

# INSIDE THE MEMO

2023



*Obscurity*  
Aray Contreras  
Photography

Front Cover: *Up in the Air*, Bhavana Thota, Photography

Back Cover: *Objects in Mirror are Closer than They Appear*, Joria Le, Photography

# *Inside Out*

Jefferson Literary/Arts Journal 2023

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**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. Free 24/7 crisis counseling.

# Foreword

Welcome to the 2023 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

*Senior Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Thomas Jefferson University*

*Executive Director for Jefferson Japan Center, Thomas Jefferson University*

*Vice Dean for Student Affairs & Career Counseling and Professor of Pediatrics, Sidney Kimmel Medical College*

# Editors' Statement

Welcome to this year's edition of *Inside Out*! In the face of an ever-changing, sometimes bleak, but frequently joyful world, our friends and peers have continued to create inspiring work. *Inside Out* is a place for the Jefferson community to share their stresses, comforts, and everything in-between through all art forms. This year, we reminisce about the good old days – fireflies, Spongebob popsicles, and places we grew up – and touch upon more difficult topics like illness and grief. The breadth of topics and talents in this issue reflects the complexity and strength of the Jefferson community of which we are so grateful to be part. We invite you to share the pieces with which you connect, to reflect on those that may challenge you, and to continue to seek beauty in your everyday lives.

We are thankful for everyone who submitted their art and literature to this magazine. We admire the creativity, thoughtfulness, and depth of introspection that is within each piece. Another thank you to our readers – we hope you enjoy this issue as much as we do.

Alice Wu & John Curran  
Chief Editors

Jaime Tsao & Lauren Posego  
Literary Directors

Connor Crutchfield & Roselind Ni  
Art Directors



*Tranquil Tide*  
Joyce Bian  
Photography

# 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 submitted to [Jefferson.submittable.com](http://Jefferson.submittable.com). 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 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.

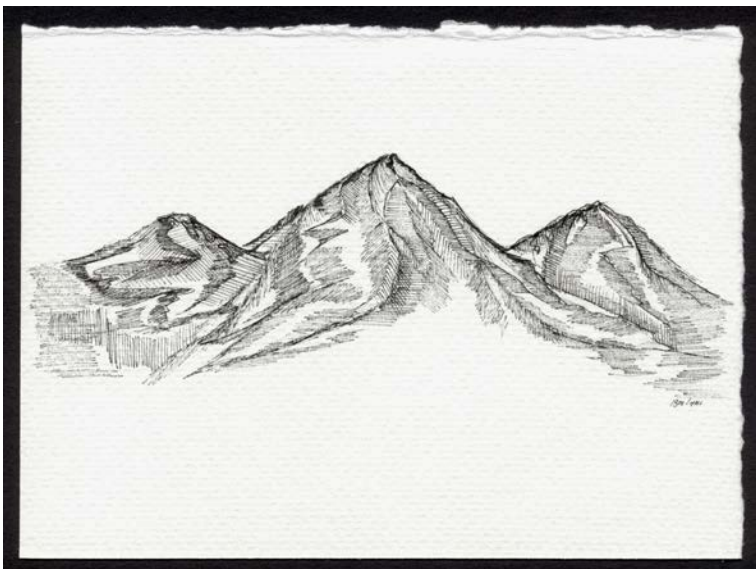
Manuscripts (prose, poetry, translations, short plays, etc.) should be submitted in a Word-compatible document, and saved under the name of the piece (or "untitled," if applicable).

All submissions must include:

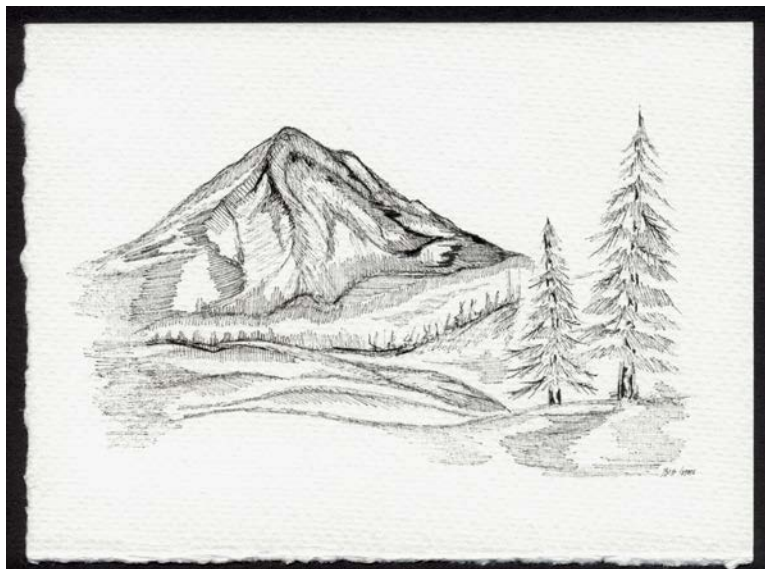
- Author's or artist's name
- Email address and local phone number
- College, department or undergraduate program and year in school
- Genre/medium and title of each submission

View the online version of *Inside Out* at: [Jefferson.edu/InsideOut](http://Jefferson.edu/InsideOut)

*Untitled 1*, Elisabeth Inns, Pen and Ink



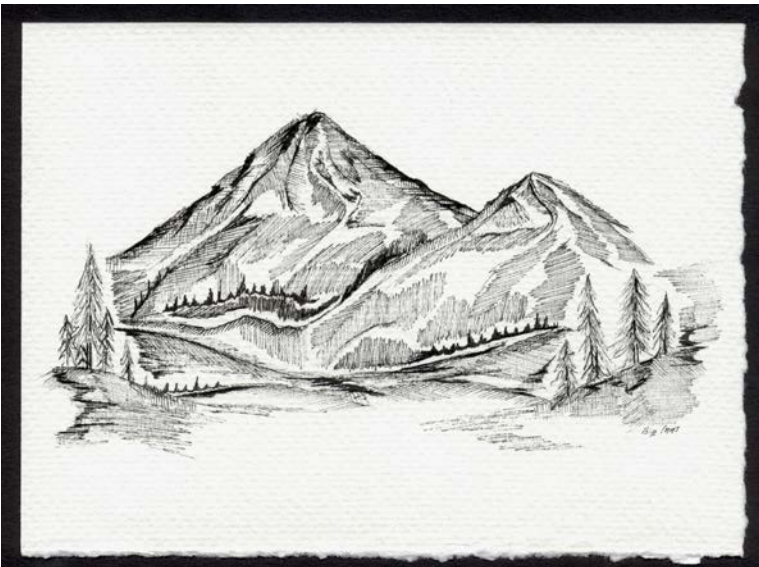
*Untitled 2*, Elisabeth Inns, Pen and Ink



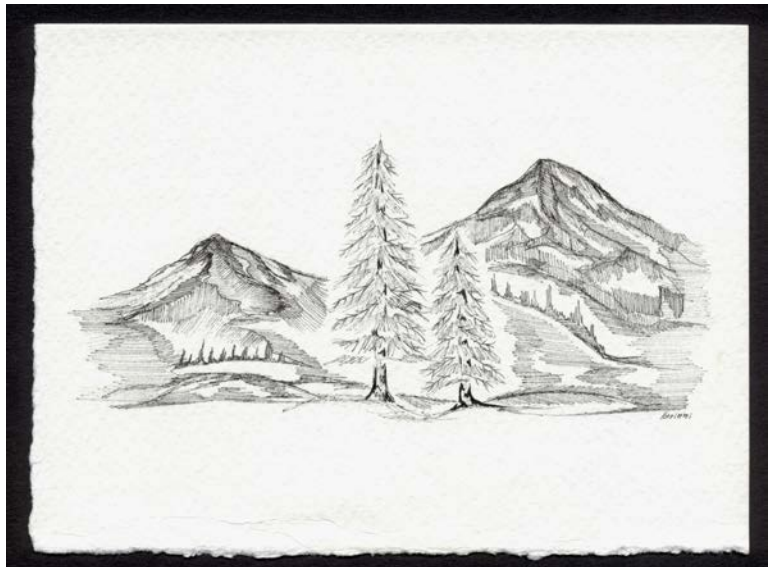
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*Mushroogami*  
 Jordan Safran  
 Origami/photography



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*Holding On  
 Jacob Schwell  
 Photography*





*Blue Lace*  
Elizabeth Binder  
Oil



*A Sri Lankan Man*  
Elizabeth Binder  
Oil

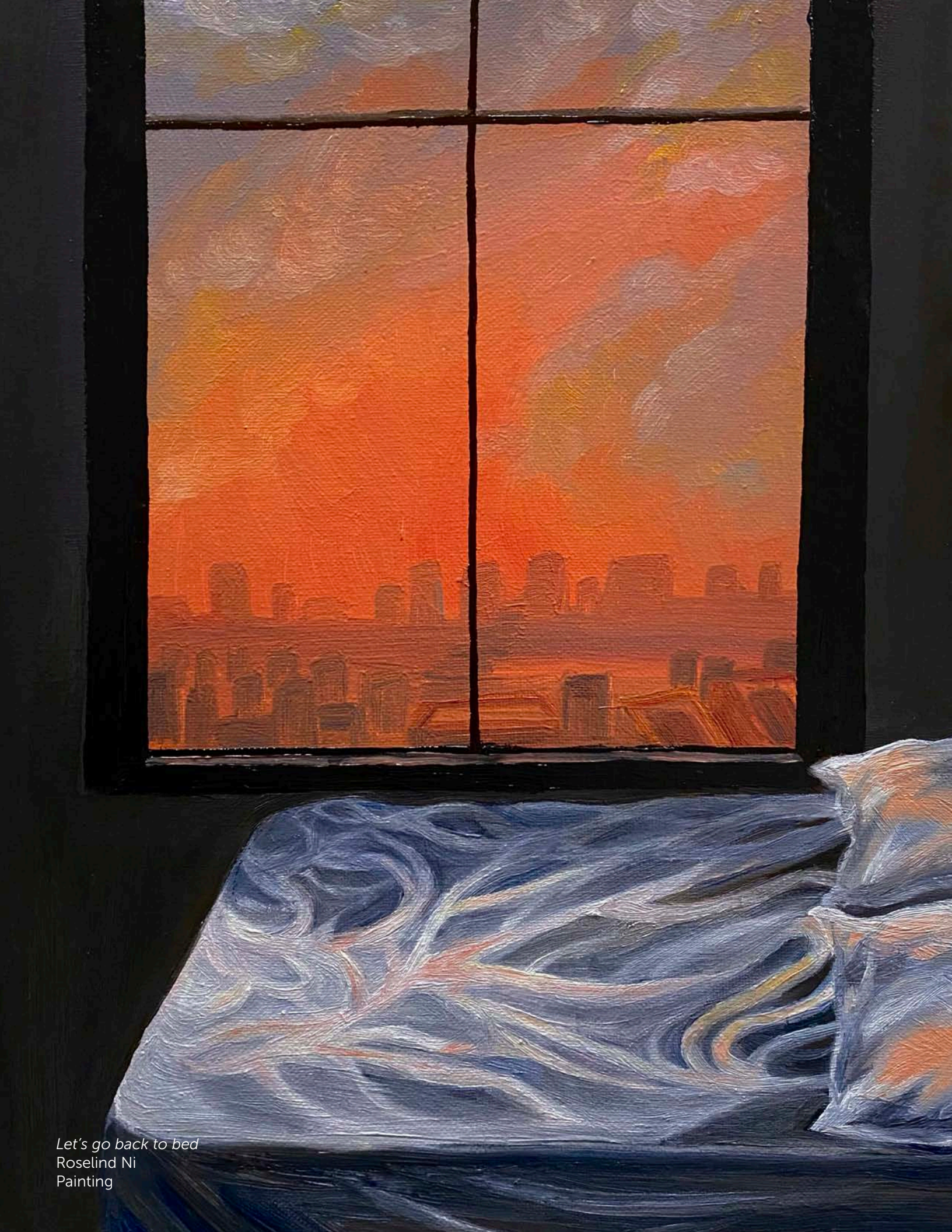
## **I Write Because**

*Ashlyn Williams*

I write for the little girl  
Trapped inside of me  
Hoping to escape her eternity,  
And for once be freed  
To express her childish ways  
And become carefree  
Only for a moment  
To embark upon a worry-free world  
To write for the intensity  
Of the aggression  
Stemming from the pain of headaches  
Which branches off into  
Further frustrations of fury  
That refused to be extinguished  
I write for the love  
I thought I loved  
That loved me  
But not at all  
I write for the struggle  
That disclosed  
The path of a better tomorrow  
By being my encouragement today  
I write  
To keep my feeling suppressed  
Within these pages  
For no one else knows me better  
Or could explain it any clearer  
For my emotions on paper  
Is my most vulnerable state  
I write because  
The words in me  
Used to define me  
Is the only thing  
That vividly shows the real me  
The ends and outs of me  
The write-in me  
Is the fight in me  
No reason more superior



*Just a Dream*  
Emily McGuigan  
Charcoal on paper



*Let's go back to bed*  
Roselind Ni  
Painting

## Poem of Us

*Rebecca Klein*

its deep in me now the way you wash your hands  
quick lather and a shake — care and then  
the purge of water

i keep an eye on you                    when you walk                    when you prepare your mouth  
for food                    when you slip through sheets to slide your underwear off  
your fingers as they trace my ankles                    evade the knife blade  
your hands that hold the ache of my thighs                    the ache of me

it is true I find you in all the moments you wish i'd miss  
private and unthinking moments that make you

i've got a sharp eye  
cutting some have said                    smooth and flappable at first  
like paper                    then quick between your fingers just the same

i don't mean to leave these thin slits in your webbing  
with my bird watching                    but there is power in the study of you  
the pouring over of your chest hair knowing the length of it  
for my fingertips                    for my lips  
the knowing of your smells

is it selfish to know you                    wish you liked your coffee black or that  
you prefer the full weight of me

i want to see you to bed                    calm the need in you  
that kicks cans about and tasks yourself with late nights  
is it greedy to love you this way?                    wanting to own your care

might we calm each other enough for two more years  
hold the deep unseens of ourselves in the crisp noon light  
our bleary swaddled nerves seeking the hush of us



*Cloud 9*  
Samara Hamou  
Photography



# Angel

*Elpidio Sandig*

I sure did see her gliding in the air like a silent midnight plane across the ocean of stars, her reflection glistening in the placid sea like tiny gems spread throughout the vast expanse of the static water, motionless for a split second as if witnessing a grand spectacle unfolding above it.

As she would to awe her sole audience all the more, this heavenly creature turned and churned in midair exuding grace never before seen in any mortal, before finally jolting up in the air to the direction of the dumbfounded moon who was then smiling uncertainly- half in amusement, half in bewilderment- of this winged lady suddenly almost touching her outspread halo.

I saw her ascending, her white silk dress- struck by the moonbeam- sparkled, mimicking a fledgling daybreak, casting a vivid light all over the night sky and drowning a few strands of stars around her in the process.

She was so lovely to behold, and I sure did see her smile back at me before, without warning, vanishing into her own magical world where she belonged, detached from my own.



*Lower School Pond*  
Connor Crutchfield  
Watercolor

## **A Vanishing Mist**

*Elpidio Sandig*

It's not a rock that endures through ages  
Whatever tide befalls;  
Through ebbs and floods, time may break its edges,  
But never its strong walls.

Neither could it be a big, sturdy tree,  
There could be no reason.  
It can't withstand a great catastrophe  
Nor weather every season.

It couldn't be a winding river  
Flowing dauntlessly through time,  
For it can't go on cascading forever;  
It's gone in a little while.

An everlasting music, it can't be,  
Seasoned to perfection,  
Nor can be a timeless poetry-  
A soul's recreation.

Life is nothing but a vanishing mist,  
An early morning dew,  
When by the daylight it is softly kissed,  
It fades without an adieu.

It's a tiny speck in an endless sea,  
A dot in the universe,  
As small as a dust in the wind can be,  
As mild as soft whispers.

Life is just but a bubble in a stream  
When a pebble is dropped  
That bursts like images in a dream



*Yosemite*  
Ari August  
Watercolor and Gouache on Canvas



*Floating Through Life*  
Teague Smith  
Photography

## Yellow, and Teal, and Green

*Elizabeth Weiss*

Can a color teach you joy like a Sunday school lesson?

Come around children and listen to how teal taught the sea to part and your fears to drown. Listen to how orange tamed the lion in my heart and how red taught me to cry. Learn from me this morning about the wisdom in the yellow of my grandmother's house and how green couldn't reach the sky so it taught itself how to grow instead.

It even can teach you how you ever move on when someone dies;

.  
. .  
.

You look deep in the purple blue of the bottomless ocean and see how we all are atoms connected to the sea and you are with me, mother.

And so is

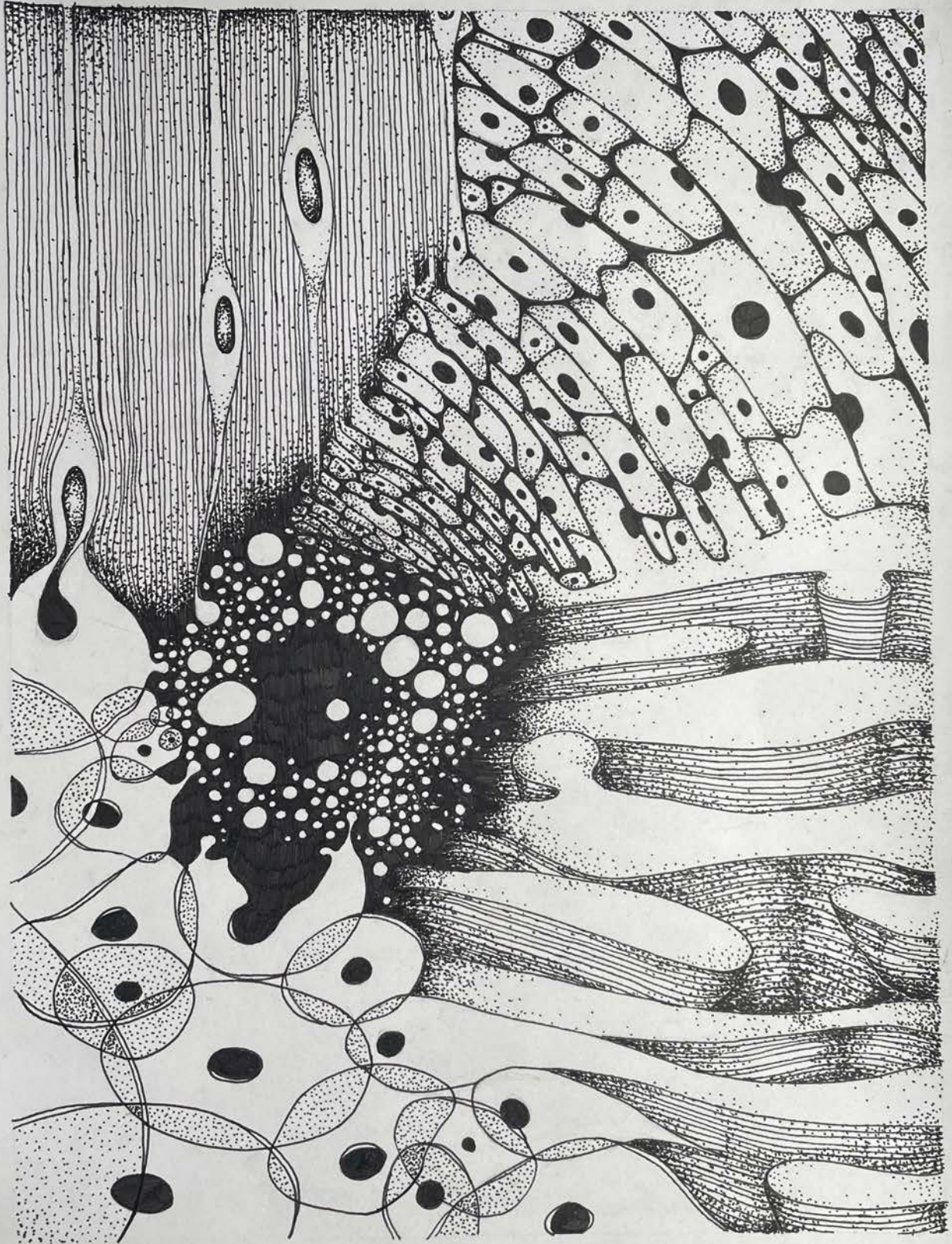
Yellow

And teal

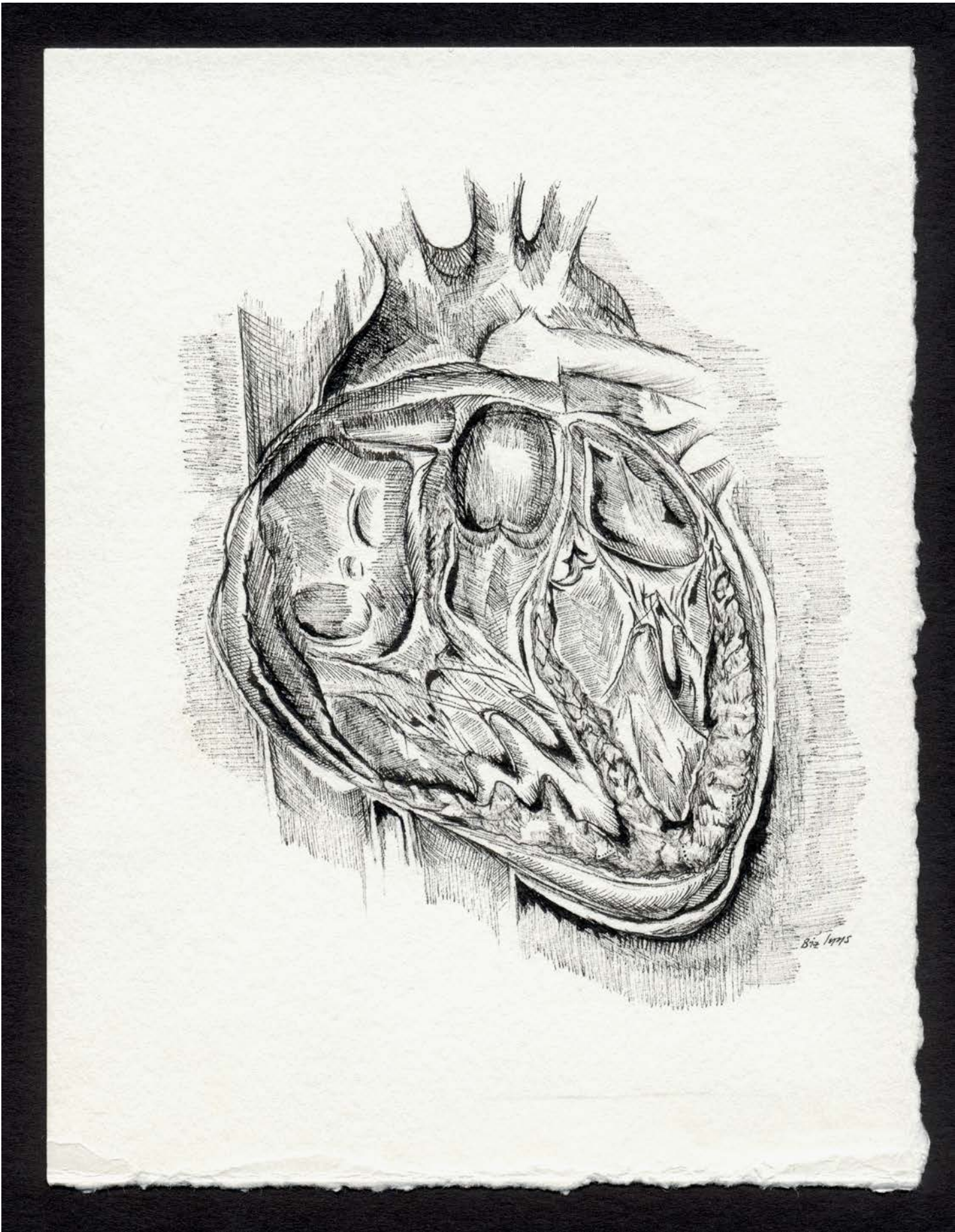
And green.



*Coral Waters*  
Michele Ly  
Ceramics



*Powerhouse*  
Benjamin Fleet  
Ink



Untitled 4  
Elisabeth Inns  
Pen and Ink



*Whimsy*  
Joyce Bian  
Photography



*public records*  
Tracy Gao  
35mm film photography





*In the Banana Trees*  
Jessica Dragonetti  
Painting, Gouache/Watercolor



*Five Dollar Still Life - Pink*  
Michael O'Connor  
Photography



*love, chinatown*  
Tracy Gao  
35mm film photography

## Interview

*Hamd Mahmood*

I like to  
throw darts  
at a  
dartboard  
every night.

Is it weird?

Probably.

Does it  
keep me  
grounded?

Most likely.

*What do  
you do  
for fun?*

Such a  
charged  
question.

What do  
you  
answer?

People  
have  
hobbies.

I like to lift  
weights  
and go  
thrifting.

Yeah, I'll  
say that.

It makes  
me

~complex~

and

~intricate~.

I just love  
volunteer  
work, and  
giving back.

I must be  
so

~kind~.

I tell a lot  
of jokes,  
I've done  
stand-up  
before,  
after all.

Yeah, that's  
it, that  
sounds  
good.

People will  
think I am

~layered~

and

~funny ~.

Do I do  
those  
things  
every day?  
Not likely.  
They are  
hobbies; I  
do them for  
fun.

Oh, I go to  
medical  
school.

Add that. It  
will make  
me seem  
like an

~intellectual~

and a

~scholar~.

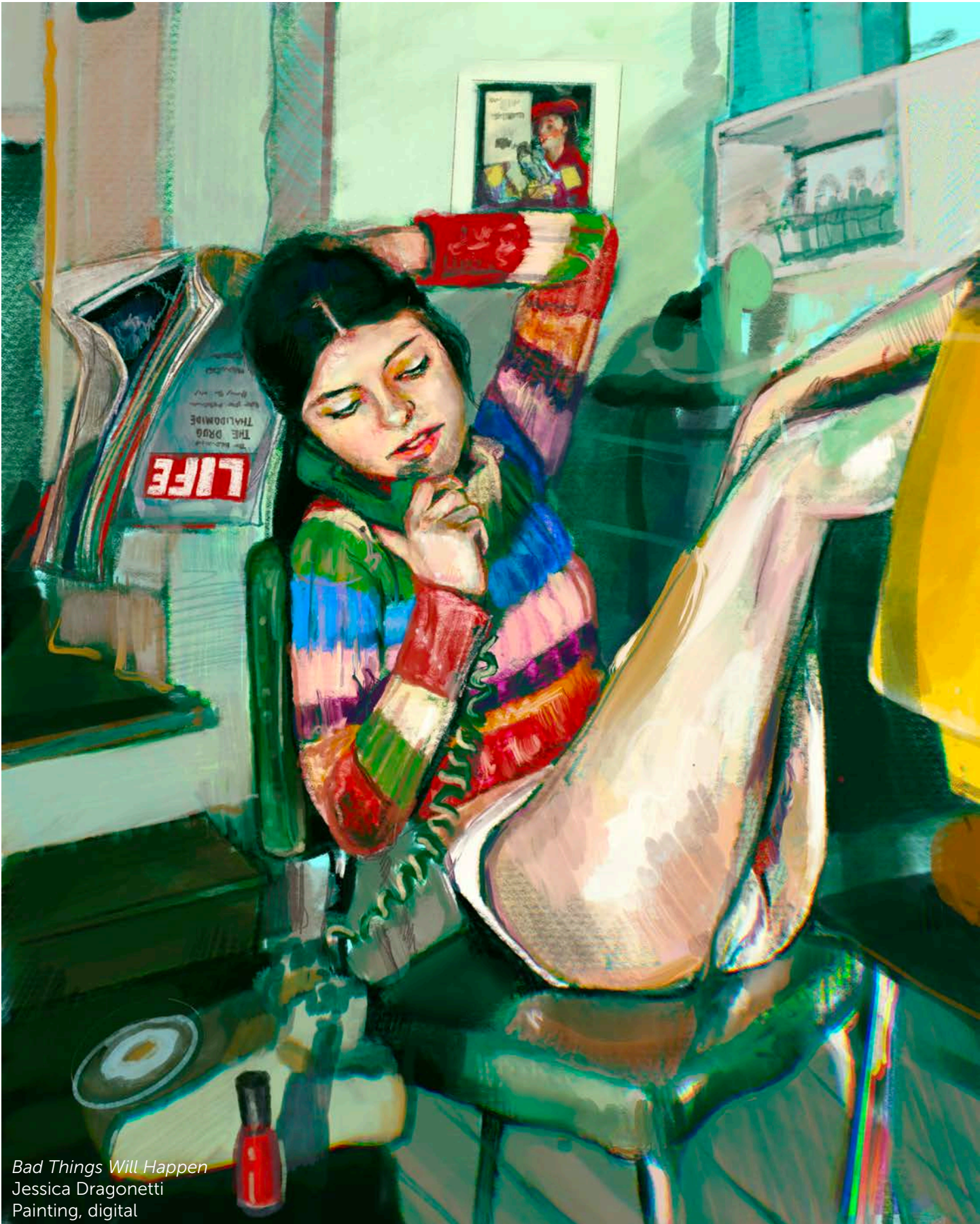
What else is  
there?

Well, what I  
really like to  
do is...

...

...

throw darts  
at a  
dartboard.



*Bad Things Will Happen*  
Jessica Dragonetti  
Painting, digital



*Rise From the Ashes*  
Emily McGuigan  
Acrylic Paint

## **my body is mine.**

*Anusha Koka*

Her body can be defined by a single digit.

A size that defines her identity as the standard at any time.

That body has never been mine.

The imagined idea that petrify young minds, ever so convincing that they should and must look like that so, should I?

A body is now classified by others' eyes.

Another's post quickly compared to mine, by none other than my own mind.

Shaped by the sharp thorns of society's standards that prick, prod, and prune me in moments that I feel lowest. With zippers that will not budge or buttons that refuse to close,

Her body does not look like mine.

Noses that have never turned to point toward the sun, and eyes that have never mirrored the sea that surrounds my home.

Each year I realize her body is beautiful, but with each pass of the sun,  
I realize so is mine.

My body has been tested by time.

My locks, curl bounce twist like the DNA of those whose memories I carry in my own body parts. My nose, a piece of a grandmother, now unable to be forgotten. My eyes as dark and warm as the soil beneath your feet that springs flowers and trees to life.

My body keeps me alive.

Stress, turmoil, aches, and tears that would break a lesser man than I. Skin that bears the sun and a heart that toils on and finds happiness through each grief and break.

Perfection - riddled by comparison, preened by inadequacy, without any true provision of value.

Redefined by the regain of control of ownership that your angles, your colors, and your dreams may be perfection,

but

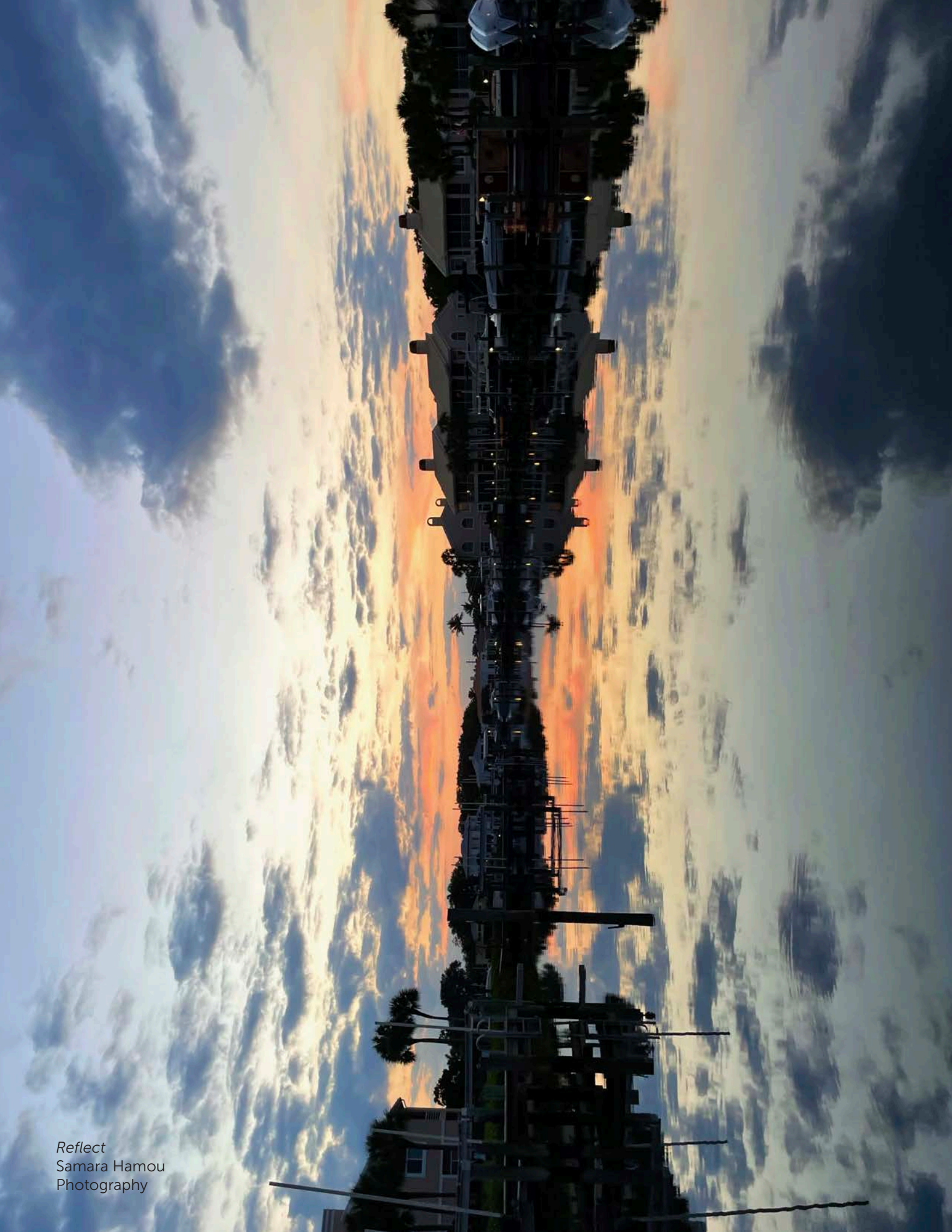
**My body is mine.**







Shamanism  
Emily McGuigan  
Acrylic Paint



*Reflect*  
Samara Hamou  
Photography

## Dos Mundos (Two Worlds)

*Samara Hamou*

### Dos Mundos

Mi hogar está en las afueras,  
una hora de la gran ciudad,  
donde viven mis padres y hermanas,  
cuando estoy en la universidad.

Estudio para ser una doctora,  
siguiendo los pasos de mis padres.  
A pesar del esfuerzo que representa,  
me encanta ser una estudiante.

Ahora hay un apartamento,  
el tercer piso es mi nuevo hogar.  
Es el principio de mi cuento,  
y español aprenderé a hablar.

He pasado un mes en Valencia,  
y abrazo la cultura con facilidad.  
Ahora como cinco comidas al día,  
y fluidez en español es una realidad.

Aunque anochece muy tarde,  
siempre me falta tiempo,  
en un abrir y cerrar de ojos,  
este mes me ha pasado.

Por desgracia, pronto voy a regresar,  
con un mundo entero por ver,  
dejo a mi nueva familia atrás,  
todavía tengo los sueños de volver.

### Two Worlds

My home is on the outskirts,  
an hour from the big city,  
where my parents and sisters live,  
while I'm at University.

I study to become a doctor,  
following in the footsteps of my parents.  
Despite the great effort,  
I do love being a student.

Now I'm in an apartment,  
the third floor is my new home.  
It's the beginning of my story,  
and Spanish I will learn.

I have spent one month in Valencia,  
embracing the culture with felicity.  
Now I have five meals a day,  
and fluency has become a reality.

Although it gets dark very late,  
there is always a lack of time,  
since just in the blink of an eye,  
this month has passed me by.

Sadly soon I return back,  
still with the world to see,  
leaving my new family behind,  
but of returning, I still can dream.



*Headspace*  
Dylan Schroeder  
Photography





*Westward*  
Dylan Schroeder  
Photography

## Carefree

*Ashlyn Williams*

To awaken without a thought  
Nor worry  
To enter into the day without the pains of yesterday  
Nor the pressures of tomorrow  
Without the irritations that never stray  
And the stressors  
Of finances, love, acceptance, and accomplishment  
It is like, climbing an infinite mountain  
So exhausting, but it never ends  
In a world controlled by the negatives  
Rarely are the positives appreciated  
To recognize the ability to  
Stop and smell the flowers as they dance in the wind  
To look up to the stars as they brighten the night  
Even in the midst of the nightmares  
To reflect on the trees capable of withstanding  
The brittle frost of winter  
The comfort of spring  
The intensity of summer  
And the letting go of fall  
Sometimes the only option is to leave  
And yet they grow big and tall  
Despite the frequent lacerations and bruises  
That only strength them  
They overcome it all,  
But eventually, the storm is too much to bear  
And just as humans, some come crashing down in defeat  
Even the positives have negatives  
Aspire to be

## Ego Rebirth

Maggie Stearns

my reflection has forgotten who i am  
and the world around us  
begins to  
*c r u*  
*m b l e--*

crumble... mumble...  
a bee is to *bumble*  
as a football to *fumble*...  
thunder-- to *rumble*,  
mutter to *mumble*...

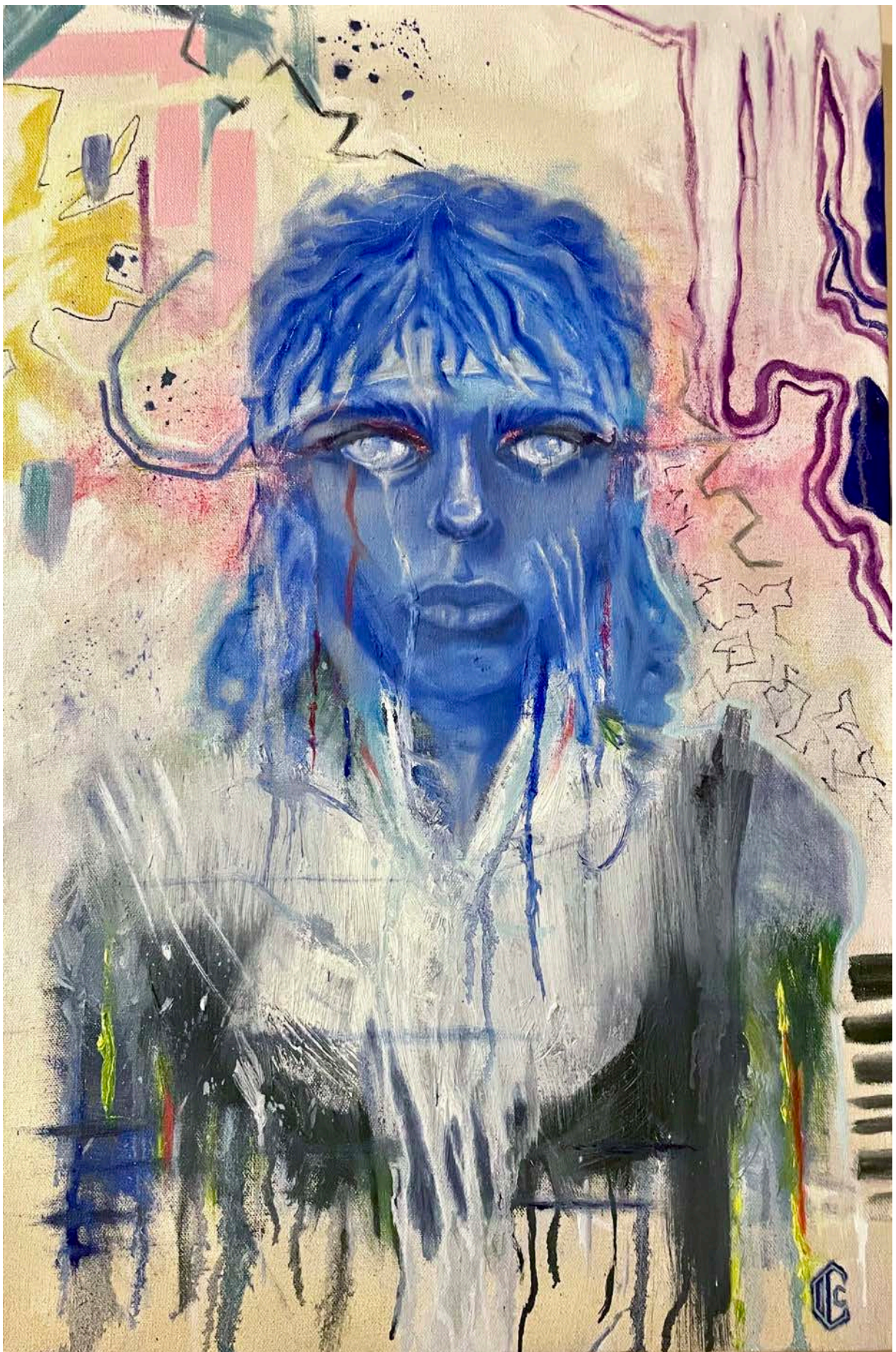
but what about  
standing to *stumble*?  
hubris to *humble*?  
clear to... . *scumble*?

am i still merely juvenile,  
wrapped in a *bundle*,  
but one in a *grundle*,  
still  
shackled to  
a *trundle*?

i was told not to look  
into mirrors once  
the walls start to *bubble*,

but mother earthplanet has elucidated to me that  
i am more than a *pundle*  
after melting into a *puddle*  
and emerging beautifully  
*muddled*.





*Life After Death*  
Connor Crutchfield  
Oil

# The Market

*Talia Higgins*

And with the word goodbye, the deed was done  
You've broken my heart  
She said, tears in her eyes  
So I shall go to the market and buy you a new one  
He said  
Four, five, six gold coins sit in the yellow candy dish by the door  
Carrying them in his calloused, wrinkled palm, each one its own unique personality  
Brand new coppery faces twinkle in the sunlight  
They seemed to wink at him  
A couple old and worn  
Facial features eroded away after decades of handling  
Some blind, some deaf  
Some missing a mouth  
He wondered how the royal faces lived in these coins  
Approaching the market now,  
Shelves neatly arranged  
Lungs, stomachs, brains, lined up like soldiers  
Ready for battle  
Intestines coiled on large wooden spools  
Pairs of kidneys hang overhead  
One lonely gonad sits in a bin, missing its partner  
What may I interest you in today  
Asks the old lady  
A heart  
He says  
Her long wrinkled arm gestures towards a long, shelf-lined corridor  
Rows and rows of hearts crowd the shelves  
A surplus of flesh and blood  
They beat in unison  
Valves open and shut  
Aortas pulsate  
What kind of heart could I purchase for this  
Opening his hand  
He reveals his treasure  
She lets out a sigh  
Leads him down the pristinely organized pathway  
To the back room  
Full of leftovers  
Slabs of meat  
Hollow lungs litter the floor  
Cool cardiac carcasses  
Line the shelves  
On the top shelf  
One beats  
Its pulse weak  
It throbs, sadly  
Valves collapsed  
Holes torn through tender tissue  
He climbs the shelves  
Careful not to step on the forgotten organs  
To choose a heart worth mending



Yo Soy  
Aray Contreras  
Photography

# Romance Magazine



*Puzzled*  
HEART

*Romantic Disillusion*  
Faith Higgins  
Oil paint on wood panel

## WHERE THE HEART LIES

*Tiana Somerville*

WALKING ALONG THE SIDE OF THIS RIVER IS ALMOST THERAPEUTIC. THE SOUND OF THE RUSHING STREAM TAKES ME TO A DIFFERENT WORLD. IT GIVES ME A MYSTICAL FEELING. AS IF POSEIDON HIMSELF IS GUIDING ME. THE STREETS ARE ALMOST DESERTED. A FEW ADULTS AND SOME CHILDREN PASS BY BUT ALTOGETHER I AM ALONE. THE FAINT MUSIC THAT REACHES MY EARS IS CALMING AND ALLOWS ME TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS. I OBSERVE AND EXAMINE EACH BAKERY, BOUTIQUE, AND TOY STORE I PASS. FAMILY-OWNED RESTAURANTS WARM THE CREEPING FROSTBITE AWAY.

THE TOWN IS BEAUTIFUL. I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO MY HOTEL. THE ALLURING SIGHT OF THE OLD TOWN CLOCK RUSTING IS ALMOST ENOUGH FOR ME TO NEVER GO BACK TO THE STATES AGAIN. THE TREES AND NATURE THAT SURROUND THE SMALL PATCH OF ESTABLISHMENTS AND ISOLATED CIVILIZATION PROVIDE A SONG. I AM THE LONE FISHER BEING DRAWN IN BY IT'S ENTICING SIREN SONG. WHEN THE WIND BLOWS, THE HEAVILY SNOWED ON BRANCHES RUSTLE, CREATING A SOUND THAT ENTHRALLINGLY INTERTWINES WITH THE LIGHT ALESSIO BAX THAT CAN BE HEARD FROM THE RESTAURANT AT THE END OF THE STREET.

THIS TOWN AS A WHOLE IS JUST SOMETHING OF A DREAM. IT'S MODERN YET OLD. THE PEOPLE'S NAME FOR THE TOWN'S CENTER TRANSLATES TO "HEART OF HEARTS", WHERE THE FLOWING RIVER ENDS AND CARTS ARE SET UP. I CAN SEE IT. CARTS DECORATED WITH ALL TYPES OF COLORS SELL ALL TYPES OF THINGS. FROM BUDDHA STATUES AND DREAM CATCHERS TO QUESTIONABLE GOLD CHAINS AND OLD BUT FUNCTIONAL WATCHES. UPON ENTERING THE HEART, THERE IS THIS MASSIVE ENERGY SURGE. EVERYTHING IS EXCITING, FESTIVE EVEN. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS HUNG FROM EACH AND EVERY SHOP ON THE EDGE OF THE CIRCLE. THE CHILDREN ARE SINGING ON A MAKESHIFT STAGE IN FRONT OF THE TOWN'S ELDER CLOCK.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN IS HANDING OUT ALL TYPES OF COFFEE AND CAKES TO THE SMALL CROWD IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN, WATCHING LIKE PROUD PARENTS AT THEIR CHILD'S KINDERGARTEN RECITAL. I WISH JOANNE COULD HAVE SEEN THIS. SHE WOULD HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THIS LITTLE TOWN. RUNNING AROUND BUYING SOUVENIRS. LEAVING THE HOTEL WITH HER CAMERAS, MAKING FRIENDS WITH THE LOCALS, AND MAKING IT HARD TO GO BACK HOME. I CAN JUST SEE IT NOW. HER BEHIND HER CAMERA, TAKING PICTURES, SAYING, "STAND OVER HERE." "CHIN UP!" "SMILE!!" AND "NOT LIKE THAT, STUPID."

I SHOULD STOP. THINKING ABOUT HER WOULD ONLY MAKE ME SAD. I CAME HERE TO GET AWAY. "HED DIT(HAVE THIS)." AN ELDERLY WOMAN PUT SOMETHING IN MY HAND. WITH A SMILE, SHE WALKS AWAY, DISAPPEARING INTO THE CROWD. IN MY PALM, LAID A BLUEBIRD HAIR CLIP. HOW? THE BLUEBIRD WAS JOANNE'S FAVORITE ANIMAL. WHY? I LOOK AROUND HOPING TO FIND HER. THAT WOMAN. SOON WHITE FLAKES CLOUD MY VISION. SNOW FALLS AND THAT IS THE RIVETING SIGN THAT SHOWS JOANNE IS WITH ME. IN THIS TOWN WALKING WITH ME IN APPRECIATION OF ITS' CHARM AND SERENITY.

## Spongebob Popsicle

*Talia Higgins*

Wrapped in a shroud of fur  
Layer upon layer of mink  
One would expect a cavalry of huskies preceding her  
Gliding along the Arctic snowbanks in a toboggan  
Instead  
Hot mid-July South Jersey  
Flip flop feet on pyretic pavement  
Pruny skin in the pool  
Our fingertips finally match  
Soaking bathing suit drips through the woven chair  
A small pool beneath our feet  
She sheds her coat revealing a springy, lavender cardigan  
Which she sheds once more to reveal a shrunken woman  
The tune of Mr. Softee is music to her ears  
Suddenly I am running  
Nearly crashing into its metal side  
What's on the menu?  
Water ice, ice cream, chocolate dip  
Zeyda warned me she has been known to steal an ice cream cone  
I prefer not to tempt fate  
A Spongebob popsicle!  
Its face askew, but cheery  
Round black eyeballs loose from their sockets  
Food coloring bleeding, bruising  
Dripping onto miniature, popsicle-stick-holding fingers  
I have heard the eyes are gumballs  
Whatever flavor black is, seems rather unappetizing  
I glance over as she feverishly consumes her chocolate cone, catching any stray drips before they  
even touch her expertly manicured fingernails  
I hold out the two damp, glistening spheres  
Creating a stain in my tiny palm  
She accepts my offering  
Despite my warnings that the coloring may linger on her teeth  
She chuckles, mouth full of bubblegum  
As Spongebob melts in the summer sun  
Ants drinking up the sugary puddles we leave behind



*Hallway to Paradise*  
Makala Wang  
Photography



*Beneath The Surface*  
Jessica Dragonetti  
Painting, Gouache/Watercolor

## **Maybe Never After**

*Johann Joseph*

I want each of my words to enter your mind and leave you still,  
A lifetime of prose muddled in whispers of dewy love,  
Listening to the sound of each other's heartbeats—breathless—mindless—innocent.

We don't know if we're in love,  
We just know that we're here, and that indefinite is enough.

Gentle woman,  
Strong mind,  
I hope I will see you again.

Love,





*The Scared Horse*  
Elizabeth Binder  
Watercolor



*Keeping Buzzy*  
Jacob Schwell  
Photography

## **What Depression Feels Like**

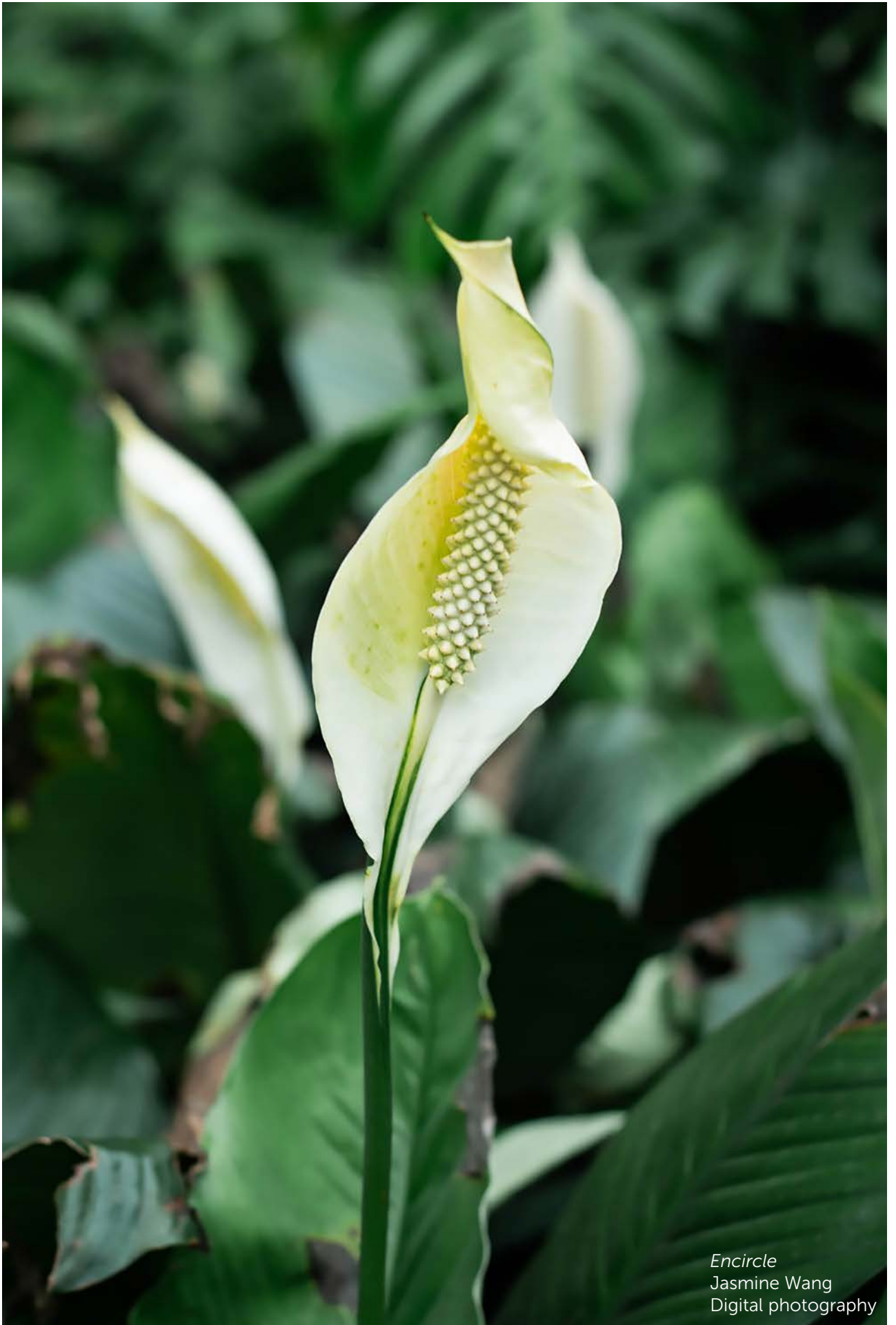
*Samantha Mauser*

It feels  
Like someone is holding me underwater  
My whole body submerged except my  
lips  
Kissing the atmosphere with a quiet  
scream

I have no choice but to breathe  
But I can't see  
I can't hear  
Only blurred lines  
Only mottled murmurs

It feels  
Like I'd rather be pushed all the way in  
Because now my lungs fill with air  
That the rest of my body will never touch

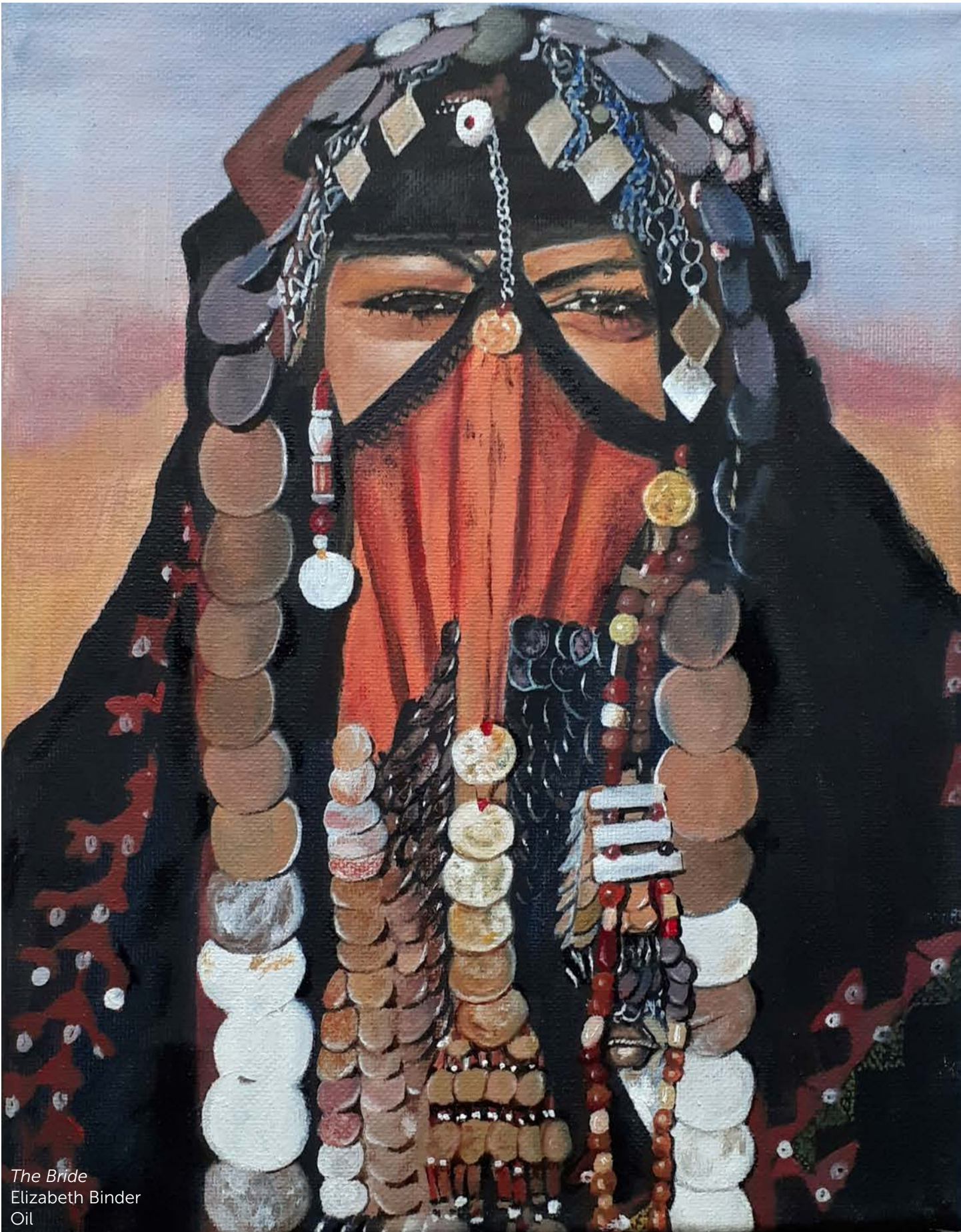
I'm stuck in place  
An invisible hand holding my forehead  
Holding my toes  
It's a gentle touch  
But nevertheless, I can't resist it



*Encircle*  
Jasmine Wang  
Digital photography



*Kitchen Table*  
Sydney Kornbleuth  
Colored pencil



*The Bride*  
Elizabeth Binder  
Oil



*Sukidakara*  
Roselind Ni  
Photography



*Multnomah*  
Dylan Schroeder  
Photography



*Shadows on a Beach*  
Elizabeth Weiss  
Photography

## **Firefly**

*Steven Bieser*

I've always said they are my favorite organism and I think that's for a couple reasons. The innate sense of wonder and awe they instill is one. The great sense of community they represent as they boldly light up for the whole world to see as one is another.

Yes they are looking for mates but they are also I think reveling in the ephemeral beauty of life. Even in the darkness they found a way to make their own light, maybe inspired by the stars above them. Mirroring the great display of the galaxy.

Thinking of loving evenings at the farm with my family admiring their mystical glow. Thinking of all those conversations with my highschool best friend in her car on life and young love and how confusing being a teenager is. Thinking of how they have been with me walking in the park as an exhausted medical student offering levity and joy.

They were even present through the depths of the pandemic during those roomie family dinners on the patio, giving light and love in the twilight.

I wonder about all the other moments I will share with lightning bugs during this life adventure. Thank you little bug.



*wahweep*  
Tracy Gao  
35mm film photography



*Popocatepetl*  
Aray Contreras  
Photography





*The Hague, 2016*  
Michael O'Connor  
Photography

## **Cribbed Annotation**

*Maggie Stearns*

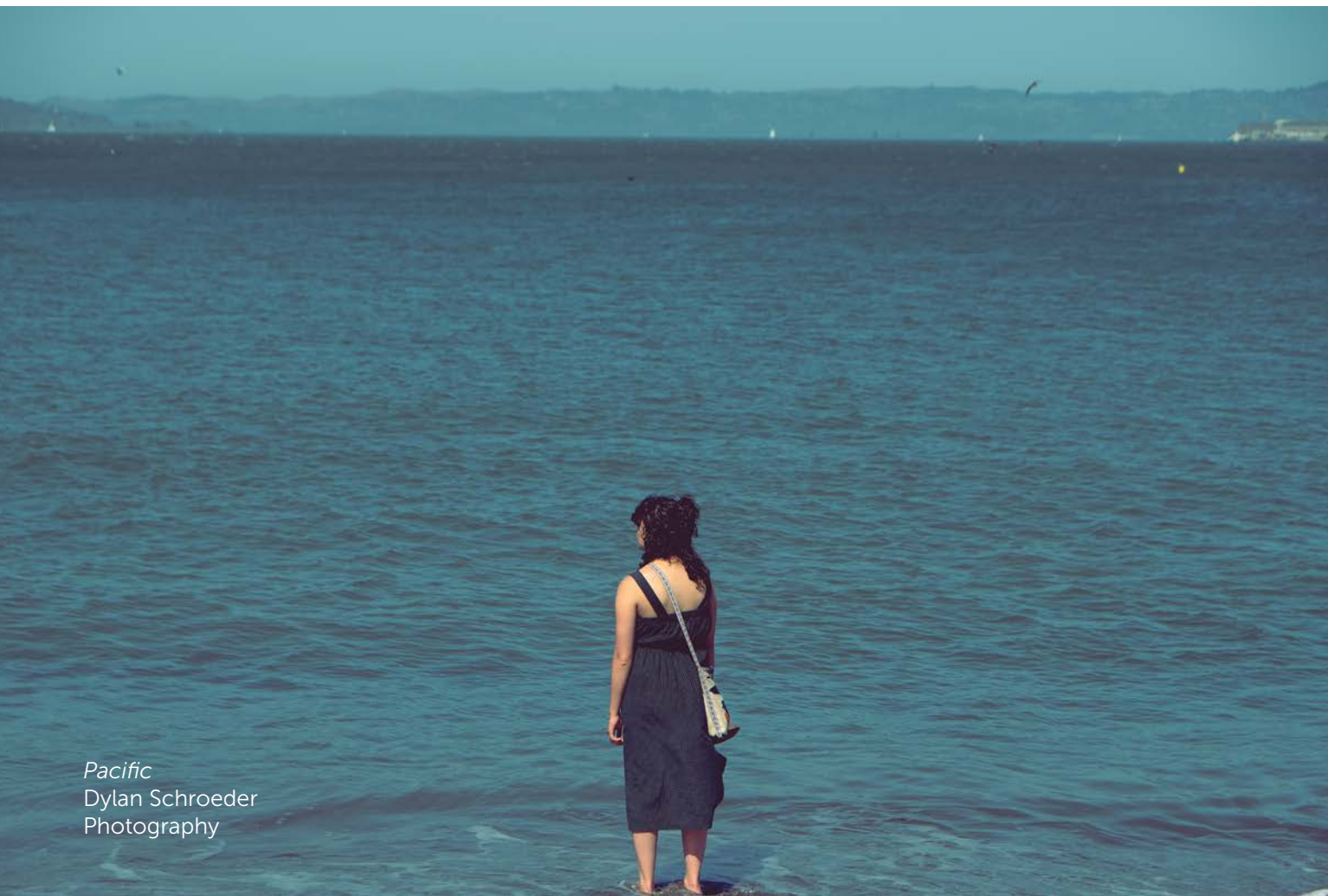
You say that I do things for attention;  
That I do them because I bleed  
as if the crimson-clotted footprints d r a g from my skull to the  
center of you

and they dry brown and caked in perfect  
tracks of what *you* wish were dirt,  
but can only be wiped away to turn red again

There is no one here for me to impress.  
You are right.  
What a fool I must appear to be as *you* confabulate about the polysaccharides  
you swept from my seventh-grade science notebook.



*calm storms await*  
Anusha Koka  
Photography



*Pacific*  
Dylan Schroeder  
Photography

## **As My Fingers Slip**

*Maggie Stearns*

Expected to sit in the fire while you fight with gasoline.  
*At least the palms of my hands are warmed.* Expected  
to sing in the fallout shelter. *Your words*  
*like the atom bombs.* Expected  
to clean up the rubble when sister combusts.  
*I thank her silently for my bruises.* Expected  
to sit out in the rain while you scream and I rust.  
*It's okay if I'm a little red. It's okay*  
*if a long soak and some time inside isn't enough*  
*to save me. With force, I still move. With force,*  
*my joints bend.* Expected

to be tireless.

*All of my energy goes to you.* Expected  
to be strong.

*While you're at it, break my bones.* Expected  
to be fine though I felt lied to all along.

*With force, you can push*  
*the corners of my mouth into a smile.*

*My eyes remain unchanged and my skin oxidized.* Expected

to never be upset.

Because you will always be right  
And I will always be wrong.

The ladder full of missing rungs,  
I gaze with a false smile  
as my fingers slip.

*and no one is here to watch my expected fall.*



*Postcard from San Francisco*  
Roselind Ni  
Photography

## **A Bench**

*Matthew Wallingford*

Past the newspaper kiosks,  
The honking traffic,  
The anxious businessmen,  
And the tired mothers  
Walking their kids home from school,

There's a park.

It's quiet.  
No one is looking.  
It's not a race to  
Send another email or  
Bring groceries home.

A bird may whistle into your ear  
A pleasant tune, a story  
Of a couple kissing  
On an old wooden bench  
Beneath a willow tree

Where they shared a messy Gyro  
Without napkins  
And carved their names –  
"Amrita, heart, Jordan"  
With plastic forks.

On the same bench,  
A widow fed the pigeons  
With her stale rye bread  
And fended off greedy crows  
With her cane.

Yesterday, a tired man  
Wearing over-sized,  
Ketchup-stained pants  
Slept the night in peace  
In the cool evening breeze.

It's a bench that has joked and wept,  
Kissed and dismissed,  
Fought and forgiven,  
And waits in the park  
For another tired soul.



Southern sky  
Lauren Straily  
Markers and ink on paper



Weighted by Thinking  
Lauren Straily  
Fabric markers on knit jersey



Weighted by Thinking  
Lauren Straily  
Fabric markers on knit jersey

## **I'm a medical student**

*Andy Huang*

I'm a medical student. I think. I mean,  
I memorize diseases. People take the diseases  
And unfurl their details into questions. People compile  
The questions and write exams, administer them.  
And tell me all I must do is pass. And yet.  
When I'm asked what I do, I lie. A little  
Lie of omission. I laugh and  
Delete the adjectives and say I'm just a  
Student.

I'm a medical student. I feel. I mean,  
You can ask me to name any bone in the body  
The grooves and condyles and eminences  
And the muscles they buttress. I've memorized more  
Names of bones and muscles than people in my  
Class. I know how to take a history and rattle off treatment  
Guidelines. And yet. I feel like a fraud.  
A diletante. Imposter syndrome runs through  
My body like cancer.

I'm a medical student. I hope. I mean,  
Patients and residents and attendings live in my head.  
Pushing for me to learn in every waking moment. Look at my white  
Coat and there is my name. It says it, right there.  
Medical student. And yet. Every time I see a medical student –  
A friend – succeed, I feel the ugly bilge of  
Worry. I worry, that I'm not doing  
Enough. That I'm not good enough.

I'm a medical student. I am.



## Mnemonic

*Blake Weil*

Cryptococcus Neoformans affects patients with a CD4+ T-Cell count of less than 100.

A textbook phrase impossible to remember, direct in its banality

"Crypto Hundie!" Christina shouts at me

I'm shanking laughing, coffee in hand, praying I remember this

This arbitrary fact, this absurd trivia

"Crypto Hundie!"

I throw my hands up, dancing through the apartment

We're billionaires, for this moment, imagining an early investment paying dividends

The manic markets flowing up and down, bring our rollercoaster wealth to a memorable now

This exuberant celebration will score me one out of one hundred and twenty points,

Another finger on the scales towards the power we cultivate

Not a thousand feet away the light hurts.

He thinks one more time of the last love gone, lowers his stiff neck, and closes his eyes.



*Campus at sunset*  
Joseph Giordano  
Acrylic painting



## **White Is**

*Grace Eddy*

White is

The color of library light

Pages in my notebook

The moon outside we hide from

My reflection in your smile

The body of your cigarettes

White Russians in your cup

The sidewalk ground that you fall down on

Refusing to get up

White is

Absent from your eyes

Exiled by the red

Like how you push out reality

To make room for drugs

The toilet you throw up in

The skeleton you turn into

The clock you stare at

And beg for sleep

White is

My face when I ask

"Do you like doing math?"

And you tell me,

"I don't like doing anything."

White is

The notebook page

Where I write this poem about you

And the color of library light

Where I still see your ghost

## **Scarlet Letter**

*Blake Weil*

When I was a kid my biggest fear was being scarred.  
That, my body marred by life, beauty would fade,  
And I would be irrevocably  
Diminished.

Give or take a few choice accidents  
A monkey bar slip, a minor abscess  
I managed to dodge each bullet while living life  
To a theoretical fullest.

Then, in the year I met you, a plague came.  
Not the plague everyone knew, but another  
Spread by our quest to feel less alone (not that one either).  
And we didn't know what we'd do.

We didn't know if we'd love each other.  
We didn't know if we'd have one glorious night.  
We didn't know if we'd ever recall each other's names.  
We didn't know if we'd never see another.

And so, we were adults. And adults protect themselves.

I almost said no when they said it was going to scar.  
That the little bubble would pop that unblemished skin  
Which I guarded like a dragon keeps his hoard.  
I was almost a child. I wasn't though.

When I said yes, I couldn't help but fret.  
This was not just a mark, it was a Scarlet Letter.  
A bright red circle, which stood for M, meaning H, called F  
Telling everyone who and what I was.

But, I got you a taco, and you got me an ice cream,  
And we were young again, no matter what duties we fulfilled,  
And the last seagulls I would hear all year cried out,  
And I was okay.

Did you know it was going to leave a mark? I bet you did.  
It matches the ones you'd had as long as you can remember,  
And the ones from the swimming, and splashing, and living,  
Growing up a little faster than me.

But now I've got my Scarlet Letter  
And you do too, I suppose  
And it's shrunk, bit by bit,  
Maybe now only a rouged punctuation, that I'll always feel flushed red

And it's mine  
And it matches  
And it's ours  
And it's beautiful.



Joy Zhao

Blank Stare  
Joy Zhao  
Sketch

## **The Parkinson's Children**

*Nancy Dinh*

I love my mom. I don't love her secrecy  
I can't help what I don't know. Please tell me

I love my mom. I don't love her burdens  
We share everything, emotional burdens included

I love my dad. I don't love Parkinsons  
Sometimes I don't recognize him anymore

I love my dad. I don't love his masks  
I promise I don't see you differently with this

I love my grandpa. I don't love his meanness  
He scowls in his chair. There is only so much cheer in me.

I love my dad. I don't love his delicateness  
We take long walks now. We're trying

I love my aunt. I don't love her isolation  
We never see each other anymore

I love my mom. Though, there is such thing as too much family  
COVID means I don't get a break

I love my family, but I am tired.



What R U Thinking?  
Benjamin Fleet  
Oil Pastel & Graphite

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*Table, 1999-2016  
Michael O'Connor  
Photography*



**Jefferson**

Thomas Jefferson University  
HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE