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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

People often refer to young people as those who will save the world. With so much on our shoulders, it's only natural to carry it together. I hope Impulse is a place to set down fears, worries, and regrets. Not to move on and forget, but to share, and lighten the load; divide the burden of a global pandemic, racial divide, the death of many individuals and the celebration of too few.

Impulse has always been an outlet for creativity. Compared to past years, this collective outlet has never been more of an imperative. What is shown in this year's publication is but a candlelight to the bonfire of experiences of my peers. It would be an undertaking of madness to try to encapsulate it all with printed ink. Nonetheless, this collection represents a portion of our humanity—love and hate and everything in between.

I hope these works resonate with you.

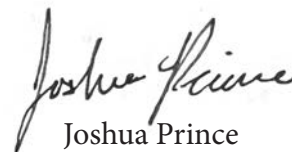
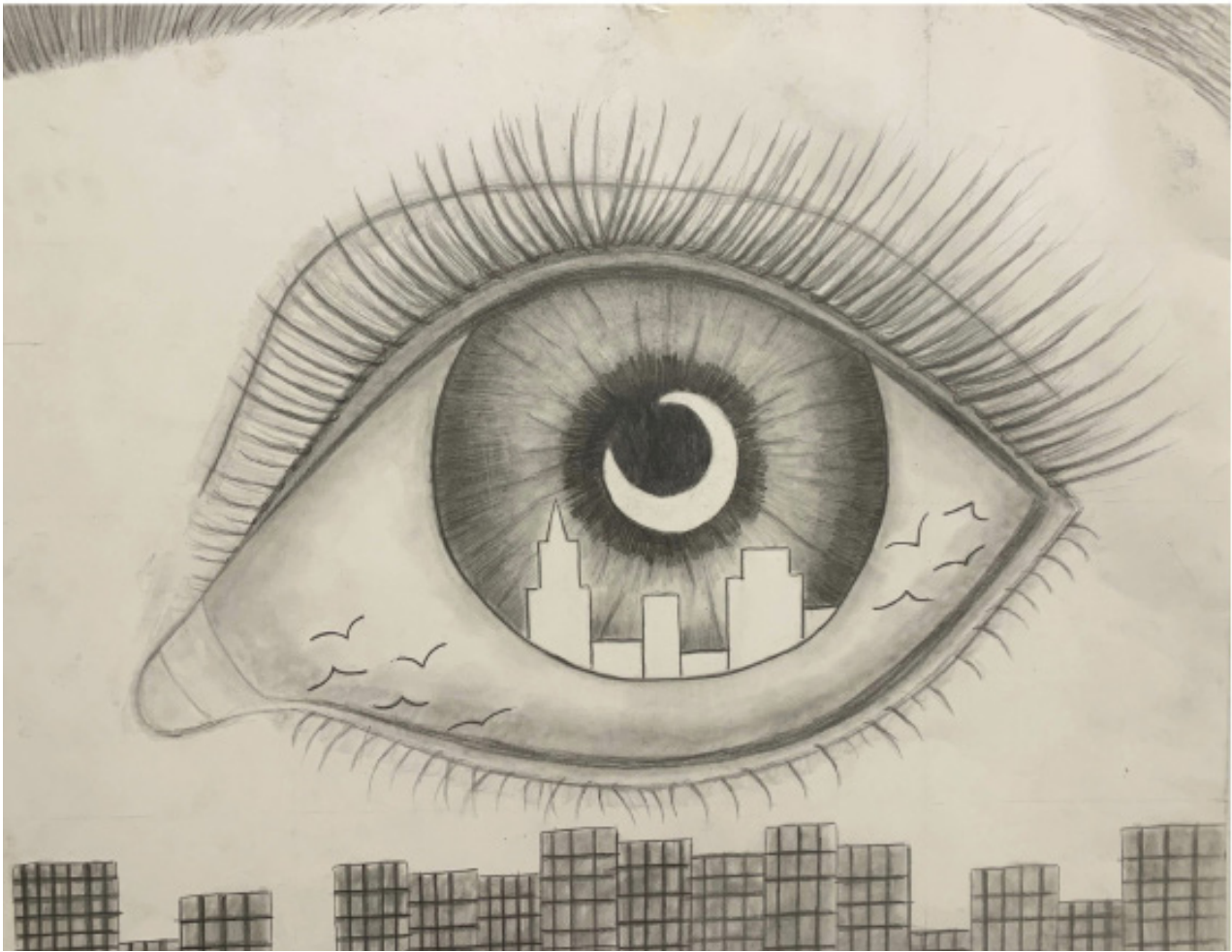

Joshua Prince

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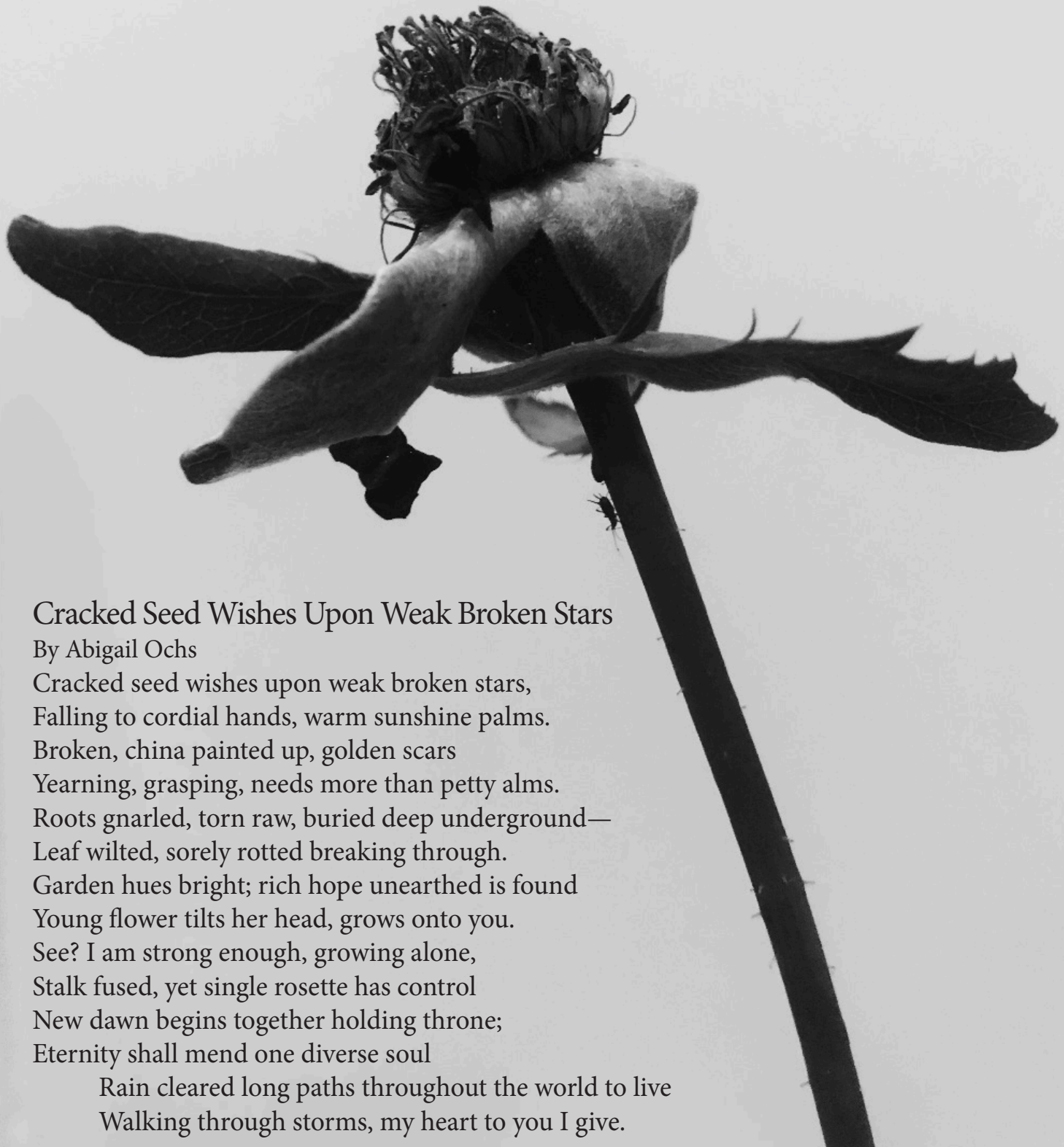
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Artwork by Victor Way



Artwork by Julia Zislis



Cracked Seed Wishes Upon Weak Broken Stars

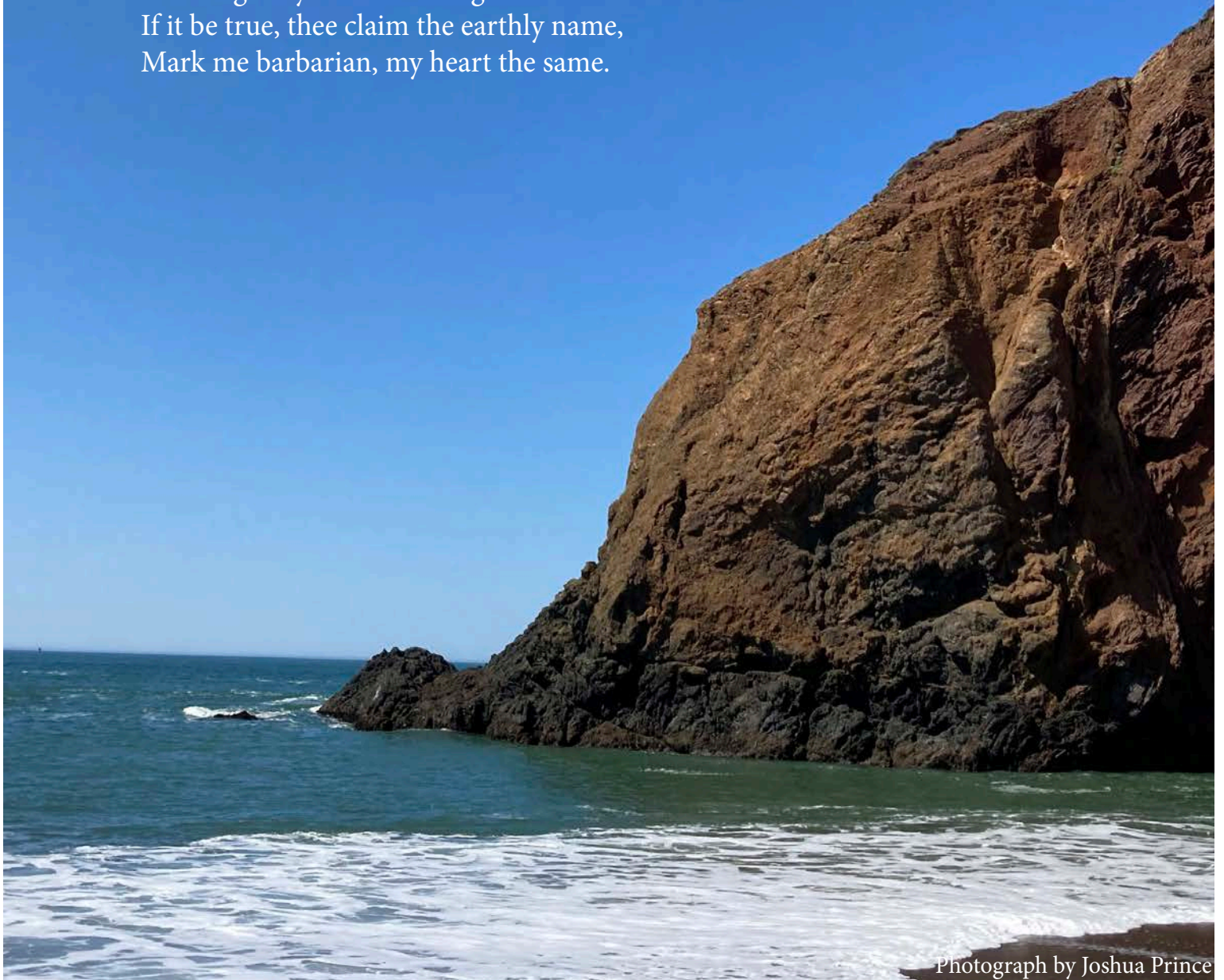
By Abigail Ochs

Cracked seed wishes upon weak broken stars,
Falling to cordial hands, warm sunshine palms.
Broken, china painted up, golden scars
Yearning, grasping, needs more than petty alms.
Roots gnarled, torn raw, buried deep underground—
Leaf wilted, sorely rotted breaking through.
Garden hues bright; rich hope unearthed is found
Young flower tilts her head, grows onto you.
See? I am strong enough, growing alone,
Stalk fused, yet single rosette has control
New dawn begins together holding throne;
Eternity shall mend one diverse soul
 Rain cleared long paths throughout the world to live
 Walking through storms, my heart to you I give.

Smalsar

By Komal Samrow

Dare I weld thy spell to this earthly land,
Where savage is the looming civil gaze?
Dare not, want not, preserve thy foreign hands
To carry forth thy otherworldly ways.
Bears wheat thy sinless soil, bears alien child;
Who lusts not after industrial dreams,
Instead sews vein to root to treasured wild,
Where pure and free cascade thy placid streams.
But doth the rocky winds shake thy resolve?
Come concrete storms and novel floods of need,
When spring's perfume leads winter's to dissolve,
Wilt thou resign thy truth to civil greed?
 If it be true, thee claim the earthly name,
 Mark me barbarian, my heart the same.



Photograph by Joshua Prince

The Upside of Fear

By Olivia Zahl

I am afraid of apples—and not just apples, basically all fruits. I am not sure why it has expanded to this point, but it did. I have diagnosed myself with fructophobia: the fear of fruits. And yes, look it up, it's real.

It all started back in preschool. I was four years old and it was snack time. I wasn't hungry and I remember bringing myself all the way to the back corner of the carpet. The snack that day was apples: red ones, green ones, and yellow ones. At the time I didn't have any issue with apples, I just wasn't in the mood. I watched my peers start to eat and winced at the sound of their chewing. One of my teachers noticed that I was empty handed. He called me over and asked why I wasn't eating. "I'm just not hungry," I replied. He told me that I had to eat, and that apples are a great and healthy snack. He shoved a plate of apples close to my face. The smell of them nauseated me and the sight of them made my eyes burn. He picked up the red slice and put it close to my lips, practically forcing me to eat it. What could I have done? I reluctantly took a bite, and I gagged. Next the green slice, I ate it as my face grew flushed. Last, the yellow one. I ate it, and tears formed in my eyes.

To this day, my feet trudge as I carry this moment upon shoulders. There are many people, immature people, who throw pieces of fruit into my face and laugh. They put themselves on a pedestal and loom over me. It makes me feel almost alien. There was a time in my life when I let them get to me. I felt embarrassed by my past. I even felt embarrassed by my presence. I put shame to my emotions. I chose to hide under my covers; the same way I tried to make myself invisible on the back corner of the carpet all those years ago.

But those hostile feelings towards myself were merely a phase. I am not broken. Rather, I am thankful for that rough patch in my life. It built a stronger me and my skin has grown thicker. I have grown to accept and embrace my feelings as I now wear them on my sleeve with pride.

To think that my so-called "irrational" fear of fruit has taught me anything is pretty crazy. Yet, truly, it has taught me the approval of differences. Once learning to appease my own emotions, I learned to sympathize with others and their emotions. I have learned to love and cherish others for their unique differences--not to shoot them down, rather to build them up. With this I will prevent as many people as possible from being belittled the same way I once was. I have learned acceptance.

And this, so strongly, I believe.



Light in the Dark by Jazmin Zeitune

The Broken Saxophone

by Samuel Knee

Outside of the music school, it is raining. The faint sound of rainfall and the roar of a police car in the distance can be heard. The squeaking sound of a struggling bluesy saxophone solo is heard from the back of the theatre. Rosanne enters stage right and sits down in front of her outdated bulky 2005 silver, Dell laptop. The screen of her laptop projected on the right portion of the scrim. Rosanne begins clicking frantically on the Microsoft word tab.

[Vm Vm Vm the Microsoft XP Windows error delayed sounds to her clicking]

ROSANNE. [calling] Eric?

[There is no response. The faint sound of the saxophone in a nearby room continues to play.]

ROSANNE. [calling aggressively] Eric?

[Rosanne is unaware Eric is in the other room giving a lesson to a student. She selfishly continues to call out his name without getting up.]

ROSANNE. [gut-wrenching scream] ERIC!

[A high-pitched squeak of the saxophone is heard from the back of the room and the metal clank of a saxophone. The back door of the theater slams open and Eric sprints down the left aisle.]

ERIC.[while sprinting down the aisle, gasping for air] Are you okay?!?!

ROSANNE.[calm and oblivious of her false alarm] Why won't Excel load?

[Realizing that Rosanne is okay, immediately running back up the aisle to check on his fallen saxophone. A student appears and walks down the aisle cradling the broken saxophone.]

ERIC. [Holding up the broken saxophone to Rosanne] Are you happy Rosanne? Are you happy I came at your demand?! You selfish piece of—.

ROSANNE. [starts crying] I didn't—

ERIC. [cutting her off] You didn't what, Rosanne? Do you have any idea how much this cost?!

[Eric continues talking as he approaches Rosanne with the saxophone at hand. He continues talking about how important this is to him. The lights dim and a spotlight shines on solely Rosanne]

ROSANNE. [to the audience] Where did I go wrong? How could I be so blind? I've barely pushed by my entire life and now—now I've ruined his most prized possession. God damn it Rosanne. What'd you think was going to happen when you screamed bloody murder? I've been working this job as an office manager for fifteen years now. What happened? Who've I become? You heard what he called me. And you know what? He's right. He's busting his ass teaching these kids how to play sax while I sit here, making more than him with my lousy degree in business. For crying out loud, the kid went to Berklee! Does it take murder to prove the damage you can do? And what've I gotten from it all, anyhow? I probably could have just Googled what's wrong with this computer...I'm so used to having the answers come straight to me. Look at me, 55, divorced, running a music school and I don't even know the difference between a C and a G note. I can't even pick up an instrument if my life depended on it. Everyday, I watch these kids enter this building, taking their lessons, going home, practicing, and then coming back with even more knowledge than I'll ever have. Have...It's always been about "haves" and "have-nots," huh? [sarcastically talking to herself] Well I have a higher salary than Eric. Eric doesn't have a normal saxophone anymore. Yeah... but Eric has a much more exciting job than me. Yeah but at least I've had the...the...grr [explosively concerning expression] I've had enough of this. Well, What are they going to say? Eric? The parents of the kid? I know what I'll tell 'em: Nothing! I'll escape—yeah, that's what I'll do. Run away as fast as I can.

[After the monologue, Rosanne runs off and leaves Eric standing with a broken saxophone in front of the computer. Excel finally opens and the spreadsheet reveals the thousands of dollars in bankruptcy. Rosanne has failed Eric, failed the student, and failed at her job.]

END OF SCENE



Artwork by Brooke Marsico



Photograph by Jahdae Levy

A Poisoned Love

By Abigail Savner

Oblivious, unaware of what's next
They see constellations but will stars align?
Polar sides of the spectrum, too complex
Little did they know they had just no time.
An ordinary day, just like the rest
They finally meet, the rest, just a daze.
She, his Juliet, their love put to test
Couldn't find their way out of a grand maze.
The thought of the other, tears begin to flow
Love poisoned by regret, now two strangers,
Their love, so malleable, just like dough
Their memories now filled with only anger.
 Not every love is a happy ending;
 Two souls torn apart, their love descending.

Ocean of Love

By Amanda Kornblum

My heart beats so fast when I think of you
Love is an ocean full of waves and tides
When our waves crashed down, together we flew,
Me and you, our strong love has no divides.
The ocean goes so far it never ends,
Symbolic of our newfound love affair
What began as playful and just good friends
For it is time to show the world and share;
But what if a huge storm comes between us,
Will we be able to swim our way out?
For our problem has always been our trust;
We need to be strong, no divide throughout.
 There is such serenity in our love;
 Together our waves soar high like a dove.



Photograph by Rebecca Beal

Ring

By Komal Samrow

[The entryway opens to empty space, a cavity of beige carpeting. The smell of roses hangs in the air, blankets the glass cases that line the room in rectangular formation. Several men mill around, mostly young, lost in the infinite karats and cuts of the gems that surround them. In the back corner by storage stands a smaller case, fashioned in a wood that hasn't been varnished in years. It blends into the tapestried walls, unnoticed by most shoppers. Within it sits a single ring.]

Ring: It's the case again for me, but I've been downgraded. No satin pillows, no tufted quilts, no basking in that piercing white light of adoration. Robbed of the right of company, I look on as my companions and casemates are examined, prodded, praised for their superior design and clarity by passing shoppers.

I've been banished, ousted to the dusty, musky, miserable recesses of the store, the darkness drowning out my marquis cut and polish. Clarity, color, carat, resigned to this wooden prison. Not that anyone is looking. They're preoccupied, entranced, waltzing along through the stroke inducing price tags and sea of glimmering gems. They see only the one, their future, their child, their happily ever after with a bent knee and two mere words.

An engagement is all about the details. The ring, the date, the grand romantic gesture that sweeps her off her feet. But there's one glaring element that's often forgotten in the fray.

Photograph by Ellie Sternschein

[Flashback: A man walks into the store. He takes stuttered strides, thumbs twitching with each step. Browsing through the endless rows of rings, his eyes wander back and forth, unsure. Finally he singles one out, a freshly polished marquise cut the glimmers underneath the ivory showroom lights. A week later he returns, ring in pocket.]

The first time I was taken, there was no bending the knee, no planning, no proposal. He got cold feet and brought me back. Within a week I was returned to luxury, to my familiar satin and comfort and admiration of shoppers desperate to get it right. The second one was sure he did. But she wasn't. The blue leather lid opened to a no, and I never even left the box.

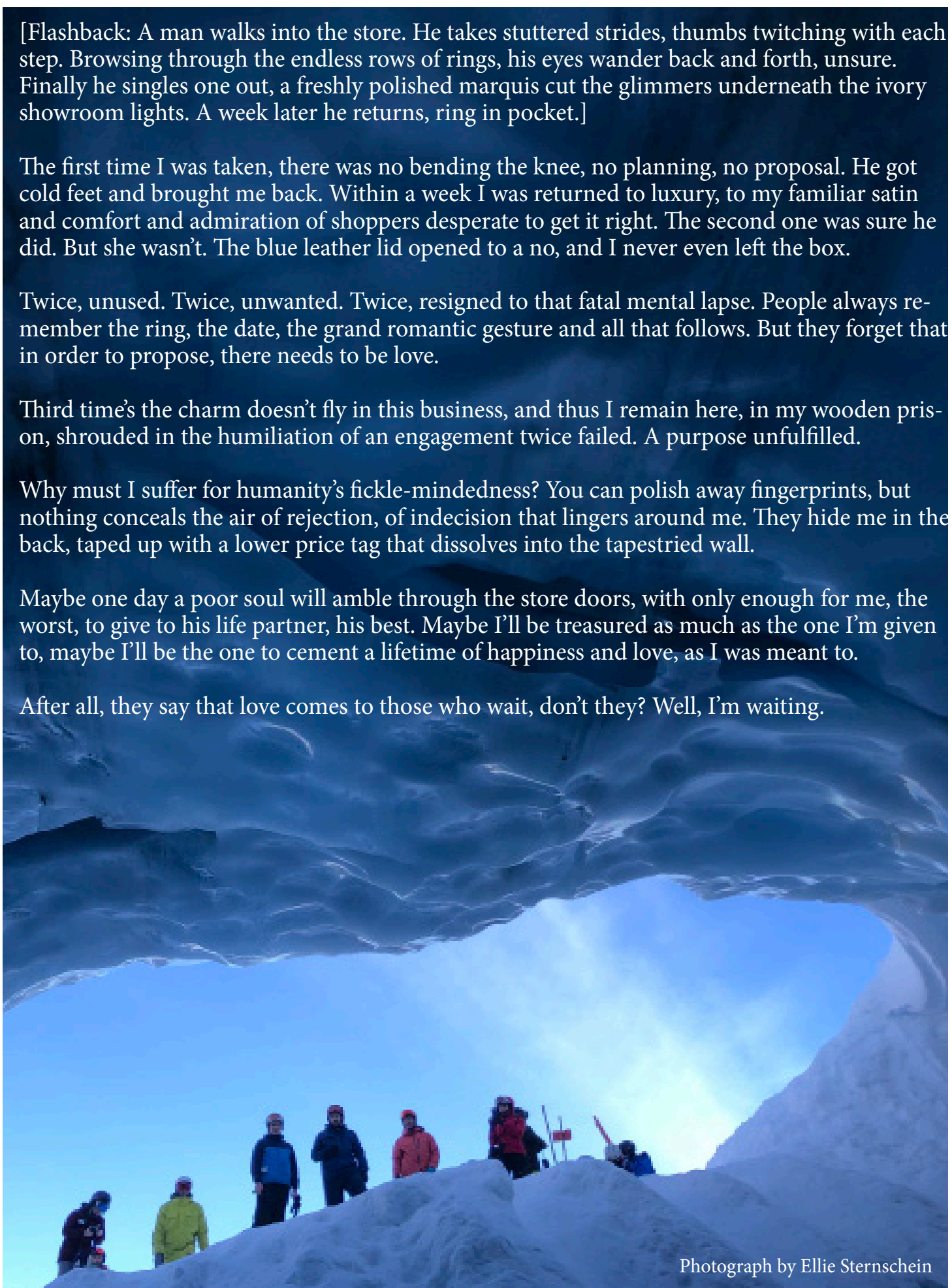
Twice, unused. Twice, unwanted. Twice, resigned to that fatal mental lapse. People always remember the ring, the date, the grand romantic gesture and all that follows. But they forget that in order to propose, there needs to be love.

Third time's the charm doesn't fly in this business, and thus I remain here, in my wooden prison, shrouded in the humiliation of an engagement twice failed. A purpose unfulfilled.

Why must I suffer for humanity's fickle-mindedness? You can polish away fingerprints, but nothing conceals the air of rejection, of indecision that lingers around me. They hide me in the back, taped up with a lower price tag that dissolves into the tapestried wall.

Maybe one day a poor soul will amble through the store doors, with only enough for me, the worst, to give to his life partner, his best. Maybe I'll be treasured as much as the one I'm given to, maybe I'll be the one to cement a lifetime of happiness and love, as I was meant to.

After all, they say that love comes to those who wait, don't they? Well, I'm waiting.



Photograph by Ellie Sternschein



Photograph by Nicholas Laterza

Every Day Becomes Easier

By Michelle Simkin

Divorce is a sensitive topic for people because of how unsettling it is. My parents divorced when I was five years old. At first, I didn't understand what was going on. I don't find it difficult to speak about my parents divorce since I grew up with it. When I was younger I learned that it's not normal to switch between houses and see different sides of the family on holidays. Sometimes the best decision is for parents to separate.

At times it was difficult to get through the day. It was hard for me to tell my mom that I wanted to spend more time with my dad. I thought this wouldn't change and would be a constant fight. When days went by I realized it became easier. Typically there would be small changes at times, but in the end, there would be a drastic change. I would always be upset and have negative energy, but I learned to turn that into a more positive mindset and it has improved my life a great amount.

As I grew up it was harder for me to have a healthy relationship with my mom. I would see my dad every other weekend and maybe once a week for dinner. My dad and I are inseparable now. Whether it's racing down a mountain skiing, blasting music and singing at the top of our lungs during long car rides, or completing puzzles with each other, there's never a dull moment.

After many visits to the court house, my dad was allowed to see me every weekend and two nights a week for dinner. This happened till I was a sophomore in high school. My dad still doesn't have custody. Over the past year I have been living with my dad full time after the living situation with my mom became too difficult. I didn't speak up until August of sophomore year. I was almost fifteen when I found my own voice to improve the situation. It has been difficult completing my work while going to court multiple times a week. There have been plenty of days I thought I couldn't get through, but I try to be positive and think the next day will be when my dad gets full custody.

My parents' divorce shaped me to be the person that I am. My dad and I have been working together nonstop which has made our bond stronger. My dad is my role model because of how hard he works. I use my positive energy to work harder just like my dad.

People give up when they think something is too hard, this is never the solution. This sets you back further. No matter how impossible it feels to get through the day, it will eventually get better. There are always ups and downs but making one small change during your day can make the next day easier. I believe that everyone has a purpose in life and no one should feel defeated.



This August

Writing and photography by Jahdae Levy

This August, I will be seventeen and I have watched the light in my mother's eyes dim. I have seen my year old brother laugh and run around, incapable of understanding the dreadfulness and pain looming over his community. All over the country there are little boys and girls holding up signs in honor of those who have died, those lives taken unjustly by the hands of the law.

This August, I will be seventeen, and I find that I can only go to sleep when I see that the sun has risen. In fear, I fixate on the apocalyptic world we live in, wondering how long it will take for our oppressors to put down their weapons. When I close my eyes, I cannot help but picture myself crying over my brother's body, his blood flowing steadily from bullet holes.

This August I will be seventeen, the rest of my life ahead of me, and yet, when I try to sleep, I worry I won't be able to complete my life without getting into an unfortunate altercation with our country's sorry excuse for law enforcement.

During these unfortunate times, I find myself thinking back to how my parents must have felt the day that I was born. When my mother brought my fragile body to her warm body, did she make a promise to protect me at all costs? When my father fed me from a bottle, did he imagine the possibility of a man wanting to take my life?





From the moment most of us here were born, we were labeled without consideration. Since the start of this country, white men contrived an image to which we were obliged to fit. They have built systems that work directly against us. We are all criminals assumed to resist, yet we are the ones who will be more compliant. We are all uneducated, yet black women are the most educated group in this country. We are all ghetto. We are in the way of white excellence and prosperity. We ought to go back to the countries we were stolen from. We have no place in high society, unless we live to wear their jerseys and sing their songs.

In the course of my grieving, I find that deep down, a small part of myself would like to give in to what is expected of us—surrendering, obedience, submission. Our fights in the past haven't been enough, and I find myself wondering when will our oppressors get a conscience? For our whole lives, we have been tricked into believing we fought for what we wanted and since that day have been equal. If we were truly liberated, why do we stand here today? Why is it that little black children must be taught racism and prejudice before they are taught simple addition? Why is it that little black children are programmed into thinking they will never be as beautiful, as wanted, as significant as their white counterparts? If we had what we wanted, why is it that we are still losing fathers, sons, girlfriends, and children? At my age, I have denounced the things I have been taught, realizing that fifty-six years ago all we were given was a seat at their table, but no meal. No recognition.

This August I will be seventeen and I have yet to figure out why people want me dead. Why is my skin so threatening? Why does my skin change the way a human being should be treated? Why must I live to fear those who have sworn to serve and protect? I will never understand why those who are filled with prejudice should determine our fates. I will never understand why people are against us fighting to stay alive. I find that I will never understand because it will never make sense. I will never make sense of people being hunted and subjected to unnecessary violence because of the color of their skin. It will never be fair, it will never be a liable excuse. I will never accept people telling us that the justice system only has “a few bad apples”, because I was raised to believe one rotten apple ruins the bunch.



This August I will be seventeen and I am truly exhausted. For the first time in my life, I understand why people might want to seek revenge. I understand that we must speak in a language that the enemy understands, they must feel if they do not hear. They have fought wars on drugs and crime against us, but cannot stand us fighting back. It is our democratic right. Who says the Declaration of Independence is only for the rich and white? Our oppressors must discern that we will not stand for the pledge until liberty in this country is eligible for all. Our oppressors must realize that we are tired of being overlooked and silenced. They must understand that our looting and our riots are all lessons we have taken out of their textbooks that have taught us that peace will never come through asking kindly. With the fires set in pain, and the fists raised in solidarity, we now have their attention. We must come together. Hug each other and be grateful for the movement we have started. It is time to plan thoroughly, and rise powerfully out of the ashes. At my age I understand that our leaders actively work against us, but our voices and pain is stronger. My brothers and sisters may not live in the land of the free, but we are the brave.

This August I will be seventeen, and no longer will I deal with the fear of going outside. No longer shall any of us deteriorate our mental health by witnessing the bloodshed of black people. Our oppressors are nescient and a part of a system built off of the backs of our persecution. For so long they have been above the law, and that must change. They have treated their own more respectfully than us, and that will change. We will not continue to let them undermine and eradicate our people. We will not let them kill us and walk away free. We will not continue to let them beat us or force us into ghettos. To them I'd ask, how do you not understand that a badge doesn't put you above the law? Why is white so right? Officers of the law should have the obligation to be more moral and ethical than the average citizen. If they cannot comply with the terms of their oath, we cannot be lulled.

This August I will be seventeen and I will fight for however long I need in order to fix what some call a great nation. I will make changes so that I will never have to worry whether or not my sons will come back home. I will make change so that when I close my eyes I will finally see unity, freedom, and justice for people that look like me.

This August I will be seventeen and I will be at peace by any means necessary.



Four Sunglasses by Joshua Prince

Mr. Vinceson

By Joshua Prince

[Mr. Vinceson is pacing the floor, talking more to himself and an imaginary audience than the real one. If monologues aren't given to the play's audience, well, Vinceson is aware enough to know he's in a work of fiction.]

I tell ya, they just don't make kids like they used to anymore. I took this one kid, Harry or something, to a Wendy's and he seemed really worked up about the whole affair. No doubt the squirrels are putting something in the water again.

Anyways, I was starving, right? Hadn't had the food since lunch at 10:30 (a ridiculous time really, the fact they make any sensible person sit down then to eat a sammich...it's beyond me. And I'm the smartest person I know if we're being honest here; they have me hired, and yet they're showing idiocy at this level...), and I've probably had enough coffee cake to fill my 400 students' heads. I think they would benefit from having that stuff in there, God knows they need something to fill that space. Sure as hell isn't anything there now, shoulda seen Richard's process with the redox equations...he could've rivaled my dead father's stink with all his assery.

Right, back to Wendy's, I'm on my way with Harold, and here's another thing! Them new people, driving's gone to the dogs as well. You figure people have some mental retard—'scuse me, deficiency, and are at least half blind to even qualify for a road test. Every which way on the highway, people ain't signaling, they stop every so often just to catch you off guard, and people can't make road signs like they used to. It's crazy.

So anyways, we were driving, Harrison had looked all alarmed when I mentioned the nitroglycerin [looking to the actual audience]—a highly volatile explosive—[resumes pacing and staring at the floor] even though I told him we were going on an exciting adventure. If anyone thinks an exciting adventure is anything but putting a wrench in the schemes of the squirrels, they've been reading too much YA.

But regardless, we got there, ordered the food. I told the boy to get it from the car, and he's obviously browned his trousers halfway through the ride. And he got the paper for the demonstration, right, but backs out right at the door. The stupidest place to do it, really. I took four steps and him with 50,000 volts. Fell to the floor all seized up, poor chap. The squirrels, I tell ya, they'll mess with your mind.

Birds

By Mariana Julian

Your laughter is sunshine on a dark day
And your rays can warm up the coldest heart,
Melting its ice and coloring the gray
And dreary parts with rich, colorful art.
Like a bright macaw in a sea of crows,
Your unique beauty is mesmerizing.
Every day my love for you only grows
To the point where it is paralyzing.
But eventually, birds find their flock
And fly away, beginning life anew.
I cannot keep you caged away and block
You from leaving and finding birds like you.
 When you're away, my heart will always yearn
 And I'll be here waiting for your return.



Dining Room by Kevin O'Neill

Sonnet No. 1

By Tess O'Brien

Put a piano on the street and I'll
play it, tune it, pluck it, keep it too clean—
a flower grown anew, each passing while
is something new to do to fill the scene.
I do not dream of labor what I dream
is half akin to lazing 'bout the lane.
I do not fight hard work, I fight the scheme.
The sameness poking through, my darling bane.
But I've not slept a whole night's rest in weeks.
The skin's peeled off, exposing rot and whey.
The worst is soon to come when horrors reap
and sow green thumbs beneath a pitch-dark day.
 Jealousy lingers where all hope is lost,
 'tis fine to leave me still, my hope uncrossed.

Lantern Sonnet

By Claire Barry

A Chinese lantern floats above the sky
As it sways gently to an unknown waltz
It glows, the flame lifts it higher than high
The focus of night, beauty without faults.
In the dark you are yet another star
You sparkle like diamonds, shimmer like pearls;
I am so proud of us and who we are,
Sleep sound, my dear, and dream of wondrous worlds.
But even as the flame sputters and dies
I know I will always be by your side,
Your fears will quell, and your triumphs will rise;
Rest safe, and dream with all worries aside.
 So long as there's fire, paper, and sky,
 We will make our lanterns, just you and I.

A Perfect City

By Derek Wang

“Do you know the reason we gave up on the stars? Because it would cause humanity to become too volatile,” Ryder continued. “If what is on Earth is enough to spark a civilization-ending war, we cannot focus on the stars.”

“But whether it makes us more volatile or not, why is progress inferior to a never changing, dull system?” interjected Theo.

After a long pause, Ryder said, “Because most of humanity is not intelligent enough to make good progress. We destroyed ourselves. I have the ability to make sure we never do it again. I will preserve humanity. I will save the world.” With that, Ryder stood up. “It seems we are destined to fight. We cannot coexist. Are you ready?”

“Yes,” uttered Theo.

Still powered by hope and ambition, Theo was able to keep pace with Ryder, however every so often Ryder broke through Theo’s defenses. It wasn’t sustainable for Theo. But every time he was knocked down, he got back up. The battle dragged on, so that the night sky began to come out. With it came additional cosmic lights and rays so that the sky had streaks of green painted in along with the stars. An incredible night sky illuminated their fight. Although Theo likely couldn’t physically beat Ryder, there was something he could do. He could talk to Ryder.

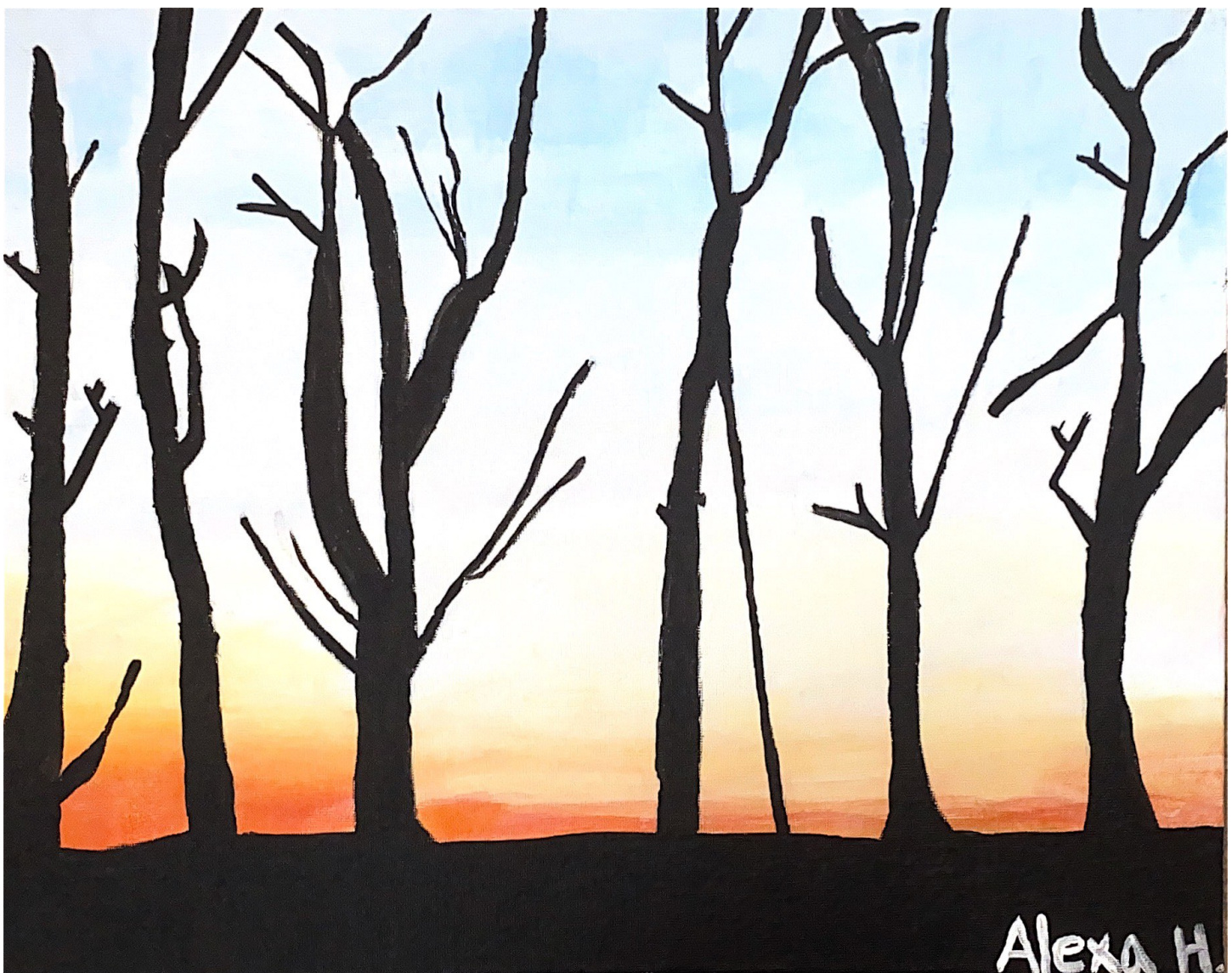
Ryder also had many ambitions as a child, and loved nature as well as the sky. But he remembered the war to end all wars. The violence convinced him that it was impossible for humanity to unify in perfect harmony when everyone had complete freedom. In civilization’s dying breath, world governments released a top secret technology that they had been developing. Whatever it was exactly to be used for, in this instance it caused everyone in the world to lose their memories of a peaceful life. In this way the anarchy was limited as the world transitioned into a new, darker era. However, some important people’s memories were not wiped, including the remaining world leaders (there were in fact nations other than barbarians still remaining). They would retain their memories so they could steer humanity in the right direction in this dark age using previous knowledge. But with that responsibility, it is no wonder that Ryder believed freedom and cooperation wouldn’t work.

Ryder’s attacks were never quite enough to knock Theo out, yet Theo’s words kept digging deeper into Ryder. Words that painted a picture of a vast green world of adventure. Phrases that reminded Ryder of his childhood when he too wondered what was among the stars. He began to

question whether he was really being righteous himself. Was a controlled society really a perfect one? Was there a reason for humans to live if no change is made? After over an hour, Ryder stopped attacking, and peered at the cosmic lights out the window that night.

It was over. After seeing Theo's resolve, Ryder felt that maybe Theo really could do something the Fenwicks could not. He didn't want to see Theo's passion for the stars die out, for he also wanted to see the stars. After taking one last long glance at the sky, Ryder turned and told Theo softly, "Reach the stars for me. I want to see them too."

Immediately, Colt emerged from the shadows to pierce Ryder through the heart. Ryder smiled before falling over. The oldest Fenwick brothers were laid out unconscious in the corridor. Theo would make sure to keep his words in mind, and restore freedom.



Into the Sunset by Alexa Hoberman

An Unforgiven Endeavour

By Alyssa Artabane

Dear body,

I am so sorry.

I'm sorry for making you suffer just because I like the pain.
For shoving fingers down a throat that can barely speak up for itself.
For making you feel as worthless as the toilet in front of you.

I'm sorry for the sores that have grown in the corners of your mouth, who yell for help.
For the stomach pains that roar in the middle of the night, keeping you wide awake.

I'm sorry for pushing you beyond your limits,
running so far that you get lost and struggle to find your way back.

I'm sorry for instilling this fear of simply not being enough.
For not listening to the kind words of others, that should make you feel
worthy.

I'm sorry for applauding myself when you drop a couple of pounds or starve.
For enjoying the way you look when your ribs stand out.

I'm sorry for staring in the mirror and filling you with hateful comments and thoughts.
For forcing this impossible image of perfection.

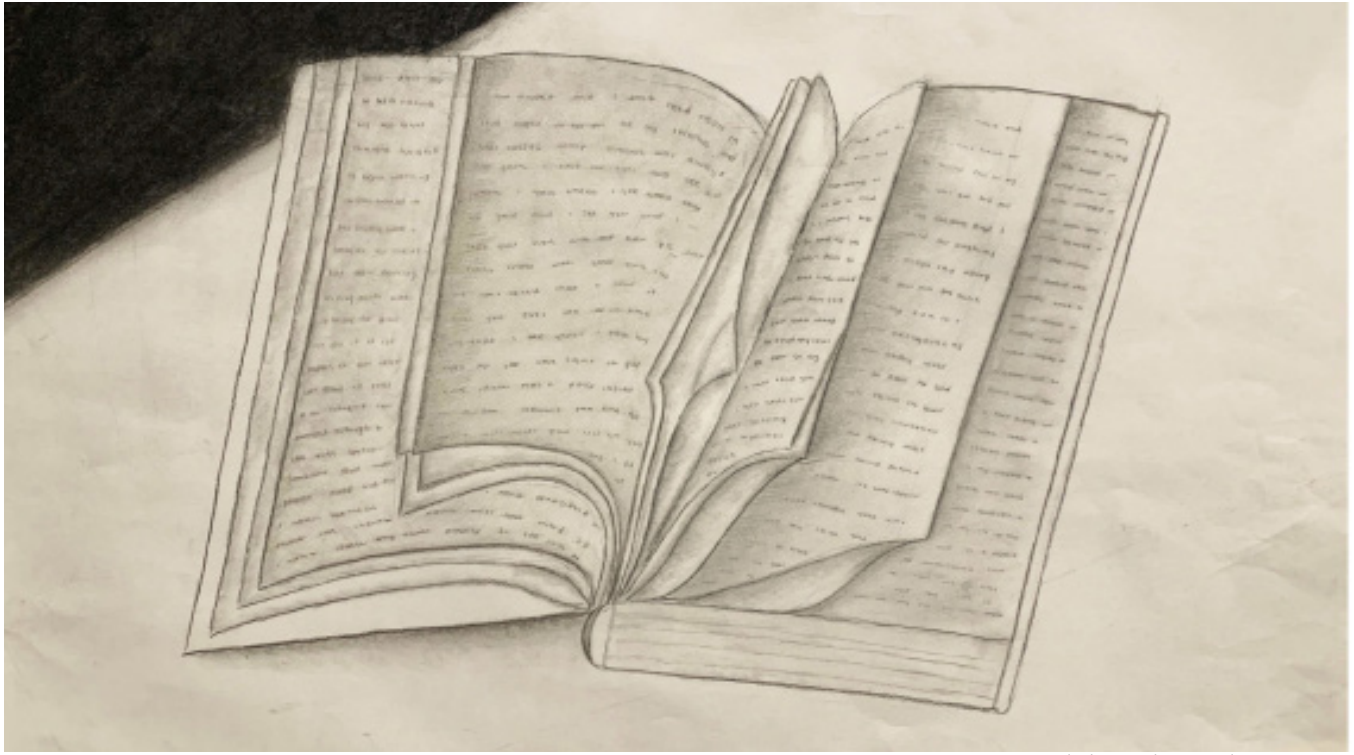
But most of all, I'm sorry for letting it get this bad.
For continuing to deprive you, even when I know it's hurting you.

Maybe one day this numb feeling will stop.
Maybe one day I can accept you for who you are,
Heal the wounds that exist between me and you.
Until that day comes,
Know it isn't wounding you as nearly as it has damaged me.

Love,
Me



Introspection by Sage Hendelman



Artwork by Julia Zislis



Empty by Sage Hendelman



Together by Sage Hendelman



Balloon Dog by Jazmin Zeitune

Body Dialogue

By Tess O'Brien

RO: For wheat is wheat. Artists are kinda insufferable.

THE BODY: You're right.

RO: Of course, wheat is wheat. We are what we are. Emily's wrong.

THE BODY: What about?

RO: Everything. She's my younger sister.

THE BODY: She's smarter than you.

RO: I know.

THE BODY: She loves you.

RO: I know that, too.

EMILY notices what's happening and looks up, watching RO and THE BODY talk.

EMILY: I'm gonna—

BANNER: Yeah. You should.

EMILY takes a step away from them, towards RO.

RO: She's growing up.

THE BODY: There's still time left.

RO: Not enough. (Beat) Once, as kids, Mom took us to a field in the middle of nowhere. We were visiting cousins in Pennsylvania—and Pennsylvania is basically just one big cornfield. I remember we drove for hours from Massachusetts, and all I saw was wheat and grass and...you know, corn. Anyway Mom took me and Emily there because she wanted to let us drive the car around, and it was just so empty. Nobody on the streets, nobody on the sidewalks, nobody in the stores. Compared to Boston, it was like a ghost town. I remember I was so short I had to sit on Mom's lap just to reach the steering wheel. Emily was fine though. She was so tall it drove me crazy. I hated her for it, a little bit, that people always assumed she was the older sister. We were young enough that that was what mattered to the two of us. Or at least to me.

THE BODY: Did it matter to her?

RO: I don't know. Here's the thing about sisters: when we get along, it's only gonna last so long. There's a due date, an expiration. One day Emily would steal something of mine or I'd say something snippy, and we'd lose it. I've never gotten angry at anyone like I've been angry at her. She was so much like Mom. When Mom died...I hated Emily for it. For reminding me of what we lost.

Mom used to call her Kudzu.

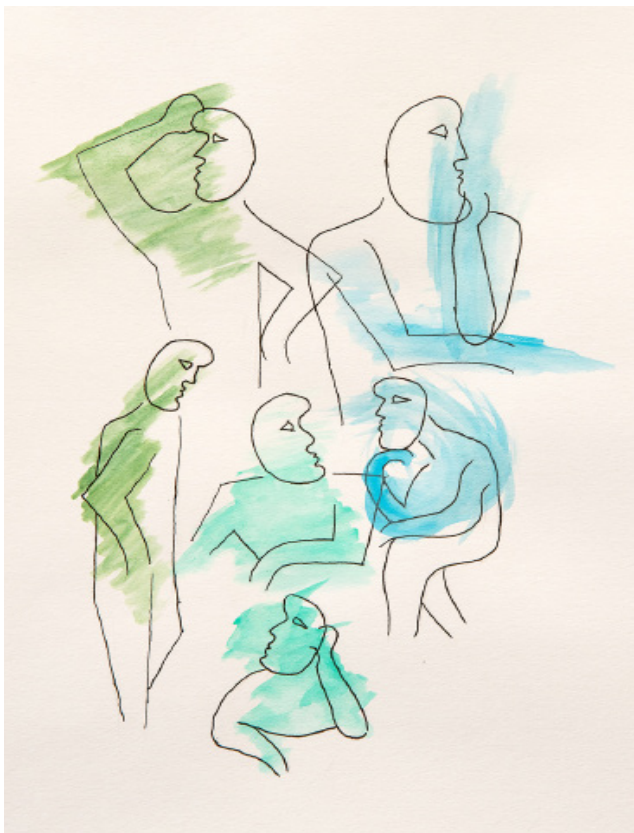
THE BODY: Kudzu.

RO: Right. Kudzu. Am I saying it right?

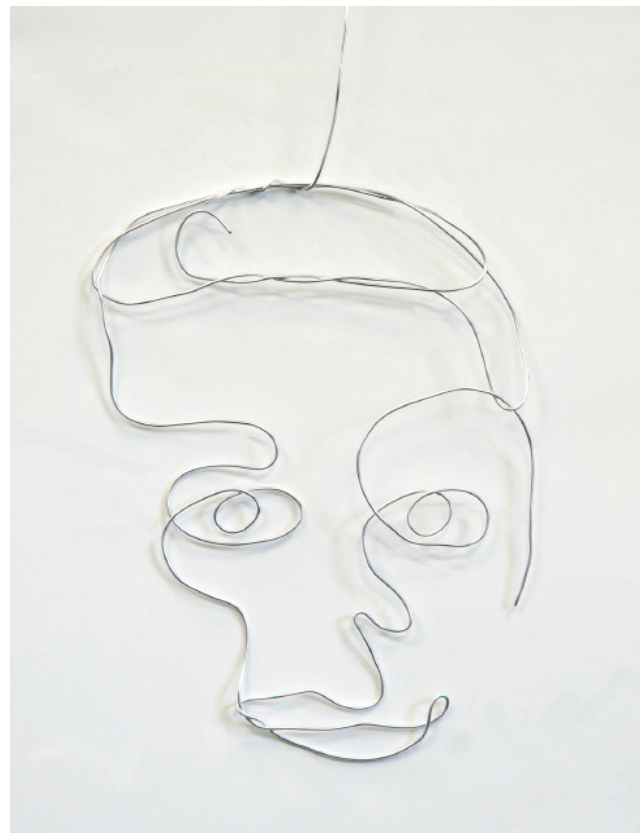
THE BODY: I don't know.

RO: You wouldn't, I guess. It was this weed Mom studied for work. Her and Emily were obsessed—it's invasive; it swallows trees whole! When we saw it on the side of the highway in Boston, Mom and Emily would mime lighting a match, setting it aflame. I guess it was a mean nickname. I was jealous of that. Of them. I thought it was pretty. (Beat) We were different, even then. Maybe more different than we are now. (Beat) Are we different now?

THE BODY: A little. Less so than more.



Thinking by Kevin O'Neill



Self in Wire by Kevin O'Neill



Sweet Dreams by Brooke Marsico

Lemons by Sage Hendelman



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