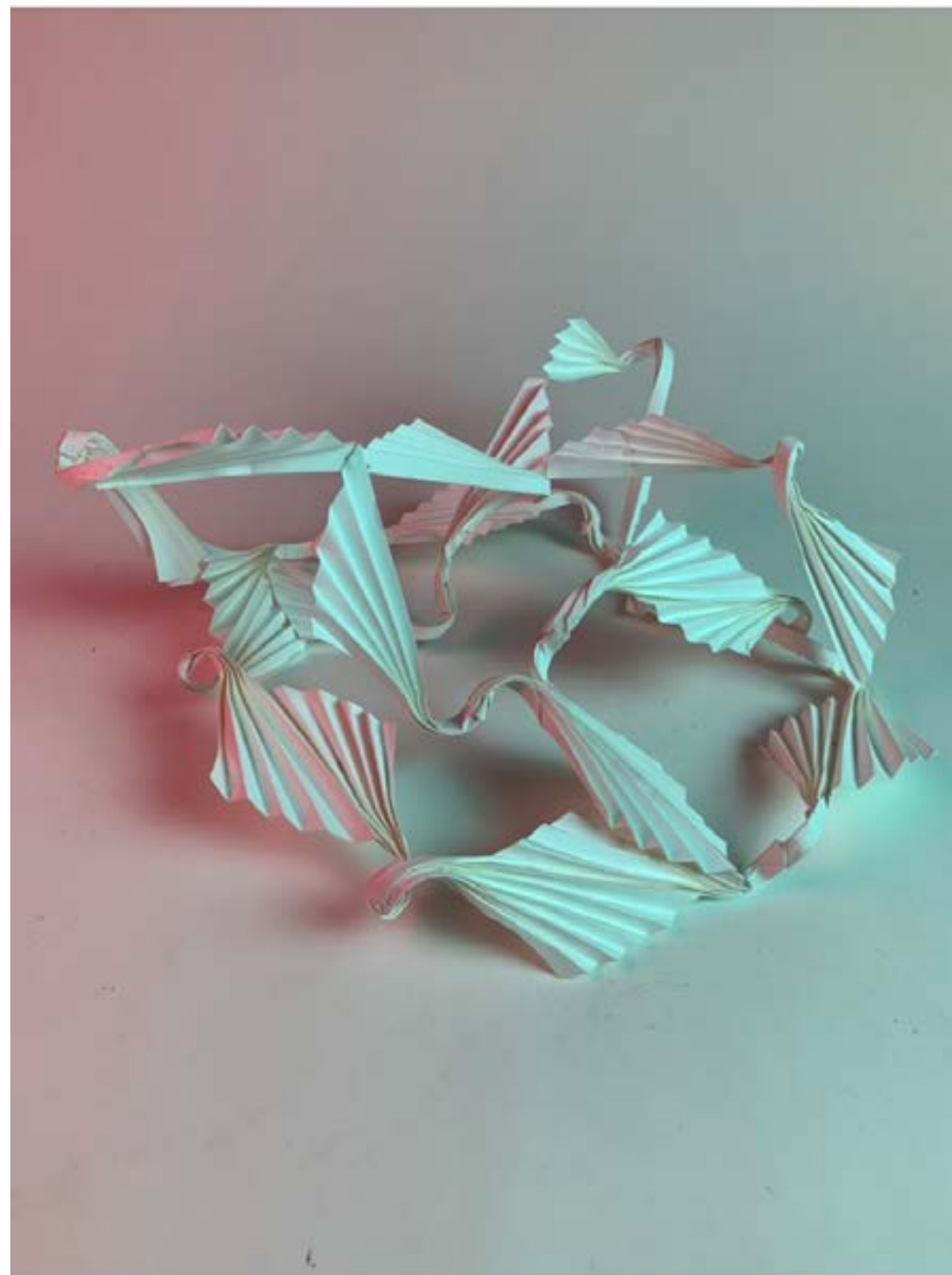


# SINK HOLLOW

ISSUE 8





## Editor's Note

To make a magazine, we seek contrast and even the tension of contradiction.

We hunt for the words that defy experience, and experiences that defy words alone but must be captured by clever poetic contraptions and literary devices that violate the architecture of language and definitions in order to teach us what we can't know by conventional means. We crave the ingenious art of using words to drag meaning outside the semantic containment of words. There's contradiction! This is the skill of infusing words with the power to evoke emotion and connection. The work of the poet, the artist, the storyteller, is that of building connections and breaking the restraints of expectation.

As you dig into issue 8, I hope you get lost in the images. I hope you lift the words off the page by speaking them aloud. Consider that the eyes use a different part of the brain than the ears, and speech is older than written language. Words without voice are half dead, and these words deserve to have a life off the page. Poetry and stories—true or imagined—ought to dance around in the reader's mind and rattle things loose. These will if you permit them.

Sink Hollow is a vector for art and ideas. Art isn't just something beautiful or terrible or sad put into the world. It's not an object or a song or words or an image—it's whatever makes those who experience it, whatever it is, beautiful or terrible or sad along with it. The viewer, the reader, is where art is alive. The audience is the true medium—not canvas and paint, marble, or language. We hope you enjoy being art.

Marie Skinner  
Editor in Chief

Image-6399

Amber Healey

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\*Cover Art





Faded  
Zane Jolley

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# Alone

Ellis Gibson

I saw the long gold beams, slow-gliding from the sun.  
The light struck many black birds, soaring.  
They knew how to be together.

Then one sung, cradled in the dense branches, for all of them.  
This is what the sky was made for.

I think a person can be reborn.



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# Still Standing

Zane Jolley



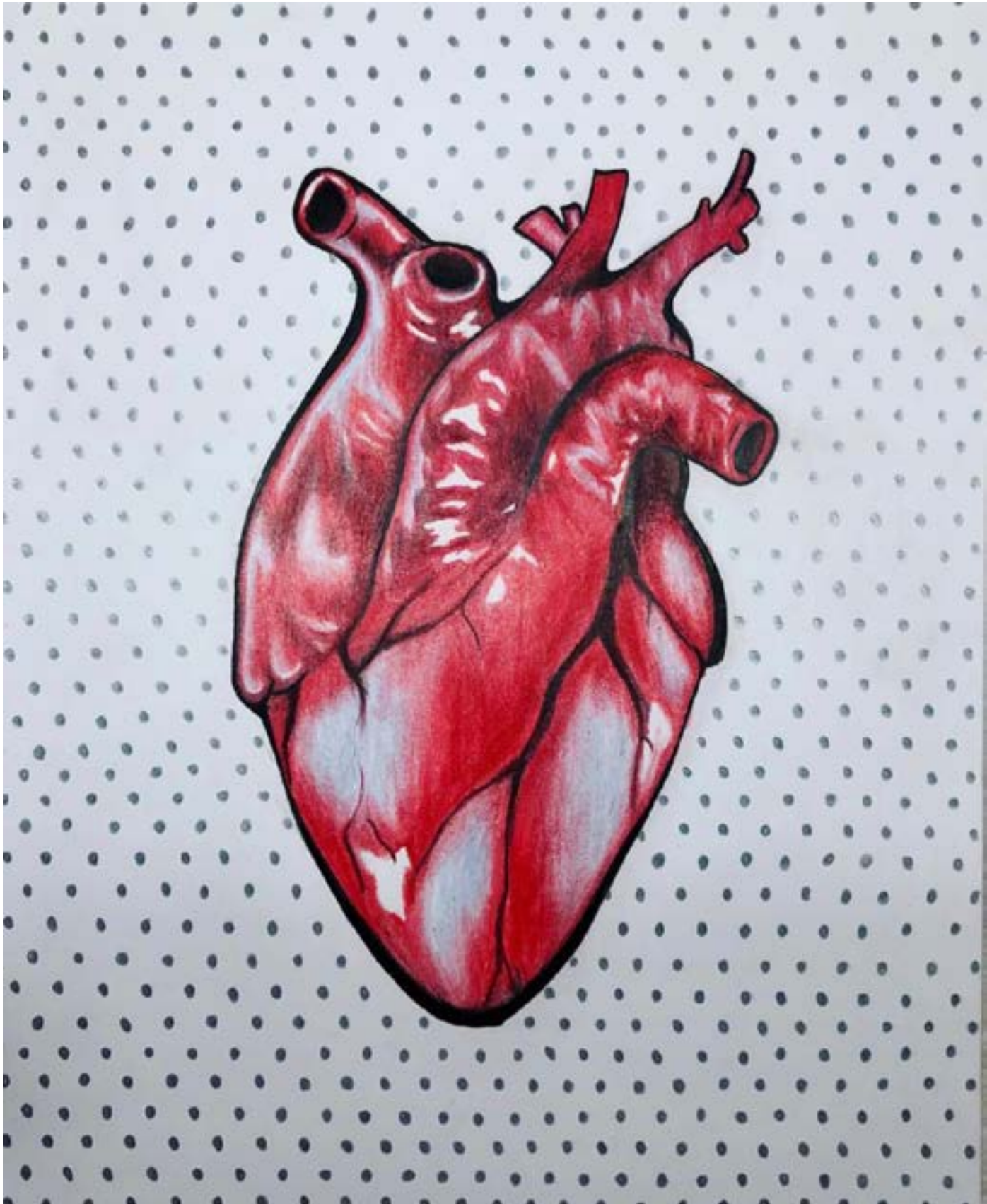


Image-1154

Kathryn Semus

## Yearn

Bryan Michielsen

Smoke lingered in the air as we left the dying fire to smolder. I can still hear the nylon tent’s zipper that he pulled upward as we ducked our heads and crawled inside. The conformity of the air mattress was annoying, but we made do.

After we settled and the rustling of our sleeping bags hushed, it was silent. The world was empty, only us and the crickets.

He slowly rolled toward me until his body touched mine and he laid against my side. I didn’t dare turn my head, so I stared at the tent roof. I’d never been this close to another guy before.

He began to talk as if everything was normal. I told myself to play it cool. He already knew I liked him, but I didn’t want him to notice how emotionally paralyzed I was.

The air temperature dropped as the night spit dew on the grass. Our teeth clacked together as our bodies shivered and shook. He propped himself on his elbow and I heard a zip. My blood filled with adrenaline. He held up the open flap to his sleeping bag. “Do you want to get in with me?” he asked.

I smiled and said, “Sure.”

There was much less space than I had anticipated, but I didn’t mind. My head laid on his chest like a pillow, my right arm across his abdomen, and our legs tangled, a puzzle for the morning. The sleeping bag held us tightly in place as his Versace cologne enchanted me.

“I’m not gay,” he whispered.

“I know.” I sighed and squeezed him tighter.





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IMG-4510

Amber Healey



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# Woman's Work

Emily Baker

“Judith Slaying Holofernes,” by Artemisia Gentileschi

You didn't shy away from the violence  
that a woman could wreak on a man, unlike your male  
contemporaries. The painting always drew me:  
the light on skin and rumpled velvet comforter  
scarlet as a heart, the shadow of the sword, the taut  
strength in the hand gripping the slain  
king's dark curls, the pretty sleeves rolled up  
out of the way of crimson arterial spray like a mom  
attempting to save her Sunday clothes from dirty dishwasher,  
the exquisitely detailed folds in the fabric of her dress,  
the mattress, and the sheet his naked,  
thrashing body is tangled in.

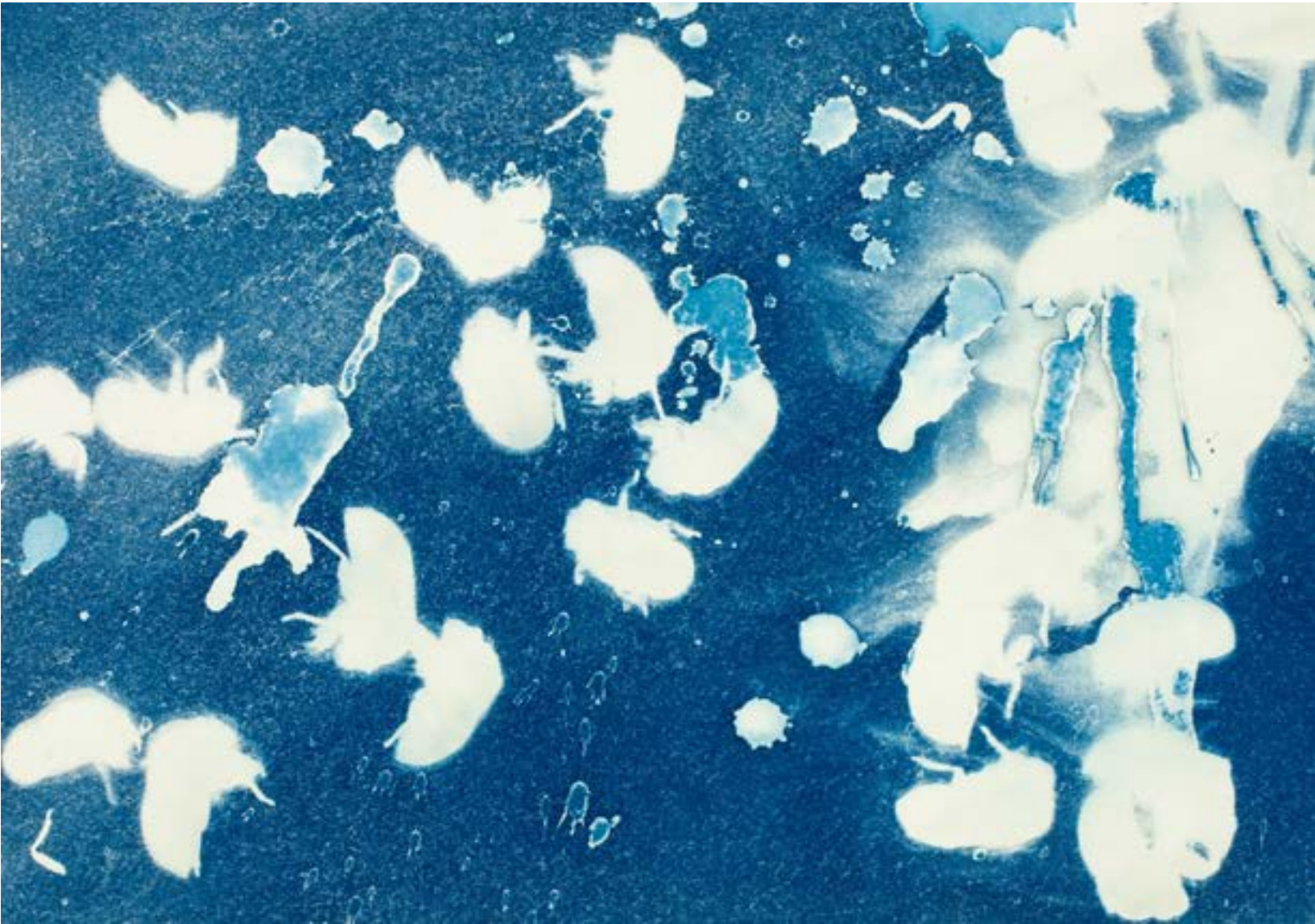
The expressions captivated me the most:  
the determination and tired scorn  
on Judith, that wasn't enough  
to droop her shoulders or shake her resolve  
to cut their kingdom free of a tyrant  
by carving his own blade between his head and shoulders—  
the surprise on Holofernes' face, as if victory-drunk  
and wine-proud he had never seen it coming.

The surprise is my favorite part.

You were the only one who didn't flinch,  
who didn't dress your Judith in white, make her hold  
her enemy at arm's length to kill him with a look of shame  
painting her cheeks— or worse— take her picture  
with the head already in the basket, sneaking from the tent.

I know parts of your story now, hunt goddess:  
victim, survivor, silenced warrior with charcoal sword  
who had to paint over Susannah screaming  
as the elders pulled her hair and held her down  
against a fate no less final than the one Judith sliced,  
scrubbing out some of the horror you knew only too well.

We're still wrestling some of your paintings away  
from your father's name, but we do the work  
with sleeves rolled up, sword in hand, and mouths set  
in a frown at the tasks we take in our fists like  
laundry, cooking, cleaning, and revolution.



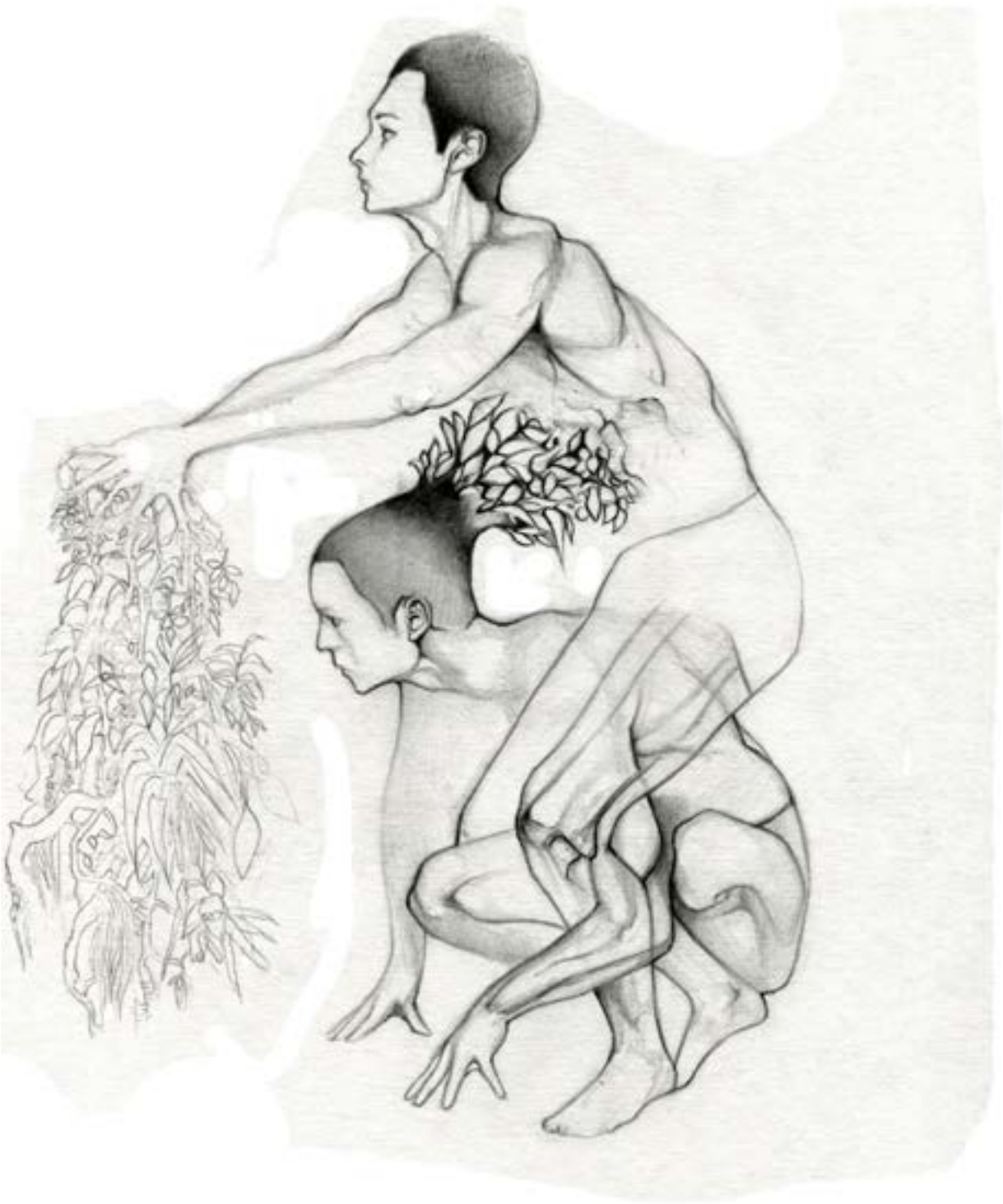
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# Cicade

Ash Derry

White Heaven  
Kyle Okeke

He wanted vile,  
Dirt coloured  
Voracious eyes;  
He wanted raunch,  
Virile tongues tied;  
He wanted-  
    Forgive me-  
    I  
Wanted to smell  
A man, a dirt  
Coloured under-  
Garment; His eyes  
    Saw, swept,  
So we  
Collapsed-  
No rhythm  
Nor rhyme-  
How wild,  
    Twisted,  
    Two men  
Are    In musk,  
    In wrong,  
    In heat,  
    Forbade;  
Forgive me,  
I'm    On knees,  
    White-glazed,  
And after sin  
    I'm covered in  
Roaches.       Roaches?       Roaches!  
Yet I  
Still kiss  
    Him,   Heaven,  
    Goodbye.



Growth  
Angjelin Hila





How Do I Change

Angel Gonzales



Extract on Quotations

Angjelin Hila



Artist Spotlight

Charity Poole



Collection of Days

Charity Poole



La Battaglia

Charity Poole





Time

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Charity Poole





— Humble Gifts —  
Charity Poole



— In\_Shadow —  
Charity Poole



# Ogre

Avishai Sol

Garth was so ticked off he had to go downtown and eat a child. Walking down Fifth Avenue surrounded by tops of heads reminded Garth of the crowd he'd left at the firm, all smiling white faces guzzling shitty wine for Amanda's birthday, or Sue's birthday, Garth didn't know. What he did know was that there had certainly been invites, and he did not receive one. It was the same situation with the Secret Santa project or the New Year's party or the office fantasy football league. So now he walked the streets. Garth enjoyed the city. It was one of the few places he could blend in, become part of the throng. New York made Garth feel small; it gave him company, and space to spread out.

Picking at the bit of corduroy still stuck in his teeth, Garth passed another hot dog stand. One of those big Greek carts where everything is large and drippy and falls apart in your lap. Garth was also large, large and ugly, with loping arms and shoulders like a desk. 'Maybe that was why' he thought, 'maybe that was why those scarecrows at the firm hadn't invited him.' Maybe because Garth's pointed, bald, head always hit the doorframe on the way out of his cubical. Maybe because Garth's voice matched his teeth, crooked, and bricklike, and black.



Exo

Ash Derry

Published by DigitalCommons@USU, 2020

Garth jammed his hands into his jacket and crumpled up the loose receipt tucked into the corner pocket. He threw it over his shoulder in the same loose wristed motion with which had been addressed with at the birthday party. Garth then gave a passing taxi a sarcastic little wave, mirroring the way a group of his cackling blond co-workers had ushered him out of the office.

A pigeon flew overhead, gargling a low hoot. Ever since Garth was a little boy he had dreamed of eating a pigeon, though was yet to realize the ambition. Garth didn't really have quick hands, and he was far too clever to go chasing pigeons down Fifth Avenue anyway.

As he neared the Empire State building the street began to thicken. Garth waded through a river of heads catching a couple eyes, but they never stayed for long. Ducking slightly as he entered the rotating glass door, Garth emerged into the bustling foyer and proceeded to another line, then another. All the security folk knew Garth by now. His regular visits to the building had ensured Garth's face was not one that the blue-coated men and women of the Empire State foyer would forget. Garth had been there so often that he knew many of the guards by name. He caught the eye of a new face as he passed under the metal detector. Pausing to read the guard's nametag, Garth's voice rumbled out in friendly greeting.

“Good morning Ezra.”

Ezra looked startled to be addressed by name and nodded jerkily in Garth's direction, but said nothing. Garth wondered why he'd had wished Ezra a good morning—it wasn't morning; it hadn't been morning for a long time. Garth nodded at a couple more of the guards, none of them nodded back. Garth knew nearly all of them by name, but to the security staff Garth was just what he looked like: the lonely giant with the black teeth.

Garth always enjoyed the long elevator ride up. The many buttons on the spacious lift were entertaining enough, but combine that with the wide berth other riders gave Garth and the elevator became downright roomy. Perhaps it was his intimidating stature that drove the people away; perhaps it was his stench.

The lift would go four or so floors then stop, five more, sometimes as much as fourteen. Motion sickness was inevitable on a busy day like today. Garth did not enjoy all the stop and start and took note of the gurgle in his stomach and the heat of the

elevator. Garth stood in the left corner of the lift with his head inches away from the ceiling. Taking a sweeping glance around the room, Garth heard a blowing noise to his right. Looking down to the buttoned side of the lift, Garth watched a small brown-skinned boy make explosion sounds as he smashed two toys together. Garth could smell him. The boy would swing a toy around his head making a whistling sound as he did, and then he would slam the toy into the other, blowing spit out of his puckered mouth in a raspberry. Garth was fascinated. He followed the boy's story with rapt attention, each clash more violent than the last, each meeting of plastic combatants had more grit and determination than the one before it.

After many doors and floors the boy finally smashed the toys together with enough force that one of their arms flew off. Garth gave a little gasp and clapped his hands together in delight, causing a few of the more distracted people in the lift to jump at the noise. Garth was treated to their sideways glances for the rest of the ride up, but he didn't care. 'What a finale,' Garth thought to himself, as the boy was led out of the lift by his hairy-wristed mother.

A few more floors passed in stop and start fashion. Garth farted.

Garth decided on a whim to get off at 98 and walk the last few floors. The remaining few riders looked relieved to see the back of Garth's neck crane through the double doors as they dinged open to let him out.

Going three steps at a time, Garth was almost alone in the stairwell. A few 'no exit signs' and an occasional fire alarm lined the white drywall, but only the distant echo of squeaky shoes broke the quiet. Breathing through his teeth as the topmost platform came into view, the door swung open even before Garth could reach the push-pole handle. A young couple came blushing and giggling out from behind it. The girl's face changed when she saw who was striding up the stairwell towards her and the smirking boy put his hand on her back as he ushered her past. Garth climbed the last few steps one at a time.

The top of the Empire State Building was coated along the edges in young people, school field trips, and a camera-wielding Korean tour group. Garth squinted in the glare reflecting off the Gatsby Enterprise building and blocked out the sun with his hand. Moving out from the doorway, Garth waded through the gaggle of Koreans to get a better view of the surrounding buildings. Craning over the edge he could see

down to the sidewalk and the multi-colored grains of rice scurrying along below, each of them washed orange in the light from the Gatsby Enterprise. Garth wrapped his long fingers around his gizzard and leaned against the railing. He took a deep breath through his nose and blew out threw his protruding lips just like the boy had done.

Just as he was about to try and hock a loogie over the edge of the building, Garth heard woman shriek from behind him. Quickly swallowing his snot, Garth turned and looked to see the Korean tour group create a semi-circle around two figures, one of whom was in the middle of proposing. The two hugged as all the Korean women on the balcony simultaneously swooned. Camera clicks and laughing followed as staff emerged from inside the Empire State Building carrying bottles of wine and plastic cups. All of the school field trips converged on the wine despite their chaperones' protests, and the Korean tour group took turns congratulating the giggling fiancés and smiled and danced and drank and stayed at the Empire State building for much longer than their schedules said they would.

It took Garth a minute to crack a smile; the movement made his cheeks creak. Watching the mismatched crowd sheepishly boogie across the Empire State balcony put a beat in his step. As the volume got adjusted his tap became a two-step, then a shuffle. It wasn't until a peck of pigeons took off together off the railing that Garth hoisted himself off the railing and sprang into the crowd.

Towering above the rest of the dancers, Garth couldn't help but laugh as he slid and skipped across the concrete floor. He shot his black teeth around at everybody in the room and everyone smiled back.

Garth danced with the rooftop crowd as long as anyone there, longer than the Korean tour group, longer than the fiancés. He bobbed around like a pigeon or a ball, catching child-flavored burps in the back of his throat.





Eye in the Natural Window  
Emerson Little



## Blind Reflections

Angel Gonzales

## Untitled

Keagan Wheat

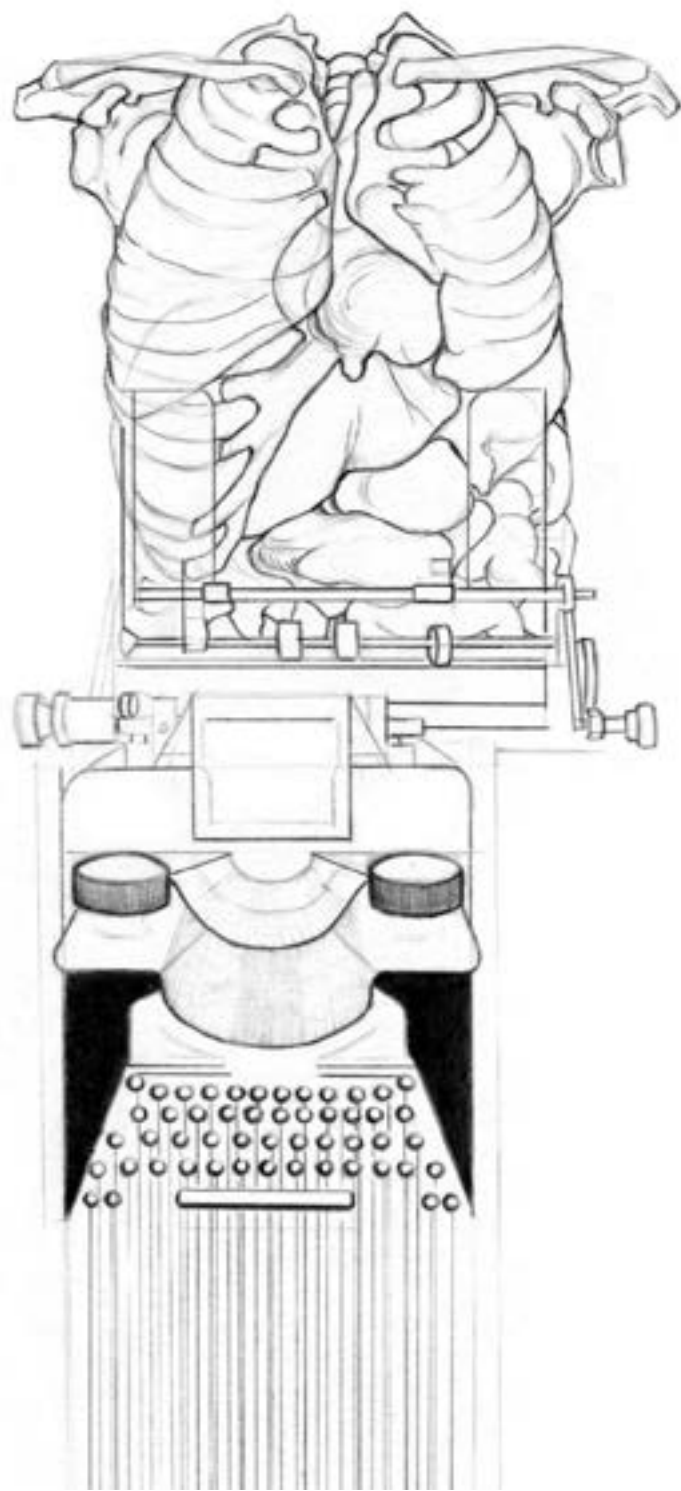
When “\_\_\_” looks into  
your eyes a deep muck brown  
with dark gray circling irises.

Often I forget my name  
as I meet the handshake.  
I worry genuinely  
about people accusing me  
of being a spy or stealing  
another’s identity.

I called myself Alex  
lied to anyone as I  
grinned with anxiety.  
It’s reflexive when your  
legal name refuses  
to attach.

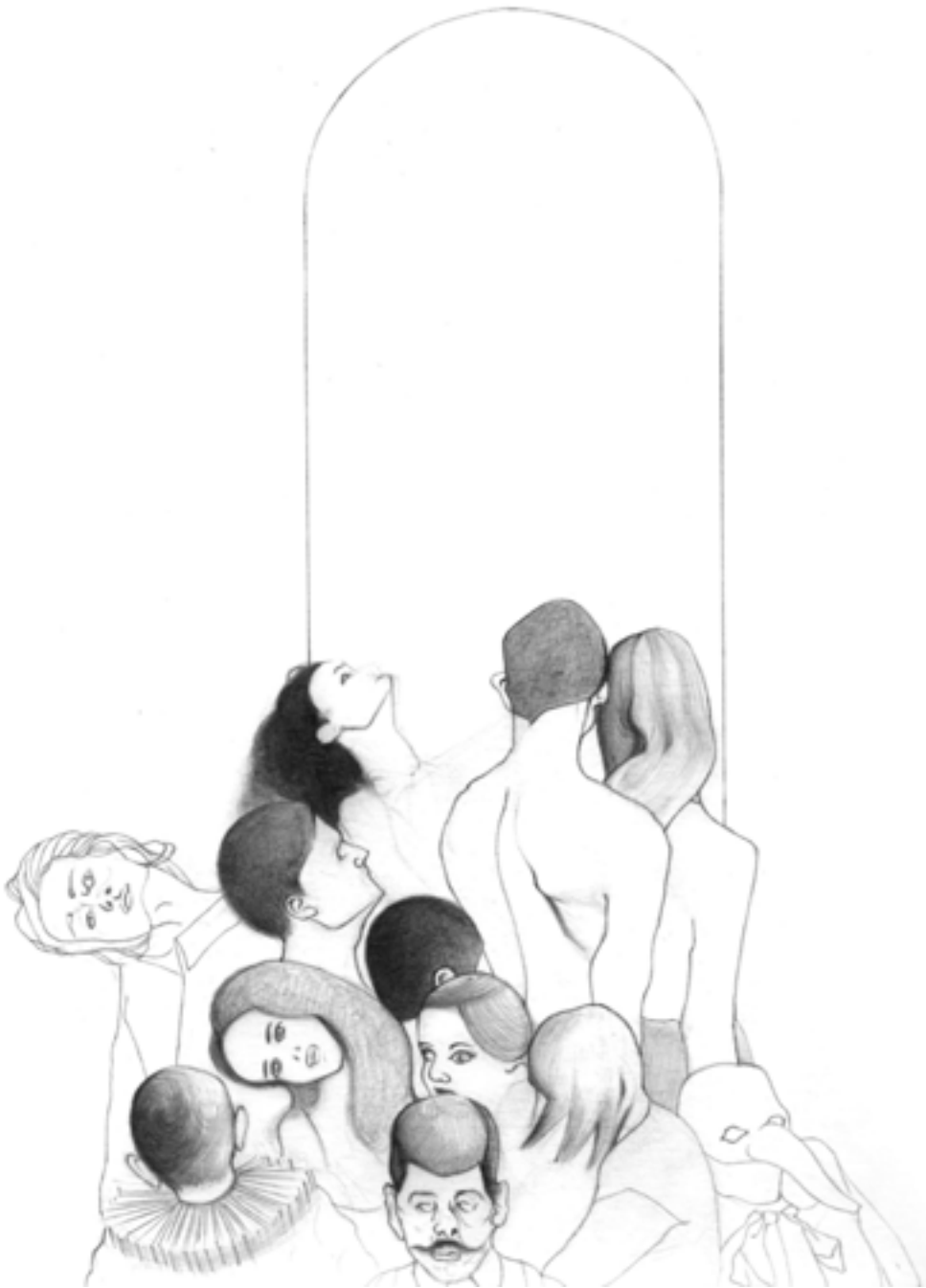
I don’t have a backstory  
down to give out  
to prove I am the person  
they constantly see.





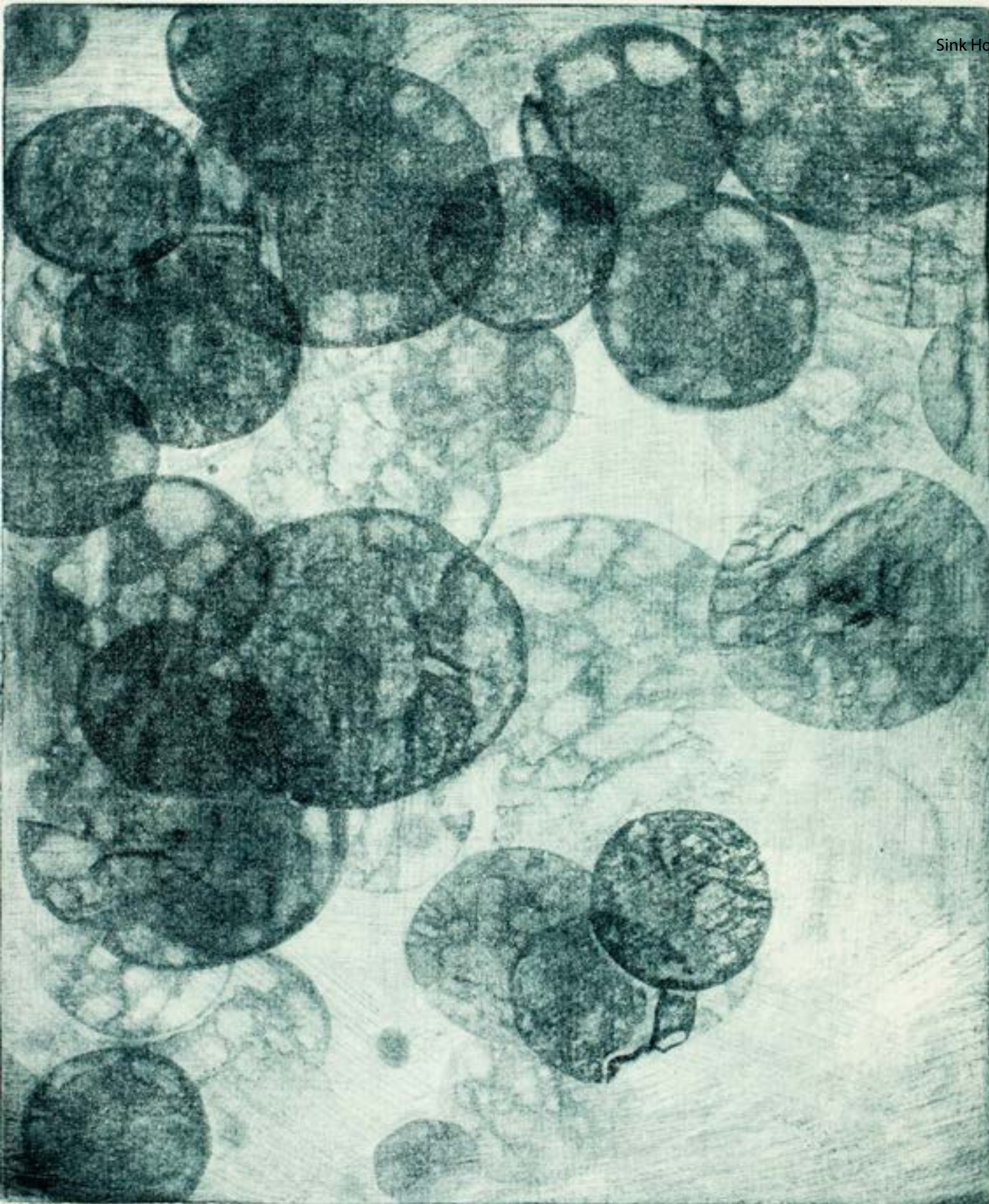
Tabulating Endoskeleton

Angjelin Hila



Troupe

Angjelin Hila



## — Sherman Alexie puts a hand on my knee —

Emily Clarke

in the little white church house and says “I am your hero.” I know I have no choice. I know I am as much his as I am my own. I know when they ask me about my favorite writer his name will still dangle off my tongue easy and sweet. And it feels good, most of the time, to finally say what they want me to. Fulfilling expectations is safe and it’s good to feel safe when you live life in fear of losing your own skin. But tonight, in the last pew, I know I’m lying when I smile. Coyote was a trickster and my worship is no different. My hero has taken off his mask. My hero has screamed, but only the ancestors have screamed back. The rest of us have woven our lips closed. I let Sherman rest his hand there, atop the half-moon scar on my leg. The women whose bodies he’s colonized hang by red thread from the arched ceilings above us. They hang like the Jesus neither of us believe in hangs from the cross. I breathe in unison with the bodies above me. Our heartbeats synchronize. But Sherman, he doesn’t breathe at all. His heart is buried deep in his belly. The only sound his body gives to me is the low howl of his grinding teeth.

## — Trapped\_Oxygen\_Lg —

Ash Derry





— IMG\_4474 —  
Amber Healy



— IMG\_4472 —  
Amber Healy





IMG-3462

Kathryn Semus

Untitled

Keagan Wheat

No one questions a butch lesbian  
walking the Dyke march.  
But I stand just a little bit off  
in this visible link  
connecting code,  
still not quite in line.

Community of radical inclusion  
taught me every piece of queer knowledge  
I have  
an unrelenting care that comes  
through asking permission  
for hugs.

I can't regrow my queer  
beginnings into the FTM community.  
Though I learned the language,  
still slip into my soft butch accent,  
retain a certain gait.





Peaceful Fog  
Zane Jolley

# Daughterhood

Evelyn Maguire

The first time you realize your mother is more than your mother, that she is called “Anne,” and the word feels both exhilarating and forbidden and crawls up and down your arms when it rolls off the tongue of a man-guest at dinner, is the first of many nails that board up the windows of your childhood. You notice new things about her, this mother that is now her and she and looks beautiful in that dress and exquisite cook. Has she always glittered when she laughed, leaning forward and touching the hand across from hers? Have her nails always dripped ruby red, drawing the eye to wherever they touched: her flaxen hair, her gentle wrists, the toned arms that once held you, and now may hold him? When was the last time you knew her? Has it been weeks? Months? Years?

Him. You cannot ignore how he looks at her over the rim of the wine glass. How in-between bites and sips his gaze trails along her neck, her shoulders, her figure. Is it his attention that has transformed your mother? Is he the source of this irrevocable shift that now causes your own eyes to consider her neck, her shoulders, her figure? Or has she been changing, subtly, slowly, beautifully, terribly, right before you each and every day? You cannot ignore how he says her name, over and over again: Anne, Anne, Anne. You cannot ignore how his knee brushes against hers underneath the table; do they think you don’t notice? Do they think you don’t know the implication of that intimate touch? Or, do they even remember that you’re here at all? You cannot ignore how she doesn’t look your way, at this kitchen table that used to belong to just you two. Do you love her more for these realizations?

Do you hate her?

How long has it been since the pale line on her ring finger that once meant Mother and Wife has been colored back in to Woman?



# Two Geishas

Angjelin Hila





IMG-3463

Kathryn Semus

# BIOGRAPHIES

## ART

### Ash Derry

Ash Derry is an undergraduate student at Western Illinois University. A lifelong midwesterner, Ash's art tends to focus on nature and a variety of printmaking mediums such as intaglio, lithography and cyanotypes. She has an affinity for disc bound planners and feels strongly about not mixing peppermint and chocolate. In her spare time, Ash experiments with hair color and alternative photographic processes.

### Angel Gonzales

Angel Gonzales is an undergraduate student at the University of California Santa Cruz. She loves experimental printmaking and anything to do with art.

### Amber Healy

Amber Healey is a sophomore studying art and creative writing at Utah State University. She loves poetry and nature photography and finds her artistic inspiration from exploring Utah's many natural wonders.

### Angjelin Hila

Angjelin is a Librarian and artist currently pursuing a visual arts minor at the University of Toronto. He divides his spare time between writing, finding articulation for his next image, and wondering if once in a while the apple does fall far from the tree.

### Zane Jolley

Zane Jolley is an undergraduate student at Utah State University. He enjoys challenging the way we view the world with his photography.

### Emerson Little

Emerson Little is an undergraduate student at Whittier College. He loves photographing and filming the natural landscapes of the Southwest.

### Charity Poole

Charity Poole is a BFA candidate at the University of Kansas, working primarily in the mediums of metalsmithing and photography. She draws much inspiration from poetry and often combines writing with her visual art. Both her metalwork and photography have earned her featured publications, exhibitions and awards, including exhibition at Society of North American Goldsmith's Exhibition in Motion runway show, the Spencer Museum of Art's student exhibition for which she was awarded the top prize, and Best in Show and Honorable Mention awards for work exhibited at University of Kansas' LibArt exhibition. She currently resides in Lawrence, Kansas.

### Kathryn Semus

Kathryn Semus and is a junior in the Graphic Design program at Utah State University. She is from Cleveland, Ohio and made her way to Utah for her studies. She have always loved art, and studying graphic arts in college has been a great addition to her artistic abilities. She also plays violin and viola, and has a passion for music.



# BIOGRAPHIES

## POETRY

### Emily Baker

Emily Baker is a senior writing major at Lee University, who is good at baking and less good at keeping plants alive. She specializes in poetry and short fiction, but just loves the art of a good story in any form.

### Emily Clarke

Emily Clarke is a Cahuilla Native American writer, student, bead artist, activist, cordage instructor, and traditional Bird Dancer. Emily’s work has been featured in journals such as *News From Native California*, *Four Winds Literary Journal*, *Anti Heroin Chic*, and *Hoot Review*. She has been a featured reader at events such as Indigenous Now, The Earth Was Shaken, and UCLA’s Environmentalists of Color Climate Justice Forum. Currently, Emily is studying Creative Writing at UC Riverside and is writing work exploring modern Cahuilla identity, female anatomy, social justice, and human intimacy.

### Ellis Gibson

Ellis Gibson is an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University. They have been known to write poems.

### Kyle Okeke

Kyle Oh is an undergraduate student at the University of Houston. He’s majoring in economics and minoring in creative writing. He typically writes about gayness and sometimes its conflicts with his Nigerian culture, but when he’s not writing, he enjoys playing a variety of video games.

### Keagan Wheat

Keagan Wheat is the Poetry Editor for *Defunkt*, the Reviews Editor for *Glass Mountain*, and an inaugural fellow in the WITS Emerging Writers Fellowship. Moving through the UH creative writing department, his poetry often focuses on transgender identity and how others, especially family, interact with that identity. He has been published by Z Publishing in *Texas’s Best Emerging Poets*, the Fall 2018 Issue of the *Tulane Review*, and *Shards* Issues 4 and 7.



IMG-3465

Kathryn Semus

# BIOGRAPHIES

## FICTION

### Evelyn Maguire

Evelyn Maguire is a senior at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Her work has been featured in *The Foundationalist*.

### Avishai Sol

Avishai Sol is an undergraduate student at OCAD University in Toronto. He loves all kinds of creative writing and storytelling, and aspires to a career in literature. Please note that despite the character of Garth in “Ogre”, Avishai Sol does not condone eating children.

## NONFICTION

### Bryan Michielsen

Bryan Michielsen is an undergraduate student in the creative writing program at Monroe Community College. He loves to write, make music, and explore the hidden gems of Rochester. His writing appears in *Cabbages & Kings* and on his website, [bryanmichielsen.com](http://bryanmichielsen.com).

# STAFF

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