



GENERATION

19-20

THE 1ST STUDENT & ALUMNI ISSUE

GENERATION

2019–2020

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Micaela Kreuzwieser

MANAGING EDITORS

Jessica Ackerman

Zelie-Marie Hummer

SECRETARY

Julia Snyder

STAFF MEMBERS

Alexis Cobbin

Nicole Fratrach

Zachary Plappert

Irina Rusanova

Jason Walko

Danny Whirlow

FACULTY ADVISOR

Michelle Gil-Montero

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello Reader,

Welcome to the 2019–2020 edition of *Generation!*

This issue marks my third and final year as member of the magazine staff. I am proud to have contributed to, and overseen, the making of the last three issues leading up to the volume that you, the reader, now hold.

Generation has been a site of creative expression for the Saint Vincent community for more than fifty years. This year, for the first time, we decided to open our submission call to alumni, in addition to current students. By representing the past and present of the Saint Vincent writing community, we truly embrace our magazine's name and, we believe, its intended legacy. The fish that adorns this cover invokes the joy and good fortune that we feel in this new direction, defining a community that freely and fluidly transcends barriers of time and place. Many thanks to Irina Rusanova for her beautiful design.

I want to thank my wonderful staff for their hard work and insights that went into putting together the magazine; our faculty advisor Michelle Gil-Montero for her guidance and encouragement; and finally, all the writers and artists, students and alumni, who submitted to *Generation*. Without you, this year's issue would not have come together.

And without further ado, I am proud to present:
Generation.

Best regards,

Micaela Kreuzwieser, Editor-in-Chief
Class of 2020

CONTENTS

TO WEAVE WORDS...	9
Micaela Kreuzwieser, C'20	
WHEN SHE FINDS HER HUSBAND'S ALMOST LOVER	10
Kathryn Ordiway, C'16	
A BLUE ROSE	15
Samantha Hilyer, C'22	
KING'S CROSS STATION, LONDON, ENGLAND	16
Heather Rieg, C'21	
EVEN IF-	17
Zelie-Marie Hummer, C'20	
I, ZEUS	18
Tyler Friend, C'14	
A THEATER NEAR YOU	20
Bethany Giancola, C'19	
DESERT TREE, MOAB, UTAH	23
Dr. Phyllis Riddle, Faculty	
ACORNS	24
Clair Sirofchuck, C'22	
DREAM FEATURING TWO SHORT PEOPLE	27
Nicole Fratrach, C'21	

FOR HER PURPOSES	28
Max Planchon, C'21	
HIM	29
Amanda Moyher, C'21	
THE PIT	31
Julia Snyder, C'21	
IF I WRITE THIS DOWN, MAYBE IT WILL MAKE IT ALL WORTH IT.	32
Kate Bell, C'20	
QUILL	33
Johanna Philips, C'20	
THAT'S LIFE. THAT'S DEATH	34
Eddie Kunz, C'19	
FLOATING ZOMBIE BITS	35
Moirra Sullivan, C'21	
BLACK, WHITE, AND BLOOD	36
Alexis Cobbin, C'22	
THE LOOKING GLASS	38
Kaitlin Repp, C'22	
BRIGHTNESS	39
Elsbeth Mizner, C'19	
REMEMBER	40
Carly Bodner, C'23	
WISDOM OF A FLOWER	41
Joe O'Connor, C'69	

MOVING ON	42
Jason Walko, C'20	
STATE OF MADNESS	43
Christian Loeffler, C'20	
MASOCHIST	44
Jessica Ackerman, C'20	
DROWNING IN SMOKE	45
Sydney Hoffman, C'20	
HIM	46
John Rogan, C'20	
NIGHT TERROR	49
Danny Whirlow, C'21	
OCTOBER 31, 1966	50
Daniel Schwoegl, C'16	
MY DARK NIGHT OF THE MIND	55
Michael Mondock, C'20	
LITTLE MAN	56
Shaye Beeman, C'21	
FROMMINGFERN	57
Dr. William Snyder, Faculty, C'73	

TO WEAVE WORDS...

Micaela Kreuzwieser

The shape sits, squat, stark against the south wall,
Before beginning its labor.
Descending to dangle delicately,
Elegantly entering instinct,
Gently! Glide to the gilded doorjamb
To hang hesitantly bent over the heating vent,
Little legs fiddling fussily with languorous gossamer,
Creating classic lines over a concrete corner,
Twirling theatrically to trap tasty tidbits,
Rounding off its resting place—the reward of rhythm—
To present a pinnacle of pristine complexity!
Oh, arresting arachnid! Instruct me in the art,
That I may litter letters too with lace!

WHEN SHE FINDS HER HUSBAND'S ALMOST LOVER

Kathryn Ordiway

The wife has been married for eight years when she finds the robot her husband is building to replace her. She has known about its existence for a while, has known since she stumbled upon one of the husband's notebooks and whispered, 'what is this,' and was greeted with a monologue about beauty and technology and immortality, full of sweeping arms and pointed fingers.

She wasn't looking for the robot. She never once considered looking for the robot. She was looking for a chair. An old armchair, upholstered in gem tones, one she thought she might have left in their drafty storage unit.

When she sees the robot—upright, perfect posture, seated in the faded chair—she knows immediately what she's looking at. She has seen the blueprints, the sketches. She isn't startled to see those pieces of paper come to life.

The dust on the robot screams neglect, screams forgotten, but she can't bring herself to care. Serves it right for existing. Serves it right for trying to replace her. She doesn't give a second thought to tipping the chair forward and dumping the robot to ground.

For years, the husband has used the robot as leverage against all the wife's perceived inadequacies. In the future, he likes to tell her, the robot won't have to remove makeup, so maybe she can put just a little effort into not looking so tired in public. The robot won't have to shave, will be perpetually smooth in all the right places, so perhaps splurge a little and get waxed. The robot won't

complain, will have only his opinions, will never be discontent, so could she just shut up and agree with him already.

But even in this blackmail, he reminds her that it isn't the end of them, rather the beginning of something new. 'I'm not replacing you; I'm updating us.'

When the robot lands, it does so with a dull thud and fleshy smacking far different from the clank of metal the wife was expecting. It lies there, pale and bare in the unlit storage unit, a broken cobweb caught on its elbow, limbs akimbo on the ground. Disgusted, perhaps even a little frightened by the humanity of it, the wife grabs a sheet that covers a forgotten end table and hides the still form from view.

The wife collapses in the vacant chair—a puff of dust, a scurrying insect—squeezes the armrests tight, tries to fill herself with the familiarity of the fabric. It is in worse shape than she expected; when she fidgets, she feels the seat give beneath her. She can't help but sigh. This is where her husband elected to store his treasured future plaything, in the dark of a metal room, stored behind a padlock, seated on a chair that shivers at the thought of supporting weight.

For a while, the wife stares through the open door of the unit, out into the deepening night. Her daydreams about the chair wilt away, until she's back to grappling with how much to spend on a replacement piece for the home she has made with a husband who wants a non-human lover, a home she might have to—should probably—leave one day.

When her eyes are drawn back down the robot, she notices its foot is not fully covered, sees a snake of writing slithering up the heel, sneaking around the ankle. Even from this distance, in this light, even with her glasses sliding down the slick of sweat on her nose, she recognizes her husband's spider scrawl. She descends to her

hands and knees to cup the foot and bring it awkwardly to her face, trying to ignore the supple texture of skin, the dainty size six foot, the way this particular angle would hurt an actual knee, an actual woman.

Reduce jutting of ankle. Size five and a half.

The wife frowns. Reduce jutting ankle? There's barely an ankle there. She runs her thumb across the bone, feels its lack of prominence. Perhaps, she thinks, when the robot is standing, the ankle is more pronounced.

She slides the sheet up the calf, brushes the beginnings of thigh with her fingertips as she reads *Raise calf muscle, less bulky*. Again, she disagrees. Again, she wonders if it's just because the robot is tossed on the ground.

The sheet goes higher, almost of its own mind, and down the backs of both thighs is written *smoother*.

She bends forward and finds *longer* underlined so aggressively at the tops of the robot's legs that the synthetic skin is slightly torn.

So, he is not finished. It is not yet perfect.

She sits there, eyeing the chair, feeling dust in her throat and eyes, catching breath she hadn't realized she'd lost. Where her hand rests, the knee has warmed, and it feels like touching someone real.

She knows now, just from these notes, that her own legs are too thick, too short, her feet too big. Which she has always known. Of course. In so little words. Why else would her husband build a robot? Why else would he spend the empty moments of their marriage drawing something else to be wed to?

But this woman's legs and feet are equally wrong; she has been molded in the idea of perfection and she too has failed. The wife turns back to the body, pulls back the covers and rolls her over onto her back. Cradling her, she winces at the arrows pointing to how narrow the hips should be, the enhanced cup size written across the perky breasts, the redrawn nipples, the sketched

adjustments to the collar bones. There are lines around the lips, new cheek bones drawn just a touch higher, numbers scribbled along the length of nose, on the lobes of the ears. On one eyelid, *wider*. On the other, *greener*.

It is too much. The wife pushes the robot away, covers it again, beautiful head to beautiful toe, with the musty sheet. She struggles to her feet and begins picking through boxes lined up against the wall, seeing if there is anything she needs for the upcoming holiday season, any decorations she's forgotten. Plastic pumpkins, maybe, or bright orange wreaths.

But instead there is a bucket and a rag and a hollow ringing in her chest, and suddenly she is rushing to the facility's dingy bathroom, filling the bucket with hot soapy water, ignoring toilet paper—wet and clinging to the walls—returning to the unit, pulling down the door behind her.

With a weak light flickering above, she can finally see the woman's coloring in full: bright and rosy, but marred. Everywhere there are the reddish gouges of her husband's pen, everywhere the evidence of his displeasure. The wife wets the sheet, pulls the other woman into her lap, and begins to wash the words away. She massages the limbs, the shoulders and neck, where she thinks there would be knots from sitting so long. She tips the head back and forth, tilting the neck sideways to touch the shoulders. She rolls the ankles and wrists, flexes and points the toes. She feels along the spine for any vertebrae that might be out of place, but in this one regard, the other woman is perfect, and so the wife contents herself to draw her fingers up and down the arch of back, soothingly, lightly. Eventually, she dips the head into the bucket and washes the long hair. There is a line of red there, too, where the husband has marked a shorter length.

When it is finished, the other woman washed and dried, the wife procures a second sheet, settles herself in

the sagging chair. Her soaked arms have chilled, risen in goosebumps even though she knows it is humid outside, that just beyond the sealed door summer's curse has not yet broken. Even in this steel sanctuary she can hear the hum of traffic outside, can catch a faint hint of diesel in the air. There's an emergency siren somewhere not too far away, the roar of a motorcycle driven at breakneck speed.

Damp and underdressed for the dark, the wife reaches out for the woman, heaves her into her own lap. She is embarrassed, blushing slightly, but she hums, strokes the fresh face, massages the meeting of neck and skull, feels a warmth spreading.

Eventually, the spluttering light gives out, and in the darkness the wife is sure she can hear a sigh.

A BLUE ROSE

Samantha Hilyer

I extend a soft, dainty petal to the light
And look, really look
The once vibrant red is now a cool, cool blue
I'm not sad
Don't be silly
I'm simply floating along
In a sea of Forget-Me-Nots,
Me, a rose, trying to blend in
In the best way I know how.

KING'S CROSS STATION, LONDON, ENGLAND

Heather Rieg



EVEN IF—

Zelie-Marie Hummer

Starchy white bedsheets still unmade mirrored the washed-out February sky I saw through the window. Dead grass still struggled to hold onto the last leaving greenness of a spring too far gone. Small birds swooped through the sky like pinprick silhouettes against a blank canvas. The forest edge crept towards my window.

As I wept, my soul could only manage one prayer.

Dear Lord, make me a bird. Give me wings to fly away.

A cold unquenchable fire, ignited by my own sins, consumes me. Yet, He reminds me of His love with the sweet piercing sting of salvation. Even if—

I begin to wander into the forest of shame, dragging my heart through pine needles. But even if my fears are true, even if I have done the worst imaginable, I am saved. I am loved. I halt, and turn around slowly, crunching dead leaves under my feet. I can see my window just past the end of the forest.

My bedsheets are now folded up in a pile at the head of my bed. I start to run back, holding sight of the folded sheets. Branches threaten to trip me and thorny weeds tug at my jeans, but I remind myself “even if—” and then I am flying.

I, ZEUS

Tyler Friend

after H.D.'s "Let Zeus"

- I. I'm not done with this, these
 inanimates, but you can come with. Chill.
- I don't tolerate loneliness well &
 your loveliness keeps me awake. I obdurate
- bitterness & you're a lemon. Squeeze yourself
 into that stream & I'll lay you down on her banks. You
- on your knees, all this frigid light. It's down-
 right evil. Let's do it
- in the Parthenon, your splendor
 on display. Keep your fear at bay, face down
- in the inviolate dawn.
- II. Men can marry you, but women—
 we can break you. It's innate, this
- strength. We'll strike down the plutocracy
 & vacation on Pluto. Pardon me, this
- ego. You'll outlive me, but
 that's deliberate.

- III. You wear my dress & all
 the men gaze at you. Your body

 is obstinate & it turns me to clay. I can't stand
 it. Intolerable desire.
- IV. When you scar me, I want
 to wear your ring. These Georgians

 don't understand. I feel meagre
 in your storm. I am blown

 by you. Fashion me into a bird, something
 with wings.
- V. Myrrh-flower & all
 these men. I have them.

 I spread them, again
 & again.

A THEATER NEAR YOU

Bethany Giancola

The kitchen counter's sharp edge jabbed at the small of my back. Candace pressed the tip of her knife into my chest, not hard enough to break skin but hard enough to let me know she could if she wanted to.

"Not one step closer."

I scoffed at her warning, not even bothering to hold my hands up to show I was unarmed. "Are you threatening me?"

Candace's chapped lips curled into a snarl, revealing the gap between her front teeth. "I am *assuring* you that if you take another step, it'll be the last thing you ever do."

"You guys, come on." Kris peeked out from behind Candace, shaking their head in disapproval at the both of us. "You always do this, can't we all just get along?"

"Hey, if she would agree, I would agree." I gestured at the knife. Candace drew closer to me, her eyes hungry with the need for vindication. "Aw, what's the matter?" I taunted. "Still need Kris to fight your battles for you, Candy?"

"Don't call me that," Candace growled, digging her knife in harder. I was definitely bleeding by then. "Kris doesn't need to do jack shit for me. I'll fight you myself, any time."

"So, prove it!" I threw my arms wide, inviting her to make good on the promise she was etching into my chest. "Bury that pathetic excuse for a knife in my heart, you have the upper hand."

"Maybe I will!" Candace's voice cracked. Her resolve was waning.

I flicked my eyebrows up in a silent challenge. "Maybe you should."

"Maybe you both should just calm down before I knock your heads together," Kris interjected, arms crossed in agitation. They began to tap their foot against the ceramic tiles that decorated the floor.

"I won't calm down until Julie's paid for what she's done!" Candace insisted.

"Jesus Christ, when did you get so dramatic!?" I laughed, not missing the way Candace's lower lip wobbled when I did. I glanced at the watch on Candace's knife-wielding wrist and sighed. "Stab me if that's what you're gonna do, we don't have all day."

Candace set me with a furious glare, her beautiful hazel eyes boring into mine for three of the best seconds of my life. Looking above my head at the clock on the wall, Candace untensed her muscles and drew away from me. A significant amount of rage had left her face. She made a noise of disgust before releasing her grip on the knife, letting it clatter to the kitchen floor.

"You're not worth the jail time," Candace sniffed, straightening out the rumpled front of her blue jacket.

"So sure you'd get caught, huh? Have a little more confidence in yourself, Candy," I teased, bumping her shoulder lightly with my own.

"I told you not to call me that," Candace reiterated, but there was no venom left in her words. She offered me one of her stunning gap-toothed smiles.

Kris ran a hand over their face and let out a long-suffering sigh. "Alright, is that it? Are you two assholes friends again?"

Candace and I exchanged a shrug. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a neatly folded Dunkin' Donuts napkin and pressed it to the small cut she'd left on my chest. I lifted my hand to hold it in place, our

fingers grazing as she pulled away at the same time. I felt my ears burn red.

“Yeah, I guess so,” Candace shrugged again, her cheeks turning pink.

“Great, I’m over the moon.” Kris rolled their eyes, reaching past us to snag their keys off the kitchen counter. “Now, let’s go or we’re gonna be late for the movie.”

DESERT TREE

Dr. Phyllis Riddle



ACORNS

Clair Sirofchuck

C
a
s
c
a
d
i
n
g
to
the
ground
like an army of hollow bullets,
The little brown husks say goodbye to their sleek green
brethren.
Some fling off their tidy, textured caps when they collide
with the earth.
Tripping over roots and dusting themselves with mud
and moss,
They tumble merrily down the hill
Knocking and clunking together as the dying grass
whistles by.

Some look battered and stout, some polished and narrow,
Others capped and capless—but there is no judgement.
They all roll gleefully together in the Autumn haze.
Close behind prance grey bushy-tails with greedy hands
and twitching whiskers.

Their little feet patter over the crunching leaves as they
chase the kernels
 'round the tree
 down the hill
 between each blade of grass.

Soft ears prick, tails bristle...

Stop!

All activity abruptly halts as scuffed brown boots come
crashing through the dead leaves.

Terrified, the grey marauders clamber to safety in the boughs
As a girl, brightly clad, wanders amiably towards the oak
All the while marveling at its majesty and brilliant palette
of leaves.

Chuckling at the carpet of seeds, she nearly slips on
their glossy hulls.

They roll with her and carry her to their regal mother;
She places a hand on the weathered bark in greeting,
fingering a leaf.

Curious, she bends down to examine the little jewels at
her feet,

Beaming with delight when they bump playfully against
each other

At the gentle touch of her hand.

Three go to her deep pockets as she departs:

What a glorious gift of nature for her friends!

Yet as she opens her door, she hesitates, and finds she
can't part with all her treasure.

She sets one on the shelf above her desk, where it peeks
out amongst her hallowed library.

How honored is the little heart! Still...

It will never grow real roots and sprout green branches
like its mother.

No, not outside.

But within the safe walls of the girl's room, as her fingers
toy with it mindlessly,

That tiny seed births branches of words seeping onto
the white school paper.

It brings consolation with ideas, transformed to writing
by a dripping pen.

Is not a word in ink as permanent as a mighty oak?

Yet as tiny as an acorn?

DREAM FEATURING TWO SHORT PEOPLE

Nicole Fratrach

I awoke to a dream
Of an actor filming an episode.
The year: 1967.
Alongside him I stood
Performing a cameo role
Amid a vague and nearly vacant scene.
Blurry were the co-stars
But clear was the half-open window,
Pure ivory sweeping in a sweet breeze.
The actor and I, we laughed at our jokes,
At this white window we could not reach,
At a “snow in June” punchline I devised
As we spied soft snowflakes out the window.
Then he mumbled something about
The past existing in the future
(or the past and future coexisting)
And I struggled the urge to shout,
“I’m from the future and
in that future you’re dead!”
Instead I whisper, “Only I know your name.”
“It’s a particularly common name,” he admitted,
Beaming at the obvious conclusion.
The here and now suddenly seeped away,
And I awoke to his future.
My lips twitched into a smile,
Remembering this memory in my present.
But mother claims you can’t
Sit and smile—they’ll say you’re crazy.

FOR HER PURPOSES

Max Planchon

For her purposes, the shell was a treasure. She proudly held the brittle, sun-bleached shard up for my approval. Her outstretched hand was paired with the sweetest beaming smile, like luminous sunlight. I smiled a different smile than hers. It was older, brittle, and sun-bleached. And yet, the pride she felt was amplified. For her purposes, my smile was a pleasure. Her youthful eyes met my mature gaze. Each shell was placed by fate for her to find and set delicately in my hand. I thought only, "If these brittle, ancient things are good enough for her purposes, then I may be as well."

HIM

Amanda Moyher

When your eyes are closed, you're on a beach. Close to the edge, the water is teal. The sky is painted with shades of daisies and lilacs and you can almost taste the salt coming off of the waves. All you see is this beautiful, endless mass of purity. You think you're alone until you feel two arms rest around your shoulders. And in that moment, it's not the ocean that captivates your senses.

It's him.

You don't dare to look at him directly, afraid he will disappear if you do. Like a flicker of light in your imagination. But he assures you he's there when he drags you closer. His touch is the same as you remember and you can't imagine anything or anyone more perfect. You can't help but smile. This is what you've always wanted. And now it's finally yours. His feet are in the ocean, hands in his pockets. The wind is blowing through his hair and you think about how beautiful he is even when he's not doing anything. Then he turns and extends his arm to you. You're staring into his eyes as you take his hand, allowing him to lead you into the cold waves. His eyes are your favorite color without a name. You would want nothing more than to look into them all day. He smiles at you as if he's thinking all the same things and you return the gesture effortlessly. Your attention returns to the ocean and you find yourself wondering what lies beyond it. You wonder how far he'd sail it with you. When you glance over at him, he's already staring at you. This makes his cheeks turn pink and he tries to hide it by looking down, but it's no use. You've already seen. You find your head on his shoulder, your hand still in his hand. He looks down

at you and takes a deep breath. He opens his mouth to speak, but you never hear what comes out.

When your eyes are opened, you're in a room where everything is dark.

It hits you—*you're all alone*. He's not there and the ocean is far from you. It makes your heart stop. You feel so empty. As empty as the space next you on your mattress. And you wonder why you have to feel this way. But the answer is simple.

It's him.

THE PIT

Julia Snyder

Noun: a liminal space
between stage and audience
part of neither
serving both
an entity unto itself

IF I WRITE THIS DOWN, MAYBE IT WILL MAKE IT ALL WORTH IT.

Kate Bell

I wanted a journey
so I thought. Tall mountains
of narratives with steep
slopes of
satire.

I wanted a story
so I spoke. Transcribing
the smoky static of
mental prose into legible
words.

I wanted a friend
so I dreamed. Birthing
from the twisted edges
something sympathetic,
kind.

I wanted an outlet
so I wrote. Learning
illogical syntax and schemes
of rhyme to feel
alive.

QUILL

Johanna Philips

Embers burn low, casting their fading reds across the room
Feather meets flame, sending thin wisps of smoke curling
into the air

A knife slides back and forth on a whetstone, preparing
to cut

Blade meets warmed quill, slicing and trimming the tip
to a point

The feather is cooled, hardening the soft nib.

Ink in inkwell, mixed black as night

Parchment pressed open, curling and crackling at the edges

Quill in hand, dipping the tip in midnight blood

Ink drops on paper, scrawling and scratching out lettering

Feather dances across the page, mimicking flight.

Archaic writing, springing to life across the page

Ancient tool with storied past, giving heart to my words.

THAT'S LIFE, THAT'S DEATH

Eddie Kunz

We come into the world crying
As the world around us smiles
Filled with joy
That's life
We leave this world smiling
Waiting for what happens next
As the world around us cries from our death
That's death

FLOATING ZOMBIE BITS

Moira Sullivan

My family was never wealthy, but every few years we saved up enough money for a family vacation in Florida. Cost-cutting measures were important during expensive vacations, and meals for a family of five were costly in the parks, so we packed lunches. Included in our lunches that year were cartons of milk that wouldn't expire in the heat. I don't know what was in that milk that would preserve it so heavily, and I don't want to know. It tasted rotten.

That day, we sat on a bench under an out-cropping of rock for lunch, resting our feet and keeping out of the Florida afternoon heat. We watched our fellow vacationers pass as we ate our packed lunch and drank our gross milk.

"Apocalypse milk," my mom called it optimistically, "because it could survive anything."

Apocalypse milk, I agreed, because it tasted like it had already survived one.

BLACK, WHITE, AND BLOOD

Alexis Cobbin

I once met a man with an all-white house.
Built upon sharp and broken trust, tattered humility, and
sturdy bricks of demented pride, held
together with questionable animosity, sharded in a
prestine gleam. Champion of the
neighborhood, his house rivaled mine own.
He had a son who watched him closely.
So out of body, so anxious to be a man, ironically more
of a man than his father, but I dare not
say that out loud.
His neighbor, a man who lived alone in a black and white
house, with no other company than a
humble soul his own. He spoke little.

The man in the white house across the way, made his way
across the way dragging his son
behind him.
“It’s time to clean up,” he muttered. “Keep off the grass”
did not apply to such men.
He demanded the man in the black and white house come out.
There was no reply.
“Come out,” he demanded.

The man in the black and white house emerged. His house,
suddenly speckled in red.
A painting with shiny red grass, a broken window, the
endeavor radical and hopeless.
And so it seemed the artist spoke: “But wait! There’s more.”
Hostile panting, a hand reaches up to the sky in a plea for
the pain to end, suddenly crumpled to

the ground, shaking. His chest rose red, and rose, and fell,
and never rose again.
The smell of copper still fresh.

The man with the white house whips around to me, realizing
my presence.
Between the painting and panting, he growls
“...You didn’t see nuthin’ ...Got it?!!”
I say nothing, yet turn to face his son. He follows my gaze,
questioningly.

The boy’s eyes wide, posture crooked and frozen, hands
clasped together as if to grip his own
life from falling into the red grass. He shook like an old
jalopy on a rugged dirt road. Petrified.

Is this what a “man” is?

I looked at the “man” in calm aversion and sneered.
“My God, what an ugly little house you have,” and walked away.

THE LOOKING GLASS

Kaitlin Repp

The creative mind
 Is a dark rabbit hole
Transporting to a twisted Wonderland
 Where hopes and dreams
Lie tangled
 In masses
Of deceit and doubt

BRIGHTNESS

Elspeth Mizner

The crossroads in the distance
To say yes? To say no?
To change or to stay the same?
Photographs flash before my eyes.
Who I was, who I am.
Whoever I'll be, I will be beautiful.

The crossroads is near
Decision. Decision. Decision.
Scared. Nervous. Unsure.
Relaxed. Comfortable. Confident.
To sink or to swim?

The crossroads is now
"Be Good. Be Kind. Be Smart." over and over, it plays in
my head
Be brave. Be you.
Always dancing in the sun,
I am free.
Happiness, joy, laughter, grace, peace.
The sun shines through, the fear is gone, I jump, my eyes
open.

Yes.

REMEMBER

Carly Bodner



WISDOM OF A FLOWER

Joe O'Connor

Men hope
to live
a hundred years.
A flower
lives
one season.
A day
of wind
and rain
it lays
scattered.
For
fifty years
I've lived
to learn
the wisdom
of a flower,
all I have
is just a
moment
my life
is
but
an hour.

MOVING ON

Jason Walko

I need to leave, but I don't know where to go
I don't belong here
But I'm not sure where I do

Wow, someone texted me
Bonfire at your house? Sounds good
Be there soon

I park in the grass
I walk toward the orange glow and familiar voices
And plant my chair beside the pit

The people are the same
But the conversations are different
Constant reminders that our past was the same
But our futures won't be

One day, we'll all be together
For the last time
And none of us know when
For all we know
This could be it

So let's tell the same stories again
Shout them loud enough
To drown out the noises of the future
We may not know where we're going
But for now, we're here
Together.

STATE OF MADNESS

Christian Loeffler

Scarlet dew drops dance about nature's thorn
Swirled sorrows into an echoed abyss
Hysterical with bloodlust, it craves more
A primal ordinance commands the bliss

Creeps within, forced to stay stagnant in place
Heart tissue pounds, it solicits escape
Intrigue of desire conceals its face
Birch rods thrust across virtue's slender nape

A deeper potential pulls to break free
Merely grasps the edge of reality
Saliva peeks through the cracks of its teeth
Deluded, sadistic serenity

Concealed in flesh, rotted apple remains
Truth of being masks deplorable pains

MASOCHIST

Jessica Ackerman

The thought of you not
wanting me
is a knife in my heart.
Permanently affixed,
Lodged deep within the muscle.
Every once in while
I grab hold and twist.

DROWNING IN SMOKE

Sydney Hoffman



HIM

John Rogan

the first thing i remember
is him staring out the window,
wide-eyed and squirrely out the window
straight at the heavens
look of a thousand stoned prepubescents
sealed in his pupils
oohs and aahs
oohs and aahs
oh god, first time since my catholic school days
i laid down on asphalt
laughing my ass off
mouth agape
tiny thousand yahwehs, whispering
“no customers,
its ok to watch
lookatit!
lookatit!”
just a park bench
under gazebo or hut
or whatever the fuck white suburbanites call it
ran softly against his angelic wings
could feel my toes rubbing
against the inside of my shoes,
the skin adjacent to each other,
left hand with nothing to do
but anxious repetitions against knees
and shifted focus
sweet incense
burns like pine
in the winter

"i wish you'd stop smoking..."
"yeah..."
"i just thought you should know,
i can smell the smoke
when you come into the line in the morning"
"i always have a few before my shift"
"it's just it's bad for you,
bad for your lungs,
your soul,
mind..."
"yeah, yeah, i know..."
"doesn't taste good, either"
"oh, i didn't realize that was your angle here"
"i mean i just don't like the way the taste,
and i taste them when...
yeah"
"ok, i'll start smoking menthols then,
because im sharing now i guess"
coy giggles
and eye contact recessions
i tell ya
it gets me
gears started turning forwards
in great speed
almost like they're spinning backwards
like the wheel of a brand spankin new automobile
spinning for a joyride
and onlookers stare at the hubcaps
repressions set free, man
i felt like coltrane on "giant steps"
foaming at the mouth,
impatiently begging for poor,
exhausted and distraught tommy flanagan
poor bastard could hardly keep up
and as soon as he pulls away
coltrane

can't wait another second been in his head too long
presses wet lips on the reed
and lights the motherfucker up
i fall on my back and he digs his nails into my neck
and coltrane
abusing his scales like a boulder in a still body of water
waves crashing and splashing and corrupting the paths of
oncoming fish
swimming away millions of little vibrations
i dont even notice good god
splinters in my ass and the backs of my knees
splinters on the bench
penetrating
penetrating our goosebumps
nails digging deeper into my neck
a hand on my thigh running down
unsure in destination
oh dear christ let the nomads run free
toss the saddles off the horses
and let them graze in fields of green
let them bray and gallop and neigh
let the little bugs and flies fuck on the windowsill
and on the leaves of flowers growing in the garden

NIGHT TERROR

Danny Whirlow

He gazed into the book
inquisitively,
digging for knowledge.
He adjusted his glasses
to look at me.
Puzzled.

That's when I realized I was
sweating, soaking,
muscles tight, head aching.
Rays of dawn pouring in through the
window.
Removing my shirt, I
reached for the phone to call
my friend.

OCTOBER 31, 1966

Daniel Schwoegl

The only thing that I can confess with any certainty is that I have no idea what I'm doing. In all the years I have known him I never had the need to write any of this down, but I have an almost manic desire to do so now. I've read a line in Tolkien that describes how I have been feeling. "I feel thin, sort of stretched, like butter scraped over too much bread." However, I have never been unhappy with my path. In fact, I am excited and nearly giddy about what might happen tonight.

It started decades ago just after the Second World War. I had just finished my years at Syracuse. I was young, hot blooded, and invited to a party. It was one of those frivolous ones, where everyone shows up in small masks, as if covering cheekbones would hide one's identity. You knew who wasn't with their husband or girlfriend—you just didn't care. Everyone was there looking for a connection with new and open-minded people.

I met him in a back parlor. Whiskey and pipe smoke stained the books around the card table, but even so, his eyes cut through everything. Smoke, bad lighting, me, even the wall behind me, from what I know of him now. He sat in the darkness unmasked and gambling. When I asked why he didn't have a mask he laughed, offering that life itself was a mask. He wouldn't give his name and he asserted that I call him Renfield the whole night, saying I had to earn his real one. I'd never been one to follow other people or to stay in one place for long, but that night I couldn't leave the parlor; I didn't even want to. I had a drink in my hand, but from how clear my memory was, I would swear I never touched a drop of it.

That first night we talked about so many things it's a wonder that I've been able to remember it all so clearly even years later. Philosophy, paintings, politics, poetry, physiology. I don't think "talked" is the right word because I can't remember saying a single productive word the whole night. I was like a student sitting at Plato's feet. I reminisce over every word though, down to exactly how his voice sounded. Dark and steady in my ear. It never sped up, never slowed down. Never seeming to need to pause for breath, he continued to transfix me. The night stretched out and many of the other partiers drifted in and away. Each eventually slid to bed, theirs or otherwise. In the end, it was just the two of us. No matter how hard I begged I could not get his name or where to call on him, and just before dawn, our host sent us home. Renfield, as I knew him then, got into a black Oldsmobile and drove away. A black shape in the misty light.

I didn't see "Mr. Renfield" again at any of the other parties I went to. I always asked around to try and see him again. Even our original hostess didn't know his real name, claiming she did not even know he was there. So, I was left bereft of him, without even knowing if I would ever see him again. Nevertheless, like a young Dorian Grey, my life was completely reborn by him. I didn't even know his name, but I read every book he had lectured me on and bought artists that he had mentioned, even ones in passing. Those people who interested me or I amused myself with were assessed through the lens he had left with me. I became rather successful, always seeming to be in the right place at the right time or knowing the right person.

The next time I would meet him would be like a flash of lightning, merely some twelve years later. I was hiding from that hip swinging "rock and roll," taking refuge in opera. The Met was showing the classic Faust. It was after the second act as I was stretching my legs that I

saw him. He leaned against the wall near one of the bars. Watching the laces, frills, and coat tails fluttering around him. At first I stayed away, watching him, spell bound by his eyes cutting through the world around him. He stood tall, even leaning he was some inches above my 5' 9" frame. I have decided in the years I've known him that he is lean like a starved wolf. This impression is helped in no small part by how he eyes crowds like his own personal feast. His hair was the same length, unfashionably long and clubbed back in a tight knot. Platinum gold. With his pale skin and smooth movements, many have thought of him as a specter.

The bells chimed, the spell that bound me was broken, and everyone started to shuffle back to their seats including the fascinating man I had waited years to find again. I felt gravity pull me behind him, like some moon dragged on a cosmic leash. He was seated in a balcony box with its own white dressed boy to pull back the curtain. The boy called out a greeting to the man, greeting him as "Mr. Akeldama." I waited till the symphony started warming up and the lights to dim before I went into the box.

He knew who I was as soon as I dropped the curtain behind me. I remember even now how it felt when he stood and embraced me like a lost friend: the enthusiasm and security I sensed in his strong arms. We sat and pulled our chairs together and talked through the whole opera. Our knees touched as we shared whispers in the dark. His breath touched cold against my neck, stirring my hairs. We talked about the universe and our purpose in it. Given where we were, the conversation inevitably turned to deals with the devil. He laughed a deep throaty chortle when I said the devil seemed far fairer a patron than others I had met.

The conversation continued late, and though I had no alcohol, my memories turned muddled after a point. I do

not remember going home, or even the end of the opera. To me there was no redemption of Faust. I only remember the uncomfortable chair and his breath so intimately close to my neck.

Finally, I had a place to call on my dear friend. I no longer even had to pay for tickets because he always left one for me at the Will Call. I visited him frequently and could tell him any of my problems, with women, or trying to be published, or keeping food on the table. I always felt better after our private confessionals even when I was left with no clear answers to my needs. This marked our relationship for many years. Sometimes, most if I am honest, he wasn't at the theater and I would just go and babble out my desires into the darkness.

As the years passed, life started to take its toll on me. My stature and strength diminished. My health declined rapidly. I would spend whole weekends in my bed weak and crying, but I would always drag myself to the opera hoping to see him. Church and dates fell to the wayside so long as I could commune with him. I remember him one night cupping my cheek with his icy palm and looking into my eyes, "Oh, my dear friend," he whispered, "I know how taxing these visits are for you. You have no idea how much it means to me." Those words were all I desired, and it made me glad that I could do this one thing for him. Invariably I would get tired on these visits and fall asleep leaning against his chest, my neck bent at an odd angle trying to bring myself closer to him.

As my health steadily decreased, he always seemed to remain the same. His ethereal beauty eternal in the darkness. It was then I started to feel drawn and spent. I grew mildly envious, and sometimes it would peek through my devotion. Though any snide comment I made at him was met with a laugh and a reminder that I was the source of his youth, that without me he would wither up and die like so many dead leaves. This stroked my ego

and I was never jealous for long.

My dates with other friends grew few and far between. I am content without those distractions, getting all that I ever wanted out of Mr. Akeldama. Recently he has started to make silly comments about wanting to keep me around. He has also mused about what we could do with an eternity of time. This always makes me laugh, his audacity in thinking that he could defy our God given mortality. I allow him his musings, but I quickly make sure to remind him that someday we must both lie in our coffins. He has given me these looks as if trying to decide just how far he can take me.

He told me last week that he wants to show me a room that he is remodeling for new family that he is expecting. We are to go to his house after the opera to see this room. He wants me to tell him how to fashion and furnish it to be comfortable. I have never, in the decades I have known my friend, been to his house. I do not even know where it is. I have been wracking my brain as to why. It was in thinking about this that I decided to write this letter outlining everything to try to make some sense of it. I am sure that I am just being a doddering old fool, but here it is. Tonight, the Met is showing Faust again. I hope this time to see how it ends.

MY DARK NIGHT OF THE MIND

Michael Mondock

Darkness.
How did I get here? I wasn't always like this.
Things used to be much better, if not perfect.
But now I hardly see a thing.
I stumble about, waving my limbs violently to find my way,
Though I rarely feel anything.
I feel the sharp stones now and then
Jabbing at my arms, my legs, and my chest,
And I have to curl up on the ground until they stop.
There is no joy anymore.
The impression of joy, maybe, every once in a while.
But it is a temporary feeling.
More often there is fear.
A fear that everything is not right,
That I am not doing anything right,
That everything I know and believe is not right,
That there is no right.
And I cannot call to my friends that I am afraid.
I am on my own.
And I pray to God
That I can see the light again,
Even if it's just a little candle,
A gentle, pure light.

LITTLE MAN

Shaye Beeman



FROMMINGFERN

Dr. William Snyder

Ah, Frommingfern, betice my blith
With britty slithers a turny gold
All spolding-so is thy bright drith
And funnily thy sterons fold.

Aroo! Aroo! vicious ague
Begot from thy stiff prill.
So brillering thy lilly blue
But impomane to smill.

Shellen in a keetsy way
And colrin in the spring
Suthan pennarota Gray
What felly flowers bring.

Egart! I say, my trelling heart
Abets a beat so wrong
I see, I smill thy radly part
I cannot now live long.

So encare, I say, not to smill
The Frommingfern so bly
Alike a fillbu yon girl
Her bril can be so gry.

STAFF

Jessica Ackerman
Alexis Cobbin
Nicole Fratrach
Michelle Gil-Montero
Zelie-Marie Hummer
Micaela Kreuzwieser
Zach Plappert
Irina Rusanova
Julia Snyder
Jason Walko
Danny Whirlow

CONTRIBUTORS

Shaye Beeman
Kate Bell
Carly Bodner
Tyler Friend
Bethany Giancola
Samantha Hilyer
Sydney Hoffman
Eddie Kunz
Christian Loeffler
Elspeth Mizner
Michael Mondock
Amanda Moyher
Joe O'Connor
Kathryn Ordiway
Johanna Philips
Max Planchon
Kaitlin Repp
Dr. Phyllis Riddle
Heather Rieg
John Rogan
Daniel Schwoegl
Claire Sirofchuck
Dr. William Snyder
Moirra Sullivan
Jason Walko

