

SAMPLER XXVI SPRING 2014

# SAMPLER XXVI

STUDENT ART & WRITING  
AQUINAS COLLEGE SPRING 2014



## Artists

Albert, Lesley 13, 48  
Besteman, David 16, 18, 30, 39, 44, 45, 51, 58, 64, 66  
Bradshaw, Monnelle 31  
Chavez, Jade 11, 15, 22, 33, 36, 40, 42, 43, 49, 53, 54, 65, 68, 72  
Davis, Michelle 19, 62  
Domer, Dale 67  
Johnson, Alexis Cover, 21, 23, 26, 41  
Klco, Nicole 27, 31, 70  
Plumstead, Michelle 35, 47  
Sichaleun, Kathalya 7  
VanDuinen, Emilie 9, 22, 28, 40, 42, 43, 49, 53, 65, 68  
VanDuinen, Emilie and Chavez, Jade 22, 40, 42, 43, 49, 53, 54, 65, 68  
Wycoff, Jessica 10, 25, 56

## Writers

Anouthay, Cassandra 54, 69-70  
Barreto, Giovana 52  
Close, Paris 66  
DeVoogd, Jake 45  
Dugan, Johanna 31  
Fisher, Andrea 59-62  
Fowler, Hannah 29-30  
Galloway, Andrea 28, 49, 65  
Giluk, Stephanie 8-9, 32  
Hoffman, Brendan 36  
Keast, Sean 50-51  
Lamb, Jessica 12, 24-25  
Logan, Ken 40  
Martinez Rodriguez, Ana 48  
McLellan, Sarah 22, 43  
Nelson, Elizabeth 23, 34  
Perkins, Mariah 57-58  
Plumstead, Michelle 3, 20-21, 41  
Ramirez-Guerrero, Erick 27, 67  
Robertson, Molly 5, 10  
Ryan, Rebecca 46-47  
Schlutt, Patricia 42, 71  
Stoner, Benjamin 6, 11, 63  
Tolliver, Raven 17  
Trevino, Felipe 31  
VanDuinen, Emilie 16, 44  
Vines, Darcy 14, 37-38, 55  
West, Natalie 19  
Wright, Stephen 26

## Acknowledgments

Front cover: **In the Trees**, oil on canvas. Alexis Johnson, BFA

Art selection/Photographs of selections. . . . . Dana Freeman

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Michelle Plumstead, Rachael Steil, Alexis Worthington

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Associate Professor Jennifer Dawson, Associate

Professor Gretchen Rumohr-Voskuil

*LIT officers:* Elisira Auchter, Stephanie Giluk,

Rachael Steil, and Alexis Worthington

### **Final Judge for the Academy of American Poets University and College Poetry Prize**

Robert Haight

### **Preliminary Judges for the contest**

Professor Michelle DeRose, Associate Professor Vicki McMillan

### **Sampler XXVI coordination**

Associate Professor Pamela Dail Whiting, Professor Gary Eberle

### **Organizing assistant**

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## SAMPLER XXVI

A compilation of writing and visual art by Aquinas College students.  
(Grand Rapids, Michigan), Spring 2014

### Contributors

#### Artists

Lesley Albert, David Besteman, Monnelle Bradshaw, Jade Chavez, Michelle Davis, Dale Domer, Alexis Johnson, Nicole Klco, Michelle Plumstead, Emilie VanDuinen, Kathalyya Sichaleun, Jessica Wycoff

#### Writers

Cassandra Anouthay, Giovana Barreto, Paris Close, Jake DeVoogd, Johanna Dugan, Andrea Fisher, Hannah Fowler, Andrea Galloway, Stephanie Giluk, Brendan Hoffman, Sean Keast, Jessica Lamb, Ken Logan, Sarah McLellan, Elizabeth Nelson, Mariah Perkins, Michelle Plumstead, Erick Ramirez, Molly Robertson, Ana Martinez Rodriguez, Rebecca Ryan, Patricia Schlutt, Benjamin Stoner, Raven Tolliver, Felipe Trevino, Emilie VanDuinen, Darcy Vines, Natalie West, Stephen Wright

### **This SAMPLER is dedicated to Dr. Andrew Jefchak**



This issue of SAMPLER is dedicated to professor emeritus Dr. Andrew Jefchak who served Aquinas College as a professor of English from 1968 until his death on 19 February 2014. Dr. Jefchak came to Aquinas College after completing his Ph.D. in American literature at Michigan State University. In 1972, he was awarded a

Kellogg Fellows grant to develop an on-campus film series showing classic and world cinema and courses on the history of cinema, modern cinema, writing about drama and film, and literature and motion pictures. His film studies courses were among the first serious film studies courses to be offered at a college in the United States, at a time when film was considered a “popular” medium unworthy of serious literary attention. Starting in 1978, he wrote regular film criticism for the Grand Rapids Press. He served as chair of the English department for 16 years, led the Ireland program in 1976, and frequently presented scholarly papers at professional conferences. He published a short story collection, *Out of Stieglitz Park*, in 2011. At his retirement in 2002, the College instituted the Jefchak Endowment for Cinema Studies in his honor. In 2012, he was inducted into the Aquinas College Hall of Fame.

WINNING POEM OF THE  
ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS  
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POETRY PRIZE

## **It's dust to dust**

and life goes on and so  
the day that the dog died  
I called in sick to work,  
lay in the bed of the pickup truck  
and watched my dad paint the chicken  
coop purple. The kind of day  
the sky's so blue it looked like it was  
squeezed straight from the tube and  
the heat presses into you  
like a heavy wool blanket,  
makes your eyelids, your breath,  
everything heavy.

Damn dog he'd said that morning  
while digging that hole three feet deep  
heaving, sinking his weight into each  
carved out shovelful of cool clay,  
my brother crying in his green cotton  
too-short pajama pants and bare feet.

Later, when the afternoon began  
to bleed into eternity,  
we packed up and drove  
10 miles to the hardware store,  
walked down each aisle  
from plumbing to paint to lumber,  
but my father who paused to pick up  
a doorknob, electrical tape, 14-gauge wire,  
turn it in his fingers and set it back down,  
could not for the life of him recall  
why we had gone there.

- Michelle Plumstead, Senior

**Robert Haight's Comments:**

Being asked to select a winning poem and possibly a runner-up poses a challenge of having to decide among an abundance of possibilities. It's like looking at the menu of a restaurant when one seeks nourishment. The listed entrees all look delicious in various ways, in their colors and textures and combinations. In the case of these poems, each attempts to communicate significant experience, ideas, emotions, perceptions, and observations, often wedding content to form, while reaching for the best possible language. The choices then become decisions about which pieces most fully realize their promise to a reader.

A poem that I believe most fully achieves that promise is "It's dust to dust." This piece evokes deep feeling in the congruence between what it articulates and what it leaves unsaid. The observations, though understated, are sharp and communicated with exact imagery. Emotional intensity is allowed to build in readers without sentimentality or coercion. Because of the writer's fidelity to the concrete details of the situation described, the impact of the final lines is memorable.

"The Deer" reaches psychological depth through its clear surface. The diction is rich and varied; images are vivid and closely observed. The attention to the details of the physical surroundings makes the events of the poem plausible, seemingly inevitable. There is a notable merging of inner and outer worlds in which we discover in our deepest selves a kinship with those other beings with which we share the planet. I have selected "The Deer" as this year's honorable mention.

Robert Haight has published three poetry collections, *Water Music, Emergences and Spinner Falls*, and *Feeding Wild Birds*, and written essays and articles on fly fishing, the environment, education and spirituality for a variety of anthologies, journals and magazines. His writing has won awards from the Poetry Resource Center of Michigan, Western Michigan University, the Kalamazoo Foundation and the Arts Foundation of Michigan. He has taught writing at Western Michigan University and at Kalamazoo Valley Community College in Michigan where he has worked for the past twenty-five years.

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The Academy of American Poets, founded in 1934, supports American poets at all stages of their careers and fosters an appreciation for American Poetry.

The annual prizes for university and college students are funded by alumni interested in encouraging young writers. We are grateful to Aquinas alumni Dr. Tony Foster and Linda Nemecek Foster for making the prize available for Aquinas College students.

HONORABLE MENTION  
The Academy of American Poets  
Contest for Colleges and Universities

## **The Deer**

Stars glimmer overhead pricking the black vault with light, approaching dawn brings pearly luster to the endless blue velvet. Fog slowly stealing in spreads silent tendrils between sleeping trees. My restless vigil comes to an end; I slip from my bed to meet you. You glide toward me through the trees, silent as the fog. We meet where the meadow turns to raspberry thickets, the long purple stems brushing the ground. Our noses touch, our breath mingles. Your face bears the scars of war, mine simply mirror gentleness. I lift my gaze to meet your eyes and get lost in the warm depths that seem to penetrate my very soul. Side by side we steal away with the dawn. The dream and the fog enfold us and silence our footsteps. No one notices our going, except the doves stirring in their nests.

*- Molly Robertson, Junior*

## Red Line

Chelsea streets bring strange comfort  
to the visitor from the Bible's belt.  
He smiles a hanging head at  
the catcalls from crowded boys bars,  
a flattering chorus line, reminding him  
of slow rides in the beds of  
friends dirt-spattered four wheel drives.  
As darkness dawns, white-wall galleries glow bright  
and cafes advertise they're closed for the night.  
The young man reaches a set of stairs and follows  
them down to the platform where he stands,  
studying the rail maps, the train lines  
intersecting, and overlapping  
like a box of pasta spilled on the kitchen floor.  
He struggles, when he both sees and feels  
the rushing car whirl into the station  
washing him in warm recycled air;  
it halts with the sound of steel forced to steel.  
The young man enters the cabin and joins  
the crowd vacantly staring at cement walls.  
Soon the car is careening through the tunnel  
and street-stops called from crackling speakers.  
He leans, listening, for the transfer line: Lexington.  
Four more jerking halts send the young man into  
deeper proximity with these strangers, then his stop.  
The doors slide open, he exits and climbs the stairs  
where he emerges to a trash can lined street,  
shops with metal grates for their façades.  
In the city that does not sleep, those that slumber  
call the black their birth, slinking shadow walkers leering  
at the young man with Southern trained posture, who quickly ducks  
and darts across the avenue seeing the illuminated sign for the red-line.

- Benjamin Stoner, Junior





Untitled, monotype  
Kathalya Sichaleun

## Hands

I.

Pale, green-veined. Thin fingers, uneven, shaking.  
Nails sharp.

Lines across the palms that mean  
death, or perhaps long life.

II.

It's no wonder Lady Macbeth went mad.  
How can you make sense of the world  
when your own hands betray you?

III.

In my dreams, everything I reach for  
turns to water or sand. Empty, I grasp  
at anything that fills me up again.

IV.

The nerve impulses have danced their  
way from my brain down the neurons in my arm,  
my hand, releasing neurotransmitters,  
contracting the fibers of the muscle  
that let me raise my middle finger  
in your direction.

V.

I hide my hands in the winter  
because they become the hands  
of a corpse. Stiff, always cold,  
purple around the nails and knuckles—  
even the blood slows down,  
flowing backward until spring.

VI.

I went through the drive-through  
at McDonald's the other day. The cashier  
cupped his hand under mine so I wouldn't drop  
all the change he was pouring into my palm  
and I cried all the way home because I hadn't  
felt anyone else's hands on mine  
for a long time.

VII.

A hand, from far away, looks  
like a fleshly light, a beam  
signaling weary travelers too long in the dark  
that haven is close.

*-Stephanie Giluk, Senior*



Hands and Feet, ink and wash  
Emilie VanDuinen

# Song of the Glaciers

## I. The Advance

Born of icy air – I Reign in the North  
Beautiful – Terrible am I  
Storm raging at my heights  
Add – my Weight  
The depths– glow Crystalline Blue –  
Purification  
Purify I must – for that is my call  
Growing – I crush all  
Descending – Slowly – I come  
Scouring – valleys grow deeper  
Scraping – Face of the Earth –  
Wiped clean  
None Dream – none Dare –  
Stand against Me  
All fly – All flee –  
Before Me

## II. The Withdrawal

Warmth returning – sun soaked soul  
My days – done – end drawing near –  
I came a lion – recede a lamb  
Feet sullied – stone and gravel pock marks –  
Discarding remnants – landscape remade  
My height degenerating – water running off –  
Scars I leave – for generations testify  
In my wake – growth spawning –  
Roots find purchase – recreating forests  
Sorry to go – tears increasing  
Left behind basins – brimming over  
Great Lakes – trail behind – my train  
Only the North – embracing me  
My future – only to cap the peaks –  
Until I leave; removed permanently  
Eventually no one will remember me.

*-Molly Robertson, Junior*

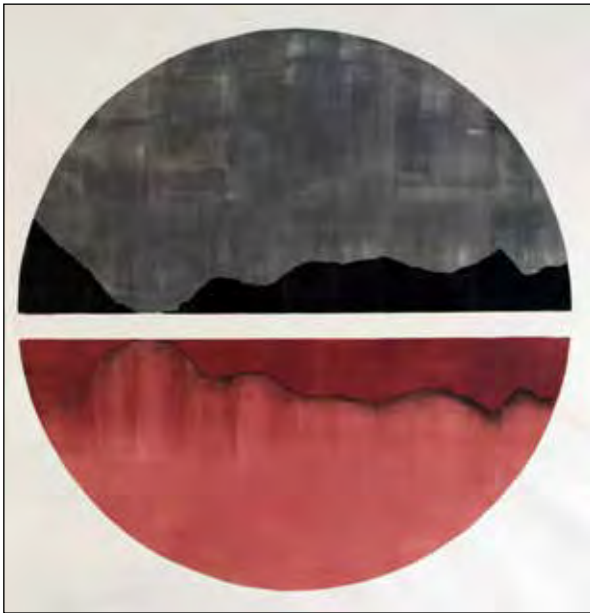


Untitled, glazed stoneware,  
Jessica Wycoff

## The View

I sat writing in the bookstore on a fraying faux-leather couch, pushed to the windows, utterly lost in thought, when the sun, after a string of gray days, decided to break free of the clouds' vault-like hold to saturate the space. Looking up from my notebook, I felt the warmth and closed my eyes, lids awash in amber. After my moment of reverie, I returned to work, when suddenly my illuminated paper went dark and I looked up expecting to see the cumulus-curtain's return, but instead I saw a silhouette standing against one of the floor-to-ceiling panes: the feminine-frame an icon aglow. And I set down my pad to shield my face, then realized as I squinted my unworthy eyes—it was you. Overwhelmed I became suddenly aware of my sitting and I felt I should kneel, but I stood instead. Looking at your smiling eyes, my mind dizzied and I felt transported to years gone by, when I stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon watching the sun set over the width of that expanse, so vast. I thought I would never see a view so devastating, but you, inches from me, baptized in the sun's first offering in days, I knew I was wrong.

*-Benjamin Stoner, Junior*



from the Elemental Mountainscape Series,  
monotype  
Jade Chavez, Emilie Van Duinen

## Wedding Vows

Perhaps he knew the way your voice lilted,  
subtle then sharp against  
voices on the television  
during that long New Year's night.  
Ear drums agitated,  
"Get the fuck out,"  
was all there was left.  
Antique rings,  
diamond embedded deep in silver,  
decorate fingers no longer warmed by his.  
He never told you that he chose you, did he?

A suitcase bursting with jeans and cigarettes  
provides the only security you need.  
Leaned against your arm,  
he haphazardly shouts  
insults that ricochet off blank floorboards.  
It was never about love,  
or lust,  
or peace of mind.  
"Coincidence" is your hushed response,  
as you stepped through the old maple door  
straight into smog-covered Indianapolis.  
The white space on your finger  
glows like a solar eclipse.  
*-Jessica Lamb, Senior*



Single Figure, oil on paper  
Lesley Albert, BFA

## **I Could Never Be Hemingway**

If I were a modern-day Hemingway  
and I had to write the truest sentence I know and nothing else,  
I'd say that the night is brightest when it's reflected in your eyes.  
I'd say that mortality is unexplainable  
and when we try to tie ourselves down to one moment,  
one lifetime, one consciousness, that's when we lose our minds.  
I'd let the world know that the minutes before midnight  
are the ones that travel the fastest and the ones before dawn  
come slowest but they're all never more than 60 seconds away  
so just be patient and don't force them.  
I would want to tell my family and friends that I've found my camp  
and it's good  
and I believe I'll go fishing tomorrow  
and that's done  
and I'm in a good place  
and it's done.  
I'd say that some scabs deserve to be picked,  
because a scar is better than an infection,  
and that I never picked at my chicken pox  
but they left 17 scars on my body,  
and I picked at people and they left even more  
but I'm healed now.  
I'd tell my Depression-era parents that it's okay  
to only buy one and not two because the other  
will be there tomorrow and it's okay to run out sometimes  
because I'll always run to the store to get more.  
I'd scream to the sky that sadness isn't beautiful  
but that doesn't mean sad people aren't;  
in fact everyone is beautiful, even serial killers  
and liars and cheats and heartbreakers had first words  
and maybe those words were all that mattered.  
If I had to write the one truest sentence I know,  
if I had to be Hemingway for just a day,  
I'd say that I'm grateful for the words that make  
deciding on one truest sentence so difficult.

*-Darcy Vines, Sophomore*





Helpless #3, silver gelatin print  
Jade Chavez

## Goodwill Grandmother

My grandmother comes to church,  
head to toe in Goodwill finds  
that were donated for their thinning,  
last decade's style, but it's such a  
great deal for the brand.

They probably know her by name there,  
or at least by her dry field grass hair.  
The cashier asks,  
"How did that shirt work with the pants?"

My grandfather is buried in the cemetery next door  
on the other side of the sap and needles.  
We think she should lie on the  
Goodwill side of him  
someday.

Tops still trimmed with tags,  
pants that fit three sizes and two years ago,  
two closets, a dresser,  
and under-the-bed storage overfed,  
because grandfather isn't there to say  
"Ruth."

*-Emilie VanDuinen, Senior*



Painter Painting #2,  
digital photograph  
David Besteman, BFA

## Tea Leaves

Black, dried tea leaves wait, trapped within the ball-shaped metal infuser. I dunk the infuser into my steaming cup, and like my anger, the leaves swell as they steep, pressing against their boundaries, fighting to find an escape. And some, they do, manage to get through the tiny holes, trickling out like tears.

The leaves release a strong, bitter flavor. Contained and caged, it diffuses throughout the cup, darkening the water, mirroring my expression, my thoughts, and my words. I sprinkle in sugar, stirring rapidly, noisily—forcefully. The sugar disintegrates and dissipates throughout the water like echoes of internal shouts, spreading and fading.

I sip the hot, bittersweet tea, tasting my anger.  
And I swallow it down.

*-Raven Tolliver, Senior*



**It's Deep**, Bic pen on paper  
David Besteman, BFA

## On Shoelaces

I have a black shoelace  
in my bright red Vans Lo Pros  
and it's stuck in there  
under my heel.  
There's a blister forming  
on the back of my foot  
and some days  
the shoelace  
hurts to walk on,  
others, I hardly notice it.  
I never tie them  
and instead let them  
hide in my shoes  
because I like to look cool  
and careless  
and unconcerned.  
When I was four  
Daddy taught  
my chubby fingers how to make a bow  
out of my laces.  
He told me it would  
keep my shoes on better—  
but always double knot! —  
so they don't come untied  
and I don't trip.  
Now I hide them  
in my shoes  
with absolutely no risk  
of stumbling over their reaching grasps  
or getting caught up  
in their dangerous black threadwork.  
You notice this  
conspicuous habit of mine  
and smile,  
asking why  
I am so afraid  
to risk falling —  
but I suppose for you  
I could tie my laces  
on the outside again.

*-Natalie West, Junior*



Untitled, oil on canvas  
Michelle Davis

## Save Room for Poetry

Save room for poetry  
on your beside stand.

Bury it in the middle row of your garden.  
Wedge words between sunshine and black good dirt  
between green peas and carrots.  
Dust off a place for some of it to settle  
between the cookbooks and empty jars  
on the upper right shelf of the jelly cupboard.

Store it in your left slipper.  
Find it with the crumpled notes in your coat pockets.  
Smell it in the steam of vegetable soup.  
Bake it into pie.  
Add one drop of it to every cup of tea;  
Let it swirl there and sweeten things.

Clear a piece of your calendar for it  
sometime between  
Wednesday and Thursday  
And the hours of nine and ten a.m.

Carve space for it  
between your fork and spoon.

Fill voids with it:  
the woodpile where the cat  
lived last spring,  
empty wine bottles,  
the spaces and cavities,  
the gaps between your bones.

Pump your body full of it  
until your blood is  
one-part cell,  
one-part plasma,  
one-part platelet,  
and two-parts word.

Save room for poetry  
on your bedside stand.  
Make a space for it  
in bus-stop conversations,  
on the radio dial,  
between slices of bread,  
and in the nooks and crannies of  
your heart.

*-Michelle Plumstead, Senior*



Lamp Light, oil on canvas  
Alexis Johnson, BFA

## Deep Rooted

Outside your house  
A river flows wild,  
Coursing over the roots of  
Thick-ringed trees  
Holding secrets and  
Tears inside their cracks.  
They're tied down, down, down  
Into the earth,  
Stretching their roots  
Into the depths.

We sat on one of their  
Lowest branches,  
Clung to their  
Well-worn arms  
While avoiding each other's  
Youthful limbs.  
With our roots of twigs  
We did not yet know the  
Drag of the current,  
The coaxing of the flow.

The Elder's roots dive deep,  
But ours slowly  
Drift away.

*-Sarah McLellan, Freshman*



from the Nature in the Round Series,  
monotype, collograph, linoleum cut  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez



## The Empty Church

For the last time this hour  
I cross myself  
and rise from bended knee.  
I turn and see,  
past rows of red pews,  
the glass doors at the back  
leading into the night  
where the snow only falls  
under streetlights,  
and shimmers so  
that I wonder whether  
it taught the sunshine  
all it knows.  
There's a silent sound  
of it striking the ground,  
a negative noise of sorts.  
Then the light shifts—  
behind me a shape,

an image reflected,  
of clarity,  
quiet and calm—  
calm like death  
when you've lived all you can  
and have nothing left  
to give to this world but  
can't wait for the next,  
so you slip away, softly,  
to eternity.  
There—in the glass—  
is the light of my hope  
in a woolly white coat  
and arms outstretched.  
He glows of wonder,  
of worlds unexplored  
and love yet to be born.

*-Elizabeth Nelson, Junior*



White on Red, oil on canvas  
Alexis Johnson, BFA

## A Recipe of Love

August sun cascades through the window  
of the kitchen where my mother  
cooks macaroni and cheese, a family recipe.  
In whispers she tells me the story  
of all those who turn sixteen,  
how they believe in true love.

I only understand what it means to love  
the sun, the sky, the earth outside my window  
in the innocence before sixteen.  
Yet, when I look at the wrinkles of my mother,  
I get an inkling of the story  
of love and sacrifice that makes life's recipe.

Mom taught me young that the perfect recipe  
is made with extra salt, grease, and love.  
Every uncooked biscuit has a story  
when seen through the splattered stove window.  
I am told I am luckier than my mother,  
who never learned of recipes until sixteen.

It is hard to imagine how at sixteen,  
such a simple thing as a macaroni and cheese recipe  
could bring together the hearts of daughter and mother,  
how telling their own stories of love  
could open up the long caulked window  
dividing the hearts of a mother and daughter's story.

At the kitchen counter I imagine my own story  
of being wild and naïve at sixteen.

I stare through the streaked window  
to find the trees, the grass, of nature's own recipe.

I imagine myself finding the right kind of love  
at the wrong place, wrong time, like my mother.

I am the product of my mother,  
a continuation of the macaroni and cheese story  
of the innocence and exhilaration of love.

So I wait to become sixteen,  
to create my own unique recipe  
by the light of that same old kitchen window.

I wish I could have known my mother at sixteen,  
known the stories that flavored her own recipe  
of love and what lies just outside the window.

*-Jessica Lamb, Senior*



Untitled, ceramic  
Jessica Wycoff

Can you look upon autumnal leaves to captivate their form?  
In reddish paint or yellow crayon, the brightest hues of orange?  
Can you trace the face and symmetry of newly fallen snow?  
The amaranth that wakes the Spring to the Summer's golden glow?  
Can you assume a hand of artistry, etch my essence while I live?  
Can color but contain my soul when my breath shall cease to give?  
*-Stephen Wright, Senior*



In Between Class, oil on canvas  
Alexis Johnson, BFA

## Madoff

I invested in your capillaries  
my human capital  
even the capital letter of my name  
because my heart is in capitalism  
and in you, I saw potential  
for return

and you returned,  
pleading for a heftier loan  
and so in your arteries I placed,  
all my human worth,  
and we signed our name on dotted lines,

you needed more

and in your lungs,  
I placed my breath,  
and in your mind,  
I placed my thoughts,  
and in your hands,  
my trust  
fund.

and everything, I gave everything

to a Ponzi scheme  
and you Madoff with my heart.

*-Erick Ramirez-Guerrero, Freshman*



Self Portrait,  
charcoal on paper  
Nicole Klco



Untitled, ink, ink wash, gesso on canvas  
Emilie VanDuinen

## Open Windows

I remember how the wind rolled in from the opened windows, drowning out the clanging of the truck. I felt the pounding my father's fingers made as he drummed the steering wheel. His voice carried over the radio, laughing along with the announcer. I tried his smile on for myself; it looked so fake, plastered across my pale face. He was covered in color: flushed cheeks from the sun and deep leathery hands. I wished so badly I could radiate the way he did, and I tried. Over and over again I tried to be like him. Laugh like him, smile like him, glow like him.

*-Andrea Galloway, Sophomore*

## The Beast

*Hannah Fowler, Sophomore*

It's a nocturnal beast. It has dark, black fur and a long, languid tail, sharp claws in large paws and a blunt, wet nose. Its whiskers twitch as it prowls around, its yellow, feline eyes watching, waiting for the right moment. It stalks the edges of the daytime, like light shining down a deep pit where the beast stays just out of the ring of sunshine. Its yellow eyes reflect the light every so often as it hugs the darkness, reminding her that it's still there.

And then the night comes. As soon as dusk disappears behind the edge of the pit far above, the beast grows restless and she hears the silent padding of its paws as it approaches; she feels its dark fur brush her skin ever so slightly, and its tail sweeps across her back as it goes past. She knew dread as the sun began to sink and darkness crept about in this pit, shrinking the circle of light that the beast has to avoid. There is no dread, now. The beast circles her, touches her, embraces her, and she makes no effort to shoo it away, knowing that the moment she does, the beast will strike.

She doesn't know when she fell into the pit proper—it was more a long, slow tumble that brought her to a soft landing where she first glimpsed the beast. She laid there for a time, like she does in the wee hours of the night in her bed. Her tears not quite seeping into the pillow; instead, lingering there on her makeup-stained pillowcase and pooling uncomfortably against her cheek.

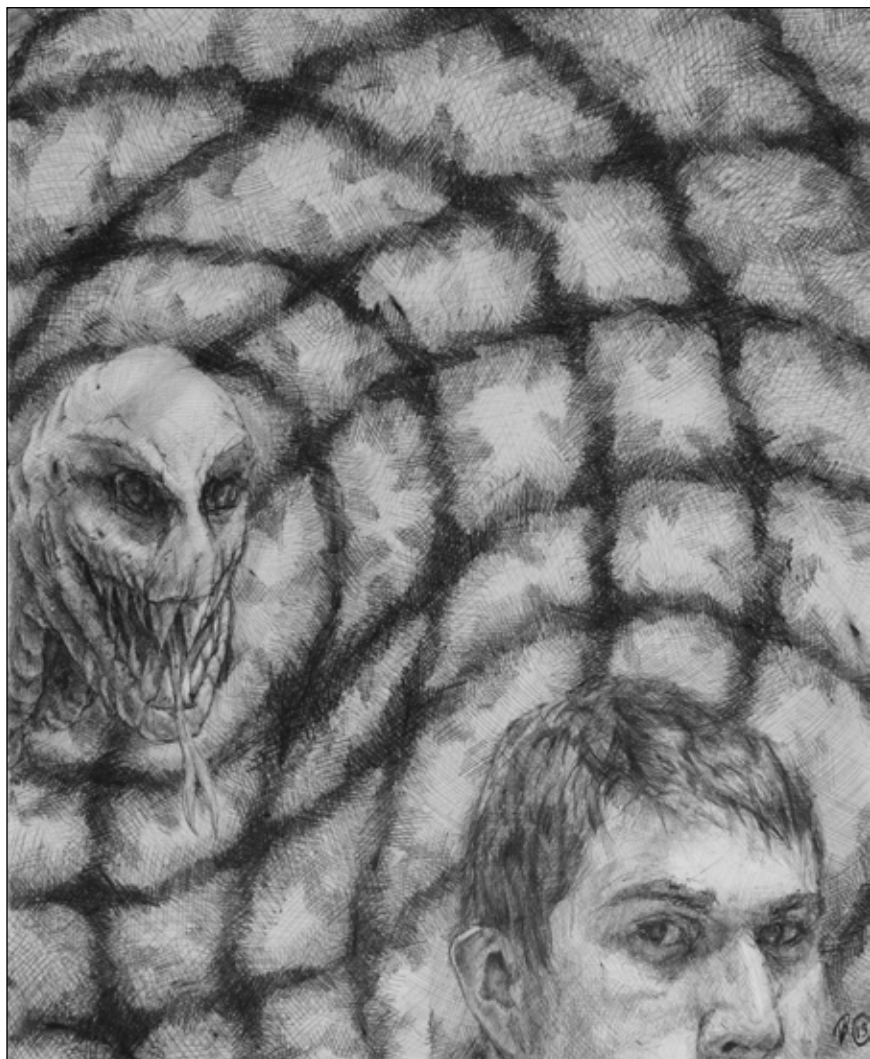
When the light comes, all is well, though. She goes about her day, maybe even laughs a little bit. Yet, once or twice she looks behind her and catches a glimpse of the beast's yellow eyes in the shadows and knows what waits for her as soon as she turns out her light that night.

When she does, the beast comes, and with it, every single doubt and heartbreak and apathy she ever felt. The beast emanates them. She ponders for a bit where she is in this life, why or even if she loves the people she does, and if it's even worth putting up with. She wonders when exactly the last time she felt true joy was, and when the last time she was content was, and when the last time she felt anything was.

She lies down there in the bottom of the pit on her back and looks up at the rim, beyond which the world lies and she wonders if it's even worth the effort to begin to climb up the wall to meet it. She cannot fathom the amount of energy required to find that first foothold when she expends her entire stores even getting out of bed in the morning. She lies there and wonders, with that beast curled up next to her under her arm, its soothing purr convincing her to stay there. She wonders if that pit is perhaps safer than what's outside of it. Where she needs feel instead of numb out. Where she needs care instead of not.

*(continued)*

And so she lies there and thinks and when the first hint of light shows over the edge of the pit, the beast stirs next to her and retreats to the shadows where she loses sight of it, save for the quick flickers of its yellow eyes, always watching and waiting for the darkness, where she expects it to come as soon as she turns off her light, as soon as her first tear dampens her pillow.



*It's Surreal*, bic pen on paper  
David Besteman, BFA



## War Paint

Paint your face  
Red for hate, blue for intimidation  
Meaningless colors  
No room for yellow

Red for hate, blue for intimidation  
Strong and obedient  
No room for yellow  
Dry paint always cracks

Strong and obedient  
Such a fallacy  
Dry paint always cracks  
All together

Such a fallacy  
Paint your face  
All together  
Meaningless colors

*-Felipe Trevino, Senior*



Untitled, monotype  
Monnelle Bradshaw



Untitled, ceramic  
Nicole Klco

## Fountains

Pay me to write poetry  
Pay me to sing songs  
I'll gladly whore my feelings out  
I've kept them much too long

The strings of words consume me  
This tangled, jumbled mess  
I've found a cadence, found a rhythm  
A fountain - that is, my mouth

-  
*-Johanna Dugan, Senior*

## Smite

They were singing a solemn hymn  
about the glory of God, capital G.  
I was kneeling irreverently on the padded pew,  
not bothering to mouth the words to the song  
as I repeatedly checked my watch.

I was on the right side of the church  
facing Michael the archangel, whose strong granite  
arms forever held aloft his shield and spear,  
head bowed in eternal contempt at the cowering  
serpent squirming, dying at his feet.

The sun was bright, the church was hot,  
and the stained glass painted everything  
crucifix red. The piano hit a wrong note;  
someone warbled off key, and Michael  
lifted his stone head and looked at me.

I felt sick, like I could fall over and die,  
like I could turn to salt. I looked at my mother,  
whose green hymn book rested piously in her hand,  
and whispered that I was going to throw up or pass out  
so we needed to go before everything burned down.

She gathered our coats, reached for me with concern,  
and led me away. I could feel Michael's blank eyes  
right under my left shoulder blade, but I didn't look  
even as his heavy feet scraped their way down the aisle,  
waiting for the moment I'd turn back to see what I'd lost.

*-Stephanie Giluk, Senior*



from the Memento Mori Series, silver gelatin print  
Jade Chavez

## The Caves

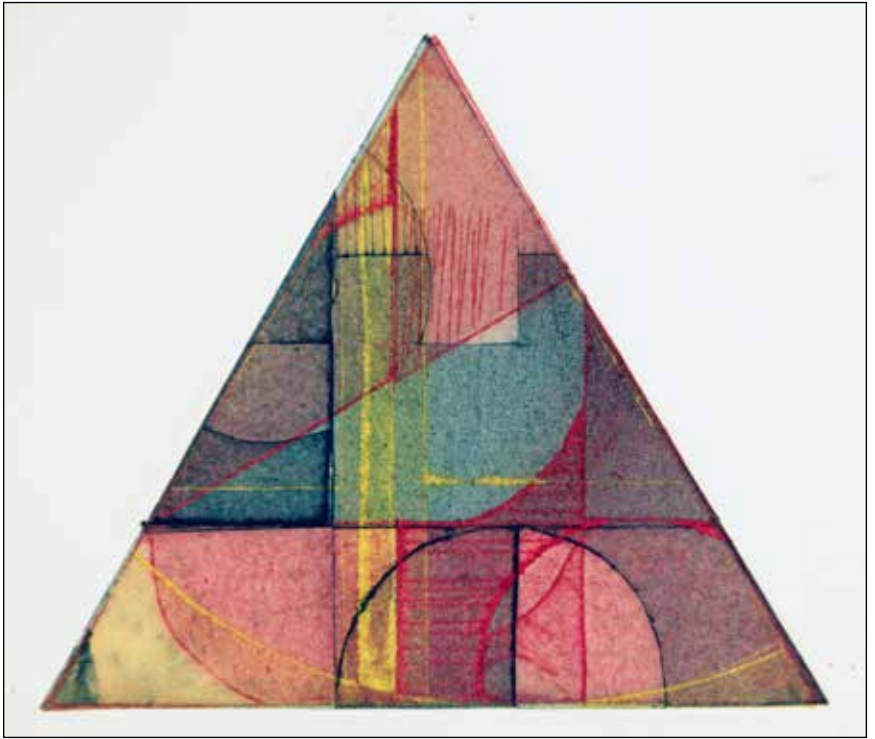
*Elizabeth Nelson, Junior*

I have been to the caves in Lascaux, France. I've learned about human evolution from people who live in tents and have no toilets. I've learned to throw a javelin and hit a cardboard goat, but I wasn't hungry for it since my stomach was full of Smuckers and Jif. I've swum in the lake of our ancestors and relieved myself in the water because I didn't want to squat over the hole in the ground. I've held a plastic Neanderthal skull in my hand and listened to a lecture from a woman who hand-washes her clothes with homemade soap and hasn't used a light switch in years. I've hiked up a hill so steep and rocky, and with no real stairs or railing, that I found myself crawling like a child despite my fifteen years. I've walked upon an old, rickety bridge above a mine-field of criss-crossed strings, the highest of technologies for mapping cave discoveries. I've stood where someone's bones had been uncovered by dusty hands and placed in a torn, cardboard box. I've been to a primitive place.

There is something raw and pungent in the air there, like sweat and humidity with a pinch of ancient dust. It smells of permanence and tradition. In the hum of the cicadas, there is a whisper of legend and heritage that tells the stories of the dead. I've listened to those stories, and this is what they told me:

Yesterday, a wise woman with a protruding brow and a rib cage twice the size of mine held a bowl in her gnarled hands – perhaps the very first bowl – and recognized its potential. Her heart leapt with the inkling of some magical quality in that simple object. She thought of how many berries would fit inside it, though she couldn't even count them. She thought of how her free hand could grab and scratch and do all the things that hands are meant to do without her having to set that bowl down. She thought of water, which so easily escaped her fingers, soon retained for as long as she wished. Her eyes lit up at the possibilities. Oh, the novelty of it! The pure genius of it!

Today, I am jealous of the cavewoman and her homemade bowl. I take a sip of water from the built-in straw of my self-filtering, insulated water bottle. It doesn't taste like genius. It doesn't taste like brilliance. It just tastes like water. When did we sacrifice that first, heart-stopping spark for a comfortable, stable flame?



Primary Triangle, monotype  
Michelle Plumstead

## Ulysses

Roll away  
like a bag of bones  
kept together  
in a handkerchief, fastened  
with a rubber band.

Keep your  
head tucked tightly  
to your chest so  
the grubby soil  
won't sully

your beard with  
flakes of sand and cigarette  
butts.

That's what they told me.

Pardon my French  
but Je suis perdu.  
I need to

be shown the  
splendor of this  
land. My ears are  
tired and I  
miss home.

Someone lead me  
to the restroom, I feel  
sick. There was something  
in this wine. It's a pity  
I forgot my camera.

No one could believe the stories I tell.

*-Brendan Hoffman, Junior*



From the Memento Mori Series,  
silver gelatin print  
Jade Chavez

## Magic

*Darcy Vines, Sophomore*

Meet Raymond Phillip Francisco Fernandez Solano II. I've been known to call him Ray, idiot, brother, best friend, and some other names unfit to print for short. The rest of the world knows him as 19 year old Private First Class Solano of the United States Army. Ray has been in the Army since he graduated high school, and it hurt me more than could possibly be imagined to see him leave for basic training when the rest of us were going off to college, but he was so passionate about the military I could never dream of talking him out of it.

If you look at his hands, you'll see knuckles that are wide and scarred from dislocation and fighting. Not mean-spirited fighting, but the mixed martial arts he did in high school that I protested because I thought it was dangerous and he was still a klutzy teenaged boy who hadn't grown into his shoes yet. He never got hurt more than a few dislocated fingers, and that never stopped him from carrying his flamenco guitar around his house, barefooted and half sleeping, responding to my remarks with smart-ass riffs and contorted faces.

"People who do what I want to do, don't do it because they want people to know about it. We have this gap, this gap in our hearts that has to get filled by something, and for me it's this. I know for a fact that other people in my position don't feel the way I do. Some people want a steady job. Some people are just doing it as an in-between. I just want to do fun stuff."

As a little civilian writer, I will never understand his thought process.

"Fun stuff? You mean stuff that could get you killed?"

"Yeah, I guess that's a little occupational hazard."

If you look at his arms, you'll see tattoos of skulls and Aztec warriors. It's hard to see the arms that I knew underneath all the ink and freshly developed muscle, but I know the arms that picked me up from behind and carried me around my house when I broke my ankle still exist.

Ray always knew how to surprise people, and when he decided that the military was for him, I was the only person to know for about two years. He played his guitar at school functions, continued painting murals and drawing charcoal portraits of all of his friends and family, and even completed an advanced placement studio art portfolio for college. Everyone assumed he would go to an art school after graduating high school, but he knew that sitting behind a desk in a classroom would do nothing but frustrate him. He needed to be doing something, seeing something, accomplishing something to feel fulfilled.

If you look at his legs, you'll see the lanky muscles of a runner. He'll be running a marathon in a few weeks. I remember when those legs were scrawny and short, in school uniform khakis that clung to his waist for dear life. I remember when

*(continued)*

those legs would purposely try to trip me in the halls at school, so much that people thought we were enemies. I remember when we would be sitting close talking about life in the park and he would be wearing basketball shorts even if it was below freezing outside. I remember when I would absentmindedly roll my finger over the scar on his knee, and make him giggle like a little boy.

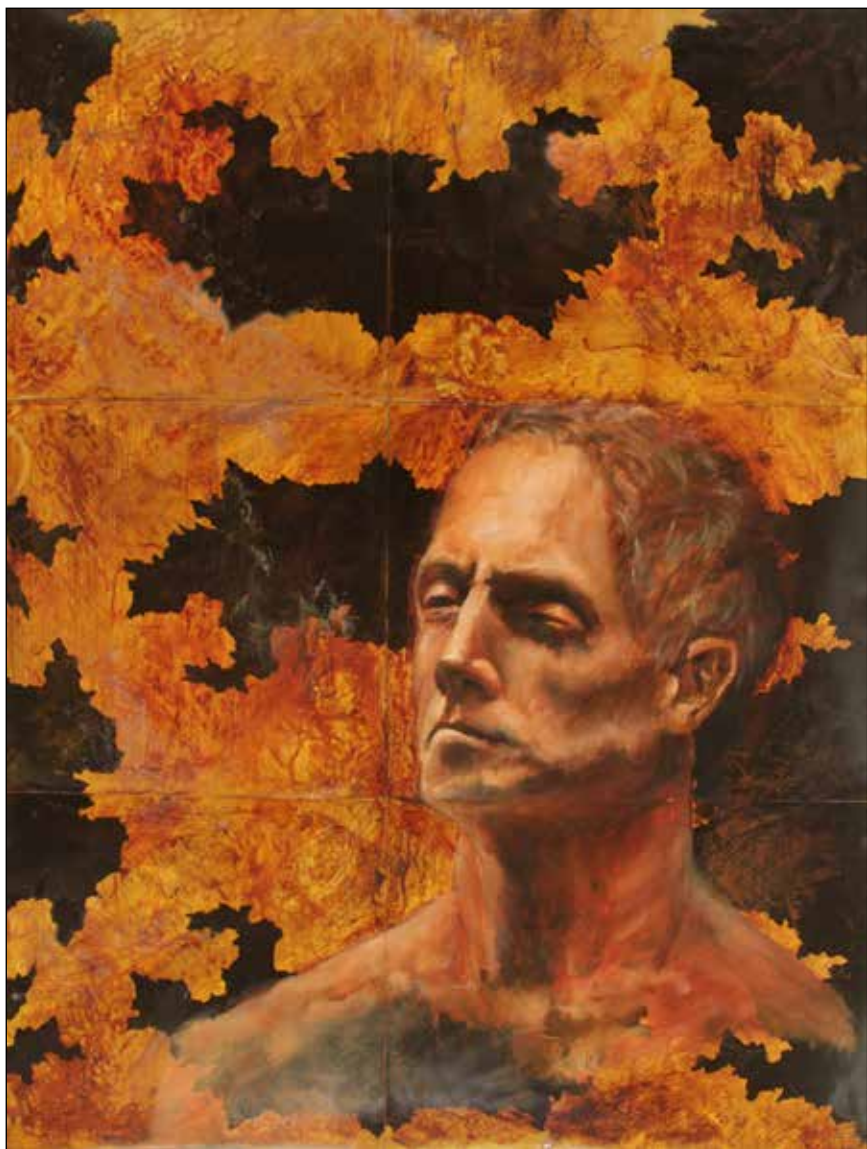
To his mother, an insurance agent, his father, a police detective, and his three siblings Russell, Adelina, and Raquel, Ray still is a little boy. He'll always be frozen in time to them, the same age he was before the Army happened. He admits that coming home is hard now, because he feels detached.

"I don't really know what to say about that. Last time I was home I didn't know what to do with myself. It's a nice release, but—gone for fifteen months, come home for three weeks. Then we go back to work, get off, go do fun stuff, go to sleep, then I lather, rinse, and repeat."

If you look at his eyes, you'll see that he's more complicated than most people you could ever hope to meet. In those dark brown eyes curtained by thick black lashes, you can see that he's a warrior now, like the Aztec on his arm. The Army has taken the little boy that I loved, my best friend, and turned him into a man who speaks multiple languages, runs miles upon miles before I get out of bed, can fire any kind of weapon with ease, and hopes to throw himself out of airplanes for the rest of his life. When I look at him, though, I still see the 16 year old who rescued a baby blue jay who fell from the nest and broke its wing under their trampoline. He kept it inside and well-fed for over a week, and when he came upstairs one morning and saw that it had died, he cried. Those eyes know how to make you feel like you are the only person that matters, and not in the temporary, fleeting way like a bad used car salesman. He carries every emotion in those old, old eyes of his, and has never stopped looking at me like I am the only other person on this planet with him, and we could get lost together, and it would be magic.

"What would I tell a large group of people if they could all hear me right now? Fuck off. Most people are stupid. First of all none of them want to be there, second of all, none of them are paying attention because they don't want be there, and third of all, I don't want to be there. I just don't like people. I like music. I like dogs. Dogs always love you. People fucking suck, they want your money, your time, your whatever. Dogs are more fun. You can throw stuff and they bring it back, people don't do that. Three people died on post today, a dad and two kids. Murder-suicide. Suicides happen a lot in the barracks. I don't know, chica. Even stupid dogs bring the ball back."





Head, oil on photogram  
David Besteman

## The Rain

A  
single  
rain drop  
falls, gathering speed  
on its descent from the heavens,  
each passing second adding to its mass  
as if it were the coalescence of every human  
prayer, the focal point of mankind's pleading  
to God while His response comes in the drop's  
splash and the falling of the rain, reminding  
us that we are never alone, the rain  
connecting everyone it touches  
to everyone else.  
*-Ken Logan, Senior*



from the Elemental Mountainscape Series,  
monotype  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

## The Grand River on Saturday

I drove by the river the day you died  
before you died  
while you were dying  
after you had been dead in it.

She wasn't roaring that morning  
out for blood or dark with anger.  
Instead she was a lady who slept in,  
taking her time to shed the golden blanket of sunlight  
and gently tickle her waking toes against  
the waders of fishermen  
as they cast their lines in early silence  
toward the Sixth Street Bridge.

How was I to know that somewhere  
hidden beneath that still,  
a bag had let loose and  
moments were tumbling into the water,  
pieces of you swiftly stolen by the current  
out to Lake Michigan,  
one by one.

*-Michelle Plumstead, Senior*



Long Winter, oil on paper  
Alexis Johnson, BFA

## Portrait of a Fall Tree and Hope

The leaves are redder than any  
red I've seen, more blood-like  
than blood itself.

Looking deep  
into the boughs is like looking deep  
into an impossible thing.

Now I know  
why blood is beautiful. It isn't  
because of death. It's because blood  
was spilled for us, blossomed  
in the gravel beneath a cross  
two thousand years ago,  
budded on his skin  
from the torn spaces  
inside his hands.

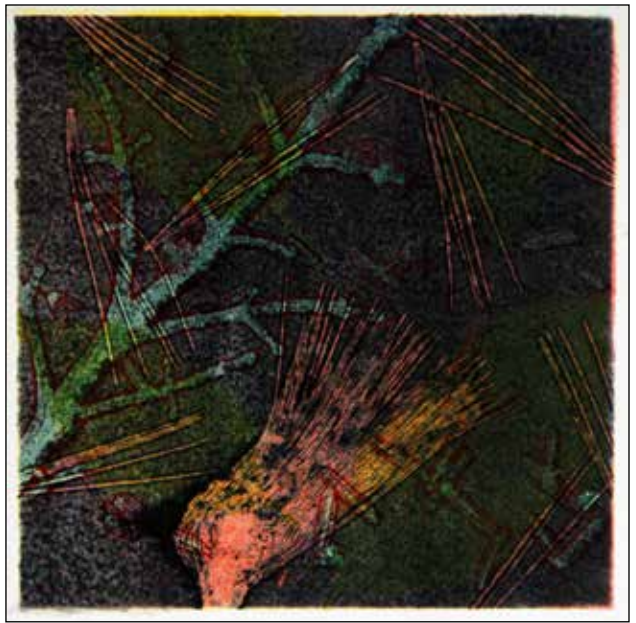
Blood is the beat in my wrist,  
the rhythm beneath the melody of these letters .  
Blood is the color of deep life,  
the color of sorrow that weighs bones down  
until they creak with age and memories  
and the joy that is the blue crocuses

when they first pull their heads out of the snow  
and turn up to face the sun,  
at first timid, and then bold,  
leaving their tombs  
empty.

*-Patricia Schlutt, Sophomore*



from the Nature in the Round Series, monotype, collograph, linoleum cut  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez



Untitled, monotype  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

## Glass Shard

She meandered through that  
Glass shard garden  
Picking flowers and thistles and  
Lovely little lies.

Coming through the gate  
A Stranger fellow  
Looking strapping and handsome and  
Ever so nice.

He taught her wonderful ways to  
Abuse her body  
Leaving ashes and dreams and  
Love far behind.

Ashamed, He left that  
Glass shard garden  
Dropping bottles and windows and  
Mirrors inside.

*-Sarah McLellan, Freshman*

## Not Quite a Sestina

Tin is given on a ten year anniversary.  
She is given a  
beaten metal pendant  
that hums on a windy day.  
He is given an  
engraved bottle opener.

A half used bottle of wine  
spills on a tinfoil topped bowl  
he set in the fridge last week.  
She watches the  
hummingbirds  
with their beating wings.

Jarred beets rest with  
glass bottles that  
hum against  
the tin cans.  
She stands in the kitchen.  
He sits in the living room.

He is not home to see her  
beating the dough.  
She cuts out circles  
with the bottle's end.  
Tinsel and tin soldiers  
shiver with a silver hum.

Instead of the television hum,  
he wishes for sounds of  
tiny tin whistles,  
feet beating the ground,  
and bottled milk gulped down.  
But she was unable to give.

The cries she makes become  
a silent hum as his,  
bottled up, becomes  
exposed. He walks away  
looking for the beating  
heart of a tinman.

A beer bottle he emptied sits on the  
the table as she listens to the hum and  
rhythmic beating of rain on a tin roof.

*-Emilie VanDuinen, Senior*



Parallel Dimensions,  
bic pen on paper  
David Besteman, BFA

## Dad

I was sitting on dad's favorite stool watching him tinker with the '94 Chevy. It was silent except for the constant clicking of the ratchet and banging of metal. "Go git me a wrench... 15mm." I rushed over to the toolbox, ripped open the second drawer, panicking that I might not find it fast enough. I searched, throwing wrenches all over the drawer. "Boy what are ya doing over there? Diggin' for boogs?" Everything was a blur in the sea of the wrenches. Then I saw a glimpse of a five, and my body un-tensed when I moved some other wrenches to reveal a 1. I grabbed it quickly, and ran back over to the truck. "I got it!" He gripped the sides of the truck with those dirty hands and rolled out from underneath. Did I take too long? Did he say 13? He sat up to grab the wrench with a smile in his eyes. I always liked when dad worked on the truck because he looked like me after playing down by the creek all day. Mom even yelled at him for sitting on the couch before cleaning up. He'd always wink at me before getting up to go wash. After handing it to him, he silently went back under the truck to continue whatever he was doing down there. I sat back down on the worn out stool with a smile on my face. Silence meant a job well done.

*-Jake DeVoogd, Senior*



Age, bic pen on paper  
David Besteman, BFA

## Reconciliation

*For the native people of the Pine Ridge Reservation*

It became dawn, where red  
kissed the horizon, once navy  
with night and its constellations, yellow  
pinpricks into a lighter place. I felt blue.  
Blood thick, fingers aching, but maroon  
I became while revisiting sun's warm amber.

He calls himself the Red  
Man and I write in this yellow  
book about him. In the dirt and amber  
grasses, I consider him working. The blue  
Lakota sky harvests under the maroon  
pain of labor, a welcome call for navy.

I am here because of the navy  
coats, the way they drew blood, red  
with heritage, a wound that cannot maroon  
with scars; it hurts daily. Yellow—  
bright yellow—was the earth. Wounded Knee, a dim  
amber.

Do you see that man in amber  
overalls? His ancestors wrote to red, white, and blue.  
I have a photograph of him, navy  
denim and russet braids, yellow  
Hubbard squash sliced under his knife. He was "Red,"  
and we became like him—blood scarred to maroon.

He made the squash into amber  
soup, he flushed our cheeks red  
with it. His sisters made quillwork; maroon,  
black, green, orange, colors of Yellow,  
White, Black, Red (the Four Directions); blue  
air pointing each way. And again, the sky became navy.



When I slept under South Dakota navy  
and worked under South Dakota blue,  
history melted from its case of amber  
and I held it in my hand, like yellow  
blooms, brighter than blood's red:  
a lovely contrast to history's dark maroon.

And when maroon cracks again into blood, so red  
in amber-encased dismay of "what navy  
did," yellow blooms live on; our skies speak the same blues.

*-Rebecca Ryan, Senior*



Self Portrait, monotype  
Michelle Plumstead



Blood Bath, oil on photo paper  
Lesley Albert, BFA

## The Last Date

I sit across from him at dinner like I have many times before and his smile worries me. His smile never quite touches his eyes. The local band Generations is on fire tonight and we know every song, every word and we sing along to "She's my sweet little thing" and "Brown-Eyed Girl." We dance, never touching. I laugh at his painfully awful dance moves that look more like an epileptic seizure than dancing. We look silly but I don't care. He is almost six and a half feet tall and I am a whisper over five feet.

We make our way back to our table. He leans into me to snap a picture and I can feel the heat coming off his body and the scent of his cologne but I feel like we're miles apart. I catch him looking at me from the corner of my eye and I pretend to not notice and look away to glance at the dance floor. I feel uncomfortable. He looks uncomfortable. They announce "last call" and he walks me to my car. We embrace and he whispers "the best times I've had were with you." I respond "you might just miss me one day." He smiles and it touches his eyes. He sighs, "I already do."

*-Ana Martinez Rodriguez, Junior*

## Distance

When the nights are clear,  
I see stars erupt in your eyes.  
I see the moon in your soul.  
I see the rivers that run through your arms,  
Pumping your veins.  
Your legs are oaks,  
Reaching deep into the ground, planted  
So so far and so so close.

The wind breezes by,  
Shaking you loose from limb to limb.  
I cannot reach you, but you fall all around me.  
So so far and so so close.

*-Andrea Galloway, Sophomore*



from the Nature in the Round Series,  
monotype, collograph, linoleum cut  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

## Scalped Hope

*Sean Keast, Sophomore*

With a rusting razor in his right hand and a chipped porcelain bowl in his left, Harvey sat in a small, dirty room, perched in front of a cracked mirror. He had been there ever since he returned from Main St. three hours earlier. He sat motionless, aside from the occasional tremble of his silky smooth arms and legs. His red eyes, strained from staring, were locked on the reflection of his bowed bare head. He waited, desperate for his crop to sprout, all so he could shave off the millimeters of hair and take them into town.

A variety of shops lined Main St.'s crumbling cement road. A twirling red and white pole stood outside of a grimy window that read, "From Hair to Bare," and claimed to only charge ten percent of all shavings. A store across the street with thick iron bars across the windows housed razors and clippers of all colors, shapes, and sizes. A guard stood outside of an exclusive club for the wealthy, turning away any man or woman without flowing locks.

Earlier that day, Harvey had gone to the grocery store. He only picked up discounted items: a three-day-old bagel, an expired can of soup, and an already brown banana. He glanced down the hygiene aisle as he walked to the register, hoping to some day afford a bottle of shampoo. They gave you more for clean hair because dirt and grime didn't weigh down the product. He approached the counter and laid out his lacking diet.

"That will be four grams, Harvey," the cashier said, recognizing him as a store regular. Her hair grew in short, uneven clusters. She must shave as she pays, Harvey thought. Walking around with a head of hair was risky in this neighborhood. Just last week, a local gang scalped a man for his buzzed hair. They say there's no time for razors in the midst of a mugging. Better to spill blood than shavings.

Harvey dug a fist into his ragged coat's pocket, pulled out a small handful of hair, and placed it onto a steel scale. The cashier entered his hair color and quality into a computer. The meter read "3.6." Embarrassed, Harvey searched his pocket once again. Nothing. He slipped his hand under a grey knit hat he used to conceal his poverty. His head hadn't even sprouted yet and he had just shaved his entire body that morning.

Harvey's eyes ping-ponged. Beads of sweat climbed out of his forehead. He frowned at the woman. "Couldn't you let it slide just this time, ma'am?" he asked. "I'm only a few hairs short."

"You know I can't do that, Harvey." She lowered her voice. "I've already given you a break more than a few times this month. Any more and I could lose my job."

Harvey stood there for a moment, his heavy eyes attached to her, hoping to pry out some sort of guilt. Then, with a sigh, he shamefully walked out of the store empty-handed. Harvey's head had been shaved clean for as long as he could

remember. Even as a child, his father had shaved his head to help pay for rent and food. That still wasn't enough. Harvey, now thirty-two years old, had been hungry for a long time.

On the way home, Harvey thought about stopping by Don's Financing but decided against it. He had heard stories of men not being able to grow hair back fast enough to pay Don back. Don ripped out all of their hair follicles, forcing them into lifelong poverty. Don always got his payments one way or another. Harvey passed alleys filled with men who had naturally gone bald. They slept in their own filth, left to die. Harvey shuddered and hurried home.

And so, Harvey sat, staring into the mirror for hours. He dreamed of one day sporting long brown locks, shivering as he imagined them blowing behind him in the breeze. He waited, his droopy eyes glued to his scalp. Fierce stomach growls echoed off of the room's filthy walls. Every couple of minutes, Harvey would run his palm across his head, searching for the slight prick of a single hair. Not yet, he would think, not yet.



The Space Between Your Ears, bic pen on paper  
David Besteman, BFA

## A Wolamute's Woes

Sniffsniffsniffsniffsniff-  
pause  
point ears.

Where is my human?

Crossthestreetandturn-  
pause  
lick wrapper.

Maybe he should wear a collar, too.

Glance leftrightupdown-  
pause  
chew branch.

"Mommy, look! Can we keep him please?"

Drop branch.

Hello, humans. Have you seen my  
hu-

"Get away from him, he's barking at you!"

The two disappear as the snowflakes race to the ground.  
Houses and cars are forming crystals and covered in white sand.

The wind emits a whisper that won't quit.

Cryandpantandcryandpantandcry-  
pause  
lie down near tree. Try again tomorrow.

*-Giovana Barreto, Junior*



**Untitled**, aquatint  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

## Trailer Park

A morning sun slinks over roofs,  
and sets the grass between  
fancy cardboard-box homes  
afame with orange.

Recluses watch behind screen windows.  
Older boy 'cross the street stares,  
licks his chapped, blood-stained lips,  
and smiles a Cheshire smile.  
Girl in a dirty diaper 'n food-stained pink tee,  
rides her tricycle up 'n down the sidewalk  
with her parents still sleepin' inside.  
Black woman waters her brown  
Hydrangeas with a cracked watering can  
that drips on her untied sneakers.  
Policeman pulls up to one of his regulars,  
sighs, steppin' out of the car  
to meet the man in boxers and tears  
and with bloodshot eyes  
lacking sleep 'n substance.

Daylight is cruel and doesn't surrender,  
not even for that man who thinks  
his worth is as small as the last drop  
of beer at the bottom of a brown bottle.

Later, that man drives himself  
into inky water, the security of nighttime,  
(he understands darkness is safer)  
when trailers cast shadows to conceal  
charred grass, scarred wanderers of day.  
The air raises bumps on the skin, like armor.

Everything is sleepin':  
the recluses, the older boy, the girl,  
the black woman, the sun  
because Mother Moon lulls 'em to sleep  
like she does the oceans.

That poor man was an ocean,  
not the last drop of beer, but he saw  
dear, dear Mother Moon that night.

She was on the water's surface.

*-Cassandra Anouthay, Sophomore*



from the Elemental Mountainscape Series,  
monotype  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez



## **This Whole Place Knew I Loved You**

I think I heard the walls scream your name  
the day that you left and never looked back.  
I heard the pallid yellow paint wailing  
each syllable as if they were a new language  
that no one would ever understand.  
I'm positive that my bed groaned  
a low and unholy "please, no"  
when you pulled the blankets back up  
and tucked in for a long and heavy sleep  
the last hope of getting married someday  
and of living in a bare brick loft above the pub  
and of grey hair and high-backed chairs.  
With every drip of the broken faucet  
I heard "stay...stay...stay..."  
but I guess all that you heard  
was something that needed fixing  
that you aren't qualified to handle.  
When I'm alone in this creaking apartment  
I pace the cold cement floors in my underwear  
like a caged animal planning her escape  
and I wonder why—  
why you loved me  
why you stopped  
why I let you hurt me  
why you liked your hands around my neck so much  
why she finds you handsome with your new hair  
why you found her at all—  
and when I ask these questions to my vocal roommates  
(the walls, the bed, the faucet you couldn't fix)  
suddenly they're as silent as you are.

*-Darcy Vines, Sophomore*



Untitled, ceramic  
Jessica Wycoff

## Wichita Grin

It's 5 a.m. and we are exhausted,  
fumbling for a five I put into my purse nearly 24 hours earlier and 5 states away.  
I finally find it  
roll down window.

**It**  
**is**  
**taking** **so** **long**  
focus.

I insert the five into the parking meter,  
the machine beeps at me and slides me the parking pass like a secret.

I am back in my tiny bedroom in Baxter Neighborhood  
holding different colored socks in my hand  
and my eyes staring at Kansas.

It's 7 a.m. and I am exhausted  
Lines that mark the highways and routes I haven't taken and the one I did—  
highlighted orange.

I touch the lines that have formed on my face  
from falling asleep on Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*  
again.

Kansas, they say there is nothing but corn in Kansas, and yet  
I have been staring at Kansas since we got back.  
I-70 looks like cowboys feeding horses  
while the lane lines turn into suggestions.  
This two dimensional map  
looks like the prairie behind my eyes.

*(continued)*

My finger traces the route as it has for 562 days:

Kansas City, Lawrence, Topeka, Junction City, Russell, Hays, Colby—  
Colorado.

We wanted Denver by daybreak.

Kansas stares back at me  
with Manhattan and WaKeeney eyes  
and a Wichita grin.

*-Mariah Perkins, Junior*



Pinned, oil on photogram  
David Besteman, BFA

## Bitter Taste

*Andrea Fisher, Senior*

The steam rose slowly from Nana's old rose-painted cup as Ladey Hampton brought the coffee to her lips. Its warm, comforting smell filled her nostrils as she held it before her face, reminding her of her grandmother. The old woman's wrinkled, delicate hands had always seemed so strong when they wrapped around Ladey, making her feel as if she never wanted to let go. Those hands could do anything, she was certain. They could wipe away any tears, mend any break, make anyplace feel like a home. Ladey herself had witnessed on several occasions her Nana's magic of changing an ordinary dining room into a masterpiece – spotless, cheerful, and the aroma of rich coffee hanging subtly in the air. She was the one who had taught her to make coffee, Ladey recalled, not so long ago.

"Every girl needs to know about coffee," Nana had told her. "She needs to have a hot cup ready for her husband every morning, and another on the table when he comes home from work in the evening."

Ladey remembered hearing those words and embracing them – she kept every piece of advice Nana had ever given her, and she followed it all. Even now, coffee was a comfort to Ladey – the taste and smell so familiar, like a friend. But neither her memory of Nana nor the coffee could help her tonight.

"Come home, Drew," she whispered to the empty room, full of shadows and silence.

Tires screeched into the driveway next door, a sure sign that it was twelve o'clock and old Mr. Crint was home from the bar. Ladey wished Drew was at the bar. She wished he was stumbling down the street with his thumb in the air, or, better yet, home with her. She wished he were anywhere but at that meeting.

Ladey pulled back the lace-edged curtain to look out the window at the blank street their beautiful beige house sat on. With the white shutters and the rose garden out front, Ladey had made it the envy of everyone on Copper Street. Everyone wanted to live there – well, almost everyone. As she saw her neighbor shutting his front door behind him, and his tan station wagon parked with one tire over the curb, she thought of that day, not very long ago, when she had watched a different car.

Drew had been given the sleek 1955 Chevy by his father for graduation, and he was extremely proud of it. He had taken Ladey out riding for hours in it, soaring around the streets of Waverly without a care, laughing as their tassels blew in the wind. "I'm the king of the world!" Drew shouted, his hair flying back, and Ladey believed him. Three weeks later, she traded her graduation cap for a veil, and the two of them stood hand in hand at the Methodist church.

*(continued)*

"Do you take Drew to be your husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better – for worse, for richer – for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do you part?"

"I do."

She had meant it too – oh, how she had loved him. The way his brown eyes sparkled when he had a secret, and his smile made her heart speed up. She loved the way his kiss took her breath away, and the way he smelled of vanilla tobacco when she hugged him close.

Her auburn curls were arranged just perfectly that day, and she had never felt happier. She adored their house, their car, and she loved being Drew's wife. She went to work making their home a magazine picture – perfect couch, perfect china, work shirt ironed and supper on the table by five. She'd styled her hair into a bob and given up her childish skirts for sophisticated slacks – everything was wonderful. But Drew stopped noticing the house. He stopped noticing the ironed shirts and the supper. He was barely home enough to see it. He was always at the office, forever attending meetings. Meetings – blonde-haired, blue-eyed meetings.

Ladey's coffee was cold now, but she didn't care. She couldn't drink it anyway. She couldn't sit here any longer. She needed to do something. She wanted to cry, to shout, to scream.

"Dammit, Drew!" the hot tears escaped down her face. She couldn't help it. "Damn you and everything you said! This house, this life, this perfect family we'll have! Damn all of it!"

Ladey cried the tears she'd never let herself feel before – the tears she'd never let herself believe in. She couldn't believe that this was happening, that this could be true. She wanted out. She wanted to get out of the kitchen, the beige house, the little town – all of it. She wanted a divorce.

They had been so happy; what had she done wrong? When did Drew stop whistling as he walked up the sidewalk, briefcase in hand? When did he stop kissing her goodnight? When did her world – the world she had been so sure of when she accepted her diploma and when she had worn her beautiful veil – when had that world shattered and broken down all around her? Drew used to love her – hadn't he? All those times they had driven down to Woodpine Lake and sat, kissing and talking for hours. He had loved her then, she was sure of it. Or that day under the bleachers when she wore her cheerleading sweater, that he had kissed her for the very first time. He must have loved her. God, what had happened to them?

Eventually, she took a deep breath and picked her head up. Straightening the shoulders of her sandy blouse, she held the painted roses firmly. Slowly, she stood up from the chestnut table and went towards the wooden door.

"Funny," she thought, as she stepped onto the porch and looked at the summer midnight, "I never would have dreamed of such a thing before – just a year ago." Had it only been a year? It hardly seemed possible, Ladey was nineteen now. Decades seemed to have been squeezed into the last twelve months of her life, and now they all sat on her back as she hunched her knees to her chest, sitting as she had when she was a little girl. She still held the coffee in her hand, the painted roses just visible in the moonlight. But she wasn't a little girl anymore; she wasn't going to sit around for another night like this.

Her plan was to talk to Drew when he came home that night, but it was well past three and she had fallen asleep at the table, still clutching the rose china. The sound of his shoes as he went upstairs had woken her, and she called to him from the kitchen.

"Not now," he said, "I'm dead tired."

"Yes," she said, going to him, "now."

"Whatever it is, baby, it can wait til morning," he didn't even turn to look at her.

"I'm not your 'baby' anymore, Drew." Now, he paused and turned his head to her. "I want to leave."

With as little expression as if she had just told him what tomorrow's weather would be, he turned back again to the top of the stairs, telling her to go to sleep – she'd feel better in the morning.

Again, the tears came, and Ladey couldn't stop the huge drops from racing down her face. She didn't even try. She heard a desperate shriek come from her lungs as she stood at the bottom step, but Drew did not come back. That was it – there was nothing else for her to do.

She took her already-packed bag from where it had been placed, propped against the ottoman in the perfectly arranged living room. She wouldn't miss this house, not at all. The beautiful curtains and rugs that she had so carefully picked out and arranged were all meaningless now. It was all she could do to keep her trembling hands firmly holding her bag as she headed for the door. She could send for her other things later, but right now she just wanted to walk. All she could think about was walking away. She wanted to walk until she couldn't walk anymore. An hour or so later, she found a bus and got on it with no question. She didn't care where it was taking her – it would be better than here.

Two months later, Ladey made her way down a bustling street. Chicago seemed like a completely different universe from Waverly – there were different people, different things to see, different everything. Ladey had found herself an apartment, not large but affordable, and gotten

*(continued)*

settled. She had gotten herself a job and was quite comfortable. But every morning, there was still that empty feeling. She supposed it would pass with time – she certainly hoped so.

Suddenly, she turned a corner she had never seen before, and there was exactly what she needed. Cheerful curtains hung in the window, smiling for Ladey to come inside. The wonderful aroma seemed to sweep her through the door and sat her down in a chair next to the window, where a waiter brought her order to her. Chicago was different; she was different; her world was different. Nana had taught her so many things, and Ladey knew she wouldn't forget them, but now was her time to figure things out for herself. Now was her time to make a new start, and to do it on her own. As she sat in the café window drinking her coffee, she felt almost as if there were someone sitting next to her – as if a fragile, wrinkled hand were gently taking hers. Ladey smiled as she took a sip; she knew that she would be able to make this work.



Untitled, oil on canvas  
Michelle Davis



## Speechless (Auditions in L.A.)

1

standing shirtless before the upscale jeans panel  
whispering, He's too skinny, me hearing, staring,  
grabbing my shirt while waiting for the response I know is coming.  
Finally a woman with hi-lighter-orange hair and thick plastic frames  
tilts her head—"You're too thin, not right for this campaign."  
I nod while struggling, not realizing I am trying to fit my head  
through the sleeve.

2

a man with a camcorder on a tripod in a room with no windows  
says when he gives the signal to act as if I am front row  
at a show and to convey the excitement of that moment.  
I acquiesce while he adjusts his lens; then he flashes—thumbs up.  
I survey the room then throw my arms in the air, jump and cheer  
encouraging the imaginary band.

3

sitting in an open room, a line of young men waiting behind a  
curtain too small to divide the space. A woman sits across from me  
and explains a department store is launching a cleaning line  
and I will need to pretend to sit atop a washing machine and toss  
a pair of gym-socks. After her account she says, "Whenever you're ready..."  
Then me beginning an awkward game of invisible catch.

4

in an old theater, a man in a khaki baseball hat describes how  
he simply desires to capture a mood, an emotion. For motivation a story—  
me walking in to see the girl I love but the pain I've caused. He zooms and says  
"Thirty seconds, emote" then rolls and with tears welling in my eyes  
I stare in the lens, a plea to understand the frustration of all  
I want to say but my voice a tool not at my disposal.

*-Benjamin Stoner, Junior*



Standing, oil on photogram  
David Besteman, BFA

# Sycamore

I stay planted in the ground,  
I reach high into the sky, limbs stretch from where I stay.  
I try desperately to move, but just keep reaching  
Outward.  
Rough surfaces cover smooth insides,  
People pick away, chip away at my skin, revealing  
Tender spots within.  
They carve out my insides,  
They hide in the darkness, a safe place.  
Roots deeply planted, they twist together and down they go,  
Wrapping around rocks, diving into the core of the earth.  
My leaves flutter about, carried away, to places I only  
Dream of.  
How far can I reach?  
Higher, stretching higher  
Stretching wider

-Andrea Galloway, Sophomore



from the Nature in the Round Series, monotype, collograph, linoleum cut  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

# Survival

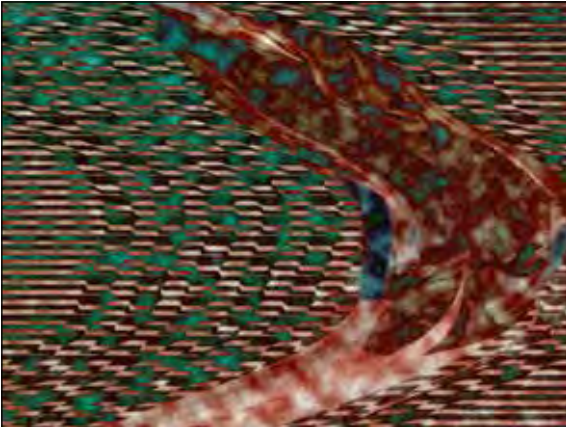
A day without light.  
Howls call from within the blurred  
timberland, and you're still lost,  
still hidden in the pale brume that  
spreads like wildfire, somewhere  
locked in the fog, so I dash to your rescue.

Through dangling vines and hissing  
waters, through wooly moss and murky terrain,  
I raced so as to save you for once this time.  
You begged me to stay alive, to be like the trees  
that breathe endless life on this planet, to be the last tiger  
to reveal its stripes, the savior, and then it would set us free.

And once the sun has chased away the mist,  
in seen or sensed light, forest or jungle,  
you said we would spend eternities howling  
until our hearts fade. That when the butterflies  
unfastened their velvet wings against the daylight the fear  
of the world would melt away in the palm of our hands.

You taught me to survive, that even after life  
it would feel as though every day were like dying.  
You taught me to endure pain and agony as alive  
as the soil from which we were born. You taught me  
to get lost in the clouds for once in my life,  
to be without light.

*-Paris Close, Senior*



Abstract Person Standing #1,  
digital photograph  
David Besteman, BFA

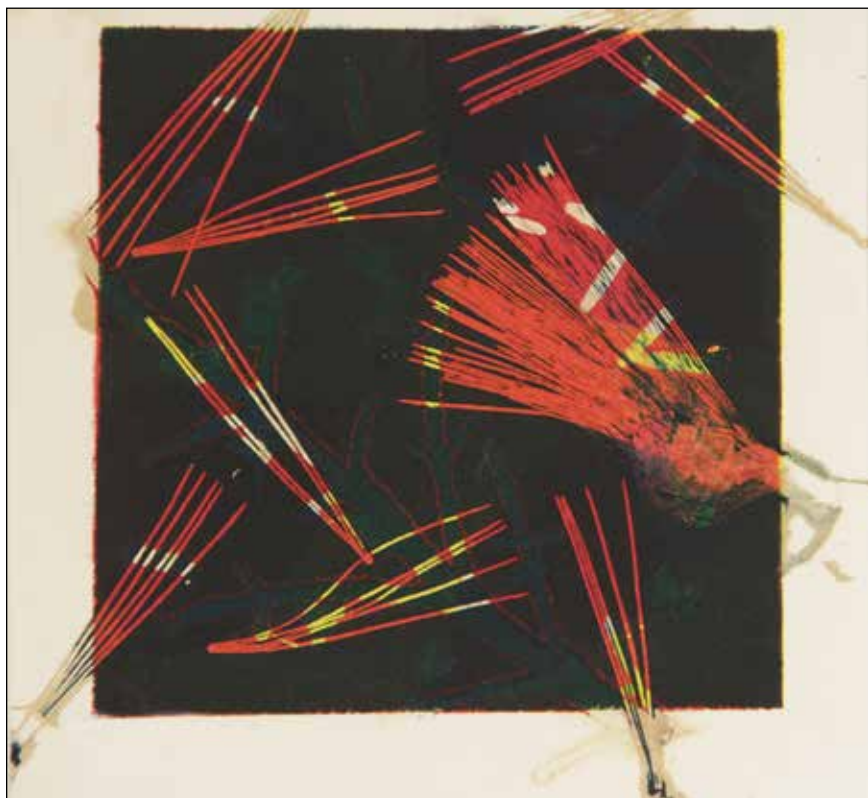
## Flesh

*Erick Ramirez-Guerrero, Freshman*

I was a crayon historian but only had eight colors in my crayon box but the teacher said we only needed eight, but she was a liar liar pants on fire. One day our assignment was to color ourselves and our families and I didn't like that assignment because even though I could draw my cat Niño who was black and white and cute and I could draw my mom who was the same color as the empty page and I could draw my sister and dad because they were the color of chocolate milk, I could not draw me because I had green and I had yellow and I had red and I had orange and I had violet and I had blue and I had black and I had brown crayons but I was none of those colors! All the other kids in class had one hundred-twenty-eight Crayola crayon packs that I desperately wanted but not could not afford yet it didn't matter because they were white pale as a flag of surrender with pneumonia standing out in the snow but I was not like them, and I was not the same skin. I wanted to use my own crayons. So I chose brown, brown like the dirt I was forced to eat on the rusty playground, brown like the dirty bruise my daddy gave me, brown like a crayon-stuffed desk, brown maybe like the roofs at Stanford, but I wasn't brown just somewhere lost on a gradient of crayons, without a box to call my home but I'd rather be dirt than boring and colorless because white wasn't a color in the eight-crayon pack, it was the default and I was a crayon historian and I knew that prior to 1999 Chestnut was Indian Red and that prior to 1962  
Peach was  
Flesh.



Cables, monotype  
Dale Domer



**Untitled**, monotype  
Emilie VanDuinen and Jade Chavez

# Oatmeal Pies

*Cassandra Anouthay, Sophomore*

When I run through my grandma's front door, I fall into a perfumed hug. It's like fallin' into a flower garden. But her hands ain't soft like flowers. They're dry like the sandpaper grandpa has in his tool bench. Her hands have big knuckles, rough parts, and big, blue veins that I trace with a finger in church. She lets me lay my head on her lap sometimes, and she plays with my hair. My favorite part is when her scratchy fingers accidentally touch my skin.

The house smells like pie crust, even when there isn't a pie bakin'. When her back's turned, I listen for the tickin' of the timer or look into the oven just in case. If there isn't pie to eat, there's an endless box of oatmeal pies in the breadbox. It's funny 'cause the breadbox never holds bread. It's a breadless breadbox. And I haven't found the tile in the floor that opens the secret passage, but I'm sure my grandma has a room where she keeps hundreds of boxes of oatmeal pies. Like, grandma, what if other grandmas want oatmeal pies?

There's a wobbly, wooden stool in the kitchen. It's always broken because grandpa always forgets to fix it. I sit and talk my grandma's ears off like I do best and swing my legs. The stool rocks with the story I tell (between bites of an oatmeal pie):

"I tripped playin' kickball, but I landed on second base."

"Yesterday I learned that pineapple pizza makes me puke."

"My painting in art class is s'posed to be a sunflower, but it looks like a fish."

She listens better than anyone. She can talk and do a hundred other things at once. My mom can't do that. Whenever she's busy doing somethin', I gotta wait my turn. She puts up one finger and says, "Give mommy one minute." But I count to sixty three times! I think my grandma has a special power. Yeah. My grandma probably has a hundred arms to help her while she listens and talks to me. I never see 'em 'cause she's always running in and out of rooms.

I follow her 'round a lot too—watch her wash pans, sweep bread crumbs into her palm, do laundry, water the plants, scrub the floor, pick tomatoes from her garden, make dinner. I like following her hands. I wanna see what makes them look and feel the way they do. Why's there dirt under her fingernails? Where did those blisters come from? I look at my own hands. They're really small, and my mom says my hands have "baby" dimples. "I'm not a baby, mom." There's a weird, light spot on my right hand (I don't know what it is) and a scab on my left one from sword fighting with sticks at recess.

*(continued)*

This one time at church, in the middle of a gospel reading, I push some blond and gray curls away from my grandma's ear to whisper my important question.

"Grandma, why are your hands like that?"

Without looking away from the reader, she says, "From many, many years of work."

"You work too hard, grandma."

"But it's all for you guys," and she opens her purse to show me an oatmeal pie.

And for the rest of mass, I think 'bout that oatmeal pie and Jesus and how I wanna work hard for someone someday and how I wanna work until my hands are as wonderful as my grandma's and how I wanna work hard for her.



Gift, ceramic  
Nicole Klco



## A Dirge for July

This is a poem for Samuel,  
who means nothing to me now, I guess.  
I ran for miles until his name  
burned off my  
heart from the friction of its frantic  
beating. I ran along the beach  
and the lake listened to the wildness  
of my unbridled feet until finally  
I stood  
bloodrushed-drunk  
on punk and too many sunsets  
that were substance-less,  
and totaled, in the end, nothing.

Sam is real  
and I am a ghost  
walking and unwalking  
the hallways of what might have been.  
Sometimes I think I hear him  
calling my name out of the past  
but my bones are  
strung straight with the metal rods  
of this unbreakable moment  
and I cannot turn around.

*-Patricia Schlutt, Sophomore*



from the Memento Mori Series, silver gelatin print  
Jade Chavez

*And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.*

*- William Shakespeare  
(from A Midsummer Night's Dream)*