



Black Rock & Sage

Issue 13, 2014
Idaho State University

Black Rock & Sage is a journal of creative works published annually through the Department of English and Philosophy at Idaho State University with assistance from the Art and Music Departments. All artistic contributions, from design to literature to music, have been produced by graduate and undergraduate students in departments from across the university. Submissions are received from September through February. For more information about the journal, see our website at www.isu.edu/blackrock.

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Cover: Detail of "Feeding the Heart" by Danielle Feige

Black Rock & Sage

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Editor's Note

During a recent *Black Rock & Sage* staff meeting, I facetiously referred to this year's edition as my swan song. After six years working with the journal (one as assistant editor, one as prose editor, and now four as editor-in-chief), it's time to move on. I say facetious because using this idiom, which originates from an ancient belief that in the moments before death the swan, having spent its lifetime in silence, sings a final melodious song, feels so melodramatic. Yet something about the image of the silent swan and the transformation provided by impending death intrigues me. But I'm not dying. And this feels less like the ending of a journey than the start of a new one. So calling this my swan song draws too much attention to me when this journal is really about its artistic contributors. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's satirical lines could certainly be applied to me here:

Swans sing before they die— 'twere no bad thing

Should certain persons die before they sing.

To be serious, if there is one final action or effort for me, I'd like it to reflect my desire from the beginning—to make the journal just a little better each year.

In this edition we've published two graphic narratives, a form we've never included before. The clean line drawings in Justin Murdock's "War and Peace" visualize a unique interpretation of a chapter from Tolstoy's novel, depicting a moment in war and its tragic results. The second graphic narrative, Forrest Johnson's "Vagrant," is a wordless comic about an out-of-place bird whose perceived tension with humans is enhanced by the excellent use of long diagonal lines and the exaggerated human figures.

While thrilled by the inclusion of these two graphic narratives,

I am no less impressed by this year's poetry. Our selections demonstrate a wide range of themes, forms, and styles, offering something for everyone, including this year's Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize winner, Mike Nichols' "Dead Girl Dancing," praised by this year's judge Ben Gunsberg for how it "dexterously balances sound, image, and idea." The diversity of form and style can be seen in Kelly Ricken's avant-garde "Untitled" and Amelia Kaspari's three response poems, each of which finds its own originality. The variety in themes ranges from the pastoral in Jeffrey Howard's "After the Harvest" to the humorous musings on sexual desires in Christine Pettaway's "Dreamboat Cafe."

This issue's prose presents a dynamic of human selfishness versus human generosity. In the creative nonfiction piece, "Child Masochism," this year's Prose Contest winner, Jeffrey Howard calls into question how humans respond to and repay the selflessness of pets and livestock. The narrator of "Suzie Steals Her Sister," by Kaitlyn Williams, chooses to dive headfirst into her own curiosities and desires without thought to the repercussions they will have on her sister Candice. Laura Neu's hauntingly Old-Hollywood story, "Red Waltz," contains a narrator who must come to terms with how her own inclination toward generosity indirectly enables her grandfather to act selfishly by continuing to abuse her.

I joke about my swan song, but working alongside so many uniquely talented individuals is what defines my time with *Black Rock & Sage*. Producing each year's edition is only possible through the combined efforts of devoted genre and assistant editors, faculty consultants like Professor Kori Bond and Professor Joanna Cleveland, and, most important, our faculty advisor Professor Susan Goslee. To Susan, for all you've taught me, and to my wife Brianne and son Ezra, thanks for letting me be part of *Black Rock & Sage*.

BR&S Musical Performances

- 1 Bradley Korth, Sophomore Piano Performance Major.
China Gates, by John Adams (1947-).
- 2 Millie Hulse, Mezzo-Soprano, Junior Voice Performance Major.
Abbi Clark, BM in Piano Performance, ISU, 2006.
Suleika, from *Sechs Gesänge*, Op. 34, No. 4, by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847).
- 3 The Fearsome Four String Quartet:
Jedd Greenhalgh, Freshman Music and Political Science Major.
Shelby Russell, Freshman Bachelor of Music Education Major.
Shelby Martignacco, Sophomore Viola Performance Major.
Alister Tencate, Cello, Physics Major and Music Minor.
String Quartet in G major, Op. 70, No. 1, *Presto*, by Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1789).
- 4 Christopher Rhoades, Freshman Clarinet Performance Major.
Stephanie Moore, Senior Piano Performance Major.
From *Five Dance Preludes*, Nos. 4 and 5, by Witold Lutoslawski (1913-1994).
- 5 Rocky James Allen, Senior Bachelors in Music and Geology Major.
Ballade in D minor, Op. 10, No. 1, by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897).
- 6 Emma Doupé, Soprano, Senior Bachelor of Arts in Music Major.
Natalia Lauk, piano, Graduate of Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Arts, Krasnoyarsk, Russia.
“Silver Song,” from *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, by Douglas Moore (1893-1969).
- 7 Quartet Consensio:
Robert Wilson, Junior Violin Performance Major.
Brianna Brinton, Sophomore Mass Communications Major and Music Minor.
Tom Attebery, Junior Political Science Major and Music Minor.
Alister Tencate, Junior Physics Major and Music Minor.
String Quartet in B-flat Major, “Sunrise,” Op. 76, No. 4, *Allegro con Spirito*, by Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1789).
- 8 Brett Friedman, Baritone, Junior Voice Performance Major.
Natalia Lauk, piano, Graduate of Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Arts, Krasnoyarsk, Russia.
“She is as Lovely as the Noon,” from *Twelve Romances*, Op. 14, by Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943).
- 9 Jared Vincent, Junior Piano Performance Major.
The Lion’s Roar, for *LH Alone*, by Jared Vincent (1993-).
- 10 Shaun Stubblefield, Baritone, Junior Voice Performance Major.
Natalia Lauk, piano, Graduate of Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Arts, Krasnoyarsk, Russia.
Heimkehr, by Richard Strauss (1864-1949).

- 11 Conor O'Farrell, Trombone, Junior Trombone Performance and Physics Major.
Blake French, Bass Trombone, Senior Bachelor of Music Education Major.
Conversation for Tenor and Bass Trombones, by Charlie Smalls (1943-1987).
- 12 Jerrica Matthews, Soprano, Sophomore Voice Performance Major.
Natalia Lauk, piano, Graduate of Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Arts, Krasnoyarsk, Russia.
"Ain't it a Pretty Night," from *Susanna*, by Carlisle Floyd (1926-).
- 13 John Punt, Tenor, Junior Voice Performance Major.
Abbi Clark, BM in Piano Performance, ISU, 2006.
"Lydia," by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924).
- 14 ISU Saxophone Choir:
Hayden Holbrook, Soprano
Spencer Bills, Montana Webb, Alto
Brett Syndergaard, Jamie Burtosky, Tenor
José Romero, Nick Johnson, Baritone
Doug Withrow, Conductor, Junior Bachelor of Music Education Major.
O magnum mysterium, by Morten Lauridsen (1943-),
Arranged by Doug Withrow (1993-).
- 15 Kÿlle Strunk, Marimba, Freshman Percussion Performance Major.
"Ballade für Petra," by Nebojša Jovan Živković (1962-).

Untitled

Taurus PT740 Slim forty caliber semi-auto pistol.
BIC Velocity 1.6 ballpoint black. of blood and shell.
Clenched callused fist. into pools
Garrote. from the rafters
C4. plummeted
XO. featherless
Loom. the filmy-eyed
Firmly pressing palm. as we loved
BIC Velocity 1.6 ballpoint black. Thus in the summer
Rapidly-oscillating mucomembranous vocal folds.

Suzie Steals Her Sister

I have the phone pinched between my ear and shoulder while my hands are busy folding and sorting laundry.

“Yes, the kids are at school.” Son’s pants go in this pile. Husband’s underwear goes in this pile.

“Is David at work?” My sister’s voice asks.

“Yes, it’s all clear. You are good to come over.” I reach for a hanger from the pile that I have perched on the side of the bed. I manage to get one with a fingertip; but when I pull on it, the whole stack comes with it, and my neatly stacked pile becomes a jumbled knot of plastic hangers, half falling off the bed and all interconnecting.

“Just come in when you get here. I’ve got to go. I have a hanger situation.” I can hear her laughing while I hang up the phone.

After I manage to sort out the hangers and restack them, I hear the front door open. When I get to the entryway, my sister is standing there, beach bag over her arm and red hair held away from her face with sunglasses on her head. She looks excited.

“Hi, Candice.” I give her a big embrace. She squeezes me quickly and then pulls away.

“Are you going to join me?”

“In just a bit. I need to finish putting away the laundry, and do the dishes. You go enjoy yourself.”

She rushes past me towards the pool in the backyard. I return to the bedroom and my neatly stacked piles of clothes. I begin to scoop up each one and take it to its predestined location. Daughter’s shirts go to her closet. Son’s jeans go in the second drawer. Husband’s dress pants hang in the closet. My shirts on the other side of the closet. Everyone’s socks go in one basket.

When I’m finished I go to the kitchen, start a pot of coffee, and begin putting away the clean dishes from the dishwasher. As I work I watch my sister from the kitchen window. She is swimming the length of the pool, her face down in the water. When she reaches the end, she flips over, and the sunlight reflects off of the thin line which runs from between her collarbone down the center of her chest to disappear beneath the line of her bikini bottoms.

My sister has a zipper. I don’t know what caused it to start growing, and I don’t know when it started. She didn’t show it to me until she was fifteen and it had grown almost to the center of her chest.

She had sat me down on the bottom bed of our shared bunk beds. I was seventeen at the time and irritated by the way she kept opening and closing her mouth like she was going to say something, but instead her grip on my hand just got tighter and tighter.

Spit it out already. The bottom bunk was mine, and I knew that if we sat there much longer I would smell her on my blankets when I went to sleep that night. I always hated when my things smelled like her.

Cups go in the cupboard to the left of the fridge. Plates belong next to the bowls in the cupboard to the right of the microwave.

After being unable to say a word, she had let go of my hand and gripped the bottom of her shirt instead. She pulled it up, and for the first time I saw the line of silver, shining skin running vertical from beneath the edge of her jeans to the fist that was clenching the fabric of her shirt.

Spoons go between the forks and butter knives. Steak knives go in the knife block on the counter.

I only got a glimpse, and then she burst into tears and dropped her shirt. When I asked her what it was, she cried harder. I asked her

where it came from and she collapsed into me. I held her while she cried, but all I wanted to do was push her away, pull up her shirt, and look at it again.

The dishes are put away and the coffee is done. I pour myself a mug and walk out to the pool. Candice has left the pool and is laid back in a lawn chair. She is wearing a small green bikini and her body looks great in it. I think about how I used to have a body like that.

"I can't tell you how happy I was when you guys bought a house with a privacy fence and pool in the backyard." Candice is watching me stare at her body.

I feel the need to make sure she knows it wasn't her zipper I was staring at this time, although I don't think she minds when she catches me doing that. These are the only moments she's this exposed, with the only person that knows it exists.

"I used to look that great in a bikini." I sit down in the chair next to her, fully aware of my loose fitting tank top and sweat pants.

"Oh, believe me, I remember." She smiles and turns on her side. "You dragged me to all those parties, where all those boys were all over you."

"I was a little slut wasn't I?" I laugh a little at the memory of how a stranger's bath mat felt beneath my back and the way it felt to dig my nails in to someone's shoulders knowing I would never see the marks I left.

Candice was at those parties. I wore low-cut tops, with an exposed midriff, miniskirts and barely-there underwear. She wore high-collared T-shirts and undershirts that tucked into her jeans. There were always precautions.

"I should have taken a page out of your book." I am staring at her zipper now. She's looking back towards the water, and I freely study the familiar tiny teeth that link together. I focus on the top

section, where you can just barely see the thin piece that opens her up when it's pulled.

The first time I touched it, it had only grown to the area just below her breast line. I was surprised when my fingertips felt skin. It could have been a tattoo, and I accused her of that, but while it felt like skin, it didn't look like skin. Even tattooed skin is still dull. This was iridescent.

She proved to me what it was by showing me that thin piece at the top, letting me lift it up like it was hinged to her. It could lay flat against her body, almost blend in, but when lifted it was obviously the top of her zipper. My first reaction was to pull down but she had quickly grabbed my hand and stopped the motion.

We sit by the pool a little longer. When my coffee is gone, it is time for her to get ready for work. I go back inside and start washing small hand prints off the front of the fridge while she uses the guest shower.

I answer the phone after the first ring, knowing that it is time for Candice's weekly swim visit.

"Just go on back, I'll meet you there."

I hang it up and go for the top drawer of the dresser. I pull out my old bikini that I haven't worn since that one daring night after baby number one. I strip down and pull up the bottoms. They're tight enough to pinch my sides and inner thighs. When I'm putting on the top I realize that I have the option to have the bottom sides of my breasts exposed or the top mushrooming out. I choose a positioning that is somewhere in the middle.

I walk out to the backyard trying to feel brave and sexy.

Candice hasn't seen me yet. She is on the end of the diving board. She bounces a little and raises her hands above her head in an extended prayer before pushing off. Her body curves and the lines are so beautiful. I sit cross-legged on the concrete surrounding the pool and start to cry. In moments her wet form is kneeling in front of me, and I'm staring at the silver teeth on her skin.

"Suzie," she wraps her arms around me. "Suzie what's wrong?"

I used to wrap my arms around her like this. The mornings after the parties I pulled her to, I'd wake up next to some guy, or a couple guys, and I'd find her sobbing in the yard, or a closet, or the car, waiting for me. I'd say, *it's okay*, or *it won't always be like this*. I'd wanted to tell her that it wasn't that great. Sex. It doesn't mean anything. *Someday you'll find someone you can trust*.

"He's cheating on me." I reach up and pull her closer, so my eyes can look over her shoulder.

"What do you mean? How do you know?" She pulls away again. She wants to see my face. She wants to see how it feels. I shake my head and close my eyes.

"He left his phone at home yesterday. Some girl called and when I answered she got angry with me."

I stand up and start pacing in front of her. "With me! Like I'm the one that's sleeping with a married guy."

She guides me to the beach chair and gently sits me down. She sits in the one across from me.

"Did you talk to David?"

"Of course. That night. He said, 'It didn't mean anything. She doesn't even know about you.' How does that make it better?" I look down at my too-tight bikini bottoms and notice that I need to shave.

"I don't think he loves me. I don't know if he ever loved me. If

I hadn't gotten pregnant."

I start to cry again. She wraps her arms around me again. Through my tears I stare at the line that runs down her chest.

"Maybe it didn't mean anything."

How far does it go? I had asked her this after our first time buying supplies to help her keep her secret. She stood in front of the mirror applying cover-up made to hide tattoos and large scars.

All the way.

I thought Candice was a virgin. When asked, she wouldn't deny or confirm, but she did tell me she had never unzipped for anyone before. It was something that happened before the zipper. I always wondered if it had somehow been a cause for it.

She used to ask me questions all the time before David and I became an item. They came quickly. The first ones were vague. *What did it feel like? Did it hurt you?* The specifics came with the specific men. *Did he shave down there? Is uncircumcised better? Doesn't the hair on his chest bother you?*

I didn't mind answering. I felt important. I was her only access to intimacy.

I listen to the phone ringing, impatiently tapping my fingers on the kitchen counter. There are dirty dishes all over, and my nails are leaving marks in a circle of dried juice.

"Hello?"

"Candice, come over. The kids are at a sleepover and David's

on a business trip.” I stop tapping the counter and start laughing. Business trip. Right.

I think the haste in her voice when she says “I’ll be right over” is a response to my uncontrollable laughter. She had been away for a few weeks, traveling with work. I can picture her comfortably wearing turtlenecks in the colder climates, standing in front of the important CEOs she talks to and not having to worry about sweat breaking down her barrier.

While I wait for her arrival, I pull out all the bottles of liquor in the house and start drinking from the tequila.

We end up by the pool. The tequila and whiskey have left us both naked and our hair wet from chlorine water. She’s asleep in the beach chair and I’m sitting on the one across from her, staring at her zipper.

The first time I had opened her up I was kneeling over her on the top bunk. She was asleep. I had listened to the sound of her breathing in and out of her nose while I slowly unbuttoned her nightshirt. With my fingernail, I lifted up that thin, hinged flap and gripped it between my thumb and forefinger. I watched her face as I pulled down. Her mouth opened and her breath deepened as it changed direction. I looked into her and forgot about her.

Looking inside my sister was like watching one of the Discovery Network television shows where they show you the most beautiful sight they could find through a telescope in high definition. Everything was in there, light and dark, movement and stillness, and then nothing at all. I stared for hours trying to pick out each color that moved, each light that shone onto our bedroom ceiling.

I get up and stand over her now. My fingers easily remember the way to pull the small piece up. She takes a deep breath as I open her. The world inside her is bigger than I remember. I leave her open and place my feet on either side of her hips, so that I’m standing over her. I stretch my arms up above my head, place my hands in prayer, and push off.

Remember
after Billy Collins

It could be the opposite of dismember,
like a coroner remembers a mangled corpse
or a bookbinder remembers an old encyclopedia.

It means to bring to mind.
To hold onto a phone number, an equation, the curve of a cheekbone,
like you keep a struggling fish on a line.

Sometimes you have to bait your memory
with something it is attracted to.
An orange peel,
a purple raincoat,
three bars of a song you never thought you'd forget.
Sometimes there's a struggle,
and the line twangs under the strain of
hauling the resisting memory to the surface.

I'd rather keep my memories in an aquarium,
so I could watch them at my leisure,
bright scales flashing among the plastic seaweed
and tiny colored rocks.

Generous
after Naomi Shihab Nye

A leaf is generous to the wind that carries it,
making it visible.

The timpani is generous to the orchestra,
and milkweed is generous to the caterpillar.

In Jerusalem, cracks in stone walls are generous
to tightly folded prayers.

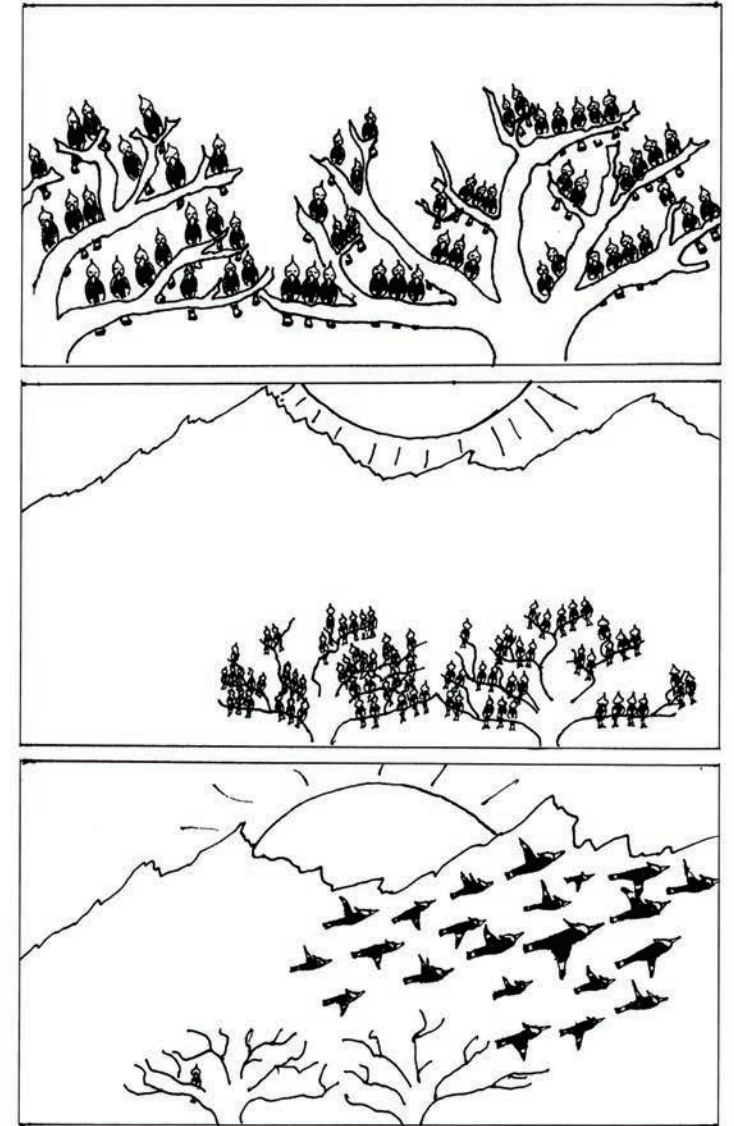
I want to be generous like a post office
or an estuary,

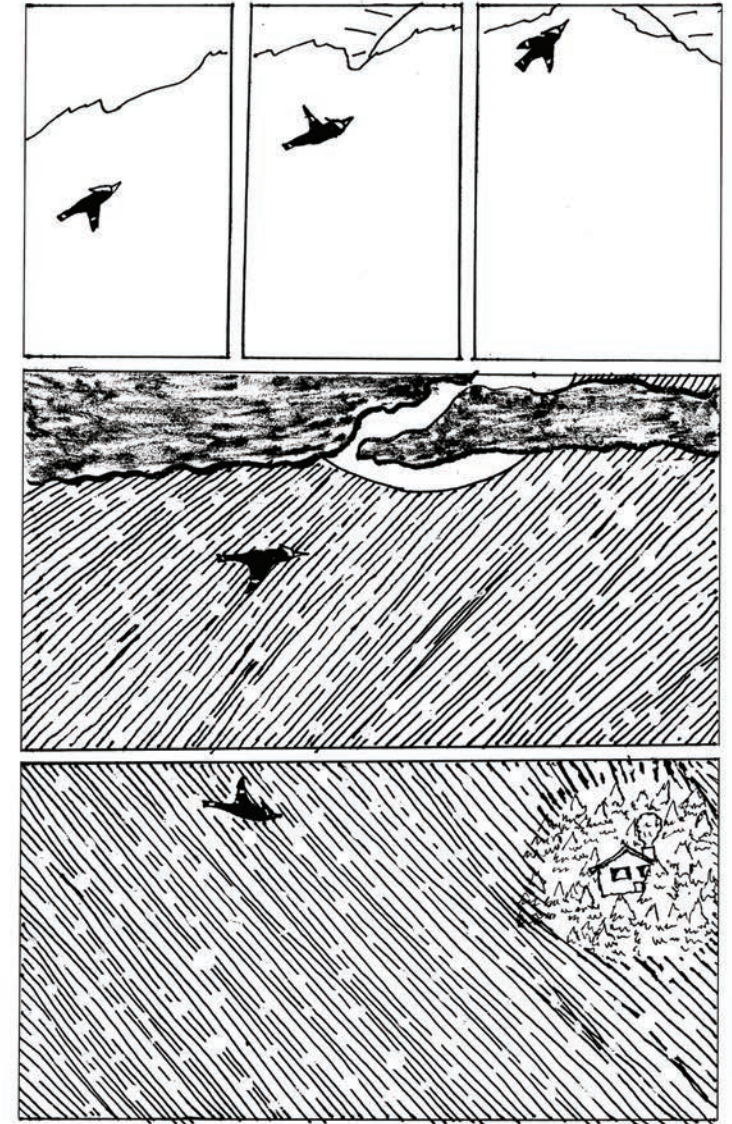
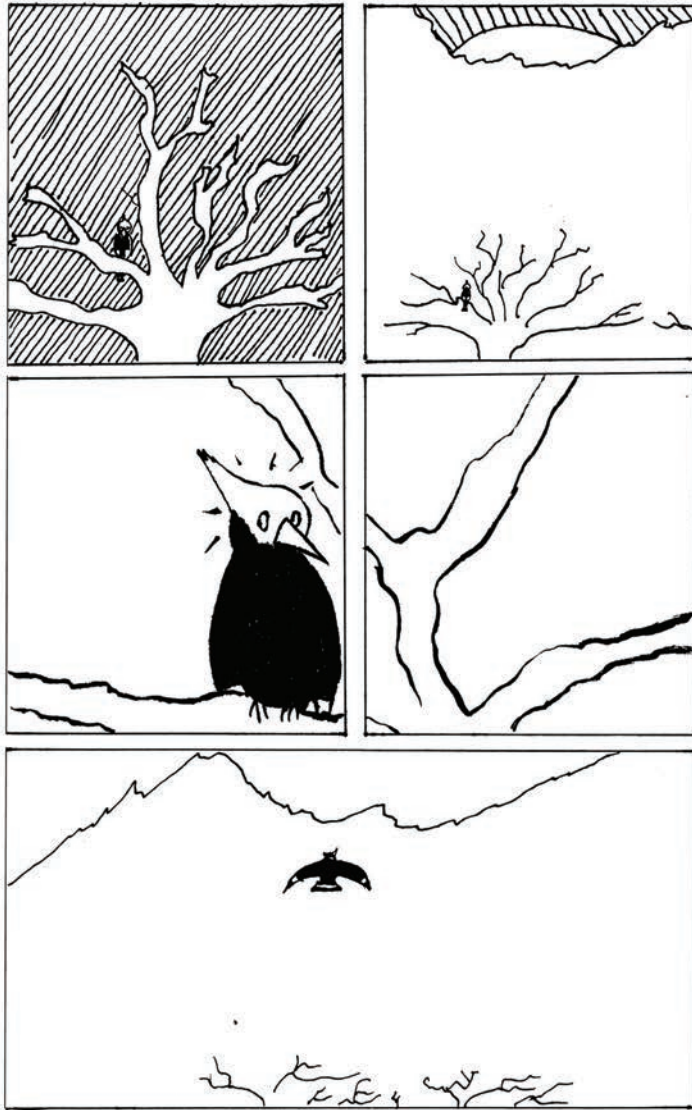
not because they give everything,
but because they give what they have received.

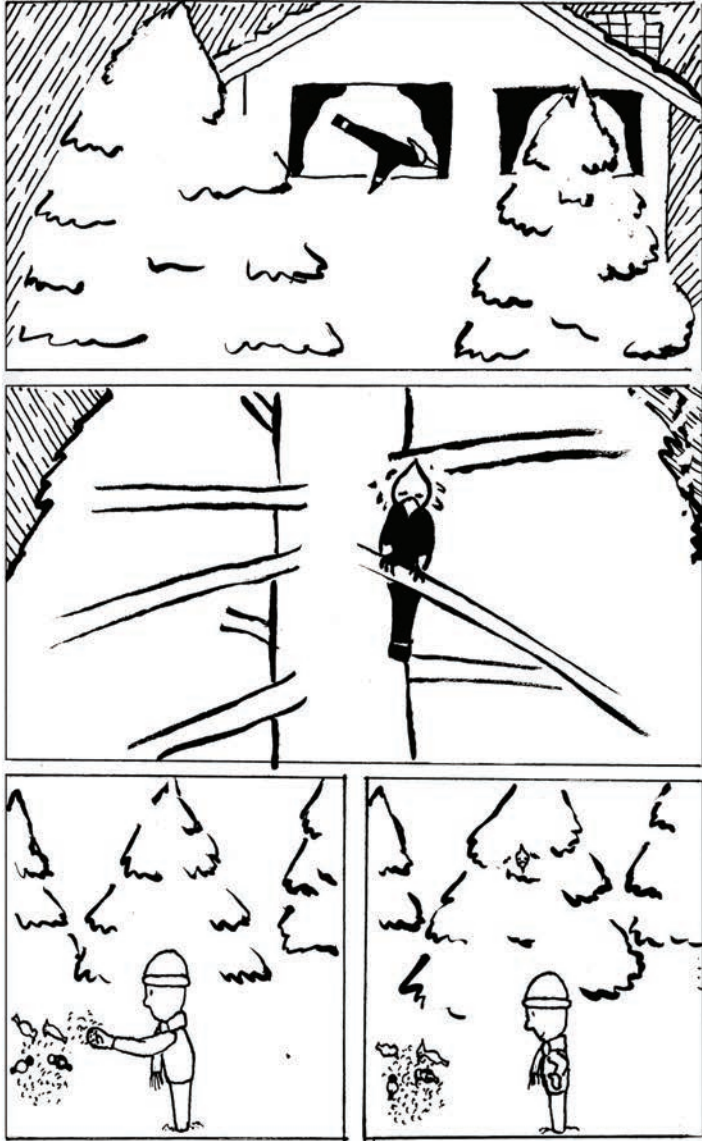
I Am Going to Start Living Like a Witch
after Edward Hirsch

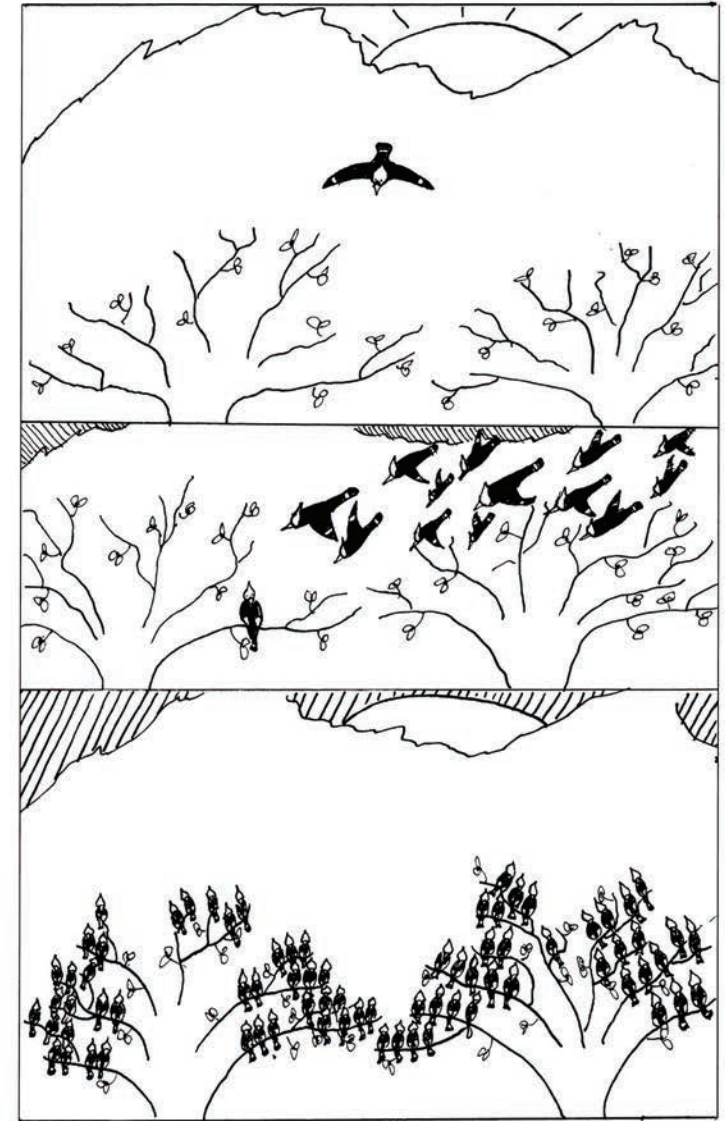
I'll find an abandoned house
overgrown with trumpet creeper and wisteria
and move in.
I'll keep a goat tied in the backyard,
and tear down that satellite dish.
I'll burn my mail,
unopened,
scatter the ashes of electric bills and Christmas cards
over the hydrangeas.
I'll leave stray baseballs, soccer balls, Frisbees
exactly where they land on my lawn,
unclaimed
by terrified children.











The Life on Land

The movement here affects the life on water
and the life on land.

The tunnel tucked in the mountain
is awake under a blanket of leaves
on our way to the seaside.

The middle only knows sun
through the two circle windows we drive through.

For ten seconds we lose our signals.
Off the map, no radar, uncharted
until we are back on again,
moving forward toward unforest.

Beneath coffee breath, beneath breathing,
there's a heart and lungs—
in rhythm I get reminded of if I want.

I wonder if the ocean has to remind itself to breathe,
if it becomes conscious of it.
Like blinking. Open
and close. In and out. Up.
Down.

Like us getting caught up in our up and down.
Like getting lost. Like losing our signals.

When our movement is like stillness
because it doesn't stop.
Because if there is only movement,
that's all that exists.

We're all that exists

where we only know sun
through the two circle windows we see through.

Red Waltz

I remember the house.

I remember the house and the striped bark-cloth curtains, the blue teapot screaming.

It was 1954.

It was 1954 and I remember the black and white bubbles floating on Granma's television set, the pop of champagne, the man in the suit. *Winnerful! Winnerful!* I went there to live after Momma went away. With Granma and Grandpap and Lawrence Welk.

Grandpap took us to a movie for Granma's birthday. It was an old one. A man in mirror shoes, his arm around the waist of a beautiful woman whose dress draped from her horizontal body, sliding against the polished floor. Later, standing behind her, his breath on her neck.

They can't take that away from me.

Pap sang those songs all the way home and in the kitchen still as he twirled Granma across the new black and white checkered linoleum floor. She giggled like a schoolgirl. She was too happy to see he was only looking at me.

Shall we dance, he said. His outstretched hand took hold of mine. Granma had gone to bed, sleeping pills tucked warmly in her stomach. He spun me over to the padded chrome chair and sat me down. Fingers on my spine, breath in my ear.

They can't take that away from me.

That was the day I met Titus.

Titus was black and white—the Petrov to my Linda Keene. He came through the grey that had been my mint walls in the daylight. Maybe he scurried across the tree-branch silhouette that broke through my window and wrapped around the room. He stood in the shadows like a statue.

At first I thought he was Pap.

It was a silly thought to have. He was much too young and much too short. I let the air back into my lungs.

He said, "My name is Titus."

Those were the first and only words he ever spoke.

Pap cooked bacon on Sundays. I'd come out from my room and sit at the table next to Granma, across from Pap. Granma sipped her milky coffee; Pap rubbed his worn moccasin up and down the Labrador's back. I made faces in my eggs, picking at the best pieces. Granma carried her dishes to the sink and I followed. I watched Pap lick the grease from his fingers, 1, 2, 3, then let them worm across my freckled shoulder as I passed. Titus hated when he did that.

Every day at four o'clock I came home to Pap playing solitaire at the coffee table. Queens on Kings, Jacks on top of Queens. Red to black. A different record spun on his table each day. Dorsey, Crosby, Ellington, Ol' Blue Eyes. That's what Granma called Pap. Ol' Blue Eyes. It was a mixture of denim eyes and his baritone hum that rocked her to sleep before the pills.

I must've fallen asleep on the couch one time because I

opened my eyes to Pap standing over me, Lawrence Welk playing behind him. His fingers dangled from his arm over my hip as he stared down at me, lips dryly parted. His arm stretched until his fingers slid across my thigh. Titus was around a lot after that. Always, almost. I only saw him at night when the shadows were just right but even when I couldn't see him, I could feel him there. With him, everything felt . . . less. Like he felt things for me, like I was no more than half there, trapped in a hall of never-ending mirrors never sure what was real and what was a distorted reflection—a mimicry.

Momma and I used to go to the beach. We'd turn buckets full of sand upside down and make castles with towers and moats to protect my dolls from dragons. The dolls wore dresses and blankets made of sand, but then the wind came and it pushed waves up the beach and the waves licked at my castle walls until one big one swallowed it whole and left my dolls naked and alone on a pile of dirt. I cried, but Momma scooped up the sand and made another castle on a rock where the water couldn't reach. We took pictures and I still have them, tucked away in my drawer where no one can find them. Sometimes I still try to make castles out of the earth.

There was a kind of numb silence then that wrapped tight around me when Pap came. Like an old movie, only I couldn't see the words on the screen. Everything felt grey. Black and grey, no white. He's there and then he was gone and I couldn't be sure how much time had passed. I knew what happened, but I wasn't quite sure who it had happened to. Was it me or one of the reflections? Titus was in the corner. His eyes had darkened. Or maybe I just never noticed before.

I watched out the window one afternoon as Pap raked the frail

October leaves into a fortress. He started to lean forward onto the handle; his right hand groped his chest. The rake fell. He dug deep inside the pocket of his corduroy jacket until he found his bottle of pills. His fingers fumbled, working the cap against its will. My eyes wouldn't let go, fixed on his clubbed tips. Titus's transparent hands dug into my shoulders, grounding me in that kitchen chair, but I broke free and ran out the porch door. I took the bottle from Pap's shaking hand and twisted the lid. He slid two pills underneath the thick of his tongue. I could feel Titus watching me, his black eyes scolding.

I tried to pretend he wasn't there.

Last summer I saw a magpie fall from its nest. Pap was there. He hurried into the garage and came back with a shoebox and a pair of gloves. He filled the bottom of the box with grass and leaves then gently lifted the bird and laid him on top of the bedding, almost tucking him in. His own private castle. I thought I heard a cooing sound coming from Pap, but maybe it was just the bird or the wind.

He didn't live very long. The bird, that is. He couldn't fly and he wouldn't eat. Pap said that's what happens sometimes to animals that are taken out of their natural habitat. That's what happened to Momma after the doctors locked her up. When she couldn't fly away, she just stopped eating.

Your momma's dead. Titus didn't speak it but his thoughts were loud as I lay in bed staring into the ceiling that wasn't there. I already knew. And I knew that meant I would never leave this place. I buried my head in my pillow, not wanting Titus to hear me cry, sucking on the tears that burned my cheeks. I heard my doorknob turn; it rattled, too small for its fitting. The door swished against the carpet; Pap's breath was thick in the silence. Everything inside me curled and puckered but I didn't move. Maybe if he thought I was

asleep . . . but he didn't. I felt the foot of my bed compress, the covers slither away from me, his coarse hand on my neck. Then he leaned in. His breath was hot but there was no whiskey in it. Only pipe tobacco and stale salt.

"Your mother's with God, you know?"

I still didn't move.

"Come here." His hand hooked my shoulder and I rose till I was sitting. With the door open, the hallway light stained my bedroom. His features were sunken in by shadow. I wondered if he could tell I'd been crying when he brushed his thumb under my eye, and I knew he could.

"Come here, girl."

He pulled me in against him, my face pressed hard into his collarbone, but I couldn't feel it. Titus was there. We sat on that bed in a moment of stagnancy. Nothing moved or changed. The clock stopped ticking. Then I noticed he was rocking, ever so slightly, his hand brushing down my matted hair. My stomach started to gurgle and the room got hot but it was all coming from me; the heat was radiating from my core. I pulled away, leaned over the bed, and threw up everything inside me. Pap's face contorted into disgust. He left the room, and I thought he was gone but he returned again with a glass of water. I took it but didn't drink from it. Instead, I dropped onto my shaking legs and hurried out the room and into the bathroom. I rinsed the grey matter from my limp hair. I took a drink from the glass, swished it around inside my mouth, and spit into the sink. Rinse, spit; rinse, spit; rinse, spit. I couldn't stop. I wanted to strip down and scrub every inch of me until I bled, peel out of my skin and leave it crumpled on the floor. Rinse, spit; rinse, spit. When I came up for air, Pap was in the mirror. He brushed my hair over my shoulder and ran his knuckles loosely across my back. My stomach kicked again.

I saw Granma's hair dryer, thought about swinging it. Maybe into him, maybe into the mirror. All I know is I wanted to hear it cut through the air, to feel it hit something, break something. I wanted it to be my hands that held it, my arms that flexed to send it flying. But I left it there. I ducked under Pap's arm and staggered into the living room, the house twisting into funny shapes around me. Somehow, a lamp became Pap and he grabbed me and laid me on the stiff couch, its plastic pulling at my skin. Before I could take a breath, he was kneeling over me. He dug his eyes into mine and his breath deepened. His hand on my hip moved up my torso, pulling my nightgown with it. Titus was in the corner; I was in the room of mirrors. Somewhere, to someone, Pap was moving in and out. His mouth was open but I couldn't tell if sound was coming out. Somewhere there was music. *The Lawrence Welk Show*, Ol' Blue Eyes, Ellington, Dorsey, Crosby, all of them in one mistuned melody. Suddenly he stopped. His eyes changed and he froze on top of that someone then rolled off, fingering at his heart. His breath changed too. It was shallow and panicked. He looked at the girl and spit the word *jacket* out of his quivering mouth. His hand lapped at the air toward the coat rack and suddenly I realized he was speaking to me.

Jacket.

Jacket.

I hurried to the rack but Titus was there, standing in my way.

"Move. Please! I have to get his pills. I have to g—"

Titus didn't move. He lifted his head from the shadow and looked at me; his eyes were blacker than they had ever been before. He shook his head slowly and I stumbled back against the wall. Titus stood at my side and watched Pap on the floor. I couldn't watch, yet I couldn't look away. When Pap finally stopped, eyes wide and empty, I turned to Titus. But he was gone. The grey slipped away and

everything turned to hues of red. Suddenly I felt everything. The weight of Pap's silence, the air crushing down on top of me. The unbearable density of color. Pain. Everywhere. I couldn't breathe. I slid down onto the floor and tucked my knees tight against my chest.

They can't take that away from me.

They can't take that away from me.

Taylor Kensel

Dust

me: something to run a finger through.
In pieces. Or particles. Unwhole.

If you stay still enough,
you can watch my slow spreading,

my spilling
into any crack that will have me.

The world I know is this one shelf.
The walls of my room are book covers.
The art that hangs
are fine, shining screws.

You trace circles in my deliberate settlement,
in me, your handy canvas.

The pattern that you make of me
isn't even a story anymore.
I have to ask what it all means.

Still, doesn't everyone dream
of coating something? Of filling in
all the holes?

Having now hands,
I wait to be collected.
Praying in vain to static.

Lori A. McPherson

Green Algae



Oil, enamel, prisma color, and joint compound on panel

Seth Spencer

Black Cat Looking Back



Digital watercolor

Colin Wintz

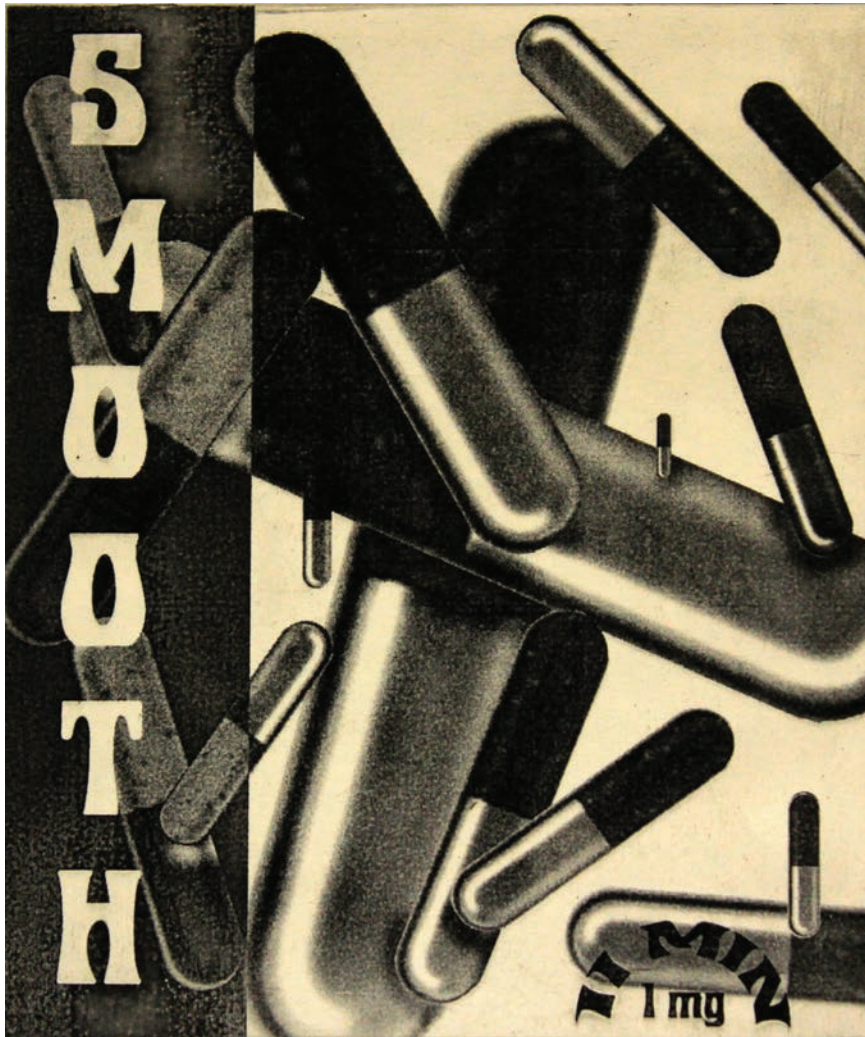
Expulsion



Oil on panel

Tracy Eastman

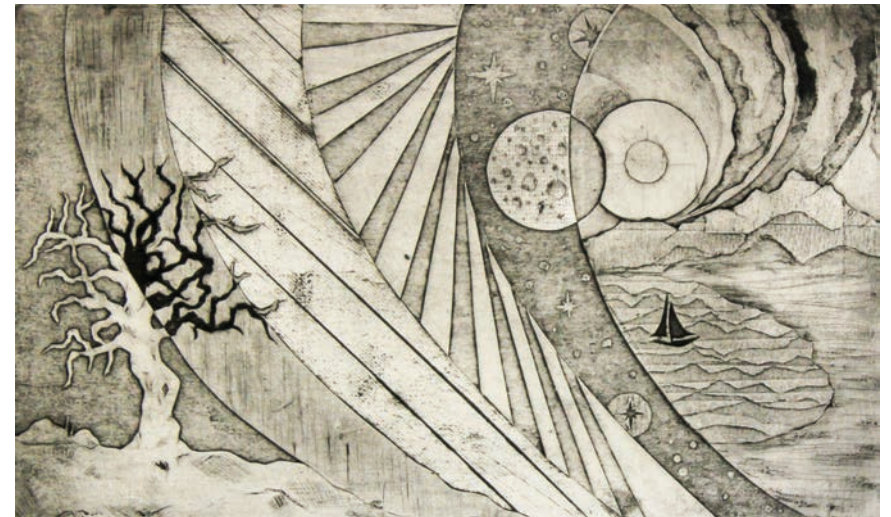
Carinology



Solar plate print

Bradley Nash

Dimensional Connections



Collagraph with paper and tape

Noi Thannao

Female Portrait



Watercolor and prism marker on paper

Danielle Feige

Feeding the Heart



Hand-tinted Intaglio print with Chine Collé

Lori A. McPherson

Ice in the Brine



Oil, enamel, and joint compound on canvas

Seth Spencer

High Contrast Leopard



Sharpie

Male Portrait



Watercolor and prism marker on paper

After Harvest Time

Diesel roar batters the October evening; tractors disk corn cobs
beneath billowed soil. Gray-winged gulls follow whirring
blades, bug-picking the furrows. I squat, grab a handful
of red-brown earth;
it lies loose in my palm. Peaked like an ash-heap. My dad.
My granddad. I roll them
through my fingers, watch the breeze toss grains
toward a west-set sun.

Lobster Boil

We once worked as cooks
 drowning screaming lobsters
in boiling Jacuzzis
until they glowed cherry red
 pale sweet meat inside broken bodies

I was a twiggy girl
 playing with fresh caught
 insects, burgundy and shiny
into the bath quick
 it screamed, jumped
 out of the pot, scuttled to me for help

all I wanted was a pet
 and a meal, lobster tail
so sweet and tender
is my panicked pet food for

but there are no more lobster tails
 no Sunday boils any more
the seas boiled away
 cooked them all at once
killed them all
killed us all
 screaming

I Am Kansas

People like Charlie Sheen can howl at the wind. With arms
outspread and faces tipped toward the sky, they gulp the rain and call
it tiger blood. They grow stronger; they spin; they call down the clouds
and tear up the land.

I like to think I'm good at faking it. When cyclones kick
up dust and the clouds turn green, when my mind rattles like old
windows in a gale, I hunker down and ride it out with my cat, candles,
and a dead-battery flashlight—not wise to venture out for coffee or
beers.

• • •

I followed two enormous orderlies down a quiet hallway.
My steps made no noise; my shoes had been taken, along with my
sweatshirt strings and belt, when the first door locked behind me. The
second door now loomed before us. One orderly punched numbers
into an electronic pad that was bolted to the wall, and the door swung
inward, slowly, on its own.

A male nurse was waiting for me in the next room, smiling.
He had a clipboard in the crook of his arm and was spinning a chewed
pencil between his fingers. I was fuzzily aware that he was speaking to
me, but I couldn't focus; behind him, the room was a tempest.

• • •

"Get up," Mom said to me a few months earlier.

I grumbled through my tears.

"I said get up," she repeated.

"I can't," I sobbed.

"You can. Get up."

"No!"

Mom pulled the blankets and sheets off of me in one good yank.

“We’re going,” she announced, “for a walk. Now get your ass out of that bed, put your shoes on, and let’s go. Come on. I only have a half hour before I have to be back at work.”

I trudged down the sunny sidewalk in my snowman pajamas and bad day hat—a black and white-striped beanie. Mom breathed in the sunshine like it was a sweet smell and exhaled it with a smile. I concentrated on the concrete, trying to avoid the sun altogether; it aggravated my chronic headache and made everything worse. The clouds were too white and prissy, posturing like they had never rained a day in their lives.

• • •

Waves of patients in teal hospital scrubs paced from one end of the common area to the other. One patient, a woman with frizzy red hair, twitched her head at two-second intervals and yelled, “Hup!” Another patient, a man with long grey hair and a Hell’s Angels tattoo, skipped like a child with his hands in his pockets. A young girl, about sixteen, approached me slowly and whispered, “Are you mad at me?” There were tears in her eyes.

I turned toward the nurse and tuned out the waves.

He said, “I need to go through your things. Just follow me.” He took me into a small bedroom and up-ended my suitcase. He then began sifting through the pile, counting.

“Five pairs of underwear,” he mumbled, making a note on his clipboard.

“Four pairs of socks, two bras, one blanket,” he said to himself, jotting down numbers and checking boxes. Finally, he turned to the remaining items—sanitary pads. He picked them up one at a time and transferred them from one pile to another. He counted as

he worked, every few seconds glancing up at me as if he wanted me to verify his numbers.

“One, two, three,” he looked up.

I nodded, embarrassed.

“Four, five.”

I nodded.

“Six . . .”

• • •

“If you wake up in the morning and think, ‘It’s going to be a shitty day,’ it probably *is* going to be a shitty day,” my friend Adam preached.

“Speaking of shit, Adam, you’re completely full of it,” I bit back.

“I’m just saying, you make your own day. If you wake up every day and tell yourself it is going to be a good one, it *will* be.”

“All right, how about this?” I said. “I stand at the edge of a rooftop, fifty stories above the ground. I jump. I think to myself, ‘I am not going to hit the concrete.’ Guess what?”

“What?” Adam replied.

“I’m still going to hit the fucking concrete.”

• • •

“Come on,” the nurse called over his shoulder as he led me down a silent hallway at midnight. “You’ll be in room one-eleven. Your roommate’s name is Tanya; you can introduce yourself in the morning.”

There was no door to room one-eleven, only empty hinges. I took my suitcase from the nurse.

“We’ll be doing checks every fifteen minutes. Good night,” he said, and turned to go.

“Checks?” I asked softly, and he turned around.

“Safety checks. Every fifteen minutes.”

I thought surely a person could manage to kill themselves in fifteen minutes.

• • •

The young soon-to-be-certified social worker was setting up her camera.

“Do you mind if I tape this session?” she asked.

“Not at all,” I replied. I didn’t want to be rude.

The session began, and I gave the usual introduction: name, age, occupation, diagnosis, patient history.

“Have you ever thought,” she asked, “of making what I call a ‘happy box’?”

I stared at her.

She continued, “You get a box—you can decorate the outside—and you fill it with things that make you happy. Pictures, CDs, quotes, and anything else. Then, when you’re in a depressive episode, you take out the box. It’s crisis management.”

I took a deep breath, held it, and let it out.

“That’s a great idea,” I said.

I didn’t want to ruin her senior project.

• • •

I tiptoed past my sleeping roommate to the bed against the wall—mine. I set my suitcase down and slid it under the bed with my foot. I sat. I let out a long sigh.

“I almost forgot,” a voice said loudly. It was the nurse again, standing in the doorway. “I need to get a picture of you for the file. Come on.”

I stood up and followed him, too tired to argue.

“Stand against this wall,” he said, raising an old Polaroid.

“Smile!”

And I did.

• • •

“So you’ve had a rough semester,” the MD observed.

“Yeah.”

“And you haven’t been sleeping well, and you’ve had more headaches.”

“Yeah.”

“Racing thoughts?”

“Mhmm.”

“Anything else?”

I thought for a moment, looked at my striped socks.

“Yeah,” I said, “I just can’t forget. Every bad thing that happened, I can’t forget. They come in flashes, at unexpected times. Like at school or talking to my mom. And I can *feel* it, what happened. Over and over again, I feel it.”

The doctor wrote something down, then took her glasses off, rubbed the bridge of her nose, and looked at me. “And what do you do when you have these flashes?”

“Cry.”

“You *cry*?” she asked, scribbling with renewed fury.

“Well, yeah.”

She put down my file and crossed her legs, slumping comfortably in her chair.

“You know,” she said cautiously, “we can dull these flashes, and we can teach you some skills to deal with them, but they won’t fully go away.”

I stared.

“This is part of the disease.”

She picked at a hangnail.

“When scientists conduct brain scans on people with this

disease, they find that the brain flashes like little lightning storms.”

She waited for me to respond; when I didn’t, she leaned forward and said, “*Storms.*”

I pictured my brain flashing colorfully on some millionaire’s computer screen. But that’s not what it’s like. It’s not colorful. It’s not like fireworks or a laser show.

I’ll tell you what it is. It’s the clouds falling. It’s a long, twisted, dusty finger scratching along the skin of my brain. It’s the inevitable weather without the report, and I am the grassless, homeless land that remains.

I am Kansas, and it’s the wind.

Sam Hansen

Bringing a Knife to a Pen Fight

Look,

I know you’re proud of that knife. I know you bought it with donated blood,

but,

THIS

is a pen. And

it can set you free like Hephaestus smashing the chains of gods, or it can cut you deeper than daddy's disappointment in a basket of pre-counted chickens.

Those soon to be scrambled dreams are gonna still-hatch with the latest incarnation of your get-rich-quick life.

That knife ain't gonna cut away the pre-traumatic stress disorder of unlived potential.

I have got potential for days.

Days and days of waiting for the lights to brighten on my small town hash-pipe dreams.

Yeah.

It was a one-horse town with a stoplight on the corner of Protestant and Cow Shit.

They broke the horse to saddle in the summer of their discontent, but the horse broke ’em back in a grass roots revelation

of greener other sides.

Man.

Can that horse ride. . . .

It grew dactyl wings in a fit of ptera.

I named it Pegas-me and we flew through a watercolor poem
of Icarus' ill-fated falling action at the end of a high school production
of *Romeo and Juliet*
on ice.

Sorry Icky,
you can't bounce back from that,
you gotta let it slide.

This time,
Juliet is gonna drop
that deadbeat and fly. She's gonna take those wings and
wax on
to the next town over.
Because getting out of Verona is half the battle,
but she doesn't know the battle's already lost,
and one day she's gonna be a constellation prize for the
third runner up in a crow-eating contest.

You gotta ask yourself,
Romeo,
is that knife in my face
the answer
to your half-cocked prayers pleading for
a way out

of your aggressive mediocrity?

Or are you gonna use it to cut
scar tissue in the shape of a cross into your wrist?

I know what it is to fail.

But here are some things I learned:

the sun is always up, we just can't see it sometimes.

The only thing higher than the population of non-indigenous wild pigs
and killer bees is the suicide rate in Japan.

And life is like a pack of menthol phallic symbols.

It's kind of a dick,
and one day, it's gonna kill ya.

Take my pen; it's got a few words left in the back.

Use 'em to write your will
to live. Ink that shit on your chest
so when they lay you down, they know:
“Hey, it took him a while, but
this guy . . .

this guy finally got it right.”

Sappho

Love's antiquity—
its ancient stores
of breath made verse
and flesh made stone,
its rusted trunks
of ecstasies made immortal
and distances made small—
has declared that I am
a red valentine—
a Sappho with a ball-point pen,
I am without subtlety
in my metal folding chair
at the corner table,
examining our closeness
in the free-swinging light
of a single bare bulb.

WAR AND PEACE

THE BATTLE OF BORODINO
VOLUME III PART II CHAPTER XXXVI

BY LEO TOLSTOY

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD PEVEAR AND LARISSA VOLOKHONSKY

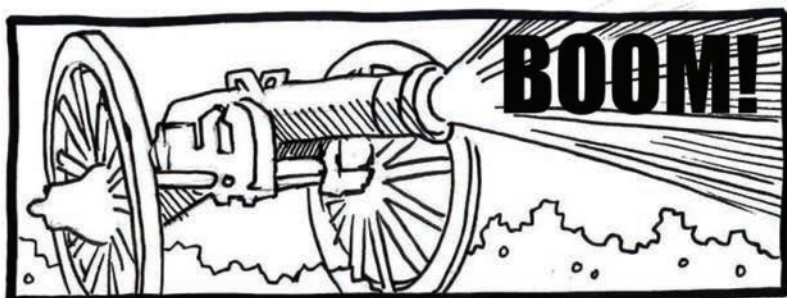
ILLUSTRATED BY JUSTIN MURDOCK

THE BATTLE OF BORODINO WAS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BATTLES OF THE FRENCH INVASION OF 1812, AS WELL AS NAPOLEON'S LAST MAJOR OFFENSIVE ACTION IN RUSSIA. IT WAS TECHNICALLY A VICTORY FOR NAPOLEON, BUT WITH SUCH A DEVASTATING COST TO HIS TROOPS THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE CAMPAIGN COST HIM THE WAR.

THIS SCENE TELLS OF PRINCE ANDREI BOLKONSKY, SERVING AS AN OFFICER IN THE RUSSIAN INFANTRY. HIS BATTALION HAS BEEN UNDER HEAVY SIEGE FROM FRENCH CANNONS FOR DAYS. AFTER WITNESSING HIS BATTALION DECIMATED BY ARTILLERY FIRE, ANDREI CONTEMPLATES THE VALUE OF HIS LIFE AND THE SAVAGE POINTLESSNESS OF WAR. HE CONSIDERES LETTING HIMSELF BE KILLED; HE DECIDES THAT DESPITE EVERYTHING, HE STILL LOVES LIFE.







Face to Typeface

III. Papyrus

It is a feature:

A sedge found in Narmer sands; it was grazed into sheets unfit for folios—the leaflets were too brittle to roll or fold. Its pulpos pith must be perfect, with spongy strips overlaying one another; if the strips become too dry, the leaves of grass will blow away. Then the papyrus is locked away—sealed in clay, they can never be opened.

It is a feature:

English would have looked like *this* two thousand years ago: a flaky face on crumbling paper. It is an elegant face, rough around the edges like antique furniture, like an adventurer's five-o'clock shadow, like an Arizona can cast in the trash. Costello calls it a kitschy font; still, it helps coffee houses and credit unions alike look cheap.

Dreamboat Diner

May you take my order please?

I'll take a tall, sturdy, quick to
the whip, cleans a whistle with a
toothbrush, kind of guy.

A time-out

giving, make my London broil
sizzle, make the bubbly bubble
in my bath water, kind of guy.

A get 'em tucked tight,

like gloves on a snow day, with kisses,
swing me low, spin me round,
sweet lullaby baby cakes, kind of guy.

A miss you till

banana pancakes turn over, slathered
in peanut butter, stuck to my cheek,
Sudoku and orange juice, kind of guy.

A regular brew, black

tie, waltz around cluttered floors in
footie pajamas, late night ice cream
sundae drizzled with chocolate—*what* a guy.

How long would that take?
Too much, too long, not on the menu
you say? Well, then, how bout the crème brûlée?

Mike Nichols

Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize Winner

This year's poetry contest judge, Ben Gunsberg, is an Assistant Professor of English at Utah State University. He received an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Alabama and a PhD in English and Education from the University of Michigan. His poetry appears in *CutBank*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, and other journals. His poetry manuscript, "Cut Time," won the University of Michigan's Hopwood Award for Poetry Writing. He lives in Logan, Utah, at the foot of the Bear River Mountains.

He writes this about the winning selection:

I select this poem for the Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize because it dexterously balances sound, image, and idea while achieving, through the repetition of "a dead girl dancing," Ford Swetnam's wish that the winning poem "employ some formal device which will discriminate it from prose, rant, howl, or cookie-cutter workshop poetry." The subtle rhetorical shifts in each invocation of the dead girl maintains the poem's forward momentum; we are told in no uncertain terms she is dancing "up on the wooden landing," and yet as the poem progresses, ambivalence takes hold and the speaker admits that no one else sees her, that she "makes no shadow" and "won't be touched." Clearly what the speaker "sees" is a confluence of memory and fantasy, with the wonderful turn, "she might as well be dancing on the moon" indicating cosmic distance between the speaker and this girl. Indeed, what impresses me most is the poet's negotiation of

proximity—how the dead girl is everywhere and nowhere all at once—
with my favorite moment occurring in the final three stanzas. Here the
poem tunnels back into childhood: the dead girl dancing under the
monkey bars, “her eyes looking down at the shadows of the bars that
lock her out” and lock the speaker in. How gracefully this poem earns
its ending.

Mike Nichols

Dead Girl Dancing

Look up.
Up on the wooden landing
see,
the dead girl,
dancing

Dust motes dissipating
in the morning sunlight streaming
down through lofty windows
where it's gathered in the wavings
of her yellow dress,
and in the golden strands
of her beribboned hair.

Maybe this is how
my sorrow
empties
not incessant waves of never-ending
but in sharp and short eruptings
stark and palpable, releasing
petite pieces each occurrence
until one day, the grief's gone missing
and it's okay that she's no longer

dancing

But, see? The dead girl

dancing
Out. (*breathe*) There.
buried
on the freeway beneath intestines
made of concrete,
a delicate enchainment light as air
atop these broken yellow lines.

But no one else is screaming
as the dead girl's pirouetting
to avoid the whooshing traffic
and the horns they are not honking.

No one sees the dead girl,
but-she-*is*

dancing

And when I reach out, though I clutch
still
the dead girl
won't be touched.
Where she whirls she makes no shadow
and she may as well be dancing
weightless on the distant moon.
While through a telescope
I'm observing, thinking
there's no atmosphere so
how is she still

dancing?

And on the long dim
summer evenings
under monkey bars, beneath
the other children climbing
still
the dead girl
will not stop her

dancing

she sways, her pale arms held soft
against her chest
looking down, her dead eyes rest
upon the shadows of the bars
that lock her out
that lock me in.
(*breathe*)

Child Masochism

BR&S Prose Contest Winner

Kids are secretly sadomasochists. Except that it isn't a secret anymore. I know about this particular sort of derangement because I was one of them once (I still sit at the kids' table at family gatherings, so I haven't completely outgrown it). Growing up on a family dairy, I found out early on that if a cow likes you, it licks you. If it licks you, you giggle and twinge, pull your arm away, and rub the moistened area to check if any skin is missing (cows' tongues have a built-in rasp that can file pavement smooth). Then you repeat the process *ad nauseam*. It rubs you raw after a few licks, but I never got tired of the tickling pain. This is how an animal shows its love.

We had other animals besides the cows though. Celeste kept rabbits in a hutch close to the house, and we always had dogs and cats. Dad and Mom bought our first two dogs, Rascal and Scamper, as puppies back in the mid-1980s, and later on our neighbor Paula gave Julia a Border Collie-Australian Shepherd puppy (whether for lack of imagination or the need to honor the giver, Julia named the puppy Paula. I know it wasn't because of any perceived resemblance between the two). The cats were all Celeste's because no one else wanted them. Precious, a sleek black panther-looking thing, was a wandering cat factory, pumping out a litter every other day or so (Sunday's litter was twice the normal size). At milking time, when the pumps and compressors in the barn kicked on, the cats gathered at the barn door, waiting for Dad to bring out whipped topping containers of fresh milk. Those were the good times. Times when we played and sang and laughed at gilded bottle flies (which Mom promptly swatted).

But there were other times, too. Celeste lost her rabbit, Sasha,

to heat stroke one year. She had been careful to leave a frozen bottle of water in her pet's hutch so the bunny could have something cool to cuddle, but one afternoon she found her pet tucked in the hutch's corner as cold as its half-thawed Mountain Dew bottle.

As bad as summer could be, winter was often its own sort of horror. Pneumonia and scours ravaged the newborn calves in their first few months of life. Mom did her best to treat them. She put pills down their throats and needles in their rumps, but science still hasn't found a cure for death.

At times, even the older cattle succumbed to inevitable entropy. One of our best cows, Linda, gave birth and went down with milk fever. She was a good cow, and Dad often bragged that she was the only cow he had ever owned who had produced over a hundred pounds of milk in a day. He worked frenetically to save her, sticking an IV in her neck and giving her bottles of calcium dextrose to get her going. She improved, then she went down. He treated her, and then she improved. After going through that routine five times, Dad's prize cow didn't get up.

Animals don't live as long as humans. Most animals, I should say. I've heard that some tortoises can live for centuries (apparently moving slowly and constantly vegging have their perks). But our animals rarely had the luxury of time. Every few years, it seemed, a generation replaced itself. Pets represent the child's first lesson in paradoxes. The same creature that made you giggle is tomorrow the hollow-eyed corpse that rasps away the covering of the heart. And we never outgrow the need to let them hurt us.

As he did with every dead cow (since there was no pickup

service for animal corpses in the Basin), Dad dug the grave with the big Caterpillar loader and tucked the corpse beneath the sandy soil of the southeast pasture lot. Nothing grew on that parcel but ragweed, so we gave it to the dead.

This is how we show our love.

Contributors' Notes

Rocky James Allen began playing piano at the age of 28 and has studied under Dr. Kori Bond for the last seven years. He is currently seeking Bachelor degrees in both Music and Geology.

Tom Attebery began studying viola around the age of 10 with Sandy Kenney. He currently studies under Dr. Keum Hwa Cha. He is a violist in the Idaho State Civic Symphony, the ISU Chamber Orchestra, and Quartet Consensio. He was born in Pocatello and is seeking to become a political journalist.

Brianna Brinton has been an active student and performer on the violin for seven years. While a high school student in Nampa, she won a seat in the MENC National Honor Orchestra in Washington D.C. Currently, she is a student of Dr. Keum Hwa Cha and performs in the Idaho State Civic Symphony, the ISU Chamber Orchestra, and Quartet Consensio.

Abbi Clark is the assistant director for the ISU Piano Preparatory Program and is in high demand as a collaborative pianist, teacher, and adjudicator. She has been the pianist for ISU's choirs and keyboardist for the Idaho State Civic Symphony and Sun Valley Summer Symphony (SVSS) as well as a teacher or administrator for the SVSS Workshops and the ISU Summer Piano Institute. She earned a BM in Piano Performance at ISU under Dr. Kori Bond.

Emma Doupé has just completed her BA in Voice with Dr. Diana Livingston Friedley. She has become a very active performer on stage, having recently played the roles of The Witch in *Into the Woods*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, as well as played many characters in opera scene workshops. She has participated in summer programs in Sun Valley and Urbania, Italy.

Tracy Eastman is currently seeking a Bachelor of Fine Arts. After graduation he plans to pursue a Master of Fine Arts. In addition to being a full-time student, he is also a husband, father, and owns and operates From The Ashes Tattoo & Piercing in Pocatello. More of his work is available at tracyeastman.com.

Danielle Feige has always found that the easiest way for her to communicate with others is through visual means. Because of this she has obtained a BFA from Idaho State University, an MFA from the University of Idaho, and is currently working on a second graduate degree at ISU.

Blake French began playing the trombone in his hometown of Boise at the age of ten and is a student of Dr. Patrick Brooks. Blake intends to attend graduate school after his graduation next year. He currently plays bass trombone in ISU's Wind Ensemble; but he has also performed in Jazz I, several brass quintets, small brass ensembles, and the Idaho State Civic Symphony. He has been the drum major of the ISU Marching Band for the last three years. During his summers, Blake performs as a member of the Santa Clara Vanguard Drum and Bugle corps.

Brett Friedman began studying voice at age 15 with Gail Birdsong and is now a student of Dr. Scott Anderson. He is currently a member of the ISU Concert Choir and Chamber Choir and is a former member of the BYU Men's Chorus. Brett also composes, and his debut arrangement of "Nearer, My God, To Thee" was recently premiered by the ISU Concert Choir.

Jedd Greenhalgh currently studies violin with Dr. Keum Hwa Cha. In high school he was an All-State First violinist and a finalist in the ASCAP National Young Composers Competition. He plays in the Idaho State Civic Symphony, the ISU Chamber Orchestra, and The Fearsome Four String Quartet. He is also a member of the pop duo "Cerulean and the Beat."

Sam Hansen grew up in Utah and Idaho. He started writing poetry at age 13 with the goal of using the word "poop" in a school assignment. He did. It was officially published. He entered the world of Slam and Spoken Word later on, where his goals became somewhat loftier. He has numerous wins under his belt and dreams of competing in the national Slam.

Jeffrey Howard received his MA from Utah State University. His interests include literature, folklore, and, of course, creative writing. He studied poetry with Michael Sowder at Utah State University and published poetry in USU's annual creative writing publication, *Scribendi*, in 2012 and 2013.

Millie Hulse began studying voice at the age of 14 in Idaho Falls. She has studied with Kathleen Lane since coming to ISU in 2010. During her time at ISU, Millie has been involved in opera workshop

productions and two full-length productions. Her most notable roles include Cinderella's wicked stepsister in Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* and Tessa in *The Gondoliers* by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Forrest Johnson started birding and drawing comics in 2009. In 2012 he completed a comics and graphic novels program at the Independent Publishing Resource Center in Portland, OR. More of his comics can be seen on his website: www.4istjohnson.wordpress.com.

Amelia Kaspari is currently working toward completing her MA in English at Idaho State University. She is originally from Oregon, where she received her BA in English from Corban University. Her literary interests range from Shakespeare to Russian novels, but you will also catch her at a Broadway show or on a favorite hiking trail.

Taylor Kensel is headed nowhere but she's guaranteed to be late. She blames all her problems on the Tetons. She named her children after towns that she's never been to. She knows her geography pretty damn well. Or maybe those things don't describe her at all and are just words from Modest Mouse songs.

Bradley Korth began studying piano at the age of nine in Idaho Falls, where he currently lives. He currently studies piano with Dr. Kori Bond and recently won second place in the Idaho Falls Music Club Continuing Education Scholarship Competition. He is the ward organist in his local church.

Natalia Lauk comes from a lineage of Classical Russian pianists and piano instruction and is now an active performer and teacher. She holds an advanced graduate degree in Piano Solo and Collaborative

Performance from the Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Arts. She is the pianist for the ISU Concert Choir and is highly sought after as a collaborative pianist at ISU and throughout southeast Idaho.

Shelby Martignacco has played viola for over ten years and is currently a student of Dr. Keum Hwa Cha at Idaho State University and is a viola performance major. She performs regularly in the Idaho Falls Symphony, the Idaho State Civic Symphony, the ISU Chamber Orchestra, and the The Fearsome Four String Quartet.

Jerrica Matthews is a voice student of Dr. Diana Livingston Friedley. This year, she was a prizewinner in the Idaho State Civic Symphony Young Artists Competition. She has played several lead roles in Opera ISU productions including the Queen in *Into the Woods*, the Duchess in *The Gondoliers*, and the Cat in the ISU Summer Music production of *Honk*, and will be Lady Thiang in *The King and I* this summer.

Lori A. McPherson is from New England. She attended the University of Denver then relocated to West Virginia to gain a Master of Arts in Art Education with an emphasis in printmaking in 2005. She's working on an MFA with an emphasis in intra-media at Idaho State University. Her current work is an investigation into her relationship with the Atlantic Ocean and the personal environmental ethics that she's developed.

Stephanie Moore was born in Texas but moved to Idaho Falls at the age of three. Her teachers have included Lorie Swisher, Dr. Kay Zavislak, and Dr. Kori Bond. She currently teaches in ISU's Piano Preparatory Program, sings in ISU's Concert Choir, and greatly enjoys collaborating with other musicians. She is graduating with high

honors in Piano Performance and plans to continue teaching privately and collaborating.

Justin Murdock is a fourth-semester Masters of English student. He is currently working on his thesis, wherein he is studying Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and the popular PlayStation 3 game *The Last of Us*. He enjoys pursuing artistic projects in his spare time.

Bradley Nash is seeking a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He has been a tattoo artist for about seven years and is looking to improve his art skills to further his career as an artist. To him painting and drawing are like therapy—they keep him levelheaded.

Laura Neu is an Idaho native and a junior at Idaho State University, double majoring in creative writing and psychology. Her work has been published in various college-ruled notebooks and yellow legal pads. Her pastimes include picking crumpled drafts out of the garbage and working to revive them.

Mike Nichols was born all in a rush, just after midnight, with no assistance from doctor or midwife, under a waning Tennessee moon on a chill October night, behind a partition at the back of a tar-paper shack, in which his unwed mother had holed-up for a time. But then again . . . probably not. Mike loves to write, and he often tells untrue stories.

Conor O'Farrell is a trombone student of Dr. Brooks and is the principal trombonist in the Wind Ensemble and the lead trombonist in the Jazz I Big Band. He enjoys performing a variety of works, varying from Baroque sonatas to Romantic concertos, as well as improvising

solos in Jazz Band. Conor is also an intern in music ministry at the First Baptist Church in Pocatello.

With graduation around the corner, **Patrick Perry** is ready to put his BA in English to work. He has accomplished everything he wanted to at ISU, from co-founding the WRIT club to having three poems published in *BR&S*. He wants to stay in Pocatello a little longer before moving on to bigger and better things.

Christine Pettaway is a senior in the English Department. Creative writing has been a part of her life ever since she could hold a pen. After graduation, she'd like to pursue a career in nonfiction and poetry. When she's not writing, she's spending time with her beautiful family.

John Punt studies voice with Dr. Diana Livingston Friedley. He has competed as a finalist in numerous local competitions and played some lead roles in Opera ISU. He has sung in all of ISU's mixed choral ensembles, touring internationally and singing solos through several European tours. John hails from Idaho Falls, and began studying music at the age of six.

Christopher Rhoades has studied clarinet for eight years and is currently a student of Dr. Shandra Helman. At Century High School, he was put on the Hall of Fame of Mr. Brien's music program and won his Outstanding Leader Award. He is a member of the Idaho State Civic Symphony, ISU's clarinet choir, and has performed in several recitals this year.

Kelly Ricken was born in Pocatello, Idaho and raised everywhere else. She received her BA and MA from Idaho State University and is currently working toward her PhD. Kelly enjoys reading, writing, teaching, and laughing, and hopes to do all of these things for the rest of her life.

Shelby Russell studies violin with Dr. Keum Hwa Cha. She is principal first violinist of the ISU Chamber Orchestra as well as a first violinist in the ISCS. Shelby loves to travel, judge, and compete in fiddle competitions. She holds many titles, including Northwest Regional, Rocky Mountain Regional, and Idaho State fiddle champion as well as the three-time Idaho State guitar and mandolin flat-picking champion.

Seth Spencer is a junior at ISU and an art major.

Valah Steffen-Wittwer is in her second year as a PhD student in English at ISU. She is happily married to Jacob Claflin, with three cats and a dog standing in for children.

Kylle Strunk, from Nampa, began his work as a percussionist at the age of 12. He studies under Dr. Thom Hasenpflug and is involved in ISU's Wind Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, and Jazz Band, as well as the Idaho State Civic Symphony. In high school, Kylle played guitar and piano in an alternative rock band called The Final Escape, which professionally recorded and released two EPs.

Shaun Stubblefield studies voice with Kathleen Lane and is also a piano minor. He has played several important roles in ISU Opera productions, including the Narrator in *Into the Woods*, and Billy Budd

in the Opera Workshop scene of *Billy Budd*. He is an active performer in the community, including frequent church performances and sings in the ISU Chamber Choir.

Alister Tencate began studying the cello in 5th grade and played in school and honor groups throughout high school. He is currently the Principal Cellist in the ISU Chamber Orchestra and a member of the Idaho State Civic Symphony, two different ISU string quartets, and frequently collaborates with vocalists. He studies with Brian Attebery and previously studied with Nancy Wilson.

Noi Thannao is a graphic design artist with a background in fashion design. Currently working on a Bachelors degree in art and mass communications, he enjoys painting with watercolors and making them exciting. He likes exploring random places for inspiration.

Jared Vincent has taken piano lessons for 14 years and now studies with Dr. Kori Bond. He has accompanied many singers and instrumentalists, and is an experienced piano teacher. Throughout his teens, he was selected for many honors recitals for Pocatello Music Club festivals. He is an avid reader and writer and has written many sci-fi stories.

Kaitlyn Williams is pursuing her undergraduate degree in English and hopes to eventually graduate. Outside of school, she spends most of her time with her daughter and talking to angry people over the phone for money.

Robert Wilson is highly sought after as a collaborative violinist. He has performed numerous chamber works for degree recitals, has been the Assistant Concertmaster of the Idaho State Civic Symphony, the Concertmaster for the ISU Chamber Orchestra, and plays first violin for the Quartet Consensio. He currently studies with Dr. Keum Hwa Cha.

Colin Wintz is a mixed-media artist currently pursuing an MFA at Idaho State University. He earned his BFA from Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec where he was a Killam Fellow. A native of Eastern Washington, his cross-cultural experiences provide him valuable inspiration. Specifically, his Cajun heritage connects Wintz to Southwest Louisiana and its Acadian origins.

Doug Withrow currently studies saxophone with Dr. Shandra Helman. In the summer of 2012, he volunteered as a counselor at the ISU Marching Arts Academy and in the summer of 2013 assisted in teaching Century High School's Marching Band. After graduation, he plans to become a middle school band director.

Colophon

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