

Phineas



2020



Phineas



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Award Winners

Works noted by the * symbol in the contents list and by special notations within the magazine have been recognized by faculty judges as outstanding pieces in their genre. See last page of magazine for more information on the award winners and the faculty judges.

Dreams

Sitting in a lonely room, forsaken
Surrounded by the memory of you
I'm dreaming of our last kiss
My imminent rapture

I will engrave your song
Across an ocean of stars
That the angels may sing
In your dreams

I will engrave your dreams
On the skin of my heart
That I may remember them
With every heart beat

You are my song
My sweet melody
The missing piece
To my everlasting symphony

— *Kevin Rodriguez*

Love Poem #11

Feel my pulse and take notes
on what kind of music I require to write love poems
and how I take my tea during holidays
Why I use five pillows while sleeping
Please do your best

I'll feel your pulse and take notes
on why you like the things you do
How you prefer to spend your days off
Why you cherish the things you love
I'll do my best

Feel my pulse and take notes
on what I feel right now
How to make that last
Why it's so lovely
Let's do our best

— *Naomi Farkas*

Maypole in a Seaport

Lilting laughter steals across the dell,
As children play around the Maypole,
Innocent of life's craggy shoals,
Or the knell of a funeral bell.

They run to the spinning carousel,
Firmly grasping the flaxen hand holds.
And lilting laughter peals from the dell,
As children splay on the Maypole.

Ribbons and banners and sea shells
Adorn the post. Stories are told
Of wooden ships and heroes bold,
On high seas where water monsters dwell,
And lilting laughter fills the dell
As children lay about the Maypole.

— *David Begnell*

Moments

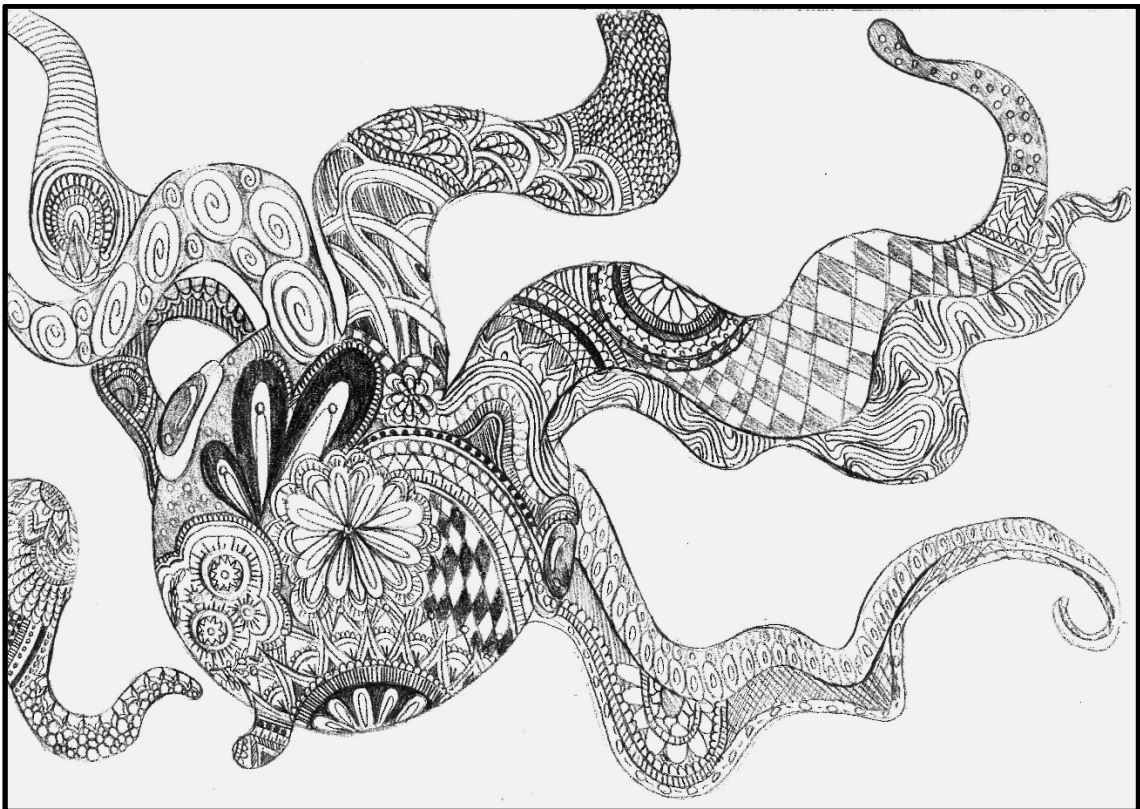
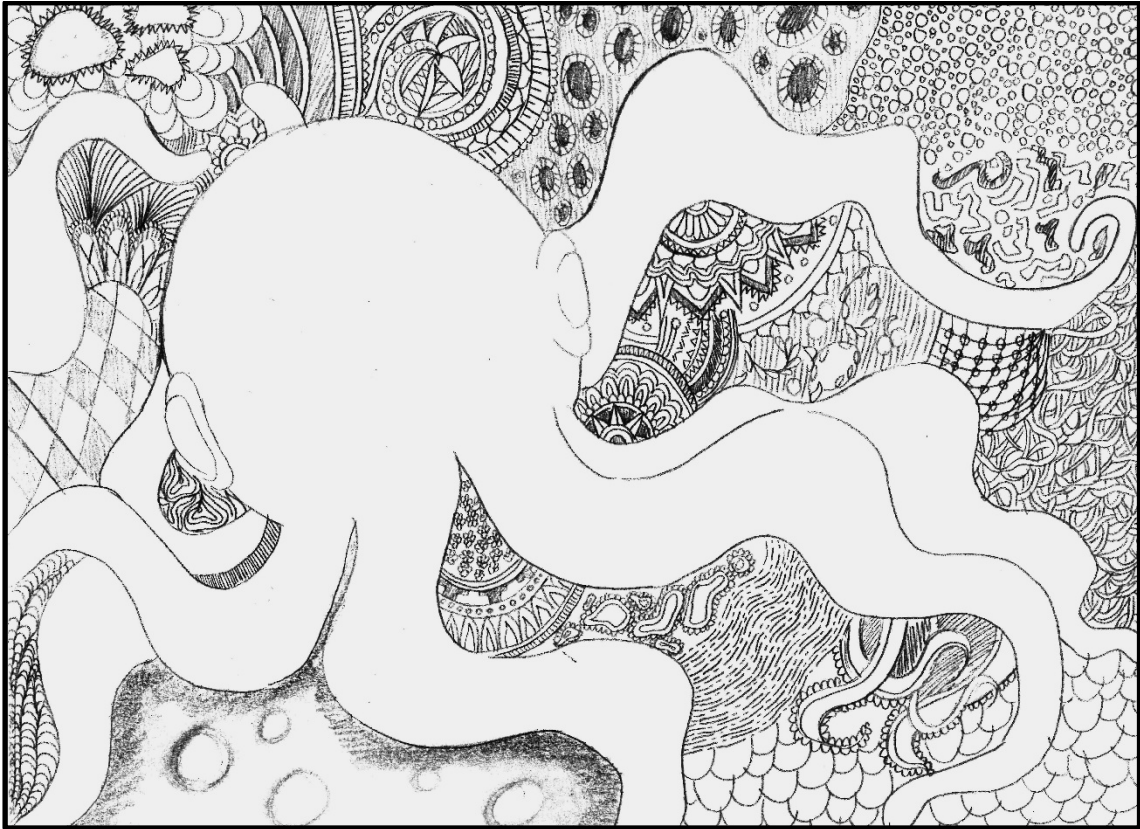
Even though moments seem like they will last forever, reality hits that they won't.
That used to petrify me.
I would turn into a scared fool chasing something that was already gone.
I was afraid of what people would say,
I was afraid that if I let go of your hand, you would fly away and shatter.
I remember all those times when I was so happy,
To the point where I was unable to breathe.
Even when we are far away, I always laughed in your direction.
I keep chasing that moment. Why am I still trying to recreate it?

I begin to row the boat again,
But I never untied it from the docks.
I lived pretending I was advancing somehow.
Its was like my brain was stalling,
Knowing it does not want to process reality to try to save my heart from this anguish.
I wear a mask to see you, but my ugliness peeks through the facade.
That horror! Oh! What horror it is to want to escape
From the island you've always known into waters that try to drown you.
In the end they will judge me anyway, so I might as well be me.
I finally want something stronger than a moment.

— *Patricia Galan*

Knot

Pencil



Hillary Wongkar

Liquid Sedative

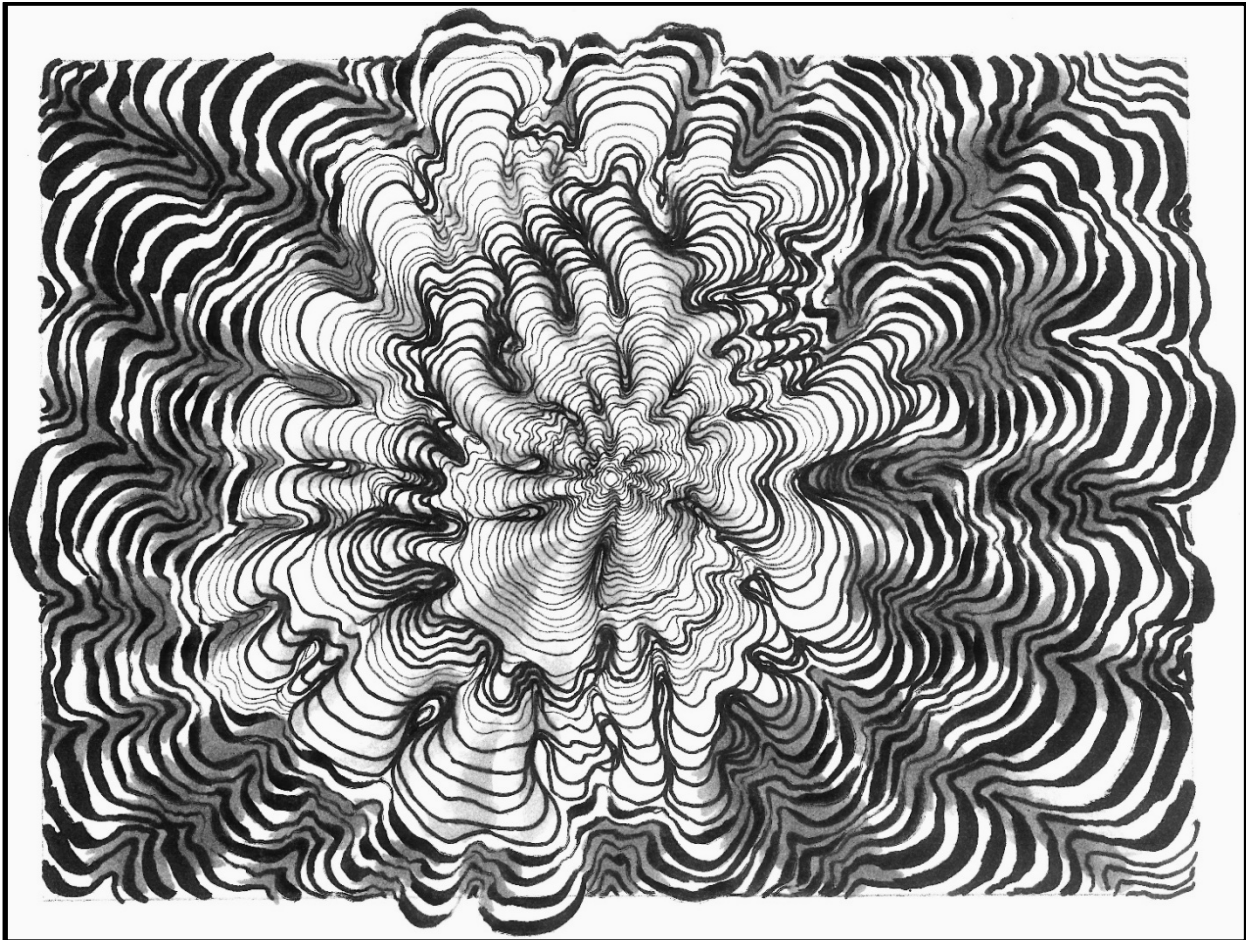
Sedate me please save me from me
As I swallow the liquid burns
Fire water, please forgive me
I lose myself I can't be found
At the bottom of this bottle
To dull the pain to disconnect

Sedate me please save me from me
I've drunk so much I may have drowned
In my self-pity if I am lucky
Don't pull me up, just let me go
I cannot feel I don't want to
Sedate me please save me from me

— *Marissa Gardner*

Trapped on Top

Mixed media



Esteban Fernandez

Remembering Vermeer

Charcoal & watercolor



Alyssa McCaffrey

I'm Not the One

When you're facing a fear
Look straight in the mirror
Realize it's not over
Wipe away your tears

Love is endless
If you look in the right places
Let go of the pain
Release your troubles
Embrace yourself

Every heart broken
Eventually heals
And anyone lucky enough to love you
Is completely golden

Don't lose hope
One day you'll see
Love will be chasing you
Up and down the city streets

— *Jamie Isabella Bartlett*

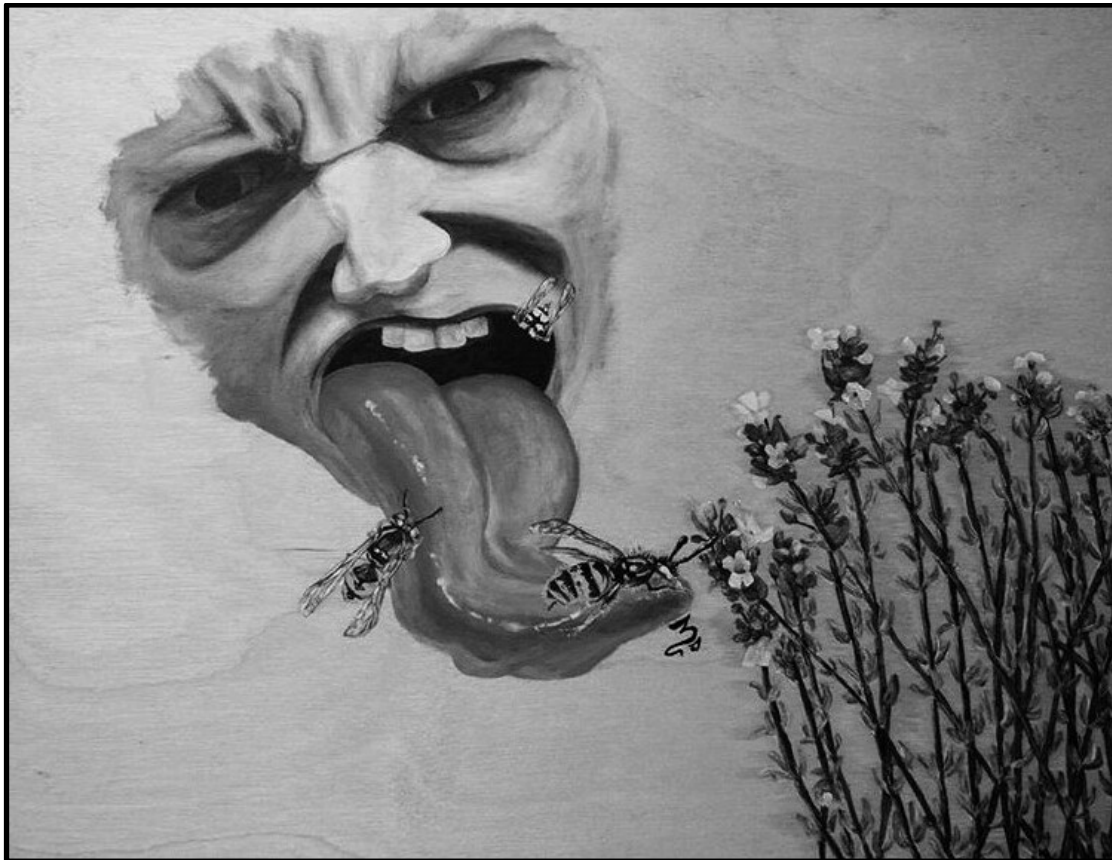
Hard Wood Café

In the gloom of gloam there sits a gnome
In the gnarl of an oak stump cafe.
In a whirl of burl he espies a young girl
With a countenance feckless and fey.
Her freckles are speckles, her hair knotty curls,
Her finery bedraggled and frayed.
To his feet he clamors, yet yammers and stammers,
As she wistfully wanders away.
At table alone he sighs, with a groan,
“How I wish that she might have stayed.”
With a glance at the moon, he tips a doubloon
And soon he is off on his way.

— *David Begnell*

Through All This

Oil on wood



Elizabeth Garcia

The Painful Narrative

When your beautiful name
Leaves my split tongue and
Slithers its way across my chapped lips
I hear a painful narrative
That tells a story of once upon a time
When I almost felt whole.

— *Marissa Gardner*

Your Secret

I want to tell you that I know.
I want to tell you that we all know.
Mostly, I want to tell you that I love you.
I want to tell you that I don't judge you.
I want to tell you that I speak for everybody when I say that,
But I can't.
I want to tell you that my opinion is the only one that matters,
But we both know that's not true.
It doesn't make me sad that you're not truthful to me.
What makes me sad is that you're not truthful to yourself.
That you've hidden yourself from the world
Because of what others might think of you.
What bothers me the most is not that the light you shine is dim,
But of how much more brightly you could shine.
You always light up every room that you're in,
But you could light the world with all you could be.
Just know that if you ever decide to burn your brightest,
Please believe one thing,
You should already know that I will be your gasoline.

— *Daniel Redondo-Macias*

Once in a Lifetime

For years she's worn
Her heart on her sleeve,
But nobody has ever stirred her soul
The way he had
She knew he was her once in a lifetime

Those late night phone calls
Curled up in bed
Those early morning voicemails
Where she remembers every word he said
Those were the moments that she cherished
With all her heart
Those moments were once in a lifetime

No problem, no amount of distance,
And no one could ever keep them apart,
They always found their
Way back home to one another
That kind of love was once in a lifetime

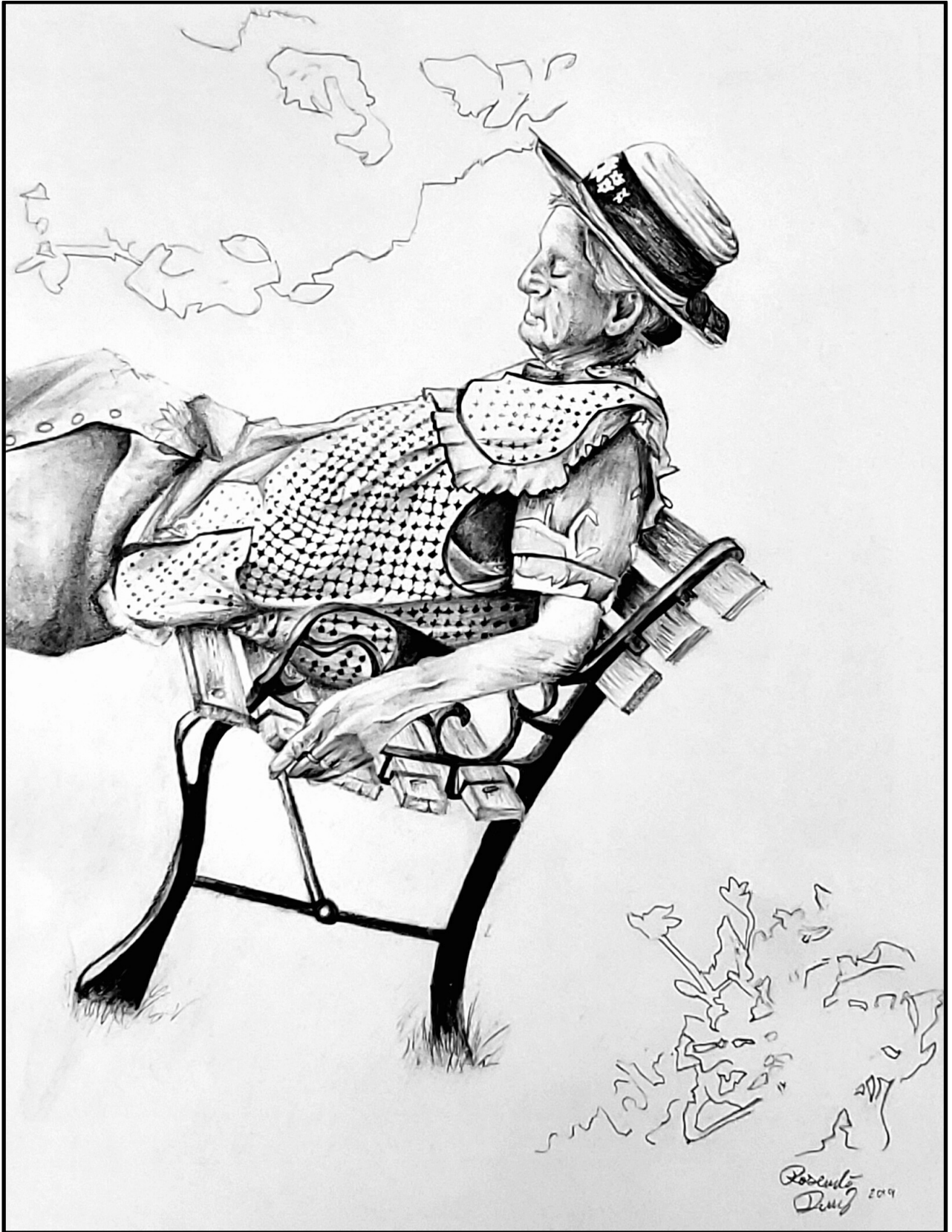
This love wasn't perfect
It took time to get it right
Through every fight, every tear,
And every somber storm,
They always remembered
Their love was once in a lifetime

And now, so many years later,
They have the life they've always prayed for
Unlike every love that comes and fades
Their love was once in a lifetime

— *Kevin Rodriguez*

Lita

Graphite



Rosendo Deniz

Los Angeles

In the streets of Los Angeles there is culture
Street vendors flood the avenues
With their merchandise
A man hands a churro to a young child
A smile lights up his face
The young boy's parents ask how much for the fried pastry
"It's on the house," he says flashing a grin

Musicians with their guitars and makeshift drums
Singing songs about their homeland
They desperately yearn to get back to
Heartfelt lyrics find their way
Into the hearts of the strangers
As they listen with tearful intent

Poets writing their verses on stolen hearts
Dedicating their sonnets to ladies they cannot have
Every word, every fragment drips from their
Tongues like honey
Every word, every verse uttered
Cuts deep into their hearts
Their true loves have vanished
Never to hear a verse from their lips

Painters with their brush in hand,
A symphony of colors dancing on a white backdrop
Their paintings reminiscent of Dia de los Muertos

Wander through the streets alone
Wondering who you are, where you fit in, where you belong
Here in LA you are all family
Here in LA you are home

— *Kevin Rodriguez*



Ted Dewberry

Smog Check

David Begnell

It is unreasonably hot as I pull into the lot. I am in a hurry. *Good, there are no other cars in the bay.* (I talk to myself.) I ease into the lone parking spot next to the building, beside the blue handicapped zone, marked “Smog Check Only”. *The gods are with me today, maybe this won’t take long.* Wait, someone is in the handicapped zone, but they have parked sideways. The only way they could leave would be to drive through the spot I had just taken. *What the...? Are these people stupid, or are they just flippantly arrogant?* I glare at the big black car, looking for a clue. Can’t see the driver clearly, but an old man is slowly trying to exit the behemoth, four door, very-old person vehicle. He is having trouble opening the door. *Beans, maybe I am the arrogant one.* Maybe he is so handicapped, or feeble that he needs his door to open directly in front of the shop entrance, so he can take as few steps as possible to get inside. *I’m an idiot...maybe. Oh look he’s with his wife, how sweet.* I imagine this couple as childhood sweethearts, having lived a long and happy life together. I had a wife once, 30 years ago. Since then I have lived the life of a confirmed bachelor. It’s easier this way, but there are pangs of loneliness when I wonder if I have missed the proverbial boat to Companionship Island. I stand on the shore and stare out to sea, and wonder wistfully... .

The elderly couple, ancient really, are now working their way to the office door. I slowly back out of my primo space and park in front of the open bay, allowing the big car egress. Faster this way, if they take me first, which is an assumption on my part. *What the hell, go with it.* Is this arrogance on my part again? If I have to move because I just jumped the queue, then I *am* the idiot.

I walk into the Eagle Smog Check office and stand in line while the woman behind the counter finishes up with her customer. I glance around, taking inventory, until my eyes stop dead on a Plexiglas cube sitting on the counter. It is about two feet high and contains a stuffed white duck, standing upright, with ten large white eggs strewn near its feet. Odd...non sequitur is a better word. I stare at the duck. Why is it stuffed? What was its story? I imagine it waddling around on a farm, or in a garden, pecking at bugs, quacking out duck gibberish, and doing ducky things.

Having finished with her customer, the woman is shuffling papers around her workspace. She is pretty. Not pretty in a girlish way; she is a svelte older woman, of Spanish descent, with a pleasing face. I can’t really tell how old she is. Past thirty I am sure, but I am twice that. She might be approaching fifty, I just can’t tell. She is fascinating.

“You are looking at my duck,” she states, barely making eye contact. I set the registration and DMV letter on the counter. She ignores them, picking up a clipboard and hanging it on a peg nearby.

“It is an unusual place to keep a stuffed duck,” I say, nudging my papers just a little closer to her. Taking no notice, she starts to recount how the duck ended up there. “It was my duck, fat and happy, until one day, I came home to find it standing upright in my yard, apparently dead.”

“Maybe a heart attack?” I query. *Smog check?*

“I don’t know,” she replies, “it had seemed so healthy. It ate snails and bugs, and I fed it corn meal... ” I had chickens once, and I fed them snails, so I tell her my story. The DMV reminder goes unnoticed on the counter as she continues to tell me about her father’s chickens when she was a child. He used to cook a mixture of corn and grain bran to feed his flock. “The concoction smelled funny,” she reminisced, “but the chickens were strong, and they laid eggs with a very yellow yolk. There was also a high percentage of double yoked eggs.”

Maybe I’m not in such a hurry after all.

“My duck would put dirt into its water dish before it drank,” she made a face, twisting her lips into a grimace. “Yuck,” she smirked, coquettishly.

“I used to feed my cockatiels dirt,” I mention. “It was a special grit, purchased at a pet store.”

“I know this about cockatiels. Do you still have cockatiels?” she inquires. I explain how I had to give them away when I moved here, but I found a good home for them. I tell her how sad it was. I had cried. Why did I come in here anyway? I guess to talk to Mercedes. That is her name. She is originally from Uruguay, she likes classical music, and sings in her church choir. Pavarotti is her favorite tenor... .

“I am studying opera in college,” I mention, tentatively.

“Really? Which part do you sing?” she inquires.

“I will sing the tenor king, Melchior, one of the three kings that went to see the baby Jesus, in a children’s opera called, ‘Amahl and the Night Visitors.’ We will be performing it around Christmas at the end of the school year.”

“I would love to see that,” she says smilingly.

“Well I can give you my phone number, but to let you know when the opera is scheduled, I would need your phone number in my contacts list. My phone doesn’t ring unless I know who you are.” This is not exactly true, but close enough for this situation.

“Okay,” she nods, curtly.

As I enter her name and number into my phone, I wonder if each character is a plank on a life raft, upon which I could sail the open seas of romance. If so, I will name my vessel “Mercedes.” If not, I could possibly enjoy her company for another few minutes when she comes to see the opera. Either way, I am content, and a little less lonely.

Hold

awkward
as a racehorse
being held back

my heart knows what to do
every muscle in my body
twitching tense with reluctant restraint

but logic is the jockey

a tentative hand between your shoulders
has so much potential
but we wouldn't want to complicate things

so I keep it reigned in

— *Meghan Blust*

Repent

Photograph



Ted Dewberry

And Sheds a Tear Upon His Rose...

Behemoth Battle drums Begin to Beat!
Contemplative samurai rise to their feet
And swing their swords judiciously
To loose taut muscles before the feat.
On hilltop yonder, for all to see
The Emperor sits upon his steed.
Unfurls his banner, a silken decree,
“To war, to glory, victory.”

One samurai cuts a blood red rose
And sews it onto his billowing robes.

(The battle begins...)

The soul of a samurai sleeps in his sword
In a fit of madness it comes unmoored
Now wholly unholy, it hacks at the hordes
With balance, precision in steady accord
To cut flesh and sinew unmercifully red
Dissecting a limb, unseating a head
Now strewn on a path of numerous dead
Whose lifeblood stains the dry riverbed.
A daemon unleashed with coal black eyes
To hunt the earth in deadly guise.
His razor's edge has opened a vein
And the world is awash in a blood red rain.
The world is a dream, a ghostly array
Now dances the Daemon's sublime charade
Till dust does settle upon the slain
And dusk descends on those who remain.

The battle is over, resheathing his blade,
And all seems for naught...but not in vain,
From the peasant village comes a joyous refrain
As a crying child, in birth, on breast is laid.

And Life renews; Time, forward, flows.
He turns to regard his vanquished foes.
And sheds a tear upon his rose...

— *David Begnell*

Five Senses

Faint echoes in a long hall
Like the tinkling shards
Of my obsidian heart
That lies shattered
Beneath your feet

Dark clouds obscure the horizon
Like misty notes
In my onyx eyes
That stare blankly
At an empty world

Acrid smoke upon the wind
I breathe deeply
The burnt offerings
Of my soul
That lie smoldering, spent

A bitter taste on my palate
Remembering your lips
Gently parted
As we drank from the cup
Of fatuous desire

Barbed memories brush my cheek
Like nettles
Intensely stinging, then lingering
A painful reminder
That we came too close

— *David Begnell*

The Killer

Pencil/ink



Jessie Lopez

Space Alien Realness

Mixed media



Esteban Fernández

Bird of the Hermes

You'll know the names but you'll never know their stories...
The bird of Hermes is my name,
eating my wings to make me tame.
The souls I've kept for many days
which is the highest point of my age, over,
and over that is my domain.
As in death & light,
would it mean to die or stay alive?
Through the warning means fight!
Myriads of bleeding andesite
As hard as the one you are, it will decay.
Through the onyx solid gate, you'll see it over,
But when something far back flashes before your eyes,
You'll see someone died to become you.
To see the bird of the Hermes scream goodbye.
From fantasies guarded by lies,
of a zircon shining through the night,
to pass your time for the big word is to say goodbye,
from watching yourself die.

— *Jessie Lopez*

The Effects of Winter

I saw you there and see you now in my mind.
Lying there, drowning comfortably in the blankets, pillows and
the clothes that were hugging your body the day before.
You were bathed in the December sunlight that had escaped the clouds
that painted that chilly Sunday afternoon.
Your eyes were closed, resting, but sometimes it felt like you
were slipping occasionally asleep that was more like fainting
Due to exhaustion I am sure but still you looked so serene.
Even lying there you radiated energy.
I wanted nothing more to sneak under the covers and soak in
the warmth our bodies arouse when they are near each other.
It's a moment frozen in time. Winter does that. Even though it feels like
A December afternoon on a Sunday, Winter makes it feel like there
is no morning, night or year and like that lazy sweet sleeping boy will always
be there lying like that waiting for me.

— *Patricia Galan*

Red Dream

I had that dream again of everything in red,
I'm in a room that smells of blood and cheap rose perfume,
Satin sheets dyed a hue of cherry red, and there's someone spread bare on the bed.

I approach the sleeping figure drenched in lace of scarlet.
I feel a chill run down to my toes, I see their hair is strangely silver and long,
With features of neither male nor female, only eyes glazed fevered.

They smile and idly pluck flower petals from the bed,
Lips a hue of carmine uttering secrets long since lost.
They rise from the bed full of grace, eyes lined with powder of crimson.
I can't help but feel rather feeble.
Their features sharp like the thorns of a rose, hand stretching close to my heart, fingers clawing.

I squirm feeling frail like plucked wings of a butterfly.
They reach inside and pull out my heart dripping cardinal red.
I claw at my empty cavity staining my fingers red; they laugh as I crumble, fooled by their beauty.

My tears stain my face red like a scar.
They simply stare amused at my state of wretchedness.
Eyes glossy like smoldering embers burn into my bones.
I had that dream again of everything in red.

— *Tamara Letecia Orozco*

Ba-boom, Ba-boom

The heart's re-frain re-sounds a tune
Ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom ba-boom
We feel its ca-dence in the womb,
It leaves us not un-til the tomb.
Its rhy-thm cour-ses through our veins
When all is lost, this still re-mains.
The pulse of life, un-til it wanes.

When came a vi-sion out of blue,
Of beau-ty, grace, and pro-mise new
An angel vis-age, dé-jà vu,
Hel-len-ic fea-tures, sta-ture true,
Of glo-rious, ra-diant, gol-den hue,
To stop the heart!
As if on cue,
She turns a-way and bids a-dieu.

Ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom ba-boom
The heart's re-frain re-sounds a-new,
From birth to death we know its tune...

— *David Begnell*

Arthur “Art” O'Rey

Digital



Kevin Cortez

🏆 *Second Prize Art*

Quiet Thoughts

Photograph



Andrea Gonzalez

Prodigal Daughter

Entitlement made me want it all, now
My Father's waiting
Receiving the blessing and squandered it
My Father's waiting
Entering to the spoils of the world
My Father's waiting
Epiphany, gained the riches of darkness in exchange for my soul
My Father's waiting
Running back to my Father, embraced by His loving forgiveness
I'm finally home

— *Jamie Isabella Bartlett*

Deceptive Feelings

Photography



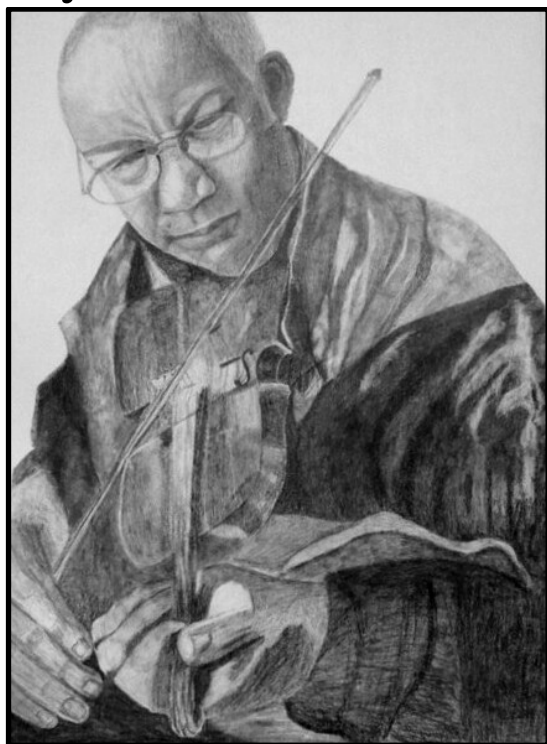
Andrea Gonzalez

Orchestra

Of brass, silver, copper and tin
Catgut, reeds, horse hair and rosin
Ivory, bone, hardwood and hides
Cork, felt and glue that's dried
Violin, viola, the cello is mellow
Double bass, a barrel chested fellow
Flute and piccolo, a frilly trill
Clarinet, saxophone, not too shrill
Bassoon croons, a musical goat
Bleating down its long-necked throat
Timpani, snare, woodblock and cymbal
Percussive eclectic tones assemble.
Xylophone, a wooden piano struck.
Harp, where heavenly rain is plucked
Trumpets trumpet a brassy bray
The oboe intones a concert A
The assembly tunes, a concerted fray
The program begins, the orchestra plays.

— *David Begnell*

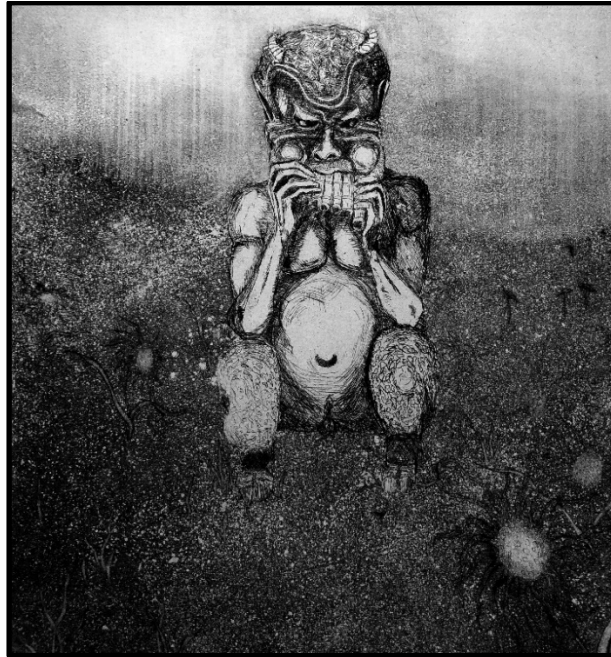
Ray and Violin Pencil



Marlene Roy

Pan Pipes

Etching



David Begnell

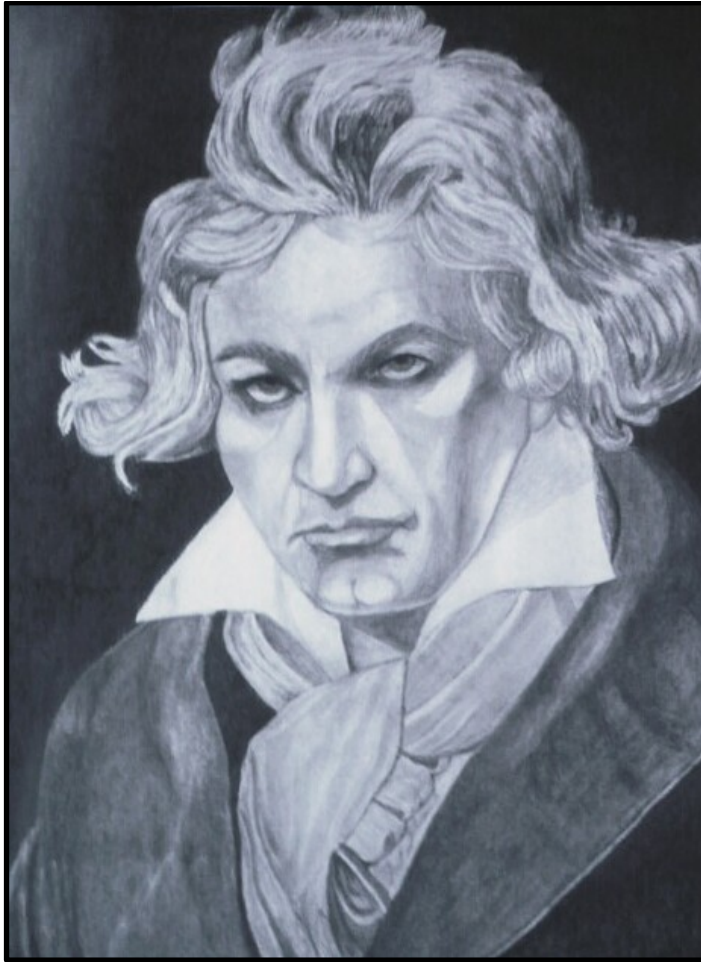
Harvest Moon

The harvest moon is fat with corn,
Engorged orange gourds garnish the ground.
Sheaves of wheat suspended on straw,
Bunched in field, that is harrowed,
Waiting to fallow in spring.
Follow the harvest moon, it croons a tune,
“We have lived another year!”
The harvest butter moon is a full plate
Of beans and potatoes, yams and clams and beef.
Clamoring to feast, rejoin a cheer,
“We have lived, another year!”
Outside of the town, the milestones measure
The plodding distance to the graveyard,
Where treasures, buried, lay.
Our ancestors sigh with relief, whispering,
“You have lived another year!”
The harvest moon is swollen, asleep.
Now raise your ale of last year’s barley,
Sip your rye whiskey and tip the barkeep.
Acclaim the host, proclaim a toast,
“May we live, yet, another year!”

— *David Begnell*

Beethoven

Pencil



Marlene Roy

Symphony

Maestro moves and swaggers and sways,
Coaxing the delicate interplay
Staccato, legato, vibrato, crescendo
Pianissimo piano mezzo forte fortissimo
Ebb and swell, from tiptoe to stomp,
A Fairy's ballet to a raucous romp
Waving baton like a painter's brush,
Now teasing, then pleasing, tread lightly, don't rush
Building a sound wall that's poignant and lush
The finale comes crashing, a thunderous crush!
Leaving a staggering, sensuous hush,
My wide eyes a wonder, pink cheeks a blush...

— *David Begnell*

Into the Flames

They say that if you stand too close to the fire
You will get burned
Well I am suffering from inhalation
Choking on the embers
I can't feel the pain of the burn
As long as your eyes are on me
Oh, but when you look away
It's excruciating
A burning down in to my soul,
Forcing the new skin to bare itself
An agonizing transition
There are moments when it's torture
But you have made me a masochist
I beg for the flames to swallow me,
And when I am in ashes and the smoke clears
There you stand
Waiting to sculpt my body into form
For you were forged in the flames
And in those flames my soul is at home

— *Marissa Gardner*

Desert Night Ink



Marissa Gardener

Involuntary Art

Daniel Redondo-Macias

“Excellent work everybody,” she said as she walked around the room. “Remember, there is no such thing as good or bad art. Many people have criticized Van Gogh and Picasso, yet we know their names. Art isn’t something that comes from the masses, but what comes from you.”

Jennifer was a volunteer at the local community center as an art teacher. She was picked by the center for her many works that her college displayed on their art page of their website. It did also help her get some credits for college, but as an art student herself, she loved to help any artist grow into themselves as her professors have done for her.

“Alright, guys, its 10 minutes until 5, so let’s start wrapping up what we have until next time. We will be finishing our self-portraits next session, but if you want to show me what you have now, I’ll be more than happy to see them.”

The one thing that Jen liked about the community classes over college was that when class was about over, it wasn’t hit with the immediate sounds of people packing up, but of the continuance of the art. People weren’t in such a rush when they didn’t have “another class” to go to. It wasn’t until the clock alarm she set sounded that people began to pack their things.

“Okay, that’s 5. Like I said, we will finish the self-portraits next week, but if you think you need help or want to show me what you have so far, I’m here for the next 30 minutes.”

While it didn’t happen as often as she would have liked, sometimes people would stay after class and ask for her opinion on their work. She especially liked self-portraits. It just felt like a small window into how somebody views themselves, or even how they think the rest of the world perceives them. She went and sat at the main desk that was in every room for anybody that volunteered.

Quite a few people came over to show her their work. Some very proud and others very shy. She gave them tips where she could, and complimented others where she deemed appropriate. She could see some that were fresh to art and others who had a chance to really make something of it. It was about 5:20 when it died down. After taking a moment to herself, she spent the last 5 minutes packing up her own things and was getting ready to leave when she was approached by one last person.

“Excuse me, but I was wondering if you could look at my drawing.”

“Of course, I can, I’d lo- “

Her words were stopped short when she finally caught a glimpse of the person trying to hand her their artwork. She didn’t recognize her from any of the classes at all. She looked terrible. Like she hadn’t slept in weeks. She caught herself staring at the woman, shook her head, and regained her composure.

“I’d love to look at your work.”

“I’m so sorry.”

“Oh, please, there’s nothing to be sorry about, art is art.”

She took the drawing from the girl. A chill ran down her spine. It was a portrait like she’d never seen. It was of a young woman, who had long since been dead. Her hair thin and wet as it clung to the scalp. The face was waterlogged and muddied as if she had been turned over in shallow waters after being found face down. The skin was pale except for what was covered in dirt. The nose looked as if it had been forcibly torn from the face. The lower jaw and tongue were gone completely. The eyes were clouded white from death, but even though it was clear that the girl in this drawing was dead, it was as if something behind the eyes was alive. Jen couldn’t look away. As if it was forcing her deeper into the picture. Then, the girl in the portrait started to move, slowly, as if she was breathing. The eyes locked on to Jen’s and the breathing stopped. The girl’s upper lip rose on either side, smiling.

Jennifer slammed the drawing onto the desk in front of her.

“Holy shit! Wha-What the hell was that?!”

She looked up to see that the classroom was empty. There was no sign of the girl that gave it to her. She looked at the clock. It was only 5:28. The girl must have walked out while she was looking at it. Jennifer’s heart was still racing. What had just happened? Did her mind really do all that to her? She slowly leaned over the desk to take another look at the drawing. It was the same dead girl, except it wasn’t moving or smiling. She quickly snatched it up, crumpled it, threw it in the bin, then picked up her things and left.

She jumped into her car and quickly drove away. She didn’t even bother signing out of the volunteer log at the front desk of the community center. Her mind was still reeling from everything she had just experienced. All of it was backed up even more by the questions of who the girl was and why she had even given her the drawing? Either way, it was done, and she didn’t even want to think about it anymore. She turned on the radio and continued the rest of the 40-minute drive to her apartment, pretending that the image of the smiling girl wasn’t burned into her brain.

Jennifer lived by herself in a one-bedroom apartment located in the older part of town. It wasn’t so much a bad area as it was more vacant from more people moving to the next town over to be closer to work. Even though it was a bit of a drive for school or her volunteering, the rent made up for that. It always seemed like more people were leaving than moving in. In fact, her upstairs neighbor had just moved out two weeks ago, so it had been pretty quiet recently. On a day like today, however, she would quite prefer some ambient noise of life around her. She pulled into her parking spot and went inside.

Leaving all of the school and art supplies in the car, she headed inside. She didn’t have any assignments due the next day, but mostly she didn’t want to think about anything art for the moment.

Turning on the TV, mostly to have something in the background, Jen began to make herself dinner. Fish sticks and mac and cheese. Inexpensive, yet satisfying and delicious. It was also very easy to make. After finishing dinner and watching a bit of TV, she decided to make herself a drink, pulling out from the fridge a bottle of Moscato and a 2-liter bottle of strawberry soda. Mix the two, and it was an instant wine cooler. It was a great money-saving trick learned from an old roommate that was still useful to this day.

Making herself a good few glasses, she had even opened a second bottle of wine over the course of two hours. Before long, it was 10. Considering the average drive and schedule, even on her days off, she made sure to try to be asleep by no later than midnight. Jen finished her last glass, cleaned up the kitchen, and started to get things ready for the next morning. Reaching for the art supplies that were normally put next to the couch, Jen remembered that they were left in the car. Remembering what had happened earlier that day, that same chill ran down her spine.

Shaking it off, she finished getting what could be ready and headed into the bathroom to finish her night, using the bathroom, washing her hands, then grabbing the toothbrush and toothpaste. She preferred to take showers in the morning. She always liked that starting fresh and awake feeling one gets to begin their day with. She finished brushing and rinsed out her mouth and toothbrush before shutting off the sink, taking one last look at the mirror. Then she heard something.

It was water. She looked down to see that there was nothing left in the sink and that the faucet was off. It wasn't the sound of running water, but the sound the water makes when you lay in the tub. Looking over, she could see the shower curtain was closed. She never closed it after a shower. Silencing her breath, she could hear the faint sounds of water in the tub, but there was something else. There was breathing. It was ever so slight, but she could hear the rhythm of breath. Her blood ran cold. She didn't know what to do. Should she run? Should she call somebody? Was this even real?

Remembering everything that had happened earlier that day, and still feeling the alcohol, she was sure this was a mix of the two. She began to think it through and started to calm down. It was all in her head. *Yes, that drawing earlier was scary, but it's not real. The fact that it scared you and had your mind going, along with tonight's drinking has got you thinking crazy things. In fact, let's prove it. On the count of three, let's throw this bad boy open. One. Two... Three!* She threw open the curtain.

There it was. The girl from the drawing, floating in the water that was clouded brown from dirt and mud. Jen was struck by fear. All she could do was stand there and look. The girl was dead in the water looking up at the ceiling. Then the neck snapped, immediately locking eyes. They were the same death clouded eyes that were in the picture. Without breaking eye contact, the girl pulled herself up and stood in the tub. Her head never moving, her body began to step out of the tub and towards Jennifer, still unable to move. The girl stepped right up to her. Face to face. Dripping with water. Then it smiled.

“Holy shit! Wha-What the hell was that?!”

Jennifer looked up from the desk and realized that she was back at the community center, right at the moment she was given the drawing. Except this time, the girl that gave her the drawing was still standing there.

“I’m so sorry.”

“What? What just happened?!”

“You have to draw it. It won’t look the same.”

“...”

“You need to draw it and give it to somebody else. Or it will never leave you.”

🏆 First Prize Art

Painting of Carl Warners Photograph Oil



Kenia Cruz

Liber

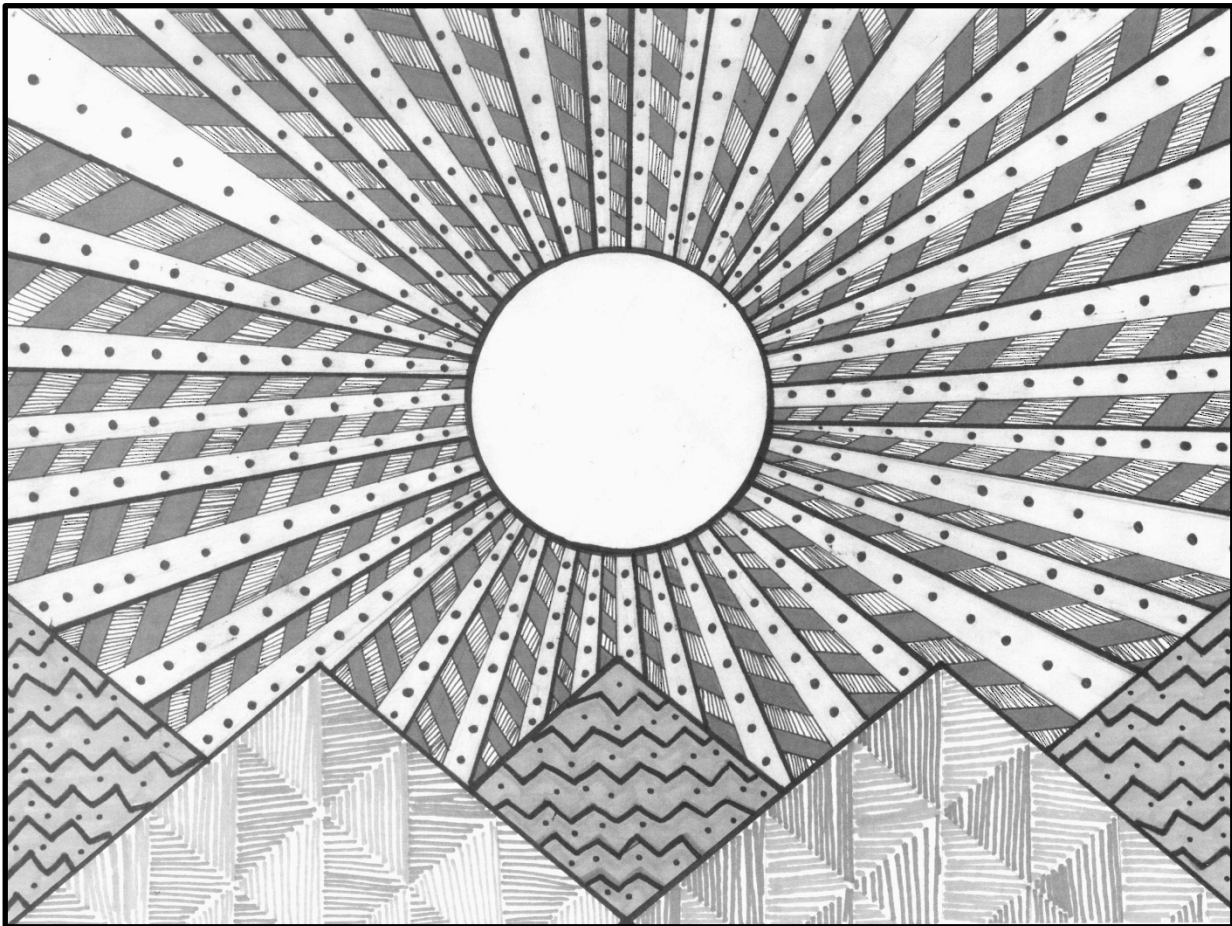
Ekphrasis based on Giorgione, The Tempest (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice)

As I lulled her to sleep I could feel the warmth of her skin,
For no other's touch, no other's heat, is no longer granted permission in,
Water is soon to fall, my frightening prospect of leaving will seep,
From my cold face to her skin, my tears will be strained of the fear I will not keep,
My strides were long, my leaps abrupt,
I ran with great woe, far away I galloped,
At a cost I take cover to nourish, thus this is not her crime,
She shall not be famished whilst I bare breasts in darkness or light,
To my surprise he kept his oath, to help a stranger break from hopelessness,
At large, we are far gone, this is only the beginning of the new us,
I do not yearn for destruction, I pray for the passing,
All for these miniscule hands I am grasping.

— *Elizabeth Garcia*

The Sun Will Rise Again

Pencil



Andrea Gonzalez

Silly Demon

Mixed media



Esteban Fernandez

Schoolbook Spring

Ink



Kat Kipper

Happiness

Lying with you in the night
Our fingers intertwined like the roots of a flower
I see your past fading away
Our future burns brighter in your eyes

I've burned every bridge that I've crossed
Trying to get to you
You're so much closer now
But I feel so far away

With every single day that passes
Your light shines brighter
In my heart, I can see what I've been missing
Even after all those years

You were the flame that would heal my wounds
The candle that burned bright
You were the light to comfort me
In the darkness
The flame that would never die

— *Kevin Rodriguez*

Past Prologue

I felt that being a broken human
my causes were nobler and time spent wiser
suffering, the ultimate universal sign of being human.

I was everything and everything was me.
Every moment mattered because
my actions defined who I was.

Now vices creep behind me
the downfall of any hero.
I am a slave to its whims

The past is prologue,
but the prologue can't be better
than the real story can it?

— *Patricia Galan*

Not So Different

We may live in the same area
We may drive the same car
We might dress the same
We might drink at the same bar
We like to spend time with our family
We like to have fun
We like to watch movies
We even like to go for a run
One thing we don't have in common
Is that I cannot hear
You might think that's weird
To me, it's nothing to fear
You might be thinking, no
But I am the same as you
There is no difference between you and me
You just use a voice
I use my hands instead
We both have our ways of speaking
Mine's just a little harder to comprehend
I'm starting to see we have things not in common
You think I need to be fixed
See, that's the difference between you and me
I don't see anything wrong with me
Even if you make me cry
There is nothing wrong with me
I wish you could see why
We have the same heart
We breathe the same air
We have likes and dislikes
You see all the flaws
I see everyone the same
You point out the negatives
I see them as a beautiful flame
We might have the same heart
But we use them differently

— *Rickie Jordan*

Solstice

Pencil/ink



Jocelyn Ramirez-Vargas

The Doll

A doll in a glass box
looks outside but never talks
You must protect her from the world,
keep that hair tightly curled!

Dress her up in all your favorite outfits
Twist the arms and bend the knees
Snap a picture, have no regrets
You can make her dance despite her pleas

A proper doll
shows no emotions, has no complaints
She is only complemented
when compliant with her restraints

Always focus on her flaws
make her hide what's underneath
Her frozen smile will earn applause
because the best dolls never show their teeth

Try to keep her mint condition
when you're labeled "very used"
It's of all your failed ambition
that you can have her accused

Just project all your sins
on to her porcelain skin
Tell her that her love is only lust,
crush every dream into dust

Here's the thing though...
Everything you deem to be a defect
is part of what makes her perfect

So you can scoff at all the cracks,
mold your opinions until they're facts
but you know Pinocchio could still feel
and someday she too
will find a way to be real

— *Jasmine Valle*

Seeing Double

Photograph



Kevin Rodriguez

Reflection

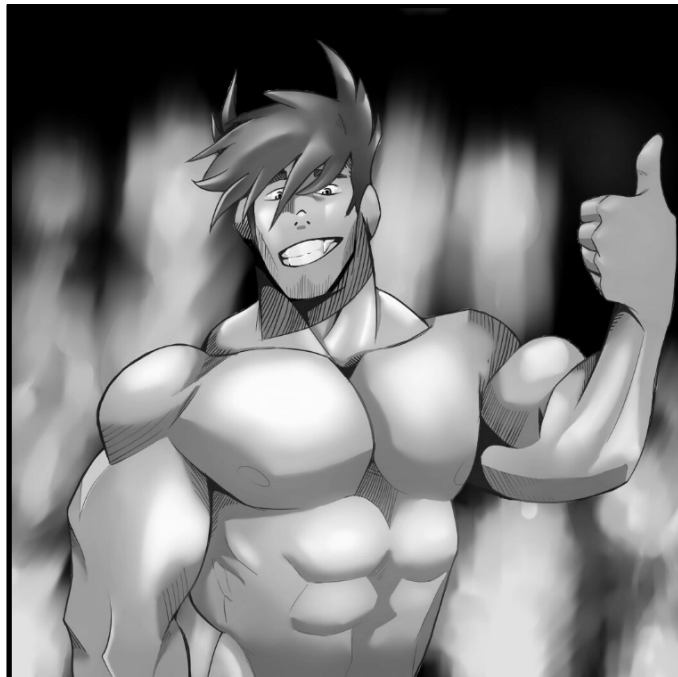
When I look at my reflection,
it is hard to see myself,
it has been a long time since I have.
I always slump, hunch my shoulders forward,
frown often, as if I am always receiving bad news.
Who is this girl staring back at me?
I am afraid she reflects who I am inside now.
So average, so afraid, so disappointed with everything.
I want to fight because I do not like who I am becoming

I get a dash of hope because I see myself in my eyes again.
They feel big again like they take up my whole face,
big, ready to go read and watch and see
and to scrunch up with laughter.
They look like a warm liquid brown again instead of that
empty bleak almost black color that reminded me of cold asphalt.
They are decorated with long lashes that curl enthusiastically as if they were
opening my eyes up like a flower blooming.
I see myself in my eyes again.
And I recognize myself.
I don't want to go back to the shadows.

— *Patricia Galan*

Full

Digital



Jessie Lopez

Introspection

Flying high but I still can't touch the sky
Most days better than before but still I wanna die
Subsistence clarifies that we all live a lie
But I've got to keep going; give it another try.

Looking around, I am who I always was
Ignored and abused, all of this just because
I'm pragmatic and solitary, they outline all my flaws
Ruining my name with rumors all due to probable cause.

I've got an ugly sweater on because it feels comfortable
They think I'm tripping balls but I just call it sensible
I explain myself to no one; how could they find it plausible
That I don't give a shit that I'm a little irascible?

This is who I am from another life before this one
I felt calm and relaxed, knew how I could have fun
Sitting down somewhere quiet away from everyone
Alone and whispering "goodnight" to the steadily fading sun.

The sun is only glorious as it's being tucked away
Throughout its brightest hours, U.V. rays ruin my day
But when the moon comes out and the sun gives way
The stars shine bright as the moon glows soft; I hope that it will stay.

The night is always beautiful as it helps me ease and calm
Thumbelina was my childhood name, it holds me in its palm
I feel safe and secure, unbothered by any qualm
Soft starlight over my skin like a tender, soothing balm.

I have spent full nights awake enjoying every second
Of peaceful quiet washing over me, as I go on unthreatened
Protected, invulnerable despite what others reckon.
Seeing me during the day, shut in, I don't go when I'm beckoned.

When the moon is out at night, I don't see a need to fortify
My inner walls as the stars are out and I feel as they detoxify
The bitter feelings in my head that others oversimplify
All their lights majesty overhead, impossible to quantify.

So many of them yet only one of me, I feel incredibly privileged
Responsibility off my shoulders and I feel so uninhibited
No longer tied down to anger or pain that others have elicited
Because no one taught them right or wrong, they go about undisciplined.

— *Josie Luna*

Hazy Comfort

Mixed media



Esteban Fernandez

Threshold

I'm at the threshold of my life where I stand body trembling with fears,
I'm expected to have something resembling an identity and be blithe,
I'm at the threshold of my life but all I can do is break down in tears,

I'm unable to give a clear confident answer concerning my future life,
I'm acting out the motions of a functioning person but everything feels like some sort of cliché,

I know it's silly to worry over such rather brief sentiments,
I've tried telling myself that I'll eventually find my niche,
I don't think I was ever taught to live in the moment,

I'm at the threshold of my life and I've lost count how often I've cried myself to sleep,
I just wish someday I had no heart for I'd rather feel nothing at all,
I'm terrified to admit something was wrong with me so I'd rather not utter a peep,
I'm at the threshold of life I never expected it to be so depressing I guess I'm terrified of the fall.

— *Tamara Letecia Orozco*

Alone

Mixed media



Melody Castro



Jessie Lopez

My Blood Is

my blood is people who have learned to overcome
because there was no time to sit still
my people gathered courage and strength
to leave war zones and enter college lectures for the first time

my blood consists of
teachers, counselors, caregivers, and architects
my familia creates things from the ground up
their hands heal and make warm food every day

my blood not only carries english but the native tongue as well
my blood is indigenous people
from a land i never got to see and feel
but know i am a part of

— *Naomi Farkas*

The Flowers in the Desert

Tamara Letecia Orozco

The Sun's rays sizzled the bones of lizards and coyotes that coiled around the rare cactus as the raging dust devils swallowed all, and the reeking Salt Sea swelled in the vast moorlands of the desert. The Apollo thrashed and heaved as the golden glistening bile oozed from the laceration as a spear with a jadeite hilt shimmered in the sunlight as it protruded from the creature's jugular. Santiago's eyes twinkled from the darkened sockets of his bulbous bull skull mask that enveloped his entire head.

"My first successful hunt of an Apollo," babbled Santiago as he yanked his spear from the Apollo's throat as a stream of golden blood bubbled and trickled from the wound staining the sand with the golden blood. "The other children will be so jealous!"

Santiago swung his spear blindly through the air as his tulle viridian hooded cloak embroidered with maroon succulent flowers quivered in the humid wind. The Apollo screeched feebly, swiping at Santiago before being swiftly stabbed through the heart, which oozed like a ruptured egg. Santiago cavorted as his black leather buckled winkle picker boots became stained in the puddle of golden blood that shimmered in the sunlight.

The chiming of a distant bell pricked the boy's ears halting his celebration. Santiago squinted his eyes to the horizon and the jagged outline of the Academy of Phlegethon that loomed over the sand dunes. Tiny figures lined the outer wall of the academy shrouded in cloaks and banging their spears against the stony wall. Santiago squinted his eyes as he stared at the figures that wore white animal skull masks that protruded from the darkness of their hoods stared back.

"I better hurry back," mumbled Santiago as he crouched over the Apollo. His little fingers clutched the Apollo's head examining its dull glazed eyes with the intensity of a spider preparing to strike its prey.

"This should serve as a good souvenir!" hummed Santiago as he plucked out the right eyeball from the Apollo's eye socket. The sand dune was drenched in the rancid golden blood as he admired the eyeball. Another Apollo crept up the sand dune and lunged at Santiago, pinning the shrieking child to the ground, briskly ripping out the boy's throat.

"Santiago, you idiot!" grimaced Maria as she peered through her bedroom's telescope to the sight of the Apollo tearing open her comrade's stomach like a rotten pear and scooped up his intestines that ruptured in its fowl maw. Maria jumped off her stool perch and paced about her room. Her little fingers fidgeting with the hummingbird skull buttons that lined her cloak.

The rusted courtyard siren shrieked out a proclamation that rattled the thin pomegranate colored walls and lemon tinted windows of the academy cheerfully declared by a woman's voice:

"All Participants Report to the Main Gate, The Ceremony of Orpheus Shall Commence!"

The moss covered floorboards rattled as tiny thundering footfalls and chatter of children advanced past her bedroom door, down the hallway, and then the courtyard.

“Today is my special day,” pensively thought Maria as she bit her bottom lip and patted down her choppy black hair as she glared at her reflection in the bedroom window as the nauseating aroma of apple blossoms wafted into her room. “I shouldn’t be scared!”

“I’m a Cerberus now,” said Maria as she cleared her throat and straightened her shoulders as she scowled at her reflection then strode to her bed. “I should act like one!”

Maria laid on her belly and scavenged under her bed pulling out her coyote skull mask that was crudely painted teal and had embellishments of golden Hesperus flowers painted around the eye sockets and teeth. A crown of wilting orange marigold flowers were engraved the top of the skull.

The booming cry of the academy's bell sent chills down Maria’s spine as she fumbled to put on the mask to over her head before scampering toward the pomegranate colored doors. She halted at the threshold to stroke her inner right wrist three times as her tiny fingers traced the outline of her emblem of ouroboros the snake before running out the room.

The hallways of the academy were devoid of all inhabitants as Maria darted down the twisting hallways passing the empty dreary classrooms and the bedrooms that where lined with rows of beds. There was a trickle of sound like a muffled lullaby recited in a rainstorm that gently rattled the windows slowly growing louder:

“Rattle Your Needle-Bones! Rise From Your Somber Grave! Snap Your Maw at The Cruel Night!”

“Oh, Blistering Bones,” groaned Maria as she ran through the hallway and to the main staircase as the chanting had reached a fever pitch. She slid down the staircase banister, then proceeded to stick the landing. “They’ve already started the chanting!”

A shrill chirp emanated from the hanging rose covered canopy ceiling that sounded like a cluster of cicadas. Maria froze for a second as her toes curled in her boots like snails and the color drained from her face. She sprinted for the front door, only to be stopped dead in her tracks by a deep voice from above.

“Maria, you’re late,” hummed the deep voice that echoed through the academy.

Swooping down from the ceiling were two towering cloaked figures in long grey monk's robes. Their gaunt looming frames blocked the door entrance. They wore silver mouthless bauta masks and lavender thorns sprouting from the eye sockets as a series of hisses trickled out from behind their masks as their bodies swayed like cobras preparing to strike.

“Hello, Hades,” Maria flinched as she yanked at her sleeves and gently stroked the side of her coyote skull mask. The Room reeked of smoke and rancid blood.

“Where’s Santiago?” jeered Hades from above. Maria bit her lips and slowly looked up at the ceiling.

A cluster of hissing hooded figures hung from the ceiling like giant bats. They were neatly shrouded in robes of grey and each had bouquet of dahlia flowers neatly clasped around their necks. The swarm of hooded figures had their heads lowered as if they were praying or taking a solemn vow. Amongst the sea of grey writhing figures came a placid pale mouthless face out of the mass that stared at Maria. The face wore a blackened veil that cascaded down like a curtain over its expressionless pale features as its irises flicked like embers.

“Dead,” squeaked Maria as she squared her shoulders and yanked at the sleeves of her cloak. “I’m sorry, I’m late.”

The swarm of hooded figures shuddered collectively as a form of solidarity to convey their grief over the dead child and as they did a stream of petals rained down onto the floor. Hades trickled down from the ceiling like an ink stain as a flurry of wispy smoke trailed behind him as he slowly encircled Maria.

“Well, that’s a pity,” said Hades dryly as he lazily plucked at the burgundy dahlia flowers that were neatly clasped around his neck as he slithered closer to her. “However, that’s not an excuse for *you* to be late.”

“I know,” sputtered Maria as she squirmed under his gaze as the smell of smoke filled her lungs and sank into her bones like some rancid mold. “I’m sorry.”

“You’re a Cerberus now,” growled Hades as he leaned forward mere inches away from her face. His thin frame creaked like the snapping of bones. “You’re off to a terrible start by being late to your own ceremony!”

Hades with one ebony scaled hand waved dismissively towards the two figures who did not move an inch as they blocked the front entrance. Hades swerved his head around like an owl and glared at the two cloaked figures as they recoiled and slithered up the wall rejoining the shuddering mass that hung from the ceiling.

Maria glanced out of one of the yellowed windows that framed the entrance hall. A cluster of chanting children in their identical cloaks and pearly white animal skulls stared back at her as they stood atop the wilting vine covered outer stone wall. Some children stomped their tiny feet against the vine covered outer wall or thrust their spears into the air. Maria winced as she dug her nails into the palm of her hands.

“There’s so many,” whispered Maria to herself as she bounced on heels and shuddered as if centipedes were crawling under her skin. “I have to fight them all.”

“Maria!” bellowed Hades as he lifted Maria up by her cloak with one taloned and scaly finger. He stood at his full height now, the top of his head almost touched the curved archway of front entrance threshold.

“Put me down!” yelled Maria as she kicked her feet that dangled like wind chimes in Hades firm grasp. “I can’t help it if I’m nervous!”

Hades lowered her onto the floor and crouched down to her eye level. “You wouldn’t be the first child to be nervous about the ceremony of Orpheus.”

“I’m not?” asked Maria as she ran her fingers through her hair. “What if I die?”

“Tedious, overly sentimental child,” said Hades as he placed his hand atop her head gently drumming his fingers atop her head as she winced. “I doubt you’ll be the last child to die during the ceremony.”

“Go, you’re already late, my little Cerberus,” said Hades as a pool of bubbling tar emerged from the floor, a spear with a jadeite hilt sprang from the black tar. Hades handed the spear to Maria as she adjusted her coyote skull mask.

“I can do this,” repeated Maria as her nostrils flared, and she tightly gripped the spear as the doors flung open. Maria charged out of the academy doors as the sound of the chanting rung in her ears. The scent of apple blossoms and smoke lingered in the hot air as somewhere in the vast desert under the unforgiving sun several dust devils raged on.

Spiral

Photograph



Angelina Minuto

His Words

The sweet embrace of sleep cast aside
By a yearning for sweet articulation
On a screen, illuminated by golden words
A sort of manipulated artificial intelligence
How can patience live in a heart that is so hungry
The words fulfilling just a minuscule piece
Of a void that is not his, yet he is the cure
His diction, delicious, like ambrosia from the gods
As if he Eros and I Psyche. A mortal and a god.
Eyes inhaling words as if they would suffocate otherwise
Every line blissful relief to the ping of hunger pains
Feeding the beast inside her, but there is no satisfaction

— *Marissa Gardner*

Blue Moon

Digital



Jessie Lopez



Kat Kipper

Pineapple Cola

Liking someone and having this much free time
can be a dangerous thing
When I'm given a moment my mind is still
my heart sprints
towards you
Pushing aside everything in its path without a second thought
yet I love it
In fact I hope I always think of you every time my lungs fill with air
I want to think of your laugh without a second thought
or when I happen to be holding 11 cents in my hand
Maybe free time isn't so dangerous
because it's moments like these that I remember
sharing Japanese Cola and making wishes
Watching shows way too late and beating you at games
If your heart sprints like mine
I hope it gets here a little faster

— *Naomi Farkas*

Children of the Sun

Our skin is golden
Our skin is brown
Our skin is red
Our skin burns

We are children of the sun
We glisten in the dirt
We mark the desert floor with our footprint
We crawl like our shadows across the land
We want to stop
We don't stop
We are trying
We are fighting
We are dying
We are immigrating

— *Kenia Cruz*

Jam Session

Photograph



Kevin Rodriguez

Unspoken

I'm drowning in feelings but my thoughts keep me dry
Who do I trust when you know how to lie?
Instinct tells me "let it go"; I refuse to simplify
What you mean every time you give me a reply

I want to trust you, just give in
Let go of the past and what has been
I don't know where we are or how to begin
Confused by all the battle scars left on our skin

Logic convinces me to wait you out
Tells me to give it a chance despite the doubt
Things are generally messy in fallout
They'll only be worse if feelings are said aloud.

For now, let's both remain quiet
Eat our feelings and ruin our diets
Allow ourselves to forget while our minds riot
Pretend on our escapes that the world will be compliant

No one knows us but us
I'm aware we have much left to discuss
Yet our silent agreement to silence is a plus
Especially when anyone else would try to make a fuss.

— *Josie Luna*



Phineas 2020 Award Winners

Every year, the *Phineas* student editors select all the written and artistic works in the magazine. From among the accepted work, qualified faculty members select pieces from each of the categories for first and second prize.

Award Winners

Art

1st “Painting of Carl Warner's Photograph” by Kenia Cruz (page 31)

2nd “Quiet Thoughts” by Andrea Gonzalez (page 22)

Poetry

1st “Orchestra” by David Begnell (page 24)

2nd “Los Angeles” by Kevin Rodriguez (page 12)

Phineas 2020

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Dion Cuevas
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Mary Copeland

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Our greatest debt is of course to the students of Valley College for contributing to this publication by submitting their art, essays, fiction and poetry.



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Phineas 2020 Online & In Print

An electronic version of Phineas 2020 will be available on the Phineas webpage on the college website by May 19, 2020. Currently, it is unclear when printed copies of the magazine will be available. Print versions of Phineas will be printed. If access to the campus is available in the fall, print copies will be available in the magazine rack in front of LA217 once access to campus is allowed. Email Phineas Faculty Advisor Joel Lamore for info on availability of the print version of the magazine.

Phineas 2021

The submission period for Phineas 2021 will open on October 1, 2020. Only SBVC students are eligible to submit work. Complete submission guidelines will be posted on the Phineas webpage on the college website by October 1, 2020.

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