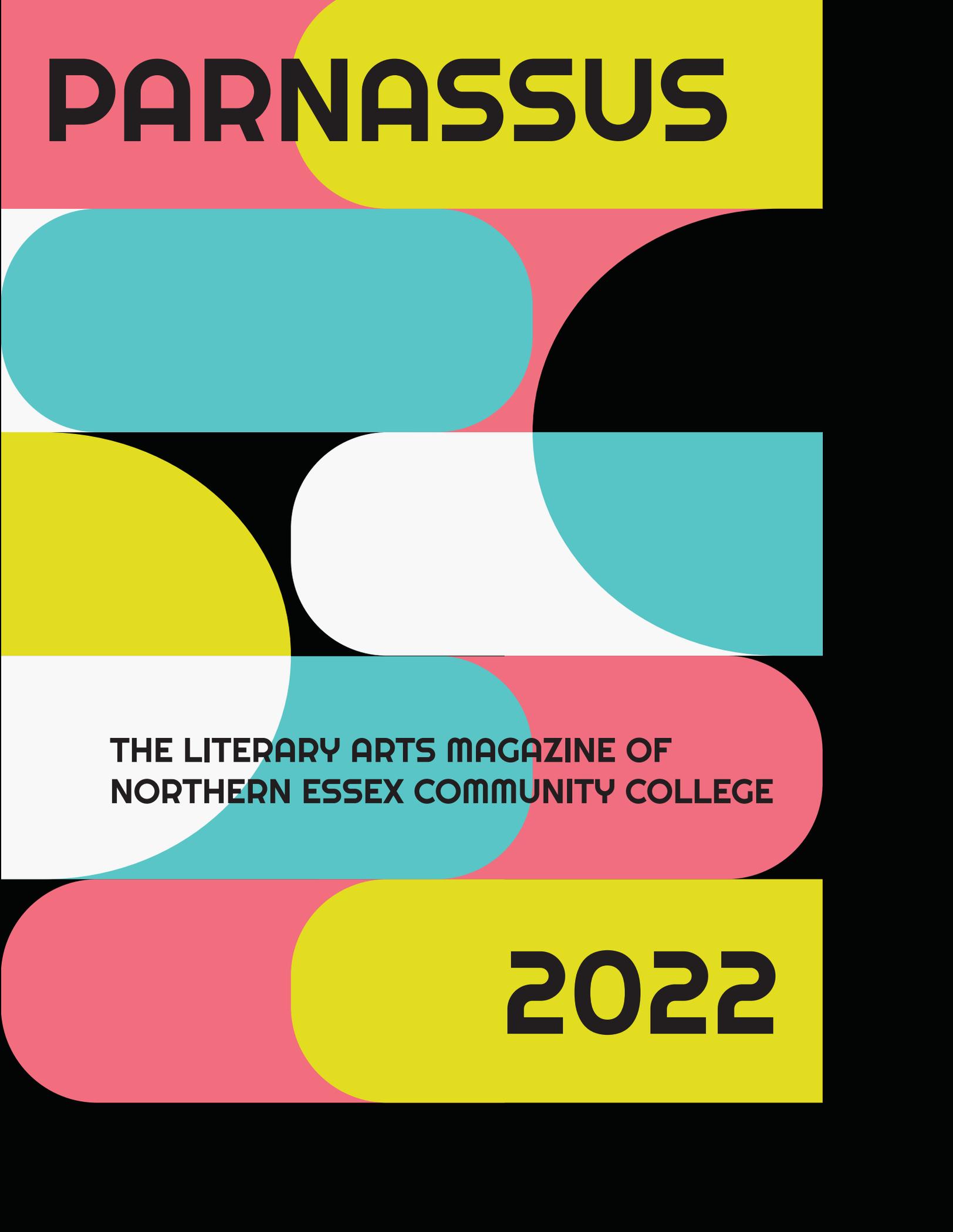


# **PARNASSUS**



**THE LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE OF  
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**2022**

# letter from

Since 1965, *Parnassus* has existed as a physical publication here at Northern Essex Community College, being printed at least annually on real, glorious, tactile paper. Sometimes it was done with messy mimeograph sheets, other years it was in thick, glossy paper, fit to stand with any other major magazine out there, but it was a hand-held experience, a living experience to engage directly with.

That was true, until 2021. Last year's issue was the first time our humble publication existed only as a series of ones and zeroes in digital form, appearing only online, and never to grace a fingertip outside of the glowing screens it lived inside. We had to make this unfortunate choice due to the wild, wild world we've all been wading through, but now that the 2022 issue is at hand, in YOUR hands, we are here, once again, in the real world, back in print and ready to be read. It's ok: go ahead and trace your digits across the glossy pages. Caress the cover. Tickle the tableaus. Fan the pages in your face and take in the sultry aroma of fresh ink and even fresher creative works from the best artists and writers here at NECC. Slip this copy under your pillow tonight to let the salacious similes and kaleidoscopes of colors trickle into your subconscious as you sleep. Stash an extra issue in the freezer to keep the imaginative ideas crisp and the impassioned images as juicy tomorrow as they are today.

Yes, we are so pleased to be back in the three-dimensional world, and we hope you didn't miss us too much, because upside down world or not, you can count on *Parnassus* to serve you a fantastic year-long meal of mischief, metaphors, and magic.

Please enjoy, and come back for more!

# the advisor



# PAR NASSUS

## NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

100 Elliott Street | Haverhill, MA | [www.parnassuslitmag.com](http://www.parnassuslitmag.com)

### COMMUNITY COLLEGE HUMANITIES ASSOCIATION

First Place, Eastern Division: 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009

Second Place, Eastern Division: 2016, 2008

### ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS

Pacemaker Award Winner: 2020, 2019, 2018, 2011

Pacemaker Award Finalist: 2017, 2013, 2009

### COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

Gold Crown: 2011

Silver Crown: 2021, 2020, 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

# OC

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# Archane, Story Weaver

Chelsea Daigle

Spin Weaver, Weaver  
Spin your yarn, spin your tale  
Create the bold tapestry, of Heroes and Monsters

Braid Weaver, Weaver  
Thread your loom, Thread hanging loose  
Snip the frayed edges, hanging by a Thread

Work Weaver, Weaver,  
String along, String along  
Follow the pattern, follow the String

When you Weaver, Weaver  
Create your image, Create your story  
In the yarn of life, of journey, and legacy

Beware Weaver, Weaver,  
Brag above the clouds, Brag above Athena  
She watches as you step, step outside the pattern

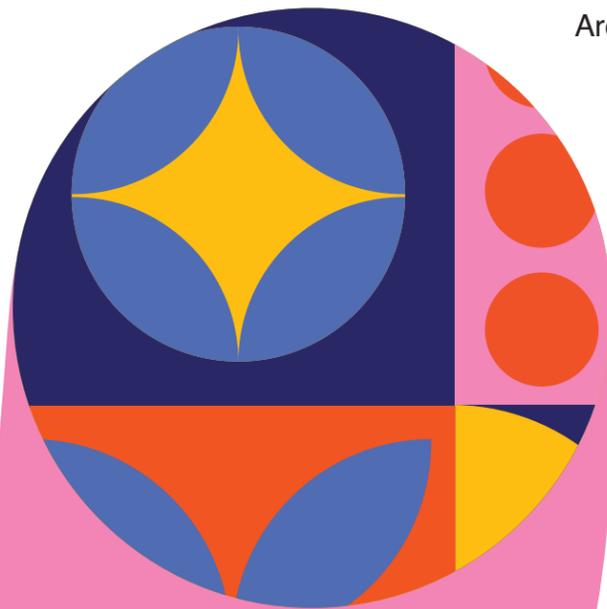
Cursed Weaver, Weaver  
Thread plucked, Thread cut  
The dirt of your fingers, guides them each



Toni Pavao

# Both Sides of War

Chelsea Daigle



Ares screams and explodes with rage,  
Tearing through anything unfortunate  
enough to be in his path  
Athena stands in poise,  
Eloquently negotiating, threatening, listening

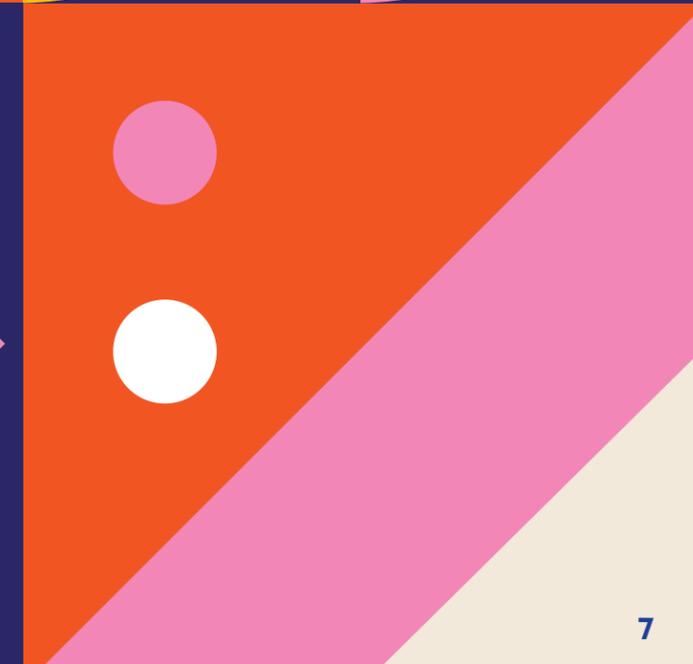
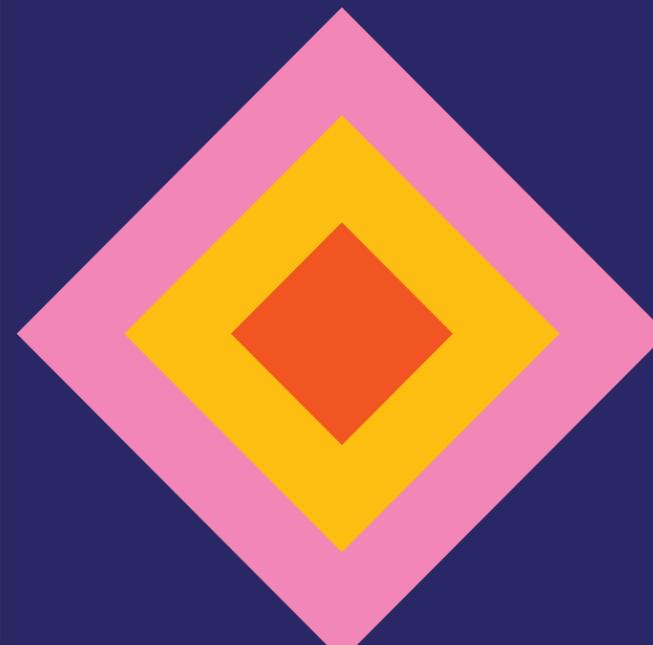
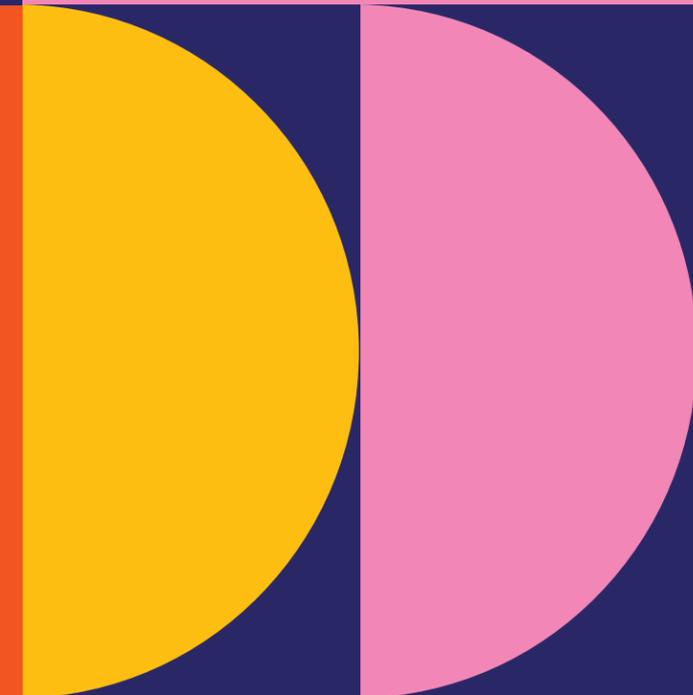
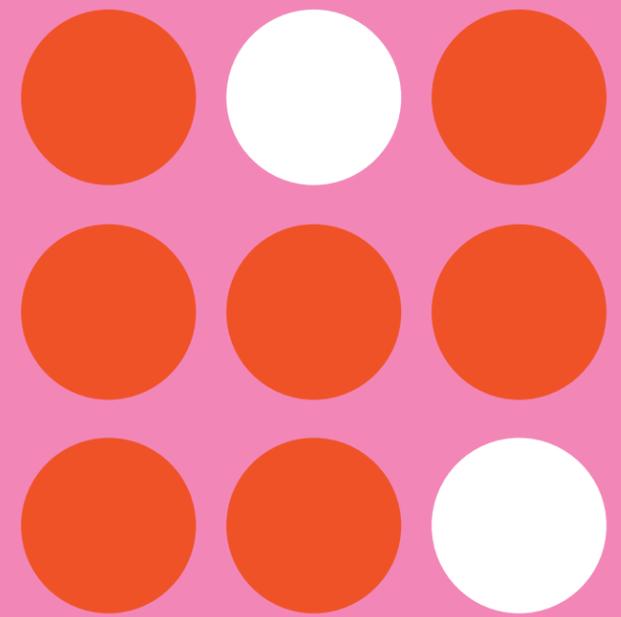
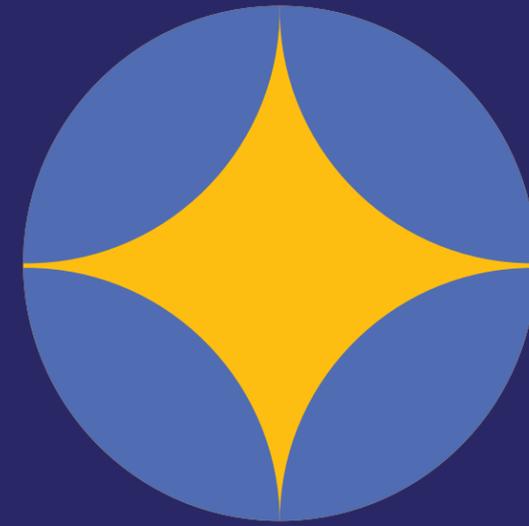
As I feel the anger boil, I must decide  
Between the Spear or the Shield

Ares rushes with all the strength of his being,  
skin aflame,  
Not stopping until the obstacle is  
vanquished – relentless, persistent  
Athena sneaks and spies, schemes, and  
hides,  
Waiting for the fatal strike's opening

Pity the fool who crossed me and can see it  
on my sleeve  
Grieve the fool who crossed me and faces an  
invisible threat

Ares the impulsive,  
The mindless wrath  
Athena the calculating,  
The maximum infliction

Is gentler bloodshed  
More or Less frowned upon?  
And should I stab my enemy  
In the Front or in the Back?



# Searched



Anne Hopkins

## Chelsea Daigle

You don't know pain, until your nerves  
experience it for the first time  
Then your brain won't let you forget it

You call me naive for flying to the sun,  
it's blazing glory far above me  
Because I didn't know its repercussions

Little do you know my skin's been burnt,  
my eyes watered  
My brain wouldn't let me forget it

Apollo has been seared into my soul,  
leaving me tunnel-visioned  
So watch me fly towards the pain any  
chance I have

Sitting in the crash of my fall makes the  
rise all the more worth it.

## Diana Burke

I talk to you just like you talk to God;  
God talks to us, but His speech is too broad.  
Talk is divine, and with ecstasy filled.  
Start with a word, and a family build.

I talk to you;  
God talks to Earth.  
Sentences few  
Seem little worth.  
What can one do?  
Words have no girth—  
Oh, how untrue;  
Words beget birth.

Worms in the dirt neither cry out nor laugh,  
Nor pray to God when you rip them in half.  
Two bodies, one brain, continue alive,  
No less capacity to never thrive.

Worms will eat you  
When you have died,  
Nature not due,  
Beautiful bride,  
To what you glue  
On the wrong side.  
Worms are not new,  
Nor homicide.

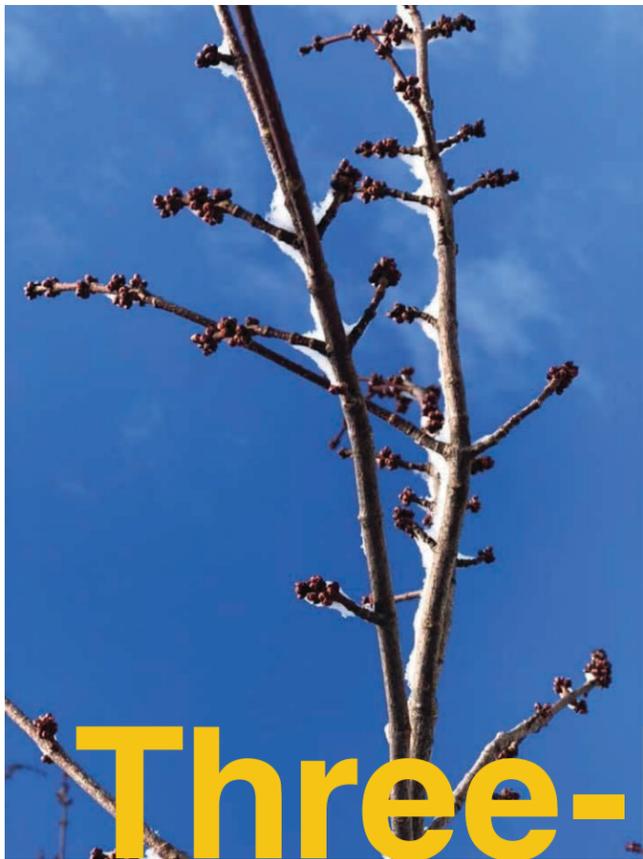
Tongues are attractive, they flirt behind teeth;  
Language seductive, with mind underneath.  
I'd marry speech in a heartbeat—my last.  
Talked into bed, to deathbed I go fast.

# Talking on

Words are a bond,  
Heart to a heart.  
Fish in a pond,  
Smooth but not smart,  
Cannot feel fond,  
Missing a part.  
Subpar, they're spawned  
Not knowing art.

What about God, about life, about death?  
What about talk makes it worthy of breath?  
I will not answer: the question you ask  
Shines down with glory in which you should bask.

Look at our bond,  
Look at this page.  
Words that have dawned  
Far from this age  
Which you abscond  
In hasty rage—  
They are the wand  
Dropped in this cage.



Toni Pavao

# Three-Headed

Chelsea Daigle

There's a reason the underworld is guarded by Cerberus  
The three-headed Hound  
Who watches the shades of life trickle below

Death of Future  
Follows those who threw theirs away  
Who quit before the finish line  
Entering the Underworld with potential still  
Dripping  
From their wounds

Death of Present  
Watches those who left mid moment  
They still have emotion  
A rare commodity  
Ranging from horror to elation  
Caught before their final exhale

Death of Past  
Tracks those who sealed their fate long ago  
With hollowed eyes  
Often confused because they've been walking  
The very same path, the very same pattern for  
A while now  
Saddest,  
For they died long ago

# Widow of the Soldier

Crystal Willette

She walked slowly through the scattered remains of the autumn breeze; her eyes fixated on the dim light from the moon  
Not a day had passed in which she slept, her nights were filled with sorrow, he passed too soon  
They were just children, hadn't even learned how to grow up, and it hurt with each step she took, her heart stung like fire  
All she could do was blame herself, if she hadn't gotten angry with him, if she wasn't a goddamn liar  
And all that remained now, was darkness, hopelessness, and antagonizing fear  
How could this happen to you, I wish you were still here  
It began to drizzle, rain poured from the dark and dreary sky, the light of the moon shrouded in cloud  
Was this a fever dream? If she opened her eyes would everything be better, and would she remain humble and proud?  
So many lives were changed, fates turned sour like old milk left out for too long, everyone mourned his quick and quiet defeat  
Her life had been unfulfilled now, she was all alone with nobody to hug, cry with, or even lay next to at night, it was shattered and incomplete  
Her mind began to wonder, depression filled her head fast, as she thought of this world without her sweet love right there  
She began to wonder if it was worth it, because life just so unfair  
So, she returned to her home, packed her bag and walked down the steps, vowing never to return, never seen from again  
She hoped someone would miss her, and yet she hoped for the end  
All that remained now, was an empty promise and a folded-up flag, beckoning for a present face  
Collecting dust for years to come, a haunting past she couldn't erase  
His death saved many lives, and for that she was most grateful  
But unfortunately, when we love someone the most, that love can turn bitter and hateful  
It felt as though her heart had sunk to the bottom of her chest, it was now just broken and shattered  
Life was now meaningless, none of it really mattered  
So, she bid them adieu, said a sweet goodbye, to those who loved her most  
Because all that was left of the widow of the soldier was a pale and fragile ghost.

# The Queen's Wanted Path

Chelsea Daigle

It's frigid out there  
Warm in here  
Warm in my heart

You say It's too Cold

You say It's too Dark

You say It's Dead  
Musty  
Unforgiving  
Hopeless

Pardon me, Mother Demeter  
I know it's not a Wanted path,  
To be on the other side of river's reflection  
But how can I love the bounty above

But he has a fireplace set in every room I walk

But the river, gems sparkle,  
And so does his smile

But I've never been more Refreshed by  
Life

And how precious  
And how meaningful  
And how short  
Its Time.

Time that's present in every moment with him

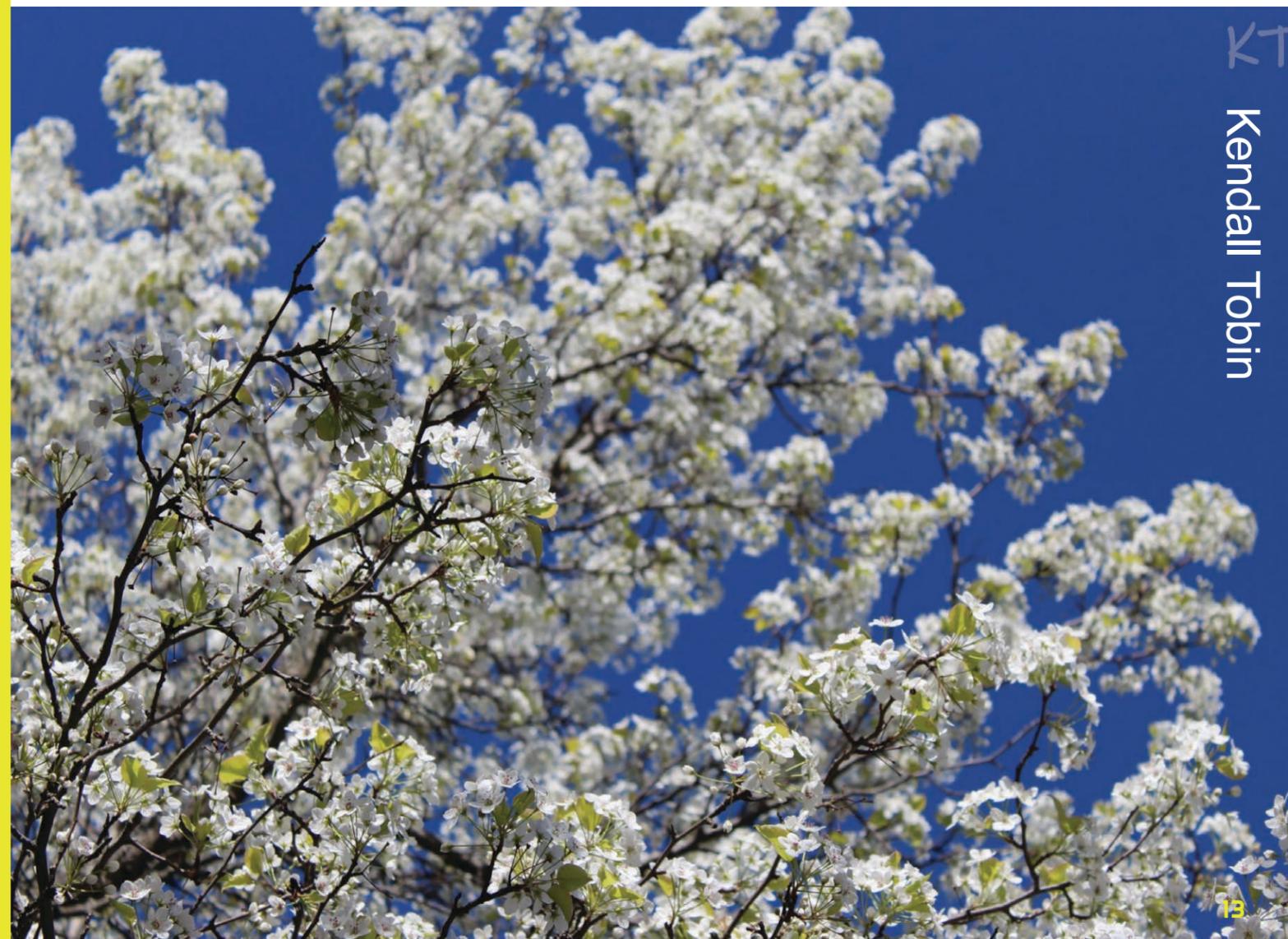
Without the wealth below?

# Your Flowers

Diana Burke

I understand the urge to dig your grave—  
but why your garden? Why  
forever lie  
along the fresh-killed corpses of  
your purest work? Deprave  
not just yourself, but those you made and love?

And why mouth-first? Why swim down open wide  
to shovel with your teeth  
thorns underneath?  
No roses at your funeral  
reflect your labor's pride—  
you ate your own. Did you, at least, feel full?



KT

Kendall Tobin

# Destined to be Drenched

Scott Silva

Echos of aqua  
Children play by the poolside  
Rain filled clouds float by

The sound of laughter  
A picnic with your soulmate  
Black clouds, thunder cracks

The hand holding halts  
Droplets of water strike heads  
Rain sets upon you

A surreal rainbow  
Such gorgeous arching purples  
Eyes are fixed outside

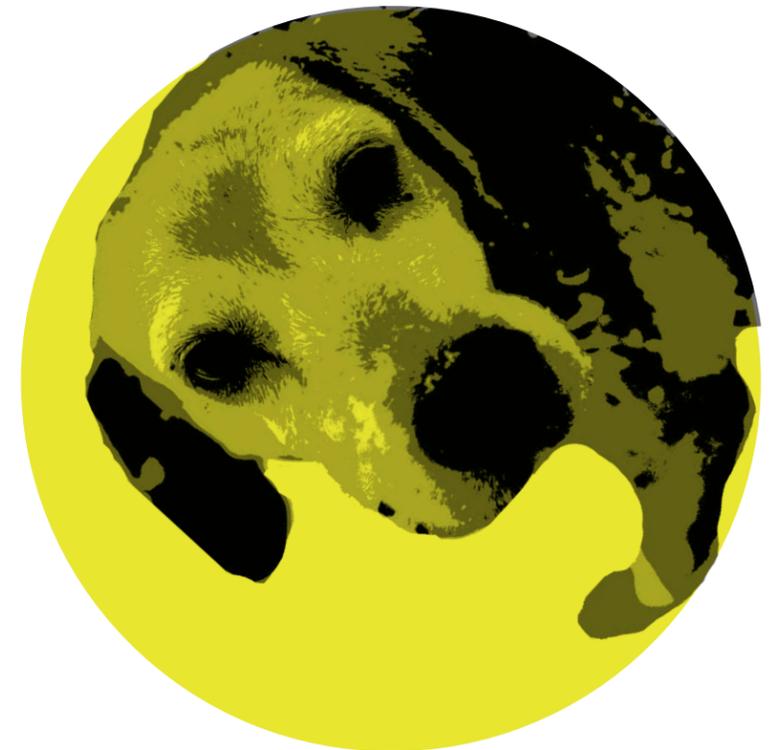


Toni Pavao

# Overstimulation

Noah Kreuser

My mind is a sponge  
I begrudgingly trudge  
Through a trench  
Of relentlessly  
Numb conundrum  
Yet I succumb  
To an index and thumb  
Plucking defenses  
Like stems of a shrub  
Finally I'm rooted  
Extending through none  
Soaked in a web  
With a venomous clutch  
System of tangles  
Refusing to budge  
I dangle imprisoned  
Too hindered to fuss



# White

Sarah Pachano

White walls cover the city,  
White snow will cover the ground,  
And only when dirty you can see brown,  
White walls, oppress the city  
White walls cover my eyes,

Everywhere I go,  
Everywhere I look,  
White walls, build in black

White walls, cover the country  
White walls, could I scape?

What's hidden beyond these walls of oppression? Is it more white?

The 1% who are able to escape,  
Is the 1% who build the walls,  
And the 1% they're all white.

Such a clean color,  
What is it hiding?  
The cleanest color

Yet so easy to taint,

These walls,  
Like a canvas,  
So easy to paint,  
So easy to create,  
So easy to imagine,  
But like canvas,  
So easy to ruin,  
So easy to destroy,  
So easy to tarnish,

Will the walls ever turn brown like the ground?



Anne Hopkins

# Existentialism Explained Inefficiently

Kat McCarron

There is no beginning.  
That is the comedy of cosmic creation.  
In fact,  
Ignore the impulse to implore any implication  
That creation may conjure.  
Consciousness is cocaine to my cortex.  
Or should I say,  
Awareness is ancillary to this addiction  
To the erring electricity expressing itself as my existence.  
This all from nothingness.  
No manipulation of minutes before moments.  
Only matter manifesting like ex-Machina.  
But Deus don't speak to me.  
Instead,  
I sit in states of silence so thick I am suspended like salinity.  
Left to ruminate relentlessly over a reality rooted in erroneous rhetoric,  
In dissonance so disorienting I dissociate faster than frailties of men  
Who fight only for fragile egos.  
There is no end.  
That is the tragedy of untraceable trauma.  
Then to hell with the tick-tock from the trickster Father Time.  
Let me amble aimlessly or aimfully around an Earth that so  
Unabashedly echos dimensions more aethereal.  
Until the quantum tides turn, I sit a sentient simian,  
A Hominidae whose hubris is harnessed by linear logarithm.

# Plastic Animals

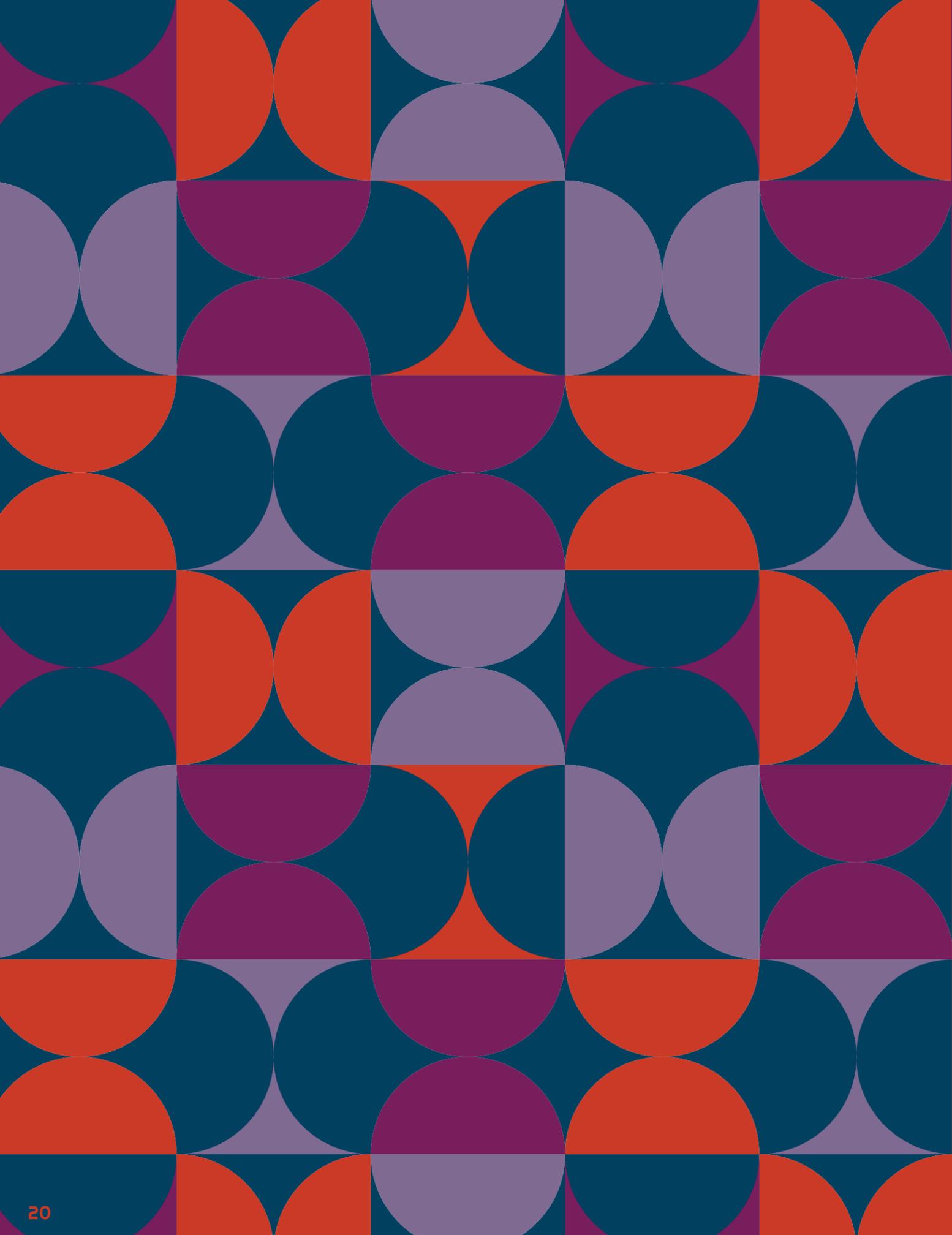
Diana Burke

I dream that I a poet am,  
Pastoralist of ewe and ram—  
    A timeless being of but art,  
And no allegiance otherwise.  
I fill my fantasy with lies—  
    I leave the manufactured part  
Out of the poems I comprise.

My animals are plastic toys.  
I speak for them by making noise  
    I find amusing in my play.  
This is the modern manuscript  
Of poetry, unneatly ripped  
    From Nature's past, that doesn't stay  
Sweet-smelling in a sage's crypt.

My toys get wet and start to mold;  
The Earth gets warm and we get old;  
    The New World is industrialized.  
The gentle shepherd I pretend  
To be is at the other end  
    Of this far sea, and sits surprised  
Where the untender pastures tend.

My pseudoauthenticity,  
Uncommentating poetry,  
    Owes debt to dead men on their farms  
For feelings borrowed, forms I steal.  
I cannot write an image real  
    I never held within my arms.  
I thank my grocer for this meal.



# To see change. (Raw thoughts)

Cheryl Wilson

No one wants to sit with me on the gay train to Pride.  
Bunches of teens and young adults are pouring into the train!

Fucking rainbows everywhere. Rainbow tie-dye. Rainbow letters on Ts. Rainbow mascara for fuck's sake!

The laughter, the smiles, the camaraderie!

Such stark contrast! I sit here, socially awkward, because I couldn't do that. I see the me I never got to be, and I'm so happy for them, but a little sad and angry for me.

But to have had the privilege to see the change, makes me weep happy tears.

# Courage: Lack Thereof

Scott Silva

I am but a cowardly beast  
The king of zilch  
The ruler of nothing  
The lord of nil

I can never compare to Dorothy  
With her ruby slippers,  
More red than the blood Tin Man lacks  
More alluring than all of Emerald City

How she was able to kill  
The Wicked Witch of the East with ease  
How, with a simple water bucket,  
The Wicked Witch of the West was vanquished

Comparatively, my tenacity is as nonexistent as The Wizard of Oz  
Even when I drank his bottle of lies  
That false liquid courage that tricked my self-esteem  
Temporarily important, just like the life I live

Dorothy could never see me for the courageous beast I should be  
I need to prove to her I'm worthy  
That I CAN protect her  
Maybe then, I would be loved

However, It's obvious I'm not enough for her  
She has Scarecrow's intellect  
The Tin Man's passion  
But what do I have to offer?

My own shadow scares me  
This fear makes me inadequate  
So, I shall forever be picked last  
Unwanted like the dirt on her feet

### HAVERSINES

The following table gives the values of the haversines and their logarithms for angles from 0 to 180° at 10 minute intervals. Characteristics of the logarithms are omitted.

°	0'		10'		20'		30'		40'		50'	
	Value	Log	Value	Log	Value	Log	Value	Log	Value	Log	Value	Log
0	.00000	—	.00000	5.32139	.00001	5.92745	.00002	2.7963	.00003	.52951	.00005	.72332
1	.00008	.88168	.00010	.01637	.00014	.13155	.00017	.23385	.00021	.32536	.00026	.40814
2	.00030	.48371	.00036	.55323	.00043	.61759	.00048	.67751	.00054	.73355	.00061	.78620
3	.00069	.83584	.00076	.88479	.00085	.92733	.00093	.96970	.00102	.01009	.00112	.04869
4	.00122	.08564	.00132	.12108	.00143	.15513	.00154	.18790	.00166	.21947	.00178	.24993
5	.00190	.27936	.00203	.30782	.00216	.33538	.00230	.36206	.00245	.38796	.00261	.41317
6	.00274	.43760	.00289	.46138	.00305	.48452	.00321	.50706	.00338	.52907	.00356	.55044
7	.00373	.57135	.00391	.59176	.00409	.61170	.00428	.63120	.00447	.65031	.00467	.66931
8	.00487	.68717	.00507	.70505	.00528	.72257	.00549	.73981	.00571	.75681	.00594	.77368
9	.00616	.78929	.00639	.80519	.00662	.82081	.00687	.83620	.00712	.85139	.00738	.86637
10	.00760	.88059	.00785	.89491	.00811	.90866	.00838	.92283	.00865	.93650	.00893	.94970
11	.00919	.96315	.00947	.97617	.00975	.98896	.01004	.10154	.01033	.11284	.01063	.12435
12	.01093	.03847	.01123	.05041	.01154	.06218	.01187	.07371	.01221	.08505	.01256	.09620
13	.01281	.10772	.01314	.11873	.01348	.12961	.01383	.14037	.01419	.15103	.01456	.16158
14	.01485	.17179	.01521	.18202	.01556	.19218	.01593	.20221	.01630	.21216	.01668	.22204
15	.01704	.23140	.01742	.24094	.01780	.25037	.01819	.25970	.01858	.26893	.01898	.27807
16	.01937	.28711	.01977	.29605	.02018	.30490	.02059	.31361	.02101	.32223	.02144	.33077
17	.02185	.33940	.02227	.34782	.02271	.35615	.02315	.36440	.02360	.37257	.02406	.38067
18	.02447	.38867	.02492	.39668	.02538	.40461	.02584	.41247	.02631	.42026	.02679	.42798
19	.02724	.43522	.02772	.44277	.02820	.45025	.02869	.45767	.02918	.46503	.02968	.47233
20	.03015	.47934	.03065	.48677	.03116	.49414	.03167	.50146	.03219	.50873	.03272	.51596
21	.03321	.52127	.03373	.52855	.03426	.53578	.03480	.54297	.03534	.55012	.03589	.55724
22	.03641	.56120	.03695	.56797	.03751	.57470	.03807	.58140	.03864	.58807	.03921	.59472
23	.03975	.59931	.04032	.60556	.04090	.61178	.04149	.61798	.04208	.62416	.04268	.63033
24	.04323	.63570	.04382	.64186	.04442	.64799	.04502	.65410	.04563	.66020	.04624	.66628
25	.04685	.67007	.04746	.67633	.04808	.68257	.04870	.68879	.04933	.69499	.05000	.70117
26	.05060	.70418	.05124	.70963	.05189	.71506	.05254	.72047	.05320	.72587	.05386	.73125
27	.05450	.73637	.05516	.74162	.05583	.74685	.05650	.75207	.05718	.75728	.05786	.76247
28	.05853	.76735	.05921	.77240	.05990	.77744	.06059	.78247	.06129	.78749	.06199	.79250
29	.06269	.79720	.06340	.80207	.06411	.80693	.06483	.81174	.06555	.81654	.06628	.82133
30	.06699	.82599	.06772	.83069	.06845	.83538	.06919	.84005	.06993	.84471	.07068	.84936
31	.07142	.85380	.07217	.85834	.07292	.86287	.07368	.86739	.07444	.87189	.07520	.87643
32	.07598	.88068	.07675	.88507	.07752	.88945	.07830	.89382	.07908	.89823	.07987	.90263
33	.08066	.90668	.08146	.91094	.08226	.91519	.08307	.91960	.08388	.92400	.08470	.92830
34	.08548	.93187	.08630	.93599	.08713	.94010	.08797	.94407	.08881	.94794	.08966	.95180
35	.09042	.95628	.09126	.96028	.09211	.96427	.09296	.96825	.09382	.97222	.09468	.97617
36	.09549	.97996	.09635	.98384	.09721	.98771	.09808	.99160	.09895	.99513	.09983	.99830
37	.10068	.00295	.10156	.00672	.10245	.01049	.10334	.01451	.10424	.01871	.10517	.02292
38	.10599	.02528	.10689	.02894	.10780	.03250	.10871	.03625	.10964	.04004	.11058	.04387
39	.11143	.04699	.11234	.05055	.11326	.05416	.11419	.05782	.11513	.06154	.11608	.06528
40	.11698	.06810	.11791	.07157	.11885	.07510	.11980	.07868	.12076	.08232	.12173	.08593
41	.12265	.08865	.12360	.09200	.12456	.09542	.12553	.09890	.12651	.10240	.12750	.10589
42	.12843	.10866	.12940	.11199	.13038	.11548	.13137	.11964	.13237	.12387	.13337	.12792
43	.13432	.12815	.13532	.13139	.13633	.13573	.13729	.14000	.13866	.14273	.14000	.14540
44	.14033	.14715	.14134	.15017	.14236	.15398	.14339	.15759	.14443	.16119	.14548	.16483
45	.14645	.16568	.14748	.16872	.14851	.17177	.14955	.17477	.15058	.17778	.15163	.18077
46	.15267	.18376	.15372	.18673	.15477	.18968	.15582	.19263	.15688	.19557	.15794	.19849
47	.15900	.20140	.16007	.20430	.16113	.20719	.16220	.21006	.16328	.21293	.16436	.21578
48	.16543	.21863	.16652	.22146	.16760	.22428	.16869	.22709	.16978	.22989	.17087	.23268
49	.17197	.23545	.17307	.23822	.17417	.24098	.17528	.24372	.17638	.24640	.17749	.24918
50	.17861	.25190	.17972	.25460	.18084	.25729	.18196	.25998	.18308	.26265	.18421	.26532
51	.18534	.26797	.18647	.27061	.18761	.27325	.18874	.27587	.18988	.27848	.19102	.28109
52	.19217	.28368	.19332	.28627	.19447	.28885	.19562	.29141	.19677	.29397	.19793	.29652
53	.19909	.29905	.20026	.30158	.20142	.30410	.20259	.30662	.20376	.30912	.20493	.31161
54	.20611	.31409	.20729	.31657	.20847	.31903	.20965	.32149	.21083	.32394	.21202	.32638
55	.21321	.32881	.21440	.33123	.21560	.33365	.21680	.33605	.21800	.33845	.21920	.34084
56	.22040	.34322	.22161	.34559	.22282	.34795	.22403	.35031	.22525	.35266	.22646	.35499
57	.22768	.35733	.22890	.35965	.23012	.36196	.23135	.36427	.23258	.36657	.23381	.36886
58	.23504	.37114	.23627	.37342	.23751	.37569	.23875	.37794	.23999	.38020	.24124	.38244
59	.24248	.38468	.24373	.38691	.24498	.38913	.24623	.39134	.24749	.39355	.24874	.39575
60	.25000	.39794	.25126	.40012	.25252	.40230	.25379	.40447	.25506	.40663	.25632	.40879

### HAVERSINES

Characteristics of the logarithms are omitted.

°	0'		10'		20'		30'		40'		50'	
	Value	Log										
60	.25000	.39794	.25126	.40012	.25252	.40230	.25379	.40447	.25506	.40663	.25632	.40879
61	.25760	.41094	.25887	.41308	.26014	.41521	.26142	.41734	.26270	.41946	.26398	.42157
62	.26526	.42368	.26655	.42578	.26784	.42787	.26913	.42996	.27042	.43203	.27171	.43411
63	.27300	.43617	.27430	.43823	.27560	.44028	.27690	.44232	.27820	.44436	.27951	.44639
64	.28081	.44839	.28211	.45043	.28343	.45245	.28474	.45446	.28606	.45645	.28737	.45845
65	.28943	.46045	.29074	.46241	.29206	.46439	.29338	.46636	.29470	.46831	.29602	.47027
66	.29663	.47223	.29796	.47416	.29929	.47610	.30063	.47802	.30196	.47995	.30330	.48187
67	.30463	.48377	.30598	.48568	.30732	.48758	.30866	.48948	.31000	.49137	.31135	.49325
68	.31270	.49311	.31405	.49499	.31540	.49686	.31675	.49872	.31810	.50057	.31946	.50242
69	.32082	.50227	.32217	.50412	.32353	.50599	.32490	.50784	.32626	.50968	.32762	.51153
70	.32908	.51147	.33045	.51330	.33182	.51512	.33320	.51693	.33458	.51873	.33596	.52053
71	.33735	.52252	.33873	.52433	.34011	.52612	.34150	.52790	.34289	.52968	.34428	.53146
72	.34567	.53325	.34706	.53502	.34845	.53678	.34984	.53853	.35123	.54028	.35262	.54202
73	.35402	.54392	.35542	.54565	.35681	.54737	.35820	.54910	.35959	.55082	.36098	.55253
74	.36237	.55422	.36376	.55593	.36515	.55763	.36654	.55932	.36793	.56100	.36932	.56268
75	.37071	.56367	.37210	.56534	.37349	.56700	.37488	.56865	.37627	.57029	.37766	.57193
76	.37905	.57296	.38044	.57461	.38183	.57625	.38322	.57783	.38461	.57940	.38600	.58097
77	.38739	.58203	.38878	.58359	.39017	.58514	.39156	.58668	.39295	.58821	.39434	.58974
78	.39573	.59075	.39712	.59227	.39851	.59378	.39990	.59528	.40129	.59677	.40268	.59825
79	.40404	.59974	.40543	.60121	.40682	.60267	.40821	.60411	.40960	.60554	.41099	.60696
80	.41238	.60795	.41377	.60937	.41516	.61082	.41655	.61224	.41794	.61363	.41933	.61504
81	.42042	.61500	.42181	.61641	.42320	.61780	.42459	.61918	.42598	.62055	.42737	.62192
82	.42836	.62289	.42975	.62425	.43114	.62560	.43253	.62694	.43392	.62827	.43531	.62960
83	.43600	.63051	.43739	.63183	.43878	.63314	.44017	.63444	.44156	.63573	.44295	.63702
84	.44334	.63821	.44473	.63949	.44612	.64076	.44751	.64202	.44890	.64327	.45029	.64452
85	.45168	.64576	.45307	.64699	.45446	.64821	.45585	.64942	.45724	.65062	.45863	.65182
86	.45999	.65299	.46138	.65416	.46277	.65532	.46416	.65647	.46555	.65761	.46694	.65875
87	.46810	.65974	.46949	.66087	.47088	.66199	.472					

# God's Hands

Noah Kreuser

Send for a master  
I've been told  
Shortly thereafter  
We come and we go

We gather together  
In shape of a path  
We seek the horizon  
Our gaze in its grasp

I feel the pull

I feel the pull

Inwards, out of body  
The vacuum itself, oddly, unfolds

The boomerang strip of the soul  
It comes around again  
Now and then  
And the lasso ensnares  
In a ring where  
We spar with double edged swords  
Carved by the backlash  
With nothing to spare



Kendall Tobin

# Circles of a Life (Pi out of the Sky)

Diana Burke

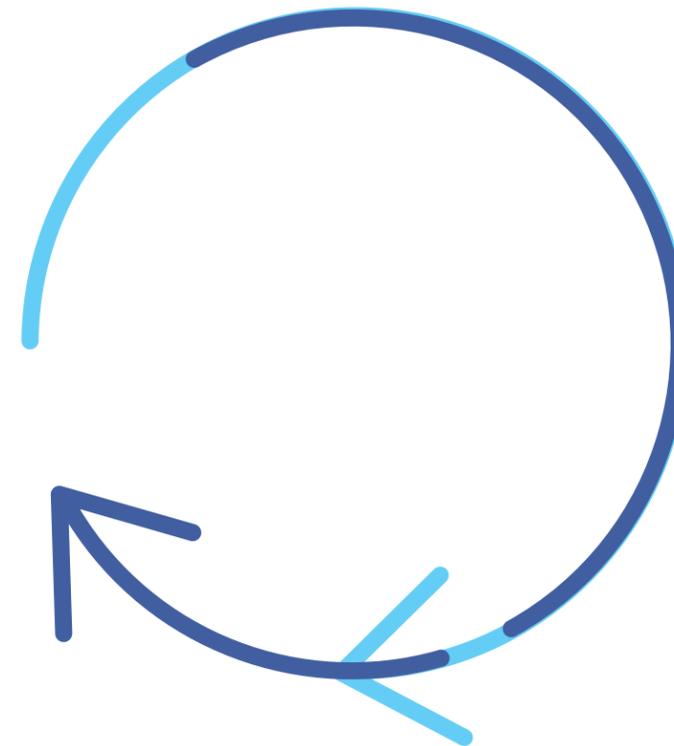
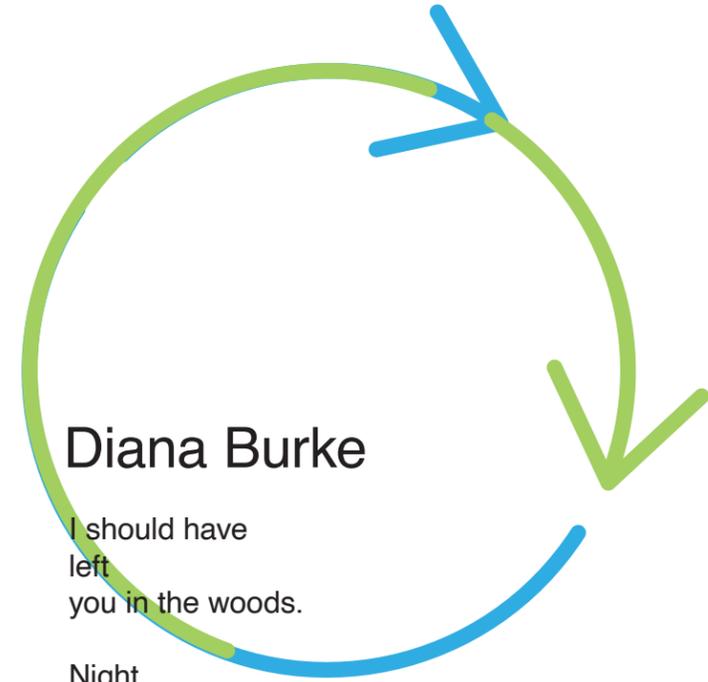
I should have  
left  
you in the woods.

Night  
could protect you from  
my incompetence, her dark body  
hiding  
a son from harm, a more  
fit and like mother.

Black puppy  
scared of your own tail,  
I failed to calm your chronic nerves,  
but I shaped them into little hearts.  
And the whites of your eyes went  
round in every oblong direction,  
poking at  
curves to  
make sharp points.

But how you would dart at your prey,  
tiny hunter,  
the bane of the backyard.  
Nature  
was your true home, and I  
your beloved  
kidnapper.

No baby  
rightfully mine were you, a mutt  
off the streets.  
I picked  
you from fallen stars, and smote  
you with the affection afforded  
to stolen changelings.



# Howl.

Madison Walsh

Howls echo in the mountains. A pack of wolves race into the pines, powder and vapor rising in their wake. Heartbeats reverberate like drums as adrenaline pushes their limits. Their pursuers race after them, creatures adorned with prey, death gripped in their hands.

With a bark from the leader, the pack splits.  
The hunters bark their own command and follow.

Teeth bared, a wolf lunges at their enemy.  
Bone versus steel.

Crack.  
It falls, staggers, collapses.

The rest of the pack snarls and attacks.

Crack.  
Red splatters against white.

Crack.  
Snarling turns to whimpers.

Crack.  
Crack.  
Crack.

Silence.  
...

Cries rise from beneath the underbrush. A hunter pauses, grip tightening on their rifle, creeping towards the noise. Their hand parts the brambles to reveal a wolf pup trembling in the snow, fur stained with its mother's sacrifice.

The rifle lowers as the hunter crouches toward it.

Another hunter hears the whimpers and spots the pup. They take aim.

Crack.  
...

A howl echoes in the mountain range as snow accumulates on the ground. The flakes glisten in the moonlight, highlighting a wolf posed at the cliff's edge, looking out across the valley. Crunches are heard as an individual, face obscured by layers of scarves, approaches the cliffside. The wolf leans into the hand that rests on its head.

A minute passes.

The individual whistles.

The crunch of snow once more fills the silence.



Yomerly Rodriguez

# The Smile

Elena Karavannykh

Sometimes you come across stories in life that are hard to believe – they seem too much like fairy tales. But how we wish they could be true.

Ask anyone in Alupka about this story: they all still remember it. Our little city is small, and if you don't count the vacationers, everyone knows each other. Vacationers were there to be counted starting in June, when the summer season began.

This story took place in the early 1980s, in the month of May.

Natasha turned 24 years old. For the last ten years, she lived with her aunt. Natasha occupied the smallest room in her aunt's three-bedroom apartment on Ulyanov Street, which leads directly to the Black sea. If not for Natasha, her aunt could have rented out the room to vacationers for a good price. But putting her dead sister's daughter out on the street would have been awkward. And trying to get rid of Natasha was not very successful. In answer to her aunt's constant comments that you couldn't wait around for your prince to come, Natasha merely smiled.

Natasha worked in a hair salon in the center of Alupka, cutting men's hair. She didn't want to risk being a women's hairdresser, for fear of the arguments there would be with clients. Men were more agreeable, and their haircuts were simpler. On that Friday, the 28th of May, Natasha was working the morning shift. A young man walked into the salon, the kind that immediately attracts women's attention: about 25 years old, good posture, black hair, straight nose. If not for the unevenness of his chin, you might say

he was exceedingly handsome.

And so it happened that he sat down in the chair of our stylist. They don't call it the hand of fate for nothing. "Give me, Miss," he said, "your very best cut and style." And he looked at her in the mirror joyfully, even excitedly. "Today," he said, "I'm going to a wedding."

His cheerful stress affected Natasha too,

and she did his hair the way that she liked best herself. Her client was all ready to go when it started raining, a real May downpour. There was no time to wait – he could not be late to the wedding – but the rain showed no sign of stopping. Natasha felt sorry for both the young man and for the job she had done. "Here," she said. "Take my umbrella. Return it after the wedding."

A collapsible umbrella! The kind that you purchased, or managed to get through someone you knew, and carried around for years. People didn't have two or three umbrellas like they do now – one was already a valuable treasure. She picked it up and without hesitation handed it to the stranger. "Here, take it." Her friends, of course, would chide her for being too trusting, but the deed

was done, and the umbrella was gone. The whole week long, everyone teased her.

"What?" they asked. "He hasn't returned the umbrella yet?"

"Well," answered Natasha, "the guy looked good for his wedding." And she smiled.

But the umbrella was returned to her. A week later, our bridegroom came into the salon with the umbrella and

said, "Miss, I didn't even ask your name. On Saturday," he said,

"after the wedding, I didn't

catch you. Your shift was already over. And then I

was partying with my friend – I've actually

never been to the seaside before,

and it's the beach season. You're

quite something – giving out

umbrellas to strangers. What if I had tricked

you?"

"So, we're not supposed to trust anyone anymore?"

answered Natasha with a smile.

Her smile, one must add, was something special.

Natasha herself was not a beauty: skinny as a teenager, small-boned, thin fingers, large mouth. She had cut off her heavy braid, which hurt her head, right after graduation from school. As if waiting for this moment, her hair had sprung up in curls all around her head like an ash-colored crown, dandelion fluff on a thin stem. But her smile – it manifested itself in a three-step process. Step one: the corners of her mouth went up and her eyes squinted.

Step two: her lips parted. Step three: Natasha's smile spread over her whole wide mouth. There she was, all opened up.

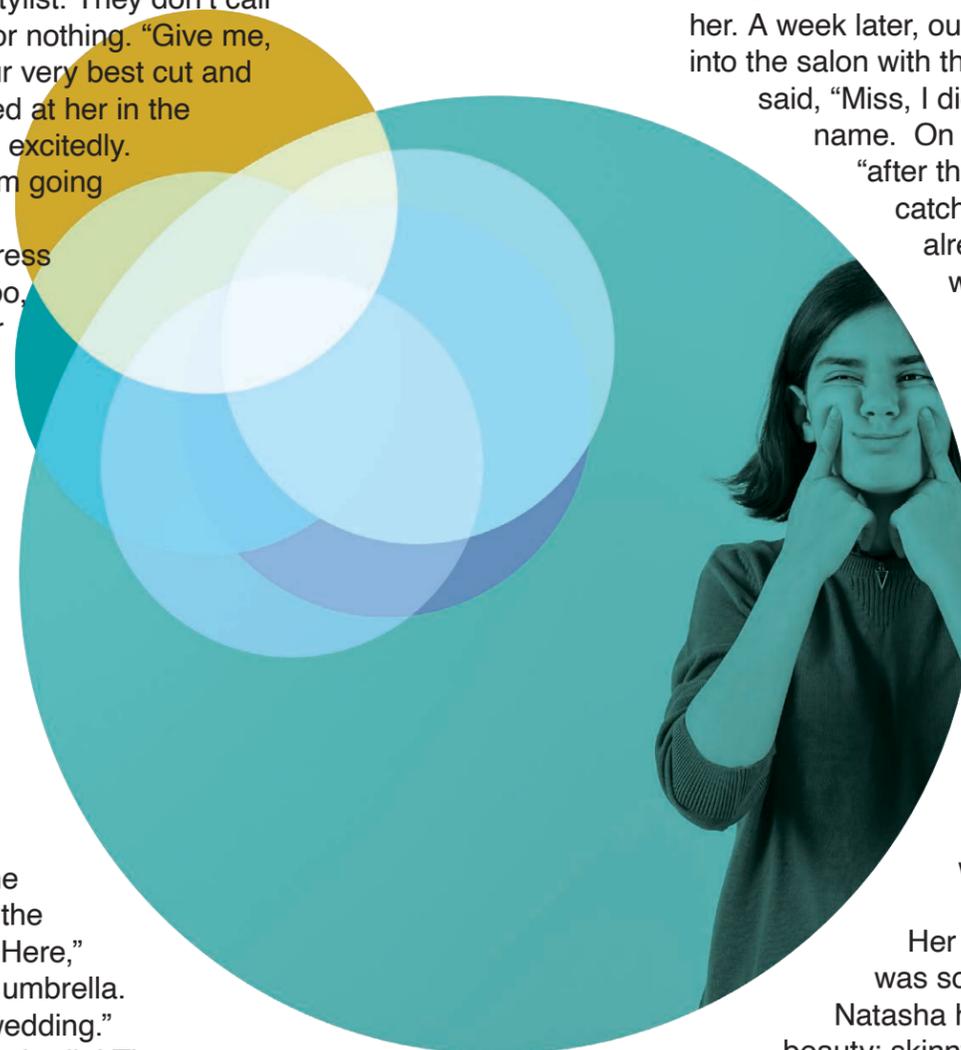
And this was how they met. It turned out that his name was Artyom and he was not a bridegroom at all, but a groom's best man at the wedding, and he wasn't 25 years old but only 21. He had come from Perm, in the Urals, to his friend's wedding. They were students together in Perm in the aviation professional school. His friend had decided to get married quickly before going into the army.

Natasha and Artyom went first to the movies together, then to a café called "Miracle Worker" and had milkshakes. Then it was already time for Artyom to leave. His trip was over, as well as his postponement from the army. In June, he had to be at the recruitment center with all his gear. They agreed that they would write to each other.

Artyom was sent to do his military service in the communications corps in Novgorod. He got lucky with his fellow soldiers and commanders in his unit. Artyom and Natasha wrote to each other often, discussing everything in their letters. Letters were long then – while you waited for an answer through the post, you were already walking around composing the next one, and sometimes you wrote one letter for several days.

A year later, in the spring, Natasha flew to Novgorod to see Artyom. There, everything was already prepared. The unit commander, Lieutenant Colonel Kutsiy had made arrangements with the marriage registry bureau and given Artyom leave. In the hotel, Natasha put on the white dress she had rented, took her passport and went to the city marriage bureau, where Artyom and the witnesses – Company Lieutenant Moraru and his wife – were already waiting for her.

After the marriage bureau, the couple went walking around the city, ate ice



cream and talked. They had a few hours until his leave was over and until her return flight. Between them, all was understood and all was joyful. Artyom returned to his unit and Natasha ran back to the hotel to change before her flight to Simferopol with a connection in Moscow.

Among the passengers on that flight from Novgorod to Moscow were some discharged soldiers, perhaps from the same unit where Natasha's husband was now serving. The discharged soldiers were in a heated fervor – a few more hours and they would be home – to their mothers, to freedom, to home-cooked food. They saw a girl sitting next to them, smiling, and they decided to get acquainted. Where was she coming from, where was she flying, and why was she alone? Natasha answered that she was coming from her husband, that she had gotten married that day. The young men took a look at the marriage certificate – it was all true; there was today's date. And there was the bride flying alone on the plane, happy, smiling all the time. The discharged soldiers started whispering amongst themselves, and moving around. Suddenly, one of them came up to Natasha and spilled a handful of candies into her lap. That's how it goes with young guys – they also have dreams of their beloved, their own fears and hopes. And here she was sitting there – their dreams fulfilled – the one who had waited.

The discharged soldiers were very energetic. They spoke to the stewardesses and a few minutes later the whole plane heard the pilot congratulating Natasha over the loudspeaker. In the meantime, back at the unit, the guys were congratulating Artyom. That evening, they gathered in the boiler room and celebrated with tea and sweets. The stewardesses also served tea to all the passengers. Thus, high in the sky and far away on earth, the marriage was celebrated and everyone flew joyfully to Moscow.

If you meet any pilots who were flying to Novgorod then, before the Yurievo airport was closed down, they will tell you this story of how the whole airplane was celebrating a wedding. It was an unusual flight.

We could end the story here. It is completely unnecessary to tell what happened later...

Later, Artyom chose to continue his service in the military, and Natasha, of course, moved to be with her husband at his unit, and their son was born.

Later came Perestroika.

Later came army reforms. Artyom was let go amid downsizing, but they managed to buy their house on an army housing subsidy. Natasha worked, like before, as a hairdresser. Artyom also managed to get a job. He started to be away from home a lot.

Later, Artyom announced that he had met another woman, and that Natasha had to move out. She took their son and left. She rented an apartment, got a job in a hair salon. Natasha still looked the same – thin, almost transparent, her hair framing her face. But her smile now resembled more of a smirk. Many women smile this way – their lips tightly pursed, the corners of their mouth going down.

Sometimes you come across stories in life that are easy to believe – because they make sense, because they are so like real life. But how we wish they could turn out not to be true.



Anne Hopkins

# the broken heart

Johnna Padvaiskas

I had planted the flowers at the graves of all those I had killed. I was the only one who knew where they were buried, and it was only I who should leave a piece of my heart with each of them.

The last wind of summer blew the disturbed soil in my face. I shut my eyes briefly, greeting the darkness as a friend. When I opened them again, I finished planting the last daisy on Julia Lais' resting place. It wasn't a typical flower for death, but Julia had been innocent, and like everything else, it had come to an end.

There were specific flowers for everyone buried here. It seemed like a nice thing to do. After a while, they would either survive or die. The final answer to if I was right or wrong. The answer to the question of if they loved me or not. Most of the time I was right, but sometimes a rose would survive the harshest New England frost. However, I would not grieve nor blame myself. There was nothing to be remorseful for. I had saved myself in the end.

Standing up, I observed my work and found myself smiling because I already knew the answer from these flowers. They would perish like most young love. I patted my hands against my trousers to get the leftover soil off then picked up my trench coat that had been neatly folded beside the shovel. I carried them both and myself out of the meadow and toward the edge of town

where my cabin was.

When I reached my stone pathway that led both to my house on my right and the town on my left, I froze, dropping the coat and shovel, as a sudden pain shot through the left side of my chest. I clutched my heart as I lowered myself to the ground, clenching my teeth and willing myself to breathe. After a few agonizing minutes, the pain slowly resided and I tried to focus on the small things around me, to bring everything back to focus. The birds singing, the leaves dancing in the wind, my shallow heartbeat keeping rhythm.

For the past month, there had been times like this where it felt as if someone was thrusting their hand into my chest and seizing my heart. I had to wonder if this is what my victims felt like before they passed and if this was a cruel joke the universe was playing on me. The world would never know, but that was why I had Charlotte; the best nurse in town as well as the loveliest, and I was seeing her tonight. I gathered my items and slowly climbed to my feet and made my way back to my house. I left the shovel outside by my door since no one thought anything of it. I was only a simple gardener, and the public believed it enough. There was only one time I was suspected of the mysterious murders around town, but I was able to throw everyone off and place the blame on

a father who had a list of heinous crimes himself.

When I stepped inside I was greeted by the sound of nothingness as if the world outside was gone. I heaved a sigh as I shut the door behind me and placed my coat gently on one of the chairs surrounding my kitchen table. Having this privacy and quiet was a luxury I didn't take for granted.

I pulled a matchbox from a drawer to light the candle at the center of the table. I sat down and collected my thoughts, still trying to gather my bearings. I would need to tell Charlotte how frequent they were getting, but I didn't know how much I should tell her.

Charlotte was the only one who knew of my extracurricular activity and she rarely asked questions. I guess it was because it was the only true excitement she got out of life. She still lived with her father and didn't have any intentions to marry, which I knew of. All I needed from her were her tonics, but recently we had been meeting at the town's tavern so I could receive my medicine while also sharing a nice dinner together. We were getting closer and I was starting to enjoy her company, which worried me. I didn't want to have to hurt her, especially after Julia, another failed attempt at love. I needed time to heal. I decided it would be better if we just shared a drink tonight instead of a meal. I needed to slowly drift away even if she often crossed my mind throughout the day. I stood up and went upstairs to get ready.

The digging had taken up most of my day, and I hadn't much time before I had to leave. I made my way to my bathroom and ran the water for the tub, not caring if it was cold. While I waited I looked at my reflection in the mirror.

My brown hair was sticking out all over and my green eyes were surrounded by a pool of red from the irritation the soil had caused. After I undressed I stepped into the tub and

floated in my thoughts of how tonight would go, what she would wear, what we would discuss.

No. I shook my head violently and splashed water on my face. I needed to think about how I would end things with Charlotte.

\*\*\*

"Something seems off today, Eric," Charlotte noted. She was sitting across from me, her blonde hair falling in

waves at her shoulders meeting a brown throw that covered a rust-colored dress that flowed like a river by her feet.

I looked away, not able to erase the image that crossed my mind. "Nothing is off; it was just a tiring day."

"You were gardening?"

"I thought we had a rule about certain questions."

"I'm your nurse; my job is to ask questions."

"That's a detective's job."



Crystal Willette

"Maybe I'm thinking of a career change." This conversation was more proof of what I had feared earlier. Tonight would be my last with her. "Did you bring the medicine?" "You want it so soon? We've only ordered drinks." "As I said, it's been a long day."

She took a sip of her wine and shrugged. "Fine." She reached into her purse and pulled out a small glass vial filled with a clear liquid. She started to hand it across the table when she paused. "Has there been any more heart pain?" I bit my lip, thinking of what to tell her, but I knew she would see right through me. "Yes. They've been worse." Pulling back the vial she reached into her purse again then pulled another one out and handed them over. "Here, drink these two. I'd rather you do it here too so I can monitor you for a bit. You've never taken a dose this high before." I went to argue when I felt the constriction of my heart. I took them from her and downed both of them, coughing as the last drop passed my throat. "You know I've never asked you what the medicine contains." "Look who's the detective now," She laughed. "That's private." I couldn't help but smile. "I should know what I'm putting into my body." "It's a mixture of healing herbs with some aspirin crushed into it." "They're strong herbs." "That's how you know it's working," she winked. "However, I don't think it's very fair that I answered your question about my private affairs but you never answered mine." "How long do I have to stay again?" "Answer my question. Were you gardening today?" I sighed. "Yes." She put her glass to her scarlet lips again and took a long sip, thinking something over.

"Do you ever think the pain your heart endures is related to the crimes you've committed?" I rolled my eyes as I finished my brandy. "Oh, please." She had a point. "No, really think about it." She said seriously. "There have been cases where a broken heart has killed." "How ironic." "I'm serious, Eric. Maybe it's time to think about stopping. You could try to let yourself love. Let yourself be loved." "Oh, my dear Charlotte, you live in a fantasy. Only the gullible fall in love." "Then be gullible." "Look where those who have been gullible with me ended up." "Well, I'm sure not everyone you meet will be a killer." "No, they're heartbreakers. It's even worse." She shut her eyes and rubbed her temples. "Eric, you don't even get to know these people before they're in the ground. I'd love to know why you can't fall in love."

I ran my hand over my coat, smoothing the edges of it. It told the whole story. It had been given to me by Erin Whitefeld, the first and only girl I had loved. The first who had broken my heart. The first I killed. She had gotten the coat for me as a gift for Christmas, since at the time I was freshly out of college, struggling to hold a job I had barely been able to get. I didn't have much, but I did have her. Every paycheck I would save a little for the future and the rest I would spend on her. If she was happy, then I was, too. Most of my belongings were old and worn thin. The coat I had previously owned had several holes in it and could barely keep me warm especially in the unforgiving winter. So on Christmas day, I was surprised when I opened her gift and found a new coat. That was the moment I knew I loved her. It was the first act of kindness a lover had given me, but I

should've known it was a goodbye. For the New Year, I walked in on her with another.

"I just don't want to," I told her. "It just leads to pain. But what about you, Charlotte? Why haven't you married?" She shrugged. "I haven't found the right one, much like you." "And how will we know if they're the right one?" She reached her hand over the table and took mine. "We'll just have to wait and find out." I froze as she smiled at me and squeezed my hand slightly, causing a flurry of butterflies to cause chaos in my stomach. When she let go I hated myself for wanting her touch. "I'll be leaving in a few days. I would love it if you'd stop by before I go."

I nodded my head, unable to form words, unable to understand why I was saying yes. Unable to understand these feelings I hadn't felt in so long. She stood up and grabbed her purse. "The medicine seemed to work fine, and I don't want to keep you any longer, since you're tired. Have a good night, Eric." With a smile, she left. I didn't wait too long to follow her out. I had to act fast before my heart decided to play yet another game with me. I was sorry for what I had to do to Charlotte but she was influencing my heart, and I couldn't allow it.

She'd be leaving town soon so no one would expect anything for a few days. I clutched the knife I kept with me to my thigh, staying in the shadows. It was easy enough to follow her. She didn't call for a carriage and the red of her dress was a beacon in the dark.

When she reached her house she didn't even bother to look behind herself, a mistake too many had made. She went inside, closing the door behind her. I waited several minutes before I approached and

knocked. When she opened her door she grinned like a devil. Allowing my emotions to get the better of me, I slide the knife into my pocket.

"I didn't think you'd be visiting me tonight," she said, surprised. "Sorry," I mumbled, trying to come up with an excuse. "I had just come to say a proper goodbye. I agree with you that our dinner was short-lived." I gestured with my hand asking if I could come in, and she stepped aside. When I entered, her hand slightly brushed mine. I fought the shiver that threatened to overtake me and took a look around, amazed at how lavish everything was. Everything had a certain order to it: the flowers in the vase on the table in the receiving area, the white rug that had not one stain, the shoes neatly lined up by the door.

I went to apologize for wearing my shoes in her house when everything started to spin. The pain returned to my heart and I collapsed to the floor as my throat started to close. Something new. Something I knew my heart wasn't causing. I gasped for air but nothing came and the pain increased. I tried calling her name for help but no sound escaped.

She knelt beside me, becoming the only clarity I could see. It was why I didn't see her holding my knife in front of my face, taunting me until it was too late and her words were barely a whisper. "You're not the only one with a broken heart."

# SOMEBODY UP THERE LIKES ME

Kaily Burke

About my time boarding with the Duffys... they weren't the worst people I could have lived with, but they definitely were a little odd.

It was only for one summer. I'd graduated in the spring and needed a job and a place to stay while I looked for something permanent. I happened to find both of those in the same place.

The Duffys owned a convenience store on the shore of Maine, not far from where I'd gone to college. It was one of many buildings along a line of gift shops, arcades, ice cream parlors, pizzerias, and it wasn't much bigger than any of its neighbors. The difference, though, was that people lived in this shop.

The ground floor was the shop itself, whose only entry way was the door up front. It was a single square room with a very white tiled floor and aisles for drinks, snacks, or travel essentials. The basement was where we kept stock of the rest of our merchandise, as well as a washing machine and dryer.

The second floor was quite crammed. There were three small rooms. The farthest room, facing the seaside, was Mr. and Mrs. Duffy's bedroom. In between, coming up from the stairs of the shop, was a combined kitchen and living room.

One end held the fridge, sink, oven, and dinner table, and then in the more narrow half of the room was a couch facing a small TV set. The last room, facing the front of the shop, was a spare bedroom where I slept.

There was one more person who lived in the house.

Somehow it completely slipped the couple's minds to mention him to me. But as I remember, after I'd been hired and welcomed into the Duffys' home, Mrs. Duffy led me out of my bedroom, back into the kitchen and...

"There's one last stop." She pointed to the ceiling, then opened the attic door and pulled down the staircase.

Walking up, I noticed a divider in the middle of the floor.

"You can keep anything up here that you don't want in your room," she said, referring to the pile of junk in front of the stairs.

Both feet in the attic, I crouched my shoulders. The roof in the very center of the room wasn't much taller than I was. I looked behind the divider, assuming there was more to the room behind there. My instinct was right.

An older fellow sat in a soft chair reading a book. His face was not perfectly

clear as the sun shined through the open window behind him.

"Uh...?" I muttered, trying not to seem rude in my confusion.

But he seemed to understand, pointing the same confused look back to Mrs. Duffy. "Martha, did you forget to tell the girl I live here?"

"Hannah, that's Mr. Blore," she brushed off. "He works in the shop too."

I did start to recognize him. He worked behind the counter when I came in for my job interview.

"He's not as nice as Mr. Duffy or me."

"Yes, that's true." He rested the book on his lap. "I'm mean."

"He bites, so we keep him in the attic."

Blore nodded. I peered at the book cover on his lap.

"*Frankenstein*," I said.

"Aha!" he grinned. "One of my favorites."

"Let's unpack your bags, Hannah." Mrs. Duffy was already halfway down the attic stairs.

The first day on the job started at seven o'clock the next morning. The register was counted and the shelves we arranged. I remember fiddling around behind the counter with the shirt the Duffys gave me. It was too loose around the waist but hugged my hips like a balloon animal. Just a hair past seven sharp, Mr. Duffy swung by.

He looked me up and down.

"What are you toying around back here for? Didn't you open?"

I pointed to the OPEN sign flipped facing the sidewalk. "I turned that around five minutes early like you told me I should."

"Then where's Paolo?"

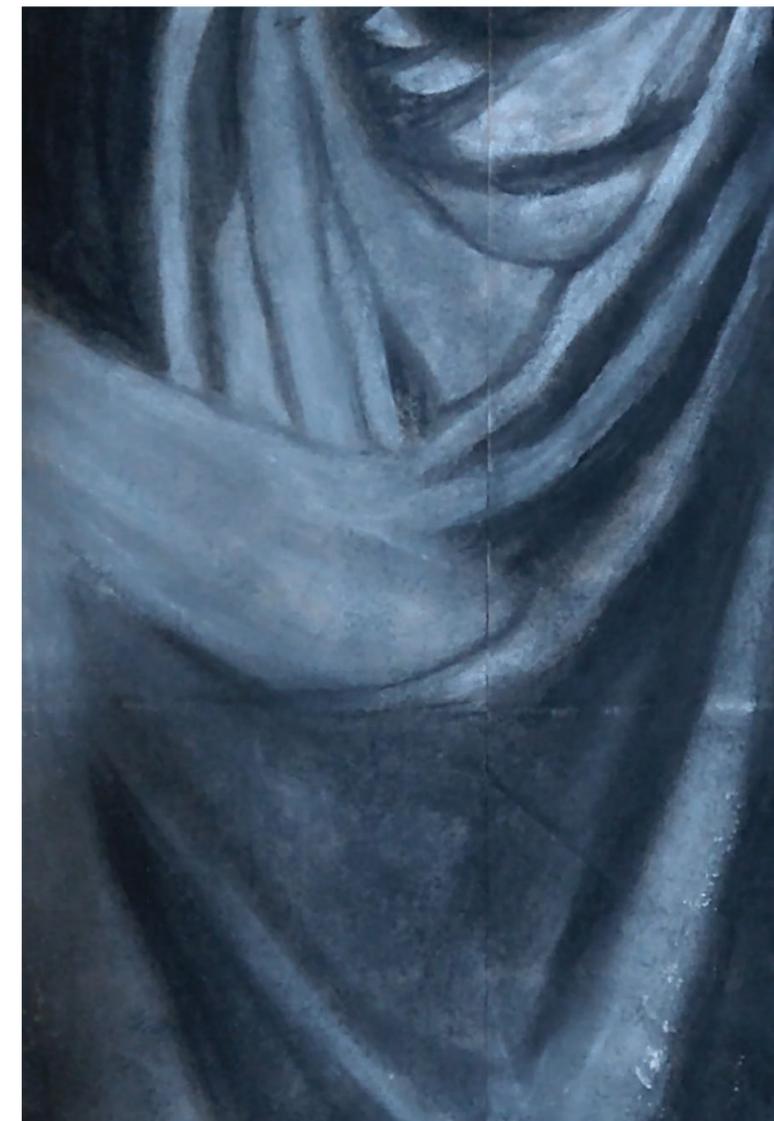
"Who?"

"Paolo, our regular. He's always in here by seven o'clock on the dot."

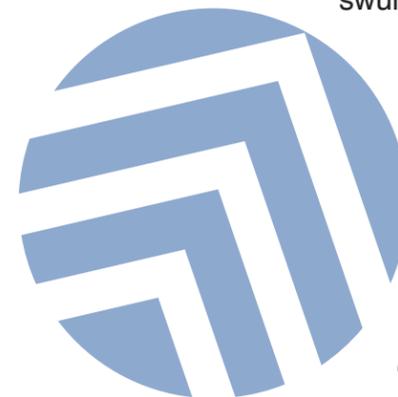
As he said that, a flushed man in worn down jogger's clothing opened the shop door. He looked about Mr. Duffy's age. "Charlie!" rang the friendly accented voice.

"Paolo!" called Mr. Duffy, making his way around the counter. "Why Paolo, you're a minute late! I must have summoned you by wondering where you were."

Paolo laughed. "Cut me some slack, I'm getting old."



Franziska Hoene





“Are you walking today?”

“Well, Charlie, earlier in the week, actually, I was rear ended. I was okay but I just hit my chest and my neck on the wheel pretty badly.”

“Oh my lord, Paolo! You’re all right?”

“Just chipper,” he assured.

Duffy’s mouth quivered at one of its corners. “Not too bad then?”

“Oh I wanna run,” Paolo said, and gave Mr. Duffy a pat on the elbow. “It’s the missus’ concern, I promise you that much.”

Duffy forced out a laugh. “As long as I still see you every day! Or just about, you- you know?”

Paolo looked back somewhat skeptically. Mr. Duffy seemed a bit more robotic than friendly. “Hannah, come shake Paolo’s hand.”

So I did, awkwardly, and from behind the counter. Something Paolo must have said seemed to turn an uncomfortable switch in Mr. Duffy at the moment.

“I’ll see you Saturday, old friend!” called Mr. Duffy.

“I’ll see you then,” called Paolo back. As he opened the squeaky shop door, the wind chimes sang in the salty morning breeze.

My boss stopped beside me after his friend had left. “Hannah, did you sweep the floor this morning? It looks great.”

“No actually, it wasn’t me.”

Duffy gave me an elbow nudge. “I know.”

I didn’t pick up what he meant at the time.

“Where the hell is Richard? Does he ever wake up on time?” Mr. Duffy walked into the backroom.

A few seconds passed, and Mr. Blore came in and set down a watering can behind the counter. “Did I hear somebody looking for me?”

“Mr. Duffy was wondering where you were,” I said.

“Oh,” he said, pulling off a pair of muddy gloves. “You can tell him I’m asleep,” and he winked.

I have to give them this: if you lived with the Duffys, even if you paid them rent, even if you worked in their store, and even if only for a few months, come six or seven o’clock every night, you knew you were family. Every night they made dinner for us. I didn’t even know they were going to do that when I moved in. We held hands as Mr. Duffy would say grace, and then they’d go around and ask if there was anything we wanted to ask God for.

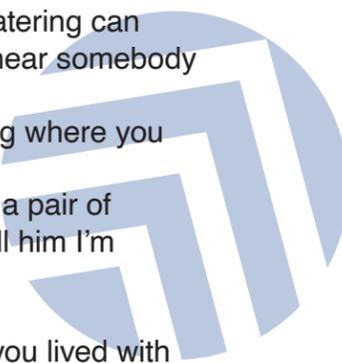
“Dedication to each day through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ,” Mr. Duffy would begin.

“The health and safety of ourselves and our families,” Mrs. Duffy might say, or perhaps, “Just enough to keep the store over the winter.”

“A raise,” Blore would say. My first night I snickered. They would squint at him and afterwards I tried not to. “Lower rent,” he’d add. “A bigger room, maybe a taller bookshelf.”

“Anything for you, Hannah?”  
“No thank you,” I would say. “Not tonight.” The couple would turn on the news after dinner, and I might pick up the paper and do the crossword. Routinely, I noticed, Blore would retreat up to the attic with a book—I always liked to ask him which one he was on now. He made it through most of them, it seemed, in a matter of a few days.

He had a taste for lots of classic novels and occasionally a playscript. I was curious one night when he pulled out a



copy of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. “I didn’t know you were a fan of epic poems, Mr. Blore?”

“You know, I’ve probably not picked up this one since high school or college,” he told me. “I know I must have been a very young man at the time. I’m not necessarily one for ancient mythology or things of the sort. It was the art of this edition which attracted me to it.”

The cover art did look something more like a soft Renaissance painting than a one-dimensional portrait resembling works of the time. “Do you enjoy the works of Homer?” I asked.

“Homer? I’ve not read him in ages.”

“I should show you something,” I told him. “It’s one of my favorite books in my collection.”

My grandmother handed down many vintage books to me. “Take it,” she would say, referring to her bookshelf. “If you see something you like there, just take it. Books are meant to be read, better than they sit there.”

She had eclectic taste. She was a fan of folk and fairy tale anthologies, and fantastic poetry she’d read to me back when I used to fit on her lap. She had many playwrights too, like George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, or Tennessee Williams; 19th century novels from Nathaniel Hawthorne to Louisa May Alcott; and a few more modern authors like Agatha Christie and George Orwell. I’d picked up some great books on that shelf I wouldn’t have otherwise considered if not for her recommendation. What I had brought was a copy of the *Odyssey* complete with custom watercolor illustrations. Some were double-page spreads; others were decorations in the borders or corners of the text. It was a lot of worthy effort on the illustrator’s part. I’ve probably spent more time admiring the book than reading it. And so I showed

it to the very sour Mr. Blore, and as you would imagine, he nearly bit me.

“This is beautiful,” he said, carefully turning the pages.

“Isn’t it so easy on the eyes?” I asked.

“It gives such nice dimensions to all the people and monsters depicted. It looks like something out of a dream.”

As the sun went down in the window behind his chair, Blore turned on the bedside lamp, and artificial yellow light poured new color on the pages. My friend reached for a Hershey Kiss on the table and popped it in his mouth. “Would you like one?” he asked.

“Hm... sure.” He tossed one into my hands.

“How long are you staying here, Hannah?”

It was July. I was looking for a teaching job at an elementary school back home, and hopefully a place to stay, but nothing was certain yet. “I’m not sure. Don’t the Duffys close the shop in the fall?”

“Yes, they do.”

“I’ll need to find a job and a place before then.”

“I stay here,” said Mr. Blore casually.

“You do?”

“I do. The Duffys are snow birds. They close this place and fly down south, and they live by Martha’s brothers. Then it’s only me here watching the place.”

“And what do you do?”

“I work at a used book store. Don’t you see? I’m always borrowing the merchandise,” he laughed.

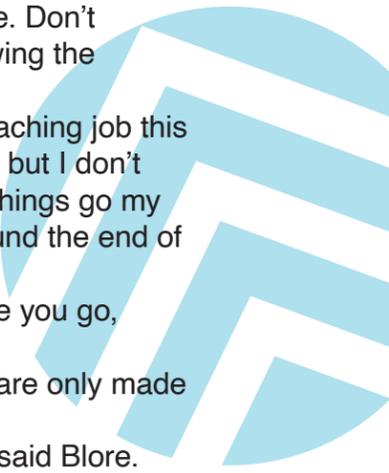
“I’m going to try to find a teaching job this fall, and somewhere to live, but I don’t have either of those yet. If things go my way, I’ll be flying home around the end of August.”

“May I read this book before you go, Hannah?”

“Of course,” I said. “Books are only made to be read.”

“I’ll tell you what, Hannah,” said Blore.

“You’re a good worker. If you don’t find



your job, we could find some room for you at the bookstore. You can stay in your room here if the Duffys permit it.” I brought my hand to my heart. “Mr. Blore, thank you so much.” “Richard,” he told me. “What?” “My name is Richard. You can call me that, you know.”

Mid-August rolled by sooner than I anticipated. I did get a job, luckily, and at my hometown elementary school too. My parents agreed I could stay with them while I saved up and looked for someplace to be my own. Good thing, too. Richard very mildly asked the Duffys if someone could stay and pay rent over the fall and winter, and they were vehemently against it. *No one but you can stay here*, they insisted. I was only glad he hadn't used my name.

On my lunch break, I was reading the copy of *Gilgamesh* that Richard had used — we traded them off. Mr. Duffy walked into the back room to get more change for the register. “Lucky you took your break now,” he told me. “It just turned into a madhouse out there.” It was 11 AM. There were two people at the counter I could see through the door, and another looking at the newspaper stand. Not unusual for this time on a Saturday.

“Anyway, Hannah, I'm sorry to bother you at the moment. But since you're leaving so soon, I was only wondering — will you finally come to church with us tonight?” “Um...” I trailed, thinking of how to approach the subject. “Or sometime next week? We can even do early tomorrow morning if you'd rather,

if Mr. Blore agrees to watch the store.” “Sure,” I told him. “Tonight is fine, if you'd like me to come with you.” “I worry about you, you know. You haven't really been since you came here, have you?” “No.” “Say, what kind of church did you attend growing up?” I never actually told them I did. “I'm a confirmed Catholic,” I said. “Oh,” he shrugged. “Well, you know. It's all the same God, at least.” My eyes shifted from my book to the door. I closed the book. It was about time I clocked back in. Mr. Duffy furrowed his eyebrows at me, concerned, as I got up to return to the register. A few minutes later, after I checked out the waiting customers, he returned to my side with an inquiry. His eyes looked a bit sorry. “I didn't say anything wrong to offend you — did I, Hannah?” “No, oh no, sir.” I shook my head. “Well, at least, you didn't offend me.” “I think it's all well and good if you're Catholic, you know. I can still appreciate that we share many ideals. Remember my friend Paolo? He's Catholic, too. The church we go to is non-denominational.” “No, it's not that, sir,” I said. “It really isn't. I'll be glad to join you tonight, if you want me to. To be honest, personally, I don't actually believe in God.” The color drained out of his face. He looked at me as if I were a ghost. I had been afraid that assuming people's faith was an important part of the Duffys' relationship to them, and I was right. With a plain expression painted on his face, he practically whispered, “You don't?” sounding heartbroken. “There's nothing wrong if you do, Mr. Duffy,” I consoled him. “I don't bring up the matter with my family much, either.” “God, and Christ, and Joseph, and Mary

— why, they're the only real family I have, don't you know?” He came around to the opposite side of the counter, then looked across the floor of the store. “Every *night* I close the store, why, I don't pick up a thing. Yet every *morning*, the floor is *shining*, clean as a whistle!” He looked out the front door, as a customer walked through it. “Hannah, come see this for a moment.” He walked out the door. Another customer was about to place a pack of drinks on the counter, unnoticed by the boss. “I'm sorry,” I said, flustered, “I'll be with you in a moment.” I joined Mr. Duffy on the steps outside the shop. “Look at these beautiful flowers!” he said, gesturing to the daisies and marigolds in the shop's front windows. “I never planted these flowers — Martha never planted these flowers! Nothing we plant stays alive; why, we don't even have a green pinky toe between the two of us, much less a thumb. Yet they bloom every day, sometimes even new ones grow, and even so, I've never seen a single petal wither on any of them!” “I'm glad your shop makes you happy, Mr. Duffy. I'm happy you can see your surroundings are giving back to you.” “But I have no *family*, Hannah,” he told me, as his eyes began to water and his voice came out a little weaker. “I have no family alive at all. My goodness...” he trailed. He breathed in, lifted his chin up to the sky, and sighed. And in his little epiphany he shared with me as it came to him, I suddenly felt heartbroken at the same depth already, unprepared for whatever more he was about to add to it. “I didn't know anything about that, Mr. Duffy,” I confessed. “I'm sorry.” “I was a baby, and my mama died,” he began. “I was a young man, then my dad passed too. I married Martha...” he rubbed his chin, and his eyes looked back to me. “I married Martha, and we had a

baby boy, but he died within a matter of days. So we adopted a little girl, and she died in an accident.” Tears welled up again, but not as much in my housemate's eyes as in mine. “And I have no family alive, again, except for Martha, but would you believe it — that I am the luckiest man in the world?” The corners of his lips tugged now into such a smile, and again he looked overhead, puffy eyes now bright as the summer sun they looked at. “Martha and I would find Maine, and find God, too, closer than ever before. And we'd stay here in the summer and open a shop on the ground floor. The shop would close in the fall, and we'd live down by Martha's family with just enough to keep us afloat for the rest of the year. And God would continue to provide for us, making our home and our lives, and bringing us our friends and blessings because He is indeed our *family*.” While he didn't change my mind, I was touched to be important enough to him that his life story was worth explaining, as riddled with pain and gratitude as it was. “Thank you for inviting me to your church tonight,” I told him. “God is everywhere, you know,” he smirked, and pointed a finger upward. “Ahahahaha — oh!” a sudden thud on the head interrupted his laughter. “My word— He's dropping gold on me!” He looked in amazement at the shiny object in his fingertips while another came down on him a little harder. “Goodness!” he shouted. He inspected the pieces a little more closely and a fingertip found the ends of the foil. “Oh, it's only chocolate. Well, even so.” He smiled and took the coin between his teeth.

I looked above in confusion and heard the top window creak shut, but I didn't see anything. I left Mr. Duffy outside and resumed working the rest of my shift.

Early in the evening, I met my friend in the attic for an inquiry. "Mr. Blore?" I asked from the steps.

"Richard," he corrected. "Come in."

I came out from the other side of the divider and sat on a stool across from the bookshelf. "Are you enjoying the *Odyssey*?"

"I just finished," he said. "It was beautiful. I see why you cherish that copy so much."

I nodded. "It certainly holds sentimental value... Say, Richard. This is unrelated, but may I ask you a question?"

"Sure. Go for it."

"Do you believe in God?"

He raised his eyebrows and grinned slightly. "Papa. Well, yes actually, I do. It isn't a matter I speak of much. But we're close."

"I know the Duffys are quite religious people. I also know you butt heads with them a lot. They told me you were *mean*. Remember that?"

"Haha!" he laughed. "Not mean, just crotchety."

"Right," I said. "Mr. Duffy was really insistent I join them for church tonight. Personally, I'm not the most religious person. I told Mr. Duffy that. He seemed quite hurt."

"I thought I heard him out there," he mumbled. "You know, that doesn't surprise me. And I can feel for him on some of that. I've known the Duffys as long as they've lived here, and to be honest, I haven't got much family left myself either."

My attention turned to the black and white

photograph on his bedside table, and my heart sank. She had warm dark eyes and a heart-shaped face. He never told me who that was. I thought it might have been intentional. "I'm sorry to hear that," I said. "That's what happens sometimes, by the time you're an old man. I didn't face anything quite as hard as those two. And I love them like family now, but it's true, we do butt heads. I never really had any trouble with the old man upstairs though."

"Do you suppose your personalities just clash then?"

"Hmm..." he hesitated, and cocked his head to the side.

"I just don't feel like they're very appreciative of me."

"What do you mean by that, Richard?"

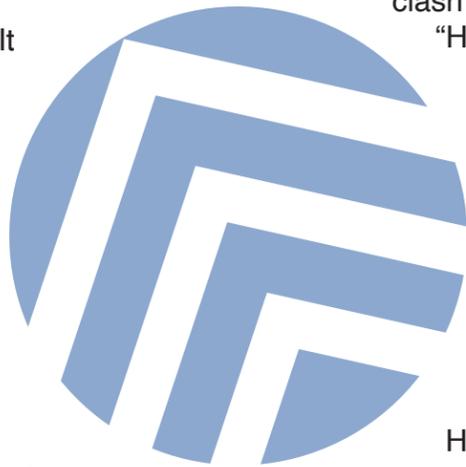
You could see he was calculating something behind his eyes. After a moment's pause, he said,

"Have you ever noticed, Hannah, that you are a grown woman, and they have you address them in formalities?"

I blinked at the question. "Yes, I suppose." He nodded back at me. "I know you're young, you might not notice. But you live with them, and work for them, and pay them rent. Their names are Charlie and Martha, and they ask you to call them *Mr. Duffy*, and *Mrs. Duffy*, like they are your childhood friend's parents."

I noticed that before, but I honestly didn't think much of it. "Where are you going with this?"

He clasped his hands together. "They don't necessarily think very well of people living with them or working for them. They're a little nicer to people who don't. I've bore the brunt of that for a long time now. For one thing, I'm an old man. The years pass and I'm only having a harder time being cooped up in one half of this little attic. In the wintertime, I'll reside in



the room you've been sleeping in. I don't tell them that because they don't want me to."

"They don't want you to?" I interrupted.

"You live here more than they do."

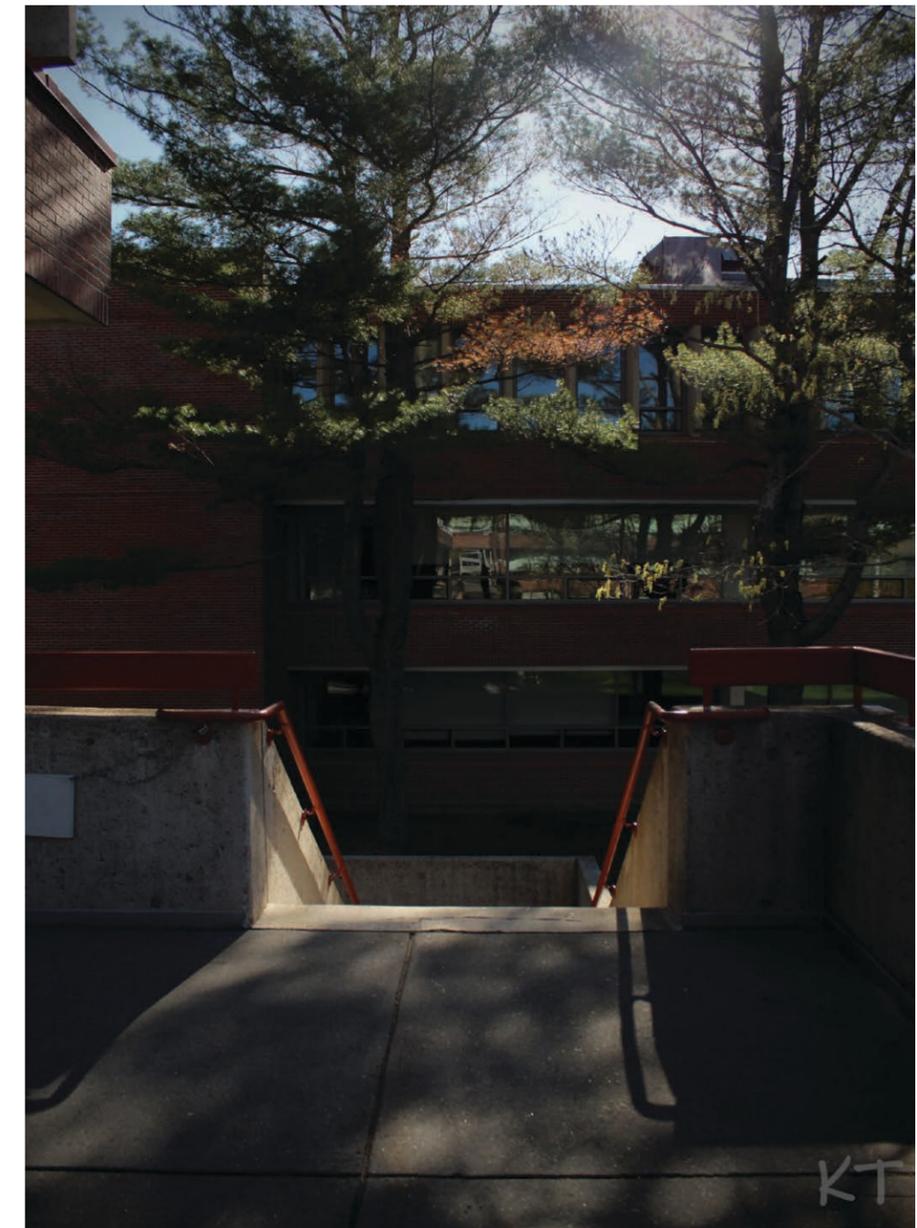
"Exactly," he nodded, "but they own the store, so they own the house, and those are their rules. In the summertime they'll rent out the spare room to anyone who'll take it. They'll probably just be working the same position that I do, despite that I've been working there as long as they've owned the place. And don't even get me *started* on the workplace!

"I mop and sweep the floor every morning before anyone else gets up, and I have never received so much as a thank you. I tend to the flowers in the shop window, water them, remove the dead heads, I'll even plant my own seeds in the wintertime to have new ones in the window by spring. They *love* those flowers, but they've never thanked me for them. It's like they don't even notice I care about the place! They'll never say a word about it to me. Oh, I'm *sorry*, Hannah." He shook his head. "I shouldn't be getting so worked up at you..."

He reached his hand into a little red bag beside him and popped something into his mouth.

"What are you eating?" I asked.

"Chocolate coins," he said. "Would you like one?"



Kendall Tobin

# contributor bios

A swanky little gal named **Diana Burke** attends NECC, studying English education for middle and high schoolers. She met poetry, the love of her life, in her early teen years, and her initial infatuation soured to resentment long ago, but she isn't bold enough to leave him yet. And besides, he's just so rich. She's been a *Parnassus* staff member since 2018 and Editor-in-Chief since 2020. In 2021, she was accepted for a readership position at the international online magazine *Palette Poetry*. Her work has been featured in previous issues of *Parnassus* and is forthcoming in your prophetic dreams.

**Kaily Burke** is a liberal arts student and ditzzy airhead at NECC. She is passionate about math education and fiction writing. Her biggest inspirations as a writer are Rod Serling, Lewis Carroll, and her grandmother, Constance.

**Chelsea Daigle** has a habit of sharing their poetry with *Parnassus*, despite vehemently disliking the very act of writing poetry. They have years of fictional narratives taking up terabytes of space on their google drive, and metric tons of digital art that make their computer run like a steamboat from the 1800's. And yet, do they have art or fiction to share with the world? Nope – this is writing they were forced to b-s at 11:50 the night before their Creative Writing course deadline during the accursed poetry unit. If this could in any way encourage someone reading the literary magazine and thinking “I wish I could do something like this...” I would like to offer this – sometimes the first step doesn't have to be with your best foot. Sometimes you trip and stumble your way through accomplishments, but hey – it's still moving forward.

**Franziska Hoene** is a sarcastic person who enjoys a lot of activities, including refereeing and playing the sports soccer and futsal. She also loves snowboarding in the winter and longboarding in the summer. If she is not doing those things, she enjoys reading books, knitting, and watching horror movies with her three brothers. Franziska was also the NECC SGA President for the Spring 2022 semester, and she enjoyed her position within the community. She is hoping to re-run for SGA President in the following year.

**Anne Hopkins** was born in upstate New York and moved to Massachusetts while a young child. She attended UMass Lowell 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 began using c-print and Fuji Dry Lab prints transferred to objects to explore the relationship between objects and memory. She is an eternal optimist and sees the glass as having plenty.

**Elena Karavannykh** has first enrolled at the NECC two decades ago as an ESL (English as Second Language) Program student, and came back to school last year as a Psychology major. While working towards her degree and professional career, she is still fascinated by English itself. Elena writes and publishes short stories and book reviews in her native Russian and strives to use her English, learned at the college, as a creative writing tool, a means of expression. The action of her short story, which she wrote before the war, takes place on the territory of Ukraine and Russia.

**Sarah Pachano** is human. She has never and will never be a robot; she was born out of her parents like any other human. Sarah does not believe that AI could be able to pass as a human; she does not think that the government is making AI and sending them to school so they can learn and understand human behavior to be able to blend in without people realizing. Sarah does believe that AI is the future, and they will take control... when the technology becomes more advanced. Because is not.

**Noah Kreuser** is a passionate creative and art/design major at NECC. He strives to find the overlap between unlikely mediums. While this typically results in absurdity and chaos, he firmly believes that this is where the most impactful art lies. Though he plans to submit paintings and illustrations in the future, for now he is content with just poetry.

**Johnna Padvaiskas** is from Methuen, MA and graduated from Methuen High in 2020. She is currently finishing up her time at NECC and is planning to transfer to UMass Lowell in the fall to pursue her Bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in creative writing. She has always had a passion for writing and one day hopes to publish a novel of her own. When she isn't writing one can find her reading, hiking, or just spending time exploring the world around her.

**Kat McCarron** is a writer disguised as a Biology Major at NECC. When Kat is not in school, she spends her free time growing mushrooms, wandering around in the woods and writing about the universe, whatever that is.

**Toni Pavao** is a Early Childhood Education major at NECC who likes to take up photography as a hobby. She lives in Methuen, MA with her four younger siblings and her mom. She mainly uses her phone camera, but recently got a camera to start taking pictures. She likes to take pictures of objects found in nature, nature itself, and her siblings. She works as a Personal Care Attendant for two children with special needs. Toni hopes to be a special education teacher as her work had inspired her to become one after hearing the struggles she hears from the parents of the children she cares for. Toni takes part in the Art Club at NECC and is the President of the club. Toni also is a part of the student government association and is the marketing and communications chair for them.

**Yomerly Rodriguez** is a kind, hardworking, and compassionate female that likes to create, learn, and help others. She has two very loving parents that support her with whatever she needs as well as give her tons of emotional support. Yomerly likes to do exceptionally well with whatever task she is doing, whether it would be school assignments or a fun project. She is also very shy and has difficulties with fully expressing herself in a way that everyone can understand. She doesn't mind meeting new people and being social, but she wishes to have more people be available to her to talk about what she is thinking and her personal issues. Yomerly wants to please everyone and not upset people she knows. It can be a bit concerning and disturbing what she thinks and feels sometimes, but Yomerly tries to think about more positive thoughts to boost her spirit up!

**Scott Silva** is making poetry to make up for his mommy issues. He thinks there is no meaning to anything he does and that takes form in his writings. Scott's vast vocabulary comes from the many years of calling people bimbos on Xbox. He was raised in Methuen, MA, but after his mom committed suicide when he was seven, he moved to Haverhill with his dad. With his father working nights, and a mother dead, he didn't have a steady parental figure. Scott now suffers from more mental illnesses than fingers on his hands. If you asked him about it, he would scoff and say, "I'm collecting them for my college resume."

**Kendall Tobin** is an Educational Studies major at NECC with a passion for photography. She began her journey when she was in high school, when she took nature and landscape photos with her iPhone. Kendall took her first photography class at NECC when she was an Art & Design major, and it was that same year she received her own camera. Her focus in photography is nature, striving to capture the beauty of life itself.

**Madison Walsh** is sometimes a writer, sometimes an artist, and sometimes a photographer, but mostly just wants to sleep. Most of the things she creates are unplanned with no thoughts, relying on her gut and dumb luck. But hey, it's gotten her this far in life, so that must count for something.

**Crystal Willette** is majoring in psychology here at NECC. She currently works in child care full time and hopes to use her artistic strengths to help children through psychology. She is twenty five years old and has lived in Haverhill her entire life. She loves cats, cartoons, singing, writing, and spending time with her fiancé and family.

**Cheryl Wilson** lives in the Merrimack Valley with her wife, children, dog, cats, goats, mini horse, and chickens. She is sustained by her walks in the woods with her dog, where she likes to do a lot of deep thinking, often fantasizing about a world where everyone greets each other with love and trust, where differences are not just respected, but embraced. Occasionally her thoughts are so jarring/profound that she jots them down. She does not fancy herself a poet, just someone who forgets things.

## how to contribute

Submissions to *Parnassus* are limited to active NECC students, staff, and faculty, with two deadlines each school year. We accept submissions in the genres of fiction, poetry, creative non fiction, and various art mediums and photography. We select the best of the best submissions, so be sure to send along your spiciest and most fragrant works for our delicious stew of creativity next year. Entries are read and viewed each semester by the staff and faculty advisor and chosen democratically. Deadlines will be announced online and on campus each semester, and *Parnassus* is published once annually at the end of the spring semester, filling holes in your brain's thirstiest cavities and crevasses.

Come be one with us and immortalize yourself in print!

## join our staff

We need new blood (literally and metaphorically) every new semester. Will you donate yourself to our artistic causes? If you love to read or have an artistic eye (or both!), we could use your help. Those thirsty for glory and power are welcome, and the work is fun and mainly online. Contact us for more information!

[plochelt@necc.mass.edu](mailto:plochelt@necc.mass.edu)

[www.parnassuslitmag.com](http://www.parnassuslitmag.com)

## 2021-2022 staff

Kaily Burke  
Chelsea Daigle  
Tiffany Esmerio  
Elena Karavannykh

Editor-in-Chief  
Diana Burke

graphic design  
Susan Stehfest

faculty advisor  
Patrick Lochelt

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