



Friends' Central Literature
and
Arts Magazine

2011



Sasha Mitts

And on he can'd, they spake anon
But one day true
He cooed he cooed.

To Lovely's face and breasts to win
His wish for him but not to sin
But win her heart
'Twas not his art.

Trot on dear man the dismal road
Troth there there stands a 'fernal mode
For you to come by your true dear
Her love for you upon a spear
Her father's hate thou'dst not impede
His she was of ilk and bleed
His running red brought not your bed
That precious maiden never wed.

And now my love I see you stand
Upon the bank of mortal strand
If your lips but had occurred
To question me with loving word
Then bloodless champion stand your hands
Hauntless then, not fiery lands

Editors' Message

Hello!

Thanks for picking up a copy of the second edition of Friends' Central School's arts and literature magazine! Within these pages are poems, short stories, drawings, and photos submitted to Ink by Friends' Central Upper School students. We had an incredible number of submissions this year, totaling almost 90 pieces. This is more than double the number from last year!

Unfortunately, we did not have space to publish every piece in this magazine. Those submissions that were not published in this issue of Ink can be found online at readink.org, a website that will be periodically updated as we receive submissions intended for digital publication.

The Ink staff has worked hard during this past year to solicit submissions, edit, and lay out the magazine. We believe that this magazine truly represents the creative community at Friends' Central, and we hope that you will be as proud of it as we are.

Thank you so much to our faculty advisors Ms. Novo and Mr. MacFarlane, and to all those who submitted. This magazine would never have been published without you.

Thanks,
The Ink Editors

Credits

Editors-in-Chief: Matthew Block, Samantha Ellis, and Sarah Katz
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Poetry Editors: Nick DeFina and Jibreel Powell
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Table of Contents

Front Spread: Aengus Culhane/Sasha Mitts

Page 6: Julia Feldbaum

Page 7: Krispy Feldman

Page 8: Nick DeFina/Tess Wei

Page 9: John Gruber/Naomi Minkoff

Page 10: Alex Kleiman

Page 11: Katie McElroy

Page 12: Alex Forrest

Page 14: Emma Shaw

Page 15: Hannah Albertine

Page 16: Sofia Seidel/Sasha Mitts

Page 17: Bill Fedullo

Page 18: Rachel Weissman

Page 19: Paula Burkhardt

Page 20: Madison Archard/Jordan Taffet

Page 21: Rory Giszter

Page 22: Izzy Singer-Kaufold

Page 23: Anneka Allman

Page 24: Sarah Katz

Page 25: Colin Lee

Page 26: Giulietta Schoenfeld

Page 27: Jane Gordon

Page 28: Ellie Rubin/Sasha Mitts

Page 29: Douglas Roberts

Page 30: Ilan Dreyfuss

Page 31: Ilan Dreyfuss/Jonathan Adler

Page 32: Laurie Novo/Sofa Seidel

Page 33: Daniel Banko

Page 34: Anonymous/Ally Zhao

Page 35: Jibreel Powell

Page 36: Matthew Block

Page 37: Anonymous

Page 38: Credits

*Black text denotes literary piece, colored text denotes artistic piece.

Horrific, Cute and Cuddly

Julia Feldbaum

I stepped out of the shower feeling clean and refreshed. The bathroom was filled with steam and was overwhelmingly hot because I had forgotten to open the window to create ventilation. I grabbed a towel and wrapped it around myself, running it over my arms and next my legs. Something tickled me, catching me by surprise, but I just figured it had been a hair that had fallen out and drifted down, tickling me as it made its way to the floor. But as I turned around I hit the sink and felt a zinging up through my spine. This did not make logical sense due to the distance of the sink in relation to my body so I froze confused. So I felt down my spine leading to my butt and stopped from fright. I had felt something fluffy, what the hell? I quickly cranked my head back to try to see, and to my horror I had an adorable, fluffy squirrel tail.

I nearly screamed. I was afraid of it, which is an odd feeling when the thing you are afraid of is attached to your body. My arms were bundled tightly up across my chest so as not to touch it and I stared at it, naked. I stood there examining it for a good while contemplating my options.

I could go to the doctor but they would probably quarantine me or say something like I've got mad-squirrel disease. Or maybe they'd tell me it all made sense because my Grandfather was part squirrel, so it was in my genetics (although I had never noticed anything odd about him, other than his abnormally bushy eyebrows, beaver-like front teeth, and animalistic amounts of body hair). Or I could not go to the doctor and just cut it off with one of those butcher knives you see old Asian ladies using.

As I thought about this, my adorable little squirrel tail flattened out its fluff and slinked in between my legs. I felt like a little puppy dog. Seriously: right now, tail?! This was no joke. That horrific piece of fluff was real and it was attached to my brain in some way I didn't understand. For shits-and-giggles I started talking to it, comforting it, trying to convince it I wasn't going to cut it off, because I might as well experiment. "Aw little squirrel tail you, I'm not going to brutally chop you off, don't worry! You're too cute and cuddly for that, my own personal pillow." And lo and behold it worked. The tail slowly came out of hiding from between my legs and expanded into its normal massive puff. I stroked it as if it were a pet, even though it was technically attached to my own tailbone. So I decided; as freakish and abnormal as it may be to have a squirrel tail, I would embrace my new body part because I now felt a new kinship with my squirrel brothers and sisters. And now I am proud to say that I am the exception, and am now able to bridge the gap between man and beast because of my incredibly cute, fluffy, squirrel tail.



Blue Pier

Nick DeFina

blue pier
i can feel the light
 dividing itself into a thousand
 silent
awkward leaps
 and
 so lightly
do i feel the scents
 surrendered aimlessly
 among the chilly flames of
loneliness:

 time passing,
 the children so casually spotting
temperamental dangers
 (in and out for summers to come):

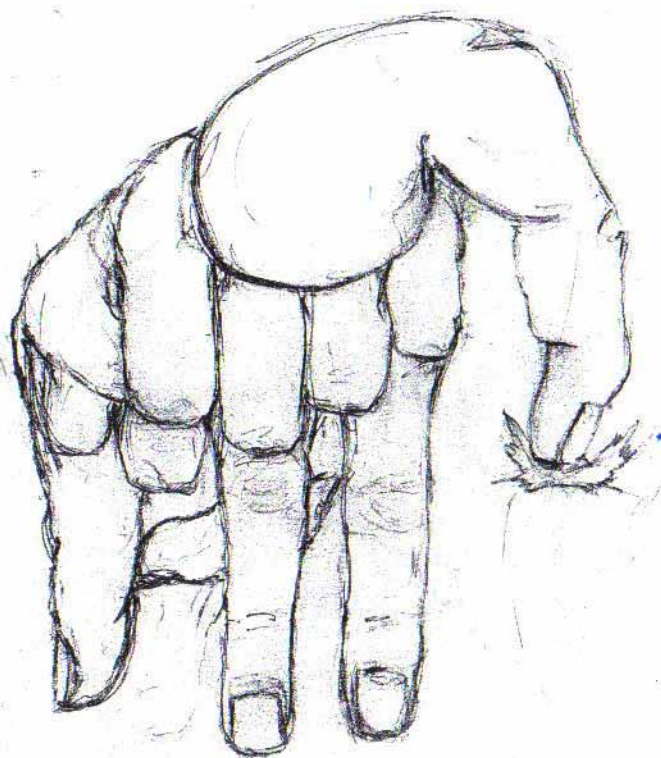
and whose child was it
 that slid down my shelves
 long before i knew what
w a l k i n g
felt like? it was that moment when
 i discovered the drama of
loving the moon, and the softness of sleep.

my sleep is
so soft in fact,
that their hands would run
 -- soft and quick --
 around this stocky torso of mine;
so quickly in fact, that
yes they go, sliding fast, and
the handprints go quickly too, and
so sensual and rocky, these fingers,
 when evening pulls my arm like
 a hectic mother:

and i realize
quite suddenly that
 i want the homes and hearths and
 worldly guidance,
 the love that carries me
nimbly
 down into the rain
 black and snarling
feeling like
the moons of jupiter do
 when the stars
 let go
of their lights (too:)

the children are sliding out again:

 out of love
of the moonlight
 (and i too, dear, love the moon)
to dive back into the night's
clear blue shade.





Curves

Naomi Minkoff

Curves, squiggles, lines, arches. Shapes leap out of my pencil made of lead but made of life and movement. The paper greets them warmly as an old friend, it is delighted to have company. The lines twist and turn into images, into dimension. The page becomes a portal into my imagination, thoughts become beautiful and visible. Look, you will get a glance into my mind, my universe. Sometimes something spectacular happens. The markings dance together in praise of the human form and a body emerges. See a woman's hip, the exquisite curve of her waist, the voluptuous chest she struggles to hide. Who is this woman? I know. And if you look closely, you can too. Squiggles meet and a gown hangs loose from the geometric lines of her constricting bodice. The soft flow of pencil strokes but of silk is weightless around her feet. As the fabric sweeps aside, the tips of her toes peek out to meet the fresh air of my sketchpad. As you know and I know, she is a free spirit, a rule maker, never a follower. She is not perfect, she hides the genetic dilemma of being a woman behind a stiff corset, paying homage to the elegant rebels of the past. It does not fit her essence but it suits her figure flawlessly. The refined tilt of her head and the strapless sweetheart neckline show off the graceful lines, tilting just right to illustrate her collarbone. She is strong and independent. Her hair falls freely around her face in almost, but not quite, parallel scribbles. She is striking, yet soft. From looking at her appearance you see into her soul, my soul, and fall in love. We want to be this person, embody her style, radiate her charm. So, I keep sketching. So, you keep admiring. We try to connect with her. I call her art. But what to call me, her creator? An artist?

Alex Kleiman

The world was ending. It was announced on an Anderson Cooper Special. Two months, and it would be over. The news talked about when the world would end, but not what to do until it did. People thought that prices would drop, because greed would soon become dated, but they didn't. A few people were happy because nothing needed to be done, and they could just stop, halt all modes of life. Not worry. Not cry. Not care. But most didn't.

There was no room for doubt, the world would end. Yet scientists still toiled, just not to better the world. Blindly working, no longer in the name of progress, but because it was all they knew. Actors filmed movies that nobody would ever see. Juniors studied for SAT's that they would never take, and people still planted flowers that would never see the light of day. Some people were scared. Not of The End, but of the time before it. They were scared of the time when the looting, stealing, raping, and murdering would begin. The news agencies cried, "When will it start?", knowing that to instill fear was to increase viewership, yet realizing that fear of a politician or war no longer mattered. But not realizing that their viewership didn't either. Not immediately. Not even in T-minus one month did they see it. That's how people talked about it. Like a rocket was about to blast off.

Not even in T-minus one month did the looting, stealing, raping, and murdering begin. People didn't need to work. The time for paychecks was past. But people did work. Office birthdays were celebrated, reports were filed, people were hired, and people were fired. Nobody knew why they were working, they just were. They always had, and they always would. They didn't know any better

With two weeks to go, the raping began.

Lots of people were raped. Some people were murdered. The risk was down, for two weeks in jail was a small price to pay for giving in to impulse. But nobody looted, and nobody stole - there was no incentive. But people started spending time with their families. Not because it mattered, but because it made them feel good. Because being around loved ones seemed appropriate, even though nobody could say exactly why. It was just something that people did.

Parties were scheduled to start at T-minus one day. The last 24 hours would be a celebration and a countdown, like New Year's. It wasn't to cope, and it wasn't to be distracted. It was because everyone knew there needed to be parties before a big event. It had always been done that way, they did it that way, and it always would be done that way.

Unfortunately, Anderson Cooper was wrong. The world didn't end when it was supposed to. It would take another minute. It was an angry minute. People had prepared, people had partied, people had celebrated, and now it was all ruined. Disgruntled men and women couldn't believe that it didn't go according to plan. But then, in that final moment, people realized that it didn't matter. That the schedule wasn't always right, that the routine wasn't always right, and that the last two months had been far more of a waste than the previous three billion years. People finally realized what their lives had been. And then the world ended.



Heartbreak

Alex Forrest

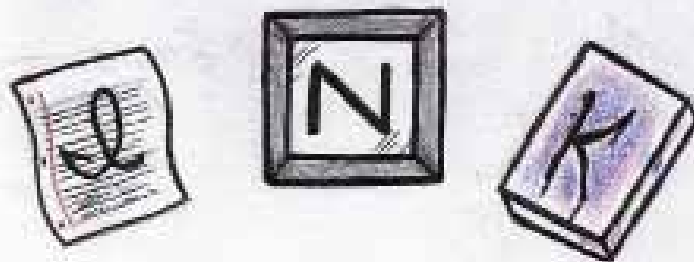
Sitting in her warm car
Jane was empty.
She felt none of the artificial heat.
Just a hole in her chest, that
wouldn't stop aching,
wouldn't stop eating her
soul from within.
Heartbreak.
Johnny was here a minute ago.
His presence lingered.
And if she tried hard enough
she knew she could
conjure up the memories
of the old Johnny
of the taste of his lips
on the warm summer night
when he first had her.
She could
feel his strong hand in hers,
feel it on her neck
and on the small of her back
like when he would
envelop her in a kiss
their passion mounting in every breath.
Heartbreak.
But this was all pretend,
make believe,
like a child's tea party.
'Cause she could still feel
that ache in her chest.
No,
it wasn't going away.
And she knew
that she would never
feel Johnny's sweet touch again.
No,
never.
Heartbreak.
The old Johnny knew how to love.
How to make her smile
when all she wanted to do was cry.

He was a charmer,
yes.
He told her
that she was pretty,
that she was funny,
that she was smart.
He told her he loved her,
that she was special
and that seeing her with any other guy
made him jealous.
And so Johnny won her over.
Whether he had meant to
or not,
she was his.
But that was then,
she belonged to the old Johnny.
Held onto his words
like a drowning child holding onto life.
Jane had loved him
unconditionally.
So much
that she couldn't let go,
even when his beautiful words
turned into daggers.
No longer sweet nothings,
just bullets to her heart
that she forced herself
to repair.
To bandage.
Because she loved the old Johnny.
But that was then.
Heartbreak.
Earlier that night,
Jane had sat in Johnny's family's
driveway
Her car's engine hum-humming.
She watched her beautiful Johnny
walk to the passenger door
as he had so many times before.
Though he smelled as he always did,
that musky comforting scent

that she usually welcomed into her,
things were different this time.
Though he smiled his charming smile,
lines forming and framing his mouth,
Jane didn't welcome the sight.
Because things were different this time.
Heartbreak.
Yes,
it was imminent,
the moment he would
no longer be her Johnny.
As his sweet pillowy lips met hers
she felt pain course through her body.
Because she knew
that would be their last kiss.
Heartbreak.
Jane had finally let go of the old Johnny.
She knew he wasn't coming back.
So in that car
she quietly told Johnny
it was over;
her voice almost drowned out
by the loud engine.
But he heard her
loud and clear.
Yes, she knew.
He didn't even say anything.
Must've seen it coming, somehow.
He stepped out of the car,
slamming the door,
walking back inside,
leaving her behind and
alone.
Forever.
Heartbreak.
Jane cried out
like she had so many times
when he had her
in their moments of passion.
But this wasn't theirs.
No,
she was alone.
Screaming.
Because an ache in her
wouldn't go away.
She hadn't even felt it forming.
It was invading her,
conquering her.

It was ripping her heart apart.
Not in half,
but into pieces,
so small it looked like her heart didn't
even exist anymore.
She was heartless.
And now it was in her lungs.
She couldn't breathe.
The emptiness was there
taking the place of the air.
Just Jane and the emptiness.
She screamed.
She cried.
She writhed in pain.
Because even a bullet
couldn't hurt like this.
She had never felt like this before.
Heartbreak.

Friends' Central
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Literary and Arts Magazine

Hannah Albertine

Bryan waltzed into the Salvation Army at the end of the strip mall. There were always rumbling construction machines hogging the parking lot. Signs went up, and then back down within a few months. The thrift store, however, had been there for years. Bryan loved to shuffle through the aisles, fondling the miscellaneous items on the cracking shelves. The store was managed by an elderly woman named Peggy. Bryan would barter with her until she got tired of his stubbornness. He had a certain eye for what Peggy called “the hidden treasures of the place.”

He had three looks. Peggy knew them all. If he was tuned out from the real world and plugged into his headphones, Bryan was idly shopping and had no intention of buying anything. If Bryan was scratching his head, it meant that he had a few particular things in mind and would most likely spend all of the change at the bottom of his duck tape wallet. But if he started smacking his chapped lips, Peggy knew that he had found his treasure.

Over the years, Bryan had found many treasures in this Salvation Army thrift shop. Old bottles, large winter jackets, board games, tools missing from their original sets. Nothing that a teenage boy really needed. But Bryan seemed to attach to these things. In that peculiar moment when he fell deeply in love with one of these treasures, Bryan needed it.

The rusted bell faintly chimed as he pushed the door open. “Hey, Peggy,” he said without looking at her. She was watching an episode of Maury on the antenna T.V. that sat on her desk. The flickering images from the television lit up her wrinkling face. The boy turned past the desk and scanned the room. Bryan touched everything he saw. He had to. The left side, then the right, always the same. He weaved up and down the rows of half-broken microwaves and Pokémon trading cards. Peggy turned off the television and studied the curled receipts on her desk. The woman heard him mumbling to himself, the way he always did. The store turned quiet and she glanced up into the mirror in the corner by the ceiling. There he was, smacking his lips. She watched him stand there for a few seconds and then finally reach out to the cream-colored shelf in front of him. A baseball glove that had been brought in a few days ago by a restless mother, who had been concentrating on her cell phone. Peggy knew nothing more about the glove than Bryan did. It had no Sharpied signatures or apparent characteristics that made it special. It was light brown and worn. But Bryan’s wide eyes saw something in it that Peggy didn’t. Something that the busy mom didn’t see or any other previous owner. Bryan slipped the glove onto his right hand and tightened the old Velcro strap around his pale wrist. He began to act out a throwing motion with his other hand. Peggy watched him proceed to have a catch with himself in aisle two.

“You find something Bryan?” she finally interrupted. He froze his game and slipped the glove off of his hand. “Yeah, I think I got something,” he responded. Bryan walked to the counter and said nothing else. He took the first price that she offered him and left the store. He tucked the glove under his right arm and quickly disappeared from Peggy’s sight. She stared through the glass door for a while, even after he was gone. “Hidden treasures of the place,” she said softly to herself and sat back in her chair.

Sasha Mitts

Down the wending road
She rode deep into the surf
The sky swallowed her

We are me and you
Neon and rhapsody blue
The death of us all

I spy a wily mouse
My daily bread and death bought
He has now my house



Pen Strokes

Bill Fedullo

He does not know that I see him. Not yet, anyway. He is looking straight at me, of course, but he is viewing me only as an object to be contemplated, whose history is to be invented and expounded upon with the quick, blind strokes of his pen on paper (is it paper? It might be a napkin he is writing on). He does not, cannot, see me as a subject, as a man who acts, as a man who can get up and leave, who can notice the stranger staring at him and feel the urge to object, to do something about this intrusive gaze, perhaps make a scene, even.

But I understand. He is a writer. Or a poet. Or something of the sort. It is irrelevant. He is writing about me because something about me – something despicable or repulsive or admirable or desirable – has struck him as worthy of literary examination. Perhaps he sees a commonality between us; he thinks we are both part of some community, a community of writers, or, more accurately, a community of pasty-faced twenty-something college students who scribble notes of supposed profundity on brown napkins (made of ninety percent post-consumer material) in cafes, believing in their heart of hearts that someday our genius will be recognized the world over; perhaps this recognition will be post-mortem, but it will come, it will come. He thinks he sees two latter day bohemians sipping at coffee, writing about each other writing about each other (writing about each other) in a recursive loop that has no end, or possibility of an end.

Or perhaps he sees in me his antithesis. A twisted reflection of himself, or at least a possible twisted reflection of himself, for, again, he does not know me, he can only imagine what my life is like. I could be opposed to everything he supports in this life and I could be supportive of everything he opposes. It is even possible that we hold identical views and he knows this, some indelible mark (of Cain) apparent on my face identifying me to him as his political compatriot – but he loathes himself and all who agree with him, so still I am his enemy.

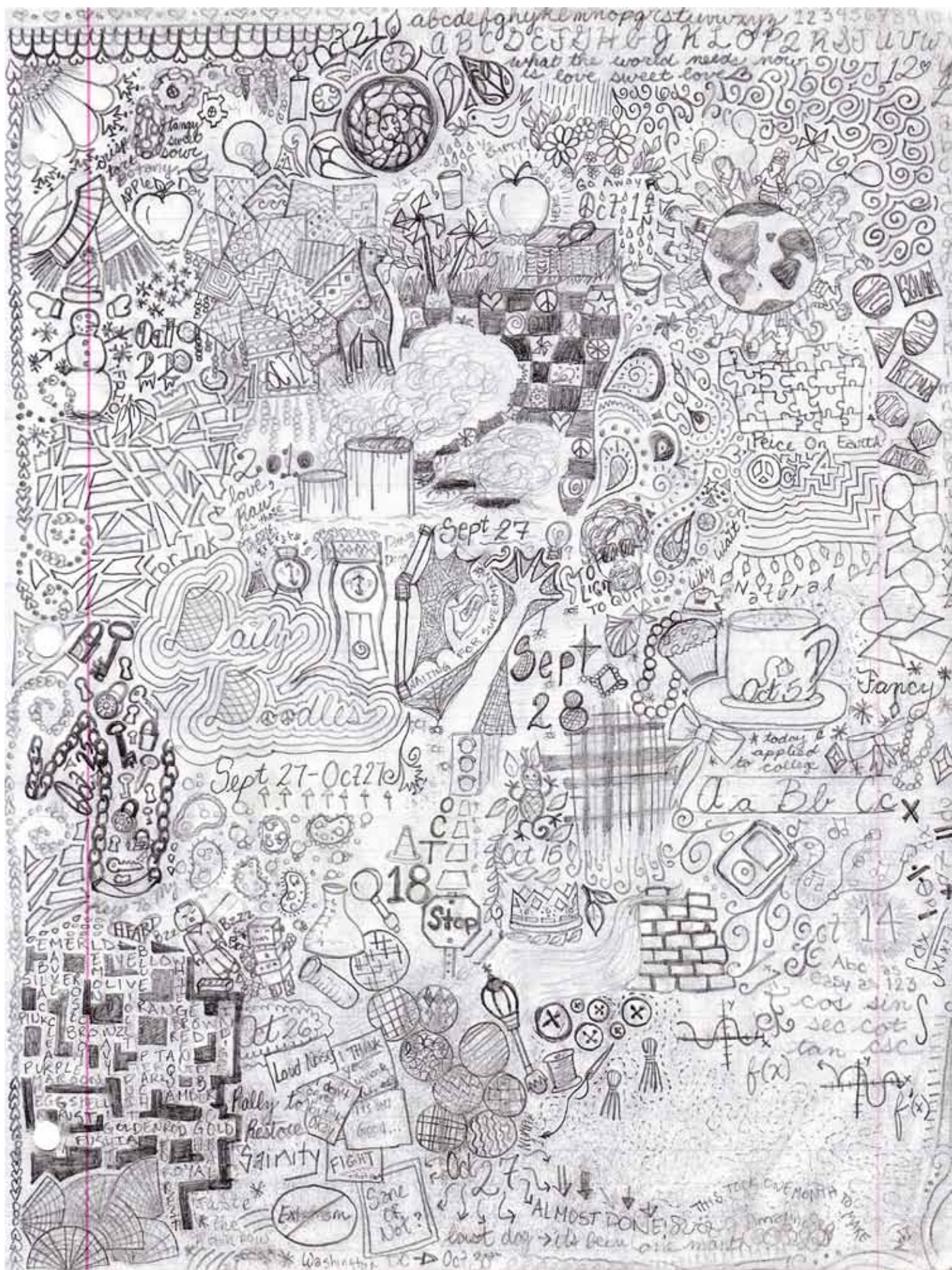
What do I know of him? I cannot say much. His work could be of superior quality to mine; I might be gazing upon tomorrow's great man of letters, or he could be a foolish young man, whose work is full of bluster and pretense. Which I suppose would make it much like mine. It is even possible that he is not a writer at all, that he is writing a note to himself and only happens to be absentmindedly looking in my direction, and I in my arrogance have constructed this ridiculous narrative of two men examining each other, because I want to feel important, because I want somebody, anybody, to acknowledge that I exist.

He is wearing unremarkable clothes – a plain black t-shirt, blue jeans of normal tightness. He has a scraggly, poorly kempt beard, which, if it were not for his conservative clothing, would make me accuse him of being a part of that cannibalistic subculture known as hipsterdom. But no, his beard is not a statement of any kind; it is as it is out of laziness, and nothing more.

He jots one last furious note on his napkin then folds it carefully and stuffs it into his pocket. He gets up to go, seeming to pay me no mind. Then he stops, sits back down, and retrieves something from his wallet and scribbles a note on it. He stands up again and walks my way. He pauses, looks me straight in the eyes for a moment. His face is blank, it lacks all of the intentness I have observed previously. I am still writing on my napkin, which I suppose might be rude, but what am I supposed to do? Strike up a conversation? That would break the almost sacred relationship we have, this bridge between intimacy and anonymity. It wouldn't be right.

As I wrote these words he placed a small business card on my table and walked out. I am looking at it now. The front of it reads: Jeffrey Stiller. There is no further information – no hint to an occupation, not contact information, just a name, a rather generic name. Still, I don't know any Jeffreys. I suppose I must pass by many Jeffreys every day, going to work, going to class, on the subway, wherever. There must be a whole invisible nation of Jeffreys.

I turn the note over. In scribbled, barely legible handwriting it reads: Stop staring at me.



Snapshots

Paula Burkhardt

The train station saw many, many leavings. More departures than arrivals these days, and it was just as well because the train station was getting tired.

“For you my love,” said the pigeon to the flea, and the flea took this and ran away. Still, for many days afterwards in the flea’s life, it thought of those words. The pigeon left too, later, but it only remembered sad glances and happy ones, and not the words in between. Isn’t that sad?

An old woman who is tall and upright. That is rare. There are a few though, in the city, and they all walk past the cafes at lunchtime and think how the pavement, like everything else, has changed.

There were dying yellow leaves pressed against the stones. Someone could have seen this, and approached it, and photographed it, and sold the prints. No one did though.

This is what it means to be alone: walking in on a weekday with the woolly coats, all stuffed with people who bump shoulders and never notice. Thinking about how to be a bearer of good news, with a secret smile. Loud noises that don’t wake anyone. Black wool and gray clouds.

In the parking lot there is a girl running between cars in the rain. The wind blows her hair and her skirt back and forth.

The buildings are brown everywhere, because the sunlight stains when it sets. Late Sunday afternoon, the kids are still playing, and they kick up dirt and the sun kicks up light.

There is a cat in the window, behind a cactus. A kid watches the cat while he stands on the sidewalk, and his mother notices this even though she is talking on the phone. We can go through another pane of glass into the deli, where the writer thinks about how that mother is really not so bad, and orders ham, Swiss, lettuce, tomatoes, and mustard with no mayonnaise please.

Saturday mornings were childhood mornings, because the light had never changed. It still was sharp and silver, and it stuck itself onto the sheets, which seemed to have gotten darker in the night.

...And in some café in some part of the city, some person made a very profound statement about life. Everyone around them agreed, though they did not really understand.

Opposites

Madison Archard

If you are the memory	You are the monsters
I am the dream	And I am the heart
You are the matter	The irrelevant beating
And I the seam	That shadows the dark
The edge and fragment	And you hold your head up
And not to be held	As I drop to the floor
While you are the will	Where I'm blinded by secrets
And the world that I weld	You couldn't hold any more
You sing the summer	And I give while you get
And I call the rain	I'm blind while you see
They summon you with open arms	And yet the whole time
And welcome me with shame	You tell me I'm free.



The Child

Rory Giszter

The gunshot hung in the air of the town, along with the cry before it, a cry that haunted the town. It was not the cry of pain—the bullet had entered directly into the child’s head—but one of forgiveness. People knew, deep down, that the cry forgave nothing, for there was nothing to forgive, no wrongs done, but rather a cry to make others forgive themselves. The town didn’t notice this or the fact that everyone stopped when they heard the cry, a cry that wasn’t loud and yet heard by the entire town. A crowd began to gather around the body and soon, the paramedics had arrived, for they heard the cry too.

He stood looking at the corpse of his friend. They had been talking only moments before and now he stood looking as his friend bled out into the sidewalk. He noticed that the breeze which had been pleasant before had stopped and he had begun shivering. Suddenly it became darker, he looked up and saw that the sun had been covered in dark clouds. He blinked as rain began to fall on his face. A policeman came and led him away, and they began to ask him questions.

The shooter stood perfectly still, his back facing the window where he had fired the gun. He forgot how long he had been standing there, but he couldn’t move. He needed to move. He had planned it all perfectly and he could get away, take the money they had offered and leave with no worries of being caught, but he couldn’t move. He had been waiting for the child for about five minutes when the scratching sound started, but he had ignored it figuring that it was just rats. He had seen the child, aimed, and fired, instantly killing the child. He had then heard something fall to the floor directly after the kid died, and turned to see a pencil rolling towards him. He picked it up wondering where it had come from and had then seen the writing. In large semi-scribbled hurried letters was written “Why” with what was possibly the beginning of a question mark next to them. The shooter fell on his knees, still staring at the mysterious writing. Far away he heard people banging on the door. He simply mumbled “forgive me” as police smashed the door down and handcuffed him.

Anticipation... [gun shot]

Pleasure... Celebration... Happiness...

noticing... preparing...

Consolation...

giving patience....

giving rage....

Giving caution....

leaving...

laughing....

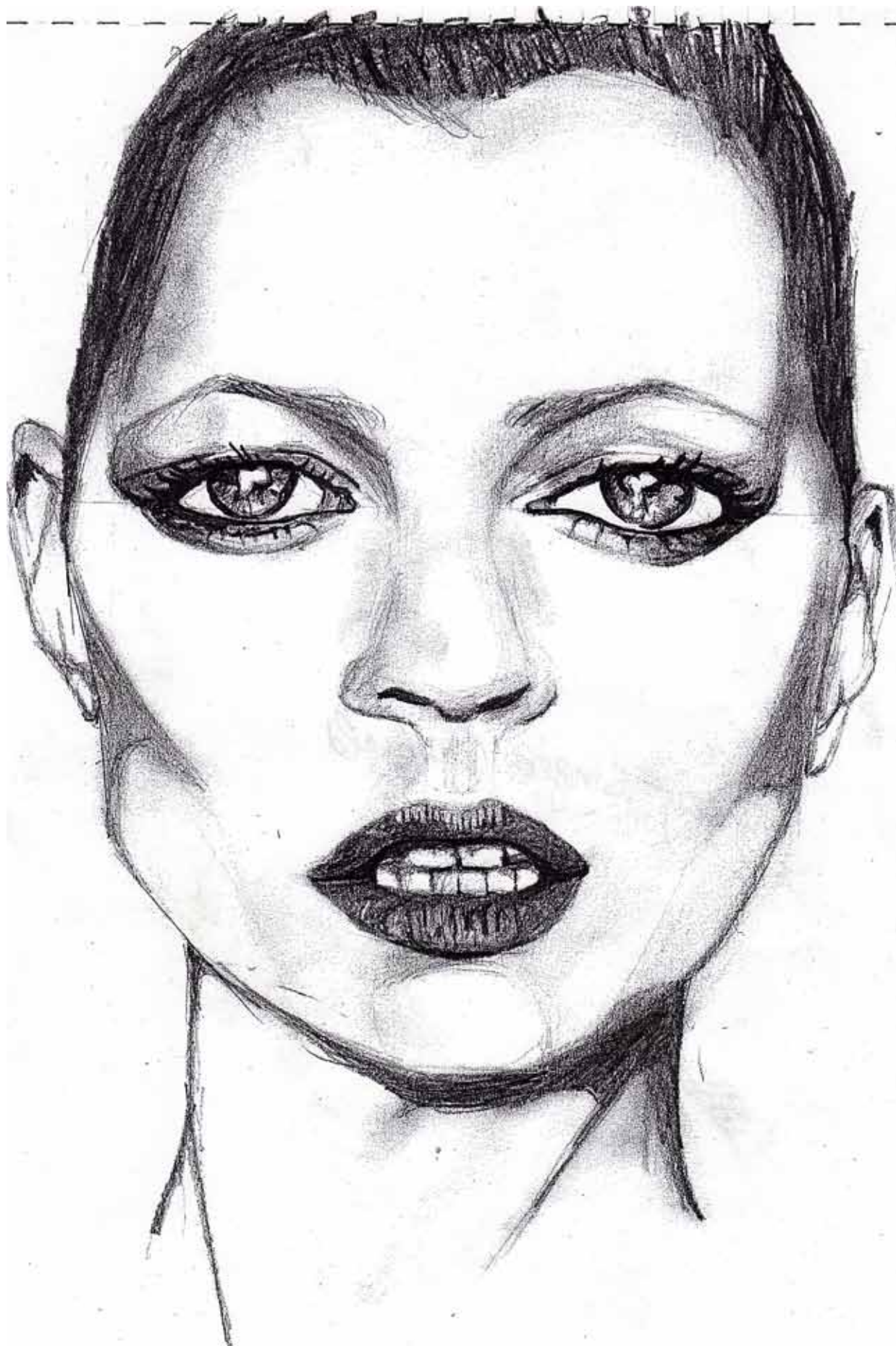
noticing...

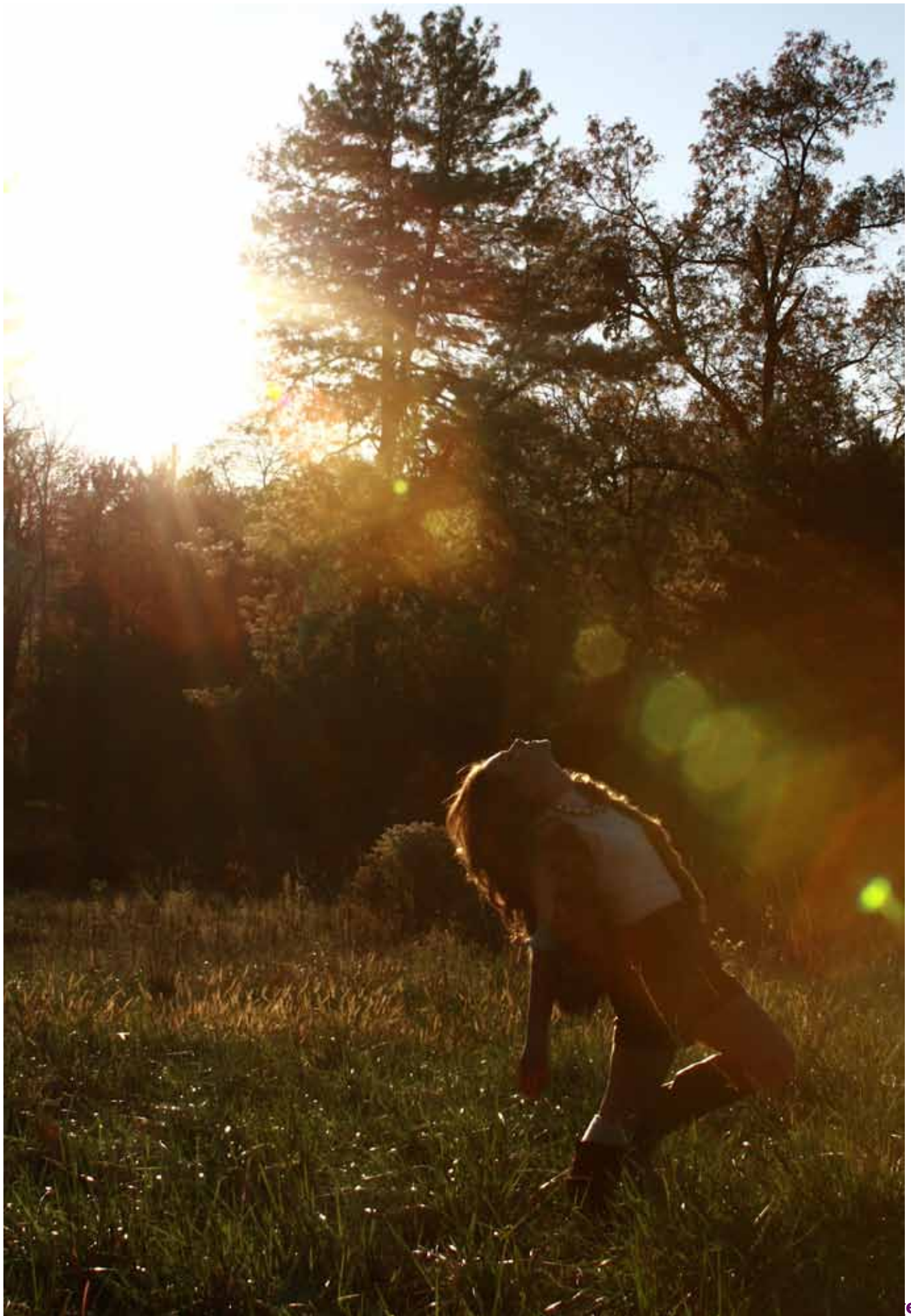
worrying....

Determination...

Gathering...

The prison guard was sitting idly in his chair wondering about what had happened. The shooter had claimed to not know why he did it except that he was hired, though by whom he claimed to not be able to remember. The prison guard was startled by sudden yelling. He got up slowly not looking forward to calming whichever prisoner it was. As he walked towards the cell where the noise was coming from he noticed fear in the inmate’s eyes and realized that he was scared too, that the air seemed to permeate with fear. He realized that it was the shooter yelling and now, at points, laughing broken laughs that sounded like sobs. “YES, I REMEMBER WHO HIRED ME” [laughter] “nothing and NOBODY” [laughter] “AND NOW” [pause] “NOTHING AND NOBODY [laughter] ... will... kill me” [sobs]. A scream cut through the air. By now the guard was running, but when he arrived at the cell he stopped. There was only a pile of smoldering bones surrounded by a circle of charred concrete left.





The Death of Something

Sarah Katz

She didn't think much about what she was doing. She'd done it before. She leaned against the dumpster in the alleyway, smoldering cigarette in her hand. She didn't usually smoke; it brought too much attention to herself. But she needed it and the darkness couldn't have been a better blanket. She watched as the smoke swirled through the air, bouncing off the shiny surface of her black down winter jacket, if it chose to ever get so close.

"Another one," her brother said earlier that day, throwing a plastic bag filled with white powder on the kitchen table in front of her. She looked up from her book. His eyes scanned her, judging her obviously pathetic condition.

"I thought it was only a one time thing," she said, throwing her sharp glance back.

He shrugged. "It seems that my druggies like to buy their stuff from a blonde. Plus you're less likely to get stopped by the cops."

That's probably why her jacket felt heavier than usual.

Her brother always loved to tinker with things. He could dismantle his bike and recreate it into a better version of what it was.

"You could open a little shop, Jared," their mother said. This was back when she still smiled, bright and beautiful.

She remembered the family trip to the Hamptons, the only time when everyone was all together. It was the happiest weekend of her life. Her dad drove, her mother had the window rolled all the way down in the front seat, Jared and her played I-spy, just like a family was supposed to.

As they drove past all the expensive houses set so far back from the road that a foreigner would think it was a public park, they blasted Bruce Springsteen and Elton John. They all sang at the top of their lungs. She remembered squirming in her seatbelt, unaccustomed to this level of excitement. She didn't know the words, but neither did Jared, so it didn't matter, they sang anyway.

There was a sign that read Private Property as they pulled into the parking lot for the beach.

"A beach's a beach," she remembered her father saying, "we have as much right to it as these people do."

It was cool for a summer day and the water was cold to the touch. None of this mattered though. Her mother skipped with them down the beach, daring them to race her. Her father was in the rear, documenting this day as proof that he could, in fact, do something good for his family.

She saw him turn the corner then. He wore a similar jacket to hers with a sweatshirt hood emerging from underneath, covering his head. It was clear he saw her, although he pretended not to. He had an odd, quick walk, his legs pointing out in opposite directions when bent.

She threw her cigarette down on the ground after one last drag and stepped on it, twisting slightly.

He was young, no more than twenty. He had bags that hung off his eyes and skin paler than her grandmother's.

"Hey," he mumbled, "you got it?"

She paused a moment, she wasn't sure why. "Yeah," she unzipped her jacket slightly and reached into the interior pocket. She felt the plastic bag and its dry, powdery contents.

This kid was so young, he had so much potential, she found it hard to give him the bag. He watched her with such an earnest look on his face you'd think he was a kid in a candy store.

She removed the bag from her pocket and held it out slightly towards him. In that same moment, his hand devoured the bag and left behind a roll of cash. Written on his face was the word "thanks" and without a moment's hesitation he turned and proceeded back in the direction from whence he came.

She couldn't help but feel that she had witnessed the death of something.



Autumn Afternoon

Giulietta Schoenfeld

It's sunny today. Shimmering rays pierce through the autumn air, shrouding the cemetery in light. Grave stones are warmed in the embrace of gold and they offer the perfect perch for the birds requiring a place to rest after gliding tirelessly through the palpable blue sky.

The small rodents emerge from their burrows and scamper across the stone-laden fields. They venture over graves and through tombs, crawling across the bushels of dandelions golden like sunburst, searching for their carefully hidden acorns in the barren shadows of the trees.

A pair of eyes observes the merriment. He watches from the shadows as the skip-happy sunshine bounces about the gates of the graveyard. His eyes widen when the blissful beams reveal two new approaching bodies.

They walk hesitantly into the cemetery and he recognizes them as children. He assumes they are related when his eyes catch sight of their matching chocolate locks and their nearly identical honey-gold eyes.

It's when he leans forward, squinting his eyes to get a better look, that he suddenly knows they are brother and sister and that they were both born from their mother; a woman whose name is Beth. Yet he can't recall the father's name. As he racks his mind deliberately searching for the omitted answer, the footfalls of the children halt and eyes the color of honey meet his gaze.

He feels his chest tighten considerably when he sees their faces. Faces that are pale with worry and eyes that seem to shrink back into their skulls like brown tinted tunnels of hopelessness.

So empty are their eyes...

Yet the children continue to huddle together when crossing the various graves. They pass over Mrs. Bottechi and her husband, around Lucy Langet who was raped by her school teacher, over by Dr. Charlie's cousin whose killer had been the cancer that had roamed his body, and Willy's diabetic grandmother.

The children are now little more than a foot away from him and he hears a strange beating originating from within his chest, a foreign yet familiar sound as though he hasn't heard it in a while and his ears have grown numb to the tune.

The sister draws out an object which she's been hiding behind her back.

A bouquet of posies, lilies, dahlias, violets and crimson carnations. She kneels to the ground, her face cloaked in a shadow, and his lips part silently in awe when she places the wonderful assortment of blossoms at his feet.

Tears spring free from the brother's eyes and wrapping an arm around the trembling boy's shoulders, the sister joins him.

Once they've sobbed themselves silly and their sobering tears have dried, the sister casts a last lingering glance at him and whispers,

"good-bye daddy" before collecting her brother and softly exiting through the gates.

He stands there suspended by these last words and all of it rushes back to him in a flood of nostalgia.

"Henry!" the specter cries, "Julia!"

Jane Gordon

I, like most other students, have always enjoyed field-trips. It is fun to avoid the daily routine of school every once in a while and go to the Insectarium and eat larvae that taste like Cheezits or to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to sketch Edward Hicks's Peaceable Kingdom. These trips always involved journeying away to find something new, but the trips I have found most meaningful are the ones I went on the year I spent in Rome, in which the lesson expanded out of the classroom into the place in which we all lived.

In ninth grade, I lived with my family in an apartment in Rome, and went to a school with people from all over the world, instead of in a house in the suburbs and a school with people from Pennsylvania. During that year, I got used to not being able to understand most of the conversations people on the bus were having. I got used to seeing the side of the Colosseum that the bus swung by every morning. I got used to having moments in history all around me in concrete forms. This strange normalcy of the unusual carried through into school. I found myself traveling with my history class on Friday mornings to the Palatine Hill, the legendary spot around which Rome grew. When we had learned a little about the Emperor Claudius, we went to the Porta Praenestina, a gate which he commissioned, located at a point where six aqueducts meet, and we connected this to his general focus on utility and engineering in contrast to emperors who built impressively showy, but purely decorative, monuments. We were applying what we were learning in school to the wider world around us in a more literal and interesting way than I had ever done before. During that time, the world seemed so connected—tangible evidence of history was all around me in the form of the city, and of the similarity and interconnectedness of human beings in

the form of my cosmopolitan classmates and friends who accompanied me.

One moment in particular in which I felt a bond to my classmates and the vast world occurred on a trip I took with my Latin class. Already linked by reading Latin together, the twelve of us, from six different nationalities, shared an unusual experience of connectedness. We had been reading Juvenal's Third Satire, which is about Rome, and in which he complains about various problems such as the constant falling of buildings and poets reciting in the month of August. He mentions the Porta Capena, which formed a boundary between Rome and its environs in the first century C.E., and how Jews, who were not allowed by Domitian to live in the city, would live in huts right outside the gate. The gate is right around the corner from the school I went to, so one day in Latin we walked there, just because we could really. To our astonishment, we found homeless people living in the same spot and in much the same conditions as the Jews of 1800 years earlier. We were torn between delight at the way in which life seemed to be mirroring art so perfectly and sadness that this connection sprang from the perennial existence of homelessness.

Now, back home, in my botany class, I am once again making field trips into my everyday world. In our studies of taxonomy, we have wandered about my school's campus learning to recognize the families of the plants that have surrounded us for years. Here too, the trips I take have given new meaning to the world I inhabit.

Sasha Mitts

Send me forth into the lands
To conquer far and distant strands
I'll hack and cleave
Rush cut and weave
'Tween rib and bone and hammered plate
Then home upon victorious day,
To child wife and parents flayed



As He Stands Upon the Broken Shore

Douglas Roberts

Waves used to crash on the beach. They used to, but it's quiet now. The man stood at the edge of the desolate coastline and thought about the waves. Where had they gone? What took them? The man didn't know. As he stood upon the broken shore, knowing that the ocean had left, he realized that he did not know why they were upset enough to do so. Perhaps it had been the arguments.

Yes, thought the man, it must have been the arguments. The whole world had been fighting with itself, too loud to even hear itself shout out into the void, much less hear the mild ocean call for mercy. So, the waves had gone away. And it's quiet now. The man began to walk along the path he had made, carved out in the ashes and soot that the world had left behind.

As he stared into the ocean's hole, he wondered if anyone else had heard the oceans as he had. They had sung out, joyfully, content, full of the substance which the rest had squandered for their ash. The man was alone now. And it is so very quiet. There had been one other, someone he had sat with, someone else who spoke to him. That person was gone now. He could remember the person's voice. No body, no name, simply the voice. It had calmed him to talk to the voice. The voice had listened to him, had helped him understand why there was so much grayness where there had once been color. The voice had been a comfort in a world of tragedy. But the voice was gone now, leaving only the deafening quiet.

So he walked now into the void the oceans have left, heard the echoes of its whispers, yet knew now that these echoes were all the oceans had left. They took the rest, leaving the broken shore for the man to walk. The man continued to walk, knowing that as the voice before went silent, so would he. But the voice said it would return, and so he would wait. The voice would come back and they would speak, speak of the oceans and the world, and about why it was so quiet now. They would talk, and the man would feel alive in the dead world. So he would wait for it. Maybe, as he waited, the oceans would see him and come back to sing again. But in the shattered lands, on this broken shore, who can say? All the man could do was walk his path and wait.

Regarding the case of Mr. Jonathan Terranson, I have reached my breaking point. Every time we meet, he shows little to no recognition of my presence, refusing to acknowledge I have entered until I speak. When he was checked in upon the death of his wife, I was astonished he had not come in sooner. He appears to have been in a stable condition once, but as he deteriorated, his wife took him in and protected him from the world, it seems. She refused to say much about him while she was in the hospital, but once she passed it was clear that he had deteriorated significantly while in their house. It seems the only time he can react in any way during his time here is when he goes on walks around the ground. However, given his recent state I have had him confined to his quarters. This has not stopped him from pacing in circles, seemingly unaware of the obstacles in his room as he crashes through them.

I have deemed his state as unfit ever to rejoin society, and am going to discontinue any more visits I have planned with him. If his condition deteriorates any further, my opinion is to put him up for inoculation, as he may become dangerous to those around him.

From the desk of,
Dr. Angela Rivaso

A Book

Ilan Dreyfuss

First off, I'm not a thief. Thieves steal. Stealing is a sin. I don't sin. I was raised in a devout household, always being taught the virtues of religion. I spent my early years cocooned in the embrace of faith, faith imbued within me by my family. My father was a most pious man, praying regularly and placing himself before the heavens. He seemed to live peacefully in the gentle cradle of God's embrace. I envied the harmony of his heart and the purity of his mind.

Our family came together in a crescendo of faith at holidays. The synergy of our mutual beliefs created holidays that were truly holy days. Then, on that fateful day in the cold of December, he left. My Father was gone. An unexpected exodus. It was around midnight when I realized his disappearance. The otherworldly void that was then created, proved to be insurmountable. We fell apart, nothing but shades of our former selves. My family in shambles, I had nowhere to go, so I went nowhere. I stayed in the shelter of my abode, slowly corroding without the guiding light of my father. A disciple without his teacher. A flock without its shepherd. She soon gave out, my mother could not take a life of suffering and so she took her own. Grievances aside, there was nothing left for me at home and I took to the streets.

I ambled along for weeks, fighting to retain my sustenance. All thoughts began to revolve around the continuing struggle to will my body into movement. Movement meant food. Food meant staying alive. But I was truly only surviving as a living carcass. Inside, the soul, the mind, the heart were edifices that began to crumble like the walls of Jericho. I was a waste.

I was at my lowest. Really, a pitiable, pitiful being that was living without purpose and to no end. Just to make ends meet I began to take. I took. I did not steal. I was a taker. I was not a thief. When the opportunity beckoned, I would slyly lift a passerby of their possession. I'm sure they didn't need whatever

I took anyways. So, my days were filled with these spontaneous escapades and my nights were equally as adventurous and daring. Not only did I have to dodge the uniforms during the daylight, but I also had to locate a safe place to rest my weary head for the night. The streets were my new home, every unoccupied alleyway and bench. I liked to call it residential freedom.

Besides my search for available assets and for a resting place, I took to people watching. This ancient and revered art form takes great skill, and with all the time to kill I truly became one of the best. Professional person watcher. Usually, I would plop myself down on a park bench and just watch the passersby. I did this daily. One day, a particularly peculiar wizened, serene man piqued my interest. Every day, this man would sit down on the same bench every day and read from a voluminous book. My piqued interest soon turned into something short of obsession. I was not sure if it was the man or if it was really the book. It was probably the book.

His steel-blue eyes seemed never to leave its pages. The man stared continually into the depths of the volume, as if in an attempt to decipher a particularly important riddle. The book seemed to have a lot of wear and some of the pages were visibly creased or folded. I could barely make out a few letters on the cover that were imprinted in gold, yet the other lettering seemed to be worn off.

Days upon days, the man read from his book. Days upon days, I watched the man read from his book. This phenomenon was intriguing, perplexing, ridiculous, and uplifting. I couldn't really place my finger on the reason for my fixation, yet it was an unshakable passion. As the man followed the lines of the tome, I followed his; almost an attempt to decipher the origin of the book's power that had overtaken both the wizened man and me. It was a novel of wonderment, serenity, and grace and I could not shake myself from its sway.

I had come to the point where all I could think about was this book. I needed to hold it, to feel it, to see it, to read it. I had to take it. One day, I followed the man home from the park. I slithered and slinked, shielding myself with shadows. It was a tall order to take the book. The man always seemed to clutch his tome with an ironclad grip, almost as if he was afraid that some devilish being would rise up and snatch it from his grasp. Yet, snatch it I did. Employing my honed skills of the “lift” I snaked my way through the crowd, bumping him with some force as to distract him from the presence of my hand as it traveled into his satchel. The book was mine.

Quickly, I sprinted back to the park filled with the emotions of anticipation and elation. I was about to be enlightened, sanctified by this book, which had so enthralled me. I had reached the bench, the same bench where the wizened man always sat. My hands shook with expectancy as I cracked open the cover. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

I looked up. The wizened man stood on an elevated plateau a little ways off. I could just make out his slim smile.



Solving for X

Laurie Novo

After it was all over, it didn't make much sense. But at the time, even though Claire had to be talked into it, looking nervous and skeptical as she played with her frappuccino, Xanthia made it sound like the only way justice would be done. Collecting the tools they would need at Xanthia's mother's house, Claire placed them into her backpack, the one elaborately criss-crossed with reflective tape for safety. Danger, she reflected, was relative: after all, though in ordinary circumstances she would not like to be run over by a runaway truck or a mad bicyclist zooming through the night and unable to see her in time—and here she stopped to wonder, briefly, if a runaway truck could be affected by the fact that her reflective tape made it clear that the truck would be destroying human life along with material property, such as the fire hydrants she imagined it mowing down in its mad progress down the quiet street of her suburban town—tonight she distinctly preferred invisibility. Eagerly she rummaged through the kitchen drawer where the masking tape was kept. Finding it, finally, she covered the shiny reflecting tape with a beige strip. Grabbing a black Sharpie, she scribbled over the tape. Hours seemed to have passed. It was definitely time to leave to meet Xanthia by the Starbucks. Just a little late, actually. Keeping to their time-honored relationship rules—she was always a little late, Xanthia was always so late that Claire began to worry that she had come to the wrong place at the wrong time—made Claire feel a little calmer. Like those murderers who break every rule of morality but always remember to feed their cats. Maybe she should stop comparing their little exploit to the irreversible slashing mayhem brought into the world by psychopaths. Nobody could see what they were about to do as more than a little teenage mischief—could they? Opening the door

quietly and thinking that breaking curfew was the least of her transgressions, Claire slipped out into the night. Passing the office where she had taken drivers' ed, the McDonalds where her Sunday School class used to meet for apple pies and theological conversation, the art store she loved because of the hundreds of ordered, organized, soothing colored pencils in symmetrical and undisturbed peace, she felt like the murderer she had just taken comfort in not being. Quickly she walked past her eye doctor's office. Right at the corner where the Starbucks was, she saw Xanthia, who had in fact arrived before her. She looked jittery and pale, though maybe that was just a trick of the halogen street lights, since she also looked green. Taking a deep breath, Claire

joined her. Under no circumstances, she knew, would they turn back. Vanquishing her nerves, she said, "Hey—let's do it!" When she heard the shake in her voice, she knew for sure for the first time that she wasn't ready to be part of this. Xanthia led the way so quickly that Claire had to take a jog-step to keep up. Yet she was excited, in spite of herself. Zipping up her coat and shrugging her



backpack more securely onto her shoulders, she went off to break a window, vandalize expensive electronic equipment with Pam and Reddi-Whip, write obscenities on a refrigerator with the Sharpie she had taken from her kitchen drawer, unplug all the clocks she saw, and run the microwave full of aluminum foil and silverware.

Daniel Banko

Gun fires into the air
'There is no explanation—I need no reason I just go
Faster, faster, faster
Blood pumping, heart pounding
Tired body weighing me down, but I keep pushing
I become numb, fluid-like I cannot stop anymore, nor do I want to I just keep going
Headaches, dizziness, soreness, tiredness
Must work through it all
Breathing getting raspy, almost panting
Cannot give up now
It's cold outside, but I'm burning up
'Throat getting dryer I keep charging forward
Hill looming in front, must remain focused
Striding now, lifting arms and legs
Bounding, climbing, ascending
Knees are giving way
At the top, muscles almost fail to move
Downhill now, must sprint ahead
No time to lose, people gaining, need to keep moving
My body is reluctant, but I'm driven, compelled, obsessed
'Time no longer has meaning,
I lose track of my steps I hear cheers but I don't know from where I keep looking straight ahead
I see my target, and banish from my mind the screaming pains in my body I catch up,
his feet kicking up mud in my face I pass, with a cold stare piercing through me
Must remain ahead, finish line almost within reach
Must give everything that's left
'Teeth grinding, I tell myself to sprint, sprint, sprint!
Gasping for air now, but such little distance is remaining
On the verge of collapse
Finally, the line coming closer, closer, one step away I finish and the world around me comes back to life I'm
overjoyed, relieved, exhausted, aching, a mess I fall to the ground, distraught and hysterical
Yet I'm anxious for the next race.

Mongoose

Anonymous

The sun shines on us
It surrounds us with laughter
It flows through our veins.

If there were ever...
Safety to be found on Earth
We would fly away.





Matthew Block

Red backpacks stare at me
from vomit colored carpets

and notebooks
from desks that fidget with the ground.

Water is taught by thirst
and the earth by space.

Purple water bottles stare at me
from wooden stools

and juice boxes
from child toys like dinosaurs.

Love is taught by loneliness
and lust by longing.

Pillows stare at me
from plush beds

and candles
from aged tables that stammer with time.

The years are taught by seconds
and moments by emptiness.

Books stare at me
from the Borders shelves

and coffee
from counters in white ceramic mugs.

Colors are taught by creativity
and the blackness by overwhelming ignorance.

Trees stare at me
from lush fields in the distance

and apples
from gentle hands that pick them up.

Rhetoric is taught by argument
and poetry from the battle with the soul.



