



Black Rock & Sage

Issue 18, 2019
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, Music, Theater, and Dance 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 14. For more information about the journal, see our website at blackrockandsage.org.

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Cover: "Cover" by Nikyra Capson

Black Rock & Sage

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Poetry Editor	Tori Shelton
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Table of Contents

Art & Costume Design

Gabriel Jeppson	Bubonic	29
Wendy Roberts	Reluctant Icarus	30
	Steampunk Carrie	31
Helen O'Hara	Thoughts	32
Milo Bossler	Idle Crisis	33
Nikyra Capson	Cover	34
Deborah Harris	Evening Stroll	35
Aifegha Stephen	No Happiness	36
	Old Soul	37
	The Reflection	38
Liz Breuker	Winter Sunbeams	39
Cameryn Dougal	Artist	40
	Nomad	41
	Prophet	42

BR&S Musical Performances

Performers and Compositions	8
-----------------------------	---

BR&S Dance Performances

Performers, Pieces, and Choreographers	11
--	----

Prose

Christa Larson	The Shelter	14
Madeleine Coles	The Morning After	43

Poetry

Cody Campbell	Tulips	12
Rebecca DeLoach	Poor <u>Baby</u> !	13
Danielle Southwick	Commemoration	28
Brooke Reader	Gneiss	49
Norrin Shearer	Jonestown and the Cauldron That Watched the Whole Damned Thing	50
	Strands	54
Christa Larson	More Than Once	52
Katie Noel	The problem of the un-dead	55

Prize Winners

Jacob Luker	1B-4B-8B High School Creative Writing Contest Winner— The First Mourning	57
Karley Morgan	Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize Winner— <i>Podra Llorar Por Ellos</i>	59
Jake Osti	<i>BR&S</i> Prose Prize Winner— Morning	62

Editor's Note

I thought that by now, as my fourth (and final) year working with *Black Rock & Sage* comes to a close, that I would be more familiar with the genre that is a literary magazine. If not familiar, then at least settled—comfortable. Yet the genre continues to surprise and provoke and excite me, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Literary magazines are unique animals. They bring together many different people, many different styles, and many different stories under one cover. As editors, we accept some pieces and reject others without any certainty about how they will all fit together in the end, just knowing somehow that they will. That there will be a common thread, and that their very position within the journal allows them to converse with the pieces around them in ways that the authors could never have predicted. This is the beauty of a literary magazine—especially a campus journal such as *Black Rock & Sage*, which exists as a physical reminder of the creative bond that ISU students share.

The prose pieces in this year's issue range from the prose prize winner "Morning" by Jake Osti, a moving reflection on grief and family, to Christa Larson's futuristic sci-fi story "The Shelter," to Madeleine Coles's "The Morning After," which deftly weaves together narrative, body politics, and the Kavanaugh hearings. As equally varied as our prose pieces, the poetry here deals both with the familiar and the familial, as well as the strange and the unknown. There are ruminations on first loves—as in Cody Campbell's "Tulips" and Norrin Shearer's "Strands"—and growing families, as in Rebecca

DeLoach's "Poor Baby!" There are mediations on inanimate objects in the presence of violence, death and what comes after, and a compelling ode to Thomas Paine. The Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize winner this year is Karley Morgan for her piece "Podra Llorar Por Ellos." Our judge, former *Black Rock & Sage* editor Natalie Homer, was impressed by the sound and pacing of the poem, in addition to how the visual layout of the poem both contributes to and complicates the poem's multiple ways of being read.

Besides the talented group of contributors, an important element of a successful literary journal is an attentive and devoted editorial staff. My second year as editor-in-chief and final year with the magazine has been entirely fun and rewarding, and I owe that to my fellow senior editors, Tori Shelton and Christopher Swensen, our faculty supervisor, Dr. Susan Goslee, and our skilled assistant editors. Similarly, I am genuinely proud of and grateful for our gifted contributors who have chosen to publish with us, for our knowledgeable design intern Mallori Briley, for our expert consultants in the Music, Art, Dance, Theater, and English departments, and for the generous support from local businesses. I hope that you enjoy the whimsy, imagination, and intellect present in this year's issue, as it showcases the very best creative work that ISU students have to offer.

BR&S Musical Performances

1: “Loop #13”

Composed by Dallas McCrea

Featuring:

Dallas McCrea, electric bass

Gabriel Lowman, keyboard

Jesse Malloy, electric guitar

Brandon Hansen, drum set

Adler Patch, alto saxophone

Curtis Dey, baritone saxophone

2: “Blooming”

Composed by Samuel Paytosh

Featuring:

Samuel Paytosh, piano

3: “Fella From Pocatella”

Composed by Quentin Kempe

Performed by the ISU Chamber Jazz Ensemble

Featuring:

Terryn Pitcher, flute

Sam Lai, flute

Zach Morris, flute

Kilynn Ogle, alto saxophone

Kristi Fisk, tenor saxophone

Quentin Kempe, trombone

Jordan Berry, french horn

Abbi Perkes, tuba

Kyra Finner, vibraphone
Samuel Paytosh, keyboard
Jesse Malloy, electric guitar
Professor Jonathan Armstrong, electric guitar
Dallas McCrea, electric bass
Chase Howie, cajon
Jake Knieval, drum set

4: *“Da schlägt die Abschiedsstunde from Der Schauspieldirektor”*

Composed by: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Featuring:

Autumn May Harris, soprano

Diane Yerka, piano

5: *“Viola String Quintet No. 4 in G minor”*

Composed by: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Performed by Hannah and the Ma’s

Featuring:

Maggie Price, violin

Hannah Livermont, violin

Margarita Espinoza-Henscheid, viola

Marcus Hall, viola

Lander Van Lueven, cello

6: *“I Have No Idea What I’m Doing”*

Composed by Joseph Chidiebere Emmanuel

Performed by The Watershed Trio

Featuring:

Joseph Emmanuel, drum set

Gabriel Lowman, piano

Professor Jonathan Armstrong, bass

7: "Spaghetti"

Composed by Curtis Dey

Performed by Funk:30 PM

Featuring:

Curtis Dey, baritone saxophone

Mal Layne, trombone

Jesse Malloy, electric guitar

Dallas McCrea, electric bass

Cameron Dey, sousaphone

Brandon Hansen, drum set

8: "Hey Mr!"

Composed by KayLynn Hammond

Performed by the ISU Big Band

Featuring:

Adler Patch, alto saxophone

Rylie Moore, alto saxophone

Ryan Tomlinson, tenor saxophone

TJ Diaz, tenor saxophone

Curtis Dey, baritone saxophone

Shawn McLain, trumpet

Audrey Waddell, trumpet

BR&S Dance Performances (2019)

1. “Boy; 1994”

Choreography and performance by Zachariah Mulberry

Submitted by Zachariah Mulberry

2. “Sassy’s Blues”

Choreographed by Bill Evans

Featuring: Brooke Ciocca, Emmanuel Chavez, Zachariah Mulberry, Aaron Peite, Emily Slike, and Amanda Stubblefield

Submitted by Amanda Stubblefield

3. “(Un)recognized Space”

Choreographed by Kathleen Diehl

Featuring: Jennifer Dykman, Zachariah Mulberry, Aaron Peite, Ashley Sandau, and Amanda Stubblefield

Submitted by Amanda Stubblefield

4. “Threaded”

Choreographed by Amanda Stubblefield

Featuring: Jennifer Dykman and Amanda Stubblefield

Submitted by Amanda Stubblefield

5. “Royal Society”

Choreographed by Brit Falcon

Featuring: Jennifer Dykman, Zachariah Mulberry, Aaron Peite, and Amanda Stubblefield

Submitted by Amanda Stubblefield

View full performances at blackrockandsage.org/isu-dance-performances/.

Cody Campbell

Tulips

Her lips on tulips—
That's what finds me.
Eating pizza
With the slice upside down.
Little pockets of her
In sounds and smells.
Strawberries, vodka,
Something rough on my lips.
Saddle sweat, latex, river water.
Mercury Sables
With knocks in the engine.
Gunpowder, broken windows, and
Embarrassed fathers holding glasses of bourbon.
Fireworks, freckles, smoky hallways.
And there she is again.

Poor Baby!

(The Boy with the Muddy Shoes)TM
has tracked his mud through the house!

“You’ve woken the Baby!” she
fumed.

(The Boy with the Muddy Shoes)TM
slams his bedroom door shut and
she comforts Baby! back to
sleep.

~~frustrationfrustrationfrust=~~

(The Boy with the Muddy Shoes)TM
~~studying~~ breaks a pencil.

!!!snap!!!

His eyes widen at the Splin-
ter in his thumb—now it *hurt*.
How painful; the Small Splinter
Being Noticed. What a pain,
to be *noticed*.

Poor Baby!

The Shelter

Winter 2440

“Ready or not, here I come!”

Emily’s yell echoes off the bare walls, penetrating my ears even though I’m hiding in a closet with my knees uncomfortably close to my face. I can feel a charley horse beginning, and I know it’s because no full-grown adult should be cramped in this position. How stupid would it be for a 21-year-old man to lose to his kid sister because of a charley horse? Emily would never let me hear the end of it.

“Josh, I’m bored, I don’t want to play anymore.” Emily’s voice rings through the rooms again, but I can hear her suppressing her giggles. She’s just trying to get me to come out of my spot.

I don’t worry about anyone wondering where we have gone, but the closet grows darker every second, and I know it’s time to head back home. Since the war ended, there aren’t many people left in Howard...Howehaven. The name changed not too long ago, and it is difficult for me to remember sometimes. I groan and try to stretch out my leg, but it is impossible in this cramped space.

“Ha! I found you, old man!” The door swings open to my 11-year-old sister, her blond hair in messily done braids. I am still learning that particular trade. Our mother had been magnificent at it, and I’m sure she had magical powers.

“Ah, yes, you found me. Good job, Emily.” I climb out of my hiding spot knowing my groaning gave away my position. I’m not going to take the victory away from her though. She

is trying to be a good sport, and I'm trying to make this new life we're fighting for easier for her. If it was up to me, she would still be in our house, waiting for me to come back with whatever supplies I found. This time is different.

"Can we play another round? I bet I can hide longer than you!" Emily begins to turn on her heel to find her hiding spot, but I grab her hand before she can get too far away.

"Emily, we have to go back. It's getting dark outside, and I don't want to be around this part of town at night." It is difficult to find places to loot that haven't been touched, so getting farther outside of what is considered safe is starting to become necessary. It is also the day I promised Emily I would show her the ropes and how to loot efficiently. I didn't plan things out well.

Emily looks down at her feet, "But I don't want to go back, Josh. It's too sad there." She's right, but unfortunately, it's pretty sad everywhere.

Standing up, I reach for her hand, which she thankfully takes. We are walking back to our bags when a light from outside shines through a window in the room we had just been in, hitting the wall next to me. I pull Emily behind the wall and listen carefully to whoever is outside.

"Yo, there's someone in there." Well, shit.

"Emily, whatever happens, you have to run. Okay? You have to keep running, no matter what. Get back home, okay? Promise me." Her eyes grow dark as she grows more terrified of who is out there. She nods her head, and I lead her back to our bags, taking them both. If she's going to have a fair chance, I need to carry hers. She needs every advantage.

The door to the building swings open. Luckily, there's a

back door we can escape through. From the sounds of it, there are at least three guys and they don't sound much older than me, but that doesn't mean they are any less dangerous. Like me, they probably have weapons.

I urge Emily toward the back door. We're trying to be as quiet as possible while listening to the men who are now walking through the front of the store. They're opening doors and cabinets, ones that are obviously too small for someone my size. Either they are looking for food or they're too stupid to actually know what they saw. Emily opens her mouth to say something, but I quickly put my hand over it and push her toward the door.

I open the door and check outside for any stragglers that might have been a part of this group. There's yelling coming from the front, and it's getting closer.

"Emily," I say, "Let's go." I'm closing the door behind us when I make eye contact with one of the guys. I know him. Well, I recognize him. I know him from somewhere, but I can't say from where. This won't stop them from stealing our stuff, though, and I know that.

Emily is waiting for me at the end of the alleyway. I shake my head; she's always had a hard time listening to me.

"Emily, run!" I'm racing towards her. The door behind me opens, but thankfully Emily begins to run in the direction of home. I know I can't run in the same direction as her. Emily will be fine, as long as she keeps running. I think she knows that. She'll get home and she has some idea how to ration her food if I don't get back to her. Hopefully they haven't seen Emily, and double hopefully Emily will stay inside when she gets home.

When Emily turns down the street in front of me and I can't see her, I turn in the opposite direction down the alley, slowing down only slightly to see if they're following me. They are. Perfect.

"There he is! Faster you dumbasses." I can't help but laugh when I hear them yelling. Obviously, there's a leader. Someone always is in a group, especially these days. If there's not a leader of a group, no one will take you seriously, right? If there's no boss, the company won't continue to be successful. Someone is always at the top, no matter what their cause is. I don't stop, turning left and right down various streets that are starting to become less familiar. I'm not going to get lost though. I have to get back home. I can't leave Emily alone. She's too good for this world.

When there's enough distance between myself and the guys, I turn down an alleyway and see a potential escape. There's a ladder ahead, and I climb toward a door at the top. The door, however, is locked. There's no other way but back down, where the guys now are. I make eye contact with the guy I recognize, and I know immediately what I have to do. I raise my hands into the air. Smug smiles form on each of their faces.

"Don't do anything stupid and no one will get hurt." The guy I might know speaks, revealing that he is, in fact, some sort of leader. I nod my head and climb down the ladder. As my feet touch the ground, I feel the point of a knife pressing below my armpit. My hands return to the air. The only logical thing to do is wait and see what they want.

"What's in the bags?"

I'm reluctant to set the bags down, but I know it's what I

should do. I turn my head slightly to look at the guy holding the knife against me.

“If you wanna move that thing, I can take this one off and you guys can see for yourself.” I can see the guy hesitate and he’s looking back at the leader, who nods his head. Knife guy puts the knife down.

I’m not stupid; I know not to run. So, I set down the bags, and I take a step forward, slowly, putting enough distance between myself and the bags. There’s always the potential of things going south.

The two guys reach for the bags, and the leader is staring me down. It sort of feels like his eyes are boring into my soul, but I’m sure he’s just trying to figure out who I am. He’s probably someone I had a general requirement class with, which makes sense why I recognize him but don’t know him.

“You don’t mind if we take these, right? Take some weight off your back?” The leader is moving on from staring at me, the smug smile returning to his face.

“Not at all. I really appreciate it, actually.” Sarcasm drips from my voice, but I am appreciative that this seems to be the end of the altercation. A simple and unfortunately common mugging on this side of town.

The leader steps forward, the knife he’s holding presses into my bicep. “Great. You won’t be so lucky next time, so I suggest you don’t come back here. This is our side.” He makes a quick move, nicking my skin. I don’t make a face; he doesn’t need to know he’s inflicted pain, even though I know he knows there’s a sting. The two goons take the bags and the three of them turn around and back out the alley. I stay in the same spot and think about what we have lost, but also giving

them time to put some distance between us. Luckily, we carry the bare minimum when we are going around town looting buildings, and since Emily hasn't joined me until recently, I make sure we carry even less to keep her from getting too tired for this kind of situation. I can't—won't risk her life more than I have to. She has to learn, but not in exchange for her life.

• • •

“Josh, you're back! I was so worried. I was about to head back out and look for you, because I didn't know where you went, but you told me to keep running so I kept running, but I wanted to look for you so bad, so I made a promise that if you weren't back in a few hours I was going to pack up and come looking for you. And it would've been scary, but you taught me how to shoot a gun that one time and I know there's one hiding under the mattress in their room and you taught me how to hide really good and I would be able to come and help you. But—” Emily stops speaking when I pick her up in a hug. I'm glad she didn't go looking for me, because it would be absolutely stupid, and she knows that. Instead of chastising her, I reassure her I'm fine and, instead, remind her to never leave without me. She hesitates, and I see she's questioning something.

“What if you don't come back? Then what do I do?” She worries about this kind of stuff all the time, and no matter how many times I tell her it's not going to happen she's still scared. She's only eleven, so I understand why.

“That's not going to happen, okay? Let's go to bed kiddo.” We head to our mattresses in what used to be my room. Our

house is in a relatively safe part of town, and we live close enough to downtown that there are military personnel that patrol the streets. They keep to themselves, and we keep out of trouble around them. It's a weird relationship we have with them, but we're not on their list of things to worry about.

Emily and I take turns brushing our teeth, washing our faces, and doing a general wipe down from the day's grime. We don't have running water, so we use as little as possible to wash ourselves from water bottles we've gathered. Going back to our beds, I sit down on my mattress, and Emily sits in front of me, her brush held out. I take it and slowly pull the braids apart, telling the story of how our parents met to fill the dead air. It's her favorite story.

"And dad would go to her class every day and bring her a flower and coffee, even in the dead of winter. Every time she would leave class he'd be standing there, flower and coffee always in hand. Mom would always say how the girls were so jealous of her. It was history after that. They got married six months later. Don't do that Emily. You have to wait at least five years, and I have to meet the guy and approve of him, got it?" Emily is facing me now, her fingers pulling on the bristles, watching them bounce back to their slightly curved position.

"What if I don't meet anyone, Josh? What if everyone's gone? I found a piece of paper that had some writing on it. It had the number 62 on it. Do you think that's how many people died?" Her eyes look up at me, and despite a story that always puts her in a good mood, she's still scared. I know that number is how many people died, but it isn't 62 people. It's 62% of the human race.

"Sixty-two people isn't that many, Em. That's like how

many people were on that airplane. Remember when we went to that island when you were little? You'll find someone. I promise." Emily takes a deep breath before nodding her head, satisfied with the answer.

She climbs into her own bed and seems to fall asleep the moment her head hits the mattress. I watch her for a few moments before I slide down my bed and lay on my back.

Sixty-two percent were killed by the AIs that had been built to take over jobs and make the economy boom. It worked for a while, but some people didn't treat the AIs with respect. It wasn't just in the United States, either. All over the world these AIs were treated like garbage, like they were just machines with no feelings. I knew a lot of them when I was in college. They had feelings, and they were given the ability to develop and learn new skills. They were tigers cornered in a cage.

It's been eight years since the start of the rebellion, and four years since the automatrons surrendered. The government completely destroyed all automatrons shortly after their surrender and shut everything down. I had friends that were killed, both human and robot. Our parents were also a part of that 62%. Everyone left was advised to do what they could to help rebuild without technology. I was approached by one of my old professors. He wanted me to join a team of engineers based in the same building as the government officials to knock down cell towers and destroy any network that automatrons used to connect to. Even though they were destroyed, everyone was still scared. I was dismissed a few weeks later. I have a degree in art history, not mechanical engineering.

I startle awake, my eyes instinctively moving to Emily's bed, fully expecting her long blonde hair to be spread like a dried-out mop on her pillow. She isn't there. I sit in my bed and look out the window to the sunrise glistening off the business complex across the street. I'm trying to take my mind off of the fact she's not in bed and not freak out. It's not working.

"Emily?" I all but run down the steps and go into the kitchen, looking around to determine if anything has been moved or if there's been any intruders. Everything is in its place, so I walk back up the stairs and check the bathroom, then our parents' room. I find it hard to believe she would have gone in there, but I check anyway. When I'm back in our room, I see a piece of paper on the floor.

Josh,

I know things have been hard and you're tired, so I'm going to the convenience store I passed when I was running back yesterday. It looked like no one was there. I'll be back soon.

Emily

Sometimes she can be so damn infuriating. She's only 11 years old, and I understand she's just trying to help, but goddamn it. She knows not to go out on her own. My stomach feels like it's in my feet, and I think I'm going to vomit, but I hold it in long enough to gather what I can: a knife hidden under the mattress, a water bottle that I can throw into a backpack, and one of her jackets. It might be cold outside. I'm not really sure what I need to grab, so I begin to rummage in some drawers in the kitchen to see if anything sticks out. I'm buying her some time so she can show up and stop

my franticness. Outside the sky is changing from the reds, purples, and oranges into a blue, the transition happening quicker than my thoughts.

I reluctantly start going back to where we had been yesterday. I think I know what convenience store she is talking about, but when I get there, everything's looted, and the store is empty. Hoping she had been intercepted by military officials, I head back toward the house and the center of the city, stopping any officers that I pass. I show the same picture of Emily to each one and get a look of pity when they shake their heads to my inquiries.

The sun begins to lower in the sky and I still haven't found her, even after knocking on doors that could potentially be housing people. I knock on doors with stacked up newspapers from years ago, molding and crumbling into a disgusting pile. No one has seen her. I would run back to the house occasionally, just in case she showed up, but she was never there. On one return, I see the flier she had been talking about, a scheme of "if you pay this much, we'll house you and feed you," obvious ploys to get people who feel like they have nothing left and take everything they have. It reminds me of one place I have yet to check, but I don't even know where to begin.

A few months after the fall of the automatrons, some officials dismissed themselves from their jobs and opened legit shelters. The shelters continue to move around, but they give resources to people in need. If you are in need, you're welcomed. Emily has always wanted to go to one of these shelters, and it's a sure way to be warm and have food.

The difference between the shelters and the ploys done

by thugs is that it takes being in the right place at the right time to find them. The government's threatened by these shelters and tries to shut them down. They don't advertise. Maybe Emily has found one, but why wouldn't she come and tell me? I don't think they take people hostage, but maybe they're not as nice as the rumors make them seem. I know that if anyone deserves to be in a shelter that provides care and human interaction that isn't threatening, though, it's Emily. She deserves to be safe and warm and grow up with a normal childhood. Even if we live in a different world, at least she would be somewhere decent. I may not deserve a place like that, but she does.

I head back to the front door, my eyes landing on the picture of mom and dad we keep on the table. "Mom, Dad, please bring Emily home. Jesus, I'll pray to fucking Zeus if that's what it takes. She needs to come home. It's time for her to be home." I stare at the picture for a moment longer, half expecting my mom to open her mouth and tell me where the shelters are or my dad to tell me to sit and wait for her.

I open the door to the setting sun, closing the door on any advice they could have given me and head back towards the city. I stop the first official I see, his eyes worn and with bags underneath from lack of sleep.

"Excuse me sir, I just have a quick question. Have you seen this girl?" I hold the picture out for him, "She's 11 now; her hair is longer, and she's a little taller." He shakes his head slowly, giving me a sad smile.

"I'm sorry son, I haven't. Good luck in your search." He moves to walk past me before I stick a hand out and stop him. He looks skeptical, and I pull my hand back quickly.

“Just one more question. Do you know where the shelters are? The ones that help people?” He works for the government, so I doubt he’s going to tell me anything, even if he did know something. He’s quiet for too long, his eyes staring at the ground, then at me, then to the sky that’s trying to end the day.

“Willis Street might have something you’re looking for.” He walks away, and I stand staring at him, my heart pounding in my ears and about to explode from my chest. I’m not sure when I start to run, but silver buildings tinted orange pass by in a blur. Willis Street used to be the street where small businesses would come and go. If this place is a bust and the official was just trying to get me to leave him alone, I’ll start again in the morning, maybe somewhere closer to the water. I always told Emily she needs to stay away from it, and she might not listen all the time, but I think she’s smart enough to know the water is dangerous.

I make it to Willis Street, and the houses seem to stretch for miles. It looks deserted except for the fact that there are no newspapers on the steps leading to the front doors. I’m not sure which house I should start at, so I go to the first house on my right. I doubt anyone is going to open their doors. I should have started tomorrow, but I’m here now, and this is my last chance in the nice parts of the city.

I knock on the first door, cautiously holding my knife in a visible place but in a non-threatening manner. The door opens to a man, probably in his late-30s, a gun in his hand.

“Can I help you?” His eyes flash to my knife then back to my eyes, the door closing a little and the gun rising a bit. I take a step back from the door, not to retreat, but to show passiveness.

“I’m just looking for my sister. She’s eleven, about this tall,” short for her age, “she has blonde hair. Her name is Emily. Blue eyes. Umm—.” I pull the photo out of my empty wallet, pointing at her. “Her, but older.”

The man opens the door a little, but not in a way that is inviting me in. He sets the gun against the inside door frame and steps onto the porch, turning down the street.

“Try...four houses down. I haven’t seen anyone and I’m not telling you she’s there. That is your best bet though.” The man gives me a small smile, and if I hadn’t been looking at him, I wouldn’t have seen it.

“Thank you, sir. Thank you.” I turn from his porch and run towards the house he indicated, the cold wind numbs my face, my feet pounding on the pavement. I jump onto the porch and knock on the door frantically, a small amount of hope building in my stomach. I knock again and the door opens quickly. A woman. She looks to be the same age as the guy down the street, but her hair is beginning to gray.

“Have you seen Emily?” Realizing she doesn’t know who I’m talking about, I show her the picture. “This little girl, she’s 11 now. A little taller, blonde hair, blue eyes.”

The woman looks at the picture, and I begin to feel impatient.

“I’m sorry, I haven’t seen her. Are those your parents? Could she be with them?” I look at her, fighting the anger that begins to bubble with those words.

“She’s not with them. She can’t be. They’ve been dead for four years. She’s supposed to be here with me. She went to get some food, it was stupid of her and she knows not to leave by herself when it’s dark. She knows—”

The woman steps aside, holding the door open as I babble. I stare at her strangely as I step through entrance, looking around to see a massive number of people scattered through the front room of the building. There are cots set up, some cribs, and small portable mattresses. Pillows litter the floor and children are sitting on blankets; some playing card or board games, others braiding hair, some just talking. Laughing. I haven't heard kids laugh in years.

"What is this place?" I look at the woman and she smiles at me before she closes the door.

"This is The Shelter. We're an organization to help people in distress. The Shelter is scattered throughout Howehaven. I suppose some will say this is the headquarters of our little group. Every house on this street has been abandoned; and with this street being a good distance from downtown, it should be a headquarters to help our sister locations. My colleagues and I thought it would be maybe safer, if we kept things spread out and moving continuously. One location found by the wrong people could be detrimental. People have forgotten that we only want to help. That's why we stepped down in the first place. We just want to help, and we will help you find her."

"Thank you." I find it difficult to catch my breath as people walk in and out of the back door. Children are moving in and out of rooms. I turn to the woman, knowing exactly what I am supposed to do.

"My name is Josh. What can I do to help you guys?"

Danielle Southwick

Commemoration

My revenge body will be twice
 decayed;
lowered into the pall by the
bearers of dust and veil;
ash embedded into the vanity
of the felt
and velvet lining of my esophagus
 —my sarcophagus:
adorned, adored,
 adulated
by the smoke of your memory
and the cherry of your cigarette.

Gabriel Jeppson

Bubonic



Wendy Roberts

Reluctant Icarus



Wendy Roberts

Steampunk Carrie



Helen O'Hara

Thoughts



Milo Bossler

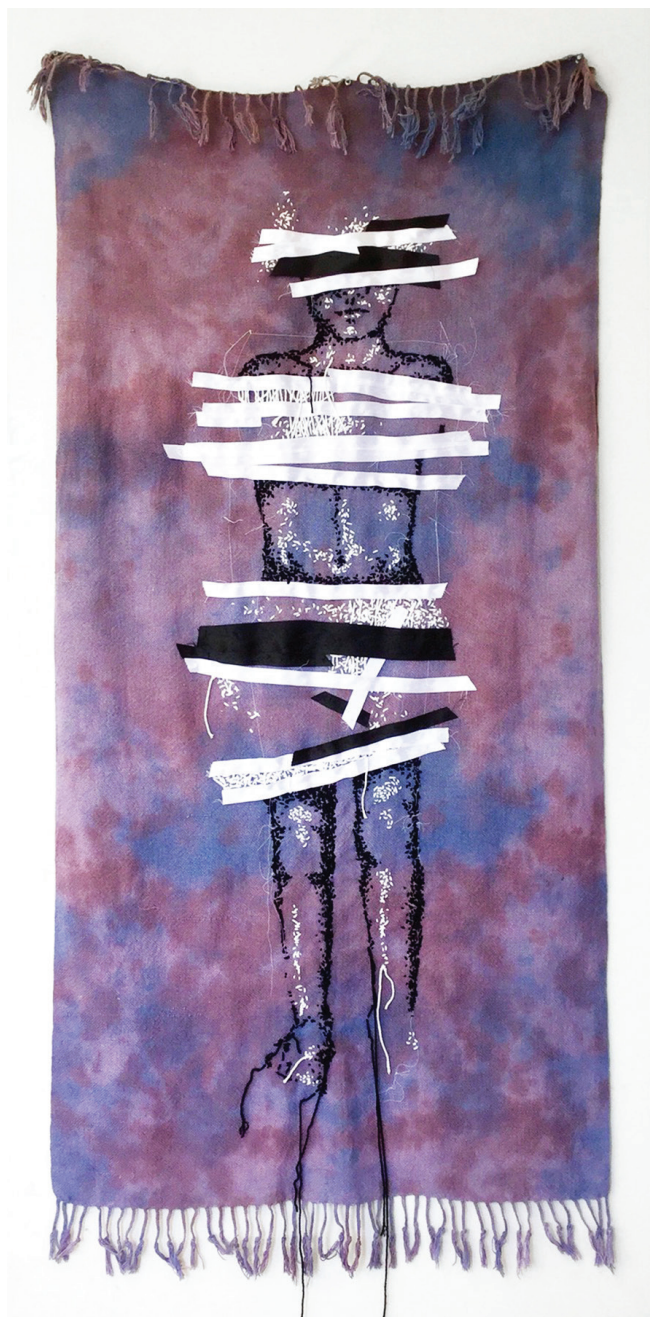
Idle Crisis



Pencil, colored pencil, digital collage

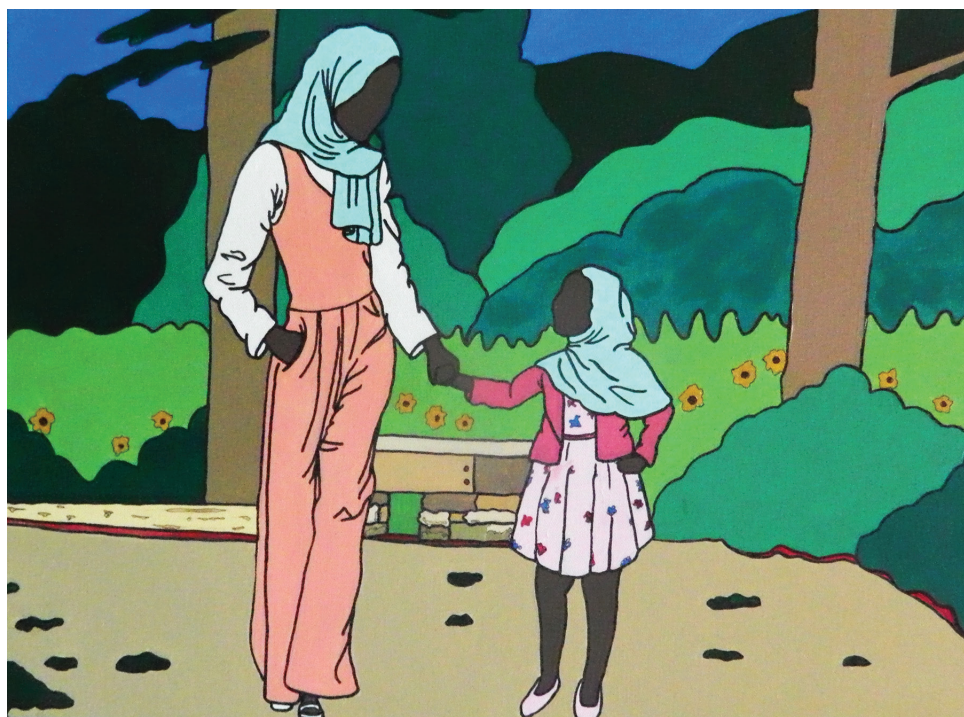
Nikyra Capson

Cover



Deborah Harris

Evening Stroll



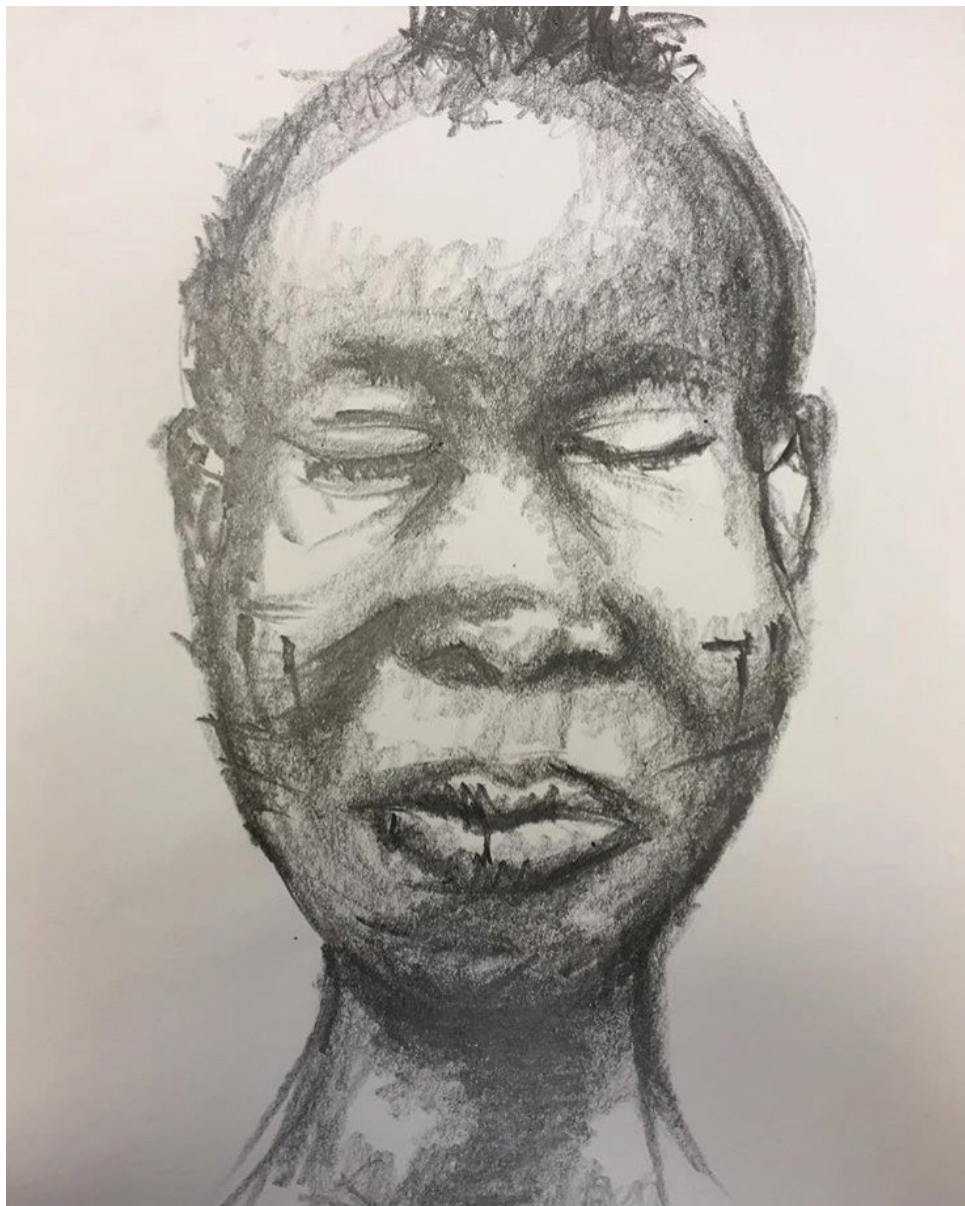
Aifegha Stephen

No Happiness



Aifegha Stephen

Old Soul



Aifegha Stephen

The Reflection



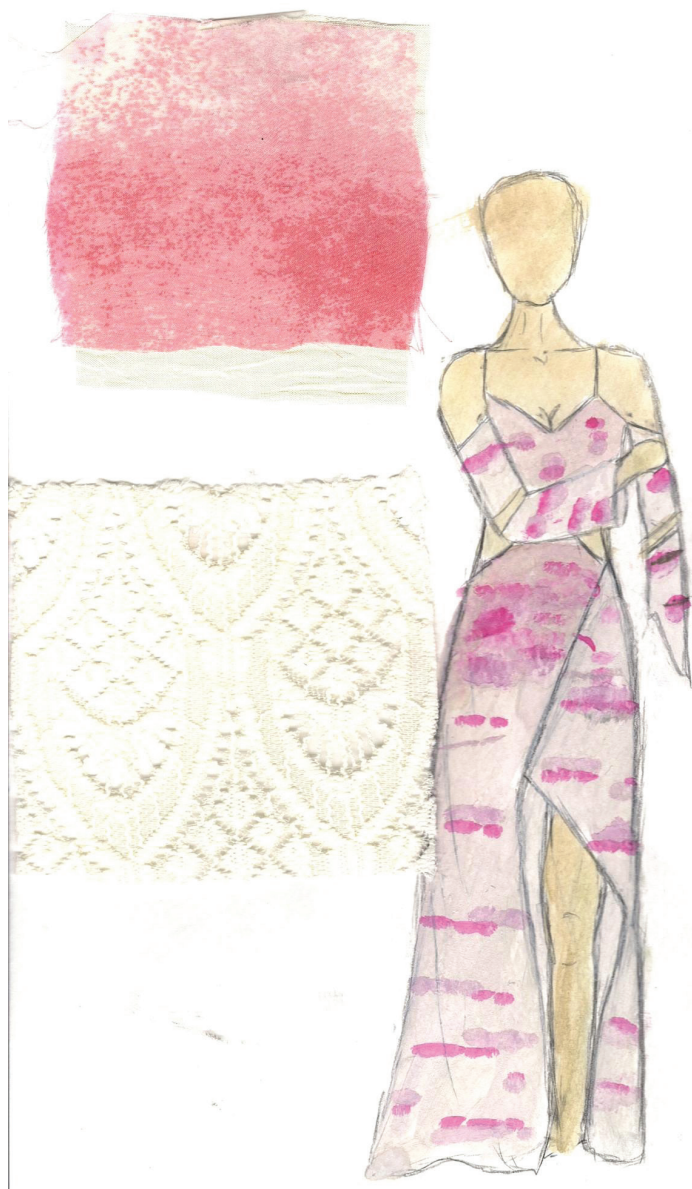
Liz Breuker

Winter Sunbeams



Cameryn Dougal

Artist



Cameryn Dougal

Nomad



Cameryn Dougal

Prophet



The Morning After

It had really just never occurred to me, for one reason or the other, that it would be so expensive. Of course, expensive is a highly subjective term, meaning entirely different things to entirely different people. I grew up in a very nice house in a very nice neighborhood to very nice parents. The type of white people who didn't have a drop of blood in them that wasn't European and would never dream of having to ask the government for money to assist in their day to day expenses.

My father is a teacher, and my mother is an accountant. It's a level of normalcy I thought existed only in advertisements from 1965. At any rate, they have very good insurance. As a child it meant my cavities were always promptly filled. As a 21-year-old, it meant free birth control.

July 9, 2018. Just one day after my 21st birthday. President Donald J. Trump nominates Brett M. Kavanaugh to serve as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Also called the Court of Last Resort. They operate in a grand building in Washington, DC. Also called the Marble Palace. In the entire history of Our Great Nation, of the justices that have served as the final word of the law, determining what this country is and isn't, holding, some would say, the real ultimate power, four have been women. When the first female justice was appointed to the court by, get this, Ronald Reagan, it was just 16 short years before I was born.

I was still in the same clothes I had worn the night before when I walked through the automated doors of the Pocatello

Walmart. Sweatpants and a university t-shirt. In the early October air, I was slightly chilled, but it was a short walk. My friend had told me that I had to go to the pharmacy and ask someone for it directly. I wasn't ashamed. I was certain the pharmacists had people in daily, perhaps hourly, requesting it. I was, however, unprepared for the interaction.

"Do you want name brand or generic?" the pharmacist had asked. I didn't want to admit to myself that I was relieved it was a woman. She was older, possibly as old as 40. Nearly as old as my mother. I imagined her having a daughter my age. I imagined her daughter going to some other pharmacy in town, not wanting to ask this of her mother, who looked like a very nice lady. Actually, I imagined this lady having a son. I thought her son would go to the pharmacy. He'd be a real stand-up guy. Pay for it himself and everything.

The naivety in me said the name brand would somehow work better. "Uh, name brand, please," I told her. She walked behind the wall of medicines in little plastic bags on little plastic hangers, waiting for their owners. It was probably a secret area where they kept the medicine for the people that aren't really great at planning ahead. She came back as quickly as she left with a white box with some really lovely purple shading on the top and bottom and the words "Plan B One-Step" in the same non-threatening color. "\$46.87," she said.

July 30, 2018. Dr. Christine Blasey Ford writes to a Senator that the nice, white, Yale graduate U.S. Supreme Court Justice nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh had, in about the same year the first female justice was appointed to the court, pinned Christine to a bed, attempted to remove her clothes, and

clapped a nice, white, preparatory school boy hand over her mouth, so she couldn't cry out for help. The Washington Post breaks news of the letter September 16, 2018. By September 21, 2018, "Christine Blasey Ford is not the victim here" is one of the top headlines of the day.

I thought his name, his full name, sounded like that of a Confederate soldier, which was something I told him repeatedly. Robert Ivan Lee Dalton. I never got around to asking him why a couple lower-middle class Iowans would give their son two middle names, but it doesn't really matter. He refused to be called anything but Bobby. The fact that we had the same birthday was one of the first things we found out about each other. We were exactly eight years apart. The night before we turned 20 and 28 we were sitting on the couch at his apartment. I think we were watching a movie, but I can't remember. I know I was playing on my phone because I watched the numbers turn from 11:59 to 12:00. I know I turned to him with a fake, goofy smile plastered on my face.

"Happy birthday, Bobby," I said with too much excitement. He didn't match my enthusiasm, but he gave me a fond and exasperated smile I was, by that point, well familiar with. "Happy birthday, Maddy," he said.

All things told, less than 50 bucks was a bargain. It wasn't like I didn't have the money. And to be fair, the alternative would be a much longer drive and give or take a grand more. I handed her a 50. She gave me my change and the box. She had put it in a plastic bag, which was probably just standard, but I imagined she was doing it just for me, so I didn't have to walk out with it on full display. I thought that was quite nice of her.

We kissed, occasionally. Nothing crazy, though, just pecks that seemed far too chaste for what I knew about Bobby. Mostly, we just slept together, literally. We would drink a little, talk a little, and retire to his twin to cuddle and sleep. Wake up in the morning. Drink coffee. Maybe watch a movie, if we both had time. Rinse. Repeat. He was having sex with other women. I knew that. Maybe I would have felt jealous, but I was sleeping in his bed nearly every night. We went camping with all our friends shortly before our birthday. He had sex with our friend, Jess before Jess's fiancée got there. But we shared the sofa in the trailer. I told him I should sleep on the right side because he would hit his head on the little bit of counter that jutted out over the sofa as soon as he woke up. He told me to stop nagging him. I laughed when I awoke to a thump and a stream of cuss words.

September 4, 2018. Brett M. Kavanaugh's confirmation hearing begins at 9:30 a.m. The appointment clause, located in Article II, Section 2 of the United States Constitution grants the president the power to nominate and appoint certain government positions, including Supreme Court justices. However, the Founding Fathers, ever wary of one single man having too much power, included a caveat. It must be done with the advice and consent of the Senate. Eventually, it was determined that that would take the form of confirmation hearings, where the nominee must answer questions, so the Senate can determine whether or not he is worthy to serve on the Highest Court in the Land. In the first hour of the hearing, 17 protestors were arrested.

When I got home, I read the back of the box. “#1 OB/GYN recommended.” “Emergency contraceptive.” “The sooner it’s

taken, the better it works.” “Side effects include nausea, lower abdominal cramps, tiredness, headache, dizziness, breast tenderness, vomiting.” “NOT an abortion pill.”

He hadn’t talked to me since August. July was just coming to a close the first time we had sex. It wasn’t even in his bed. It was a little girl’s bed, our friend’s daughter who loaned us it in our inebriated state. It definitely wasn’t my proudest moment. It definitely happened again. And again. I learned after the first time Bobby was highly averse to condoms. I gave up after the second time. He stopped talking to me after the third time. His interest had been piqued by a newly single tan, tall, and stunning girl my age. She got back together with her boyfriend a month later.

In October, we all went bowling, which is code for getting drunk in a bowling alley. Trinity’s room had creepy dolls and clowns on all the shelves. Bobby and I teased her about it constantly. She pouted and said she liked them, and anyway, it was her room, not ours. But of course, it was ours. That night, it was completely ours. We had never had sex sober, so I didn’t really feel it was fair of him to blame the Jell-O shots. Later, he told me he would have helped pay for it. I don’t know if I believe that, but I don’t regret leaving without telling him the next morning.

September 6, 2018. Nice guy Ted Cruz asks nice guy Brett M. Kavanaugh why he dissented from his fellow judges while serving on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in a case involving the Affordable Care Act and its requirement that employers provide coverage for birth control. Brett M. Kavanaugh says he didn’t feel it was right

to force these nice religious people to allow their employees access to “abortion-inducing drugs.”

He was mocked, splendidly, in virtually every major newspaper in the country. It had been almost a full year since my morning after, and in the time that had passed I was more than happy to join the nation’s women in terrified laughter at the reality of how poorly educated the men calling the shots are about our bodies. I delighted in his misinformation, his mediocrity despite his overflowing confidence, the way he believed himself a superior being for having an extra appendage where I have a hole. I thought it likely he believed that meant something was missing, that I was unfinished.

I might have been tempted to believe him on that October night, when I curled up on my bed, fighting the pain of a surge of extra hormones scraping my insides and the feeling of blood slowly pooling in my underwear, a feeling he would never know and couldn’t possibly understand. I might have succumbed, like so many before have, to the pervasive messages of shame and inferiority we are meant to feel by virtue of having two X chromosomes. For a moment, maybe I did. At some moment, maybe we all do. But there is always an age of rebellion and truth.

October 6, 2018. Brett M. Kavanaugh is confirmed as an Associate Justice for the Supreme Court of the United States.

And there will always come a reckoning.

Gneiss

Thomas says, "What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too
little,"

He said he would show me the world

Instead I feel like I'm headed to a psychiatric hospital

My heart has been tattered and torn and is now unfurled

I've heard there's a gold rush in Sacramento

Something sheen and new, it's an obsession

The cut a nick but the scare service as a memento

Something so easy could never end up as a regression

I'll never work for wages again; I have found the ticket that
is numbered

I think I finally found my Rock of Gibraltar

So much space to never feel encumbered

Potential love so effortless, even time won't let it falter

It's like Tom said and now it's obvious

It wasn't a rock at all I was standing on Mount Vesuvius

Jonestown and the Cauldron that Watched the Whole Damned Thing

Silver ingots forged and cast,
molded into the great cavernous
cauldron that reflects the tear streaked
faces, the wood pillars holding up the
tin roof, the bodies already piling on the ground.
Red dye number 40,
blue dye number 1 stain the teeth
and the tongues of the acolytes
who litter the floor of the compound.

Splish

Splash

Splish

The cups dive in and emerge
dripping onto the cold wood floor
before carrying the elixir past the
teeth and the gums and then down
the throats of those who follow the
mad prophet so blindly.
His words flood forward, sickly
sweet like the scent of grape and
almond. A match made in
heaven. Through the eyes of the steel vat,
Jones is freakishly tall; he is too skinny.
It is an illusion, a trick of the mind.
What's real though,
those 909
people were lost.

However, the cauldron is still there.
A mirror reflecting the purple stained
range of mountains in Guyana.

Christa Larson

More Than Once¹

The moon begins to rise,
casting strange shadows
on already illuminated
hallways,
eerily empty as
the workers file out and
the nighttime janitors start
the rounds.
Six boys' laughter
searches the corners and they play
games
looking for something to prove
they're real
as they pack to go home.
"Was this even worth it?"

Knock

The lights turn off and the room,
it stays quiet

knock

"Do you want us to stay?"

knock

"Are there—is there more than one of you?"

Knock

"Can we leave?"

knock knock

"Did any of you run the faucet?"

knock

“Are you still here?”

knock

We try to leave, and they do something to stop us—

They turned on the faucet—

KNOCK

The questions turn into whispers,

the knocks have to be real

The stories are recorded.

“Can we share your story with everyone?”

*KNOCK, KNOCK, Knock, Knock, knock, knock,
knock, knock*

“Is there any...sort of heaven?”

knock knock knock

¹Based off of Youtube’s Sam and Colby’s video “Queen Mary: The Night We Talked to Demons | Untold Story”

Strands

I am picking your hair from my sheets
and my clothes and my car seats
and my dreams. Strands of you live
in every aspect of me. I used to write poems
on your skin, trace my fingers to form
the words, leaving ghost white outlines
of sounds that never escaped.

I see the poems on the seats of my car,
your castaway dyed red hair vibrant against
the cool gray fabric where you used
to sit. You always covered up the
cigarette burns, but now there's
just empty coffee cups and long
strands of your hair.

Katie Noel

The problem of the un-dead

What does our martyr look like?

An old man in diabetic support hose,
chemicals in his veins
that kill him faster
or slower...
than the ones he absorbed for
them.

The patron saint of modernity
has a small machine where his heart was
that stops the frantic froth
of grasping and gasping
and bending to tend
sugar snap peas.

Earthly beings pray to him
a god of slow inner decay
of cartoons from commercials
of pay and
he will lick
salty earth from your shoes.

Youth was brown-haired,
rosy-cheeked,
Naïve
Ignorant of expiration date they assigned
for the easy-going son of No One
and an
Alcoholic.

Sacrificed at the Altar

of Known but not Told,
small orange bottles
and clinically nimble fingers that clench
the steering wheel of a car
my dad fixed.

The First Mourning

1B-4B-8B High School Creative Writing Contest Winner

Stacy woke up tired. She could feel strong medication numbing her senses. She saw the flurry of nurses moving around her. She looked up to see her husband standing above her hospital bed amidst the hectic nurses, holding some small thing bundled in a white blanket. Stacy felt a rush of emotions. An overwhelming feeling of relief and ecstasy. As fast as this came, it fled in place of terror. She saw a ... person with a white curtain tightly draped over its face. He... She ... It gasped loudly trying to force the air that it desperately needed down its throat. As it gasped, the cloth was pushed down its throat further—suffocating it. Stacy watched the horrifying struggle; she screamed out, rushing to stand up. Before she could leave her bed, her husband held her in place, while nurses rushed to see what was wrong. She struggled violently to help the person. A loud *chunk* sounded as her head hit the bed frame, and everything went black.

She woke up to darkness. She looked around to see if everyone was ... okay. She heard the sound of snoring; she looked toward the sound to see her husband, asleep in one of the hospital chairs. She sat up dreadingly and looked out the window. The night was thick and gray. No stars illuminated the dense veil of clouds. The world seemed to be fading away into silence. Then that silence was broken by a loud *thunk*. She jumped. She looked around for the source. Her husband was still asleep, undisturbed. She assumed something must have fallen off of a shelf. She got up to find the fallen object, when she heard it again. This time clearly coming from the

next room over. She stood there for a moment, conflicted over her fear of disobeying the nurses and the building curiosity inside her. She decided what to do.

Stacy slowly crept into the hall. Still, the noise sounded again, and again, rhythmic in a non-rhythmic way. She opened the door to find ... nothing. For a second she stared at the white curtain drawn over the window, blocking out the gray sky. She walked forward and grasped the cloth tightly. She breathed in and pulled it open.

He woke up. Slowly coming to his senses, he noticed the hospital bed. It sat empty in the lightless, cloudy morning. Where was his wife?

Karley Morgan

Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize Winner

This year's poetry contest judge is Natalie Homer, author of the chapbook *Attic of the Skull* (dancing girl press, 2018). Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming in *The Cincinnati Review*, *Meridian*, *The Journal*, *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *the minnesota review*, *The Pinch*, *Blue Earth Review*, *Salamander*, *The Lascaux Review*, *Flyway*, and others. A former *Black Rock* & *Sage* contributor and editor, she went on to earn an MFA from West Virginia University, where she was Managing Editor of *Cheat River Review*. She currently lives in southwestern Pennsylvania with her husband and three cats.

She writes this about the winning selection—

“Podra Llorar Por Ellos” possesses a lovely, melancholy elegance. By keeping the enjambment parsed, the poet ensures the pacing is calm and somber—in keeping with the content and tone. Placing the English and Spanish on opposite sides of the page draws attention to the differences in language but also creates a pleasing side-to-side visual for the reader, not unlike the paths of marigold petals riding a river's motion. The poem is trifold; one can read the English straight through (appreciating the clear images and cool, distant tone), the Spanish straight through (its ghostly, disembodied lyricism), or the languages interwoven into a single, fluid unit of meaning. The ambiguity with regard to the speaker(s) and situation complicates the poem's literal meaning, which makes for a gradual unfolding of the mystery with each additional reading.

Karley Morgan

Podra Llorar Por Ellos

Her marigolds wither as they fall from her fingers
they float down, swirling on the water

En el río donde los dejé

los niños hoy son esqueletos

Little feet run through the streets with little hands
holding pan de muerto;
something beautiful and sweet for those remembered.

It will be hard to see those graves again
awash in liquid candle light, warmer than any water.

Preferí que el agua sea su cuna

*Y cuando el amanecer calentó el mundo, ellos estaban azules
frío todavía*

the river turns orange with the sky
and it outlines everything floating in it like pure white chalk.

she and her memories reflect on the water's surface
As everyone on the street behind her goes to see their families.

Mis lagrimas calleron muy tarde y las limpié

Con las manos q los debió de haber salvado
she finally follows the current of folks trickling into
the graveyard
and lights those tall white candles as if she can reignite
their souls.

Como si mis manos no los extinguieron.

**Spanish to English Translations
(in order of appearance)**

May She Cry for Them

In the river where I left them

the children are skeletons tonight

bread of the dead

I chose the water to be their cradle

and when twilight warmed up the world, they were still

cold blue

my tears fell too late and I wiped them away

with the hands that should have saved them

as if my hands didn't extinguish them

Jake Osti

Morning

BR&S Prose Prize Winner

Graveyards are where people go when they die.

Or where they go when someone they know dies.

Or when you're a teenager trying to get drunk on
Halloween night after a failed attempt at getting laid.

Unlike in my teenage years, looking for solace in a body,
I haven't brought a pack of cheap beer with me. I've brought
nothing. In the chilled winter air, my breath inches out in cold,
coalesced shapes.

Next to me is a couple who've been leaving flowers—nice
red and white petunias. They glance in my direction and
huddle closer. They look at me as if I've intruded, as if this
isn't a fucking public space. Bitches. I rub my chapped hands
together to try and get some warmth back into them. My little
finger stubs look like blue icicles that will chip and break apart
if I rub them hard enough. I rub them harder. They eventually
become pale little hot dogs bleached white from soaking too
long in the morning air.

I should have brought gloves.

Shoving my hands into my coat pockets, I cough to clear
the last of the anguish out, scoop the recesses of it from my
chest, and hack it into the air. When this ritual is complete, I
begin to walk down the broken, pock marked path toward the
plot of land I spent too much money on and who no one else
cares about. I don't even know why I care. At least the other
plots have something in them: cement, wood, worms, and
bones.

My plot is empty. In the end I was too afraid to let go of his ashes, and we ended up not burying anything, leaving one half of the plot for my mother when she needs it. My right cheek is still bruised from the knuckles of my younger brother trying to tenderize the meat of my face at the funeral when I decided we shouldn't bury the urn.

"You're fucking crazy, let him go!" he shouted.

In this epic clash of titans I ended up on the ground, curled up around the box of ashes in my coat—the same coat that became my favorite after my dad bought it for me at Bloomingdales on the rare jaunt out before he had lost all of our money—and wet dripping out the edges of my eyes and nose.

"No," I'll repeat for the next half hour or so. My mother and the rest of my family had to drag my brother off me, eventually, but not before he gets a good spit shot on me; in the same place his knuckles punched me in their attempt to make sense of something, anything. That had always been his way, our father's way. If you can't make sense of something, hit it. If you still don't get it, hit it harder until that cookie crumbles.

Chocolate chip, macadamia nut, peanut butter, after it breaks it all comes out like shit anyways. My dad's potty humor had been the best, and after years of washing my mouth out with red, bumpy soap, my mom had finally given up on correcting my humor as well. I had inherited something from the old man after all.

I've taken to rubbing the bruise from brother's fist, poking at it over and over, the pain reminding me that I'm here. It's what I'm doing now as I stand over the empty grave and read the inscription:

Loving Father,
Loving Husband,
David Richter
1957-2018

Once my mom takes this spot, when she passes, I guess there's no more room. We'll be expected to find our own lovers and children to mourn us.

I kick at the dirt, "Dan's good." I toe at a loose bit of stone embedded in the ground and look up at the sky. In a movie this would be the part where some birds fly across the frame and I would say something profound.

"Mom's being a bitch." The words settle at my feet. My cheek feels warm where I've been picking, and I look down at my hand and see the blood vessels have popped and left my fingers red. I guess I'm glad I don't have gloves then.

I put that hand in my coat pocket and feel the box of ashes I've brought with me like I have done every day since Dan punched the shit out of me. Little bastard's got a good right hook, but he'd also had a point. I rub my finger over the top of the maroon plastic box in my oversized pocket and visualize the plastic bag inside filled with burned, fire licked remains.

The thought strikes me that the ashes are probably not even completely my father's; they could be mixed in with some other motherfucker whose family wants him back—just wants a piece, anything to prove he was here.

I take the box out of my hands. I look at it. I imagine ripping open the bag, dumping the ashes over the grave. I want to laugh at the sight, feel some sort of resolution steal over me, and know that I have finally been cleansed of this loss. I want to know if I would feel regret after leaving him behind,

abandoning what's left of his body, gone forever in the wind and the dirt. I want to know if I would hate myself for losing such a precious commodity as the remains of a loved one.

I kick the grave, hear a crack in my shoe, put the ashes back in my pocket, and limp out of the graveyard instead.

Colophon

Issue 18, 2019 of *Black Rock & Sage* is set in Dutch 766 BT type at Idaho State University using Adobe InDesign. *BR&S's* cover and footer font is Futura Medium. The journal is printed on 60 lb Cream Tradebook (436 PPI) by Bookmobile in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Contributor Bios

Milo Bossler is a visual communications major, with a background in drawing, who likes to explore a variety of traditional and digital art media. Milo also currently serves as Vice President of ISU's Sexuality and Gender Alliance.

Liz Breuker is an Outdoor Education undergraduate student, Army veteran, McNair Scholar, and ASISU Senator for the College of Education at Idaho State University. Her interests and hobbies include United States and international travel, photography, volunteering in her community, and cooking. A self-proclaimed "foodie," she also loves to discover new cuisine.

Cody Campbell is a basic Idaho kid; his birthstone is a potato. He's trying to figure out how to live a life of adventure without being poor.

Nikyra Capson is from Blackfoot, Idaho, and she is working towards a degree in Advertising and Fine Arts with a minor in English. She is currently in her second year of graduate school in the Fine Arts program. She wants to work as a professional artist, as well as in the advertising field.

Madeleine Coles is a senior at ISU majoring in journalism. After she graduates, she will be attending law school, but she hopes to always keep writing creatively and not just boring legal stuff.

Rebecca DeLoach has always loved writing, ever since she could hold a pencil. She began seriously writing poetry as a sophomore in high school, and she frequently uses poetry and writing as a great source of comfort, as well as stress relief. One of her biggest inspirations is the Harry Potter series, and she classifies as a Hufflepuff (if any of you were wondering).

Cameryn Dougal is a sophomore in the theatre department. They're currently studying costume design, something they discovered a passion for their junior year of high school.

Joseph Chidiebere Emmanuel is a drummer from Lagos, Nigeria. He is a music major at Idaho State University and is currently sponsored by Salyers Percussion, Canopus Drums, and Bosphorus Cymbals.

Margarita Espinoza is a Music Education major, Military Science minor and is in the ROTC program at ISU. She was born and raised in Rupert, ID and started playing the viola in the fourth grade. She was inspired to play the viola by her brother, Jose, who is also a violist. Margarita has also learned to play violin and cello. She looks forward to teaching her own orchestra one day in the future.

Funk:30pm is a funk band growing in popularity in the small town of Pocatello that is driven to spread the love of funk.

Marcus Hall, a Pocatello native, is pursuing a Bachelor's of Music Education. He has played viola for 14 years and his goal of becoming an educator stem from his love of working with children as well as the positive example of KC Chojnacki. Marcus hopes to pass his knowledge and passion along to generations of musicians.

KayLynn Hammond was born in Blackfoot, Idaho. Attended one year of collage at the former Ricks college, after which she decided that she needed to stay home with her newly born daughter. KayLynn has five children and has been a private piano teacher for 20 years. She worked for the Blackfoot school district for two years as a full time music para-educator. KayLynn has since returned to school as a non-traditional student and is currently in her junior year of her BME degree. KayLynn hopes to be a band teacher and also to continue writing original compositions.

Coloratura soprano **Autumn May Harris** is an active participant of the ISU Chamber and Concert Choirs. She has performed in many full musicals, an opera, and opera scenes with ISU and in the community. She presents her senior recital this April before graduating in May with her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance.

Deborah Harris is an undergraduate student working on their Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree. They work heavily with painting but enjoy most mediums. The series they are currently working on explores the relationship between mother and child. They feel motherhood is under represented in the art world, so they hope to give motherhood more recognition in the arts.

Throughout their years as a student, **Gabriel Jeppson** has consistently perused the arts. Drawing, sculpture, and theater have been their main forms of expression, but they have also dabbled in painting, photography, and other mixed media. They will continue to peruse the fine arts during their time at ISU and hope to create many new and interesting pieces far into the future.

Christa Larson is a super senior at ISU, finally set for graduation after this spring semester. After graduation, Christa is looking forward to not doing homework, but is daunted and stressed by the fact that she won't have to do homework, so there's a chance she'll come back so she has something to do. When procrastinating from doing said homework, she likes to play D&D, Fortnite, hang out with her cat and write things that have nothing to do with what she should be writing about.

Hannah Livermont is from Weiser, Idaho, the Fiddle Capital of the World. At nine years old, her mom became her violin teacher. In the thirteen years that she has played, Hannah has been concertmistress of the Weiser Youth Symphony, first violinist of a string quartet, and was a guest soloist for the Treasure Valley Symphony. She is currently majoring in Radiographic Science at Idaho State University as well as furthering her love of music and her skills as a musician.

Jacob Luker was born and raised in Pocatello. He is currently an eleventh grader at Century High School. He lives with his parents, three siblings, cat, and dog. Horror has always been a secret passion of his. He commonly scours the internet for horror stories and Creepypasta.

Dallas McCrea is a music education student at Idaho State University. He was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. He plays trombone and bass at ISU.

Karley Morgan is an ISU undergraduate who is double majoring in English and Sociology. She was born and raised in the southeast Idaho area and is proud to attend her mother's alma mater. Karley is hoping her work can create a sense of small-town nostalgia while also asking bigger questions about the world and the people that inhabit it. She is currently enjoying life with her husband, Gio, who inspires her every day, as well as her dog and cat who bring her nothing but happiness.

Zachariah Mulberry is a dance major at ISU. He will graduate in May 2019, following the completion of an international exchange program in Plymouth, England. “Boy; 1994’” was choreographed by Zachariah as part of a capstone project. It explores the dynamic, internal struggle between masculinity and femininity and questions traditional views of gender.

Katie Noel took as many writing classes as an undergraduate biology major as possible, primarily as a mental health exercise. The transition from a lifetime of schooling to the working world, as well as aging and thoughts of death and meaning, inspires her poetry.

Helen O’Hara has been doing art for many years, and they decided to come to ISU and get their degree, possibly eventually going on to graduate school. They work in many mediums, but fibers is their favorite. They love weaving and quilting, as well as drawing and painting.

Aside from writing and reading, **Jake Osti** enjoys hunting introverts, stretching himself too thin, and attempting to have a social life until he remembers that people terrify him. He also has a dog whose name is Daisy, and he is absolutely sure that she is weird.

Samuel Paytosh is a junior studying at Idaho State University. He is currently pursuing a double-major in Biochemistry and Music Performance, and when Sam is not cooking up chemicals, he studies with Dr. Kori Bond. He plans to pursue composition and is excited for what the future will bring.

Maggie Price was born and raised in Pocatello Idaho. She got her start on violin from the School District 25-Sixth Grade String Program. Starting in a school-based program has made her want to pursue an education in teaching music to others. Her goal is to become a better musician as well as become a better teacher.

Brooke Reader is a senior at Idaho State University where she is majoring in Creative Writing. In 2009, she earned her cosmetology license and later decided to pursue a career as an elementary school teacher. After two years of college, she changed her major when she discovered that her passion is writing rather than teaching.

Wendy Roberts will graduate Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor's of Arts degree from ISU in May. She has enjoyed pursuing her degree in art and has had many inspiring experiences at ISU. She would like to thank all her professors who have helped her get through school. She's off to take on the world—first stop, visiting her grandchildren!

Norrin Shearer is a Creative Writing major from Meridian, Idaho. When he's not writing sappy love poems or another fantasy novel he'll never get around to finishing, he can often be found playing Dungeons & Dragons with his friends or re-watching Star Wars for the millionth time.

Danielle Southwick is a 22 year-old pansexual Slytherin. They grew up in Soda Springs, Idaho, went to high school in Preston, Idaho, and is currently attending ISU in Pocatello, Idaho. They are a Psychology Major and a Creative Writing Minor, and they will graduate with their BA this spring.

Aifegha Stephen, an undergraduate student of ISU, is currently majoring in arts and communication. Their work is connected to the daily issues of humankind and their environment, as it depicts the struggles and beauty of life. Most of the time their work is directly influenced by their home culture: the western part of Africa, Nigeria.

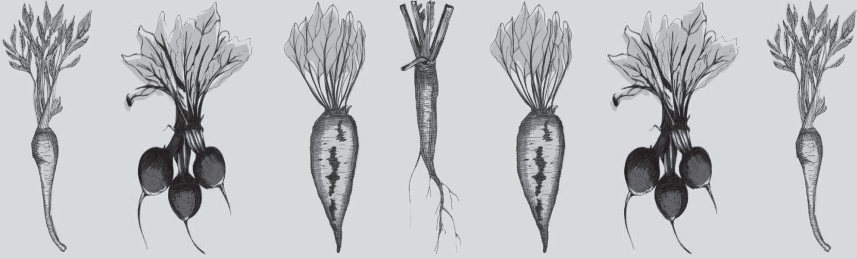
Amanda Stubblefield is in her last semester at ISU pursuing a B.A. in Dance Studies. In March 2019, she presented her work “To the Core” at the Northwest American College Dance Association Conference, where her choreography received tremendous praise and was ultimately selected for the highly coveted Gala Concert.

Lander Van Leuven is in his second year of a BA-Music degree studying cello. His love of music began early in life, thanks to his parents. They and many incredible musicians have inspired his pursuit of music. Lander enjoys the intrapersonal and interpersonal connections that come from music, and that there is an infinite space for growth.



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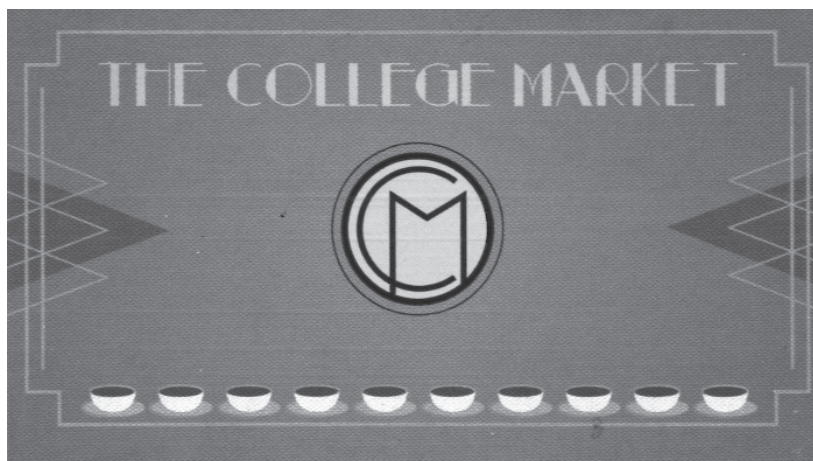


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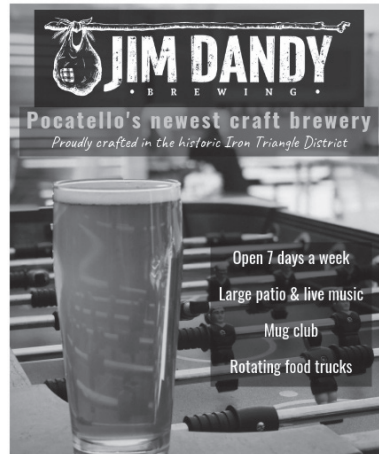
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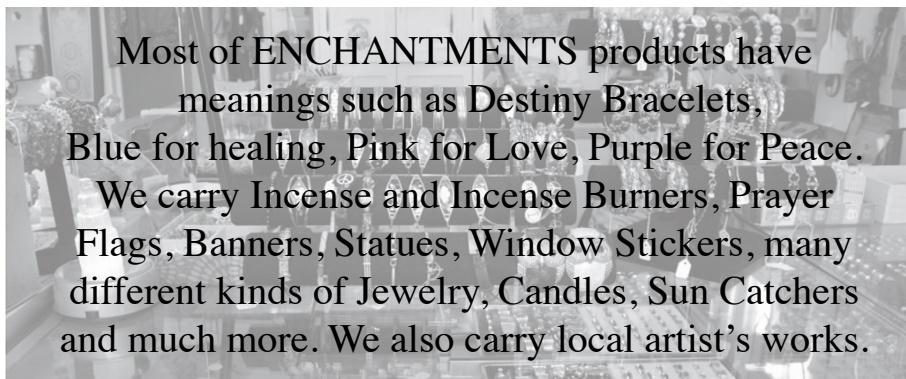
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