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The Oval

Oval

Volume IV

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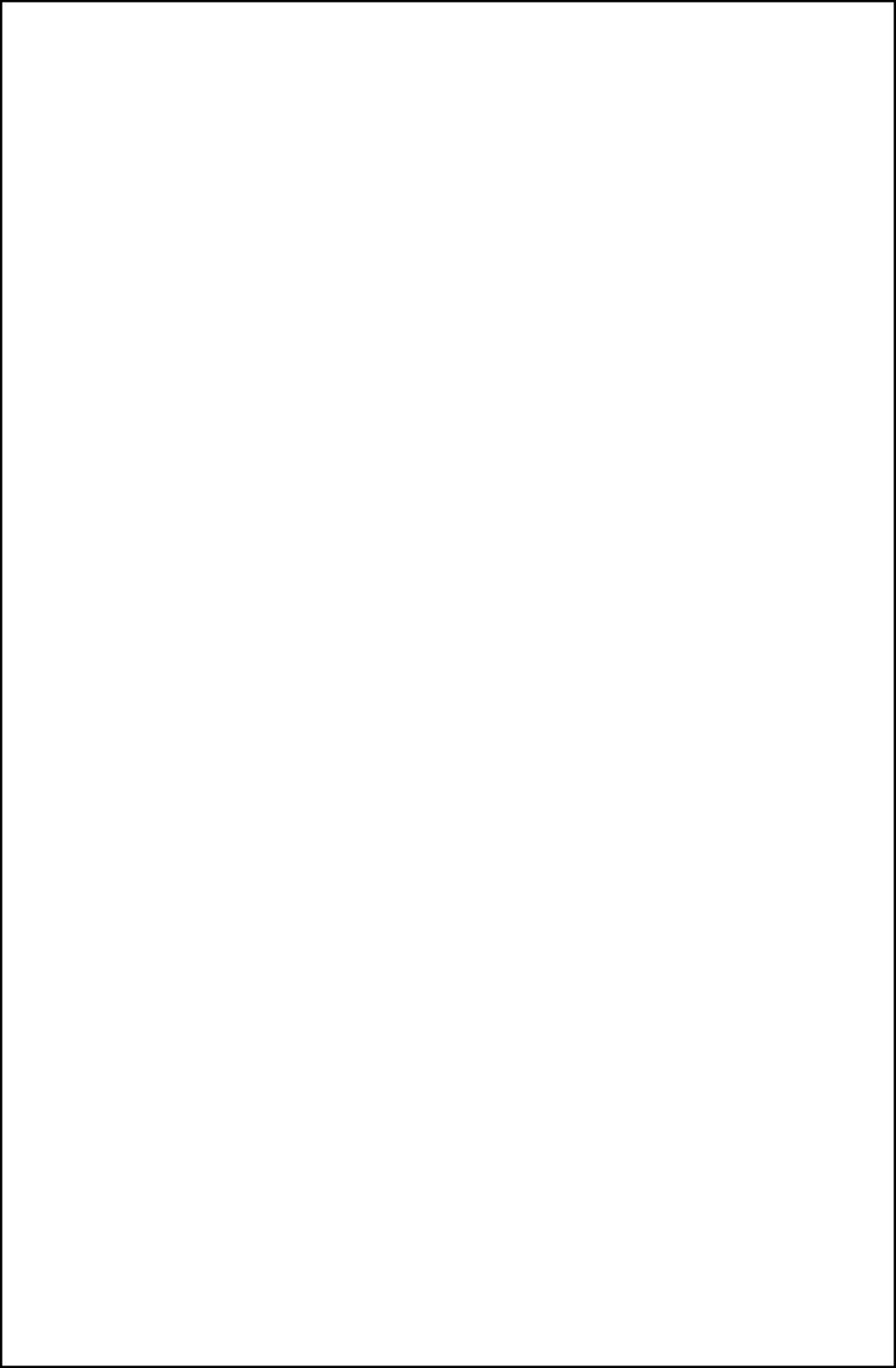
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The Oval is a literary magazine published annually by the Associated Students of The University of Montana (ASUM), the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, and the Creative Writing Program of The University of Montana English Department. Each volume is printed with vegetable ink on recycled paper by The University of Montana Printing & Graphics.

The University of Montana Bookstore, Fact & Fiction, Shakespeare and Company, and The Book Exchange in Missoula, Montana sell copies of *The Oval*. Griz-card holders can buy a copy for \$5.00 and the standard price is \$8.00.

The Oval cosponsors monthly readings with the University Center Student Involvement team called "Prose and Poems" on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the University Center Art Gallery.

The Oval cosponsors annual readings with the literary magazine Aerie Big Sky every spring, usually a general reading and poetry slam.

The Council of Literary Magazines and Presses' (CLMP) Literary Press and Magazine Directory and NewPages.com's index of Literary Magazine include *The Oval*.

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Submissions

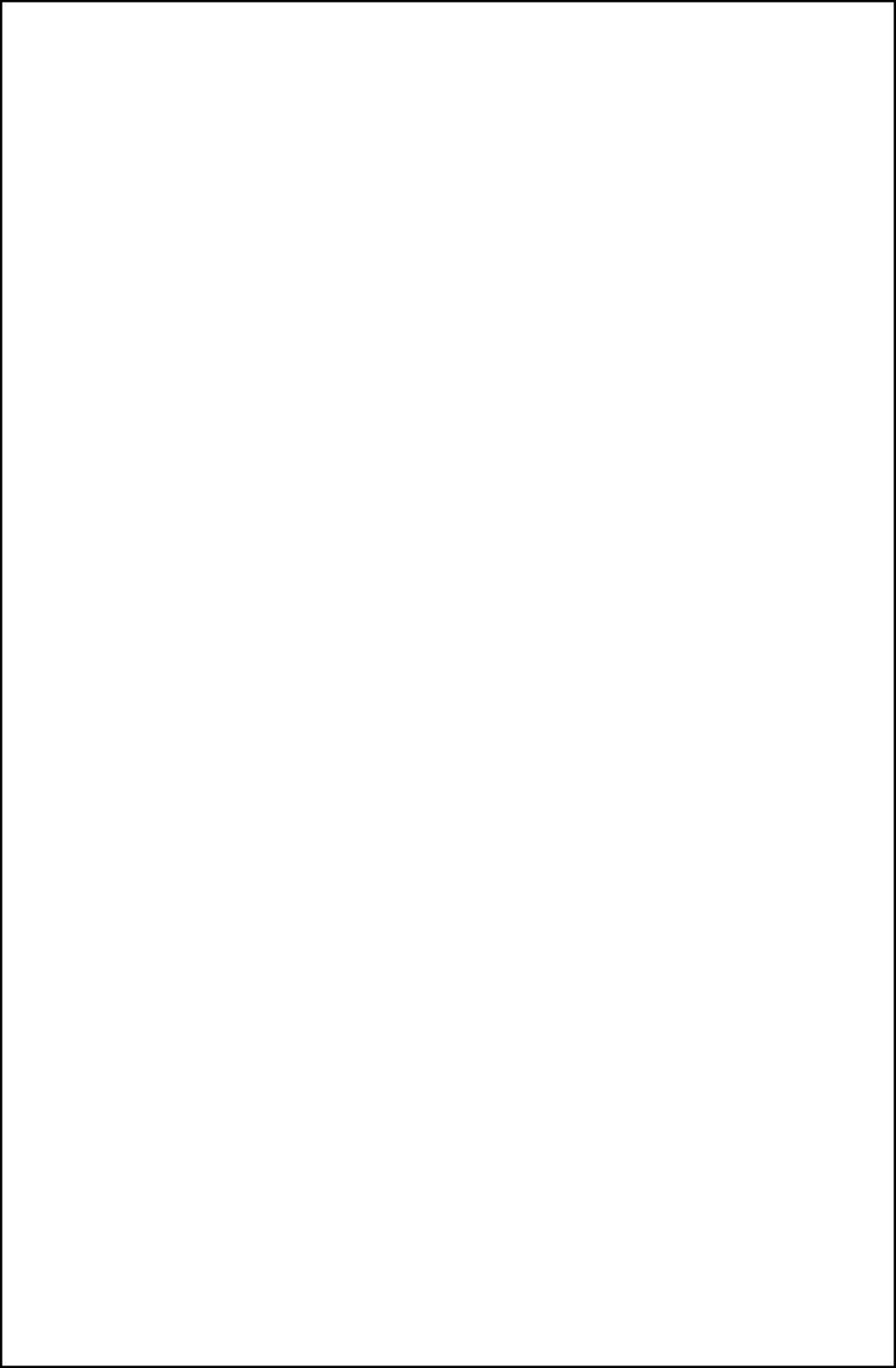
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The Oval accepts electronic submissions of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and visual art from September through February. Only previously unpublished work by currently enrolled University of Montana undergraduates will be considered. Submissions must be in RTF, JPEG, or TIFF format and their genre (essay, short story) must be defined.

New: Oval Blog 

{umoval.wordpress.com}

Get updated on upcoming Oval sponsored events, workshops, readings, and check out the Honorable Mentions for Volume IV!





Dear reader,

There are few things as uncertain as the future of a young artist. Success is subjective, gainful employment is hard to define, and “making it” is rare. Being a young artist is more a submission to the self—an act of introspection—than an outward ambition. It happens by default, because one can’t help but create; because, to the young artist, nothing else seems possible.

In the pages of this magazine, you will find the voices of the University of Montana’s most vibrant undergraduate artists. They are the voices of fresh thought, of exuberance. They are voices wrung out of stolen hours between classes and on Sunday afternoons and on lonely Friday nights. Each work in this collection stands for something ultimately separate from the whole—just what is for you to decide. But collectively, these works, as they exist bound between covers, stand for something more: the voice of our community.

Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations: Dean Bonnie Allen and the Mansfield Library, ASUM and its tireless senators, the Office of Admissions, Jill Bergman and the English Department, Prageeta Sharma and the Creative Writing Program, the ever-patient Ken Price and his staff, and, of course, to Professor Robert Stubblefield, a leader, mentor, and friend—your efforts are so rare, so essential to us all.

And to the reader: thank you for reading.

-- Jamie Rogers
Editor-in-Chief



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Ismael Pallares

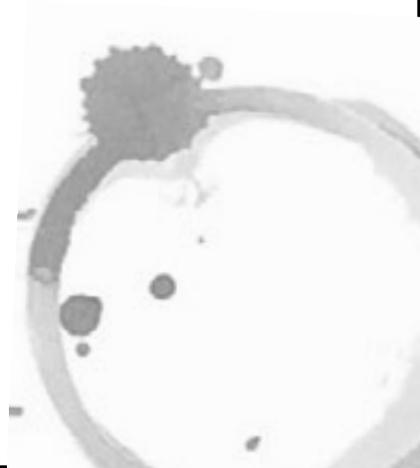


Place of Residence



First there was the commune in the mountains where I learned to say “snow;” followed by the double-wide with the lawn not even worth mowing; then the ranch-style that saw me through puberty; and the apartment with my high school girlfriend 50 feet away that was really my grandparents’ garage; the new in-laws’ room three states north so they could help with the baby; the house that was mine because the mortgage had my name on it; the minimum-security bed in county; the dorm room with the mini-fridge for six months; the house in the boonies where I once saw my friend’s girlfriend naked; the ritzy place with the light-switch fireplace that cost more than the mortgage on the house I used to own; the two-bedroom with a girl who couldn’t come up with her half of rent – where I finalized the divorce and won custody; back to the ranch-style just to get away; then north again to the spider basement where I proposed to my second wife; the high-ceiling oven held together by mold and wood paneling that saw us married; and the attached townhouse where I wait for snow again.

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Matt Hassler



Ophus Bloom



When a girl named Caroline has her hands around your throat, you learn a little something about love. You learn about the fragility of an eleven year old throat, and how lilacs smell, even after they've been trampled by a hundred shrieking fifth graders. Lilacs are a member of the olive family, said my uncle Tommy. Why don't they smell like olives, I asked him, and he told me a family doesn't always mean much. I told him I know what he means.

12

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Caroline was a member of the Ophus family, who lived three houses down from us and whose children ran too much and ate grass, like horses, or something hungrier. Caroline was the type of girl that couldn't be hungry, and wouldn't be, and she walked in a certain way. It must've been a full time job walking like that.

It was April and a bull was loose in town because all the good cattle drivers were drunks, but if a drunk could bring the money in, there wasn't a penniless soul in the county going to tell him to bench the bottle. That being said, a bull loose on the playground was enough to cause an uproar. First recess began at ten in the morning, and because it started after grammar class, even preceding the crisis it was an especially savage recess.

We first saw the great huffing thing coming through the cemetery east of the playground. I was on the swing playing pilot and Jimmy Fisher (Fish, we called him, because of all the mischievous things we did, he was the one who ever got caught) who was my best friend and my swinging co-pilot yelled, "Boys, look at that." We looked, and instantly lined up against the chain links, like eggs in a carton, all leaning in unison, heels up, junior militia, tottering on the balls of our feet.

"That's a fuckin' bull!" somebody yelled, and we locked our gaze harder, each wanting to be the first to confirm the anonymous hypothesis.

“That ain’t a bull, it’s probably just Gran Anderson’s mutt,” another onlooker refuted, a stupid mistake at such an early viewing of something so extraordinary.

“It’s a hundred times bigger than that fuckin’ mutt,” Jimmy said, more to gain some of his own rhetorical ground than to debase the boy who’s imagination was dog-small so far.

“It’s a tractor tire or somethin’,” I piped in. This also was a mistake as the thing was clearly moving, a fact I was instantly bombarded with, but to admit that some nameless geek had been right in his bovine assumption on the first try would be simply ridiculous. As the thing moved at us, it morphed unquestionably from dog to tractor tire to bull, and a large bull at that, with a head like a bag of nickels and forward facing horns that when turned right at you were another set of cold, round eyes, and they were staring at each one of us as it began its charge at the fence and our hardly stable frontline.

We ran for cover, except for Fish, who assured us he could dodge it. As we charged for cover in the school, we pushed, as eleven year olds do. We pushed hard and I managed to stumble and strong-arm a girl, a pretty blonde, not onto the ground but straight into the arms of Donnie Kramlich, whose family bathed in the river, which was low this year and ungodly with fish rot. If there was something worse than being trampled by a herd of miniature savages or gored by a bull, it was being embraced by Donnie Kramlich. Consequently if there was one thing worse than being embraced by Donnie Kramlich, it was becoming an enemy of Caroline Ophus. Close friends with the blonde who was now stained forever with Kramlich stink, Caroline made it her sole objective, temporarily putting the stampeding bull out of mind, to pummel the offender, my sorry self, into the playground gravel.

Head bleeding into the dirt, I watched Caroline Ophus bloom. Violet clusters dropped and oozed perfume into my gushing nose each time Caroline’s fist retracted and caught the lilac bush. I sang to Caroline:

“This is education, and while I learn, my eyes track a mass of canvas shoes funneling into the schoolhouse. I see Jimmy Fisher

get trampled and gored, caught again, and I see the bull, the great tractor tire mutt, get shot in the gut by the janitor and whimper like something so strong should never do."

Ten years later, on July 4th, I married Caroline Ophus. We made love like a war was coming for weeks and weeks, and weeks later when the war came, Fish and I joined the U.S. Navy to become submariners.

14 H a s s l e r
Fish and I stayed friends after high school. He couldn't walk right ever since the bull shattered his femur. He was at the doctor's office weekly and was very nearly a cripple through most of our secondary school years. So, while my father wrapped a plow around mine, Fish's head was buried in books because he couldn't do farm work. When we signed on to the navy, he scored high and landed a job as a medic. I scored just over farm scores and landed a job as a radio operator. A radio operator isn't a bad job in the Navy if you're on a boat, but on a submarine it's a joke, and Fish, in spite of all his personal downfalls, loved to laugh at my placement. Two weeks we were underwater and we knew which table to eat at, but Fish was a good friend and he kept close. It never took long, though, for Fisher to do what he knew so exclusively how to, and he got caught up bad this time.

We ate our slop in the reactor airlock, where there was a footwide window, the only one on the whole can. Someone had taped a hammer and a bottle of cheap Scotch to the wall below it with a handwritten note: In Case of Cabin Fever, or a Nazi Pig Takeover.

"You're taking morphine, aren't you?" I asked him. He stared from the sand on his plate up to me, his eyes black and over-textured, like that bull's greasy horns. He smiled a purse lipped Fisher smile.

"You a fucking doctor now?" he said while he chewed.

"You're taking morphine, Fish. It's gonna get you mar-tialed."

"That's doctor Fish," he said, and he slid his fork around in his oatmeal, watching the four little plow lines close behind the prongs as he moved it.

"What happens if someone gets hurt and all our Mor-

phine is stuck in your veins?”

“People don’t get hurt on submarines,” he said, “we sink or we don’t sink, but people don’t get hurt.” He closed his eyes for a long time and I looked at the Scotch and hammer on the wall.

“We won’t sink,” I said, but he laughed and it was a wicked laugh and I’ll always remember it. I wrote to Caroline:

“Scotch and the hammer keep me feeling safe. I love you like sailors do, like carpenters and drinkers, but Jimmy’s laugh, like every creak in this great tin can makes me wary, and my love is a coward, a janitor with a shotgun.”

She wrote back that a laugh doesn’t always mean much, and I said I know what she means. The reason radio operators are a joke on submarines is because submarines in this particular war could only communicate with other submarines, something that was never useful when the only submarine close enough to communicate with us was always a U-boat. The problem, and the one simple fact that made my job useless, was that we couldn’t radio the planes. “Birds don’t talk to fish,” captain said, “birds fuck fish” and what he meant by this is that when a U.S. Air Force plane sees a submarine in the water and they can’t make out whether it’s a U-boat or a U.S. boat their orders are to bomb until the potential threat is neutralized or it dives. We called it “Bürgerkreig” which is Nazi for civil war.

Lucky for us, the U.S. Air Force is generally slower to hit their mark than their Navy is to dive out of range, but nevertheless, if we were on dry land and we met a pilot, decorated or not, it was standard procedure to swing at him until his face was Bürger or his vulture comrades took the swing out of us. Caroline wrote that she stopped inviting the Anderson’s over for church discussion group because their son was an Air Force pilot. I felt proud of her for that, and I hoped we had our own son someday, so he could read that letter and meet the Caroline that had her hands around my throat in fifth grade, and always.

A matter of time manifested itself sooner than later. Fish’s trouble surfaced in Italy, when a private in our tin can wanted

to visit a whorehouse. A soldier can't visit a whorehouse in Italy if he's uncircumcised, and Doc Fish's hands shook like a mortar blast. Under the knife, where he shouldn't have been (and Fish knew this all the better than the rest of us) the private's penis was severed, he never made it to the whorehouse, and his pain was only hardly subdued by the curiously limited amount of morphine left in the medicinal supply. The man was in the sick bay for days, more likely from shock and dismay than from actual injury. It was the end of Fish the doctor and the aggravated continuation of Fish the morphine addict. We went to the window, Fish and I, we ripped the emergency pack from the wall, and drank the Scotch, every drop. He wrapped his quivering hands around the hammer and held it there, twitching, not ready to drop it, not ready to use it.

"We need to go home," Fish said. He chattered his teeth and each time his lower jaw ground on the upper, he tapped the hammer on the glass.

"We'll go home," I told him, "we haven't sunk yet." He didn't laugh this time. "But Jimmy," I told him, "if we go home, you need to get your head right."

"It's not my head," he said, "it's these goddamned hands." He dropped the hammer and went to his bunk. I heard him crying for the man in the sick bay.

In May, we got bombed by our own planes. Bürgerkrieg, and we screamed it as we deep and fast into the ocean. Whenever there was an attack, the alarms in the submarine would spin and flash red. A red light in a dark tube feels like the entrance into hell, and if you don't hang on to something, it very well could be. The sirens sounded like all those shrieking canvas shoed kids, like the bomb had already hit, but we held on, and gripped our fists around steaming pipes. The flashing red grew brighter as we dove and our heads adjusted to the pressure and our eyes pushed out from our skulls against the stale, betrayed air of our sinking bean can.

The lights stopped flashing and despite the seaquake of some close calls, everyone seemed to be intact. But Fish was in the sick bay where a buzzard bomb went off, not violently enough

to crack the hull, but Fish went deaf in his left ear. It would ring forever and hurt longer. When we got back to dry land they gave him morphine for it. When we surfaced, we got purple hearts and I sealed mine in an envelope and I sent it to Caroline:

“I fear that everything I see now, everything dry and beautiful and covered with leaves will soon be underwater, like my love is underwater. But I’m coming home because things underwater can remain intact, like my love is. Jimmy is deaf, and he’s sick with that junk he feeds himself, but these trees do him good. His hands shake less.”

They welcomed us home with cold beer and fireworks and tender barbecued things, and I embraced Caroline and smelled rich lilac. Her eyes were sweet green, like anything but the ocean, and we kissed. I sat at a table with Caroline and Fish and later I drank with my uncle Tommy and told him what I learned about families. He met an olive and a lilac, and he said he knew what I meant.

From across the room, we saw a radiant thing walk in. A flowing brunette with a dress as red as her hair made my face feel.

“Fish, look at that,” I said. He didn’t hear me. I was talking into his left ear. I stretched my head around his shoulder like a hungry calf and repeated myself. He was silent for a moment, and I worried he was deaf in both ears.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” he finally whispered, “how do you even approach a thing like that?”

“Carefully,” we both thought, “like a bull on a playground.”

He pushed in his chair slowly, never removing his grainy eyes from that red dress, and that hair. He circled toward her, drawing a periphery, a bullpen. I saw him adjust his purple heart and snag two glasses of champagne from a waiter. For the first time since my farm score radio placement, I felt jealous.

I pulled Caroline in towards me by the waste, my hands around her this time, and she began to kiss me. She kissed me on the neck and I shivered. She placed a hand on my jawline, where

the ridge meets my ear, and again I trembled like the doctor's hands, wanting something I knew I couldn't have.

Fish moved in and handed the red dress a glass of champagne. I tried to watch his mouth to make out the words he said, but he had to lean his right side toward her to hear her properly, putting his head at an angle facing just slightly away from me. I imagined what he'd say to her. What I'd sing to this red brunette Caroline:

"How the sight of you, flashing spinning red, pierces my ears and I need your tenderness. You are the high end, and the reason things can drop so low, submarines and Donnie Kramlichs. Put your hands around my neck and we'll dance until the lights stops spinning or this hull cracks, and my love floods in."

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I squeezed Caroline's hand too tightly and watched the portion of her finger above her wedding band swell and turn flashing red out of the corner of my eye. Fish was sliding his hand across the woman's waist. It was shaking just enough to invoke pity and doting questions of heroism and fear that always lead to soft sex. Just then, three decorated U.S. Air Force pilots lined up before him. The first kissed the lady's hand and extended his to Fish. As Fish took the hand in his own, I nearly fainted, until I saw the maneuver. He pulled the man in to his body by his gesture of gratitude and smashed his forehead against the man's prominent nose, crushing it into his close shave.

"You cowards. You fucking cowards!" I heard him yell, and before I felt my legs move I was by his side, swinging drunkenly at the bombers. The red dress was gone, and that brunette with it, but the flashing lights were made present again, spinning before my eyes as I felt the bones in my hand break over the high cheekbone of a Captain. I put my fingers around his neck and watched the black liquid trickle from his face like a breach in the hull, just waiting for something else to burst. As it ran down and blanketed my hands, warm and tender, I watched it stain this buzzard's starched white military jacket a deep merlot, and I was thirsty. The third man hit a home run through my collar bone and I was on the floor, staring into Fish's painless, swooning eyes.

I watched a polished black shoe charge into his head, pull back, huff and paw its hoof, then charge again, knocking Fish's jaw out of place. Just before my head was bombed by our own, I heard a wicked, wicked voice singing through the room:

"In case of cabin fever, or a red dress, wrapped around that sugary brunette, use your trembling fists. This love is sinking. This love is gutshot, or something hungrier."

Awake in a hospital bed, I mumbled through the dark "Caroline" and she was there at my side. I could only just make out her silhouette, but I knew it was her when she ran that cold hand over my forehead and I smelled her scent.

"Where's Fish?" I asked her

"Jimmy's sleeping, sweetheart. He's hurt pretty bad," she kissed my cheek and drifted out of the room. I remember thinking, it must be a full time job walking like that.

Morphine swam through me, diving and diving, and I laid on my side to look at Fish. Caught again. I couldn't see how swollen his face was in lieu of all the tubes running into it. Jimmy was in a coma, and was going to die. "Goodnight, Dr. Fisher," I whispered, and as I slipped into fever I heard the machines towering over us whimper like something so near to me should never do.

I lived, then, in a four bedroom house, with pictures on the wall, and a bowl of water on the kitchen table, feeding lilacs.

Alissa Smith

Progression

You were snowflakes on my tongue as I tasted
that freezing silver sky.
The wind coming in smelled of storm—
I waited.

Later, you were that wind,
beating against the blinds as if glass were ice
and would shatter with a gust.

Giving up, you became the morning:
Grey snow

Beneath my boots.

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Thomas Macfie

(Iowan and Avocado)

Grocery stores, Iowan, super
markets super! are such
spectacular things:

leveled light, concision, spectacles
of illumination,
testaments of

disinfection. Pregnant woman,
just as clean and heavy.
Daily stocked. Like the

reliable presentation of
avocados. Have you,
Iowan, perceived

the avocado? I would want you to say
they are a food most earthy, dense fat,
Iowan, fat

un-fractured, without that pesky
fractal. Alligator
pears. Fruit and flesh.

Though neither and, biologically,
a berry. Did I
did I, remind me

Iowan, did I tell you of my
friend, of her hands? She said they
in every sense

were changed: structurally, heft, even their
exterior moisture; she said
they were no longer

hands. Then what could they have been,
Iowan? She couldn't
postulate but instead

negate, say what wasn't. When I was
younger, I peeled baseballs.
Fibrous wool and

22 rubber. Also cotton followed by center,
M corked cherry pit. I'm certain
a you, Iowan, did not.

c
f You tossed baseballs and caught them,
i your hands extensions of strength, all
e bicep and scapula. Hands

are either this, extensions of the carnal
of lift, or of prodding,
thought:

sequestered curiosity. Like
have you, Iowan, held,
ever, the shell

of an avocado against
the husk of a baseball? Are there
similarities?

Such are the questions, Iowan, like would you
dismantle me? Can you? I
would like it if

you could take me apart, Iowan.
I would love you more. You've been

always only a bed,

place to settle in, clasped palm. Brightly
dismember me, Iowan,
piece by piece. Lay my

fractures on a table, Iowan. Then
poke my components. Splintering which
makes us, Iowan, reminds

that examination is
an obligation
required; even in a bed don't

be such a bed, Iowan, an aisle
in the market after
close, the fruit bin

teemed by avocados, too
tenebrous, too broad.
Just show me, in single

functions, Iowan, functionality
spectacular for
its terminals.

And light. For example, Iowan,
show something indexed, clean,
Iowan, in logic:

the butter fruit, palta, and explicitly
its interior, skins of pale, inside:
a sand-papered egg.

Ella Pfalzgraff



The Red Barn



Somewhere in these woods, there is a monster. And it could be hiding anywhere. The light spreads through the treetops, creating shadows on the ground. Shadows big enough for a monster to hide in. The child walks along the path, careful not to step on a stick, or kick a rock, or make any sound at all. If the monster found her here, she'd be dead for sure.

24 A twig snaps behind her, and the child starts to run, bounding over logs and mud puddles. The forest passes beside her in a blur of green and grey and she keeps running, even though she knows that nothing is chasing her, even though she knows it was just Joel, and not a monster at all.

She stops. To her left there is an old barn with no door and red paint peeling down its sides. To her right is the house. One way is dangerous, the other is safe. She goes right.

The child hears the crackle of car wheels on gravel. She imagines that it's her parents, come to take her home. The father is wearing his red flannel shirt. His sleeves are rolled to his elbows, and he's leaning his forearms on the steering wheel like he does when he's been driving for a long time. The mother laughs at something he said, and she reaches to turn down the A/C. The child imagines riding in the backseat, rattling in her too-big booster seat, the van gyrating like an unbalanced dryer.

But it's not the van. The child knows that's just pretend. They won't be back until the end of summer. The father said so. He said that it would be fun here, with Joel and Uncle Paul. He said that he loved summers here. But he never comes here anymore.

A blue truck pulls in front of the house. There's pictures of horses running on the sides and in the back there's a black box. This is the vet's truck.

Last summer the vet came to put Shooter down. The child ran her fingers over the outlines of horses as Aunt Liz held her close, smoothing her hair back. Aunt Liz smelled like hand lotion and

medicine. After Shooter died, Aunt Liz stayed in bed for a week. The father said that Aunt Liz was sick, but she didn't look sick. She just looked sad.

The father said Aunt Liz was gone now, that she died. The child wonders if the monster got her.

The child passes by round bales of straw, brown and dusty and smelling of old bread. Trucks are parked all over the yard. All are rusted and one of them doesn't even have a seat. Joel used to play taxi driver with the child, but he hasn't this year. The paint on the turquoise truck is wearing off, and she peels off a strip and crushes it between her hands.

The child sits beside the hay, where she has an easy view of what's going on. Henry is tied to a pole. His head hangs low, as if there's no muscle in his neck, and when he breathes his stomach seems to sink into his ribs. One of his back legs quivers a few inches above the ground. The fur has been scraped off, leaving raw skin, grey and bloody, exposed.

Uncle Paul watches the vet. He's leaning against the barn door, but his back is perfectly straight. Uncle Paul never smiles.

The child stretches out and hay sticks to her bare legs. She wonders if he's going to find out and punish her. She never gets punished at home, but one time when Joel left the gate open, the child told Uncle Paul, and Joel got punished. That's why Joel's arm was in a cast.

"They're going to have to put Henry down." Joel stands behind her. He pulls a stick of hay from the bale and starts ripping it to pieces. "My dad loves that stupid horse. He's fucking crazy, but my dad loves him. He was Dixie's last colt, and everybody thought he'd be a show horse, but he's crazy. Fucking waste of feed." Joel grabs handfuls of straw and lets them fall to the ground. "Dixie went out to the red barn to die. Same place I found Mom." He smacks his hands together and dust falls to the ground. "Are you going to tell him?"

She grabs a stick off the ground and ties it in a knot, pulling so hard it snaps. "No."

Joel took Henry out, even though he wasn't supposed to. Nobody

but Uncle Paul is supposed to take Henry out. But Joel said it was okay, his dad was gone, wouldn't be back for hours.

The child asked, "Can I come?"

"No."

But she went anyway. She followed Joel out of the paddock and into the field. Henry walked beside Joel, his energy barely restrained, his head high like a challenge. Joel swatted at him with the lead rope.

The moment Joel mounted him, Henry's entire body tensed, and he threw himself forward, twisting and shaking. Joel dug his heels into Henry's sides and yanked on the reins, but this only caused Henry to spin in circles, so fast that he fell to his knees. Into the barbed wire fence.

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Everything was still. Henry lay on the ground, his head down, turned towards his leg. Then he looked up. And the child saw herself reflected in his eyes.

And then Henry pulled back, straining against the wire. It scraped against his leg, peeling his skin. And the blood turned the ground red.

Joel held the child's arm so tight it hurt. "Don't touch him."

Henry slid on the slick red dirt. A shrill scream escaped his throat. He kicked out, and then lay still. Joel went to Henry and unwrapped his leg.

Joel wouldn't look at Henry.

The vet and Uncle Paul huddle together, telling secrets. Uncle Paul nods, and then he looks towards the child. He goes in the barn. The vet touches her palm to Henry's rump and he shudders under the weight of her touch.

"Is Henry okay?" The child asks.

"He's very badly hurt," the vet says. "You have to be careful around barbed wire."

"I didn't do anything," the child says.

Uncle Paul is in the feed room, standing over the table with his back to the child. The feed room is dark and empty and Uncle Paul's voice echoes when he says: "It's a fucking waste."

Then he turns around. He has something in his hand, but

the child can't make it out. But then he grabs onto her shoulders, pressing cold metal up against her collarbone. A gun.

"Did you see what happened to Henry?" His breath is warm and it smells sour.

The child imagines that he shoots her. She imagines blood oozing from her skin like it did from Henry's, she imagines it staining the cement. She imagines disappearing, going away for good. She imagines death.

"No."

Uncle Paul releases her, and the handle of the gun leaves a sore spot on the child's chest.

"I'm going to put Henry down," he says.

"He could get better."

"Don't be a fucking idiot." Uncle Paul says. "I know it was Joel."

"It was an accident," she says.

In these woods, there is a monster. It's lurking in the shadows that spread like disease on the ground, breathing as the wind blows. It's following the child as she runs over logs and mud puddles.

The red barn opens before her like a toothless mouth, releasing the foul stench of decay. Lines of red creep down the sides and the windows, like hollow eyes, stare down at the child.

She wonders if Aunt Liz is still in the barn, where Joel found her. Maybe she's hiding there still. Maybe she'll take the child in, comfort her like the last time the vet came. The child knows it will be safe there, that inside she will be away from the monster.

"Aunt Liz?" the child says. She doesn't expect an answer. When people are hiding, they don't answer. But she goes closer to the barn door this time, so close she can see the dark outlines of abandoned farm equipment. "Aunt Liz?"

The child takes a step into the red barn. She's going to hide. Hide with Aunt Liz.

Inside, piles of straw rise to the ceiling. In one corner there's an old saddle, its leather so worn that red stripes appear against the dull and crusted black. It's doesn't look like a place

anybody would live.

The child lies down in the straw. It's so quiet, quiet like a house during a thunderstorm, tucked into bed between the mother and the father, watching reruns of Star Trek. Outside there is a monster, but in here it's safe.

The child looks up and she sees a woman standing on the hayloft, her head turned to the sky. She wears a yellow dress that floats around her ankles. The only sound is the rustling of the straw as the woman stretches her foot over the edge of the loft. She looks towards the child, and then she disappears into the darkness.

"I won't tell anyone," the child says.

She digs her hands into the straw and she thinks of thunderstorms and stickers on pickup trucks and red plaid shirts and somewhere there is the clap of a gunshot and then there is silence.

28

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Emma Andrus

*(*The Mutilated Trees of*)*
Olene, Oregon

decapitated,
the trees that line the roadside fields of Olene
fill me with a sorrow clear as amber
muddied by the broken down houses
the shoddy shingles lined with moss and mold
cracked window-panes
where i imagine the wide eyes of hungry children staring.
po' white trash,
i know these children.
i grew up in the rusted cabs of model A pickups
playing witchcraft in the dust
and standing in line with my mother at the food-bank.
a trailer full of boxes of books
and the desiccated paint tubes
of a painter who didn't paint anymore.
Olene, Oregon, is not so far from Clinton, Montana,
with its shaggy horses whose ribs poke sharp through their
hides,
oxidized cans
and barbed wire.
government cheese is universal.

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Claire Mikeson

(Mary)

My sister came down the stairs
in his stained shirt, in her underwear
still drunk, oily haired, makeup smeared eyes
bigger than mine, bluer than mine
(but I've always been skinnier,
and she never learned how to talk to men).

30 She asked if I wanted to smash eggs,
M Grandma's eggs,
i the eggs from Grandma's chickens
k on the kitchen floor today.
e I asked her, "What's wrong with you?"
s and she went back upstairs.

o Later she came down the stairs
n still in his stained shirt, still in her underwear,
sober, and she only looked at me,
hangover-face, purple shadows
under bluer eyes, and walked by.
A few minutes later I heard the pop,
the progression of pops
of Grandma's eggs on the kitchen floor
the eggs from Grandma's chickens,
and I heard her start to cry,
sob, pop, sob,
and twelve shattered eggs oozed
over the red tile of my kitchen floor.

She stayed in the kitchen
to watch me clean up her mess,
the leaky orange spatter, the shattered shells
dried on the door of my refrigerator.
(Grandma's chickens eat grasshoppers,

and they don't live in cages.)
she just stood there, yolk-toed
and asked me whether there were
twelve invisible, dead baby chickens
floating in all that orange. I don't know.
She said she'd make a good housewife.
I told her, "You'd make a horrible housewife."
She thought about it and said,
"You're right, but I'd have pretty babies."

James Burkhart

disgust.

I can see you covered
in the filth, the finger prints, the disgust
that you seem to wear
like a golden disk
how do you rest -
doesn't your belly ache
from the traffic that travels through?
perhaps He makes them better these days
(but fresh paint won't fool me)

32

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Lynn Barlow
Bones

I imagine myself in
the context of
your bed
I imagine myself a
collection of bones
on your sheets, white
against navy blue
tangled somehow, though
bones do not bend
they are brittle, they break
especially in the cold
I used to think that bones
were the core of people
skeletons— the architecture of
what it means to be human
calcium and marrow spanning
the gaps between us—
a skeletal solidarity
and greenstick fractures
were the worst thing I could
imagine happening to a body
internal structures exposed to
gravity and expelled violently
into the air, out of their element
but existing— I could be sure, then
that I had something permanent
inside of me, something enduring
like a soul but more concrete
more believable
now I imagine the feeling
of your hands on my bones
counting my ribs and grasping

my femurs, cupping my iliac crest
reaching down through skin and tissue
uncovering my truths, you could
do me a favor and check if there's
anything broken or missing
I felt a disconcerting crunch
a couple weeks ago and my mind
hasn't really been the same since.
I want you to hold my bones
in your hands and feel—
I am a display skeleton whose wires
have been carelessly cut and you
clearly have no idea where to start
my skull is mute and unhelpful
in your palm.

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Bury the Tote Lady



The Tote Lady lives in a pink house on the north side of the city. In her yard the grass is dead but there are always flowers in bloom that never need to be watered, pruned back, or weeded; and if she wanted to, she could pluck up an entire bouquet at once and stick it into a vase without worry or care because the flowers are fake.

From the outside, the pink house looks small, but inside there are several tiny rooms. The Tote Lady has made it this way, but not by wood and nails. Most of the walls of the tiny rooms are made from cardboard and newspapers, mounds of magazines, countless cookbooks, heaps of second-hand clothing. They are so tiny in fact that only their tenants can fit inside. These rooms are special spaces and this is the way the Tote Lady has made it. This is the only way she will have it.

The largest room is for the Dinosaurs. The largest of the Dinosaurs is a plush T-rex that stands three and a half feet tall. His nylon fur is red and green. He shares the room with six other T-rexes, fifteen kinds of Long Necks, eighty two kinds of Triceratops and over a hundred other Dinos of all species from all eras that are all under an inch long. Somehow a Mammoth found its way into their room as well.

Around a corner of apple-box cardboard is the room for all that is Disney: one shelf holds Christmas Mickeys that are either ice skating, ringing a bell, wearing scarves, or singing carols. Dumbos and Mouse Dectecitves collect dust in a corner while Beauties, Beasts, Foxes, Hounds, Little Mermaids, Poison Apples, and Pinocchios all keep their places and they keep the Dinosaurs out.

Between the National Geographics and the Fly Swatters live the Rubber Ducks: a variety of sizes, shapes, and kinds. No Rubber Duck left behind. All Rubber Ducks Welcome, Rubber Duck Crossing. They must share part of their room with the Towels. It's only natural.

Across from the Shampoos (which are neighbors of the Towels) reside the Babies. The kind that have huge blinking eyes, the ones that wet their pants; some are always sleeping and others do not have arms while a few have had their hair cut off. But they are all beautiful and blessed. The Tote Lady shakes her finger and tells them, "Don't you leave this room, and don't let anyone in. We are safe here."

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She has a kitchen, she does cook. After all, she has some good cookbooks. And as she cooks she admires the Salt and Pepper Shakers that cover the shelves of her cupboards that she has removed the doors from. There is salt and pepper in every Shaker in the house, and she uses a different set every day. In the kitchen, there is a high chair for every Baby. All of the small Babies sit in one together. "They never eat their food," The Tote Lady tells the Cats, all seven of them. They are good listeners and their fur can be collected to make very nice yarn. Unlike the other residents, however, the Cats are quite mischevius. They rip up the walls and chew on the Dinosaurs. They sleep on the Towels and spray the Babies. Each Cat has his own tower to guard, which makes The Tote Lady feel safe. One Cat was becoming very round.

Hidden behind a broken piano, under photo albums of faces that look familiar to The Tote Lady, between achievements and acknowledgements, within dreams she could touch, there is a whole woman.

The Tote Lady always has her favorite Ones with her. From her Tote hangs a mess of miniature Beanie Babies, somewhere around thirty it seems, and every sunny day she walks to the little store to fill up her gigantic thermos with a fountain beverage. The little store used to have mini Beanie Babies, but The Tote Lady bought all of them. Or stole them. The kid saw her do it, but he had also seen an entire ocean in her once-good eyes. He thought that her short white hair made her look older than she actually was. He pretended not to notice, and The Tote Lady always purchased her beverage.

"Today is cold," says The Tote Lady as a whistle of wind sneaks under the Dinosaur's window. She reaches into the Scarf room (next to the Angels) and pulls out a pink one with long tassels that get tangled around the ring on her finger. She wraps the

scarf several times around her sagging neck and cheerfully puts on her coat. It is turquoise with big brown buttons and it has four pockets: one for Kleenex, one for lucky pennies, one for gloves and the last for a pen. She blows a kiss to the Babies and heads out the door.

While walking, The Tote Lady thinks; she tries so hard to remember whose faces are in the photos pressed neatly into pages in the albums. She wonders how her house became so lived in. Maybe today she will remember (she has before) and all of the tenants will finally move out and let her be. They take up so much space and they threaten to bury the albums. Bury The Tote Lady.

Blink! White lashes press together; the sun is pulled behind a cloud and a crow laughs about it. A black kitten mews and cries for its mother, but she does not come. Cracks in the sidewalk turn to canyons. Sudden pain between her eyes causes The Tote Lady to stop. Her feet turn to stone and she remembers. The Tote falls to the ground and the thermos rolls out into the street. All of the Beanie Babies start crying. The crow laughs louder and the clouds tie up the sun and cover his mouth. "My love!" cries The Tote Lady. The crow flies away.

Tomorrow, the Tote Lady will die. Everyone will say, "We knew she would, eventually." The fire truck and ambulance will dramatically sound their sirens and neighbors will gather on the cracked sidewalks next to green cypresses and watch. They will not wonder how she died. It will read in the paper as, "Hoarder Found Dead in Pink House with Fake Flowers." The kid will read the article while a bum shoves a bag of Drum into his pants. Beanie Babies will still be crying and the Cats will disappear. Tenants of the pink house will be compiscated and its windows will be boarded up while the crow laughs and laughs and laughs at how the pink paint peels and falls upon the fake flowers.

Claire Bachofner
First Born

875 days apart,
we were both born
on rainy Tuesdays.
Grandparents rushed across state lines,
their windshield wipers
working overtime, cutting paths
of clear vision,
they gave us all they knew.

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Grade school woes broke and entered
ruthless midnight bandits who
snatched up your secrets
and spilled them:
A neighborhood crush here,
a furious fistfight there
and, at home,
we watched a marriage fall apart
over grilled cheese and tomato soup.

You took up burdens like bricks,
shoved them into your Nightrider backpack
no questions asked—

as if they belonged to you
as if they were too heavy for me
(and they were, thank you).

It's hard to say how many
sand castles and snow angels
we scattered through time, through seasons—
soft evidence of a united past
now sifted, melted, gone.
Later, we choked down the heavy smoke

of someone's dad's cigarettes
and boldly guzzled our dad's tequila-
straight from Mexico,
went straight to our heads,
there was nothing smooth about
those first stolen highs.

15 years since we harvested sap
from the unsuspecting Maples on
East 5th and 6th.
Dad drilled holes so deep
the trees wept from their cores.
We tapped their sweet veins,
hung silver buckets, two per tree,
all the way around the yard.
We spent months, you and I, gathering
each day's fill, after school,
into dusk, and, in the end,
only two bottles of syrup
that tasted like gold
and were gone in a flash.

Tyler Morgan

(Staying Occupied in Retirement)

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yesterday, I walked
to the supermarket,
wearing a dress shirt
and tighty-whiteys;
with long strands of
white hair, fly-aways
from my wrinkled head,
people assumed senility.

I stuffed two oranges
down the front of
my underwear,
to see who would
accuse me of stealing.

and mumbled vaguely
latinate phrases:
semper ubi sub ubi,
as if I were at church.

and adults averted their eyes
and children stopped to stare,
before being dragged away
by concerned parents,
scared of offending
or having to talk
to me.

at the register
I wrote a check
for an onsale candybar

and signed it
Seymour Buttz, playing
with my oranges the
entire time, they
didn't have to heart
to call what passes for
grocery store
security.

walked home
on shaky, white,
varicose twig legs,
slumped with arms in
front of me, making
Frankenstein moans.

after the front
door was shut,
the oranges removed,
giggles turned
themselves into
belly laughs and
I spent the rest
of the day with a
smile on my face.



Turner Canty

Finally, Serge Patch

Upon waking I find him in the corner,
trying on my clothes and marking up the
walls with his diagrams.

42 That is one of his photos next to the
c window, it's from his blue period. Some
a plaza in Europe where he found himself
n alone one day taking the pigeon's portraits
t beneath centuries of architecture.

y Serge Patch protects me from being
shocked in the night. My Grandfather
would have liked that when he stayed
up reading, and studying pictures of
the places he could never visit like
Machu Picchu, or the second floor of
his house.

My Grandfather would have liked Mr.
Patch for so many reasons. They both
liked to smoke, they both had had Polio.
They would have gone to matinees
together, or down to Greenlake to
admire the lilies.

The trouble is my Grandfather never
liked to go on walks, except with his
woman. Never liked to do anything but
read, and eat, and coo softly early in
the morning.

He lived in California most of his life,

where neither I nor Serge have ever been. And he sent my father away to boarding school so he could have the sun all to himself, and he raised his kids by the length of the broom handle he kept between them.

I found Serge on a ship in the Caribbean, (or maybe it was in the Sea of Japan I can't remember). Sometimes I forget that there was a time when he wasn't there, always blinking, and trying on my clothes. He has a little red light attached to his brain that he uses from time to time to throw techno raves while I'm asleep, and I wake up and have to tell all his friends to go home.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica entry for Serge Patch, he is shown standing in a blue captain's shirt, smoking a pipe in some port on the Atlantic, and next to him is an indistinguishable man in a trench-coat, and hat, and between them a sailor with a mustache, but you can't see him, Gorky had that one removed.

In the pages of Serge's journals I have found that he had once been a submarine captain, though on his birth certificate it says he was born a sea otter, which would explain his affinity for sea urchin roe.

I have taken Serge to the museums downtown to show him the many skulls of his ancestors, and all the beautiful variations of guitars. And afterwards to eat Chinese food in the park, and to

ask Serge is he would draw me in that scene. Serge got out a piece of paper and drew me looking just like my Grandfather used to when he did crossword puzzles out on the veranda in the summer, when I would come out to talk to him, and he would tell me how he used to sail ships of all kinds and sizes, and I asked him what he would have done had he capsized, and he would just shrug and say that he had never worried about It, and simply thought he would deal with it when the time came.

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Serge used to save people who fell off of ships, and put them on his back and bring them to shore, and give them a cigarette and some pocket change, and say see-you-later.

On weekends I sometimes stay up all night and read Serge's books, and diaries, and sometimes my Grandfathers too. It used to be, on those nights, I would play table tennis with my Grandfather who would sit on a bar stool, and reach his long arms out, dominating the table. It was the only time I saw him take off his suit jacket. I never play table tennis with Serge.

Once in the fall, I was out biking and crashed and split my hand open, it was Thanksgiving, and the next day my Grandfather died in his sleep, and I didn't want to go to the funeral because I knew it would be black.

Instead, I went to the beach with my
hand wrapped in gauze, and found
Serge whistling to himself, turning over
the rocks to find sea urchins.

And we talked about food, and we
Talked about poetry, and we talked
About windows, but we never talked
about Grandfathers.

Matt Hassler



Missouri Breaks



1.

I'm eleven and we're driving somewhere. A white-tail skips alongside the truck, chasing a doe, throwing his head, laughing maybe. The doe hurdles the fence, and the buck makes a leap to follow, but catches his legs in the barbed wire, thrashes until he catches his rut-swollen neck and resigns himself to bleeding out, like they do. I don't remember where we're going, but that deer is hanging, five feet off the ground maybe, chest lurching in halftime with a heartbeat in cadence, waiting. The doe is already over the ridge, and there's another buck-in-rut, watching her white tail flit between sage patches. This is about that, but it's really about love.

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2.

I'm older now and hunting elk. Wapiti, but you wouldn't dare say that. A kid or something dumber carved in a corner-post: Keep Gat Cload, so I do. I'm walking along the bank of the largest river in the world. If you've heard it's the Amazon or the Nile, you were misinformed. An hour or a day passes, the sun pinwheels through wispy cirrus, high and bright, but not hot. I wonder what can hear me out here. I'm lazy and loud because I've crossed the river, where you can't shoot. They know this, across the river, and they stand stiller, taller, antlers longer. As quiet as everything is, I imagine they're watching me.

I notice something, in a tree, a few hundred yards up. I halve that, through binoculars; maybe it's in the river. Something colorful dangles up there. Things aren't colorful here, across the river, mostly brown, and darker brown, like hair and eyes.

I find a Superman backpack lodged between a rock and a cactus, and some papers are caught in sagebrush, flapping in unison, like ducks on a pond, seconds before flight. I see the thing

hanging from a tree, five feet above the riverbank.

It's the quietest day on the largest river in the world, and those papers in the wind, or maybe my heart is flapping in my ears and there's blood pumping hot in my face. That can't be a person.

It's a kid, but I wouldn't know it, were it not for the way he's dressed. He's quarterback blonde, but there's dirt in his hair, and his eyes are bulging and jellied. They look like they used to be blue. A piece of climbing rope tied in a double knot slices into his swollen neck, tied the way you'd tie a shoelace. The blood in his face has all been squeezed down into his chin, and his mouth droops down around his teeth. He's been dead a while, too heavy for the wind to move, he just floats, red, blue, purple.

I walk back to Deertick Ridge, where I can call somebody. Maybe I'm crying. Maybe I'll dream about that kid for a year. Tomorrow at the Sheriff's office they'll ask, did I touch anything? What was I doing on that side of the river? Did I know the kid? No, thinking, no. I ask them what his name is? Confidential.

3.

Ten years later, I'm sitting with my father, who hasn't learned a thing about love, and taught me just as much. He's pawing a cigar, watching it, like it might paw back. I know he cares about me because he lets the thick smoke bleed out the right side of his mouth, toward the wall. I've never liked the smell. What would you say to her? He's talking about my mother. They're getting a divorce. For action's sake, he's divorcing her. You know her better than I do, I say. He lets some smoke seep between his teeth, slowly, so that when it hits the air, it just hangs there.

The kid In the tree was named Mark, and one of those shreds of paper in the sagebrush was a letter to a pretty girl who didn't love him. It wasn't her fault, he wanted her to know that.

I've since decided that loves works like any other disease. The worse your case, the worse your outcome. My father didn't follow anyone over the barbed wire, so he'll be okay. In the end, he left her a note instead. I didn't read it, but I've always imagined it a certain way:

Regarding divorce,
It took twenty-three years for us to pick each other apart,
but the line for my signature isn't twenty-three years long
so I'll just write:
I'm sorry.

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Finger Lickin' Gold

Kait Perrodin

Photography



Out on a Limb

Tiana Jensen

Photography



Buffalo Jump

Abby Sweet

Tissue Paper, Oil Paint, Ink, Charcoal



Our Angel Boy

Torie Powell

Acrylic



Audrey Hepburn

Torie Powell

Acrylic



A Dream Upon Waking

Megan Riggs

35mm Film Print Toned

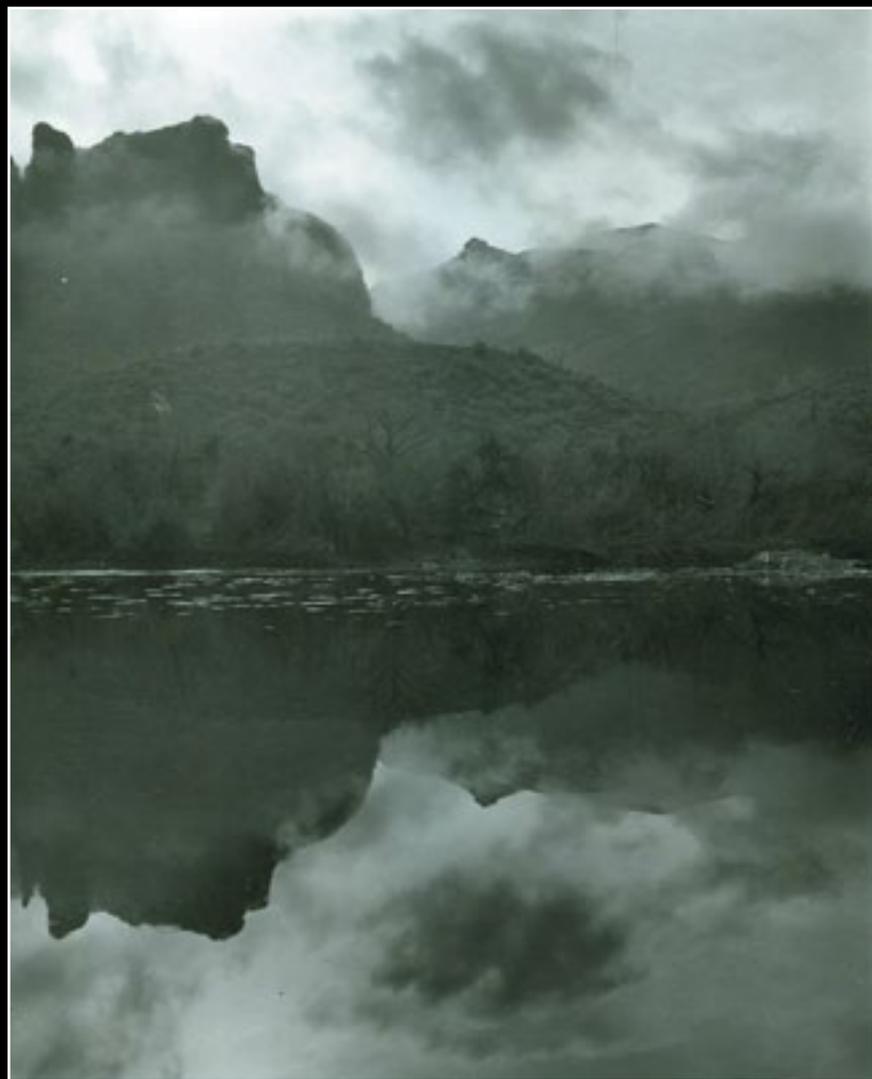
with Coffee & Sepia



Rolling Sunrise Fog

Stuart Garney

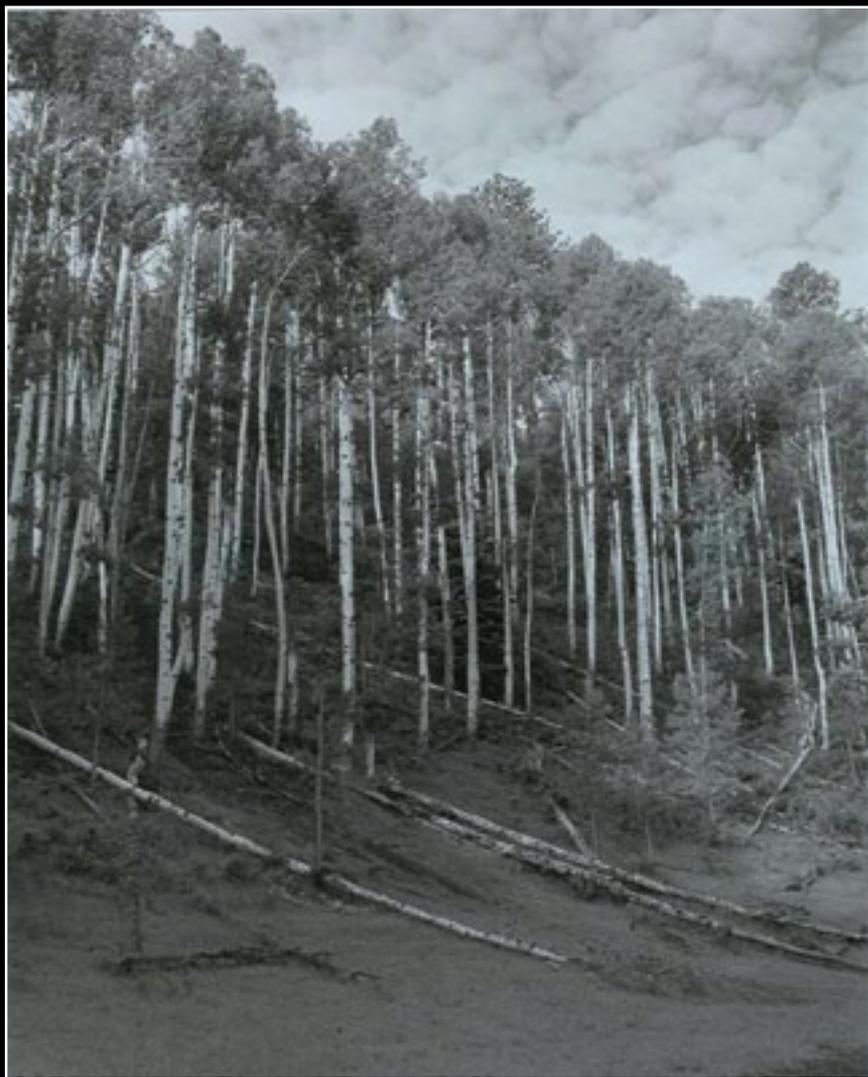
Silver Gelatin Film Print



Cloud River

Stuart Garney

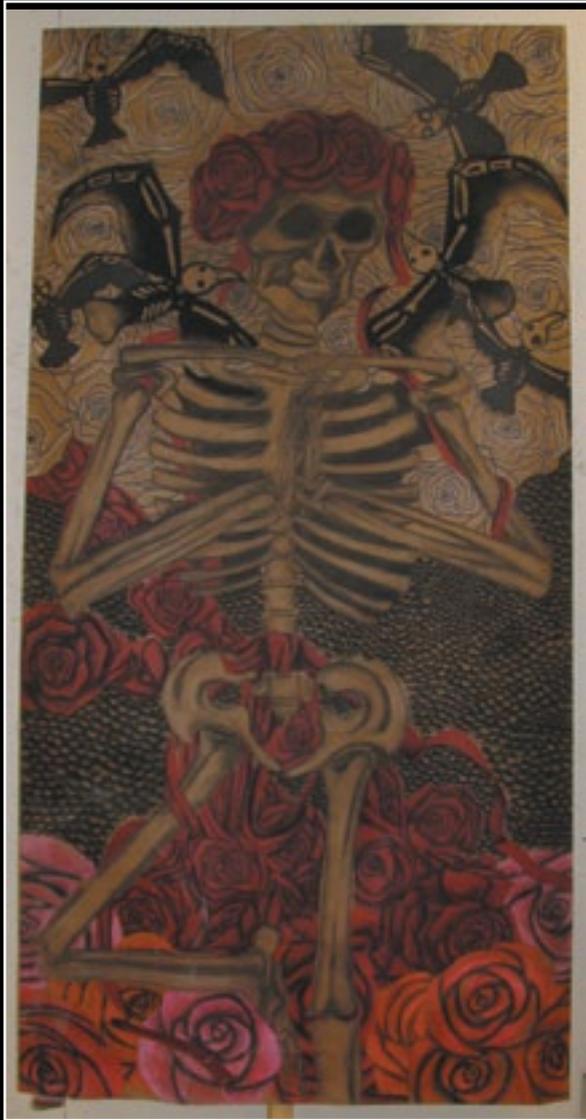
Silver Gelatin Film Print



Aspen Rise

Stuart Garney

Silver Gelatin Film Print



Peace in Death

Rachel Chansler

Marker, Charcoal, Pastel,
Colored Pencil, Graphite



When I Met Sylvia...

Rachel Chansler

Ink, Oil Pastel, Marker, Graphite



Self Portrait

Rachel Chansler

Pencil, Chalk, Pen, Marker

Matt Hassler

Hardspeak

A man in a suit is a softspoken man,
is a soft man who speaks, "Condition?
It's love, when you're in it, and
still love, when you're out of it."

A pretty red girl in the diner is in it.
Conditional, irises lost in her soft places.
The fly on my coffee cup, now drowning in it,
his tiny legs, they're in it. His hands.

I ask her for pie. I'm in it for pie.
softly she loves, "We're out of it."
She speaks, "We're out of it." I love
my tiny legs out of it. My hands.

Irises found beneath my coffee cup.
"What is that?" she loves. "Condition,"
I speak, softly. "It's 'still love.' It suits me fine,
and it isn't moving until I get a slice of pie.

Jacob Kahn

Leitmotif (4)

personally, I love the dog.
I have no qualms with the dog.
The dog sheds white snakeskins,
white fabrics, black hats,

62 tangerines. I yoke Tuesday
for the anonymous sail and blink away two dogs.
K I am not alone. I shout. I say
a surrender! On the carpet is a lake.
h Beneath the lake is this: Egypt.

n If you hit a dog he will tell you your secrets:
he explodes like a pill. Or confused
he will tell it to the grass.
There still is land
in his nose. Among it

I have memorized these triangles.
We were walking these
through gnarled fields. Angle of
fear, angle to hold
all of the human race, solace
and disease

but mostly the dog. Thin knobby
torso, flat cobbled
skull. How honest: his blue hindlegs
on fire. How, violet, grief

is mold on muscle. The dog is a ladder.
The dog like an arpeggio is
filled with teeth:

camera, glass, and fur!
Sun rises up.
The field is black.
The dog stretches off

path, before light, in dark,
in the less dark day.

The trees slump down off the string.

Claire Mikeson



Strawberry



Reservoir

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At the funeral all I could think about was Molly Ringwald. I couldn't stop staring at the picture above the casket, and I kept thinking to myself, cry damn it, cry, they're all staring at you. I mean, she's playing in some show on ABC Family, and she still has the red hair and all, but it's weird, like she shouldn't exist outside The Breakfast Club. It just doesn't fit. Jesus, I wish I could have just cried like everyone else, but the best I could do was stare at Rowan in that picture. His mom took it this summer, and if the angle had been wider I'd be in there too. He was sitting on their lawn in the picture, holding his guitar. He'd been playing no song in particular. He was looking sideways, looking at me past the wooden frame and smiling. He looked so ethereal, I could practically see the edge of a halo poking out under all that brown hair he was always trying to hide it with. I know I've never smiled like that. I don't know, but that casket just made me think of Molly Ringwald at forty-five.

Right after the funeral service Rowan's grandma came up to me and said, "What a strong girl for not crying!" Her curved spine was trying to poke through her black dress. I tried to look straight into her cataracts and only her cataracts, but I think she caught me glancing at her spine, all hunched up like her mom never made her drink a glass of milk in her life. I told myself, "Don't look at her spine, don't look at her spine" but it was so goddamn awkward and then I just had to look at it. I turned my head, expecting to meet Rowan's eyes, see the mutual smirk on his face, but then I remembered. When we were friends in elementary school, before my boobs and his deep voice, we used to call her "the dinosaur" and run around like we were raptors. When you're small you don't realize that you'll be old too and that kids will laugh at your reptilian qualities someday. Most teenagers don't realize it either I guess, but I stopped calling her

“the dinosaur.” Out loud anyway. I still look at her spine, but real sneaky, so on the off chance that there’s a God and he’s watching he might miss it, or at least notice my effort and maybe not send me to hell. I guess Rowan doesn’t have to worry about that anymore, about being a reptile. I still do though.

His grandma had wrinkled her scaly face in an effort to look sympathetic. She squeezed my hand with her bony fingers, but I could tell she hated me. I could tell she wanted to stab her long lumpy yellow nails straight through my palm because I couldn’t even cry at her grandson’s funeral. I could picture it, blood spurting from a crescent-shaped hole in my hand, her head back, cackling, “That’s what you get you little bitch!” She didn’t, but I know she wanted to. I wanted to explain to her that I tried to cry but I couldn’t because of Molly Ringwald. I wanted to tell her I had cried myself completely dry already and if she flipped me inside out my organs would be all cracked and dusty like salt flats.

That’s how my organs felt, but they must’ve still been working fine since I wasn’t dead. And I’m pretty sure your guts don’t ooze out salty tears, but I felt heavy and drippy inside for days, like the air was squishing all the wet out of me. And then after a while it stopped so I just figured there wasn’t any more wet left in my body at all. But I still wondered a few times if I might be dead too, just lying there finding paint pattern pictures on the bathroom ceiling. Except my mom kept coming in just to look at me, nervously fingering whatever small gem hung from her short silver chain at the indentation in her neck where they give you tracheotomies. I could tell she was always trying to think of something to say. She kept opening her mouth with a sharp inhale, and I’d wait and hear her shut it again, exhaling as she bit her little round lip. I wanted to tell her to shut up, that she was breathing too loud, but I just laid there real still so she’d think I was dead or something and leave. Sometimes she’d say, “Devyn, sweetie, you might feel a little better if you just got up off that hard floor” or, “Devyn, honey, maybe you’d feel better after a hot shower.” It was true, after about forty consecutive hours the bathroom floor was feeling pretty damn hard, and I wasn’t exactly the poster child for good hygiene. My clothes and hair had dried

after the first few hours, but they were stiff and made crunchy sounds whenever I moved. And I still smelled like lake water.

Last night I stood up and turned on the shower and stepped in, fish clothes and all, and I washed away the Strawberry Reservoir smell. It was ridiculous, it was so goddamn ridiculous, but I couldn't help thinking that whatever was still left of alive-Rowan in that dried up reservoir water was slipping down those round, black drain holes, screaming at me in a tiny, algae-coated voice. I wanted to cry but, you know, dust guts.

Maybe it's completely normal to think of weird, old Molly Ringwald at your boyfriend's funeral. I mean it sure as hell seemed like a better alternative to picturing Rowan inside that closed casket. The casket was flawless, shiny mahogany like it even mattered, like it was going to sit there in the church forever with his picture on it. But it didn't. They took it to the cemetery and piled shovel-fulls of dirt on it. I watched, and I felt sort of nauseous and claustrophobic, and when I got back to the car with my parents I puked in the parking lot.

"Oh god, honey," my mom said as she pulled out a kleenex and a mint from the dark abyss of her purse. "You don't have to go to that reception. Just come home with us Devyn." I had to go to the reception.

The reception was at Rowan's house, and when I got there everyone was ambling around making small talk through mouths stuffed with cookies. They were admiring the color scheme of Sloane's living room, commending her bold paint choices. They were telling her how sorry they were, what a good boy Rowan had been, what a loss to her it was even though "God gained an angel." I got that twitch in my fingers, the one that says, "Punch someone Devyn, punch someone right in the head," but I just squeezed my thumbs instead. Sloane managed a polite smile, and it didn't even look contrived.

Mourning was a good look for her. I mean, her skin always looks like milk anyway, but it practically gleamed with tragedy. I became self-conscious of my own pasty skin, without even bright hair or light eyes to compensate. She wore a tight black satin dress on her skinny six-foot body—classy tight, not slutty

tight—and she had put a lily from the funeral bouquet in her short Coke-can-red hair. Even though I'd showered I still had that special look that you can only get after marinating in fishy lake juices for a couple of days. I was wearing the only black dress I owned, sweating in long sleeves in August. And I was wearing my mourning underwear. After my shower I decided that that's exactly what they would be, my mourning underwear, the oversized, red Christmas ones with tiny nutcrackers all over them. Putting them on was always like a guarantee that I wouldn't be getting any for the next twenty-four hours. Rowan never seemed to care though. Every time he slipped them off, rolled them down my thighs, knees, ankles, I would laugh and tell him I thought a little less of him. I stood there, watching Sloane, at one end of the cookie table with my friends. They tried not to make eye contact.

You know those girls born with innate hugging abilities with the huge perma-smiles to match their huge white teeth? I've never been one of them. I don't even consider myself to be sub-par at it. I hug like shit, and I usually stay safely out of hugging range with my arms crossed. But I left my friends and went and hugged Sloane, probably mostly because I didn't really know what the hell I was supposed to say to her. When we let go I was probably squinting, I was looking so hard in her eyes for blame. Jesus, they were bluer than I'd ever seen them, a nice shade of no-matter-how-much-you-loved-Rowan-you-will-never-miss-him-like-I-do indigo. They didn't scream that though, like eyes sometimes do scream things. They stated it, subtly, tactfully—and they were probably right. Still, I was a little jealous of all the attention she was getting from those fat funeral women. They only glanced at me, whispering with their shriveled lips in between bites. Sloane kissed the top of my head, and I left.

When I got home I turned on the hot water so my mom wouldn't ask me how I felt again, and I spent another hour on the bathroom floor looking out the window. The warm fog crawled to its outer corners. That's what clouds are made of. I never thought of that before, that clouds are just water spread way out. You probably wouldn't even be able to feel a cloud. You'd think it'd be fun to sit on one; they look so puffy and comfortable, but really you'd fall right through.

When you're swimming in Strawberry Reservoir you can see the sky, the clouds at night. I mean, once you're actually in the water without all those trees around. There's none of that Provo pollution, just stars with sharp edges. You can float on your back and see the sky and pretend that all there is is sky—that's what being a fetus must feel like, or heaven. The first time we swam there in June Rowan got real quiet and just stared at the water. After a minute he grinned and said, "Look Dev, the stars are melting." He ran his hand through one of the water stars and we both watched it shatter softly into white ripples. He was concentrating so hard he made me laugh. "Apparently you don't understand the significance of melting stars," he told me. It was so dark out, but I could see his eyes squinting up, teasing me.

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"Apparently I don't," I said with the same feigned condescension. I pressed my body against his in the water and found his mouth, kissing him so hard our teeth hit. I loved the way his eyes watched those melty stars. His legs kept treading, harder, straining to support my weight. They were warm when they brushed against mine. It always surprised me to touch him, that he was solid. He was more like air than a cloud seems, and I guess half the time I expected him to dissolve, you know, dissolve in my fingers into a million tiny bits I couldn't feel. He was never really here in the way I'm here or even Sloane, the artist Sloane, is here. Rowan would be able to pinpoint that floating fetus feeling—I think it's all he knew—but that's the best I can describe it.

The bathroom window was white with mist, and I was sweating through my black dress. I heard my parents arguing outside the door.

"Well don't you think we should go in there?"

"Come on Corine, just let her be," my dad answered back.

"I'm worried about her, and you know when I open that door she's just going to be lying on the floor again. She needs us. She's just too damn stubborn."

"She'll talk when she wants to talk. For Christ sakes, you don't even know what to say to her."

I turned off the water and heard the wood floors creak as they hurried back to the kitchen. When I walked in they were

sitting at the table, still in their funeral clothes. They ignored the fact that I was still in mine.

“Devyn, honey, are you okay? How are you feeling? What a beautiful service that was! That picture of Rowan just captured him so well...” my mom trailed off, realizing that the pile of words in her stomach had suddenly dwindled, that they might not even get her anywhere. She nervously patted the curls at the back of her auburn hair. They were stiff with hairspray. She glanced at my dad then back to me, expecting someone to say something, but I just looked at her. I told her I was going for a bike ride.

“In your nice dress?” She furrowed her dark, immaculate eyebrows and scrunched up her lipstick lips—her concerned face. It was the same face she gave to Rowan whenever he refused to eat a third helping of her shepherd’s pie. She looked like she wanted to punch me or braid my hair. I couldn’t tell.

As I swung one leg over my bike she screeched from the doorway, “Honey everyone will see your underwear!” She paused then went on, “I wish you would talk to me about this!”

For the forty-some hours on the bathroom floor I couldn’t not think of him green. I couldn’t not think of him dark green and suspended like some science project in a jar. It was like when you stare at a bright light and then close your eyes, but the light’s still there in the wrong color. Even when you squeeze your eyes so tight you see it, and it follows your pupils around. All I could see was dark green, a black body, floating hair silhouetted from above by ripply water light. Really, I don’t know how it happened, and I never actually saw Rowan like that, but it was tattooed on my retinas anyway. I mean, you see all these paintings of that one chick in Hamlet who drowned, like it’s supposed to be so god-damned pretty, but I couldn’t stop classifying him with formaldehyde cow eyes and fetal pigs.

I was lying on the wooden dock next to him. We’d just had sex in the grass and gone swimming in the lake. I guess it’d sound more poetic if we had sex on the dock, but the wood was so old I’d get splinters. It was nice to just lie on it though. Rowan turned on his side, pressed his hand in the puddle under our

naked bodies then traced his dripping fingers down my spine. As the goose bumps erupted all over me he laughed. "You can really be a dick sometimes, you know that?" I told him and dipped my hand over the edge of the dock and flicked water on his side. The tiny white hairs on his skin poked up straight, catching little water orbs that followed the creases of his abs to the gray wood of the dock. He stood up, jumped over me, cannon-balled into the water. I yelled at him for splashing me, told him to get back out, it was warmer with him next to me. He always had these theories, all these theories he'd tell me. "You know what Dev, humans long intrinsically for warmth. Even in the summer." At the time I hadn't known what the word "intrinsic" meant. But I mean, of course humans want that. I don't know if there was something more to it or if he was just always bullshitting me because I liked to hear it, liked the way his head fit in my lap. He made everything sound so damn vital.

He didn't get back on the dock though; he told me he was going to swim for a little longer. I woke up around four, cold.

Mom came into the bathroom sometime Thursday afternoon and told me Sloane was in the kitchen to see me. I stayed there real still. A few minutes later she came back and told me Sloane thought I'd want to know about the autopsy. She said the doctor had said that these things happen and that they happen pretty quickly. When someone starts to drown it's usually silent. They don't call out because they use all their energy trying not to go under. She said even though Rowan was pretty strong, pretty athletic, he wasn't a great swimmer. He got tired is all.

It was true, I guess. He'd never taken swimming lessons. He'd get a little offended when I made fun of him for not being able to do the front crawl, but sometimes he'd do this thing where he swam like a squid because it made me laugh so hard. He was always a little awkward in the water, but he knew how to swim. It didn't make any sense. I wanted someone to scream at, to scream, "Why did you do that?" It could have been anybody else, anybody.

When I woke up alone there on the dock I yelled for him. I yelled

his name and laughed. Then after a minute, I yelled again and told him he wasn't being funny anymore. I screamed his name, screamed that he was scaring the shit out of me. I dove off the dock and kept screaming and crying and spinning around in the water to see where he went, but there wasn't enough light. I couldn't see anything.

I drove the pickup back to Sloane's, going about ninety the whole way, and the drive was shorter than it'd ever been. When I got there the front door was locked and I hit it, kicked it until Sloane opened it in her underwear. Her eyes were a little swollen with sleep, but when she saw me they got real wide. I can't forget how her face looked, like she already knew everything, and I thought her eyes were going to light me on fire.

"Where's Rowan? What happened Devyn?" She talked so fast and gripped my shoulders tight, trying to hold my shaking body still.

Her long white legs looked strangely vulnerable, and as I stood there sobbing I realized I had forgotten to put my pants back on. It was less awkward than in dreams, but I would've settled for awkward. Sloane ran every red light on the way to the police station as I told her what happened. The cops wouldn't take me back to the reservoir with them.

I had ridden a few blocks on my bike when I decided that my dress was too tight around my thighs. It was too hard to pedal. I set my bike against a tree and ripped my dress up the seams on both sides. Everyone could definitely see my Christmas underwear then. I smiled. I think Rowan would've liked that I wore them to his funeral. The back half of my dress hung down and flapped against my bike tire as I rode.

I'd never been to Sloane's art studio without Rowan before. Our high school was four blocks away, and we'd usually hang out there after school waiting for Sloane to give us a ride when she was done with work. She was always trying to get us to make something out of all that clay she had piled up in the back, and we were always pretty apathetic. A few months ago she finally flipped the sign on the door to "Closed," clapped her hands

together and said, "Alright kiddos, time to get off your asses and make some pottery!" I explained to her that my only exposure to art happened to be a particular phase of my childhood when I drew multitudes of pictures of balloon farms. Sloane had no sympathy. She took my hands and shaped them around the wet clay, then Rowan's hands, and she laughed as I created something that vaguely resembled a bowl, but really just looked more like what I would imagine a giant tumor would look like. I painted it orange. She set our lumpy pots carefully in the kiln and said she'd sell them the next day and make millions. She told me there was an illustrious future for me in the tumor-bowl industry.

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I locked my bike in a rack in the park a block away from Sloane's studio and ran the rest of the way. I pushed open the glass door and a bell rang, a real one, old and made of metal with chipped red paint. Sloane's so classy. She was sitting in the back room, like I'd thought she'd be, making something out of the wet, gray clay spinning on her pottery wheel. She was wearing a loose yellow tank top and baggy jeans, cuffed at the bottom and smeared with clay and paint. Her hair was up and lumpy, with the shortest wisps clinging to the sweat on the back of her neck. The kiln made the room so warm; it was unbearable in August. She still wore the lily.

When I walked in she shook her red bangs out of her face and looked up at me. I looked down at her hands, suddenly realizing that I hadn't planned out what to say. I guess I just thought it would come to me when I saw her, but I just stood there opening and shutting my mouth like a fish when it's dying. I didn't take my eyes off Sloane's long fingers shaping the clay. She didn't even have to look at it. It spun around and around real fast, fat and round and squishy, and my face got so damn hot. I thought maybe it was a stupid idea to come there.

"Devyn, what are you doing here?" Sloane asked me in a quiet voice, but not mean, just how you'd probably ask if you were an artist getting your art on and someone interrupted you mid-pot. She looked at my shredded dress, my red face. It was sweaty from the bike ride over and I could feel my dark hair plastered to my forehead. "What happened to you?" She had to keep

her hands on the clay.

"I...I...hi Sloane," I answered and finally made myself make eye contact. Eye contact is the worst. I never know how much is enough or whether it's okay to look from one eye to the other over and over and over. And Sloane has the pretty eyes, the kind that are white-blue with the dark blue around the edges, and it's even worse with people pretty eyes. I always think they have to know how uncomfortable they're making you with their unsettling eyes, like they can see you naked when you're fully clothed. They have to know that the reason you're staring at their eyes is only half because of eye contact, that the main reason is because you can't not stare.

"What happened to you?" she repeated. "You're looking a little rough." She smiled at me, a polite, tired smile.

"It was too hard to pedal in my dress."

"Oh," she answered. Just "oh," like nothing was wrong or ridiculous, my dirty torn dress, the nutcracker underwear, Rowan, and she glanced back down and admired her hands like they were part of the clay, like she was going to cook them in the kiln too, hard and perfect and permanent.

"He knew how to swim," I whispered.

"What?"

"I said, he knew how to swim."

Then she dropped her hands like they weren't hers, like they couldn't break, weren't long and thin and glassy. The clay kept spinning. "It's not your fault Devyn."

"I mean, it doesn't make any sense because he knew how to swim."

"It's not anybody's fault." Around and around and around. She looked like a statue, like some Greek pottery goddess sitting there so stiff.

"I was sleeping. I was just sleeping Sloane."

"It was an accident!" She was yelling.

"He knew how to swim though. He knew how to swim..."

It was all I could offer.

"Jesus Devyn, stop saying that!" she was screaming now, standing up. She grabbed a clay bowl, deep purple, from a shelf full of pottery and threw it on the concrete floor. It shattered, and

the sharp edges were exposed and white.

“I fucking know he knew how to swim!” she screamed at me, leaning toward me a little, like how angsty teens scream in movies. The next one she smashed was a pot that Rowan had made, dark green and lumpy. Then my orange blob. Then a red vase, and she kept going and going, and I thought there must be something to it so I opened a bottle of glaze and thrashed it around until the bottle was empty, and glaze splattered the floor.

I was on my fourth bottle when Sloane crumpled down into the puddle of all the colors mixing up, in the middle of a shelf’s worth of pottery shards. She put both hands in her red hair, smearing it with wet clay, and the lily fell to the floor. She started crying. Maybe not crying. Maybe sobbing. Yeah, sobbing and shaking for air with her mouth open so wide like oxygen wasn’t quite doing it for her.

I just stood there not knowing what to do, and I thought I’d been doing a lot of that lately. But I mean, you think adults aren’t supposed to cry like that. When I was little I used to keep my blanket lying exactly like it was when I woke up in the morning because I knew it would change when I moved it and it would never be the same again. My parents laughed and said I was being weird, and I thought it was just a sad child thought, something to grow out of. At night I used to figure out the increasing percentage of life that I’d lived. I gave myself eighty years. At ten I was 12% done with life. At thirteen I was 16% done, and I was scared. I guess I always thought that’s what kids feel though, that when you grow up you would feel better, but Sloane was sobbing, and you don’t.

The abandoned clay on the electric pottery wheel had finally stopped spinning, but it was flattened and sharp now, and the air was squishing me again. I started crying. My throat constricted. It felt full of paint all dripping down, hardening into rock like I was looking at Medusa instead of Sloane there in a heap on the floor. I still didn’t know what to say to her to fix it even a little bit, but if I did I couldn’t have said it anyway. I was exhausted, and I let my shoulders drop—shoulders, back, hips, knees folded until I was down on the concrete too. I crawled over to Sloane, lied down next to her and put my head in her shud-

dering lap. I pinched my eyes shut so tight and stuffed my painty fingers in my ears because I just couldn't stand her sobbing like that. The glaze on the concrete soaked through my dress, wet and cool on my back. Eventually she stopped crying.

When I got home Mom didn't ask any questions. She helped me take off my dress. She wadded it up and threw it in the trash and washed the glaze from my hair.

I think tomorrow I'll throw my dirty underwear in Strawberry Reservoir.

Jacob Garding
The Dredging Pull

from "Sea Grapes" by Derek Walcott

And which are you, I wonder,
skirting the edge, an Odysseus
or the other man still

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unwritten? Be sure that man
undone by twentieth century choices
hears her name in the gull's

cry, and it's said the nearby
waves mimic the heart.
The grapes are ripe and ready

for sale, practically falling off
the bunch these days, and no
one's sure who Prometheus is anymore.

From your sandy vantage, now
mine by invitation, it's not
enough to look to giants

and you admitted such; a truer
form looks in mirrors, while
the dredging pull wakes within.

Despite intentions, we are our epics.

Amie Macdonald

(Running Shorts *)*

That's New York if you sing it. Begonias
between rusted cosmetics, speckled like
whippoorwill eggs and twice around the
ice. Leaves turning slow, slower, listless
where beauty runs short, an orange flashy tinge, autumn
veining in
and out between stale smoke and chopped
liver. Eating out of paper carton
never so bright. Winter roughed
cheek, and a thumb chimes
the little silver bell. Hours later
small talk in an empty bar, whiskey,
rocks. That's why she had me over.
Pages turned,
an old Jane Eyre lullaby.

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Suzy Bertsche



Cigarette Ad



Her toes are pointed. I was told the toes were important. Now her toes are callused and tan in her river ready sandals. She holds a cigarette erect. Now she drinks smoothies full of new age protein powders I can't pronounce. Her eyes are hidden behind thick cat-eye sunglasses. Now her eyes are rimmed with black eyeliner she got tattooed in Mexico. Her mouth is thick and pushed out. Her chin has a dimple, like a forgotten punctuation mark. Now her mouth is a light pink sagging line, her chin is a cobweb of fine wrinkles. The background could be the skyline of Hollywood or some suburb of New York City. Now she lives in Mexico or in her too-silver airstream at the Missoula KOA. I lay this picture over how I know her today. The effect is harsh and uncomfortable like silk over burlap.

Posed in a plastic woven lounge chair, hair styled, cigarette perched and ready, pedicured toes, plaid shorts melt into pale long legs, her white collared shirt wrinkled at the elbows, the buttons cast an S shaped shadow down her chest. "Is that the aunt that looks like your mom?" is the way she is identified among my friends. I know her from the others as the one who likes potatoes as much as I do. She is the aunt who never did art projects with me or sent crocheted bears. She is the aunt who takes me hiking and on driving trips to ponds during family reunions. Buddhism, literature, travel, and trees are the things we talk about. The aunt whose husband's ashes I freed into the Blackfoot and toasted with my first Canadian Crown Royal Whiskey on the rocks. Like my mother and me, when she laughs her cheeks rise and almost cover her squinted eyes. Her visits from Mexico are not few, but when I see her it seems like years have passed. Posed on the lawn chair she is exotic and familiar to me.

A necklace of power lines runs above her head. The front left corner of the lounge chair is cut off. Her white legs are over exposed. The depth of field is wrong. The mountains are both-

ersome and blurry. He should have changed his aperture. Years later he would have known how to technically make the picture perfect. My uncle wouldn't have relied on the subject to make it pop. He would have reached into his fishing vest turned photographers' vest and pulled out rabbits and bouquets to make the photograph sing. What would the picture be like if he had taken it ten years later? My aunt would have been holding my cousin's hand, with his brother in her belly. The background would be a forest of Oregon green instead of a city. The photographer would have a list of errands and appointments running through his head as he set the scene and not what the midterm would be in his next class.

The round thick metal ashtray balances on the edge of the armrest. Is it carved with an Indian Raja and Rani or old English roses and girls in bonnets? The ring she wears sparks in the black and white sun. Is it on her middle or ring finger? The wide wood planks of the porch are old and rough. Does she have a splinter in her arched foot? Her sunglasses make jagged dark shadows on her cheekbones. What is she seeing behind those glasses? Is she looking into an apartment window, watching a couple arguing over what to make for dinner? Or is she looking at my uncle's large frame bent over the camera, his lips and eyes saturated with a smile? Her face is calm, all her features flimsy, yet there is a purposefulness to her. She is rigid with relaxation. Is she thinking about a grocery list or her father's death?

I find the photo on the dining room table, it looks dirty against the laundered white table cloth. My cheeks bloat with blush. I pick it up, careful to hold it by its crimped edges. The photo is heavier and more solid than I thought it would be. I put the photo back and check for fingerprints.

I eavesdrop on their first date. He picks her up after one of my grandma's meals of fresh peas, mashed potatoes, a chicken from the yard and a pit-filled-cherry-pie made by the youngest sister. He is a public school boy, she goes to Sacred Heart Academy. He is well dressed, even if his shirt is too tight. She made the red cotton dress she wears. How would the grandpa I never met greet this burly boy who came to pick up one of his four daughters?

I stand as the fourth bridesmaid at their wedding. My mother is sixteen years old and stands taut as the maid of honor. The yellow daises in her hands are starting to wilt. Our floppy hats and Dotted Swiss dresses make us look like guests at the Mad Hatter's tea. The scene is drenched in yellow.

I sit across the street and watch my mother plead with my cousin who is parked in the middle of the street with his arms folded and face tight. My aunt dumped them on my mother the morning after they made the drive to Seattle. His older brother watches and holds my mother's hand. She reasons, begs and tries to bribe the boy with treats from the grocery bags she clutches. The boy re-crosses his arm and shuts his eyes. She leaves the two year old in the street and tramps down the hill.

I am next to his hospital bed, my aunt is in the parking lot doing her first drug deal at sixty-five. I can't see my uncle. I never saw him once he was diagnosed. I don't imagine him fragile and small for he never was when I knew him. My aunt comes up and gives him a cookie. I can see my aunt, I can see the cookie, I can see the bed, but I can't see him. I still can't see him. I see his photo in the cherry frame, I see his fine art photographs that litter my parent's house, I see his children, his grandchildren and I see his wife. She is carefully sprawled on a lawn chair. She sees her husband.

"This is not a photo of Mary, this is a photo of a sixties movie star," I say to my mother, and she laughs. She cuts up a nectarine and pours sugar over it, the fat crystals scrap over the white plate. "We all looked like that back then," she says. She asks if I want a slice, and I take the smallest one, and drench it with sugar. "But look at her hair, and those sunglasses." My mother keeps eating.

The photo is large, a loaf of bread long, two soda cans high. It has dents and wrinkles. The image is black and white, but the border is light cream. Unlike the others there is no mat or frame, no price tag or artist's signature. It's from his private collection, stored in a trailer, in one of the stacks that reach the ceiling. One of millions. It was a class assignment at some fancy photography school. That's why her toes are pointed.

Josh Wagner

(Buffalo Jump)

silence is the edge
between delight and
a buffalo jump

at the bottom is a
heap. See, at the top is a ...
and at the base of silence
someone stares up, and finds he
has forgotten what he was about
to say

at the top, on her belly she is
peering low, shocked at how
far the gulf has—
since
that spark of thunder

the plains roar with it
and you can see the shrieking eyes
of the mute

[Punctured at the base, note
how the skull has
fractured here

and here]

from up top she is shouting
and he hears her somehow
from one word
to another:

“it’s all theory—
to say
precisely at what height a fall would
kill you or would not ”

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2011 Contributors

ISMAEL PALLARES // is a sophomore studying English at the University of Montana. He moved to Montana from his hometown of Wasco, Calif., in 2003, and hasn't been able to leave the mountains since.

MATT HASSLER // originally from Lewistown, MT, is a junior at the University of Montana, studying Creative Writing and English Literature. His interest in poetry and lyrical prose stemmed from a musical upbringing in the midst of the landscapes and townscapes of rural Montana.

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ALISSA SMITH // is a third-year English education major from Colorado Springs, Colorado. She wants to teach high school English and creative writing, and she is ecstatic to be a part of such an excellent program at The University of Montana.

THOMAS MACFIE //

ELLA PFALZGRAFF // is a junior studying Creative Writing at the University of Montana. She hails from Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

EMMA ANDRUS // is a junior from Glasgow, MT studying Creative Writing and Film Studies at UM.

CLAIRE MIKESON // is from Stanford, Montana. She's a sophomore majoring in Literature and Creative Writing.

JAMES BURKHART // is a junior from Anaconda, MT studying Creative Writing as well as pursuing a certificate in the Entertainment Business Management program.

LYNN BARLOW // is a freshman majoring in Creative Writing and Anthropology at UM. She comes from Los Alamos, New Mexico.

ABBY SWEET // is currently finishing her Associate of Arts Degree at the Missoula College of Technology and hopes to begin studying Fine Art and Creative Writing within the next year. She grew up in Stockett, MT, and hopes to one day write and illustrate children's books.

CLAIRE BACHOFNER // is a senior from Kalispell, MT studying Creativing Writing.

TYLER MORGAN // is a senior in the English: Creative Writing program. He's originally from Bainbridge Island, Washington outside of Seattle. He enjoys territorial gophers and Steven Seagal's potential mustache.

TURNER CANTY // is a liar and a charlatan. He was born in Florida and has little recollection of its sandy beaches. On living in Missoula Canty says: "I would have liked it a lot better if they had kept the indoor tennis courts up in Hellgate canyon, also, there is no place in this town to get decent food from the Indian sub-continent". Some say Canty's work only mildly passes the guidelines for plagiarism, other's have contended that it stays trapped between the fork in the road of art and mutiny. If you keep your eyes peeled this spring you may see Canty digging a trough in his yard in an attempt to feebly collect the tears of Missoula as they drain off of people's thawed and emotional faces.

KAIT PERRODIN // is from Havre, Montana and will be graduating this year with degrees in Photojournalism and Creative Writing.

TIANA JENSEN // is a sophomore majoring in Communication Studies. She's from Circle, Montana and loves photography and the outdoors.

TORIE POWELL // is currently a sophomore at the University. As of now she is a Pre-English major and hopes to become a French minor. She is from Whitefish, Montana, and has two major passions in life: baking and making artwork.

MEGAN RIGGS // is a third year Photojournalism student in The School of Journalism at The University of Montana and grew up in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

STUART GARNEY // is a senior from Phoenix, Arizona, majoring in Environmental Studies at UM.

RACHEL CHANSLER // was born in Missoula, moved to Lolo at 8 years old, and moved back into town to start college. She is currently in her second semester of her freshman year. She is a Political Science major, with a minor in Art.

86 JACOB KAHN //

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JAMES GARDING // is a junior from Helena, MT, studying Creative Writing and Literature at UM.

AMIE MACDONALD // is a senior studying English-Creative Writing. She was born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, but is happy to call Missoula home for the last 5 years.

SUZY BERTSCHE // is a junior from Missoula studying Creative Writing and Social Work at UM.

JOSH WAGNER // was born with a broken heart. Fresh out of the womb with Patent Ductus Arteriosus, he required open heart surgery to close off an artery that should have closed itself. The doctor who performed the surgery was Leonard Bailey, a scalpel wizard who eventually went on in 1984 to implant the first baboon heart into a human, the 12-day-old girl known as "Baby Fae". In a startling coincidence, that same year Josh had his heart metaphorically broken for the first time by a girl in his 5th grade class. Her name was not Fae, as much as Josh's literary sensibilities might wish it had been. The scar from his operation is still visible, a long jagged thing running all the way up his back from just behind the base of his ribs. Josh continues to insist that this is actually where a dragon once bit him. The scar from his first crush is a bit harder to find.

Wagner finally got a break in writing with the publication of his award-winning Graphic Novel, "Fiction Clemens". His poetry and prose has been published internationally, and last year the Montana Actor's Theater produced his first stage play, "Salep & Silk". He currently attends the University of Montana, and hopes they'll let him be a Creative Writing Major sometime soon.

