

Issue 11

Fall 2022

# The Agathist



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*ISSUE 11*

*FALL 2022*

*GERMANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL  
409 CALHOUN PARKWAY*

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## Advisor's Note

MR. DICKSON

The “fall” season in Mississippi isn’t really a fall, ya know? It’s hot till the middle of October, then cold for a few days, then hot again, then snow, then hail, then tornadoes, then rain, then hot. The only predictable thing is the unpredictability.

I have similar feelings when reading through this edition of The Agathist. The pieces in this semester’s edition are at times comforting, then shocking, then reassuring, then unsettling. But they’re all relatable in some way or another.

Art is the most direct line of communication between an idea and its audience, and it requires a lot of work from the audience, the artist, and the art itself. This triangular communication is simultaneously complex and simple. It’s unpredictable, in the best possible way.

I hope you enjoy this edition! Thanks to all the students who submitted, and please, turn in your work for next semester’s magazine. And thanks to the staff for your dedication and keen eyes.

Write on,

Mr. Dickson

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## composition

GABBY CARAWAY

i hear music in the night,  
in that quiet time where no other soul may find itself stirring  
except for those others that are as well  
eternally fueled by the assassinate symphony.

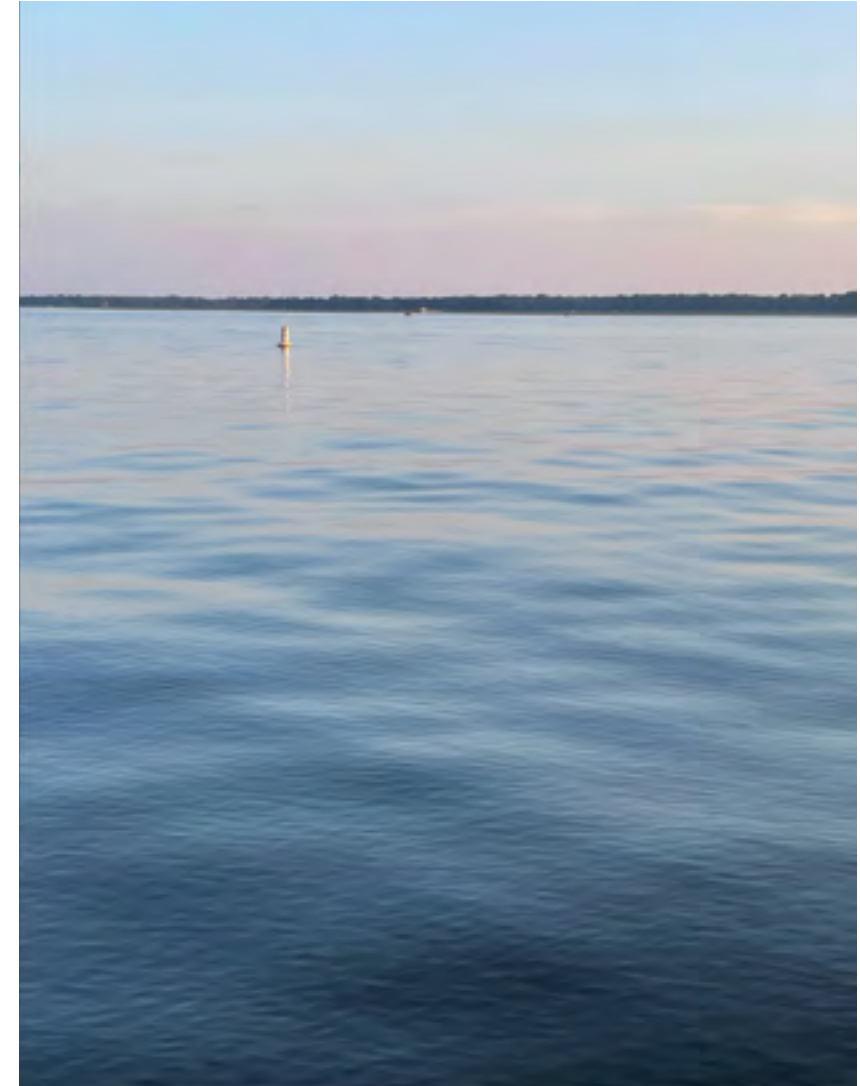
a rich rhythm rising from the depths;  
i cannot hear it.  
but i feel its ongoing beat  
compelling my heart to rise to its faster tempo, and join in its eternal  
sounding

a harsh ostinato, rumbling in its repetition;  
i cannot hear it.  
but i taste its intensive umami,  
a flavor of blood and tears and efforts, drilled into the rough taste buds  
on my tongue.

a slithering countermelody, hiding below what may be apparent;  
i cannot hear it.  
but i can smell its wide range  
of sweat and roses and cigarette smoke, and all the details intertwines  
in my memory.

a melody.  
it has no clear emotion, no intent, no lingering goal,  
and i cannot hear it.  
but i see the world it paints before me.

the universe's song that composes this world  
can only be heard in the evening.  
when i lie below the night sky,  
and fall into a slumber,  
to the sound of my breath.



## Still

KRISTINA SEYMOUR, PHOTOGRAPHY

## **I miss you.**

GEORGIA PITCOCK

August 15, 2019

I didn't cry at first;  
I think it was shock.  
"He passed last night. I'm sorry."  
Time stopped.

You weren't gone.  
No, you couldn't be.  
This was some sick and twisted dream  
and when I woke up, you'd be here.

The funeral was four days later.  
It was nice. Small.  
I sat in the front row with everyone else.  
That was the first time I cried over you.

Em refused to walk in the room.  
I sat with her on an ugly green couch as people  
acted like nothing was wrong; like an 11-year-old  
with tear stains down her cheeks was normal.

They folded the flag on top of your casket,  
told us that the United States of America  
thanks us for your service.  
You never talked about that time in your life.

They made me take pictures that day,  
told me to say cheese.  
I didn't want to smile,  
but I did.

The smile didn't quite reach my eyes  
and it made my cheeks hurt.  
Standing shoulder to shoulder with unknown relatives,  
as we stared ahead at the camera.

Their coats scratched at my bare arms  
and the smell of baby powder and  
tobacco filled my nose like some  
kind of perfume I couldn't escape.

I don't want to seem bitter,  
if you were in pain then I'm glad it's gone.  
But it's not fair.  
I don't know what to do now.

I miss you,  
Georgia



## **Southern Side-Street**

WILLIAM GARDNER



# Room 804

CHLOE HUGHES

I remember how cold it felt there. I've always been told I have bad memory, but this day is one of those memories I just can't seem to forget. In fact, some days, it plays on a loop, over and over again, just tormenting me.

I stood there in that hallway, my eyes glued to that door, not blinking, not breathing, not moving.

I was scared, frozen in fear. I shut my eyes and imagined I was in my favorite movie. I wasn't in the hospital, I was in the forest with Lucy and Mr. Tumnus, playing in the snow. That's why it was so cold, Lucy had just thrown a snowball at me, that's why I shivered. I wasn't in the hospital; I was in Narnia.

"Come on," a voice urged, it was my brother. His eyes were brimming with tears.

Right. I am in the hospital.

I held my brother's hand tightly, he was stronger than I was, he charged forward like a knight charging into battle, and I was but a frightened damsel being dragged along.

The hallways were changing, stretching out, with every step we took, the door seemed to get farther and farther away. I was walking as slowly as I could, trying my best to prolong the inevitable. I pointed out chipped wallpaper, funky smells, weird noises, anything to keep it from coming. I was desperate, I wanted to be strong, I promise I did but I couldn't, I was weak, and I was scared.

The door was in front of us, my brother reached out for it, we entered.

There were a few people in the room, they all surrounded his bed. I wondered how they could do it. Being around someone clinging to their last bit of life.

I couldn't, I did everything I could to avoid this day. Was I selfish for that? It just hurt too much to see him; in ways I cannot explain.

His room had a nice view, I could see directly into the night sky. I could see the moon, the stars, heck, if I squinted, I think I could see the planets. Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, even Pluto.

I'd always been a fan of astronomy, I actually use to wish I was a star, with no job except to burn.

I took a seat on the couch next to his bed, my eyes still stuck on the tiny stars in the sky. No one knew it, but I was playing connect the dots. At first, I tried to find constellations, but that was too hard, so I settled for—

My brother nudged me, snapping me out my daze.

I looked at him, his eyes went to the bed. I followed them.

He was looking at me. My dad was looking at me.

He didn't even look like himself; he was so skinny. He wasn't smiling, his eyes weren't bright. This wasn't him, my dad was tall and big, people were afraid of him because of how giant he was. He ducked to get in doors, he...he... this isn't him. This isn't my dad.

His hand...God his hand was so skinny, and it was reaching out for me. He wanted to hold my hand. I couldn't do it, I just couldn't. This wasn't my dad. This was just a bad dream. Yeah, a bad dream where an evil witch had poisoned my dad, he just needed a potion or something! He was fine, everything was fine, I just needed to wake up.

Wake up, I tell myself. Wake up, wake up, WAKE UP!

But I didn't. It wasn't a nightmare; it was real, and everything was not fine. This was my dad. And he was dying.

Say something. I tell myself, Speak!

Say anything, do anything!

He's looking at you, he's reaching for you!

Hold his hand! Say you love him, Do anything please!

Please...Please just do something.

My mind was screaming at me, but my body refused to listen.

I stared at his hand.

My brother nudged me again, I didn't move.

I just continued to stare, trying my best not to cry. I wasn't the one dying, I had no right to cry.

My dad was going,

And he was gone.

He was gone and I didn't hold his hand.

# **I look at that same moon**

ANONYMOUS

I look at the same moon on these cold October nights; sitting in the back of a truck bed in this place I've inhabited for 16 years. I've spent years toddling down these outdated hallways, ambitious of the future that would come. I'd gaze at the moon, dreaming of the future I'd have in that place. But something's changed. Now, I look at this sky screaming through the numbness. Am i nothing more than a disappointment?

On this cold October night, I sit in a truck bed in this familiar parking lot, looking at the same moon; Suddenly scared of where I'll be in a year's time- the moon's comfort suddenly absent. Oh, the disappointment and shame they'll feel. I look at the same moon and wonder what that little girl would say if she saw me now? Would she smile? Cry? Or simply tilt her head in confusion? Utterly unable to recognize this version of herself.

But then it occurred to me. They may feel shame and disappointment, but I will not. I will be elated and joyful. I will look that that same moon and see progress. I will look at it as a symbol of growth and prosperity.

And maybe one day I will look at the sky and feel joy and peace.

# **One Tragic End to a Million Stories**

GUY RAYNER

"What will happen once it's all gone?"

The question just lit in my mind, barely illuminated by the single star. Her small hand clings to mine, almost pulling me out of my mind.

"I-i'm not sure.."

Her face contorts into a sob, her tears freezing as they fall from her chin. I can feel my eyes begin to water, maybe it just hit me, once the last hope fades away, so will we. I try to keep my composure, for her sake, yet I still can't hold it all back, with every flicker of the light a drop falls from my eye. Her face seems to calm seeing my struggle to hold back the fear, "It's gonna be ok, i'm sure it will."

Her innocence melts the ice stuck to my face, the smile on her face could've lit the whole galaxy. Without saying a word she hugs me, every last eye focused on the last flicker of the star,

"We're at the end of space and time."

Those words, the last ever spoken, as it begins to fade, just like a sunset, I'm happy.

## **I miss you.**

GEORGIA PITCOCK

August 15, 2020

Things are a mess,  
a complete and utter mess.  
I haven't left the house since March.  
No one has.

I'm glad you're not here for this  
because you would hate it.  
After you reread all those old westerns you loved,  
you'd grow bored of the loneliness.

We lost Her too, earlier this year.  
It hurt, but not as much as you did.  
At least you two are together again,  
right?

Em still misses you,  
it got worse once you both were gone.  
I hope she gets better,  
I want my sister back.

This was the first summer I didn't  
get to write you a letter  
from camp.  
It hurt more than I expected.

I wrote you a letter for a class though,  
the teacher said it was good.  
It made Nana cry.  
I didn't mean for it to be sad.

For Christmas, she gave me the  
letter printed into a book  
full of pictures of you and me.  
It was the best present I've ever received.

My favorite is the one of us standing on the  
gravel road outside your house.  
I was collecting rocks and you were following me around,  
carrying the bucket that was too heavy for me on my own.

I miss you,  
Georgia



## **Factitious**

BEAU WHITTINGTON



# Needles

JOHN CUSTER

A bead of sweat ran down my forehead.  
Followed by another,  
And another.

Cicadas and crickets chanted their chorus non-stop.  
They used to inconvenience me,  
But I never knew why.

The more I thought about it,  
They were just going along with their lives.  
I began to admire them for that,  
Just going with life.  
The same went for myself.

Another bead of sweat ran,  
This time down my arm.  
Followed by another,  
And another.

I glanced up to the wall of pines towering over me.  
How miniscule I felt in front of this army.  
I seemed to be comparable to just one needle  
On just one of the hundreds,  
Thousands of pine trees standing in front of me.

Wouldn't this army remain the same  
If just one of those needles wasn't there?  
I wondered if the same went for myself.

Another bead of sweat ran,  
This time down my leg.  
Followed by another,  
And another.

My gaze shifted to the sky,  
Which the sun was finally beginning to leave,

My favorite time.  
The wispy clouds became intertwined with  
Streaks of vibrant orange.  
Among my favorite of all sights,  
Which I often underappreciated.

My thoughts drifted back to the  
Now almost nonexistent sun,  
Which never truly left the alluring sky.  
I wondered if the same should go for myself.

Another bead of sweat ran,  
This time down my forehead once again.  
Followed by another,  
And another.

Another bead of sweat ran,  
This time down my forehead once again.  
Followed by another,  
And another.

The still heavy nighttime  
Began to suffocate me.  
I searched for some kind of relief,  
But was only met with an Inky sky,  
Dappled with dim dots.

So many stars scattered throughout,  
So many more than I could ever count,  
All so much larger than myself.  
But somehow so distant from the  
Mississippi night.

My thoughts returned to the pine trees  
When faced with this astral battalion,  
But these notions of being insignificant  
Were soon met with the realization that  
Those stars couldn't grow the pines as I could,

Nor could they tear them down.

# The Lady in Grey

BY RIVER WALL

It was a cool autumn evening, and my older brother and I were going to visit my uncle for a week since that Saturday was his birthday. Momma said that he was becoming a hermit and that hopefully us being there would help. I wasn't quite sure how Uncle Oscar could turn into a hermit crab, but I figured it would be awfully painful for him, so I quickly packed my things and asked if we could leave as quickly as possible. The only thing I didn't pack was Bunny, my stuffed corduroy rabbit that I carried with me everywhere. I didn't want him to get too hot packed in my bag, so I decided to carry him with me. My brother Theo, Momma and I hopped in the car and began our journey to our uncle's massive house.

The next day we made it to our Uncle Oscar's house, and when we arrived, we saw him standing on the front steps to greet us. He was a tall, thin man of around 50 (he was Momma's oldest brother), with dark hair streaked with gray, small wire framed glasses that gleamed in the midmorning light as they sat upon his large nose, and a jolly smile on his face that would make Santa Claus look miserable by comparison. Momma kissed us each on the forehead before helping us with our bags and driving back towards home.

"Clementine and Theodore! My favorite niece and my 3rd favorite nephew! How are you two? I hope your mother fed you before you arrived because I'm afraid I've already eaten all the blueberry muffins. Oh, it is so wonderful to see you both!" My uncle leaned forward to hug us, and we could smell the faint scent of the muffins on his clothes.

"Come in, come in! I cleaned up a guest room just for you two!" And with that, he led us into his ginormous house.

Uncle Oscar's house was massive, with its marble floors leading into more rooms than any one man could need. At the entrance, there was a small (at least when compared to the rest of the house) area for coats and umbrellas and other things of that sort, as well as small table with a vase with slightly wilted daisies sat upon it, stood by the giant winding staircase that led to the upstairs area. Past the staircase was a living room with a great stone fireplace, a gray couch with a few deep blue

pillows thrown across it and a few comfy looking chairs to match, a bookcase against the wall with many large books that were definitely older than me and my brother combined, and a painting hung above the fire, depicting a young boy frowning with a toy horse at his side. Right across from that was the kitchen, which was quite cozy despite its large size. It kept up the general color scheme of Uncle Oscar's house (dark grey and royal blue) but was full of various knick-knacks and things that made the space feel lived in, including a muffin tin and a few bowls and spoons with residue of muffin batter and blueberry juice left out on the counter.

After Uncle Oscar had frantically offered us various breakfast foods despite our constant insistence that we had eaten before we left, we made our way upstairs, Theo carrying our bags and I dragging Bunny behind us. We got into our room, and Theo started unpacking the shirts from his bag, and I hopped on my bed, sitting Bunny down next to me.

"Hey Clem," Theo asks, opening one of the small chest of drawers in the room and beginning to put shirts in it, "Do you think Uncle Oscar's gone crazy?"

"What?" I reply, confused, "No I don't think he's gone crazy. Momma says he's turning into a hermit crab, so I think he's just a bit nervous about it. I can't imagine how hard that would be for him. Maybe he got cursed by a witch."

"What?" He replied in that certain tone that he used when he thought I had said something stupid, "No, he's not transforming into a hermit crab, Clem. Mom says he's becoming a hermit. Hermits just stay indoors all the time. He wasn't cursed by a witch, either. Witches aren't real."

"Witches are real! I saw one myself! You just think because you're 10 years old now and you've got two numbers instead of just one that you know everything! Well, you don't, 'cause witches are real." I crossed my arms and slouched down, pouting.

I don't speak to my brother again until Uncle Oscar calls us down for dinner at the big dark oak table downstairs. Uncle Oscar made us pasta with a creamy white sauce and slices of chicken, and as he serves it to us, he rambles on and on about a cat he'd found in his herb garden.

Then, as he sits down and starts to eat, he tells us another story:

"Did I tell you children about the ghost in the west wing? Oh, she's beautiful, truly. I don't know how long she's been there, but she's been there since I discovered the west wing. Even though I've been here for years, I still haven't quite discovered everything yet." He chuckles a bit here. "Anyways, but in the west wing, there's this beautiful lady in a grey dress that haunts the corridors. I first discovered her when I discovered the wing itself, drawn to it by a haunting song echoing through the halls. That whole section of house came pre-furnished, but one of the things there was a giant portrait of the Lady. And oh, children, how I wish you could see it. The artist was very talented, she was the most beautiful lady I've ever seen. Maybe in another life we could be together." He looks off dreamily at something, but I wasn't quite sure what. I feel bad for telling my brother off for calling Uncle crazy. I think I believe him now.

That night, after Uncle Oscar had retired to his office, I tug on my brother's sleeve.

"Theo?" I ask, trying my best to look like a sad puppy, "Can you come with me to see the ghost lady?"

Theo sighs, "Ghosts aren't real, Clem. Just like witches."

"But witches are--"

"Clem. We're not having this argument again."

"Well could you at least come with me to look? Maybe if we look around and don't see anything then I'll believe that ghosts aren't real."

My brother sighs before agreeing, and so we grab a few things to go and try to find the Lady.

I grip the flashlight so hard my knuckles turn white, the beam shining in front of me and illuminating the marble floors. I clutch Bunny in the other hand (not because I'm scared though. Bunny just doesn't like being left alone). Theo nonchalantly trails behind me, but that's because he thinks he's too good for the Lady. We eventually make our way into what we assume is the West Wing, due to the obvious shift in decoration.

Where the rest of Uncle Oscar's house mainly had grey and blue, the West Wing was a sort of off-white color and a soft green. There were several vases scattered about the wing, full of flowers of all sorts of colors standing tall in their crystal containers. The hall then led into a room with a soft green carpet, a few side tables and chairs, a large house plant, and a fireplace with a painting over it. The painting was of a beautiful young woman, wearing a grey dress.

I gasped, "The Lady!" I could practically hear my brother roll his eyes behind me. Suddenly as if on cue, we start to hear a song echoing through the halls; the haunting voice of a lady.

"Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do, I'm half-crazy all for the love of you--"

I quickly look over to my brother, whose face has suddenly gone as pale as the cream-colored walls around us. I frantically dart the flashlight around, trying to find the source of the song.

"It won't be a stylish marriage; I can't afford a carriage--"

I catch the swoosh of a grey dress with my flashlight, but only the end of it. She's here.

"Theo, it's the Lady!" I whisper, and Theo quickly grabs my hand.

"It's time to go, Clem. I knew coming down here was a bad idea." He turns us around and pulls me towards the hallway we just came from.

"But you'll look sweet upon the seat--"

My brother drags me towards the door just as we hear-

"Of a bicycle built for two!"

My brother bumps into something, which shoves him back into me, and I hear a small yelp that couldn't have been from either of us. I point my flashlight beam up and sitting on the ground in front of my brother is the Lady in Grey.

And at that, all 3 of us scream. My too-good-for-ghosts brother, the real life lady, and me (who totally believed in ghosts the whole time).

After a few minutes of screaming, we hear sprinting coming towards us. Then, we stop screaming when we see a sweaty, panting Uncle Oscar bolt towards us.

"Children, are you guys hurt? I heard screaming and..." He sees her and his sentence trails off. Then, in unison, they point at each other and yell "Ghost!"

"Wait! Hold on!" I say, "What do you mean 'ghost?' You're the ghost, Lady!"

The Lady in Grey seems to be taken aback by this. "Me? A ghost? Oh, good heavens no, I'm alive! Or at least, I was the last time I checked... He's the ghost!" She replies, pointing at my uncle again.

"What?" says Uncle Oscar, equally as confused, "I'm not a ghost! I'm alive! You're the ghost that's been haunting my West Wing!"

"What? No, you're the ghost that's been haunting my East Wing!"

"I have a headache," My brother groans, pinching his nose between his fingers.

"Now I'm confused," I reply, "So which one of you is the ghost?"

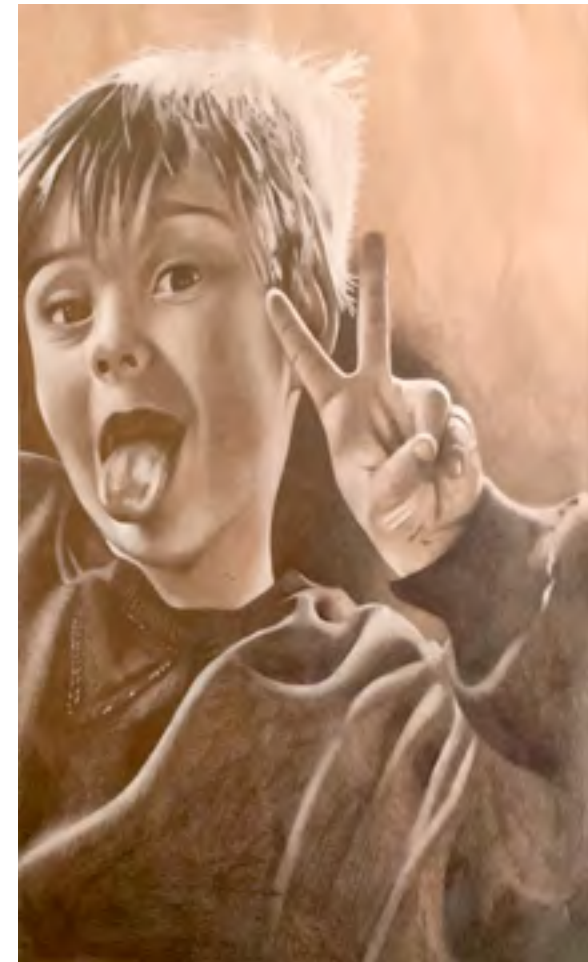
"Well, I'm certainly not a ghost," begins the Lady, "My name is Ophelia. I've been living here ever since my father died. I didn't even know the East Wing existed until I accidentally stumbled across it a year or so back. Are you really not a ghost?"

"No, of course not! I thought you were a ghost!" replies Uncle Oscar.

Basically, they go back and forth like this for a while, and it honestly got a bit tiring. It took an embarrassingly long time to explain to both Uncle Oscar and Miss Ophelia that neither of them were ghosts and

both of them were most definitely living. Turns out, when the houses were being expanded, they were built so close together that they accidentally connected the two houses, so they technically became one house.

In the coming weeks, Uncle Oscar and Miss Ophelia became close friends, and he even invited her to his birthday party. And when we finally left at the end of the week, Uncle Oscar and Miss Ophelia both waved us goodbye, hand in hand, and I don't think I've ever seen Uncle Oscar smile so wide.



## Peace

ASLYN STRAUS, GRAPHITE AND WHITE CHARCOAL

# My Favorite Pair of Jeans

MARY CANARD

They didn't fit.

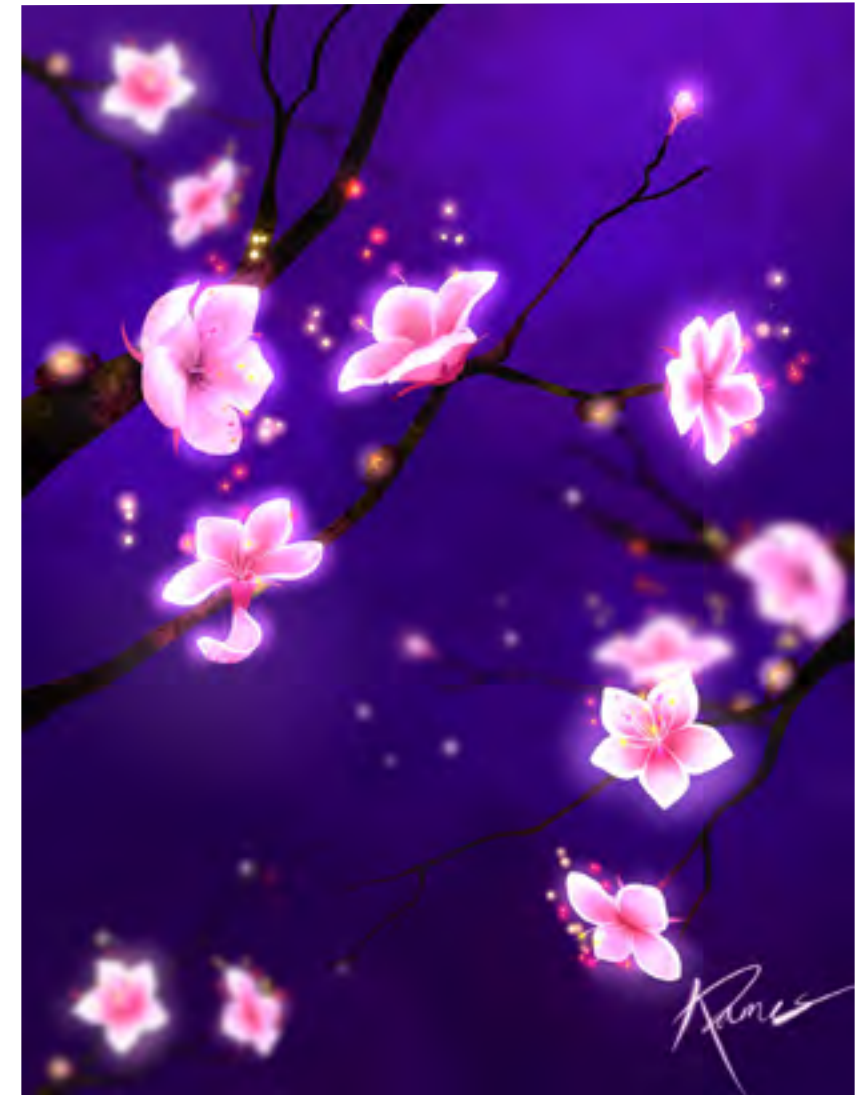
I looked into the full-length mirror and watched as my black jeans sagged sadly on my hip bones like a frown.

They had fit before. When was before? May? April? No no, they fit before. Why didn't they fit now? I tugged at the buttons, maybe they were loose? No, they were not loose. They just did not fit the way they used to. I was ok with that. Who wouldn't be? I couldn't take my eyes off the way my jeans slipped off my sides, the way my stomach tried to hold them up, only to let them fall.

I didn't need these jeans. They, like so many other pairs of pants I had tried on before, could be replaced. I tried to take them off, but something like hands guided my chin back up to the mirror, and I began to stare at myself again, in these jeans. My black jeans? When did I buy these? Ah, I got these a year ago. I bought them at Belk, with my mother. Audrey had the same pair, and when she wore them to school the same day I did, we laughed, and we took a picture. I wore these pants to her birthday party. I think I brought them to Ohio. My mother bought these pants for me. I liked these jeans. But they don't fit. Not like they use too. Not snug. Not fit. Not whole. I placed my hands on my stomach and watched the weight dip my favorite black jeans further down my hips. I haven't any pretty things to hold up these jeans. Not anymore. I took them off and threw them to the floor. They landed where all my other clothes did, with the outfits that didn't fit me the way they used to. I went to my mirror and looked at my skin. I touched my collarbones. I shrank my back. I watched my skin pull. I could feel it snap. This pale shell I'm living in is thinner than it's ever been

And it doesn't fit. Not like it used to.

Not like it used to.



# Blossoming Firelights

KALYB JAMES, DIGITAL PAINTING



# A Le'er 'o Br'ish People

JT PARR

Dear Bri'ish people,

You are da wors'. Like in a dic'ionary, word "horrid" has "Bri'ish" as a synonym. You guys are u'erly horrible. I really ha'e all of you. I have ye' 'o mee' a decen'ly good Bri'ish person. I am upse' you guys exist. I' is u'erly damaging to me.

Why? Why would you be br'ish? I's a problem. I do no' like any of you. You all should change your island to a garbage can shape. I' would make way more sense.

Bu' I have no reasons for ha'red, you migh' say. Bu' really, I do. Firs' of all, you all are led by a "queen" as old as da coun'ry i'self. Oh wai', you aren' anymore. Now i's a man who looks like he would 'urn 'o dus' wi'h a Lis'erine brea'h min'. And a monarchy? Seriously? Wha' is 'he poin'? He has go' 'o go. Eradica'ed. Done wi'h. He's ugly jus' like 'he rest of you.

Secondly, wha' is up wi'h y'all's "t's." Y'all don' use 'em. You probably didn' even no'ice I am no' using 'em in 'his le"a. I's horrid. Why no' use a "T?" I's a le"a in 'da alphabe'. Jus' use 'em. I's no' 'hat difficul'.

3rd of all, y'all drink 'oo much "tea." I's jus' a rip-off of coffee. Wait. Y'all don't use "T" because y'all drank i' all. Or was i' because we dumped i' all in the harbor? 'ea isn' even good. Jus' s'op.

Las'ly, all of you are jus' annoying. Your accen' makes me wan' 'o drive my head in'o a wall. No more ellabora'on needed.

I refuse 'o like any of you forever,

- J'



## Bus Boy

BEAU WHITTINGTON, PHOTOGRAPHY

## Gold and Blue Bracelet

ELLA GOODIN

I am running late but I cannot forget it; I do not feel like myself without it. You may see the bracelet I wear each day, but I see something else. On my wrist sits a blue bracelet with eighteen golden beads representing each year of my life. I see flashes of my favorite childhood shows and sounds of the laugh track that played while the characters made the most horrendous jokes but each time, I laughed so hard all the breath left my body. Smells of chlorine filled the air during summer break, and I spent hours and hours swimming till my fingers looked like raisins. I see progress and the ability for growth as I add a bead every year: new people and experiences. I look at it with overwhelming gratitude because some people never made it to eighteen beads. I see it as a silent statement. I look at it on my way to school as each tiny bead glistens in the sun, and I cannot wait for my future to glisten in time.

## Purple

CEAMBER JEFFERSON

A color of royalty and purpose,  
Knowledge and depth  
The color of mystery,  
And wisdom from experience  
It understands the hardships,  
And embraces them as a quality of its being  
Purple is dark and mysterious,  
Understanding the pain and hurt  
And filling it in with memories  
And great experiences,  
Unknown to anyone who does not share them  
Purple is menacing and freeing  
A color that truly understands



## Self Portrait

ALLYSON BROWN, WATERCOLOR

# I miss you.

GEORGIA PITCOCK

August 15, 2021

They told me that they  
want to sell your house.  
I thought it was a joke at first;  
they were being serious.

The man who lives down the road  
wants to buy your house  
so that he can tear it down.  
He thinks it's an eyesore.

The small, yellowed home sat at the  
beginning of a long gravel road.  
The screen door, now broken, used to always  
be open; inviting us in for supper.

Em got upset when she found out,  
says it not right to sell it.  
She's getting better,  
I think.

I got my first job this summer.  
I don't like it, but you would've  
told me to grit my teeth and bare it.  
So that's what I'm doing.

I'm taking US History this year.  
We're going to learn about WWII,  
and when they ask if we had any family  
who fought, I'll think of you.

My last year of camp was this summer.  
I still didn't write you a letter but  
this time it didn't catch me off guard,  
which I think is progress.

I still don't think it's fair you're  
not here. I really don't.  
"Life's not fair Sweetie, get used to it."  
I refuse.

I miss you,  
Georgia



## Tall

BEAU WHITTINGTON, PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Princess Effect

BRIA BLACK

I was always more of a Disney kid than a Nickelodeon or Cartoon Network one growing up. Did I watch Doc McStuffins until I was in 4th grade? I might have.

Okay, I did.

But, growing up having tutus of every color, all the different dresses and plastic heels, and my own pretend make-up vanity... you can imagine that the Disney Princesses were the characters that had a special place in my heart. Women teaching me what it is to have a true kind heart, fearless mind, and brave soul. Enlightening me on empathy, standing up for others, being independent, going after what I want, and NEVER letting a man tell me what I am and what I can and can't do. And they did all this, perfect hair, perfect skin, and of course, perfect bodies.

I feel like I got the former down, but I am not quite sure on the latter.

Why didn't they teach us how to maintain the same hips, and chests, and waist? It was the same in every movie. The same hips, chest, and waist. Not a hair out of place or pimple on their chin. They gave their bodies almost as much emphasis as their character traits, but they didn't give near as much elaboration. They didn't show anything about starving themselves to fit into their elegant dresses, or taking hours to put on make-up, or crying in their beds wishing they had any other body but their own. Yet, every girl beginning around age 10 does those things.

They begin to rewatch their favorite Disney Princess movie, but instead of seeing the princess stand up to the guy and prove that she can do anything he can, they see her perfect hips, perfect chest, and perfect waist.

Homecoming is next week... and all I can think about is how I will look in my dress. All the things I have to do to look that way in my dress. All I can think about it how I will show up alone. How I didn't want to go with a guy who I am not attracted to and am barely even friends with. All I can think about is how I need to get my nails done, straighten my curls out, and put on hours of makeup. But when can I do that? After I get home from afterschool practice? And then after I get done with my hours of homework? But I have to get it done. I have to get it done because I've watched Disney Princesses since I was two years old.

And they somehow, someway, taught me that I need to have the same perfect hair... perfect skin... and perfect body.

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## Brisé

GRACE GARDNER

my body winds and curves like a flowing river  
honey like hair reflects in the sun,  
a frail figure sways in the wind  
limbs, like branches of a tree,  
dangle as if they're dead weight.

I feel enclosed from all directions.  
eyes examine me as though I'm a patient they can fix  
while my body is labeled without regard.  
anatomical—an autopsy.

crawling in my own skin,  
dissecting every dip and curve.  
food turns into numbers,  
a walk into a run,  
and I am lost.

the 8-year-old in my heart cries,  
for I am no longer myself.  
time ticks while I slowly decay by my own hand.  
skin and bone, yet I keep going.



# Monster

IRIS VARGAS

I have grown  
An extra pair of ears  
To hear the bubble of anger  
In the depth of your words  
I have grown  
An extra pair of eyes  
To see the heart's decay  
As one's mind bleeds grey  
I have grown  
So many limbs  
So many parts  
My existence has become a jumble  
Of all I have seen  
I have grown extra legs  
To run farther from the reality  
Of your control  
I have grown extra mouths  
So as not to anger you  
After a long day  
I have grown  
And so have you  
The shape I am  
Cannot fit  
In our improved life  
Sometimes  
The way I look  
The way my silhouette contrasts  
Makes me feel  
Like some kind of monster  
How do I escape  
What I am at heart  
How do I let go  
Of the space I take up  
A puzzle piece  
With mutilated edges  
Why would you let me  
How could you make me  
Your monster



## Comedic Duo

BEAU WHITTINGTON, PHOTOGRAPHY



# I Miss You

GEORGIA PITCOCK

August 15, 2022

We went to your house yesterday,  
it didn't look the same.  
They knocked down the walls and  
replaced that old linoleum flooring.

They left your hat hook up on the wall  
but there was nothing on it.  
It looked out of place,  
wrong.

I stole some of your shirts,  
I hope you don't mind.  
They don't smell like you anymore,  
wintergreen tobacco and autumn.

Em took some shirts too.  
They fall off her frame, baggy and loose.  
You don't need to worry about her, by the way.  
She's doing much better now.

The quince tree is still standing, but  
it doesn't produce any fruit anymore.  
It hasn't for a very long time.  
I can still taste it though.

I got some of the money from the house selling.  
They said it's what you would've wanted  
and I like to think that that's true.  
I opened my first savings account.

I'm graduating this year.  
I wish you were here to see it.

I miss you,  
Georgia



# Peace

LEO TINGLE, GRAPHITE

# Run

ALAINA EASLEY

Running into deep woods  
where the bullfrogs may lie.  
With your white socks and  
the flag you hold so high.

Even though it had changed  
the land was still so rife.  
And just as much as you ran,  
you loved the family live.

Constant relaxation under  
your favorite tree.  
Trying tons of new foods  
or getting cleaned randomly.

Over time, a sharp pain grew,  
from something we never could see.  
How did we not see that  
you were in agony?

Even though we knew it was time,  
we couldn't let go.  
But it's like my dad said,  
"Now he's running around with Coco."

So, as you keep running  
with an old friend.  
We'll remember you,

even if it's the end.



# Fall Pumpkins

ERIK HERRING, WATERCOLOR