

LIVING WATERS REVIEW



Literature
& Art

by the Students and Alumni of Palm Beach Atlantic University

If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said,

out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

John 7:37-38

THANK YOU

School of Arts and Sciences

•

English Department

•

Visual and Media Arts
Department

•

Office of Advancement

SPECIAL THANKS

President Dr. Debra A. Schwinn

•

Dr. Randy Richards

•

Dr. Robert Lloyd

•

Dr. Susan Jones

•

Dr. Jenifer Elmore

•

Barbara Sharpe

•

Susan Williams

•

Taylor Smythe

Help support Living Waters.
Contact Professor David Athey
in the English Department.
561-803-2259

LIVING WATERS REVIEW

FOUNDER AND FACULTY ADVISOR

Professor David Athey

GRAPHIC DESIGN ADVISOR

Professor Tim Eichner

SENIOR EDITOR

Lauren Johnson

Sam Wilber

Bethany Conover

Holly Heers

MANAGING EDITOR

Grant Van Gorp

Jonathan Olar

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Jonas Essington

Grace Cram

COVER ART

Lauren Johnson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

7	DIVINE GLORY <i>Lauren Johnson</i>	19	FLOWER FOR PAPA <i>Emma Kilpatrick</i>
8	TO FEED A VILLAGE <i>Adriana Bockman-Pedersen</i>	20	MURMURATIONS <i>Samantha Wilber</i>
9	FIRST & PIKE <i>Grace Cram</i>	21	CATHEDRAL LUMINESCENCE <i>Lauren Johnson</i>
10	MY DAD'S FACE <i>Shelby Parks</i>	22	ROAD TRIPPIN' <i>Bethany Conover</i>
11	TRACY'S BLUES <i>Jonas Essington</i>	23	MY APOLOGIES <i>Emily Libby</i>
12	ON FOUNDATIONS OF IGNORANCE <i>Audrey Collison</i>	24	ANOTHER WARDROBE <i>Jasmine Roth</i>
13	RUNNING AWAY AS AN ADULT <i>Jonas Essington</i>	25	SENSIBILITY <i>Amaya Estrada</i>
14	GRANNY'S FRIDGE <i>Neyssa Rogers</i>	26	GROUNDING <i>Emily Hilligoss</i>
15	THE NINE LIVES OF MY FATHER <i>Tori Warkentin</i>	27	FINGERPRINT TREE <i>Sarah Pouliot</i>
17	THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF PRAYER (ON THE SIDEWALK) <i>Paige Stanish</i>	28	SEATED IN THE GRAVEYARD <i>Jonas Essington</i>
18	CONVERSATION WITH MONA LISA <i>Canaan Walker</i>	29	CHRISTMAS EVE IN KERALA <i>Isabel Isaac</i>

Contents

3

- 30 WORLDS COLLIDE
Lauren Johnson
- 31 MY GRANDEFATHER JIM
Brynn Richer
- 32 WHAT ONCE WAS
Emily Hilligoss
- 33 PAPA'S SONG
Holly Heers
- 34 I STILL DREAM OF THE HOUSE,
BASED ON THE NOVEL *THE LIKENESS*
Grace Cram
- 35 KOALA
Whitney Maxis
- 36 MORNINGS IN KURICHY
Isabel Isaac
- 37 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
Lauren Johnson
- 38 THE GARDEN I USED TO VISIT
Shelby Parks
- 39 TWO-MAN BAND
Holly Heers
- 40 SUCCULENTS ON A SHELL
Esmeralda Tillet
- 41 WRITING ON WATER
Bethany Conover
- 42 ROCK AND PAPER
Sarah Pouliot
- 44 STUMBLING ACROSS A CHURCH
WHILE ON A RUN
Grace Cram
- 45 PORTRAIT
Nicole Merendino
- 46 ROSALIND
Jonathan Olar
- 47 THE PLANT-IFF
Danielle Newport
- 53 RED-EARED SLIDER
Bethany Conover
- 54 SHADOW
Amanda Morse
- 55 CHICO
Amanda Morse
- 56 LOVE PARK
Ariane Campbell
- 57 WINDOW SEAT
Isabel Isaac

58 SHEPHERD IN THE VALLEY
Hannah Gebhardt

59 TOVAR COLONY, VENEZUELA
Valeria Ortega

60 BURNT CULTURE
Thomas Green

61 WELCOME, HOME
Ariane Campbell

62 BALUT
Nicole Hirt

63 SAFARI
Sarah Schwalm

64 THROUGH THE WINDOW
Lars Essington

65 MELDED
Sarah Pouliot

66 POSTAGE FOR A LADY
Alice Browning

67 FLAMINGO
Caleb Grant

68 AVIARY
Holly Heers

69 THE LABYRINTH OF ALTO VISTO
Kaleb Luster

70 WHAT DREAMS MAY COME
Emily Hilligoss

71 NO NEED FOR A PORCELAIN ANGEL
Sarah Pouliot

72 3:30
Zach Robrbough

73 STARBUCKS ON THE CORNER
Grant Van Gorp

74 AGAPE
Sarah Schwalm

75 THE DOOR OF COPPER AND GLASS
Lauren Johnson

76 GREENHOUSE EFFECT
Paige Stanish

77 SOY EMMA
Emily Libby

78 MARKER 77, JUNO BEACH
Grace Cram

79 SHIPWRECKS
Brody Eldridge

Contents

5

80 GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN
Amaya Estrada

81 BURT REYNOLDS PARK
Kalani Leblanc

82 HIGHWAY IN THE DARK
Lars Essington

83 MORNING MASS
Isabel Isaac

84 EL CONDOR PASA
Ariane Campbell

85 1000 STEPS DOWN
Grant Van Gorp

86 THERE WAS DUST
Emily Hilligoss

Why do swirling galaxies brew
beyond all borders?
Why do Saturn's scintillating storms spill
diamonds down like rain?
Why does ocean sea-spray crash
into weightless white wings on briny black rocks?
Why do blue whales sing
symphonies we cannot comprehend?
Why do aspen leaves shimmer and jingle
like gold coins in the sunlight?
Why are hummingbirds carved
of amethyst, emerald, sapphire?
Why does my heart beat?
To proclaim,
without words,
one message.

TO FEED A VILLAGE

Adriana Bockman-Pedersen

Poetry

8

Everyone wakes at dawn
to wait out on the silent ocean for hours
at the hope of two fish.
The sun wars against exposed necks,
lines tease and tug on the seagrass.
Bored children peer over the edge,
point to iridescent jellyfish sailing by.
On the starboard side the fishing wire pulls,
blistered feet patter across the deck.
Children shout “look, look”
and behold
a school
of twenty-three Spanish mackerel.

First & Pike, Seattle
Public Market myriad of
fish from ice box coolers;
inanimate eyes staring profoundly
at ogling buyers
and attracting flies
for me to swat at as I speed walk by.
Crinkling my nose,
almost colliding with the peddler offering plumcot:
(Fusion of two things we've known forever:
Why had I not thought of it before?)
I munch on candied nuts that give
cobblestone crunch to sightseeing flavor —
Climb second-story political bookshops that provide
a window seat by which to form one's view —
Ponder chewed gum on brick:
more family-friendly than graffiti.
Jabber of dualistic slang
patter of misty rain
so familiar, you lean into it like an old lover.
And above it all,
needle constantly rotating,
trying to carve the same babbling circle
into blue dome.
And in response,
drawing fresh tears and gauze
with which to mend itself morning after morning.

MY DAD'S FACE

Shelby Parks

That deep, staccato laugh
clipping through the evening air
of the living room.

Those quick winks
a shared secret,
comedic truce.

Two bushy brows
straight across,
solid and defined.
Just like his morals.

My dad's face
is nothing and everything
like mine.

Poetry

10

Improvised melodies flood my apartment, spilling from an antiquated radio and into the dusky humid evening. I step up onto the balcony railing, grinning at the distant brick pathways unfolding below. Most of the time I appreciate 91.3 WLRN's selections, but tonight, Tracy Fields continually renews my perception of jazz with each crisp song. Famous and unnamed musicians alike spring forth with each passing pick.

I observe the cumulonimbus drowning the skyline as Tracy prophesies from the speaker behind me, foretelling the tune that is to be the backdrop for my next few minutes.

Her fluid voice trickles out onto the balcony, "Up next, we have a very special song—the one I was named after, in fact. This is 'Tracy's Blues' by Mister Dodo Marmarosa."

A rolling piano lick opens, shadowing Tracy's voice. I appraise the first measures, nodding, tasting each note Marmarosa presents. Static hisses from the radio, bringing more depth and flavor to each silence between phrases. The clouds tumble in response, and I sink into the swirling refrain. Thoughts mingle with each key as Marmarosa tugs me deeper gently. Twilight intensifies while my eyes transition from green to glassy to glistening.

Rain begins to mist, prompting an early close to the sliding glass door—I slam it shut on beat and the bass solo nearly topples me. Piano and drums leave asymmetrical ripples on the scenery of a splashing harmony plucked away by calloused fingertips. Swinging blinds and droplets on glass devise a hypnotic pattern on the faux tile, feebly attempting to pluck my attention away from the song.

I gasp for air beneath the torrent of a drum fill. Each pitter patter mingles nimbly with the rain, tapping away its own rhythm outside. Music engulfs me, crushing, dragging me to the floor beneath the pressure of such fathomless dialectic dichotomy. Finally, the band breaches, bringing climax and resolution as the song fades. I am not done listening.

"Again, that was 'Tracy's Blues' by the one Dodo Marmarosa," Tracy says. "Thanks for listening."

ON FOUNDATIONS OF IGNORANCE

Audrey Collison

Markers and
Gouache

12



RUNNING AWAY AS AN ADULT

Jonas Essington

Sometimes, when your soul becomes baggy
on your lanky frame,
the thought of running away
is flavored slightly
with spices of
mental scenery, little responsibility,
and change.
When the seductive song of self-reliance
sung by the vistas, the sierras,
tickles your ears,
remember:
that time for running away approaches,
swift-footed, welcoming.

Poetry

13

GRANNY'S FRIDGE

Neysa Rogers

Poetry

14

fading flower magnets adorn your fridge
napkins with phone numbers, addresses, doctor appointments
a magazine cutout of a man who looks like my dad but isn't
one page from a coloring book
pixelated print-outs of my brother's face
a birthday card with a bug-eyed chihuahua
my senior yearbook photo
papaw's long-since used bottle opener
the poem a lady called Shirley wrote decades ago

A Prayer for a Friend

and a photo of us in D.C. with me holding
a stuffed lion doll in my arms
and you holding me.

THE NINE LIVES OF MY FATHER

Tori Warkentin

Sitting before me at the kitchen table, his body strong and healthy, reading the morning paper and sipping a steaming mug of coffee, I watch my father. His morning routine had never strayed all twenty-something years of my life. He was constant and reliable, something I took for granted, until hearing the stories of the wilder years of my father's youth.

"He's like a cat," grandma would joke, not always in humor as my father's early years had done a number on her. "I'm just lucky he had you and has held onto his ninth life," she would say, tugging playfully at my hair.

Life #1

At birth, my grandmother knew that her eldest child would give her early-onset gray hairs and a lifetime of worry. He came into the world silent and still, scaring the doctors and nurses around her bedside. They whisked him away and left her alone with unbearable worry for her child, praying that God would let her fulfill her longing of being a mother.

A short moment later, the doctor came back into the room looking winded and awestruck. "Is my baby alright? Please tell me my child is okay," she cried to the man in scrubs.

"Your child is fine," he said. "Perfectly healthy actually, it appears he wanted to make a dramatic entrance into the world."

When he was finally safe in her arms, tucked against her chest, she whispered over his sleeping frame, "You better not scare me like that ever again."

Life #2

He began walking at eight months old. First taking small steps, holding onto the tips of my grandfather's fingers, and then running headfirst between the two couches in the family room.

"He's like a drunken sailor," visitors would say, watching him wobble on his chunky legs.

"He never falls," my grandmother said as he did a lap around the room.

He rounded a corner too fast, slammed into the edge of the glass dining table, and he fell.

My grandmother recalls that day as my father's first black eye and her first heart palpitation.

Life #3

At six years old, he fell into an old well on the corner of the neighboring farm. He had been playing tag with the neighborhood kids and only intended to jump over the crumbling structure to get away, but he misjudged its height and ended up falling to the depths.

The neighborhood boys rushed over to the nearest house and called for help. Grandma and Grandpa got there as he was being pulled up, his right leg broken and his head bleeding.

"You're lucky," the paramedics had said as they lifted my father into the ambulance, "there wasn't any water and that the bottom was filled with hay."

When he began to gain consciousness, hours later at the hospital, the first thing that he asked my grandparents was if he had won the game.

Life #4

Most of his childhood was spent outdoors, between the farming fields and neighboring houses. He would play made-up games like Army Man or Karate Kid, using sticks and branches as his weapons.

When my father was nine, my grandfather built a swing out of old wooden planks and rope that he'd found in an old shed. He tied it up high in an oak tree, testing it out to make sure it wouldn't break. When he deemed it safe, he told my father it was time to swing.

"I can almost touch the leaves! Push me higher!"

My grandfather pushed as hard as he could and my father went flying up to the crown of the tree where he tried to reach out to grab a nearby leaf. He leaned a bit too far, and he lost his hold of the rope and fell several feet to the ground.

At the ER, he was diagnosed with three fractured ribs and a concussion. And he lost four of his teeth.

"Does this mean the tooth fairy is going to give me extra money?" He had asked on the way home.

Life #5

He got his driver's license on his sixteenth birthday, driving my grandfather's old Chevy with the dented front fender and the duct tape ceiling. With the temporary piece of paper in hand, he spun out of the DMV's parking lot with the radio blasting The Rolling Stones.

Two hours later, speeding into the dusk, a deer suddenly raced out onto in front of him. My father swerved and successfully missed the deer, instead careening over the medium and flipping the Chevy into a ditch.

When the emergency crew arrived, he was stuck upside-down in the car, so they cut him out and assessed his injuries. He was lucky he had only a few bruises and scrapes, but he realized he might have been better off unconscious when they asked for his parents' phone number.

Life #6

In his second year of university, he was virtually penniless. He worked odd jobs to make his rent and ate two hotdogs for 99 cents for every meal. The gas station down the road became his grocery store, snack shop, and restaurant. The workers even called him by name.

One winter evening, after taking part in his nightly dinner routine, he began to feel unwell. His stomach cramped, and he barely made it to the bathroom to rid his stomach of its content.

All night he bowed to the porcelain queen, going in and out of consciousness until his roommate found him and drove him to the hospital.

"You have an E. coli infection," the doctor told him, administering his third round of fluids. At that very moment, he vowed to get a better job and never to eat a hotdog from a gas station ever again.

Life #7

He first met my mother at the community pool; she was lying on a lounge chair wearing a yellow one-piece with large round sunglasses shielding her eyes. She was the prettiest woman he ever saw.

Trying to catch her attention, he decided to jump off the high diving board. He had never done it before, but it had looked easy enough. Climbing up the stairs, he looked

at the people below becoming smaller and smaller.

At the top of the board, he stared over the edge, realizing that he probably should have just walked over to the woman and introduced himself.

"Oh, well." At the count of three, he jumped, landing on his stomach, passing out, and having to get rescued by the lifeguard.

While lying by the side of the pool, holding his abdomen in pain, my mother came over to him and asked, "Are you okay?"

"I am now," he said, to which she rolled her eyes and went back to her chair.

Life #8

At twenty-six, he married my mother, not relenting after every failed attempt to gain her affection. She put up with his sporadic need for adventure, and he helped push her out of her introverted comfort zone.

One winter afternoon, he decided they should go skiing. He had never gone before, and he knew that she used to spend family vacations up on the ski hills.

"Let's start on the bunny hill," she said, pointing to a small mound where several children were learning to ski.

"Nah," he said, pointing to the expert hill. "I'm going on that one."

"You're not serious," she said.

He didn't answer her, already making his way towards the lift.

Twenty minutes later, she was called to the medic station, where she found him with a ski pole stuck in his eye.

"The medic fainted trying to help me," my father said as she and he waited for an ambulance to take him to the hospital.

Life #9

He welcomed his first child at the age of thirty. He held my mother's hand the whole time, alternating between telling her to push and to breathe. They had a girl. He was so excited, he couldn't stop staring at her little face.

"She's so beautiful, a bit homely, but in a beautiful way," he told my grandmother on the phone, "I will never do anything to hurt you," he said, kissing the top of my bald head.

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF PRAYER (ON THE SIDEWALK)

Paige Stanish

pleas for world peace and
the healing of the sick and
the forgiveness of trespassers and
A's on unstudied-for-exams and
that josh would walk hand in hand with bethany and
lead us not into temptation on this college campus
stand in the middle of the sidewalk
with interlocked fingers and sweaty palms

making my package pilgrimage across the green
my approach is not to be seen
through eyes pinched shut in the presence of their deliverers —
both mail and soul

if only the stirring of their souls
translated to the movement of their feet
for a biker on their other side could not avert
the crisis of her crashing into my mailcart

perhaps she should have prayed for agility
rather than the sins of the unapologetic guilty

Poetry

17

CONVERSATION WITH MONA LISA

Canaan Walker

Poetry

18

To be the portrait
of countless camera clicks
—though they didn't always look like this
host to boundless hours of busy banter
yet, you can never boast

Watching us unfold
every hand-hold, handshake, and hug
envying the splendor of our wonder

You've felt thousands of adoring eyes
studying each stroke and each line
that brought you to life
etched in time
with history that inspires new minds

Everyone knows your name,
how about I tell you mine

FLOWER FOR PAPA

Emma Kilpatrick



Watercolor

19

MURMURATIONS

Samantha Wilber

Poetry

20

Why do birds fly in a V?
and why do planes follow after them

Starlings gather
to pattern
their wings
in the shape
of galaxies

Shrikes survive
with rounded beaks
and unabashed glory

To be as herons move
and bow as they do
to each other

CATHEDRAL LUMINESCENCE

Lauren Johnson

These holy, hallowed halls of stone
Seem solemn and still until
Lithe light leaps through the glass,
Joyous and jubilant. Just as a river
Rushes its riches to ready ground,
The brightness brings abundance,
Making holy, hallowed, halls of stone
Glow and gleam with grace.

Poetry

21

ROAD TRIPPIN'

Bethany Conover

Poetry

22

On the way to Pennsylvania,
mom's listening to the radio,
oldies thumping through the car,
she's dancing and waving and bopping.
Dad drives like a pro—
shimmying his shoulders,
but can barely keep his eyes on the road
as he watches her
joyful arms swinging.

MY APOLOGIES

Emily Libby

¿No hablas español?

But you're brown.

Yes, my dad is white —

the paradox —

when people see he is darker than my

caramel queen mom, more radiant than a dream, cream of the crop.

My apologies

not knowing beans and rice most nights for dinner,

my mother's inability to speak the Spanish.

My apologies

for 1960s American intolerance

of cultures other than their own.

My apologies for my mixed heritage, for no *abuela o comida de mi abuela*,

no Puerto Rican attitude, my assimilated self, for family stories, recipes, or

genealogies never passed down, and for lack of accent.

And yet.

Never once an apology made to my mother

as she watched all she knew be ripped from her

five-year-old fingers.

Poetry

23

ANOTHER WARDROBE

Jasmine Roth

Flash Fiction

24

Rays beat down on my head. Dirt had crusted its way up both legs, leaving me with a heightened knowledge of my own appearance. Passing people stared down at me with mixed emotions. Some with pity, others with revulsion.

I can still place the exact moment I was kicked out of my so-called 'home.' The stifling air in the cramped living room caused my hair to stick to my neck. The scent of honeysuckle, sickeningly sweet, hung in the air with the threat of suffocating anyone who drew too deep of a breath, rivalled by the poignant stench of alcohol that always seemed attached to any room in the house.

The drawled-out words of my mother resounded: "You don't do nothin' around here, Jamie. Get your useless self outta my house!"

I was terrified and rushed to gather anything quickly, only seeing my tattered dark green cardigan and favorite page-torn novel. I didn't seem to see the blankets, change of clothes, or any logical needs.

The dull thud of a coin dropping into my cup jolts me. A fragile girl shyly waves before sprinting back to her mother's side. A weak smile forms as they leave my view. My attention slowly turns back to the tattered novel in my lap and C. S. Lewis takes me to the real world of Narnia.

SENSIBILITY

Amaya Estrada



Oil

25

GROUNDING

Emily Hilligoss

Poetry

26

my lungs inflate
count to five

one
a red cardinal outside the window
emerald evergreens
a yellow armchair
mom's burgundy sweater
and my beat up Converse

two
a lawnmower
air-conditioning kicking on
my little cousins giggling
and the coffee maker going off

three
freshly brewed coffee
my aunt's famous chocolate chip cookies
and newly cut grass

four
a comforter wraps around me
and sweat runs down my forehead

five
a cup of coffee my dad hands me
my lungs exhale.

FINGERPRINT TREE

Sarah Pouliot

I dot two paper trees
with fingerprints dipped
in wet acrylic, sculpting
small oval leaves across
the page with corner curling and
torn—a falling sunset of
apricot
 crimson
 claret-red
their plunge perpetually preserved
in the lifted, dry paint crated by
little hands—stained.
One adorns mom's fridge and
one drapes on dad's.

Poetry

27

SEATED IN THE GRAVEYARD

Jonas Essington

Poetry

28

Mythological figures dwell
on the door of your home
intertwined, frozen, in the dance of life
you have declined to continue.
Do they embolden you in death?

Under the wreathed dome of the banyan,
your shrine and this bench become
a new abode; one for seeking
contemplation, wholeness.

Many come to ponder
their own mortality
with your name and your grave and the great, great tree
as guides.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN KERALA

Isabel Isaac

Christmas Eve in Kerala is a glittering occasion.
Children, parents, grandparents decorating the streets,
donning drums and torches.
"Hark! The Herald angels sing..."
I hear them from my seat at the front of my grandmother's church.
The cement floor is cool under my bare feet.
I study its dips and crevices,
wondering which ones were made by my great grandfather,
and wondering if he would have liked my voice.
Someone calls my name from the pulpit.
I look to my sister with a glimmering smile
and we stand together, hymnals in hand.

Poetry

29

WORLDS COLLIDE

Lauren Johnson

Photography

30



MY GRANDFATHER JIM

Brynn Richer

He bought his dream house:

the gray one
with a nice red door
and an in-ground pool
sitting on top of a hill
in the smallest city in New York
when I was seven.

He brought his hunting gear,
his army medals,
his leather briefcase with unused blueprints,
and an old ceramic coin tray with my tiny handprint fossilized on it.

He painted the walls,
built me a bookshelf,
restored the wall-length fireplace,
gave fertilizer to the backyard crabapple tree,
and made the neighbors laugh
by gingerly fishing frogs out of the pool.

My grandfather lived in this house
for two years

until he left ambulance stretcher marks
scraped along the living room doorframe.

But he *lived*
nonetheless
in the smallest city on a hill,
shining.

Poetry

31

WHAT ONCE WAS

Emily Hilligoss

Poetry

32

The song is like the first drops of rain
on a cloudy October afternoon.
Barely noticeable, but insistent.

I still listen to that old 70s tune,
hoping I'll find more of you in the lyrics.
Piano chords trickle down my scalp
and dissolve into what once was
before tension scratched the records
and made me skip over words you said.

"See you next Christmas," still rings
after four years of ignoring messages.
It doesn't drown out the
bittersweet piano progression
that bangs against my ribs.

We didn't get a goodbye;
the melody slowly
fades into steady static.

Your voice rings out like church bells,
rumbling, rolling like a stone
with forceful love like holy wind.

How Great Thou Art

Lilies bloom on the platform where you sing,
like those embroidered on my Easter dress
with Gramma's hand-stitching,
I'm swaying, shyly whispering

How Great Thou Art

Now Gramma's ears, withered by age,
barely hear you sing,
her hearing aid buzzing a silent hymn,
humming memories of your voice echoing

How Great Thou Art

I heard you on a radio station
driving through bending roads
and changing leaves
with creation singing in harmony
from a stranger on a church stage, muffled by drums
and electric guitars
still clear to me

How Great Thou Art

How Great Thou Art

I STILL DREAM OF THE HOUSE, BASED ON THE NOVEL *THE LIKENESS*

Grace Cram

Some nights, when I am sleeping in an unfamiliar bed in an unfamiliar city, I still dream of the house. The photo I did not take is branded into my memory.

In my dream, it is always a Midwest August—lemonade stand on the corner, scootering with the neighborhood kids, philosophical hammock swing dazes under an encyclopedic sky as blue as the Atlantic ocean.

In my dream, the house is always empty, just how I last saw it. I am standing in the kitchen, vats of afternoon sun pooling in through slits of fingerprint-smudged shades and warming the floorboards groaning underneath my dusty feet. The scent of freshly cut grass slips through cracked windows to tickle my nose and undercut the Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day that is eternally adhered to all the countertops, lazily lingering in the crannies of the wooden ceiling beams with the daddy long leg spiders.

In the dining room, the table is set for seven, but Dad's carving knife has gone dull and Mom's wine glass is chipped. The paper napkins have yellowed and one of the chairs is missing.

The swish of a match, I whip my head—the fireplace is piled high with wood. The whine of an alarm on the edge of my consciousness, a sickening stomach drop. Something is wrong, I am wrong, they're still here, and I am the only one who left after all, all those years ago. I tear through all of the rooms, the siren is getting louder and I have to hurry, but the shadows won't stay still and I run so fast I bash my head on the edge of the wall and burst open my stitches just like when I was four.

The carpet is an itchy, prickly, water-stained place for me to rest my head, but my initials are still penciled in under the staircase railing and the key is sharp in my palm and the whooping alarm is actually a low, ringing throb reverberating from my ear drums to deep into my bones. They have all gone. They really left.

We left. The house is gone. Dull T.V. static throbbing in my chest wakes me up most times, but the silent house never leaves the back of my eyelids.

KOALA
Whitney Maxis



Watercolor
35

MORNINGS IN KURICHY

Isabel Isaac

Poetry

36

i woke up to the sound of laughter and local news bubbling outside
my open door

open windows and
open curtains
waving in the smell of smoke and
songbirds' voices hidden between the
towering trees of the tropic

the floor was sticky when i stepped out of bed, reminding me to slip on sandals

my stomach groaned, i grinned sleepily
my fingers tingled as i pushed aside the drape hanging across the doorway

i was welcomed by a table covered in plates of *puttu* and plantains
and steaming chai
and old stories

there was an empty seat at the end of the table

Thin, soft grey strokes collect and curve as I try to create a face out of graphite. The paper around my lines is now more grey than white because I've erased it numberless times. I look back at my reference photo—a stern woman in Roman-style armor—and sigh, erasing.

Why is it so hard for my lines to be true?

Why can't I align what I see in my mind and what I form with my hand?

Many attempts and failures later, including at least seven do-overs of her hand grasping a spear, I finally finish the outline, and start on the shading. In my first endeavor, her metallic armor looks flat, so I erase for highlights and cross sketch for shadows. Then I notice the spearhead is inaccurate and redraw it. Again.

I flip my pencil between my finger, looking at the person I have formed of shadows and light, gentle curves and sharp angles, pencil lead and mental anguish, trying to decide if I'm satisfied. I'm surprised to find I am, and even more surprised to realize it's only because I was willing to erase.

THE GARDEN I USED TO VISIT

Shelby Parks

Poetry

38

the garden I used to visit
hedges now overgrown
old metal gate
a rusty, unforgiving welcome
I used to be able to peer over the hedge
when it was smaller,
when I was smaller
inside I would pull weeds
with dirty knees
just me and the gardener
rust gives way
knees crack,
it's harder now
to pull weeds.
so many weeds
instead of
the flowers I'd pick
and hand out
at school, on the bus,
in the orchestra room.
unaware of the thorns
on the stems.
now I know the thorns.
too afraid to prick,
I no longer hand out flowers.
too afraid to hurt,
I don't give.
I hurt.

A wrinkled man with a citrus tan
plays trumpet on Clematis Street,
his bass player wearing a "Veteran" hat
faithfully keeping the beat.

Sitting on concrete seats, they greet us weekly
with their tunes,
familiar now, but refreshing still
among a loud and changing crowd.

I stop to listen closely
to the stories that they sing
as if every Saturday could be the last
they sing to strangers like me.

SUCCULENTS ON A SHELL

Esmeralda Tillet

Watercolor

40



Wading out,
my fingertips dipped,
writing unsubstantial shapes, letters, languages
into the fabric that always forgot
the stories I told, the secrets I whispered.
Water was the perfect keeper
of those unspoken parts sealed
in the crisp, silken
sunken envelopes, my missives
to the sea.

Poetry

41

ROCK AND PAPER

Sarah Pouliot

Creative Essay

42

Horses' hooves weave through winding, dirt-packed paths—the air becoming cooler with each ascending step. My body jolts from side to side upon worn leather to the rhythm of a trudging trot, leaning back in the presence of steep, alluring hills. The tilting trails are thin, revealing a precipice, inches away from the horses' steady stomps, the lower landscape scattered with emerald-green pines, tangled, and intertwined—becoming one.

The beat of the saddle soon settles as we reach a plateau. Our bodies spring to earth, our thumping feet interrupting the mountain's whisper and the murmur of leaves swaying in the wind. Sunlight pours upon dew-stained trees, a shimmer of teetering lucent beams.

"Perfect spot for digging!" the guide says, handing out shovels.

I slice into the earth's skin in search of garnet. Wedging my shovel into the world, I wonder if I would actually find it. *Would I know it if I saw it?* As I continue to dig, my eyes seize a scintillation amid crunching dirt, and my hands reach towards the subtle glisten in grime, fingers blanketing the coarse rock. I dust off earth's soiled remains—entranced, eyes fixating on hypnotic stone spattered with sparkling red. I ponder how many feet have walked upon this same ground, unaware of the garnet I found underneath. Maybe their eyes were lifted to the mountain's peak, where the trees are shortened, crushed under the weight of the immeasurable sky, negligent of the treasures that lie within the world's dusty soul. The garnet's deep red flickers are not that of a ruby, yet still a semi-precious stone; not worth a lot but still something, and isn't that what we all want: to find *something*?

The garnet sinks into my hand—heavy. I'd be heavy too if I couldn't tell the secrets of the underworld, buried, hidden from light like a fish soaring in aphotic waters. If only I could see the world through garnet's eyes—the eyes of a worm snaking through nature's womb.

I continue to dig, finding a handful of rugged rocks studded with garnet. I wrap them in a thin, white shroud before plunging them into the deep pockets of my jeans, flecked with mud from leaning upon earth's flesh.

"Good find," the guide says.

As the sun sinks, we pack up and begin to slowly ride down the mountain. My eyes gawk on ground as the horses' strutting steps resound within my swinging back. I wonder if stones of garnet sunken in clay know the cadence, the beat, the sway of life above—and for the first time, I stare directly into creation's kingdom with garnet eyes.

In the stirring street of Worth Avenue, on the island of Palm Beach, footsteps click like coins. Expensive dresses seem to soar around me, outstretched in humid air—colorful kites encircling designer women as they shop in Gucci, Tiffany's, and Akris with ample purses hanging and dangling upon bracelet-wrapped wrists; the women prance in Prada pumps, striding past me as I hike in sandals and a t-shirt sticky with sweat from trudging across the bridge with my backpack and books. Two men in their early twenties scamper toward the beach, backs bent under the weight of surfboards propped over their heads like oblong umbrellas, blocking their eyes from the effulgent sky.

I slowly wander down Worth in search of a place to study, and my eyes catch upon a store sign: RAPTIS RARE BOOKS.

Rare? What makes them rare? Intrigued, I stumble inside the room, taking a deep breath of cool air. As I glance throughout the store, I stand still—entranced—viewing the first editions of renowned books enclosed within tall, wooden cabinets: Joyce, Hurston, and Austen sold for thousands upon thousands.

"What are you reading?" The words catch me off guard. I look up from the cabinets brimming with acclaimed literature to find a man striding towards me in a dark blue suit; he seems official like most people on Worth Avenue.

"Huh?" I say.

"You are holding The Norton Anthology of. . ." he pauses, trying to read the title of the book I found was

heavy in my hands, “American Literature?”

“Oh. . .yes. Emily Dickinson,” I say.

“Unfortunately, she is not in our repertoire.”

Like I could afford it.

The official man catches another customer as I continue gazing upon great works. Each book is placed perfectly straight onto the shelves like an actor on stage, and here I watch with gaping eyes, still in wonder, giving a standing ovation. The captivating books are covered in leather and laced with gold designs—some even hand-signed.

Maybe one day, I'll be able to afford one. After half an hour of admiration, I leave the store, dragging myself back into the dreaded heat of the street.

I saunter toward shade, discovering a garden with concrete statues encircling a flowing fountain. Sitting down to rest at a picnic table, my fingers glaze over my anthology as never before—homework becoming art, and with each comma, period, and dash—I pause. I pause just like I had in the store, realizing a new stillness in reading and tranquil freedom, a quiet prayer; for even Dickinson’s dashes create contemplation—meditation. And so, here I sit amid ceaseless commerce, eyes sealed, still in literature.

STUMBLING ACROSS A CHURCH WHILE ON A RUN

Grace Cram

Poetry

44

i slow to an awed walk under intricate, vaulted arches
that extend over the empty courtyard,
switching off the blaring music in my headphones—
the silence is more interesting.

every inch of space is inscribed with uncountable names of dead people
nothing indicates life but the signs of constant garden upkeep.
there's a cross in the middle of the patio
my foot drags on the pavement as i circle it
the sounds of me living are irreverent
to the thunderous preaching of lips long stilled.

my reflections chase each other
in the shadows i cast on the sidewalk
blending and contorting
with distorted ideas of light and graves and the cross
resulting in a sun stencil incomprehensible and inseparable
from the names etched on each memorial cobblestone.

PORTRAIT
Nicole Merendino



Watercolor
45

ROSALIND

Jonathan Olar

Poetry

46

Ivory missing; fingers hovering—
silence tempestuously affording
the muffled conversations from the other room;
the air conditioning counting; her back straightening—

the hammers hitting against the taut cords—
a Rachmaninoff—the pedals fastening warping
sounds, she is playing daringly;
no visible audience lurking—
except for the now silent people in the other room—

tones thickening,
her breathing is still—I am not breathing either—
listening,
forgetting the other room;

the accents of silence disturbed
by the reverb of a broken key, still,
the imaginary accompanists define
the nimbleness of her playing
like ambers from a prod,
sounding in precise decision;
now she's respiring the room
in a flur, the flur of allegro and fortissimo

in the lasting vibrating
strikes of major and minor keys expanding
and depressing into piano and forte
as she now resounds the stop.

CHARACTERS

Mr. William O'Banion: **The Defendant**, a man 30-35 M
Ms. Ivy Green: **The Plaintiff**, a houseplant 25-30 F
Judge Amelia T. Houser: **The Judge**, the house 40-50 F
Mr. Clayton Potter: **The Prosecuting attorney**, a flower pot 35-40 M
Mr. Kenneth Waters: **The Defense attorney**, a watering can 30-35 M
Mr. Phillip Dendron: **Defense witness**, a houseplant 50-60 M
Ms. China Voss: **Prosecution witness**, a china vase 30-35 F
Eight potted plants: **The Jury**

BEGIN SCENE

In a courtroom that looks uncannily like a regular living room in a house, a trial commences. A jury of eight houseplants. They appear restless, chattering as the plaintiff and the defendant, as well as their respective lawyers, take their places in the court.

The defendant, MR. WILLIAM O'BANION, a regular guy who keeps many houseplants, looks worried as his defense attorney, MR. KENNETH WATERS, a watering can, consoles him.

O'BANION: The jury hates me.

WATERS: They don't hate you, they don't even know you.

O'BANION: But I'm not like them. I'm a human, and she's a plant. They're already on her side.

WATERS: Look, when this all gets sorted out, they'll see that you're innocent.

O'BANION: They'll never understand what happened— heck, I don't even understand what happened. How am I supposed to defend myself when I don't even what went wrong?

(The defense, MS. GREEN, enters the courtroom with her attorney, MR. CLAYTON POTTER, a flowerpot. She gravitates towards where O'BANION sits, as if to speak to him, but POTTER ushers her away.)

GREEN: I just wanted to ask him something.

POTTER: It's not a good look in front of the jury to show sympathy for the man you're taking to trial. He tried to kill you, multiple times. Don't forget that.

SCENE 2

GREEN: I still don't understand why. He still insists that he never meant to hurt me.

POTTER: It's all a part of the act. He pretends like he cares, but he's a psychopath.

GREEN: But if he wanted to kill me, why did he work so hard to save my life after finding me?

POTTER: Ivy, look— he's insane. Maybe he thought it would be fun to torture you some more! But it ends now. It has to end.

(JUDGE AMELIA T. HOUSER raps her gavel. Silence falls over the courtroom.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Members of the jury, you are called today to decide the case of Green versus O'Banion. The charge against Mr. William O'Banion is that of an attempted murder on the life of Ms. Ivy Green, a houseplant under his care. Prosecution and defense, you may present your opening statements.

(The prosecuting attorney, MR. POTTER, stands and address the court.)

POTTER: Your honor, I stand here on the behalf of Ms. Green to avenge the injustice she has endured during her residency at the O'Banion household, over a year of neglect and abuse which culminated in one final act of malice and that nearly ended in her tragic death. Several plants, Ms. Green's neighbors and friends, have witnessed O'Banion's cruelty and his most recent attempt to take this young woman's life. It is the aim of the prosecution to have Ms. Green removed from O'Banion's care and placed elsewhere by Indoor Vegetative Protection Services, as well as revoke O'Banion's license to garden so that no other plants will have to suffer as she did at the hands of this plant-abandoning monster.

(As MR. POTTER speaks, MS. GREEN looks remorseful. She makes eye contact with O'BANION, who is white as a ghost. MR. WATERS notices this exchange, and angrily stands to his feet.)

SCENE 3

WATERS: Potter, he's not a monster! And he never abandoned Ivy! You know that as well as I do!

(JUDGE HOUSER raps her gavel.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Order! Mr. Potter, you may continue.

POTTER: The prosecution rests, your honor.

JUDGE HOUSER: The defense may now present an opening statement.

(MR. WATERS stands and addresses the court.)

WATERS: Your honor, William O'Banion is an ordinary man. He has a 9-to-5 office job that pays the bills, he goes out with friends, and he lives a modest lifestyle. What sets him apart from most of his friends is his true passion: caring for plants. Gardening is more than a hobby to Will—plants are his life. When Will found Ivy at a plant nursery fifteen months ago, she was on the brink of death, forgotten by the busy business owners who never had the time to truly give her the care she deserved. For months, Will labored to restore her health, all while devoting the same attention to the every other plant he cares for, both indoor and outdoor. This incident that has been brought to the court's attention today, as well as Mr. Potter's claims of neglect and abuse, are not consistent with Will's character. My witnesses have seen Will regularly provide Ivy with water, proper nutrients and light. Mr. O'Banion is just as confused as to the nature of Ivy's sickness and shriveling as she must be. The defense will present evidence in favor of other circumstances leading to her illness—O'Banion is not a plant-killer.

(MR. WATERS sits down. O'BANION looks at him gratefully, but is still just as nervous.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Prosecution, call your witness.

(MS. VOSS, an elegant vase with a posh British accent, comes forward to the witness stand. She is sworn in and sits.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Please state your name.

SCENE 4

VOSS: Ms. China Voss.

JUDGE HOUSER: And you are a member of the O'Banion household?

VOSS: Yes, your honor.

JUDGE HOUSER: You may give your testimony.

VOSS: Thank you, your honor. I've been in Mr. O'Banion's family for over fifty years, having been purchased by his late mother. I have seen him grow up, and while he seems to be an upstanding sort of human, he certainly had no respect for plantkind for the majority of his lifetime.

WATERS: Objection, your honor—

JUDGE HOUSER: Overruled.

VOSS: It's alright, your honor. Waters and I have known each other forever, so I know exactly what he's objecting to.

(VOSS speaks in WATERS' voice, somewhat mockingly, before continuing her tirade.)

VOSS: "Will was just a kid! All little kids stomp on flowers and pick leaves and pull out patches of grass from the yard!" But his disdain for plants persisted into his adolescence. He only began his whole 'environmentally friendly' phase about six years ago, and while his persistence in taking care of houseplants comes from a good place, we cannot ignore his past. Not to mention the countless mistakes he made when he first started out. At least half a dozen plants have died in this house because Will didn't know what he was doing.

WATERS: But he learned from his mistakes. There's no human out there who is a perfect caretaker. And there are so many cases where plants given perfect treatment still end up dying— sometimes, it's no one's fault but Mother Nature's.

SCENE 5

(A murmur falls across the jury. MR. POTTER smirks and chimes in.)

POTTER: Blaming Mother Nature now, are we? I'm sure the religious plantfolk on the jury will appreciate that.

(MR. WATERS sighs.)

WATERS: You know what I meant. We've had some harsh winters over the years. You can't blame Will for those.

JUDGE HOUSER: Ms. Voss, please continue your statement.

VOSS: Thank you, your honor. From my perspective, Will intentionally endangered Ms. Green's life by refusing to give her enough water needed for sustenance before leaving on a three-day business trip. He knew that she was showing signs of wilting on Thursday night. He knew that by his absence, it was unlikely that Ivy would survive. I believe Mr. O'Banion was hoping Ivy would be dead, but he returned too early and put so much effort into reviving her in order to cover his tracks until another opportunity came up to leave Ivy high and dry. That concludes my statement, your honor.

(VOSS leaves the witness stand.)

JUDGE HOUSER: The defense may call a witness.

(MR. DENDRON, a kind, elderly man with a cane and a rickety voice comes to the witness stand and is sworn in.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Please state your name.

DENDRON: Mr. Phil O. Dendron.

JUDGE HOUSER: Please give your testimony.

SCENE 6

DENDRON: Well, I've been in the O'Banion household for about three years. I was one of the first houseplants on the block. Some of the wee young plants have taken to calling me "Papa Dendron". Mr. O'Banion has always such great care of me— he was always worried every time spots started showing on my leaves. And since Will's had Ivy, he's been even more attentive. Not just to her, but to the rest of us. He knew that caring for someone with her sensitivities would be difficult, but he rescued Ivy from that horrible nursery anyway. This is a good home for her, and Will has never neglected her or purposely hurt her.

POTTER: Your honor, may I ask the witness a few questions?

JUDGE HOUSER: Proceed.

POTTER: Mr. Dendron, are you aware of the state that Mr. O'Banion left Ivy in on the eve of his departure for the three day business trip?

DENDRON: Will watered Ivy before he left! I saw with my own phytochromes.

POTTER: Then how do you explain the dry soil? Sir, you must need to get your phytochromes checked. She was shriveling!

DENDRON: Potter, you're unbelievable. My senses haven't dulled that much yet, sonny boy. And, given that I'm plantkind and you're ceramic, I think I'm more qualified to make statements on Ivy's physical health. How's about that, chucklehead?

(The jury laughs at DENDRON's remarks against POTTER. Furious, POTTER wants to speak again, but one look from JUDGE HOUSER tells him that is not a good idea.)

POTTER: The prosecution rests.

JUDGE HOUSER: Bring forward the plaintiff.

(MS. GREEN comes to the witness stand and is sworn in.)

SCENE 7

JUDGE HOUSER: The defense will now be given the opportunity to address the plaintiff.

(MR. WATERS stands.)

WATERS: Ms. Ivy Green. First off, I'd like to ask you a more personal question.

POTTER: Objection!

JUDGE HOUSER: Overruled.

WATERS: Ivy, do you really want to leave the O'Banion house?

GREEN: I... I didn't want it to come to this. But I want to be safe.

WATERS: And do you really think the IVPS will put you somewhere better? They'll send you straight back to the nursery!

POTTER: Objection, your honor! This is perjury!

JUDGE HOUSER: Sustained.

WATERS: Apologies, your honor. Ms. Green, let's start with some facts: were you watered by Mr. O'Banion on Thursday night?

GREEN: Yes, I was.

WATERS: And the claim is that he purposely did not give you enough water to last the three day business trip?

GREEN: Yes.

WATERS: Do you believe you were given adequate water?

SCENE 8

GREEN: I thought I was... But when I began shriveling, I knew something was wrong. If I were given enough water, I wouldn't have shriveled.

WATERS: You were given enough water, Ivy. But you're right— something was indeed wrong. Your honor, may I present the defense's first piece of evidence to the witness?

JUDGE HOUSER: You may proceed.

(MR. WATERS brings a watering can forward and hands it to MS. GREEN.)

WATERS: This is the watering can that Mr. O'Banion used on Thursday night. Yes?

GREEN: Yes.

WATERS: Please, inspect it. Looks to be nothing out of the ordinary, yes? Well, we ran it through the labs and found traces of residual salt at the bottom of the can.

(MS. GREEN and the jury all gasp. MR. POTTER's jaw drops.)

GREEN: Salt? Why— Will, you put saltwater in the can?

(MR. O'BANION stands, shocked at the evidence MR. WATERS, his own lawyer, brought that appears to be against him. The jury mutters, a few exclaim in outrage.)

O'BANION: No! Of course not! I would never, Ivy! I'm being framed!

GREEN: Then who did it?

(JUDGE HOUSER raps her gavel louder than ever before.)

SCENE 9

JUDGE HOUSER: Order! Order in the court!

WATERS: Who, indeed? You might be wondering, Ivy, why Mr. Potter didn't bring forth this evidence himself?

GREEN: Potter, you didn't know about this, did you?

(MR. POTTER stays silent.)

WATERS: May I present the defense's next piece of evidence, your honor?

JUDGE HOUSER: Proceed.

(MR. WATERS brings an evidence bag containing a tablesalt shaker and papers with fingerprint confirmation to JUDGE HOUSER, who inspects the paperwork carefully.)

JUDGE HOUSER: The court validates the following evidence: the fingerprints of Mr. Clayton Potter have been found on the salt shaker found in the O'Banion kitchen.

POTTER: What? That proves nothing! Why would I pour salt into Ivy's watering can?

WATERS: Because you *WANTED* Ivy to be taken from the house! You wanted IVPS to take her!

POTTER: Objection!

JUDGE HOUSER: Overruled.

WATERS: You were always jealous of Ivy. Of how much Will took care of her. He never neglected her—he was simply not giving you as much attention as you wanted. You had been sitting empty for too long, without any flowers in your pot. You wanted out of the O'Banion house, to find a new human who took more interest in magnoliids than aroids.

SCENE 10

WATERS: So you had to get your hands dirty— but not in the soil. You've been tampering with Ivy's water all year, and you thought that Will's business trip was your chance.

GREEN: I knew something felt off about my water all year! And it wasn't just me. So many of my friends had the same symptoms as me from the times Will used the same canfull of water for the group of us.

O'BANION: Potter put the life of every plant in my home at stake, just to drain Ivy. Not only that, he knew that Ivy has a pre-existing health condition that requires special care! How can he be jealous of her, when he doesn't even need soil, water, and sunlight to survive?

POTTER: Fine! You're right, I wanted Ivy gone! I wanted all of the houseplants here gone! You're nothing compared to flowers, and you never will be!

GREEN: You're one sick flowerpot, Clayton.

POTTER: Curse you O'Banion, and your stupid environmentally sustainable horticulture! I hope you all shrivel up and die! And Mr. Waters, I hope you rust alone in an empty toolshed!

JUDGE HOUSER: Jury, do we have a verdict?

(The jury nods and casts their votes. JUDGE HOUSER is given the judgement.)

JUDGE HOUSER: Mr. Clayton Potter, you have been found guilty for the attempted murder of Ms. Ivy Green. We will determine your sentence at a later date.

WATERS: Well, Mr. Potter, you'd better pray to Mother Nature that you don't end up spending the rest of your life in a thrift shop, or worse, given the smash sentence. Your honor, the defense now rests.

LIGHTS DOWN.

Play

52

RED-EARED SLIDER

Bethany Conover

Out of silent waves gilded with warm rays
she peeks her beaked head.
Emerald and lime crease her face,
basked with the expression of an upside-down v.
The tide is low tonight, so children come out to romp,
drifting Spanish moss through the water in teasing circles.
Their figures play along the water
as wooden pier planks rumble from hundreds of feet,
but she still drifts in and out,
taking in all the ruckus, her ears burn red,
making ovals and circles periodically.
She weaves among limp lily pads
hanging out of the water
finally climbing slothfully onto a log
hiding the amoeba shapes on her stomach
letting her shell catch final glimpses of the sun.

Poetry

53

SHADOW

Amanda Morse

Photography

54



CHICO
Amanda Morse



Photography
55

LOVE PARK

Ariane Campbell

Poetry

56

Cobalt blue and sandstone tan tiles
web together in a mosaic
atop flat, orange walls,
roughly textured with resilience
against time and dry climates.

Romance ripples over wavy art
in heart-wrenching quotes once spoken
by Peruvian poets of the Silver Age.

Two lovers wrapped in “El Beso”
lay on a pedestal in the heart of the park,
the sculptor’s devotion to his wife
reflected against the rolling Pacific.

As waves erode the Chorrillos cliffside
and dust blurs the magnificent mosaics,
this park holds onto love’s many layers
in a peaceful embrace.

my uncle's apartment always smelled of cigarette smoke
i found it pleasant,
especially on night visits in the winter.
it jumped through the open door, tugging
me out of the cold and into the
warm, yellow glow of his living room.
my uncle served us the heartiest of laughs
with the tastiest of dinners,
steaming dishes set on his glass table
between stacks of opened mail and
plastic baskets of everyday junk.
i'd kick off my boots before
making my way to the mirror above
his faded perfume bottles,
turning them over in my hands
as if i hadn't seen them a hundred times before.
i never bothered to take off my coat
before having a seat on the worn sofa,
settling into its fraying comfort.
my uncle always sat in the chair closest
to the window.
his gaze would switch back and forth
between the sixers game on the tv
and the steady snowfall outside,
cracking jokes and then
growing quiet, at times.
from that spot, he'd watch us come
and go,
and wait for us to come again.
even after he stopped waiting,
we'd come,
and go,
sitting quietly around his table,
but never in his seat.

SHEPHERD IN THE VALLEY

Hannah Gebhardt

Acrylic

58



wide curves make up the path
violently impacting my body in the passenger seat next to my father,
as we leave behind the greatest nightmare,
home.
we travel up the mountain
the farthest one from worldly soil,
as if driving towards the gates of
heaven.
the clouds seem to brush the mirrors,
the mist spreads along the path,
as if slowly consuming the Yellow Twingo that
my father loved so much.
any soul would be terrified of such a road,
a cliff on either side of the worn tires wants to give way at every turn
and invites you to lean out the window to meet the face of horror
that curiously lacks human features,
pure dark immensity turning your stomach.
in infinite hours of driving to this destination,
a German town hidden in a mountain
where cold is eclipsed by the heat of hot chocolate steam.
metaphorically convenient, isn't it?
"wie heiÙe Schokolade, die dir auf der Zunge verbrennt, bevor du sie schmeckst."
(to taste the sweet chocolate, you must burn the tip of your tongue).

BURNT CULTURE

Thomas Green

Creative Essay

60

There is nothing with the same gleam, flickering trance, and deadly dance. Brothers can stare into a fire and talk for hours of deepest troubles—never making eye contact, connecting only through the gaze of this embodied light.

At fifteen, I moved to Uruguay knowing nothing of fire, Uruguayan culture, or their intrinsic connection. That first month, a neighbor invited us to a traditional *parrilla*. Because of Spanish and Italian blending, pronunciation in Uruguay differs from Latin America. Rather than *pah•ree•yah*, as it would be in many places, it is pronounced with a soft “J” (rather like the droning of a lawn mower at a distance). *Pah•ree•jah*.

At his *parrilla*, I learned that such grilling parties are the *lentissimo* of meals. There is no hurry, no rush for the next course as there is no particular order to the courses. The griller brings out one meat after another, cooked by contorting flames and thinly sliced, served with a garlic and parsley *chimichuri* to the guests gathered around the fire. Gradually they eat this and that, grazing on savory meat and indulging in sweet conversation.

When I tried to hold my first *parrilla* in our own well-provided porch, I thought I too could grill. Unfortunately, I knew nothing about how to start a fire. I had pinecones, I had paper, I had wood, I had a lighter, I had lighter fluid—I had no fire. After half an hour or so, one of our guests suggested a hair dryer. My mother, moved by pity or hunger, deigned to let me use hers—under its warm caresses the flames flourished immediately. Later, I learned how to start

the fire traditionally; by stacking paper and pine cones *just so*, it is possible to bring light and life to the dancing conflagration with only a breath.

I hosted many more successful *parrillas* over the ensuing years, and I learned a part of their significance to a culture burned by a lack of family. Half-siblings are more common than full ones, and the marriage rate is one of the lowest in the world, while the divorce rate is one of the highest.

This is part of why *parrillas* are so loved. They center around a wood burning fire—kept blazing—and a table where conversation is the only thing more important than beef. Fire is a force of destruction, but nothing unifies people so well. People who speak no words in common share camaraderie through the tongues of flame.

WELCOME, HOME

Ariane Campbell

We stand in a prayer circle,
heads bowed in respect to the walls
and roof that took three years to earn.
Holy water falls like raindrops
off my mother's fingertips
as we travel across our new home,
cleansing every crevice of old energy.
Flowers of red, white, and gold
proudly puff their pollenated chests
from a crystal vase in the living room.
Handprints of varying sizes
splay on the freshly vacuumed carpets
sprawling across empty bedrooms.
Cleaning supplies cast a thick odor
that sails higher than the ceiling
and sticks to the paper thin walls.
An open pizza box lies in wait
on the kitchen island as we finish
acquainting ourselves with the
walls and roof and claim our
lifelong spots at the table.

Poetry

61

BALUT

Nicole Hirt

Creative Essay

62

“Go on, try it.”

I pursed my lips and looked down at the duck in my hands. Or rather, the embryo of a duck, still in its egg. It was a tiny thing, nestled in a bed of hard yellow substance. I had no idea what that was, nor did I want to find out.

My mom and uncle nodded at me, eager grins on their faces. They wanted me to eat the fetal duck beak, feet, and all. As revolting as it may seem, I did want to eat this duck—or balut, as it was called. My mom had grown up in the Philippines, and now that I was visiting it for the first time, she wanted me to try all their food. Sure, she had cooked us some Filipino foods before, like pancit (noodles like lo mein), adobo (salty pork), and lumpia (essentially eggrolls), but those were all tame dishes.

A duck embryo was a huge jump from noodles.

I looked up at my dad and sister. They shook their heads frantically, mouthing, *Don't do it*. I was tempted to listen to them. The longer I looked at the egg, the more I wanted to chuck it into the nearest trash can.

But I didn't. My mom may have taught us some of the Filipino language when we were younger, and sometimes we ate her people's food, but I always felt like it wasn't enough. Half of me was Filipino, and yet, I barely knew anything about that side of me. Now that we were in the Philippines, I wanted to learn as much as possible. Even more than that, I wanted the experience. And if that meant eating a fetal duck, then so be it.

I braced myself for the worst and popped the duck in my mouth.

Surprisingly, the flavor wasn't bad. It was salty more than anything. The texture, on the other hand...that wasn't so pleasant. While the bones were soft, I could still tell that I was chewing the body of a tiny duck.

I quickly swallowed and took a deep breath. My dad and sister made gagging noises. Despite their reactions, I couldn't help but smile. I had come a step closer to understanding my heritage, and it felt good.

“What'd you think?” my uncle asked.

“It wasn't that bad,” I answered. “I mean, I don't think they'll become my favorite snack or anything, but...yeah, not bad.”

My sister grimaced. “I still can't believe you did that.”

“As long as you're trying new food...” My uncle turned to the stove and poured some soup into a bowl. He held it out to me, a devilish twinkle in his eyes.

I looked down at the dirty-brown soup. It did not look appetizing. “Um, what is it?”

“Oh, it's really good! It's dinuguan.”

“That's not an answer!”

My mom laughed evilly. “It's pig-blood soup!”

My dad blanched. “W-what?”

“It's not that bad! See, it even looks like chocolate!”

I gulped and took the bowl. Pig-blood soup...yeah, that sounded disgusting. But if it would help me connect more with my heritage, I would do it. After all, if I could eat balut, then I could eat this.

I took a sip.



Colored Pencil

63

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Lars Essington

Poetry

64

through the window i can see the fields
green and brown, sprawling in all directions
the grass and broken fences stained silver by the moon
old and serene, a calm patch in a busy world
anxiety awoke me one night
i downed my lukewarm water and looked to the window
hoping the sight of the fields would give solace
the moon hung large in the sky
the grass swayed slowly, a terrestrial sea
an owl perched on a weathered post in the distance
it spread its wings and soared off
i felt peace
i wiped my brow
i settled back in bed
and dreamed of fields

My hands fold over ripe Granny Smith apples, peeling and thinly slicing each one into a large metal bowl filled with lemon juice to keep them from browning.

“Done!” I shout, waving a long, bouncing curl of green apple skin in the air like a golden trophy.

“Wow,” my mom says, a soft smile painted onto her lips, “a whole apple peeled in one slice! You know my grandma used to be really good at that.”

“Must run in the family,” I say as I split the lengthy peel into two and drop the torn pieces into our dogs’ drooling mouths. My mom mixes sugar, more lemon, cinnamon, and salt into the bowl of juicy apple slices, the metal dinging with each flick of her wooden spoon. I test to see if the ingredients are well balanced, sipping the marvelous mixture. The combination of sweet and sour tingles my tongue—each ingredient an instrument within a sacred song forming a spiritual sapidity.

We begin to shape the crust, adding flour and water when needed, rolling it out like clay—curling, folding, and knitting it into delicious art. The opposing flavors create a thickened, luscious filling, fizzing and bubbling under golden crispy crust—perfectly hardened like pottery in the oven.

A yellow tablecloth drapes over our hickory table luminated by the sun beaming through a large window. I place the apple pie next to garlic mashed potatoes, cheddar and butter melting into the cloud-like fluff. The table brims with turkey, gravy,

stuffing, salads, green beans, breaded mac and cheese, and yeast rolls.

“When Aunt Ida made these rolls, they melted in your mouth,” my mom says, testing one. “Mine are just okay.” She licks the corners of butter-glistened lips as a loud knock echoes throughout the room.

“I’ll get it,” I say while the dogs bark at the reverberation. The door swings open to reveal family friends juggling delicious dishes: Filipino oxtail soup with peanut sauce, stir-fried glass noodles, steamed rice, and leche flan.

A euphony of elated greetings and “happy Thanksgivings” are exchanged as we embrace, then add their food to the table; the yellow tablecloth is barely visible now. The abundance of recipes forms an ambrosial aroma as we sit, hand in hand, giving thanks through prayer.

Soon we are passing platters, scooping hefty helpings, and laughing until faces turn red as cranberry sauce. We indulge in all the dishes, shouting praises followed by “amens,” telling lusty stories starting with “do you remember the time when . . .”—noise I’m not used to hearing in this room.

My mom finally cuts into the freshly baked apple pie, pairing it with scoops of vanilla ice cream. And Anak slices the flan.

POSTAGE FOR A LADY

Alice Browning

Poetry

66

Dear Euclydia,
I rock back and forth and back on the bough
and seize in the freezing gusts that threaten
to throw us off our course as I record
my thoughts so that you may feel as if I'm
near. I hope sweetly, soundly, sickly that
my words will ring in your ears for I fear
that God nor law could reach us where we float.
And as our plunder grows pregnant and swelled,
the underbelly groans like a dying
beast from below, tentacles to swallow
and drag us down where the sky is the sea.
My dearest Euclydia,
I know well that I will see you where it's
dry and sunny and rains bring more life, but
at this moment I think of you and
you of me, watching and waiting on the
inky blue sky.

FLAMINGO
Caleb Grant



Watercolor
67

AVIARY

Holly Heers

Poetry

68

doves dangling,
finches fluttering
about their ten-foot home on the porch,
half-way to freedom and breathing fresh air
yet unaware of endless “somewheres,”
never testing their wings
made to glide through wind and breeze.

are birds content contained?
sheltered from predator and rain
and only touched by gentle mist or whispering wind
leaking through their screened-in land
laying their eggs in safety nests and knowing the constant feeding hand
of a kind old man who loves them.

half-way to freedom, still they praise
and softly sing with summer cicadas, crescendo-ing,
thanking God and earth for whiffs of spring, of night-blooming jasmine and day lilies
and for the bullfrog’s nightly symphonies, faithfully lulling them to sleep.

“Are those even real?” my mom said, verbalizing what we all were thinking as we stared at a mountainside covered in rocks and boulders so full of luster they seemed to be painted by Disney Imagineers. We stopped the UTV in a patch of dirt and stared at the hillside that was so magnificent it felt like we’d entered a work of art.

“Can we go climb them?” my youngest brother Michael asked.

“Sure,” my dad responded with just the slightest twinge of impatience as this was our fourth unplanned stop on the path to the Little Chapel.

My two younger brothers and I charged off across the rocks, leaping from sparkling boulder to sparkling boulder. What looked artificial from afar continued to be so full of sparkle even as we stood atop them that I had to reach down to feel if they were painted.

“Real,” I said. “It’s all real.”

Atop the uppermost rocks, we stood silent as we looked upon the view of the rocky beach being bashed with blue Caribbean water.

The drive to the Chapel took another twenty minutes. Twenty bumpy minutes on paths covered in coral, sending dust clouds behind us as we weaved between boulders and patches of cacti. My family began arguing about directions, confused about the map and where Google said we should be. After several wrong turns, we finally saw the Chapel on a hill in the distance. Some long, winding minutes later, we found an empty parking lot behind the Alto Vista Chapel and pulled in front of the Peace Labyrinth.

Michael said, “We have to go do it.” So we all got out of the UTV and read the sign before entering:

Bon Bini

Welcome

To the

Peace Labyrinth

A place for

Silence and respectful contemplation

We fell silent as we stepped into the labyrinth. Our loud and rambunctious family of six could feel the spiritual power of these consecrated grounds. We walked through the labyrinth, making turn after turn after turn in reverence of the ground that we walked. My family has never been silent for more than sixty seconds, always telling jokes or pointing fun at the silliness of some traditions, but we journeyed through the labyrinth without saying a word.

As we reached the end of the maze, the center, we waited for each other. Michael got there first, followed by me, Keyden, my mom, my older brother Kyle, and finally, my father.

We greeted each other with a hug that felt holy.

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Emily Hilligoss

pastel colors dance around me
mimicking Van Gogh's *Starry Night*.
I grasp at the flowers below,
but they melt in my hands
leaving wet paint on my fingers.
the swirls in the sky
mix billowing clouds with
the last hour of sunlight.
The cherry blossom tree sheds
its *papier-mâché* petals.
Could this be his best piece yet?
I can see him on his white sailboat,
sailing in a sea of stars.
I give my compliments to the artist—
always creating a new masterpiece,
but rarely finishing it.

Poetry

70

NO NEED FOR A PORCELAIN ANGEL

Sarah Pouliot

eclectic ornaments cling
to the branches of a shedding Christmas tree—
handprints pressed on clay
dried & tied with worn ribbon,
family pictures
glued onto faded fabric,
corners curling upwards, and
a popsicle-stick star colored with crayons
stands stagnant on the
crown

a wooden nativity,
lit by uneven string lights,
is centered in the front yard
overgrown with grass and bittercress weeds—
demise disguised in white blossoms

and stockings
musty from cardboard boxes
kept in forgotten closets
hang empty on the knobs of an aspen cabinet

because it's February, and I can't find the strength to take them down
without you

Poetry

71

3:30

Zach Robrbough

Poetry

72

while she plays her electric keyboard
the warm air through the window causes
images to shiver

i'm lying on the carpet
writing would-be poetry
in my overstuffed notes app
when she stops playing abruptly

"class starts at 3:30"
then, the room melts
it is so hot outside

we endure the sun-bleached concrete
and chipped black-top
of West Palm wilderness
sharing earbuds on our way

STARBUCKS ON THE CORNER

Grant Van Gorp

greeted by bitter beans
being ground into drink
cold glow of corporate sandwiches
and warm gold from sun
through wide glass windows
the homeless man offers
his advice

Poetry

73

AGAPE
Sarah Schwalm

Acrylic

74



THE DOOR OF COPPER AND GLASS

Lauren Johnson

On the crypt,
I notice two carved names,
two birthdays,
but one death day.

A mia Moglie.

*Il mio cuore sarà sempre
gonfio del tuo ricordo.*

*Tu sei stata la
gioia della mia vita.*

This sharp-edged mausoleum,
younger than the weather-sanded
dirt-stained headstone beside it,
already ages:
the copper bars overlaid
on its locked glass door
are etched in cerulean rust.

Gazing through the copper bars,
I see, above the marble urn,
a stained-glass window.
Dark lead unifies the bright slices
into a tiger-orange sky, emerald hills,
and a rippling cobalt sea.
Who dared paint a sunrise in a tomb?

Poetry

75

GREENHOUSE EFFECT

Paige Stanish

Poetry

76

in the greenhouse of you
tenderness is protected and in that protection
tenderness thrives
the softness of me stays warm in your dome-like hug
given to me by every glass fiber of your being
you protect my twisted roots from the outside world—
harsh and cold without any squashy soil for me
you let me grow sideways, my own way
without bending my branches
or forming me to stand up straight like the early bloomers
i soak up your filtered light
and your unfiltered affection:
for this love has no shade nor shadow

““H
ola. Soy Emma,” she
said into her rearview mirror for the three hundred and
twenty-seventh time. She rehearsed another introduction. “Mi
nombre es Emma.” Shaking her head, she repeated the first
introduction that she had practiced the entire two hour
drive to Miami.

Now with the car off and the windows rolled up, the
heat and pent-up anxiety began to suffocate Emma, beads
of sweat collecting at her hairline and sneaking down
her back.

From the driver’s seat, she looked at the tiny shack-like
house, the porch overcrowded with bushes. Taking a shaky
breath, Emma opened the car door and stepped out. Soy
Emma. Soy Emma. Soy Emma. Her feet led her up to the
creaky porch, keeping time with her bass drum heartbeat.
Soy Emma. Soy Emma. Soy Emma.

She pulled the folded piece of scrap paper from her back
pocket and read: House #34. It matched the thirty four
that had been nailed to the side of the house, although the
three was loose and hanging upside down.

Lifting her hand to knock, Emma swallowed and let
out a deep breath that she didn’t realize she had been holding.
She knocked.

Eyes pressed tightly shut, she whispered to herself,
“Hola.” A deep breath then, “Soy Emma.”

The door creaked open, part way, and the face of a
woman cursed by fear appeared in the crack. Her chocolate
eyes searched Emma until they landed on a heart-shaped
birthmark on her left forearm. A forbidden and unasked
question lay on her tongue.

“Uhhmm. . . . Hola,” Emma launched into her prepared
speech. “Soy-”

“Emma?”

MARKER 77, JUNO BEACH

Grace Cram

Poetry

78

blues blend in skies blushing above
glassy waves striking sugary sands
to the beat of rhythmic melodies pulsing
from El's crackly portable speaker.

sheltered in the scraggly trees and sea grape just beyond water's break,
i roll the smooth, rising moon
on my tongue, like a blue jolly rancher
mixing palettes on paper plates, i swirl acrylic anecdotes into peeling scrolls of bark
under beaded seashells clinking and swinging on braided hemp string and
amid broken green glass and shark teeth threatening to cut calloused feet.

i hum the tune with the beads and the leaves, waves thundering, brush spreading
sun's silent chords incarnate.

Shipwrecks are pedestals that I stand upon:
Housed within your eyes,
The wreckage of my brigantine adheres to
Aegean blue waters.
I am glued to wood planks,
Daring enough to jump,
I dive through salt mist:
Breaking the still barrier of quiet waters;
Swimming into the aperture of
Your eyes, mesmerized.

GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN

Amaya Estrada

Watercolor
80



I walked my dog through Burt Reynolds park.
The sign at the entrance was careful in not letting us forget such a legacy.
Football star, movie star, father, and husband.
His competency in these fields is not relevant
but I must be grateful for his contribution to
this land.
My dog slipped out of my hand and ran towards
a woman in the sand, and smashed her brush into
her canvas.
“Whose dog is this?” she yelled while staring at me.
“I’m sorry, ma’am, I think that’s Burt Reynolds’s dog.”
“Burt Reynolds must pay,” she said.
I shrugged. “I’m sorry, ma’am, but I think he already paid for the park.”

HIGHWAY IN THE DARK

Lars Essington

Poetry

82

old highway in the dark
long grey ribbon winding through ancient green
busy sometimes, but barren tonight
billboards tower over all
heralding places and companies forgotten
(or perhaps never remembered at all)
on the side of the road, a gas station
long left behind by the world
if a driver left his journey for a moment
and pulled in under the skeleton of a canopy
and rested among dry pumps standing like headstones
and tuned the radio to somewhere between stations
perhaps he could hear old voices in the hum of static

my grandmother rises before dawn every day
to the hymns of morning birds behind wooden shutters.
her lips move in silent prayer as she steps out of bed,
tip-toeing between a dozen children still asleep on the floor.
her routine is simple and swift—
plaiting hair, pinning sari, washing face,
no breakfast.
she leaves the house quietly, rosary and coin purse in hand.

the route to church is a long one,
miles of thin dirt paths carved into rubber tree forests.
my grandmother continues her prayers the whole way down,
wooden beads rolling between her fingers
and hail marys rolling off her tongue.
she finishes fifteen decades by the time
the church comes into view.

a golden cross peeks over the trees,
hugged by sun rays and dragonflies.
my grandmother beams up at it,
finishing her prayers with a glory be
and pulling a shawl over her head.
she steps out of the woods, onto dewed grass,
just as the church bells
begin to chant their morning hymn.

EL CONDOR PASA

Ariane Campbell

Poetry

84

Andes condors take to the skies
at the start of the orchestral folk song.
A *cajon* slowly and softly thumps
with the beat of the condor's clumsy wings,
the *zampona* whistling a bouncy breeze that
lifts the monstrously massive predator
across nomad tribes that protect their goats
from talons thick as nails.

The *charango* enters in lolling strums
swooping with the rest of the
hand-carved instruments into the steady melody.
Three minutes this tribute lasts,
the tempo as slow as the condors' glides,
the tranquil Peruvian rhythm
mingling with unsung gratitude
for the birds that
watch over the mountains
from three miles in the sky.

1000 STEPS DOWN

Grant Van Gorp

body of trapped water
deep aqua greens and blues
I dip my feet in warmth
closing my eyes
hearing
albatross and seagull
beating the air
while they rise and dive in a bird ballet
waves crash deeply
washing, splashing, adding
to the emerald pool
salty air stings
and heals

Poetry

85

THERE WAS DUST

Emily Hilligoss

Poetry

86

there was dust
and a gleaming wooden floor
a fireplace with ashes and
burning embers of empty laughter
old orange wallpaper stained
with simple church hymns
rugs imprinted with the ghosts of
chairs that were made for visiting
and i realized something
the house was warm
i was home.



Palm Beach Atlantic
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 24708 • 901 South Flagler Drive
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4708
www.pba.edu • 561-803-2000