

The Agathist



Spring 2019

The Agathist

Issue #4
Spring 2019

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Advisor's Note

"Now we're up in the big leagues."

Here's one reason I love my job: one of our assistant principals saw that *The Agathist* was asking students for their 6-word memoirs, so she decided to submit her own. (She asked to stay anonymous, but if you're using your brain, you can figure out who she is. Sorry, ma'am.)

But she's right. This magazine isn't playing around. We're up in the big leagues, now.

This is our fourth regular issue, and the few growing pains we started off with are fading, quickly. The quality of work submitted by the student body keeps getting stronger, and this issue is proof of that. We've got poems that consider the difficulties of life, but do so through various vectors: pop culture, or established poets, or meditations on nature. The artwork explores the wonder of what's all around us—people and landscapes and architecture. We've got fiction that explores the everyday and nonfiction that settles us in nostalgia. Heavy, serious stuff. Big league.

Also, we've got some beauty from our Super Mavs. True beauty.

I'm always thankful for the students who submit their pieces, thankful for the administration and faculty for their support and encouragement; thankful for *The Agathist* staff. Y'all are brave and bold. You allow space for others to be undeniably themselves, and that is good work. Hard work. Important. Big league.

Enjoy this issue.

Mr. Dickson

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internet quiz adventures

Caroline Howard

1. What is your Inner Monster?

i hate my lack of self control
a marionette, it says:
gullible, easily influenced, loyal to a fault
but i cut her out, i say no
god, i hope i'm better

2. How dumb are you? (Basic history)

dumb enough, honestly
but she likes to say i'm not
(she must be pretty dumb, too, to believe that)

3. What type of girl are you?

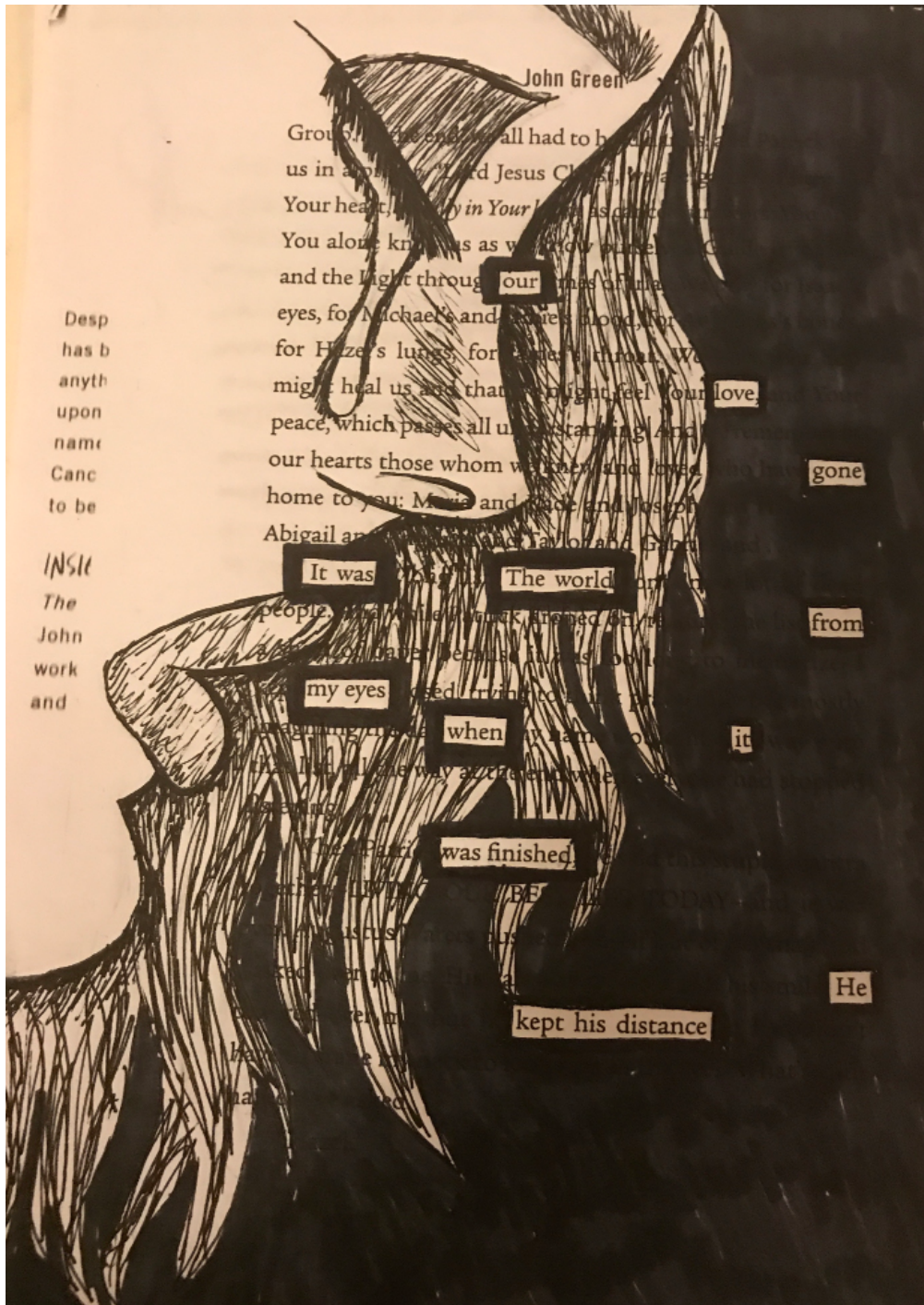
"A bit of both!"
like sweatpants under dresses
or heels with socks, but that's almost as bad as
socks with sandals, gross,
i'd rather be a cuttlefish
(blending into rocks,
being eaten,
rinse and repeat)

4. What is your heart made out of?

a heart of gold, she says
(that's a first, for sure)
i mean, not really
but if my heart was made of gold
my body would have sunk in the lake
out back my aunt's house
or maybe it's leaves:
adventurous, she claims
but it's more likely my obsession with bugs
(if you stepped on me
would i crunch too?)

5. How did You Die in a Past Life?

murdered in a fast-food back-alley, just like this life
(but that's my own input, let's see what the oracle says)
would you commit suicide?
i'm not sure, would i?
i could hardly be considered human,
so really, how would I have died?
like an animal - or maybe like the beast
pitchforks could hardly scare me



Gone
Ann Caruthers
Blackout Poem



Anthropologie
Abbie Gulland
Colored Pencil

My Home Haley Dennis

My home was four walls filled with old photos and some weird crosses momma picked up at a yard sale. It was backroads and muddy four-wheelers. It was Mawmaw cooking possum stew and Pawpaw rolling cigarettes. It was trees. It was a yellow school bus with a lunch lady driving it and an ol'Chevy truck vs. an ol'Ford rolling down middle of nowhere main street. That's all I ever knew.

I come from a small town in South Mississippi. The town grocery store was a "Greer's", and it was owned by a man named Mayo. You'd always see him stocking shelves in that little store that sat away from the main street chaos. He passed not too long after I made the move to a bigger city. I heard there were so many people at the funeral in his church saying goodbye that day they had cars parked at the church down the road too. He was good man, but his motorcycle didn't know that I reckon.

Dad drove into this subdivision that he had bought this overpriced house with no land to go with it, and I remember thinking "where am I gonna park my four-wheeler?". Turns out, Dad had sold it while I was at Mawmaw's one evening helping her with the green beans from the garden and listening to the town gossip, which mawmaw always knew. I started driving it when I was about 8 years old, and I remember naming it Lightenin'. I only flipped Lightenin' a couple times, but to hear my momma tell it you'd think I couldn't drive under 90 on that old thing. Truth be told, I did a lot of racing on Lightenin' that momma didn't need to know about. Sometimes I still sit and think for a while about the memories on that four-wheeler.

The worst thing about moving was how every house looked just the same, and that included the one my dad went out and bought. It felt suffocating and loud. There wasn't any crickets chirping. I spent the summer cooped up like a hen in that house. It is a brick, typical American dream house, but it isn't home. I live on a street with about twenty houses on it, in the middle of a bunch of streets that hold about that many houses too. Considering we don't have enough land to sit on, I am not surprised there wasn't much to do there. There is a side walk, but I am not sure where everyone is walking to since there isn't anywhere to go but in a big ol'circle. There's a pool, with other people germs in it. I never knew complete strangers would all swim in the same pool. Down south we called that a baptism, but everyone knew everybody, and I figure it's a bit safer since we did our swimming in a river.

My old school was a run down, couch in most classes because we didn't have very many desks, kinda place. It smelt like cigarettes and rose petal perfume. The perfume was from our principal and let me tell you, she wore some perfume, along with her bright purple, blue, pink or green outfits. Once she had caught me and a few buddies with a dip in at one of the playoff football games. I figured she'd call my Momma like she swore she would, and I'd be dead by the morning. She never did make that phone call or even mention it. It didn't take long for me to get to know her and realize she was a forgiving woman. She was a strange woman at times, but she let the bible club get on the speaker and pray every morning after the national anthem so even Mawmaw stayed off her case.

Most things were cheaper, but the materials didn't really matter, unless it was a cigarette or some whiskey to wash down the day with. Some folks would come and let us know that smoking creates cancer, but my Pawpaw would set them straight. He let them know that his Momma smoke every day of her life, and she died of a stroke. He'd grin while took another puff then he'd say, "That ain't got nothing to do with no cigarettes". If that didn't work, he would tell them that he had to die from something to get away from Mawmaw, and if that was it, so be it. Most the time that would shut them up.

Days were good in the middle of nowhere. The cows were good secret keepers, and folks helped one another out. I reckon I rather like my home, and I don't see too much wrong with it. The smell cigarette smoke and feel mud between toes. The swing of backroads instead of these straight interstates. Hearing the southern slur ring through your ears and the hollering of engines roaring down a forgotten backroad. The sunset over the trees. Cornbread baking in the oven and the weather channel blaring.

The last memory I have there is leaving. Packing everythin' wasn't hard. The hard part was lookin' one more time through the house that I had been born and raised in. There weren't any crosses hanging on the walls, and all trace of who had lived here was removed. They painted over the marks on the doorframe that had tracked our family's height and the little colorful handprints on the porch that wrapped around the house. Every memory I held close in that house ran through my mind while I sat on the floor packing boxes. From sleepovers to my first kiss had happened in that small, three-bedroom house right off highway 532. That's when it all got to me. I remember closin' my bedroom door and knowing I'd probably never see it again.

Blue Teeth and Diner French Toast

Emma Ellard

Someone in the back thumbs through the jukebox;

a crooner drowns your flapjacks in syrupy ballads

while across the sticky booth, basking in aquamarine,

he is too busy sharing his food online to eat it.

You try to speak, but words dissolve in midair, like sugar cubes

or conversations.

Escape to blue-lit bathroom unnoticed; stare at the mirror

as if it's a window to some other universe

where our phones learned the secrets of poisonous dart frogs.

There, our greasy fingers would melt every time they grazed

the shattered-glass surface of our obsession;

here, our brains melt instead, like two-dollar strawberry milkshakes.

or conversations.

Here, in blue-lit bathroom, remind yourself of the curve of your skull, the dip of your temples

(warm to the touch, and human).

Flower crown sprouts thorns

and stains forehead magenta;

a spoonful of cough syrup drips over brow

as he takes another photograph of his French toast.

He does not look up when you come back a battered Halloween decoration,

only blindly wrinkles his nose

smelling sour cherry.



Peaceful Creativity
Abbie Gulland
Colored Pencil

Leaves

Logan Riddle

Children running about
Brother and sister
Playing louder than ever
(But not really)
Screaming short lullabies
They know by heart
Until their lungs are on fire
And their throats gasping for their share
The sun surfing its way across the sky
Until the stars speckle the sky

When they've had enough
They leaned against a birch
Tired and wilted
But very much alive
They could contemplate our fascinating world
"Why are we such good friends?"
"Why do leaves fall?"
She would always answer
"I don't know."

The birch was changing for winter
Turning white, looking cold and bleak
It was visited much less now
Sister was gone more often
But he still sometimes watched
The leaves fall
One by one



Respect
Caroline Walton
Digital Photography

Little Golden Books

Alex Zimerman

I used to complain so much about going to Mammaw's house. I don't exactly remember why. Maybe it was the long drive over there, or the way her house was full of old stuff that I wasn't supposed to touch. Maybe it was the way it smelled. Like old vintage perfume. To a six-year-old, anything other than candy or a happy meal smells bad. I didn't know it then, but I'd come to appreciate and savor the smell of Mammaw's old vintage perfume.

There wasn't much to her small apartment. It was in Byram, only one bedroom and bathroom. It had a galley kitchen with mix-matched appliances. A black fridge, a white oven, a stainless-steel sink. It was the perfect size for an eighty-five-year-old woman, but it was pretty cramped for the large family dinners she loved to cook. Her most famous dish was what she called "Mrs. Helen's Chicken." It was very simple, and yet even so, everyone loved it. The way the smell of the gravy engulfed the entire apartment when it was baking over the chicken in the oven made your mouth water from the first moment you stepped in her front door.

Getting me to go to Mammaw's house was the problem. Once I was there, I never wanted to leave. Every time we would go over, maybe once or twice a week, she would be sitting in her Lay-Z-Boy recliner, Comcast remote at her side, watching the cooking channel on her box TV. We would walk in, and she would say, "Well, there you are! Come over here and give me a neck hug." That phrase; 'neck hug.' It always bugged me for some reason, and I would always try to correct her. Looking back on it now, I can see that she knew that it bugged me, and she did it on purpose. After our hug, my mom would hug her as well and sit down to talk with her about her day. Me, I would go over the couch adjacent to Mammaw's chair, and climb behind it. The couch was catty-cornered to the wall, with just enough space for a basket of stuffed animals and little girl to sit behind it. I would often tune out the conversations my mom would have with Mammaw. I wish I hadn't, thinking back.

When they were done talking, Mammaw would call me out from behind the couch and tell me to go pick out a book. She almost had the complete collection of the Little Golden Books. My favorite was the Poky Little Puppy. Once I picked my book I would sit up on Mammaw's lap, and she would read the book to me. She read me the Poky Little Puppy countless times, but if you asked me, I wouldn't remember what it was about. What I do remember is her voice. As old as she was, she still knew how to make a book interesting. She would make voices for different characters. I also remember her hands. They were riddled with arthritis, almost completely locked in a claw. Even though her knuckles were the size of nickels, she would lick her fingers to turn the pages every once in a while. I thought it was gross every time she did that.

Memory is a weird thing. We don't get to pick and choose what we remember, especially when we're children. It's rare that we remember the good things from childhood. For most people, the first memories that come to mind when you ask them about their childhood are the bad ones. The ones that hurt. The ones we want to block out, but can't. For me, that memory with Mammaw was in the March of 2009. A few days earlier, my mom had just told me she was pregnant with my baby sister. I was so excited. I had always wanted a younger

sibling, and I was finally going to be a big sister. My mom and I were headed to Mammaw's apartment to tell her the good news. She would be a great-grandmother for the fourth time over. When we got there, I knocked on the door and heard my Uncle Danny yell "come in!" I opened the front door, and went to give Mammaw the biggest 'neck hug' she'd ever received. Her face lit up when she saw me. My mom walked in the door behind me, and I saw the light drain from Mammaw's eyes.

"Why, who are you?"

My mom was taken aback. I looked over at her, confused. "Mammaw, it's me," she told her. It had gotten worse since the last time we saw her. I could see it in my mom's eyes. Uncle Danny wheeled himself towards Mammaw. He was paralyzed from the waist down, so he was almost always on eye-level with her. "Mom, this is Shannon. Cheryl's daughter."

I looked at Mammaw. I could tell she was searching her memory for the name 'Shannon.' After a few seconds it came to her, and her face lit up yet again. My mom smiled at her, and excused herself to the bathroom. I don't remember anything else about that trip. I don't even remember if we told her that my mom was pregnant. It would never really matter anyway, Mammaw wouldn't live long enough to meet her youngest great-grandchild.

She died when I was seven. You know that saying, "you never know what you have until it's gone?" In the days after Mammaw's death, those words had never rung more true. A seven-year-old should never feel regret. Not in the way that I did. I was so distraught, I couldn't bring myself to even go to her funeral. I don't regret that decision, as heartless as it sounds. I'm glad my last memory of her isn't of her cold body lying in a casket. Having to share my memory of my Mammaw with people I didn't know. My last memory of her was happy. Of her smiling.

That's what made the biggest impact on me. Her joy. Wherever she went, she was happy. She always had a smile on her face. She always saw the good in people, even when they didn't see the good in themselves. She could always find a bright side to any situation. She strived to make other people happy. Cooking all those large family dinners in her tiny dining room proved that. Even when she was losing her memory to Alzheimer's, her smile was the one thing that reminded us that she was still there, even when she wasn't.



Farm Fun
Rachel Spitchley
Oil Painting

Talent or a Curse

Sarah Lewis

I can't feel a bone in my body.
Even the smiles don't fix me.
Hopefully I'll stay on key.

My stomach is killing me.
If I start to shake,
Hopefully they won't see.

I can't control
The anxiety.
What is this thing
Inside of me?
It feels like a bomb.

I wonder if they know.
It is controlling me.
I can barely see.
My eyes are blurry
But beauty queen of only 18.
Hopefully they will love me.



Just Keep Swimming
Addie Fetcko
Acrylic

Ladybug's Omen Emmory Bridges

Scared to cross what is rippling,
they stick to one another as if
friends. Here they float simply
like granite, solid and color-
blotted. Together they arrive
on foamy chalk lines and are
gifted medallions of sand to
hide under black fossil bellies.

People enjoy making declarations:

1. Infestation. They will not agree with
Libyan insects, we always have funds
for war; shields are shiny, decorated,
and washed by our waters for battle.
Spots have bedded illness before.
2. Godsend. We have prayed, and been
sent Mary's Beetles. Red cloak and
dappled darkly with seven sorrows,
our crops will be saved, our people fed.
We use wings of their elderly as beads
in heirloom and rosary. Slightly torn leaves
make pictures for the lucky to see and
stories to imagine from gentle minds.



Butterfly Bush
Kennington McDavid
Marker Pointilism



Atticus Finch
Caroline Walton
Digital Photography

Morning Coffee

Cody Hardy

Often, I watched her lift it high above her weary eyes. She had a look of calm upon her face as she did this in the morning. The small pot which held a sloshing, steaming, lake of dark brown coffee now flowed down into the small mug which lay below. It was a cyclical event, one that I woke up early in the morning just to watch. We had been married for about 7 years, yet the light glinting off of the small crystal-clear pot held into the newly rising sun renewed all hope for the day.

But the glory of the early morning sun came after she stopped pouring. She would turn around with her back to the window of the open morning, see me upon the stairs, and give a gracious smile, brighter than the dawn, and more calming than the dusk. Her eyes drawing a cyan sky upon her face, as she looked upon me in a seemingly humorous wonder.

"Morning"

"Morning, you look like a pile of rocks crushed you in your sleep!" She laughed softly at her own joke, her humor weighing upon the suddenly brighter room like the feather of a swan.

"Yeah, well... at least I don't.... umm... yeah, I've got nothing" I replied with a goofy smile, and poured myself a cup of the coffee, sitting down at the small wooden table that was the center of our kitchen, and our universe.

"Oh crap!" She launched herself up from the table, slightly spilling the coffee (I wiped it up with the crumpled remains of the sports section of the newspaper).

"Be careful! Don't forget about the..."

I heard a small thud and a returning grumble and an "I'm alright!" as she slid with her woolen socks on the light wood floor of the house, hitting her arm against the cabinet that was "too large to be removed" by the previous owners, to the point that it stuck out from the small living room, into the right side of the doorway. She had forgot to feed George, and she always feeds George, whether or not her forgetfulness makes her panic about it, doesn't seem to matter to her. I heard the ruffling of awakening from the large white bird, and the opening, clanging, and subsequent closing of the cage door. George only "complied" with the cage if he was sleeping, and he slept just as long as we did. George never left my wife's shoulder, the little betrayer, after all, I was the one to drive all the way to Chicago to get the little guy.

She returned to the kitchen with a sigh and a ruffle of her long blonde hair, and floated into the empty chair opposite of me. I stifled a laugh at the long black feather that stuck out of her hair, and quickly plucked it from the sleep-deprived form of my wife.

"Every day, you get more like him!"

"Yeah, yeah, keep it up with those kinds of jokes and the neighbors'll start to think we have a kid!"

I had loudly laughed at that, as I remembered the many times we went home for Christmas or Thanksgiving. My dad was a failed comedian, while my mother was a rather successful owner of a Chinese restaurant (never mind the fact that the only relative that ever went to China was my "soul-searching" brother Dave). This left the door open to copious amounts of puns, jokes, funny stories, etc. When I first introduced Rose (her parents were botanists who found it amusing that she used to punch people who got too close) to my father, he waited until dinner began so that he could obtain an armory of jokes. When we sat down at the table in front of the large turkey and the smaller bits of bacon wrapped broccoli presented around the feast, he chose that moment to let loose his onslaught of puns involving her name. He even asked if the jokes were too "thorny". I had taken precautions, and told her about his habit many days beforehand.

I flipped the pancakes onto her plate, and subsequently flipped them onto my plate, poured syrup in a spiral on top, and began to dig in. It was an odd morning, it could have been because we ran out of bacon, or it could have been because of the lack of any kind of rush that was common on the weekdays. The morning felt wrong because of the lack of clamor and rush that was present with most days. Usually it was "I woke up an hour late!" or "I gotta go get more food for George!", but it was a small gift of quiet this particular morning, with an air of calm.

I watched her stretch her arms and walk out the door with a quiet patter of steps in time with the drops of dew that fall from the rooftop. She quietly walked down the road, with happiness bubbling with each step, only revealed to the most observant and loving mind.

After I had managed to take a week off, I knew that I couldn't dawdle for much longer. I had to go to work soon, and I'd have to bring the bird, because otherwise I'd come back home only to have my glasses displaced by the sneaky feathered fox. The bird actually had a history with us that we still remember. Rose was out on one of her "research expeditions" out into the wide world beyond, while I stayed here, watching over the house and setting up downstairs. Seeing as her job (she decided to take after her parents and become a "Wildlife Researcher", but based on the pictures she sends, she just gets to play around with all sorts of creatures) requires her to travel often, and I had planned on going the way of my mother and opening some sort of restaurant, I decided that we needed some additional company since having kids right then wouldn't work very well for our plans. Turns out, that the very bird (a toucan, which never stops reminding us of its greatness) that I decided to raise, was one that she had saved months beforehand. She had found the toucan, only days old, with an injured wing and an odd red feather at the top of its head. She (being the quick-witted woman that I love) scooped up the small bird and helped to nurse it back to health, before sending it to a place where they would raise it.

You can imagine that I was astounded when I saw a website marketing the "toucan with a red-feathered head" from an exotic pet-store in Chicago. I can't say that I don't think through decisions, but in the picture, it had its tiny little head cocked to the side with a glaring smile that just whispered, "You know what would be really funny? Buying me." and well, I

can't say that I didn't completely cave in to the little guy and call immediately. The next night when she was supposed to return, I called her and told her that I was out of town "to meet with investors", which wasn't a complete fabrication, but that's beside the point. I got the bird (the woman at the counter pointed out to me, and listed, the proper food that toucans needed), and began the long drive home. While I talked for what seemed like hours on the road (I was on a call with earlier mentioned investors), the little guy managed to rub his head against the ground, picking up some bits of crushed coffee beans in his feathers, and gave himself a look of a man a balding head of hair. I named him George, brushed him off, and he slept in my lap for the entire drive home as I focused on the long road ahead.

I opened the creaking door and (accidentally) hit the cage against the door before "shushing" myself and closing it behind me. I walked into the bedroom to see my graceful wife laying peacefully in the moonlight of the un-curtained window. I, in my sleep-deprived state, decided to open the cage door and yell "fly!". I heard naught but a flutter of feathers from annoyed toucan and an incredulous "huh?" from Rose, who swiftly turned on the lamp beside the bed, and laid her eyes on the now-awake and tired toucan. A smile crept upon her face as she sleepily waved her arms for me to bring him closer. She sat up in the bed and took him in her arms as I gently wrapped my arms around her from behind and said, "His name's George". A smile jumped to her face as she quietly laughed, and that night, George slept in the bed.

As my feet reach the glass door under the sign that boldly states, "Red Feather Coffee" along with a now faded chalkboard sign that faintly desires to say, "Red Feather Coffee will lift you up". As I reach in my pockets to feel around for the key to the shop, I hear the rattling chains of metal as a familiar sound registers in my mind.

"How many times do I have to tell you that you get here much too early?"

"How many times do I have to tell you to get up earlier?"

I laughed at the retort from the young man, and deftly opened the door, my nose instantly invigorated by the delightful smell of unground coffee. After a much-deserved deep breath, I held the door open, and looked towards the young man, clad in a dark hoodie, with rough jeans and a belt that probably used to be a darker brown than it currently is.

"C'mon in, you know you're always welcome here."

"Thank you Mister Cessabit, it's a nice day today, isn't it?"

At this point I had already let George sit on his little perch by the window, glowing with all of his pride and amusement, while I started making my first cup of coffee, my hands running through the familiar motions as smoothly as the clouds float across the sky.

"Isn't that some news? You're the first person to ever tell me that the forecast will be wrong before a cloud even shows up."

"It's just a gift I have. I guess."

I looked up to see the teen smiling a big grin on his face, take out an old laptop. And begin to plug it into the outlet on the wall, before walking over to the counter as I gently place the mug on the top for him. First time I met this boy, he was just wandering around the street and happened to wander in during the busiest day that I'd ever had. People walked in bumping into each other, shoving each other to get out of the door, and George nearly flew away in a fit of panic, but after the crowd had dispersed, I saw George perched gently on the shoulder of a small boy, sitting patiently in a booth in the corner, watching him trying to eat a small coffee bean that he had snatched from the dirty ground behind the counter. It was at that time that the boy looked around at the lack of a crowd, noticing the lights of newly illuminated streetlights blink from outside of the window, and he jumped up and shouted, "I'm gonna be late," and just darted out of the door before I had time to discern anything from him. The next morning was a morning of firsts, as it was the first day that he sat in front of my door, with a bike chained up to the bike stand sitting there cross-legged and patiently waiting. He said that he never tried coffee before but mainly wanted to see "the bird" (George was upstairs with Rose at the time), so I decided to let him have a sip of the first cup (I always test the first cup of coffee myself to see if I made it right). He pulled out a crumpled 10-dollar bill from his pockets, and I simply shook my head and told him that the first cup is always free or else I'd have to pay myself every morning. Since that morning, he's come by the coffee house almost every day, tasting the first cup, of which I'm grateful to an honest, unbiased opinion of. It's always been with a grin on his face, every time he steps into the coffee house, and for that I'm grateful as well.

Today, however, was both unique and the same. I started to brew more coffee as he typed quickly on his computer before he launched himself up from his seat in the corner with a smile plastered across his face.

"Aha! I won! Sorry about the outburst mister Cessabit sir, but I just found out that I've won a photography competition! I never would have thought they would have actually used my photos for their magazine, but apparently they were good enough!"

I chuckled at his overjoyed demeanor and brewed another cup, and brought it over to the table where he sat grinning and restlessly tapping his foot while he read through the letter. He looked up at the cup and I, before trying to deny the small gift.

"Oh, Mister Cessabit, I can't accept this, I didn't pay for it."

"Nonsense, you deserve it, from what I hear, you deserve it more than whoever is to walk through that door next."

"I'm sorry, but I can't take this, Mister Cessabit."

"You will be sorry, because if you don't take this, then I'm gifting it to the trashcan, mug and everything."

He did take the cup after that remark and sipped on the cup softly before laughing and turning to me with a grin.

"You know, for a gift, you shouldn't give someone ground up dirt in a cup."

I laughed heartily at that and went back to the counter as another customer walked in and asked for a “simple cappuccino”, and got to work behind the dark wood counter that I’m always overjoyed to stand behind.

Awfully after he finished his drink he quickly got up and nodded to me through the sea of customers, as the bell rung, signifying his exit into the open world. As if drawn to the lack of young adults, following his departure was the arrival of the businessman and businesswomen of the block, all trying to gain that “one extra push” of energy to make it through another day of hard work. Next came the second customer that regularly arrives once the crowd thins to practically nothing, usually after lunch. With a ring of a bell and a small scratching sound of the floor against wooden stool, I began brewing a “flat white” for the overworked airline pilot.

“You know where I’m flying next, Jim? I’m going all the way to Japan for a flight. Yep, they thought I was so bad that they had to send me to another country this time.”

I scoffed as he began to chuckle lightly, and began to sip from the cup as I set it down in front of him. His dark hair was scraggly and uncombed, and he began to smooth his suit and pants (which only held a small stain of ketchup on his right leg), and hum to himself softly. He rustled through his pocket and laid his wallet out beside his cup, and pulled out a small picture roughly the size of his palm.

“Did I ever show you a picture of my little girl? I get to see her for the first time in years once I get this flight over with. She’s probably all grown up now.”

He lightly touched the picture with his index finger and smiles, saying, “I hope I don’t come back from Japan with an accent, otherwise she might not recognize me.”

He laughed softly at his own comment in a light-hearted manner, though I thought it sounded strained, and he simply laid his cup down onto the counter alongside a wad of cash, and made his way to the door. I called out to him before he completely exited and wished him a safe flight, and the glint of a smile wavered upon his face.

“Yeah, I’ll be wishing right alongside you.”

The day past that point drew cold and the weather kept many of the customers from coming out of their houses at all. I sharply exhaled into the cool wind during the closing time, and lightly flipped the key within the lock, softly placing the ‘Open’ sign upon its back to a rather graceful design that was woven into the word: ‘Closed’, and stared into the cloudy sky above, grateful of the lone 4 stars that shone their way through.

1840-1920

--inspired by Langston Hughes

Jorden Gilbert

I, too, sing equality

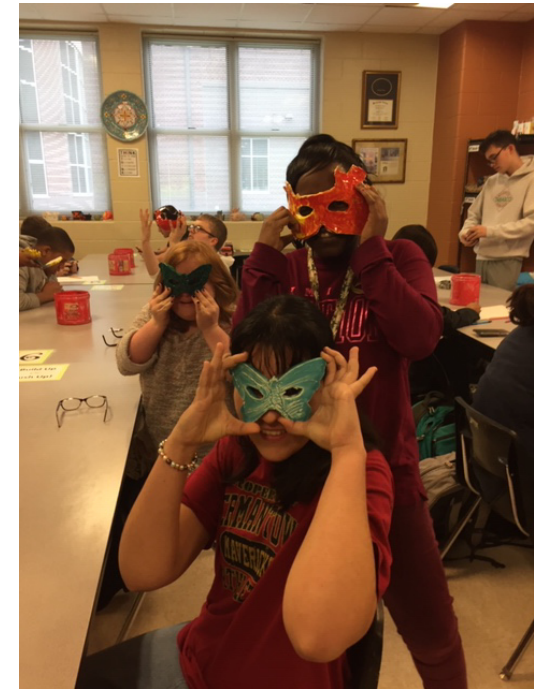
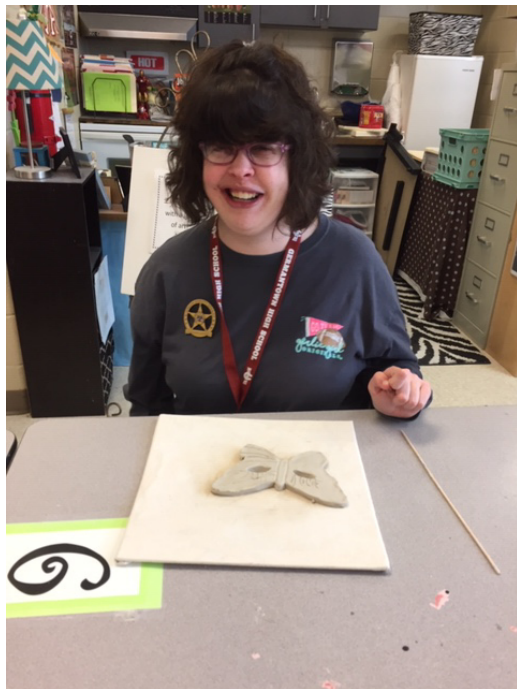
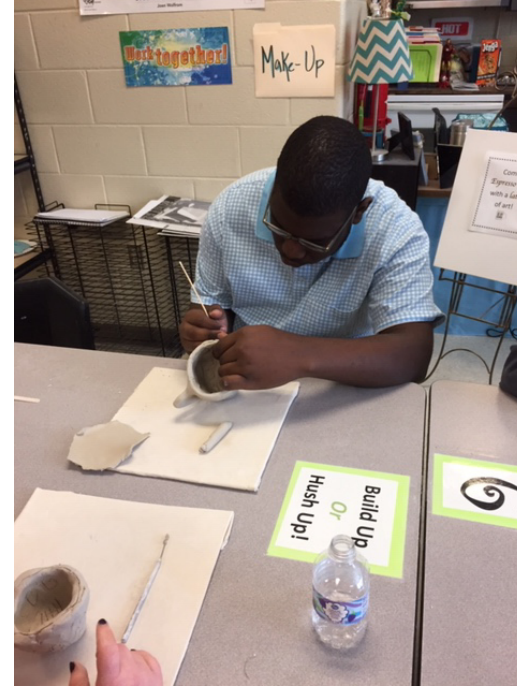
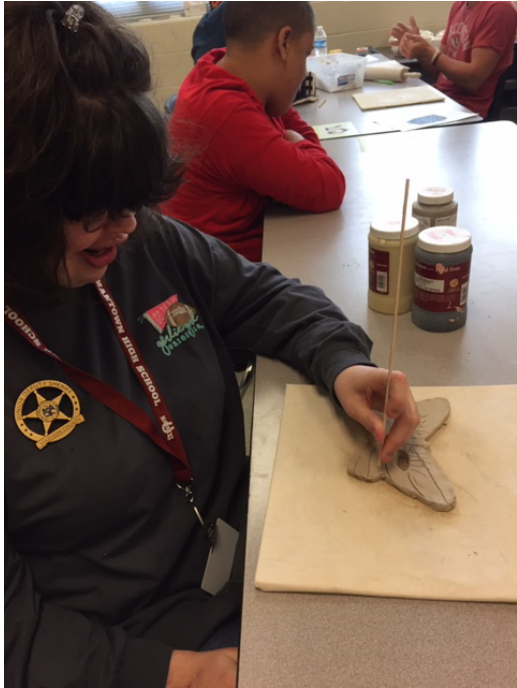
I am the inferior sex
They say I can’t do it
When it comes to work
But I laugh.
And try harder
And grow strong.

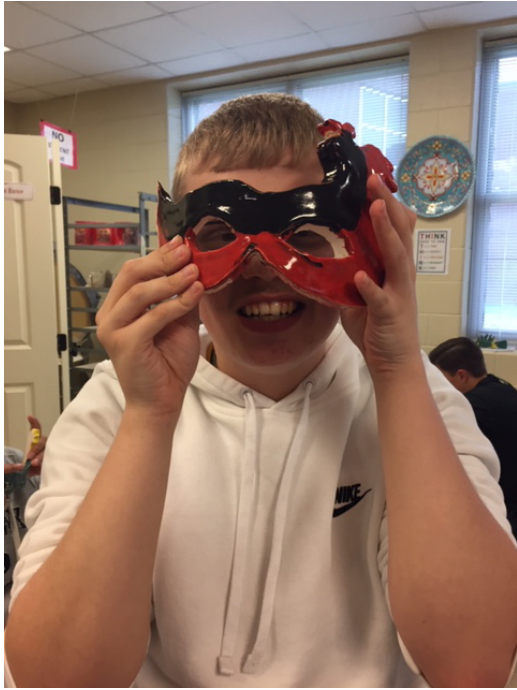
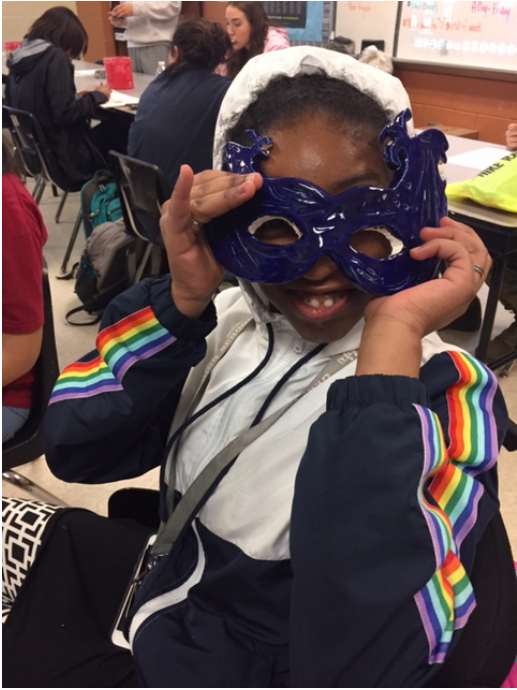
Tomorrow
I’ll be at the table
With the men
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me.
“That’s a man’s job”
Then

Besides
They’ll see how powerful I am
And be ashamed

I, too, am equal

Super Mau Artwork





Untitled
Parker Brewer
Photography

Claiborneville, Yazoo County 31180

Dawn Munro

Yazoo Mississippi in the 1930's was the worst place to be. And that's exactly where I was stuck. Being a black man in the south was a struggle but add on the lack of work and nonexistent pay and you got the dreary existence that was my life. I couldn't leave because there was nowhere to go and no money to go nowhere.

The Great Depression was named fittingly. It was awful to watch my town; my people go through the heart ache. I've lived in Yazoo County since I was a boy. My Daddy was a barber, and a damn good one, and my Momma did the washing for the townfolk. I loved this town, never wanted to leave, not until the depression came at least.

I was a barber just like Daddy but nobody could afford a haircut when the depression rolled into town so I turned to day labor. Which was few and far between but I had put food on the table for me and my wife.

Edith Mulligan, my wife, was the most gorgeous woman in the world. She was the reason I stayed in Yazoo. (Well her and my lack of money.) She was my world and I wanted to give her everything she'd ever wanted..... and I couldn't. That damn depression. Took everything good out of life. No matter how happy you were it always lingered in the back of your head.

If I could have I would have punch that depression straight in its mouth. Hit him till he bled. He took everything from me. My town. My people. My job. My money.

My wife.

Every day in Claiborneville, Yazoo was the same. I would wake up with the sun and head down to town. The day laborers would mill around and look for work and the earlier you were the more likely you were to get some. On a good day, you would get a simple job helping someone out. They would give you a small sum or maybe even feed you lunch. After the job was over or after you got tired of waiting around you would head back home.

One particularly busy day, and by busy, I mean I got one job that lasted past 1 o'clock, I started to head home earlier than usual. As I walked down my street, a small sum of change jingling in my pocket, I noticed that all the windows on the house were closed. In the middle of summer in Mississippi you had leave your windows open or your house would turn into a furnace.

I walked into the house, which was hot as hell, and began calling out for Edith and opening the windows. Once I was done I realized that Edith was in the house so I headed out back and checked the garden. Edith loved her garden, it was her favorite place in Claiborneville. She would spend hours out there and with the lack of work that's about all she did but that day she wasn't there. I sat around for a while assuming she went to talk to one of the neighbors. I walked around the garden. It was perfect, prim and proper- just like her.

Finally, I decided that the house had cooled off enough and went back in. I sat down in the living room on our dusty old couch and stared out the windows waiting for Edith. The Mississippi sunshine was blaring through the open windows and reflecting off of something on the mantle. Curious, I got up a saw Edith's ring, a simply band of metal with a small diamond. She always took it off when she was gardening, said she didn't want to lose it. She always left it on the mantle but today was different. The ring was shining, in the sunlight it was almost blinding. It was freshly polished and there was a small folded paper under it.

I slowly unfolded the paper and suddenly I realized exactly why the Great Depression was called that. I read that note over and over and over. And finally, when I realized that the words on the page weren't gonna change no matter how much I looked at them, I put it down.

I stared at her ring, remembering the day I put it on her. I worked so hard for that ring. I saved all my tips for a full year to buy that ring. I wanted to get her something better but I just couldn't. That's probably why she left. After what felt like hours I picked up my heavy body and headed into the back yard and grabbed 2 old logs, all that was left of the fire wood from winter.

As I went back in I walked straight over Edith's flowers instead of her nicely trimmed path. I placed the logs into the fireplace and, like a crazy person, lit a fire in the middle of summer in Mississippi. I sat right in front of it, sweat dripping down my face, and placed the paper in the fire. I watched it blacken and change and then completely disappear, just like she had.

Life after this night only got drearier and drearier. Slowly everyone began to leave Claiborneville. The group of day laborers got smaller and smaller. Families left. My best friends left. Until I was the only one left. My town, my home, became nothing more than a ghost town.

When the last family left, when all the houses were cleared out, when all the businesses were shut, that is when I lost it.

I kept thinking of that letter, burnt and shriveled away. I wanted nothing to do with this town. I wanted to burn every memory from this town and that's exactly my plan.

Tonight, exactly 3 years since the depression started, 6 months from when my wife left and a month since the last person in town left, I'm gonna burn this hellscape to the ground. I'm gonna tack this letter to the welcome sign for anyone to read.

So, if you find this letter I hope you learn about the great town that Claiborneville used to be and the broken man that turned it to ash.

-Mulligan



Holy Charleston Church
Britney Goss
Marker Pointilism

The Revolution Brady Permenter

My name will forever be immortalized in legend at Hartfield Academic Academy as the only person to ever started a fight. And while I wish I could say that I regret my actions, to be honest, that was one of the greatest moments of my life.

Three things were made crystal clear on my first day at Hartfield: people like my accent, very few people like me, and I don't like Edward Cunnings. The funny thing was, that first day he didn't even say anything to me. It was the way he looked at people; like he was the king and they were his peasant.

I hopped out of my car and headed inside. As usual, Miguel was already sitting at our table. "sup mate."

While anyone else would have whined about my mix of English and Scottish slang, Miguel just replied in his own sarcastic way. "Hola."

It wasn't long before George showed up. Unlike Miguel, who got a free ride because of his dad's job as the school's groundskeeper, George was there on an academic scholarship and was currently struggling to keep his chemistry grade at an A. George sat beside Miguel and proceeded to down half a liter of Mountain Dew.

"Another all-nighter?"

A tired head nod was the only response I got. This was George's second week on the "two hours of sleep a week" schedule he had put himself on.

Constance came in later than usual but she was carrying a box of donuts so all was forgiven. Besides me she was the only one that paid tuition.

"Eat up." She plopped the box on the table. We swarmed like hungry Piranhas tearing through the soft bread like flesh.

Miguel threw scissors to win the last round. As I prepared to listen to an hour-long lecture about the Mexican Revolution, He pulled out his phone. I had five pages of notes when the bell rang.

I handed the notes to Miguel. "You never told me that you started the Mexican Revolution."

"What?" It took Miguel a few seconds to get my joke and he was immediately disappointed in me. "Dude. Grow up."

I walked into gym right after George. He was looking refreshed and energetic. "How much ginger have you had mate?"

"Okay first off, it's called coke or soda; not ginger. And second, some of us actually have to do leg day."

"Aye right, I do leg day... sometimes."

"Please" he tapped my prosthetic leg with his foot, sending a soft echo through the room. "That thing could get you out of anything."

"You know, you're right, maybe you should cut off your leg too."

"Come on man, you know I didn't mean it like that."

I softly punched him in the arm. "Yeah, I know."

"Good news, Wallace!" Coach appeared in front of me. "Leg day's canceled, so you can participate in full." The sly grin on his face told me that this was a recent development in his lesson plan.

"Greaaaaat..."

"Great, indeed."

"I'm telling you man Dolphins are evil" I watched Constance's face as she explained the article that she had read. Lunch tray in hand, Miguel took his spot across from me.

"Hey, Juan!" Edward "His majesty" Cunnings had arrived.

Being one of the only non-white students in the school, Miguel was often the subject of Edward's wraith. Over time he had learned to shrug off the slurs; I hadn't. "Leave." My accent was heightened by anger and Edward seemed disgusted by my voice.

"Or what?" Edward looked at his friends behind him. The obediently snickered with approval.

"I'm going to knock you back to the country club that you crawled out of"

"William." Constance grabbed me by the arm and turned me to face her

"Look, I want to shove an art pencil in this guy's eye just as much as the next guy, but nobody needs a fight on their record"

As I did with most voices of reason in my life, I completely ignored Constance. "My offer still stands. Now leave."

A small crowd was gathering now. I examined my potential opponent; he was tall and wiry. I doubted that he knew how to throw a punch but the gold ring around his figure would do damage.

"You talk pretty big for a cripple."

Edward once again look to his friends for approval, but even they were dead silent. He had crossed a line. And Miguel's small tan fist delivered the punishment

The Revolution had begun!

Keeping with my promise I shoulder charged Edward, knocking him to the ground. But someone grabbed me from behind and started punching me in the small of the back. I wrapped my foot around their leg and fell back using their body to absorb the shock as we hit the floor. Right after I pushed the first guy off another was on top of me, beating my head into the tile.

I positioned my head so that he was hitting my cheek and not my nose. I saw the feet of fifteen or twenty people split into two warring groups: the brown-nosing loyalist aligned with Edward. And Miguel's kick-ass rebels.

Just when I thought that I would spend the rest of the fight getting wailed on by some angsty freshman, a pack of art pencils landed beside me. A quick grin flashed over my face as I grabbed the pencil and stabbed the eraser into my opponent's side. This stunned him long enough for me to push him off.

The Revolution lasted ten minutes. In the end, there were nine suspensions and one expulsion; me.

As I walked out of Hartfield for the last time, Constance pulled me to the side. And slapped me in the face. "Ow!"

"What is wrong with you?"

"What did I do?" I knew exactly what I did

"Oh, I don't know, maybe start a gang fight in the cafeteria."

"I didn't start the fight, Miguel did."

Her open hand struck my face again.

"Don't slap me." I said with quiet intensity.

"Then stop being stupid." Despite her sarcastic remark, I knew Constance got the message. "If Miguel started it, why are you getting expelled."

"I took the fall. If Miguel gets kicked out his dad will lose his job too. And they need that money. Why do you care anyway?"

"Maybe because you're one of my three friends at this school."

"Everything will be okay. We'll still hang out."

"I know that, but I don't want you to end up on the street."

"You know public school isn't that bad, right?"

She didn't seem pleased by my response. "I guess I'll see you around."

"Yeah."

She turned to walk off.

"Hey" I said, "Keep the guys out of trouble."

"Only if you stay out of fights"

"I make no promises"

"Then neither do I." We shared a smile and I started towards my car.



Retro1
George Yoder
Acrylic

He Ran

Hailey Dennis

To school, the store, work,
But never home. His life revolved
Around Football, Basketball, Running,
Anything that took his mind away
From reality. His mind
whirled after every tackle

No one was there to cheer.
He walked off the field
His body ached for the embrace
Of the tackle. The cheers of the crowd
Permanently locked in his mind. He ran
From that as well.

He looked in the stands to see his father,
But he had left years ago.

He ran through the woods, under bridges,
Away from the things he feared.
Until his breath grew heavy, his shoulders
Were no longer a burden, emotions faded
With the trees and fields.

Deadly but Oh So Sweet

Dawn Munro

Thanksgiving is about food. They say its celebrating “the wonderful beginning of our nation” but in reality, it’s a day of mourning for Native Americans and a day of feasting for the people who stole their land. Instead of facing their crimes their just stuff their faces with a plethora of delicacies. Thanksgiving is a day full of hot kitchens, long tables full of food, and random relatives asking you what you’re going to do with your life. It is the best day of the year. Not because of the relatives, I usually give them all different answers. My great aunt thinks I’m going to be an astronaut on the mission to mars and my second cousin thinks I’m going to join the circus. The real reason I love Thanksgiving is the food.

I’ve always had an obsession with food. Well because I am a human and I need it to survive but that’s not it. Food to me is a sanctuary. A friend that never fails you. I understand that many people use food as a coping mechanism but that’s not how I am. Food to me is something to be appreciated, savored, loved. A day dedicated to making and eating wondrous food is a dream to me.

I have experienced many wonderful Thanksgivings throughout the years but one is much more memorable than the others. I was 13 years old. My mother had been cooking for days. We had everything you could possible think of. Turkey and a ham, all of the trimmings, a table full of desserts, and my favorite dish, Apple pie.

As our family gathered and plates were served, the only thing I wanted to eat was that apple pie. My family sat down around the decorated table with their plates full and their stomachs empty. We prayed, we ate.

After eating every bite of food on my plate, I politely excused myself from the table of people with mouths still full of turkey and ham. I snuck away to the dessert table. A table that looked as if it was out of a fairy tale. Stacked high with every pie imaginable. Pecan. Pumpkin. Cherry. Strawberry. There were brownies and cookies. Most children’s dream but all I wanted was that apple pie.

I find the apple pie, it was sitting in a glass pie plate with apples on the side because that’s just the kind of woman my mother was. I took off the tin foil to expose the golden-brown lattice crust overflowing with magnificent apple cinnamon goodness. I cut a generous slice full of the thickly cut apples. I placed a perfect dollop of cold whipped cream onto the slice. As I watched the whipped cream slowly melt into the warm pie I took a bite. The flaky crust melted on my tongue. The apples were crisp and fresh. It was full of cinnamon and sugar and something that I just couldn’t put my finger on. It was hot, yet sweet and warm.

After eating my slice, I hid the evidence and headed back to the table. I joined the conversation, answered all of the intrusive questions, and got increasingly hot. Not because I was being bombarded with questions about my future but because I felt sick. My arms got red and bumpy as if I had suddenly contracted chicken pox. I excused myself again, this time to the restroom. As I looked in the mirror I saw my face was red and very warm. I pulled up the long sleeve of my shirt and saw my arm covered in small burning red dots. The same with

my legs.

I started to panic, not because I thought I was dying, but because my house was full of family and friends and I looked like something out of a Sy-Fy movie. I waited, collected myself, and left the bathroom to get my mother. I walked into the dining room with my sleeves pulled over my hands and my head staring at the floor. I pulled on my mother's sleeve and beckoned for her to follow me. She apologized to her guest and paced quickly after me.

"What do you want" she said in a sharp, yet quiet voice.

I pulled up my sleeve and looked her directly in the eyes. She immediately panicked. My sister has always been extremely allergic to milk. She had allergic reactions, broke out in hives, and went into anaphylactic shock if she even smelled milk. My mom knew that the bumps on my arm were hives. I was having a reaction to something but we didn't know what. My mother scrambled for her keys and purse. She calmly walked into the dining room, full of guest some still eating, she said that she was going to have to leave for a moment. Then she grabbed my father by the collar of his shirt and dragged him to the car.

As she sat in the passenger seat, frantically explaining to my father why he was driving to the hospital, I laid down in the back. Every 30 seconds my mom asked me if my throat hurt, if I was breathing okay. After a short ride and 700 repetitive questions from my mother, I was walking into the empty emergency room of Saint Dominic's.

I was sent back immediately. They started an iv, and I was pump full of Benadryl and antihistamines. When I was thoroughly drugged and the itching started to subside, a doctor came in. He said doctor things. Told my mom that it was a minor reaction and my breathing was not effected at all, thankfully.

I dosed off into a light sleep, as my mom and doctor discussed what had started it. When they ruled out all of the food from diner, my mom asked me if I had anything else, to which I respond in a mumbled voice "pie" It was like something clicked in my mother's head. She explained to the doctor that my favorite pie was apple and that she has used a different recipe than usual.

She added ginger.

With the mystery solved, I was discharged. The entire way home my mother apologized profusely. She rambled on about the recipe and everything that could had gone wrong.

"You could have died, Dawn" She said with a concerned, stained voice.

And within my half asleep, drugged state I managed to mumble out: "It was so worth it"



Summer Fun
Abbie Gulland
Acrylic Paint



Spring Day
Ashley Lin
Graphite and Colored Pencil

The Elusive Self Sophia Guerier

I haven't lost the self in me.
In fact, I am just found.
But, oh, this discovery
Only just secured my bound.

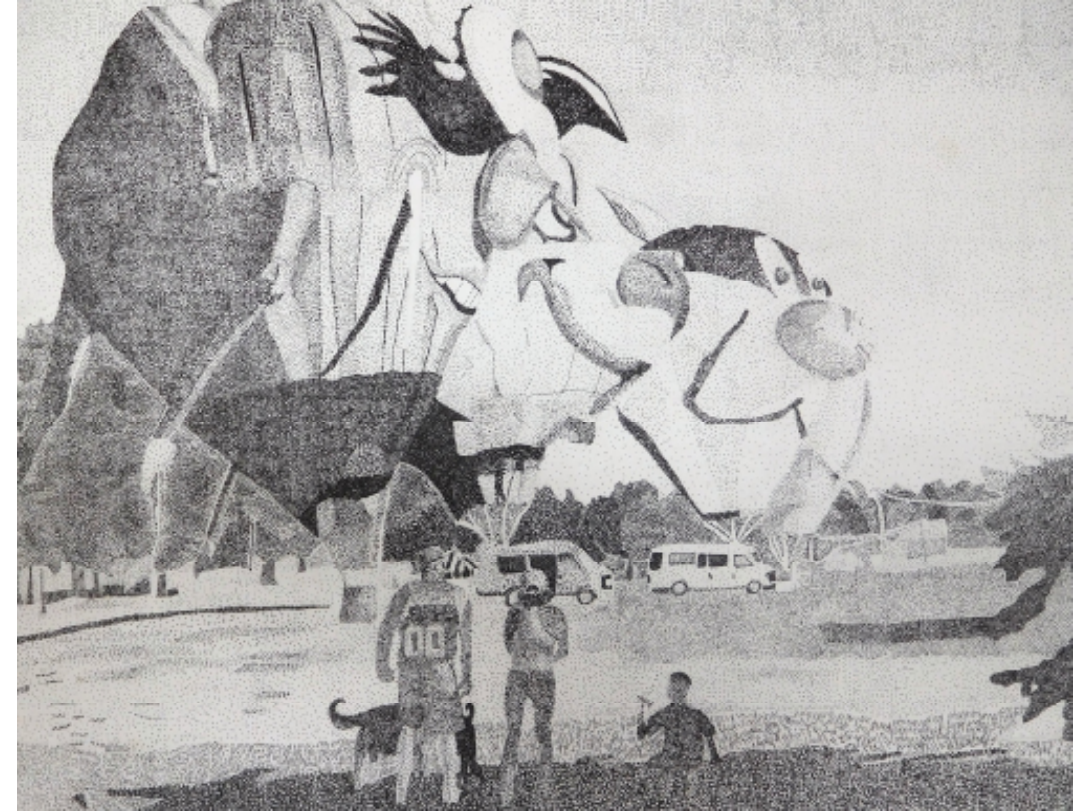
Had not the liberate.
Know not whether to set or tear myself apart.
Hidden, I can no longer accommodate
The feelings welded like leeches to the heart.

The world has yet to alter toward
Those to learn the fight of the elusive.
They are not the ones to uphold an accord.
I remain a fugitive, *always a fugitive.*

Dear Preceptor, show me how the elusive wove.
Oh, why must we veil their trove?

Soul
Ashley Dunn

If you could see your soul tonight,
How much would you grieve?
For all the damage it has suffered,
And all the broken pieces that are missing.
For all the time that's been wasted,
And all the harsh words that bite.
We try to express how we feel with words,
But they never turn out quite right.
So, when people ask how you're doing,
You tell them you're no longer construing.
Because you're trying to hold on tight.



Hot Heads
Baily Stanton
Ink

Blurred Words
Shayla Drzycimski

The stars shined unimaginably bright,
But failed to hide the stiffness of
The suffocating air that surrounded her.
The metal chair became colder against her back
with each word she read.
They would sentence her to months of darkness,
Despite the blinding light from the screen.
The words blurred in and out of focus,
Due to the water that gathered at her eyes.
But that didn't stop the message from being clear.
The chair rocked her back and forth,
Hoping to calm her.
Its paint chipped with the movement
And floated onto her hands,
Some landing to hide the most hurtful of words.
Their bright color had turned dull,
Just as her heart soon would.
"It's a normal thing in life",
they all say, hoping to console.
That may be true but,
it can't little the hurt she wished would leave.
Only time chases that away.



Bloomin
Victoria Russell
Collage

A Ballad of Female History

(So Much to Write About)

-with inspiration from Langston Hughes

Dawn Munro

There is so much to write about
Within the female history.
On each page,
Glow a kind face.
Eve comes to mind
In the beginning
Woman made for man
Perpetua and Felicitas
Sentenced to death by a man,
The Christian tunics stained in blood.

There is so much to write about
Within the female history.
Though now the mightiness of Cleopatra
Is thought of as a beautiful myth
Once ruling empires, commanding armies
She is now just a pretty face in the book of history.
Why are women silenced
When they been populating the world
Since the earth began to spin.

There is so much to write about
Within the female history.
Women have been changing the world
For 3,200,000 years
Lucy, the beginning
Knight, the female Edison
Tereshkova, the first woman to explore the galaxies
Curie, the brightest biologist to grace the earth
Earhart, the first woman to travel the skies
Anthony, the woman to give a voice to other women

There is so much to write about
Within the female history
So many strong women
Erased from the pages.
We must not forget
Rosalind's secrets were stolen by a man
Mr. Keane gets all the credit for the art his Mrs. made
And the heroes
Who tended to men back in Vietnam.

Sylvia Plath
Penned her rhymes of lyric lace-----
All the sadness and the humor
Within the female history.
To the words of female congresswomen
The Halls of Congress rang.
Mamie, The Queen of the Blues.
Monroe and Hepburn ruled the 50's.
But still today women are forced to
hang their head in shame.

1920-----The Roaring Twenties!
Women began the mighty struggle
For a rightful place
In the making of America
Women fought for what they believed
Like Joan of Arc in 1433
For their mothers-----
For their daughters---
For her sisters-----
For me.

The story is one of struggle
For the women of history-----
But in spite of all the inequality,
We've marched on to take our places:
Stanton, Women's History Month,
Parks, Dickinson, Rankin,
Truth, Blackwell, Nightingale,
The cultural record grew.

There is so much to write about
To sing about, to shout about
Within the female history!
On each page of history
A woman shadowed by a man-----
On each page of history
Women tall and short straight and gay black and white-----
On each page of history
My sisters!
My sisters!
My sisters!



Garden Delight
Angela Feraci
Colored Pen

Roots

Isabella Thompson

As much as I may not like it,
you're here for a reason.

*I remove my
pink-colored glasses,
and am able to see
how the sunlight
is dulled in your eyes,
and how your smile
is twisted, plastic-tasting.
The woman standing next to me
removes hers as well,
the same exact pair,
and she looks at your face,
her insides melting
and mouth corners rising,
as if she never took the glasses off.*

You're someone's beautiful,
someone's "accidental" snapshot
taken in a kitchen, draped with morning sun,
someone's warm farewell,
someone's something.

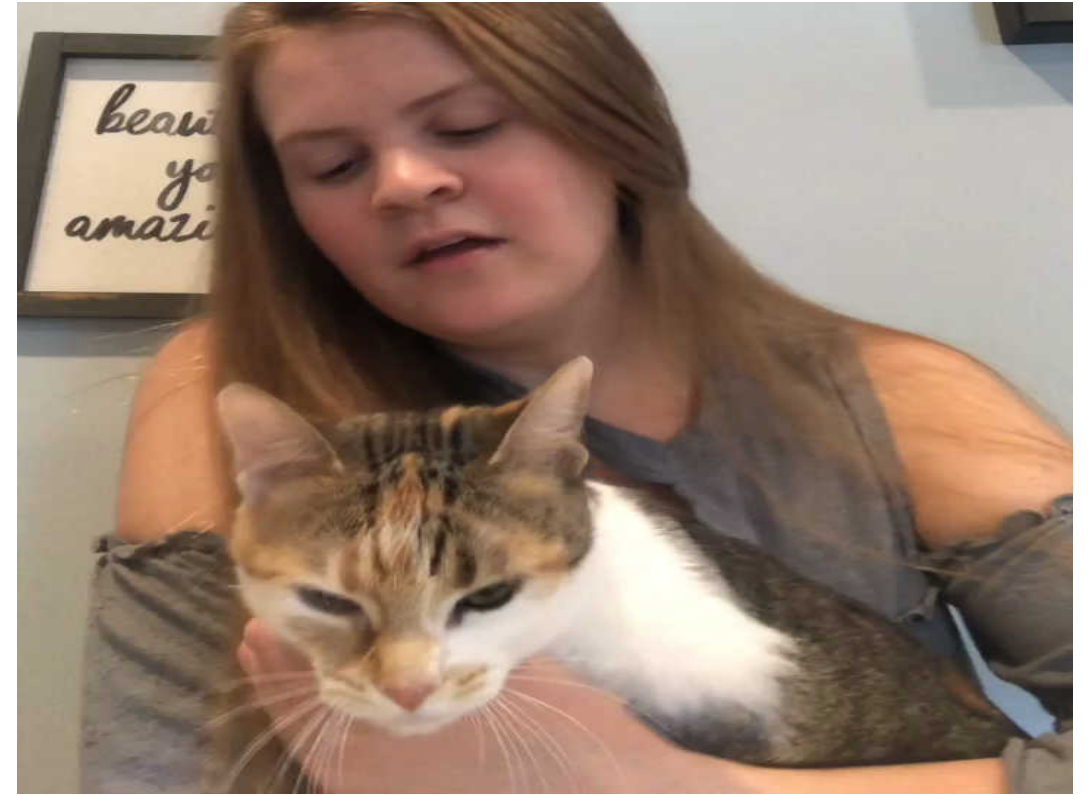
It's selfish to pretend I'm the only character in this story arc.

*I pick up the phone off of the wall,
and I reach down to the
dust-dripping slip of paper
wedged underneath a stack of
Southern Living magazines.
My eyes carefully scan the digits
messily written on it.
Yellow-tipped fingers
nervously twist around the coils of cord
as loops of beeping play.
A soft greeting is heard from the other end,
and I feel the anxiety swirling with
feelings reminiscent of rich morning coffee.*

"Hey! How've you been?"



Sunbathing
Caroline Walton
Photography



Alyssa Fillingane
Singing "Control"
Composed by Tenth Avenue North
(click to play!)

6-Word Memoirs

Speak even if your
voice shakes - Dawn
Munro



No Half measures
Deal With It

YOU
WANT TO
LISTEN
TO ME?



Hint of Orange
Caroline Walton
Photography