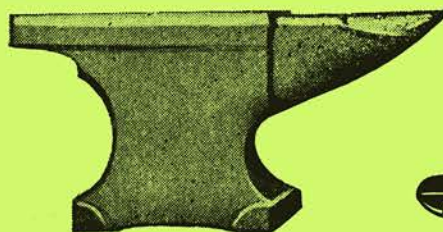
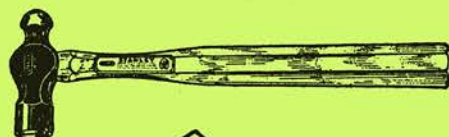
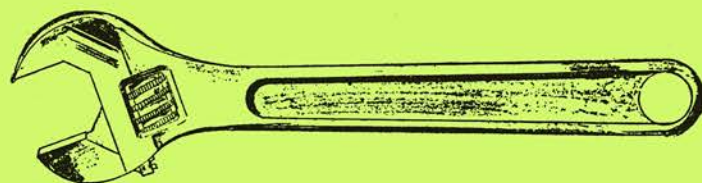
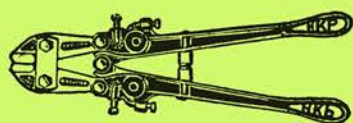


MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE
LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2014



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PRINTED BY:

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Friends of MCC Foundation
- Sandra Lang, Gallery Curator
- Ed Risch
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BEST OF MAGAZINE

Voices 2014 is proud to announce Awards for the Best of Magazine

LITERARY:

Joe Rice
Kissing in the Rain

VISUAL ART:

Wyatt Peterson
A United Ireland

MUSIC:

Oxford Owls
And the Wait

Voices wishes to acknowledge students for their excellence in literature, music and visual arts.

THE DAN RISCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship is awarded to outstanding and promising visual art students. This scholarship is generously funded by Dan's family and friends in memory of former MCC art student Dan Risch.

The 2014 Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship winners are:

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MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2014

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CONTENTS

VISUAL ARTS

- 6 **WYATT PETERSON** *A United Ireland*
- 8 **ANDY LECHNER** *Warm Wine*
- 9 **JOANNA SIT** *Jomana*
- 11 **BAERBEL NEMETZ** *Herringbone Floor*
- 12 **KERI RASMUSSEN** *Siren Song*
- 13 **BRANDON AGUILAR** *The Walk*
- 19 **TABITHA HEIN** *Hex*
- 20 **COREY McCULLAR** *UVA/UVB*
- 22 **DENNIS TAYLOR** *It's None of Your Bismuth*
- 23 **CLARA GASSETT** *Matilda*
- 26 **ASHLEY TANNER** *boooooop*
- 29 **JENNA TOMASZEWSKI** *Preparation*
- 30 **SHELBY PAGE** *untitled*
- 31 **NATALIE JEDYNAK** *Warrior*
- 33 **MICHELLE MATHIS** *Corrosion*
- 34 **BRANDON MARKS** *Paper Plane*
- 35 **DALLAS LACASSA** *Goldbaum*
- 36 **PATRICIA KIGGINS** *Rot Kraut*
- 39 **ASHLYN NOLAN** *Metal Feelings*
- 40 **TABITHA HEIN** *Guardians*
- 43 **MARY MARIUTTO** *Secrets of the Stones*
- 44 **DANIEL TENBROOK** *untitled*
- 45 **WILLIAM SERRITELLA** *Fish*
- 46 **IVAN BURIK** *Still Life*
- 47 **MOLLY TAIT** *untitled*
- 48 **SUSAN CLOUGH** *Thing One & Thing Two*
- 50 **JENNA TOMASZEWSKI** *Through the Woods*

LITERATURE

- 4 **JOE RICE** *Kissing in the Rain*
- 7 **EVELYN SILVER** *Do Not Go Soft*
- 10 **SAM BERINGER** *Then and Now*
- 14 **BRANDON MARKS** *Sitting Ducks*
- 21 **JOANNE KEEGAN** *The Gleaners*
- 24 **DANA WOLF** *Just an Ordinary Day*
- 27 **JOSH DERFLINGER** *untitled*
- 28 **JERRY WENDT** *St. Elmo's Fire*
- 32 **KATHRYN KAMINSKI** *Boomerang*
- 37 **BRANDON MARKS** *Grandmother Played the Cello*
- 41 **HOLLY WENDT** *Clarity*
- 42 **ANNE DONALD** *Mother Nature*
- 49 **LEAH HOTCHKISS** *All The World's a Unicorn*

MUSIC

- 1 **JOSH GUELZOW** *Ripped Off*
- 2 **JOSH DERFLINGER** *My Only Heart*
- 3 **OXFORD OWLS** *And the Wait*
- 4 **JOSH DERFLINGER** *Codrius the Father*
- 5 **THE HARKONNENS** *KLOF*



JOE RICE
Poetry

BEST OF MAGAZINE

KISSING IN THE RAIN

If we're going to get wet, then we might as well swim,
Like kissing in the rain on a magical whim,
When a lone light shines to illuminate your eyes, a beaming brown haze, a single look to realize.
Shimmering in the dark, my thoughts in a daze, the contrast is stark, your lips are a maze,
Why contours trace so sharply in space... It's bright in the park... We could stay here for days.
Capsizing under, our breathing asunder, drowning deep down screams the silence in sound.
Saturated aglow, shooting straight to my soul, this moment so great, this moment we know --
Lost at sea and letting go.
Our lips converge and slowly submerge,
Streaming the urge of a peaceful purge, whilst nearing the verge of an electric surge.
Shocking ahead into a tranquil storm,
That forms and swarms to wherever we fore... Lightning to strike, thunder to roar,
As our bodies collide and strive for more.

My heart heats on repeat, not skipping a beat,
Falling asleep, the black sheep in your arms. Falling awake, for the sake of your charms.
Levees break beneath a heavy barrage, sodden sensations of a flooding mirage.
Drops around our feet, yet we stand tall. A cool breeze passes, spreading your call.
An attempt to be subtle, I step to your puddle, gently caressing, playing spoons while we cuddle.
Soaked and sprouted, yet feeling dry,
Together, you and I, we always come alive. Together, you and I, the trepidation subsides.
Quite simply by, the anticipation of precipitation,
In an instant we share, that carries mid-air. In an atmosphere, where there is nothing to fear.



Staring out the window, waiting for the sun, though secretly wishing the rain wasn't gone.
It wasn't always like this, until I found you, that forecast in my mind bringing me to --
The hope for showers upon a bed of flowers, where this feeling grows in the smallest of hours.
Stratus clouds turn, burn ashen grey, how the heavenly angels fly, sing, ballet,
Starting to spray, giving life to the day, in their own unique and beautiful way.
Stratus clouds part and sever astray. Brought to my knees, I begin to pray,
"Oh, Beope, my silver lining Frey..."

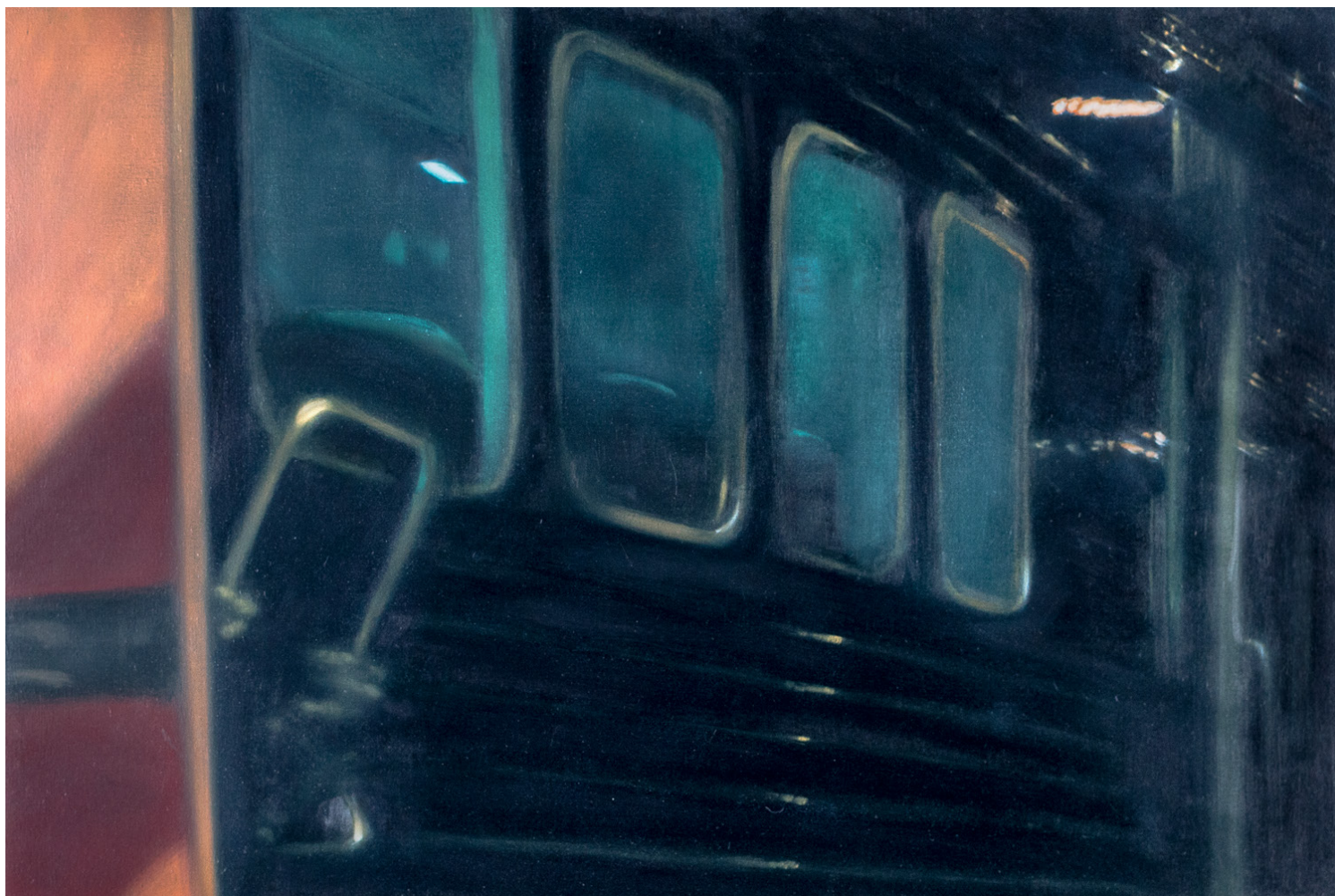
Within, without, the drizzle disappears, vanishing from your cheek like exsiccated tears,
But hey, if I may, I just want to say, "There's absolutely no evaporation at play."
"But why", you'll probably say, which of course is okay, and to which I will say,
Without a second's delay, "Because, my dear, I'm here to stay."
So please, ask away, "What's the forecast for today?"
"Bright and sunny, Honey, with a good chance of rain,
A good chance to wash away all the pain, of Father Time's stain, an untimely gain.
The mighty ocean will be stirred insane, directing the course of our inner weather vane.
Free of the chains, we will been given free reign,
To do as we please, as Mother Nature sustains. That, Sunshine, is the forecast for today."

If only it could rain every day of the year, then I could hold you close and whisper in your ear,
"Once I was blind, but now I see clear, and I am so happy that you are right here."
It's coming down now, but only on us, that warm, shining feeling, a trust fund of lust,
And with the arc of this rainbow, true love is a must.
I know I'm no expert, but of this much I know - Life is glad tidings and they're starting to show.
When it rains, it pours. Now I get what for - Because kissing in the rain opens the door,
To a whole new world, for you and I to explore.



WYATT PETERSON
A United Ireland

BEST OF MAGAZINE



OIL ON CANVAS, 30" X 45"



EVELYN SILVER
Poetry

DO NOT GO SOFT

Do not go soft into that goodnight.
Go fighting.

Do not let them hold you down.
Scream in their ears your battle cry.
Let them know you will not be silent.
Break their chains and show them who you are,
Flesh, bone, heart, brain, spirit, human.

Take their sharpened words and
Mold them into something beautiful.
Start a movement.
Polish off the voice you've kept hidden for too long.
Remind the world
That you are a freak,
You are an individual,
You are perfectly imperfect,
And you will not back down and bow
To the corrupt powers that be.
You will change the world.
You are The New Normal.



ANDY LECHNER

Warm Wine



CERAMICS, 9" X 7" X 3.5"



JOANNA SIT
Jomana



OIL ON CANVAS, 40" X 30"



SAM BERINGER

Short Fiction

THEN AND NOW

Nowadays you can't stand to look into the mirror, at the withered old face that stares back at you. Not because you're growing old, but because of what growing old signifies. You're reaching the end, whether you like it or not.

Back then, you didn't like looking in the mirror, either. The reflection of your too-thin frame, the dark circles under your eyes, and your dull, thinning hair reminded you of what you were: a walking corpse. Each day killed you little by little until at some point you started to wonder why you bothered living at all.

Back then, Hell was going back there day after day after day to listen to the constant whispers and snickers from the girls, the catcalls and lewd comments from the boys. It was going to your locker and finding words you couldn't bear to repeat written across it – disgusting names they called you when they knew you were listening – and an unwelcome “present” inside; things you didn't recognize, but realized their purpose and so eliminated any wish to know what they were for. It was the way that teachers did little about it despite your parents' loud complaints. It was wondering when they'd stop, when they'd bother someone else, when they'd allow you to go on with your life.

Now, Hell was how it ended.

Back then, you had to muster up all of your courage to confront the one who started those rumors in the first place

on the rickety old bridge, the only way to get to the place she liked to spend time in. You demanded that she take back everything she said about you, or at least get everyone to realize they weren't true. She, of course, did not take you seriously. Just a mousy girl a high school queen had nothing to fear from, someone who provided amusement for her.

“Besides,” she told you with that smirk you hated, “I did you a favor. Do you know how many boys are willing to pay a buck or two?”

It was those words that pulled you forward, that urged you to charge towards her as she walked away. To show her you weren't the sniveling thing she thought you were, that you had a spine and you weren't going to stand for this anymore. You felt a brief moment of triumph in her widened eyes as you grabbed the front of her shirt.

But that disappeared as soon as she went over the railing and into the stone creek below.

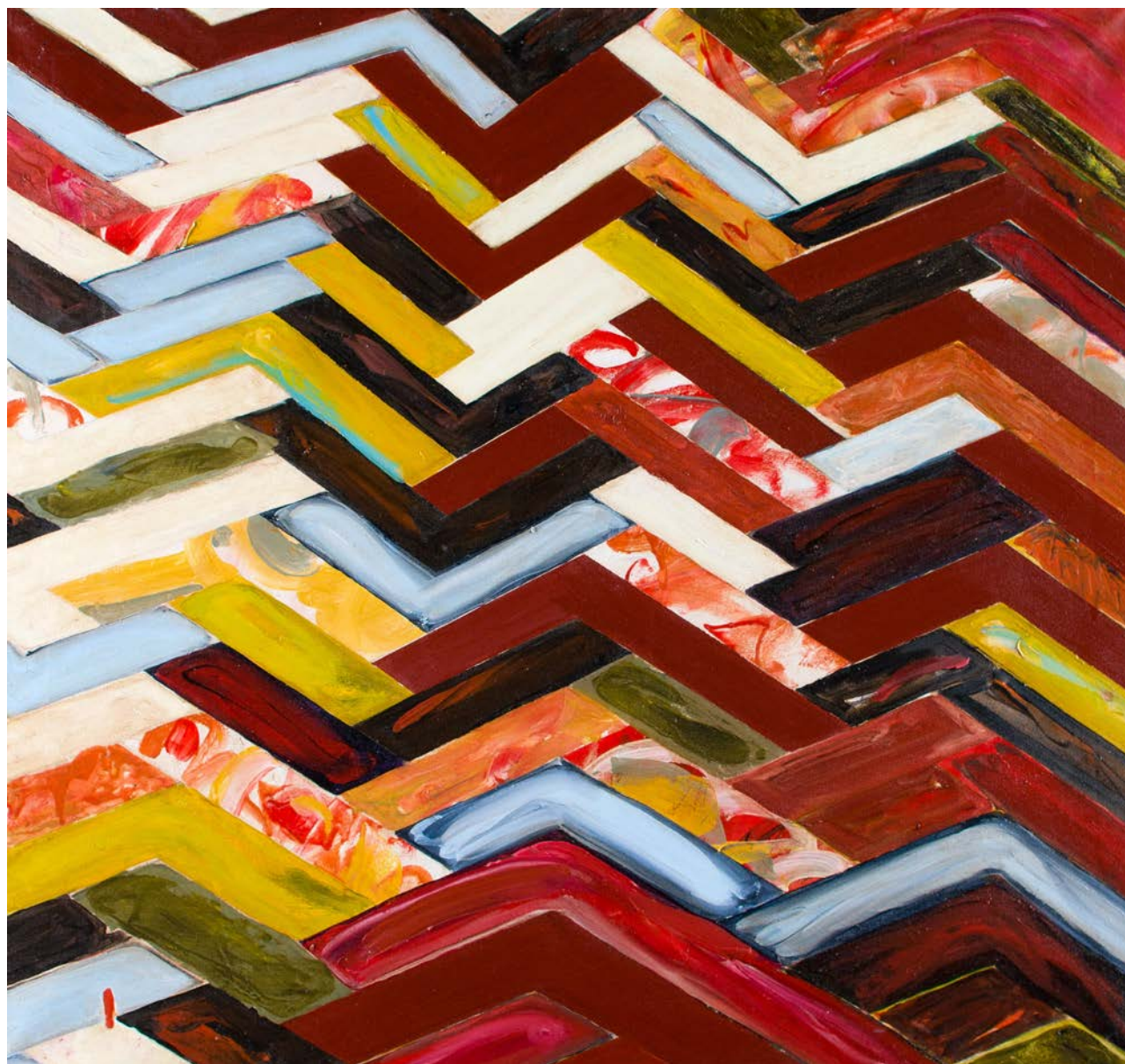
Now, you hear that sickening crack! from that day every time you hear parents and teachers encourage children to stand up for themselves. Now, her twisted body and frozen eyes flash in your mind whenever you see pictures of your high school days. Now, you find yourself confessing more than praying.

Back then, you were a victim.

Now, you're a murderer.



BAERBEL NEMETZ
Herringbone Floor



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 34"



KERI RASMUSSEN

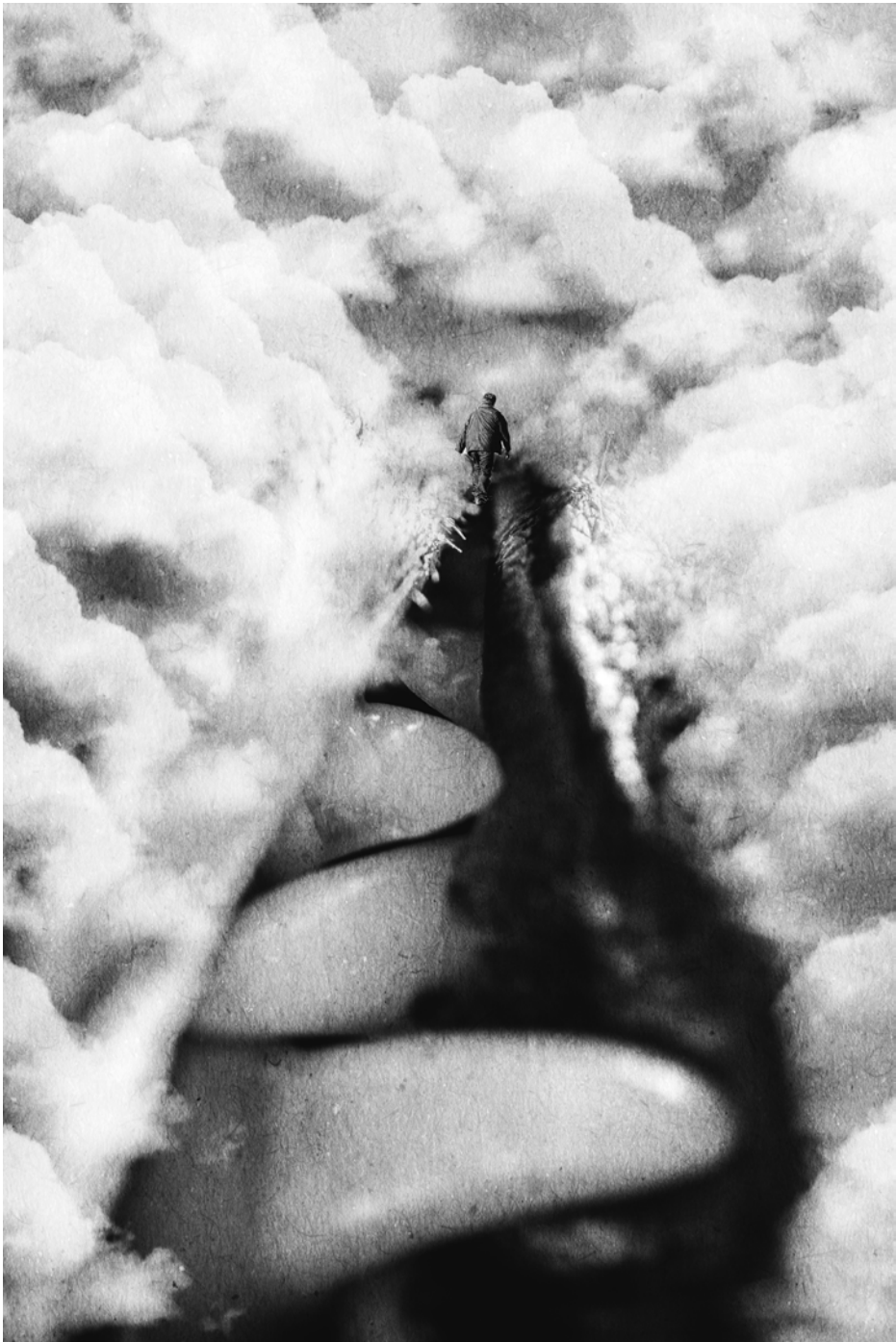
Siren Song



CERAMICS, 23" X 10" X 10"



BRANDON AGUILAR
The Walk



ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT, 11" X 8.5"



BRANDON MARKS

Drama

SITTING DUCKS

TIME: The Present

PLACE/SETTING: *Early Autumn in Northern Wisconsin on a remote inlet somewhere on Lake Superior. Two men in their mid-20s are sitting in a worn aluminum boat. Joel, dark-haired and lanky, wears faded blue jeans and a camouflage jacket, slightly open revealing a dirty white t-shirt. Mike, solid with buzzed blonde hair dons full camouflage attire. Both wield Winchester shotguns.*

MIKE: Damn, does it feel good to be back here or what?

JOEL: Yeah, this was always that one place where all the shit just faded away.

MIKE: Yeah, but we never really had it that bad, right? I mean, come on, who was it that scored the two most beautiful chicks in high school, led the football team to 3 championships—I mean we practically ran that school. Now look at us, married, nice homes...

JOEL: *(Doesn't answer.)*

MIKE: What's wrong man? You've been in a funk since we got here. I haven't seen you this quiet since you got a boner in gym class, junior year. You sat cross-legged the rest of the period on the bleachers because Mr. Tuck wouldn't let you leave.

JOEL: A funk?

MIKE: Yeah, I didn't say anything before because I just really wanted to get this boat in the water. But we're here now, shotguns in hand, 'bout to shoot some fuckin' ducks right outta the goddamn sky. I would think that you'd be a little more excited to be here.

JOEL: I am. I'm just—tired, that's all.

MIKE: Tired? Then why the hell did you ask if I wanted to go hunting today? You never ask me to go hunting anymore. The few times we've gone lately I was the one who asked you. So what's up man? There's gotta be something on your mind for you to call me up out of the blue.

JOEL: I don't know, I guess I just really needed to get away right now. You're the only one I know who would just up and go in the middle of the week.

MIKE: You're damn right I would. I even put up with Tricia throwing a hissy fit because I called in sick to work. I could give a fuck what my boss thinks, but as much as I seem like I don't care, I hated lying to her. I said to Tricia—look, Joel really needs someone to talk to, he and Mandy are hitting a rough spot in their marriage, you know, after what happened. I said, we'll go hunt for a few hours, have some laughs, smooth things out, and then I told her when I come home all cold and frosty, we can screw around on a blanket in front of the fireplace. You know, she likes romantic shit like that.

JOEL: Wow, sounds like you two are still going strong.

MIKE: Yeah, you could say that. Are you and Mandy not?

(JOEL Grumbles and turns away.)

MIKE: C'mon, man. What is it with you today? Fuckin' talk to me. We've been best friends since Tina Ahlers started growing tits in the fourth grade. I'm not gonna tell anyone anything. Besides, ain't nobody around for miles. Betcha no one even hears this. *(Fires rifle into the air.)*



JOEL: Dammit Mike. Jesus Christ. Gimme some warning before you fire a shot off like that.

MIKE: Relax man, I gave you warning enough. What do expect anyway? We came out here to hunt, right? There's bound to be some gunshots. There's gonna be a lot more pretty soon if you don't start talking because I'm tired of trying to get you to spill your guts. I know if you don't, the birds will when I blow a hole in their chests.

JOEL: Jesus Mike.

MIKE: Jesus what?

JOEL: Jesus, will you quit talkin' about guts right now?

MIKE: GUTS? FUCK, JOEL, WE CAME HERE TO FUCKING HUNT. *(Stares wild-eyed.)* Why on God's green earth are you trying to ruin this for me? I didn't take off of work for nothing. If you don't want to talk and you don't want to hunt, then what the hell are we doing out here, huh?

JOEL: *(Staring down.)*

MIKE: Ridiculous. I'm taking us back to the landing and getting the hell outta here.

JOEL: All right...shit. Mike, just—

MIKE: Just what?

JOEL: Just—just wait a second, okay? Don't head back yet. I have something I gotta tell you.

MIKE: Alright, start talking.

JOEL: It's bad, Mike. It's real bad.

MIKE: Well, go on, man, I'm not judging you.

JOEL: *(Sigh.)* It's Mandy.

MIKE: Mandy?

JOEL: Yeah.

MIKE: You're not cheating on her, are you?

JOEL: No, but—

MIKE: Oh my god, she's cheating on you, isn't she? I knew it. I knew I should've said something to you. I just had a feeling, but Tricia told me not to say anything unless I was sure.

JOEL: No, no, no. You're not listening to me. You wanted me to talk and you keep interrupting me when I've got some heavy shit I need to get off my chest.

MIKE: Okay, sorry man. I just don't know what can be worse than that.

JOEL: It's worse, Mike. Much worse.

MIKE: Well?

JOEL: I uh... I... *(Looks down and runs hand through hair.)*

MIKE: Alright, spit it out already, the suspense is killing me.

JOEL: *(Meets Mike's eyes.)* I killed her.

MIKE: *(Pause.)* What are you talking about?

JOEL: I killed her, Mike. *(Beat.)* I killed Mandy.

MIKE: *(Laughs.)* Right...and we're out here because what, you wanted to dump the body?

JOEL: No, no, her body's still at the house, in the pantry. I didn't know what else to do with it.

MIKE: Joel, you're fucking kidding, right? This isn't even funny, but you better be goddamn kidding me right now.

JOEL: No, Mike, I'm serious. Yesterday, I got home from a shitty day at work—over and over people kept swearing at me,



BRANDON MARKS

Drama

SITTING DUCKS (CONT.)

insulting me. You know, the same old “this is the third fucking time I’m calling, and I’ve been on the phone for over two hours, and don’t you morons know anything about these fucking computers?”

MIKE: Yeah, but that’s work, man. It sucks, but that’s no reason to kill your wife.

JOEL: There’s more to it than that. *(Pause.)* As soon as I got in the door Mandy and I—we started arguing about some stupid thing...that-that the uh...the water keeps going cold when she’s taking a shower or something. This isn’t the first time she’s gone off about some little thing, but I was patient with her, as always. I told her the water’s fine whenever I go in, it’s always hot enough. And I told her that I really didn’t want to talk about it right then. I just wanted to lay down and get away from the bullshit for a while, but she kept yelling, saying I didn’t want to talk about it because I forgot to pay the heating bill.

MIKE: Well did you?

JOEL: No, I never forget to pay the bills. That’s all I do is pay bills. And no thanks to her. There was no reason that she couldn’t go back to work after we lost the baby. Even if it was six months later. Just the effort would have been nice. She could have earned some money instead of putting all the pressure on me while still feeling like the victim. I took this job that I hate just to make a few more bucks. But what did she do? She left work on maternity leave and just never went back.

And why would they take her back? No one wants an alcoholic working for them, anyway.

MIKE: Alcoholic? I didn’t even know Mandy drank.

JOEL: *(Feigns laughter.)* Ha! You didn’t know her that well, Mike. She was a drunk. She was driving me crazy and I couldn’t fucking take it anymore. I yelled it in her face that it was time to get over the goddamn miscarriage and start working again—start doing something besides drink all the time. That stopped her dead in her tracks and I kept walking up the stairs. I didn’t even feel bad about it. I thought that was that and she would leave me be, but she then she ran up to me and punched me in the back of the head. Out of pure reaction I whipped around and back-handed her. *(Motions.)* I honestly didn’t mean to do it, but her head smashed into the wall and I could hear the crack of bone or drywall or both. She fell backwards down the steps and I could hear snapping all the way down. There was blood on the handrail from it spurting from the side of her head, but I still held on to keep myself from shaking. By the time I got to the bottom I saw that her cheek was down in a pool of blood. I didn’t know what else to do so I dragged her to the pantry. Then I sat in the armchair all night, not sleeping or moving an inch. I called you because I didn’t know who else I could talk to. I don’t know what to do Mike. What am I going to do?

MIKE: What can you do? Nothing.

JOEL: Well I have to do something Mike, I can’t just do nothing. Her body’s still lying there.

MIKE: No man. Don’t you see? There’s nothing you can do now Joel, she’s fuckin’ dead. You killed her, man. You have to tell the police. That’s the only thing you can do.

JOEL: No Mike, I—I can’t...I can’t go to jail. I can’t go to jail.



I'd sooner blow my brains out right now. You know me, I wouldn't last. That's why you've gotta help me. Please, I don't know what to do.

MIKE: I can't help you man. I still have a wife, I can't be caught up in this shit. You're my best friend but—

JOEL: Exactly. You're my best friend. Friends since the fourth grade. You've got to help me, Mike. Please, at least just tell me what to do. I can't go to jail. Please just tell me what you think I should do.

MIKE: You want my help? Here, I'll dial 911 for you and you can talk to them. *(Holds up phone and starts dialing.)*

JOEL: *(Joel raises shotgun and points it at Mike.)* No. You don't call the police.

MIKE: Alright Joel, I'm sorry. Please—just put the gun down.

JOEL: I'm sorry Mike. I'm not putting the gun down until you throw the phone into the water.

MIKE: I can't. We need this phone in case there's an emergency.

JOEL: Don't fuck with me. We both know there's no service out here.

MIKE: C'mon man.

JOEL: Mike, I'm not fucking around. *(Pumps shotgun.)* Toss the phone.

MIKE: *(Stares at Joel for a moment, reaches arm out of boat and lets phone fall. Doesn't speak.)*

JOEL: *(Still pointing shotgun.)* I couldn't let you do that. I need to think first. I know I dragged you into this, but you're in now and we're not going anywhere until we've figured this shit out.

MIKE: I'm not tellin' you to turn yourself in because I want to see you go to jail, I'm tellin' you because I don't want you to

make this worse on yourself. I am your friend and I know you well enough to know that this isn't you Joel. I don't know what there is to think about.

JOEL: I just need to think. I can't go to jail for this.

MIKE: Why not? Don't you think you deserve to? I mean, you killed your wife. How can you get away with that?

JOEL: I—I—I don't know, I mean—

MIKE: Don't you even feel bad about it?

JOEL: *(Lowers shotgun.)* Of course I feel bad. Why would you even ask that?

MIKE: I don't know. You're here aren't you? You should be choked up, crying over your wife's body, not calling me up to go hunting.

JOEL: She deserved it, Mike. It was an accident, but she deserved it. You don't know what she did.

MIKE: What could she possibly have done to deserve being murdered?

JOEL: It was her own damn fault that she had a miscarriage.

MIKE: Man, that's ridiculous. She was just as torn up about it as you were. Probably more.

JOEL: Yeah, that's what you think, but you didn't see it all. Sure, she was upset that it happened, but not because she lost our baby. She felt guilty because she knows she killed it.

MIKE: How?

JOEL: She lied to me about when she thought she got pregnant. She told me long after she already knew because it was too hard for her to give up her wine every night. Then when she came out and told me she was pregnant, I told her she needed to stop, that she can't drink with a baby inside her. She said she would not only quit drinking, but that she'd dump out all the bottles so she wouldn't be tempted. But do you know



BRANDON MARKS

Drama

SITTING DUCKS (CONT.)

what I found a few weeks later while planting mouse traps in the guest room? Six wine bottles in the closet and four of them were bone dry.

MIKE: She kept drinking after she knew she was pregnant?

JOEL: Yeah, I told her again and again not to, but how could I watch her while I was at work and she was at home on maternity leave? Anyway, she had the miscarriage and got really depressed. Instead of giving it up completely, she started to drink even more and just never went back to work. I should've just left her. I don't know why I didn't.

MIKE: Damn, man. I'm sorry. I had no idea. Don't blame yourself though, Joel. It wasn't your fault.

JOEL: I don't blame myself. That's why I think she deserved what she got. That's why you gotta help me—because I can't be blamed for something she brought on herself.

MIKE: Look man...I'm not gonna turn you in. I'm not even gonna tell you to turn yourself in because...I don't know...you're my friend and what she did really was wrong...But Joel,

if you're gonna ask me to help you...I can't. I know this isn't you, but it definitely is not me. I don't want this blood on my hands. I understand you have to because you did what you did and you can't undo it, but leave me out of it.

JOEL: That's bullshit. I'm no better off now than I was this morning, in fact, I'm probably worse off because now you know and you still won't help me. But I know I can trust you not to say anything, right?

MIKE: Right. Let's head back. It doesn't look like we're gonna do any hunting today.

JOEL: Thanks for understanding.

MIKE: No problem.

JOEL: Can I tell you what the strangest part of was though?

MIKE: Shoot.

JOEL: Don't get me wrong, I do felt bad for killing her, but I also felt happy. I sat in the chair overnight and I couldn't help but smile the whole damn time. It felt like relief—like I actually enjoyed it.



TABITHA HEIN
Hex



COLOR PENCIL ON PAPER, 30" X 22"



COREY McCULLAR
UVA/UVB



OIL ON CANVAS, 40" X 20"



JOANNE KEEGAN
Poetry

THE GLEANERS

Colors clustered
Leap across the palette.
Clouds rise and fall.
Silver and gold stacked high and low
Bask lazily.

The maize, the wheat,
Watchful of sickles' thrust.
Reaching high the harvest peaks
Changing.

Grapes quivering full-bodied
Blush upon the vine,
Await the crush, choosing last for first
Thirsting.

Harvest abound
Reaped for Masters' spread,
While the lowly
Wait their turn.

Gleaners humbled
Mid umber fields:
Scorched by blazing sun
Unable to rise.

Yet the bent shall rise first
To His table,
Wheat and wine, silver and gold,
While the master waits his turn.

As the master owns not the field,
Only tenant is he.
For the field belongs to
He who feeds
The needy, the weary, the winged.



DENNIS TAYLOR
It's None of Your Bismuth



OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 18"



CLARA GASSETT
Matilda



CERAMICS, 13" X 7"



DANA WOLF
Fiction

JUST AN ORDINARY DAY

I walked to work today. I guess I should have seen it coming because I rarely do things out of my daily routine. As I locked the door to my one bedroom apartment, I noticed the broken window in the apartment below mine. I guessed the tenant's ex-boyfriend was back with a vengeance but the sound of loud crunching caught my attention.

"Uh, Hannah?" I approached the broken window after I descended the stairs. I'd talked to her once or twice, not more than a 'hey' or 'how are you?'

A growling sound startled me. I backed up, tripping over my sneakers and falling back as someone launched themselves at the window. It was her ex, but there was something strange about him. His eyes were cloudy and almost yellow, his mouth open in a snarl, and I could see his skull from where his skin had been peeled away.

"Woah," I muttered. "Zombies."

He lunged at me and I used what I remembered from the many movies I'd seen to avoid him. Rolling off to the side, I had just enough time to stand before he realized his prey had gotten away. As we locked eyes again, I remembered the rules from my favorite movie, *Zombieland*.

Rule 1: Cardio

I took off running. I heard his frantic shuffling behind me, the leap from Hannah's window must have shattered his ankle... Not that he cared anymore. As I sprinted down the street, I noticed some people weren't as lucky as I had been to be living on the second floor. I just kept moving my feet.

I wonder if this means I get the day off...

The thought came to me as I saw my place of employment. Costco loomed almost intimidatingly in front of me. Or at least as much as a building could be intimidating. As I approached the doors, I saw boards had been nailed over the glass.

"Hello?" I poked my head in the door, unsure if the doors were meant to keep zombies out or confined within.

"Jenny?" A small voice came through the darkness of the store and a heavy duty flashlight turned on. My coworker, Alice was staring at me with a mix of relief and fear.

"Can I come in? It's kinda... vulnerable out here." I scrambled to find the right word to describe my situation. She nodded and I heard a few other voices behind her. They sounded like more of our coworkers. I opened the door wider and was about



to step in when Alice's face turned to utter terror.

"Ow." A sharp pain bit into my shoulder. Literally. Hannah's ex-boyfriend was nibbling on my shoulder. I always knew he was an asshole. Alice screamed and the other employees raised their makeshift weapons.

Well damn.

I shifted out of his grip and punched him in the face. He went down and then started nibbling at my ankle. I didn't bother stop him. I suddenly felt queasy, like the contents of my stomach were suddenly acid. Doubling over, I retched right in front of my boss, Henry, who'd come to see how I was.

"Guess I'm fired, huh?" I laughed as darkness surrounded me and I passed out.

I woke up later and found myself incredibly hungry. A 'I-could-eat-a-horse' kind of hungry. Although maybe I should say 'I-could-eat-a-person'. I slowly got to my feet and looked around. The Costco was clearly overrun; the windows and doors were utterly demolished. I guessed that my arrival was enough to alert a bunch of my now-brethren.

I stumbled a bit as I tried to walk. It was going to take some getting used to... being undead and all.

As I stumbled away from the wreckage of my old place of employment, I thought I saw someone move to my right. I cast a curious glance and saw a teenaged boy. He was alive and terrified. How cute.

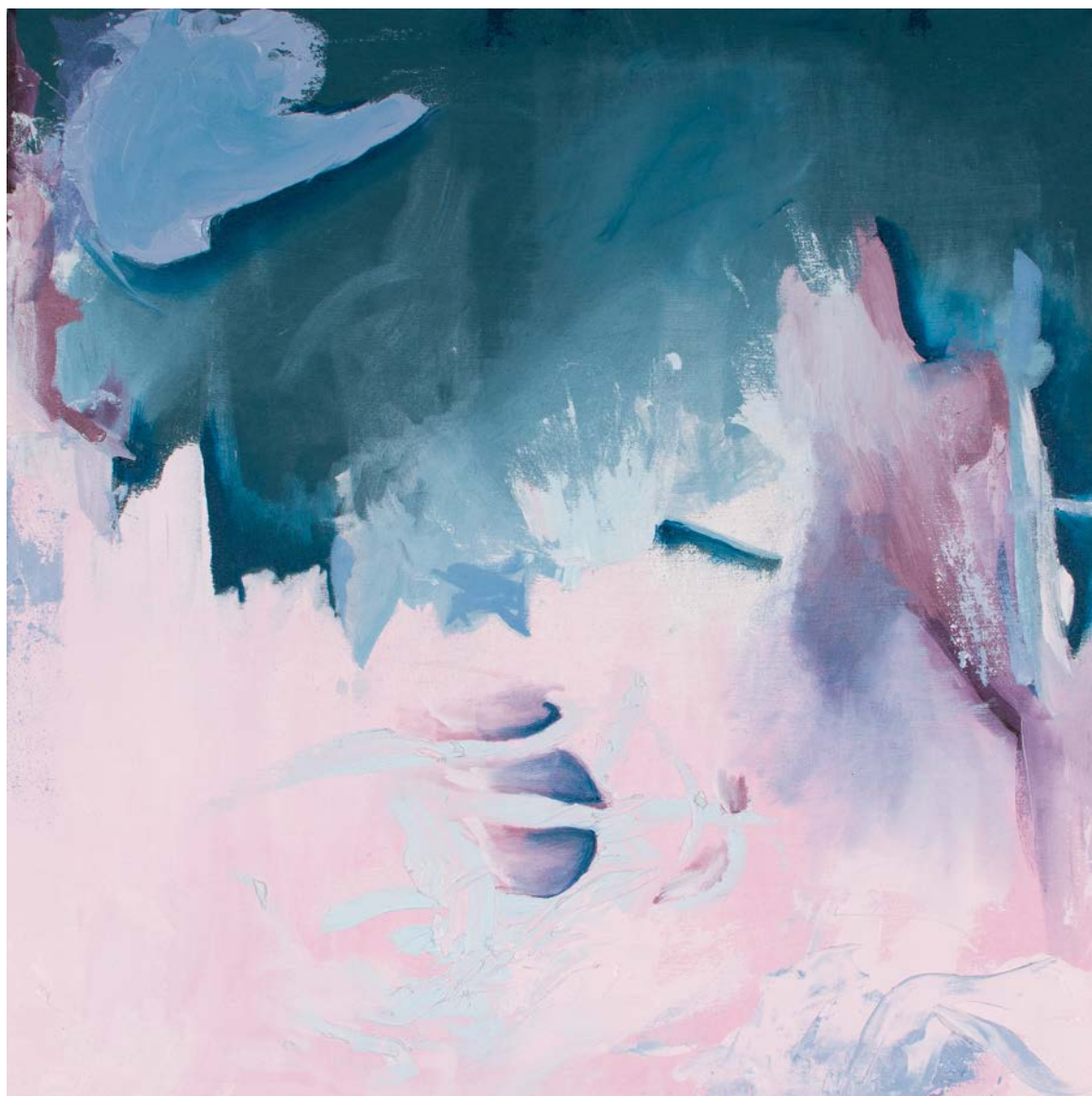
My stomach gave a lurch as though I finally found sustenance in a desert wasteland. Which was a pretty spot-on analogy. I stumbled after him as he tried to edge his way into Costco. He probably thought there'd be a ton of supplies and food. Too bad he'll probably never find out. If I didn't get him, someone else in there would. And I was just so damn hungry.

He never saw me coming. For all his nervous glances around, he never saw me quietly shuffle up behind him and simply take a bite out of his shoulder. He went down screaming but I couldn't care less.

He was delicious.



ASHLEY TANNER
boooooop



OIL ON CANVAS, 28" X 28"



JOSH DERFLINGER
Poetry

UNTITLED

Swift Recovery

A simple transition,
From man to machine,
The softest thought in the coldest dream
Seems now as free as our hearts can be,
A final tragedy;
The final chance at a glorified excuse,
Well you don't have one

For only thieves can see in the night,
A mere memory faded into white
Now it may seem as if you're losing your grip
But only thieves sink into the abyss
For if you keep these things close,
Who knows how far you'll go

Rest assured, you know you're good,
For the selfless eat hungry, but are always full,
Now it may seem like you're falling down
But only strangers walk out of step,
For the ones who are selfish eat to their hearts' extent,
But the selfless stay humble, with no regret

For we all appear as thieves, or strangers in the night,
But the selfless shine the brightest light.



JERRY WENDT

Poetry

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

Let banshee wind,
pelting torrent,
and tumult of angry sea
rid your mind
of any toy-store cuddly.
This Elmo of mariner tales
would purpose prayer
if thought could be found twixt
efforts to tiebind-safe ship
against feral sirens of Poseidon's lair
beckoning straining timbers and rigging to bottom rest.
Ghostly blue aura shrouds mist-veiled crew,
chilling bones and rifting reality.
Dancing, almost palpable other-world spectres
shadow tie to earthly bodies.
Ears crackle as eyes belie fear
glancing mastward to peaks of flame;
candles for some hell-sent party.
The vessel burns strange; cold;
timbers unscathed,
only scorching deep inside storm-tossed souls of sailors
hopeful to live to tell tale and find words to do it justice.



JENNA TOMASZEWSKI
Preparation



INK ON PAPER, 18" X 24" (2)



SHELBY PAGE
untitled



CERAMICS, 32" X 22"



NATALIE JEDYNAK
Warrior



ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT, 13" X 19"



KATHRYN KAMINSKI
Drama

BOOMERANG

TIME: Present

SETTING: *A man in his early twenties sits on a park bench with a tree on each side of it. On the tree to his left there is a carving, J.H. + N.E. = BFF; his focus remains on it. He wears a dull blue t-shirt and cargo shorts. His elbows rest on his knees and he continuously turns a boomerang in his hands. The audience can see the light shine on his face from his steady tears.*

JOHN HARRIS: The one thing my mum always said to me when I was young was that home held everything you could need. When she would put me to bed, she'd sit next to me, put her hand on my belly and say, "Johnny, I want you to remember this, okay, love? Remember that family is the most important." Every time she'd say it she looked so serious, like it was the ground that all other truths were built on. I never understood her back then, I always wanted to know what it was the most important part of. But the look on her face made me hold my tongue; "all right, mum, I'll remember."

This park here. This park has always been more home to me than anywhere else in Oz. It's where I met Nate. Where we spent our days and nights. Talking, playing, growing up. Our dads taught us how to throw our boomerang, how to angle it perfectly so it returned to our hands. Taught us why it always came back. Taught us how our Aussie ancestors used them for hunting. This park was our childhood, mine and Nate's. Every-

thing between us could always be traced back to this park. To that tree. To those carvings.

Ever since we went to Uni, and our lives, lives that had always been on parallel tracks, suddenly split and went off in different directions. Mine to medicine, to helping people, to doing routine check-ups, to using needles to inject medicine; and him to using needles to inject meth.

Ever since then this park has always held a different meaning. It was more of a holder of memories than a place to go make more of them. It stings in my heart to know that this park will never go back to being the place to make memories for Nate and me, that it will forever remain the keeper of our childhood, and will never be the keeper of our adult lives.

It seemed fitting, you know? To come back on his anniversary. My mum was right, it seems. That home held everything you could need. All I need now is this park, my boomerang, and Nate. I wish I had understood that before I let our friendship, our brotherly bond, be severed. I finally get what she meant when she said family was the most important. That it was the most important everything, and that it should be held above all other things.

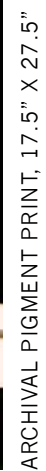
So it makes sense that I would come back to the place that it all started, to the place where Nate and I were thrown together. Just like a boomerang comes back to your hand once you've thrown it.



MICHELLE MATHIS
Corrosion



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 34"





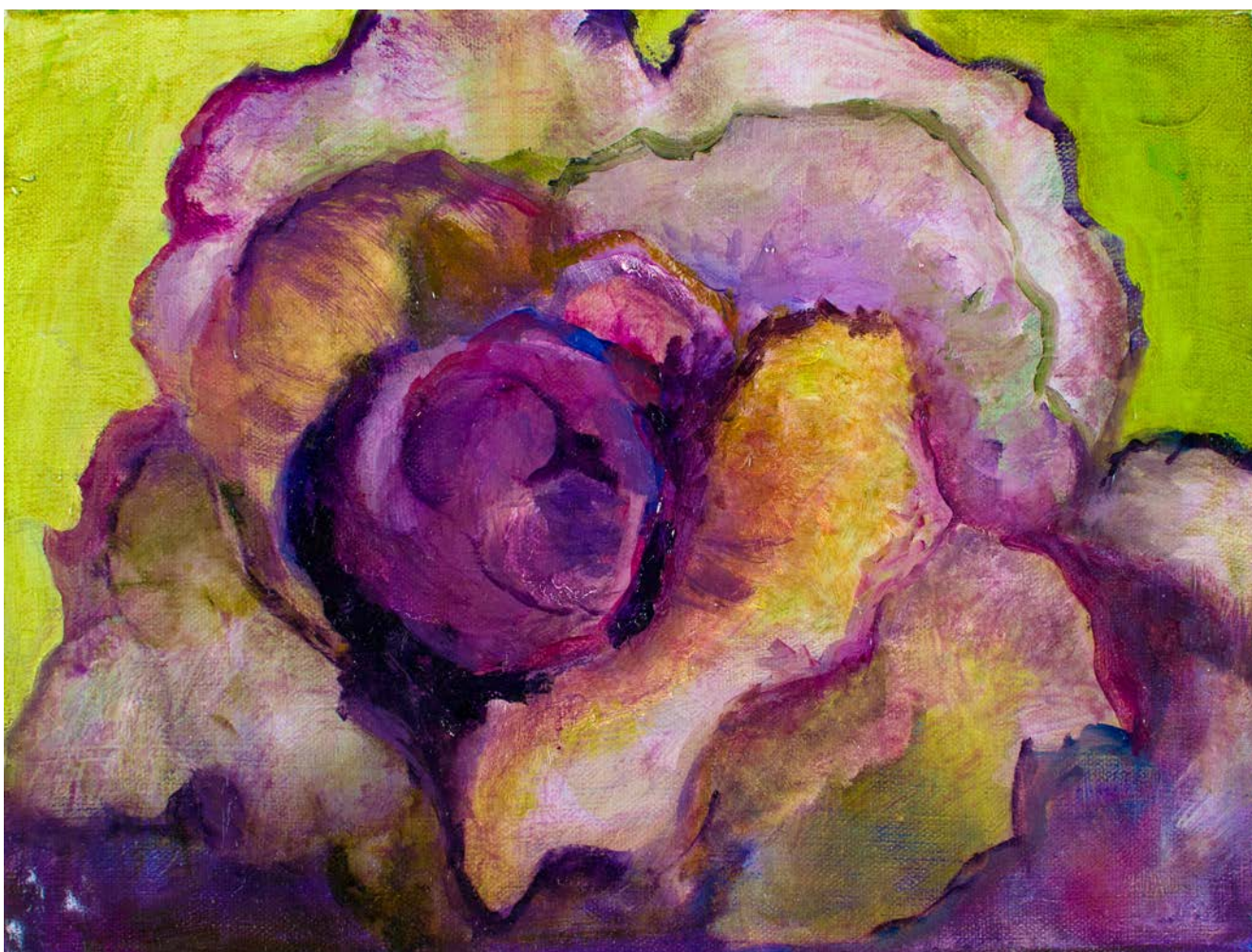
DALLAS LACASSA
Goldbaum



CERAMIC & GOLD LEAF, 19" X 12" X 12"



PATRICIA KIGGINS
Rot Kraut



OIL ON CANVAS, 9" X 12"



BRANDON MARKS
Creative Non-Fiction

GRANDMOTHER PLAYED THE CELLO

She sat there at the counter, a few diner stools away from me, lightly chewing a mouthful of her favorite breakfast food—spinach and feta omelet with mushrooms, a subtle reminder of her Mediterranean roots. I don't like the flavor of mushrooms myself, but they say your taste buds dull when you get to be as old as she was. Her skin was a soft ivory, made transparent by the years so that I could see the thin highways of green veins intersecting around her eyes and the backs of her hands. With each scoop of egg, she would slowly lean in, bringing the food up to her mouth over the plate. Neat, poised. Classical etiquette. As she leaned forward, her tiny dangling cello earrings appeared from behind her white locks and swayed steadily back and forth, back and forth, briefly recording the pulses of an inaudible metronome.

Under the yellow light of ceiling cans, her blue blouse and white shoes against the red of the stool cushion gave me the impression of an old, faded pinup poster. She was the cross-legged pinup doll with a sailor's hat, crisp blue uniform, red high-heels, and starched white bow at the neck. Not the nude pinup next to the bunk of a hopeless infantryman smoking cheap, C-ration cigarettes, but the dream girl of an honest, church-going American. Here she is, quiet and pensive, but at one time, she was awing auditoriums...

When she wasn't teaching piano to a roomful of rambunctious school children (whom she adored!), she was playing

the violin in bandstands for parties, picnics, and holidays. She loved being involved with the community and was fond of spreading the joys of music.

Even in the hot Texas sun, she looked so cool; her brunette hair tossing in the breeze and her fair, delicate hands fast at work. Fourth of July celebrations were especially something to behold in Wheeler, Texas. You could practically hear the firecrackers and bands sound uproariously from one side of the Panhandle to the other. This beautiful young woman was in high spirits every Fourth and in between sets, she would mingle with her neighbors and nibble on slices of frosted white cake.

These gatherings were also an opportunity to introduce her friends to her wonderful husband and bright, young daughter, Rebecca. The only thing more important to her than music, after all, was her family. They were what helped steady her nerves that time she was invited to play for a large crowd at a bordering town's Grand Auditorium. She was called on to play solo cello in honor of an esteemed musician who had just recently passed away.

Playing the cello was actually her true musical passion. She loved it ever since she was a little girl and her mother played classical music on a turntable record player—a luxury beyond any that she could imagine. It delivered to her the soaring notes of her favorite piece: Bach's Cello Suite No. 1



BRANDON MARKS
Creative Non-Fiction

GRANDMOTHER PLAYED THE CELLO (CONT.)

Prelude. She would lie down on the worn family room carpet and ascend and dive and drift with each poignant vibration of the warm-toned strings. On her 11th birthday, her parents presented her with her very own cello and every day after school, she would practice this piece verbatim until the tips of her fingers were red and white from calluses, but nothing made her happier. Even still, over two decades later, she had butterflies in her stomach as she prepared to go on stage and play that very same piece for a crowded auditorium.

The nerves were not because she was going to be in front of so many people or for the fear she would mess up. No, this fluttering feeling was because she realized her dreams were about to come true.

She could not have asked for a better job than teaching music to children. She found fulfillment in playing music for her small town; now she would play her favorite piece of music for them, in memory of a fellow musician, and to make her mother proud. Most importantly, she could see her husband's warm smile and her daughter's earnest thumbs-up, just barely

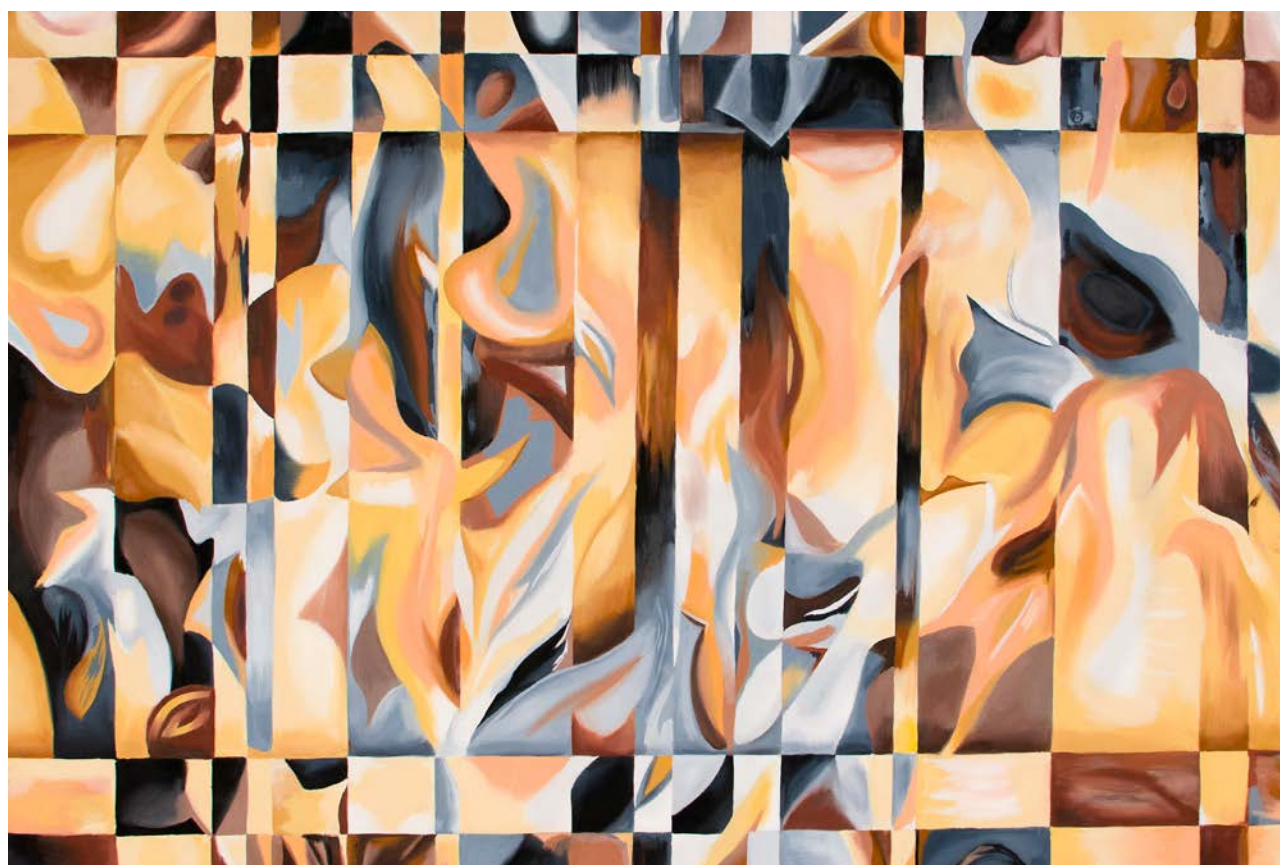
poking up from heads in the audience. This instantly melted her nerves away. All that was left to do was submit to the dream and be swept away by it, in happiness, like a baby giving in to sleep while swaddled in a warm blanket.

Before she knew it, she sat behind the cello, her dark brown hair and delicate ivory hands swaying with every deliberate stroke of the bow. The deep, bellowing tones echoed off the polished wooden stage and throughout the marble hall. The sound reverberated in the audience's eardrums and amplified in their hearts. The grandeur of an entire symphony rang in that room and though the cellist played with passionate fervor, she was a portrait of delicate vulnerability. That night, lying in bed, she smiled knowingly to herself, thinking that she had played all of what her heart had told her play...

I saw all of this as the old woman paused, the fork halfway between her mouth and the counter: a familiar classical song had just started to play over the restaurant's tinny speakers. I grinned to myself and returned to my cup of lukewarm coffee.



ASHLYN NOLAN
Metal Feelings



OIL ON CANVAS, 35" X 52"



TABITHA HEIN
Guardians



GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 30" X 22" (2)



HOLLY WENDT
Poetry

CLARITY

A hot, steady stream rains down over my skin.
I will it, and my tears, to wash it all away—
Down the drain and far, far away.
Cleansing me of these demons that endlessly haunt me:
Poisonous, tortuous thoughts;
Relentless, forbidden desires;
Painful, regrettable actions—
All of my sins and pain.
If only it were that easy!
What else can I do?

Lock them in a box and throw away the key,
Only to scrounge and scour for it after just a moment's time?

Seal them tight in a glass jar and shatter it,
Hopeful that the shards are enough to shred them to oblivion?

Tie them to a weight and plunge them to the sea floor,
Only to drown diving into the depths to retrieve them?

Bury them in the earth as far as my shovel will go,
Only to bloody my hands digging and clawing to get them back?

Alas, there is no escape, no respite.
The remainder of my journey awaits.
And these, my burdens, travel with me—
My constant, forever companions.



ANNE DONALD

Poetry

MOTHER NATURE

I listen and watch my children,
who disturbed my virgin soil with footprints
and chopped down the trees to build homes.
My children who tore roots from the ground, up turned the soil
for their nourishment.

As my children built the factories they drilled deep, tearing out
the roots from the trees that stood like gentle giants, swaying in
the breeze. My children who clog the air with the smoke stacks of
factories. And they dump their wastes in landfills, and it
seeps into my core. In return I bled with floods
that were necessary to cleanse my ground
of the filth they left.

These are my children,
yet they are the ones who destroy me.
Through my rage I sent waves of water, winds,
and rains. It was time that I cleansed myself of the blood, waste, and filth
that seeped into my core;

and while the children wept for a fallen
comrade, I wept for my soul, which was killed as the children
pulled guns from their packs and maimed each other,
leaving the corpses to rot, the bones and flesh as the
soil claims the corpses, and as the left bodies sink
in I allow the soil to claim the bones
in an eternal embrace.
And they trampled the flowers in boots as heavy as their intentions.

In their conquests, they conquered my lands, burnt my forests
and skewered the veins of riches which were buried under the soil.
In return they award me with nature preserves,

environmental groups and planted saplings to replace the
wreckage and destruction they wrought. They believe
these gifts will placate me, yet their thoughts vegetable
from selfishness and greed.

Their insults and shouts of hatred and war
resonate in my ears, like a song too long forgotten. I send more
disaster as they replace the mask of goodness with one of selfishness.

These children, who destroyed the resources
I gave them with open minded ignorance. They drilled
deep for the oil, and the fumes from exhaust were like
bullets, shooting holes in the barrier I created
to keep their waste. And my rage from conflicting.

Yet without my children I would be nothing—a mother with an
empty womb. I find they need a push in the right direction,
a nudge toward respect for their ancient mother,
and like all conniving toddlers, they need my guidance
to learn, because without their breath,
I will have nothing.
I will teach
these toddlers.
I will allow their desires, wants,
to clinch my soul in the
metal of the shackles of servitude
and allow my breath and love to

fill my boundaries and
my children will croon in their ignorant bliss as I bind myself,
to an eternity of servitude.



MARY MARIUTTO
Secrets of the Stones



OIL ON CANVAS, 28" X 48"



DANIEL TENBROOK
untitled



OIL ON CANVAS, 20" X 36"



WILLIAM SERRITELLA
Fish



CERAMICS, 6" X 2" X 7"



IVAN BURIK
Still Life



OIL ON CANVAS, 16" X 20.5"



MOLLY TAIT
untitled



CERAMICS, 13" X 8" X 6", 13.5" X 8" X 6", 13.5" X 11" X 6"



SUSAN CLOUGH
Thing One & Thing Two



CERAMICS, 8" X 16" X 12" (2)



LEAH HOTCHKISS
Poetry

ALL THE WORLD'S A UNICORN

I heard you once, I heard you twice
I know I heard you say
“There is no magic in the world.”
But can’t you see it shine?
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.

Sea spray cold like jewels on your face
Do you see the waves glint?
The manes of leaping unicorns
Dancing in the magic—
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.

Summer wind hisses past you
Its heat a breath of song
Can you hear its hidden fury?
Can you feel it tremble?
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.

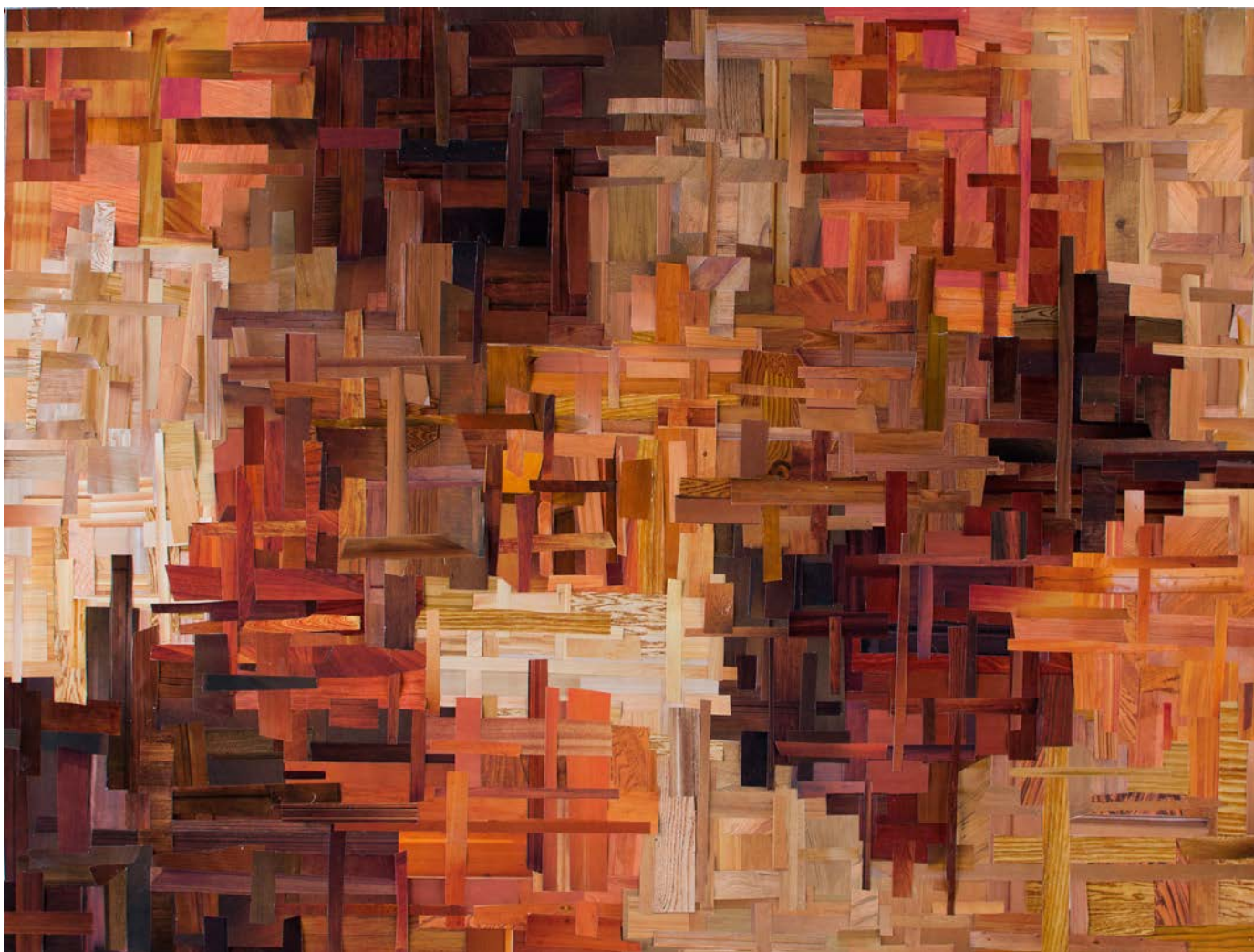
The roar of a typhoon is a
Stampede of unicorns
The conifer trees are their horns
Stars are their eyes blinking
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.

Crackling furious fire
The tongue of a dragon
Mountains in the hazy distance
The spines along its back
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.

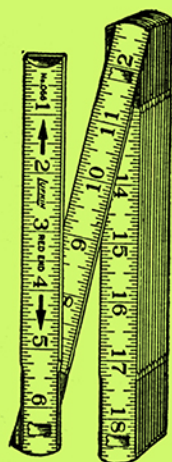
There is so much all around you
So much you do not see
You keep saying there’s no magic
But isn’t life a dream?
All the world’s a unicorn
And all the world’s a dragon.



JENNA TOMASZEWSKI
Through the Woods



COLLAGE, 18" X 24"



COLOPHON

VOICES 2014 was produced in Adobe InDesign CS4. The text is set in Cg Futura Maxi, News Gothic MT, and Chronicle Text.

The cover is printed on 100# dull cover stock and the interior pages are printed on 100# dull text. 1,500 copies of the issue were printed by Carlith LLC via an offset four-color process.

