

# MARIAH **2017**

*The Art and Literary Magazine  
of the Morristown-Beard Upper School*



COVER PHOTO  
Chris Hardman



# MARIAH

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## 2017

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ALL VISUAL ARTWORKS  
ARE DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS,  
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

# TUNDRA

Crystalline droplets  
Glisten like a thousand suns,  
Nature's chandelier.

Blackened, charred embers  
Reborn; life amidst algid  
Perpetuity.

Peak to slope to base,  
Sleek runners carve, enclaving  
Perilous pitfalls.

Rigid bindings crack,  
Fingertips warmed by cider,  
Rustling papyrus.

Particles floating,  
Dancing in incandescent,  
Shimmering sunbeams.

Wafting tendrils drift,  
Exploring, breath quivering  
In a sea of stars.

Rebecca Tone



Justin Wachtel

# WHAT NOW?

Our home, it is still.  
We stand, united.  
A sturdy oak.

Our land, it is no longer.  
We fall, divided.  
Scattered forgotten leaves.

Our ancestors, looking down at us,

beaming light.  
They believe in us.

obscured by night.  
They cannot bear it.

We have survived this long.

Then, a brutal winter.  
This is not the end.

Now, a melting summer.  
Is this the end?

I yearn for peace.

It will come.  
And we will carry on  
like we did before.

Will it come?  
Or will it evade us,  
like time and time again?

My father would not comprehend

the rainclouds  
suspended above our heads.

how the seasons  
have changed.

I ache

for justice.

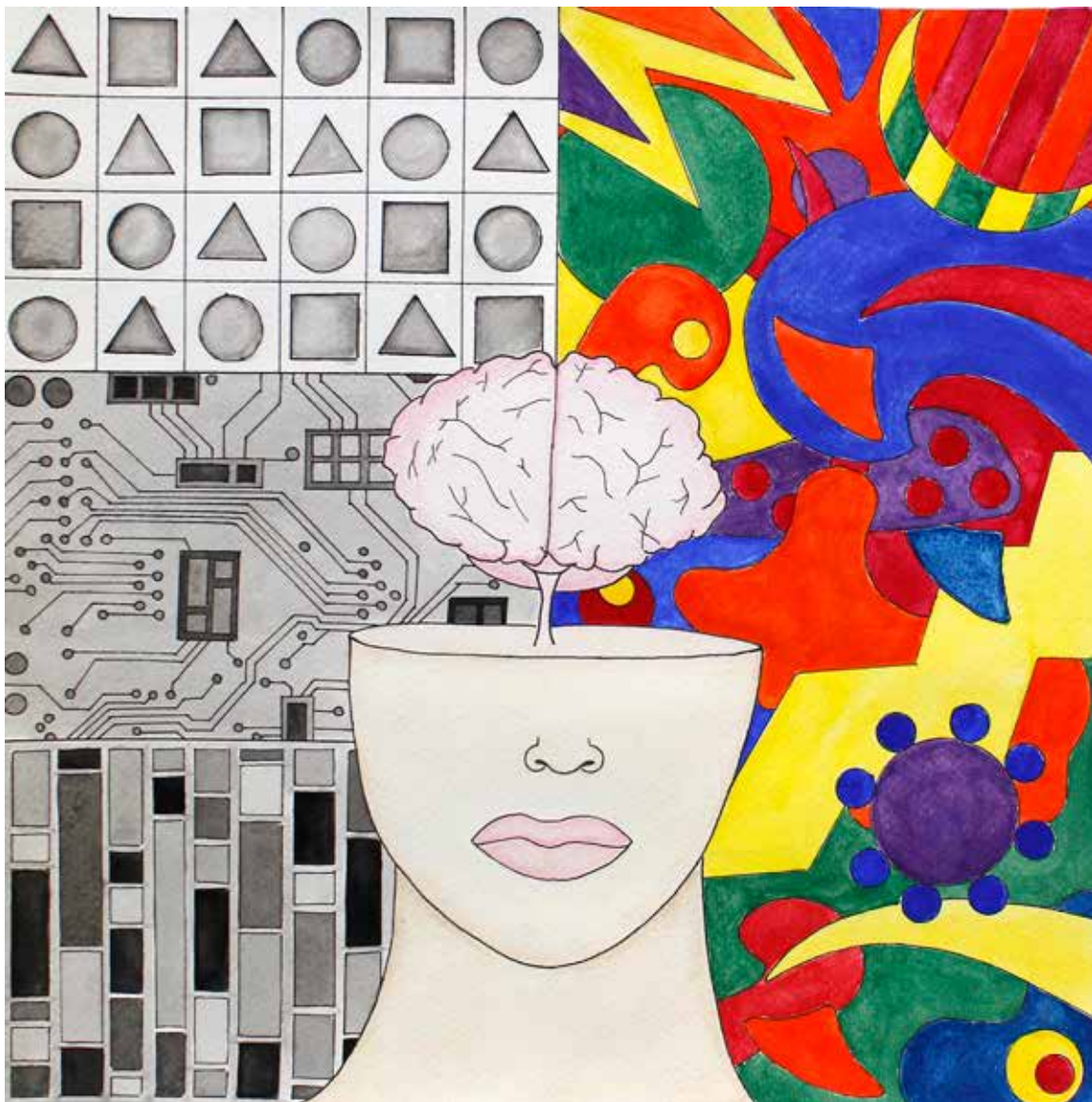
for a new beginning.

I ache to belong.

I ache.

Sarah Yamashita





Sam Salazar (Pen and Ink, Watercolor)

# SUMMIT

INSPIRED BY *WANDERER ABOVE THE SEA OF FOG*

BY CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH

I imagined clarity.  
But ironically,  
I can barely see.  
Fog covers the road ahead of me.  
Finally made it to the top of this unholy beast.  
My legs are dead.  
These mountains broke me, on my weak will did they feast.  
You just don't see the red.  
And instead of blue skies to light my path,  
I got fog, so who knows what's down there.  
Want to yell something bold like "Feel my wrath!"  
But we both know I'm scared.  
Quaking in these shoes.  
The sign of a quick-tempered, hot-blooded fool.  
Honestly thought I was a man.  
I'm done feeling like a man,  
I feel like half.  
Sure, I can conquer mountains, but  
Lord knows what's down in the valleys.  
I'm not ready.  
For all I know, it's the depths of hell.  
Full of all those before me who fell.  
Couldn't take the journey.  
I guess they just weren't worthy,  
But am I?

I'm not ready to die,  
But I can't stand here forever  
With a head full of never say never.  
Like said fool, I descended into the fog.  
From mountains to valleys.  
All of a sudden there's no more light.  
Isn't that odd

Trevone Quarrie



Amanda Fradkin



Briana Diggs

## BLAE

They say the eyes are the window to the soul,  
but I feel as if his eyes are the window to mine.  
Blae in color, they lie before my heart  
and I relish as they doff layer after layer  
until I am exposed.  
My vulnerability is soothed by the smooth  
crash of his tide as I relinquish my emotions  
from the bay at which I keep them.  
He is the ocean and I am afraid of a lot of things,  
but I am not afraid to swim.

Julia Papas

## BEAUTY

The burned body lay  
Among the wild roses.  
All the land and all the sea  
Sat in silence  
As the sun danced around the corpse,  
Claiming it as its own.

As petals and leaves die in winter,  
Ash is scattered through the snow.  
Where is the warm sun,  
Which causes a flower to rise  
Through the ruins of what once was?

Molly Barnett



Elijah Green

# LA MULATA DE CARTEGENERA

INSPIRED BY *LA MULATA DE CARTEGENERA* BY ENRIQUE GRAU

Her face,  
Glowing ever so radiantly.  
Do you not see how the earth flourishes around her?  
The flowers bathing in her splendor.  
She is the sun.

## *Mulata*

They called her because  
Her skin,  
Was neither white nor black,  
But rather a mixture of fair,  
*Y moreno*  
Stuck in the in-between  
Of pleasure and reality.

She is a melanin-infested being,  
Ravishing everyone that gazes upon her entirety.  
Her body, curves  
Inward and then outward again.  
She is at her truest and purest form.

She is free  
Like the leaves.  
You see not one care in her face for society.

She wears a crown on her head  
Of kinks and curls  
She reigns and prospers in her own little world.



Her white father  
And her black mother —  
Stories about their lives in Colombia

Her heart thumps  
For prosperity.  
Her eyes gleam  
With integrity.

She was born a "crime,"  
The sin of her parents, had been looked down upon  
And yet,  
Here she is.

A queen  
And I admire her in all her femininity,  
Because  
I too am a queen

I come from Nigerian and Spanish ancestry,  
From ages of Igbo dialect and fluent tongues.  
My blood runs all the way from Equatorial Guinea to Lagos;  
My roots planted in Owerri, my fruits growing in Jersey  
I carry the names of my ancestors on my back,  
My skin holding secrets untold from long ago.

And yet, isn't it weird that the earth we walk upon  
Knows all the secrets that even we don't?  
All our secrets  
Even when we think we've buried the bones.

And that is why even though  
La Mulata de Cartagenera  
Is now only a mere painting and memory,  
It feels as if I've known her my whole life.  
There's just something about her  
That comes off as intimidatingly present, and strong.

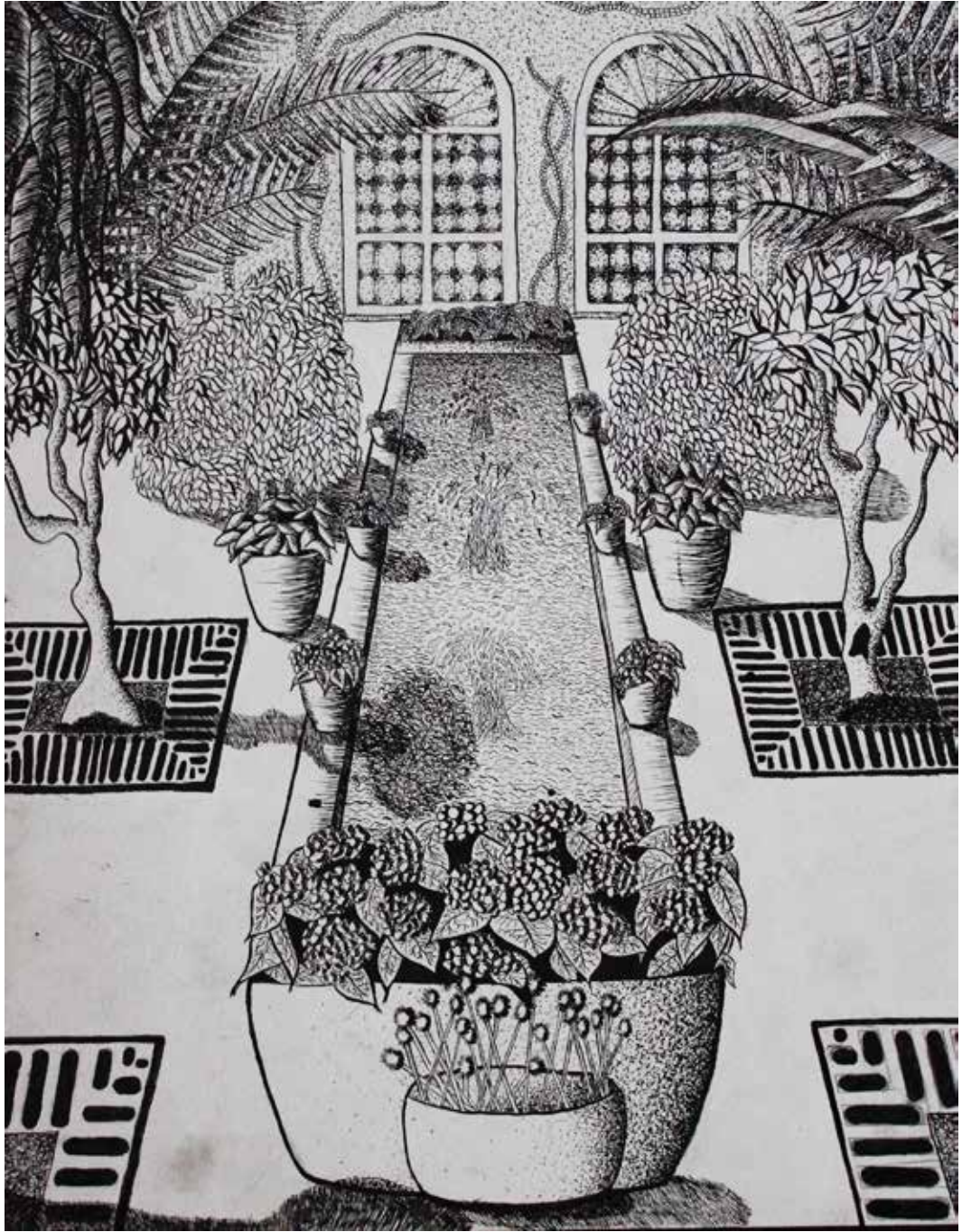
Just by gazing upon her,  
There is no doubt in my mind that  
She was a cause of beautiful strife.

And so every time I lay eyes on her portrait,  
I absorb the power that she is giving off

The same strength  
That she absorbed.  
The same strength  
That many other past queens had to absorb  
And have now left behind  
So that through me,  
They can live on

I am  
La Mulata De Cartagenera.

Sundia Nwadiozor



Pam Beniwal (Pen and Ink)

# EARTH

Greenish blues  
Froth and foam  
Creatures far and wide  
I'm not the ocean

Dark nights  
The terrifying noises  
Hungry eyes  
I'm not the forest

Stars of the ground  
Cold concrete  
Mourn the trees  
I'm not the city

The oneness everywhere  
Terrible terrible heat  
Death, famine, thirst  
I'm not the desert

Then what am I?  
I am everything,  
But nothing at all  
A mere speck  
In a grander scheme,  
But at the same time  
Everything you will ever know

Trevone Quarrie



Olivia Braunstein

## THE MAN BY THE LAKE

Every day I fled to the park, hands gripped tightly around the handlebars of my rusted bike, in order to escape my life. And every day the same man came and sat on the bench at the edge of the lake. But this man wasn't a man, not really. He was the shell of a man in a black business suit who didn't move until he left, not even to brush aside the bright pink petals which fell from the tree onto his shoulders in the spring or to sweep the dirty blond hair from his eyes which flew all around on a windy day, a knotted casket for his head.

Every day I sat next to him and every day, after waiting three heartbeats, I would ask him, "How are you today?" And every day, every time I asked him, his eyes, under all that hair, stayed glued to a far off place I couldn't see until the sun began to set and the wind whipped us both frozen. At that point, he went his way, home maybe, and I went mine.

"How are you today?" I asked him that one still afternoon at the end of winter. And to my surprise...

"Have you ever regretted a decision?"

Three heartbeats. "Come again?"

"Have you," he said in a gentle baritone, "ever regretted a decision?"

"Yes and no."

He sighed as I fidgeted, "Those are the worst kinds. Which one?"

Two heartbeats. "Excuse me?"

"Regret," he said slowly as if I were a child, "comes in two forms. When you think too much and do not act or you think too little and act anyway. So, which one is the cause of your pain?"

"I," heartbeat, "thought too much."

"And I too little."

"If you don't mind me asking, what did you do?"

Heartbeat. Had I overstepped my place? Heartbeat. "I decided to blindly follow my father's wishes. I became a banker. I should have become a painter. It would have allowed me to bring color to this monochrome world that has too little nature...sorry."

I guess the passion which had risen in his gentle voice had caused me to flinch; an after-effect of living with my parents, who preferred to chase after the "perfect painting" rather than raise their child, for so long. Passionate people were not always a good thing, but passionate parents were the worst. In fact, they left their children scared of it, passion, and any other expressive emotion...or maybe just any emotion at all.

Snap snap. His fingers in front of my face caused me to almost fall off the bench.

"You all right, darling?"

"What? Yeah." Three heartbeats. "You asked a question, didn't you?"

"What is the cause of your regret?"

Five heartbeats. "... A person..." Two heartbeats.

"Okay." He didn't pressure me to say more which was good because I wasn't ready, too.

We sat in silence after that for a bit. Until I spoke up softly. "So your dad was a banker?"

"Yeah."

"Anyone I'd know of?"

He laughed at that. I flinched again.

"What makes you ask that?"

Heartbeat. Had I sounded stupid?

Heartbeat. "Because...just, I feel like...never mind. Sorry."

He turned to look at me for the first time since I began visiting this place months ago. A shiver of uneasiness reverberated through my bones. His eyes were empty.

We sat like that for twelve heartbeats.

Until we both left like we normally did. Him first. Me, a few minutes later. My fingers were tense. I didn't realize I had been grabbing the black metal of the edge of the bench.

The sun cast an orange hue in the clear sky as I walked away that day. When I went back to the park the next day, he never showed. The same thing happened the

day after that. And the day after that. The broken man by the lake never showed up again. And eventually, I didn't either.

Ellie Buscemi

## FROM MY DAD'S EYES

Crisp, cold morning air  
Trees drop dead leaves like lost hairs  
And my hair falls, too  
Thanks, male-pattern baldness

Matt Smith

## I'M FALLING IN "LIKE" SLOWLY UNTYING THE KNOTS THAT SECURED MY HEART.

Natalie Pruitt

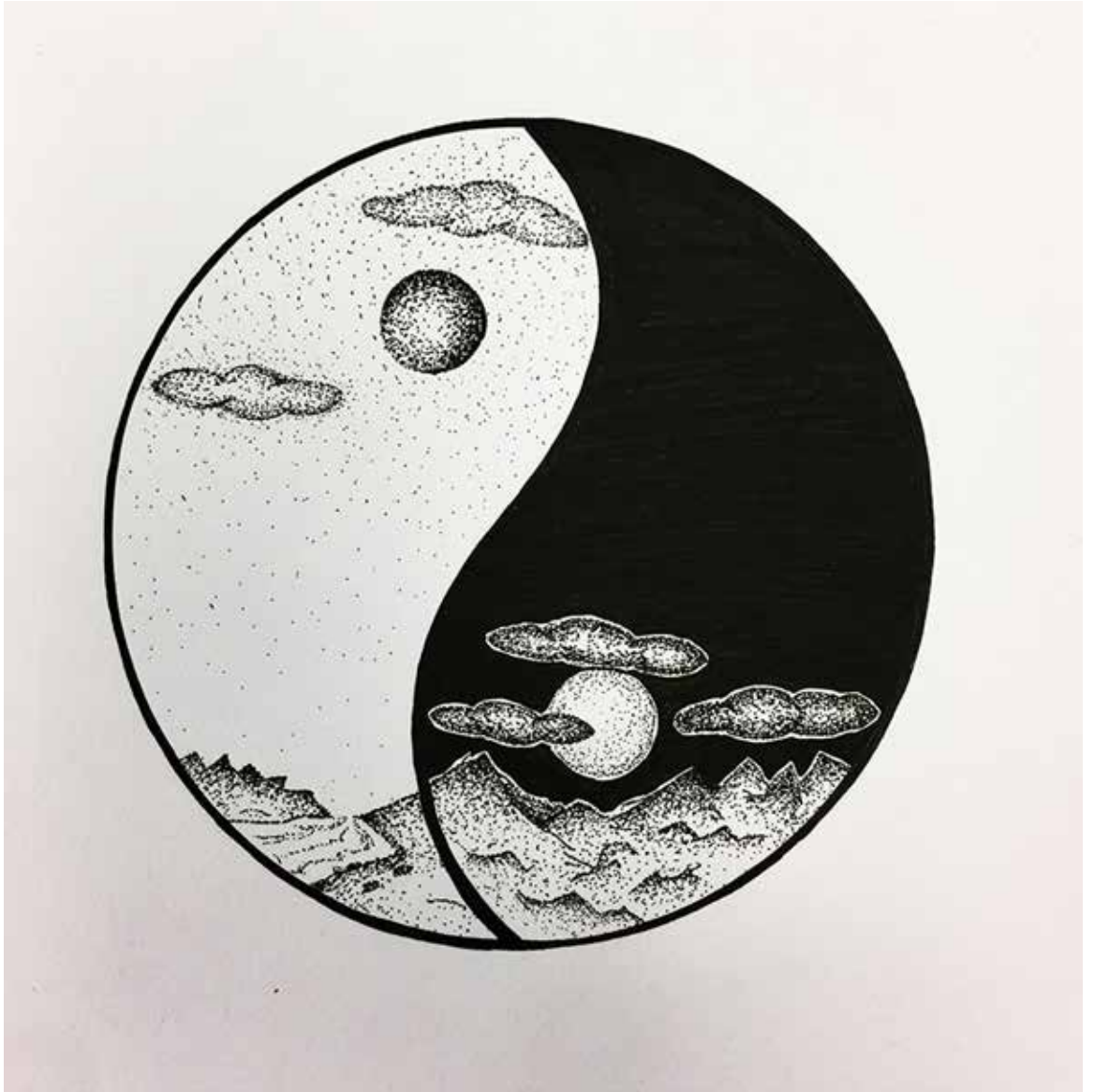
## THORNS

She was a rose  
And you yelled at her  
Because she had thorns.

How foolish of you  
To think her beauty  
Depended on what  
You could handle.

Julia Papas





Sam Salazar (Pen and Ink)



Jaime Sheppard

## NOT ABOUT ANGELS

Sometimes we let go. On purpose, accidentally.  
Falling, facing the sea, no one can see.  
Functioning eyes, but blind.  
I grasp for a reason,  
to live.  
Faith,  
a reason to hold on.  
Grasping at the last straw,  
I see him, reaching out to guide me.  
I'm lost, now found. I have lived. I have faith.

Sometimes we hold on. For too long, "KAPOW!"  
It hits you, falling flat on your swollen face.  
How could we be so blind? Icarus,  
plummeted from the sky.  
Baby, dead.  
A void,  
awkward to fill, why try?  
Our love has a voice, but no one  
speaks. Words fail. Is it wrong to toss it?  
Angels cannot heal the cut. It's not about angels.

Ali Stecker

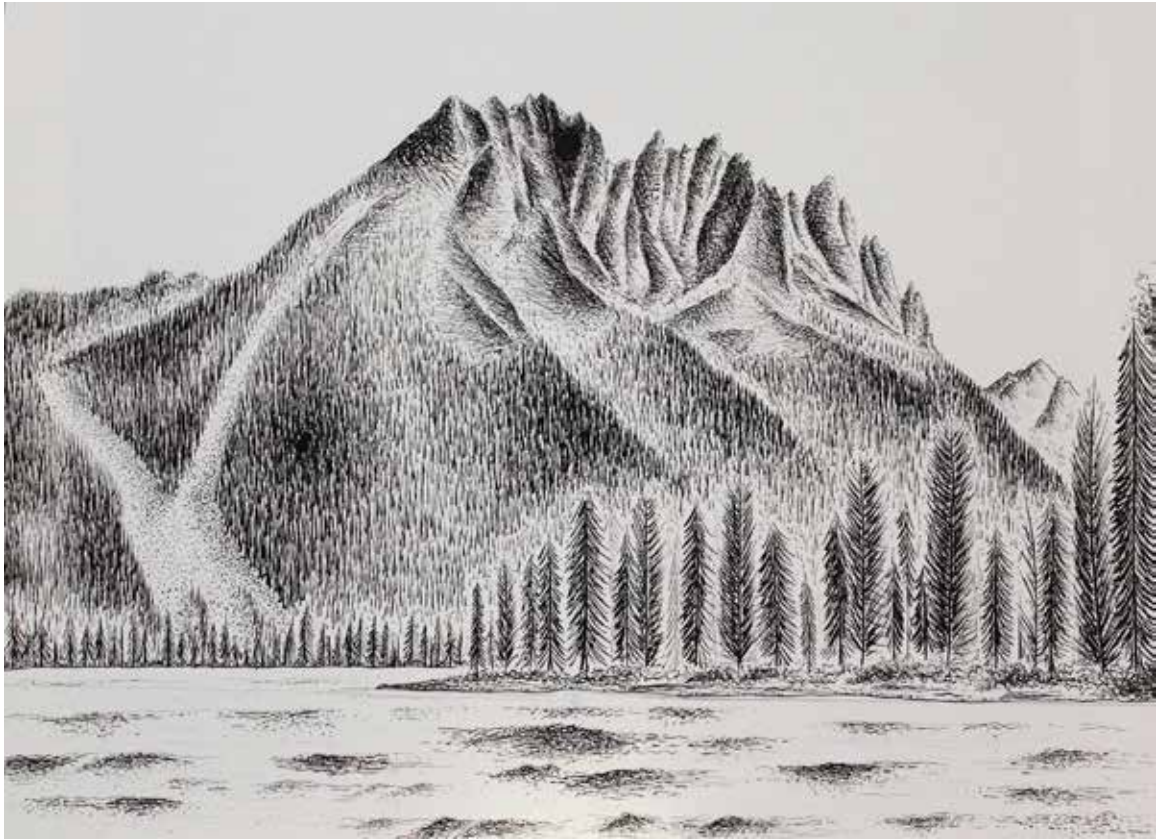
## TREES ARE MADE OF PAPER

Thank you for watching the trees  
with me.  
We sat on the bench  
in the cold  
outside.  
And I guess  
you must have thought that because we used to be close.  
You could tell me how you were so *stressed*.  
But for every scoot to the right you took,  
I took one as well.  
The trees didn't move much,  
but you did and I adjusted as such.  
And I think you mistook this  
because I never believed you, you trying to sell  
all of the secrets you told me,  
all of the lies, and all of the truths.  
They were told like you believed they were special,  
and you took for granted that I would find them special too.  
You said you didn't know who your friends were anymore, *no*.  
Don't be blameless, you were the one searching, the one who wanted to go  
and leave us all behind.  
You got mad when your friends stopped looking;  
what were you hoping for?  
Like talking to me would open some door  
that you would open and escape.  
Where were your friends in that landscape?  
A door that would justify all your confusion  
and angst,  
while I sat there responding.

I was wondering why you felt like knowing  
that pretending to know pain is far easier than recognizing disdain;  
when knowing meant you would have to give up masquerading.  
You weren't ready to stop  
and admit the ignorance was not saving you.  
Was it for yourself? The pain, did you realize, it was inside yourself?  
If you had asked, really, truly asked  
instead of having this *deep* conversation, masked,  
I would have given you ink  
to map each plan you conjured, everything you saw, the links.  
We are not the only ones  
who think they know what loneliness is.  
I would have told you that  
we hide behind the empathy our friends  
tell us we have, when in reality, it's not a circle, it's an end.  
You never started looking around;  
you never woke up. Hearing all the noise  
we make when we talk is hearing no sound.  
You didn't say all of this,  
but I know it's what you meant.  
In your efforts to appear colorful,  
you became shaded, blended in, and wonderful.  
You were so pretty, so youthful, so free  
in the pursuit of happiness in whichever way you saw fit,  
even if it meant having to sit and watch trees.  
I didn't want your unspoken narrative to blend in;  
feeling sad is not a mortal sin.  
But accept your fortune and all that it gives  
because so many people have to fight just to live.

And you waste your life away complaining  
while I could sit, with your words, painting  
all of the most original ideas and dreams  
with you pulling my canvas apart, at the seams.  
You did that to yourself,  
you wouldn't let me help you.  
For every word you didn't say,  
the ten thoughts in your mind wasted you away.  
And I wasn't watching you, while it happened.  
All we did, all we were doing, and all we're doing now  
is sitting and watching the trees.  
And they're still made of paper.

Courtney Norteman



Amelia Hawkins (Pen and Ink)

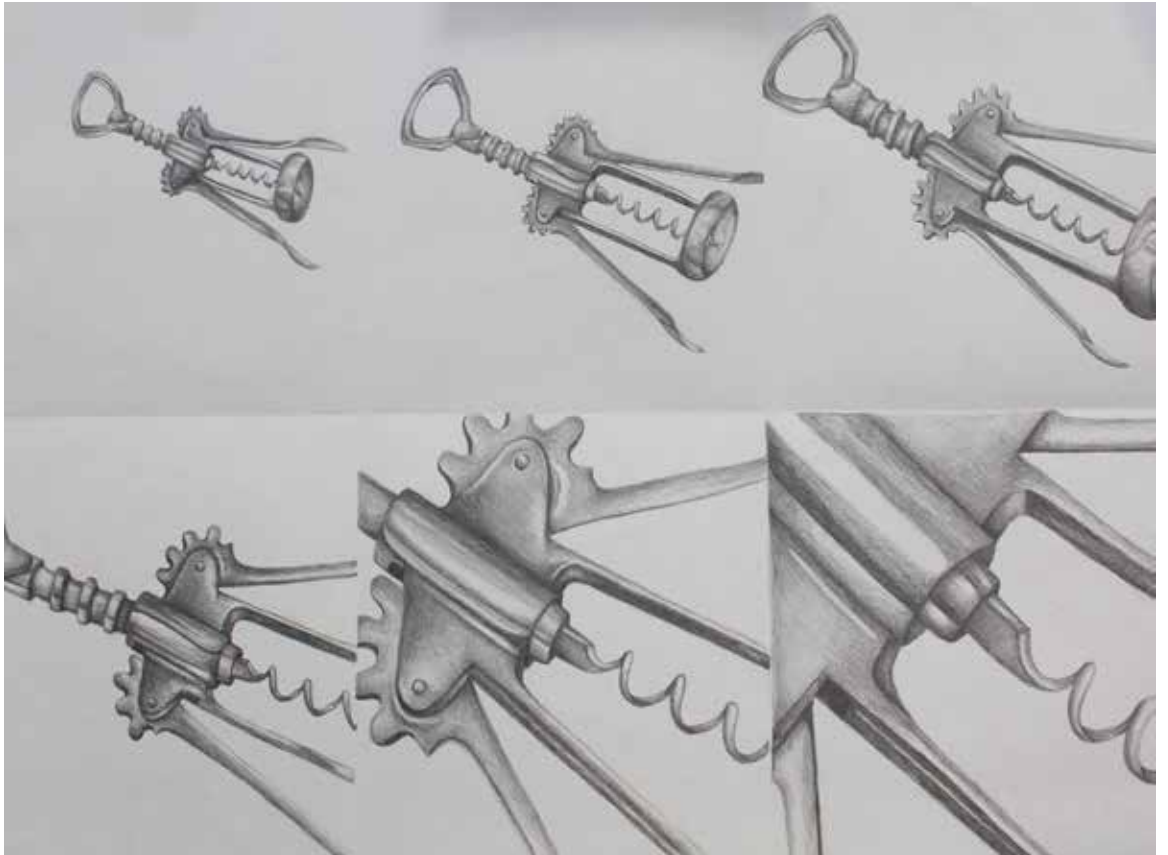


Jaime Sheppard





Jaime Sheppard



Amelia Hawkins (Pencil)

## LIPGLOSS

I ran out of lipgloss.  
It was Malibu pink and had a little bit of sparkle in it.  
It was packaged in a clear tube and had  
a glimmering seal on it.  
Glossing over the flaws beneath it, it covered my lips  
and added a protective layer of beauty.  
It was my armor.  
At a glance, it looked flawless.  
I looked flawless.

But I wasn't flawless.  
I had brush marks on my lips that only  
I could see and by the time I got home,  
they were chapped and sore.  
The tube started to get sticky  
so I flinched when people tried to touch it.  
I let people borrow it though.  
They didn't care about the tube as much as I did;  
they only cared about the gloss.  
Everyone wanted to be Malibu pink, too.  
I couldn't blame them.  
So, I let everyone borrow my lipgloss until  
I had to scrape against the inside of the tube  
to get anything out of it.  
Now it's just a dirty brush in an empty shell.  
It still has a remanence of sparkle,  
just nobody looks close enough to see it.

I was a pretty color.  
I wish I had saved some for myself.

Julia Papas

## YIN AND YANG

The sun, the sky, the moon, the stars, and everything beneath  
All seem to be translations of what a higher being is painting,  
And it's almost as if they can't decide which they prefer:  
Life or Death, Mind or Matter, Love or Lust  
You or Me.

Their uncertainty manifests as a mixture of colors and emotions.  
You, painted fierce and dark shades  
While I, painted lighter, softer, angelic ones.

Our shades blended with fast and slow strokes  
To create a balance.  
And oh how well we do blend together.  
So well that I started seeing myself in you.  
So well that I fell in love with you.

And darling, I cannot begin to explain,  
How it feels to be in love with you.

It is joyous and beautiful,  
Yet it is so heart-wrenchingly dangerous  
For one to see and swoon over  
The good in The bad,  
Rather than to see it for what it is

Because,  
You were  
The devil.  
You are  
The devil.  
And yet, you remain my favorite angel.

But I am the epitome of God.  
So why is it that  
I still worship you?  
Why is it that I submit to your love like a desperate and wretched fool?

The reason could be that, maybe, just maybe,  
There's a bit of you in me, too.

Sundia Nwadiozor



Amelia Hawkins (Scratchboard)



Michela Redington (Pen)

# LEAR

"Rumble thy bellyful! Spit fire, spout rain!"  
*Here I stand God's slave*

"Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters."  
*Here I stand God's mercy, if so, I welcome his worst*

"I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness."  
*Here I stand my **children's** slave  
For their worst remains incomparable*

"I never gave you kingdom, called you children;  
*Here ye, Regan, Goneril  
Here ye stand as my tempest*

"You owe me no subscription. Why, then, let fall."  
*This interspersion of elements  
So cruel*

"Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand your slave,(.)"  
Yet  
ravages  
all  
parts  
of  
me,  
Body,  
Mind,  
Heart,  
Soul,  
Consciousness,  
in the same manner as thine actions.  
And all left of me being,  
Poor,  
Infirm,  
Weak,  
Despised,  
Old,  
Incapable . . .



*These parts of me.  
These bases of being.  
These elements —  
These elements set askew.*

*Rain cackles with satisfaction,  
Wind wrestles with every morsel,  
Thunder muffles cries of agony,  
Fire boils in exhilaration.*

*Time cackles in sync with rain.  
Both are satisfied.  
Body gone.*

*Anger wrestles with my living morsels,  
Following the wind.  
Mind gone.*

*My daughters scorn like thunder smugly;  
My cries ignored.  
Heart gone.*

*God's sorgwielm of a storm  
Boils in exhilaration.  
Soul gone.*

*Body  
Mind  
Heart  
Soul*

*I am owed no subscription.  
Why, then, let fall  
Your horrible pleasure  
Here I stand your slave —  
A slave to the elements,  
Confined by mine own self.*

"One of us you are Lear  
And one of us you have always been.  
One of us you will be everlasting.  
Us who have been battered,  
soiled,  
forgotten,  
exposed."

*Slave  
Battered slave  
Soiled slave  
Forgotten slave  
Exposed slave*

"Poor naked wretches, whatso'er you are"  
*I am none other than one of you*

"That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm"  
*And you are none other than one of us*

"How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,"  
*And us one of humanity*

"Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you"  
*And us one of animal*

"From seasons such as these?"  
*And us one of nature*

*These parts of me.  
These parts of us.  
These parts of beings exposed to the elements.*

*And so I am bestowed upon a crown of gold,  
Glittering through the crevices between raindrops.*

*These parts of me.  
These parts of me who have power.  
And if not over man,  
Then over slave,  
Then over animal.*

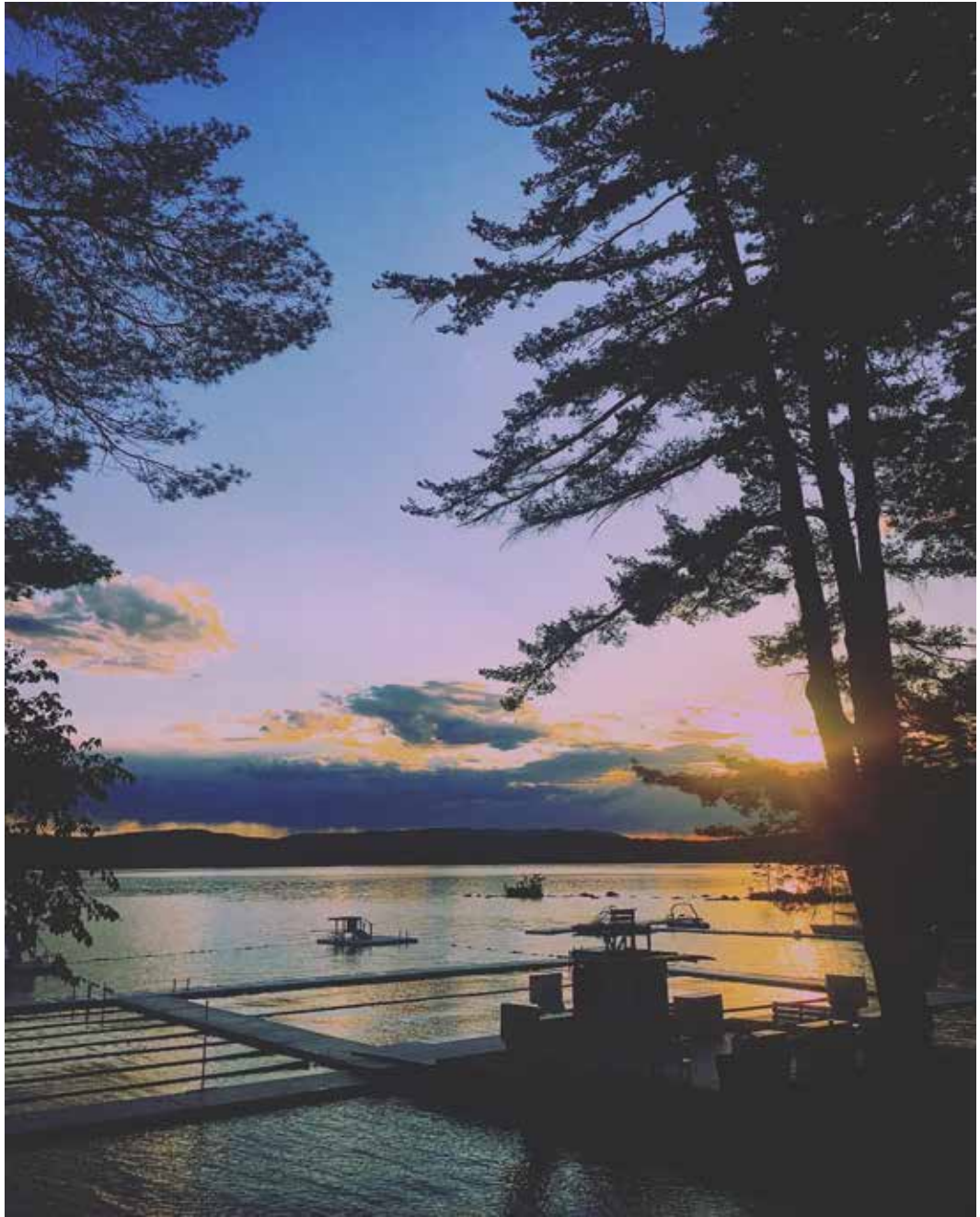
*And so I am bestowed upon a staff of silver;  
Human features engraved atop.  
For I am human  
As well as animal.*

*These parts of me.  
These parts of me who have power.  
Who rule with gold and silver.  
If not over man,  
Then over slave,  
Then over animal*

*Man  
Slave  
Animal*

*These parts of me*

Jessica Roitman



Justin Wachtel



Lauren Mennen



Aidan Wood

## GARDEN OF EDEN

Smooth black glass on a frigid, lazy morning.  
The air, heavy with buttery aroma of familiarity and routines.  
A plethora of stuffed animals.  
The Powerpuff Girls.  
Snuggly fleece PJs.

Filled to the brim with tempting mystery,  
Her favorite yellow mug touched her lips;  
My juvenile eyes stared at her sophistication and ease.  
An adult ritual.

The Sunday paper in one hand,  
Indulgence in the other.  
Her pale pink lipstick branded her cup:  
"For Mommy, Only."

As curious as George,  
As determined as Kim Possible,  
I boldly grasped for the yellow chalice, stretching tall on my tippy toes.  
My chubby child fingers slosh the steaming liquid across the countertop,  
Evidence of my crime.

One final breath of mischief,  
A quick look around,  
For the authorities, of course.  
I lifted the mug to my own naked lips,  
And inhaled the delicious smell of maturity and a mission accomplished.

I took a long sip,  
Just like my mother.

Natalie Pruitt

## AFTERMATH

He looks so good,  
They said,  
Peaceful.  
He's happier now,  
They said,  
Smiling down on us all.  
God welcomes him,  
They said,  
Heaven is where he  
Belongs.

Yes, pale skin  
Caked with  
Stifling, pungent powder.  
Yes, skeletal hands  
Molded together  
Unnaturally.  
Yes, sealed eyelids  
Plastered together for  
Eternity.  
Yes, deeply set wrinkles  
Reshaped to become  
Foreign.

My own face,  
Streaked with salt.  
My own hands,  
Icy and quaking.  
My own eyes,  
Bloodshot and burning.  
My own shell,  
Broken.



He looks so good,  
They said.  
Yes, death suits him well.

His suffering has ceased.  
The tumor can't torture him now.  
No more aches, stabs of pain,  
And restriction.  
Lungs released,  
Heart calmed,  
Hands drained  
Of throbbing pressure.

The weighted breaths,  
Once cumbersome,  
Are they meant to be lost?  
The wavering rhythm,  
Ever present.  
Why has it faded away?  
Swollen fingers,  
Of hands I once clasped  
Close to my own reliable chest.  
Who says this is for the better?

He's happier now,  
They said.  
But are we?

Swells of anger,  
Disagreement,  
Hatred,  
Love,  
Scattered by death's tide.  
Never a chance to forgive.

Never a chance to apologize.  
Never a chance for redemption.  
Never a chance to express due gratitude.

What being would intend such  
Rifts,  
Fissures  
Among family?  
Why would he send downpours of  
Guilt,  
Despondency  
To his own champions?  
I've heard of horrors, but I  
Cannot  
Believe  
In  
This.

God welcomes him,  
They said.  
But is his acceptance  
Worth dying for?

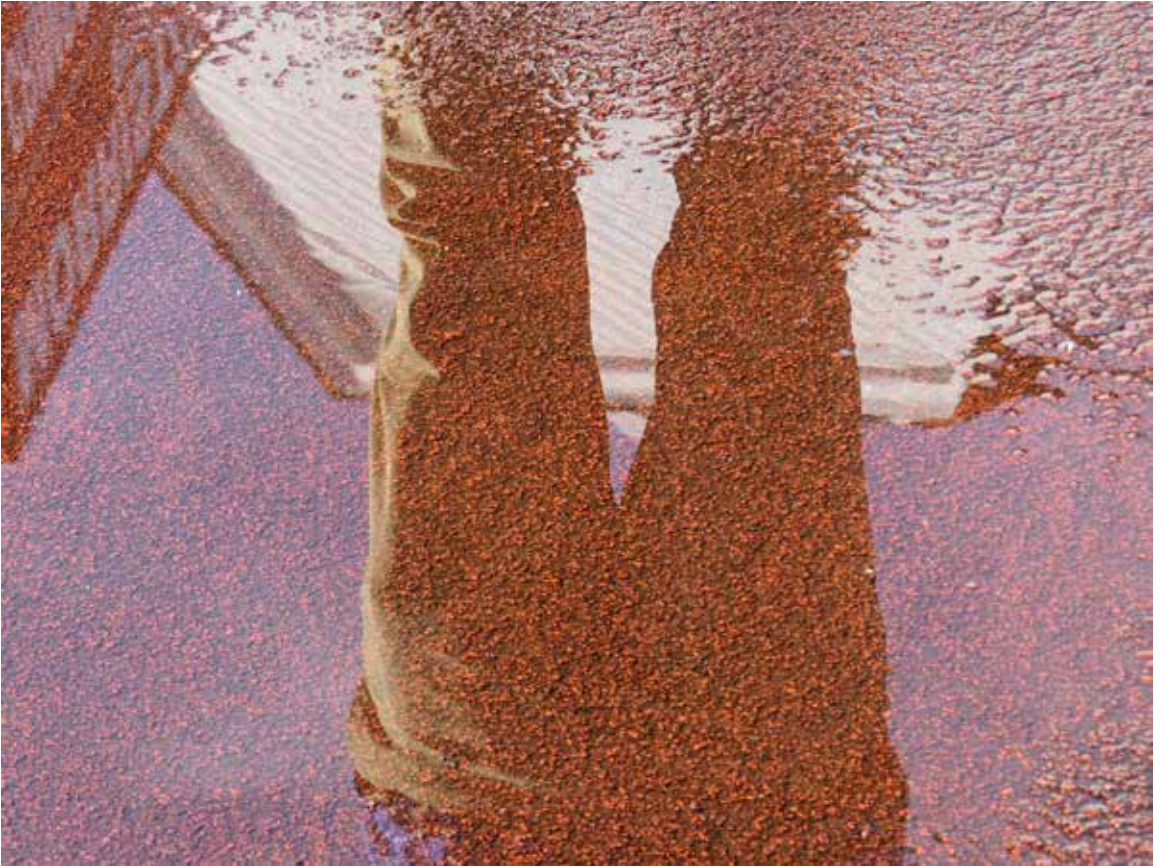
Rebecca Tone



Harrison Kern



Harrison Kern



Teddy Koide

## I'VE SEEN...

I've seen a girl  
Clutching, scratching at her head  
Frizzy hair falling as she stares into silence  
She's doing all the yelling in her head, you see  
Trouble is, there's a response.

I've seen a boy,  
A man now, they tell me  
Angry, confined, and cornered  
Kick out, his boot landing on his brother's temple  
Screaming at his family, terrified and misunderstood.

I've seen a boy  
Crying on the locker room floor  
Tears on a sweat-stained floor  
Shame mixes with him in such an odd way  
Don't you think?

I've seen a girl  
Her arms covered in scabs  
Telling me she's doing better  
Clinging to hope  
Clinging to me, as well.

I've seen a parent  
Telling me she's  
"Had enough of my mental illness crap"  
Yeah, haven't we all?  
And then the apologies

The apologies that flood  
Through my brain  
Demanding forgiveness,  
Begging, Asking, Wanting  
Expecting.

I've seen more than I have words for  
And I don't deal in apologies anymore  
I've got a brain full of chemicals  
And none seem to be working tonight.

But hey, chin up. It gets better.  
Right?

Anonymous



Adelyn Berrocal (Pencil and Acrylic)



Emily Kitchin



# THE TREE

In the beginning, it faced a bitter darkness,  
With mud covering its eyes.  
Yet it crusaded through the crust  
With the hope that it might see:  
A purpose of living  
A reason to be.

It then smiled with gasps of fresh air;  
And admired its place among the unending green.

But its life is just beginning,  
The troubles are not half told.  
And it wonders if life's worth living,  
When frozen by deep winter's cold.

It placed faith in the skies,  
Thinking: up there I must be.  
But even in the heights,  
It found no sensuality.

Still, it has lived on,  
Not knowing why.  
Meaning has not answered,  
Neither death, why?



Jill Stecker (Acrylic)



Jill Stecker (Pen and Marker)

## GIVER

I am but a little, lame man at the side of the road.

When I ask to quiet the thunder of my belly with a single crumb, they spit upon me.

When I ask to quench the drought of my tongue with a single drop, they curse me.

Why are they so cold?

Their hearts so full of the blackness of these lonely moonless nights.

When I was young I gave them everything,

Everything!

I gave them every ounce of my youthful strength, every breath was for them, every beat of my heart!

I gave.

And what I could not give tortured my soul.

Oh, indignant weed that would root itself in my conscience and sap my sanity.

The fool I was.

The weeds were they.

For here I lay

Shriveled

Broken

Used.

A little, lame man on the side of the road.

They give not to quiet my thunder.

They give not to quench my drought.

ME!

He, who has given everything, is left with nothing.

None deserves such cruelty.

None deserves such torment!

But here am I.

Here I lay.

Have I been forgotten?

Forsaken?  
Cast aside simply because I have nothing left to give?  
Is it not your turn to give to me?  
Is it not time for me to rest and receive?  
Worry not, my child,  
Your kindness is not in vain.  
Your rest draws near.  
In the next, you will have all  
And they will gaze upon you,  
For I will fill thy hands with fruit.  
They will plead mercy.  
They will plead forgiveness.  
They will beg you to give.  
I leave it in your hands.  
Will you let them fool you twice?

Trevone Quarrie



Jaime Sheppard

# SAVING THE GOLD

Aurum piscis smiled through the glass

The Homo sapiens put his hand to the glass and aurum piscis put his fin to the glass

Aurum piscis peered through the glass waiting for his family to leave like sand  
going through an hour glass

When the lights switched off, his party began — he became Batman

His cape draped on, he flapped his fins, and he began to save the kidnapped king

He left his tank and headed to the bank

The king was trapped in the bank and aurum was here to save him

Aurum burst the door open

knocked everyone down, grabbed the king, and aurum piscis saved the bling

Aurum flew back to his tank

The lights were off — he went to bed

Aurum piscis smiled through the glass

The Homo sapiens put his hand to the glass and aurum piscis put his fin to the glass

Charlie Naples

## FLASH-FORWARD TO FREEDOM

there was this fish I know  
whose name was Flash.  
the way he used to swim below  
was really quite a catch.

he swam about all day,  
I guess you could call him curious.  
to him, the bowl was a bay,  
but I knew it was a small experience.

the way he swirled and twirled  
was really quite a bliss.  
he didn't know any other world  
being but a small goldfish.

but sometimes I think I heard him cry  
when he hovered along the water line.  
you see, I think Flash wanted to touch the sky,  
but he knew that would be impossible to find.

so he simply just swam in his dome  
because there was nothing he could do.  
in his bowl, he created his own home  
and he bid the sky adieu.

but one day there flew  
a splish and a splash.  
and somehow I knew  
that it must have been Flash.





Jaime Sheppard



Sydney Morris

## THE 20TH CENTURY

The great migration  
the sun peeks from behind the urban flora,  
casting jagged shadows from steel mountains  
and titanium trees.

The fauna begin to stir,  
but were they ever really still  
in the terra firma of the city that never sleeps?

This is the urban wild  
the hostile landlords and flashing lights  
will winnow the pastoral prey  
from the city-dwelling beasts.

Blake Kernen, Natalie Pruitt, and Jill Stecker

# MY IDENTITY

FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED ON MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

You see, when I was rehearsing for the fall play in October, I was talking to a cast mate, and I don't remember how or why, but she said to me, "No one even knows who you are." And she is right. None of you, not my friends, not my teachers; none of you know who I **really** am once I leave this building. Some of you may know that my name is Giovan Isaiah Guanill, born June 28th, 1999 at Clara Maas Hospital, Newark, New Jersey. More of you know that I'm Puerto Rican and was raised for a little over a decade of my short life in Newark. But truthfully, I'm a man "of two worlds," as Mr. Mitchell, a man I look up to, once articulated to me.

I float between the ghetto and the greats within this community with no solid footing in either. Like all of you, I came to this school — just like each and every one of you here — to find my identity. What none of you know is how my identity came to be: what really makes me, *me*.

I came to this school right after one of the worst days of my life: September 1st, 2013.

I'll never forget it. My god-brother Jesus Torres, one of the few I am honored to say is family, was killed in cold blood. He got a job at Pizza Hut and hoped to provide for his baby son, while also pursuing a music career as a rapper. He didn't have a violent

bone in his body. He is the definition of a great man. He loved his family, he believed in doing right by his fellow man, and he had ambition unparalleled.

And just like that — bang, bang, bang — he was taken from the world. He didn't plan for it, he didn't want it; none of my family did. But it happened and it really hit me when I saw him for the last time at his wake. They put makeup on his face to hide the gruesome truth beneath the foundation applied to his skin. And he wasn't the only one put into this situation. He, and 56 other people, slain in the span of a week. I, and 56 other families, left to mourn without any foreseeable closure and finality to it all. Only 20 miles from this institution.

With that loss came guilt, but also determination. Many of the seniors can attest to this, especially the ones in my advisory, but I spent that year in isolation; not because I was nervous or shy, but because I had to grapple with the question of, "Why me?" Why am I here when I didn't have a kid to feed, I didn't have the drive he did, or the will that he did? No one depended on me or needed me as badly as a newborn son needs his dad. So why am I standing here and he was taken away? To this day, September 1st haunts me. To this day, I still ask myself why. I used to call it survivor's guilt, but now I call it purpose.

It is a big reason why I am making the most of my opportunities here. It is a big reason as to why I want to make the most out of the things I love to do.

And this has been one of three tragedies in my life: someone lost for each year of my high school experience. And I hate to admit it, but I am in the midst of what could be a fourth. These are people who have touched my heart and soul in different ways, but all leaving an immeasurable impact in the makings of a growing adolescent — helping me figure out who I am.

Now, I'm not saying this to get your pity when I know many of you have also experienced loss. We **all** share the capacity to feel loss. I'm not saying this to make you cry, or for you to be impressed with how I can put tragedy and details of my first world out there to hundreds of you. I say this to impress upon you all the value of living. I believe there is more to life than "hatred," "resentment," "rage" — life is too short for that. Even though five men — two blacks, two Middle Easterners, and a white man — had the capacity to kill a person who was close to me — a father, a brother, a son, and a friend — in cold blood, we can't condemn the masses for the actions of the one: or in my case, five.

In truth, as horrible as this event is, as

horrible as things seem, life is beautiful. I think, and I could be wrong, but I think that we spend so much time focusing on the negative that we forget that there is positive and a lot of it, too. I know I told you about Jesus and Newark and all that, but that doesn't change my pride in being from Newark. I know Jesus would say the same because for each of the horrible things you might hear about what goes on there, there are more beautiful things that accompany it, like Branch Brook Park's cherry blossoms, or the smiles on the young, jovial kids' faces that I see when I visit my middle school on Clifton Avenue. When we judge a community because of the crimes within it, we dehumanize the honest citizens who call that community their home.

Gio Guanill



Sofia Antico

## LIGHT IN THE OCEAN

We all sit and watch the sunset  
As it goes down past the clouds  
There's something we don't know yet  
The fire descends and grazes the waves  
Its tip is submerged and we no longer see it  
Now, the fire's split  
Light in our world and in our depths

Then, the light is sucked out in a moment  
In a breath  
This unknown world beneath the horizon  
Is just waking up, their fire is rising  
Their light sinking lower in depths  
It paints shadows behind every crevice and reef  
Life drifts awake  
"Another day in the oceans," the sun sighs in relief

Swimmers float through the water  
Another day; so long, yet so brief  
Then, the fire's coming up, the swimmers lie down in masses  
I see it splash the horizon  
And another day comes as quick as it passes

Michela Redington

# THE ENDLESS QUEST

Stuck

That's the best way to describe it

The emptiness in my feelings

Waiting to be refilled,

But only to be left alone and stuck

Trapped in this basement

As I plot the answer to this endless quest

I realized that this has made me a complete mess

Slowly falling into the depths

The farther I go, I begin to feel less

I run and run and run

Away from this reservation called home

But I call it Hell, where I'm stuck and alone

No matter how far I go, my destination is the same

Back to where I was

Stuck and alone

One day I run, but this time not alone

I run with a man

He's taking me home

He calls it freedom

And I no longer fall

Finally, I arrive and my quest has ended

And this ending is just a new beginning

So I hold onto him

My only escape

I'm stuck in this place, but he makes it great

Kyle Torre





Jaime Sheppard

# HOURGLASS

A soft, benevolent breeze sifts through silky slacken curls. She maintains an explicit stare on the lulling waves — on the patent plainness of the disappearing horizon. The entirety of the image is untroubled, inducing inner serenity, evoking ear to ear elations from peace-filled passersby.

But she shuts her heavy eyelids, slacks her laden shoulders, tolerating the sudden slump of her head. And when her legs collapse underneath her fragile frame, she crashes to the ground, landing on her bruised knees. She sifts the cool sand between her nimble fingers, trapping some in her fist and watching it slowly filter through her fingers. The sand reminds her of an hourglass: a slow, yet certain drizzle that never seems to end. But when least expected, the last cluster of sand particles flutters to the bottom to join with the rest, and everything abruptly remains void and empty.

The hourglass keeps her alive, but she wishes it would quickly empty.

*Why did the raging tides swallow her mother, pulling her down,*

*slowly*

*sinking,*

*to the deep abyss?*

*Why did her father join her,*

*Diving*

*Desperately,*

*To cling to his life line?*

*Why did a fragile fissure on*

*the frozen lakes*

*devour her brother, chilling his*

*childish*

*carefree figure?*

*And why did a bitter trail of blood*

*lead her to her spouse's*

*vacant orbs,*

*the sea courteously lapping at the pooling ichor?*

Here, she kneels, letting the soothing foam lick at her battered knees. The sand is no longer soft and fluid, but clumps together in one thick compound. She squeezes it in her hand, the damp chunks plopping to the ground.

"Why do you, wicked waters, always push the soothing sands away?"

The frothy waves tug at her dress, pull her body closer. She can only comply with their willful whispers and lies down in the soaked sand. She stares up at the Heavens; they dance, flaunting their coral and citrus hues. She allows the swift tides to pull her closer to her desires, to pull her further from control. She moves with the tides, formlessly floating into the unknown.

She obeys the restless waves when they pull at her body, drawing her under into the thick depths.

Particle after particle drifts down, falling gradually but definitely. It flickers and flutters in the vacant atmosphere, until it lands lightly with the others. And when the last particle falls,

the last breath is taken,

and the heart's thumps reach its terminal.

The entirety of the image is no longer halcyon,

For everything stops and a deathly silence disperses.

Briana Diggs

# DOOR

Your breaths were heavy  
But you were  
ready  
steady  
Go  
On your way to places only God could know  
I watched you walk through the door  
My heart sore  
Pleading  
Leave  
No  
More  
I was left broken at the core  
When they told me that you  
breathe  
no  
more  
The gore  
Broken forever more  
I was faded, jaded  
My heart sank to the floor  
Tears galore  
Then I stopped.  
Filled with pain and rage  
You shouldn't have left  
But you always felt trapped in a cage  
You would spend hours on the road  
Sometimes gone for days  
If you had stayed  
I could have loved you more  
But you never loved me like you loved that door.

Trevone Quarrie



Briana Diggs



MARIAH  

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2017