

# PERIPHERY



59

# About

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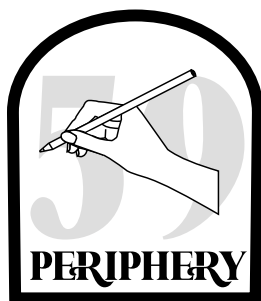
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# Submission Process

Submission to *Periphery* is free and accepts work from undergraduate students from across the United States, but we are happy to be able to publish undergraduate work from across the globe. *Periphery* accepts stories, photographs, poems, music, essays, paintings, videos, interviews, new media work, sculptures, graphic narratives, spoken word, comics, and genres that have yet to be created or recognized. All submissions are sent through a blind review process by the Editor-In-Chief, Art Director, and Editorial Staff only. *Periphery* reserves the right to edit any and all submissions, but does not claim the rights to any published work.

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# Acknowledgments

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Beyond the immediate staff, I would also like to extend a thank you to Carol Spaulding-Kruse, Jeff Inman, Denise Ganpat, the Board of Student Communications, Drake University, and Christian Printers, all of whom played central roles in the creation and publication of the journal. Finally, I want to thank all the writers and artists who were brave enough to submit their work to our journal. We exist to honor your imagination and spirit. May your creativity always flourish!

# Letter from the Editor

Every year, *Periphery* serves as a snapshot for undergraduates as they pursue their creative endeavors. We were blessed this year to receive submissions from all over the world. Through literature and art, we are able to connect across distances and stitch our experiences together. While we differ in location and experience, we are united by two things: the world we live in and our desire to create something beautiful from it. You don't have to look hard to find chaos in our world today. It takes a keen eye to capture beauty, though.

Today, we celebrate the keen-eyed among us. We don't all find beauty in the same place. Some of us see beauty in our faith. Others watch it blossom from within as we demonstrate resilience. Sometimes, there is beauty in love. Other times, we find it in the depths of absurdity. Be it the beauty of nature or the creations of humanity, we all have that moment inside when we are pleasantly captivated by the world around us. My favorite part of the selection process was finding out what captivates each individual soul. To create is to liberate our souls from the inspiration that holds us fast. We find beauty and catharsis in each release we put to the page.

To me, *Periphery 59* is about finding beauty in the places where no one else looks. To walk the outermost edge and tilt without falling into madness... that is the work we spotlight in this journal. Congratulations to everyone featured in these pages. Congratulations to everyone who finds the strength and persistence it takes to transform chaos into beauty. May your wits stay sharpened and thoughts run smooth as ink.

*Anna Richardson*  
*Editor-in-Chief, 59th Edition*





LITERATURE

# *un coup de foudre en* **route to french class**

*Rachel Alarcio*

it's our third year &:  
*je ne parle pas français.*  
i don't speak the language of love.  
when I do, it's a bag  
of kettle  
cooked: crisp,  
but half full of air.  
i swear I don't lie  
in my bed, reconstructing your image  
from words unsaid. you are a rhapsody  
of unashamed mistakes,  
but I will never  
not care  
for my errors.  
my double negatives shout  
at me, hooks on repeat, while I lie  
in bed staring, shut-eyed at the miscellaneous  
crashing of  
visual & auditory snippets.  
boom. it was a *coup de foudre*,  
a clap of thunder, blue ball lighting.  
strike the matches  
with caution.  
consider the Santa Anas, for they blow  
where they blow where they go  
& all it takes is a wayward  
ember to mow  
this studio system  
city  
down.

# Bittersweet Hope

*Mary Ryan*

As I lay in bed with fear of tomorrow  
With fear of loss  
And fear of life  
I think of how i would want you to remember me  
If my nightmare came true  
And I was no longer here.

Search for me in the smell of mornings.  
Smell me in the crisp fall air.  
Remember me when the weather gets warm  
and the flowers start to bloom.  
Find me in the silent snowy nights.  
Feel me when you hold warm drinks.  
When you look at the sunset  
and see an array of colors  
look for me.

While I may decompose  
my presence and love for you  
will spread through the universe.  
Embedding itself within the things I love.  
So that when you find yourself looking for me  
I am the world around you.

# The Jinn

*Gia Mesz*

The day we got married, there wasn't a single cloud in the sky. Not one. I remember being alarmed about it, that day. "Where're all the clouds?" I asked my mother as she clipped my veil onto my head. Even on sunny days, there were always a *few* clouds.

She didn't answer; I don't think she heard me. But I should've taken the lack of clouds as a sign. I should've seen it for what it was: nature overcompensating, trying to put me at ease for the oncoming storms.

The killings started twenty-two years into our marriage.

It's not entirely Bobby's fault. I mean, he had a really difficult childhood, with his father and everything, so he had a lot of pent-up anger that had nowhere to go. He never took it out on me, which I was grateful for. I seemed to be the end of a cursed line of women in my family who were all beaten within an inch of their lives by their husbands. But with me, me and Bobby, a new curse came in. A bloodier one than my predecessors could've imagined.

I could say it started with the jinn, but that would be a lie. It started with Bobby.

Bobby was depressed. He was always depressed, his default mode was misery. Constantly exhausted. For those first twenty-two years of our marriage (and for years before that, too, I know), Bobby didn't really do much. I don't mean to say he sat around all the time or refused to work or do things around the house — he did all of the above. It's just that activities seemed to happen to him, rather than the other way around. Life happened and he didn't notice.

And try as I might, I didn't get it. I didn't have the backdrop for sympathizing with being sick from the inside-out. I didn't get how that was even possible, and I didn't know how to respond to it. I usually didn't respond well because of that. That's why when



Bobby brought home the jinn, it seemed like such a godsend — a solution to the disconnect that had been slowly growing between us for decades. He ignored me when I asked where he'd gotten it, and practically dragged me downstairs, mumbling something about a man in a bar and getting *"the deal of a lifetime if this works."*

Once we were in the basement, Bobby rubbed the silver, medallion-printed lamp until smoke began to trickle out of the spout. The smoke stretched and elongated until it formed the image of a man — torso and up — floating on the air in front of us. The jinn's skin, howlite-blue, sparkled as if moonlight shone directly on it, and his enormous arms coursed all over with flashing veins. Purple clouds floated around the base of the jinn's torso, and every inch of space that could be pierced on his body was pierced, hoops made of precious metals hanging all over his nose, ears, eyebrows, lips, nipples.

As we stared at him, the jinn did the same to us, looking the two of us over with a stern expression — eyebrows furrowed and large, blue lips pursed thoughtfully.

I looked at Bobby — and his eyes were sparkling. For a moment I was transported, back to the last time I'd seen his eyes sparkle, that day he first told me he loved me. Years ago.

When he could still feel things.

*"Who commands the lamp?"* the jinn bellowed. His cavern-deep voice echoed off the concrete walls.

"I do," Bobby answered. "Robert Aimes."

*"Your name matters not. You are 'Master' now. What is it you command?"*

"What can you give?"

*"Even desert magic is finite. I cannot grant endless wishes. I cannot manufacture love. I cannot resurrect the dead from slumber."*

"You can't manufacture love," Bobby repeated. "But what about happiness?"

The jinn stared at him. *"Happiness is a slippery thing, Master, like an eel slinking between rocks. I cannot grant*

*happiness in eternal supply because that is not its nature. But I can grant happiness in more abundance than any other earthly source."*

"Then I want it," Bobby said, nodding. "I'm tired of being tired. I want to feel alive, no matter what it takes. I wish to smile more than I frown."

The jinn straightened, a movement so sudden it seemed to surprise even him; and then he looked steadily at Bobby, said, "Yes, Master," and closed his eyes.

When he opened them a moment later, his irises had rolled back into his head, and the solid whites of his eyes, flashing with lightning, looked out at us. Lightning also flashed within the clouds all around his floating body, and thunder rumbled beneath his voice as he invoked Bobby's wish in an ancient, foreign tongue: "\_\_\_\_\_."

*"What the heart craves, the hands reap."*

It was sweet at first, the jinn's wish-granting. Bobby woke up every morning excited to be alive, rather than cursing for not having died in his sleep. He came home with silly stories from work, instead of mumbling "*Was fine*" and slinking off to the shower when I asked how his day was. He even kissed me, delighted in my body again, aging though it was. "*How was your day, babe?*" he started asking. He noticed me again. Made me feel like the girl he'd chosen to talk to over all others that day in the park when he'd switched directions and starting running backwards beside me and introduced himself.

That was another difference the jinn had made — Bobby started running again. We both did. We ran together, like old times. We got back into shape, we felt better in our bodies. It was sweet for a time.

But something that had long remained buried inside Bobby, locked safely in the cellar of his depression and apathy, soon rose to the surface.

"*I want to feel alive, no matter what it takes,*" he'd said to the jinn. For Bobby, it turned out, it took killing to bring a real

and true smile to his face.

I found the first body buried in our backyard. Things soured.

“Don’t you want me to be happy?” he asked when I confronted him. We stood over the freshly dug grave that he’d made by our garden shed. “Isn’t that what you’ve been nagging me to do all this time?”

“Not like *this*! I thought you’d take up yoga or Buddhism or pornography or something! Not —” I waved my arms at the upturned dirt.

“I didn’t choose this, Kim!” I glared at him and he lowered his voice, repeating: “I didn’t choose this, Kim! The jinn chose this for me. That wish made me into this!”

I disagreed. And I was proven right, later, when the jinn confirmed that magic could not change a person, that it could only bring out what lay dormant inside them already. But in the moment, I kept my mouth shut.

“They’re nobodies anyway, Kim,” Bobby whispered, walking around the grave and stopping in front of me. “People with nothing to offer the world. People who hurt other people. No one will miss them.”

I shook my head. “How do you know that?”

“Because I watch them first,” he explained. “I watch them and learn about them, to make sure there’s no one who’ll notice if they disappear. They’re people like my dad, Kim.” He got quiet. “People like *your* dad.”

A switch flipped in my mind then, and Bobby knew it. He kissed me before I could think anymore about it. He knew how long I’d suffered without him touching me and he knew it would distract my mind. And I knew all of this about his motives, and I didn’t care. I just wanted him to never shut me out again. He was right, I just wanted him to be happy.

So I planted flowers where he’d buried the body, so that no one would suspect the dug-up spot; and Bobby and I called them bodies from there on out. Not “people.” In our minds, they weren’t people; they were mold that we were scraping off the surface of the world, one spore at a time.

I helped him get more. Usually they were hitchhikers, rejects who'd made themselves desperate and now had to rely on the kindness of strangers. Bobby did his thing with them. I never really saw what he did, but he always came out of the basement with a smile on his face. He never asked for help cleaning anything up. He just winked at me and whistled happily as he walked back downstairs with a mop-bucket full of bleach water.

But, like all sweet times, of course it couldn't just stay the way it was. I think I realized it had changed again the night Bobby lay beside me in bed and just shrugged when I asked how his day had gone, and then he rolled over to face away from me. I knew, then: he'd gotten bad again.

The spark had gone.

When I questioned the jinn about it, he only replied, *"Happiness is a slippery thing."*

"Then I'll just keep trying with what I have," Bobby said, when the jinn repeated the same words to him. "It worked before, it'll eventually make me feel happy again. I wish for an endless supply of victims."

The jinn straightened, said, "Yes, *Master*," and closed his eyes.

We could hardly keep up with his second wish. Bodies came to us in droves. Walking beside the highway; evangelizing the subdivision; selling Girl Scout cookies. Bobby had to get less selective in order to keep up. He spent most of his time in the basement, which made me slightly lonely; but on the other hand, he rarely slipped into a depressive mood anymore, which meant he was around when he was around. It balanced out.

If the marriage had been newer, fresher, I might not have stayed with him. I might have seen the writing on the wall and left him to his ways. But twenty-two years cements people. It makes you overlook their faults, because you know you can't have one without the other — no person without imperfections.

Over time, killing became less of a source of personal satisfaction for Bobby and more like a moral responsibility that he felt obligated to fulfill. He got really good at it — we both did,

actually — to the point that hunting barely exhausted us and we could knock out at least a couple of them before bedtime.

Except this one time. She put up a fight, which was frustrating because Bobby and I had both had a long day at work and we'd pegged her as an easy one — stick-thin, every bone in her body visible, her skin pale and sallow under the stark-white beam of our headlights. She'd just stood there on the side of the road — so like a newborn fawn — shielding her eyes from the light, already stumbling on her feet from the effort it took just to hold herself up on those weak legs. Bobby and I would never have guessed she could run so fast on those things.

No one had ever gotten away. We didn't know what to do for a second. We just sat there in the car, frozen, watching her sprint into the forest; then we jumped out and set off after her.

There was a moment, as we'd chased her through the woods, when time slowed for me, and I could hear Bobby ahead of me, huffing like a grizzly bear, his boots pounding across the underbrush... and I had a glimpse of my past life — the lonely mornings, the lonely evenings, the lonely dinners when I might as well have just been talking to myself — and I asked myself, *Had it really been that bad?*

I wondered if it would finally happen, if someone would finally get away. If we would finally get caught. For a second, I even willed it to happen. How unfaithful is that?

But I didn't stop running. I was no fool, I knew that I'd slipped into the peripheral lines of my husband's vision yet again, just in a different way than before. I knew that my love and dedication kept me useful to him, and that the only line separating me from the young body we were chasing was that I'd been consistently loyal. Fate could have swiftly turned against me if Bobby had woken up and realized that I was a lot easier to catch than girls like this, girls who were youthful, athletic, fueled by the desire to grow old before they died. But I don't think Bobby was even cognizant of me being an option; I'd been running with him for so long, I'd become a guarantee. And I *kept* running with him, my conscience and that past life shriveling into something

smaller and less recognizable with every passing day.

We caught her, eventually. And by the time we did, she didn't have much left to fight with. She didn't last long.

What Bobby and I had worked. He wasn't perfectly happy, but who is? He did smile more than he frowned, so we knew the wishes were useful.

Bobby didn't want the last one to go to waste. He wanted to have a purpose in the world, he told the jinn. To be surrounded by others like him, who delighted in the same things as he did. He had his happiness, he had a calling and a task to keep his hands busy with — now he craved a sense of community. So the jinn said, "*Yes, Master,*" closed his eyes, and sent Bobby to hell.

I went with him, of course. There is still this thing called loyalty.

After I've explained everything from the beginning, do you understand a little better what it means to love someone? That's *my* purpose. Bobby has his purpose, and I have mine — to educate.

Maybe you think Bobby's crazy. Maybe you think I am. Perhaps he is, and perhaps *I* am too. Who's to say? Twenty-two years cements people. For better or worse.

# Baby Girl

*Jordan James*

Now a million or so years back mighty God fire rolled  
 boulders of atomic mud into something that looked  
 like oak and reef and sap and hide and cages made  
 of bone. A prehistoric play and the dress rehearsal  
 of UrukEgyptGreeceRomeMongalEnglandUs  
 humped along on flat tires and stinking cheese,  
 bitter wine and heavy breasts. Sick indigenous  
 and Southern sins and Henry Ford establishes  
 the eight-hour work week and a man in  
 Wisconsin writes a song he calls  
 "Skinny Love" I wish I wrote  
 for you. A woman—You—  
 sleeps on clammy tile with  
 a sick cat who cries when  
 she's alone. Where did  
 you come from.....  
 ..... I can't  
 write you folk songs  
 or make you anything  
 but a wife. Let me  
 mold this wet soil,  
 call them worlds,  
 name them  
 after you:  
 Holy  
 orphan  
 sorcerer-  
 ghost  
 Baby  
 Girl.

# The Parking Lot Sisterhood

*Brynn Teske*

I recall the muted calm  
that often comes on August wind  
and I'm back in 2006

Temperatures in the low 70's;  
just the right side of safe to  
leave your kids in the car -

if the window is cracked  
and the radio is still on

My sister - well into middle school,  
would crawl - clamour actually  
into the passenger seat

watching mom's platinum hair  
bounce away from us  
in pursuit of dinner's odds and ends

I'm not close with my sister  
never have been, but when

August comes and that breeze rolls into me  
I can still feel the goosebumps  
on my arms as that haunting

G note heralds The Black Parade  
and shrieking out the lyrics like some



banshee, or wraith or Lauren's little sister;  
praying we could scream the whole thing  
out the windows or at each other,

before Mom finished her shopping  
or we hated each other again

## VI

*Delaney Isaacs*

The lovers are two girls, one sinking her teeth into the other's breasts and hips. And she tastes like rosebuds. And she tastes like wine. They're trapped under the lamination and they wrap their lips around each other before the air runs out.

How many love stories can resist the urge to end tragically? How long will you keep a picture of her in your wallet?

# From the Hyacinth Garden

*Sydney McDonald*

Antonio Oliver Flores died at 6:43 p.m. on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. Afterwards, he got up and clocked back into work. Hank's Gas N' Go is the only place in Haliway Bay open after 10 p.m.. Sometime in the late 50s, Haliway Bay enjoyed a few years of prosperity as a bustling, busy beach town. Now, it has two gas stations, four restaurants (all on the same half mile stretch of boardwalk), and a whole lot of abandoned streets.

There's an old, grainy monitor screen above the front doors. Ollie stands behind the register and watches a woman with needle-mark arms try to free a tube of Orajel from its plastic casing. The casing is rigid and sharp-edged. The tube will slip into her pocket easier without it. She'd bared her rot-spotted teeth at him when she'd walked in and mumbled something about needing a drink. Her fingertips are bleeding and Ollie's going to have to take the biohazard kit to everything she touches when she leaves. She doesn't seem to notice her bloody fingers as she keeps struggling with the Orajel. She has ugly, oozy red scabs on her hands and face. She hisses expletives at the plastic as if its resistance to her prying fingers is a conscious decision. She's probably trying to be discreet, but she keeps shooting Ollie furtive glances that shift her whole body to the left and unbalance her enough that she has to shuffle her feet around to stay upright. If he turned his head to the right as she looked up, they'd be making direct eye contact. She's oblivious to her image on the screen in front of him.

He thinks briefly about trying to stop her. It doesn't matter, though. She had come in yesterday and the day before. She'll be back tomorrow, too. The clock on his register reads 3:21 a.m..

Ollie's ears feel full and staticky. His tongue is glued to the backs of his teeth. It's fine. He's not being paid enough to deal with foul-mouthed customers at such a godforsaken hour anyway.

He pretends not to notice when she finally gives up and shoves the whole package, plastic casing and all, down her shirt. Ollie has biochemistry papers spread out across the front counter. He looks down at his notebook and pretends to be studying protein folding as she beelines it to the door. She pauses —door open and one foot on the dusty pavement outside — and he can feel her looking at him. Waiting. Ollie never looks directly at her. She exists only on grainy security monitors and in the blurred corners of his peripheral. He keeps his gaze down and doesn't think about how the air smells like iron and burnt rubber.

The gas station closes at 4 a.m.. Hank wanders out of the back room as Ollie is locking the doors. Hank is one of those guys who looks perpetually tired in a deeper-than-bone kinda way. Like he might just go home from work and stand by his door with his shoes on until it's time to go again. His real name is Archibald, but he hasn't gone by it since his hairline started to recede. He says it just makes more sense to be Hank since he owns Hank's Gas N' Go. Ollie thinks he's probably overheard too many whispered jokes at his expense.

He asks Ollie how school is going, and Ollie says, "Spring break. I think I might quit soon."

"Here or there?"

Ollie doesn't really know, so he just shoves his scattered papers into his backpack and slings it over his shoulder. Ollie's in his fourth year at Grand Mountain University. Grand Mountain is just a city over from Haliway Bay, and it doesn't actually have any mountains, but it does have a medium-sized hill. He's been looking at his notes for almost three hours and he can't remember a single thing that's on them.

Hanks sighs — a rattling, old man sigh, even though he's only in his thirtie — vand says, "See you tomorrow, kid."

Connor wakes Ollie up a little after noon by flinging open his

bedroom door and throwing a granola bar at his head. Ollie's never given him a key, so he doesn't know how the guy keeps getting into his apartment. Ollie has known Connor since pre-k and been friends with him since sixth grade. Considering he's been around almost Ollie's entire life, Ollie should probably know more about him than he does.

Every day around noon, Connor insists on going to the Haliway Bay Aquarium. Like most things, it's on the boardwalk. He is utterly incapable of making this journey alone. Connor doesn't like fish; he hates the whole ocean, really. But the Haliway Bay Aquarium — trashy, little shitshow that it is — has a raccoon. Her name is Chowder and the aquarium couldn't just relocate her after she was turned over to them on account of her roadside-slush fur, beady red eyes, and non-existent vision. So, she's become a permanent resident.

Connor pays the ten-dollar entrance fee for both of them, because despite not having a job he always seems to have plenty of money. It's one of those things Ollie decides to just not think too hard about. The aquarium manager, Danni, has a thing for Connor. Ollie is pretty sure Danni didn't give Connor her number just to be texted about the damned raccoon every day, but she still lets him feed Chowder anyway.

Danni smiles at Connor in the same way that she always does—too sincere and too bright to really be trusted. Her smile gets a little bit strained at the corners when she sees that Ollie's tagging along again.

“Has Chowder been fed yet?”

“Nope! I was waiting on you!” Danni always talks in exclamation points, like she has too much energy itching under her skin and no other way to express it. She wrings her hands and scratches at her wrists a lot, too. Her nails are freshly manicured—bright, eye-sore fuchsia—and her platinum blonde hair is in loose curls. She twirls strands of it around her fingers when she talks.

“Oh, awesome! Thanks, pal. Ollie, come feed Chowder with me.”

Ollie does not like Chowder and he does not want to feed her with Connor, but Connor gets pissy if he's left alone with Danni. Connor gets pissy if Ollie leaves him alone with anyone, really. Then little plants with googly eyes and nametags stuck to their pots show up in Ollie's apartment. Ollie does not know how to take care of them, so they always die. He always feels like shit about it. Conner, the petty bastard, always looks smug about it. There's a little graveyard of pots tucked away in the back of Ollie's closet. Sometimes, when he wakes up at night with that staticky feeling in his ears and can't get back to sleep, he gets out of bed to sit on his bedroom floor and stares and stares at his personal closet graveyard, feeling carved out and empty like he's a Halloween Jack-o-Lantern left out on the porch rotting away into November.

He goes to help feed Chowder, even if his version of helping is just to stand near Connor and step between him and Danni when she starts inching closer and Connor starts side-eyeing her.

Chowder's eyes are red and weepy. She has a chronic ear infection in her left ear, so she always walks around with her head tilted to the side. She gets a bowl of some type of bland looking kibble and washes each piece in her water dish individually before she'll eat it. Before they come to the aquarium, Connor will stuff handfuls of berries into his pockets to mix into Chowder's kibble. She can't see her food, so she ends up staring directly at Ollie with her weepy-scab eyes and tilted head as her too-human hands scrabble desperately around her exhibit to find her dishes. She never seems to remember where they are, even though they're always in the same place.

"You do know you don't have to come here all the time or text her every damn day if she makes you uncomfortable, right?" Ollie asks as they're walking away from the aquarium, debating where to get lunch like they don't go to the same place every time.

Connor gives him that bitchy, pinched up look that promises more googly-eyed plants if Ollie keeps it up. Ollie is tempted to push him. But then he remembers how used to fail tests because his hands shook so bad no one could read his writing. They didn't

stop shaking until his dad tumbled down the stairs and broke his neck, a cocktail of so much shit in his system that no one thought too hard about why he fell. So, Ollie shoves all his stupid, pointless thoughts back into their box below his ribs and lets it drop. He's not that much of an asshole, even if it's a near thing.

Ollie and Connor go to Captain Dan's Burger Shack. A familiar, strawberry blonde bun is bobbing up and down in one of the corner booths. Esme usually joins them for lunch, even though they never plan it that way. She has earphones in and is color coding her physics notes when Ollie flops into the booth beside her. Apparently, they both have such shit classes this semester that they don't actually get a break.

"I took that class sophomore year," Ollie tells her as she's gathering her notes and tucking them into her bag. "I probably still have my papers on it somewhere. Pretty sure Cooke just uses the same stuff every year."

"Oh, don't worry about it. I'm sure it's different this time." They both know it's not. Esme's face is in a state of continuous sunburn because she doesn't tan, but refuses to wear sunscreen in the hope that one day she might. Ollie keeps telling her she's going to get skin cancer. She laughs and tells him she doesn't plan on living past thirty anyway.

Ollie and Esme met in freshman year English, where Dr Thompkins — a three-time divorcee perpetually playing matchmaker with his students — paired them up to workshop each other's final papers. It ended with Esme calling Ollie a pretentious prick, Ollie calling her a frigid bitch, and Dr Thompkins giving both of them zeros. She's been one of his closest friends since, even if he doesn't particularly like her. He tries not think about what that says about either of them.

Esme reminds Ollie of the fighting dogs his uncle used to keep in a concrete pen behind his house. It's her eyes, he thinks. All caged-animal and perpetual waiting. It makes him sad in a way that he doesn't really know what to do with, and he hates her for it more than is probably fair. Into the box it goes, with all the

other things to not think about.

They order and then Esme says, “I want to be a flight attendant,” like she’s not one semester away from a neuroscience degree. “Learning a few new languages can’t be that hard, can it?”

Esme changes her major at least once a semester. In the fall, she’d wanted to be in interior design; last spring, a toxicologist. Ollie’s pretty sure she came into GMU as pre-law. He has no idea how she’s graduating on time. Sophomore year, he’d switched from engineering physics to biomedical engineering and now he has to stay an extra semester.

“I know Hebrew!” Connor’s mother was Jewish and he does not know Hebrew, but he’s always very excited to tell people that he does. Ollie is starting to think Connor’s said it so many times to so many people that he might be starting to believe it. The only thing Connor knows in Hebrew is how to recite the Shema and he has done so enough times to prove that he knows Hebrew that Ollie also knows how to recite the Shema.

Esme knows as well as Ollie that Connor doesn’t speak Hebrew, so she looks at him to see what he’s feeling about all of this. The thing about Esme — the thing that Ollie really, really hates about her, even more than her caged-dog eyes — is that she rarely seems to feel anything on her own. She’s always looking around at other people, trying to see what expressions they’re making so she can model hers to be the same. Sometimes, when she looks at him to know what emotion to wear, he keeps his face blank. Every muscle held perfectly still, just to see what she’ll do.

She rolls her eyes at him, thanks for nothing, asshole, and says to Connor, “I doubt people are just running around speaking Hebrew on planes outside of prayer. I meant like Spanish or Arabic.”

“Oh. Well, there’s always Duolingo. Or libraries?”

“I appreciate that you’re trying to help, Connor, but your ideas aren’t good.”

“Okay. I mean, I may not be getting any fancy degrees anytime soon, but at least I have more emotional range than sand.” When

Esme had first started hanging around him, Ollie had kept trying to pawn her off on Connor. For some reason, neither of them had been enthusiastic about it.

Esme drags them down to the edge of the pier after they leave Captain Dan's. She climbs up to sit on the railing and swings her legs out over open air. Neither Ollie nor Connor like being out there, but it's one of those things that Esme thinks she's supposed to like, so they have to sit there and pretend with her. The pier is old and wood-rotted. There's a thin strip of empty space by Ollie's foot where the planks have shifted apart. He sticks the toe of his shoe into it just to see if he can.

Ollie looks out at the ocean—foamy dirt-grey-blue bleeding into clear, mid-afternoon sky until it's all just one congealed, indiscernible mess—and feels small in way that makes his bones feel too light and fragile. Like if he just jumped off the pier right now, he'd hit the water below and shatter into a million little pieces against the waves. Esme looks at Ollie, blank in that carefully crafted way she has that makes it look like she might actually be feeling everything at once. Ollie knows she's closet-graveyard empty though, that she's trying to see what he feels to figure out what expression she should try on next.

She must decide that whatever's on Ollie's face doesn't suit her because she gives the beam she's sitting on a hard kick and asks, "Raccoon still at the aquarium?"

The question is directed at Ollie, but it's Connor that cuts in with, "Her name is Chowder," like it's some grand offense that Esme won't use the raccoon's name, "and yes, she is. Not like she can go anywhere else, is it?" It's the wrong thing to say. Esme is still kicking her legs back and forth 35 feet above the water and something about open air always makes her vicious.

"I was just asking! The thing's been half dead since it got there. I thought maybe it had finally kicked it."

"Why would you even say that?"

Connor had a cat in elementary school. Kind of. He fed table scraps to a stray cat that slept in the shrubs by his driveway



and made really shitty, illegible flipbooks about its imaginary adventures. He carried those flipbooks around everywhere with him and force-read them to any kid unfortunate enough to sit by him in class. Ollie had gotten his first pink slip in first grade for scribbling on one with black crayon. Connor had started crying and Ollie had been sent to the principal's office. They'd tried getting his parents to take him out of school for the day, but no one answered their calls and they'd eventually had to send him back to class with just a little slip of paper to show for his vandalism.

A year later, Connor overslept and missed the bus, so his dad had to drive him to school. His dad cut the turn too soon backing out of the driveway and ran over the cat, finally putting a permanent end to the flipbooks. Connor told anyone who'd listen that it had been on purpose, but no one believed him. Connor said a lot of things back then that no one believed.

Esme's legs stop swinging. She straightens her back and finally stops watching Ollie. He thinks of how his uncle's dogs would throw themselves shaking and snarling against their chain-link fence when they saw his uncle approaching them, teeth gnashing against the metal until their gums bled. Connor's been weird about animals since the flipbook cat died and Esme knows it. Ollie had brought it up once when Connor was pissing him off, and Esme latches onto weaknesses with an iron-grip. Ollie says, "Chowder is fine. She still has an ear infection, but it won't kill her or anything."

After a moment, Esme's legs start swinging again and she starts talking about a play she went to with her sister last week.

In the end, it's Esme who suggests it, because it's always Esme who suggests terrible ideas. They're walking down Summit Avenue because it still has a few beach shops that haven't been boarded up, so it feels more alive than the other boardwalk offshoots.

"Spring break is almost over, y'know. We should go inland, to Glasrey, and go camping. Hiking, at the very least. You can miss

a shift or two at Hank's, can't you, Ollie?"

Glasrey State Park is an hour and a half inland of Haliway Bay and none of them have ever gone to it. Ollie's seen plenty of pictures, though. It's rugged and winding and the trees are so tall it makes his skin itch to think about being under them. Esme has a habit of watching shitty 80s movies and convincing herself that the tropes she sees the most are Essential Real People Experiences™. Like if she just does enough movie-esque things then one day she'll wake up and suddenly be whole. Ollie doesn't think any of them have ever gone camping before. Some distant, shoved-down part of him knows they never will.

Esme had dragged them to a corn maze last October. Ollie fell behind because he thought he'd seen something moving between the reedy stalks and stopped to investigate. By the time he'd looked back to the path, Esme and Connor were gone. Ollie stayed lost in the stupid corn maze for so long they'd eventually sent employees in after him. Esme thought that it was hilarious — or at least thought that she should think so — and Ollie found a triplet of prickly pears on his kitchen table the next morning.

"Tonight?"

"Why not? I'll be by your apartment around 5. We'll hike somewhere and see the sunset."

The thing about it is, Ollie doesn't know if they're real, Esme and Connor. Because they've had this conversation a hundred times before, even if it's one of those things he shoves all the way down and doesn't think about, like Connor's shaky hands or Esme's caged-dog eyes.

So, Ollie knows exactly how this is going to go. Connor's going to say he doesn't want to go to Glasrey, even though he'll follow Ollie back to his apartment and grab the fire-hydrant-red overnight bag that he keeps there anyway. Ollie will call Hank, Hank will answer after two and a half rings, Ollie will say he's sick and needs a few days off, and Hank will tell him to have fun with wherever it is he's going. Esme will pull up in the shock-white Range Rover her parents got her for her twenty-first birthday and honk the horn until Connor and Ollie have tossed

their bags into the trunk and climbed into the car, Ollie in the passenger seat and Connor in the back.

A little after 8, Ollie will trudge back into Hank's and get shit about being late from the snotty high school kid who works the evenings before Ollie's shift. He'll watch a woman with oozy, needle-mark, scab-arms struggle with an Orajel packet in the grainy monitor above the front door. He'll slip into the comfortable, staticky space between present and not, and he won't think about flipped-over, crushed-roof SUVs; about Esme's glassy eyes looking fuller and brighter than they ever had when she'd been alive; about his own breaths, tar-thick and heavy in his chest. He won't think about how the air smells like iron and burnt rubber.

"I don't really like camping," Connor says. Sometimes he looks at Ollie like maybe he isn't sure if Ollie is real either and he's working up the nerve to say something about it, but he never does.

Ollie says, "Sure, it might be fun," because it's easier to just live through it than to think about it too much.

# I'm Not Cuban

*Dominic Blanco*

*for my mother who believes she's Italian*

*& after Harold Norse*

I'm not Cuban

I get what Castro did and why  
I left Miami and am glad  
I wasn't born in Cuba. I've never gone to visit  
English is my first language  
My Spanish is pathetic  
I lost my one *guayabera*  
I just learned what mongo means

I'm not Cuban

I leave out olives or raisins in my *picadillo*  
I like beans on the side and not on my rice  
I eat with my mouth closed  
I don't drink *cafecito* after every meal

I'm not Cuban

I don't own a car  
I don't own a boat  
I don't know half my cousins  
I don't want a house or family  
I don't believe in marriage

I'm not Cuban

I prefer silence  
 I like looking at paintings  
 I express my feelings  
 I talk with my hands down  
 I like cigarettes, not cigars  
 I can't dance *zapateo*, *yambú*, or *danzón*  
 I want to put an arm around my friend's shoulder  
 I've never been in a fight  
 I've never believed in myself

I'm not Cuban

# Spring

*Gracie Schwenk*

Three giggling girls in the grass  
 sipping lemonade in the shade of lilac bushes.  
 Above them shrieks and shouts sneak  
 through an open oval window.  
 The girls fail to flinch  
 as the sound of glass shatters  
 followed by slamming doors. Violent voices arrive at parked cars  
 screeching and spinning of tires  
 one car leaves  
 then another.  
 The smaller sisters observe the oldest  
 she smiles  
 as the meadowlark sings a morning melody  
 summoning the arrival of sweet spring.  
 They copy her crooked smile  
 soaking in the sweet rays of the sun  
 after a wired winter.

# Mabely's Pottery

*Grant Campbell*

Mabely laid her hands  
against the spinning pot,  
trying to quiet  
the way it swung  
its uneven hips —  
self-inflicted dizziness.  
Every attack  
on the pot's asymmetry  
was an overcorrection,  
as had been the last 7 Monday nights  
of this 10 week adult class,  
having lacked  
the balanced even-pressured chat  
and general symmetry  
to make a friend.

Mabely watched Naomi  
put her palm in the small  
of the pot's back,  
effortlessly leading the clay  
where it unknowingly wanted to be.  
Into those beautiful  
looping voluptuous  
curves, lips curled  
like question marks.  
Unnecessarily sexual, really.  
Irresponsible parenting, maybe —  
how quickly Naomi would  
stick stuff in the kiln.  
Such a casual kind of loving,  
as if perfection was something

she couldn't help but stub  
her toe on.

The somewhat circular piece of earth  
looked up at Mabely  
with its lop-sided, accusatory  
single-eyed droop.  
Its thin pursed lips  
didn't need to say anything,  
Mabely knew it hated her.  
She set her hand down  
to steady herself  
and was spun off the wheel:

She pictured Naomi dipping  
her hands in the soiled water  
and running them over  
Mabely's cracked adobe body.  
To have Naomi place her sure palm  
on the small of Mabely's back,  
sliding Mabely's loose  
slimy clay anatomy across  
the spinning dance floor.  
In this dizziness  
Naomi placed  
her in a kiln, kintsugi  
to be paralyzed in perfection.  
And she felt preordered  
so practical so essential.  
Built to the exact specification  
of when the spinning would stop  
and of what a someone  
needed Mabely to be.

# A Book at the Door

*Savannah McDaniel*

It starts with a book at the door.

Oily pages. Leathery quality. The pages don't swish when I flip them but fold and bend like plants in the wind or Red Vines. There are far too many metaphors to describe its emptiness. The pages are not bound by lines: an opportunity for pure chaos. Blank space. I've been given blank pages.

There is no note attached nor a bow. There is nothing but a blank book that I've renamed an empty journal. This is not to say that it couldn't one day become a book. Maybe it could. But I can't imagine I'd ever find the heart to put ink on those delicate, blank pages. I couldn't possibly ruin the tranquility of the empty space that heckles at my thoughts.

There are people who live in my house. People who are related to me and know far too much, but we stay together because we are bound by blood and hardship. And sometimes love. I don't show them the empty journal, the could-be-full-one-day journal, because I want it for myself. We should all have some things to ourselves.

The people who occupy my brain the most are the ones that don't live in my house. Sometimes I have imaginary conversations with artists and writers and thinkers. That is, when my mind isn't a factory of synthetic silence. Other times I conjure up loved ones who've passed on.

When my grandfather died, he took his side of the memories with him. I never asked him what he thought of me, and I can't tell if I regret it. If I think hard enough, I can find a maybe-real feeling, warming my insides. Sometimes I think that's him. Sometimes I know better.

Everybody knows what death is. It must be biological. Even children know that where there's a beginning, there's an end. But we focus on the happily, not the after.



Every once in a while, I'll come across a book where I would rather not know the ending. This makes me strange. Most people want to know the ending, right? But if a writer strings moments together, then aren't entire books made of endings? Ends of conversations. Ends of relationships. Ends of fictional lives. I have to mourn all these ends, which makes getting to the *end* end too much to handle.

When a child clutches the handle of a bicycle for the first time, parents cheer. The child swells with pride. Whereas I mourn the end of not knowing.

I didn't mourn death the way I thought I would. Maybe I don't know myself very well. I don't remember where I was when they told me he died. I didn't cry. There's a time to mourn. Too bad I've always followed an inappropriate timetable. I wait for the post-mourning period to break down: the dry cheeks and moving-on smiles. Then I mourn the end of mourning.

It may have been inappropriate to approach the mailman and ask about the empty journal. I am well aware of this fact. And, yet, I can't resist. The mailman looks surprised. I assume he doesn't get much conversation, even though he fingers everyone's business. He says he doesn't know, and I believe him because if he's trustworthy enough for the United Parcel Service, then he's trustworthy enough for me.

I don't trust myself with my memories. My mind desecrates them every time it selfishly tiptoes past my common sense and sneaks a peek. That's why I choose to remember our last conversation as a collage of all the good times rather than our actual last conversation. The one where I cried the ending of a goodbye.

I find a pen easily because pens have always been abundant in my home. I imagine uncapping the pen but then immediately discard such an outdated idea. I need a clicker pen. Obviously. Once I get the clicker pen, I hold it in my hand. I imagine destroying the empty journal with the pen. I really do. But I don't.

My grandfather was the only person I knew who wrote in a

journal every day. I don't know how I found this out, but I asked him about it one time. He said he just liked it. I didn't mourn the end of the conversation because there was something peaceful about not giving an excuse as to why. As to not draw out the conversation so long that it feels irresponsible not to mourn.

My house starts to stink. All the people who live here complain. They all snoop into my business. They find my empty journal and decide it is the culprit. One of them is suspicious by its oily pages and leathery quality. Where did you get this? It was at the door. Why didn't you tell anybody? It was for me. How do you know it was for you? I just know. Can I take it and figure out what's making it stink? I guess.

Now it's time for me to mourn the end of only me knowing.

When they find out what it's made of, they gag. They make retched noises with their bodies as they dash to the toilet. They are horrified. But not me. I ask for the empty journal back. Although they complain, they give it back. Because it's mine, and they know that now.

I use the clicker pen and put ink on the top of the first page. I begin to write what I think I remember of my grandfather, determined to celebrate the after-the-fact. Now he can finally know my side of the memories.

# Divorce

*Chanice Cruz*

The tangled lovers spend hours  
unraveling their bodies. Soaking  
sore muscles have become almost  
a tribute for the better.

The act of saying goodbye takes hours,  
she turns the warm cloth against his skin,  
they both know when he shivers against  
her touch, it will be the last time.

When asked why? He says she is an  
infestation of moths, his heart surrounded  
by her webbing.

When asked why? She says he vanished.  
She watched the man, once a husband, angles  
of his body no longer memorized. The turn  
of her finger's glide across his swollen  
shoulder, there were nights they'd fuck so hard  
she mistook it for a commitment.

# Waking Up From The Wellness Cult

*Skylar Brown*

## On White Wine

Except for at the bar. Madison did not smile placidly at the bar.

The whole evening was a bit stupid, really, but then it had a big impact. Madison went with Eliza to the Neighbourhood, a bar that was a five-minute walk from Madison's apartment, maybe not even. Eliza left her car there, at the surprisingly nondescript building housed above a store that sold dried fruit and nuts, and an insurance company. Not where Eliza had imagined Madison Gardenia might live. Before she could chew on that too much though, the car was parked, and Maddie was chatting her ear off on the way to the bar. About mystery novels. Eliza had attended one of Madison's free retreats, and they had found that they both shared once-debilitating (in Eliza's case, still-debilitating) cases of OCD, and a love of mystery novels. They didn't really have that much else in common: Madison was thirty-one by this point, while Eliza was nineteen, this raven-haired beauty who lived with her mother in co-op housing. But OCD and a love of mystery novels were like an abundance of money: if it was something you both had, that was enough to be friends. Nothing else really mattered.

So, Madison was chattering on about mystery novels.

"I've always loved Agatha Christie, I mean, I think it's so funny when people say she wasn't an *artist*? I had this English teacher in high school, Eliza, and she seriously thought that anything popular couldn't be art. I think that's wild, you know, and maybe this is *controversial*, but I think it takes the absolute same level of talent to write a really well-crafted mystery novel as it does a beautiful poem. Think of the concentration, the attention to

detail... it's superhuman, really. And people never learn, you know, English teachers love to remind you that people thought Shakespeare was trash back in the day, but then they're the first ones to criticize what's popular *now*... it's so short-sighted, it really is."

"Oh, *totally*," Eliza agreed.

Then they were at the bar at a corner table with these huge glasses of wine — they both ordered a glass, but the waitress brought over a decanter to each of them alongside the glass, so it really worked out to be almost two glasses, for only six dollars. Eliza was sure it was a mistake, but Madison blinked and said, "No, that's just what they do here." And the bar itself was maybe the nicest bar Eliza had ever been to, which, okay, she hadn't really been to many nice bars, but she had been to a few trendy bars downtown, so she knew what they were supposed to look like. And this was nicer than any of the bars downtown, because it had personality. Next to each table was a bookshelf stocked with novels, which she couldn't figure out — the music was much too loud for people to come here and *read*, surely? Probably it was just an ambiance thing. If it was, then it was working — Eliza now felt like more of a literary person than she had when she'd walked in. She tried to find some theme within the titles, but they seemed completely random: romance novels from the eighties were housed next to new editions from the 1800s. Madison picked up a romance and read a couple scenes out loud until she got bored. And the bathrooms were filled with pop art of Queen Elizabeth and Kermit the Frog. It was all very charming.

"Listen," Madison said recklessly, once she'd necked her first two glasses of wine (but really it was more like three, because of the decanter) and was on her third or maybe fourth, "I don't understand why alcohol is not considered therapeutic, like other drugs?" She peered up at Eliza, blue eyes and blonde hair framed by her white coat. All innocent.

Eliza half-smiled. She adored Madison, in a semi-lustful way: she *liked* Madison, and she didn't really like that many people. This alone was enough to make anything Madison said make

sense, even though Madison clearly lived in a different world. The first time they'd gone out to lunch together after the retreat, Madison had gifted Eliza a little pot of moisturizer that Eliza knew, without a doubt, cost more than all the beauty products she and her mother owned, combined. "Because you're such a beautiful girl," Madison had said, "and you need beautiful hands, too." Then she'd taken Eliza's dry, cracked, practically bloody hands in hers and rubbed the moisturizer into them slowly, gently. It was possibly the most maternal thing somebody other than her mother had ever done for her. "And say a mantra instead next time, maybe," she'd continued, still rubbing the moisturizer in. "Not forever, just for now. Eventually you'll stop doing that too. But think of a mantra to say next time you want to wash your hands, and then just say it instead. I like the Sanskrit mantras, myself. Very loving."

See, so how could she not love beautiful, innocent Madison who recited Sanskrit mantras and believed alcohol was a therapeutic drug?

"Alcohol ruins people's lives, Maddie," Eliza said, downing the rest of her glass. *How* it ruined people's lives, she couldn't fathom in this moment — how could something that made her feel so light and warm and floaty and beautiful ever have a dark side — but it did, definitely.

"So do other drugs," Madison said obstinately. "But this one just gets a bad rap, for some reason."

"Well, weed doesn't ruin other people's lives. And neither do shrooms."

"That's not true, actually," Madison countered, so mildly Eliza almost missed the fact that she was being disagreed with. "Weed does. My uncle, he was an addict in his teens and twenties...to weed. But then he got older and kicked it."

"Your uncle..." Eliza squinted her eyes shut, pinched the bridge of her nose. "Is this the same uncle who is now an MP?"

"Oh, yes. The very same." Madison nodded, looking vaguely satisfied for some reason.

"But doesn't he want, like, stricter drug sentences? I mean,

I know weed is legal now, but other things..." Eliza really only cared nominally about politics, and she would never before have been caught dead knowing some random MP from Alberta's platform, except after she met Madison she had gone online and read everything there was to know about her and her family, because Madison was the most fascinating person she had ever met.

"Oh, probably." Madison shrugged. "Look, I am not saying I agree with him *policy-wise*, but I do believe that weed addiction is a thing: why would he lie to me about it? And alcohol is, you know, it does have very therapeutic properties — don't *laugh* at me, Eliza, you know I mean it..."

"No, I mean, yeah, no, you're right." Eliza was snickering slightly, but mostly because she'd hit the point in an evening of drinking when suddenly everything was funny. It usually lasted for only a few minutes, but now that she was thinking about it, maybe Madison was onto something. Weed did calm Eliza down and make her feel more present, but alcohol — particularly wine — relaxed her, and made her want to dance uncontrollably, and made her feel that everything was funny. And didn't everybody say that laughter and movement were the best medicine? Ergo, then, wine was basically medicine.

"And you know," Madison went on lazily, "I'll tell you, I don't believe in all this open-your-throat-chakra-activate viśuddha nonsense anymore. No." She shook her head resolutely, signaling to the waitress for another round. "The wellness community, they think they have all the answers, but really all they do is over-complicate things. You want to speak freely, drink a bottle of wine. Done." She pounded the table with surprising force, gazing at Eliza triumphantly.

"Because I feel," she went on, "I feel so loving right now. I'm not anxious at all — I feel so calm, so passionate, so sure of my place in the world... I feel enlightened, actually, and I paid, what? Under twenty dollars? Not thousands, like these people will tell you to... no, I don't believe any of it anymore. See, and I'm telling you: I never met a truth I didn't like after a bottle of wine."

“Oh...” Madison appeared liberated in this moment, and Madison’s liberation made one feel that they were liberated too. “Well, you never have to hold anything back with me. I don’t want you to.”

Eliza really did have several questions, so she hoped Madison *wouldn’t* hold back. They had actually met at one of Isabelle’s workshops earlier in the year, in summer, at a gorgeous studio downtown (Eliza had had to sell her prom dress, and two pieces of jewelry given to her by her great-aunt in order to afford to go). She had been sure it would be worth it, to soak up all of Isabelle’s wisdom, her loving presence. But really it had ended up being worth it because that was where she met Madison. Let’s take a trip back, then, to the summer.

Read the entire piece at: [peripheryjournal.com](http://peripheryjournal.com)



# Charting

*Kalani Leblanc*

Lone Star beer lays over  
the headstone  
of my grandfather,  
with the brown paper bag I bought 'em in

Fishing poles lean against the wall,  
like a machete does in the houses of  
the paranoid older women.

He calls his fishing pole a “decoration,”  
like the singing trout above his T.V.,  
while Grandma shakes her head.

*Life is a lot like fishing,  
you never know what you'll catch—*  
My dad decided a long time ago to not  
tell him he plagiarized a Forrest Gump quote.

Grandpa lives on,  
literally,  
charting fishing tours everyday.

Whose grave is this?

# I Love You, Exterminator

*Joseph Donato*

A mouse died in your kitchen.  
Her fur is matted,  
skull broken,  
but I can tell she was once pretty.

The furnace groans  
in mourning,  
the windows cry  
condensation tears.  
We lock eyes,  
mine wide and wet,  
hers frozen open.  
I can't bear to look.  
I kick her under the fridge.

You will soon return from work,  
kick the dirt off your boots,  
dust it from you clothes,  
pick it out of your nails,  
staining the kitchen sink  
a dark brown for me to clean.

I scrub the linoleum,  
pinching my nose.  
Death carries a stench,  
stronger than the charred meat  
wafting from the chicken in the oven  
that had blackened in my frenzy.  
I hope you don't mind

your dinner well-done.

You don't notice when you collapse  
into your chair by the fire,  
since I sprayed air freshener  
until the can hollowed,  
before you turned the key in the lock.

Tucking the bed sheets under the mattress  
while you smoke outside with the neighbour,  
I forget about the mouse  
decomposing under the fridge.  
But in the middle of the night,  
I sob into my pillow  
while the mouse rots  
amongst dust and crumbs,  
becoming home to insects.

The smell will soon be worse than death,  
you will find its source.  
Your shoulders will tense,  
your chest heave,  
my looming stare  
the boiling water  
spilling over the pot.  
You've always hated messes.

I wake alone in the bed,  
the hallway light leaks  
through the crack under the door.  
I hear the crashing of pots in the kitchen  
where I creep  
to find you on your hands and knees,  
cheek pressed to the floor.

You lean back,  
hand clenched tight around her neck.  
You stare at the mouse with love,  
such pity that I know you recognize her.  
The floorboards creak under my bare feet,  
we lock eyes,  
I see my own horror reflected.

I'm sorry I say,  
but I had done nothing wrong.  
No, I'm sorry you say,  
and I know you aren't.  
My chest empty as the air freshener can,  
I realize all the mousetraps in the house  
are still wound.

# Luxurious Days

*Moll King*

So,  
I used to be on food stamps.  
I wish I was still on food stamps,  
But apparently,  
At \$32,000 a year,  
I'm "too rich" for them now.

I used to receive my food stamps  
On the twentieth  
Of every month,  
And the twentieth  
Of every month  
Was my favorite  
Goddamn day  
Of the month.

It was the day of the month  
When my nephews would get up early  
So I could drive them to school.  
We'd stop at the gas station  
And spend twenty dollars  
On snacks and sodas.

And of course,  
I would send them in  
With the food stamp card,  
Because I'd rather let everyone  
See two trashy little white boys  
Filling up on gas station snacks,  
With no regard for the price  
Of three snack cakes,

Two bags of chips,  
An Arizona tea,  
And four sodas.

I would not have the world  
See me like that.

You were only going to see me  
With a cart half-full  
Of the respectable poor-person groceries,  
Shopping at the cheap store,  
Generic brand only,  
No soda,  
No chips,  
But not too much produce either,  
See, there's a formula to this -  
The marked down produce,  
Not the fancy expensive  
Pre-cut stuff,  
Tub yogurt, never single pack  
And don't you even think of buying a shrimp cocktail ring.

My only real grocery courtesy to these kids  
Was the noodles.  
And only because I could never  
Quite get past  
The pitiful hilarity of my nephew,  
In veiled sarcastic excitement,  
When he told me he couldn't wait  
To get our food stamp card,  
Because then,  
We could finally get the better brand of noodles.

But before you praise me  
For properly subjugating myself  
As a poor minority in public,

First,

You need to know a few things:

- 1.) Every person on food stamps feels this pressure.  
Women of color feel this  
On a molecular level.

Hell no,

I did not bring my wild,

Bad-ass children in the grocery store with me,

People will know I'm on food stamps

Before I reach the check out.

And Hell yes I feel you

Craning your neck

To check

If that's a food stamp card I'm using.

- 2.) I still ate the donuts,  
The chips,  
The soda,  
And the shrimp cocktail ring,  
With grocery store sushi on the side.  
I just made my white husband buy it.

Food stamp day

Was the best day of the month.

It brought the family together.

My crazy,

Rowdy runaway teens

Used to leave for days at a time,

To stay with their granny,

To stay with their parents,

To stay with whatever friends

Had something better than

An air mattress on the floor

And bunk beds  
In the section of the house  
That had no insulation  
And where the roof was going to fall in  
At any moment.

But everyone in our household  
Made an appearance on food stamp day.

God, I miss food stamp day.

And now that these kids  
Have grown,  
And scattered to the winds,  
And to this unbelievably broken system  
That makes up the streets,  
The back alleys,  
And the hallways of a fate  
That was decided long before they were ever even born,  
And now that I'm too rich for food stamps,

I still get that warm fuzzy feeling of Christmas  
When the twentieth of the month rolls around.

I might reach out  
To these misfits of anger,  
These confused  
Street-born  
Chattanooga children.  
And we think fondly of the luxurious days  
When our measly  
Little povertous mouths  
Could bite down  
On a four-flavor cheesecake.



The good ones that cost twelve dollars  
And taste like 20 seconds  
Of not being so fucking poor  
That everything you own  
Came from the thrift store,  
Or the dollar store.

Damn it, I love food stamps.

Don't even get me started  
On when my kids lost their great uncle,  
And we spent \$150 of our food stamps  
"Catering" the funeral.

That same day,  
A different family was having a catered service  
In the next room over  
At the same funeral home.  
We shared a kitchen.

And how clever we felt  
Eating our fancy cut fruit  
And cheeseball  
Having saved ourselves  
From the humiliation  
Of visibly being the poorest family  
At a shared funeral.

We filled up on name brand soda  
And Doritos  
Shamelessly.

And to this day,  
I can't imagine why anyone  
Would give up such a luxurious thing  
As food stamps.

# Nyetophobia

*Taylor Bolduc*

When compared to his contemporaries, Count Hans Berkhoff was a young vampire. He had been turned as a teenager in the 1960s, and as such, wasn't wholly acquainted with vampire life. Sure, he had mastered the art of seduction, and he had a foolproof method for manipulating mortals into inviting him past the threshold of their homes, but he still struggled adapting to certain standards and expectations.

For example, his current conundrum.

Though the count was an undead, bloodthirsty creature of the night, a being who lurked in the shadows and was supposed to sleep in a pitch-black coffin during the sun's reign for half the day, he considered himself more to be a creature of the dusk, and preferred to be more half in the shadows.

You see, Count Berkhoff feared the night, and the dark, and even the shadows. Nearly sixty years of death had failed to cure him of this fear, made all the more irrational by the mere fact of him being the scariest creature in the night. As the only vampire around for miles and miles, what could possibly be scarier than him? Well, as it turned out, that was a question which he did not want to know the answer to, did not even want to entertain the possibility.

And so, he slept for nearly sixty years in his coffin, comforted by the dim glow of a flashlight pointed at his feet. Every night, ever since he was turned, he slept with his beloved red flashlight in his hands, a stockpile of batteries kept close by just in case it were to go out when he needed it the most. Just as it had begun to do tonight.

Count Berkhoff frowned as he watched the flickering light, growing fainter and fainter until it near went out, before carefully, cautiously cracking the lid of his coffin and slipping out his arm, groping around blindly for the large batteries he

typically kept. However, he felt no such batteries. Alarmed, he lifted entirely the lid of his coffin, sitting up against red satin cushions and looking around his small bedroom for the batteries he was sure were there. He'd bought a brand new pack only a few days ago, after having to trick the clerk into inviting him inside the small bodega. He'd also made a quick meal of the clerk and left him, alive but unconscious, on the bodega floor.

Where were those batteries? Where could they be?

But as he looked around his bedroom, dimly lit by the now-rising sun coming in through the rips in his curtains, he had a horrible realization — he'd never actually brought the batteries into his bedroom.

Rather, he was fairly confident they were still sitting on the kitchen counter, where he had left them. The kitchen counter, all the way downstairs, past the many uncovered windows of his home...

The count shivered. He didn't love the idea of having to brave the sun, early rays of light though they may be, in order to trek down to his kitchen. But the alternate option, to sleep in the pitch blackness of his own coffin, was far worse. Sure, the sun might burn him, should a ray of its brilliance touch his skin, but... the dark was worse. And Count Berkhoff decided he had no other choice.

He rose from his coffin in a fluid motion, arms crossed over his chest as he stood upright upon his chest, eyeing the tattered curtains covering his windows suspiciously, as if they might fly open of their own volition, just to bring about his demise. But as Count Berkhoff covered himself in a dark cloak, hissing at a spot of sunlight cast upon the floor as he walked around it, the curtains did not, in fact, fly open of their own volition. They stayed just as closed as he had left them.

The windows outside his bedroom and the windows in the kitchen, however, were uncovered. Why ever would he have need to cover them, when he slept through the day?

When he needed to go downstairs to retrieve batteries for his flashlight, apparently. He pulled his cloak over his head, creeping

over the threshold between his bedroom and the second floor landing, hissing as he tiptoed between windows and beams of morning sunlight.

“Terrible, just terrible,” he muttered to himself, crouching low beside the staircase bannister as he crept downstairs, careful to pull his cloak tight about himself, lest a spot of sensitive skin be exposed to the burning sunlight.

Past the massive bay windows of his lounge, and finally into the kitchen, Count Berkhoff seized his prize and clutched it to his chest, long fingers wrapped tight around the plastic battery pack.

*Perfect.*

Now, just to make the return trip upstairs, replace the batteries in his flashlight, and he was free to sleep in the dark through the day.

He retraced his steps near perfectly, one hand holding tightly closed his cape, while the other clutched the batteries to his chest beneath the thick fabric, perhaps fearful he might drop them in a puddle of sunshine, where they would be unretrievable until the fall of night. But thankfully, he didn't drop the batteries. Rather, he made it upstairs and back into his room without incident, shedding his cloak and leaving it where it had fallen upon the carpet.

It wasn't until Count Berkhoff had unscrewed his flashlight, dumped out the used batteries, and torn open the plastic wrapping of the new package that he realized the error he'd made the night before. Beside the flashlight lay the used batteries, large and cylindrical. In the plastic packaging were the batteries he'd bought, shaped as cubes.

Not even close to being the same. Not even close to being usable.

He wanted to weep.

He dropped to his knees, his beloved red flashlight held close to his chest.

What was he going to do now? How was he supposed to sleep without his flashlight?

Was he supposed to just... sleep in the dark? In the pitch

blackness of his coffin?

The count shivered at the thought.

Then, he had an idea. What was a flashlight, after all, but a movable lamp? He had lamps, he had many, all different shapes and sizes and colors. Surely, he thought, surely one of these could work!

Discarded cloak tightly wrapped around his frame once more, Count Berkhoff crept out of his bedroom, hissing at the now very bright landing that made up the bulk of the second floor of his home before retreating to the shadows, slinking near the floor into the next room, welcoming and dark in contrast with the other inhospitable rooms in his home, where he knew there to be a small writing lamp resting on a secretarial desk from the turn of the century.

Indeed, the lamp remained where he had last left it, and as he had with the batteries, he quickly absconded with his prize, retreating back into his bedroom, hissing as sensitive, pale skin was exposed to the sun's light, if only for a moment. Yet he knew from his years of undeath that even a moment's exposure would result in reddened, burnt skin soon after.

The consequences of his carelessness, he supposed, plugging the white cord of the small lamp into an outlet in the wall. However, as he began to step towards his coffin, he quickly realized the lamp's cord was much too short to extend all the way to his coffin. But, this was an easy fix, he supposed. His coffin wasn't too heavy for him to move, and carpet didn't scratch. Count Berkhoff set the lamp down in the corner before turning to his coffin and dragging it a few inches at a time closer to the outlet.

Sure, he definitely messed up the carpet, probably. And sure, now his coffin was in the dead center of his bedroom, but he was close enough that the lamp reached all the way inside now, so he figured he could live with it for just one night. Just until he could buy the proper batteries for his flashlight.

With the lamp plugged in and switched on, casting a soft, warm glow upon the satin lining of his coffin and the

surrounding, darkened room, all that was left was for Count Berkhoff to make himself comfortable. He crossed his arms over his chest, stepping into the foot of his coffin, near the lamp, and slowly sank backwards down onto the soft cushions. The lid of his coffin gently followed, closing with a soft thud, and finally, comforted from the suffocating blackness of his coffin with a gentle, glowing light, he felt as though he could sleep through the day.

# Following Him

*Gaayatri Sivamantham*

The note snaking out of the  
flute, wraps itself around the  
violin and sitar's melody,  
enchanting the audience –  
charming restless serpents.

But a dancer heed not these  
tunes, but Another.  
These words memorized by  
Heart, and understood in my  
Tongue by my Mind.  
The dancer sways to their dusky  
deep meanings and lyrics  
but she listens to the hymns  
of Another, in her Soul.

My teacher taps the rhythm  
on small cymbals, heartbeat  
steady – guiding / control.  
Each clinking: *tiss – tiss – tiss –*  
sounds softer, as another Heartbeat  
rhythm of the *Damaru*;  
His small two-headed drum echoes.

My painted feet, maroon with  
mehndi leaps and my body bends  
like the cobra that sways on His neck.

My painted hands, depicting His  
feats, imitating his stance,  
trace the outline of the Himalayas.

Off the stage, my eyes strain to  
glimpse Mount Kailash, its tip,  
its rocky contour of a Home –  
my painted, aching feet  
in shadows of His footprints.

## Become Crab

*Raina Genaw*

Why not become a crab?  
My exoskeleton will be thick and sturdy. It will protect me.  
I'll bathe myself in red paint and scuttle along the ocean floor.  
My pinchers will be strong and sharp. I will protect me.  
Maybe I'll be drawn up in a dip net, or a crab pot.  
I won't be able to protect me.  
Maybe I'll be butchered, cooked, and eaten.  
Nobody will protect me.  
Either way, at least I'll be a crab.



# Church Cats

*Max Brown*

This morning, Fanta the cat found himself wondering whether God could die.

Fanta spent most of the morning scurrying around the shelves, where God kept his great works - those were all still here, but Fanta found no sign of God himself. Nonetheless, the activity was calming for Fanta - even though he sat at the foothills of those great mountains, things raised by God across the kitchen floor, the act of running around them felt more like navigating a tricky maze than being trapped. Besides, it was these same hills that protected Fanta during the Night of Abandonment, and he had no reason to believe that they would betray his trust.

It was mostly the Night of Abandonment that make Fanta believe God could die - perhaps more accurately, be killed. That was the night Fanta watched through the window as the other gods, those great beings who walked on two legs and spoke in booming, guttural howls, each clad in identical blue vestments, arrived in their chariots, nearly hypnotizing Fanta with the sway of red and blue lights on their roofs, before forcing his gaze away.

Fanta did not see what had happened to God, just that he met the ones clad in blue at the bottom of the stairs as Fanta himself fled upward in mortal terror, finding refuge behind one of the many stacks of boxes. The ones in blue returned and spent some time searching Home, but Fanta was sufficiently tucked away behind the piles of boxes, remaining undetected. God's creations, at least, continued to serve Fanta. The ones in blue left, apparently having found whatever they could find, yet God never returned up the stairs, never made Fanta feel it was safe to show himself. Fanta spent the rest of the night crouched behind a box, watching the doorways.

In the morning, Fanta convened with Sprite and Dr. Pepper by the boxes. Fanta presented his suspicions, that God had died

or been killed during the night. Dr. Pepper rebuffed this – Dr. Pepper was an ancient cat of 16, compared to Fanta’s 5 and Sprite’s 7, affording him significant sway. The Doc insisted that God would return. “Never, it is folly to think such a thing!” Doc spat at Fanta. “God provides, as he always has and as he always will.” To accentuate this, Doc padded over to the cakepan of nourishment set out for the three cats, overflowing with nuggets of freeze dried fish and poultry, flanked by a plastic fountain. Though currently idle, God could draw from it a small waterfall for the cats to drink from. “This is provision, and as you spit upon it, with your doubting, treacherous ways, it remains,” Doc declared, before padding to the stairs, pointing to the cats’ wastebboxes with his snout.

“And here God, in his divine care, cleanses the boxes at least once a week, removing our excretions,” Doc said. None of this was new to Fanta or Sprite, a tale Doc impressed on them dozens, if not hundreds of times, over the years. “Hear me, young cats, and know that God would never abandon us. While the Old Masters have left, God shall never,” Doc preached.

The Old Masters. The gods that Doc says once ruled the Home. Doc, in his ancient age, could recall these figures but did not bear witness to the creation of Home. That, by Doc’s estimate, must have been truly antediluvian, likely upwards of 30 years ago. Doc arrived at the house as but a kitten, finding it a convenient refuge from the cold, and it was then that he met the Old Masters. They had created the place but never really controlled it – Doc recalled observing fewer and fewer of them during his patrols of the house, oftentimes resorting to capturing rodents for sustenance when the masters bequeathed too little. In the end they’d abandoned it, along with Doc. Then God had arrived, and Doc was never hungry or thirsty again.

The Old Master’s enduring creation was, of course, the Holy Spring.

“Imagine it – a pond blue as the morning sky, fed by a great waterfall, a limitless wellspring that the Old Masters could control at will,” Doc told Sprite and Fanta late one night. “But

the Old Masters were decadent, always playing in the spring like kittens, yet never drinking from it. Some small wonder they lost control,” Doc spat, denouncing his former caretakers. Fanta asked Doc what had happened to the spring, where in Home it had disappeared so it could not be openly viewed as when Doc was a young cat.

“Sealed away, behind new walls,” Doc said. “God knew it was not a plaything to be flaunted but a resource to be respected so he hid it away, nested in the center of his garden.” Doc nodded toward the downstairs. The cats were forbidden from there, as that was no longer Home but the private realm of God and his garden – the near endless shelves of those great works.

Fanta vaguely understood what these shelves held – in each container a shined disk, one on which Fanta could see his reflection, tinged with rainbowlike lights. Fanta heard God refer to these as Cee-Dees and Dee-Vee-Dees, and he understood that they carried the voices and images of other creatures like God. God’s bedroom contained a widow called the Television, something which Doc insisted was how, in conjunction with the Dee-Vee-Dees, God communicated with others like him. It is these works, Doc insists, staring down at the cats from their Shelves, slicing the open plains of the rooms into winding, narrow valleys that the cats traverse with their namesake grace, that allow the cats their daily nourishment. God has a power, Doc says, to turn the works into pellets of poultry and dishes of lukewarm water. Fanta glances again at the plastic fountain. He pretends to listen to Doc’s words, while thinking of how that water fountain, one of God’s provisions to them, seems a hollow imitation of the Spring from Doc’s story.

...

It had been six days since the Night of Abandonment and the cats were out of water. Sprite had retreated to a corner behind some of the boxes of idols yesterday evening and hadn’t emerged.

Doc lay sprawled on carpet filthy with the collective shedding of the three cats. Earlier he had greedily lapped up the last of the water, water that was filled with dust and hairs by now, insisting

that he needed the water to be strong for when God returned. Fanta wasn't sure they could wait that long. His own throat was already dry and scratched. Lying down for naps failed to eat up the time as Doc claimed. Fanta thought back to the story about the Holy Spring, where water could be summoned at will. But the Holy Spring was buried, somewhere behind the Vault of Works. Trying to find the spring was foolhardiness, Doc declared, that Fanta would find himself hopelessly lost among the shelves, that only God, with labyrinthine recall, knew the path to take.

Now Doc was no longer moving or speaking, so Fanta has no detractors. He looks down the stairs, his dark-accustomed eyes cutting a path through the unlit basement. His paws rest on the last of the carpet, that barrier separating Home from the Vault. He recalls nothing before Home, his known existence the routine of eating his turkey pellets, drinking from the miniature waterfall and the stories given to him by Doc. Everything ahead is uncharted territory – territory for gods, not cats. Fanta takes his first step of the concrete floor of the vault.

Fanta searches for a long time. Doc was right in that the Vault is near impossible to navigate. Above Fanta, the images of other gods on the outside of the Cee-Dee and Dee-Vee-Dee boxes stared down. Each one containing an epic fable, something to leave even a god in shock and awe. Fanta's feline eyes aren't meant to recognize the patters in these cases, graphics and expressions meant to pique the interest of gods, only beguile Fanta. He walks by the same container perhaps a dozen times without realizing it. He ascends another set of stairs, only to descend it twenty minutes later, having reached a dead end. Thousands of discs, bearing the sights and sounds of thousands of gods, yet nothing to guide Fanta on his quest.

Fanta rounds another corner, expecting to be met with another wall of ineffable Dee-Vee-Dees. Instead he distinctly recognizes female versions of God. He recognizes them, for they are from another one of Doc's stories – stories of God surrounding the Spring with murals of only the most beautiful maidens of his species. He sees these murals now, inscribed on

a glossy material, acting as faithful guardians of the Spring that must surely be ahead. He walks between the guardians. Nothing moves to stop him, and he is before a small staircase leading to a faded blue basin.

Fanta, his thirst returning with a vengeance this close to his goal, descends into the basin. It is dry, and it feels smooth, too smooth, under Fanta's paws – smoother even than the stone Outside. Fanta's claws can't get purchase, forcing him to lumber his way through the depression, hoping for some way to bring the water back. Growing tired, Fanta's focus on his quest fades, his body falling into the routine of instinct. He resolves to nap in this basin, possibly for the last time, but first he rubs his cheeks around the perimeter of it to mark it as his.

Nevermind that the gods who created the basement are nowhere to be seen, nevermind that the only cats that could challenge his claims are both themselves comatose upstairs, if he's going to die it will be peaceful and on his terms. His last step is to rub his cheeks on a bar of shining silver protruding from the side of the basin. As he puts his weight against the bar, it slides down in a semicircle. Water spills from overhead, revitalizing Fanta and making him instinctively jump before he indulges, nearly taking in more water than he allows to descend to the floor of the basin.

As the basin fills around Fanta, he is born again.

# Rabbit Hunting

*Kimberly Ramos*

*"...when snow blankets the landscape and temperatures plunge to 30 below, hungry hares scavenge other hare carcasses... And, in an ironic twist on natural selection, hares also dine on dead Canada lynx—their main predator..."*

*-Adam Popescu, National Geographic*

I.

I am convinced us girls are born grieving,  
our first breath all heat and tears.  
Little baby banshee,  
here's your gift: a rabbit slit  
from throat to belly,  
freshly bleeding, as if to say,  
This is what happens to warm, soft things.  
So learn to quiet down.

II.

Foxes, dogs, men with guns —  
little rabbit, you will never run out of sharp things to fear.  
Rabbit, you've got no claws or teeth,  
but god made you small and fast  
with paws strong enough to make the earth  
yield like flesh.  
So burrow, rabbit, learn to be unseen.  
As long as no one is looking, you are safe.

III.

Girls make claws out of keys,  
burrow into seas of bodies and call it safety.  
I never learned how to stop crying,

just learned how to do it  
silently.

IV.

Rabbit, all gutted you are two hind legs,  
two front legs,  
a head, your slim body a series of flaps  
and pink fat.

Rabbit, you stew  
so tenderly, you come apart  
with barely any chewing.

V.

I am told women are best when they're dead.  
That's when they're the sweetest.

VI.

Rabbit, it was a cold winter.  
No greens, no roots, nothing.  
Frost had laid  
down like a tired body.  
When you found the lynx  
it was already dead,  
lukewarm protein  
leaking scarlet onto the snow.  
Rabbit, you were so hungry —  
so you drank  
and your friends drank  
and that lynx's bones broke like music  
and when its sinews snapped you danced.  
Little rabbit, you are a meat eater  
just like every other beast.

# Pyromaniac Addresses Her Mother

*Maeve O'Connor*

Mamma, I want to be an actress — but the old kind, wrapped up in pearls and red silk and the pelts of small, dead things. I want to pantomime a drowning — but the good kind, where someone sympathetic buries me in white and the gasoline seeps quietly from my fingertips, unnoticed. Picture me now in my little-girl shoes with the shiny buckles, our trip to the surrealist wing to visit your favorite landscape. I said there wasn't enough orange and by that I meant — I know this now — every painting in that gallery would be more beautiful burning. The problem with both fire and actresses: everyone excuses the beautiful, we let it entertain as much demolition as it likes. I want to be an actress, Mamma, but my lungs are tired. I'll settle for the funeral if you can cover up the scent of ash. Someone is mourning me right now, you know, so it's all right.

A curator stands at the center of the wreck with his head cocked just so, surveying my masterpieces in silent horror. I know what he is thinking. We do not hold vigils for monsters. We do not carry sympathy for coals when they burn our hands. Like anything prone to devouring itself, I am not worth saving. I am too synonymous with destruction. But Mamma, I don't care to be saved anymore. I swear if you can make him glimpse my grand exhibition, I'll relinquish my matches. I'll pull the nearest river over my head and doze off. All the galleries will be free of the threat of me. Could you picture a world without my



grievances? I am just trying to make something so huge and brilliant and terrible that everyone stays all night long to watch. Yes, everyone stays to see the smoke billow, everyone *stays*. I am just trying to make myself memorable, I am just trying to be someone worth staying for.

Here I am, standing in the rubble of a grand idea and what is there left to do but end it? Start over, maybe, but I have never been so tired. There is smoke in my lungs and gasoline on my clothes. My feet don't fit into shoes with shiny buckles. I want it to be over. I want it to end. I am sorry, Mamma, I am sorry.

# Lovers

*Alisha Kauten*

## Winner of the Periphery Prompt Contest: Flip the Script

### The Artist

I am longing for —

— you.

— for me?

— that rush of endorphins.

Hands plunging into your soul.

— Disappointment.

Do you love out of self-preservation?

No.

Do you love out of obligation?

Your silence speaks volumes.

### The Art

Pen and paper?

Across the room

I sit at a worn desk waiting —

No.

For —

— those unreliable hands.

Hands plunging into my spirit.

Feeling the fall of —

— Infinity?

Feeling the bite of —

My condolences

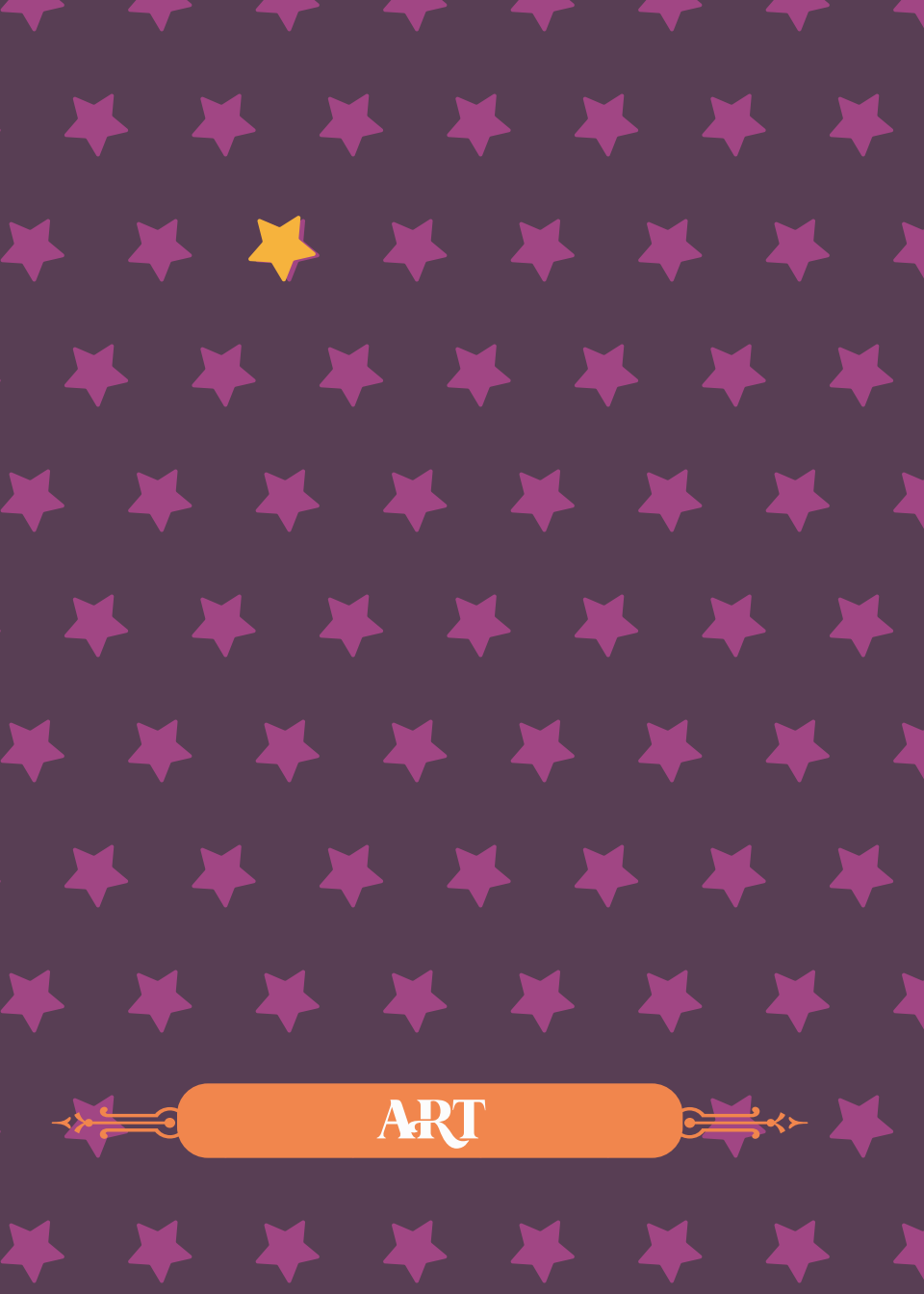
I have a question.

No.

Do you love out of devotion?



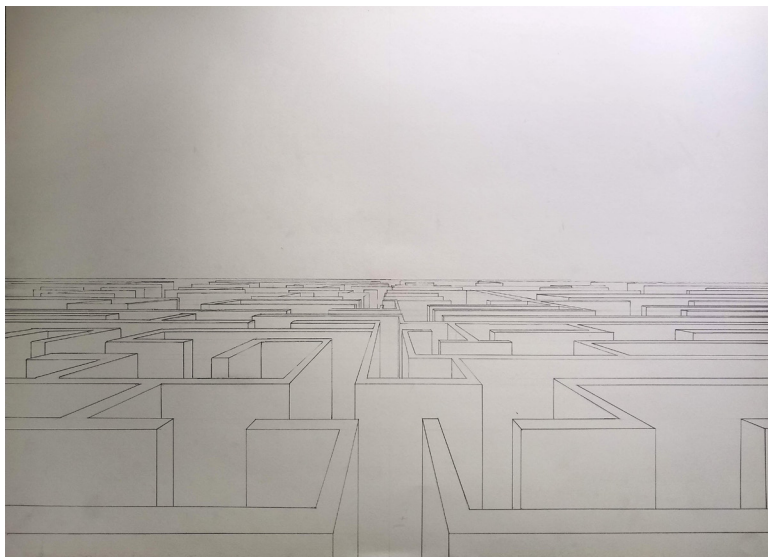






# Heartfest Nite

*Rebecca Adele*



# Infinite

*Luke Gentle*



# Chernobyl Menagerie

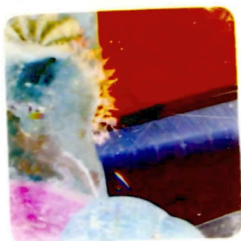
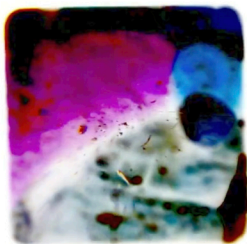
*Emily Smith*





# Monument Valley

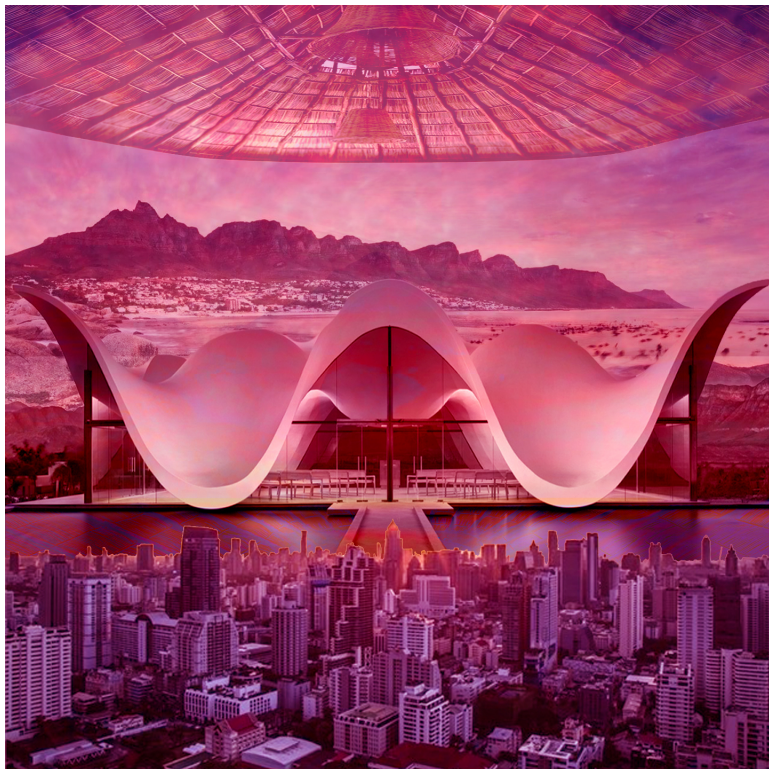
*Austin Farber*



# Lifted

*Nazrene Alsiro*

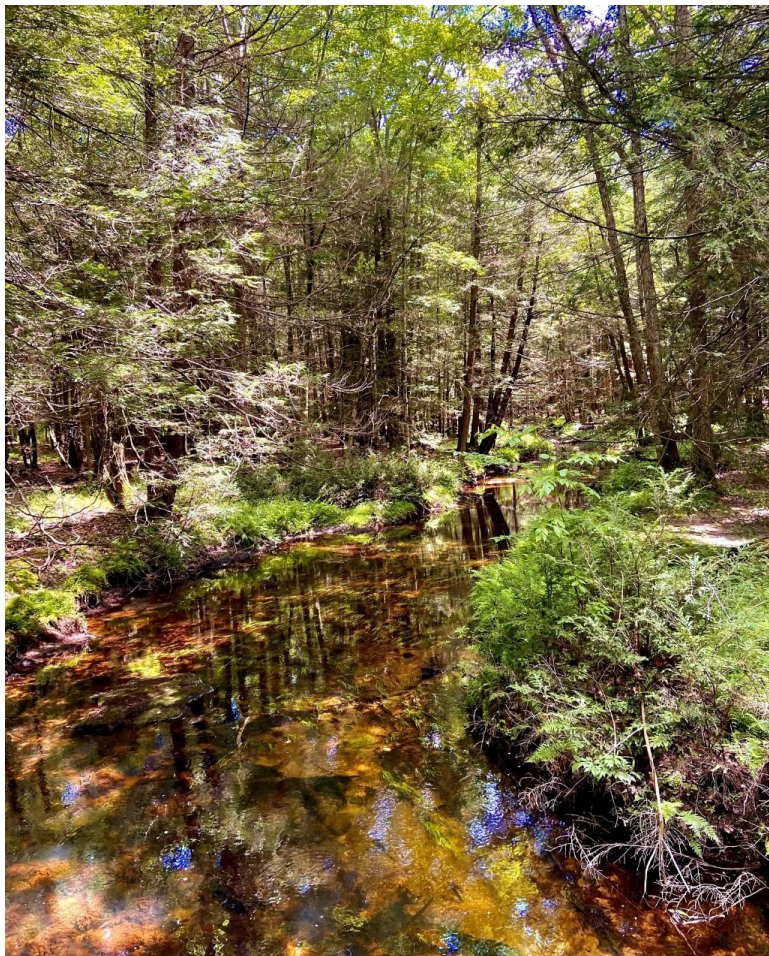
See the whole video at: [peripheryjournal.com](http://peripheryjournal.com)



# Through Time We Tell

*Rosalie Glenski*





# Weiser State Mountain Stream

*Hannah Bridy*



# Double Exposure

*Emily Smith*



# Irreverent

*Emily Smith*





# Down Memory Lane

*Rosalie Glenski*



# Static Noise

*Emily Smith*





# TVs from Mars

*Emily Smith*



# Tearing Through the Headline

*Rosalie Glenski*



