



Home Sweet Home Michele Ly Photograph

Inside Out

Jefferson Literary/Arts Journal 2022

Chief Editors: Amy Baumgart and Steven Bieser Artistic Directors: Connor Crutchfield and Roselind Ni

Literary Directors: John Curran and Alice Wu

Editors:
Nava Barman
Amy Baumgart
Steven Bieser
Connor Crutchfield
John Curran
Lena DiFulvio
Taylor Haddad
Alicia Kenyon

Sophia Lam

Michele Ly

Roselind Ni Michelle Pimentel Lauren Posego Zaynab Sajjadi Esika Savsani Jamie Tsao John Vaile Jasmine Wang John Waters Zoe Wong Alice Wu

Content Warning: This magazine includes some written pieces with possibly sensitive subject matter. If anyone is experiencing difficulty with issues that you feel are hard to manage, consider using the following resources:

Student Counseling Center (SCC): 215-955-HELP (4357)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255 (available 24 hours a day)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 for free, 24/7 crisis counseling

Forward

Welcome to the 2022 issue of Inside Out!

Inside Out is the literary and arts journal of the Jefferson student body. As such, it gives voice to our scholars as they migrate through their educational experience at our University. The creativity and vision of our students is featured within the pages of this book. Showcased is student work that was created in the intervals between classes and notebooks, dorm rooms and city streets.

Please enjoy this issue of *Inside Out*, as our students offer a unique view of their world using images, colors, words and light.

Charles A. Pohl, MD
Chancellor for the Center City Campus at Thomas Jefferson University
Vice Provost of Student Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University
Vice Dean of Student Affairs and Career Counseling and Professor of Pediatrics at
Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Editors' Statement

We are excited to share this year's edition of *Inside Out* with you! One year since the last publication of this magazine and so much of the world has changed. In many ways, we continue to be challenged as students, healthcare workers, and members of the Jefferson community. We struggle to balance a reverence for what has been lost over the last two years with a gentle optimism for the future. Despite this uncertainty, what is clear is that creating and sharing art will continue to be a critical way for us to reflect and better understand ourselves. The diverse collection of written work and visual art represented in this magazine speaks to the complexity of our Jefferson community, and in that complexity we see beauty. Through this publication, we celebrate the achievements of our contributors and take inspiration from their art.

We are deeply grateful for the contributions of the Jefferson community to this magazine. The vulnerability, strength, and self-reflection exhibited in their pieces is truly admirable and we are sincerely thankful for their openness to share.

Amy Baumgart & Steven Bieser Chief Editors

John Curran & Alice Wu Literary Directors Connor Crutchfield & Roselind Ni Art Directors

Motherland Zaynab Sajjadi Acrylic



Submission Information

Inside Out is a presentation of artwork, photography, short stories, poems and essays that is published annually. All full-time and part-time Jefferson students are welcome to submit work and to apply to serve on the magazine's editorial board. Submissions may be emailed to Dorissa.Bolinski@jefferson.edu. Photographic submissions should be saved as a .jpeg file using the highest resolution possible. Artwork should be photographed from a direct angle, without glare or visible background, and saved in the same manner as photographs. Artists who submit non-photographic material will be given the opportunity to have their accepted pieces professionally photographed by a Jefferson photographer in order to assure the best presentation in the printed magazine.

All submissions will be reviewed anonymously; not all submissions will be printed. Please note that entries will be judged as submitted; *Inside Out* will not crop, sharpen or otherwise adjust an improperly-saved graphic submission.

Manuscripts (prose, poetry, translations, short plays, etc.) Should be submitted in a Word-compatible document, and saved under the name of the piece (or "untitled," if applicable).

All submissions must be accompanied by a separate cover letter document containing the following:

- Author's or artist's name
- Email address and local phone number
- College, department or undergraduate program and year in school
- Genre/medium and title of each submission

View the online version of *Inside Out* at: jefferson.edu/university/student-life-engagement/medical-humanities-series/inside-out.html

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File Corrupt
Michael O'Connor
Photographic collage







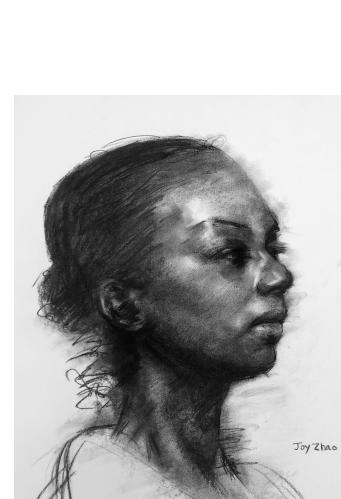
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Fatima Zaynab Sajjadi Acrylic



Peaceful Longing
Joy Zhao
Charcoal













*Isolation*Sophia Block
Digital art



Color Vision Roselind Ni Acrylic

Adderall Shawn (Joseph) Collier

A speck of blue in an orange jar Like a patch of morning sky glimpsed through deep forest canopy Within lies the promise of freedom

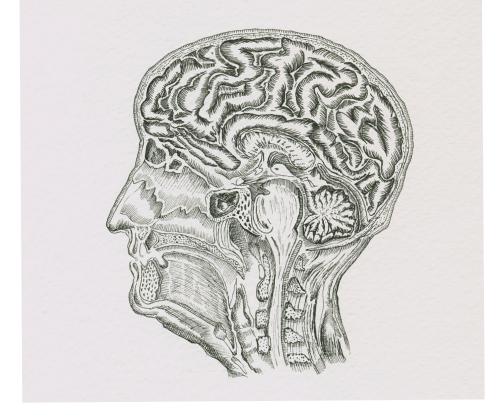
The flock of thoughts scattered across my neuronal branches slow their fluttering For once they perch in stillness Listening

I pause, expecting an eruption of random flight But they remain at attention: waiting, I now see, for me

I timidly call out, and they come to me
One by one in an unbroken stream so beautifully distinct my eyes well up with tears.
No overwhelming swarm surrounds me, flitting in and out of view;
This is a dance
With every step at my direction

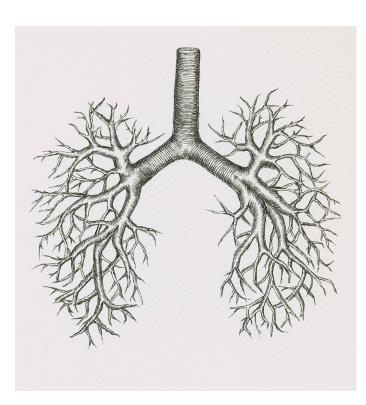
A peace so rarely felt fills the air like the gentle breeze of a thousand beating wings A faint song of sadness whispers This is what it was always supposed to be like

The setting sun reminds me this stillness won't last But as restless chirps flit back and forth in the darkening branches I rest my eyes with hope that tomorrow will have more blue skies

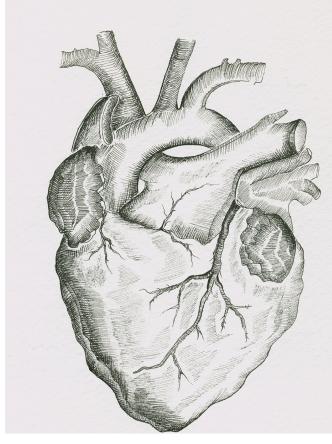


He разбивай моего Elisabeth Inns Pen and ink

Максимальная нагрузка Elisabeth Inns Pen and ink



C каждым вдохом, который могу Elisabeth Inns Pen and ink



Alternative Medicine Zachary Davis

There are so many problems that reside within our bodies, way down deep inside: like pathogens, or tumors in your head. Meds won't always work, so I think instead, they should shrink me to the size of a cell, and I'll make sure you stay alive and well.

I'd go one-on-one with bacteria.
Fight off strep pneumo and listeria.
You won't need drugs with beta-lactam rings;
I'll lyse their membranes launching rocks from slings.
Won't matter if their cell walls are crosslinked,
I'll hunt them like Dodos, 'till they're extinct.

Moving on to block two, I will divulge, I'll stomp down CML's myelocyte bulge. M-spikes too, I'll suppress with diligence, unless we don't know their significance. I'd break up fibrin if you DIC'd, so don't fear an intracranial bleed.

If I found ruptures in your heart's landscape, I could fix it right up with some duct tape. And coronaries: clean as a whistle, cholesterol plaques: cleared by my chisel. But dead heart tissue, I could not act on, so keep taking your spironolactone.

In the lungs, I'd cleave all excess trypsin, and if you smoke, I'll clean 'til they glisten. If you aspirate from too much Stella,

I'd take on all the Klebsiella. Break apart their capsules; stop the abscess, so you don't cough up currant jelly mess.

I'll also keep sodium in your pee as I pass through the loop of Henle. You'll stop needing your loop diuretics.

No need to track my enzyme kinetics. Just make sure you continue to hydrate. Don't get stones of calcium oxalate.

I'd reach the liver if I cycled well, but I might be eaten by a Kupffer cell. To escape, I'd jump in the portal vein, and eventually, I'd reach the brain. The liver may remain in disarray, but that's fine, it can re-grow anyway.

I'd make your basal ganglia run clean, so you'd have plenty of spare dopamine. No Parkinson's; Alzheimer's next. My axe will destroy your beta amyloid plaques. Meningitis doesn't scare me a lot, I'd soothe it away with some icy-hot.

So that's how I'd heal you from the inside. I'm ready to hop on that wild ride. I'll even fix a genetic mutation for the appropriate compensation.

I promise, you won't ever look the fool, 'til you learn I never finished med school.



Perspective Stephanie Beldick Photograph

Gold Zachary Urdang

Gold. A speck of sand fleeting, born from the heart of Earth tumbling along the river, glimmering in the morning light. Slowly disintegrating back to Earth as the trees breath



Tranquility Katie Duquette Pine wood



Healing with Congee Nancy Dinh

There was some implicit rule,
Passed down from generation to generation
Across all of human history,
That when you are sick,
Your mother takes care of you.
However, there was nothing said
About what you should do
When your mom was sick.

What did she do for me when I was sick?
She gave me medicine.
I wrinkled my nose,
And my young brain gagged
At the imagined bitterness.

No, I couldn't give her that.
I had to be the better person.
Besides, the looming medication shelf
Floated just above my reach.

Was there anything else?
She made me congee. Of course!
The only acceptable course of action
Was to make her congee.
It was the food of love, of warmth.
It was a fool-proof treatment.

There was only one slight problem:

I was ten and had no idea how to cook.

No problem. I'll just ask my mom.

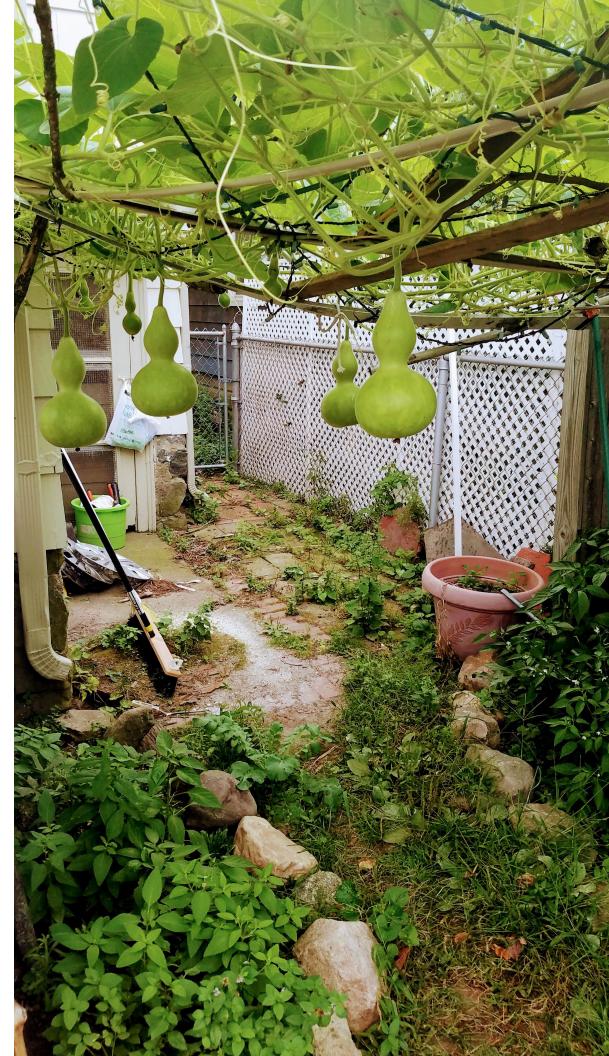
As she laid down on the couch, I pestered her for the recipe While I wrote it all down.
Once I was satisfied,
I ran down to the kitchen to turn my plan into action.

Did I know what I was doing? No. I was ten. Was I particularly good at it? No. Again, I was ten. It turned out horribly. Somehow, I managed to burn the soup. How does one burn soup?

Staring at the bowl. I wrinkled my nose. It smelled just as bitter as medicine.

Still, she ate it anyway and asked no questions. I sat there, in awe, watching her eat. It wasn't my meal, but I felt full all the same.

Looking back, I don't know if she got better because the congee worked or because she didn't ever want to eat it again. Well, I guess it doesn't really matter. Either way, the congee worked.



Mom's Garden Marzia Maliha Photograph



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Queens Michele Ly Photograph

A leaf falls by the river Steven Bieser

A leaf has chosen now to make its great Journey from a perch among the canopy fluttering down in the morning sun. It hears many languages during its travels, from the runners speaking Mandarin, cicadas calling out for love, and crew members rowing and coordinating their great pulls through the water below.

The medical student sitting on the riverbank is taking a luxurious morning with a smoothie and a book, his soul feeling quiet and full. The silent transcriber of a fleeting moment. For the leaf is rapidly approaching the sparkling water below.

It feels fear briefly as it has never been so far from the mother that nurtured and produced it from her own flesh, coded by ancient genes marching towards some great goal that we may never understand. What catapulted this race of life and growth, of death and decomposition? She taught it everything, for it was part of her, and gave it nutrients collected from the burning ball in the sky to create millions of its siblings year after year.

The leaf catches one last updraft before carefully settling on the river surface, causing delicate ripples to surround and expound outwards. It has no idea that it's journey had only just begun as it is gently swept downstream, the future holds waterfalls, thousands more languages of life to behold, great glass buildings overhead, and gardens flanking this water laden expressway. May it's journey into the unknown be full of Wonder and Awe, Love and Peace.

I love you little leaf.

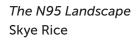


Hidden Makala Wang Photograph





Valley of Fire Simran Rahi Photograph



The tears will fall caught in the lines carved by the masks and the shields

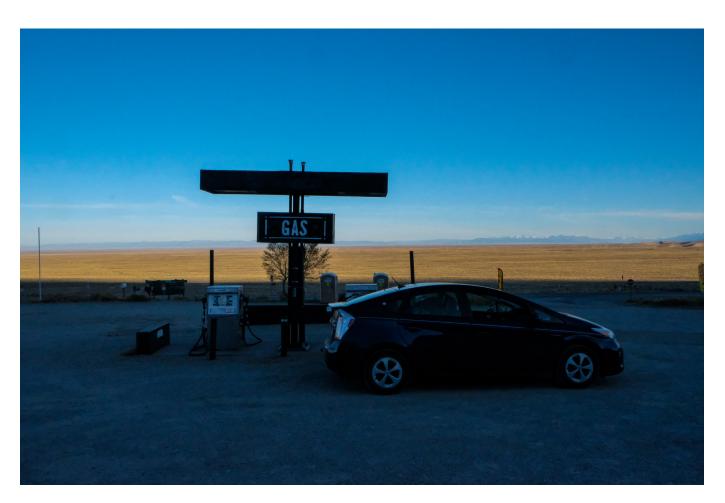
They are like valleys pushed into land that was once unmarred

Freckles indented into face like cacti scattered in the desert

There is beauty in the vales and the depressions both on the face and in the mind

Like the sun cresting the mountains your smile lines will radiate from behind the wires

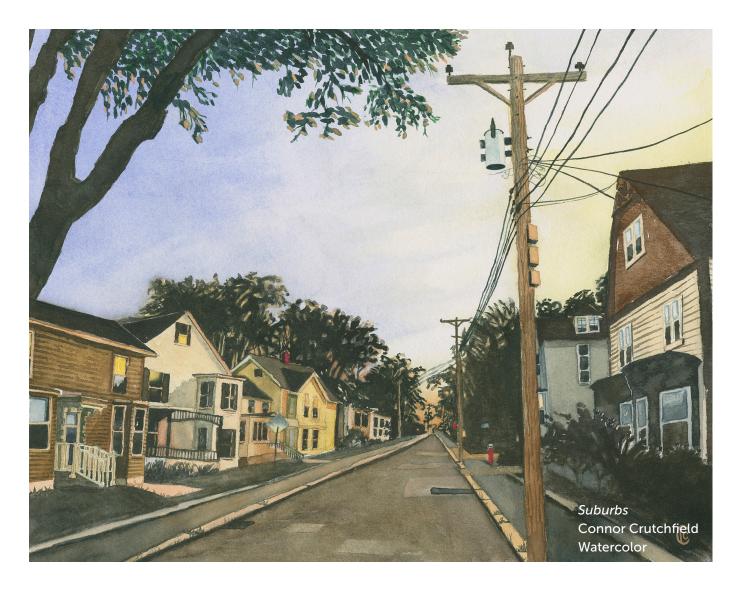
There will be sun in the valley once more



Somewhere in America Dylan Schroeder Photograph

Young Family at Sunset Matt Sears Photograph





*Gratitude*Janita Matoke

The sun is gentle when it touches my face

It wakes me up in the morning.

And although it is early and my body yearns for sleep-

When I meet the sun in the morning it pours a smile out of me.

For the sun is gentle when it touches my face

It tells me I have /met yet another day/

As I whisper gentle prayers and thank God for this new day

The sun whispers back in a warm and blissful way

For the sun is gentle when it touches my face

It makes me feel loved as it rests its lay.



Hidden Underpass Jacky Reny Photograph

*Mi Jardin 3.0*Janita Matoke

The tears watered the soil where the seed lay

Although they came from a place of uncomfortable and deep pain

they bore a stem

and then a leaf

and then a tree

where flowers began to grow

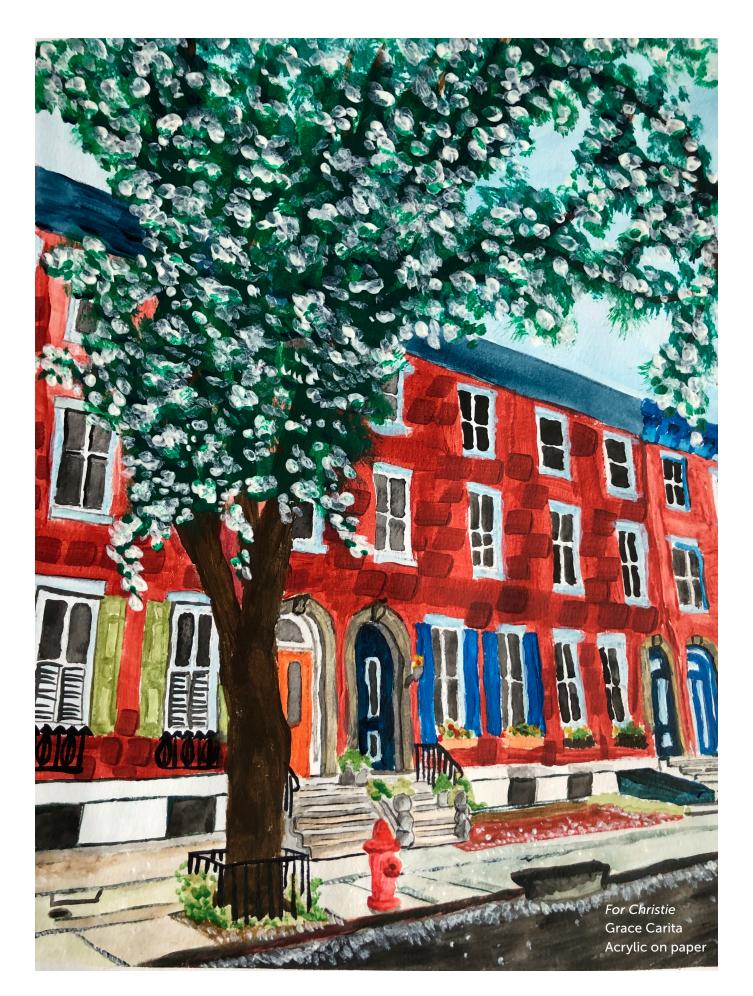
no matter how the cry fell

they always hit the soil, they always watered the seed –

flowers always found a way to bloom beauty was always found beauty always found a way she bloomed beauty beauty always blossomed from her.



The Sunflower Field Ranju Kunwor Acrylic on canvas





The Vase Ranju Kunwor Acrylic on canvas

The Fall Elpidio Sandig

First, the apparent change.

Take a verdant leaf.

How it turns beige and dry, with time.

Then, the weaning.

A fissure appears where it attaches to the twig Until finally, the leaf breaks off.

The dance ensues.

In midair, the leaf slides and glides, upward and down, At the whim of the wind beneath it.

Then ultimately, the landing.

The leaf kisses the ground on the spur of the moment, Then rests its battered soul upon it for eternity.

The fall – its sorrow unthinkable, Its proximity undeniable – Is a near kin of death.

It strikes when you least expect it, Seizes you with a cold hard grip, And drags you down to your grave

Like stone thrown in water.



Healy Hall Connor Crutchfield Watercolor



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Catch of the Day Makala Wang Photograph

Jordan Lake Summer of '15 Emily Ashton

We walked slowly each step a gamble as our toes found silt and recoiled from roots hiding further as we kicked up clay streaks that swirled thick caramel.

We settled in, chin deep convincing ourselvesas we slipped soup through our fingersthat this was refreshing.

Small talk gurgled in our mouths.
Occasionally bubbles reached the surface from air escaping beneath our feet.

Kayla tugged the straps of her borrowed swimsuit and Bryant with a deep breath broke the film on the water's surface, vanishing for a second, and popping up ... refreshed.

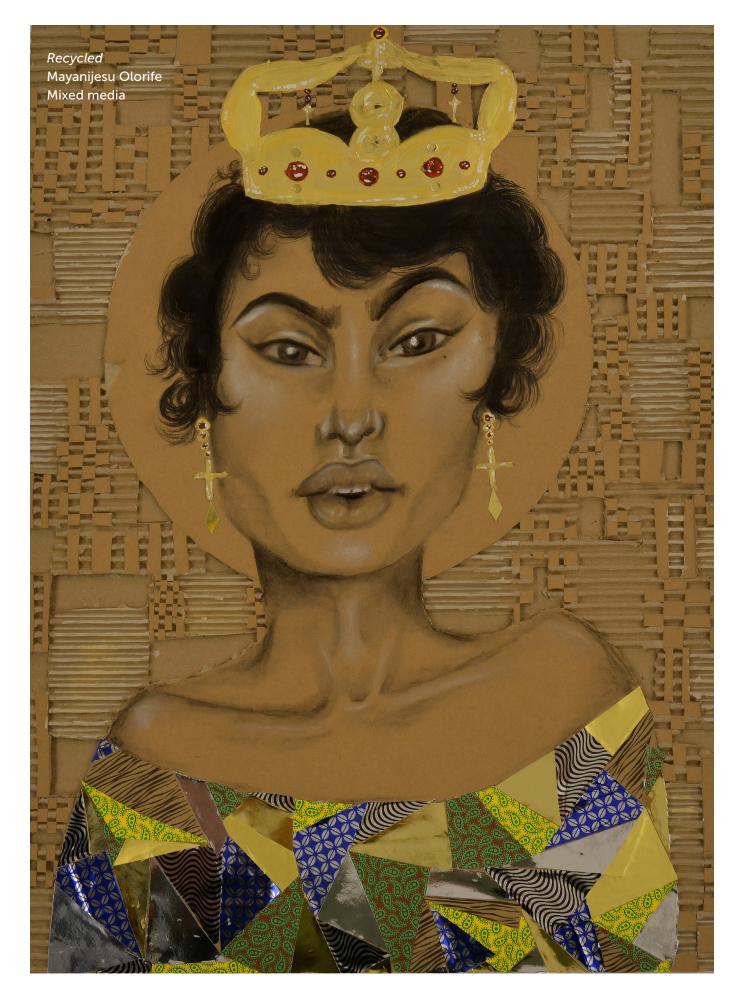
Ben's face twisted and suddenly he looked enlightened, his head plunging under the surface.

First up was his hand with a Bud Light the liquid gold still bubbling inside it catching evening sun. I don't even remember how we got it opened but we drank it immediately the fizz tickling our lips.

One swig got me drunk and we giggled our way back to shore, to spend the rest of the evening

strumming a ukulele and singing whatever left our mouths.

On the car ride home, I let my hand catch the wind outside. Pointing my fingers up until the wind made a small hill, then forcing my hand down in a series of tiny waves.



Sing for Me Skye Rice

Sing for me, why don't you?

You will wrap me in your voice as the snow enfolds a field,

and I will make no noise.

Breathless, throaty, hoarse.

I want to hear your voice in all its forms and in all its places.

I will become lost in your melodies,

my mind will ride on the waves of your song.

Sing for me, for a moment.

I will cease all movement and I will lie down beside you.

Your hymn will flood with peace my soul.

I will find rapture in your chorus,

your voice as close to a God as I will ever be.

Sing for me, this last time.

You will part with me at your crescendo,

and I will begin to hum my tune.

Euphonious, breathy, clear.

I will find my voice in all its forms and carry it to all places.

I will become lost in the dulcet of the world,

my mind will always wander to your song.



Parallel Paths in the Storm Matt Sears Photograph



Nature's Tears Tessa Laney Photograph

Grieving Gregory Whitehorn

When I put on my white coat I think about what I've gained But more about what I've lost The memories come flooding back The walks, the games, the hugs, the ups, the downs The love

When I put on my white coat I think about the future But more about the past The sacrifices that they made Being there for me when I needed them the most

When I put on my white coat I think about joy
But more about sorrow
Of what could have been but never was
Of experiencing big moments in my life without them
Of feeling lonely now more than ever

When I put on my white coat I think about success But more about failure I'm afraid of letting them down I'm afraid of letting myself down

Some days, I feel confused and broken Some days, I'm not sure where to go Some days, I'm lost in my mind And I wish they were here

But when I put on that white coat, I see them again In patients and friends, I see them In kind gestures and laughter, I see them In family dinners, I see them In my dreams, I see them, if only for a moment

And I hope that I've made them proud

The Abolition of Spring by Covid-19 Elpidio Sandig

Neighborhood turfs sprout lusher Where frost evaporated, The gentle wind has twigs sway Weightless, like ladies in red.

I glance – no, stare quite sternly – For days and days on end now At the empty cul-de-sac Muted outside my window.

White and purple hyacinths
With tulips interspersed
In pastel shade of pink
Ornate, odorless, accursed.

The fresh crisp breeze is squandered While all the kids are confined, Hibernation protracted Into their bedrooms resigned.

The only soul that's out there Is you, the soulless lurker, Weaver of isolation, Invis'ble brute of terror.

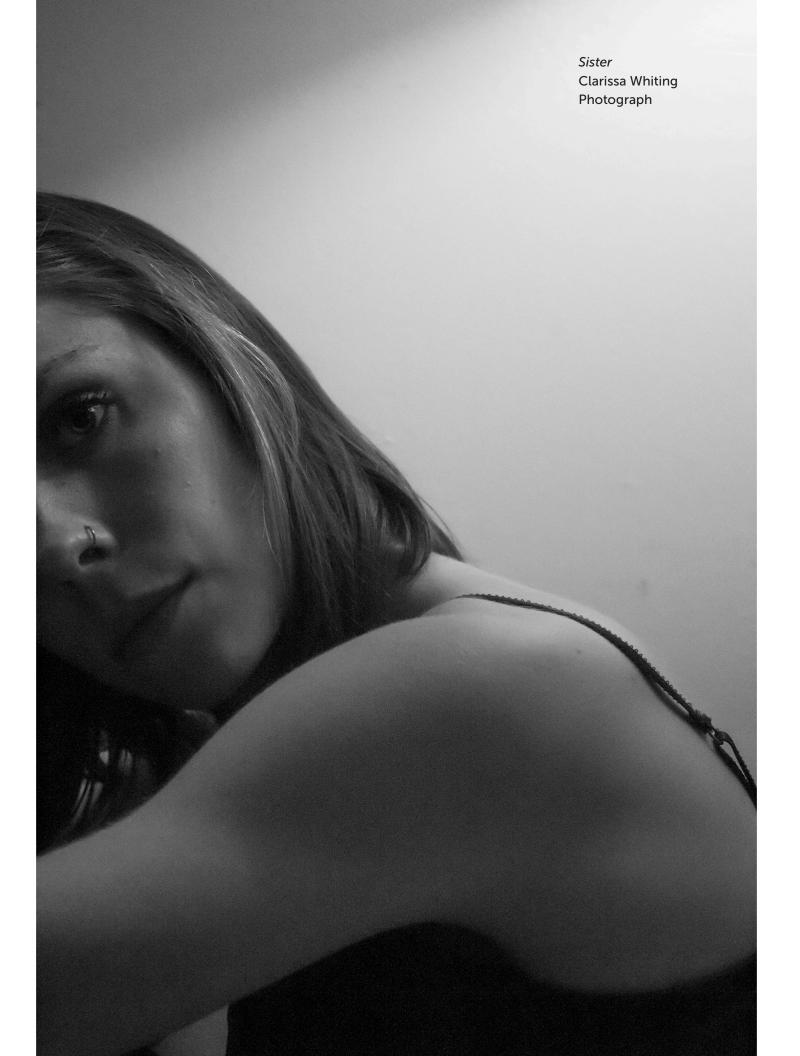
Unseen, yet dare do I say
The robbery is vivid,
How you have spring abolished
Has left many a-livid.

Unique the melancholy Now the lively spring lies dead Longing for a distant smile Of a love unrequited.

Such theft, oh beast most cruel Who took away the thrill Of gawking at a (tear)drop Of dew on a daffodil



*Isolated*Benjamin Fleet
Digital image



Portrait of a Lost Mind Lena DiFulvio

And there you are, Right where I always find you.

No laugh, no smile, no confusion, Just you— Or is it you? Or is it someone else? Or is it no one?

The nurse just fixed your shirt.
Fixed it like you were a mannequin
And we're in a store
And I'm just a customer
And you're just plastic.

The woman in the next room is wailing,
Wailing like the world is falling apart
Like you and I are witnessing a parting
In the fabric of time and space
As if she's enraged at our gentle complacency
And the sloppy smear of your once favorite lipstick
That doesn't quite fill into all the wrinkles
In your parted lips.

Do your children plead with you? Grab your bony shoulders and wonder why you don't remember the very beings you bore From your own womb?

You created life, But where did yours go?

It's lost in that lipstick
On the shelf of a store
Where I am a mannequin.

The Astronaut in the Sea Nancy Dinh

They always say that it's lonely on top of the hill.

This hill, it's high up. Higher than anyone has any right to be.

Many covet it. They scramble and claw their way up

Its windy paths to reach the top.

Up there, they'll hand you fame and know your name. You'll practically be in space, face to face with the stars.

And yet. It's cold. It's dark. Only the pedestal of a hill Below your feet reminds you of home.
You may, if you'd like, have a rope
Tying you to this hill and for a second,
Whilst you jump in the air, pretend you are an astronaut.

One day, someday, if you climb too far up
And find yourself an astronaut, there is always a chance,
That persistent chance that covers
The expanse of the earth, minus the hill
That you'll eventually fall
Back down, tumbling and stumbling into the deep black sea.

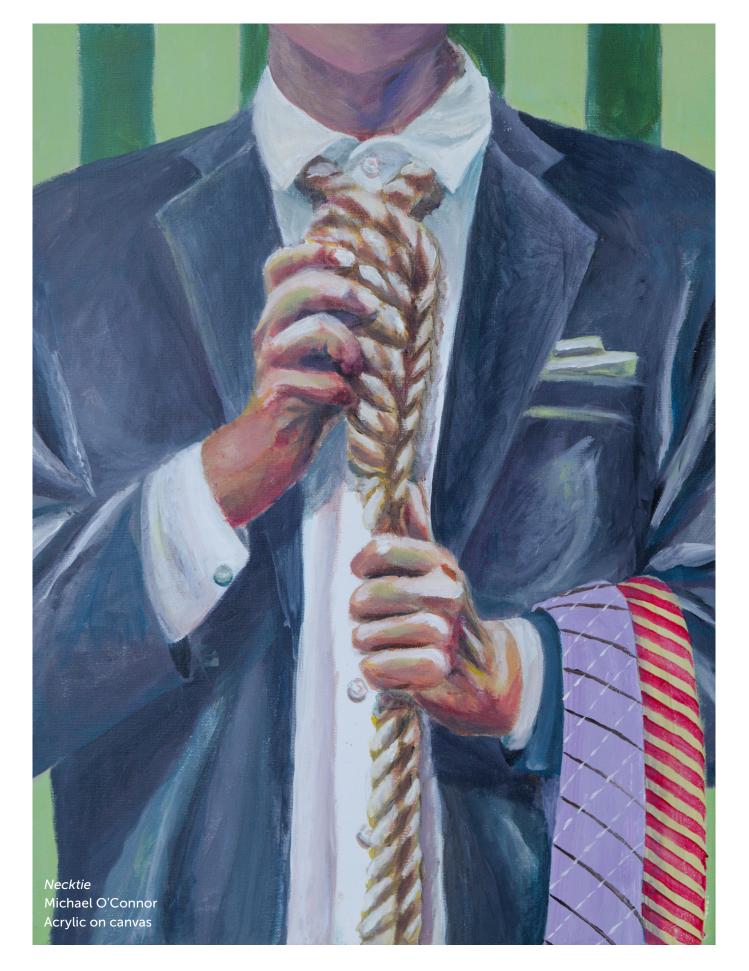
You best hope someone is down there to fetch you.



le Coup do Foudre Connor Crutchfield Graphite on paper

Deus Ex Machina Emily Ashton

If heaven is real it would look like the room I am standing in surrounded by plastic wombs. The nurses walk as if their feet hover inches off the ground and the throaty hum of the monitors feels vaguely Gregorian. The first soloist with a high and tinny cry raises his raisin fingertips to the ceiling and the nurses float over to perform a laying on of latex hands. They place his arms and legs between thumb and index bringing all four limbs close to his heart. The respirator sighs as he returns to sleep, and the nurse tenderly draws the blanket like a curtain enclosing the pod returning to her post waiting for the next song to break the silence.



The Feeling of Air Slipping over My Skin Steven Bieser

The feeling of air slipping over my skin

Oh the gradient of the sky, the purples, blues, yellows and peach.

Matched only by the soft breeze caressing my skin.

The temperature is perfect, my mind is proud. Proud of what it can do, what it can handle, what it can produce, and how it finds peace within chaos.

Thank you to my Mind, my eyes, my skin. Thank you to friends who patiently listen. Thank you to whoever mows this grass I am sitting on.

I think the leaves on a nearby tree rippling in the breeze feel pleased and at peace. Grateful for the cool air of night that lets them breathe without fear of losing all their precious water. They effortlessly flip and bend and sway in the wind but return back to where they belong, stronger because of it.

*Mirror*Simran Rahi
Photograph





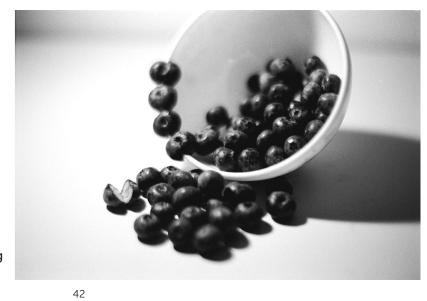
Easter Michael O'Connor Ink

Orange Jasmine Wang 35 MM film





Still Life, Apples
Michael O'Connor
Charcoal pencil on paper



Blue Jasmine Wang 35 MM film

Bruce Gloria Pereira

We were not alone, Even though you weren't there. This is not to say we didn't miss you — of course we did! But hopefully this postcard finds you well, no need to despair. We had Claudia, or Irene some had Suzy. Their voices bellowed through the hall day and night, We were not alone. They came in and sang us hymns, tucked us in, and offered us their version of gin, The kind that's administered via an IV drip. Then there was Bruce, who became a dear friend of mine. A plump little blue jay, with only one eye. The physics of his flight truly rattled my mind, Nonetheless we got along just fine. Big ol' Bruce would fly right in, nearly hitting the window with each descent. And by nearly hitting, I mean quite literally pummeling into the glass. The thud would jump start my heart better than that AED machine did when I was admitted. But alas, Bruce was once again alive and well! He had a nag for always coming at just the right time Right when that gin Suzy gave me would wear off, and I'd feel a little pain inside His one-eyed grin would bring a twinkle to my eye.

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Sometimes a man came and played the guitar,

It reminded me of that little bar on the corner of south street,

You remember that bar,

The one where the musician clearly didn't know how to play the guitar.

Are you smiling now?

We were not alone.

Boy, did those memories surround me.

The bar, Aunt Cathy's on Easter, Mel's birthday at the beach.

They came back so vivid, full of color and life

Inciting the most wonderfully visceral feeling of warmth and happiness.

You know, I even got to see our old neighbor, Frank,

The one who got in that terrible accident all those years ago.

He's looking swell, hasn't aged a bit, and is still funny as hell

Alright, ciao my dear, I have many things to do.

Just thought I'd drop a line and make sure you weren't feeling blue!

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I hope you realize now that we were never alone,

And you'll never be alone

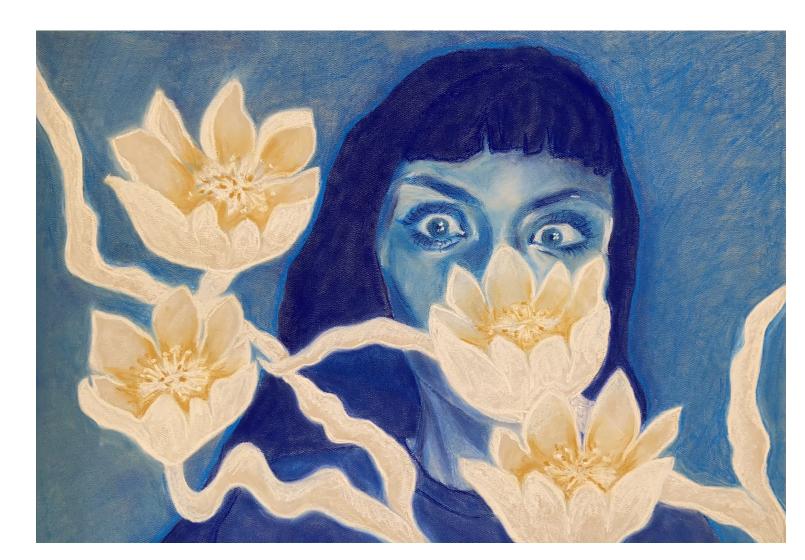
Because I am always with you.



Judgement
Briana Dragone
Bronze, steel,
reclaimed wood,
cast iron



The Galaxy Erupts Over Mauna Loa Matt Sears Photograph



Avoidance Zaynab Sajjadi Acrylic

Aeidein of Ambien John Waters

I ask questions I don't want to know the answer to.

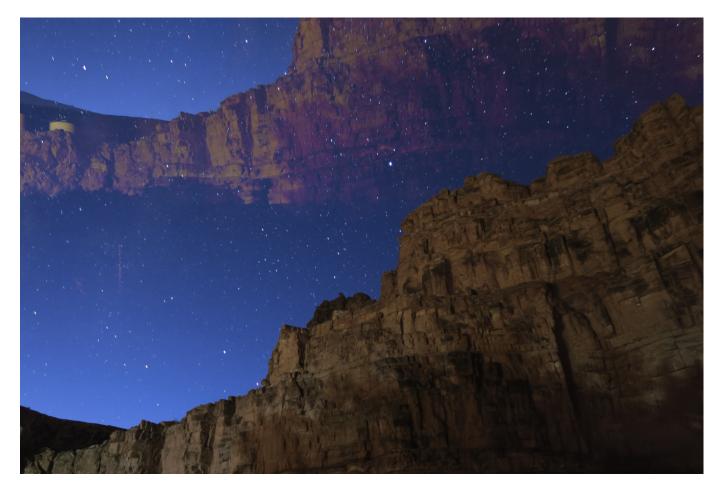
When it came time to pick, did she even see me?

In her Elysium of sleep and pain relief,

Did I ever cross her mind?

Who...what does she think about more?

I don't want to know.



Double Vision Simran Rahi Photograph

Chamomile screenplay, an excerpt – 2020 Nava Barman

NEIL: I liked being with you in California. Otherwise, I wouldn't go back.

MISHTI feels her scarf: Hmm...

MISHTI closes her eyes and dramatically narrates her favorite feelings in California

MISHTI: Imagine the sun warming your skin right now. Standing on the ocean, staring at the waves. A light breeze on your neck...

NEIL grins: Yeah, I can smell the salt.

MISHTI eyes still closed: And after work we could just walk on Santa Monica. At sunset, it would just be you and me. And I wouldn't think about work (slight pause) or my family... and you wouldn't have to think about the hospital, or anything else. It would just be so... nice.

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Gaia's Sculptures Dylan Schroeder Photograph

MISHTI opens her eyes, reality sets back.

NEIL takes the last sip of his coffee: That truly sounds beautiful.

MISHTI exclaims: Doesn't it!

NEIL: It does. (shakes his head) But that's not how it'll work. I'll always be thinking about the hospital, that's what residency is. I don't think we'll take as many long walks on the beach as you think.

NEIL puts on his jacket: I love you. Are you ready to go? Should we get another tea, I know you like the chamomile (NEIL starts beckoning for the BARISTA)

MISHTI is silent. She doesn't like how NEIL cut her off, and she's visibly upset: I don't think I'm ready to leave yet.

Sterile Gloria Pereira

Aseptic, disinfected

Uninhabited and uninhabitable

Sanitized lab benches and UV lights

Men in long white coats, faces adorned with glasses, furrowed brows,

And a vertical slit across their lips, that never dare curve at the edges to form a smile

Petri dishes basking in the warmth of their incubator

...growing, growing, growing

Breaking free of the agar chamber and climbing up the glass wall to liberation,

...life

Sterilized needles penetrate skin,

The contents of test tubes find their new home in a vasculature highway

In the wards, science and humanity lock eyes in a never-ending gaze

The hand injecting the propofol filled needle,

Is the same hand the patient holds anxiously as they slip into a terrifying unknown

The eyes that reviewed the scans

are the same comforting eyes the patient sees when they awake

Eyes that smile, even behind the mask

Eyes with a warmth that doesn't cultivate bacteria

"Did you break sterile field?"

The attending surgeon asks a question he knows the answer to

Latex gloves form a slippery second skin on the medical student's sweaty palms

A wandering elbow is to blame

Sterility is broken

Mistakes have been made 49 "Sterile"



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Sterilized order is regained through the rumble of a nearby autoclave

It's steaming hiss is accompanied by an orchestra of beeps, buzzes, and hums

That slowly waken a 32-year-old woman in the PACU

Medical instruments, latex gloves, and antiseptic wipes surround her

Florescent lights reflect off white walls

Her palms are sweaty

She clasps her hands together to feel the moisture

She dreams of the tiny hands she hopes to hold

A knock on the door, and the good doctor enters

A warm hand extends out from the sleeve of a white coat

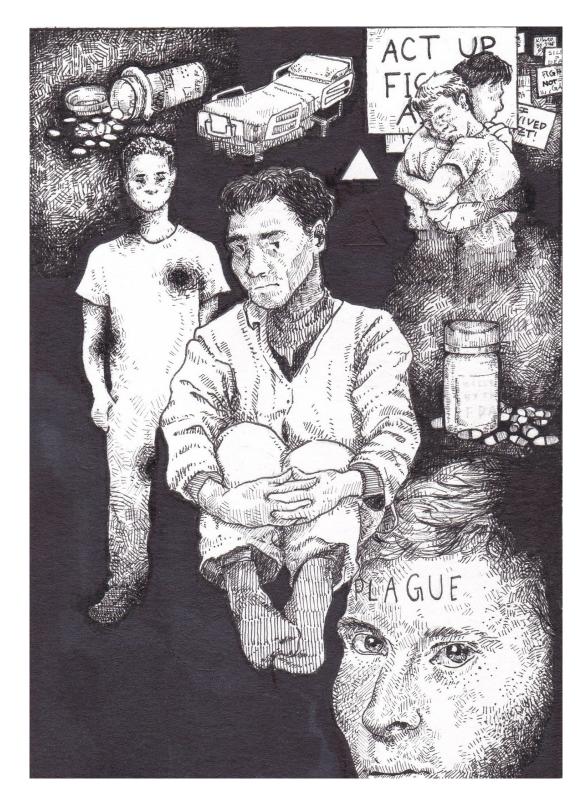
His palms are sweaty too

The corners of his mouth turn downward as his lips part to whisper

"I'm so sorry"

Her brow furrows in agonizing anticipation,

Until she finally hears the word she has long feared



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The AIDS Epidemic
Benjamin Fleet
Micron Ink Pens

Fading in My Hospice Nava Barman

Awash in purple pills, Poseidon in my pain.

My faith in God, reflected in the rain.

Through glowing, hopeful windows, you ask me

Papa, can we play with the dolls?

knowing nothing of life's divine comedy.

I lift your gentle figure in my gingerbread arms, afraid to tell you

our house is crumb.

You are a sapling. Blooming before my very eyes.

Scourge rattles obsidian mortars in my skull.

Hand me the doll, baby girl, let us try and sing a song.

Shadowy wisps invade pink seas. Hellfire kisses serene waters.

These ancient battleships, older than war itself, know nothing of surrender.

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The melody of chaos is all I can remember.

Yet you smile wide, connecting your little face to mine.

Ah yes, our song!

The tune is faint now,

like sirens

whispering from their beacons.



Porcine Impression Connor Crutchfield Oil on canvas

The Spider Ball Skye Rice

Her body is the same hue as her hair once was,

gleaming and obsidian as ever.

She is now feared rather than loved,

an outcast to friend and foe alike.

Her web twists around her tarsus

as her jewels once twirled around her fingers.

She is adroit at her craft,

the thread effortlessly sliding across her.

She no longer needs to pay for her trade,

the craft comes from her figure faster than it ever could have from her mind.

When the moon is crested in the sky,

the humans retire inside for their feasts.

She waits at the window,

her new home spun across the orb into their world.

She pretends that she is one of them,

donning her feet in the finest silk for her evening out.

Her back is dressed in red,

the same hue as the flowers she was gifted millennia ago.

Her body is eager to begin,

legs long and adept at dancing across her web.

As the music swells,

she hears the vibration of another.

He tumbles into her lair,

like a man falling into her lap.

The humans spin to the music,

whirling across the floor to the symphony.

The music of the fly swells,

the wings beating to a crescendo.

She unleashes her spinnerets and falls,

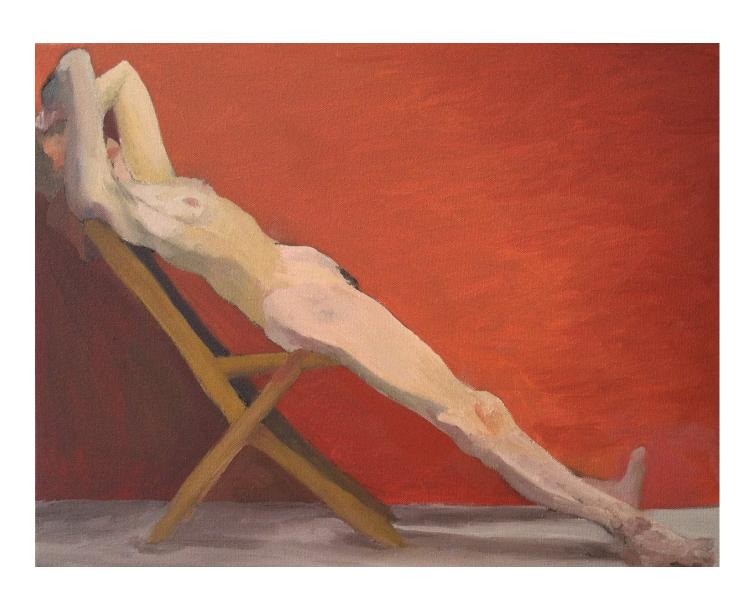
tumbling to her victim like a lover in the night.

He is wrapped in her embrace,

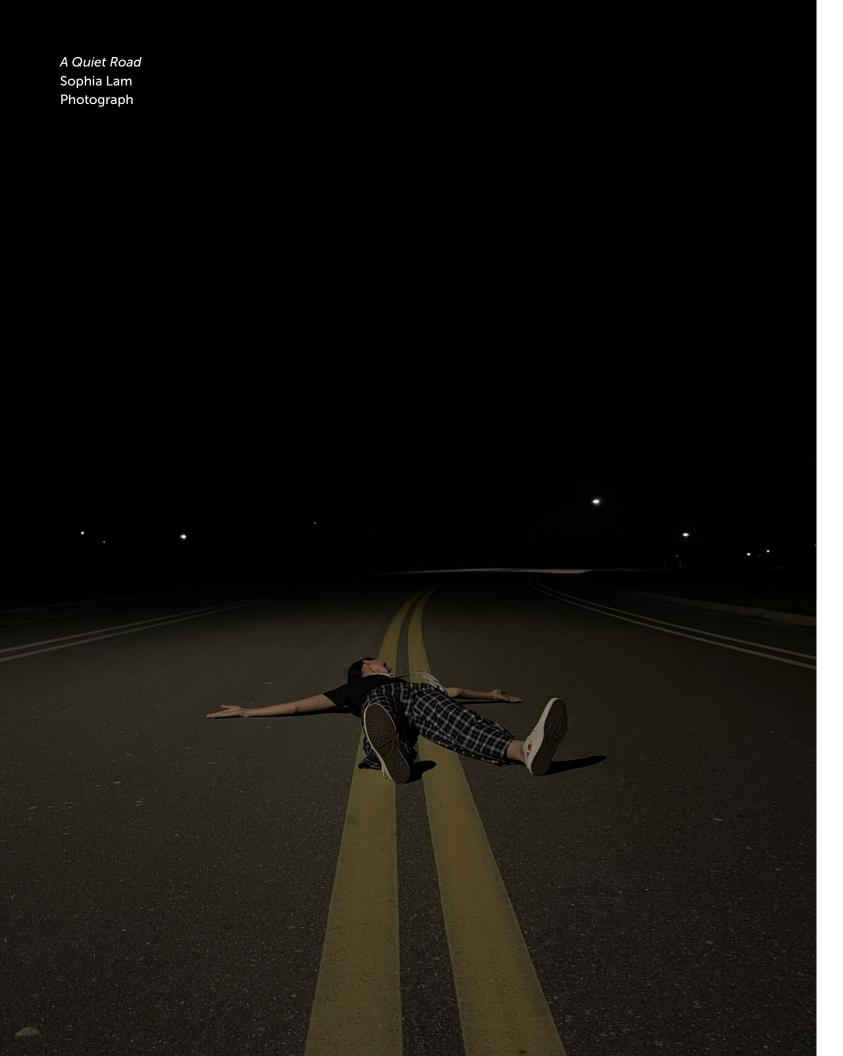
her kiss will be the last thing he feels.



Upstream/Downstream Roselind Ni Paint



Uglow Master Copy - An Exercise in Grief Michele Ly Oil paint



Distancing Emily Ashton

I wish that I could say I don't miss touch but at this point I think I would accept the warmth of anyone: excuse to brush my absent-minded fingertips against another forehead, just to move the hair behind their ear and after, maybe, trace their cheek until I find their neck, and there I'd place my lips, to feel another pulse beneath them. I can almost shape my arms an oval, aching for another waist to tangle in, appreciating where I find its slopes and curves, so that the most inviting feelings wouldn't be my own caress, that is and isn't quite alone.

I'm in the City Janita Matoke

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

One foot in front of the next

Bag on you swinging closely by
Stepping to a pace that helps you get around
Drifting vigilantly, quickly to the youthful sounds

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

The smell of cigarettes reaches my nose
I lift my head briefly to see if the culprit is close
As the smell wooshes and swooshes and swiftly drifts by
I'm met by the smell of the trash unit nearby

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

I hear a bang a pop and a pow
I see the dump truck picking up trash now
I hear a bark and see a pull of a leash
A pigeon perched in front of a dog is bound to cause a scene
I smile at the dog and stay clear of the bird's way, as it flies off into the distance not giving me the time of day

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

I began to zone out

Mind strictly on the route

Focused on the lights, changing to green

Carefully crossing the street so the cars do not scream

I hear honk, it was my turn to go

I turn to the car who beckons a show

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

As I walk hearing just the rhythm and beat of the sounds my headphones bring

I feel small in a space so large

As I began to reflect- a "weerrr weerrr" sound is off in the near distance A siren, an ambulance, I break the gentleness of my thoughts to pray for the recipient Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

I hear a different sound now, the click clank of coins,
I look down now, to see a cup
A sign
A somber, solemn face

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste you're in the city

I see a man lying with no shirt, I see clots and bounds of real dirt-on this man

Who is he? And why is he so poor??

Pick up the pace you're in the city

My body slows down Do I have coins?

Pick up the pace you're in the city

I pass the man who needed money

Yet here a woman stands with the same plea
I see her eyes going back and forth and then up at me

Pick up the pace you're in the city No time to waste-

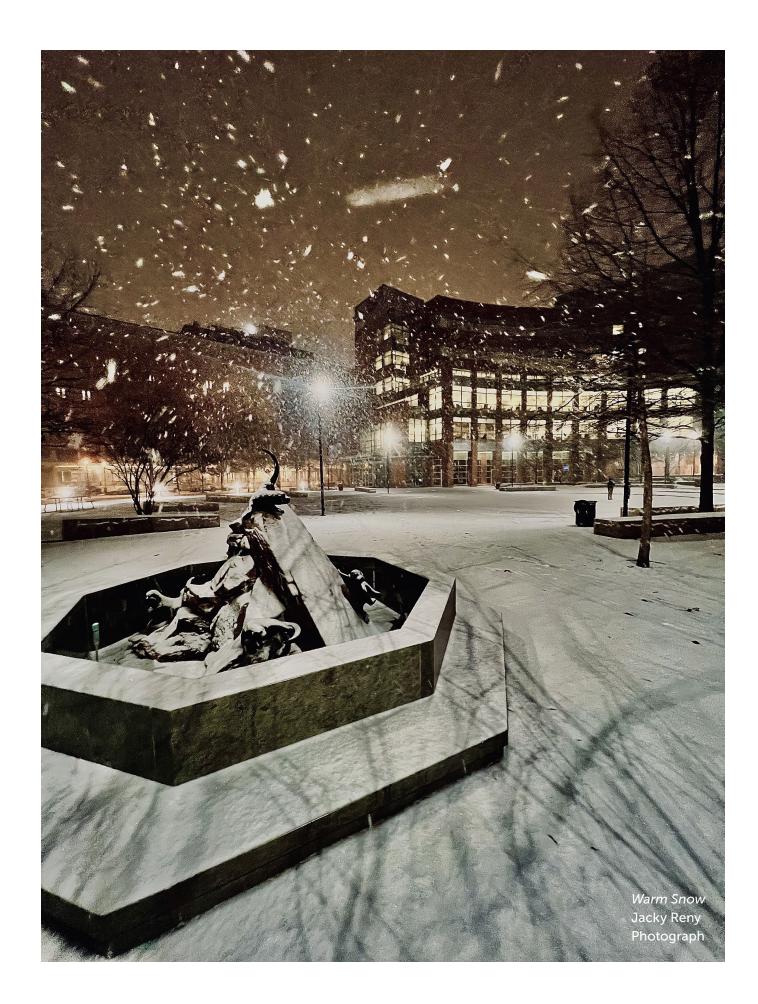
I can no longer move faster, I am stuck, lost in this city of hope, lost in this city of tall towers, and fancy flowers, that line grandiose buildings, buildings that in between the creases hold the bodies of God's man, lying, needing, I can no longer breathe in the smoke, I can no long remotely pass by, I am slugged down, bombarded with the truth, I just paid ten dollars for coffee and a muffin but have nothing left for you

PICK UP THE PACE YOU'RE IN THE CITY NO TIME TO WASTE

I am frozen in time

because after your eyes met mine, I was reminded, no, I was scolded by the truth, you are no different than me, I

no different than you my brother, I am sorry, my sister I do weep for spaced in the pace of the city that is so sweet, no one left any nectar for you.



Intensive Care Mary Metkus

"We take better care of dogs than loved ones,"
He said, while rounding on the comatose patients.
Blood in their brains, they could not hear the fights,
The push and pull between family with hope-filled tears
And the doctor who thinks in pressures and mortality curves.

The halls echoed that their lives are worth as much as a dog. "Rocks", they say.

No longer the human beings they once were,
An act of mercy to end life while it is still ongoing.

But his name is John and he has a wife.

"He loves to play the banjo", she says.

And the patient down the hall has a stuffed bear

Gently wedged between her fingers.

"Bears are her favorite," her daughter tells me.

The rhythm of the ventilators hum In tandem with the talk of comfort care and euphemisms They lay, unable to have a voice.

Contributors

Emily Ashton, College of Rehab Sciences, 2024

Nava Barman, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Stephanie Beldick, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2022

Steven Bieser, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

Sophia Block, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Tiffany Buturla, Jefferson College of Population Health, 2022

Grace Carita, Jefferson College of Nursing, 2022

Shawn (Joseph) Collier, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Connor Crutchfield, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Zachary Davis, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Lena DiFulvio, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Nancy Dinh, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Briana Dragone, Jefferson College of Health Professions, 2022

Katie Duquette, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Benjamin Fleet, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Elisabeth Inns, Jefferson College of Life Sciences, 2022

Ranju Kunwor, Jefferson College of Life Sciences, 2022

Sophia Lam, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

Tessa Laney, Jefferson College of Pharmacy, 2025

Michele Ly, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

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Marzia Maliha, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Janita Matoke, College of Population Health, 2022

Mary Metkus, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

Roselind Ni, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Michael O'Connor, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

Mayanijesu Olorife, Jefferson College of Pharmacy, 2025

Gloria Pereira, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Simran Rahi, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Jacky Reny, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Skye Rice, Jefferson College of Nursing, 2022

Zaynab Sajjadi, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2022

Elpidio Sandig, Jefferson College of Nursing, 2023

Dylan Schroeder, College of Health Professions, 2023

Matt Sears, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2022

Yasmine Sultan Raheem, Jefferson College of Nursing, 2023

Katelyn Tyrell, Jefferson College of Life Sciences, 2024

Zachary Urdang, Post Doctorate Fellow, Departments of Otolaryngology and Clinical and Experimental Pharmacology

64

Jasmine Wang, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2023

Makala Wang, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

John Waters, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Gregory Whitehorn, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2025

Clarissa Whiting, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

Joy Zhao, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, 2024

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Charles A. Pohl, MD: Chancellor for the Center City Campus at Thomas Jefferson University Vice Provost of Student Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University Vice Dean of Student Affairs and Career Counseling and Professor of Pediatrics at Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Mark L. Tykocinski, MD: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Thomas Jefferson University The Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Megan Voeller: Director of Humanities, Office of Student Life & Engagement



