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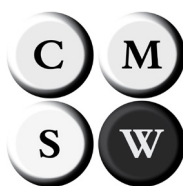
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Great Aunt's Flowers

Zoya Fan

grapes

Dylan Holmes

Out on the porch,
we watched your careful father
unfasten grapes
from stiff vines.

In the ebbing light,
His clever speckled hands
fished between the shadowed leaves,
Recovering some sweet pebble,
then another.

Some days he can't find words, you said,
And some days he's like Newton himself.
But sometimes, very rarely,
there are mending days:
when the light falls on
a quiet place he has always known,
and he becomes part of it.

We must have
turned back eventually,
hurrying to put away dinner in the
buzzing brightness,

Somehow, though,
I only remember an infinity:
a pane of light across a dark lawn,
The illuminated man suspended
in a leafy windswept void,
his face obscured.



Reflections

Sarah Dohadwala

Clementine

Nafisa Syed

The rinds are waxy and
soothe her fingers

as she breaks skin

her nail are weapons of
small scale destruction

as she unleashes citrus

and tosses the debris
from palm to palm



Boston Commons

Bristy Sikder

Whitewater Song

Lisa Tang

Through verdant willow overhangs
Down dappled waters winding
Through the dreaming day we sang
Laughing, hoping, sighing

Beneath the sandstone cliffsides high
Dance the rapids roaring
Beneath the burning canyon sky
My spirit bright and soaring

Across the waters mirrored blue
The worn kayak rocks me gently
Across the ripples of the moon
Lie lake roads paved with memory

I'll row my rambling river songs
To stormy winter shores
After I have drifted on
They'll sound forevermore



Falling

Ivy Li

Defeat

Agatha Tai

My hand trembles as it holds the phone. I switch hands, and respond, voice smiling, to my uncle. Look at it.

End phone call.

My hand blurs a bit. I blink, it's clear. It blurs again. I take my finger, swipe at a bit of moisture. Look at it.

The moisture is too small. Invisible. Figures.

I hear my mom wailing on the other side. I look up, at the meters-thick stone walls surrounding me—separating us.

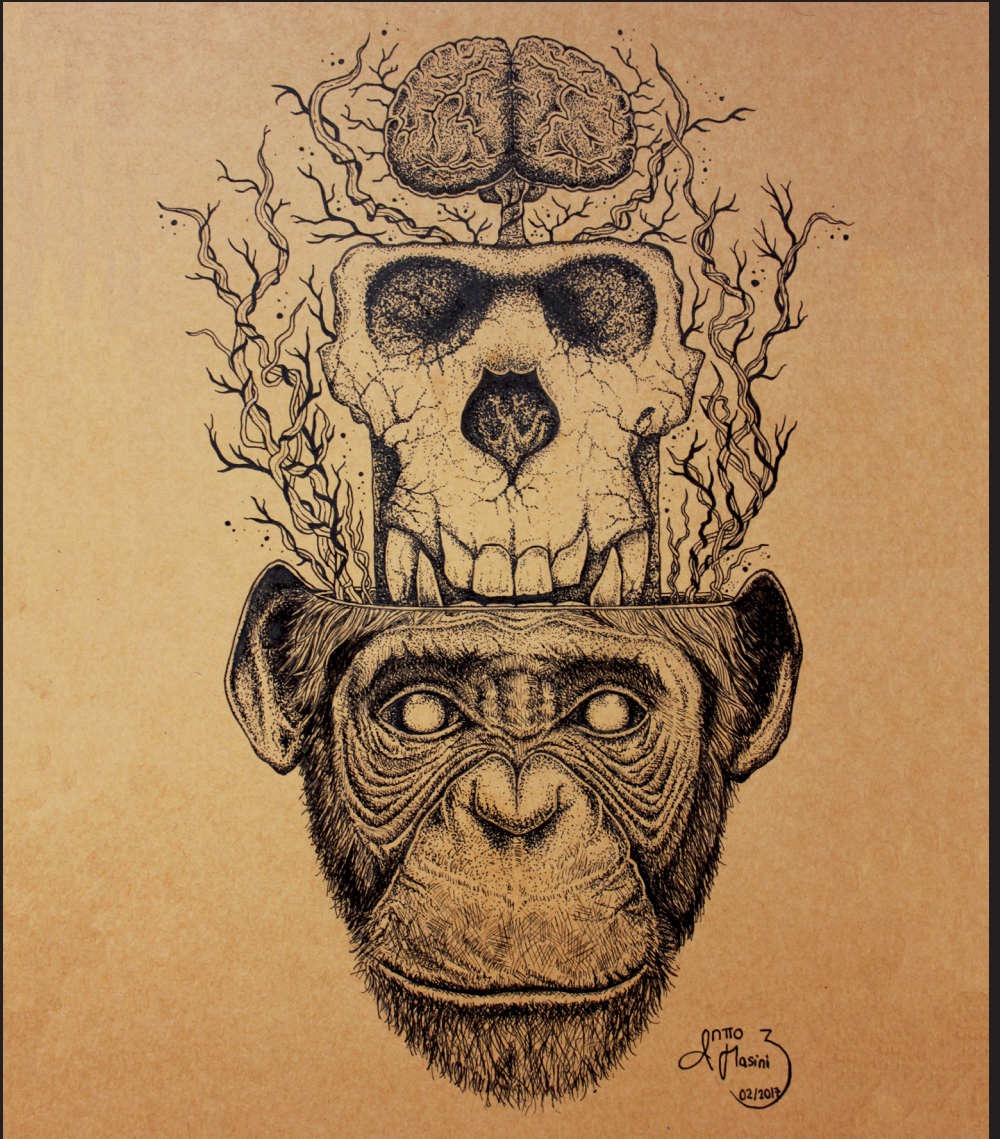
I look down.

Broken toy picks stare at me.

I pick one up.

Look at it.

I look at the wall.



Brother or Creature

Antonella Masini

Cured Meat

Ivy Li

The Nouveau Americana rippled into existence decades after the Americans landed on Mars. In those days, there was little else to eat but human meat. At first, “I’m above this” was a sentiment shared by most, then thought by none. Arguments came down to the value of flesh. Some fought to represent the diversity of the human spectrum: lengths of intestines were taken from just as many wealthy men as from poor men, Ukrainian women were stuffed with ground, vagabond meat taken from African women, and most meat was seasoned with the salt extracted from teenage sweat or a delicate sauce strained from elderly blood.

All savored the pertinence of flesh, as it became crucial that every discussion revolved around meat. Hence the particular occasion, when modest proposals followed the accident that killed a young boy. The councilmen disagreed on what to do with the child’s body. Traditional law dictated that meat not go to waste, and that the child would be consumed. But seeing as the mother was present, and it was her son that died, the council asked her for her opinion.

Her marriage was consummated before she knew better. She could not grieve when her son, the perfect product to an unhappy arrangement, had died in the accident. The window glass shattered and tore into him, and she watched her only child with pity because his life had amounted to nothing. She wished desperately for maternal instinct to kick in but felt numbness instead of sorrow. Behind her, another child sobbed loudly while his stomach growled. Don’t dally, she thought, as she cut open her son with a knife and sliced a filet of meat.

“Take some. There’s not much else,” she said, “I will start a fire.”

One of the fathers hesitated, but he led his family to kneel by the boy’s side. They uttered a quick prayer. His wife could not stop her tears. But they cut.

Soon, the rest of the families picked him apart. They cooked him in the fire, took care to pick the bones clean, to waste as little of his life as possible. When they had finished, the families mourned. The now-skeletal son's mother stood over the fire, warming her hands, and she turned to them and refused their condolences.

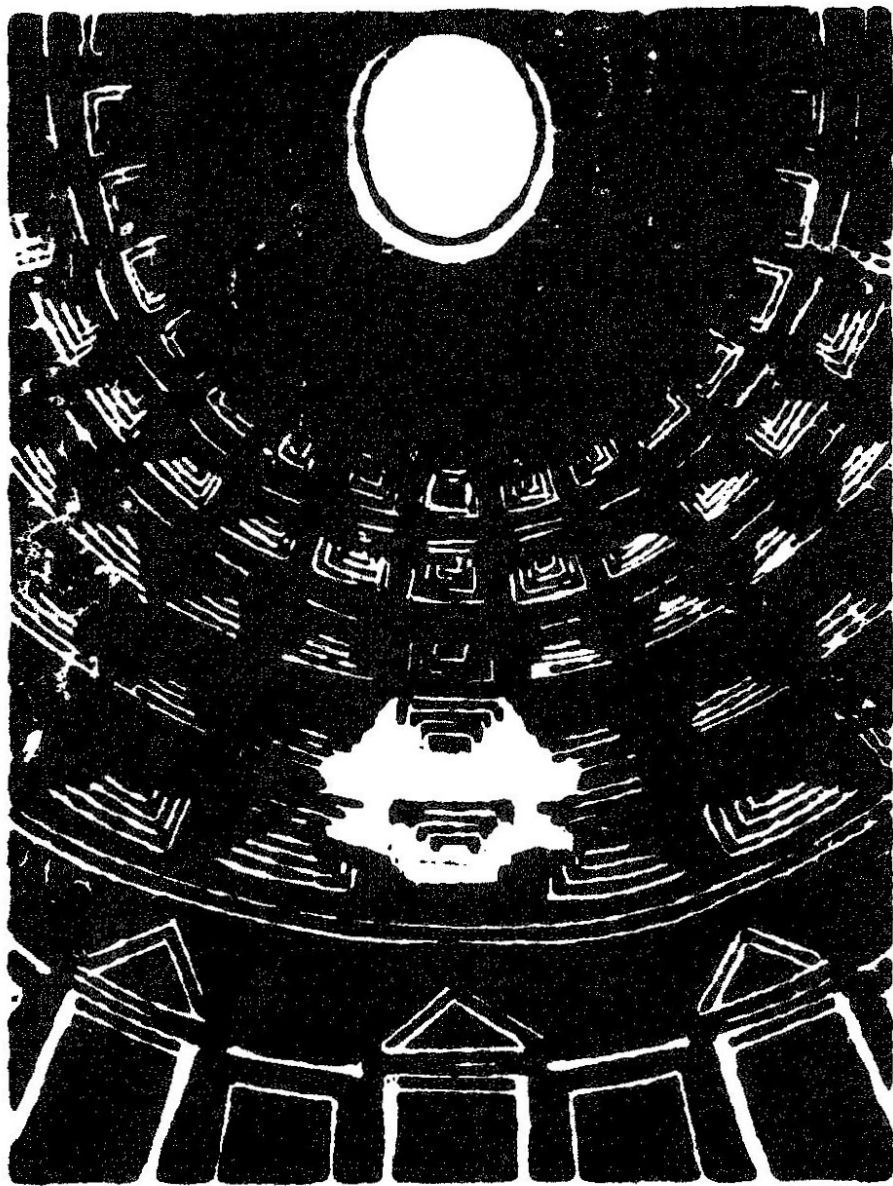
"To eat is to survive. To maintain our diverse population, we sacrifice ourselves," she offered sardonically. A couple of people chuckled at the silliness of the thought.

Consuming meat cured loneliness, they all knew, and picking flesh off the bone brought them closer to the warring home they abandoned.



Space

Lauren Oh



Pantheon Poise

Clio Macrakis

please call your senators

Max Evans

if I am to be
but a number
I would like at least be
a number that counts



Guthrie

Ellen O'Connell

Two Worlds

Jonathon Brown

Left and Right. Black and White.
Courage and Bravery. Ebony and Ivory.
I live in two worlds.

If white was right and black was wrong,
Can I make a right-left and change the song
Playing on the track-and take it back
To a simpler time:
When I drank lemon-lime soda
And fought my sisters for the controlla
To the TV, before we could see
That the ebony and ivory towers
In our home were the exception:
Not the norm.
IFF. If and only if.
I live in two worlds.

If black was right and white was wrong
Then it didn't take long,
For me to break the bread
And meet and greet
My black folks; my Southern roots:
Before I learned the truths
Of a divided family.
Where blood lost
Turned to blood loss
As my family shrank,
And my heart sank.
To be frank,
I didn't thank
My family for the tree;
Before it was cut at the knee,
And the tree destroyed.
Leaves decimated.
Branches annihilated.

And the tree-trunk
Went Ker-plunk
As it was chopped at the roots.
I live in two different worlds.

If black was right and white was left,
Then shouldn't I have been bereft
With words when my friends called me
"The whitest black person they know" IMMEDIATELY!?
Shouldn't the twinge of anger have been automatic?
Should I have been less than static?
When my friends gave me the false assertion
That my exertion
Of energy to be defined as my actions
Had a hidden standard?
Given the given, shouldn't my reaction
Have propelled me from being a bystander?
It took days of dismay,
Weeks of down-turned cheeks,
And months of fake-fronts
To realize that I WOULD NOT accept this anymore.
I live in two different worlds.

If white was right and black was left
Then call the cops! There's been-a theft!
Of my white identity: or so it seems.
Because I am an ice-cream:
Vanilla chocolate swirl,
But to a lot of people
I may as well be double-chocolate whirl.
But why can't I fit in?
Don't I have the right stuff?
Will I ever have enough to say:
"I'm white and I'm proud"
Without sneers from both sides?
Apparently not yet.
For when a cereal-ad
Showed what my family looked-liked,

The world looked right-away
Saying they'd "want to vomit"
As their reactive comment.
It showed me that world could
Accept my rainbow family:
If it were monochrome.
I live in two different worlds.

If black and white
Were meant to fight,
How did they forget
When I was beget?
How can I be born 100% equal,
And almost a score of years later
Live more than $\frac{3}{5}$ unequal?
Since $\frac{1}{2}$ of my lineage got to set the rules
And the other half were chained up worse than mules.
Well I am at least two races,
And I'm tired of sprinting;
I have 20/20 vision,
But I am tired of squinting
To see the nugget of truth
In a sea of lies;
To see the double-standards
In single lines.
But I seek to live as a whole person
In balance with myself;
And I seek to live in a world
Where we are on the same shelf
Of the kitchen fridge, where we
Could come together and share some food.
And no racist who'd call me
Anything other than my name
Would be there to spoil the mood.
I live on one planet, but live in multiple worlds.



In the Woods

Christine Li

The Family Here

Emily Soice

See the sister
In the great aunt
I last saw
A decade ago

The sister is dead
Her voice here speaks
Back in the state
Where it was born

My mother cares after
Speaks so kindly
To the grandmother
Figure here for a day

Lost in family
Remembering
Then drive on
Into the present
The future ticking
No time for delay

No longer children
No longer a daughter
No longer sisters
Only our own.



Smokey Sartre

Zoya Fan

Mutual Support

Miranda McClellan

We are the same height
him sitting and me standing,
So I lean against him
And he supports me at the waist.
A leaning former tower
And her sturdy base
His arm's the beam between us
Connecting our two unstructured souls



Self Portrait in Red

Alyssa Dayan

Ode to a Boba Straw

Joey Noszek

O! Extra straw within the bag
You thought you were meant for the past,
But then you lacked a cup to tag
So you were just not fast to match,
You were into the darkness dragged
And left behind a locked latch.
Until a cup could find no straw,
And give you new life after all.



Propagation

Talia Miriam Blum

Paint

Marissa McPhillips

“The tide’s coming up.”

Jane’s brush nearly fell out of her hand, splattering crimson on the rocks. She glanced up. Mark’s familiar jacket matched the red that now covered her shoes.

“Is the moon the only light you have?” He peered over the short wall, trying to get a glimpse of the other side.

A wave crashed behind her. Droplets of water rained on her palette and brushes.

Jane resumed her painting. Mark sat on the wall facing the ocean and dangled his legs over the side, hands stuffed in his coat pockets. Only the waves broke the silence.

The seawall stretched for about a half mile, bordering a small section of coastline from the end of the beach to the nearest dock. It separated the ocean from paved streets, sidewalks, and unoccupied hotels.

Jane had been crouched by the rocks on the other side for a few hours now, coloring cracks and bumps in the aging wall. Paint didn’t stick well to the salt-covered partition, but she kept adding layers anyway. It didn’t matter. She wished she had brought gloves, though. And more brushes.

The sidewalk was empty. Not unusual for the middle of January.

“I saw your car parked here.” Mark stared at his hands. “And I didn’t see you.”

Jane kept her eyes on the mural.

“You see me now.”

"I figured you might be on the other side," Mark said. "I just didn't know you'd be painting."

"I need to."

"I don't blame you."

"I don't care if you blame me."

Mark wrung his hands.

Pebbles were getting stuck in her brushes. Whitewater splashed her back and caused paint to drip down the mural.

Jane couldn't see much of what she had created. It was directly in the shadow of the partition. Not much light from the streetlamps reached anything beyond the short wall. She could barely distinguish the rocks from each other.

Mark gripped the edge of the seawall and swung his legs back and forth. "I can't believe those rock sculptures."

"What?"

"You know." He gestured to the wall, where a hundred feet down some small rocks piled high, looking as if they were about to tip over. "The ones people build in the summer that somehow stay up all year round? I don't get how they're so stable, must be breaking some laws of physics."

"Yeah, I don't get it either."

"You could say their balance is rock solid."

Jane smiled unwillingly. She knew he had seen it.

"I knew you weren't so stone cold, Jane."

She slumped her shoulders in defeat and let her smile grow like usual.

She even bared her teeth.

Mark laughed.

“Aren’t the rocks slippery?” He asked.

“Only the ones with seaweed.”

“Not the others? Really?”

“I haven’t cracked my head yet.”

“You cracked your head a while ago.”

He lowered himself onto the rocks beside the worn brushes and palettes.

Jane looked at Mark for the first time since he arrived. His nose and cheeks almost matched the color of his jacket. His hands were white.

“I haven’t seen you in a while.” Mark carefully stepped onto the rock with Jane’s tools. “Why are you here, Jane?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t know. You have no idea why you’re painting the seawall in the middle of the night. In January.”

“I like to paint.”

She focused on the crisscrossing shades of pigment on the wall. She placed the brush on a rock beside her and began tracing dripping paint with her fingertips.

“Plus, there’s no one here.” She traced a crack in the partition.

“I’m here.”

“You shouldn’t be.” She made a cross at the end of the trail. *X marks the spot.*

“Did something happen?”

“No.”

“Then what’s wrong?”

Jane turned to face him. “Nothing’s wrong.” She traced her fingers from the corners of her mouth to the tops of her cheekbones, carving a crude, unconvincing grin on her pale face.

“See, here’s a smile.”

Mark scowled.

“Sorry,” she said. She stared at her stained hands.

Mark stepped toward her, knocking a brush into the crevice between the rocks. He traced his white fingertips on the weathered surface of the wall, adding another trail of paint.

Jane felt a tear stream down her cheek. She hadn’t cried in a long time. There was still so much wall to paint, but she had used all her pigments and ruined her brushes. Jane looked up from her hands to meet him face to face. She knew the tears and painted-on smile hid nothing.

“Jane.”

She turned away and tried to wipe the paint on the damp rocks.

“Jane, please look at me.”

She sighed and turned towards his voice. Clouds from their breaths condensed the air between them.

Jane felt Mark’s cold hand on her cheek.

She drew in a sharp breath and clenched her teeth. She pushed him away, and his foot slipped.

It happened so fast. Mark fell backwards and didn't catch himself. The sound of skull hitting rock. She couldn't look. The shallow breaths. She heard him moan. A wave smashed the rocks below. Jane retreated, grabbing her stained palettes and destroyed brushes. She didn't want to see his body crumpled in the red jacket.

She scrambled over the partition and threw her stuff in the passenger side. She started the car and slammed on the gas, leaving Mark's truck parked by the seawall.

Paint from her fake smile dripped onto her pants. Her hands gripped the steering wheel.

Jane shivered. She still felt his frozen touch on her cheek.



Faerie

Danny Gelman

Mirror

Jonathon Brown

I look left,
What's pristine, is as such.
I look right,
What's not, still isn't much.

I open my mouth,
My lips purse, curse, but stay silent.
I close my eyes,
But I can't tell if they're compliant.

I step forward,
I get bigger but see less.
I step backward,
I see more but get depressed.

I reach out my hand,
My warm fingers aren't greeted back.
I drop the act,
And only return once I'm back.



Infection

Ivy Li

shepherd

Dylan Holmes

Presidents are good-hearted naturalists; they don't believe in unseen worlds parallel to our own. They are full of love for the people whose hands they shake, not the future with its invisible pleats, nor for distant wonderlands. Because of this fact, nothing is stranger or more beautiful than the companionship between shepherds and presidents: the shepherds do not have to believe; they know.

And nothing is more honest or more sacred than the heart of a shepherd. On this morning full of bluebells, a president emerges from a windswept helicopter where a shepherd sings an old hymn in the mountains. There is a secret Word which the president doesn't know, and which nine Justices whisper in nine pieces to the shepherd. The shepherd seals this Word away forever in the heart and picks up a bright knife, attached by a resolute cord.

From that moment, the two are never apart. The shepherd tails the president, the bright knife swaying as they walk. They eat breakfast together in a fine-china room where the president murmurs over memoranda. When they look at one another, it is the way a deer and weary hunter see each other through the trees: there are two forests, two clouds full of breath, and a pale light stretches to cover both of them.

In time they grow a mild love, the way people love their coffee or their flag; it grows like a meadow in between, until the gulf seems beautiful. But despite good breeding, the president's generosity is like a small, swinging lantern: when the gold-eaters—patron saints—grow restless on the rooftops, the president feeds them in fingerfuls. In return, they send down plagues; their war-cries fill wavering hearts with smoke and arrogance.

The president hears them, too. On the worst days, the shepherd will hold the president's quarrelsome face. This makes it easier to think of peace. The shepherd sings the old song about a people you can never see: like fairies, each one's soul is a patchwork of many colors, most of them ugly,

but one patch is always beautiful. The president loves this song even more than the smell of blood, and it is almost enough.

But not quite. One day, the president is too anguished for stories, too wild and enflamed for further invisibles. On that day, the president demands the Word. Because the shepherd cannot hand over the Word, the shepherd hands over the bright knife instead. In an instant, the president lunges for the red place in the shepherd where the Word lies buried, and uncovers it with the knife, and lifts it up, and shouts the Word. Shadows drop like birds in a place you can never see.

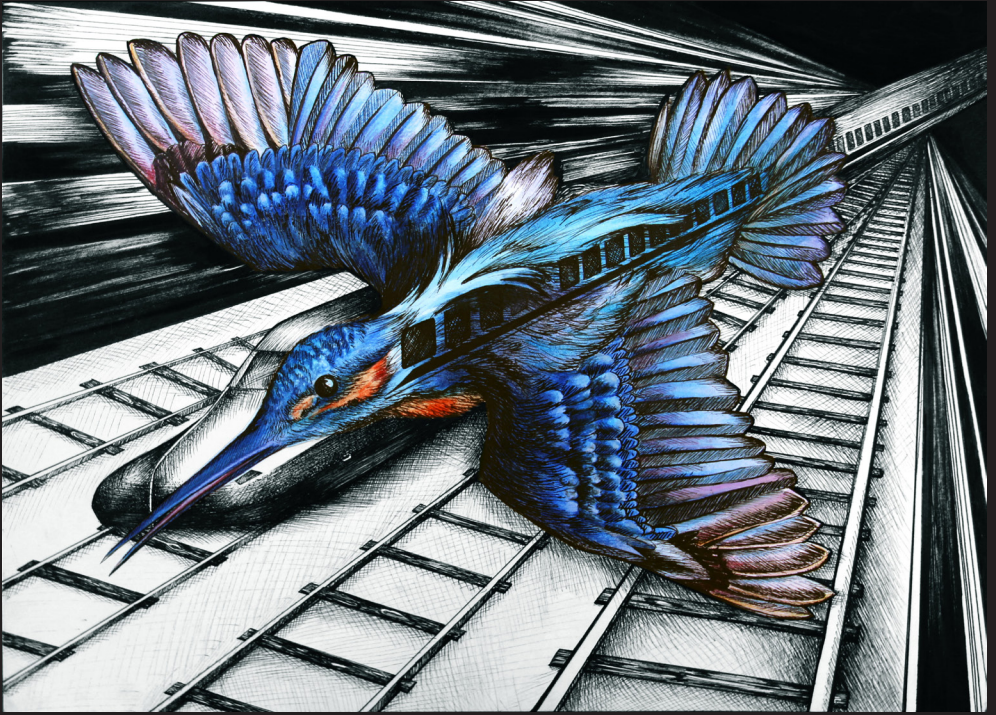
The next day, the winsome president is served breakfast in a room painted like fine china. There are memoranda on the table—proud words—but instead of eating or reading, today the president goes to lean on the balcony. The president searches for a way to remember.

There are many things you can never see, and presidents do not usually think of them. But when the president finally sings an old tune, it is carried aloft by an invisible wind.



Charles Twilight

Korrowat James Pruegsanusak



Kingfisher Biomimicry

Jessica Xu

Caged—In the Style of Maya Angelou

Luisa Apolaya Torres

A free student leaps
on the back of the Jeep
And rolls down street
till the curbside ends
And dips her chicken wings
in the orange sauces
And dares to claim her youth.

But the girl that stays up
late in her room
reads and writes through
the hours of gloom
her wings are not clipped and
her feet are not tied
but she feels the need to sing.

The tired girl sings
with a fearful trill
of grades long past
of deadlines estill
of reputations and
tests of will
for her family
she gives her freedom.

The free girl drives through another breeze
her radio soft as she jingles her keys
her fat dogs wait on the dawn, bright lawn
while she names the day her own.

But the tired grl studies, happy it seems
Although truly, loneliness pays the price of dreams
Her wings feel clipped, and her feet feel tied

So she opens her throat to sing.

The tired girl sings with a fearful thrill
Of days for herself, of days when still
Her love and wonder for her world would heal
The wounded and the shaken.



Burned out

Kristin Sheridan



Luis

Allan Gelman

untitled

Agatha Tai

I gave that one a hand
and that one the other.
I gave my foot to these ones
and my other foot to them.
I planned it all out.
Nice neat slices.

Then more came
and I wanted to do it again.
There was still more of me
so I portioned out
the shoulder
cheeks (both kinds)
breasts
chest
stomach
legs
arms
buttocks

and then I left some for myself
just in case I ran out too fast.

sometimes I would take a cheek
and keep it for a few hours
just to have some for me
you know?

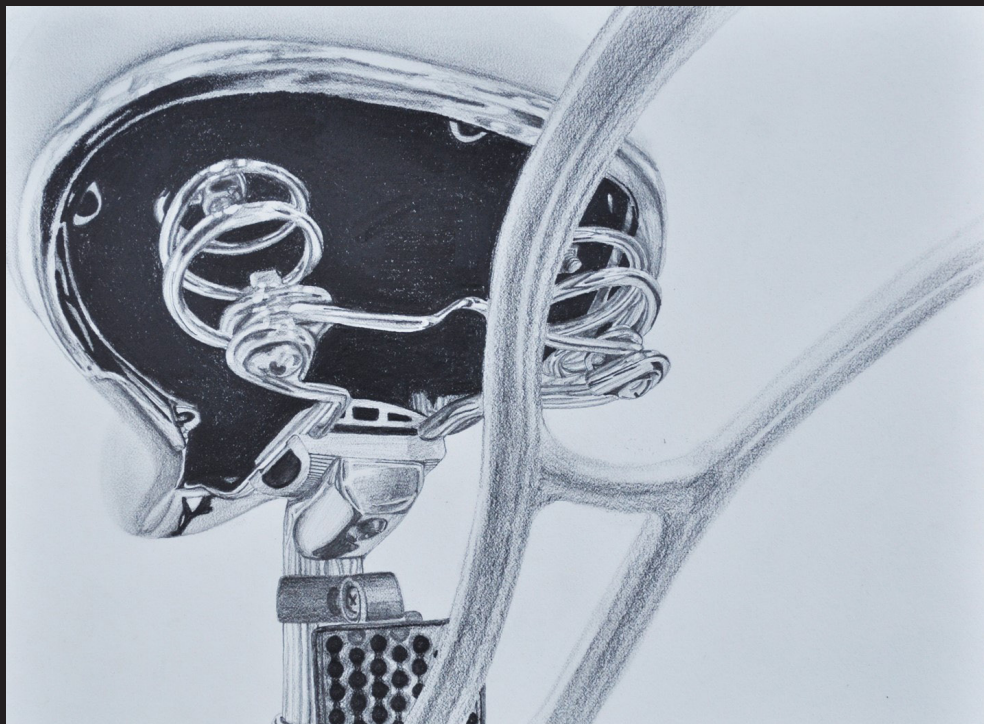
But then it got crazy.

She grabbed my hand and took my arm
he took my whole leg and thigh with my foot
he's yelling at me because he can't find my stomach
and I'm still clutching my cheek,

trying to get them to share properly.

Now they're tearing
and I think I'm bleeding.
They're still frantically searching
for their part
while I'm trying to stop them
because I'm really trying to keep track.
I still want to share
but with each day
I don't know if I want this anymore.
And I think I dropped my cheek.

Now I don't even have enough
to reach for the pieces
and I just want to sleep



Bike

Ellen O'Connell



Façade

Ellen O'Connell



Cloudy Day

Kristin Sheridan

beetle

Dylan Holmes

As you lie twisted
on the kitchen floor,
the brushed limbs of
fir trees wave shadows
above you,

evergreens along the highway.
You were drawn to their indifference,
how trees never mind the rilling of traffic,
how soon they forget.

In this luminous house,
the forest quivers
within you,
a flint of dislodged bone.
It darkens your eyes, and the
The porcelain of these floors swells
to outlast all memory.

Across the room,
the solemn infant spreading its fingers
toward you from its high chair, a throne,
has determined that you are still alive,

Though you both witness
the gathering of gold-flecked
angels, fanning their beetled wings
as they flit from skin to skin.



Breath

Maude Gull

Fantasies: Studio Album by Metric, 2009

Nafisa Syed

No.	Title	Length
1	<i>"Help I'm Alive"</i> and Beats rain down from the sky like exclamation points punctuating the thoughts of a	4:45
2.	<i>"Sick Muse"</i> whose	4:17
3.	<i>"Satellite Mind"</i> pollutes the pristine	3:42
4.	<i>"Twilight Galaxy."</i> Its tinny voice decries the merits of	4:53
5.	<i>"Gold Guns Girls"</i> with plaintive cries of	4:05
6.	<i>"Give Me Sympathy"</i> that are 3 minutes and 54 seconds too long for us to understand. Believe me, we tried, but our attempts to make a	3:54
7.	<i>"Collect Call"</i> only left us shivering in a static snowstorm. Unfortunately, we had left our coats on the plastic backs of our	4:46
8.	<i>"Front Row"</i> seats. You wouldn't believe we bought tickets to see this madness, if you could call the observation of light and sound-induced	3:34
9.	<i>"Blindness"</i> seeing, but it seems The guitars and grass and melodious screeching held us captive in a	4:26
10.	<i>"Stadium Love"</i> that we couldn't escape.	4:13

