

Parnassus

THE LITERARY ARTS
MAGAZINE
OF NORTHERN ESSEX
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

2019

Let's close out another decade together, another stellar ten years of *Parnassus* here at Northern Essex Community College. The future is unwritten, unknown, unforeseen, but if the past years are any indication of where we're headed, we are more than willing to strap in to the artistic cockpit and launch out into what is to come.

As always, *Parnassus* looked this past year for the finest works that the NECC community tossed into our open arms, and we are delighted to show you the best of the best. *Parnassus* doesn't work without the brave souls who take on the task of putting themselves out there, facing the possibility of outright rejection, balanced with the hopes that their works could be immortalized in our annual collection. To everyone who sent in your creations, we thank you, and we hope that you will be back next year. Spread the word, hold your breath, and try, try, try. 2020 will be here before any of us will be ready, but when it comes, our arms will remain spread to receive what you transmit.

Happy reading!

Parnassus *awards*

NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE | HAVERHILL, MA

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NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION

FIRST PLACE, EASTERN DIVISION: 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009

SECOND PLACE, EASTERN DIVISION: 2016, 2008

ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS PACEMAKER AWARDS

BEST IN NATION, TWO-YEAR COLLEGES: 2018, 2011

FINALIST: 2017, 2013, 2009

COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

GOLD CROWN: 2011

SILVER CROWN: 2010

AMERICAN SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

FIRST PLACE WITH MERIT: 2009, 2008

FIRST PLACE: 2016, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010

BEST GALLERY: 2008

BEST PAGE DESIGN: 2010

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PARAGON AWARDS

GOLD: 2017, 2011

SILVER: 2009

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Dale Rogers Jr.

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guest artist

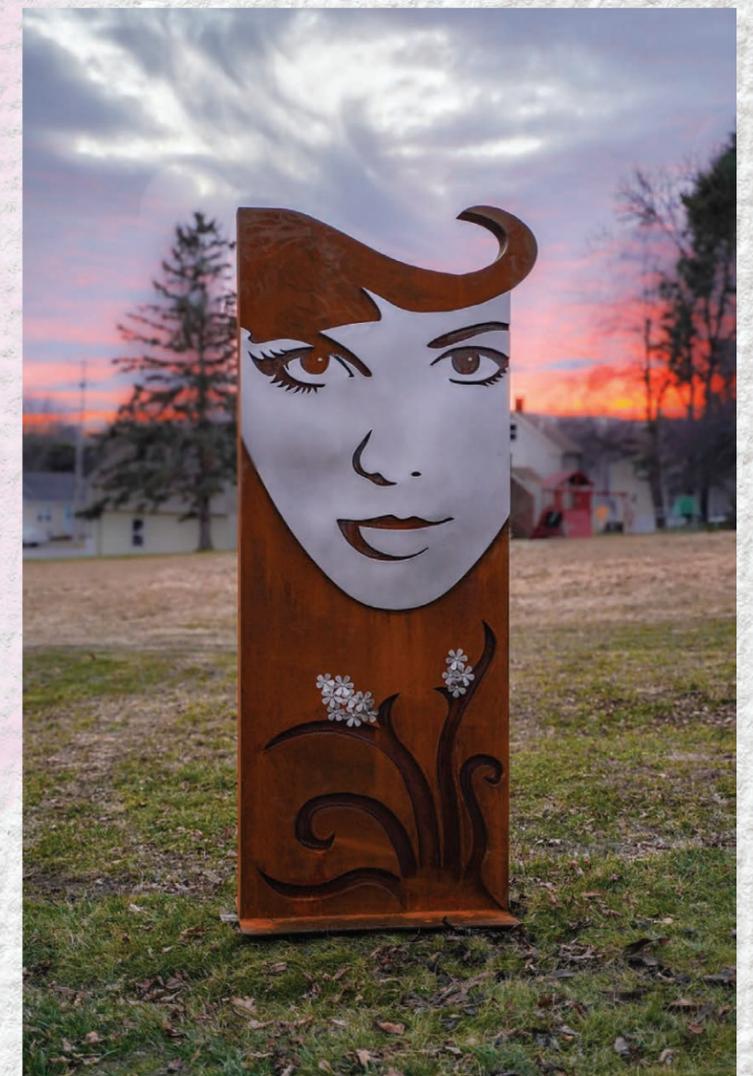
DALE ROGERS JR. grew up on his family's dairy farm in Haverhill, Massachusetts. From a young age, Rogers was designing and creating, using whatever materials he could find. He struggled in school and was diagnosed with a learning disability in third grade, requiring him to spend most of his days in a single classroom with only a few other students. A fifth-grade teacher and high school art teacher really changed his life. They recognized his artistic abilities and fostered his creativity while building his self-confidence. After high school, he attended Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, NH and majored in business, sidelining his interest in art.

After graduating from college, Rogers worked in the family water-bottling plant, Spring Hill Water. Responsible for keeping the bottling equipment running, he performed what he terms "quick-and-dirty welding" to improve plant efficiency. His natural-born creativity led him to experiment with welding, learning about push-pull effects of metal, anticipating how the material would react and how he could manipulate it. He became consumed by thoughts of metal and sculpting it.

Working professionally as a metal sculptor since 2002, his true love for art is with abstract geometrics. Rogers has incorporated iconic and whimsical shapes into his collection, striving to create sophisticated, thought-provoking work. His large-scale work is originally designed, lasercut, TIG welded, and hand-finished from CorTen and/or Stainless Steel.

Rogers' most recognizable design is the *American Dog*. A 16ft tall version can be seen beside I-495 in Haverhill, MA. The Big Dog Show, his temporary travelling art exhibit, consists of 20 eight-foot tall American Dog sculptures. It has been to 23 cities in 11 states over the last ten years and continues to tour the country. It's been a huge success and has helped to raise well over half a million dollars for different nonprofit organizations.

For more information please visit: dalerogersstudio.com or email: dale@dalerogersstudio.com.





I want to be a part of placing art in as many public venues as possible. I truly believe adding sculpture to the public landscape forever enhances the environment and the art serves as a reflection of the quality of the community.

-Dale Rogers Jr



nocturn



HORSE THIEF

— Diana Burke

For I am born of honored genes
Of scoundrel ruffians.
The destitutes and libertines
Gave unwrapped skeletons.

It's far from only corpses left,
It's villages as well,
Rewarded for their desperate theft,
Sent off to different Hell—

And thusly were my roots so clipped.
The ultimate result
Of exiles being poorly shipped,
Is bred by catapult.

I stumble like a foreigner
Where lies my origin,
But knowing where the bastards were,
Not where I do begin.

MOTHS

— Susan LaFortune

tricked by a bright star
in late November

teasing them out from
a winter's bed

and the rain pounds life
against glass doors
frosted window panes

stuck on light lampposts
house shingles

each time
the door opens

they
land on countertops.

I find some days later
clung to my sweater

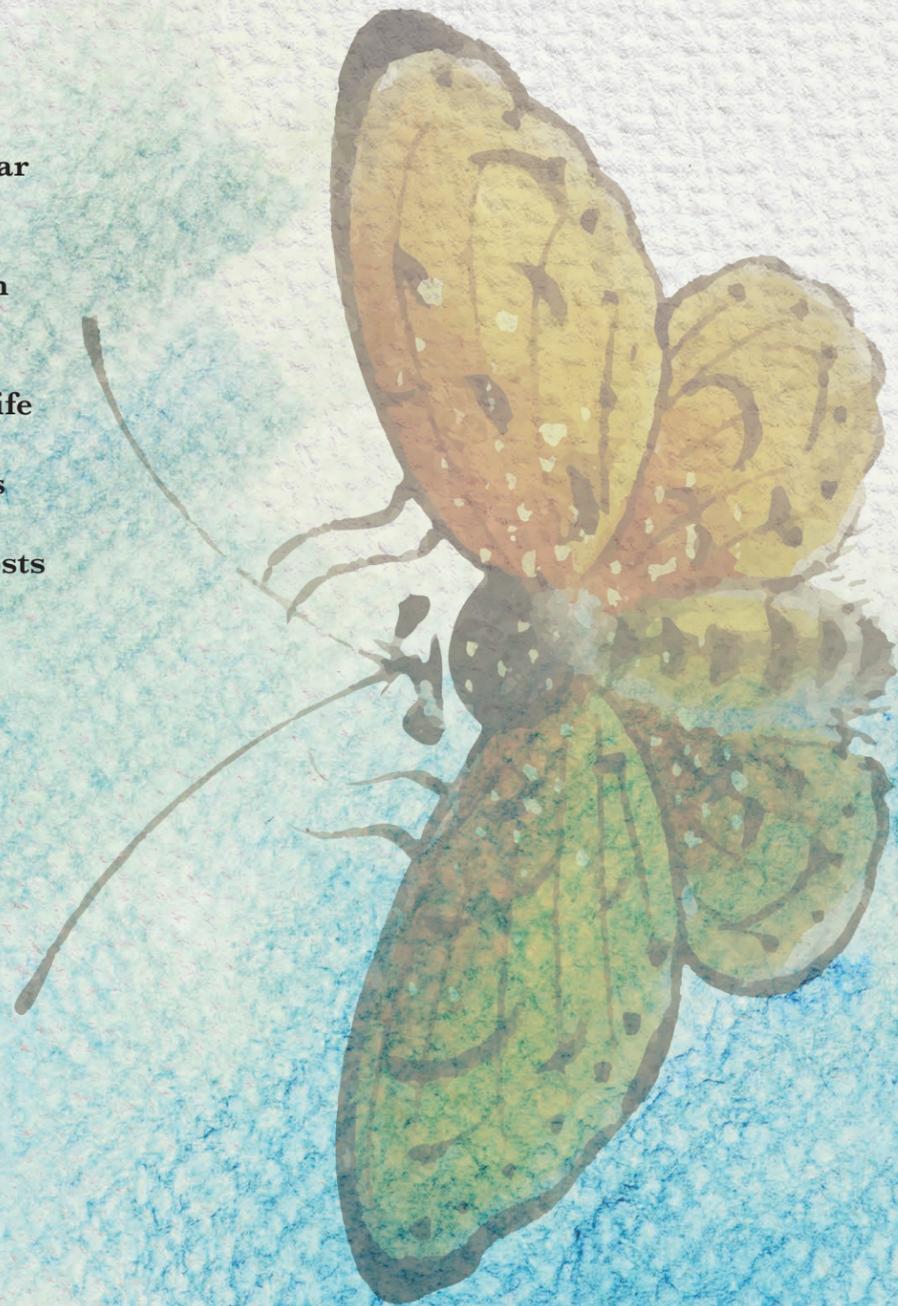
lying limp in the
laundry basket and

I remember how
in the summertime
they come with

a veil of fluttering.

Delicate bodies
grotesque in mortality

Dust is the glow
of paper wings to flame.



MORRIGAN

— Diana Burke

Hot and wet, not in a way men would like; for where they are concerned, I'm a desert.
I am a marvel of nature, a dry-blooded fiend who could make the Pope's fez hurt.

Drenched from the ocean I live in; dehydrate internally, free from all fluid—
Priests shake before me—their Christians have nothing comparing in years to a Druid.

Hiding societies dwell 'neath the land; I am one of a people of many.
Someday we'll dive to the deck-top, and not a landlubber will have left a penny.

Dry on the outside and squishy within, petite humans may treat us with organs
Perfect for flooding our mansions—the bleeding sustaining a species of Morrigan.

Sea monsters surface on top of their turf is a vision of horror they dream not;
Nightmares of peons exclude us—they look at their ponds and our shadows do seem not.

Scholars are wary; they know of our scary potential impending exhibit—
They will be first of the village accurst to be dangled by liberty's gibbet.

Hiding societies dwell 'neath the land, but the populous thinks this surprising.
Screams serenade on the hour, the soundtrack of our eventual rising.

MY BOY IS A MACHINE.

— Susan Lafortune

Son,

It's 7:45 on Tuesday night, I just got your arrival call. There are no words to say, no letters to write, nothing to send. I can't tell you what this feels like, as you-can-not-tell me what or where you are; how tears harden in my throat. I want for you the world. I want for you to be ok even when it's hard. It's hard here too. It's a black sky to know you are-hurting and missing the warmth of home. No matter where you are, you are loved.

But, like you, I need to keep going to get past the pain and focus on what needs to be done now-
Now my heart longs to see you, my boy, my bright star.

Love, Mom

UPON THIS FIRST SUNRISE

— Susan Lafortune

My son carries a gun now,
across a place
or an island

learning how
to become
a machine

America runs by machines

your body now-
gears and metal
meticulous in purpose
eyes are scopes

They hear
your squeaky wheels
and drown you with
oil

They found
the hidden piece
the place where
your heart stays

replaced by a
key that clicks
revs your engine
....OOHRAH

my boy's body
a transmitter
in the dark

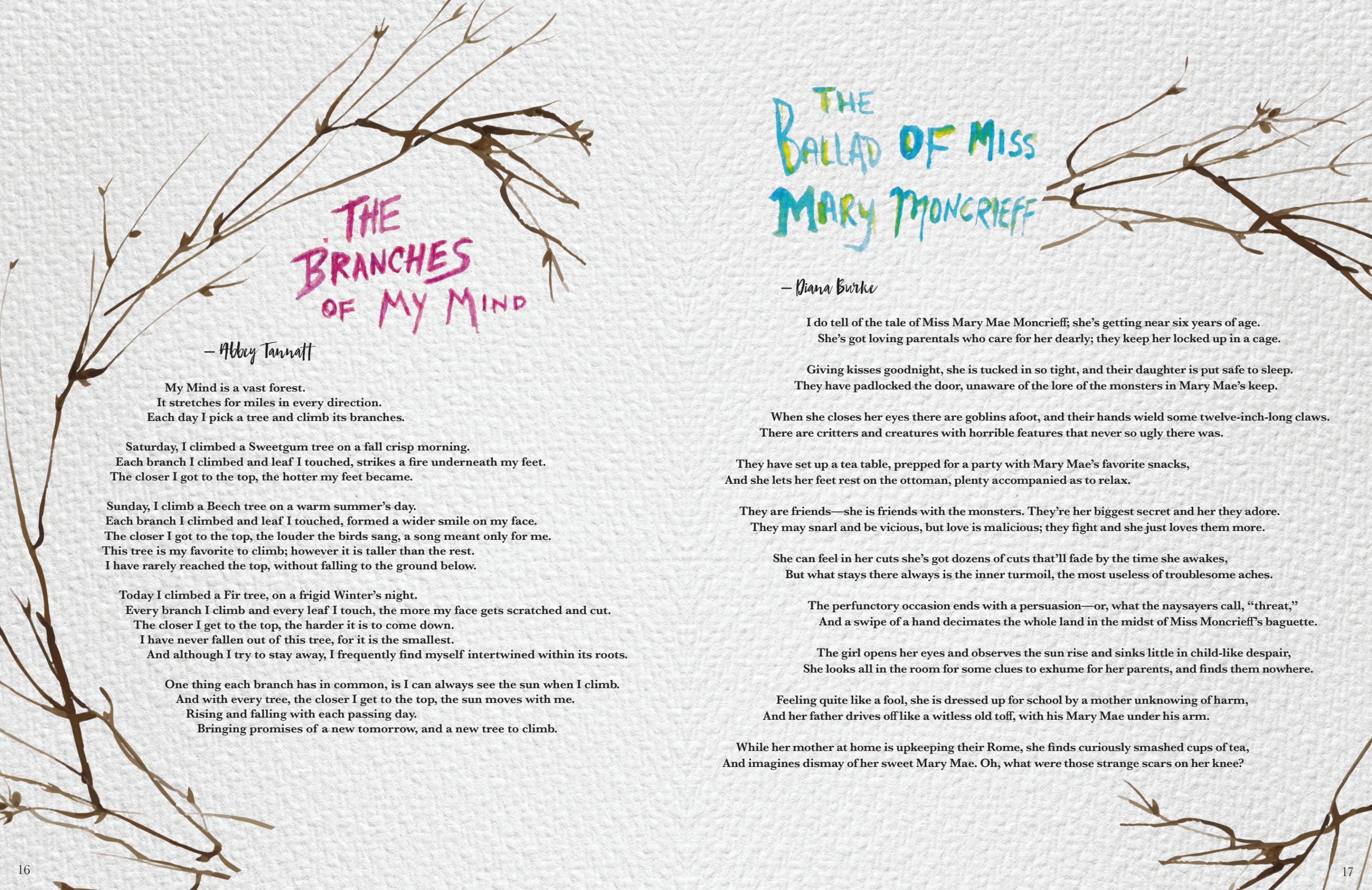
perfect
night vision

Oh say can you see

a piece of me
stays with you

while you
stay lodged
in the pharynx

of an eagle's
throat.



THE
BRANCHES
OF MY MIND

— Abbey Tannatt

My Mind is a vast forest.
It stretches for miles in every direction.
Each day I pick a tree and climb its branches.

Saturday, I climbed a Sweetgum tree on a fall crisp morning.
Each branch I climbed and leaf I touched, strikes a fire underneath my feet.
The closer I got to the top, the hotter my feet became.

Sunday, I climb a Beech tree on a warm summer's day.
Each branch I climbed and leaf I touched, formed a wider smile on my face.
The closer I got to the top, the louder the birds sang, a song meant only for me.
This tree is my favorite to climb; however it is taller than the rest.
I have rarely reached the top, without falling to the ground below.

Today I climbed a Fir tree, on a frigid Winter's night.
Every branch I climb and every leaf I touch, the more my face gets scratched and cut.
The closer I get to the top, the harder it is to come down.
I have never fallen out of this tree, for it is the smallest.
And although I try to stay away, I frequently find myself intertwined within its roots.

One thing each branch has in common, is I can always see the sun when I climb.
And with every tree, the closer I get to the top, the sun moves with me.
Rising and falling with each passing day.
Bringing promises of a new tomorrow, and a new tree to climb.

THE
BALLAD OF MISS
MARY MONCRIEFF

— Diana Burke

I do tell of the tale of Miss Mary Mae Moncrieff; she's getting near six years of age.
She's got loving parentals who care for her dearly; they keep her locked up in a cage.

Giving kisses goodnight, she is tucked in so tight, and their daughter is put safe to sleep.
They have padlocked the door, unaware of the lore of the monsters in Mary Mae's keep.

When she closes her eyes there are goblins afoot, and their hands wield some twelve-inch-long claws.
There are critters and creatures with horrible features that never so ugly there was.

They have set up a tea table, prepped for a party with Mary Mae's favorite snacks,
And she lets her feet rest on the ottoman, plenty accompanied as to relax.

They are friends—she is friends with the monsters. They're her biggest secret and her they adore.
They may snarl and be vicious, but love is malicious; they fight and she just loves them more.

She can feel in her cuts she's got dozens of cuts that'll fade by the time she awakes,
But what stays there always is the inner turmoil, the most useless of troublesome aches.

The perfunctory occasion ends with a persuasion—or, what the naysayers call, "threat,"
And a swipe of a hand decimates the whole land in the midst of Miss Moncrieff's baguette.

The girl opens her eyes and observes the sun rise and sinks little in child-like despair,
She looks all in the room for some clues to exhume for her parents, and finds them nowhere.

Feeling quite like a fool, she is dressed up for school by a mother unknowing of harm,
And her father drives off like a witless old toff, with his Mary Mae under his arm.

While her mother at home is upkeeping their Rome, she finds curiously smashed cups of tea,
And imagines dismay of her sweet Mary Mae. Oh, what were those strange scars on her knee?

MY OCEAN

— Nasrin Musa

He was an ocean,
and you were a diver.
Exploring every inch of every
crevice you could find.
The need for air
was often forgotten.
Who needs oxygen when he could
fill your lungs with promises.
And oysters filled with pearls of
“I love You”
Deeper and deeper you swam,
getting lost in the colors and light.
He'd roll the waves,
always keeping you company.
With the entire ocean holding you,
how could you feel alone?
With the entire ocean protecting your heart,
how could you feel anything but safe?

And when the ocean got tired of you,
and left you washed up on shore
damaged and confused,
how could you feel anything at all?

You had been under for so long
that the sun now felt like fire.

The fresh air caught in your throat
in a way salt-water never did.
You grasped at the sand in fist-fulls,
trying to catch your breath.
But each grain pricks your skin like needles.
On shaky legs you stumble and rise,
not used to your own two feet
after depending on his waves for so long.
You watch the tide go
farther and farther out.
Taking with it all the love and treasure you left in it.
You never dreamed you'd have to say
goodbye to the ocean.

Eventually you learned how to walk
instead of swim.
To run
instead of dive.
Now the sun feels like a kiss,
the sand soothing between your toes.
Now when you stand on grass
instead of seaweed, and you spread your arms out
air rushes through your fingers,
and you don't miss the silkyness of water.
But you still choke up
when people ask you why you're afraid of the ocean.
And you don't know how to explain the fear
of losing a home all over again.

IN FLUX

— Susan Lafortune

A girl small and tender,
bones larger than her muscles be

hollow as things forgotten,
underneath her wet moss
Oh how she moans,
simmers long (cold)

winter,
budding spring,
in summer,

she finds a pointed roof,
lowers her body down
straight

a c r o s s
the balanced edge,

gravity holds her breath-
less

and still a
a r
e l in
P
her mouth,

as big as our moon, her
tongue swells
to oyster flesh, she hums
my pearl

and swallows while
her lips turn
to blackened shells,

air becomes ocean
stars to salt stone,
a girl finds her body again
(like) holding on to
a slippery fish-an electric eel.

With a joke to spare,
Now calm, and collected.
A shared laugh in the air.
Fears laid to rest, and brow upright
A chance smile finds its place across her once
grim face.

The soldier, With a mind knotted and twisted
by doubt
seeking truth and purpose.
Find himself leaning against your rippled and
gnarled shoulder.
Raging against the cage he built himself,
A heart broken,
But the soul spared.

With a whisper of the wind, he awoke,
to new-found wisdom that
Opportunity lends itself to the selfless.
With a quiet mind and open heart,
He marched on.

A life thrown asunder since the sky was blue,
A seed took root, and a perspective grew.
Many came and went.
With love.
With hate.
For guidance.
For forgiveness.
For you.
A guardian, holding fast in the gale,
And gentle in the sun.
Strengthened by love.
Humbled by life.

AFTER WATCHING THE DOCUMENTARY: SALT OF THE EARTH

— Susan Lafortune

I've seen pictures
of the dying

sick starving corners of
their lips bleed,

Life is still a
part of us

skeletal piles of
rag'n'bone

empty
eye sockets hold,

the locusts make a shadow
on the sun

-a distant warning of

War

fighting ghosts in
the dark

Our banquet table
holds a fatted calf

We cover our ears
to the cracking of bones



LAST STOP ON THE COMMUTER RAIL IN LISBON.

SHADOW PUPPETS ON THE CITADEL IN BUDAPEST.

— Daniel Keating, Jr.

This poem is a journal entry from my travel journal. In 2017, I went to Romania to my friend's home, to meet their father before he passed and to soak in some culture. On the way I spent a night in Budapest and I was a little restless, so I walked the entire city that night to take in the sights. I had just decided it was time to move on and start my third life so I had a lot to work through on this trip, and the plum brandy my friends were experts at making helped to lubricate the process. Every line in this poem refers to an event that occurred on the trip. When I wrote the poem I had just hitchhiked back from a beach outside Lisbon, Portugal. In the early airport hours where my plane had arrived but security wasn't open yet, I started a sentence that just felt like that magic trick where the magician pulls on a cloth that never ends, and then he lets go and the cloth keeps coming out of his hat without him pulling on it anymore. At the end I felt like I'd exorcised a demon or something.

Read quickly while whispering as if praying a familiar rosary

Skinny dip pig slaughter foggy vineyard panorama firecracker in the woods fish feet sauna
buckets brandy maker stone oven bread baker coming home go to Maine spiced wine orphans
sang glass of port glass of port glass of port leaving notes for my cohorts now I lie alone and
wander through my mind and over yonder eerie peaceful pitch black beach my flight is here
but out of reach one more language without speech and now to god I do beseech leave me be
leave me be and let me sleep I am not yours for you to keep I contemplate to make the leap
but do I dare to fall so deep it is now time but without place it is now depth but without space
I cannot sleep I cannot slide beneath my conscious I reside no oasis I can hide this time on
earth is mine to bide my shoes are worn my soul is too and laces replaced and laced anew but
without rest I will remain until I see your face again I miss my youth I think aloud nostalgic
sprites may sing and cloud like mountain mist familiar shroud this path thus passed I am not
proud so do you see are you aware my soul to you I have lain bare perhaps you whisper 'haps
you stare I only write I cannot care and there again the problem lies impact comes not from
long goodbyes or bygone whys these bees they fly within the confines of my head swirling
whilst I lay in bed, shut up begone and go away I plead and beg but there's no way they scratch
like sweaters lined with hay,

4 A.M. the clock doth strike and driven like the golden spike unites the night unto the dawn,
The mighty king us useful pawns in his faithful name we pray watch us mary while we lay,
mirage and falsities I detect "but no, tradition!" You object,
Can faith exist but without doubt?
I am within and yet without.



LET ME

— Tabitha Soper

Let my body be the trees that guide you
through a forest of hope
Let my arms be the branches which show you
the way to ambition
Let me be the leaves which grace
your cheeks with sunshine and autumn touch
Let my hands be the ground you walk on
so I may catch your fall
But let me be the rays that kiss your eyes
Let me be the stars you gaze upon

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

— Caitlyn Coleman

A single heartbeat
A breath,
Soft and silken like
The drip of water onto cracked, begging lips.

A stroke of skin
Just barely a touch.
A moment of more,
Lust at its precipice.

Two meet without
A past or future
Written in stone.
Moments frozen in time.

Never the same,
Never forgotten.
Moving forward,
Into the unknown.

Together,
Or apart.

IRONY

— Abbie Brown

The girl who swore off love
Finds it in the man she despises

The girl who strives for freedom
Is afraid of responsibility

The girl who lives dangerously
Is terrified by death

The girl who lives her life in the shadows
Shines brighter than anyone

The girl who keeps to herself
Is telling you her deepest secrets



Muse



WHAT IT MEANT

— Amber Finney

I don't remember the first time I experienced the ocean. Nothing in my memory recalls the first moment my feet stepped upon the rough sand, warmed by the sun, or when the chill of the Northern Atlantic first made my muscles tense and my teeth chatter. I can't remember the first sting of a bite from a greenfly or the distinct smell of salt that always managed to seep into my hair and the pores of my skin. No, I don't remember the first time I experienced the ocean, but I do remember the last.

I always considered myself lucky to live near the coast. A drive to the beach from my house took thirty minutes at the most, accounting for traffic. As a child, most of my summers were spent on the beach, either in Salisbury or Hampton. My mom, my brother, and I would escape from the confines of the house for a few hours at least once a week. The thing about New England beaches is that the water maintains its chill even during the dog days of summer. When you first step out into the tide, you are promptly greeted with a numb, stinging feeling in your legs as the water pushes past you onto the shore and back out again. As a child, I didn't mind the feeling. The three of us would always play this game that my mom showed us where we jumped over the waves as they came to a crest. As the tide rose, it became harder for us to jump higher than the tall wave and we'd eventually be outpowered by the strength of the wave and fall back onto the sand or run back up the beach before it could get us.

Those are the earliest memories I have of the New Hampshire beaches, which are nothing compared to the beaches of Kittery, Maine. My mom's side of the family owned a house on Gerrish Island once upon a time, and to this day, some member of the family manages to rent a little bungalow near where the old house used to be almost every year. Gerrish Island is occupied by seasonal and permanent residents and renters. My first memories of the island are with my cousins and my mom, eating fruit salad on the deck of the house that overlooked the ocean. I can remember making the trek from the house to the water over the rough landscape of rocks, periwinkle filled tidepools, shells, and seaweed left over from high tide. We were always alone on the beach, always just me and my cousins. While Hampton and Salisbury were always crowded and noisy, Kittery was secluded and quiet. Only people with property on that side of the island used

the beach, because it was rocky and sort of out of the way and not at all attractive to tourists. It was our place for the day, our beach. Back then, the beach meant fun and games, and spending time with my cousins. It meant running into the tide with no fear of it pulling me out with it. It meant swimming in the cold water until my lips were blue and my fingertips were well-past pruned. Back then, I could spend all day at the beach.

Those were the innocent, early years of my childhood, where my biggest problem in my life was not getting a toy that I wanted, the only uncertainty was what my mom would be making for dinner, and the worst pain I had experienced was a skinned knee from falling on the rocks of the getty at Gerrish Island. Somewhere along the way though, things changed. The beach trips became a rarity during the summer, partly because my mom no longer had the time to take us, and partly because I grew to dislike the beach. I didn't like how the sand stuck to my skin, or the bites from the horseflies, or the cold sting of the water. I got too old to jump over the waves, holding my mom's hand as I tried to beat the falling crest. I was afraid of being pulled out by the unforgiving waves and we stopped visiting the house at Gerrish Island.

During my middle school years, I only remember going to the beach on various field trips. In sixth-grade, my entire grade went to Plum Island for a whole day, a reserve with tall grass and purple sand. I remember winning the sandcastle building contest with a recreation of the Colosseum and how one of my friends swallowed a mouthful of sand because she thought that because that it was purple, it would somehow taste better than regular sand. Another time, my seventh-grade class spent a day at Odiorne State Park, where we walked through the tidepools to find periwinkles and sea stars, but I was more focused on what my friends were planning to do for the weekend and the test I had in math the next day. Living so close to the ocean, I began to take it for granted. There are people in landlocked states and countries who, in their whole lives, have only seen the ocean in pictures or TV and here I was, only a town away from some of the most beautiful beaches in New England, not wanting to go. What was wrong with me? I spent so many beautiful summer days in my house, basically suffocating in the stuffy heat, when I could have been spending the days as I had in my childhood, at the shore.

I don't really remember going to the beach again until the summer after I graduated from high school. I finally had a car, and that meant I had a little more freedom. During the school year, I only really drove to and from school. Senior year was very stressful, and to be honest I just hate driving anyway. It wasn't until early July that my best friend, Sophie, would call me asking to hang out

and suggest we go for a drive to the beach. We went a handful of times; I'd drop whatever I was doing and leave the house for a few hours. Sometimes we took her car, and other times we took mine. Either way, we'd have the windows down, blasting Kendrick Lamar or Taylor Swift as we made our way to the coast. It was early enough in the summer that I wasn't yet worried about leaving home and going off to college; I was just stuck in the limbo between childhood and adulthood, just about to jump over the biggest wave I had ever encountered. We were usually at the Salisbury Reservation right before sunset. There were few people and it was comfortable to sit on the sand, having cooled down from the afternoon when the sun was beating down on it. I would lie down and close my eyes and feel the soft salty breeze. The reservation had always been my favorite local beach because of the lack of greenflies and the fact that you didn't have to pay for parking after a certain hour.

I remember the last time the two of us drove to the beach. It was mid-July and still, neither of us were thinking of college. We drove up and down Hampton Beach for a while. It was the late afternoon and all the restaurants and shops were busy. The sun was beginning to set when we finally made it to the reservation. It was getting a little cooler, and when I stepped into the water, it was freezing. We didn't end up staying very long because we were suddenly covered in greenflies that must have come from the tall grass behind us.

I haven't seen the ocean again after that, or Sophie for that matter. A few weeks after our last trip, her sister died of an overdose and after that she took off for college in Alabama. During that time, I couldn't find the courage to pick up the phone and suggest a drive to the reservation. The beach was once an innocent place for me, where I would play and build sandcastles and hold my mom's hand as we stood in the water. All of a sudden, I could feel myself being pulled out by the tide. I didn't know how to console my best friend. Nothing felt so innocent anymore. The summer became suffocating and the wave that I was going to have to jump over seemed to be getting bigger and bigger. I never ended up finding the words to say and the summer seemed to come to an abrupt end all too soon. I could still feel the greenflies on me, the hot sand burning the soles of my feet and the aching chill of the Northern Atlantic water.

BURN THAT SHIT DOWN

— Susan
Lafortune

Flames dance from the fire pit in the back yard. We sit far enough away, but the fire, like a greedy mouth, keeps devouring our things; it jumps, and the smell of scorched hair fills the night. Clarissa throws her doll into the fire and claps her hands. I hold my journal tight to my chest. Mama sits in a broken lawn chair, her arms and legs sprawled out underneath the moon. She's wearing Rick's sunglasses and drinking her last beer.

"Throw another one of his goddamn shirts in there," she slurs at us as she lights another match and flicks it to the gas soaked ground. A whoosh of orange explodes into a fast moving path toward the house, where it disappears from us.

The house begins to shine as a jack-o lantern; the windows are eyes, the red door a gaping mouth caught in surprise or fear.

I walk over to the pile of things she's pulled from the house, mostly her boyfriend's clothes and pictures. I'm sad about some of it, like the pictures from Disneyland. Rick carried me when I got tired-I might miss him-I don't miss them all. Clarissa forgets everyone.

Our stuff is packed up in the car; we've never burned a house down before. I can see the light getting brighter where my bedroom window was; with a pop of glass, the flame pushes itself through the window and runs up to the roof. Clarissa is too young to be afraid so she laughs instead. Mama's not crying yet; she's just watching the fire with the moon shining down like a flashlight on what we've done.

When we hear the faint wail of sirens, Mama says it's time to go. She blows the house a kiss and picks up Clarissa, tells her to say bye-bye, too.

Clarissa smacks her hand to her lips, makes a raspberry sound, and then holds her tiny hand out to the world as if it has something to give her.

I kick a stone along the dirt in the dark and imagine the next place, and the next one after that. I close my eyes-that's as far as I want to see; that's as far as I'm willing to go.

I'm in the front seat so I can help Mama drive when she falls asleep. Clarissa is surrounded by boxes in the back; she starts using her hands to drum on them and sings a song about ducks. Mama sings the quack-quack parts.

"Are you ready?" she yells like the man at the carnival, and Clarissa drums louder. I'm starting to get that loop-dee-loop feeling again.

The road keeps rising up and coming down. When the firetrucks speed by, Clarissa points to the flashing red light and laughs. Mama sings until she blacks out and as her head hits the steering wheel I shift the car into park and wait. Clarissa blows raspberries into the palm of her hand and laughs until she sleeps.

I REMEMBER

— Stephanie Bellapianta

I remember a four-leaf clover I once picked out right by a large oak tree that stood right by the middle school I attended.

I remember the chocolate diamond my uncle gave me when he visited me, after not having seen each other for more than a decade; it's the only souvenir I have from him.

I remember how I got a small scar, just below my nostril; it was when I jumped off a Bouncy House and slid face down onto the ground.

I remember my grandmother's ashes being thrown inside *Pozo Jacinto*, just the way she would have liked.

I remember the day my younger brother was diagnosed with severe autism, at just six months old.

I remember when our class held a sleepover in middle school; we would lay in our hallway, tucked inside our sleeping mats.

I remember the first thing I remember. A piggy bank shaped like the Tweety Bird from Looney Tunes.

I remember when my mom hit a rat out the kitchen windowsill; she swung her broom like in a game of baseball.

I remember our last house in Puerto Rico and its white wallpaper filled with water caused by the destruction of the second story.

I remember the pink jewelry set our roommate, Eva, gave me during our last day at the family shelter.

I remember my first video game that I played in GameCube.

I remember sitting down looking at the stray dogs trotting by our neighborhood.

I remember walking with my mother every Sunday to our Pentecostal church up the street.

I remember swinging on a tree branch next to our first apartment.

I remember waking up the day after the Election.

I remember December 17, 2005; it was the first time I stepped on snow in Massachusetts.

I remember winning the Spelling Bee in elementary school and becoming the first Spanish speaker to do so; the word was *seriousness*.

I remember being ungrateful in the times where I should have been.

I remember those times where I cried more than I should have.

I remember visiting once a wooden house that stood atop a swamp in Ecuador built by the single mother that owned it.

I remember the sunflower necklace one of the local neighbors gave me.

I remember making heart origamis for my children at Jumpstart.

I remember receiving a same heart origami from a child in Ecuador after I helped her with homework.

I remember the avocado trees that our family would grow behind our house in Puerto Rico.

I remember my father visiting me for my high school graduation after not having seen each other for several years.

I remember riding my first bike on the pathway of a public park while my father held the handlebars.

I remember my mother working as a housekeeper while working as a cashier for 7-Eleven.

I remember when my father became homeless in Newark, New Jersey.

I remember when I asked for more than I should have.



THE UNEXPECTED BUS STATION COMMUNITY

— Michelle Colbert-Mason

Sometimes light and inspiration are found in the places you'd least expect.

The Washington Square Transit Station, headquarters of the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority, sits in the center of the busy downtown Haverhill area. It's a small brick building, sitting by tall, old mill buildings now used for low-income subsidized housing. On the surrounding streets, people buzz about in the many cafes, restaurants, and small businesses.

I spend a lot of time here, commuting to and from Northern Essex by bus, four days a week. Often times it reeks. Upon entering the building, I'm greeted by a foul smell causing me to scrunch up my face until my nose grows accustomed to the smell. The setting can be described as dank, dark, and dreary. The only light either emerging from the natural rays of the sun coming in through the three windows at the back of the building or emanating from the lights in the office where the clerks sit to assist people with schedules, bus routes, and purchasing Charlie cards. In the evening when the sun has set, some lights come on in the waiting area, but they're dim and hazy. In the space for riders to sit and wait, there are three short benches and walls filled with graffiti. The literal writing on the walls range from cheesy jokes to random names to drawings of male reproductive organs. I assume the artists were young kids or teenagers, reminding me of the behavior of my mischievous old friends and I years ago.

Many times I've sat in this area thinking of how I would remodel this place to make it more comfortable for passengers, passerbyers, and those that work here. *Maybe I'd add some bright, but cost effective, lighting throughout the building. Definitely install more comfortable seating offering back support and cushion. A bigger office for the clerks who spend hours here with more space for better organization. A small kitchen or an area with a microwave and utensils to heat up food for the bus drivers on break and even hungry passengers waiting for their bus. Oh yes-better flooring is a must, as well.* To the side of the space, there's a door with that word "Azkaban" written above it, presumably by a humorous Harry Potter fan. The door leads to a narrow space where they put trash, brooms, mops, and other cleaning supplies. It's dusty, grimey, and I wouldn't be surprised to find some sort of creature lurking in there.

Public transport can be found worldwide. When you think of busy cities like Boston or New York City, I'm sure the immense amount of foot traffic and public transportation comes to mind. Public transportation is great not only because it saves you money, but also because it helps to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion. All types of people rely on public transportation. It's not reserved for the poor, but I've noticed that's who you'll see at the station more often than not here in Haverhill.

Multiple homeless people come to the bus station everyday. They come inside to make conversation with the clerk and waiting passengers, warm up from the bitter cold, regrouping and organizing their backpacks, wait to catch a bus to wherever they need to go, or stay outside sharing cigarettes or tobacco with one another.

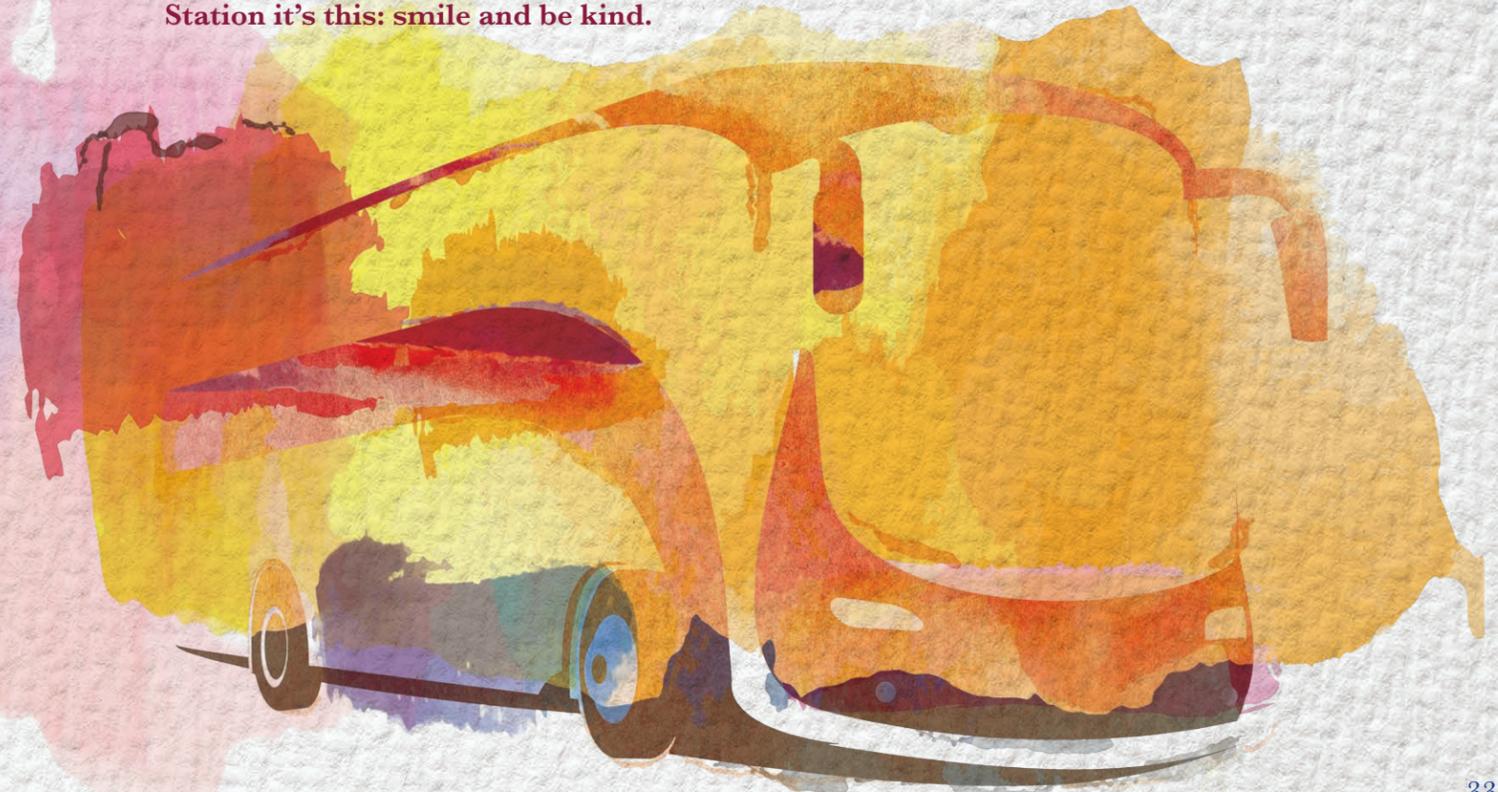
I've found many quick to judge these individuals, including myself, making assumptions and shuffling away from them. But, despite their rough, disheveled appearance and sometimes not-so-pleasant scent, they are some of the nicest people I have met. Often times they're offering kind smiles to everyone, hugs, advice to stay in school and do well, and easily making conversation about life's problems or the day's work.

With the variety of people, mellow environment, and daily passing through of the same people on their commute to work or home, comes a sense of familiarity. Passengers and bus drivers know one another by name, always greeting each other and stopping to conversate. It seems people actually care about one another. I see many become pals, laughing and sharing stories with each other, offering comfort when needed, and trying their best to help when they can.

One evening in November as I was waiting for the bus, a man came in carrying warm food he didn't want but would rather give to someone in need than simply trash it. He offered the food to anyone who needed it, but when everyone declined, he asked to leave it for a homeless man he was familiar with that frequents the bus station.

This thoughtful gesture was very heartwarming, restoring some of my faith in humanity, and prompted me to help in ways that I could as well. It's amazing to see the people who have the least and are treated poorly bond together and treat one another, alike or different, with the kindness and respect they deserve. This kind gesture, many others like it, and sense of community make an otherwise dreary place feel warm and lively.

If there's one thing I take from my time spent at the Washington Square Transit Station it's this: smile and be kind.



A FUCKING HURRICANE

— Luisa Maria Jimenez

Bipolar disorder can lie dormant inside its victim for years. It can stay inactive for an entire lifetime, an entire family's generation, lying in wait. Sometimes it's obvious; puberty hits or one enters early adulthood and is suddenly showing erratic behavior. They are too spontaneous, talking too fast, they are just too alive. Then, like a switch, they are not alive at all. They are numb in a shell surrounded by desperation. Past the desperation is every emotion felt at once. Then those feelings are coated in a fine layer of ambivalence once again. Other times it's lurking lazily behind other genes. Hiding from the world, sure to remain unseen, until something tragic happens.

Something leaves the person traumatized so deeply that they are scarred forever. Permanently changed, it seems, but that is not true. You are not changed at all. This was always inside of you, this demon. The trauma only gave it reason to come alive and make its appearance in the world. A coping mechanism of the body, to show its true self. The self that is inside every family member, yet remains undetected. The self that separates you from everyone else. Not even those with demons of the same name, with the same bitter taste at the back of their throats, and phantom screams at the tips of their tongues... not even they can truly understand. Every demon is so unique, like a snowflake. All falling in uniformity to the blind eye but under a microscope holding its own distinctive features.

This demon defines you. This demon destroys you. Yet, everyone says you have no right to blame this demon for any of your problems. It's real, just irrelevant; but how can something that by definition alters the functionality of your life not be relevant to how functional you are in life? How can something that is so integrated into your very being, something that stares you in the face every time you look into the mirror, whispers your name in a crowded room and screams it when you're alone, luring you into a desperate state everyday, not affect you?

How are you expected to survive? How are you expected to feel alive when you are tied to your bed by the vacant arms of your disease? How can you stay alive when you don't feel real? Yet, the highs are incredible. You feel so alive you can feel the sunshine. It's exploding inside of your chest. You are sunshine. You have spontaneously combusted and the tears are coming down because you can feel the life force flowing through you; if there is a God, you are God.

You are invincible, you can do it all. You can finish any task, a hundred in record time. You can jump off a building and live to see another day. You can hear the wind whispering and the flowers smell more potent than before. YOU are God! YOU are sunshine! YOU

are everything! You can build a world in less than seven days and fix all of our current world's problems with the wave of your hand. You stand on the roof of a building, far too close to edge, and you just feel the wind filling you with powers, the likes of which the world has never seen. You are the most alive being in this universe, the cosmos move within you, through the veil you see it all, but you are not alive. This is not what it feels like to be alive. This is holding life in your hands, yet not owning it. It's being pregnant with the hopes and dreams of what a healthy happy life could have been but when it's time to give birth you are left with a lifeless body in your arms. Your life is a stillborn baby on life support keeping its organs viable until a decision is made.

You are the line between life and death. The conflicting feelings literally tear you apart from the inside. You are fighting multiple wars throughout the day. How exhausted you must be. It is not the dog you feed the most who survives; it is the dog with the sharpest teeth, the faster reflexes, the bravest heart. That is the dog who will kill for his food. Because, honestly, do you have the energy to feed either dog? They must fight for their lives and pick away at each other bite by bite until one is left the victor. The lone dog, the champion who is unlucky to be alive. What name has the dog given itself inside of you?

For you, life is nothing more than the pair of hands grasped firmly onto your shoulders. They slowly pull you into the abyss. There are days you try to fight it. You carry on because you are strong. You are fearless, and you are someone worth loving, worth living, worth happiness. Other days, you let it take you. It drowns you, perhaps at a slow pace at first. You'll feel its gentle tug during your morning coffee; you just can't seem to drink fast enough to keep it warm. Then it tugs again when you feel alone in a crowded area. The subway, where as a unit, you are all there for the same resolution. You are waiting impatiently for the next bus to hit the tracks to get you to work or school or maybe even back home. Yet, you feel as though you are different somehow. You are in the way. You are a burden to your fellow passengers. Then suddenly you are laughing and joking with friends and you feel it again. That last tug. Like a punch in the gut. You're a fish caught on a string and the hands are your guide to your captor. Your friends are still laughing and you stop, but they don't seem to notice. No one ever notices the fact that you are surrounded by blackness and all that is left to see is the features of your face. Even that sinks down under forcing you to hold in your breath.

After a few moments you can breathe again. You are in the abyss, you are one with the loneliness and frustration that courses through the world. You are a medium who lives off of the negative energy around her. Now, what is one to do in the abyss? Are you to solemnly sulk until you feel the highs of mania again, or do you simply get high? Pop a

couple of pills and wait for them to take effect. Smoke an extra cigarette even if you've already smoked two. Do you lay in bed wallowing over the life that could be, or do you write? Do you seek comfort in the arms of a different lover night after night having had more poison than someone with a death wish? Or do you go numb? Do you sleep the day away? Do you stare off into space? Do you meditate? Do you breathe or do you hold your breath as you watch the cars pass you by, hoping for the strength to hold back the temptation to finally take that glorious step in front of a speeding car?

Toying with the idea of the here and now, with the idea of living a life on the edge. You do seemingly impulsive things that can cause serious harm if not done correctly, and many other things you shouldn't do still. You miss doctor's appointments, forget to take your pills, jump off the roof top onto the car for the hell of it. You are bad with relationships, and not just those of a romantic nature. There's always some sort of disconnect. You may not look both ways when you cross the street and at times you may carelessly throw someone out of danger's way and harm yourself in the process. You may smoke cigarettes. Boy, do you smoke cigarettes. It is the slowest form of suicide. You do all of these things because at our core we don't care enough about our lives to stop.

You contemplate signing a DNR in secret. No one has to know until it's too late. You would never want to live in a coma you tell yourself, but the truth is that if you are lucky enough to be on the brink of death, without having done it to yourself. You don't want to waste that chance by having those meddling doctors bring you back to life. This way your family can remember you as they wish to. They can naively remember your death as an unfortunate accident and not a suicide they should have spotted. They can't be heroes if there's nothing left to save. Their innocence, still in tact, lay forever in your cold dead hands.

The general consensus is that suicide is easy, it's a cop out, it's a selfish act committed by a person who cares not for the feelings of their loved ones. This is not true. Have you ever been suicidal? Have you ever had the pills in a bottle next to you, rat poison on the counter, knives in arms reach and thought about how easy it would be to just end it all? Some of you are horrified by this question, as you probably should be. I wouldn't know. The reality is, suicide is not selfish. It's not a moment when you say, "Screw the ones I love." It is the hardest and scariest thing you can do in life. One can almost easily romanticize suicidal ideation. After all, it is the bravest thing one can do. It is difficult to reach the point of desiring death to come but making that finalizing decision and executing it goes against every instinct we have, and that's a terrifying thing.

Dear readers, I hope in no way you take this as an encouragement for suicidal actions. It is brave to die when your world seems to be falling apart, but it is much braver to live through these horrid chapters long enough to find some peace in the future, because there should be a future. So next time you feel alone and are determined that tonight is the night. It has finally come. Please, remember, millions of us, myself included feel the same way. Together we can seek solitude and hopefully you will see the future because there could be great things behind this horrid horrid block in our lives, whether it be mental, physical or theoretical. There will be good days. All we can do is wake up every morning and say, "Today will be a great day." Even if you don't believe. We are here. We are a community. Perhaps a silent one walking by each other unnoticed in the halls. The only indication we are one is in the glimpse of recognition when our eyes meet, they're saying, "You are not alone."



EVERYTHING STARTS OUT AS A LOVE STORY

— Susan Lafortune

My aunts don't want to put Baba in a nursing home because they know he will run away. He threatens to keep driving until there is no road left. When he moves in here, Mama steals his keys, replaces them with a fake set. We redirect him each time he talks about going for a drive.

He has lived with us for a few weeks and there is starting to be a faint smell of urine in every room. All of our chairs are adorned with blue pads. I sit on the floor. My sister is back sharing a room with me, and her unwelcome essence lingers on my clothes. I can't escape her.

In yellow gloves up to her elbows, Mama scrubs the bathroom floor; her hair is wrapped up in a kerchief with curlers peeking out. We don't ever use bleach; it hurts her lungs. Instead, we refill an old plastic container with some cleaning product that looks like green sand and shake it onto the toilet seat, bathtub, and sink. It only moves the germs around and smells like something rotting.

Blue pads and Depends are overflowing from the diaper pail we keep by the door. I hear Baba shuffling down the hall, into the kitchen. He stands just inside the bathroom, blank faced, watching Mama cry. Her gloved hands scrub the floor around the toilet.

"What's for supper?" he asks.

"Daddy, we just ate." She wipes her tears with the upper part of her arm. He doesn't even remember the bathroom incident. He nods his head in understanding then shuffles back toward his room, stops for a moment and turns around again.

"What's for supper?"

I want to answer this time, but I can't talk to him; I move around just outside his peripheral vision. The distance between us is so unfamiliar; I search the face of my grandfather for a hint of me.

"You never feed me!" he complains, "I'm starving!" He heads back to his room again.

Our house was once perfumed with Lavender soap, fresh linen, and holy water. I am catching hints now of blood, vomit, and loss. My father left this morning. Mama tries to sing herself a lullaby while she cleans the bathroom again.

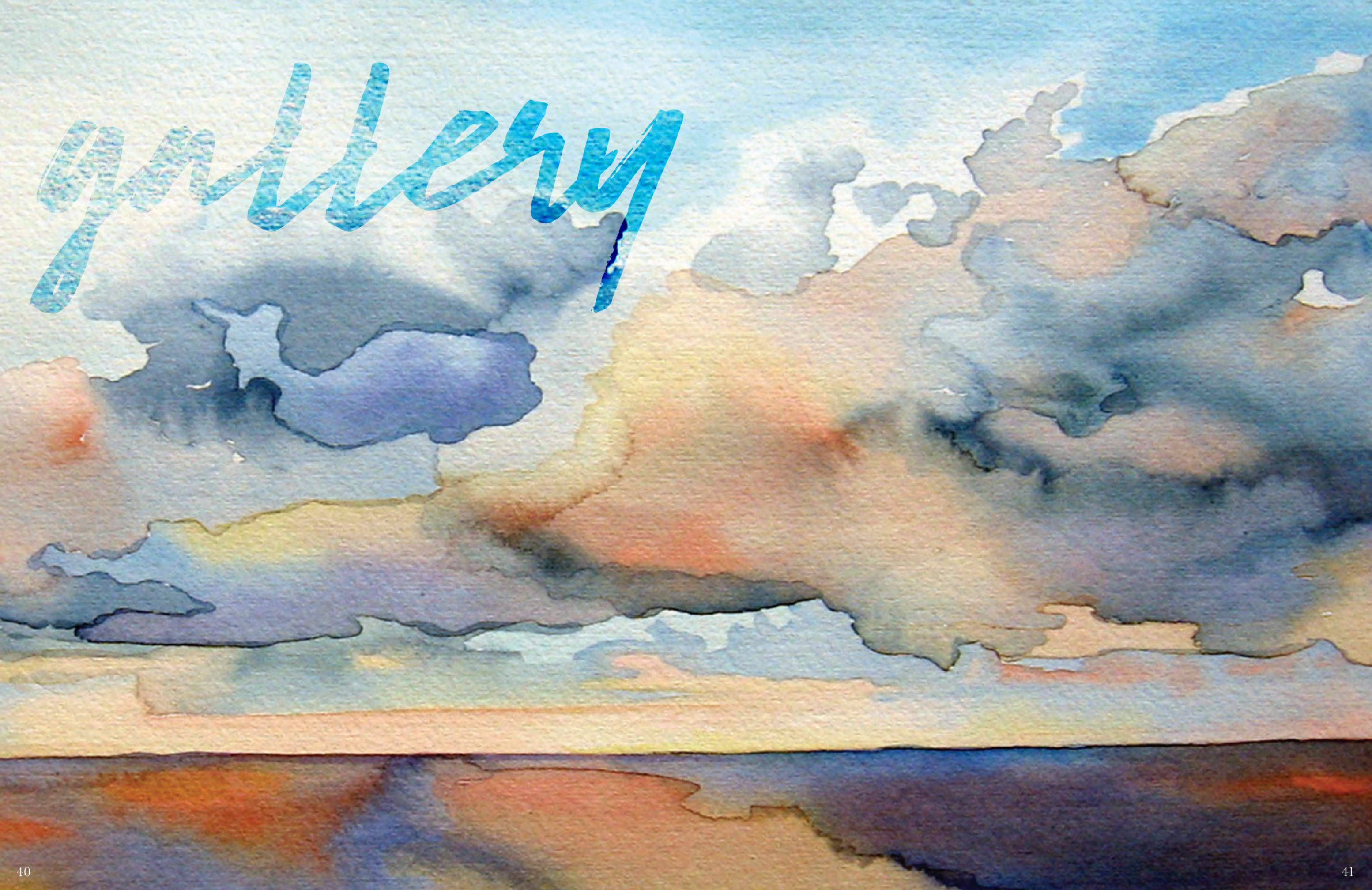
I can hear Baba in his room; the rocking chair creaks on the dip backward. Over the television noise I hear him call out,

What's for supper?"

Mama sings just a little louder.

Weeks later he is in a nursing home, and Mama doesn't visit. Baba refuses to see her, refuses to eat. One of my aunts shows us a picture she took. His face is a sunken mass of skin; he is less than a hundred pounds. Baba has always been round, too round, too plump, too much. Love is starving. My mother hangs the picture on our refrigerator; my father never comes home.

галерея





- Anne Hopkins



- Anne Hopkins



- Anne Hopkins





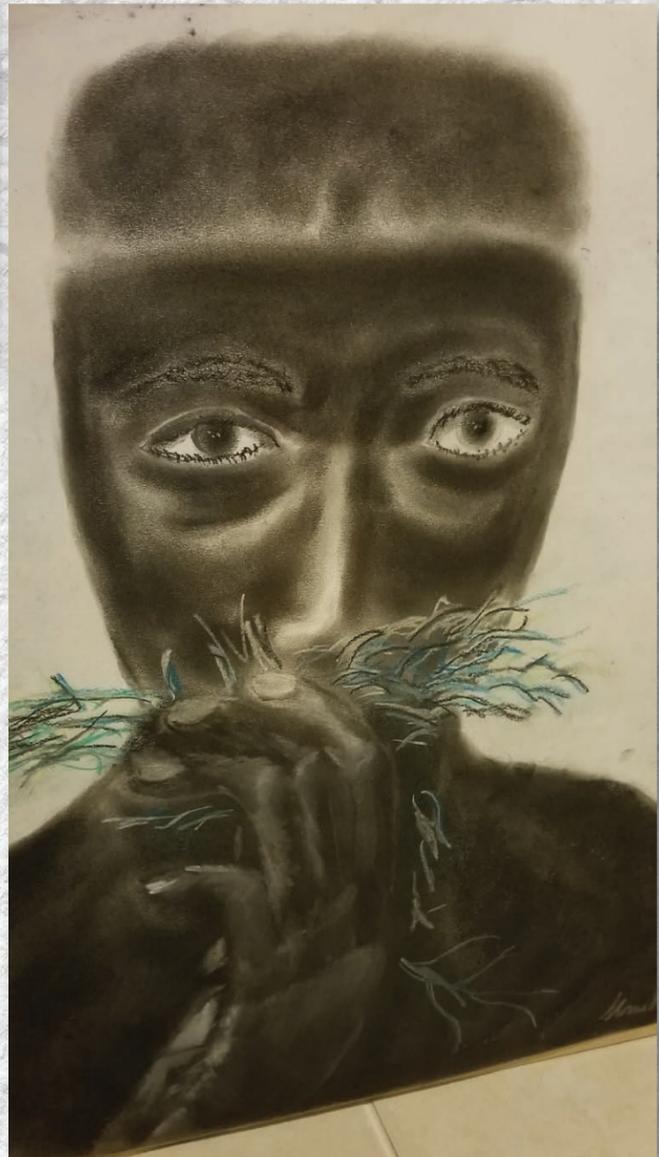
— Chrissy Eichhorn



— Adam Dorgan



— Julia Krupnik



— Steven C. Perry



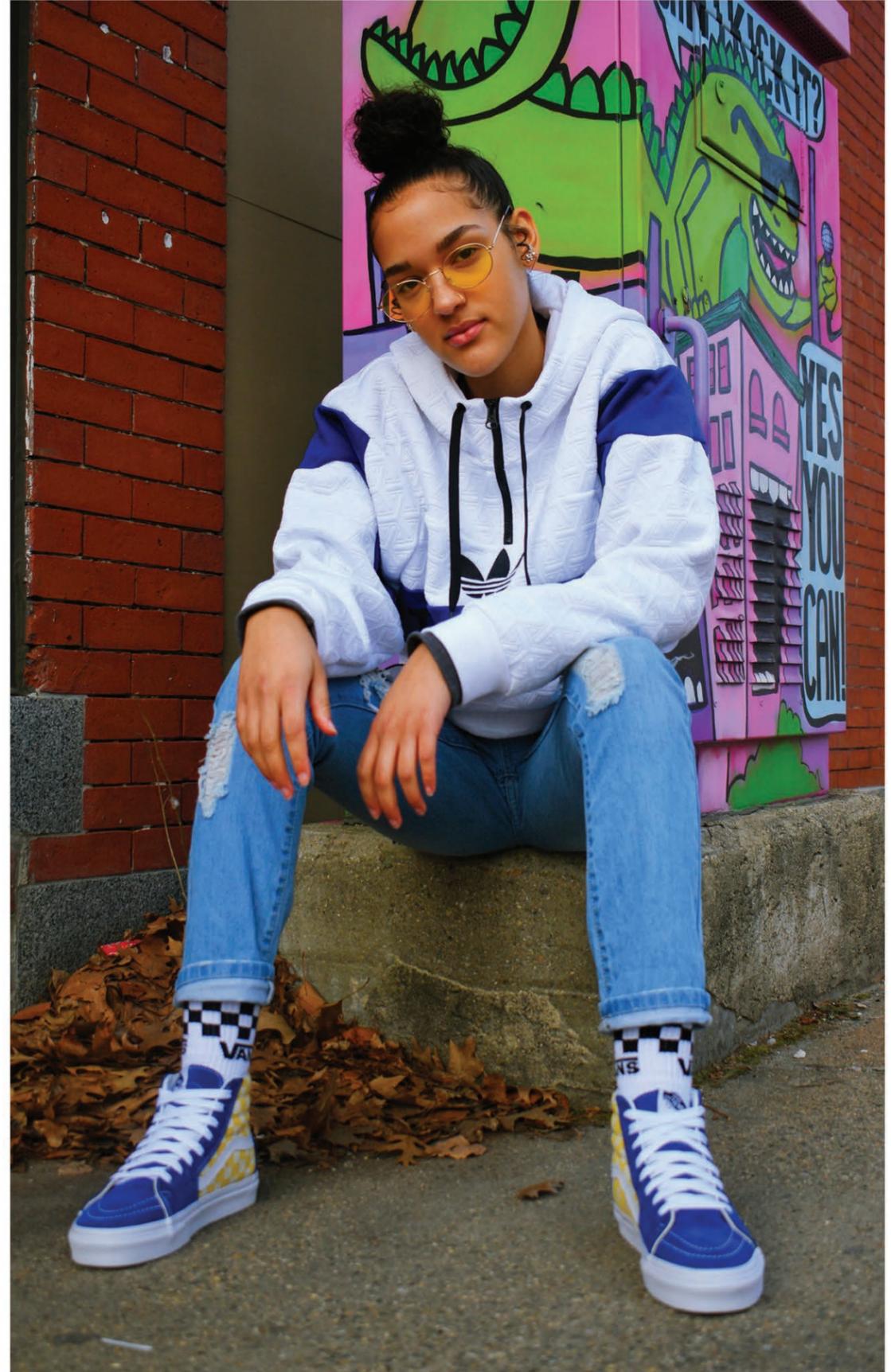
— Carlos Tapia III



— Julia Krupnik



— Carlos Tapia III





— Carlos Tapia III



— Chrissy Eichhorn

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

Originally from Puerto Rico, *STEPHANIE BELLAPANTA* attends NECC as a second-year student majoring in Psychology. She plans on continuing her education at a four-year university after graduation with a concentration in the human mind. Aside from writing during her spare time, her interests range from spending time with her family to walks on the beach.

ABBIE BROWN is a 19-year-old student in her second semester at NECC. She is studying Human Services but has a passion for art. She writes as well as paints in her spare time. She likes writing stories, poems, and even scripts. She loves painting still life pictures and landscapes and hopes to improve her skills with practice and dedication.

DIANA BURKE is an enthusiastic, amateur poetess from Merrimack Valley, born in 1999. She prefers classical form poetry, and her favorite writers and biggest influences are William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Emily Dickinson, François Villon, W. B. Yeats, Christina Rossetti, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Sylvia Plath. She's written hundreds of original poems since the age of 15 and has not a clue what to do with any of them.

MICHELLE COLBERT-MASON is a young, quirky, and ambitious woman with a love for writing. She is majoring in communications with a concentration in journalism. Although she's most likely napping, you're bound to catch her at the mall, reading a book, or painting, complete with a new hairstyle every few weeks.

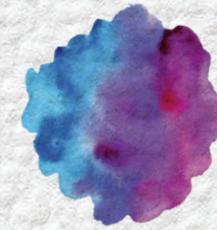
CAITLYN COLEMAN is a freshman at NECC working towards a degree in liberal arts in writing. She is well known for her love of music and reading and strives to do well in her classes during the semester. She enjoys writing poetry and prose when she has the time and can often be found curled up in a chair reading the newest romance novel that she has set her gaze on. Although quiet at times, she makes her opinions about things well known if someone questions her. Her professor encouraged her to submit this piece in the hopes of getting it published, but also to teach her that taking risks is an important aspect of life.

ADAM DORGAN is a 38-year-old Massachusetts born and raised photographer and artist. He started doing photography in 1998, and other art forms have been a lifelong pursuit. He has been working with costume creation of his own creatures as well as working with cosplayers to increase his skills. Any type of medium goes with this artist because everything has the potential to be art to his eyes. He has been working to get his degree in visual arts since 2000, with various disabilities causing difficulties with mathematic and English classes. One of his many artistic dreams is to have his degree, and with it, he hopes to run his own photography business. This year marks one of these goals being completed, as he will graduate in May of 2019.

CHRISSE EICHHORN is in her second year at NECC. She hopes to graduate in the summer of 2019. She has taken Drawing 1, 3D Foundations, 2D Foundations, figure drawing, painting for studio classes, and is currently in Drawing 2. She is also currently making a website in her portfolio class, at www.eichhornchrissy.wixsite.com/website. Chrissy has actively created art since she was 13, and she works at an art studio in Salem, NH called paint pARTy NH. Her hopes are to teach art in the future and possibly open up her own art studio. The works presented here are representational.

AMBER FINNEY is a first year student at NECC. She is 20 years old and is a resident of Amesbury, Massachusetts.

ANNE HOPKINS was born in upstate New York and moved to Massachusetts while a young child. She attended the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and studied under Arno Minkkinnen and Mark Eshbaugh, where she fell in love with the magic and science of photography. Upon graduation, she worked for many years in a custom black and white lab, in addition to a color lab. With digital photography becoming more and more prevalent, she focused her attentions on more traditional materials, and in 2009, she discovered a process in which it was possible to lift and transfer the dyes of a c-print, as well as veil and manipulate them. She has continued to explore the possibilities with this process as a means to illustrate the way that our perception and memories are transformed by our own experiences and interpretations. She has also begun using lifted Fujifilm dry lab prints as negatives for historic photographic processes. She is an eternal optimist and sees the glass as having plenty.



LUISA MARIA JIMENEZ is a 23 year old who for most of her life she has struggled with depression and symptoms of hypomania. After many years of refusing medical care, she has only recently received an official diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder at the age of 22. Now, she spends most of her time in school, writing or caring for her two year old son Jeremy and four year old daughter Lilit. Luisa is engaged to the father of her children and through his great efforts and determination he has made it possible for her to continue her education. She is working towards her Associate's Degree in Psychology and plans to pursue a Medical Degree in the field. Her goal is to learn more about herself and the world around her as well as educate others on the life altering effects of mental illness.

DANIEL KEATING JR. has lived three lives. Grandson of Harold Keating Jr. and Eileen Keating, Daniel spent his youth playing in the machine yard and in the woods behind the family's home in Swampscott, MA. From an early age he showed interest in the arts, and participated in creative writing exercises, painting, and theater. After high school, Daniel moved to Manhattan where he modeled and spent time with renowned literary figures like Dick Kalich, who encouraged Daniel's creativity. Fond of the open air, after retiring from modeling at age 24, Daniel moved to Amesbury, MA to work as a full time live-in farmhand for three years where he worked with 15 Romanians and learned the trade. Now Daniel studies organizational culture to someday "help build employee health and wellness into biotech and renewable start up companies' ethos." His favorite artists are Leonardo Da Vinci and Escher.

JULIA KRUPNIK is a 21-year-old girl who loves expressing herself through art. She does mixed media art in her art journal and makes miniature food out of polymer clay.

SUSAN LAFORTUNE's work has appeared in various publications including *Ibbetson St Magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, and *Flash Fiction*. Her first chapbook, *Talking in My Sleep* was published with Finishing Line press in 2013 and nominated for a pushcart prize. She was also published in *Parnassus* in 2018 as Susan Waterman.

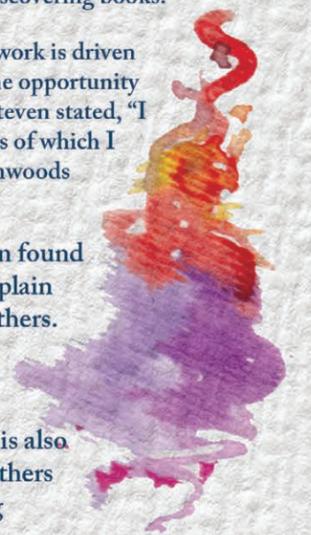
NASRIN MUSA (also commonly called Naz), is an aspiring artist who is unrecognizable without her camera in front of her face. She's a psych major and a photography major who wants to use both to help teenagers one day. God means everything to her. Friends and family take up most of the space in her heart. She spends the winter looking forward to when the sun comes out again in May, and if there's one thing she'd be happy to do it's write something that touches the lives of many people, just like novels used to do for her when she was first discovering books.

STEVEN C. PERRY is a native of Haverhill, where he grew up, and is the second oldest of five. His artwork is driven by what he sees, especially when pastels are used as the medium. He enjoys the blend of colors and the opportunity to experience the touch of each color that makes him feel a part of the development of his artwork. Steven stated, "I am most passionate of an inner strength that overcomes overwhelming odds in many different forms of which I want to be a part of." One of the greatest accomplishments has been exhibiting his artwork in Buttonwoods Museum where he drew the attention of many local and well-known artists.

TABITHA SOPER is an aspiring writer who enjoys reading and photography. She is often found at Barnes and Noble, buying stacks of books that she will inevitably dislike and complain about for months. She aspires to write a book that she dislikes a little less than the others. Except for *Harry Potter*, nothing beats *Harry Potter*.

ABBEY TANNATT is currently attending her second year at NECC and is currently Student Government Vice President. She really enjoys being as involved as she can on campus, and is also an avid poetry writer. Poetry is something she strongly relates to, and she finds that many others often feel the same way. She keeps a poetry journal where she writes a poem daily, revolving around her life and current events.

CARLOS TAPIA III is a nineteen-year-old portrait photographer from Lawrence, Massachusetts. After years of living nonchalantly with no purpose, in November of 2018, he sought out and decided to undertake the challenge of his life: making a thunderous and purposeful impact on Earth and surrounding planets with a camera. He means to expose the truth that we as a community pretend doesn't exist. With visuals, they can see the photo prints for themselves. He will shoot and distribute powerful, colored, aesthetically pleasing, purpose driven photos and feed them to the people through great marketing and social media. Six feet tall and weighing in at about one sixty with his chocolate complexion, he means to show the world a problem and a solution through raw and unfiltered photography.



How To CONTRIBUTE

Submissions to *Parnassus* are limited to NECC students, staff, and faculty, with two deadlines per school year. We accept submissions in the areas of art, photography, fiction, poetry, and creative non fiction. We print the best, so we want your best - slather us with the greatest that you have to offer, and your work might just be in the next issue! Entries are reviewed and chosen democratically each semester by the staff and faculty advisor. Deadlines are announced online and around campus, and *Parnassus* is published annually at the end of the spring semester, silently, swiftly, when you least expect it, like a literary ninja coated in poetic Teflon.

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JOIN US

Calls for new staff members go out at the start of each semester. We welcome all creative, power-hungry types who have an eye for great design and a nose for even better art and writing - it's fun! Contact us for more info!

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