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# Calliope

Armstrong Atlantic State University

Volume XXIV - 2008

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*Calliope* 2009 submission guidelines: Regardless of medium, each entrant is limited to five submissions. Each entry must have a completed submission form. To ensure anonymity during the selection process, the *Calliope* staff asks that you not include your name or any identification on your submitted work. Please pick up submission forms in Gamble Hall or email submissions to [aasu-calliope@hotmail.com](mailto:aasu-calliope@hotmail.com).



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## Contributors





## **Kris**

Oil on Canvas

James Kincaid

Lillian Spencer Award Winner for Art

Cevon Rambo

## **The Deception of the Clock**

Lillian Spencer Award Winner for Poetry

Upon inhaling the capsules we were so quick to claim, "it does not work"  
and so we breathe deeply more:  
this time through the nose and mouth.  
The long hand follows the thin one  
(ticking ever so regulated in his pace)  
and diligently—like clockwork—the fog sets down against us.  
It is a foreign but comforting blanket causing inhibitions to  
slowly, silently steal away.

like clockwork: our bodies  
The thin relentless hand transcends time, and beckons longhand to follow.  
(as if denial were an option).  
Tracing the circumference of a single perfect form,  
we work in union at different velocities for anticipated climax.  
Quick slow fast hard soft. tick tock tick quick—DONE.  
"It does not work."  
Exhale.



## Light a Candle for a Monk

Lillian Spencer Award Winner for Short Fiction

### I

One winter morning, a bleak toll of the bell from the Buddhist Temple was whirling around China Town to release a soul from purgatory. The cutting-cold wind was sweeping the dead leaves on the ground, and the bald brown trees, like the mummies, stood with no sign of life. With thick clothes on, people walked fast on the street. My father held my hand and stepped into a gate with two narrow crimson doors that opened into a small Buddhist temple, which awkwardly sat between two grocery stores on Flash Street.

We were about to see a dead person, a Chinese monk of New York.

### II

The dead monk was my tutor, who had been teaching me Chinese Kungfu for three years since I was 13 year old. We never knew what his real name was or what his family looked like. He came from a rural village of the far east China. In China, if a person becomes a monk, he should conceal his real name, cut off love and desire, step into the "empty world," and become one falling from Buddha. His Buddhist name was Wuji.

People said that Wuji was a "dumb dragon," because he was a quiet monk with extraordinary Kungfu, which was thought to be as good as his master's, but I never saw his master perform it in front of people. My father told me that most of the time, his master was running for alms in Manhattan, Brooklyn or Queens. He owned a house in Brooklyn, and nobody knew where his money came from. By teaching Kungfu, Wuji was the one who provided the main income for the temple.

Every weekend my father drove me to join a group of children to learn Kungfu from Wuji. He was two years older than me, so he was more like a big boy than a teacher. At that time, I was studying in middle school, but I had the happiest time in the temple with my monk tutor.

We played Kungfu in the backyard during the summer, where an old tall tree thrived with wide dark green leaves and birds sang with joy. Wuji, dressed in a gray Buddhist robe tided with a black strap around his waist, flung a long rod, and rambled around with secret paces and bellowed: "Shaolin Kun, step forward, step back, around and back. Follow me." We awkwardly moved as he did, and, like a group of monkeys playing games, we flung our rods in a chaotic way.

I was not serious about the practicing and was easily distracted by the interesting things around us. Mostly, the big brother, Wuji could help me enjoy distractions more. One day, I was moved by the singing of the birds and forgot what I was practicing. Suddenly, in front of my eyes, a bald boy in a gray robe swiftly sprang high and picked up a bird on the branch of the tree with the rod end, and he agilely grabbed the bird with his right hand. All of a sudden the dancing gray robe stood frozen before me. He smiled shyly and loosed his hand a little. A redgolden bird was quietly perched in the center of his palm. He gently stroked its feather.

A few minutes later, we all ceased to gaze at the little bird and the quiet boy; Wuji slowly lifted his hand up over his head and opened it to let the little bird fly away, and behind it a piece of golden feather floated in the air. Wuji picked up the feather, and his eyes were flickering with innocence.

### III

When my father and I entered the temple, we smelled mysterious aroma like the dry daisy in the hallway. The desolate toll of the bell was lingering over the far top of the temple. The atmosphere of the main hall was dreary. Two monks were couching in the cushion and praying, and the master was knocking at a wood stock and pattering a glib song in front of the dead. Uncle Wong, the owner of a Chinese restaurant, was standing beside them. The dead, Wuji, was laid flat before the statue of Buddha. My father lowered his head and loosed my hand and stood next to Uncle Wong.

"What a poor monk." Uncle Wong spoke to my father. My father nodded his head slightly. I was concentrated

on the dead on the board: Wuji had changed his robe; now it was a brown cotton robe, and within it, a snow-white cloth robe was wrapped around his neck and his body. On the top of his head, two lines of six-dots made by the burning incense were almost covered by the growing black hair. He kept his eyes closed, and his lips were purple as if they were colored by a naughty girl with lipstick. His face looked neat and pale, like a sleeping child with no suffering. He clasped his skinny bone hands on his chest as if he was struggling before death.

The smell of the burning incense was wreathing around the space. The huge golden Bodhisattva statue sat in front of us with peaceful face. He splayed one hand and slanted his other hand holding a white water lily, which seemed to be an unlimited world ready to take in the limited life of a dead monk and raise him up to the paradise accompanied by the flat pattering sound from the monks.

#### IV

My father had known Wuji for a while because my father helped his master to gain contributions to build the temple and run a Buddha magazine. He told me that three years ago, Wuji was brought to New York from China by his master. He held a visa of visitor, and his main job was teaching Kungfu in the temple. His excellent skill helped his master earn enough income to support the other monks, and his master provided Wuji with three meals a day, but nobody knew whether Wuji had salary or not.

He never told people about how much he received from his master. I doubted that he had enough money because he never went to any place and did not even take a train to Manhattan. Because he was a monk belonging to the temple, he had not realized the need to save money to plan a future for himself.

However, his poorness once embarrassed him when he faced a girl that he knew. One day, I was thirsty and took my little friends to nudge Wuji to buy a few bottles of water from the grocery store next to the temple. Wuji stood close to me and was fumbling his cloth inside his robe around his chest, and his face was bashful. He never braved to look at me, and he at last found out two dollars and lowered his head uttering a couple of words: "Two dollars...not enough. Two...." My little friends were laughing at him, and I was also joking: "No, Wuji, you are so mean." Wuji caught a glimpse of me and handed the two dollars over to me and said lowly: "I...am not thirsty."

Wuji did not like talking but had a good manner to people. He not only taught Kungfu but also did temple works such as sweeping the yard, cooking meals, cleaning the hall and accompanying the Bodhisattva at night. He was neither happy nor sad, like a puppet confined in the temple. Occasionally, he had a little joy with us because we were all children.

However, one time, I found he was unhappy.

Last month, as usual, my father took me to the temple. I was like a bird flying to Wuji, and was looking for him everywhere, but I could not find him in the backyard, the hall or the front door. I felt I was losing something and I, like a naughty girl, screamed in the hall regardless of whether the Buddha would disapprove, but Wuji did not respond.

A monk told me that Wuji was in the kitchen.

I walked into the kitchen. It was dark. In front of me, a tall black cement tank was adjacent to a black square stove leaning against the brown brick wall. On the stove, the steam was swirling up from a big crimson bowl, and next to the right side of the stove, a couple of brooms were slanting against the side-door, and on the far left dull corner, a monk was crouched with his head buried in his chest and with his knees held in his arms.

"Wuji...?" I made an effort.

In the darkness, I saw him uplift his head and face at me rigidly. I was trying to get close with him. He was wordless.

He looked tired, and his face had stains of tears. His old gray robe wrapped his skinny body and his black cloth shoes were stained with dirt. This time, I felt embarrassed, because I never saw him drop tears. I knelt down and stared at him. He was gazing through the emptiness with desolation in his eyes, while through the narrow window, a shaft of light mingled with the dust and froze the moment in the darkness.

I never realized it was my last time to see Wuji alive.

#### V

My father put his hand over Uncle Wong's shoulder with a slight sigh.

The master was indifferent to our visitation, still knocking at the wood stock and incessantly tapping a rapid song in a coarse voice. What was he singing? His eyes were empty, and his sound was cold and flat like an eccentric soul encompassing the dead to the other world.



In the furnace, a couple of candles and incense were burning. The cold light of the fire was flickering in the small puffs of wind. Some candles had flamed out as a young life unexpectedly terminated.

Uncle Wong lighted a candle and put it in the furnace, and then, he told us a story about Wuji before his death.

## VI

The end of February was the Chinese Spring Festival. Fireworks were bursting over the sky to light the darkness in New York. People were celebrating joyfully.

There was a young monk wandering around the street. He was Wuji. He had a jacket on, and a pair of dirty sneakers covered his status as a monk. He looked exhausted. Under the cutting-cold wind, he was shaking with the gaiety of the people's celebration of the festival.

He had been walking around in Brooklyn for three days and nights.

The temple would never be his home any more.

One month ago, his master decided to send him back to China because his visa had expired. If he kept living here, his master would be punished by the government. He begged his master to help him renew his visa, but his master told him: "That would cost a lot of money." Then, his master bought a plane ticket and sent him to the airport and wanted to say goodbye to Wuji forever.

Wuji did not take the plane. He had no place to go in China because he was a monk. His temple was his home, and his master was his father. He returned to the temple, but his master refused to keep him in case of being blamed for retaining an illegal immigrant.

Wuji left the temple with a little money. He rode an old bike around Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn to find a job. He washed dishes and collected trash to make a living. Since his life was secluded in the temple, he was not sophisticated enough to live through the hardness in a city. He needed to belong to the Buddhist temple to fulfill his responsibility for taking care of the Buddha.

Finally no one wanted to hire him anymore, because he was not able to speak English and he did not have a visa.

He lost his bike and had no way to go.

The fireworks were celebrating, but not his fireworks.

## VII

At last, he walked into the Chinese restaurant run by Uncle Wong.

He pushed the glass door, slowly stepped in, and timidly stood stark in front of the counter. He looked weak, and the innocence had already disappeared in his eyes. He was murmuring with pallid sight toward the cook.

He clasped his right dirty skinny hand and pinched his left pocket with his other hand. Uncle Wong and the cook did not know him before, and they thought he had a mental problem, so they paid no attention to his appearance.

Wuji uttered indistinctly: "Help me...."

"What's wrong?" Uncle Wong did not look at him and was still cooking the food.

"I am a monk from the Buddhist temple."

"Don't be silly." Uncle Wong squinted at him.

To prove he was a real monk, Wuji, at this moment, had no shyness any more, and he took off his jacket and showed them his real status: a brown Buddha robe wrapped his body was presented in front of them.

Suddenly, Uncle Wong and the cook stopped what they were doing.

## VIII

Wuji begged Uncle Wong to make a phone call to his master to tell him he would die, and he wished his master could release his soul from purgatory after he died. His innocence kept him loyal to the master of Buddha. He was afraid of suffering more after death and believed his master could release his sin.

Uncle Wong was astounded. He thought he could save the little monk's life, and he consoled him the whole night. He made a phone call to the temple, but his master was not in.

The next morning, twilight started peering through the darkness. Wuji left the Chinese restaurant. Before he left, he gratefully caught a last glimpse of Uncle Wong and put five dollars in Uncle Wong's hand and said this was all he had. Then he disappeared in the darkness.

Uncle Wong thought that he had gone back to the temple.

## IX

However, he did not.

In the cold morning, people found him hanging under a roof of a grocery store next to the Buddha temple. With a beam of golden sunshine shed on his brown robe, he closed his eyes and dropped his hands straight along his body. His lips were purple.

## X

The light of the candle was trembling in the furnace. His master was repeating a bunch of songs in a mysterious voice as if it rose up from the abyss and gradually became louder. The yellow candlelight was reflecting on the master's blank face, who seemed to be apathetic to the things around him. Maybe he was a real monk with no love and hate, and his world was depleted.

An ambiguous cold attacked me unexpectedly.

I turned my eyes back to Wuji. He may not be a real monk, because he still had love, desire and hate. That's the reason he chose to die.

No matter who he was, he was my tutor and my elder brother.

## XI

I picked up the red candle handed over by a monk beside me, and then I inserted it in the furnace filled with incense ash. I took over my father's match and lighted the candle.

The yellow and purple and white candlelight was flickering feebly, the red drips of the wax flew down like a bunch of pearls, and in front of it, Wuji was serenely lying on the board.

Gazing at him in the dimness, I was thinking: the moment when he hung himself under the roof, he might be suffering, but not more than before.





**Turquoise, Coral, Brass, and Wood**  
Jewelry  
Theone Karatassos



**Beau**

Digital Photography

Katie Corbitt

Kevin Daiss

## Outside, After Hours

Drill undersound  
Upper precipice,  
    prescience. Understanding  
Come with this-  
    Clear and smooth-  
Demonstrative.

And reading back  
    Asleep,  
In the paperback pre  
    dawn.  
Avoiding lechery, but  
    plaintively  
        regretfully,  
            uneasy / azure  
            repenting.

Lilting lolling thief,  
how'd you speak  
    so freely?  
    Oily blood, leech to need,  
cough coughing, choleric grief.



## A Taste of the Orient

"Well I don't know how they did it, but they managed to make this chicken gamey," spat my longtime friend Bernard.

"I told you we should've gone to Razz's. But no, you had to pick this hole in the wall joint where the lights flicker when the train goes by. Nice job." As you can tell, I wasn't impressed with Sun Ce's Chinese food. In my mind, he should have stuck with sword fighting, and we should have gone somewhere, anywhere else.

"Lay off 'em, Al. You've picked some crappy restaurants yourself."

"Uh huh," I said between stale, crouton-like egg noodles, "and just how is your food there, Kip?"

"Ha, alls I can say is I'm glad they have duck sauce."

"I don't know guys; my soup's nice 'n hot, and the steak is juicy." That was Benny, if you were wondering.

"I hate to tell you this Benny, but that's not steak. I saw them dragging in a dog from the back when I took a whiz earlier. Just thought I would warn you."

"You always gotta make everybody else disgusted, Al?" Cindy did always stick up for Benny. I don't know why, but she would always defend him against anyone. "If you don't like what you got take it back and get something else." I shot her an angry stare and speared a piece of soy-saturated fish on the end of my chopstick.

"If you two guys are done arguing, could you pass me a napkin? My fish has bones in it."

"Here ya go Bernie." I watched Cindy throw a couple of napkins at Bernard and sunk into my chair. I'm glad my fish didn't have bones in it, though it's not like I could have tasted them. That fish was a bit like Jello. You eat it because somebody, like Bill Cosby, says it's good, and dodging sauce stains on the menu was a little Chinese warrior telling me that their Kanpi Fish was the best. But of course that was a lie, and the fish was as chewy as rubber and saltier than extra salted cashews.

"PLALH!" I made the mistake of trying to chase down the fish with my sake. "God that, that's horrible." I wasn't exaggerating; it tasted like old foot powder.

"Yeah, I kinda figured that out once you spit it across the table."

"Sorry, Kip. That stuff's nasty."

"No problem. But by nasty do you mean like toe funk? Or more like bile?"

I just stared at him and wiped the liquefied death off my chin.

"I was just wondering. Was thinking about having some."

"Well go right ahead." I say as I pushed my cup towards him, "just don't blame me if it tastes like hot sour milk."

"Okay." He downed the rest of my glass. "Well you're right; it is hot enough to burn my throat, but I'm just not tasting the sour milk. I'm getting more of a raw egg taste with a hint of kemchie mixed in."

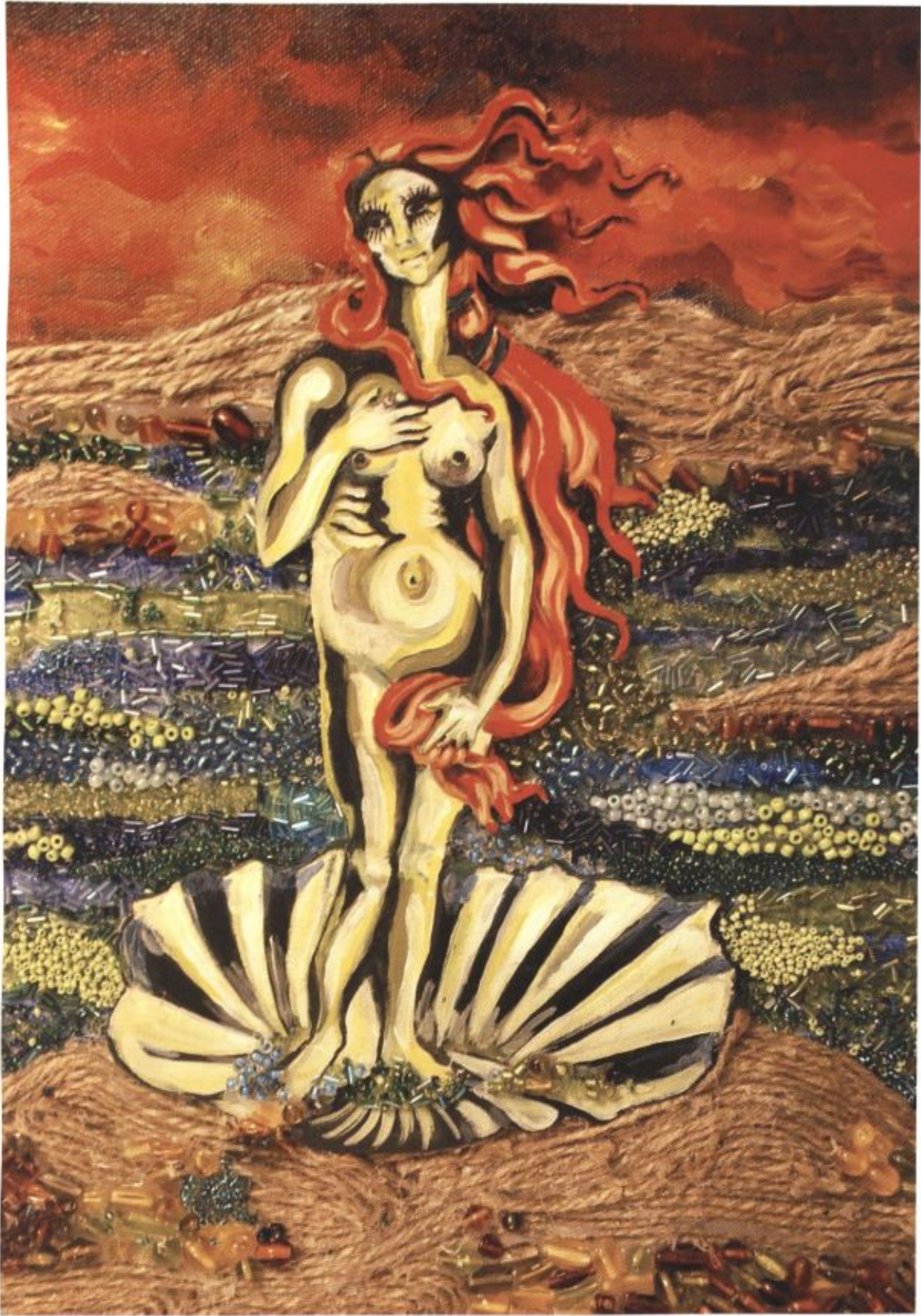
Now Bernard decided to join in the fun. "A nice compliment to your Szechuan pork, then?"

"Na, the pork tastes a bit like dust with some crappy duck sauce on it. That sake's in a league of its own."

"I'm just glad Coke tastes the same everywhere you go."

"Flat?"

"No, if you can believe it this stuff is actually pretty crisp."



## Venus

Acrylic and Beads on Canvas

Gabrielle Hague





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## Rockets

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Jessica Jenkins





## **Blues Angel**

Pastels

Nancy Miller

## So I Married an Athiest

"You are going to get yourself sick, reading like that. You know you get car sick whenever you try to read something." Elizabeth looked up from the red Doritos bag and sighed.

"I'm fine for now," she started. She moaned and pressed the palm of her hand against her forehead.

"I told you," Percy sang from the driver's seat. Elizabeth ignored her husband's teasing and slid down in her seat, feeling the sickening lurch of an upset stomach. "You weren't even listening to me either," Percy continued.

"No," she mumbled, still pressing her palms against her forehead. The car swerved suddenly, and Percy snickered. Elizabeth moaned again.

"Serves you right." Elizabeth looked away and pulled the glove box open. A pile of brown napkins met her fingertips as she dove her hand inside. She lifted one out and grabbed Percy's black ballpoint pen. She leaned back against her seat and kicked the glove compartment shut with her heel.

"Did I upset Her Highness?" Percy snickered. Elizabeth flicked her Doritos bag from her lap and spread her napkin over the top of her brown skirt. She had been itching to write something all throughout the long drive but had refrained from doing so because of her tendency to get sick whenever she read or wrote in the car. But Percy was just so inspiring at times. She gritted her teeth.

*I love you and I hate you, I can't stand you...*

She scribbled the words as they came to her mind. When she was finished, she looked down at the napkin. Her normally neat script was wobbly and jagged from the drive. She pressed her palm to her forehead again in a sudden flash of nausea.

"I didn't mean it," he said with a laugh. "Oh, the fury vibrating from you just now!"

"All right," she rasped. "Distract me, what were we arguing about?"

"We weren't, we were having a philosophical discussion in which we were expressing our views."

"YOU were expressing your views, I was looking at my Doritos bag not paying-" Elizabeth coughed. "I mean, um...you didn't give me time to speak..."

"You weren't listening," Percy sighed. "I need to get this all out before we reach your parents' house, you know..."

"Why must you torment me so?" she said with a sigh and a slight roll of her eyes.

"Because I like to."

"No...please...I'm sick of it..."

"I relish in it." The car lurched again and Elizabeth smacked her forehead in agony.

"Okay...what were you saying?"

"Finish off my soda, it will help your stomach, then we'll talk." Elizabeth reached for his bottle of coke and obliged his request. The soda was warm; evidence that it had been sitting in the cup holder for several hours forgotten. But, Elizabeth drank it anyway and made a face as flat liquid inched down her throat.

"As I was saying," Percy went on. Elizabeth regarded him. The mid-afternoon California sun was streaming from her window, bathing him in a handsome orange glow. His sharp, angular features radiated beneath his perfectly parted dark hair. Thin, rectangular glasses rested at the tip of his nose. He sat up straight, prim and proper, as if there were a score of aged professors watching over his every move.

Even his attire was proper. He had opted for Elizabeth's favorite brown suit. The deep shades of browns matched his dark hair, complimenting his olive skin and green eyes.

"-so if this is indeed the case, why can't God know what is to happen?" Percy looked at her and waited.

"He already knows everything, so he simply allows it to happen," she said as she played with the folds of her skirt, hoping that he wouldn't catch her making things up.

"Elizabeth..."

"I love you?"

"Elizabeth..."



"Sorry, I was just," she blushed. "Enjoying you."

"Well, if you want to fully enjoy me, listen to me. Or else your mother might have to."

"No!"

"Now," Percy cleared his throat and turned his attention back to the road. "As I was saying, so everything is predetermined. God has given everyone his place in this grand plan of His. If this is the case; if this predestination-fate truly exists, then what does that say about the choices we make? Are we then not truly free? God already knows what we will decide and how we decide it. If He already knows what we choose in our lifetimes, then why is there so much murder and war? Why does He, who created this vast universe in His image, allow such things to happen if this is really His grand plan and we are all following His sacred path?"

"Well," Elizabeth let out a sigh. She hated it when he worded things so eloquently. "Without war, there isn't peace. Human beings need conflict-without the bad, we cannot know good. Without the bad and good, that leaves just grey. He has His plan and we unknowingly follow it."

"So in essence we are just puppets who think we have free will?"

"Well...put like that it sounds horrible, but yes..."

"So free will doesn't exist. You choosing to drink that soda wasn't a choice at all. It was just something programmed into you that God knew all along. If He knows the future and what all is to happen-why does He allow our world to have so much suffering?" Elizabeth didn't answer, but looked at the napkin on her lap. "Why does He allow this? People are dying but all He cares about is having His big ego stroked every Sunday!"

"Percy, I don't know."

"He opened up the Earth and swallowed up hundreds of His own followers...and here I am labeled a monster without morals just because I refuse to believe in such frivolous nonsense." Elizabeth looked away and shifted. He had a point. There was a tale in the Bible, in the book of Numbers to be exact, which described such an act. She had looked it up a few weeks ago to show Percy. Even then, it had made her uncomfortable.

The passage described the earth opening up and swallowing about two hundred Israelites. Elizabeth never fully understood why He had committed such an atrocity. The only explanation she could come up with was that He was angered because they were unhappy with the leadership that He had put in place to act on His behalf.

"Talk about jealousy," Percy muttered. "What kind of leader commits such an atrocity?"

She frowned and nodded. For once, she agreed with him. She smoothed out her napkin.

"Don't, you will get carsick!" Elizabeth ignored his protests and scribbled another verse onto the napkin.

But I can't live without you.

Elizabeth gasped suddenly, feeling her insides churn in protest. She wanted to write more, but as her eyes glazed over the words she had written, she felt herself being pulled into a vacuum. Bitter bile seeped from her mouth onto her tongue. Tears stung at her eyes. Her skin warmed, and beads of cold sweat formed on her forehead. She put her palm to it and pressed hard in hopes that it would distract her from the beginnings of nausea. She squirmed and grasped her stomach tightly. The feeling subsided just as quickly as it had begun, and she let go. The car slowed to a crawl.

"Want me to pull over?" Percy asked. Lines of worry were etched into his brow.

"I'm okay, for the most part...I think I'll be fine," Elizabeth said as she wrote a third verse. She shook her head, chuckling at her silly poem.

*So caring and thoughtful, so full of charm...*

...

Percy turned their brown Mazda into a small suburb. Rows of maple trees turned into houses which were similar in model: three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large sitting room and a dining room with an adjoining kitchen. Elizabeth shook her head, watching the familiar lawns littered with toys and bicycles filter past them.

"Suburbia," she commented, taking in her childhood neighborhood. "This used to be a military base that was shut down several decades ago." Most of the houses were painted in drab shades of grey, evidence of her statement. The ones which had opted for a more human look were painted in handsome hues of beige, browns, and navy blues. The vibrant houses stood out against their grey counterparts like peppered moths.

Percy looked out at each of them in silence, his brow furrowed deep in thought. A look of pity momentarily crossed his charming features, but it was lost when he craned his neck to see the worn off address of a grey house.

"We aren't there yet," Elizabeth commented. "A little ways down."

"I don't like how they are all the same."

"Tough."

"Why do they just leave their toys out?"

"Most of the families here have at least three children."

"That doesn't give them an excuse to leave their yards a mess."

"Percy, sometimes I wonder about you."

"Why?"

"You are too rigid for your own good."

"I am not. I am just well adjusted and set in my ways. Dirty yards are not me."

"I don't think anything unorganized is you."

"As I said, I am set in my ways, and I cannot stand when people are too lazy to pick up after themselves."

"I hope we never have kids...this could get ugly."

"We are having kids."

"And just what are we going to tell them? 'Father is an Atheist and your mother is a devout Christian! Go ahead and pick which set of beliefs you want. Go on, don't be shy!'"

"You have the gist of it, my dear."

"Yes, that will work when they are fifteen, but what about when they are toddlers? I'm sure a three year old is not going to know the difference..."

"You can tell them of God all you want along with Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, and whatever else children are gullible enough to believe these days."

"Oh, Percy," Elizabeth sighed, running her fingers through her hair. "You are going to be the death of me."

"Until they are hmm...seven, you can have free reign over such matters, deal?"

"I can't see you with kids..."

"I can see myself with a son."

"No...I really can't." Percy frowned and started clicking his tongue. "Just wait until you meet my brothers, trust me," she said placing her hand on his thigh. She gave it a loving squeeze. Percy had been an only child.

"Oh, Beth, they are not as bad as you make it out to be."

"Have you forgotten the messy yards all around us already? Take a look. Those are yards with children. Children play; children make messes!"

"One child couldn't possibly create such a mess," he scowled, looking out the window as they passed a particularly messy yard. The yard was so unkempt, that the grass was barely distinguishable underneath the half broken toys and sports gear. "I was never foul like that," he scoffed.

"I bet you weren't..."

"And neither shall our child be."

*So bossy, but gentle...* she wrote onto the napkin.

Elizabeth hesitated, holding the pen above the napkin and focusing on the tip. When she was satisfied that she wasn't going to get sick, she folded the napkin and slid it inside of her skirt pocket. The road narrowed and turned into a cul-de-sac. Five identical houses sat around the half circle, each painted a different color. Faded navy paint was peeling off the leftmost house, and the yard was grown over as always. Mrs. Bellington had always been too cheap to pay the neighborhood boys to have it mowed every week. Elizabeth smirked. The old woman had always been a crazy nut-case.

She smiled when she spotted a fat, calico cat perching on Mrs. Bellington's tattered fence.

"Which one?" Percy was looking around and slowed the car to a crawl. Elizabeth looked out her window and stared up at the middle house. Its familiar windows glinted at her, seemingly pleased with the new brown paint job that her father had boasted about in his latest letter. The front yard was cleaner than Elizabeth had ever remembered it. There were no footballs, no wooden rubber band guns, and no make shift forts that crumbled at the slightest change in wind. The grass was neatly cropped to about two inches, making it appear as though her father had installed a bright green carpet in the front yard.

"Now this house is a house I can live in." Elizabeth ignored her husband's comment and continued taking in the home she had known since childhood. It loomed over their little car, its brown face bearing down on her with certain trepidation.

"This is it," she said.

"Really?" Percy was smiling. He pulled up to the curb and parked the car. "Well, glad to finally get out of this thing." He stretched his long legs and yawned. "Shall we?" He slithered out of the driver's side, still yawning. Elizabeth



placed a trembling hand on her door. It opened and Percy extended an olive hand to help her up.

"Thanks," she said, taking his hand. He let go of her and walked around to the back to get their luggage.

"Don't forget your violin," he said. Elizabeth moved to the back, where a black instrument case was lying on the seat. It had shifted slightly during their ride, one more turn and it would have fallen to the floor beneath Percy's seat. Elizabeth pulled it out with a grunt and followed her husband up her parents' walkway.

He paused and waited for her. Elizabeth sighed, noting that his glasses were resting on the very tip of his angular nose.

"Percy, you look like an old librarian; pull up your glasses!"

"I always wear them like this."

"Pull them up," Elizabeth sighed. "And no you don't."

"Well, I ought to just take you back to the car and have my way with you for snubbing your nose at how I look!" Elizabeth fumbled, nearly losing her footing in the process. She coughed and almost dropped her violin case. Her blood gushed and swelled underneath her skin.

"P-P-Percy!" By now, they had reached the front door. The same purple 'Jesus Loves You' sign with white lettering, which had been there ever since she could remember, still hung from a rusted nail just under the peep hole.

"Please, Percy, don't-"

"I know, I know! I won't! I've promised you a thousand times by now!" Elizabeth opened the front screen, which squealed loudly on its hinges. Heavy footsteps bounded across the floor on the other side of the door.

"She's here!" a voice called out. "Her husband looks like a dweeb!" Percy scowled. The door flung open and a burly boy dressed in a plain black T-shirt and faded jeans with holes at the knees extended his thick arms out to Elizabeth. His wild, sandy hair flopped with his every move.

"Jacob!" she cried. He had grown much since the last time she saw him: he was just as tall as she. When he was done embracing her, he stuck his hand out to Percy. Percy narrowed his eyes and tightened his lips. Both his hands were full of luggage.

"Oh, sorry! Let me help you get those! You guys will be sleeping in Beth's old room: first door on the right." Jacob grabbed both suitcases. "I'll just take these. Mom and Dad are waiting in the living room."

Percy took Elizabeth's hand, and she led him into the adjoining living room. Two couches covered in hand knit blankets waited for them. A couple was sitting in the couch closest to them with the back of their heads visible to Elizabeth. Her mother's blond hair was starting to show the stringy signs of age, while her father's hair was as black and full as ever. She put a hand to the black bun on the back of her head and smiled.

"Mother, Father," she said, leading Percy around the room to face them. "This is Percy Pierson, my husband." Her parents rose from their comfortable places. Her mother's light eyes scanned over Percy with a scrutinizing gaze. Her hair was pulled back into a large bun at the top of her head, and she was wearing her classic peach, button up blouse and red brooch that she reserved for special occasions. The silver 'S' engraved into the brooch's stone sparkled brightly. A glass of ruby wine rested in her right hand, half tilted.

"Well, nice to finally meet the man who has won our daughter's heart," her father said as he extended a large, open hand, which Percy shook. He was wearing a suit similar to Percy's.

"Have a seat and as I said in my letters, you can call me John. This here is Susan."

"It is a pleasure to meet you both in person," Percy extended a polite hand to Elizabeth's mother. She took it and shook, still scrutinizing him with her cold, grey eyes.

"You look like you could use a new pair of spectacles," she said, letting go of his hand. "John is good friends with the eye doctor down town. While you are here, you should look him up."

"Uh-sure..." Percy stammered. Elizabeth turned away and suppressed a snicker.

"Well, have a seat. I'm sure you're exhausted from that... What was it? Nine hours? Get comfortable; I want to get to know you, Percy." Percy nodded as he and Elizabeth sat on the couch opposite her parents. Elizabeth placed her hands on her knees and clutched the hem of her skirt.

"You majored in Mathematics?"

"Yes, sir, I am a bookkeeper at the local law firm."

"Well, that's good news," a smile creased in John's thick face. "So, last I heard, Beth, you were looking into a teaching position?" Elizabeth leaned forward and opened her mouth to speak, but Percy was quicker.

"She didn't get it, but that's no fault of her own. They don't need English teachers at this present time."

"I wonder who wears the pants in this relationship..." It was barely above a whisper, and the only reason Elizabeth caught her mother's mutterings was because she was still leaning forward.

"Oh, well, there's many things you can do with an English degree, Beth," her father said with a reassuring smile.

"So, what are you doing now? I remember you wanted to become an editor for a newspaper?"

"Oh, she stays at home," Percy boasted. He puffed out his chest and smiled broadly, as if he had announced that he had just won the Presidency.

"Stays at home?" Susan arched a thin eyebrow and turned her stark gaze towards her daughter. Elizabeth shifted and made a strange guttural sound in her throat.

"Yes," Percy nodded. "She's wonderful! The house is always perfect and—"

"You stay at home?" Her mother repeated the question, more forcefully than the first time. Elizabeth's eyes drifted to her black violin case.

"What a waste," her mother muttered. "All that education...down the drain...a complete waste..." Elizabeth frowned and clenched the hem of her skirt more tightly. It was her own scholarship that she had earned!

Her mother continued to appraise her, her thin lips moving as she muttered about wasteful money. *How could Percy be so stupid!?* Staying at home was not something one bragged about! She had warned him of her mother and her strict ways! Elizabeth stood up and glanced at her husband, who was looking as ignorant as ever.

"I'm going to play with my brothers," she announced, stepping out of the room. *And you can't come, Percy!* She wanted to say. In fact, she wanted to scream it, scream it at the top of her lungs. Instead, she jerked her napkin out and wrote on it.

*You love pushing me down, Tearing me up!*

Elizabeth found her two brothers playing catch with a tattered football out back. She stopped at the edge of her family's wooden porch and smiled. The backyard looked exactly the same since she last saw it before she had gone off to college. Even the tree house her father had built when she was five was still there. It was a simple structure, a single room with four wooden walls and a paneled roof.

It had been built inside the sole maple tree in the backyard. Its trunk was wide, and several wooden planks were nailed to it so that she and her brothers could climb up into the trap door above. Elizabeth crossed the length of the backyard and caressed one of the wooden planks. The planks had aged throughout the years. They were warped in several places and darkened by the weather. The tattered football thudded to the ground somewhere at her feet. She turned to see her brothers sprinting towards her.

"Beth! We missed you!" They hugged her, tightly squeezing her small frame.

"I missed you too," she said with a grunt. Jacob and Josiah, her youngest brother, let go. She ruffled Josiah's blond hair and smiled; he too had grown a lot since she last saw him. He was in that scrawny stage between childhood and puberty, where nothing fit properly. Plaid socks peeked out underneath a pair of blue trousers that were two sizes too short. His skinny arms flailed about in a large, grey sweater that had once belonged to Jacob.

"The top one is coming loose, so watch out if you're gonna climb up it," Jacob remarked, bending down to pick up the ball. She nodded and looked up at the base of the small structure above her. It, too, had darkened from age, but it was not as worn as the planks nailed to the trunk were. The trap door was shut; its rope hung still. The frayed ends were exactly the same as she had remembered. Elizabeth heard the football slap into Jacob's hands as he tossed it and caught it.

"I missed this old thing," she said.

"You gonna play or just stand there?" She turned to see Jacob smirking at her. "I bet you anything that your dweeby husband sucks at this game!"

"Hey!"

Jacob laughed and sprinted across the yard to the far wall. Elizabeth shook her head, kicked off her heels, and followed him to the middle of the yard. Jacob reared back his hand and released while Josiah started running around with his arms above his head in hopes that he'd be the first one to catch it.

"It's like old times!" she cried as she caught the ball between her palms.

"Yeah! You still have it in ya! Was afraid that since you got married 'n all that you'd become one of those *girly girls!*" Jacob said. Elizabeth threw the ball at him, which bounced off his thick shoulders and slammed into the wooden fence behind him. They continued in this manner until she wore herself out and started panting.

She tossed Jacob the ball one last time before retiring to the back porch. Percy was there, sitting on the old porch swing with a leather book in his lap. Elizabeth sighed and stepped onto the porch.

"Beth," he said. "I have something for you. I was going to wait to give it to you tonight after supper, but..." He looked her over and half smiled. "You probably would like it now." He lifted up the book that was in his lap and extended it to her.

"I'll have you know that while you were...ahem...gone, that I told your parents all about the novel you are

working on and all about your excellent prowess at the violin."

She sat down next to him and looked down at the blank, leather book.

"They want you to play after supper." She opened the front cover and saw that it was a diary. She flipped through it and brought her fingertips close to the delicate cream pages. The paper looked as though it had been crafted from fine silk, and she was too afraid to touch it, lest she mar the perfection with her dirty fingers.

*Only to lift me higher.*

The words to the next line of her hidden napkin saturated her lips, and she whispered them softly so that Percy would not be able to hear her speak. He shifted beside her and stood up.

"This is a nice backyard," he said, stepping towards the tree house. Her brothers were still playing catch in the distance. She set the diary aside and followed him. They stopped at the planks. Percy poked one with an exploratory touch.

"Come on in, it's fun," Elizabeth said as she placed her hands on one of the planks. She lifted her bare foot to the bottom plank and climbed, taking care not to lose her footing.

When she got to the top plank, she wobbled slightly and steadied herself by clinging to the rope hanging from the trap door. She glanced down below to see Percy on the planks below her. He was looking up and smirking at her. She flushed and almost lost her footing. The rough rope scratched her palms as she struggled to regain balance. She pushed up when she had recovered her footing and heaved the door open. Elizabeth wiggled through the opening and pulled herself up.

The tree house had changed slightly since she was last in it. There was less furniture, and her toy kitchen had been disposed of. She frowned at the clean imprint left in the wall that marked where it had rested. Percy slapped his hands on the floor and lifted himself into the room.

"Cozy."

"Yeah," she said as she glanced around. Her little wooden bench was still there, sitting off to the side. Her small tea table had been pushed against the far wall, and a new navy-blue toy box had replaced the old, faded red one. Several wooden guns and toy soldiers were scattered across the floor, as though Josiah had been playing a mock game of war. She smiled; at least the tree house was still getting some use.

Percy closed in behind her. His hot breath wafted against her bare neck. She leaned back into him and closed her eyes, enjoying his warm, solid body. He wrapped his arms around her front, sliding his fingers underneath the opening in her blouse. He kissed the nape of her neck. She sighed. His lips were soft, plush against her bare skin, and warm from the summer air.

"A very cozy place indeed," he purred into her ear.

"P-P-Percy!" she cried, feeling her neck tingle. He let go of her and spun her around by pulling at her arms. He was smiling, and his lips spread into a callous leer.

"No!" she whispered. "Oh, my God!" He interrupted her by placing his lips over hers. She relented, wrapping her arms around his neck and running her fingers through his soft hair.

"Smooch, smooch!" Elizabeth screamed and would have jumped out of Percy's embrace had he not been holding her so tightly. Jacob's sandy head was peeking up from the trap door, snickering.

"Jacob!"

"Don't worry. I'll make sure no one bothers you for your 'alone time.' I can keep Josiah busy and Mom and Dad are occupied with getting the table ready.

"J-Jacob! Just what are you insinuating!"

"I'll be baaaAAaack!" He giggled and dropped out of view. The trap door slammed shut, momentarily shaking the tiny tree house. Percy drew her near and started kissing along her jaw line.

"Oh no, oh no! My parents!" She pressed her hands against his chest and let out a soft sigh.

...

Elizabeth exhaled and laid her head on Percy's chest. She closed her eyes, letting her head rock with the steady rise and fall of his breathing. She felt his fingers run through her messy hair. She smiled and let his other hand caress her back. He had waited until their wedding night. He had placed her feelings above his personal needs, putting her first when most men would have dumped her or mocked her. Elizabeth clutched his silk shirt and balled her hand into a fist, wrinkling the soft material.

"Are you crying?"

"Huh?" Elizabeth sat up and lifted a pale hand to her face. Her cheeks had become damp. He sat up and his open shirt slid off his left shoulder, exposing a muscular arm. He put his index and middle finger under her chin



and smiled.

"We better...straighten up, you're hair is a fright," he said as he ruffled her hair with his hand.

...

"Well, let's get to know your brothers for a few minutes before dinner," he said, opening the trap door. Percy dropped through first and Elizabeth followed after him, slipping back into her heels. The backyard was empty. Jacob's tattered football lay forgotten in the grass. A soft glow was emanating from the large kitchen window. Salted ham and butter wafted towards her. She breathed in deeply, drinking in the heavenly scent. Percy walked towards the smell and peered in the window. Elizabeth stood next to him and could see the silhouette of her mother through the thin, white lace drapes.

"Mom, you're being too hard on her," Jacob's voice was clear and sharp. His silhouette was leaning against the far counter while her mother's was walking back and forth between pots and pans.

"I mean, isn't that what you want for her?"

"Of course I want her to be a virtuous Proverbs Thirty-one woman! But that doesn't mean she can't hold a job! All of the women in my family have been strong!" Susan's voice grew loud and high pitched as she ranted. "We've always stood beside our men! And need I remind you that while you children were in school, I slaved away alongside your father at that mill!? I slaved away to send you three to Bellview! And all the while I managed to feed you, to clothe you, to mend your clothing, and-"

"Okay, I get it! But you are just being too hard on her!"

"Too hard!?" Susan emitted a loud laugh. "After all I've done for this family!? I get an 'I'm too hard,' while all she does is sit around her house and you two worship the ground she walks on! Mine and John's help with that scholarship was for nothing!"

"Mom! She's visiting! We haven't seen her since she went off to college! Can't you be happy that she stays at home like the way they taught us at Bellview. You know, since you labored 'n all for it?"

"Jacob!" Susan's silhouette stopped abruptly and spun towards the one leaning on the counter. It pointed and put a hand on its hip. "Enough! Call them for dinner! Make sure Josiah washes his hands. My family has always had good strong, hardworking women!" Percy backed away from the window and ducked onto the other side. The silhouette spun around. Elizabeth crouched and inched her way along the backside of the house towards the porch. Percy followed after her.

Elizabeth paused and a frown pleaded her lips. A warm hand squeezed her shoulder.

"Bet she won't be saying that when your novel is on the Best Seller list," he whispered. She glanced over and gave him a half smile. "Besides, she's probably still upset that we were married by the State instead of having a traditional ceremony that involved family. My mother was upset at first, remember? But she got over it."

They walked the length of the house until they reached the porch, where they could see Elizabeth's father standing over the ham through the sliding glass door. Percy slid it open and walked in after Elizabeth stepped through.

"You're taking too long, John! No! The knife goes that way! You will cut it into uneven slices, cutting like that!" Susan flew from her hiding place like a crazed hen, fluttering her arms about as if they were short, stubby wings. John was hovering over the roasted ham with a large knife.

"I know what I'm doing, *dear*. Sit down and get yourself some more wine!"

"You-ugh!" She flapped around and pulled a fresh bottle of wine down from one of the cupboards. She refilled her glass, splashing a few drops of the wine down the side of it.

"Hey, guys! Sit anywhere!" John cried as he looked up. Susan had decorated the table with the white lace table cloth that she reserved for special guests and holiday dinners. She had even put out the nice, hand painted china. Two chairs lined either side of the table. Percy stepped over to the side nearest to the wall and pulled the closet chair out for Elizabeth before seating himself.

Susan sauntered from her station, carrying the wine glass and bottle in both hands, and took the seat opposite of her husband.

"So, Beth, are you at least going to give me a grandchild with all that free time at home?"

"Oh, she doesn't have time right now. As I said, she works very hard day in and day out on her novel," Percy said, clearing his throat. Elizabeth looked down at his hands, which were clutching the dark material on his thighs. Jacob and Josiah came running from the living room, colliding with each other.

"Careful," John warned. The boys were busy punching each other in the arm. Susan slammed her hand down on the table. The wine in her half-empty glass rippled, which she promptly tipped off before giving the boys a hard glare. They sat down and the table jolted once. Jacob beamed.



"Look at us, our family all here at last," John said with a smile as he set his knife down. The ham had been sliced. "Let us pray."

...

"That was beautiful!" John cried, clapping his hands. Elizabeth blushed as she lowered her violin from her chin. Her mother, on the other hand, was expressionless and more interested in refilling her wine glass. When she noted Elizabeth's gaze, she smiled, trying to mask it with fake sincerity.

"Well, ah, boys," John started. Jacob and Josiah were lounging on the floor, lying on pillows. "Why don't you two go play in your rooms while us adults have adult time?"

Josiah leaned over and yanked a lock of Jacob's hair.

"You little!" Before he could finish, Josiah was up and running down the hall. Jacob chased after him, fists clenched. Elizabeth smirked and looked down at her husband, who was watching the boys' interaction with wide eyes. Still want a son, now?

"So," Susan started in a high pitched, overly sweet tone. "What else do you two do? In your spare time, that is?" She was looking at Elizabeth, expecting an answer. Elizabeth opened her mouth to speak, but was stopped when Percy answered for her.

"Many things," he said cheerfully. "We love reading together."

"How...quaint," Elizabeth did not miss the underlying tone of scorn in her mother's voice. "And Beth, what do *you* like to do?" Elizabeth bit her lower lip. Her mother was being ever so persistent.

"As Percy already told you, I enjoy writing and playing the violin."

"So what made you decide to play the violin?"

"I didn't have a minor at the time...and Percy suggested that I minor in music, and so I did. Out of the instruments to choose from, I liked the violin best. It has such an elegant, yet sorrowful sound."

"Percy had you do it, huh?" Her mother said, narrowing her eyes. She looked on her daughter, her lips pulling tight into thin strips of paper. Elizabeth looked away and sighed. What did it matter if he was the one who suggested it!? It was a good suggestion and she had never regretted it! She bent over her open violin case and carefully set the instrument and bow inside the grooves in the velvet lining.

"Did he also suggest you write a novel, or did you actually come up with that yourself?"

"We like to go out to the lake on Sundays!" Percy interjected. Elizabeth exhaled and sat back down onto the couch. She glanced at her mother, who was no longer sitting on the edge of her seat, and was instead leaning back, sipping on her glass of wine. Percy's interjection had quelled her harsh insinuations for the time being. Elizabeth grazed her husband's warm hand with her fingers in a gesture to say "thank you."

"After church lunch? That's romantic," Susan replied, stirring the wine in her glass by twirling it around. Elizabeth's eyelids fluttered and she pursed her lips. Her mother's statement had hissed from her tinted lips. Elizabeth's breaths became quick and her skin grew hot. She could even feel her toes awaken from their lazy slumber. They tingled from the sensation and Elizabeth wiggled them. Her eyes opened wide, and she leaned forward, locking her eyes onto her mother. Her mouth slowly opened and formed itself around Percy's name-

"Oh, we eat lunch at the lake itself..." Percy said. "It's such a beautiful view. We can't deny such a wonderful site as that."

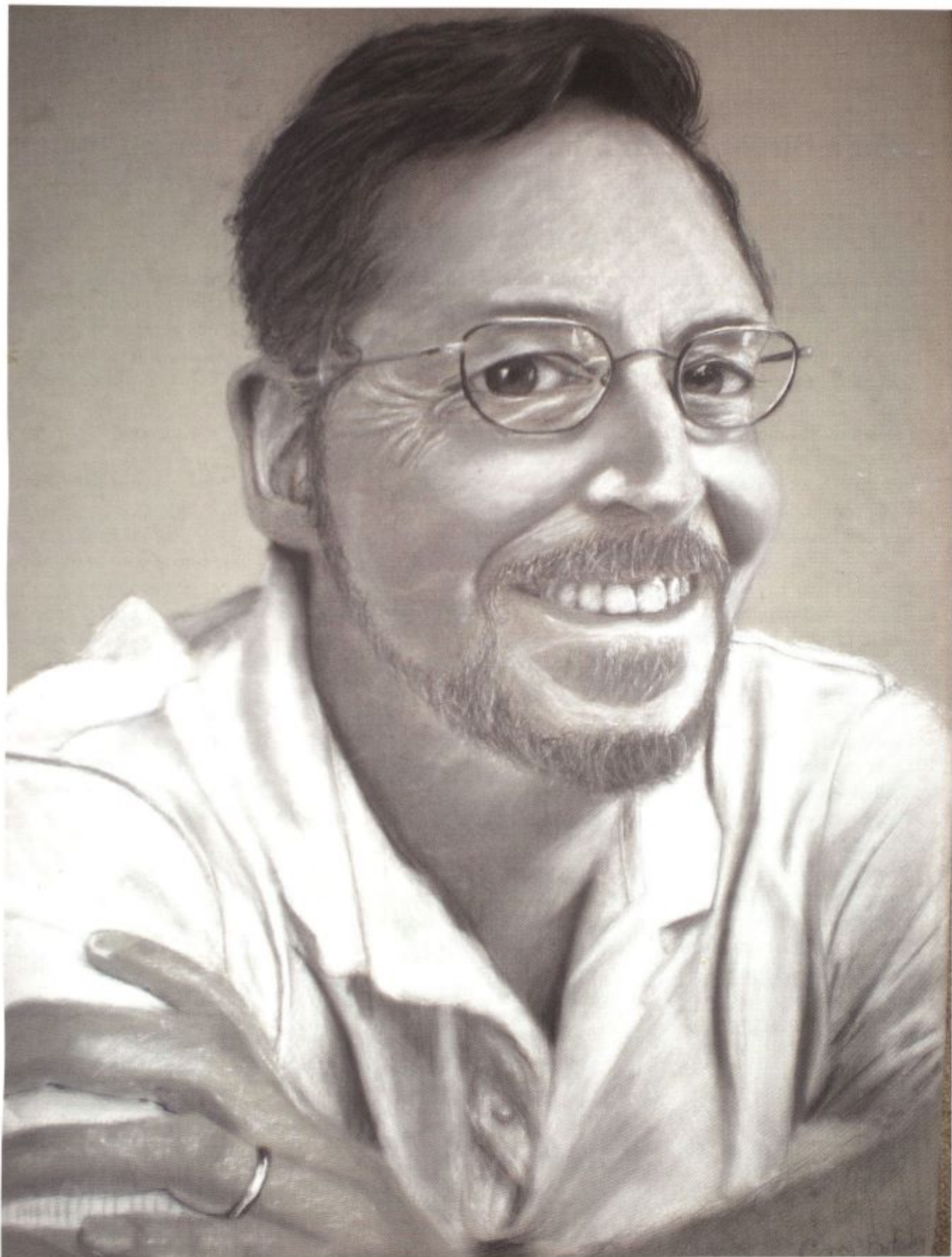
"God's beautiful creation," Elizabeth's father remarked. But Elizabeth wasn't looking at him. She was still watching her mother.

"We don't go to church," she said, but her voice was soft and lost to the strong, domineering voice of her husband.

"Yeah, that's one way of putting it, Mr. Jones. Very lovely. We also hike around the lake. There are many trails and such..."

Elizabeth smoothed out her skirt, not taking her eyes off her mother. Her mother was trembling, causing the wine in her glass to splash over her fingertips.

"Percy is an atheist."



**General Kincaid**

Charcoal

Corey Bufalini

## I Bought a Birdhouse in Siloam, Georgia

- I. Certain things are unavoidable when driving home on 15 South—  
Cotton fields, wheat fields, ancient barns,  
Siloam.  
Siloam is the birthplace of barking dogs.  
It is where dead ends go to die.
- II. I took a turn at the hanging tractor—suspended from two thick rusted chains from  
Two crusted metal poles plunged deep into the loamy clay.  
In a small brick building by the tracks  
Hung rows and rows of identical gourds, insides hollowed,  
Exteriors bleached and faded.
- III. Seven Dollars. I paid quickly, because  
The dogs had stopped barking and the cashier's watery eyes were hungry.  
The dread crept into me as a train  
Roared outside. Siloam was angry. It knew I'd soon be leaving and  
I left as quickly as I had come.
- IV. I unpacked hours later, finally home.  
I gave the birdhouse to my mother. I looked away as I handed off the  
Shell of a gourd from the  
Shell of a town. My mother likes the birdhouse, that small-necked calabash.  
It hangs from a crimped, old wire.
- V. I went home again last week. The gourd now swings from a low  
Oak branch and an irritable green snake has taken up residence there.  
Nobody notices, but sometimes in the evening I see  
His thin, dry tail hanging out the lip of the hole, like a  
Terrible worm.

Dagny Pariani

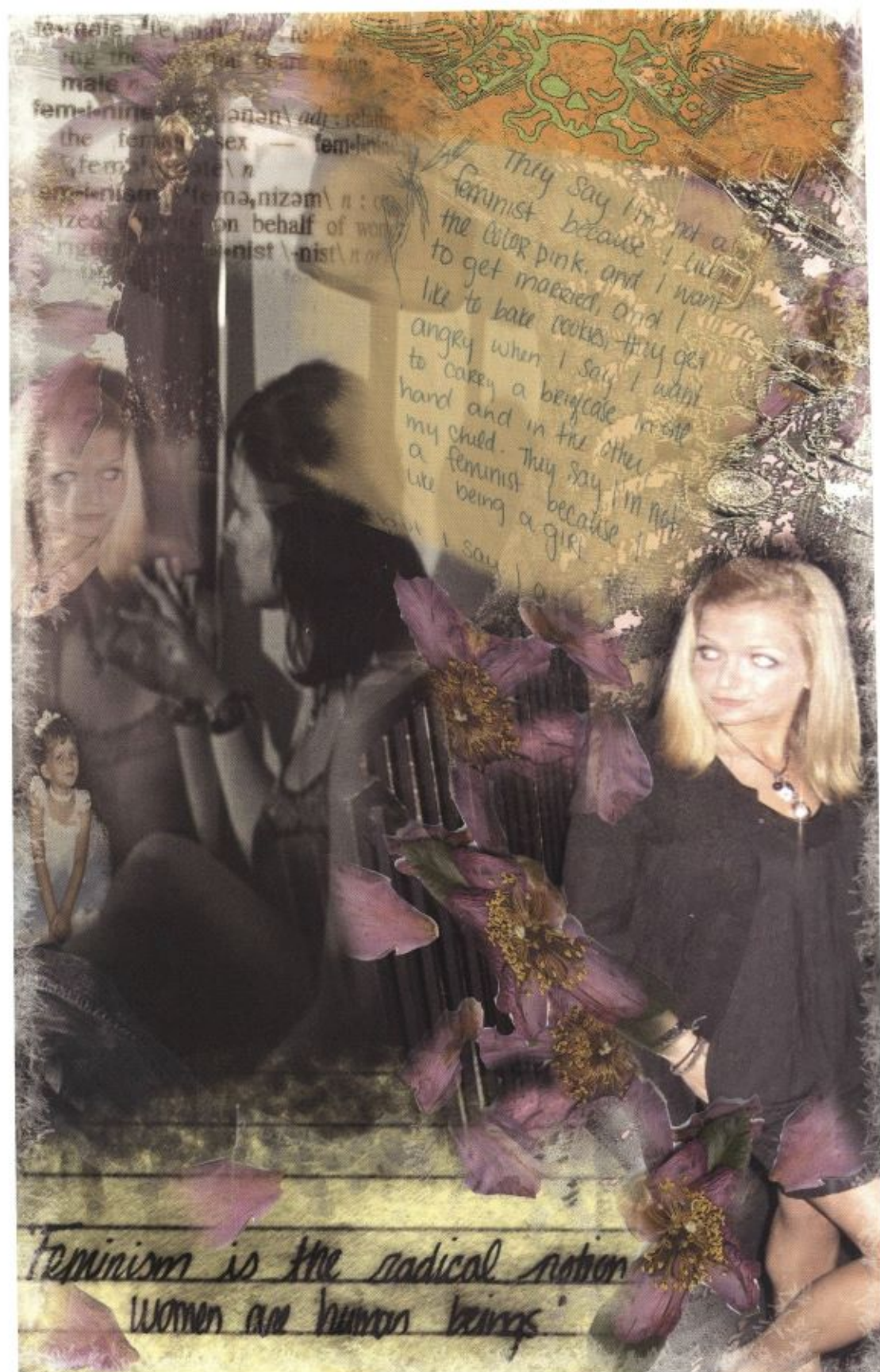
## **organic romance**

i am obscured slightly from view,  
tucked between the burt's bees and theraneem.  
you are diligently perusing and packaging  
the purchases of hemp clad mothers,  
tattooed teenagers;  
oblivious,  
beneath your 100% sweatshop-free t-shirt:

this is my organic romance.

studying the cashew butter,  
contemplating its tone against your skin.  
speculating the type of sultry circumstance  
that can only be brought on by raw honey  
and girlish laughter.  
i avert my eyes  
when paying for a tangerine soda,  
and relish in the proximity of your smile.





**Intropective**  
 Digital Collage  
 Britney Compton

# William Friedman

## Chapter One

On top of the hill, Alice watched the sky, clouds drifting by, laying on her back. Her blue dress hung from her shoulders and the yellow flowers on it had a familiar feeling. She sat up, put a hand in between her face and the sun.

"The sun is so bright."

I turned from staring at a certain cloud that had transformed into a face. Sitting on my left, her blue eyes were barely visible. Her eyes became small slits when she smiled, which looked even more intriguing thanks to the shadows her hand cast. Hands behind my head, I stared at her blankly for a second then grinned toothily back. My tooth still hadn't grown in yet. I lost it a week ago. She looked back at the sky, her smile still on her face. I suddenly realized that my t-shirt was sticking to me because of a little sweat.

"Is it possible to remember this day?" she asked, after a pause.

I had not broken my stare yet. My grin stumbled and became a smirk, devoid of teeth and the gap in between a few of them. I turned back to my cloud, now a ship. My thoughts were taking a while to make any sense to me. I knew she could not get my meaning if I could not, so I took my time. I looked back to find asking eyes looking to me for the answer.

"I s'pose. We remember some things that are really fun and big."

She did not seem really happy with that. That just confused me.

"What's wrong?"

"Well, it seems unfair that something fun or big has to happen for stuff to be remembered," she said disappointedly, the smile gone from her face.

"Alice," I started and was quickly interrupted.

"These days are nice, at least. I'd love to remember this feeling," she said, searching my face for the sweat of a liar, to make sure my next words would be honest.

"That shouldn't be tough. I remember how tough it was to breathe all of last summer. My mom said that the air was heavy."

"You're right," she said, fell back, and looked back up at the sky. Her eyes danced, and the smile hid and teased me, peeking out every now and then. I sighed and looked back at the sky. The clouds had become the same: wispy, puffy. I closed my eyes as a cloud drifted overhead, and its serene shadow allowed my bones, flesh, and, finally, skin to cool down. As the cloud passed, I could feel my skin, flesh, and bones warming back up. I opened my eyes slowly. The warm sun seemed to have also brought some weight on my arm and chest. It also brought a scent of girl sweat.

Alice had put an arm on my chest and her head on my arm. She was smiling and had her eyes closed. Caught off guard, my smirk had faded. I was calm and relaxed and couldn't remove my gaze. She opened her eyes slowly until she noticed me surveying her face. She looked at me just as intently as I minded her. Her smile was the same as before, obscuring her eyes. My face remained blank for one last second. Then, my grin returned, gap and all.

We laid there for a couple more hours, her resting on me, our souls resting together. I did not mind when she fell asleep and the happiness faded from her face, replaced by tranquility. I did not mind when my arm fell asleep. I did not mind falling asleep. I woke up to a face staring down at me, blocking the sun.

"Think we'll remember it now?" Alice asked gleefully. Her smile was back and bigger than before. It didn't tease me this time. It couldn't.

I took a deep breath, yawned wide, and rubbed sleepers from my eyes. I shook my sleeping arm. I watched my arm as I felt the prickly pain running up and down it. I had looked away for all this, and found, unsurprisingly, that the face remained hovering. It was still gleeful, still obscuring the sun and eyes, but it pled with me a little, asking for the response that was well deserved.

"Of course."

I grinned at the floating face. Relief washed over her, and she lay back down. Only her limb returned to its

resting spot on my chest. I guess she noticed me shaking my arm. She had her head turned to me. Now, one smiling eye was truly hid by the grass.

"I should have known," she said calmly. "I don't know why I wonder bad things when you're around."

"It wasn't bad," I muttered reassuringly.

"I can't think of a better way of saying it," she explained.

"Oh."

She sighed, and then I did. Both of our heads had turned back to the sky, our smiles again lessened by the calmness around us. Again, a cloud had blocked the sun.

"Let's make a pact right now."

She turned her head, her eye disappeared again.

"About what?" she asked.

"To never forget this day."

"Oh," she purposely echoed me, a smile once again teasing me. "Ok."

"How should we do it?"

"Iunno."

"Perfect. We'll remember by not knowing how to remember!"

Alice surveyed me quizzically.

"You're right," she said, turning her eyes to the sky. "That is perfect."





## 100% True

Illustrator

Alex J. Sandoval



**Mr. Kincaid**  
Oil on Canvas  
James Kincaid

Josh Bjerke

## Twenty Monkeys (Forbidden Dances)

Twenty monkeys dancing round  
Spinning to a ghostly, drifting sound  
Flutes and pipes and bells and drums  
As the wind both sings and hums  
Bringing forth a lovely sound  
As the monkeys dance around  
Their shadows caught up in the mist  
As they dance and turn and twist  
An age old dance of times far gone  
Lasting through the night till dawn  
Never seen and never heard  
This may just seem all too absurd  
But tonight they'll dance again  
Under the moon's frigid, icy grin  
Although not seen, they'll dance around  
To the phantom music sound...



Elena Fodera

## ashes

i decay from remembering a lie.  
how could you?  
fleeting aries;  
your stars whirl around my head.  
deep beaming dreamlike  
scream

you promised!

but growing is patterns  
of dazzling misunderstandings.

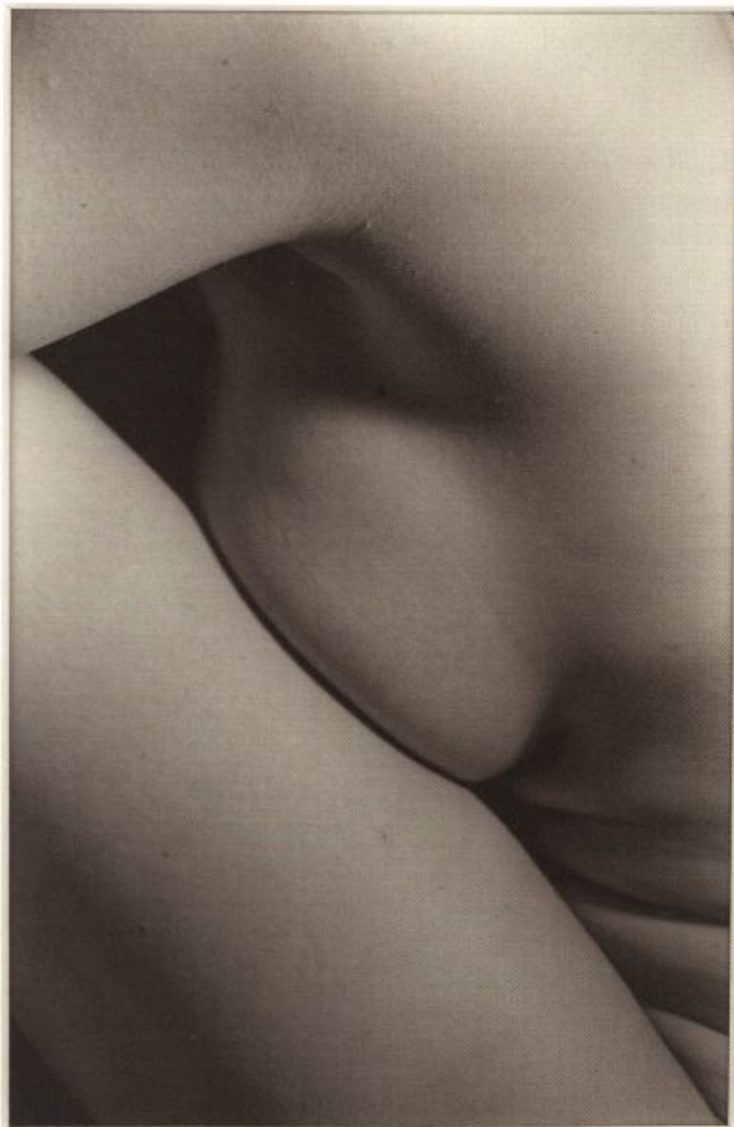
color

perfume

coffee

surround the ghost of a laugh.  
you are not welcome in my dreams now.  
get out, coward, walk on.  
you  
are haunted.

Mr. Kincaid  
Oil on Canvas  
James Kincaid



**“Portrait, #4”**

B&W Classical Print from Film

Theone Karatassos



**New Beginning**  
Mixed Media  
Chaqeta Dearing



## The Common Spring

The gun went off, and Adam felt a shudder through him that was separate from the frigid thirty-degree temperature. He drew his parka in tighter around his face and tugged at Eury's leash as the animal began to pant. She broke into her usual rhythm of stamping her feet, shaking the snow from her dust-colored fur. The other dogs imitated. He climbed up on the sled runners, mushing the dogs slowly across the muddy snow to the start line just under a sign that read: *The Hawthorne Annual Dog-Sledding Race-2007 hosted in Anchorage.*

Where is she? Adam thought, looking into the crowd, but trying to avoid the eyes of his mother, stepfather, and Regina. Daphne had said that she might be late, as there were many students traveling for spring break, but that she would try to catch the first flight out of Canada. She had said she would send word if *something changed*. The dogs were anxiously footing the ground, with Stoltz and Eury jumping up on each other amorously. Eury had begun to grow restless under the collar of civility amidst the anxious contestants. He tried to tune out the cheering of the crowd in the manmade cul-de-sac behind him and the barking of the dogs, to no avail. He kept his attention straight ahead. Another gun shot, and the second line was off. He was next. The dogs moved up to the start line. He got into position with both feet set on the runners of the red and yellow wedge-shaped sled just as the last shot went off.

The sled was going at a good speed now, gliding across the snow like a chariot on air. It was the familiar period where his heart rate began to slow from the push off. He allowed his mind to wander. He liked the feel of his feet on the runners, the well-carved skeleton of wood beneath him. It reminded him of his house. Although he couldn't smell the polished wood odor of it with his mask on his face, he remembered it well. It all brought back memories of walking through the door and seeing the glow of the fire in a room half lit even with all the windows uncovered. Then of being a child, cowering behind the living room chairs, the massive curved legs protecting him like a fierce animal from the yelling of his mother over some trivial thing. And how Daphne, who was six months older, would come down the stairs, scoop him up into her arms and say:

"She'll calm. Just wait."

"You don't know her," he would reply.

The fights over money, the lack thereof, and the surplus from the competitions. And then an altogether new fight when Regina was born a year ago. Always, what to do about Adam and Daphne? The merging of the two families, he thought, that was when it all got worse.

Had he ever really wanted to enter the first race? He wondered. Bad time to consider, in biting cold, skin-peeling-from-skin cold. It was a long time ago, and he could barely remember. *It takes every ounce of strength a man has*, Greg had said. Man against snow. Primal connection with nature. When most of the boys his age were out scouting basketball courts or dating naïve girls, Adam had taken the most unnatural of routes and become something of which to be proud.

Hours passed before he saw something red coming up ahead of him. Another competitor, tearing through the Alaskan tundra with his pack, not so much as stopping to look back. Adam called out to Eury and Stoltz to go faster, though he knew there was no rush. He had eleven to fifteen days ahead of him, depending on the weather. They pushed past what looked like a woman gliding effortlessly through the snowy lane.

Before Regina, it had just been Daphne and him, and even on his best days, he wished it would go back to that. Now the family was broken apart and Regina was the odd child out, split between two parents who, after almost ten years of marriage, only stayed in the same room when the children were there. And for all their fighting, afterwards, Adam could never tell what it was all for. Though he had taken the brunt of it from his mother, and had since he was a child, it had eased when Daphne had become the daughter Sheila seemed to always want. He felt bad for Regina to come along at such a time, but he resented her all the same. He rarely addressed her as more than his "sister," almost never by name.

A dusting of precipitation that he imagined wanted to be rain, but came down as snow, had begun to fall on his eyelashes. Frost formed on the tip of his flushed nose. He pulled his shaded goggles down, pulled his mask up, and kept on. The next time that Adam looked at his watch, it was nearly evening. Time to stop and feed the dogs. From two in the afternoon to night had been one long block of brightly lit white before him that had now turned to a hazy twilight

blue. He stopped at some ways from the trail and applied the brake while looking at his map. His arms were already stiff from holding the handles. He set up camp for himself and the dogs. Taking out a thick brown notebook, he settled in to write by a fire he started for himself.

*March 10, 2007 Saturday:*

*The first night is always the hardest, not that any night is really easy here on the tundra, even in the spring. And this year is colder than the last. But I get through it as I always do. Remember running the winter races as a kid when I was with the team and how I was afraid to spend the night in the woods alone and that was with the other boys camping out right next to me. Haven't seen many people in miles. Can hear wolves howling in the distance but they're nowhere near me. About one per 25 miles, I think the announcer said, but I keep my ax close just in case. Don't want to end up like one of last year's contestants-can't afford a hurt or dead dog on my hands right now. Or worse. The part of the night in freezing cold never bothers me much. You get used to it. Covered 55 miles already, got 11-12 days (at best) and more than 700 miles ahead of me.*

*Can't believe Sheila was at the race. Knew Greg was coming but jeez. She yells at me all week and then comes to the race? I ask her one question that she doesn't even answer! Spends all morning yelling at me even more. No way to treat your goddamned son when he's trying to win a race, Sheila. God I hope she's not at the finish. Don't know why she even came-I asked her and she said she just wanted to see her son race and is that a crime.*

Yawning, he grabbed a fist full of numbing snow and threw it on the fire, snuffing out the last of it, and curled up in his sleeping bag inside his domed Insta-tent. His stomach was gurgling from want of food, but he was too tired to notice.

Sunday went much the same, snow, and white, windswept tundra with few trees in between. He had gotten up at 5 a.m. to get an early start, what he was sure would become his routine. Adam had to give the dogs more rest stops than he had planned due to a heavy onslaught of snow.

*March 12, 2007 Monday:*

*Yesterday was a bitch. It snowed most of the day, and I could only make it about 45 miles. My thermometer said it was -56 degrees plus the wind chill. Felt bad for pushing the team like that, but I'll be damned if I didn't get to at least get 40 miles out. Had to slow to about 10 miles an hour and put all the dogs coats on. Put my tent up last night, and the weight of the snow almost collapsed it. Kept the guys in close. Lots of blankets all around.*

*The few hours of sleep I got I ended up having a weird dream that Alex came up to me, while I was tying the dogs up, and started talking to me. I asked him why he was out on the tundra. Couldn't understand what he was saying, though. Like he was speaking Russian or something. I think he was apologizing, but when I turned to him his face looked like a jackal. He kept talking like nothing changed. Creepiest shit I've ever seen.*

*Woke up a little after 1 am-still twilight. Snow stopped and lights were on-Green and yellow left over deep winter lights. Didn't think about them back home as much as I do here. Daphne always liked to watch the lights--Remember askin her won't you miss the lights and she just smiled and talked about schools in Canada.*

*Should be seeing some forests soon. Going through the forest isn't bad; its the treeless parts, where all you can see is white all around you, that really bother me, like your in the plain site of God. Last thing I need is to be prey for some wild animals-Imagine that in the papers. Give me forest of white any day.*

The stillness of the morning made for a quiet and sluggish start. He was glad to hear Stoltz's barking when he tossed him a treat, this against the solitary nature of the cold. He debated the good in starting another fire to cook the soup he had planned to have the night before and the night before that, but then was so excited that he decided to forgo it and ate several bars. He had survived on For Your Health bars for the first couple of days, provided by the competition. He unwrapped another bar, using it to salute the gray skyline.

The trek to Tikolani was arduous for the entire team, up the side of a very large embankment of snow from that afternoon and many before it. But Tikolani was situated at a steep angle, hard for any rider to navigate with even one dog. The dogs galloped onward, undaunted, gouging booted paws into the softly parting ground. Adam held on to his handle grip with a death-like clutch. At night, he heard singing in the thinly wooded parts and knew that a congregation of people, his competitors, was celebrating the end of a long day. A large fire burned, controlled, in the distance. He pushed the dogs further thinking he had been given an advantage.

*March 13, 2007 Tuesday:*

*Got past Tikolani, less than 69 miles to Metsinlong now. Can probably do that in bout a day. Reached a Minor Checkpoint, 1st of 4. Met up with man behind the counter who gave me more dog food. Told me I look tired, that it was only a race and heath comes first. Stocked up on more For Your Health bars and soup, instant potatoes, and the like just in case. I asked him if I had any mail and he said no. Couldn't sleep or eat, just walked around the forest. I guess you can call it forest anyway ~~While the dogs slept I flipped through~~ Last night I figured there was no sleeping in the night with the lights and all, so I boiled some water for my coffee and I guess I took too long or something becuz when I went to move it to another cup with the instant coffee (hate that stuff), it vaporized. So much for coffee. Hard to stay awake without coffee but I guess I'll piss less.*

*Hope it clears up again tonight. Gonna try to stay up and see the lights.*

When he awoke the next morning, Eury, and a back runner, Tova, were sniffing around his gloved hand. He had woken with a start, feeling the proximity of Tova's warm breath on his glove. "Whoa, girl Back off. You're not my type," he said. He rolled over and smiled to himself. "Where's your harness?"

Roaming the campsite, he saw that there were only thirteen dogs in the vicinity of the sled. One of the Siberian huskies had broken loose of her harness and taken off, but he could not remember whether it was Sienna or Phoebe, both the Siberian huskies. Adam was not surprised. He moved through the skeletal trees for nearly thirty minutes, cursing under his breath, but grew more incensed when he realized the dog did not want to be found. He wandered the forest for a few more minutes calling the dog's name, Sienna's and then Phoebe, and whistling but saw nothing move in the forest for a long time. He resigned himself to having to report the dog missing as he saw something move several feet away behind a cluster of cragged black rocks. Phoebe came from behind the rock. He walked over and grabbed her by the collar. She whined, and he tugged at the collar to stop her resistance. Then, with a quick snap of the jaw, she attempted to bite him. He reeled back just in time to save his fingertips. He switched her out with another, older dog, Gepetto, whom he put up front in her place, mostly out of spite.

*March 15, 2007 Thursday:*

*Five days after the start and god I can feel victory in my veins. Know for a fact that I left at least a couple of groups of riders at Tikolani and then at Metsinlong and some little village after. Didn't see anyone for at least 25 miles outside Metsinlong, though I got past by a couple riders outside the village somehow. That's not a good sign but I'll make it. It was open season, so I pushed the gang a little harder than usual last few days. What's 3 grand for entry when I stand to win 25? Have to remember not to smile too much when the cameras come at me or I'll look like a jerk. Just be polite, talk about the struggle, the integrity of the dogs. Charming.*

*Thought about dropping Sienna or Phoebe or both off yesterday. Damn dogs slipped their harnesses. Tova, Sienna, Phoebe, and Eury. I knew Eury could get out of her harness pretty well, but she usually rangles the others in so I'm not mad at her. Sienna and Phoebe take off though whenever their lose. Phoebe ran off into the woods and I had to go find her for nearly an hour. I was pissed but I thought I'd give her another chance. Put Gepetto up front instead though. Almost backhanded her. New order. Put Phoebe in the back across from Orion. Thought about just dropping both the girls off but decided against it when I considered how much faster I could run with 14 dogs instead of 12.*

*Ankett! that was the village. Shit, the second checkpoint how do you forget that? I knew I passed it, looked at the map, just don't remember when. I'm sure there was a sign, I just missed it. Don't know how that happened. Got to be more observant of land. Zombieing along is how you get hurt. Eury's running like a demon so is Stoltz (can demons run?) If she keeps this up this race will be cake. Can't wait till the finish to Daphne again.*

After another restless night on the tundra with his goggles on, Adam climbed on the sled at five am, his body weak and his vision a little blurry but overall in good spirits. He had made two cups of coffee in the shelter of his tent after feeding the ravenous dogs. He tried humming a song that he had heard Daphne singing before she left for school. It ended up coming out as a jumble of something by Britney Spears set to a classical beat. He cycled through dozens of songs in his head trying to find the words.

For eight hours of the day, he kept his hands on the handles as though they were molded of metal. It was no surprise to him to leave the sled near late evening with his right hand in a claw-like hold, the muscles of his forearm tense long after he was stationary. He tried not to think about it. It warmed him to think of Daphne laughing, even if it was at him. And the faint smell of some flowery scent-something he could imagine growing in Alaska if only they didn't have so much damn snow. He put down the blankets for the dogs.

And then, just as suddenly, he thought of two months ago, when he mentioned to Alex Carven that he had seen the newspaper article touting the talents of a young athlete in the Hawthorne race, eighteen at that time. The boy had had



to drop out for unspecified "personal issues." The town had been sorely disappointed. And then another, also 18, the bare minimum to enter, hadn't won. Some bakery shop owner had won. Must have been about fifty at the time. How it had occurred to him that that left a very large gap for someone like himself. And the sheer jealousy of his supposed best friend. He thought how hard it had been to accept that Alex was not his friend anymore.

"Sure he's young and he entered, but he didn't win," Alex had said.

"What does it matter if he wins? He's the youngest ever to apply."

"Means nothin' if you don't win," Alex said, issuing a personal challenge.

"Well how much do you wanna put on it?" he heard himself say.

"A confident man! I like confidence..."

"You like money," Adam said, digging into his pocket dramatically. "And it's not just confidence. I know I can win."

"How much does the winner get?"

"About 25 grand."

"God, you'd do good to win... 100 bucks." Adam began flipping through his wallet. "The hell you looking for?"

"My credentials for the race.... Show I'm good for it."

"Oh, it's cool. I don't believe you'll do it anyway. Think you'll come to your senses and leave the hard stuff to your seniors." He snickered to himself, as though just realizing the joke was funny.

"What the hell, Alex? I said I'd do it."

"Yeah, you do that." Alex began to walk away, smiling, but came back.

"Win, and get my face in all the papers, not only here, but national. Everyone'll know who I am before the spring's over." He smiled, slowly, just beginning to realize the personal connection he had to the future. Alex was not amused. His stare became intense, and hard.

"No way you're going to win that much money. Eleven days. And you're just a high school kid," he said.

"I've been doing this since I was like eight. I'm up for it. You want my money or not?" He stretched out his hand with the picture ID in it. Alex slowly took it.

"How're you gonna get in?"

"Got two copies. Guess they don't trust high school kids." Adam smiled, the equivalent of waving a white flag.

"This ain't play, ya know. You serious about this? Why do it?" he asked, looking down at the card.

"For the money. The bragging rights. *Girls*. When I come back to school, I'll be a god for a week, minimum."

"That's bullshit and you know it. I think you're doing it for that hot sister of yours," he said after a brief, tense silence. All traces of friendship in his smile had melted and become a sneer.

"Not funny, man." Adam began shoving his hands in his pocket from the sudden clammy cold.

"I think you're just trying to get her to want you like a boyfriend now that her dad's divorcing your mom! You're a sick fuck, Adam, *really* sick. Get help, k?"

Adam couldn't remember what had happened. He just knew that within moments, he and Alex were rolling in the snow, throwing punches, most of which he missed. He was on top, holding Alex's head down and screaming, "Take that shit back, you idiot! Take it back!" A noise came from the house as the front door opened, and a woman screamed. His mother. A glimpse of Daphne standing, leaning over the balcony yelling something, her long red hair hanging down. Someone pulling him off Alex and Alex's face bleeding. Red against white, the ugliest kind of defeat. Man against snow. Snow one, man zero. But that's not who he was anymore, he thought, while sipping from his thermos. *Just to win... God, just to win and not have to beat the sense into every jealous moron that comes along. The look of Alex's face, defeated and bleeding, immaculate snow, running to save face...* He smiled to himself and knew that one day the thought would no longer be funny. And for this, he was sad.

"Good riddance," Adam said, now looking again at Eury, who was sitting on a wool blanket he had laid out for her. She got up and then began to pace a circle at Adam's sudden movement of packing up the camp in a hurry. "Eurydice, old girl, it's amazing the friends you lose when you get a little bit of success. Guys just can't handle it. Now *girls*...", he started, while packing up the tent. He smiled to himself, but knew that if Eury were a human, she would not find it so amusing. She stared at him until he averted his eyes. "All right, girl. Let's get back at it. Miles to go."

*March 16, 2007 Friday-(Morning)*

*Came round the curve to Hoyana. 78 miles of the greatest stretch between cities. Ankett far behind. Pushing through the night was hard. Giving the dogs the morning off to relax. Think they're all off their internal clocks, but so far no one*

*complaining. Most of all not Eury. Snow started up again in the middle of the night forgot how much easier it was without the whether creeping up. Whatever's bad for my competitor is good for me. 3rd checkpoint coming up soon. Soon the Black mountains. Soon to finish.*

By mid afternoon, Adam was on the sled registering the full use of his hands and ready to begin the entire cycle again. At some point he felt himself beginning to lean backward in the speed of the propulsion and tried to fight against it. He put his foot out as if to aid in push off. Suddenly, unable to stand up any longer, he slipped and fell backward into the snow. A piercing shriek came from one of the dogs, but he could not identify which in the confusion. The sudden weight change had caused Eury and the others to hit a bank of snow, though she had swerved to avoid the hardest impact. Stoltz had not. The sled veered off to the left around a cluster of spruce trees, next to a frozen lake. The left line of dogs was as stunned as the right, suspended by their harnesses, and yelping at the air, then maneuvering towards freedom.

Stoltz was lying on the snow and ice packed hill, panting wildly. *Please, please, please don't be anything serious*, he thought, crawling maniacally through the snow. He checked each of the dogs. *If I can just make it to the next stop, I can still make it*. He thought he remembered having his foot on the brake when he went down, and started pounding the ground with his fist. *Shit, shit, shit!* He knew that it was his own mistake that had led to the dog being hurt, but he could not comprehend why. Coming last to Stoltz, who was whimpering loudly, he lent down and examined his right paw while applying pressure. Adam began to feel a welling within him, but it was quickly put down by an upsurge of anger.

"You stupid mutt! What the fuck made you think you could lead over a log that big anyway!" Unsure he had even seen a log in the path, he looked around to justify himself. He unhooked Stoltz's harness from the fan hitch, while reaching under and scooping the dog up. He put him on the sled. The animal gave a loud whimpering echo off the ice as the other dogs began to bark. *Shut up, please, shut up*. He covered him with a blanket, knowing that this would add more back weight to the sled, which was already at a carrying capacity of about 275 pounds. This would slow his progress considerably, but he couldn't afford to have the dog limping out front, or risk further hurting Stoltz. He screamed "fuck" but was silenced by the cold mist penetrating his throat into his lungs. Eury, now alone at the front, lay down on the ground. He went over and checked her again and then the sled. Nothing was broken, wood or dog. She lazily rolled over in the snow as he applied pressure to each leg and paw once again. When he finished, she gave a soft whimper.

"Shut up, Eury!" He started running his hand over his scalp, forgetting that his hat was sewn up. He heard the voice of a nearby sledder calling out to his dogs, a gruff, experienced voice. A man whose face was chapped, frost hanging from his beard, and came to a meditative stop. "You all right, son?" he asked, and then added "oh," when he saw the dog in the sled. Adam nodded, growing more irritated by the moment, and stood with his back to the man, trying not to make eye contact with him. The man wished him luck and mushed the dogs on.

"Looks like we're in for the night, guys," Adam said reluctantly.

There being a mandatory 24-hour rest, Adam thought it best to go ahead and take the time before hitting the next rest stop, which was nearly 25 miles ahead. He managed to get the dogs to pull the sled off into the trees, where he built up a bundle of logs some ways from the sled and lit a small crackling fire. He unrolled his sleeping bag and his tent on the ground. Breaking off an icicle from a branch nearby, he put it into the cup and moved it above the flames. He swirled each cup a few times and set them out for the dogs to drink from quickly. Then he set out extra food for them.

"You've got heart, Stoltz. I'll give you that. I'm really sorry, boy," he said, chewing through a half-frozen bar and rubbing the dog on the head with his other hand while lifting the bowl before him. Before going to bed, he pulled out a finely clipped newspaper interview he gave with the *Anchorage Daily News* and read over his favorite of his quotes: "I can make it. I've been doing this for a while now and I know the cold better than my dogs do." He put the clipping away. Zipping up his jacket a little higher, he huddled in close with the dogs, and feeling the warmth of renewed hope, fell asleep.

The next day, just a few miles from the third checkpoint, Adam rehearsed the scene in his head but could not come to a sound conclusion of what had happened. Even as he rolled up to the pentagon-shaped building next to the giant cliff, he was not sure what he would say. He waited for a few competitors to clear out before he went up to the counter. A frail looking Native American woman with free-flowing brown hair was shuffling through a stack of clipboard charts.

"Any mail?" he asked.

"Name?"

"Adam Wade Solomon."

"Ah, you're the young'in this year," she said, smiling. She flipped through the small stack of mail and said,

"Afraid not."

"Oh. Okay...I...umm...have an animal to drop off," he said.

"Injury? Or sick?"

"Injury. His right paw, I think."

"Name?"

"Stoltz...Solomon, I guess."

"How'd he hurt the paw?" she asked, walking around the counter to the limping dog.

"Tripped up."

"Him or you?"

"What?"

"Well the rules state-"

"Him. He...tripped." Adam nodded, making sure to look her in the face. "Dogs get so excited they don't look out for their health first. Throws the whole pack off." He gave a tense smile. She looked at his face for a long moment.

"Just him?" she asked.

"Yeah."

"Want me to examine the other dogs, just in case?" He was silent for several seconds.

"No, they're fine. I really need to get going."

"Don't forget to sign in." She pushed the chart over the counter. She examined the animal for several minutes as Adam scribbled, looking back anxiously. Then the woman stood up.

"Okay...it's not bad. Mostly his ego hurt, I think." She gave a reserved smile.

"Really? Can I take him with me?"

"Afraid not. Still need to get him a check up. Probably just a little sprain, or less. But wouldn't have him up on it. Not in this weather. Not being a runner."

"When do you think I'll be able to pick him up?" he asked. She had already turned to the dog and started petting him vigorously.

"You're just a big baby now aren't you! Well, that's okay, we're going to take good care of you, *Mr. Stoltz*," she said. Adam lingered a few minutes before turning and walking out the door.

He set out determined not to think of anything but the road ahead, a very hard task, he realized. He felt anxious every moment his feet were not on the runners but took stops when the animals needed them. In some ways, this was the most treacherous country because the snow had begun to melt for miles in the neighboring land, which meant that ice was being exposed all around. And even that would soon be gone. Bare, ragged mounds of rocks were beginning to show through the snow. He just hoped the dogs would have no problems making it through. In between stops, he jotted in his journal.

*March 17, 2007 Saturday:*

*Dogs at good pace about 10 miles off Kasphe. Just passed the Gonge cliffs. About 12-14 for speed. Dropped Stoltz off at the 2nd to last checkpoint. Don't think he's hurt bad, but more worried about what they'll find hopefully he's just being a wimp again. Dunno what happened. Keep going over it in my head but all I see is me standing there watching the dogs running and then before I know it was on the ground and the dogs are half cocked up the embankment and that godawful barking and Eury god Eury. Pretty sure the native knew that I was lying. Fuck. Just hope they don't try to arrest me after the race or worst at the next stop. How fucked up would that be? Make it to the finish line only to be arrested for animal abuse especially when it's not your fault. Still I heard those investigations can go on for weeks if not months. The way Daphne would look at me. Like that day I tackled Alex.*

He moved steadily past the Soylanku range with its striated, jagged peaks and thin halo of clouds and then came to the Congdon River. Though he was excited because he knew the finish was not very far now, he worried for the dogs. The river was mostly frozen, but large chunks of ice were bobbing in it, causing it to move at a drowsy pace around the rocks. The path they were to take was a thin road that bisected the water in two places, so that no one would have to get wet, least of all himself. He feared the dogs losing their footing in the water, especially after Stoltz being hurt. He'd had nightmares the last few nights about losing the entire team in the river and walking to the finish line, sans dogs, respect. A loser. He checked the cart one more time, making sure the ropes tightly secured everything.

They crossed without many problems, except Tova's back leg was caught in between exposed rock. He got it out



with little hesitation, and they pressed on.

That night, he sat staring into the fire, listening for other people. There was nothing but the crackle of the wood popping from moisture in the writhing flames.

He thought of Daphne and how long a way he had come to prove himself. He saw her sitting at the lodge where the winners would be celebrated. He thought of home near the mountains in Anchorage and her sitting. Then she had been sitting in the chair beneath the stairs in their house, trying to fix a toy that Regina, who was sitting by her feet, had broken. She had not looked up when he came in, and all he noticed was that her red hair was down, in shapeless, tapering strands. She looked up at him finally, her angular face pale from the winter cold. He took off his Scully and parka and tossed them to the coat rack, comically missing all together. Then he went over to the fireplace where the flames were dying down. He took a box of matches from the mantle and struck a couple, flicking each impotent one into the remaining embers of the fire bed.

"God, how can you see in here? You'll go blind doing that..." No answer. "Is Sheila home?"

She glanced up as if from a daze.

"Yeah, Sheila-mom-is upstairs...Hey, come here and look at this," she said opening and holding up a book from the table next to her.

"Daphne, I swear, if you show me one more damn play and spend an hour going on about how misunderstood Iago is-You know, you're a little weird, Daphne." He laughed aloud.

"I know, I know. No more Tennessee Williams. No more Wilde. I get it. You like poetry. I found someone I think you'll like a lot better. He's more a guy's type."

"Who?"

"Have you ever read Poe?"

"Yeah. High school, of course. 'The Raven?' I get poetry. Plays...not so much. Too many characters." She nodded and held up a badly worn copy of *The Collected Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, and he gave a reflex grimace for comic effect.

"Yeah, really dark. 'The Raven'...'Annabelle Lee'...'Alone'...All the goodies," she said and held the book up for him. She flipped through the pages a few times, licking her fingers with each turn. He watched intently, waiting as she found one and held it out for him to read.

"That's creepy..."

"Yeah...tell me about it..." She was staring down at the book.

"Hey...uh...come with me," he said, grabbing her by her one free hand, pulling her towards his bedroom.

"Adam, NO," she yelled a little too loud, too suddenly, bracing herself in the doorway of the entrance to the hall. He dropped her hand and stood still, looking at her.

"It's your present...for Christmas..." he said slowly, his enthusiasm waning. Her violet eyes stared at him for several moments, then she nodded and followed hesitantly behind him, folding her arms. He led her to a half-ajar door down the hallway and reached into his dresser next to the door.

"Close your eyes," he said. Daphne did so and clasped her hands behind her back reluctantly, allowing her long blue sweater dress to fall free over her chest. He pulled out a shiny silver ring with a Fleur-de-Lis stylized on it.

"I thought for when you finally get to France, you can fit in with the natives...so Merry Christmas..." She gasped for a moment staring at it, cupping her hand over her mouth.

"It's...beautiful, Adam. Thank you." She put the ring on her middle finger. She began twisting it around nervously, then glanced up at him, smiling. Daphne sat at the table again. "I feel like I should give you something too," she said. He could feel the redness coming into his cheeks against his pallid skin. "It must have cost so much."

"So?"

"Adam, how much did you spend on this ring?"

"Please, you're insulting me." A pause.

"Well...at least take this," she said finally, handing him the worn book.

"Oh that's nice. I see how this works. I give you a ring and you give me a book."

She smiled vaguely. "If you don't want it..."

"I want it," he said, remembering her licking her fingers going through the pages.

She picked up Regina and took her to her playpen back in the living room as Adam watched. When she got back to the table, he was standing against it. Suddenly, he leaned in and put one arm around her shoulder. She flinched as he approached, but then stood completely still as he kissed her mouth. His eyes were closed until he heard the opening of a door upstairs. Daphne moved away, sliding his arm off of her.

"Daphne, baby, did you put Regina down for bed?" Sheila called from the upper stairs.

"Yes, mom. Already did it."

Sheila came down the stairs with heavy footsteps, sighing, and stopped at the bottom, looking around the bend at the two huddled teenagers.

"Something wrong?" Adam asked Sheila, finally. But Daphne interrupted.

"Look what Adam got me," Daphne said, fumbling to take the ring off. She showed it to her mother. Sheila examined the ring quietly, glaring at her son.

He thought of how he had kept the book next to his bed all winter after she had left. Then all the e-mails they had exchanged:

*-I really need to talk to you, why do you ignore my phone calls?*

And then Daphne had replied:

*-I am just protecting you. Please do not write me so much. College is expensive and hard, and I need to focus on my studies now. And you on the big race.*

*-What is there to protect me from? How can I focus on anything with this rift between us? Do you know that she yells at me everyday? Everyday! I go to the countryside just to get away from her now. And you still have not told me if you're coming to the race or not. I haven't seen you since Christmas. I need you there.*

*-Yourself. I am protecting you from yourself, Adam. Just be nice to her. She is your mother. Mom loves you, and only thinks that you take things for granted...Please focus on the race, I have such faith in you. I know that you will win. I will try to come. I'll send word if something changes. But I will try.*

And all the letters, written on college-ruled paper, he kept in his dresser drawer back home with the book. He hadn't thought of the letters in a while. He cleared his throat and stood up, determined to work through the night to reach the finish. He packed up the camp and summoned Eury, who was surprised at the movement. The dogs were sluggish but he got them going again within the hour. He jotted down a quick note in the journal:

*March 20, 2007 Tuesday:*

*In a few hours, should be in the Toisi pass leading to city of Agoya. The finish. One more day should get me there. Maybe less. Dread seeing Sheila there. Think I know why she hates me. All the shit between us since Greg and Daphne coming in but she never hated me more than when I gave Daphne the ring. Gonna get an early start. Am I just deluding myself that she will be there. I still hope. Maybe her flight was just late. Spring break is a bad time to travel, I hear*

He packed away the notebook and got the dogs going. He traveled through most of the night to get to Toisi.

As he walked into the office of the last checkpoint, his shoulders slumped; he took off his gloves and pulled off his hood. *Just a tedious routine now.* But part of him felt a surge of adrenaline coming into the warmth of the little pine-scented office. He started to ask the woman behind the counter, who was already smiling, if he had any mail. He opted to sign the chart instead then turned to walk out.

"Oh, Mr. Solomon?" she said, looking at the chart. He nodded his head suspiciously. *This is it.* He had determined not to say anything, not to give any defense or answers. Just to cooperate. She pushed a white envelope over to him and said, "I'm sorry about the mail. What with all the snow we've been having here the last few days, it's been just hectic for the planes and cars through." He smiled, more of a twitch than emotion, feeling a release when he saw Canada stamped on the upper corner.

"Yeah...I kinda figured that," he said, his lips dry. He stared down at the envelope. He started to walk away from the desk but then looked back as the clerk said:

"Oh, and congratulations, Mr. Solomon."

"What? For what?" The clerk looked confused at his reply.

"Well, you're the first one...Only a few miles from here to the finish, right?"

"*What?*" he asked, still looking at the envelope.

"I was personally rooting for you ever since I saw you on the news a couple of weeks back."

"*No one* has been past?"

"Not a soul. Guess everyone's been bogged down by the snow."

Adam burst through the thin door and stood outside trying to inhale, the letter crumpled up in his hand. He could feel the puffiness of the note inside of it. He started to open it but then crammed it into his coat pocket and

ran to the sled, yelling for Eury to take off. He knew with every fiber of his being that the letter meant she would be there. Though late, there.

The miles were all a blur of colors as he crossed into Agoya. The rooftops of homes and street signs in the distance. Peopled towns again. And then the end of a snowed lane where a massive group of people were jumping up and down and screaming. He was surprised at such an early hour. He looked behind him. Here and there saw a dot of color, fur against snow, but yelled at Eury to go faster. He crossed under the sign and applied the brake. The news cameras ran up to him. A reporter from the *Anchorage Daily News* and commentators similarly out of breath as he was. But he nodded vacantly and waved them off, smiled at the crowd, though he was exhausted and didn't feel very much like smiling.

His mother ran over to him, smiling harder than he had ever seen her, and Greg tried to hug Adam with Regina in his arms. He didn't see Daphne anywhere. Adam looked around in confusion, biting his cracking lips and pulling off his shades. The uproar came again minutes later as another competitor, then another, then several crossed the line. But he had whispered his empty platitudes to his family and gone off to take refuge in a nearby lodge, the cameras following cautiously behind him. He took the letter from his pocket and ripped one end off and the silver ring tumbled out onto the hardwood floor of the lodge. With wavering emotion, he began to read the words:

For Adam:

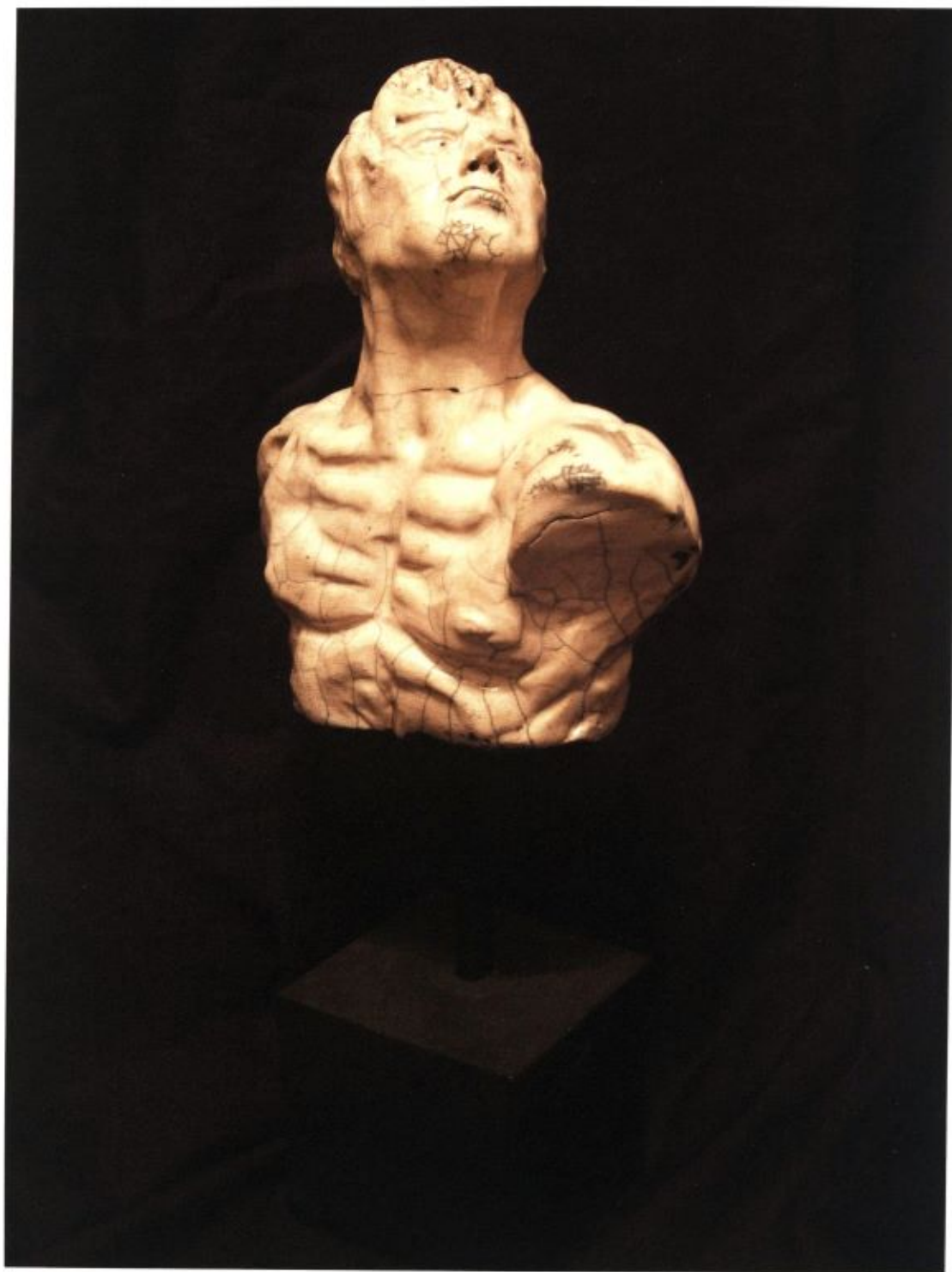
"From childhood's hour I have not been

As others were-I have not seen

As others saw-I could not bring

My passions from a common spring."





**David**  
Ceramics  
Jonathan Djulvezan

Kevin Daiss

## Open Your Hands

I stepped out to my back yard  
Only to find an umbrella,  
Crimson on fire  
with Christmas lights.

"Surely," I thought, "This is a sign."  
Though its meaning has become  
Convolutd and confused.

I stared wanton, enraptured  
At the glowing embers  
Of shelter and promise.  
Dared myself to enter,  
but remained static.

"Such things are best left  
to be observed from a distance,"  
I thought.

## My Cry for Completeness

It is Easter Sunday, 2:35 am, and I am up at my parent's house sitting by a fire. A cold front has swept in, and it's 30-something degrees outside. I actually had to just check the calendar to be sure of the date, because since you left, I have tried to drown any concept I have of time by voluntary oblivion, so the days, the hours, the minutes won't be meticulously calculated with an obsessive consistency. Now I know, though. I'm almost in the last 12 hours of my 3rd day, and I'm heading closer to the fourth.

Only 87 days to go if I'm lucky, and even as I write that the familiar knot returns to my stomach, and I now see with tear-blurred vision. This is my first entry in the journal you bought for me since you left. I finally have the guts to sit down and face what I'm feeling head on, and instead of my feelings consuming me, I'm hoping that in writing I may find some release. God, I love you so much. Goodbyes have never been my forte, and I have never had to say goodbye to anyone I have loved as much as I love you.

The nights are the hardest. The empty bed, my empty arms, no you just the next pillow over. Reflecting back on the nights I would scoot all the way over to the edge of the bed to have my space, makes me angry with myself. To think now, I could have been touching you. Those last weeks before you left were permeated with stress, fear, and apprehension for our d-day. Now I'm d-day +3.

I am so sorry I gave you the silent treatment the night before you left. I didn't have the courage to talk about anything I was thinking, or feeling. The sadness within me made my brain float, until I became drunk on my own tears. Laying there with you beside me, knowing that it was going to be the last night for 3 months, the last night of you sleeping next to me, and the beginning of worry and melancholy being my bedfellow.

I wonder if you felt these intruders clawing their way into our bed, claiming it for their own. All these thoughts were going through my head that last night, and damn them for not allowing me to enjoy it, for shoving between us and creating a space between our souls that not even 8000 miles can compare to. Communication is what binds us. The super glue, the magical element making Siamese twins of our souls. This silence that was the surgeon, the separator, lasted until you followed me into the shower.

D-day. It's d-day. You're leaving. I'm alone; I'm lost; I'm Alice falling down that black hole, a hole of darkness and despair, and like Alice I'm chasing time. You come into the bathroom with two towels, a blue one and a white one, which lets me know you plan on showering with me. You know I don't want you to. And part of me doesn't. I wanna just cry and weep alone to get it all out without you seeing me, to just have that release with no restraint. But inside I am relieved you don't intend on leaving me alone. Thank God! is all I can scream inside silently.

My eyes tell you the loudness of my thoughts, that I can't hear anything else, and they are heavy with emotion. I step into the shower alone as you undress, and your clothes descend to a pile on the bathroom floor. The weight of my pain causes my knees to buckle, and I assume the fetal position on the shower floor. I take the shower head and place it in my lap; I hug my knees, and like a blade, my eyelids fall, and sliced emotion descends my cheeks.

Why...? reverberates through my being. At first I almost say it pleadingly, then it becomes louder and more full of rage. WHY? Then you step into the shower and sit beside me on the floor. The right side of your body finds my left, and through body language our souls become Siamese twins again. The why? repeats within my mind, but returns to the softer, almost whisper it was before, pleading, and now I break down and cry while you hold me tight. Naked as truth, our souls curled up on the shower's floor, I thank god that my tears can masquerade as shower water, and a million paths of wet tracks race across our wet bodies. We both know my cheeks would taste of salt, and the irregular rise and fall in sharp jolts of my chest reveal the magnitude of my pain.

Then you begin to wash my hair, and we both get up, and for the last time begin our ritual of washing each other. It is so romantic, and I also find it so spiritual and intimate, when we lather each other down with our green tea and lavender body wash and exchange soapy embraces. When we are through I step out of the shower and grab the blue towel off the top of the toilet. While toweling off I read the messages we had written to each other on the mirror: "How ever far away, I will always love you, Amanda!" and my response beneath it "I would wait for you forever, let's just hope 3 months



feels like 3 months!" I cannot see myself in the mirror because it is fogged, but those words stand out clearly. I think about how this is symbolic of the road that lies ahead: I may not have clear vision of the future, it may be fogged with separation, but I know you love me as much as I love you.

As I sit now, reflecting on the lack of my own reflection (literally and figuratively), I wonder if you are writing to me at this same moment half way around the world. I wonder if you are cold, what kind of light you may be writing by, and wish I could share the warmth and light of the fireplace next to me. I love writing these little passages to you. They make me feel like you are here, like I'm about to go to sleep and we are having our nightly conversation reflecting on our day, our future, praying together. I'm conversing with you; I just don't know what you sit and write.

Before sleep would find us, we would spend these hours sharing thoughts, and magically the sandman would find us at the same time. In the last nights we had together, he must have been busy, or either forgot about us. Maybe he figured we would want to spend our last nights awake with each other; he was giving us a gift. Now all I can think about is sand. You are surrounded by it. The irony that sand is exactly what an hour glass is full of. Ours is top heavy. I'm standing here on barren ground, and Cronus's sky is full of sand, not stars. What has happened to my heavens? Here I stand, wishing the funnel would widen. My hands outstretched, you the constellation I can't wait to catch. But you're suspended above me in what seems a sea of time.

Winnie Walsh

## Sonogram Spaceship

Like the ancient Mayan flying Palenque  
My astronaut grandchild  
Hurls toward the earth  
Connected safely to  
Life support in Mother's womb.



## **When One Has Too Much to Put Into Them**

Charcoal

Farhanna Smith



## Bus Ride

I was sitting in a seat that managed to be just uncomfortable enough that any amount of discomfort wasn't noticeable when I first sat down, but manifested itself-like a rebellious uprising of oppressed nerves in your tailbone-and grew with every inch the bus lurched forward.

I'd never really ridden a bus since I was in the first grade, and back then I was too preoccupied with baseball cards and boogers to notice much of anything along the way. These buses were different, I suppose, from the school buses I grew up with-in my neighborhood that was being eaten alive by cornfields. I was different, I suppose, from the child I used to be-all eyes and teeth and cow-licked hair and glasses and too-small-feet in too-big-shoes and a rash on my forearm that refused to go away (Grandma said it was sin; Dr. Rosenschwatt said it was allergies to corn)-but I feel the same as I ever was.

I still laugh uncontrollably at the stupidest things. A woman and her groceries fall-a figure skater and her partner-to the sidewalk ice, and a cantaloupe rolls into the street, causing a car to slam and honk, the driver to swear. I just about wet my pants trying to maintain some composure.

I still become transfixed by natural wonders. A leaf blows off of a tree, and I can see it float aimlessly, amiably, and take its sweet, sweet time on its trip to the ground because it knows and I know and everyone in the world knows that as soon as that leaf hits the ground, there will be an earthquake in the mountains of Turkey that will destroy no property and kill no one except for a lonely gardener in his garden who was just about to finish watering his flowers when he thought he heard something on up the hill a little ways. And really, what bit of flora needs that on its conscience?



**Audrey**  
Illustrator  
Jessica Jenkins



**All the Wild Horses - Ireland**  
Digital Photography  
Katie Corbitt



Brent Gillenwater

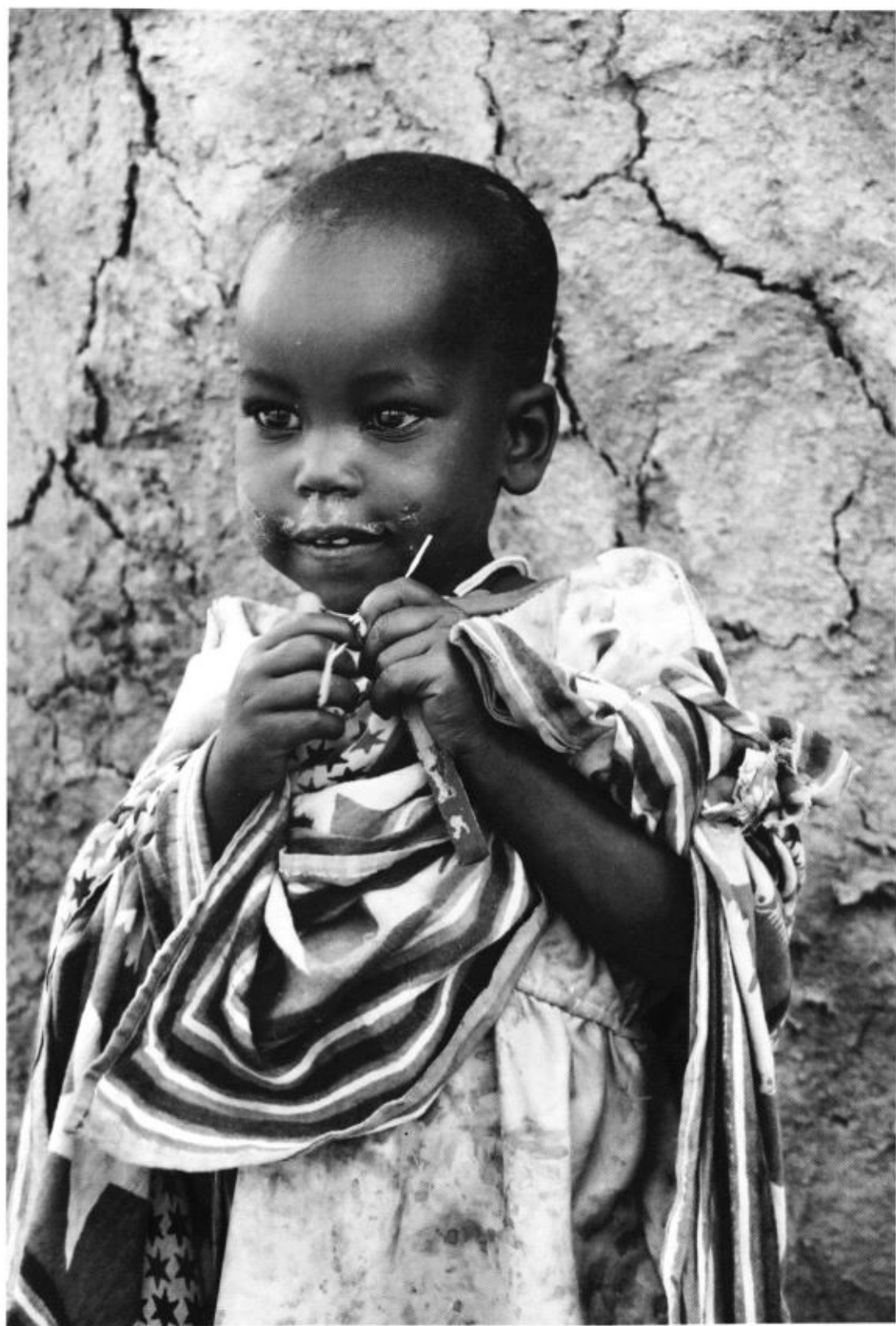
## Still-drunken lich

My downfall was the Amontillado.                      Mary full of grace  
    I knew it long before  
    The last stone he bore  
    was set in place.  
Long before the torch fell-  
My trap iluminado, I knew the fresh mortar that creased the ancient stone  
                    of my hell.

                                    I stare at it still.  
    The Amontillado, the last thing I innocently desired, it will not let me rest. I hang  
chained to this wall    Stripped of flesh  
                                    These boney wrists  
                                    The shackles hold fast to my soul  
I beg of you: should you dream of ghosts in these dark catacombs  
                    Will you not tear down this wall?  
                    End my grief, this undead state:  
    Pass a drop of the curse  
Between my lipless, grinning teeth.  
                                    In pace requiescat.



**Hsu**  
Oil on Canvas  
James Kincaid



**Little One**  
Digital Photography  
Britney Compton

Rebecca Hattaway

## The Visitor

The housing of your mind is frail  
I hide, I slither, I crawl  
on the ceiling, behind the wall  
leaving acid in my trail  
I destroy and tear away  
the fabric of your mind  
devouring everything I find  
until oblivion holds sway  
Seek me if you dare  
In the hollow of your skull  
stab until the blade is dull  
Try and drive me from my lair  
I'll leach into your brain  
my tendrils fill your eyes  
until all your truths are lies  
I'll make you go insane  
But now the beams are whole  
there is no original remain  
I hold your flesh in twain  
I have destroyed your soul





## **Skull Pot**

Ceramics

Jonathan Djulvezan

## A Wild Wolf

The deep autumn moonlight slightly sprayed on the border of Mongolia and Russia. Over the boundless grassland, the wild wind was whistling loudly as if it was trying to devour all the things in the world.

A low white bar, like a snake, winding to a far depth, divided the land into two countries. A long-haired shepherd was on his white horse, holding a rifle on the Mongolian land, and he was staring over at the other side, where there was a wolf standing far in the Russian area and gaping at the shepherd like a silent white statue. Her gray hair was quivering, and her cold green eyes, gleaming with sorrow, were peering through the darkness at the shepherd. Suddenly she was howling with a twitter as if she was telling an unfortunate story, and then she moved her eyes from the shepherd toward the four little wolves, who were trembling and humming, lying on the ground right under the head of the shepherd's horse.

The shepherd held up his rifle and tried to aim at the wolf with quiet anger.

He had been chasing for her several days, since his two sheep were bitten to death by the wolf. He promised he would kill her once he found her. Finally, he rooted out the wolf's cave and seized her four cubs. He pursued her until he had reached the border of China and Russia's land, and then the wolf jumped over the bar leaving him behind. He could not follow the wolf over the bar, so the shepherd threw her cubs beneath the horse to provoke her to come close.

"Ping, ping..." he held his breath and shot at the wolf several times. Immediately, the wolf turned her back toward the shepherd and moved a little further away, meanwhile turning her head back with deep desolation, staring at the four cubs. She started howling again, and the sound was echoing to the dark blue sky and merged into the billowing whistle of the wild long grass.

With no patience, the shepherd became much angrier, and he abruptly picked up one cub with the rifle, and then, with his left hand, he held the cub over his head waving as if he is throwing the cub to menace the wolf. The little cub was shivering and twisting its body weakly in his hand, and slightly humming with his soft furry head swaying in the air. Like an ant on the hot pot, the wolf was wandering to-and-fro, and crying out at the sky and at the shepherd. All of a sudden, the wolf started rushing toward the shepherd without fear, like an arrow shot out with power.

Then the shepherd put the cub on the horse and pointed the rifle at the running wolf. And suddenly, the wolf stopped running and stayed stiffly far and searched for the little cub.

"Ping!"

Unexpectedly, the wolf tumbled over and was wailing with prickling pain. Blood was streaming out of her right thigh, and she was groaning and groaning with anger and affliction.

"Ping!" After the second bullet rushed out of the barrel of the rifle, the wolf screamed out loudly, which broke the serenity of the deep night and startled several little birds, who abruptly flew out of a bunch of the grass into the darkness, warbling and warbling and then disappearing. The wolf had been injured, and the bullet brushed by her left ear, which started bleeding and blinded her left eye thoroughly.

However, she did not give up and was moaning with grief. Blood streamed down into hereye, her nose and mouth. She was not able to stand any more, but she was still trying to crawl slowly and slowly toward the shepherd. Her cold green eyes were searching everywhere for her little cubs, and her right leg was covered with blood.

Gradually, the wolf came very close to the shepherd. Again, the shepherd held up his rifle and aimed right at her, and at the time when he was ready to shoot her to death, he found that the wolf had tears flickering in her almond-shaped green eyes, and she knelt down behind the bar and was staring at her cubs with the last hope. The cubs were trembling in the freezing wind, and one little wolf was trying to crawl toward her mother. The wounded wolf was struggling to reach her kid with her left leg, and the tear drops were glittering on her face. She could not reach her. She tried again and again, and she was wailing and wailing with wretchedness and sorrow.

At this time, the earth was quite tranquil, leaving the owl chanting melancholy in the far depth of the grassland, and the wild wind was combing the dry grass, the short gray hair of the wolf, and the long black hair of the shepherd.

Holding his gun and gazing at the wolf, he tardily loosed his finger from the trigger and moved his eyes onto the little wolves. They were humming and shaking, and their little bodies were leaning against each other to gain warmth.

The wounded wolf was crying dully, and was trying to stand up to grab her little wolves. Drops of blood were scattered on the trail that the wolf had just passed.

The shepherd was staring at her, and, with her blood-covered eye, she was also looking at him as if she were begging for something. Abruptly, the horse retreated back several steps and waved its head with coarse breath blown unto the shepherd's eyes by the strong wind. Seizing the reins tightly, the shepherd looked up at the sky. It was close to dawn, and the twilight had been sparkling behind the eastern dark sky.

He turned his eyes toward the wolf and then sighed slightly with a deep breath. Then, he put his rifle onto his back and pulled the horse's reins and made it turn around. Gradually, he moved far away, and with the last glimpse of the wolf behind the bar in the Russian area, he lashed the horsewhip to make the horse gallop far towards the western wilderness, leaving the wolf and her cubs behind him.

Finally the sun was rising, and the eastern sky had been colored red and gold, and the long grasses were still whispering in the cold shivering wind. The eagles started hovering over the sky, and the brown rabbits were jumping over the dry grass. The little cubs were still humming and humming.



**“A Day Inspired By Cindy, #2”**

B&W Classical Print from Film

Theone Karatassos

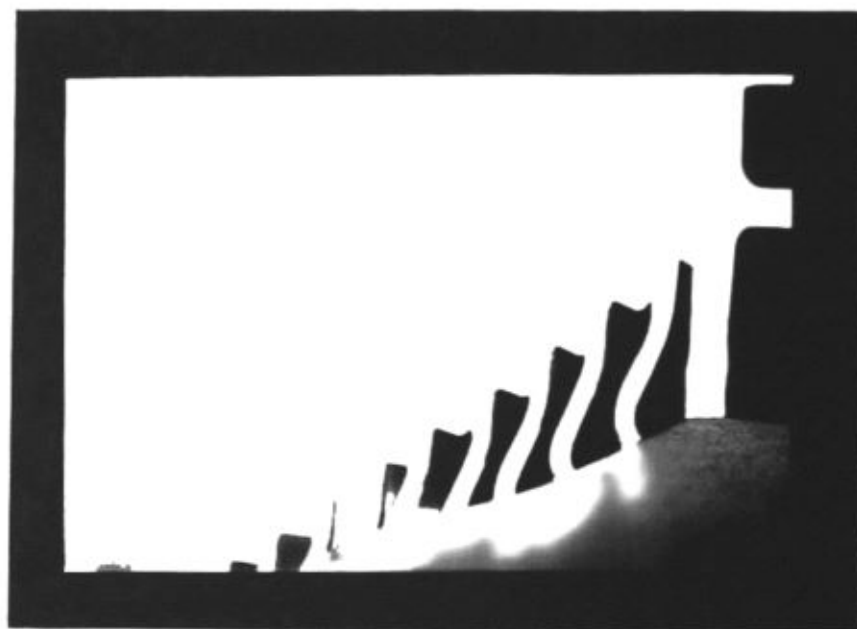


## Drive

A drive in the middle of the night.  
To nowhere really,  
to see no one  
and do nothing-  
wind up coming back with more  
nothing than before.  
That's how it goes sometimes.  
The road is dark before me;  
I've never seen it quite so alone.  
Crossing the bridge  
stars glisten on the marsh,  
and the moon, orange and ancient,  
smiles at me from behind the clouds.  
It seems to know that I'm not perfect.  
Somehow.  
But it doesn't matter;  
the point is that I noticed  
and smiled back.  
I'm trying!  
It's all just so pointlessly fragile--  
the mysteries in the tiniest of things,  
the unimaginable infinity!  
And in between,  
this little white Jeep,  
bouncing along down the road...

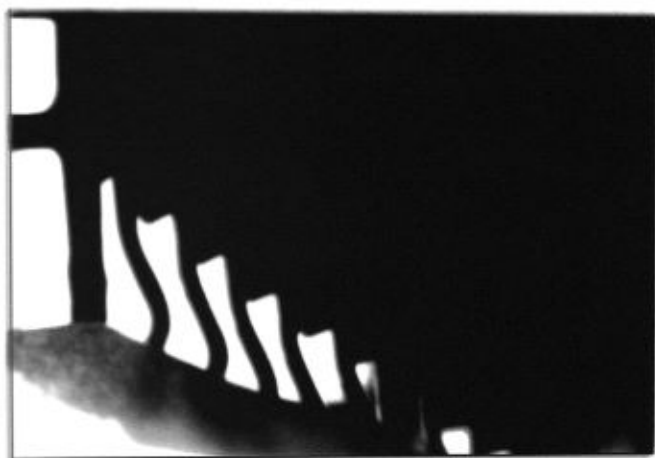
towards the beach...

towards morning...



## **Ascend**

Film Photography  
Sylvia Charpentier



**Descend**  
Film Photography  
Sylvia Charpentier

Rebecca Hattaway

## Whither

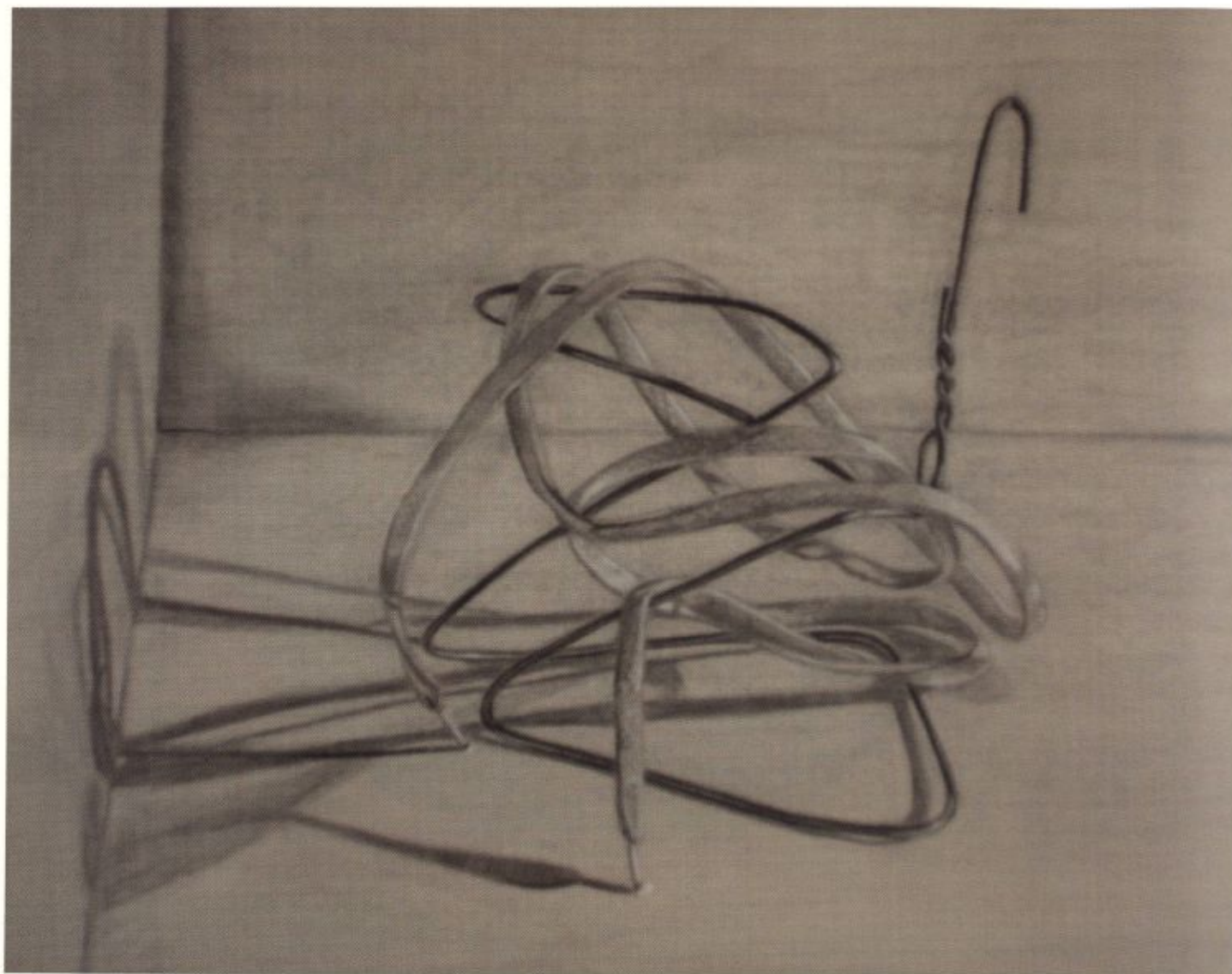
whither wouldst thou flee my soul?  
whither wouldst thou fly?  
when thine wings in mortal shades of grey  
wither, crack, and dry?  
and whether we would waste away  
when whiling wax dost not  
we witness ashes sift through bone  
within marrow to be caught





## Teafields

Illustrator and Photoshop  
Raphyel Jordan



**Hanging On to Domestication**  
Charcoal  
Farhanna Smith





Andrew Bufalini

"Swingset"

Medium: Gelatin Silver Print

## **Swing Set**

Gelatin Silver Photo

Andrew Bufalini



**Funny Face**  
Ceramics  
Jonathan Djulvezan



Dagny Pariani

## **flight of the greyhound**

i am motion

fluid and unfettered

an anomaly against a stagnant tree-lined

horizon

climbing the impressive peaks of the rockies

languidly floating the flat fields of kansas

sleeping to dream of a different time and place

and waking always amidst a foreign one

my shadow draws a shaky line moving across

the face of your map.



**Audrey Hepburn**  
Mixed Media - Batik  
Chaqeeta Dearing

# Philip Townley

## Bob Against the Killing

It had finally happened. I was being arrested. My face was pressed against the ground, my arms pulled back behind me, as the police officer handcuffed me and read me my Miranda rights. So many years on the run, so many months of hiding, weeks of fear, days of seeing what I had done, but in one hour, with a single mistake, I had finally been caught.

As I was dragged to the police car with Carl, one of my ever present followers, I shook my head. Maybe now it could all be over. Maybe now things would change. But there were other possibilities as well. There could be more riots, this time with people using the name I had used for years, to cry out that I be freed. If I wasn't, the city, whichever city they took me to keep me jailed, would probably go up in flames as hundreds, perhaps thousands, rushed to my rescue.

On the other hand, it would probably be much worse if I was freed and my crimes pardoned.

Sitting in the back of that police car, being led away from my old house, I watched the policeman drive down silent streets. The officer was fortunate that I had left my followers elsewhere; this car would be torn apart otherwise. Of course, I never would have been captured if they had been with me. It all seemed like the worst irony; I had been arrested for trespassing on private property.

Early June, 1986, fifteen years ago...

It was near the end of the school day in Mr. Prowavisk's class, and our teacher knew no one had his precious literature traversing through their brains with their minds traveling their imaginary futures; each of his seniors saw themselves steering their "life canoe," a phrase Mr. Prowavisk liked to use often. With this in mind, the teacher had put in some boring movie that no one had heard of, "The Wrath of the Lilies."

I was perhaps one of the few seniors who was actually not thinking of leaving. I had something else in mind. It was my intent to change the world; I didn't know how, or when, or exactly where to start it, but I seriously wanted to do something about it. If I had known then exactly what would happen, I would go back in time and stop myself.

On the day before the school year was over, I purchased a long, white metal sheet with some red and blue paint. I spent part of the afternoon painting the words onto the metal. What I was doing was actually intended as a learning experience, an experiment on how people would react toward a simple message.

My purpose in all of this was toward any possible forthcoming events when I might actually change how the world thinks. It was my intent to try out my basic scheme before putting it entirely into practice, a test run, so to speak.

As I said before, if I knew how this would have worked, I would have stopped myself.

I got to school early that day, not hard since I walk the short distance to and from school, and hid the sign under the bleachers. Anyone glancing at it would assume that it was a spare part for one of the seats. It was all prepared; that afternoon, the experiment would commence.

The school day was mostly wrapped up in the graduation ceremony, and almost every high school student from Freshman to Senior was involved in some aspect. To avoid any confusion or disorder, students would depart our gym, with its large glass windows all around, according to a certain order. Seniors with prizes, Juniors with prizes, and so on and so forth leaving in that order in 3 minute intervals. With the Senior Science prize, I was one of the first to go. I grabbed my

sign from the stands and went to the front of the school and started walking, the words on my sign blaring forth.

BOB AGAINST THE KILLING. It was a simple message, and a weird one, since my name was not Bob or anything even slightly related. It was a simple message, as I said, but one that had a profound effect. It started in the lower stands inside the gym, but in short order grew to a loud roar.

"BOB AGAINST THE KILLING, BOB AGAINST THE KILLING," they were shouting. With the first shout, I shuddered in shock, and as it grew progressively louder, fear grew within me. I continued walking home, my sign pointing towards the road, and students drove by, all of them still chanting "BOB AGAINST THE KILLING." They spoke it with fervor; this idea meant something to them. As I looked back, I noticed something: the Freshman, recently let out, as well as Sophomores and the Juniors without cars were not getting onto the buses that would get them home. They were following me. And chanting. They crowded the street that led down to the school in a sort of curve as I was on the lawn on one side, and they crossed over the road and into the grass on the other side and back onto the road again. Most of the high school was following me. Few of them probably knew my name was not the one on the sign, but likewise, few of them would have cared, and probably most those at the back couldn't see the one that was leading them. I don't think there was a single person in the school that had not been affected by my painted words.

"Bob Against the Killing" used to be such straightforward and trouble-free words. They were that no longer. I eventually dropped the sign and ran. Several students rushed forward and fought over the sign, like it was some holy relic. That was probably all that allowed me to get away.

That night as I stared at the ceiling, I prayed. "God, don't let this go anywhere." It became my greatest hope, a hope that I had not changed the future. It was a night when sleep did not come to me easily, if it did at all, and at that late hour, coffee was my best friend.

2 days later...

I stayed inside, not wanting to provoke anyone. Everything seemed to have died down soon after I had left the parade of students, but it felt like gasoline outside, like all it needed was a spark to become a fireball, and I was the convenient match. All it would take was one strike of the match against the surface, to make what had seemed a horrible fire on graduation day a firestorm a hundred times worse the second I went out my front door.

Even now, looking back, I can hardly believe that my sign had such a profound effect. Come on; Bob? Bob is not a name that inspires the imagination. I mean, come on! Its just three letters! Somehow that didn't matter to the students, or the parents who ended up following them, or the friends of the parents, or their families, because even if I had won a prize as a senior, I was still an idiot. I eventually stuck my head out the door.

"THERE HE IS! IT'S BOB!"

I had thought that, being the early morning, it might be all right if I went out to get the newspapers that were accumulating outside the front door. It never occurred to me that my paper boy would be a high-schooler doing his summer job.

His words awakened the Hipty-Loits subdivision, my neighborhood. The undergraduates of the high school must have told the message to their parents. Maybe they didn't quite awaken to the words without the sign, but once my name was shouted, the sign's absence hardly mattered.

With the shout still in my head, I locked the door and ran back into the house. I figured that the front door would be broken down in short order, so it was only a temporary blockade; I had to therefore leave immediately, if not before. Grabbing a bag left by the back door, I dragged the newspaper with me. I jumped over the backyard fence and stole a glance at my house. A crowd was starting to gather outside, on my front lawn. Soon after my glimpse of the gathering, the mantra of Bob (as it was later called) began. It may have started slowly, but it grew in intensity.

I hailed a cab the moment I got to the road, and fortunately, he didn't recognize me as Bob. I had him drive me out



of state, paying with cash. I was sure by now that the group that had been outside my house now knew what my real name was as well, if only by rifling through the bills on my table, and some of them might have the resources to trace me if I used any credit cards. At the hotel, I finally got a chance to look at the newspaper. Most of it was boring details; nothing was mentioned of what had happened at the school. The only thing that made me quiver were 2 messages in the classifieds.

The first was simple.

*Looking for Bob. Any information is welcome.*  
**BOB AGAINST THE KILLING!**

That alone made me very afraid for the very sanity of the people my message had infected. The second was worse.

*Everybody needs to follow the righteous path.  
The wrongs of the world must be righted.  
One man offers the way.*

Up until this point I wasn't worried. Up until this point, this could be a religious message about Jesus Christ. The rest of the ad sort of cancels out that theory.

*He has so recently given us the message.  
It is a message that gets to the heart of wrongdoing.  
It is "Bob Against the Killing."  
Bob is the leader to a true Utopia.  
Will you follow him?*

The person who had sent in the classified was a person I knew and respected. He was an intellectual I thought could never be suckered in to any thing that had no permanence, like a fad or a trend. If he believed in Bob Against the Killing, I might never outrun my mistake, but I sure was going to try.

Two weeks later, and in another country, my mistake was still around me. It had only just started, so I thought that if I could think up some sort of message that counteracted my previous one, it might not get any worse. Buying more red and blue paint, and another sheet of white metal, I came up with another simple message. I took it to a road leading into the city and staked out my sign.

"THAT'S BACON!"

It was idiotic and completely stupid, and so I was sure it would work. I mean it was just about as stupid as BOB AGAINST THE KILLING, and look at the impression that made! Cars started to slow as they approached my sign, and a few people got out and looked at me and then stared at my sign.

I had it! I had done it with this new sign! Bacon can't be bad, right? This new message can't mean anything! As soon as that thought left my brain, the first rock hit my head.

"Blasphemy!"

"Bob-wanna-be!"

"How DARE you insult the way of Bob!"

I couldn't believe it. I had thought it would work. As the rocks pummeled my body, I knew of only one way out. I should have let the rock pummel me.

"Stop!" Amazingly enough, they stopped. I should have stopped too. "I am Bob!" Mouths gaped. You could see their

minds working. Either I was taking “blasphemy” to a whole new level, or I really was Bob. Luckily, or unluckily as I saw it, they believed me.

“What does this message mean, Bob?”

“Is Bacon the real blasphemy?”

“Is that true, Bob?”

“Is all pork bad, Bob?”

“Or just Bacon?”

You can see where this is going. I threw the sign; it went where ever the first sign went, probably into the “holy” Bob museum; they jumped for the sign; I ran, and I haven’t had bacon for almost fifteen years because Bob followers have come to know that Bacon is a form of sacrilege.

You look at your life, and you wonder where you made your biggest mistake. After making the first sign, it was pretty easy; I should have never made that first sign.

For others, it’s more difficult because of one of two things. The first is that perhaps they’ve made a lot of mistakes and can’t figure out which one is the worst. The second is they haven’t made many mistakes, and can barely remember the ones they made.

After making that second sign, I was scared that my life might make a turn for making a lot of big mistakes.

1 Year Later...

Bob was all over the news by now, of course. My house had been on the news for the first few days. They had yet to break down my door; people feared it might bring the Wrath of Bob. Stores where I had once had memberships were questioned on the matter of my purchases; the grocery store was asked my favorite food; I would have been glad if I had bought more bacon from them; the library was asked which books I had checked out, and of any that I might have called favorites, so they might be taken to the Museum of Bob, which would soon be under construction.

As I understood it, they were demolishing part of my old neighborhood and building the museum around my house. I couldn’t find out who exactly was funding this weird project, but it didn’t seem to matter. Whoever it was intended to dedicate it to the public after it was completed. Some of my earlier plane tickets had been found, right after I had left the country for the first time, and these would also enter the Museum of Bob. The museum was supposed to follow a timeline, with the entrance covering the “Before he was Bob,” leading to a room where they could actually touched a fence, that touched my lawn (cared for by people who might have actually seen Bob!), which touched my house, which lead to the grand and illustrious great hall that followed it, where I revealed the first of my signs, which some now said declared my divinity, and continued on with my second sign as well, and ended with the government’s official declaration changing my name, on the record, to Bob.

The government seemed to be the one thing not affected by the messages of Bob. It was probably because they were used to having power and didn’t want to give it up to some unknown. They made the declaration to satiate the people, to get re-elected. To my disgust, some politicians ran under a new party, the Party of Bob, though once in office they did little differently from what they would have done under their former party, to my delight. I might have killed myself swiftly if there had actually been a political party called the Party of Bob a year after my “appearance of the stage of infinity,” as Bobbists declared.

The Bobbists were also waiting for me to appear again. They wanted me to complete the book they had started: The Fifty Idioms of Bob. They were unhappy with the two they had so far.

I probably should have left my hiding holes, then, when I had the chance. I hadn’t yet become an international criminal,

and after the Bobbists found out how bad a leader I was, and that I couldn't lead them to a Utopia because I would get lost at least twice before starting, they might have given up and seen that I was just a human being who had made some really big mistakes.

I doubt it though. Even though the bacon industry had an intense disliking of Bob and Bobbists, the majority of people tended to like the semi-religion of Bob. My first sign had actually caused a fifty percent decrease in murders worldwide, as well as a side effect of general criminal activity decreasing by as much as twenty percent globally. If I had revealed myself, there would have been a rebound effect; every slight decrease would become a monstrous increase. I see that when I look at it, but I look at the bright side, at least they wouldn't be doing it as Bobbists.

I so desperately wanted it all to stop. I was sure that, for most, it would be the best possible thing that could ever happen, being globally revered and almost worshipped, the most popular kid in the playground. For me it was a nightmare, a nightmare with no way of waking up to end it. There were so few options open to me. I could do one of three things: 1) Reveal myself to the public. Bad idea. As stated earlier, the rebound effect would be disastrous. 2) Suicide. Not as bad, but with the possibility of becoming a martyr, and thus making Bobbism an actual religion rather than as an attachment to others. 3) Stay in hiding. Also not exactly a bad idea. Bobbism might die out for lack of a Bob to lead. Of course I would also, sadly, still be around for as long as it was because after it died, I would probably end up following its demise. I doubted any revival would be serious enough to really last after the initial death.

Death. The end of a life, Bob's life. And who exactly was Bob? He certainly wasn't me. It came to me then, all of a sudden. It wasn't because the message was simple that people were influenced by it. Neither was it due to some mystical divine force that the name Bob represented. It was more than that. Bob stood for the simple idea that killing is wrong, that every life is precious. Wealth, power, knowledge, they all meant nothing if you couldn't be there to enjoy it, respect it, to live it. In the end, the reason it got to people was because it was a simple idea, but also an important one. No life should ever be wasted; there must be cause, and Bob's message made the common person think that perhaps no cause was worth the loss of a human life. For that idea alone, Bob must live on. I, the representative of Bob, must live on. I could never give up. If I gave up as Bob, the world would eventually revert back to what it was. Perhaps what I had done was not right. Looking at it, did I take away free will? It is within everyone to live, to fight to survive, to strive.

Living isn't only living. And that's why I went home. It took me over a decade to get there, but I did it. I visited groups of Bobbists on the way. My words, inspired by my once unique look on life, were like putting gasoline on the flame. They were a spark, "BOB AGAINST THE KILLING" was the kindling, and all my words did was fan the flames. Some of the better phrases eventually finished *The Fifty Idioms of Bob* and its sequel: *What Bob Means to Me*. Sometime after the latter was published, they were banned from being read. It seemed the government found offense at what was written because they believed dying for your country was sometimes the best of causes. It was my retort, when I heard this, to say, "The lives of the people of the world can not be wasted on the frivolous pursuits of politicians. Unless you are saving lives, one life is too high a price to pay." They responded by making me an outlaw. Regardless of both reactions, the books reached the best seller's list within three days and stayed there until Christmas.

As I said, I went home. I left my followers behind, except for Carl, who had become a friend while I traveled the trail of life. I was just over thirty when I finally got back to my home town. The museum controlled the skyline for miles. Carl and I walked up to the Museum of Bob, which was closed for updates, without any fanfare. I brought out the keys I had kept in my pockets for years without knowing if I would ever use them. I opened the door and entered. Cobwebs and dust welcomed me back, which I returned with a smile, though I kept my lips tight. I brushed them aside and stepped inside. It was dark; power had been cut long ago, if only for not paying electrical bills, but I knew where everything was; it was right where I left it. As I explored almost forgotten memories, I closed my eyes.

Life isn't much, I thought, if you don't have a place to call home. Returning to the front door, I found Carl had never left the doorway. I chuckled, closed the door, and locked it. I was just inside the museum, when the policeman drove by. Fifteen seconds faster or slower, and we never would have been seen, never would have been caught.

And that brings us back to the present.

Whatever happened now, things would change. Whether for better or for worse, it had arrived. Lying down on that prison bunker, staring at the empty bunk above me, I wondered if they had figured out who exactly I was yet. Perhaps I was still just a trespasser. If I had been discovered, it would be headlines in the morning, and if Bobbism was to be kept alive, the followers might expect a miracle, something to prove that being loyal to me (and the ideas that Bob represented) was the right thing to do. As dawn drew near, time crawled to a stand still. Slow thudding footfalls could be heard, and my head gradually turned to see who was approaching. I pulled myself to a sitting position, and from there I got up to stand. I walked over the bars that kept me incarcerated. The policeman brought out handcuffs and secured me to himself. He led me away from the neighboring cell, which contained Carl, and down steps, eventually leading me to the courtroom. Looking around, I saw that it was just myself, the judge, and the officer that had arrested me. The very silence of the room was only broken by the breathing and heartbeats we produced. Abruptly, the hush was broken.

"Who are you?" The judge asked, with an emphasis on the word who.

I knew this moment meant everything. Whatever I answered would announce my fate. Was I a trespasser; was I Bob; was I a prophet; who was I? The judge's question did not indicate whether she knew I was more than just an intruder on museum property or as amazing as the most wanted man in the country. Whatever I said now could as easily commend as condemn.

I answered. The judge stared at me incredulously; my answer seemed too simple or stunning to obtain any other sort of response. The officer looked on with vague interest, nothing more than that of a slightly more interesting case of the day, but the judge certainly seemed to be fuming.

The judge turned her head suddenly to the police officer. "Is this true?" The officer shrugged nonchalantly.

The "arbitrator of the court's justice" pursed her lips. "Return the prisoner to the cell. Before any real trial can be held, I must consider not only what was said by," here she paused, "this criminal, but also the manner in which it was said. Any person who can so easily shrug off that answer in such a manner is much more than the simple criminal that the law professes he is. Take him away."

And with that, I was led back to the bunks. I didn't know what the judge was up to; and why she would react in that manner. Was I to be fed to the lions, or be given something no government has ever been able to give, freedom? In the hands of a judge who had only my words to sentence me by, I was reminded of the tale of The Lady or the Tiger. Perhaps a minute, but possibly hours later, the bars of the cell were tapped with the clink of guard's keys. It was time. The judgment of Bob had begun... The question: The Lady or the Tiger?





**Leonardo DaVinci**  
Ceramics  
Jonathan Djulvezan

# Contributors' Notes

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## Josh Bjerke

Josh is a Junior pursuing a degree in Computer Science. He asserts, "My life goals are currently indistinguishable from the rest of the obscure and clouded mass of potentialities we call Future. My poem, 'Twenty Monkeys (Forbidden Dances),' was inspired by, of all things, my imagination. It was dreamt up while considering the idea of there being a place where all of the fragmented melodies and voices and other sounds we hear go after they've been forgotten. In my mind it would be an unimaginably old place filled with every sound to have entered and been disregarded by human consciousness. Put to words it became something more restricted, but no less mysterious. What better to do with this ancient euphony but to dance? And who better to spend eternity tripping the light fantastic than a bunch of monkeys? As unseen and disregarded, and all the happier for it, as the music to which they dance."

## Andrew Bufalini

This photograph was taken near Wormsloe Historical site. It was Andrew's first shooting assignment for Mrs. Jensen's Introduction to Photography class. The assignment was simply called "light," and all he had to do was capture some aspect of dramatic or interesting lighting conditions. Overall, he is fairly pleased with the photograph. He states, "I first came across a small church and thought about shooting that, but the lighting in that area was very dull. Further down the road I saw the playground and decided that could be an interesting thing to photograph. When I got there, it was still a little cloudy, but I decided to shoot anyway. Luckily I waited around and the sun showed up and gave me the picture that I wanted." Andrew is a Junior who is majoring in art, and he would like to study graphic design, so a good background in photography will be crucial. He notes, "Hopefully I can have a successful career in graphic design so that later in my life I can open my own art gallery where I will show all of the photographs that I have been working on."

## Corey Bufalini

"General Kincaid" is an artwork done in charcoal. It was an assignment given to Corey in his junior year of high school to draw one of the teachers at his school: Savannah Arts Academy. He states, "I chose Mr. Kincaid, who is a general and was my government teacher, because I liked the naturalistic nature of his pose. My preferred style is realism, so I enjoy any picture that captures the true essence of the person. I hope to continue to get better at art, and I am planning to major in it. Currently, I am a Freshman who is an undeclared major."

## Sylvia Charpentier

Sylvia is a junior with a major in Art Education. She states, "I am very excited and honored that my two photographs were accepted in this edition of Calliope. 'Ascend and Descend' were really products of improvisation; with the assignment 'abstract' photography, I left the classroom knowing absolutely everything was potential subject matter. I walked down the stairs, and turning left I saw my first abstraction: a stack of chairs. Yep, pretty boring, but with the right angle, lighting, and darkroom know-how I was able to transform inert objects into emotionally charged cogitations; thanks Mrs. Jensen!" Although she intends to work with children and art, another, or perhaps ultimate, goal is to "make a dent" on benefiting the environment. She would like to conclude with a self-quote: "Anything can set you back, but only you can hold yourself there or push forward."

## **Jie Chen**

Jie Chen is a Sophomore English major. Regarding her entries, Jie asserts: "‘Light A Candle for a Monk’ is written for a monk whom I never seen before. My father told me this story happened in New York. I was sympathetic with the death of the monk. This feeling haunted me all the time, and I decided to bring it out by writing the story. For this paper, I just won a First Place award (2008) from the International English Honor Society (Sigma Tau Delta). ‘A Wild Wolf’ is tied with a person whom I know. He is a shepherd leading a simple and natural life. I love animals such as wolves, lions, tigers, cats, chicken and ducks and so on. His experience inspired me to write this story to remind people of protecting animals."

## **Giovanna Zofia Chmielewski**

Giovanna Chmielewski is a Junior and is currently completing her BA in English with a Spanish minor. Giovanna's favorite activities include smelling book spines, following train tracks on foot, cultivating a perennial garden, driving aimlessly through the country with good music on sunny days, trying desperately to cheer her chronically depressed-looking hound dog, and staring at the starry heavens on clear nights. Giovanna wrote "I Bought a Birdhouse in Siloam, Georgia" soon after reading a collection of nine essays by one of her favorite poets, Richard Hugo, entitled "The Triggering Town: Lectures and Essays on Poetry and Writing." In one essay, Hugo gives suggestions he calls "assumptions" for poems about small towns, which have always been Giovanna's favorite kind of town. "Finish the poem first," Hugo encourages, "then worry, if you have to, about being right or sane." Assumptions like: "Birds never stop. They fly over, usually too high to be identified," or: "No one dies, makes love, or ages." Giovanna wrote this poem with the assumption that the town is a living entity, angry and deeply evil, and every thing from it is somehow corrupted. It is a true story.

## **Britney Compton**

Britney Compton, regarding her art, states, "Pieces I create are not necessarily the greatest, but as long as I can teach and inform my audience, then my work has served its purpose." Her focus, other than educating children in art, is taking photographs in a journalistic fashion in order to create a story in a single print. Traveling and relaying the information to others is her passion; as is the treatment of females in all cultures. She says, "I try to incorporate either, and sometimes both, into my art, no matter what medium I use."

## **Katie Corbitt**

Katie Corbitt is a Sophomore majoring in Photography and she hopes for her artwork to resonate the passion and significance she sees in the subject she chooses. She says, "Horses have played a particularly meaningful role in my life, and I find great beauty and respect in them aesthetically. Whether its a long-loved family horse in the pasture or a chance meeting of an untamed herd across the ocean, this breed always has something to say. As with all my work, they hold great personal value, but apart from that aspect, I attempt to translate my intimate response into something of a more all-encompassing emotion that can be shared."

## **Michelle Crabb**

Michelle Crabb is currently a Senior majoring in Information Technology and minoring in English. She was in the Air Force for five and a half years. From there, she went straight to AASU. About writing, Michelle says, "Writing has always been one of my favorite hobbies. I have been doing it since high school. My short term goals are to finish my degree and to get a nice, steady job. No matter what I end up doing, I know that I will always write on the side." Regarding her piece in Calliope, Michelle states: "My piece in Calliope is an excerpt from a longer short story, titled 'So I Married an Atheist.' The story had been brewing in my mind for quite some time, and I finally sat down and wrote it for my English 4750 portfolio last semester (Creative Writing). My inspiration for the story is in the title."



## **Kevin Daiss**

Kevin Daiss is a Senior majoring in English Literature. Regarding his submissions, he says, "See, what happened is...what happened is this: I wrote 'Bus Ride' as a kind of response to something that never existed. It isn't really a story. I don't know how it got published as a story, other than in a moment of literary rebellion I decided to call it a story. It's like I wrote a much longer, interesting story (full of sword fights, plot twists, damsels in distress, and a tough-talking billy goat with a heart of gold) with this character playing a peripheral role and someone asked me, 'Hey, what's that dude really like?' and I wrote 'Bus Ride.' It is a false extrapolation of a minor character in a non-existent piece of fiction. And that is what I aimed for, I guess. I would also like to take this opportunity to suggest that everyone take karate classes at some point in his/her life. They are truly awesome. Much more so than Tae Kwon Do classes. Karate is the reason I wrote these pieces."

## **Jonathan Thomas Djulvezan**

Jonathan is a senior working toward a BFA. His works were made with patience, hard work, and at times an offbeat imagination. The "Da Vinci" sculpture (based on Leonardo da Vinci) was a fun project carved out of a 25lb block of clay. The "Skull Pot" was a challenge to be creative about a functional piece. Jonathan states, "I was sketching skulls and possible regular bowls. I stopped and said to myself, 'Hmm, skulls and pots...why not, it could be fun.' Big thanks for John G. Jensen for pushing me on the realism to acquire the look and feel of a full size skull." The "David" piece was actually a 2 and a half foot sculpture with legs, arms, and base. He worked on it for 2 months and realized the bottom dried out before he could detail and hollow it out, and so he thought why not make it a bust that looks classic and broken. The "Funny Face" was a two hour sculpting experiment. Jonathan says, "I was in kind of a mellow mood and wanted to make something that would make me laugh. Each time I look at it, I can't help but to smile and move on with the day. My future goals are to make art that enters peoples' lives, whether through commercial art, personal art, or by a sketch on a napkin that will make a person that sits at the table next, think and smile. It is just that simple."

## **William Friedman**

William Friedman will have graduated from AASU in May 2008 with a degree in Liberal Studies and a dual minor in Theater and Philosophy. He wrote Chapter One (a working title) in a random moment of inspiration. "Childhood is an amazing time in a person's life. You look back and everything was simply awesome," he says. "My life flipped on its head a few years ago. Everything seemed so unstable and I was angry for some time, but, the story came to me and it reminded me of home." William was born and raised in Wellington, Florida and moved to Savannah in 2002. "Things are way better now, thanks to friends, family, and the sporadic short story." His favorite part of the story is the character, Alice: "There is nothing special to her name. I just wanted something that sounded nice, so I started thinking about names. I went in alphabetical order and the first name I came up with was Alice. It seemed to fit the story perfectly, so it stuck."

## **Brent Gillenwater**

Brent is an English major whose goal is to "get a job that pays pretty well, but not one that bores me into low self-esteem and an early grave."

## **Gabrielle Hague**

Gabrielle Hague is a Freshman majoring in both Art and Psychology. Her goals are simple: to be successful and happy. She hopes to go on to NYU in four years, for her Graduate degree in art therapy, and to be able to work with others to demonstrate the importance of art as a method of visual communication. Most of her inspiration comes from the world around her and the beauty in random, everyday objects. When discussing her submission, she states: "Venus" is the product of a 2-D project that dealt with color transfer and acrylic paints, only. "After I got my project back from my professor, I decided to go a step further and actually make it into an entire piece that utilizes several different materials. The



materials include hemp cord for the landmasses, glass and plastic beads for the sea, and foam core to support Venus so that she wouldn't fade into all of the other 3-D elements."

## **Rebecca Hattaway**

Rebecca Hattaway is a Freshman majoring in Psychology. Rebecca states, "Experience is the inspiration of every writer, whether it is their own or that of others around them." "The Visitor" is a composite of things that she has felt and what she has seen of the various people she has and has not known: "It is something known to all people, the thing that eats away at you before slumbering oblivion...different, though, in every mind. My aim as a writer is to pinpoint the shared demons of humanity and express them in such a way that everyone can feel their personal demons gnawing at the corners of their consciousness." "Whither" was an effort to translate emotion into words or, more precisely, an experiment in crafting something tangible from the intangible: "It is something felt within the very core of your person, a yearning question coupled with the nihility of knowledge without the assurance of fate. It is knowing that every breath drawn in subtracts from the remainder and every faltering step is taken on a path with a definite endpoint. By writing, I hope to come to peace with those questions that dim the light of hope and to somehow guide others to a peace that I may not ever know."

## **Jessica Jenkins**

Jessica Jenkins is a Senior graduating in Fall 2008. She will be receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in graphic design. Her work "Audrey" was inspired by her obsession with classical beauties, such as Audrey Hepburn. She plans on doing a series of classical beauties. After graduating, Jessica hopes to one day open her own design studio.

## **Raphyl Jordan**

"Tea Fields" was created for a revised look for a tea company in the Package Design class taught by Mrs. Angela Horne/Ryczowski. Raphyl took the project as being centered to the mature and "sophisticated": "after finding a reference of a tea field (permission by a Mr. Will Ellis), I used different tools and paint brushes in my favorite computer software, Photoshop, to illustrate a peaceful tea field in the valley underneath the warm sunset." "Tea Fields" is only one of many computer illustrations that Raphyl has done: "My passion is to draw, and my entire life has been art ever since I drew my first picture when I was three. I hope that my art can be seen by others on a greater scale someday, but if not, I'd still consider my gift to be the most treasured quality I could ever have. So until then, I feel deeply humbled and honored when someone like *Calliope* considers my work decent enough for publishing. I'm a Senior Art Major, even though I'm trying to get into the Fine Arts Major."

## **James Kincaid**

Regarding his art, James Kincaid states: "I try to develop my portraits around the person I'm painting. I think about their characteristics, what's going on in their lives, and strive to amplify them in my pieces. Each one my paintings should, (I hope) tell the viewer a little more about the subject than most traditional portraits would. Thanks to all of you who supported me in my artwork."

## **Nancy Miller**

Nancy Miller is a post-bac art education major at Armstrong. Her personal choice of art media is pastel. She hopes to teach young students about art in the near future.

## **Joe O'Connor**

Joe O'Connor wrote his submission as an assignment in Dr. Smith's Creative Fiction class. The piece was supposed to convey textures and taste, and he thought that there was no better way to convey these things than by setting the scene in "a really crappy restaurant." He says, "The restaurant itself is based off of a hole in the wall Japanese restaurant I know. In

reality, it is fairly decent place to eat, but I decided to change it for my assignment. Dr. Smith assigned this as homework pretty early in the course, and I got the crazy idea to try and put stuff from Sun Ce's in my other assignments and in my stories for the class. I abandoned the idea later, but I did mention a bunch of fortune cookie fortunes from Sun Ce's in another bit of homework."

## **Dagny Pariani**

Dagny Pariani is a Senior working on obtaining a dual degree in Biology and Spanish: "My major goals in life are to travel the world and study its oceans. Poetry and writing are for me a necessary emotional outlet and means of self-expression that help to balance out my extremely introverted nature. Writing is what I turn to when I feel passionately about something, but lack the verbal tenacity with which to make the strength of those feelings understood." "Flight of the greyhound," in particular, reflects "my rather strange and tumultuous love affair with traveling by bus. I prefer it; the constant motion, irregular sleeping and eating patterns, interesting people, and of course long periods of solitude and scenery let me reflect on things long enough to be moved into words."

## **Cevon Rambo**

Cevon states that "perhaps one of the most vivid and intriguing inspirations for my writing (and life in general) is the fascinating plane between sleep and wakefulness. It is a secret plane that I attempt to investigate through writing, and I always feel satisfied in its results—learning something new about myself and the nature of the human conscience. Writing 'The Deception of the Clock' was, for me, a rare product of those countless investigative attempts. As a sophomore majoring in Pre-Communication Sciences & Disorders, I hope to continue to develop my language skills in both explored and unexplored means for years to come."

## **Farhanna Smith**

Farhanna Smith is a Freshman and an Art major. Her two pieces, "Hanging On to Domestication" and "When One Has Too Much To Put Into Them," were done as class projects in Summer Wheat's Drawing I class, which was her favorite class that she didn't mind attending at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The piece "When One Has Too Much To Put Into Them" was done with the medium vine charcoal and was by far the most difficult thing she has ever taken on as an artist. It was a project that had to be some sort of container and it took her about twenty hours to complete (not in one sitting!). Farhanna says, "What inspired me were the sayings 'glass half full' or 'glass half empty.'" The title comes from my favorite quote by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, 'When one has too much to put into them a day has a hundred pockets,' and the glass is a symbol of an empty container that can be filled when one has too much."

"Hanging On to Domestication" was her second project in Summer's class, and they had to draw a wrapped object. At first she didn't have a them, but after she chose my objects, it took some thought, but with Summer's help, she came up with the idea of domestication and using the coiled hanger wrapped in a shoestring as a symbol of how society wants everything to be: tame and under control. What inspired her artwork was how Summer believed in her and made her want to keep going and keep drawing.

## **Philip Townley**

Philip Townley is an English with Teacher Certification Major, and "Bob Against the Killing" is a reflection of something inexplicably linked to his quintessential self: "Bob is more real to me therefore than anything I was able to type up. I dreamed Bob's existence, and wanted to share what I felt regarding all individuals' abilities to create drastic change. It is the lesson that goes beyond what happens to Bob, and that is what I hope the readers were able to understand from 'Bob Against the Killing.'"

## **Amanda Weston**

Amanda Weston is currently a Junior at Armstrong, pursuing a degree in English Education with a minor in Writing. She plans to complete her degree, teach middle school while obtaining her master's, and eventually obtain a PhD.

Her goal is to ultimately teach middle level English at a University. Her husband, James Weston, was the inspiration for her piece: "He had left for a 3 month deployment to Afghanistan, and we exchanged journals and promised to write to each other while we were separated to ensure the distance would only bring us closer through personal expression. While writing 'My Cry For Completeness,' I tried to recall the last night we had spent together and capture my feelings not just for myself, but to share with others going through similar situations. So, GO army wives and girlfriends! It isn't easy, but hang in there."

## **Yvette Wheeler**

Yvette is a Sophomore English Major. She wrote "The Common Spring" in her summer Creative Writing class to help her with her own searching for the way to deal with a very common problem in an uncommon way. She became more interested in the method than with the actual problem. She says, "The only way I could think to deal with it was to write about it through the protagonist, Adam, who is in many ways a typical teenager being initiated into adulthood in a very different way than most people are. Adam and Daphne are not based on real people, but are a loose composites of different people I have known. They are structured on the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice and Apollo and Daphne as well." The story was also written based on her favorite poem as a child, "Alone" by Edgar Allan Poe, to reflect a lot of her past influences. "The Common Spring" is about "conquering fixations and seasons of youth and simply getting on with the process of growing up. I thought it would be a challenge to make Adam human, to make him suffer through youth in a way that was entirely his own, entirely by himself, with the dependency he has on his sister. My goal is to continue writing until I see fit to call myself a writer. I've wanted to be a writer since I was 12 years old. I plan on pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing sometime in the future."









