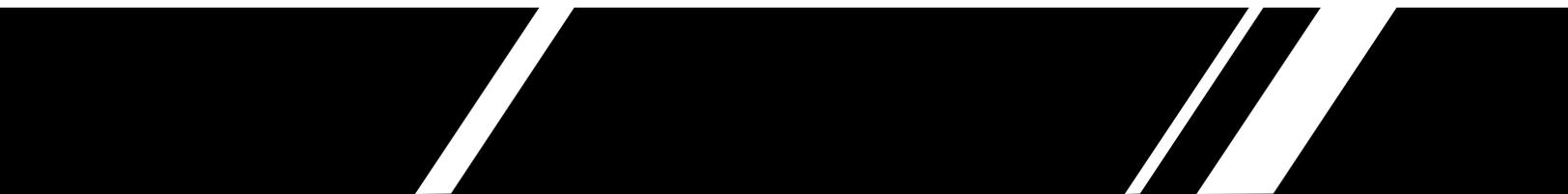




PEGASUS

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Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology, was born from the blood of Medusa's severed head after the hero Perseus slew her. Legend has it, that it was Pegasus' stomping on Mt. Olympus that caused the springs of water to form that eventually birthed Muses. **Thus, Pegasus has gone down in history as a symbol of creative genius.**

Address all correspondence to Pegasus Magazine, Campus Life Office, Delaware County Community College, 901 S Media Line Road, Media PA 19063. For more information on submitting poetry, fiction, or artwork to Pegasus, contact Campus Life Office at (610) 359- 5341.

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Guest Artist Biography

Allen Hoey

Allen Hoey's first collection of poems, *A Fire in the Cold House of Being*, was chosen by Galway Kinnell for the 1985 Camden Poetry Award; subsequent volumes of poetry include *What Persists* (1992), *Provençal Light* (2005), *The Precincts of Paradise* (2005), *Country Music* (2008, nominated for the Pulitzer Prize), and *Once Upon a Time at Blanche's* (forthcoming, 2009). His first novel, *Chasing the Dragon*, was published in 2006, followed the next year by *Voices Beyond the Dead. On the Demon's Trail*, a mystery, was released in March 2009. In 1993 he received the precepts as a Rinzai Zen Buddhist. He currently teaches at Bucks County Community College and makes his home with his wife and dogs outside New Hope, Pennsylvania. He also serves as Director of the Bucks County Poet Laureate Program, the oldest such program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and was a recipient of a Pennsylvania Council for the Arts fellowship in 2002. For more information, please visit www.allenhoey.com.

Guest Artist Advice for Student Writers

When I teach creative writing, I give my students what I call "Cautionary words from two masters." The first is a quote by John Gardner from *The Art of Fiction*: "No one can hope to write well if he has not mastered—absolutely mastered—the rudiments: grammar and syntax, punctuation, diction, sentence variety, paragraph structure, and so forth.... No writer should ever have to hesitate for an instant over what the rule to be kept or suspended is." The second, much broader in scope, is from Ezra Pound's essay, "A Retrospect": "The mastery of any art is the work of a lifetime." Taken together, these provide some of the wisest counsel that a writer can get. Learn the nuts and bolts of your craft, and be patient. Beyond that, my advice consists of a single word: read. Read widely. Read deeply. No one can hope to achieve much of anything in an art form which he or she has not studied, and the only way I've ever heard that you can study writing is by reading. That doesn't mean take college classes. You may be exposed to a great deal of great literature, but you're probably not reading it in ways that will be practical for a writer. Writers rarely think in the terms of literary critics, and that's the way that most professors approach literature, which is amazingly useful if you plan on teaching literature. If you can take literature classes from writers, you're much more likely to approach literature in ways that will aid you in your own writing: pace, phrasing, in poetry the interplay of line and syntax. If you want to be a poet, the best thing you can have is a love of words and the music they make when they rub together. If you want to write fiction, the best thing you can have is a love of sentences. Great painters love the smell of paint, the way it feels when they apply it to canvas. While reading can't give you that love, it can certainly feed it.

- Allen Hoey

Allen Hoey

and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
—Psalms 19:1

Sometimes, late night, the middle of January maybe, I get home, everything's quiet, the cows aren't in the pasture out back, all the lights turned off as far as I can see, the packed snow crunches underfoot as I step away from the car and slam the door, but not quite a crunch, almost a kind of squeak, it's that cold, and then, cold as it is, I stand beside the car and lift my head to look up at the sky, not a cloud, a high wind's blown the heavens clear, and all the stars are weaving the way I'd weave heading across the yard and up the stairs, the warm air, the faint trace of heating oil, the rumped bed at the end of the hall, but now the stars dance their little dance and, my God, it's cold, and I'm here, and that's just about the best a man could ever care about.

Allen Hoey

*It is better to go to the house of mourning
than to go to the house of feasting.*
—Ecclesiastes 7:2

Nights grow longer, on the drive home, the window cranked open, the air seems dark, freighted with winter's impending weight, but leaves rustle their October songs and mist curls in ropes across asphalt. Deer cross the road, grey blurs looming in the headlights too late almost to avoid hitting them. On the side of the road I see one lying, pull over and walk back. She's alive, barely, just over the ditch and only a few yards short of where the woods begin. So close, almost there, a second, a simple second, one way or the other she would've made it, woods, freedom, the chance to browse more leaves, whatever—I'm lost in the deer's life as I can only imagine it—her forelegs kick desperately, weakly among the grass and weeds, her neck arched, eyes glowing fear, but she's completely broken, dead except for her beating heart and crackling brain, under the cold roof of stars, among the wisps of ground fog, her sides still heaving, I go back to the car and get the tire iron from the trunk and I do what, in praise, in glory, in all abiding, has to be done.

It's dark inside this poem...

Joe Fackenthall

It's dark inside this poem. I guess George is late with the bill again. Where does all the money go? If I try and ask about finances he tells me to make him a sandwich. Then if I argue he says: "That doesn't sound like making a sandwich." What happened to the man I married? The guy who worked double shifts so he could pay the mortgage on my dream poem? The man who pretended to forget my birthday then surprised me when I got home from work by decorating the poem with birthday stuff? The man who used to make love to me on the floor of poem because we were so caught up in the passion it didn't matter where? I guess I could go live in my mother's poem until I figure this out.



Art by Tom Bytheway III

Heaven is a Dump

Julianne Walsh

A crushed soda can sat nestled on a turf of puffy cloud, reflecting back the ethereal glow that somehow emanated from everywhere all at once. A tall man with long flowing blonde hair walking along stopped short when he came to the can and after looking at it for a moment, kicked it in frustration. It soared into the air and did a loop-de-loop before floating back to the 'ground' exactly where it had been. Far more like a feather than a bit of metal, but then again, it was heavenly metal. It gleamed tauntingly at the man who had kicked it.

As kicking was ineffective, the blonde man bent down, picked up the can, and continued walking until he came to a gleaming trash-can and disposed of the offensive litter. Examining the area more closely, the man found it irritatingly ironic that there was more trash around the can than actually in it. In his angelic benevolence, he proceeded to pick up and throw away everything that everyone else had carelessly tossed in the general direction of where it was supposed to be.

While by nature patient, kind, understanding, and endowed with all other virtues, even an angel can only take so much, and this angel had hit his limit. It was time to take this to the boss. Again. The white feathery wings that had before been tightly folded inconspicuously against his back were now unfurled, revealing their full magnificence. With an agitated flap, he took to the air.

Now dressed in his best official robes, the angel stood some time later (we cannot say exactly, as time is relative in heaven) before the doors to the Main Office. He knocked so firmly it bordered on rudeness and waited for a response. Soon it came, in a voice not unlike Morgan Freeman's:

"Come in."

He approached the figure and knelt before The Creator.

"My Lord."

"Rise, my child. What troubles you?"

This was not the first time Lucifer wondered why God asked questions when He already knew the answer.

“They’re still throwing their trash everywhere!” he burst out in frustration. “I can’t even guess how many times I’ve reminded them, put up notices, and explained the importance of recycling. We’ve even put out more trashcans. Why won’t they listen?”

“Even pure spirits have free will, they won’t always do what you want. I know how discouraging it is for you to work so hard and feel like you’re getting nowhere. But it is important to keep at it, because it is working. You are making a difference, even if you can’t see it.”

“All I see are crumpled Philadelphia cream cheese wrappers and I swear if I pick up one more...” he paused. “And that’s the other thing! I’m the head Archangel! I don’t have time to be Heaven’s garbage man, cleaning up after everybody! I have a lot of responsibilities!”

The angel paused and opened his mouth to speak but did not at first. He was hesitant to ask,

“Couldn’t you do something?”

“I’ve spoken to them too, and helped you with everything you’ve done about this. There’s nothing more I can do. I’m sorry.”

“But you’re the Almighty!” Lucifer said incredulously with a stamp of his foot. Like a petulant child.

“So mighty I gave my creations free will.”

Lucifer saw where things stood. His eyes flashed with defiant determination. It was all clear to him now. “If you won’t help me, I’ll have to take matters into my own hands!” he said wildly.

“Lucifer, please. What you are saying? I know you are frustrated, but think about what you’re doing!”

A grim response: “I have thought, and you leave me no choice,” the angel said, fists tightly clenched.

“There’s always a choice,” God said, but he knew Lucifer had made his decision.

“If you won’t take care of this place, I’ll have to take control from you!”

One epic battle later:

WELCOME TO HELL

Abandon Hope All Ye Who Litter Here

We incinerate our garbage.

Will/Will Not: The Lost Art of Doing Nothing and Changing Everything

Sean Lennon Harris

I will as Bukowski so eloquently put it,
“Forget the bullshit and
get into the so called art.”
Gonna write a poem a day.
Scratch that!
Gonna start a poem a day,
unless I want to watch T.V. instead.
And I’m finally going to read that book,
the one that’s been sitting there taunting
with its extensive use of meat-
Meatphysics and metaphor.
And maybe I will practice my right to choose
another brand of beer to feed my liver.
But, more than likely, I will not.
I will not change, or grow,
except form maybe outwards,
my belly expanding from the daily bread.
I will not be a better person.
Instead I’ll just be an OK person,
and continue to not eat babies,
and not kill whooers, and not punch old people,
and vote Republican.
I will not stop farting, burping, shitting, pissing,
but I will try to stop rolling my eyes when you
tell me about your period
and your feelings.



Art by Tom Bytheway III

The Spirit of Philadelphia

Josh McCormick

Verse 1: Brother can you hear my cry,
Can you see me where I lie,
The man called from the pavement,
Stretched across the cold cement;

Won't you be a good Samaritan,
Lend a man a helping hand,
I've been bleeding here for hours,
My battered body has no power;

I've had ten people pass me by,
My pleas for help gained no reply,
I saw it on their faces,
They had no time for nameless strangers here;

Chorus: The morning headline read:
An unarmed man found dead,
And none were found to claim him so they said;
Someone killed a man, in the streets of brotherly love.

Verse 2: Sister can you feel my pain,
Don't let my suffering be in vain,
The girl cried from a tomb stone,
Among a thousand, all alone;

Can you smell the blood that stains,
The gutters with a violent rain,
I begged of them for mercy,
But they would only shame and curse me;

I had no chance of peaceful death,
I fought for every bitter breath,
I pray there are no others,
No helpless victims made to suffer this;

Chorus: The news was there in time,
To publish that day's crime,
Young woman raped and murdered in her prime;
They've just killed a girl, in the streets of brotherly love.
Bridge: Mother, Father can you taste the fear
It billows thick, as it pollutes the air
Your children call you in innocence
As they fall prey to mindless consequence;

We barely blink and Daddy's girl,
Waves goodbye to her young world,
And Mama's boy, her pride and joy,
Will not be heard again, his gentle voice;

Chorus: Reporters give their routine news,
Two children shot to death at noon,
But parents mourn forever those they lose;
they've just killed again, in the streets of brotherly love.

Contemporary Literature Paeon

Spencer Koelle

A scathing and unprovoked attack on Literature with a capital L, by Spencer Koelle.

Hear me now.

Come forth, modernism.
Come forth, realism, gritty and realism, magical.
Come forth, art imitating life.

I have wrought altars in monolithic tribute to you.

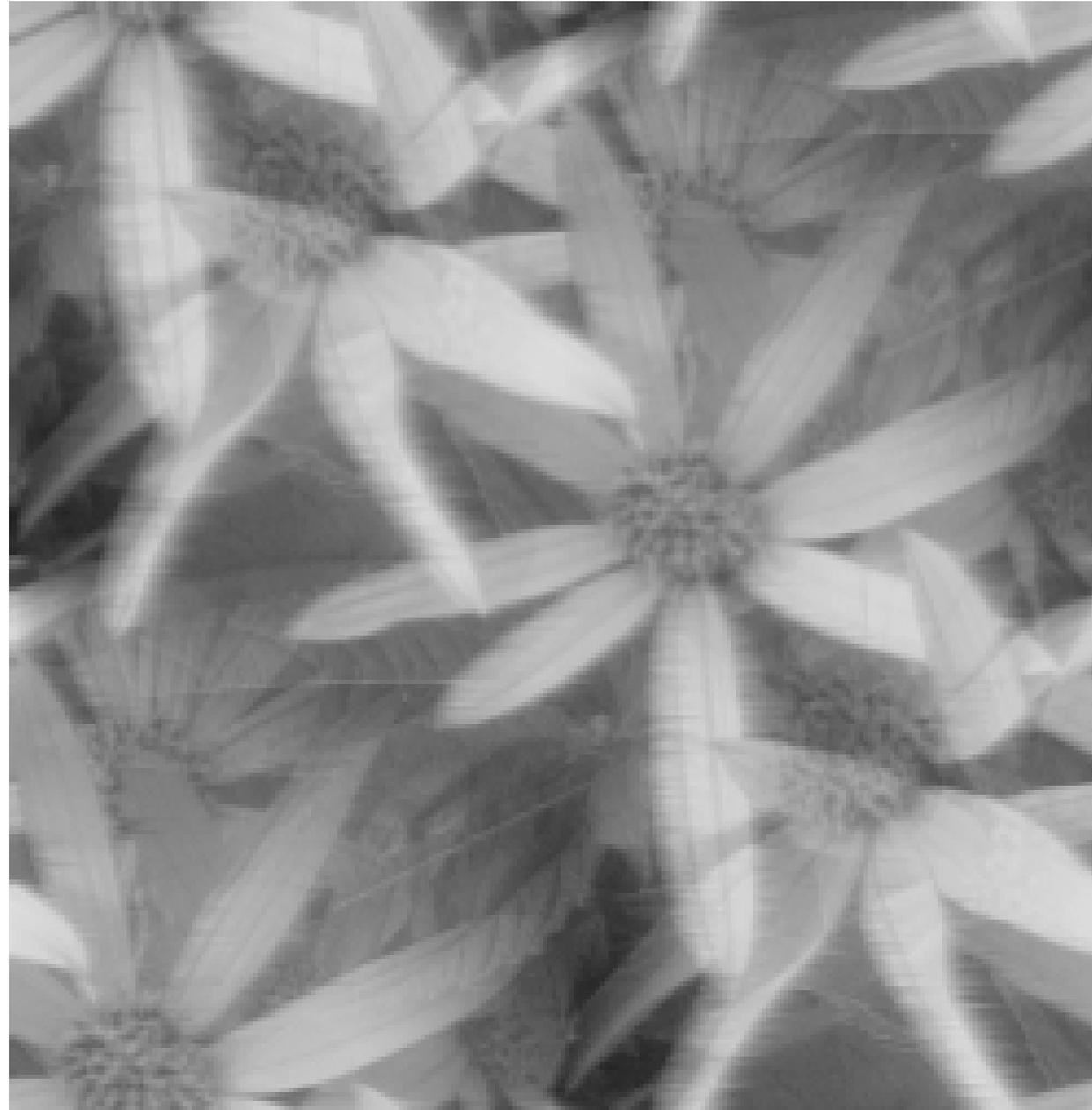
I have written a short story where a man of no importance eats breakfast, goes to work, types up a memo, takes a lunch break, is bored in a meeting, goes home, watches television, has a bowel movement, then hangs himself with a silken rope for no adequately explored reason.

An offering unto you

A story about a salesman and a dragon moving through New York, where nobody points at it and says “holy crap, a dragon!” because really, it is the dragon within all of us.

An offering unto you

I crafted a novel with enough skill to draw readers in and make them drop their guards, and then hit them with an emotion sucker punch and let them know what naive cretins they are.



Sabrina Selvy- Moore

Rare Flowers

An offering unto you

I transcribed a poem concluding that continuing to live and committing suicide are equally futile.

An offering unto you

I wrote a story about a woman intimately concerned with a bake sale. It goes on in stream-of-consciousness style, with vivid detail, considering how close the bake sale is to reaching its goal, how well the marshmallow-cereal treats are selling compared with the peanut brownies, and every other trifling aspect of the event, for two hundred pages. In the last three pages the protagonist rapes her eight-year-old son for no adequately explored reason.

An offering unto you

Oh lords of realism and modernity, accept my meager tribute and bless me, your humble servant that I may continue to do your bidding.

Let my novels and anthologies crowd the bookstore and library shelves.

Favor me now

Let the most jaded fiend out of hell be unable to read my work without cringing in pain. Let no rapist or serial killer browse my tomes without being shocked and appalled by the grotesquery of my content and subject matter. Let the most cynical pessimist be unable to foresee the darkness of my endings.

Favor me now

Let critics exalt my virtues, my authentic characters and believable settings.

Favor me now

Let my pain, my poetic injustice, and my quiet contempt for all that thinks and lives open a path to immortality. Let my creations torment high school students and English majors FOR CENTURIES TO COME!!!

Favor me now

Let patrician and plebian alike applaud my perspicacity. Let every reader revere Us, for without Us how would they ever know how meaningless and miserable their little lives are?

Favor me now

Bless this thy servant, as my muse and soul bless you. As I rise in power, I shall continue Your Work. I shall spin novels, weave poetry, and vomit forth a plague of short stories, ALL TO THE GREATER GLORY OF YOU!!!!

Marbles Lost Regained In Time

Sean Lennon Harris

A great man said, "There's no use arguing the point of a marble; it's pointless." That man later died, but that's not what I wanted to talk about. I wanted to tell the true story I made up about my uncle, Isaac A., who wasn't my uncle; I called him that because he was my mother's brother.

"To end a story always have your character awake from a dream; people relate to waking up," Uncle Isaac said.

The last time I saw him was in a photograph kissing marbles. Yesterday I dreamed we were having lunch, and then I awoke.



Suburban Mowgli

Melissa Morphet

Girl finds abandoned dog. Girl convinces parents to house dog. Parents hate dogs, but reluctantly accept. Dog is not trained. Girl tries to train dog. Dog will not train. Parents try to train dog. Dog will not train. Dog loves girl. Girl loves dog. Parents hate dog. Dad hits dog. Dog is really wolf, dog mauls parents. Girl is sad, but too young to realize that dog is still wolf. Girl follows dog into wooded area. Girl finds lots of dogs. Girl loves all dogs. Girl tries to train dogs. Dogs won't train. Dogs try to train girl. Girl trains.

Art by Mark Raczynski

Isaiah Rebecca

I was looking up, watching the clouds roll over head. They moved slowly, like school days that past spring. I stood there, turning up freshly cut grass with the bottom of my cleats. I took in deep breaths of the warm summer air, shifting uncomfortably in my hand-me-down uniform. It was itchy and clung to my sweating skin, but it didn't stop me from enjoying myself.

Clink!

The reverberation of the bat hitting the ball pulsed through the outfield, pulling me out of the little world where I had drifted. My head turned towards home plate, where the bat was just hitting the ground. The ball soared through the air, going by first base and heading in my direction. My first thought was simply: Uh oh.

In the whole of my three-year Little League career, I'd never been able to catch a ball in flight. Even grounders were only a fifty-fifty chance.

I extended my arm, not putting my body in front of the ball out of fear of getting hit. And just like that, the ball buried itself into my beaten up mitt. Bringing my glove in front of me, I looked down at the ball, sitting snug in the palm of my worn leather mitt. My eyes widened, and I immediately turned to where my dad stood.

His face lit up, and I could hear his cheers above the rest of the families.



"I really messed up this time," I sighed. My eyes burnt as I fought back the tears that I had been holding in for a month.

My pastor sat across from me, his desk in between us. It was made of a

brownish-red wood, and by the look of it seemed brand new. The top was very well organized, like the typical office desk you'd see in movies; the picture frames were on one corner, a thin folder to the left and a computer on the right. The rest of the office was in similar order; his degree framed and hung up for anyone to see beside the family photos that revealed the inner happiness of each member. Whether it was a just a pose or real, it was believable.

"But, Justin, what was it?" My pastor had been listening to me say that same phrase for ten minutes, but his voice was still patient and calm.

"I just don't know how to put it." I took a pause and breathed in the lingering scent of paint, "I messed up."

"Justin," my pastor leaned forward and rested his arms on the smooth, shining top of his desk, "whatever it is, it can be kept confidential, just between you and me."

"That's the problem. I've been keeping it quiet even to myself," I said with a slight quiver to my voice. Damn that stray tear.

The pastor stood up and walked over to one of the two windows in his office. He unlatched the top and lifted it up, letting in the cold. I gave him a questioning look. I couldn't understand why he'd do such a thing what with it being so drafty in the room. He glanced back at me and opened a drawer in his desk. From within he produced a little black dish, and slid it over to me.

I stared down at the dish, none of this making sense in my mind until my pastor spoke up. "You might be able to hide your cigarettes, but you can't hide the smell," he shrugged at me and sat back down.

I took the invitation; pulled my pack of cigarettes out of my coat pocket and slipped one out. I lit it with my red lighter and took a long, deep pull. Exhaling was the most pleasurable part, I thought, as I watched the cloud of white smoke plume outward. I immediately realized that I couldn't sit around and just smoke; my pastor gave me a gesture of good will, so I had to pay him back with my trust... Plus, I only had two cigarettes left. Five minutes for each, maybe fifteen

minutes in between each... That brought me to potentially forty-five minutes of stalling. I wouldn't be able to get away with that.

I took another drag of my cigarette, watching the tip turn a brighter red and then dull as I stopped. I put the cigarette over the dish and tapped it, letting the light grey ash fall into it. "Well," I paused again, the emotion suddenly rising up from within me. I forced it down once again and looked up into my pastor's face. "I guess I should just say it in the simplest way possible. I'm going to be a father." My pastor sank back into his seat and let out a deep breath, "Girlfriend?"

"No, that's the worst part," my voice shrank to a quiet utterance

"Whose is it? A friend?" He kept asking the obvious questions, but I knew he wouldn't come close. I had to give it to him.

"It's an older woman," I paused as I listened to my own words echo in my head. "Met her at work... and much older."

"How did this happen?" His voice was staying in that same calm and patient voice.

I took another drag from my cigarette, again focusing on the embers while I collected my thoughts. "I messed up, I can barely forgive myself. I've been acting like nothing's wrong in front of my family, to fool them. They think I'm their perfect son."

My pastor watched me as I spoke, not wanting to interrupt in case I hadn't said everything I wanted to.

"Ever since I found out that she was pregnant, I've wanted to run and hide, or just die. I don't know what to do anymore... I feel like this is my punishment for the lying I've done... to my parents... to myself."

My voice broke as I cleared my throat, pulling in more white smoke from my cigarette, then releasing it, watching it drift towards the window as it poured out from my mouth. For once, cigarettes didn't make me feel any better about anything. The stress couldn't be ignored, and my words made the reality of the situation all the more clear to me. "My parents will disown me when they find

out...they'll say I'm too immature and that I can barely take care of myself."

I paused long enough that my pastor decided to jump in. "I take it she plans to keep it."

"Yes, she doesn't believe in abortion. I wouldn't let her sacrifice her values just because of me." My words stopped again, so I took the last drag of my cigarette, engulfing the last small bit of white below the black ash that surrounded the dirty red of the lit tip, feeling the filter heat up and collapse as I finished the pull. I dug the tip into the bottom of the dish to put it out as I let go of my cloudy breath. All I could think of was just wanting to light another. Then the words came back to me, the heart of my pain.

"I don't know what I'd do without my parents. I've lied to them, but I love them. If they turned their backs on me, I'd have no reason to live. I've bastardized their name, and... insulted the parents who put so much pride into how I ended up. I've let them down, and that's the worst part of this." The reservoir finally reached its maximum level and the tears began rolling from my eyes and streaming down my cheeks. I couldn't speak anymore; I just wanted to finish it all right there.

"Why do you think they would disown you?" My pastor asked as he stood up and walked around the desk, crouching down next to my chair and putting his hand on my shoulder.

I couldn't answer, my voice box had quit on me. The only part of my body still functioning was my hand. I allowed it to slip into my coat pocket, reaching for the pack of cigarettes within, but not quite able to grasp them. My heart continued to race, and the tears still freely spilled down the reddened skin of my cheeks.

"Justin, the Lord is the only one who understands what's in your heart right now. Even though this is a major mess-up, as long as you sincerely ask for His forgiveness, He will forgive you." My pastor was just trying to say what he could to console me, but we both knew I understood that already. I had been reminding myself that for a month now. What I didn't know was how I could handle an entire

life of rejection from my father. That feeling could never be settled by scripture. Either way, I still listened to what he had to say, my fingers still resting uselessly in my pocket.

“I can’t live without the love of my parents,” I said in a quivering voice as my hand finally managed to grab hold of the pack of cigarettes and pull it out again. My hands were shaking as much as my voice as I pulled out another cigarette, and struggled to light it. I inhaled the smoke like it was the only substance keeping me alive; in that moment, it was my oxygen.

My pastor paused, allowing me to smoke my tearful cigarette and giving me time to calm down and gather my thoughts.

I looked back up at my pastor with burning eyes. I wiped my nose with my sleeve and stood up, my chair pushed back, nearly tipping over. I just couldn’t stay there any longer. “I’m sorry, I have to go,” I said, my voice nearly a whisper. I spun towards the door and ran out of the office, my lit cigarette still in my hand. I hurried home, my thoughts bounding around and useless. I finished the last of my cigarettes.



I had a dream that night.

I was standing next to a fence. The overwhelming smell of summer soothed my heart, and I could feel the warm breeze slipping through my hair and against my skin.

The sun was beating down on everyone around, and caused little beads of sweat to form on my forehead. It still gave me a sense of comfort, the kind of relaxed feeling you get as a child when you have the next three months away from school.

I looked out past the fence, appreciating the deep, rich greens of the grass all over. It was freshly cut, done by an artisan that must have crawled on their hands and knees to measure each blade of grass to make sure it was all even. And, if you couldn’t tell just by looking at it, the scent was strong enough to tell you. My nose had a sharp tingle with that aroma, tickling every nose hair while I took in a breath.

A little beyond the grass was red-brown dirt, freshly stamped with the footprints of sprinting kids. Lines were drawn across the center, making out the shape of a diamond. The white lines had been kicked up and dusted over with the constant movement of the scurrying children. I could still see the dust cloud settling after the last group of kids ran off the field, and a new batch took their places. My eyes finally fixed on one of those running kids.

The boy was running from his position out in right field, his cheeks red and his eyes reflecting the bright sunlight. Left in his wake was an old mitt and his baseball cap, but neither of those mattered to him as he ran to me. This boy’s smile was one that would melt even the coldest hearts, his eyes squinting above his lifted cheek bones. His excitement was more than evident as he reached me, looking straight up at me and his level of energy almost causing him to jump right out of his skin.

Staring into his eyes, I felt my heart tense up and skip a beat. He just smiled up at me, as if looking for a reaction, but I didn’t know what to say. The most I could do was smile back; watch him jump up to reach the top of the fence. His smile was filled his entire face as he looked at me, waiting for me to sound my approval, but I could only stand there, smiling.

I woke up crying again. But this time I wasn’t sad.



Art by Adam Trageser

Garbo Laughs

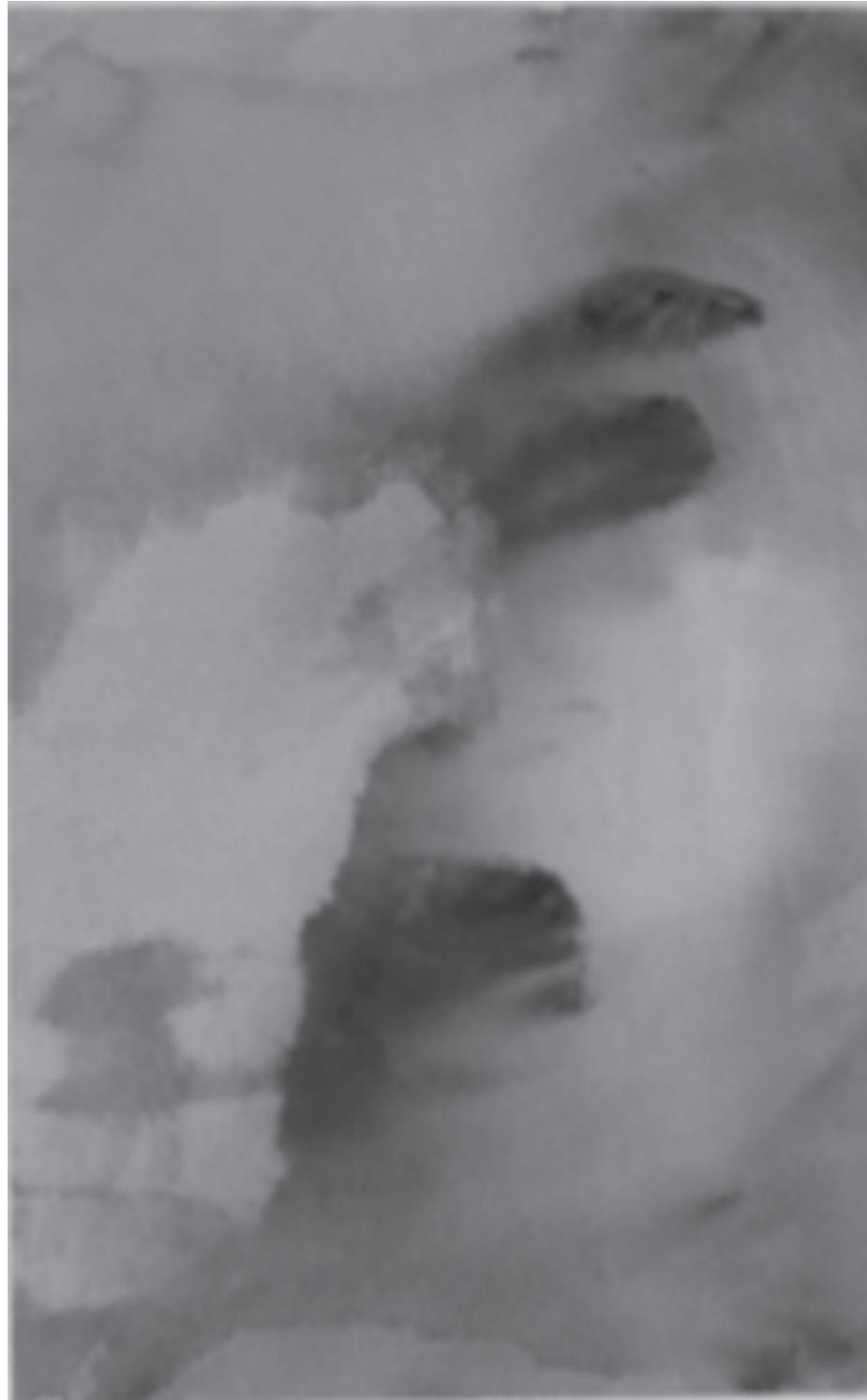
Sean Lennon Harris

If there must be a ghost in this house
let it be the memory of you and me
sitting on the floor,
eating, drinking, and watching
some classic film,
where the hero and heroine
make love and war
with their words.
And my hand in yours.
And my heart in my mouth.
And your laugh hanging
fresh in the air.

Last Summer in America

Jake Kurtz

In the last summer in America it became clear
This country would no longer be here
All of the people tried to leave
But most couldn't afford the fees
The country was nearing its end
Accepting this fact was becoming a trend
The country was now no more
Most other countries did nothing but cheer



Art by Mark Raczynski

Chastity Belt at My Feet

Amanda Wilkie

I want the touch of your bare skin against my naked body

I want to feel your chest gently moving up and down my back with every breath

I want to feel your warm, soft lips tenderly kissing my neck, then moving down slowly to
my breast

I want to cradle your head on my shoulder and breathe in your intoxicating scent

I want to touch every inch of your body, while you caress every curve of mine

I want us to lay there in that place of calm and bliss, feeling the warmth of not only each
others bodies, but also each others souls

A Stranger's Kiss

William Perkis

The room was a bit smallish, but neatly appointed. Most of the furniture had been purchased from IKEA, and it made his apartment seem smart and promising. The new morning sun was beginning to peer around his drawn curtains with a warm orange hue. The city below was still, for the most part, asleep. Even big cities aren't in much of a hurry to wake up on Sunday mornings. In fact, if it weren't for the occasional growl of a diesel truck, or the wail of a police siren off in the distance, Sunday mornings in his apartment could easily be mistaken for one of those bed and breakfasts that the tourists flock to Upstate during the summer.

The faint whisper of the sun's glow had found his sleeping face. He stirred and grudgingly opened his eyes. He looked at the space around the curtains from where the sun was leaking in. "I really need some new curtains" he thought to himself. He rolled onto his back, and repeatedly rubbed a hand through his short hair, as if somewhere on his scalp there was a button that would help to alleviate his slight hang over. He sighed and glanced at the clock on his nightstand. Glowing green numbers declared to him that it was 5:27 in the morning. Even though it was Sunday he had his alarm set for 5:30, for he had work to do today. It seemed that he always had work to do. At a time when most people's businesses were slowing down, he found his work to be picking up lately and it kept him very busy.

He stretched his arms above his head and yawned. He then felt a presence sharing his bed. A smile quickly leaped onto his handsome face. He could tell that she was still there. "Oh of course she was, did you really think she would leave," he thought to himself and smiled some more. He remembered her name was Meagan and they met each other last night at Rick's Tavern.

Though she arrived at the bar with friends, fate had somehow led her to his barstool. Rick's had a habit of getting too crowded for his liking on Saturday nights, and he hadn't planned on staying too long, that is until he met her. She was stunningly beautiful and he found her to be hypnotic. As their minutes together melted into hours, the conversation had grown from nonchalant banter to mutual wonder. He had always thought that love at first sight was some kind of Hollywood fairytale, spun by fat, balding middle-aged writers. But that east coast sarcasm fell away last night when he first glanced into her eyes. She seemed equally fascinated with him. She found his charm could only be outdone by his rugged good looks. She hung onto every word he spoke, and they talked about so much in such a short span of time. Is it possible to condense one's life story into a four hour barroom conversation? Well, they tried; they talked and laughed about so much last night. Except work of course. He didn't like talking about work.

He brushed a fly away from his face and rolled to his side to stare at her silhouette. She laid there naked, at testament to their affection towards each other earlier in the evening. Her long hair veiled the pillow beneath her head. Her arms were outstretched as if she too was stretching, but her eyes were closed and she remained peacefully motionless. He gently ran his hand over her leg, then her taut stomach, towards her exposed breast. He leaned in to her and kissed her tenderly on her cheek. He whispered to her "How lucky I am to have met you." Another fly landed on his face, and he angrily brushed it away. Flies were a problem in his apartment, but he knew the complaint would fall upon the deaf ears of his super. \$2200 a month rent should secure a fly free existence. But didn't matter, her beauty and charm blinded him of the flies and any other of life's knocks for that matter.

Context in Which You Could Tell Loved Ones to Go Fuck Themselves

Melissa Morphet

The glowing green numbers morphed into 5:30 and the alarm clock radio trumpets to life. Harry Wayne Casey can be loudly heard singing something about “Please, don’t go...” He reaches over, and pushes a button atop the radio and it goes silent. He turns to her and says “Well, I got to get up Darling; I’ve got work to do.” She lays silent and doesn’t respond, but that’s okay, he understands. His muscular frame rises from the bed and he pulls on a faded pair of jeans that had been bed side. He walks to be near her head and kneels down. He gently brushes her hair with his hand. A tiny swarm of flies had gathered to feast on the rotting flesh of her wounds and scattered with a uniform ‘buzz’ when his hand comes near. His tender brushing comes to an end and he twists a handful of her hair into his fist and pulls her lifeless body to the floor with a loud ‘thunk’. She falls into the light coming in from the window. Her body is ashen gray with large purple bruises around her delicate neck. Her once arresting face is now battered and crusted with dried blood. He steps around her outstretched arms which are bound with duct tape at the wrists, and pulls her corpse towards an adjoining bathroom. He lifts her body and smoothly puts it into his bathtub. He gazes unto her, blows her a kiss and says “I’ll be right back, darling” as he leaves the room.

He happily returns a short while later, whistling the same song that played on his alarm clock radio not long ago. A large butcher knife bejewels his left hand like a demonic Rolex. He peers at her body and thinks, “So much work to do, so much. Gonna keep me busy today.” As he begins his labor, he wonders, “Where should I go tonight? Rick’s...nah. Maybe someplace new.” he shrugs his shoulders and then goes back to his work.

In the café, a girl sings in fluid Creole at her table
Where unsupportive friends jeer her and argue.
Laughter breaks, the flawless falsetto collapses in defeat
As her temper sings out a fitting, “fuck you!”
In the courtyard, a phone mediates a girl’s sobs to her boyfriend,
Who’s begging against the absolution in terms she spews,
Waving her hands at no one, exasperated, she cuts him off,
Shouting, “No, Paul! Give up! We are through!”

I slide down the hallway’s wall to let the breaking points and stress
Come and overtake me, too.
And through the wall sustaining me, I hear consoling jazz float over keys,
It’s a seemingly insatiable calm long past due.
I let myself into a music lab and watch an old man
As he unknowingly provides comfort and rescue.

He finishes the upbeat song; I surprise him with my presence
I ask what he’s playing because I haven’t got a clue,
“A piece so cheerful could only mean so much content,” I started,
Or so I thought this to be true,
He sits back and grins, “It’s an original piece! I’m glad you enjoyed it!
I call it, ‘Pack Up, I’ve Had Enough of You!’”



Art by Lauren West

A Guide For Building Elevators

David Hulford

I stumbled 'cross this story
As I fumbled through the firs
A twisted tale of lorries
Eyes misted 'til they blur

It was an eerie clearing
Only fuzz upon the ground
The Douglas firs all leering
What this luckless boy had found

"A Guide For Building Elevators"
Was scribed atop the pile
And beneath the credited creator
Had bequeathed my name with style

As I flipped on through its pages
I quipped I knew the end
Quetzalcoatl keeps his rages
Plastic bottled for his friends

Yet the journey was compelling
Twisty turny though clichéd
This Aztec's tale needs telling
How his Texas-fortune's made

I tote the titled manuscript
Through rotely laid out woods
The path is mostly nondescript
From wrath I guard my goods

Pass three werewolves wailing
Like tea-kettles full of teeth
Their noses must be failing
Lord knows I smell of beef

I'm running with the concept
And gunning for the clear
Pursued by warring robots
Eyes glued with scarring tears

A flapping sheet goes flying
Loose wrappings midst the trees
My fussing heart is dying
It is buzzing full of bees

From the void I grab term papers
Sigmund Freud applied to Saints
Add it to Quetzy's capers
A pure bouquet for it to taint

Emerging from the forest
Arms surging with loose leaf
No longer mere lost tourist
Feels wrong to feel relief

Cthulhu wearing Reeboks
A Yoo-hoo in his hand
He offers seating on a rock
"No it's softer in the sand"

We read over my story
It needs a huge rewrite
The characters just bore me
As mere factors in the blight

It wasn't that well written
I mustn't do that ever more
Go and become so smitten
With something writ so poor.



Art by Adam Trageser



The Winter Gardener

Tracey L. Carson

While steeping my morning tea and preparing for my trip to work, I listened attentively to today's weather forecast. It called for blustery winds, light snow, and icy conditions. I glanced at a calendar and found an almost southern comfort in its countdown to spring.

As I left my home my breathing became momentarily gasped as cold wind carried tiny pieces of debris that whipped and fluttered across my yard. Strangely, I found folly in a vision of myself sitting on my patio sipping lemonade while watching the Great Bumble sitting on a bloom sipping nectar. Very aware and appreciative of each other, we enjoyed the serenity of the garden. I secured my hat and my journey began.

My steps were careful and strategic as I walked along the icy curbs and sidewalks taking a shortcut through a small park. I listened to areas of thin ice crack and crumble beneath my feet. Somehow I felt a secret solace in my vivid recollection of the scents I experienced on these used to be, soon to be, fragrant pathways. My smile was hidden beneath my scarf.

Throughout the day I watched flurries, like feathers, lightly fall one upon another creating an accumulation. I had flashbacks of moments when I saw dew drops rest on petals like diamonds laid upon black velvet. My awe was thawing.

One might ask: "How do you detect bouquet in the wind's bitter bluster? When the birds, bees, and butterflies are gone and the trees are bare, how do you hear the earth's symphonies in their hallow? When nights have extended at daylight's expense how do you see beyond the darkness to the event of sunlight's reemergence tapping sleeping flora on her shoulder commanding her to awaken, and the connection of their grasping hands forming a rainbow?"

The answer is simple. That's just the dormant spirit of the Winter Gardener.

"In the depths of winter I finally learned there was in me an invincible summer"
~Albert Camus

Photography by Michael Downs

Ode to the Media

Anonymous

Make us feel fat,
Tell us we're sick.
"Take this little pill,
It will do the trick."
Set goals real low;
We're not allowed to dream.
Not rich or thin enough?
They can fix that with a cream.
"Be sexy, be hot, and be healthy-
But don't forget to smile!"
Read their book and get wealthy.
Try so hard, fail so hard,
Fall so short of perfection...
That's ok, they bottle it now-
It comes in a series of injections.

Art by

Alyssa Vance

