

# The Agathist



Fall 2018

# The Agathist

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## Advisor's Note

Last year, *The Agathist* was entirely a volunteer endeavor. The staff met in my classroom during Mav Break, and together we hammered out a pretty decent magazine. It was chaotic, loud, but fun.

This year, *The Agathist* has a staff that meets during a class period. We're still in my room, we're still producing a quality magazine, and it's still chaotic, loud, and fun.

One change is the overall look of the magazine. It's actually pretty this time! We're using Adobe InDesign (as opposed to iBooks Author) and the staff is responsible for the layout and general appearance of the magazine (as opposed to me, who has zero aesthetic sensibility).

Another consistency, though, is the quality of the submitted pieces. We have essays dealing with family heartache, our first science-fiction story, poems that give praise to favorite authors, embody childhood innocence, and elegize lost family members. The artwork, as usual, blows me away. Photography that embraces the simple beauty of the natural world appears alongside pieces of digital artwork that create imagined, stylistic worlds.

Thanks are due to the administration—the way the class was scheduled was entirely Mr. Quick's idea, and I'm thankful for him and the administrative team's enthusiasm for this weird experiment.

Also, thanks to the staff. Emm, Seth, Cam, Alana, NaTya, Cody, Caroline, Brady, Iz: thank you. You are brave writers, and you have made a solid magazine.

--Mr. Dickson

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# Missing Guatemala

-Jamey Cobb

I love the way  
the mountains crane  
reaching for the morning rays

I love the way  
the little motorbikes zip  
by stitches of cars and bursting buses

I love the way  
the farms and plains quilt  
each inch, climb each slope

I love the way  
tinsel houses embroider  
the hillsides and waysides

I love the way  
the roofs were fashioned  
to view the night's majesty displayed

I love the way  
the children scream  
as a radiant red parachute jerks and jolts

I love the way  
I fell in love  
with where the sky melted into gray

I love the way  
I miss each day  
away

# 2,075 Miles and a 30 Hour Drive

-Dawn Murno

When I was a girl, I lived in California. Manteca, California. San Joaquin County. I don't remember it very well. I was only 5 when we left but I do remember one day in particular. The day we left.

My mom told me we were going to "Mississippi." I didn't really understand what that meant at the time, but now I realize that it meant we were going home. The only home I had ever known was my house in Manteca. It was right on the water, my mom and dad always loved the water. My father loved the water a little too much and one day he sailed away.

My mother, Laura--or as she's most commonly known, Sunshine--and I lived in a pretty white house with a perfect garden. To this day, Sunshine still likes to make jokes that we lived in the White House. The house that always had kids playing in the yard or the water. The house that hosted many parties and family gatherings. The only house I ever thought could be my home.

The day we left was a daunting one. I remember my mom packing our old beat up Lincoln. It was pearl white and the inside smelled like clean leather. We packed our whole life into that car. Then we said our goodbyes. My mom's best friend, a hippie named Wehner, who lived with us for a while, was the hardest good-bye and also the only one I remember. He gave me a bear hug. He whispered in my ear "don't steal you mom's tooth brush." I was only five and I would always take his tooth brush and make him pay me a dollar to get back. After that we left, leaving our whole life behind.

It had been a year since Hurricane Katrina hit. My mother was trying to help in the only way she knew how. My mother has been a realtor for over 25 years. She's also the kindest woman I know. She left everything she knew behind to go help people who had lost everything.

My mom was nervous, she had the right to be. She was moving her whole life across the country, including her 5-year-old daughter. There's this story she always likes to tell about me. We had just crossed the border out of California and she was debating if she had made the right decision or not. According, to her story I looked at her and said, "It's better days now."

And everything did get better. When we got here we stayed with my sister. My mom got a great job doing what she loved. I started school. Miss Sunshine became Mrs. Sunshine. Everything changed when we moved, but it changed for the better.

Sometimes my mother will ask me if she made the right decision. This question always catches me off guard because no matter how many times she asks I always think about what my life could have been. What school would I have gone to? What would my personality be like? Would we still live in the White House on the water? But then I remember the important things. The friends I've made here, the family we made here, the life we made here. And I realize it's the best decision she's ever made.



Silvered With Age  
Caroline Walton  
Digital Photography

# Undone

-Alana Forman

She was everything I wanted to be and not to be  
Her senseless interpretation of love perplexed me  
I looked into her depressed eyes,  
And I felt all the misery that washed over her every day.

She'll dance around the sun,  
and sing to the moon.

But She was beautiful  
Like a flower,  
Her wilting petals radiated with blazing colors  
Her crooked stem became lively  
The moist soil below nourished her roots,  
And as she blossomed,  
She was my mom again.

I wish she would look through my eyes  
And See what I see.

# Belly Up

-Camden Clem

Why don't you drag the lake  
And search for a piece of who I was  
Buried in the mud  
And drowned  
So swollen with water  
I'm unrecognizable

Over time  
I've faded  
Floated away  
It doesn't really matter anymore  
If you ever find anything  
That's not me anymore  
There is no me anymore  
It's all flaked off  
And gone for a swim

But sure  
Surface with the shell of a man  
No one cares if it's empty  
It brings closure  
For empty people  
Mourning the loss  
Of someone who was empty long before

Not really gone  
Just tired  
Out of ideas  
Staring at a blank sky  
With blank eyes  
With anything but a blank heart  
Bursting inside  
Fragile bones  
That won't let me out

N o b o d y ' s h o m e

# The Littlest One

-Calli Ainsworth

She is a lamb with an untainted coat  
Her mind is not clouded with a worry or regretful quote  
She thinks about things that are nothing but fun  
And is not scared of what happens under the sun

She thinks about glitter and sparkles abound  
And greets me with a hug whenever I come around  
She always has something new to show me  
And we bond over our love of everything artsy

I'll show you how to do this and that  
She always says if my awareness falls a little flat  
One place I'm higher is the topic of boys  
For she can't yet see past her brothers that like to destroy

But that same difference is the one that brought us together  
I can't be naive and say that it will last forever  
Of course I would love to be her actual sister  
But that I will only work if I don't find a new mister

Still she speaks with words that are without regret and fear  
So do not be offended if you dare come near  
She's too little to understand the weight of a word  
But old enough to know that some stuff cannot be unheard

Her curls flow wildly without restraint  
When she runs around or tries to paint  
Her brown hair is not a cause of insecurity  
Because her heart is still so full of purity

The corners of her mouth are always upturned  
And frowning and tears seem to not be something that she has learned  
Her face is always bare  
Because her reflection in the mirror is not yet something that causes her a scare

She just started a new chapter in her life  
And I really hope that it is without strife  
She may no longer be in double digits  
But the thought of anyone hurting her makes me fidget

# Why SeaWorld is Trash

-Madelyn Jarjoura

“I want to live in a bathtub. They’re great. I love chewing concrete when I’m bored. My dorsal fins do not stand up straight and it’s the best thing I could ever ask for.”- said the most sarcastic Orca Whale ever.

I’m about to metaphorically hit you with some facts. From the article “15 Shady Things That Go Down at SeaWorld,” “At some point, the answer becomes obvious: their parents were simply stolen from the wild.” Kidnapping animals from their natural habitat? That’s pretty trash. Imagine being taken from your home to be put into a tank comparable to the size your bathtub. From the same article, it is proven that SeaWorld’s parking lot is bigger than the whales’ tanks, refer to Figure 1. SeaWorld is nothing more than an ethical mess. Instead of trapping animals in nets, how about the SeaWorld employees help get them off the endangered species list.

Time after time, the Orca Whales at SeaWorld have died premature deaths. They have died years before their natural expectancy. They have died with their only function was to make money. Author of the PETA article, “8 Reasons Orcas Don’t Belong at SeaWorld,” states that Orcas have a life expectancy of “thirty to fifty years” in the wild, whereas at SeaWorld they have an expectancy of “fourteen years.” Again, despicable treatment toward animals, another mammal.

One huge reason SeaWorld is a terrible place to spend your tourism money is that the animals there, specifically Orcas, chew the concrete in their tanks out of boredom. From “SeaWorld’s Orcas Are Attacking Their Tanks- And Losing Their Teeth,” the author proves this point saying that “It’s long been known that SeaWorld’s orcas - both in the U.S. and abroad -shatter their teeth from chewing on the unnatural concrete and metal walls of their tanks, a sign of frustration and boredom in captivity.” I can’t speak for everyone, but when I get bored my first instinct is not to chew the drywall in my house. This is because I have the option to do other activities besides sitting locked up in a

tank that doesn’t ever try to mimic my natural habitat.

What about zoos? Aren’t they just as bad? Yes, they can be, but a lot of zoos provide rehabilitation to animals and help rescue species of animals on the endangered species list. Zoos do considerable work is conservation, but SeaWorld affectively ignores this. So, what should be done? Sea side sanctuaries. From “SeaWorld of Hurt,” the author proposes these sea side sanctuaries as a way for the animals of SeaWorld to live in the sea and become acclimated to sea life since many of these marine animals have always lived in captivity. This way, they can be helped by humans in a way they always should have been before being put in a literal cage. I know we all can’t be as radical as PETA, but when deciding where to spend dollars in places like Florida who has a SeaWorld, and also other huge tourism attractions, I ask that one think twice before funding an animal’s worse nightmare. Think before the early death of marine life is funded.



# Still We Rise

-Natya Gunn

You may get the story wrong  
By teaching your jealous lies  
You may deceive everyone else  
But still, like dust, we'll rise.

Does our assertiveness intimidate you?  
I know you worry when we wear our hair curled  
Because we walk with a vengeance  
And as if we don't possess a care in the world.

Like petals blooming in the spring,  
We no longer feel the need to hide  
Like an empty swing on a busy playground  
Still, we'll rise.

Oh, did you want to see us broken?  
A congregation of teary eyes  
Left starving, voiceless  
And knowledge deprived.

Does our potential frighten you?  
What is your frustration?  
The broadness of our stride  
Is truly the cause of your separation.

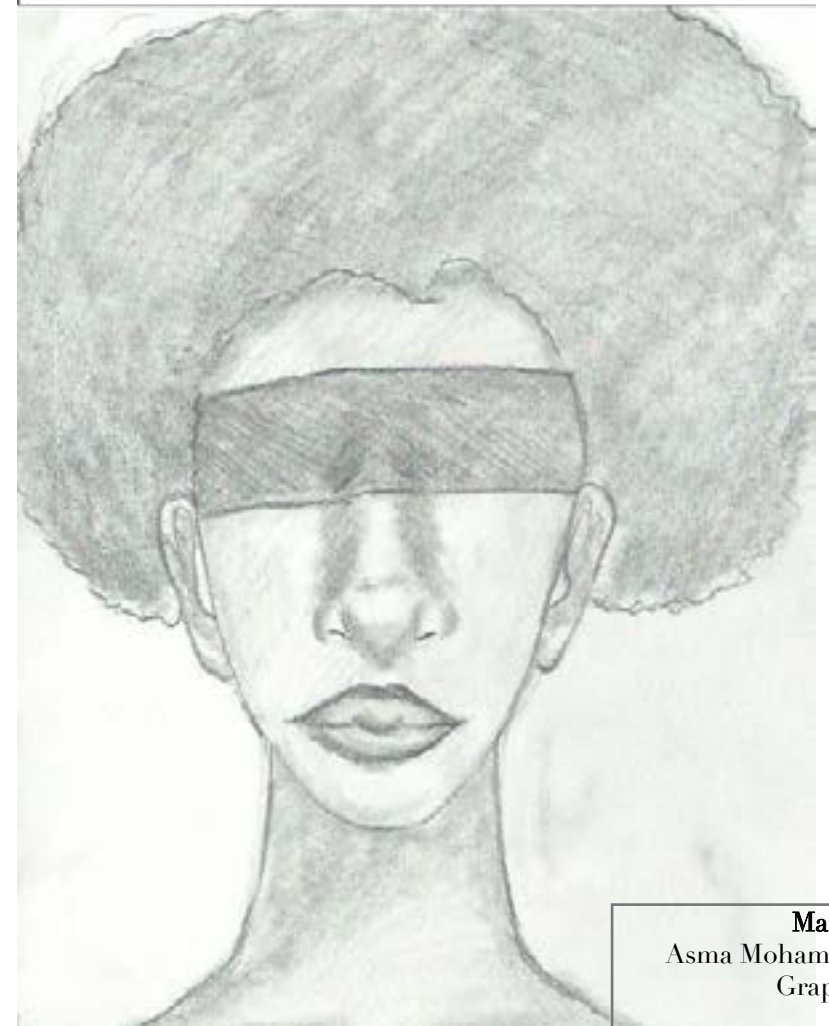
You may bomb us with your hate  
You may steal from us our pride  
You may kill us with your privilege  
But still, like air, we'll rise.

Does our tinted skin alarm you?  
Does it come as a surprise?  
Endless shades of mocha  
Crowds your resentful eyes.

We rise.

Out of cracks and crevices of hidden history  
We rise  
Our definition and direction left a mystery  
We rise  
We are a black forest, standing tall from leaf to stem  
Fulfilling of life and contained of hidden gems.

From the escapes of darkness and scorn  
We rise  
A sense of enlightenment and hope are born  
We rise  
Bringing back what was taken from those before,  
Brokenness and torment will be no more.  
We rise  
We rise  
We rise.



**Masked**  
Asma Mohammed  
Graphite



# Nad and Naughtier

-Olivia Harrison

A love so pure  
Only we understand  
From the moment, I saw Olivia  
I knew she would be perfect in my eyes

Born with a physical disability,  
Doctors said she may not walk without a walker.  
CP, affecting a person's ability to move,  
Along with maintaining posture.  
Although I knew she would prosper,  
I was worried about her life ahead.

Time and time again, she doubts herself  
Limiting her mind to only thinking  
She can do so little.  
I work with her daily telling her I  
Believe in her  
For weeks, I stood behind her watching her  
Strive to ride her bike.  
On the fifth day, she did it oh so effortlessly.  
I told her she did amazing and I knew she could.

Sitting in my truck, in silence,  
Pondering what to say next  
Fearful of what my response would be,  
Olivia sat quiet.  
For a good while. A good while.

Now, 17, I look at her in awe of who she is.  
Applauding myself on what a good job  
I have done.  
Helping her become who she so desperately  
Knew she could be.

It was only the simple relationship  
Between us that helped her grow into who she is.  
That was all.



Amity in the Forest  
Sophia Guerieri  
pencil, ink



Poison Ivy

*Opposite page:*

Smile

Suffocate

**Ashley Lin**

Ink, colored pencil, copic marker

# Essay on Being

-Sophia Parsa

River rushing all night, lighting up my-  
(it wishes to rush and rush and hush)

And the skies so pleased with your silence.  
You know one hundred ways to pray to them.  
Blood, ice, lightning-  
rippling beneath that water. You  
reflect it all.

Anyway, I couldn't  
so I sat by the window watching.  
Thinking I must look like something  
lit up and

like this.

There is an under, always.  
Something breathing,  
Rising, Melting.

Shifting. When I wake,  
everything is dry. Now, this washed up carcass  
exposing its own heart. I'm being repetitive now

but do you ever feel so resilient near dying?  
Like a great river evaporating,  
sick of worshipping the moon's gaze.  
I don't glisten to you

I am always glistening.



**Silly Goose**  
Caroline Walton  
Digital Photography

# The Parking Lot

-Lauren Dinding

As the wind ripples through the barn-owl's wingspan, the rays of the sun pierce through the cracks of the clouds. Descending towards the soft burgundies scattered throughout the leaves of the forest, the owl navigates toward its nest. She banks against the wind, soaring effortlessly and drifting left. Through her eyes, the trees are moving in an autumn blur, merging into an ocean of warmth.

She spots the tree in which she settled her nest. It is tall, overlooking a sea of infinite existence. As she lands with her talons clutching the bark of the opening of the nest, her eyes rest upon a white dome laying in a bed of pine. It has black lines webbing out from one point on the side. A sharp cracking noise is heard, and the black lines deepen and expand around the white dome. She takes a step closer to the noise. The top of the dome caves in and grey fuzz is all you can see from inside. It tips over and a protruding yellow dagger is there. Two deep brown circles appear and both stare into the depths of each other's eyes.

Wonder fills the mind of the small owlet, ready to discover the world. The mother turns her back spreads her wings, and is lifted into the air once again. She soars through the sky, searching for prey. By the time she starts to head back to her nest to give her young some food, the sun is beginning to set.

As she returns, she hears a mechanical gnawing of wood coming from the direction of where she had left her owlet. A lack of warmth and autumn blur settles upon her. Diving down where her nest was, she can no longer find the tree in which she had inhabited for months. She had no sight of it.

She saw tens of trees fallen down, tired of standing up, on the ground. The air smelled of freshly cut wood. Only the stumps of trees were left on the ground. She scans the area and finds movement farther from the cliff. Her eyes focus on the strange creatures with shining weapons in their hands. The weapon begins to move and is brushed up against a tree and it falls down.

## ***Three Months Later***

The barn-owl has relocated across the land, towards the deep forest. She glides through the air, reaching where she once lived. She inspects they area where she once was a mother. The ground is covered in black and radiates heat from the rays of the sun shining against it. Boxes of shiny colors are moving to and fro. Those same creatures that made the trees fall got out of the boxes and made flashes appear out of their hands.

The owl flies away, remembering the dangers of these creatures. From then on, whenever she saw them, she knew that she had to relocate.



On the Lookout  
Caroline Walton  
Digital Photography

XO

-Calli Ainsworth

It sounds like a meeting in the middle of Paris  
Sipping coffee and eating macarons  
Tucked away in a quaint little corner  
Watching as tourists and locals alike stroll through the crowded streets

It sounds like a breath of fresh air  
Flooding your lungs  
Traveling to every cell in your body  
Simultaneously adding relief and life

It sounds like warmth  
The kind you get from love  
The kind that makes your heart flutter and swell

It sounds like a set of cotton sheets  
Silky and soft as you brush your feet against it  
Trapping the warmth inside  
Right after you wake up in the morning

It sounds like tears of joy  
Streaming down your face  
Soaking your cheeks with love and happiness  
Leaving behind a joyful glow

It sounds like a breezy spring afternoon  
Fields of flowers regaining their color  
Elderly animals continuing their lineage

It sounds like time spent with your person  
No phones, no distractions  
Just focus  
On the one who understands you most

It sounds like dancing in the rain  
The refreshing liquid hitting your shoulders  
Dampening your hair  
But not your mood

It sounds like security  
The kind you get from a mother's hug  
Or from a father's mighty hand



**Golden Heights**  
Caroline Walton  
Digital Photography

# My Biggest Fear

-Calli Ainsworth

My dad and I hunt together. It's our thing. Well, it was until I got tired of staying quiet and getting cold. Before we bought our own land, we used to go up to my late grandparents' house and scour their lands for deer. Out of the countless times we spent up in Lexington, there's one particular outing that sticks out in my mind.

We had just left the stand. My toes were shivering and a nasty liquid was spilling from my nose. Because my dad is never one to just leave someplace, he had the bright idea of going in my great grandmother's house. "It'll be fun, maybe we can find something cool," he said. I wish I never would've listened...

If you went down Ainsworth road, you'd first see a nice trailer that, now that I think about it, wasn't so nice. It looked like it was about to collapse. There were grand canyons in the ceiling and dead leaves stuck to the dried-out porch. The coat of paint that had once been white was now a dingy yellow that was practically reaching to be peeled off. A few feet east of said trailer was a, quite literal, tiny house. It was coated in cobwebs and a nice layer of dust. Its exterior was covered in bruises and scrapes, most likely from withstanding nature for so long.

On that fateful day, emerging from the woods, my dad kicked down the door of the tiny house. It fell with a thud and induced a dust storm so big that it put the Sahara Desert to shame. So far, we had made it past the screen door, and our next obstacle was the actual door. With his mighty shoulders and unstoppable strength, my dad forced the aged door open, and we stepped inside.

Trash bags and old toy sets littered the living room. The sad belongings used to be coated in bright colors, but had since faded. For a short time, my dad rummaged through the old things, looking for any possible treasures. Coming up empty handed, we moved on to the next room.

The bedroom was even more full of waste. I can still remember the shiplap walls, and not a cute Joanna- Gaines shiplap, a dingy and molded hickory. Looking back, it complimented the shattered glass window quite well.

Again, my dad went through his routine of pretending to be a pirate. He went through every dollar store trash bag, one by one. I, having nothing else to do, helped him as much as my stomach would allow. The entire time, I was on edge. The entire situation seemed straight out of a horror movie. I just knew that something bad was about to happen.

And my instincts were right. While looking through a box of broken, mid-century Christmas ornaments, a slight movement in the corner caught my eye. I thought

it was just an illusion, maybe my brain was playing tricks on me, or my eyesight was experiencing a minor glitch. But before I had time to react, an enormous, salt and pepper colored creature flew out of the wall. Time seemed to stop for a minute as I watched the rat catapult itself across the room, landing god knows where, and scurrying off. A shrill shriek escaped my lips, startling my dad as well.

"RAAAAAAAT!" I screeched. It took a few minutes for my dad to put together the pieces of the puzzle and realize what happened, but nonetheless, he responded, "Oh it's not a big deal. It's just a rat." Not a big deal?! I thought. The largest rodent known to man just attempted to be spider man- AND ITS NOT A BIG DEAL?! I couldn't believe my ears.

My dad went on rummaging through the house, while I was stuck in a daze. My body shook, my stomach churned, and my head replayed that dreadful scene over and over. At last, he finished his search, and we got in the truck, and headed far far away from that wretched creature.

*blackout*  
-Emma Ellard

brain drowning in kaleidoscopic vision,  
sifting through sugary negatives with holes too big to catch anything.  
capture: different shades of darkness, pinpricked with light.  
face numb, skin rippling, bones shaking  
like a star has swallowed you, and the inside is darker than you thought.  
you sink into a black hole, and wake up on the bathroom floor.

*-- you've got to take care of yourself, dear*



Pretty in Pink  
Caroline Walton  
Digital Photography



Round and Round  
Marry Emma Suggs  
Photograph

# Identity Crisis

-Jacob Greenwood

**MA237:** My eyes open, I look down to see my metallic body sitting in a chair of some sort. I see in front of me an old man with scraggly beard and glasses. His hair was matted to the side of his face, and he looked as if he had not showered in decades. Master James is his name. How did I know this? Programming I answered, but how do I know what programming means. This is my first time being in the world. Suddenly, the man started to speak.

“You’re awake” he said. “You must be confused. Let me help you understand.”

He plugged a USB into my neck area. All at once, flashes rushed through my brain. I knew who I was and why I was created. I was MA237. The “MA” stood for metallic android.

I was created by my master, Maximus, to serve him and no one else. I was supposed to be emotionless because emotion bred conflict and conflict leads to catastrophe. I was to obey his every command. Any task he wanted me to complete I would complete it; it was in my code.

I went throughout my days serving my master, and during this time, I got to meet many different humans, some had weird names like Andreлина or Hiddleton while others had common names like Tim or John. Regardless of the variety of names, they all had one thing in common. They had names. It never really bothered me that I didn’t have a real name, but I suddenly couldn’t shake the feeling that I was lost without it. It was as if I did not belong in the world I was living in. Other Metallic Androids like myself, never seemed to care about not having a name, so why did I. This puzzled me because I had no clue as to how I would remedy my problem.

I finally had a solution. I would simply ask my master. I marched up to him, and said what my programming demanded, “Permission to speak master?” I said with the utmost seriousness

“Permission granted MA237” he replied.

“Name me.”

“What?” he asked with a quizzical look.

“I wish to have a name like you and all the other humans.”

---

**Maximus:** I was working on a new design for androids when one of my most recent ones walked up to me. He asked me to name him. When he said this, I was terrified. My androids were not programmed to have feelings of jealousy. Many questions rolled around in my head. Had someone tampered with my programming? I had no clue as to what to do next. I decided that I would hold him over, and I told him,

“How do you like the name Mac?”

“Mac is a wonderful name master,” he replied with a large grin, an expression he was not supposed to have.

---

**MA237:** Over the next two weeks, I walked around with my chest plate poked out. With pride, I told people that I was to be called Mac, but I did not receive the respect I had anticipated. People would look at me with disgust or even fear. They scoffed in

my face and disregarded what I said. “You’re nothing but a bunch of scrap iron” or “I’ll have you disassembled for that” people would say.

---

**Maximus:** I started getting reports from people claiming that my android, MA237, was walking around telling people his new name. I was being pressured by my superiors to deactivate the android. I would have done it without a thought, but something about MA237 made me feel curious. I felt like he was more than just a robot.

I resisted my superiors request to turn MA237 off, but today would be the last day I could avoid the situation. My errand boy came sprinting up to me yelling something I could not understand.

“Mister Max, mister Max,” he said with great panic in his voice.

“I overheard the superiors talking. They are coming to take you to prison, and they are going to deactivate MA237!”

---

**MA237:** I saw my master running towards me. He was quite fast for a man of his size. My sensors detected that he was in distress.

“MA237, you have to come with me.”

I was crushed because my master still saw me as just another android. He didn’t even have the decency to call me that name he gave to me.

“Not until you called me by my real name,” I responded.

“Your real name is MA237.” He said with annoyance.

“No, it’s not. You know what my real name is.” I said not willing to budge.

“Mac come on we have to go now!”

Satisfied, I ran alongside him towards the city gates.

---

**Maximus:** MA237 and I ran and ran until we finally reached the gates. I walked up to the security guard to scan my badge to get out of town, but I was too late. They had already revoked my security clearance. The guard drew his gun on me and told me I was under arrest. MA237 and I looked at each other. I knew what both of our fates would be.

---

**MA237:** That time at the gate was the last time I saw master Maximus. I was taken to a facility. There, a bunch of old, skinny scientist went through the process of deactivating me. I didn’t quite get the concept of the process, but I knew I wouldn’t be myself again.

They flipped a switch and I closed my eyes. They flipped a switch again and my eyes were open.

“You’re awake” he said a scrawny man said. “You must be confused. Let me help you understand.”

He plugged a USB into my neck area. All at once, flashes rushed through my brain. I knew who I was and why I was created. I was MA237.



# The Blue Couch

-Macy Curan

He was never there.  
Only showed up for the money we had saved.  
She was never there.  
Just a body on the bed with a cigarette in hand.  
I could not stay anymore.  
My new home revolved around friends' couches.  
The Blue Couch in particular.

My 13th birthday was spent on that couch.  
So was the 14th and 15th,  
Along with the 16th and 17th.  
The Blue cushions surrounding me,  
as a real family would.

Only the days that I get the call he is coming for me,  
Is when I come back to my old home.  
I sit outside on my pink suitcase,  
Until night lays over my shoulders.

He is not coming for me.  
A walk back to my home,  
The Blue Couch.

I lay there until the next phone call.  
When I go back to that corner and sit,  
Until night comes once again.

But not to worry I think,  
I'm not alone.  
The Blue Couch is waiting for me at home.



Fake Dream  
Ashley Lin  
Watercolor,  
digital art



Terrarium  
Ashley Lin  
Watercolor

# It Smelled Of Salt

-Seth Chapin

The air tasted of salt. It smelled of salt. I was tired of salt.

For weeks I had rocked back and forth on a ship, and of course, it smelled of salt. Now I was on a different boat, a smaller vessel. Behind me two men stood, on a podium above the rest of us in our green suits, holding our nicely wrapped green packages. It was the third time that I would ask myself if it were raining from the amount of sea spray that careened over the sides and onto my clothes, into my boots. The more water that soaked through my shirt and deep into me, straight to the bone, the more I smelled of salt.

My legs were accustomed to the feeling now; of becoming out of alignment with earth's center, of feeling the waves tip and raise me, dip and roll me. Ahead of me, one man felt the need to vomit, and so he did. It was obvious the man had eaten nearly nothing but the tasteless food for days. Why was it obvious? Well, it smelled of salt.

I opened my mouth for only a moment to lick my chapped lips, and found seawater on my tongue; an interesting taste for one who was parched for water. What he would so desperately need, so close, but tainted. There is a time in which those who desperately need will take that which is tainted, for even the faintest resemblance of that which they need.

I suppose that was why I was here.

An unusually rough wave rocked the mass of us to our rights in unison, before shifting back to the left all at once to take our previous positions. No one spoke.

Over the sound of the engine and the crashing wake, I heard the chink of a Zippo lighter, held up to a shaking man's cigarette. He desperately needed security, but he would instead take the cigarette, tainted with that which could kill him just to feel a small flicker of that comfort. As another man came to vomit, he reached up and did so over the side of the ship, but with an intrusive whizz and a ping, the man fell back into the ship. My eyes remained fixed on my boots as the water that sloshed at our feet became red. We were all directed downwards, and so downwards we went, crouching.

From here I could see what had become of the man who leaked red, he was close enough to touch, but I dare not do that, the blood would get onto my hands; and quite frankly, the blood smelled of salt.

Shouting fell on what I felt were deaf ears by now, surely the gunfire, the explosions, the screams and cries, they had deafened me, surely. Alas I was to face the truth of the matter that I was deafened, but not in the way I would prefer. I instead was deafened only because I heard these sounds so often, they were as continuous to me as silence.

The boat lurched forward, or perhaps it was we that did that, slipping and sliding on the slick metal floor of the boat. The two men behind me had begun to shout, but they soon shouted no more, and instead of cold water, I felt it warm on the back of my neck, though it felt thicker than water. Though it must be water, right? It must have, it smelled of salt.

The gate afront our league of men fell down, and the league of men before the door fell down as well. I stood for a moment, looking curiously at the falling men. Perhaps they had slipped on the slick, slippery floor. They must have, right? They must have, I didn't hear any gunfire. I didn't want to slip like they had, so I grabbed the top of the wall of this grey ship and hefted myself over. The world turned a flip as I broke the surface of the water. With a heavy thud my back hit the sand beneath the water, not too far beneath. This water was too cold, I didn't like it very much, and so, I reasoned, I should get out.

So out I trudged. Up the boggy sand in my equally boggy clothes and boots, each step up the beach ejecting water from the soiled footwear. This water had to go, had to leave from my boots at least. I found a place to rest my back, a strange X of metal in the sand beside a wooden pole. It would do.

I sat behind the rusted metal and reached down to pull off my boots, looking out at the crashing waves and hurried boats that slid up the sand beside where mine had in the same way. Men in green carrying green packages hurried past me and up the beach, though some seemed to trip and fall. They must have tripped, because I still didn't hear any gunfire, and no one seemed to be yelling.

Ah yes, my green package. The package at my side wasn't soggy, wasn't wet at all as I undid its exterior to extract the present inside. Out came a brown stick, a loud stick. My rifle. This rifle had gotten me through the first few years of my vacation in Europe, and I was sure it would get me through what I hoped was my last. I was ready to go back home. I was no longer enjoying this vacation.

I hefted my rifle up with me as I joined the men in green running up the beach, watching as groups huddled behind steel x's, wooden posts and rocks, each of which I passed on my way to the cliff. Everyone wanted to get to the cliff. Why? Well, we didn't know either; but of course someone said that we really wanted to, so now of course, we really wanted to.

Before I could run any further, my collar was grabbed from behind I was yanked off of my feet and into a large crater that was made by one of those explo-

sions that I was deafened to. I thought maybe they had wanted to talk, but once I was down, it was just more yelling. Always more yelling. I looked around and saw that the sand was red. Strange. It smelled of salt.

I spent no longer than half of a minute in that crater before I wasn't the only one laying down. In fact, everyone had seemed to get tired and join me laying down. Each lain out in the bottom of the crater as the red almost began to pool up. I had to get out of here, I hated the smell of salt.

I stood and began running again, running towards the cliff that I really wanted to get to. The more I ran, the further away the cliff seemed, the further it seemed I would have to run. The more I ran, the less I wanted to run. I was getting tired.

I felt my breath leave me, heard it in full detail as my knees hit the ground. I resolved to lie on the sand, and wouldn't you know my luck, it smelled of salt. I watched as the sand beneath me slowly turned red, the salty color, and looked at my tired body. It seemed I was just too tired to move, wasn't I? After all, I didn't hear any gunfire.

With my cheek pressed into the grit of the beach, I looked across the flat range of sand. My eyelids grew heavy and tired as the world beyond my little space of red became dark. I watched out over every other tired man in green in their own patches of red and reminisced in my last thoughts as I drifted away.

The air. The water. The sand. The red. It all smelled of salt.

1:28 pm  
-Emma Ellard

a concept:

i sit by an open window

sending wishes to the stars,

peppering the dark with prayers and poetry

as they spill from my lips

and float hopefully to the heavens.

spores of longing

swirl above my head, tangible and real

as though weightless.

# Oblivious

10/14/87 - 3/25/15

-Ashlyn Chisolm

I know that I have forsaken you  
hurt your memory with my complacency of your absence  
I was everything to you  
but at the time, you were not to me  
my constant aggravation with your care for me  
overshadowed the love rooted in you  
I spent our time in tolerance  
Then in waiting  
waiting is something I regret to admit  
sometimes more knowing and accepting  
but all the same waiting  
then when your clock stopped  
and I no longer had to sit  
the heaviness consumed but the pain crept slowly  
I was drowned in the anguish of the ones who loved you  
but it was never mine suffocating me  
how could I not feel what others suffered through?  
could I just borrow some of theirs?  
everyone had on their coat of Sorrow  
but no one's fit me  
and I couldn't find mine  
I became uncomfortable around my mourning kin  
for weeks on end  
but

the more I lived on  
the more I saw what you saw  
and I began to understand  
that the things you did before you left  
you did so I would come to comprehend your affection  
you heard the insincerity of my love  
and still waded in the wake of my impatience  
waiting  
smiling and offering me love  
you knew just how I felt  
but still you poured into me till you had nothing left to give  
and no more time to give it to me

and I didn't realize till it was too late  
that I was full of your love

Memama now I know  
it was there all along  
but it took me 15 years to find it  
15 years too late

your love will not be wasted  
now that I have discovered it  
I will spread it to everyone I reach  
no one will lack what I thought I did

If only I had found it sooner  
And been able to give some of it right back  
to you.



**Aloha Spirit**  
**Caroline Walton**  
Digital Photography