navigated through. It isn't like I could have picked up the phone and asked my female friends. I'm the one they come to about all their sex stuff. In the end, I managed to have the birthday, albeit not exactly how I imagined it. I however, will remember and cherish it forever. So, all the ladies out there, get into whatever you want and if sex related, it's possible that our bodies have our backs.



VANESSA AGUILAR  
THESE BOOTS... - MIXED MEDIA





Indifference is like room-temperature water,  
it does not soothe the dry burning of wasted  
effort.

Indifference is like the groan of hunger,  
with the absence of desire.

Indifference is being an activist,  
for a cause you don't believe in.

Indifference is the *acceptance*  
that you'll never be the father I need,

Indifference is letting go  
of the father I needed you to be.







Drowning branches sucked up by cement  
Concrete collapsing, rubber eating the road

Pay no mind, they're mother nature's beauty marks  
Fixing them would just take away character

The delivery driver tends to disagree

Receipts drift on the pavement  
\$11.09 for a pack of Marlboro Lights and two Slim Jims  
from the 7-11 down the street  
I wonder how long it'll wander before someone throws it away  
Or if it will just disintegrate by oil spills and kitchen shoes

But this is not the pristine block of houses paved with golden  
retrievers and young mothers holding their daughters' hand

And no one seems to care how you look tucked away on the  
other side of the street

White paint pens make the deep blue varnish on the  
dumpsters disappear  
Aliases of my friends that describe our youth  
Follow it for one block, or ten if you can

Snake through the road

Scrawls on tall silver poles that reach to the sky being  
hugged by barbed wire fences  
Step on the seat of your single speed road bike if you have to

They'll notice who's the highest  
I sip my black coffee  
Cooled down by the air  
Take the last drag of my cigarette

flick

Smoke billows in the brisk breeze of mid afternoon  
Proof that my route has come to a close

I step inside

Clean bright lights ignite a dining room of sparkling wine  
glasses and freshly polished flatware

Clock in, say hello





To be the mother of a child is to have all the answers, to be able to heal all the wounds. That day was the end of my motherhood.

There is a bed with two people. It is the biggest bed that I've ever had. In Spain, the beds are half as big as here. I was sleeping alone for some years, but now Guille is sleeping next to me. I get pins and needles in my left arm and leg. I try not to move too much; when I move, he wakes up. It is not easy the adaptation, to share your bed, your room, your house, your life. Guille has earplugs in his ears. I feel a brilliant light that makes me open my eyes. It is hot. My bedroom has enormous windows without blinds. We rent the house, and I don't want to spend money here. The sun is in front of me. Two drops of sweat fall on my chest. My head hurts. Lately, I have a headache almost every day. Maybe it is the wine, or the altitude, or the menopause. *"I need a coffee."* Guille holds me. *"No, please! It's too hot!"* I slipped away sneakily. *"I need a coffee."* I sit in the backyard with the coffee, my cigarette and my computer on my legs. I'm reading the news, *"definitely, the world is crazy."* Suddenly, Victor appears.

"What are you doing here?"

"Nothing," he pauses and taking a deep breath tells me, "It's over." And he goes into the house.

I can imagine how the soldiers look when they come back from a lost battle. I perceive defeat in his body, in his beaten shoulders, hanging without the force that gives us the first big illusion. His chin is laying on his chest, his look beyond the floor, trying to see through the concrete, wanting to find an answer. *"Why do we always need an explanation?"* The fact is that no one knows why, and me less than anyone. I feel cold, but not a cold out of my body. *Oh no! No, please!* It is a cold that emerges from inside and freezes me. I'm looking at the door, waiting. I don't know what. *"It's over? Why?"* I take another cigarette. I burn my finger; the cigarette flies and falls on my computer. *"Coño!"* I go inside. Before going down, I sigh, and then I go down the stairs. The door is open, and I walk in.

"What is over, Victor?"

No answer. I sit on the floor; he is on the couch. His head is on my shoulder. There is a warm breeze on my arm. It is his breath, his quick and irregular breathing. He smells like the sea, salty, fishy. I hear a soft cry. My chest hurts. It is not the sea. My stomach is in a knot. The end of the world is here, is today. The boat sank. The tide rebels inside of him; it is enraged as I am. The answers to questions never made crowded in my head. *"Because she is a bad person. Because she treated you so wrong. Because she's not worth it. Because she is a kid. Because life is an enormous piece of shit. Because living is painful. Because you are too good. Because she is not."* I feel a spasm. You remember something and jump inside yourself. *"I know, I understand now."* You've revived their scent, their scars, their fears. This pain is temporary kiddo, but once the pain comes, it never leaves you completely. It builds its house in your chest, and it is going to stay as a long-term resident. I would like to avoid this suffering, but I can't. I can only place my body close to yours so that you lean on it. My mouth is blood; it tastes like rust. I will not open it, the blood would spill, and I would bathe you. I do not want to add my blood to yours. Your head weighs more and more. I don't feel my arm. I move my fingers. My arm is still there. You are still here. Your pain is here, but mine is hidden. I won't show it to you, *"good mothers don't do that."* I can't bear your pain. I just want to go inside you and put a bandage on your slaughtered innocence. He has fallen asleep, the dressing worked. The room is dark. I forgot to turn on the lights. A rumble of thunder in my stomach, it is the hunger. *"Shit, I forgot to eat. Please, that when he wakes up, he has already healed."*

"Mom," Victor says, "why did she leave me?"

"I don't know kiddo."



JENNIFER HUDAK  
UNTITLED - PEN & INK ON PAPER





ROSA "PELIGROSA" RIVERA  
LA AMBULANCIA

La ambulancia es mi oficina, bienvenidos  
Aquí necesito usar mis sentidos  
Tomo la presión y el pulso  
A veces empiezo el intravenoso  
Con la ayuda de mis lentes  
Veo los problemas de mis pacientes

Puedo manejar rápido  
Tomar oportunidades  
Hacer diferencias significantes  
Puedo ser la diferencia de la vida o la muerte  
Con mis habilidades y un poco de suerte

Rico, pobre, mujer, hombre  
Joven, viejo, alto, bajo  
Agresivo, impulsivo  
Perezoso, mentiroso  
Todo el mundo  
Vaya conmigo

¿No puedes respirar? Puedo ayudarte.  
¿Necesitas vomitar? Puedo ayudarte.  
¿Dolor en su pierna? Puedo ayudarte.  
¿Estás enferma? Puedo ayudarte.  
Medianoche, mediodía  
Hace calor, hace frío  
Puedo ayudarte



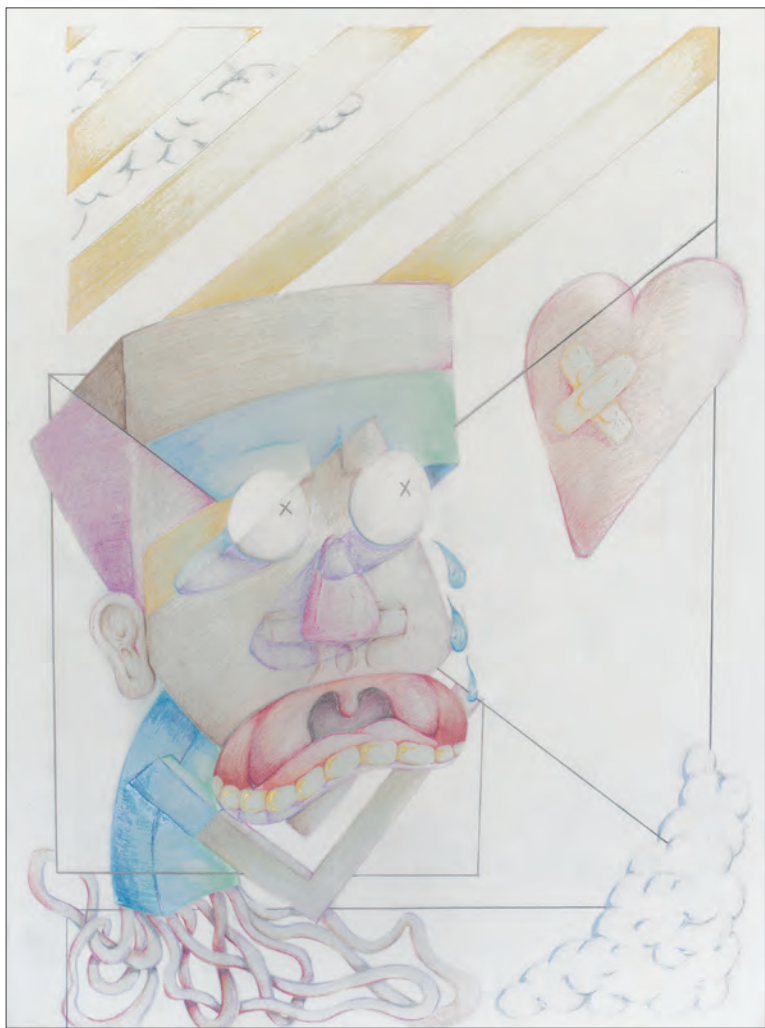
Puedo manejar rápido  
Tomar oportunidades  
Hacer diferencias significantes

Puedo ser la diferencia de la vida o la muerte  
Con mis habilidades o un poco de suerte

Cuando las personas me preguntan  
"¿Qué son las cosas que no te gustan?"  
Yo sé la respuesta que ellos buscan  
Quieren saber de la sangre o la muerte  
Pero estos son los tiempos  
Cuando no puedo estar fuerte

Y me pregunto, "¿Por qué, Rosa, por qué yo lo hago?"

Porque puedo manejar rápido  
Tomar oportunidades  
Hacer diferencias significantes  
Puedo ser la diferencia de la vida o la muerte  
Con mis habilidades y un poco de suerte



JORDAN FERGUSON

UNTITLED - COLORED PENCIL ON PAPER



The ambulance is my office, welcome  
Here I need to use my senses  
I take the blood pressure and pulse  
Sometimes I start an IV  
With the help of my glasses  
I see my patient's problems

I can drive fast  
Take chances  
Make significant differences  
I can be the difference between life and death  
With my skills and a little bit of luck

Rich, poor, woman, man  
Young, old, tall, short  
Aggressive, impulsive  
Lazy, Liar  
All the world  
Come with me

You can't breathe? I can help you.  
Need to vomit? I can help you.  
Pain in your leg? I can help you.  
Sick? I can help you.  
Midnight, noon  
Hot, cold  
I can help you.

I can drive fast  
Take chances  
Make significant differences

I can be the difference between life and death  
With my skills and a little bit of luck

When people ask me  
"What are the things you don't like?"  
I know the answer they're looking for  
They want to know about the blood and death  
But these are the times  
When I can't be strong

And I ask myself, "Why Rose, why do you do it?"

Because I can drive fast  
Take chances  
Make significant differences  
I can be the difference between life and death  
With my skills and a little bit of luck  
I can drive fast  
Take chances  
Make significant differences  
I can be the difference between life and death  
With my skills and a little bit of luck



BEST OF PAINTING LEVEL II

DANIEL FERRY  
THE HIDEOUT - ACRYLIC ON CANVAS





CHAD BROWN

## SHAKESPEARE AND POWER

Power in the Elizabethan Era of Shakespeare was systemized, distributed, and localized in much different ways than it is today, yet it constitutes the seed that eventually grew into our current institutions and organizational structures. Investigating our political and social roots yields real benefits and insights that can illuminate our perception of what is unjust or irrational within our current political and social setup, and can perhaps provide the clarity necessary to discover a better path forward for humanity. Descriptions of medieval and early-modern power structures can be found in countless works of history and philosophy, but nowhere is there to be found a more intimate and up-close description of these structures and the way they played out in everyday relationships, than in the theatrical works of Shakespeare. Specifically in the characters whose lives are crystalized in the works of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *King Lear*.

"Princes, barons, lords, knights, squires, and gentlemen of blood and quality" (*Henry V*, 4.8.92-93). Shakespeare was writing during a transitional period of history in which the medieval feudal system of hereditary government consisting of monarchs and aristocrats was giving way to a mercantilist/capitalist system consisting of democratic and republican Nation-States. When King Henry speaks of "gentlemen of blood and quality," he is referring to the men in positions of power, men in the ruling class of the feudal aristocracy, who likely inherited their position from birth. When the bloody battle between King Henry and the French is finally over, they distinguish the dead by separating the men, "of name," (4.8.109) from the men without name. And this class system was not maintained by the English alone, but was shared throughout, as Shakespeare illustrates when the French messenger arrives to beg Henry to allow them to, "sort our nobles from our common men, for many of our princes — woe the while! — lie drowned and soaked in mercenary blood. So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs in the blood of princes" (4.7.77-81).

It could be argued that the power structure that is passed down to us even today has evolved out of an underlying theory of property rooted in a sort of primitive social-Darwinism. Thucydides and Thrasymachus agreed in ancient Greece that "might makes right" and justice is whatever is advantageous to the strong. Whoever was willing to establish dominance via physical force became ruler and owner over

that which was dominated, and thus man as physically stronger than woman became ruler of women, and one man could come to own another man by physically dominating him, and kingdoms were but the personal property of monarchs, who passed their property down to their offspring as inheritance. The King as the mightiest of all, was the absolute ruler and owner of all. Though the feudal system distributed and decentralized power also into the hands of the Nobles, Lords, and Knights, forming contracts with the King to own some of his property and wield some of his power, in return for allegiance and other promises. Yet still this idea of physical dominance remained rooted in determining status among the nobility, and power land and serfs were passed down as inherited property.

Shakespeare illustrates this socio-political framework when Falstaff, a knight, addresses Hal the Prince, "Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare, but as thou art prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp" (*Henry IV*, 3.3.154-56). Falstaff explains to the prince that as they are both mere men, he dares to address him as he would any man, but as Hal is prince and heir to the Kingdom, he wouldn't dare cross him, or attempt to dominate him, as prince Hal is Falstaff's future ruler, and ultimately, owner. But Hal responds curiously to Falstaff, asking, "And why not as the lion?" (3.3.157). To which Falstaff replies, "The King himself is to be feared as the lion. Dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? Nay, an I do, I pray god my girdle break" (3.3.158-60). Falstaff explains that as prince, Hal is like the lion's whelp, not the lion itself. For the King is the current ruler, and bearer of the sovereign power, which is to be feared, and prince Hal, like the lion's whelp, is but the threat of future power to be wielded.

The most terrible consequence of this dominance hierarchy that sets up monarchs to own kingdoms full of people as their personal property, and later to distribute that property to a ruling class of aristocrats, and which leads men to justify owning other humans and treating women as property, of all the horrors that such a system leads to it is the perpetual competition for the throne of sovereignty that is the worst of all. All human beings, I submit, yearn for agency and autonomy. Even if unarticulated, unacknowledged, and not acted upon, it is still present in all, and in a system in which full autonomy is reserved for the hierarch at the top of the physical dominance hierarchy, all are incentivized to seek to overpower the throne and obtain sovereignty for themselves. This is

the seducing and corrupting nature of power. In *King Lear*, Shakespeare makes this toxic tendency most clear. In *King Lear*'s daughters Goneril and Regan, who lie to gain the seat of power and use it tyrannically, but mostly in Edmond, when he articulates it in his soliloquy: "Thou, Nature, art my goddess. To thy law my services are bound. Wherefore should I stand in the plague of custom, and permit the curiosity of nations to deprive me" (*King Lear*, 1.2.1-4). Social custom and law bind Edmond, as an illegitimate son, and bar him from rising in the social hierarchy, and so he proclaims his loyalty to nature itself rather than the law and custom which binds him, and resolves to seek and find his autonomy through force, to place himself in the seat of power. "Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit. All with me's meet that I can fashion fit" (1.2.192-92).

We are tempted to interpret the actions of Edmond and others who are attracted and corrupted by power, as actions of immoral and unethical individuals. But upon closer examination, we may begin to consider that such individuals are acting rationally within the framework of the system they exist in. We can see clearly that all are denied agency except the monarchs and the aristocrats, most are slaves or serfs or at best men of no name, and even "men of blood and quality" that were born illegitimately as Edmond is are bounded by such circumstances, not to mention the plight that comes as result of the circumstance of being born a woman in such a society. Just thirty years after Shakespeare passed away so too did feudal aristocracy and monarchy, as it's replacement, the Nation-State was born in with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Our current socio-political structures look much better when compared to the medieval structures that Shakespeare outlined in his plays, but we can still see the remnants of the "might makes right" social Darwinism from which our society was born. The seat of power, now centered in the sovereignty of national governments, still seduces the worst of us, and corrupts the best of us, and we still feel its toxic effects. If we follow the trend, from absolute monarchy to national democracy, we can see that power is becoming more decentralized, and each individual is gaining more autonomy as society evolves. Perhaps it is time we consider that our problems are not caused by, or explainable in terms of, the worst seeking the seat of power, or the best being corrupted by it, but that the seat is illegitimate in itself. "Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain" (5.3.388-89).





BEST OF DRAWING LEVEL I

ERIN LUCEY  
MID-MORNING - PEN & INK ON PAPER





The swans lined up on the river bank  
one by one departing into the water  
the swift sunrise darted across the ripples  
which wrinkled with thousands of smiles  
glimmering like golden teeth,  
the luster of the swans' eyes  
carp which dance to the gift of warmth  
the swans circled each other  
with beaks floating towards the surface

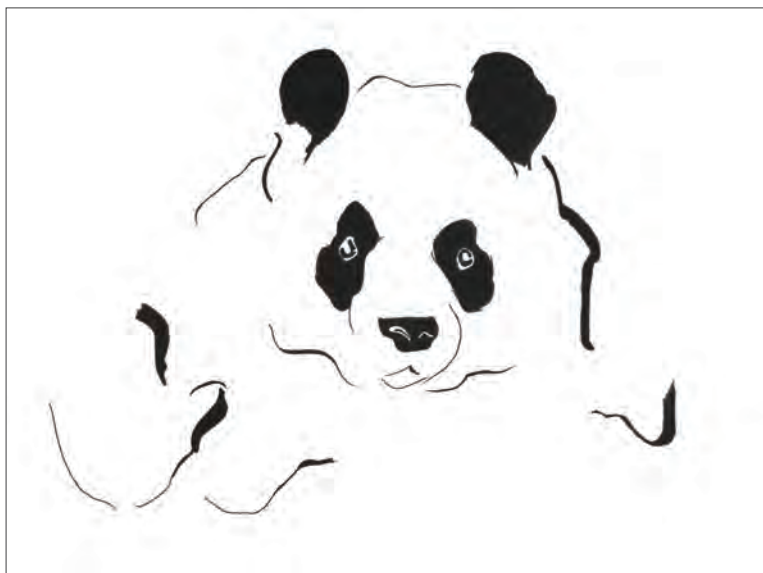
eyes gleaming like two beads of coal  
which were mined from the earths' deepest shafts,  
from faces of coal smudged miners  
the Co2 inhaled on an overcast day  
as their lungs scorched, lungs spread,  
like shadows cast under the cotton woods.

they line up  
chasing and pirouetting  
under floating cotton puffs,  
bobbing down the river, to somewhere

my sister was one of those swans.  
and they tied river stone  
to her webbed feet.  
gazing from the bank  
muttering "I saw it coming."  
after ripping of wings through water

A ballet shoe washed upon the shore.  
blood from the blisters  
stained her soul

If only she was a thinner swan.  
The rocks would have been unwound.  
I will use those river stones  
for something else.



BEST OF 2D DESIGN



OLIVIA BELL

COMFY - INK ON ILLUSTRATION BOARD



I have never considered myself a germaphobe.

My color-blind father, a hereditary trait, worked a job with a collar and he taught me how to get my hands dirty. My mother taught me to wash them.

Do people only get the cold when it's cold outside?

Is that where the name came from?

What's better, naming a sickness after the first thing you can think of, or after the person who discovers it?

For certain people, those are the same thing.



ELIZABETH SUMMERS

**BITE ME** - COLORED PENCIL ON PAPER



Mr. Baxter had once read a study that informed him that, apparently, the students of today have higher stress and mental illness than students of past generations. In his personal opinion, Calkin's Prep, unfortunately, was not an exception. He spent many days in his classroom overhearing students detail their lives and mental wellbeing. Too many times he had talked to other faculty members about it. If asked quietly in a secluded space, he'd admit that it hurt him very personally. Mr. Baxter consistently wished he could do more than he did.

The class of xx16. They were unusually and noticeably healthier than their fellow students upon entering ninth grade and, seemingly as a result of their arrival, several of the other students started functioning better as well.

Some of Mr. Baxter's fellow teachers and some of the parents chalked it up to the younger generations getting over the typical teenage emotional stages quicker. Then they started to notice something.

It wasn't uncommon for teachers to discuss students, but very few students were known by every instructor. Esteban Martinez was the exception. It was a subtle phenomenon, but the boy was well known and well-liked by the majority of pupils for apparently no reason at all. He was quiet, not particularly handsome, though he could be one day. He was lanky with dark skin, jet black hair that went to his shoulders, heavy eyebrows and a wispy mustache that was all the rage among teenage boys just starting to learn the potential of facial hair. A seemingly unspectacular boy, he wasn't unusually smart or gifted in any way, but students looked at him with awe when he passed. And yet he didn't seem to have any steady friends, never seen talking to anyone in common spaces.

Mr. Baxter caught him in the back of the theater with a glassy eyed Betty Sullivan the week her boyfriend moved to Canada, Esteban's hands curled around her face. Sandra Caleb, one of the school nurses, found him with Clarice Johnson, who was grinning like the Cheshire cat, holding Esteban's right hand and leaning her jaw into his left, just outside the west entrance between the second and third tests of finals week just before winter break. Joseph Temple happened upon a dazed

Timothy Faulkner Jr. just before the Home Coming game leaning heavily against the lockers in the boy's locker room while spotting Esteban's retreating form go out the door.

While finding two students in a compromising position was not particularly significant, it was becoming increasingly common that one student looked discombobulated, out of it, strangely placid, and that the other student was a pleased looking Esteban.

Drugs became the initial assumption (though everyone sincerely hoped not seeing as Timothy Faulkner Jr. went on to dominate during the football game). However, the inquiry into it made an ass out of all of them. Esteban was brought in on four different occasions. Five students were subjected to drug tests with their parents' permission.

Nothing. Nothing in their systems, nothing in their backpacks or lockers. If drugs were the correct explanation for the odd behavior, then it had to be something that went through the body quickly and was extremely easy to hide well.

When Esteban was asked to explain the unusual rapport he seemed to have with several students, especially since he wasn't often seen interacting with them in the conventional situations, he shrugged and said, "I don't know." But they were sure that he did.

In his second year, teachers started spotting students sporadically approaching Esteban, usually with a wary look over their shoulder and tap him on the back of the hand. Esteban and the student would leave, be gone for a few minutes, then slip back into whatever they were doing previously while other students just looked on with silent recognition and appreciation.

He was never approached in class, or when there were more than two adults around. None of the students discussed Esteban at all, or at least within earshot of the instructors, which was impressive considering the mass amount of gossip that roamed through the school and made its way to the attention of adults on a regular basis.



Then Freddie Williams' parents died in a car crash. They were good people, very involved in the school and neighborhood and most people knew them. Such a tragic hit to the community shook every student and teacher.

The school's counselor was in quick contact with Freddie's aunt, Willa Harkley, to tell Freddie to take his time, rest and grieve with family, his assignments would be held.

Freddie showed up to school the next day.

Mr. Baxter didn't even try to hide his surprise when Freddie walked into his 7:15am math class, a course he was not enrolled in. The boy was popular, nice, athletic. Today he looked expectantly dismal, thick hair unruly, nose and eyes red and posture sagged. When he entered, he just stood by the door staring at Esteban without concern about who watched.

The other boy took only a moment to notice Freddie and proceeded to stand quietly like he had always been observed to in these situations. Without asking permission, Esteban walked to where Freddie stood, put an arm on his shoulder and gently moved him out of the room.

The Never Ending Staircase was an enclosed stairwell that went from the bottom floor to the top floor in a series of twists that allowed for one to stand on one of the landings and not be seen. It was also the only staircase, and one of the only places in the school without cameras. Students and teachers alike tended to stomp their feet as they went up or down the stairs during a time when no one was typically around to ward off potentially jeopardizing encounters.

That's where Mr. Baxter found them. Initially, he was afraid of drugs. That was the last thing this kid needed right now. There were several other theories that Mr. Baxter feared on top of drugs and they listed through his mind as he walked out of his class, down the hall and into the stairwell. It turned out to be none of them, he found.

He heard grunting and groaning that didn't clearly declare any specific activity. Quick and anguished sobs from Freddie crushed his chest and

a groan and hiss from Esteban made his stomach twist. He kept his footsteps quiet as he turned to peek at the second landing.

Esteban and Freddie stood inches apart with their foreheads pressed together and their eyes closed. Esteban had his hands on either side of Freddie's face as the boy was wracked with tears. Freddie's fingers grabbed Esteban's forearms in a painful looking grip. He was gasping and crying, but it slowed as it went on and his shoulders shook less, easing of tension. Esteban stepped closer, or tried to, his face the picture of determination and strain.

He stumbled instead, towards the wall, his right arm shooting out so he could catch them before they crashed into it. Freddie cried out in shock and opened his eyes, catching sight of Mr. Baxter's partially obscured face. The two collided with the wall in a jumble of limbs then sorted themselves out, Freddie never looking away from Mr. Baxter. Once they regained their balance, Esteban followed Freddie's gaze and nearly jumped out of his skin.

Both boys swayed in a disoriented manner. Freddie babbled some words, his chin lowering to his chest. Esteban just stared at Mr. Baxter. Mr. Baxter stared right back, hopelessly confused.

"Bathroom breaks are five minutes, Esteban." An oddly casual thing to say, but Mr. Baxter found himself in an oddly mystifying situation. He wasn't sure what was going on. He wasn't sure he should know what was going on. Freddie's face morphed from shock and settled into a glossy cheeked calm.

"Sorry, Mr. B," Freddie said issuing a surprisingly genuine and easy smile for a child who has just lost his family. "Esteban is the best at comforting people." Freddie reached out and squeezed Esteban's shoulder with his fingers. "Thanks man. That helped."

Esteban nodded. Neither boy looked away from Mr. Baxter, obviously wondering if the man would let it be.

Freddie spoke again with a lower voice, this time looking at the other boy. "Can I, uh, can you—later? Can we, um, can we fini—meet? Later, I mean."

Esteban nodded again. Freddie smiled once more, squeezed Esteban's shoulder, and went up the stairs with a perturbed glance at Mr. Baxter. Esteban watched, then went down the steps towards Mr. Baxter who didn't know what else to say so merely went down the stairs as well.

He detailed the encounter to some other teachers later, and they were equally flummoxed. They pooled their collective memories of encounters with Esteban:

Foreheads together, standing close, the dopey look when found or interrupted or shortly after separation and Esteban's often times gratified countenance. His 'encounter' with Freddie didn't leave Esteban looking pleased, but many others had. Either pleased or content. Yes, content was the better word. The probability of drugs was brought up again but there was still no way to prove it. The possibility of some sort of intimate relationship didn't hold much water taking into consideration the somewhat large amount of students and personalities involved. Nothing seemed hostile, but the rapid emotional conversion following the physical contact was slightly bothersome if not outright concerning. Esteban should be observed at a distance. They would step in if whatever was going on became detrimental to students.

Freddie came to take Esteban from class every single day after the first. He and Esteban didn't even try to be discreet like other students had attempted to be in the past. None of those other students were seen to approach Esteban for his 'help' as the teachers had taken to calling it, but there were more whispers about the situation actually caught by adults. A few students, including Betty, Clarice and occasionally Timothy, even started sitting with him during lunch time, which Esteban usually spent reading in the library.

Hector DuMont noted, while checking out a student's books, that none of the students sitting with Esteban spoke much with him, but he was far from excluded. Conversation seemed to pull him in even if he almost never directly participated. They hung out on the couches and bean bags at the center of the library, laughing and trying to secretly rebel

against school policy by eating snacks that were hidden in backpacks and under notebooks and in pockets.

Freddie started joining them after some time. Abandoning his usual circles, he would slump on the couch and watch the goings on in silence. Freddie was the one person Esteban actively established a friendship with. Freddie would regard proceedings with empty eyes and increasingly hollow cheeks, and Esteban would offer him some of whatever food he was snacking on at the time. That was the only time anyone at the school would see Freddie eat.

When Freddie collapsed during fourth period, none of the adults spoke out when Esteban climbed in the ambulance alongside Mr. Baxter, who was calling Freddie's aunt.

Esteban was hardly noticed by the paramedics, the boy's spare frame pressed against the back doors while Freddie got his vitals checked. At some point, Esteban had slipped closer, pushed up one of Freddie's pant legs and put a hand on his bare shin.

Esteban's brows furrowed and he frowned deep. He removed his hand when they arrived at the hospital and wiped a little sweat from his upper lip as he went to the waiting room.

Mr. Baxter fidgeted, his leg bobbing rapidly as he sat with his hands shaking. They had all discerned Freddie's hapless condition. Guilt was too kind a word.

Aunt Willa arrived soon and looked questioningly at Esteban, but said nothing as she waited for a doctor with teary eyes. Her left arm was crooked so her large hot pink purse was nestled in her elbow and her hand pointed upward, flicking through her hair.

Esteban stared at her his fingers twitching with an incomprehensible look on his face. He laced his hands together and stared at the door.

For reasons unknown to Mr. Baxter at the time, Willa waved for both him and Esteban to accompany her to the room. The boy didn't follow

them in immediately, but came in a few minutes later, during Willa's desperately worried tirade.

Freddie looked worse for wear, skinny and self-harmed. Seeing Esteban prompted a slight smile. Esteban smiled back. He reached into his hoodie pocket and fished out a packet of cream filled cookies. Opening the bag, he popped one into his mouth as he crossed the room and sat on the edge of the bed. He remained there while Willa lamented into the air and after a moment of chewing pulled out a cookie for Freddie. Freddie smiled a bit wider and took it, biting a small chunk out of it then setting it aside. Esteban frowned and stared until Freddie picked it back up and ate the whole thing. Looking pleased, Esteban offered him another cookie, and another after that, staring until each one was eaten.

A doctor called Willa out of the room. Mr. Baxter was quickly forgotten, or rather dismissed after both boys spared him a glance. Esteban stood up and turned to face Freddie head on. He reached out a hand to touch Freddie's face, but Freddie shook his head.

"I think I need to do this on my own now." He said quietly. "But not— I mean— for a bit. I don't want to completely cut off, but I want to try and space it out."

Esteban pulled his hand back and shoved it in his pocket. "I shouldn't have done this the way I did. I don't think I'm supposed to do it like that. Sorry."

"No, you told me. And anyway, it was the only thing helping. You were the only one helping."

Mr. Baxter frowned and looked away from the boys shifting his weight on his feet and considering whether or not he should leave. This seemed like something he shouldn't be privy to.

"I dunno. It doesn't look like I helped much." He scratched the back of his neck. "Thinking about quitting. Like, closing up shop. Maybe forever."

"Really?"

"Yeah, just— I don't want to hurt anyone like I did you."

"Wasn't you. All me. My fault." Freddie adjusted his position restlessly. "You know I should've— maybe it would have been better if I had—"

They were quiet for a moment. Mr. Baxter noticed Freddie's gaze flick over to him, then away.

"I don't know what you want me to tell you."

"Nothing. I'm sorry. You don't need to hear that shit."

"I don't mind. Never did. You know that, right?"

They avoided each other's eyes. Esteban sniffed loudly and straightened out the crinkly bag, now empty of its contents.

"Don't close up shop." Freddie said abruptly. "I don't know what I would have done if you—"

Willa came back in asking Mr. Baxter and Esteban to leave gently, offering Mr. Baxter a thankful smile and a squeeze to the arm. Esteban stayed where he was for a brief juncture before inhaling deeply and pulling his hand from his pocket, settling it over Freddie's hand. Freddie started, eyes growing wide. Then he looked down at Esteban's hand and studied it a moment as if waiting. Then Freddie smiled, not the typical clouded smile that came after contact with Esteban but a clear one, and he nodded a little. Esteban gave a half smile back and rushed out of the room. Mr. Baxter paid for Esteban's ride home but stayed a bit longer to buy Willa some food before leaving himself.

At a point in the future, Esteban was over at Freddie and Willa's house when Mr. Baxter got the call about his mother. They were watching a movie, all four of them, and the interruption had been sharp. Mr. Baxter was reluctant to answer the phone since he knew what it was about. He took it in a different room but was still visible to the living room couch. That's why he saw, sort of saw, through growingly watery eyes: Esteban and Freddie look at one another and Freddie jerk his chin over at Mr. Baxter who was struggling to stand up straight and focus on the information being given over the phone.

Mr. Baxter tried to sob away from the phone's mic and leaned heavily against the wall next to the bookshelf he had set up last weekend. Esteban appeared in his line of sight and before anything could be said, the boy set a comforting hand on Mr. Baxter's shoulder his thumb and index finger touching the skin of Mr. Baxter's neck and collarbone.

It was like feeling wind push through you, but the wind started inside and was drawn outward. Mr. Baxter gasped at the pull and Esteban made a determined *hmm* in the back of his throat. Soon Mr. Baxter's mind became able to process things other than his own emotions again. Except for panic, at first, but that seeped out of him too until that drifted away and he was left with a pleasant elation due to the absence of overwhelming sorrow.

He was completely able to listen to the person on the other end of the phone without difficulty. He felt a little nebulous but mostly fine on the inside. His sadness remained, but, overall, his emotions felt much less disorderly and his logical self, much more in control. Mr. Baxter could see Willa and Freddie watching from the corner of his eye, both with a sense of understanding.

"So is that okay with you?" The person on the phone asked. "I know this is difficult, but we need to—"

"Yes, that's fine. Is it all okay if I call tomorrow morning and take care of everything first thing or must I do it now?" His voice no longer trembled.

He was assured it could wait the night. He thanked them and hung up.

Esteban had stepped back at this point. His face was a bit sweaty, but he gave a small smile ducking his head down.

"That's not how I usually— but you'll be good for a bit. Just a bit though." Under Mr. Baxter's curious scrutiny, Esteban stuffed his hands in his pockets and gave a slightly sheepish look.

"First time's free."



DANIEL FERRY

FLOWER HUNTER - GRAPHIC DESIGN





My pussy is a tunnel  
Your rod is a hose.  
Shoot me with your bullets!  
Make me curl my toes!

My pussy is vice grips!  
When you sink in deep,  
It snaps like a snapping  
Turtle! Feel the heat?

My pussy suction like  
Vacuum that inhale

My pussy is a car, driving  
On a wet street.  
Lubricated baby!  
Sink down in the seat.

My pussy wet and wild,  
Like a water slide!

Like mink, soft and pink,  
Black and pink, soft  
Marshmallow pie!  
Fuzzy like biting a peach.

Now don't let the pussy get  
Lonely, It don't keep.

Like stuffing a jar with  
Leftover meat.

You can kiss my neck and  
Curl my toes.

Please don't let this pussy  
Get cold!

I drain your water hose,  
You go away.

If we play pussy drop you  
Will stay!

Open your mouth! Bow  
your head! Swallow the  
pussy! You heard what I  
said!

Around and around and  
around we go! Popping like  
Bubbles all over the flo!

I bend over backwards, cast  
you in a heck, wrap this  
pussy all around your neck!

My pussy like a twirling  
tongue, sucking your lip,  
dip  
it in wine, let the honey  
drip.

Throw it out the back door!  
Throw it in the streets.

Keep pounding this pussy!  
This pussy in heat!

Cool down pussy! Don't  
overheat!  
Put some ice cubes in that  
pussy! To put it to sleep!

Pussy jumping and leaping  
like a frog with burning  
toes! It hear your voice  
like  
the sound of a BOSE!  
I flap my wings and my  
thighs slap!

BRACE THAT PUSSY!  
With a chastity strap!

# CCD CREATIVE WRITING COURSES

EACH SEMESTER, CCD IS PROUD TO OFFER A DIVERSE SET OF CLASSES FOR EVERY TYPE OF WRITER

## FALL SEMESTER

### | ENG 221

#### CREATIVE WRITING I

An introduction class that focuses on poetry, nonfiction and fiction. You will get to try a little bit of everything here and learn a variety of skills that will improve your writing.

### | ENG 230

#### CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOP

Want to start writing your memoirs, or learn about literary journalism?

This advanced workshop is for you.

*Prerequisite: ENG 221*

## SPRING SEMESTER

### ENG 221 |

#### CREATIVE WRITING I

An introduction class that focuses on poetry, nonfiction and fiction. You will get to try a little bit of everything here and learn a variety of skills that will improve your writing.

### ENG 226 |

#### FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP

This advanced workshop explores the craft of writing stories. In this class you will write and workshop your fiction.

*Prerequisite: ENG 221*

### ENG 227 |

#### POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP

This workshop provides you the space and support to build on your poetry writing skills.

# CCD ART COURSES |

## | ART 121

### DRAWING I

An exploration into drawing as an expressive medium for human creativity! As a human mode of communication, Drawing and "mark-making" have been part of our collective experience since our ancestors inhabited the caves! As part of this class you will enjoy projects that investigate the various approaches, techniques and media needed to develop drawing skills and visual perception.

## | ART 132

### VISUAL CONCEPTS 3-D DESIGN

An adventure in three dimensions, you will use the visual mechanics of the physical world to creatively solve conceptual challenges. The opportunity to play with scale, perspective, texture, form, color and the creative application of ideas to a wide range of materials will open up a new world of expression.

*Prerequisite: ART 131*

## | ART 139

### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY I

Free your inner photographic genius! This class will deliver the fundamentals of photography in a fast-moving, creativity-focused, workshop-style class using state-of-the-art workstations and software to bring your photographic ideas into reality.

## ART 151 |

### PAINTING I

An engaging exploration of the various techniques, materials, and conceptual possibilities using acrylic paints to bring form, space, symbol, and more to life.

*Prerequisite: ART 131*

## ART 221 |

### DRAWING II

Want to start writing your memoirs, or learn about literary journalism? This advanced workshop is for you.

*Prerequisite: ART 121*

## ART 239 |

### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY II

Expands upon the beginning digital photography class. Focuses your digital photography practice to strengthen use of design, technique and lighting to create more successful images for your portfolio. This active and exciting class includes a deeper dive into communication factors including color, visual design, lighting, graphics, and aesthetics.

*Prerequisite: ART 139*

## ART 251 |

### PAINTING II

This course further explores techniques, materials, and concepts used in acrylic painting, and introduces working with oil paints as an exciting addition for an expanded range of techniques with emphasis on composition and content development for your portfolio.

*Prerequisite: ART 151 & ART 131*

# CCD MULTIMEDIA GRAPHIC DESIGN COURSES

## | MGD 101

### INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER GRAPHICS

As an introduction to graphic design, students will dive into an exploration of the hardware and software components used in multimedia production and design. Beyond basic computer operations, this class will give you the building blocks needed for a successful and exciting future in the field of graphic design!

## | MGD 105

### TYPOGRAPHY & LAYOUT

Kern your enthusiasm! This class covers the creative process behind the basic production of your favorite design projects. Produce thumbnails, digital layouts and more with an emphasis on creative typography to jumpstart your graphic endeavors.

## | MGD 111

### ADOBE PHOTOSHOP I

Concentrating on the high-end capabilities of Adobe Photoshop, you will enjoy a variety of projects focusing on illustration, design and photo retouching. Learn techniques to select and manipulate photos, graphics and videos while expressing your personal creativity and imagination throughout the process!

## MGD 112 |

### ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR I

Are you interested in digital or print media design? This class is the kickstart you need to give you the tools to create successful digital artwork. Used across the field for a variety of projects, knowledge of this vector drawing program is a must have skill in today's graphic design community.

## MGD 114 |

### ADOBE INDESIGN

This course will introduce you to InDesign, a page layout program which integrates seamlessly with other Adobe design programs. This course will help you develop your creative freedom and productivity through numerous hands-on projects both in class and on an independent basis.

## MGD 116 |

### TYPOGRAPHY I

An exploration of the history and concepts of typography awaits you! With an emphasis on design, understanding and use, this class will give you an enlightening introduction to one of the most important aspects of graphic communication.

# CCD MULTIMEDIA GRAPHIC DESIGN COURSES |

## | MGD 141

### WEB DESIGN I

Are you interested in learning how to create your own website? Simply put, this course is for you! Learn how to plan, design and create a website that will be effective in today's internet-based society. Throughout this introductory course you will also explore some of the finer points of creating a website such as creating a user-friendly interface and screen-based color theory.

## | MGD 203

### DESIGN & CONCEPT

Take your graphic design knowledge to the next level through the comprehensive problem solving of advanced print design. This course will also expand upon your existing skills through the introduction of multiple computer applications with an emphasis on digital production designs and concept.

## | MGD 213

### ELECTRONIC PREPRESS

Dive into the electronic prepress process! You will experience a detailed overview of this system in order to encourage effective electronic designs and an efficient use of modern software programs.

## MGD 289 |

### CAPSTONE

Finish off your degree with a bang! This course is necessary to finalize the portfolio you have been building throughout your previous classes, as well as giving you the tools you need as you transition from student to successful professional in the field of graphic design.

# | OUR TEAM

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