


# **THE CRUCIBLE**

Earlham's Literary & Visual Art Publication

**2020-2021**

انا احب

Don't be too inside your head.

Just smile a fat one and chill, man. It's gonna be alright. Don't worry, for real. 

ايرت

I love y'all


School is hard

bliiiiitch!

the world is better with you in it!

GO QUAKE!!

but you got this

We've got this! 


Life is suffering. There is light in But that's okay, places you expect you can do it.

You are cared for

Love is patient. Enjoy Every Moment

Stay Strong when times tough!

Even

I love the earvinham community & thanks for being home against anything home 






Your hard work is so

- Appreciated.

and seen!

Things in life get difficult, but that doesn't mean none cares, or love you.

Thank you  Happy Valentines day; Sincerely, Everyone  You are enough 

Dear Earvinham Community,

MUCH LOVE TO YOU ALL

Dear Earlham,

Will you be my  
Valentine?

I hope everything goes  
wonderful this semester and  
this is the last in the  
Pandemic!



Keep on truckin'!



Celebrate  
have

Practice Kindness!  
You Are Amazing!

Everyone,

You all are working so  
hard, I'm proud of you please  
drink water.

I value you  
thanks for  
being yourself



Stay Safe.

Stay Healthy.

Stay Happy.

You are a beautiful  
human being

\* YOU ARE  
Enough!

Hope you have a  
Valentine's Day  
you're loved by someone  
I'm proud of us  
we're done!

Ivai nezuvu  
Rakanaka mose !!

Handwritten text in a different script, possibly Hawaiian or Maori, written vertically on the right side of the page.

# THE CRUCIBLE

Volume VI, New Style

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Please visit our website to read past editions of The Crucible :  
[earlhamcollegethecrucible.wordpress.com](http://earlhamcollegethecrucible.wordpress.com)

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# EDITORIAL NOTE

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Friends,

While the words you now read are the reflections of the few, the works to follow represent the creativity, talent, and heart of the many. During a time of historic difficulty for all, it is by thinking of each other that we can form something strong. It is our hope that this artifact can be a reminder of this in years to come. Our goal is not to force you to dwell on the difficulties of the past year, but rather to encourage you to marvel at the creations of the individuals who, like you, have persevered through it. Whether it was through the pixelated smiles on computer screens or smiling eyes peeking out over masks, we persisted, as one unified family. We as a community have the capacity to express great beauty even in the harshest of times. This year's Crucible is a testament to such tenacity. The same universal themes that have always dominated art remain. In whatever future takes shape to secede our current society, they will be there too. Art survives tragedy and loss; the same way that water, tectonics, wind- any natural force- continues to self-perpetuate.

To truly bring out the voices of hope within the Earlham community, we had many Earlhamites offer messages of love and encouragement, and together, we assembled a collection of them as bookends for this year's Crucible to serve as a reminder that we are here to hold each other in the light. Read them, and know that you are surrounded by those who wish you well.

Dear family, we are about to be engulfed by the light. We are resilient.

We would like to thank everyone who submitted and contributed to this year's Crucible magazine, and everyone who supports it year after year. We would also like to thank our advisor, Joann Quiñones. We could not have accomplished this without her support. And finally, a big thank you to those who stopped by our Valentine's day event and wrote a love note to Earlham's community. Your words are priceless.

Thus, we present the 2021 edition of The Crucible with great hope that it will boost spirits. May our campus' creativity be a reminder of the light at the end of the tunnel and of the brightness that is the persistence of human ingenuity and creative expression.

With love,  
The Crucible Editorial Staff

## anxiety

Dorothy Weiss

I'm always anxious. I think it really started after the crash. An excuse to cling to the endless possibilities for something to go wrong. My anxiety is like a toxic friend I keep around. Not because I like her company, but the constant chatter feels comforting, like a distraction from the parts of myself I don't want to confront, a presence so I'm never alone. But I'd rather be alone. She makes me feel unsure of myself, like the skin clinging to my bones isn't mine. I keep feeding myself her vicious words because the parts of me I believed in have stopped breathing under her depressive weight. And she grows heavier, with all the "what ifs". She snatches them with her sticky tongue like flies. They die in her stomach and make her stronger, bigger. But if something really were to go wrong, she'd just laugh and say "I told you so," and all the thoughts I'd been feeding her would make her too fat with greed to help me. And yet I'd still be bowing down to her and her great wisdom, for preparing me for that moment.. I knew she was good for something. But that's weakness. She's a bitch, bottom line. And I'm a fool.

Let her go. The attachment you feel is one of fear, not love. Let her go. Let anxiety go.

They say when you graduate college there will be endless possibilities. But I only see one. Survive. Does it make you anxious that the trees around us are dead? They got too sick from sucking on our shit, and yet we're either surprised or ignore it all together. And nobody likes shit. Except for dogs and worms and other things in nature I can't explain. When I hear the sound of planes I think someone's finally going for it. They're going to bomb America for being such an arrogant douche. When I hear a scream I get nauseous from my heart rate spiking. What now? It's usually children playing. They still do that? Everything just looks dull. Like colors are starting to fade away because we're taking too much. We're taking all the blues, reds, yellows, greens, and leaving the greys, the shells, the bones, to feed our own fickle desires. And just as we suck the colors dry, there anxiety is, sucking the colors out of me. The Queen. She has betrayed me, and I myself.

Let her go. The attachment you feel is one of fear, not love. Let her go. Let anxiety go.

I get anxious being outside and outside is the only place that makes me feel happy anymore. The fresh air reminds me to breathe. The height of trees make me feel small, less important, free from the fake world humans have built for themselves. But all the sounds; car doors slamming, ambulance sirens blaring, leaves shuffling, branches creaking; buzz around my brain. She gets hungrier. And the smallness just feels too vulnerable. The freedom brings too much responsibility. So I run back to my cage. And she strokes my back as I kneel at her throne. She'll take care of me. She loves me. She gets bigger. And I.

## Boys

Alex Heyrman

Luke's cousin had once told him that when kids stayed out past midnight, they got eaten by men with no eyes. He'd always been too scared to ask what exactly that meant. These days, Luke was old enough to know that he shouldn't be scared, but as he looked at the shadows outside the window of Jim's car, he couldn't help but watch for teeth shining in the dark; for figures that were somehow both watching and unseeing. Jim shoved him, hard.

"What do you see out there?" Jim asked, obviously not caring.

"Just trees," replied Luke, indifferent to Jim's indifference.

Luke observed the outside of Jim's car in the side mirror. It was some kind of classic Cadillac that Jim had inherited from his older brother. It barely ran half the time but Jim thrived on the feeling of freedom it gave him. Luke tried to remember the model, thinking about the cars his dad had shown him, but that sort of thing never really stuck with him. He liked working on cars, but he mostly just liked the process, not the final products. Jim was the opposite, which was unfortunate given his brother's alterations to the Cadillac prior to Jim inheriting it. The entire car had been painted hot pink, and on the side the words *Baby Girl* were airbrushed in a neon blue and purple font. Jim hated it, but couldn't refuse the offer of a car, so he preferred to mainly drive at night, when witnesses were sparse.

As they drove towards Ferris' house, Jim tapped the roof of the car to the rhythm of the barely audible song playing on the radio. He thought that the tapping made him look cool and casual, but he was too short to easily reach the top of the car, so to Luke he mostly just looked uncomfortable. Jim glanced over at him.

"Ready to have some fun?" Luke made a thin-lipped smile.

"Boy, am I."

*Something moves. Then another. Limbs, or something before limbs, primordial machinery starting up again. Scratching, writhing, squealing, needing. They breathe in they breathe out, new faces, new mouths, new lungs the scents gasoline and wood, beer bubbling in what was once a stomach. They were incomplete unborn unfilled unable to hold. Pieces straining to be whole. One, two, three, they counted, one, two, three. They smelled boys they smelled men.*

The light outside Ferris' house was red when they arrived. It illuminated Baby Girl, which looked right at home in its garish color. Ferris had claimed he could get alcohol, a claim he frequently made with limited accuracy. Still, it was always worth a shot; not like they had any other avenues to pursue. When they'd spoken at school the day before, Ferris had said that his dad was out of town. Given that neither Luke nor Jim had ever seen Ferris' dad in the five years they'd known him, this did not strike them as hugely important news, but Ferris insisted that it offered an opportunity. His mom was, in his

eloquent words, “a drunk bitch,” which meant that Ferris could easily spirit away some of her booze without getting caught.

Jim rolled down his window and the pair waited. Ferris’ phone had been broken since he’d thrown it into a lake in an attempt to “rid himself of worldly things,” so they couldn’t call him. Ferris lived in what might kindly be described as the less affluent part of town; it was downwind from a sewage plant and surrounded by woods that had once contained hiking trails until the need for cheap housing outweighed the need for outdoor exercise. Again, Luke’s eyes were drawn to the trees. The inky blackness framed by the red on the trees made the forest even more eerie than usual. The smell of iron filled his nose, so strong that he started to tear up. The shadows seemed to keep bigger, shifting and stalking like an animal surrounding prey.

“Something’s moving.”

Luke turned and realized that Jim was looking out into the woods too, just as transfixed as he had been. There was something in his eyes Luke didn’t recognize; a gleam that seemed to signal both fear and excitement in equal measure.

There was a clanging noise behind them. Jim grabbed Luke’s arm as the two each jumped in their seats. They turned to see Ferris’s gaunt face grinning at them through the rear window, a six-pack of beer the visible culprit of the clanging. Jim tried to casually punch Luke’s arm, playing off his barely hidden panic. Luke tried to smile at him reassuringly, but Jim turned away to watch Ferris slide into the backseat.

“You pussies scared of something?” Ferris grinned, clearly enjoying catching the two off-guard.

“Frightened of your spooky-ass face,” replied Jim as he turned on the car’s engine. Luke sat back in his seat and tried to relax, although he couldn’t bring himself to look back into the woods again. He noticed that Jim seemed to be avoiding looking that direction too. Ferris whistled something tuneless as they drove away.

*Five hundred, they counted. Bodies moved like blood and they were unbroken unfixed unfixable. The spit-up sick stain living room paint the older-than-dead dog back covered in tumors the women they could not love, could not love them the men they could not know, the belt buckle the smell oh god the smell when he found his boy the dream where there is nothing but teeth and falling, they counted. Five hundred forty six. More.*

Luke wasn’t sure who had decided they should pull over, but Baby Girl had somehow wound up parked, and Jim and Ferris were walking in front of him towards a group of people sitting on the sidewalk smoking something. Luke guessed that it was weed; he hadn’t run into it before but it looked like what people smoked on TV. Ferris seemed to have a bit more familiarity with the substance, as he had sat down and perched his arm on the shoulder of one of the people, someone in a varsity jacket who was about twice Ferris’ size. Ferris mimed a smoking gesture. The varsity man grunted, either in affirmation or indifference, and Ferris took the joint. Jim, not to be outdone,

darted to his side. As Ferris began to cough, Luke wandered over to the other two people; a long-haired guy wearing a beanie and a girl with short, dark hair and a nose piercing. Luke realized that they must be college students. A knot of anxiety leapt to his throat, but he had already approached the two, and made a noise that resembled a hello.

"Howdy," replied the guy with the beanie. The girl nodded at him, and Luke nodded back, perhaps a bit too vigorously. Something in her look made his throat tingle. She gestured at Jim, who was clearly trying to outdo Ferris by taking the longest pull that he could as Varsity watched stoically.

"Is that kid Smith's little brother?" she asked. At that, Jim coughed out a violent cloud of smoke. Luke saw something that looked like vomit come out as well as Jim continued coughing, but it seemed like nobody else noticed. Jim was unable to interrupt Ferris' cheery confirmation of the girl's inquiry.

"Wild. My roommate dated Smith freshman year," said the girl.

"Feel bad for her," said Ferris, smiling wide. Jim recovered from his coughing fit enough to shove him in the ribs. He straightened himself up and acted as if his brother hadn't been mentioned.

"Any parties happening tonight?" Jim asked, attempting to regain some control of the interaction.

"Not for high schoolers," replied Beanie. He and the girl stood up, and Varsity followed, retrieving the smoldering joint from Jim's hand.

As the girl began to walk away, Luke felt something odd. There was a feeling in his stomach, and his feet, and behind his eyes, something like a pull. In the shadows behind her, he seemed to see the shadows get brighter, yet still dark, like a black screen on a TV turning on. His body moved.

*Little boys little boys wish so badly to be big. The taste of meat made them sing. They thought of spring and of heat and of joining. They thought of figures moving in the shadows, the screams in the woods, pain and pleasure merged, they thought of children, the mother's milk the womb the joining the joining the joining*

Luke looked up. The girl was staring at him, and Jim was standing between him and Varsity.

"You should get the fuck out of here," growled Varsity. Jim nodded, slowly backing away. Ferris grabbed Luke's arm and started to pull him back toward Baby Girl. Luke looked again at the girl. There was something in her eyes that burned and marked him like a brand, seared into his muscles, his chest, his eyes. He looked away.

*Two thousand fifteen. Fire and hair and muscle. They burned. They only wanted wholeness instead they had the smell of shampoo and bleach the vomit coating his mouth the fear of bodies the touch. They screamed.*

Ferris hadn't stopped laughing since they'd gotten into the forest. Luke stared at his beer in the dim illumination of Jim's phone flashlight.

"The hell was that, man? I mean, Jesus." Ferris took a swig of his beer and hid his grimace with another chuckle. Luke didn't say anything. He wasn't sure what he could say; he didn't even really understand what had happened. Every time he tried to think about it, he felt like there was

something squirming inside him. Worms, crawling under his skin. And her eyes. There was something underneath them, too. Luke noticed Jim looking at him, perplexed. When their eyes met, Jim looked away. Luke felt something burning inside him.

“What are you looking at?” he said, taking a step toward Jim. Jim looked back at him.

“Chill the fuck out, man,” Jim said, rolling his eyes dramatically. He raised his bottle to take a sip. Luke knocked it out of his hands.

“Oooh, Luke’s a big man now!” cackled Ferris, stepping towards them in an attempt to stop the brewing fight.

*Burning boys burning boys breaking*

Luke turned and punched Ferris in the face. He’d never punched someone before. He looked down at his fist. He thought he must have hurt himself more than he hurt Ferris, but when he looked at his friend, the boy was spitting out blood. Ferris looked up at Luke, smiling, blood around his mouth.

“Fucker.” Ferris reached down and grabbed a small silver knife out of his boot. It seemed to glow in his hand, reflecting the light of Jim’s phone. Luke looked over at Jim, who was staring at the two of them, eyes wide. Ferris started to move toward Luke. As he started to take a step, something swallowed him.

*Five thousand seventy and one more. The smell of wet dog, alcohol on his breath, blood in his throat, weak women and weaker men. They smiled at him. Too many teeth for too many mouths. They were laughing.*

There was nothing where Ferris had been moments before. Or, Luke thought, there was something. At first he thought it was a tree, but it was too big, and trees didn’t suddenly spring up in places where people had just been. That was when he noticed the smell. Iron, like before, but now mixed with a thick stench of sweat, and something Luke couldn’t identify, but which everything in his body told him to fear. He looked up and saw the faces. There were so many, connected by strands of gooey flesh, faces of men, some smiling, some frowning. Most looked like they were silently screaming, eyes and mouths flung open, faces distorted in either fear or ecstasy. He saw his cousin, eyes missing, teeth sharp as needles. His father smiled down at him. He saw Ferris, laughing, tears in his eyes. Jim’s brother Smith was there, too, one of the silent screamers. The faces shifted, some receding and others coming forward, and Luke saw Jim’s father, his face a picture of rage.

Jim grabbed Luke. They ran.

*Slick smell touch the brain now they count they count they count until they can’t count anymore.*

Luke saw tears streaming down Jim’s face. He could feel his feet dragging, but Jim’s hand was a vice grip around his arm.

*Little boys love to play they love to love to love to love*

A shrieking sound surrounded them. The trees around the pair began to shift. Faces grew onto their branches, each of them joining in the piercing

shriek. Luke looked at the ground but it was too dark for him to see his feet.

*How does he grow up? By killing destroying eating stomping it all. They scream, they scream for help for something more for the little boys with their little tears*

It reached them, faces and flesh suddenly surrounding the two boys. They stopped running. Luke looked at Jim, terrified eyes wide. Jim met his gaze. The boys embraced.

*together together together together together*

## on what is known

bailey owens

It's 2 a.m. when we make the great journey back to your room and I'm shivering in the early February frost – the kind that eats at your fingertips first but then crawls to your insides and makes a home in your throat. You look up as little snowflakes drop from the sky and land in your hair, and the streetlights make an orange halo that caresses your head. We make small talk, giggling about passing things that mean nothing to us, we don't want to make the conversation too heavy because we only get so much time and I plan to make it last for an eternity – or whatever an eternity feels like as time is just a limitation that we refuse to adhere to.

I have to stop and put on my jacket, the cold is really getting to me and my lips turn bluer with every passing breath. We've stopped talking and now we just walk hand in hand, exchangeable warmth, our partnership is agreed in silence, and we both know it's okay to not speak, the silence usually says more than we ever could anyways. Words only form the complications that fell cities and end generations.

Sometimes, I think about that night and how do you really make time last for an eternity? How did I drag those hours on and on and fixate myself in that moment? If I could, would I do it again? Sometimes, it's better to just let the past exist as you experienced it.

But that night I broke our silent partnership and whispered your name in near sleep – and upon the realization I fell apart, knowing that I had crossed a threshold that was never meant for me to trod over, stomp on like some delicate flower – I wished I could stuff it back in my throat and push it deep deep down to a place where you could never see it; but there it was, suspended, frozen in open air, and I found myself frozen with it.

But my regret turned to something else, as you turned your face to mine and maybe just maybe I could see that twinkle in your eye that blinded me with hope, left me sitting on a cloudless day looking straight into the sun – in that moment I knew why Icarus flew too close to the sun and I, too, followed him. Now we both know things that are supposed to be unknown and we can never be the same as when we were walking innocently in the snow, me with my shivering hands and you anointed with your streetlight halos. But maybe we can pretend all the same.



## full

Alex Heyrman

breakfast. your mother is worried again. she thinks you're too thin. i wash down her concern with a glass of orange juice and a plate of eggs. over-easy. ketchup on the side. your middle school gym teacher yelled at you once for something you didn't do. his shouts go well on toast with a pat of butter. your brother is tired, crying into the phone and i cannot take his tears bite for bite so i swallow them whole. lunchtime. you sometimes wonder how many drops of other people stick to your skin; how many microbes are living on you. you clean yourself off. i've poured myself a glass of milk, so i mix it in, drink your microbes. cow's milk, fresh from the teat. a B on your paper. i drink that too. you tell me about her. you dream of a sunset without her shadow. it was the perfect evening, you say, ruined only by her presence. so i eat her silhouette, stick it between two slices of bread, add mayo, lettuce, coriander. still, she tastes like lavender and dew. there's a shade of yellow you don't like much, so i have that for dessert. paired with the girl scout cookies my neighbor left me. in the afternoon i rest. i can hear your head murmuring, smell the anxieties in your throat. i would take them, even now, but for now I have respite. dinner comes. this is the big one. appetizers are shrimp, and to dip, you wish my skin was not so soft. that one's a bit personal. gives it a kick. in my salad i find spinach, your favorite, and i already know what's coming next. it's doused with a blend of unstable futures and regretted pasts, and your dream to be a lawyer is sweet and satisfying until i taste the bitter tang of economic collapse. you remind me, you cannot afford law school, not without finding a job, too, and you don't want to study and work, you say, you'll end up sad and alone. i don't say anything about that, just take another bite. there are pictures of you, somewhere. if you knew where, it might taste worse; as is, it's just about tolerable as long as i wash it down with liquor. tanqueray gin, my sole contribution to the meal. at last the main course, full plate. you begin to break. you hate things; cowboys, quilts, ponies, men with goatees, men with brown eyes, men with hair that you can smell. i swallow them. taste them, aftershave, spurs, and all. still, there's more. dead-eyed pigeons, half-dead grandparents, girls who sing, girls who dance, anyone named chuck but especially your uncle chuck, lentil soup, frozen peas, broken phone screens, tic-tac-toe, books that end with dying.

i retch them up, one by one, head against the toilet seat, back bent, stomach swollen. lose it all until i'm empty.

cut me open a thousand times and still i would swallow this for you.

## Snippets of Rain in London

Alex Heyrman

*There's a common language of people caught in rain. Maybe not a language; it could be described as a kind of doctrine, or a faith. The way one moves oneself shifts, bodies responding to the rites, the traditions, the grammars of wetness. There is a unity in rain that's hard to find elsewhere in London, filled with nine million people trying desperately to pretend the rest of the nine million don't exist. A common enemy, maybe, though I've often found its presence comforting. A common experience, at least.*

Two people sit on a park bench. The rain beats down on their heads, but both have cut their hair short to keep it out of their eyes on days like this. The park is empty except for the couple, which is how they like it. They loved the park in rain. It was a wholly different place. Once packed benches were now empty, and their faux wooden slats turned darker, deeper colors than one could ever see in sunshine. The greens, too, seem deeper here, a verdant green welcoming the lovers home. The rain quiets for a moment as if to let them speak, but there is no need for words here. They feel the residual heat of each other's bodies. Peace, at least for a moment.

*Sometimes I dream of Kentucky. Most of the time, really. It's where my head is, even when my body's in Archway, or Soho, or on the Tube. That's home, after all. In some ways, it couldn't be more different. Less than half the population of London on over 6 times the land. I probably see more different people in a day in London than I did in the first 10 years of my life back home. And that's to say nothing of the rain.*

Two men stand under an awning in front of a pub. It's dark. Rain pitters some, patters some. The shorter man is named Lewis. He speaks. "She broke up with me."

He uses as few words and syllables as possible; in the dark, facing away from the light of the bar, his expression is hardly visible, its emotions opaque. He tries to make his voice the same. He takes a sip of beer.

"Why?" asks the taller man. His name is Owen. They know each other, but only as acquaintances. Owen had always assumed Lewis was gay.

"Poem I wrote." Hence Owen's assumption. Owen chuckles.

"Must've been a pretty awful poem, then."

"It was about a dog bite."

The way Lewis says it, you'd think everyone on the planet was meant to give a shit about his dog bite. Owen nods sagely, pretending to understand.

Wary of the silence, Lewis continues.

“When people know you’re a writer, they think everything you write is about them. About their shit. About what you’re really thinking, deep down. Everything’s got to mean something. So you write a poem about a dog that fucking bit you. The pain. The relationship between man and animal. That kind of shit. Then you show it to your girlfriend and she fucking breaks up with you.”

Owen coughs. He didn’t need to see Lewis’ face for this one. He takes a heavy drink. When it seems Lewis isn’t going to continue, he speaks.

“So, what does the dog represent?”

Lewis looks over at him.

“It’s her, obviously.”

*In Kentucky, rain is an event. It comes through town for a few hours, people grumble, they dig out their umbrellas, kids jump in puddles and play in the mud, some just stay inside and wait for it to go away. Not so in London. Rain in London is not an event so much as it is a presence; not always physically there, but constantly felt. It doesn’t come and go; it emerges and recedes.*

A boy and his dog are out for a walk. The rain comes down lightly. The boy is maybe eleven, maybe fourteen. He’s one of those kids that looks like he could be virtually any age, a quality that frustrates some children but mostly just amuses Ade, the boy in question. Strangers dealing with Ade can never tell whether he’s a particularly precocious child or an exceptionally childish teenager, and Ade likes it that way. The dog is old, for a dog, which is to say it’s about Ade’s age; he’s had it since it was a puppy and the pair have grown up together. Ade, always struck by philosophy when in the rain, begins to muse.

“Why am I wearing clothes, dog?”

The dog has a name, but Ade prefers to simply call it by its species.

“Let me explain. I have a body, dog, do you agree?”

The dog gives little in the way of an answer, which Ade takes to be agreement.

“I can move its parts, wave my hands around, kick my legs, even wiggle my toes.”

He demonstrates each action as he describes them. “But I can’t help but feel that there is no me in my parts. My hands are mine, but they are not me. The same can be said of my legs, my toes, my chest, my belly. They are just parts, pieces. Bits. Do you feel the same way, dog?”

This time, the dog sits, looks up. His eyes are black ringed with amber, or they were, once. Both eyes are now clouded with cataracts. Ade stops walking.

“Basically, dog, it’s like the me that is me is just in my head.” He taps his head. “Behind my eyes. There’s no brain in the parts. They are just tools of the head.”

The dog keeps staring. It’s hard to tell if it can actually see Ade, or if it’s just staring into the clouds in its eyes.

“Why, then, am I wearing clothes on every part of my body except my head?”

He pats his wet hair and head and accidentally gets water in his eyes. Tries to wipe them with his arm. It doesn't do much. “It is as if you put a hat on a computer and called it dressed.” “Bad metaphor,” the dog seems to say with its droopy eyes. “Fair enough. It is like if I put a bumper sticker on my car and said I was clothed, because the car is my tool and I am controlling it. I just don't get it.” Ade starts walking again. The dog stands, follows. The rain gets heavier. Ade puts his hood up. “Nice to keep the rain off, though,” he says.

*And yet, for all these differences, I can't help but imagine that Kentucky is steps away; that I'll round some Holborn street corner and suddenly be in Red River Gorge. I've never changed the default location on my weather app. This means that every morning, bleary-eyed, I check the weather and see a forecast for a place across the ocean, thousands of miles away.*

Clean water, clean rain, clean rain, clean rainwater. The air is sick and wants nothing more than to be clean. The dirty man sits in it and wants nothing more than to be clean, to be pure, original, unfound, naked clay. The air is his home and the rain is its mother, guardian, possessor. The city is struck sick, plague on the wind, enemies at the gates and an infestation long ignored. Mudwater runs through his fingers and toes, taking some of his mud with it. Another man walks by, head down, named something like Philip or William or Andrew. He's forgotten an umbrella, and is clutching his hands to his chest like he's holding in his entrails. He sees the dirty man, looks away, steps in a puddle. Coughs once. Moves along home. The street is empty. The rain keeps pouring anyway.

*Here's an odd story; the weather in Kentucky, almost every time I check it, is about the same as the weather here. Cloudy there means cloudy here. And vice versa. There's a thunderstorm, one day. Big one. It seems strange to say, but I'd kind of thought real cities didn't have thunderstorms. Like the weather knew there were too many people around, and saved its fury for places less well known. Places like Kentucky. But there it was: a thunderstorm. About 1 in the morning. Or maybe 6 in the afternoon; I can never keep track, with how little sunlight there is. For some reason or another, I go outside: “I have no will to wander forth of doors, yet something leads me forth.” Like the Bard says. And the storm; I mean, it's a storm. I walk out the doors, immediately my whole body is soaked. Bathed. In my pajamas, too, nice ones. And I look up. And there's this thing in cities, this light pollution. When it's cloudy at night, like, say, when one is in a thunderstorm in the early evening or the very early morning, the clouds reflect the light of the city. They glow orange. But I look up, and I could swear the sky is black. Pitch black, no stars, nothing. And I open my mouth, and the rain falls in. Guess I was thirsty. And for a second, just for a second, I could swear I was home. Like, the rain tastes the same. Guess I must be home. That's the story, anyway.*

## The Thousand Stories

Amalia Silverheart

On a freezing night in late October when the half-full moon was hidden behind snow-laden clouds, Eliana found herself in the house by the woods all on her own. Her father had lit a fire before he and her mother left and she had been feeding it fast-burning pine logs and slow-burning oak all afternoon. Now it was dark outside, and the house was quiet and cold outside of the circle of warmth and light in front of the fire. Eliana sat in the island of warmth with a cup of hot chocolate and a scratchy blanket around her shoulders. She had a stack of books beside her that she didn't want to read and a handful of letters from city cousins that she didn't want to answer. It was strange to write letters back and forth with them. Their letters were from a different world, and when Eliana tried to respond with descriptions of her world she started to lose track of it and feel that she didn't understand it anymore. The forests and the rivers stopped making sense and the things that she saw and heard in the shadows didn't seem to have a place in letters destined for the city. Once upon a time the line between the magic and the real had been a barely visible crack in the ground, but now it was a chasm that seemed to gape wider every day.

In the corner of the room was the rocking chair with the leather seat where her grandmother always used to sit. The leather seat was tooled in the pattern of an elaborate rose surrounded by a dozen other tiny roses. A man Eliana's grandmother had once known had made the rocking chair for her after her son died. Once upon a time it had been painted yellow and pink but almost all the paint was worn off now. Eliana's grandmother had been dead for two years now, and although no one ever sat in it, the rocking chair still took up a quiet space in the corner. On evenings like this, when her parents were out, Eliana used to sit on the floor watching the fire and her grandmother would knit and tell her stories. The metal needles would flash in the flickering firelight and whatever garment her grandmother was knitting would grow and grow as though it had a life of its own. Her grandmother's lilting accent would fill the room and make the shadows seem warm and inviting or menacing and cold depending on the story. Her grandmother had known a thousand stories, and when she told them her voice would become rich and strong, taking on the accent of the Old Country more heavily than usual. She had died at home, when everyone else was out of the house. A year before her death she had been diagnosed with throat cancer and had refused treatment. "I will not die in a cold white room," she had said. "I don't want to die clutching at what's left of life. I've lived a good long time. If this thing thinks it can beat me, let it. I want to die at home, in my own bed." No amount of tears and pleading could convince her otherwise. Maybe she was really brave and unafraid of death, reflected Eliana, or maybe she was just deathly afraid of hospitals. She had tried to convince Eliana's mother to give birth at home so she wouldn't have to set foot in one.

Because she refused treatment the tumor in her throat had gotten bigger and begun to press on her vocal chords. Her voice had gotten weaker and weaker and by the end of her life she could only whisper. The stories in the rocking chair ended before she died. Eliana stared into the fire, mesmerized by the flames as she

had always been as a child. The memory of her grandmother's voice and a story she told leapt into being and filled the room like the smell of pine smoke and the flickering light, and she was swept away.

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## The Story of Truth and Proverb

One winter's night Truth found herself wandering naked from shtetl to shtetl and from house to house. The night was bitterly cold; the icy wind cut like a knife and stung like a swarm of bees. Flurries of fine, dry snow blew across the icy ground. Truth didn't breathe, but if she could have she would have seen her breath dancing like a puppet in the wind on its way up toward the dark, clear sky. The moon was new and the night was so dark that she couldn't see her feet as she stumbled along. Truth reached the first house at the east end of the shtetl and stepped into the puddle of yellow flickering light under the kitchen window. The light revealed her nakedness and the reminder of warmth made her shiver harder in the cold. Before she could even knock on the door the people of the house looked out and saw her and cried out in fear. The nakedness of the creature outside frightened them and they clutched their hands to their chests and shuddered in horror and pulled closed the heavy curtains to keep out the fear and the cold.

Truth forced her trembling legs to keep moving across the frozen ground to the next house, and the next, but everywhere she went her reception was the same. Everywhere she went the people were afraid of her, so afraid that no one would let her inside. Finally, as the stars were spilling across to the other side of the sky, Truth's strength began to give out. She was so exhausted, and so, so cold. Her knees collapsed and she dragged herself by her frozen hands to the meager shelter behind a pile of sticks and leaves. There she sat, huddled in on herself to hide her nakedness and offer some protection from the cold, and buried her face in her knees. The wind roared and howled in her ears and she felt the cold creeping into her very bones.

Then slowly Truth started to feel a glow of warmth on the side of her face. Warm breath curled around her ear as she heard a whisper "Open your eyes, sister." So this is what death feels like, thought Truth. Death feels like the kiss of summer in the depths of winter. What a sweet and lovely way to go. But the whisper came again and the warm air touched not just her ear but her shoulder as well and moved a bit of Truth's frozen hair, and she forced her eyes open, blinking away the ice that had formed between her lashes.

Crouching before her was Proverb. Proverb's face glowed with a beautiful golden light and her breath smelled like sunshine on fields and baking bread. Her hair was full of leaves and twigs and shards of bone. Bits of it were braided and tied with every imaginable color of cloth. Stars seemed to twinkle for a moment in her curls and then disappear again, and feathers rustled in a gust of cold wind. Proverb's eyes were every color that water and the sky can be, and the ice on the ends of her eyelashes glimmered gold and cast rainbow prisms across her face and hands. The rest of her was obscured by the coat she wore; a beautiful, breathtaking coat. It was woven in some places, knitted in others, and still others seemed to be made from

animal hide. It was covered in patches of denim and silk and painted canvas, and embroidery curled and spread and grew between them. The coat flowed from her shoulders to the ground and spread out far behind her and the warm air under it melted the ice wherever it touched. Her hands were lost somewhere deep in the sleeves, and things were spilling from the thousands of pockets that covered the coat; kittens and fox kits and crickets and snakes, seeds and seedlings and words written on scraps of paper, letters and cigarettes and postcards and coffee grounds, tea bags and candy bars and hair pins and sea shells.

“You are so cold my dear,” she said, and her voice sounded like a thousand bells ringing and the rush of birds taking flight and a love song and a lullaby. “You should ask the people to let you inside.” Truth licked her chapped lips and forced her stiff, cold jaw to move. “They are all afraid of me,” she whispered. “They are afraid of my nakedness.”

Proverb tossed her head and her hood fell back and her hair spilled out over her shoulders and onto the ground. “I will help you,” she said, and this time her voice sounded like water running under ice and people dancing to music at a party and a child crying and a mother soothing the child. “Take my coat.” Proverb stood and swirled the coat off her shoulders and wrapped it around Truth. Truth tugged the coat around her and it fit perfectly, although somehow on her it looked less elaborate, less complicated. It was a smaller, more ordinary coat. It was wonderfully soft and warm on the inside. Proverb looked down at her, her coat still somehow flowing from her own shoulders. “Go,” she said, and her words dripped down like honey. “My coat is Story. Go back to the shtetl and see if they are still so scared of you.”

So Truth got up and walked back to the shtetl wrapped up warm and safe in Story and once again began knocking on doors, begging to be let in somewhere, and this time no one was afraid of her, and they welcomed her with open arms.

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Eliana stirred and wiggled her toes, which had fallen asleep. The cold had climbed all the way up her back and around her neck. The last dregs of the memory drained away and she let her eyes drift from the glowing coals to the bookshelf beside her with its familiar, battered spines, the cut glass vases that sat on the windowsill and whose prisms surfaces glinted with what was left of the dying light, and the dark grains of the wooden floorboards. The rocking chair was barely visible now, lost in shadow. Eliana pulled the blanket closer around her shoulders and jerked her head to the side to crack her neck. She walked quietly up the stairs, leaving the books and the letters on the floor by the fire and scooping the sleeping black cat up off the couch on her way to bed.

# Power

Adrian Torti-Feener

In the closing months of the 2017 Alaskan summer, the idea for this project first emerged. I sat on the edge of the Noatak River; my tent pitched just 300 yards away. The water was flowing in a language of mystery and unpredictability as I watched bubbles sprout to life and dance off into the distance. There I was, sitting next to my closest ally and my greatest enemy. Perhaps it was the strangeness of life in the arctic and/or the surreal nature of the sun circling overhead, never to set, but I felt radically different for some reason or another. The days quickly blended into weeks, melting away time altogether. Responsibilities, fears, goals, and the persistent demands of the modern world became obsolete and irrelevant. What exactly was it that made me think of the river as my greatest ally and my greatest enemy? As I dipped my water bottle into the glacial river and took a sip, it struck me.

I was in one of the world's most remote regions drinking directly from the river without purification, and it felt extraordinary. The water replenished my thirst, cleansed my clothes, and became my road. It did not matter where I wanted to go; the river went where it went. I felt comfortable knowing the river and its water were in control and it seemed fitting to acknowledge, given my body was also made of water. However, hidden in the mysterious gurgles was also an unprecedented danger. Every stroke of the canoe paddle had to be calculated and precise. One mistake on a rapid and I could plunge into the depths for my foot to get stuck, resulting in paying the ultimate price. Death. The river had no feelings, and it could kill me just as easily as it was providing for me. Over the forty days on the Noatak, I pondered the relationship with the river I had developed. I kept returning to ideas of power and subsequently searched for examples of water as solely the ally and not the enemy. As I returned to the urban world, it was joyous to see my old friend pouring out of the faucet on demand once again. For a moment, the return home led me to believe that water as an enemy was a concept from the past. I was led to believe that in the city, we were in control of water. We had directed its danger away and brought its care home. A week later, I thought of Flint, Michigan.

These photos explore the power that water has. From shaping physical landscapes to illustrating peace with tranquility, water tells a particular story; but with the unstoppable force water can effortlessly take on by ditching ideals of peace and predictability, water tells a separate story.

Perhaps, water is the best example of a Ying and Yang relationship on Earth. Water dictates where species travel, colonize, or avoid. In a flowing stream or placid lake, the presence of water can be felt. Standing on the ocean shore, the presence of water can be felt. In the modern world, the faucets turn, and the water flows. Can the same presence be felt?





A massive slot canyon slowly carved out by a gentle stream over thousands of years.

Zion National Park – Utah, USA 2015



Remains of a long passed Caribou aside a flawlessly mirrored lake.

Unnamed Lake, Arctic Circle – Alaska, USA 2017



A receding river leaves behind a painting in the mud.  
Noatak River, Brooks Range – Alaska, USA 2017



Multnomah Falls, Columbia River Gorge – Oregon, USA 2018



Death Pools, Yellowstone National Park – Wyoming USA, 2019



**Étoiles: Les jeunes et les vieux**

Tess Cunningham

10"x 7" Acrylic on canvas



## Consumed

Elijah Gamber

melted candle wax on skin



## Brains

Sophie Pickering

28.5" x 22"

Fiber (Hand-dyed cotton fabric, thread, polyester  
batting, cotton monk's cloth)



**Rain**  
Hanna Craig





## Hidden

Eve Corbett

Photo taken on an iPhone of a male bloodred cornsnake named "Azuki" peering out from his home



**Untitled Self Portrait**

Selena Faith

Silver gelatin print



**Day at Home**

Amal Tamari

Brooklyn Red clay and covered in Matt's White Liner



**laundromat**  
Morgan Day  
Scanned film negative



**Untitled Abstract**

Kate Wallace

12"x12" oil painting on a hand-prepared  
canvas



**Forgotten**  
Hanna Craig



**pollen**  
Morgan Day  
Scanned film negative



**Propagation**  
Kate Wallace  
Graphite 8"x10"





**Nurture**  
Elijah Gamber  
Poplar and Mahogany Wood



**Midwest Winter**  
Iris Stevenson



**Legend**  
Mollie Lyon



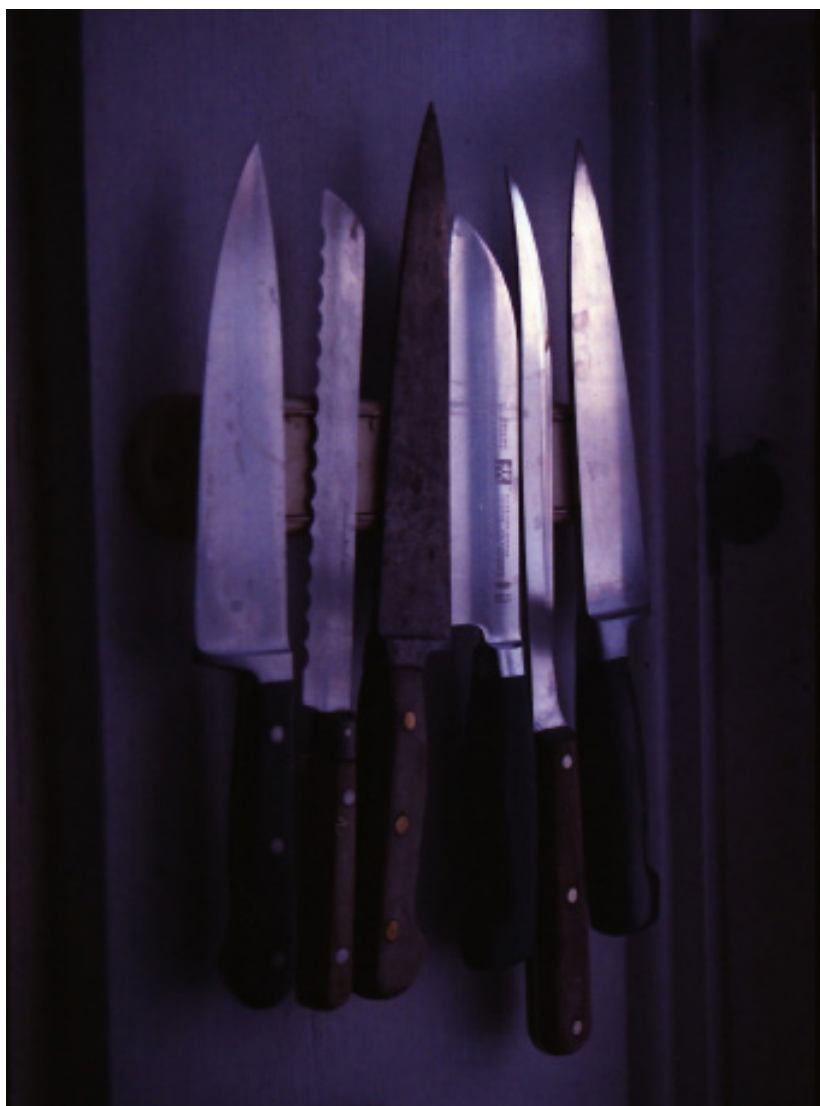
**Inspiration in cage**  
Aima Wang



**Four to a Dent**  
maddie gullion



**A Perspective**  
Hanna Craig



**Knives**  
Selena Faith



**Embrace**  
Masha Morgunova





**Vertigo**  
Masha Morgunova

## fun facts

Alex Heyrman

Don't you know  
where blood comes from  
not our bodies but the water  
dyed red with  
smushed up rubies  
and ground radish skins

Did you know that  
our brains are made up of jelly that they couldn't use for food  
because they left it out in the sun too long

Isn't it true,  
that when babies are born  
they give them a cucumber or a fruit salad  
and that's how they decide who can be president

Did you know  
that pain is not in our bodies but in the clouds above our heads  
and when it rains, we soak it in,  
wallow it  
like sponges

It's a fact that tornadoes are made  
in a lab in Skokie  
in order to sell more basements

Did you know that  
tiny wolves are always pulling at our insides;  
that when we sleep,  
they swallow our head-parts  
and we run through their dreams

Have you heard,  
that there is something in our throats  
it dances  
swings and sways like a spider on a string  
and when we speak it chokes us

Did you know that  
There is nowhere taller than the shoulders of giants  
except their heads—  
I would love to be in their dreams.

In exchange for these facts, I would like to know:  
When does smoke become fire?  
What is the color of a fever?  
What do you call the feeling of touching your belly button?

Anyone with information should write it down, tuck it under a leaf, and  
clap three times.

## love from a safe distance

maddie gullion

we protect our hearts in different ways,  
shield ourselves from pain  
and endings  
and sometimes beginnings.  
leave belongings in boxes  
and take only what you need  
a daily practice in necessity.  
every day is harder, every day  
is a little easier.  
if you never fully move in,  
if you were never here, never invested,  
moving out won't be leaving,  
just moving on.  
we hesitate to start because we are afraid  
to fail, choosing instead  
to delay,  
to sprint to the finish line,  
life blurring in the peripheral,  
robbing ourselves of the experience  
before anyone else can do it for us.  
we find solace in the temporary,  
maybe because we need it,  
maybe because capital-R Real  
is scary and big and full of what-ifs.  
we bounce from moment to moment,  
never looking up to see our interwoven paths,  
surprised to find ourselves tangled in webs  
of misplaced emotions and broken promises.  
we protect our hearts  
in different ways.  
shield ourselves from perceived  
and prophesied pain.  
i am tired of being afraid to feel,  
i feel too tired to keep pretending,  
i pretend to want the same things,  
the same things are the same mistakes are the same, the same, the same.  
there is comfort in the familiar but  
expectations spell disappointment.  
i expect to be disappointed,  
i live in the moment,  
i momentarily regret it,  
i regret nothing.

## Splices in the Grapevine

Eva Wetzel

With plant botanists as parents our windows frame plant-pots in every room,  
at least three in the bedroom shared by my sister and me.  
Some plants have moved with my parents for years, uprooted and wrapped with the china dishes.

We drive away, some plants left behind; not my sister or I,  
but baby ferns, lil' tufted grasses, toddler shrubs, Iowa, Tennessee,  
Northampton, and Williamsburg. The family plants in the little town and takes root.

Leaves hug sunlit panes, a garden wraps itself around the house,  
vegetables sprout in the neighbors' patch;  
we share harvests with our cooperative community.  
Co-ops, local farms, naturally-grown,

but also

non-GMO, hormone-free, organic,  
Williamsburg is in The Happy Valley.

Potato beetles move in down the street – mmm our delicious garden;  
they think of where to lay their children.

Kale: crunchy, massage before steaming. Grows bitter in the heat.  
All flannels know good weather is distinct from good climate. Dorm hall  
flannels know local kale is distinct from  
FairTradeCertified™ coffee beans; they buy both just the same  
both plant-based, therefore guilt-free,  
say the educated, why else are they vegan caffeine addicts? Not for the  
taste. Or the crunch.

My dad drives into Work every day to teach about sustainability;  
it hurts to drive, but he thinks of his children.

Pesky potato beetles. Recent replants don't take well;  
political environment shakes over climate change. Growth stunts.

Yankee a cuss word in Mass: The Yankee Plant, officially up to be torn  
down.  
Electricity be damned, think of the children.

The word electricity exhales like exhaust from the flannel-clad locals; they chat in Dunkin parking lots and spit fumes whirl in dorm hallways and spark revolution idle in Adirondack chairs and hammer ideas, children under-porch.

Where to plant crops,  
land shrinks,  
turned under saline waves,  
where not even those kale stalks can stand?

Top News: Transportation releases most CO<sub>2</sub>.

More tree planting, I guess. Trees bring carbon right down to their roots, did you know?

And my dad drives into Work every day to teach about sustainability.

## Salve meretrix

Madeleine Spellman

i've never had sex.

yes, men have fucked my ass, my life, my throat,  
and upstanding young women have eaten my skin.

yes, all these hands have stretched and led and bruised me,  
but their arrows have pierced only my tree-bound flesh,  
and their wheels have crushed only my praying arms.

none have touched me.

my purity renews itself.  
ego sum immaculata  
virgo magdalena

## two nights in 2005

Emmett Howard

plastic foot-tall christmas tree  
sits on simple second-hand kitchen table  
christmas eve again, my first year of two christmases  
we tack multi-colored string lights up  
around the dirty window

pink pajamas, soft fleece  
i sit on your shoulders, flick lightswitches with toes  
another evening, mom at book club  
you tuck me in early, as the sun sets  
singing comfortingly out of tune

i fall asleep next to you  
hold your hand from my trundle bed  
wake up long after dark but long before morning  
red and amber and green lights glow  
i tiptoe out of the bedroom

i sleep in my white dresser-bed  
tucked under baby blanket, arm around stuffed animal  
wake up late, after dark but before mom is home  
bright yellow hallway light through cracked door  
you stumble softly into my bedroom

i sneak a look at the dining table  
sure santa didn't come, two days late and no chimney  
i see them there, christmas magic flutters  
presents laid out by the little tree, even a stocking for you  
a lone sock he must have found in your drawer

i peer through mostly closed eyes  
not sure why you're here, why your breath smells sour  
i pretend to sleep, am almost asleep  
eyes closed now, i hear heavy breathing  
feel the inescapable and unspeakable touch

i don't remember the next morning

i don't remember the next morning



## what does \_\_\_\_\_ taste like?

Salaam Odeh

your most beloved tree: unassuming peculiarity, ridges in odd places, the taste of the scent of dirt when you nibble the edge of a raw button mushroom, like adventure, but better.

heartbreak: you work your way through an apple, tasteless - not because it's tasteless, but because you've eaten apples every day, since then, till now, the sweetness is lost on you, the crunch silent, you swallow, take another distracted bite and think oh my god, this episode is crazy, how will they ever resolve it? you reach the core, it's bitter, and there's no "next" button.

the car ride (going): freedom, detonating eardrums, a dry throat quenched by the gradually decreasing miles, warmth, like the taste of dry socks on cold feet, or in the summer, crisp bed sheets.

party life: like hell, heavy, hazy, horrid and perfectly divine.

that forgotten plant in the corner of your room: an odd sense of dread that fills your feet, that makes them burrow, in heat, deep, in guilt, in the gut wrenching awareness that you have affected, you have hurt, you have neglected.

aloneness: like sugary tears, baffling and unwelcomed, but slowly loved, like coffee when you're older, or flamboyant grey clouds in october.

glittery nailpolish: it's half past midnight, your head in a friend's lap -that one friend who's endlessly busy, the one you see in passing, who hugs you when you catch them in the hallway, who chimes with "lets get tea sometime!", who you feel safe with, but know nothing about, the one you find yourself reaching out to, unexpectedly, confusedly, urgently.

the car ride (leaving): a weighted blanket in eighty degree weather, the catastrophic sting of not receiving a smile back from a passing stranger, dreading the moments past, nostalgic for the moments yet to come.

## Drainfly

Ian Murray

An omnidirectional view of three walls and a floor  
Tiles colored like shards from a broken songbird's egg.

Does the moisture stir memories of a past life from  
interment, of rank ditches, or ponds cold and glassy  
below you?

Could you still be drawn to that heaven you've  
never had the chance to skim?

When you pilot yourself around the scalding clouds  
and keep the heart-shape of your moth wings dry  
you earn a victory.

Your life is spent circling the the drain that birthed you,  
defined by a shower stall's shape.

On evenings when the water hits my  
back at the precise warmth, my revulsion  
melts into envy.

## portrait of a boy and a car

Emmett Howard

*in memory of Justin (5/14/2000-10/25/2016)*

*i.*

olive green jacket  
a shroud  
dark coat, dark jeans  
dark out  
twenty after seven  
october morning  
the clocks fall back soon  
crisp michigan autumn air  
brown leaves litter sidewalks  
distant streetlights glow

honda civic, silver  
on her way to work  
early morning, radio on  
coffee thermos in cupholder  
same route as always  
autopilot, almost  
no fog today  
but dark  
on the parkway

dark, quiet  
or a song plays, perhaps  
headphones in ears  
was there music as worlds collided?  
did it keep playing?  
did her radio?  
did he see headlights  
see it coming  
at all?

*ii.*

second-block teacher  
notes unexcused absence  
brow furrows  
that's not like him  
off-brand clogs on  
newly waxed hallway floors

hushed voices  
deep breaths, steps back  
into classrooms, typed-out half-sheets  
read aloud

exams interrupted by  
screams, inhuman gasps  
then eerie silence  
sound of a signal-less television  
echoing through a brick building

a haze, footsteps  
dozens of bodies in hallways  
a heavy, wordless silence  
sunlight reflects off walls

tears on cheeks, shaking hands  
a man sits on a desk, crying openly  
no illusion of strength  
or thought of what comes next  
only raw physical presence  
words are pointless  
hugs less so

black box theatre holds trembling energy  
a community full  
of sharp sorrow  
of food and store-brand root beer  
of desperate love  
of lost children  
where else would we go?

## how it's supposed to feel

Alex Heyrman

eyes heavy dead breath frozen hands, reaching for  
something / you / unbroken body / can't you fix mine?  
/ head underwater choking on teeth and breath / is this  
how it's supposed to feel? / like touching a fire and not  
getting burnt / like faking a fever / in the dark everything  
is mouths and fingers / i just want to be the mouth that  
eats all the fingers / all the dead broken things / all the  
lovestruck colored halogen lights / all the ice that runs  
down your back / stars fill up the room and trickle out the  
window / leave me empty / a hole / o what it is to be whole  
and not pieces / i wish you could take this too / i wish i  
could eat this too / can i?

## **divinity**

bailey owens

God made me from fire  
She, pulling me from the  
flames, declared me  
a live ember  
followed by a trail of  
scorched earth and  
burnt hands  
and in her infinite  
cruelty, she formed  
you from smoke  
i try to catch you  
just a fingertip away

but i can't hold you  
and you won't burn

**august sunday, golden hour musings**  
maddie gullion

August, Sunday,  
August on a Sunday,  
all of this will someday  
become pocket fuzz, unfazed and  
flattened into sheets of dryer lint  
caught on a screen.  
you offered yourself up in tiny pieces,  
fingers tangled in the sand  
by the water of the creek in the woods.  
clumsy hands wrapped together,  
almost as if by accident.  
same with an elbow, gentle fingertips behind  
thick cotton, not unwanted, not wanting,  
quiet reminders, silently finding  
myself in measures of you.  
one hand, fingers spread, steady on the small of my back,  
sudden disappearance, cold in the shape of your hand,  
I wonder—  
these gestures,  
they seem a language you know well.  
you spoke to me in gentle pauses and  
words I needed but couldn't request.  
I wonder if you'll read this and  
see yourself in this expression of wonder  
at all the humanity we hold inside of these celestial bodies.  
these golden hour musings are made of starstuff,  
reduced to bits of fluff in the pockets of your jacket keeping me warm,  
all the things too great to hold inside  
my mortal heart.  
I took those tiny pieces offered up to me,  
tucked them away under my tongue and  
took what I could get.

## Another Birdwatching Dream

Ian Murray

Do you remember when the storm broke over our village  
And the hill in the center became a dark waterfall?  
Where there had been blacktop, murk and churning foam  
Tumbled, braiding lawn-plants and trash into dams of debris.  
We watched the geese and ducks swim up against the rush  
Like lost boatmen, straining their mottled wings, bobbing their  
Neon heads. We wondered if there was a name in science  
For the animals who chose to force themselves against the rapids

Later, in the fields, a crow wheeled through the bright gold sky  
Around it, a gull (something less than a dove of peace)  
Turned, with its bone-china plumage and black wing bars.  
We were fixed watching them circle one another- the  
Cogs of unseen gears meshing in the air, screeching,  
Until the wind shifted so we could smell the source of their battle.  
A horse, who died some time during the storm, lay with ribs  
Like a vault, and the strings of viscera unspooled by the birds.  
We had no purpose to assign their little squabble, so we turned and left

That's not all I remember from that long stormy summer, but the  
Truth is, little else was worth relating. There was mud on my boots,  
Fetid July air filled our houses. You brought up the ducks and crow again,  
And I said not to talk of flying- or any hackneyed flying similes,

There isn't any exit from here to be found in another birdwatching dream.



## Swang 'Wif Me

Zaine Newbell

My grandmother carried his body  
like the burden of racism itself  
Diminutive, pensive  
His arms a noose around her shoulders

She said a girl spit on her  
while she drank from a water fountain  
They left him on the doorstep  
covered with a sheet

Gustavia was a mournful rooster  
Early morning she'd awake  
and see his body there  
Slumped over in a lazy nap

Death's slumbering  
in the heart of the South  
Festering  
Rising at his peak in the night

Delivering the haints of boys' past  
to their mothers in a lazy state  
Between the reality of hate  
And the unreality of a restless nightmare

Hold them tight  
Lest the spirit of white sheets  
And eye-bearing potato sacks  
Come fetch them in the night

People stopped cutting through  
the collar patch after he died  
Afraid that the swing of a mother's arms  
would hold too tight and become a rope

That the motion of a playground pastime  
would become a modern nightmare  
My grandmother walked with a hunch  
after all was said and done

“Carry me Thelma” he whispered  
And she complied  
Bearing the accustomed heaviness of a black girl  
who lived near gravestones camouflaged as forests

In a world where a noose never hides  
But lives among us  
Waiting

**Winner of the 2021 Bain-Swiggett Poetry Prize**

## Places I Never Want to Go

Amalia Silverheart

Poland, for example.

How to Spot a Jew ran in a newspaper there a few years ago  
— did you hear about that?

To be queer there is sounding more and more like a death sentence.

And nevermind the ghosts I would meet there

Too many to count.

Would I even be able to breathe if I went there? Or would the ghosts fill up  
my lungs like fog and choke me.

They would take me to the hospital and tap on my chest and say “she has  
pneumonia”

And the medical translator would repeat it to me and I would gasp out “no,  
it’s not pneumonia, it’s the Jews

the Jews in my lungs, in the leftover smoke, they’re still in the air

It’s the ones still wandering, looking for their homes again

It’s their blood running cold in the tears of the Black Madonnas and  
poisoning your wells

It’s their ghosts trapped in all your mirrors all your pictures all your kitschy  
little figurines

It’s the souls you won’t release they are trying

— cough

They are trying to escape cough cough

They are trying to hide in my lungs so I will take them to America”

And the medical translator would say “she says it’s not pneumonia, it’s the  
Jews”

and the doctors would nod and say “ah yes, the Jews, well, isn’t it always?”

## Winter in Turmoil

Emerson Jakes

Crunch, finality—  
This known violation,  
Found in frozen snow.

Fingers trace the ground,  
Born a solid melted state,  
Broken by movement.

Falling like ashes—  
Burning nimbus cloaks the sky:  
Blind to her clear eye.

Crunch, finality—  
This known violation,  
Found in frozen snow.

Fingers trace the ground,  
Born a solid melted state,  
Broken by movement.

Falling like ashes—  
Burning nimbus cloaks the sky:  
Heavens, blind tonight.

An alarm wakes me up and a thought glances through my head, “She is made of spoiled milk skin and scabby breasts. A window is her mirror when she is feeling down and she’s usually feeling down.” I respond to the thought that was not my own. *Screw ‘skin like porcelain’, they like me like this.*

I don’t like me like this. Some people do, and all power to them, but I wish my mirror was one-way. I dreamed last night that my cam was the eye of my sociology professor. Analyzing, knowing, finding out. He blinked and my audience fell down to nothing. And now I get to wake up at 7:20 am to see his red-ass face at o’ dark thirty. God, if he knew, I would be such a curiosity. Such a subject to be analyzed, to be watched from above like a raptor ready to pounce. My feet scrape the linoleum as I sit up in bed. The snooze on my alarm has run out, time is always running out. One minute late is \$6 wasted— each class is \$300 by my calculations— so it’s time to get on with it. I shove on clothes and close my laptop to shove into my bag. “*May I kiss the hand that wrote Ulysses?*” and Joyce said, “*No, it did lots of other things too.*”

Crunch, finality—  
This known violation,  
Found in frozen snow.

Fingers trace the ground,  
Born a solid melted state,  
Broken by movement.

Falling like ashes—  
Burning nimbus cloaks the sky:  
Heavens, blind tonight.

## **broken brain**

Alex Heyrman

I was born with a broken brain or else when I was born it spilled out, filled the room, was pushed back in by the doctors, my mother and father, shoved into a head too small, plugged my ears so it wouldn't leak out, filled with the detritus of the room, blood and shit and mucus, squirming around inside me ever since or maybe when I was young, I saw my father crying, and the image never left me, made my ears ring, made me weak or soft or scared of touch, or else my parents never punished me enough, so now I punish myself, send myself to my room, take away my food, learn which part of the belt hurts the most. That or I never learned responsibility; never had a younger sibling, or cousin, or friend; perpetually the baby, always waiting for someone to take care of me, hoping to be held and nursed until the pain goes away. Or else I was too lazy to learn to speak, couldn't handle it, so instead I recorded the sounds I heard, played them back until they sounded like my voice, until I forgot what my voice sounded like, too filled with samples of how other people talk. Or perhaps the night I was born, I came out too late and my mother had already eaten a burger, sauce & starch soaked my body, and I came out already stinking. Or else I should've been born someone else, and I would have looked right and sounded right and smelled like flowers and known how my body worked, how to smile and how to sit and how to love in a way that didn't hurt.

(cut out the tumor cut off the loose skin cut off the broken pieces til you are small enough to fit inside the holes you've made)

## Observations while airborne

Marlon Robertson

(1)

A blank blue canvas  
Kingfisher through white water  
Our gray hell again

(2)

Glinting metal roofs  
Designer dress with rhinestones  
A fowl opinion

(3)

A rush of hot air  
Pressure of the mind escapes  
Final breath of prey

**grassy hillsides under light-polluted skies**  
maddie gullion

he tells me about a game kids play,  
one with spinning and stargazing  
and a flashlight that knocks you off your feet.  
I want to compare him to something there,  
maybe the stars, maybe the light.

yearning for hidden stars,  
hazy yellow streetlights.  
I try to put him into words but my tongue gets preoccupied by perfect  
and I'm left hoping he can hear my heart.  
heavy yawning somethings hang between us so

side by side we take the hill  
like kids, grass and grass and grass and spinning sky,  
my own momentum pushing laughter from my chest.  
I tell him he contains multitudes,  
and I wonder how his smile would taste.

perhaps he's picking grass from his sweater,  
standing in the mirror thinking about me.  
perhaps the mirror image I imagine  
begins and ends within the drywall between us.  
perhaps contains multitudes.



# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Eve Corbett** is a Geology major and a Museum Studies minor who enjoys capturing the natural world that she loves to study and explore in her own artwork.

**Tess Cunningham** is a sophomore biochemistry major, who greatly enjoys painting and drawing. When she is not engaged with art or science, she can be found on the Women's Soccer Team. **is a Geology major and a Museum Studies minor who enjoys capturing the natural world that she loves to study and explore in her own artwork.**

**Hanna Craig** is a senior from Colorado, who is double majoring in studio art with a focus in photography and English. She loves documenting her travels with photography, such as the three photos captured in this publication. She loves to capture the world in a way that is often overlooked. She has a soft spot for tea, a good book, and black and white photography.

**Morgan Day** is a Studio Art major and graduating this spring.

**Selena Faith** is a senior Photography and SoAn double major from North Carolina. She is interested in the human experience, the art of film photography, and love.

**Elijah Gamber** (He/They) is a first year history major. Elijah is interested in the interplay between organic shapes and typically utilitarian manufactured objects.

**Maddie Gullion** is a senior ENSU major who can usually be found in the fibers studio. She likes to write things and bake things and play lacrosse in the sunshine.

**Alex Heyrman** is a senior studying literature and gender. He hopes that his words have meaning.

**Emmett Howard** is a junior Biology major and Psychology & Creative Writing double minor. They love yellow and flowers and poetry, Lake Michigan and their mom and their partner, and their dog and cats and kitten.

**Emerson Jakes'** favorite plant is a *Senecio rowleyanus* and they enjoy horses, dogs, and yelling into the ethereal mists.

**Mollie Lyon**

**Masha Morgunova** likes big noses, the word "poetic," and the smell of peonies and turpentine.

**Ian Murray** will write a bio later, maybe

**Zaine Newbell's** piece is a mythological, biographical piece that combines Southern mysticism with the real-world horrors of human inaction.

**Salaam Odeh** is a graduating senior, Charles Bukowski fanatic, and aspiring publisher.

**Bailey Owens** is a Sophomore English and French double major.

**Sophie Pickerling** is a senior Studio Art major with a focus in fibers. She works mostly with appliqué and machine embroidery but has recently ventured into weaving figurative tapestries. The piece in this issue is a part of her senior project which explores violence and intimacy.

**Marlon Robertson** is a senior Japanese Studies major and grew up in Centerville, Indiana, which is ten minutes away from Earlham. He has a passion for book, movie, and video game collection and dancing. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking new dishes and watching terrible films with his friends and boyfriend.

**Amalia Silverheart** is a sophomore History major and Creative Writing minor. She is from Oregon and she misses swimming in very cold rivers and seeing the ocean. She eats a lot of peanut butter and really just wants to go dancing as soon as that stops being wildly irresponsible.

**Madeleine Spellman** class of 2022, is a devout sodomite who writes to cope with the crushing liberty of her mortality, to heal from the psychic scars of the past, and to voice her quietest beliefs.

**Iris Stevenson** is a junior from Louisville Kentucky who is majoring in politics and minoring in photography. Iris does both film and digital photography but prefers film. When doing photography, they focus on landscapes but also like to work with more experimental darkroom techniques.

**Amal Tamari** is a third-year Art major who likes to stick her hands in mud. She often finds herself drawing everyday objects. She likes finding beauty in the ordinary and documenting her life. Her piece is “about the day I painted my garage. In quarantine, all my days tended to blend together so by creating this piece, I immortalize this day, and with it is a fond memory of a day I spent with my family.”

**Adrian Torti-Feener** is a Junior Environmental Sustainability student with a deep connection to remote landscapes. He feels equally at home in and foreign to areas hardly recognizable to the modern world. Adrian hopes to continue remote and intense expeditions throughout his life as they provide him with an unparalleled level of inspiration. If you are interested in seeing more of Adrian’s work, he invites you to visit his photography page at [@outdooradrian](#) on Instagram.

**Kate Wallace** is from the Wayne County, Indiana area and she is studying at Earlham to become an art educator. Her illustrations have recently been published in a children’s book, *Algernon and Zef*, written by Bess Sturgis. Kate enjoys gardening and ceramics.

**Aima Wang's** shot was captured on a sunny day at noon. After refraction, the sunlight hits the floor, presenting a magical effect of sunlight, like a flower of inspiration interlaced with light and shadow, locked in a cage, ready to emerge.

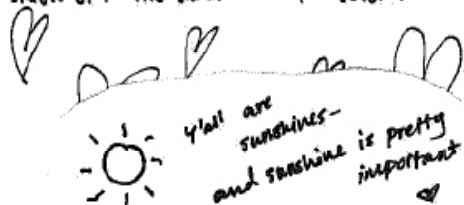
**Dorothy Weiss** is a fourth year student who enjoys writing as a way to channel all the noise.

**Eva Wetzel** is from a small town in Western Massachusetts, a fact which she partially credits for her love of the outdoors, inclination for creative ventures, and a particular type of environmental focus. She looks forward to many more adventures after she graduates from Earlham this spring, despite being sad to leave such a community.

I'm really going to miss  
the Earham community  
when I leave.

You guys are all so  
special ♡.

I APPRECIATE ALL THE HARD WORK  
THAT THE WORKERS HAVE DONE TO KEEP THE  
SNOW OFF THE SIDEWALKS & BUILDING CLEAN!



You are valued, loved, and  
appreciated.

Put one foot in front of the other  
and keep going.

Life is too short to get bogged down

Good job staying on top of  
your school work! Remember to  
also take time for yourself! ♡

\* Pops Peck's  
Lovingly! \*

You are amazing and  
deserve the world!!

Love yourselves!  
Stay safe!

You're amazing!

Hi!

I hope you're  
having an amazing  
semester. You are loved  
to ♡.

You're all really weird  
but I wouldn't trade it  
for anything else ♡

"You got this Motherfucker" ♡

Keep the love at all times. ♡

Eat a cookie ☺ ♡

I Believe In

All of You ♡

Stay True Yourself  
And  
Be You!

I love you earham for the mutual  
aliveness you inspire.

The path ahead of you is not paved  
learn from your mistakes, from every-  
day and it will keep growing.

THANKS for not kicking me out  
(vet!)

We are resilient, we are in  
this together. Fighting!

You will die,  
THAT IS A FACT

WHICH MEANS YOU ARE FREE  
TO DO/BE WHATEVER  
YOU WANT



"you weren't born to be  
perfect, you were born  
to be real."

- M.Y.G

Are you from  
tennessee because you  
are the only ten I see

When we go through  
things,

We go through those things

TOGETHER ♡ ♡ ♡

You are loved and  
Cared for very much!  
You are appreciated!  
Good luck with everything.

Remember that you are loved and  
you don't have a date, so love yourself.

You are valid and  
loved! ♡

Happy Valentines  
Day ☺

all the lovely people that  
brighten up my day ☺

I know its not  
always easy, but  
remember you're  
growing every day.

Stay Safe and Healthy.

You're doing an amazing job so far!