

IMPRESSIONS

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ABOUT IMPRESSIONS

In print since 1974, *Impressions* is an annual publication created by and for the students of Maryville College and members of the surrounding eastern Tennessee community. *Impressions* aims to present the best of art, poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and other creative works submitted by the the Maryville College community and the appalachian region. Online editions of *Impressions* can be viewed at *impressionsmc.org*.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Art is everywhere. It brings people together. It's in our lives every day in so many ways—through music, photography, literature, paintings, architecture, drawings, the list goes on. We are the only species that creates and appreciates art and it plays such a large role in all of our lives.

This magazine is a celebration of how important art is to each of us as individuals and as a community. Everyone has worked so hard this year to put this together. I hope that you enjoy the experiences of all these artists as much as I have.

Natasha Kollett, Editor-in-Chief

COVER ARTIST'S NOTE

For my last exhibition as an active faculty member at Maryville College I chose to express both the humor through which I view much of life and an inner reality that is always with me. The "Selfie" series tries to capture the many personalities that hide within me and sometimes pop out during a lecture or for special holidays like Halloween when we let our shadows escape into the light. The title work for the exhibition, A Phrenological Study of a MAD Man captures some of those personalities while misquoting Wikipedia while making fun of the relativity of human knowledge. The two sculptures reflect my whimsy when looking at the world and show what happens when a person begins collecting things like wine corks and pieces of wood left over from making frames. Eventually you have to do something with these collections. The colored abstract expressionist works are more a reflection of my inner self. They flow from my long held practice of automatic drawing and playing with symbols.

I hope that you enjoy the work and realize that inspiration came from such diverse sources as: Mad Magazine, The Ernie Knovacs Show, medieval manuscripts, and artists as diverse as Adolph Gottlieb and Warrington Colescott. I would like to thank my colleagues for their camaraderie and good humor these past 15 years. I will leave Maryville College having made many good friends and feeling like this community has accomplished many great things.

Thank you,
Mark Hall

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Part I

Prose

Sarah Hensley
Twelve Years

We've been living together for about ten years now. He's the best thing that's ever happened to me by far.

Before we met? Oh, I don't remember much of that, if it was before him it wasn't important anyway. If I ask him he gets upset and he really doesn't like me in black or blue, so I tend to avoid the question. All I know is what he's told me, and that was that he rescued me from something horrible before I came here. I can't imagine anything better than being with him. It must have been so horrible before. I bet I was miserable.

Leave him? Never! I would never want to upset him. He's so good to me.

How old am I? Twenty-two since June. He's such a good cook. He always makes me anything I want for my birthday. I usually choose cupcakes, it's the only time he says I should eat sweets. He told me they were harmful if you ate them too much.

Hungry? Of course I'm never hungry, the water helps with that and he likes me to look my best.

Too thin? Of course not! He says I could never be too thin. He says that I'm beautiful because I'm fragile. He's so good to me.

Do I watch television? Of course not! He says there are terrible, terrible things on the television. He doesn't want me to be scared, so he doesn't show me anything on the television. He can watch television though, but he's older and he's seen terrible things already so it's okay for him to see them. He says that's how he knows what's going on so that he can tell me. He's always protecting me, he knows

I'm sensitive.

Do I like to read? Never! He says that books are written to hurt people like me. He says there are things that would frighten me in them, so he keeps them from me to protect me. He's so good to me.

Music? No, I don't listen to music, he says it's full of bad, dirty things that would ruin my innocence, and he says that's what he loved most about me when we first met. He's always protecting my innocence.

Would he hurt me? Oh, no! He would never hurt me, he only teaches me and only when I do something terrible. Since I'm older now, I don't have to learn as much anymore. I used to have to learn a lot when I was younger, though, but he said that was normal for girls like me. I've learned to be good because it makes him happy and he doesn't think I look as good in black and blue. He's so good to me.

Do I have any friends? No, he says he's all I need.

Do I love him? Of course! He takes care of me and he protects me and rescued me from something horrible.

Does he love me? Yes, he loves me! He always tells me how lucky I am that he loves me, how he's the only one that could ever love someone like me.

Is this what I told the last interviewer too? Yes.

Do I have any questions? Yes, where is he? When can I see him? Is he okay? I know, you can't answer. That's what the last interviewer said too.

I have one more question before you take me back to my new room. I heard the other interviewer say it to the man with the gun. What is Stockholm Syndrome?

Natasha Kollett
Shots Fired

To this day, she swears that she barely even touched the trigger—that it just went off.

Me, I got lucky. The barrel of the gun was close to the floor and only a small amount of the shot connected with my foot.

I was 16 years old the night I sat at home late one evening chatting with a friend over the internet, when I got a call from my best friend, Mason, who told me some disturbing news: An escaped rapist was loose in the city.

My family's house was located a single block away from the prison, so, because of the close proximity, the call I received was appreciated. I went in to inform my mother about the situation, only to find her on the phone with Mason's mother about the very same thing. Getting the call from Mrs. V had sent my mother into a panic. She moved about the house, gathering up blankets to cover the windows. Receiving a phone call from both Mason and his mother meant that this was a pretty serious situation. However, with the house locked up I felt comfortable going back to the computer.

Shortly after she finished locking up the windows, I heard the cocking of a gun from mom's bedroom. I quickly went into her room where I saw my brothers sitting on her bed and my mother standing holding her (never before used) shotgun. She looked unnatural holding it. At first she held it by the barrel with both hands as if she was holding a bouquet of flowers—very dangerous and awkward flowers.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“It's just for in case.” My mom replied, still fiddling with

the gun as she tried to decide how it was supposed to be held.

“That's crazy! What would you even do if that guy did find us, shoot him?”

“Only in the knees—that won't kill him.”

“MOM!”

My brothers in the background chimed in with their own exclamations but quickly reverted to their own argument. I moved out of the doorway where she was directing the gun in demonstration. I stood just to the left of her as I leaned against her bed with my legs stretched out in front of me. I watched as she fumbled with the safety—she was switching it off and on trying to remember what the man that sold it to her had said was correct.

“Mom, leave the safety alone...you're going to hurt someone. Just...give me the gun, please?”

I've handled guns before, and if I could just get it away from her then we would all be fine. But she insisted.

“No, I've got it! The red dot means the safety is on”

“Mom, No! Red means Dead!”

She placed the butt of the gun against her shoulder with one hand on the barrel and the other moved closer to the trigger as she pointed the barrel to the floor to look down the sights.

“Mom, please just leave it be! Turn the safety back on.”

“It is on...it is fine!”

Then it happened.

BANG!

I dug out the small bit of flack that had lodged into my foot and bandaged up the wound. There was no visit to the emergency room, because all gunshot wounds have to be reported to the police—what would I have said? “Well my mom was nervous about a loose criminal, so...” no, that wouldn't do. I simply would have to take care of it myself.

I called Mason back to tell him what had happened. There was silence from the other end of the phone. Mason hesitated and tried to avoid laughing. He couldn't believe how out of hand this had gotten. It started as a harmless joke—just a rumor started by someone with nothing better to do—no one was meant to get hurt. There was no escaped man from prison, no danger at all.

Jordan O'Neal
Flash Fiction

Johnny

“Now, Johnny... I hope you know what you're gettin' yourself into. Look. They've got at least two dozen rifles and half that in shot. You can't go off an' taken 'em alone. You know that.” John sighed. Grief hung on his shoulders like a wool cloak soaked in a winter storm. He ran a hand through his hair, hoping the rock at the toe of his boot might shed some wisdom. “Dammit, Frank I know but... but I... I can't just sit here an' do nothin'!” He looked up, tears in his eyes. That killed the sheriff on the inside because if there was anyone in this town that wouldn't be caught tearing up it was Johnny. “Frank, I've got to go. They raped my wife and hung my kid! You don't... you just can't do that to man! I ain't got nothin' left no more.” Hot as it was, there was nothing but salt trails on his face, even with the shadow of his hat. John wouldn't care if it was raining molten iron or if hell brought winter; he'd be riding to take revenge on the god forsaken Bluetick Gang if it was the last thing he did. The sheriff knew it too, and he didn't have a cent to blame the poor man. But there wasn't much they could do with how well they holed up. All he had was a Winchester, his revolver and a useless deputy. How on God's Earth were they going to fix this?

1000 steps

When traveling the mountains, it is customary to stop and give homage to the many piled stones that mark the graves of those that didn't make the journey of the Thousand

Steps. "Here lies Elana, huntress, ambassador, mother. May she catch the Wild One in the worlds beyond," My voice croaked, and I laughed. I didn't realize I hadn't spoken in so long. I looked up, gauged the time to be a bit past noon. "Perfect time for lunch, don't you think, Miss?" The sound my pack made when it hit the ground was satisfying. It was heavy with a good trade and more than satisfying to put down. I pulled out bread, broke off a bit for Elana as offering and a tallow candle, too, which I lit. "May you find your mark." Meager prayer as it was, at least it was something. I've seen enough to be a little more than superstitious. The bread was stale, though still good. I washed it down with a bit of the mountain berry wine the locals made here. Elana got a share as well. I figured the dead might fancy a bit of wine now and then. With my belly full and spirits high, I sighed, all the weight of travel falling off of my shoulders and into the rock beneath. I was finally able to take a moment and look out beyond the little nook I rested in. Before me was a valley; Intural Range on this side and the Pollak Hills on the other. Nestled between them was the most ideal spot you could imagine for a kingdom. A mountain's river, likely the one that carved this range, ran through the middle, the Vitali. Nestled in the miles between the hills and mountains was a prosperous, independent little nation. They had enough space for fields, the river for water and trade, and protection on three sides. The wall to the south, their weakest point, was about to be done given a year's time. Everything here was blessed by the gods, they say, for no land is more bountiful. I was headed to the shrine atop the mountain-

The people in the valley say it's older than man and was here far longer than the first settlers. I'm curious to study its origins and perhaps glean some truth out of it. "I must be on my way, fair lady. I enjoyed your company. I'll be

sure to stop again on my way down. Rest well." With my pack up and ready, I set for the peaks.

Helpless

A heavy sigh, more of a sob than anything, fogged up the glass in front of her. Her hands and face pressed up as hard as they could against the icy surface. Internally, she screamed, as loud as her inner voice would allow. Her throat was raw, and her voice had given out long ago. The fog cleared, and once again she had to look outside her transparent prison. For miles she could see in all directions (for the floor was glass as well), and for miles in all directions the city and villages burned. Soldiers armed with hard plate and shining silver swords rampaged through the valley that held the most peaceful and progressive sovereignty in the word. The woman's heart could sink no further, and yet, as they approached the central structure of the province, it fell further still. This building was a glorious construction; a great marble tower stretching far above and wide as well. In it was at least three of every book around the world. The pride and joy of her city, their emblem, their image... now burning. The terrible smoke and fires billowed angrily from the windows on every floor. The deathly plume that rose above the city heralded the destruction of a golden age. The queen's hand bruised as she pounded at the walls, dying more and more as each of her beautiful citizens did. There was nothing she could do. Her city and people were lost, and she was forced to watch suspended above it, all for refusing to sell them into slavery. How could she? It is better they die than ever enter the Hell Pits, where their minds and flesh are stripped away, replaced with vile orders and stinking, constricting leathers made from their own skins. Better

they die. Darkness came to the queen, for there was nothing left to give. Her tears and voice and all her energy had died with her people, and so she conceded to sleep as it overran her consciousness. Whatever lay ahead... it didn't matter anymore.

Safe in the woods

"The way the streams sing to me is always my favorite part of going to the woods," I said to the millions of things around me. My back hurt from lying on the big, flat rock that I claimed since I was five because I could never quite lie flat. There was always this upward bow in my back that made uncomfortable surfaces even worse. But it was totally worth it. My island was perfect, smack dab in the middle of a big stream. It was big and tall and the part that sloped up faced upstream. It was sturdy. Defiant. My big old, reliable, and wet boulder. I couldn't tell you how many days I've spent here, gently rocked to sleep by the stony caress of the island and lulled to sleep by the watery lullaby. When the fires came, it was the first place I went to. They never went into the woods for some reason, even though they had the big guns on floaters and all sorts of Firestarters. It was as if they were afraid. Oh well. Hopefully they'll be gone tomorrow. It's been a week, I think. The days just kind of all seem the same anymore.

Julia Licavoli

The Test

It must be late. I can feel my eyelashes tickling the underside of my brow bone, but the only light breaking through the blackness is the tiny flickering of stars—jagged little circles punched in a black canvas.

I don't remember going outside. In fact, I don't even remember the exact moment in which the sun descended below the horizon; it seems instead to have winked out in an instant. If I blinked, I might have missed it. I'm lying belly up on the ground, I notice, and the gentle rustling beneath me suggests I've somehow ended up in the forest, probably nestled in a pile of fresh fallen leaves. How?

What's the last thing I can remember? Ah, that's right... it's his smile above me, playful and bright in the October sun. And I hear her voice, like honey, but sharpened around the edges of her words as she hisses into the phone, "Oh, shit".

But I don't hear anything now—no adjacent rustling of possible company. No sounds of breath. An owl hoots softly above, a low warning. Where are they?

Something stops me.

I realize that although I can feel soft air tickling my pursed lips, my chest isn't actually rising. I can't seem to send a message to my hands to move, and I suddenly realize the painful rigidity of my body. Panic burns through my veins as I struggle to sit, to reach, to perform any kind of voluntary movement to ensure that I am, in fact, still alive.

I hear a voice deliver a command, inside of my head: Count backwards from ten.

The voice is harsh and commanding, not unlike that of my secondary school History teacher who was always barking commands at us groups of semi-frightened schoolgirls. I flinch a little as the voice growls the command once more, exactly as before.

I will my eyelids to shut, desperate to obey because, for the first time in my life, I'm suddenly all too aware of every inch of my physical body—and the fact that I can't seem to voluntarily move a single part of it. I'm desperate to prove to myself that I'm not losing my mind and no, I'm not paralyzed—I'm just confused from...however it was that I ended up here, in the woods.

I begin counting, my voice moving through the numbers out loud at first, then to myself, until everything fades into blackness—this time a deep, bottomless blackness with no hole punch starlight in sight.

Something's wrong.

The thought, loud and persistent in my head, stirs me. The light is too bright outside the safety of my closed eyelids, an unexpected orange globe on the horizon of the darkness. I slide my eyelids open a tiny slit, first the left and then the right, gradually edging them to full openness. My mouth drops open as I take in, as if for the first time, the worn but somehow still cool interior of Atlas's old Wrangler. The sun filters into the open-air vehicle, it's brightness weaker than I'd anticipated but still warm enough to hold off the shivers threatening to creep in as it slips further below the horizon.

Are we almost there? Seriously, we've been driving for approximately three and one quarter hours, and I have coursework to be done before tomorrow morning, so it's not like we can spend all night out here looking around. I've told you, Atlas. If you don't pay more attention to your studies, you won't pass your comprehensives and you'll have to wait

a whole year to retake! You can't get a job without your comprys, you know that? You'll end up— We'll be there in about five minutes. Relax, Annie. You really should consider not being so wound up about everything all the time. Atlas's voice is cool and calm even as he cuts his sister off mid-sentence.

And I told you, this is coursework. It's helping me with this piece I'm working on for performance art. Annie snickers at the last part—she always did think his interest in the arts, particularly theatrics, was silly and wasteful.

I try not to look as panicked as I feel when I realize the reason for the awful sense of dejavu I'm having at the sound of their voices. This is the same conversation I woke up to yesterday afternoon. Prior to the woods at night situation but after I fell asleep thirty minutes into our three and a half hour drive. I search for any kind of rational explanation, my mouth pressed firmly against my fist, and when I come up empty, I feel the sigh escape my lips before I hear it, too loud against the classical music tinkling out of the stereo.

What's wrong? Atlas and Annie inquire simultaneously, the latter peering curiously at me from behind the thick-rimmed hexagonal rims of her glasses. She quirked a brow, daring me to lie to her. Ever the analyst, Annie is.

I try my best smile as I assure her,

Nothing, I...

But my mind goes blank as we bank around a steeply curved hillside road and the building grows before me, sagging and rusted in the nearly set sun, a forgotten monument to our town's history—the Old Mill House.

A lump rises in my throat as the building draws up in front of the Jeep, dark reddish and looming larger than it first appeared from the bottom of the hill. The windows, long broken or burned-out, are rimmed with what looks

like sooty residue and remind me of the sunken in eyes of corpses, dark and empty and lifeless. The Mill's wheel, though still standing, is riddled with termite-chewed holes and doesn't spin anymore, according to the older folks in town.

I notice, however, that despite the overgrown, weedy state of the yard, someone seems to have cleared a path to the building's concrete porch. A line of flat, oblong stones leads the way along the path to the front door, which stands wide and open, the door itself ripped off the hinges and cast aside some time ago. For some reason, the existence of this clean-cut and intentional part of such an unkempt property fills my chest with a burning sense of dread.

C'mon, Soph, what's gotten into you? You were so excited when we left this afternoon! Are you feeling okay? Atlas's cool voice pries me from my thoughts, and I force what I hope is another convincing smile before I reply, Yeah, just a little tired. I guess I had a weird dream while I was napping. Something about being trapped in the woods, in the dark, and unable to move any single part of my body. It was strange...it felt so real.

He shakes his head, but as I begin to avert my eyes and head up the path to meet him and Annie, who already stand on the porch, I see him exchange some sort of look in my direction—yet I realize that he isn't quite focused on me but just beyond the crown of my head. Everything in my body tells me to freeze, to run, to turn around and leave them in the Mill and sit in the car until they are finished with whatever it is we are here to do.

I reach the porch, which is really just a slab of concrete littered with tattered remains of lawn furniture and cigarette butts, catching a glimpse of Annie's golden waves disappearing through the gaping doorway and around the

corner. I take one last deep breath, steady myself, and step over the threshold and into a small, squat room. Against one wall, covered in smashed window glass, sits a small loveseat. The stuffing is coming out and it is faded from prolonged sun exposure, but overall seems newer than most of the furniture we've seen thus far. There is also a folding chair, nearly completely consumed by rust, and on the seat, a shiny black revolver. I can see the glint of the copper colored bullets in the barrel. I gulp.

Suddenly, Atlas steps out from the left corner of the room, a glinting near his hand catching my eye. His eyes, normally wide and calm, look sharp and squinted as his gaze locks onto mine. He edges nearer to me, driving me in the direction I know the rusted chair and revolver to be, but I don't want to...I love him.

I back up towards the chair anyways, because he's advancing quickly and I can see now that the glinting is a large butcher knife, which was half tucked in his sleeve but now rests facing me, the solid black handle gripped tightly in his palm. My hands, which are sweaty by now with anticipation, struggle to clutch the gun and when my index finger finally lands on the trigger, I don't have any time or distance left to think before I clench my finger and squeeze, firing off a close range shot directly into my best friend's heart. I gasp raggedly, too loud in the silent house, and drop to my knees beside him.

NO.

I hear quiet, small footsteps coming quickly towards me that can only be Annie's. I turn to face her, open my mouth to speak or scream at her, but the cold, collected look on her face shuts it before I manage any sound.

Congratulations, Sophie. You've passed the test. Well done.

Before I have time to think or move, I feel the prick in the side of my neck, and everything goes black.

Raine Palmer
Birds of a Feather

“I’m a murderer!” Maggie’s shrill sobs echoed through the otherwise quiet forest. The devastated admission of guilt failed to move either member of her audience. Martin continued sitting on the mossy green log of a fallen tree, eying Maggie wearily as she sat huddled on the dead leaves coating the ground. The only other witness was the murder victim herself, lying crumpled on the ground before them, chest still and eyes glazed.

Maggie continued to blubber incoherently into her hands. Martin sighed, a lingering cloud in the icy air. Maybe his indifference made him seem callous or cruel, but he’d been watching Maggie’s hysterics for at least ten minutes now, and his patience had quickly run out.

“It’s just a dumb bird, Maggie. You don’t even like birds.”

Maggie’s head shot up swiftly, glaring at him with red, puffy eyes. The image wasn’t nearly as powerful as she’d intended, but five-year-old girls in pigtails are rarely very intimidating.

“It’s not just a bird,” she insisted. “She-She probably had a family. And friends. And now she’s dead. I killed her!”

Martin rolled his eyes before standing up, jamming chilled hands inside his jacket’s pockets.

“Okay, one, you don’t even know that it’s a girl bird. Two, it doesn’t matter. So there’s going to be an empty nest. Who gives a fat f-“ He trailed off, and it wasn’t just to avoid another dollar in the swear jar. Maggie’s face had suddenly contorted into a look of pure devastation.

“Her eggs, Martin! Her eggs! They’ll be orphans. I killed their mommy!” She wailed, dissolving into sobs

once more.

Martin groaned loudly, eyes rolling towards the sky. This was why he hadn’t wanted his little sister to tag along on his impromptu hike. Ever since they’d moved a month ago, she’d become impossibly clingy, following him like a human shadow. He wouldn’t have minded as much if she hadn’t also become so moody, fluctuating from her normal giggly self to a six-year-old’s best interpretation of an angsty teenager. Hell, even he wasn’t that bad.

But it hadn’t been his choice. Maggie had been so dead-set on going with him to explore the woods near their new home that she had thrown a tantrum of Biblical proportions until their mom had demanded that he let her come.

Still, no matter how annoying she was being right now and had been for the past few weeks, he did hate to see her cry.

“Well, hey, things usually work out for orphans, right?” He tried with all the false enthusiasm he could muster.

“Like... like a bird Harry Potter.”

“But that means that I’m Voldemort! I don’t want to be Voldemort!” She shrieked.

“Look, Maggie-“

“This is all your fault, Martin!” She snarled, cutting him off. The devastation on her face had morphed into a sudden fury in a way that was becoming upsettingly familiar. “I’m Voldemort and it’s all your fault!”

“How is this my fault?” Martin shouldn’t have started arguing, he knew he shouldn’t have, but his mouth was already moving, and he couldn’t stop now. “I wasn’t the one throwing rocks at people. You’re the one with the bright ideas and the lousy aim.”

“I only threw the rock because you were ignoring me,” Maggie retorted, little hands curled into fists by her sides.

“No, I wasn’t.”

“You were,” She insisted. “You’re always ignoring me!”

“That’s not true-“

“It is,” Maggie said, soldiering defiantly on. “Ever since we moved here, you’ve ignored me. You won’t hold my hands when we cross the street. You don’t talk to me, and- And you’re never here! Mom’s never here, none of my friends are here, and neither are you! I hate you!”

With that parting blow, she bolted, leaving the trail and I hate you behind as she raced into the jungle of rhododendrons and pines.

Martin didn’t move to follow her at first, hesitating as she vanished from sight. Pieces of reality that he’d had the privilege to ignore were now fitting neatly into place to form an upsetting picture.

She’d changed since they’d moved, he’d known that. He’d seen the symptoms with growing irritation, but he’d never once tried to figure out the cause. Now it was all too clear. She wasn’t being a brat on purpose. She was lonely. He and their mother had been so wrapped up in adjusting to their own new lives that any concerns about how Maggie was adjusting had fallen to the wayside. She was upset, she was lashing out, and now- Oh, shit, now she was probably lost in the woods.

Martin took off in the general direction she’d disappeared into. Barren, thorny branches grabbing vindictively at his clothing and foliage low to the ground intermingled with wayward roots to create an obstacle course on the forest floor.

“Maggie?” His voice rang out as he ran, carrying on for what seemed like miles. He stopped for a moment, listening for a reply. None came, but that was when he heard the sobs.

He made his way toward his sister’s unmistakable

whimpers and sniffs, carefully and quietly threading through the undergrowth like he was approaching a spooked animal. Pushing aside the sticky branches of a pine tree, he found her, curled into a little ball, a vibrant splash of color in her pink fleece coat.

“Maggie?”

She didn’t reply.

“Maggie, I’m sorry.”

“Go away,” She sniffed loudly. Instead, he moved to kneel down next to her.

“Maggie, I really am sorry. I’ve been a... a butt, and I’m sorry. None of this has been fun for any of us, but we- I was so caught up with all this new stuff that I didn’t think about you. I’ll try to do better, okay? Can you please forgive me?”

Maggie had uncurled somewhere in the middle of his speech, eyes focused stubbornly on the forest floor. He held his breath.

“Yeah...” She mumbled finally.

“Good,” Martin said, a smile tugging at his lips as he stood up, holding out a hand to help her up. “Ready to go back home?”

She nodded mutely, taking his hand in hers and allowing herself to be pulled up.

They made their way back to the trail, moving slowly and deliberately to avoid any accidents in the undergrowth. The silence was still awkward but not quite as empty as before. It was only when they were back at the trail that Maggie stopped, eyebrows furrowed.

“Martin, where’s the bird?”

He paused. Where was the bird? The body had disappeared leaving only a few splotches of blood and single feather behind. Had it actually somehow survived?

The answer came as soon as the question was poised. A

flash of dull orange darted into a nearby bush. It had to be a fox or some sort of weird stray dog that was about to use Maggie's accidental victim to take care of its own family.

Martin glanced back at Maggie and was relieved to see that she hadn't noticed it, too busy studying the scene of the crime.

"She probably, you know, flew away," He tried. "I guess she wasn't dead after all."

They were quiet for a moment, Maggie's face pensive and Martin's trying and failing to act casual about the whole incident.

"Yeah," Maggie finally said. "She must have."

Martin wasn't sure if she'd actually believed him or was choosing to give him the benefit of the doubt. In the end, it didn't matter. The accidental bird murderer and her unwitting accomplice left the crime scene to head towards home. This time Martin let Maggie hold his hand, even when they weren't crossing the street.

Brian Gresham
Cold War Story

In the process of combing the room, he'd moved the sofa and pulled back the rug. The sofa had been concealing a badly warped section of flooring - heavy water damage - the boards almost squished when he stepped on them. His better judgment told him to cover it back up - the place was a rental, after all, but he badly wanted a place he knew wasn't watched, even if it was just a crawl space. The question was, then, how to bust out the floor without making too much noise.

So he went shopping. He bought groceries, an ashtray, and a table top radio. He set the radio on the coffee table and turned it up - loud enough to drown out some noise, but again not too loud. Then he went and got his gun, attached the silencer, shot into the floor, and pried up three boards - wide enough for his shoulders. He shined his flashlight down into a good-sized basement. The stairs weren't centered under the hole but were within reach. They looked like they had some rot as well. After nearly crashing to the floor when the first step he touched snapped under his weight, he picked his way down to find about 400 square feet of empty space. He searched in vain for lights and combed the room with his flashlight. He found no bugs of the electronic variety, but he found the outline of a tunnel that had been bricked up. Nothing else was there to tell him what the room had been used for but a clawfoot bathtub, some glass bottle shards, and some cigarette butts. He imagined this could have been a bootlegger's hideout. He could imagine some toxic concoction being cooked up in that bathtub, and that would explain the tunnel - it might have led to a local speakeasy.

He suddenly noticed his heart pounding in his ears. This room was suitable for nearly anything he wanted. He could live in it, if need be. . . . He swept it for bugs one more time and tried not to become too excited. He would let the room be for now. In all likelihood, the KGB knew about it.

He was not called upon over the next two weeks. He spent the time disappearing into the city. Shops, parks, and bars. One night, with a kettle of tea to keep him awake, he stayed up drafting papers from memory. He wanted the descriptions and diagrams done in a day so he wouldn't have to store them for long. The design for the physical machine he stretched out quickly, but it took him till well after sunrise to review, to check, and to recheck his math. He still could not believe it was possible. From the moment the nuclear race began, he had wrestled with other applications for fission, how it might be applied to time dilation. The concept, put simply, was this: Elementary particles can approach - and potentially break - the speed of light. If an object (or human) could be decomposed, sent through a particle accelerator, and reassembled (hopefully in a sterile environment) it could be transported instantaneously anywhere light could be projected. (Of course, the object couldn't be sent far enough to have significant time dilation. It might not be reassembled in the future.)

The most difficult piece was getting the atoms and then compounds to reform. The first step was to catch the energy/matter in anything from a cleanroom to a test tube. As long as they maintained a high velocity, the particles would not "stick together." The reduced velocity and lower temperature in the container aided the process, but such highly energized particles, forming complex organisms, would require a stronger catalyst than water condensing on a glass. Something had to tell them to replicate same form - bone and muscle structure, DNA.

Three years ago, he managed a private meeting with two chemists from Leningrad State University, and they developed a bonding agent that could be injected into living organisms. In theory, it works as a sort of muscle memory for atoms and compounds - a chemical signal similar to what allows sea stars to regenerate limbs. In theory, but there was no telling if too much energy would be lost, even in the closed system that he'd devised. And they had nothing for inanimate objects: as far as they knew, there could be no chemical signal to tell particles "knife" to become a knife, instead of a dull plate of tempered steel.

* * * *

The house on 112 Mercer St. was small and square - white siding, dark shutters. Just the sort of quaint, unassuming house you would expect a seventy-year-old professor to live in. A low hedge with a chest-height iron gate surrounded the place. As he approached, he could hear a violin. He was not one to recognize melodies, but the notes sounded clean and precise. Why do mathematicians always play? he thought. Somewhere, notes and numbers are equivalent. The gate was latched, of course, so - after a quick glance to either side - Boris vaulted it and knocked on the door. He heard the screech of a bow suddenly lifted off of strings. A cough and a shuffle. A few resonating knocks as the instrument was cased. A short man in baggy clothes, who looked like he had just withdrawn his finger from an electrical outlet, answered the door. The warm smell of pipe smoke escaped the room.

"Dr. Einstein?" Gribanov asked.

"You found him," Einstein said.

Gribanov doffed his cap and bowed his head. One lie requires another. He had best keep things simple. "Boris

Gribanov – I am here to consult you for a project.

“Ah! You didn’t write.” He kept the door partially shut.

“No, sir,” said Gribanov. “My vision is poor. . . . My English is worse.”

Einstein chuckled. “But a gate is no obstacle.”

Gribanov grimaced. “Forgive me, I did not want to shout in the street.”

The door opened wider. “Forgive me,” Einstein said, leaning against it, “but what is the nature of this project? You understand that you are the first Soviet scientist to show up at my door. . . . I presume you are a Soviet scientist?”

“I am Russian . . . Soviet according to some. I have done . . . thought experiments . . . in time dilation. I had hoped we could speak in private, if the press will allow it.”

He offered his hand. Einstein shook it – firm and warm, but soft – the kind of handshake you would expect from a man whose mind was his workhorse. The door swung open. Einstein took his pipe out of his mouth. “Well, Mr. Gribanov – Or is it Dr. Gribanov?”

“It’s Boris,” said Gribanov.

Einstein flashed a smile. “Well, Boris, I have had a bounty on my head before. I’m not afraid of having a word with a suspected Soviet, so long as we can shelve the politics. . . . I am flattered that you would come so far just to speak with me.” Einstein led him past a staircase – rich wood with white walls.

The living room had a crackling fire, three walls of bookshelves, and interesting but sparse furniture. Simple padded armchairs and a black music stand; an old Victrola beside a brand new television; and a gorgeous wall clock that looked early 19th century. Einstein cleared a mound of books and papers off a table, revealing ink stains of what age there was no telling, and they sat in the

armchairs.

“You’d probably like a few morsels or a cup of coffee,” Einstein said. “I would offer you a drink, but I don’t.”

Gribanov smiled and waved a hand. “Nothing. Thank you. I have eaten.” He took two cigars out of his pocket and offered one, but Einstein shook his head. “Thank you, but I prefer a pipe when I have one,” he said, knocking the contents of his briar pipe into the ashtray that had served as a paperweight. He refilled his pipe. “Smoking may be a nasty habit, but I’m sure you know how it focuses the mind. . . .”

Gribanov nodded and struck his lighter.

“ . . . I tell you, if more presidents, prime ministers, and diplomats sat and smoked together, there would be no need for arms races. Threats and posturing drain away. . . . Solutions rise to the surface.” Einstein struck a match to light the pipe and sat back, propping his feet on the table.

Gribanov thought of the famous lack of socks. The man spared no time for trifles. And yet Gribanov wondered how many bowls of tobacco would equal a pair of socks. It was a shame that someone who so valued his time would risk cutting it short.

Gribanov went for his briefcase. Einstein piped up again. “Before you reveal anything that you wouldn’t otherwise, I’m sure you understand that I cannot guarantee total privacy. . . . I am a person that people tend to pay attention to . . . and I’m sure Hoover knows I’m fond of a state of peace . . . Lord knows what Hoover thinks of me. I gave up counting the flies on my wall.”

Gribanov nodded. “I’ll take my chances, Dr. Einstein.”

He pulled out the folder of sketches and equations and watched as the old man poured over them with the intensity of a patent clerk long out of work. His hands were almost trembling. When he passed over the equations for a

second time, he actually clutched at his heart.

Gribanov reached out to him. "Are you all right? Is my math correct?"

Einstein straightened up, wiped the mist off his glasses, and took the pipe out of his mouth. "Yes to both! . . . All this is your work?"

"On paper. I would need help to realize it."

Einstein took a deep draw of his pipe. "When Dr. Leo asked me to put my signature on that letter," he said, "warning President Roosevelt of the A-bomb, I told him 'I had not thought of that' . . . But I had thought of that. . . . I don't mean that as an insult to your work, my friend . . . I am very glad someone came along and wrote it out, made it a reality."

Gribanov leaned back in his chair. "It is not a reality yet, Dr. Einstein. . . . and this is as far as I plan to take it."

Einstein did not look as disappointed as Gribanov expected. He puffed a thick ring of smoke and rhythmically tapped the stem of his pipe on the table. "I assume you're concerned about its potential to be weaponized. Then why come and share this with me?"

Gribanov smiled as he watched an unbroken ring of smoke drift toward the ceiling. "The urge to confess," he said. "The need to know that my effort was not wasted." Then he snuffed out his cigar, got up, and slid the contents of his briefcase into the fire.

Part II

Art



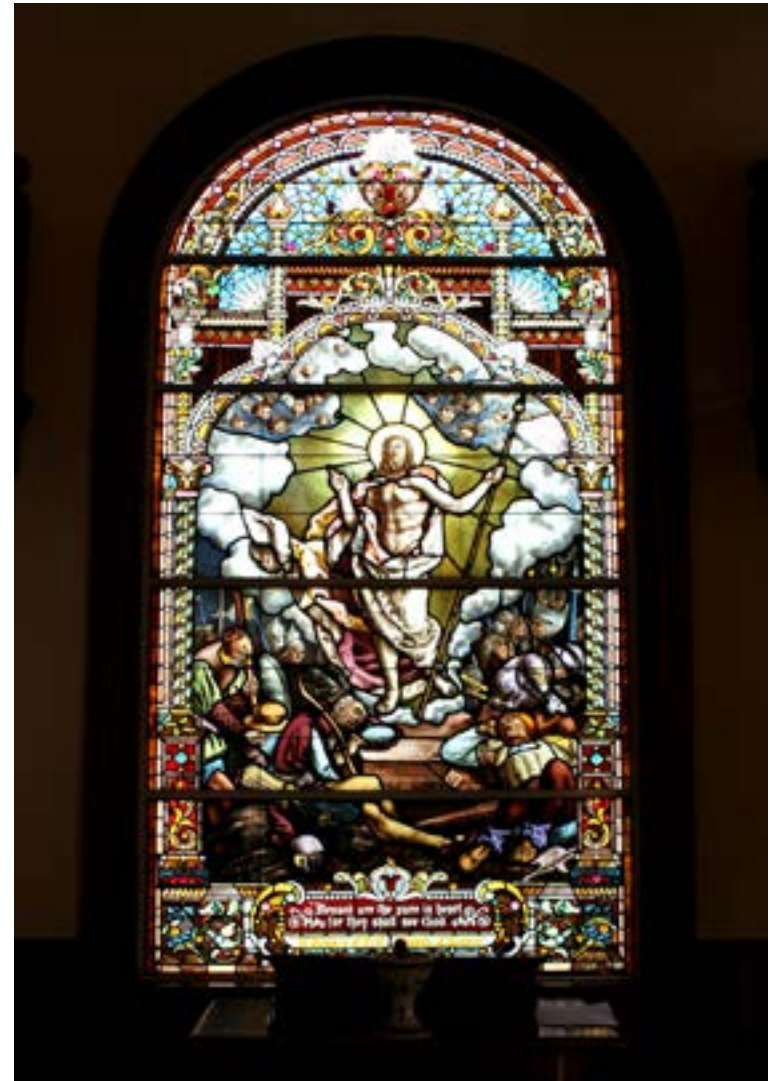
Foxes by Brandi Payne



Hello by Brandi Payne



Untitled Photo by Albrianna Jenkins



Untitled by Albrianna Jenkins



Shell Sheaf by Hannah Sharp



Floundering by Beth Myers-Rees



Mushroom Girl by Natasha Kollett



Graffiti Wall by Natasha Kollett



The Red Lady by Timela Crutcher

Part III *Poetry*

Sue Mitchell
Untitled

The waves crash
upon the empty beach
as the pebbles rustle
the chill winds whip
the sand along the shore
while the sun sets
on my January in Maine

Taylor Ford
Forever You and Me (a Sonnet)

Reality, too dull for me to dream
My God, please help me to pretend some more.
I want a world where nothing's as it seems,
A world where I don't care what soul is for.
I longed for wings of turquoise made of stars
To ward away my loneliness and strife.
I dreamed of men who'd chase away my scars
And hide the wounded terrace of my life.
But I was young and did not know that they
Would run away from me and disappear.
My tears were cold and begged for them to stay.
I prayed that I was there instead of here.
But you are more than any fantasy.
I only want forever, you and me.

Albrianna Jenkins
Glass Heart

My heart beats violently inside its cage.
The hair on the nape of my neck is raised.
My voice box has swollen inside my throat.
 I try to speak. Instead, I choke.
 I float inside my state of being.
Unbeknownst to others, my head is reeling.
 There's terror in every tortured step,
And my eyes are glassy with tears unwept.
 I offer up my barren chest,
Vulnerable and naked, my screams suppressed.
 My heart is pounding in my ears,
 For all my fears and all the tears.
Who knew there were such high stakes
In offering a glass heart, free to take?
 In offering a glass heart,
 Free to break?

Albrianna Jenkins
I'm Sorry to the Girls I Called Pretty

I'm sorry to the girls I called pretty,
and to the girls I said were cute.

I'm sorry that that was my first compliment when meeting
 you.
Instead of remarking on your intelligence, your creativity,
 your sense of purpose, or your desire
to learn new things,

I summed you up to the word
"Pretty"
and left you alone.

Because, in my haste,

I didn't take the time to see or understand that "pretty" is
 the least of all compliments.

When words like "brave", "independent", "self-sufficient",
 and "compassionate" exist

How does "pretty" compare?

Please, accept my apology,

And know that you are worth more than a compliment to
 your appearance.

Julia Licavoli
1248 Winchester Avenue, 6 A.M.

the kitchen, small by comparison
seems to stretch miles in front of me today
the cabinets are pouring into the floor, tile coughs click
clack
and my eyes are pouring into glass after glass.
the room squirms beneath my hollow gaze
and alone i reach for arms to hold me,
half expecting the room to hug me back.
the table, three foot four.
it seems so domineering, the bridge of my
nose resting against the polished oak.
hands empty, heart empty, i search for comfort.
ghosts of our whispers and giggles are all i discover,
crouched beneath the stairs and behind the pantry door.
all of my favorite places for hiding.
in your empty kitchen, too vast for even the singing
teapot to fill with its clattering noise i hum your song, our
song
the kitchen sings with me in your absence
i can still feel you here, sure, in this endless abyss full of

white and black click clack tiles and fresh-squeezed juice,
but a kitchen full of my memories is still an empty room
and you're still dead
and there is still nothing i could have done to keep the
casket
from closing again and again on the chapter of my life that
is
your kitchen.

Brian Gresham
The Libertarian

I do not choose to be a common man.
It is my right to be uncommon – if I can.
To come to a fork in the stream,
And climb the tree that stands in between.
Liberty or security . . .
We have a false dichotomy.
Left or Right, Black and White, on polling day.
But Red Sheep, Blue Sheep locked in a fray
Cannot keep the wolves at bay.
My solution is simple –
At least in principle.
Congress, won't you concede?
Leave me my guns,
But let my neighbor have his weed.
Stop handing out the dole,
But have compassion with border patrol.
Treat other nations with humility,
But have fiscal responsibility.
Keep military capability,
And call terror by its name.
No utopia will this be,

But heed my words and you'll soon see,
That I'll return the same,
And serve my country on demand.
Legislate with a light hand.
Let me be a free man
In an uncommon land.

Melanie Mullins
#1 (From Me to You)

I carve moments out of my day
away from what is
to what
was.

To play the songs that slowly begin the story.
How the music of a carousel starts
tinny and drawn out
speeding up with the spinning of the painted horses.

Two songs into the mix
windows are down and I'm
breathing in the dry, dusty, delicious
smell of decaying leaves.

This is my autumn.

Warm air with a bite
pumpkin patches with the family
and my annual brief slip
into the quiet place
inside
where I love him from far away
in early autumn.

Raine Palmer
Mourning Dove Man

You should've known what kind of day it was going to be
When instead of the Cock crying out at the break of dawn
You woke up to-
The Mourning Dove.
An Appalachian omen right outside your window
Anxiously ruffling its gray, gray feathers and
Sighing that sorrowful tune-
"I'm so
Sad
Sad
Sad..."

You were too poor to hear about it on the radio.
You had to find out from the newspaper that
War Had Come Last Night.
The draft was calling your name,
Dragging you from your home, your wife, your life like-
A Mama Bird kicking its baby out of the nest.
Uncle Sam was telling you
It
Was time
To fly.

So you had to borrow your brother's boots
And were paraded with the rest of the former nestlings
before the great Bald Eagles.
"You're a War Hawk, boy!"
That's what the drill sergeant, the colonel, the Commander
in Chief
That's what they all told you.
"I'm a War Hawk Boy!"

You all screeched in reply
And then in a flock of other War Hawk Boys
To a far off, foreign land
You
Took
Flight.

But the moment you landed, you realized you weren't the
 real Birds of Prey
The War Hawk Boys were falling, not flying
Courage
Pride
It all fell away with a spray of bullets
Feathers stained with vivid red exploded in the air
Exposing the gray, gray wings underneath.
You weren't a War Hawk Boy
You realized as your wing was clipped and
You fell to the Earth, clutching your shoulder.
You're a Mourning Dove Man.
You sighed that sorrowful tune
"I'm a Mourning Dove Man
And I'm so
Sad
Sad
Sad..."

Beth Myers-Rees
My Siblings' Parents

Jagged glory, he is all sharp edges
Magnificently sharp
She glides through him, sinuous and sultry
He feels nothing
She is too subtle, breeze to his tempest
Dwindling, they occupy
 the same space
 facing opposite walls

Chandler Chastain
Halloween Sonnet

The sky of black will gleam for you tonight
We sing to bats that cry lonely and hard.
Listen for our love song bringing our light
The ghost and ghoul are soft, afraid to guard.
A pumpkin stands on brick porches to scare
Behind our masks of night we try to hide.
The breeze will rise to this autumn affair
They hold their hands to heart and stay inside.
But why does cold give chill to happy hearts?
We stay content enjoying night and song.
Alone, we would be cold and stray apart.
So here we thrive in night and say "belong."
My heart is calm with you in cold and night.
Your heart is safe with me in warm and bright.

Chandler Chastain
Why I like to Stare at the Sky

My favorite part about this place is the lack of cars.
People are fine; I can deal with background children at
play and
the ambiance of squirrel chatter.
It's the cars that get me.
Dangerous and fast they threaten my
humanity with their lack of personhood.
A screaming child may involuntarily snatch
my attention, and a red bird will accidentally hold
my train of thought for an hour--but of these
images I am accepting. I love to be distracted
by the simple and pretty.
But please, understand when I say the cars make me
uneasy.
They hold my attention in the most unpleasant of ways
and it
takes a talkative crow and a swaying cloud to bring me
back
to a small serenity.
The unpredictable breeze touches my skin,
hair, and pushes late autumn leaves
through the holes in my sweater; the sky
shines early evening light on the swingset
and my little bird. Together, my park
friends and I remain stilled by this weather,
but no force of nature stops the highway from
slowing down.

Peyton Jollay
Mouths

I came once alone to a key clandestine.
By canoe I came through fall fog.
On every frail branch a bird was perched.
And the way they screamed!

No mammal thing had ever come there,
Not alive. Those brutish creatures,
All trying to be louder than the last.
How hatchlings cried for mothers.

There were no nests, for the whole of
The place was a withered shrub.
And on the whole, it seemed so lonely
My God. How hungry!

Abby Navarro
Vulnerable

And she loved me so
Like a great storm loves a ship

With nowhere to go

Mia Pearson
St. George in Ashes

**“Flames shoot through roof of Knoxville Greek Church,
site of annual Greek Festival” (WATE)**

Your mosaics lined my veins.
Blue and red tiles warmed me
Like blood cells. They
Took me up and away
With strong
Incense.

I could hear the angels singing
From the walls; I heard the
Saints professing
Their devotion from
Stained glass.

I felt the crack and whistle
of broken bones as
All my angels were silenced
As fire consumed
It all.

But beside this fire we sit.
Coffee bubbles in the *briki*
Atop flames which dance like
Our ancestors.

I see them holding
Rough, troubled hands
That cling to one another
Like hope.

There are Turks and Germans
On the edge of the wood.
They bring only
Black ashes and heavy
Smoke.

But my people dance on
Forgetting not *meraki*
Forgetting not the joy
Which our unceasing
Fire can bring.

Embers which took away
My heaven, I see them raise shadows
Long like cypress trees.
I see films of Cretan warriors
Chewing olives and
Spilling wine into their laps.

Your mosaics line my veins.
And their laughter pumps my heart.
Incense fills my lungs
And so you shall
Live.

Hannah Sharp
Swept Away

Powerful waves pulse
around my legs
and the salty air
whips my chestnut hair
into spinning spirals.
The coarse sand stings
my bare feet
and my open eyes
see how the Atlantic
rolls up to meet the rumbling sky.

Further, and deeper
I venture into this
tumbling immenseness.

For a moment
I wonder at the solid ground
left behind-- see the
soundness in it.

But out there,
a Siren's sweet song
calls my soul to life
in the deep—wide, unknown—
in those pulsing and powerful waves.

My mind slowly slips, and drifts—
eyes closed—
while my arms and legs lift,
and the Sea embraces me.

A soft smile
curves across my face
because, in this moment,
I am free.

Beth Myers-Rees
Grace

First glance:

The green, green promise of summer,
surely sweet in May,
has soured by late August.
Heat weighs heavy on me;
 saps my strength,
 slows my step.

Assessment:

It's blunt, not blownt (Blount),
severe, not seviay (Sevier),
lenore, not lenwah (Lenoir),
and murvel, not Mary-ville (Maryville),
the real estate agent informs me . . .
I am a foreigner,
I've always been a foreigner;
resettling, not moving,
 and far too many times.
Nuclear families are portable, after all.

Second blush:

Insects buzzing, bullfrogs calling, beavers damming,
leaves turning, earth preparing
 to be dormant while
every route to town is splashed
with gold and orange,
crimson and evergreen.

Reassessment:

Kindness is a gift given often
here, with great conviction.
Can't remember any settlement with more sincerity
 per capita.
They are genuine
here
and hardly aware it's a rarity.

Chilly reception:

Almanac calls for deep snow,
frigid air, gritted teeth.
Hard times are coming.
Dead-brown leaves feel like wasted years
 falling.
Mood won't lighten under grey overcast.

Connection:

Bonds are forged in music, stage front.
Found a family of friends swaying to the beat, singing along,
 or joining me on the dance floor by ones and twos.
Blues blends to Bluegrass
and the local practitioners are far too modest.

Colorful reprise:

Wind is freshening;
can smell the ozone on the shifting air.

Spring rains announce waves of color:
bright yellow, crisp white,
then pink,
 purple,
 blue.

Leaning into it:

Roots have tunneled deep while I wasn't looking.
In the course of child-raising, wage-earning, soul-yearning
home was defined
 and I no longer question the concept.
Odd feeling, this rootedness,
this 'there-will-always-be-this-place' feeling.
No more need for portability.
And I instruct "furrners" in the local pronunciations.

Nadia Marrero-Silva
Gone

Nights without you here feel like purgatory,
where there exists you and I on the same plane of being
but neither of us can touch the other.

Let's be honest while my saliva's turned to truth serum.
I dread it when you're gone.

It's the same feeling I get when my eyes are tired
and feel too taut, too strung out just behind everything
- in a place where I can't rub the slight burn away.

This must be what it's like to be born in a world of color
and have it be drained away, all grays and shades and tints
and--

Everyone asks me where you are, and I never noticed the
 frequency of it
until the first night you were gone.

See, you are everywhere even when you're not,
a phantom haunting the vacant corners of my mind.
In this silence, I am reminded your absence gives you
 omnipresence,
but who would ever choose an abstraction over something
 tangible?

I want you here, like Dante to fair Beatrice – let's call you
 my Paraíso,
since Hell comes to me, as he, when you're gone.
Jesus. I know I'm rambling again.

But my soul is a low hum, you host all of its buzz,
and restlessness grapples with my consciousness.
I don't know what's before me and what's not.

Look, I am so sleepy, and you're so far away.
And if I close my eyes, maybe I'll dream of you.

Wesley Blevins
Snapshot Number 2

The scene is set –
A small desk, a black laptop with blue lights,
A red-cushioned chair with little balance.
The backdrop, a glaring window
And blank brick walls.
The soundtrack to my life is air conditioning
And the cooling fan of my computer.
The beat of my heart matches liquid melody,
Electronic, contrived songs of energy and recklessness
Pouring from headphones like glorious fountains
To wash me away and lift me on tides of sound.
I drum out consistent strikes with each press
Of the easily-indented keys.
This moment is the symphony of my thoughts,
And not often do I make such captivating concepts
Into a relaxing reality.
I am composer, conductor, and audience
Of the most perfect moment ever framed in time.

Megan Burnett
Unlikely Intentions

He's just a man, after all
He likes his whiskey like he likes his women—strong and
 a little cold.
The first sip sends a warm trickle down his throat
He's ready.
Ready for the next woman to catch his eye
The room is filled with laughter and the looming clouds of
 smoke,
He sees past it and he finds her.
Her long, beautiful legs
Hair pulled tight and a briefcase by her side
He knows she's by herself—no one takes a second look.
She sits close to him, never making eye contact.
One shot of tequila and an old fashioned,
She looks over to him—never cracks a smile.
He's ready.
Ready take her out of this place,
He's ready to take her.
He's just a man, after all,
And that's when the murders began.

Megan Burnett
Little Hell

We wait in lines, we wait in traffic,
Wait for the next big thing to come along.
Life is one big waiting room, one big trick,
We have no idea how often, how long.

Sometimes patiently, we just wait;
We believe we have choices and more time,
Why wait on others to decide our fate?
Without time on our minds, we'd do just fine.

Inevitably it comes to an end,
Do we go to heaven or hell from here?
This is purgatory; no help to lend.
We live here, we die here; with or without fear

We cannot choose our unavoidable fate;
We can only choose how long we must wait.

C. Ballinger
A Pastoral Scene

We humans have painted in blood a small,
disproportionate portrait of our God.

Predestination of life and damnation,
One trail but two gates for the will-less cattle, and
Segregation by herds
Branded before birth
Judged merely by the bitter whims of some Bearded
Detached Rancher in the Sky.

That is not who God is. It's quite the pastoral scene, but it's
blasphemous. Arrogant.

We haven't yet a canvas large enough to fit our God
not enough color to depict
the magnitude of justice, love, mercy, grace, acceptance,
or wisdom
or eyes wide enough to see the entire masterpiece created
by the Ultimate Painter.

Liz Lane
A Lesson

There is an end to all things
Sisyphus's burden will crumble before him
Those roasting in Hell will have burnt to a crisp
Tantalus's tree will rot, and pomegranates will rain
And what would have been the point of it all?
Why teach a lesson when all things end,
Birds, beast, trees, and the hours?
Even the mountain will bow to the wind
The ash from the furnace will not come back again
Those bridges you burned in open honesty
And the charcoal and soot that have clung to me
Will have meant nothing, they did not set us free
When there is nothing to us, there is nothing to be
I cling to you as I wish you would have loved me
But should I still try to live my life, if only vicariously?

Part IV *Community Spotlight*

This school year, *Impressions* made trips to Lanier Elementary School's after school program with the goal of helping children with their reading and writing skills, while also showing them how much fun it can be! The following images, stories and poems were produced by these elementary school students.

At the Beach

I see an eagle in the sky
I hear the waves
I eat ice cream and the flavor is cookies and cream

--Amy



Godzilla the Humongous Rooster

I the rooster live in a barn
and I smells grass, dirt, and hay.
I eat crawdads and if they pinch me
I smash them
I am Godzilla the Humongous Rooster.
I am nice and don't chase the hens
I tell everyone when to go to bed
and when to wake up
When hens attack they hurt the people
and they put it in their vlog called chens.

--Brayden



Corn Snake

I would be a corn snake
Big and orange
Eat, sleep, and slither
Slither all over my brothers' neck
I would sleep in a cage
and eat rats.

--Cayden



Gingerfriends

A long time ago, once upon a time, it was a dark and stormy night. A little girl and a little boy are walking in a dark, spooky forest. A big scary black bear chases them in to a big white house. "Hurry and get in the house!" says a gingerbread man. They all run in to the house. The bear is very sneaky and is trying to get inside. When he looks through the window, he sees a FAT T-rex with a top hat! "Shhhh," says the Gingerbread man, "we don't want to wake up Baby Bear, the t-rex that is asleep on my bed." The bear decides to sneak in the window with Baby Bear, the fat t-rex. The bear is very sneaky because... he's a ninja! Ninja Bear!

Suddenly, everyone hears a big ROOAAAAAARRR!!!! Its very scary! Then, they hear the doorbell ring! Ding ding ding! Gingerbread Man opens the door and outside is T-Rex MAMA! And she's carrying a turkey dinner for thanksgiving. "Oh! I forgot! Let me call my friends to bring some more food," Gingerbread man says. So, while everyone sets the table, Gingerbread man calls his gingerfriends to bring more food. They deliver the rest of the food by helicopter! And now, everyone gathers around the gingertable for Thanksgiving.

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

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Caroline is from Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, and recently transferred to Maryville College. Space exploration and science communication are her passions. Her free time is spent making music and writing, watching too much sci-fi, and taking way too many cell phone pictures of dogs.

Wesley Blevins

Wes is a junior with a major in English Literature. He enjoys jazz music, noodles of any sort, and creating an average of two new universes in his head every week. Wes is also a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

Megan Burnett

Megan Burnett is a senior Writing/Communications major at Maryville College.

Chandler Chastain

Chandler Chastain is from Signal Mountain, TN. She is a runner and Writing Communication major. She loves books, long walks in the woods, and dogs.

Timela Crutcher

Timela is a junior majoring in art at Maryville College.

Taylor Ford

Taylor Ford is an alumni of Maryville College. She graduated in December of 2015, and she majored in Writing/Communications. She was a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

Brian Gresham

Brian is a junior majoring in history. His poem is about his thoughts on what it means to be a Libertarian and was inspired by an excerpt from Thomas Paine's Common Sense. The short story is taken from a Cold War Sci-fi novel I've been working on.

Sarah Hensley

Sarah Hensley is a Writing Communications and English double major in her second year at Maryville College. She hopes one day to become a novelist.

Albrianna Jenkins

Writing and Communications Major, Class of 2018

Words to live by: "Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing." -Ben Franklin

Peyton Jollay

Peyton is a sophomore political science major at Maryville College.

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Natasha is a junior majoring in Writing/Communications with a minor in art-photography. Natasha enjoys hiking, rock climbing, and almost anything outdoors. When she's not outside, she's either writing creative fiction or watching Netflix.

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Liz is a freshman Writing/Communications major at Maryville College.

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Sue Mitchell

Sue is majoring in... at Maryville College. Her poem was written about Wells Beach, Maine, where her mother resides and where she and her children have vacationed.

Melanie Mullins

Melanie Mullins is a history major and will be graduating in May. She wrote her poem while in the intro to poetry class at Maryville College. She had never written poetry before but this class, and Ms. Seymour in particular, gave her the confidence to do it. After that she found inspiration everywhere, but especially from comparing and contrasting her own life experiences past and present.

Beth Myers-Rees

Beth is a non-traditional transfer student of junior standing. She is a Writing and Communications major. She is 54 years old until 12/10/15, thereafter 55. She has had an administrative/accounting career, if you can call it that, for over 35 years and she says she neglected her passion for the English language far too long. "Future's so bright, I gotta' wear shades!"

Brandi Payne

Brandi Payne is an eighteen-year-old artist who enjoys

wasting literally all of her time playing video games (and drawing). Even though she's a design major, she prefers creating illustrations and cartoons. She believes her oversized glasses contain all of her talent.

Abby Navarro

Abby is a sophomore at Maryville College.

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Raine Palmer

Raine is a senior majoring in Writing/Communications. She enjoys writing stories both short and long and reading just about anything she can get her hands on. Raine is a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

Mia Pearson

Mia is a senior majoring in Writing/Communications with a minor in Sociology. Her favorite genre to read is fantasy/science fiction. As for writing, she mainly writes terrible poetry and depressing short stories with way too much melodrama. Mia is a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

Hannah Sharp

Hannah is a junior majoring in Writing/Communications. She enjoys reading, writing, spending time with her family, and obsessing over *Game of Thrones*. "When people call people nerds, mostly what they're saying is 'You like stuff' which is not a good insult at all. Like you are too enthusiastic about the miracle of human consciousness." -John Green

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