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Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the last *genesis* issue of the decade! This year has been a transformative one as our country (and the world at large) faces the decision of who we want to be and where we are heading. *genesis* has seen much transformation this year as well, with a new editorial staff and managing editor team taking over the reigns.

The works in this issue reflect the shifting, reflective cultural moment we find ourselves in, and offer some strategies in their forms that we can take inspiration from as individuals navigating our age.

These pieces speak to our ties to the past and their implications for our future. Poems like *The Hoosier Dome* and *Hummingbird Eulogy* understand the benefits of observing the profundity of the present. Historical figures and artists are reconsidered, both in prose and visually. Atmospheric paintings by Malinh Ho, as well as experiments in photography by Olivia Van Renterghem and Kylie Dennis, lend a distant, pensive aura. All these pieces reflect the thoughtfulness required to contend with contemporary issues and offer a light to help guide us into the new decade.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to step into this role and curate this issue. We hope you gain as many insights from these pieces as we did in selecting them.

Joseph Alcala, Jordan Kalt, and Trenna Soderling
Managing Editors

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Contributor's Notes



Fruit #4

Molly Wolfe

Oil on Panel, 30" x 22"

God Gave Me a Lighter

Tanner Léon

Arrive home from the bar
in a tumble down the avenue.
Punk night at Melody Inn.
Or maybe it was ska night?
Often it's somewhere in between.
Either way, I downed 2 PBRs
which is heavysset
for a lightweight.

They crossed my throat
into my chest
like holy water
on a parched man's lips.

Among the plague of personal crisis,
I have piloted through persecution—
made it back to my apartment steps
high, but definitely not dry.

A miracle laid there as if perfectly placed.
The smallest gift from god
to remind a tipsy poet to have faith.
A simple, red lighter.

Likely it was left after a cigarette sesh.
My upstairs neighbors
love passing flames into their lungs.
I think it makes them feel alive,
to know that heat can cleanse
their insides.

It was that sixth sense stoner sensation
which whispered to their hands,
leave it here, let it be
someone else has the need.

I swear the world knew my last lighter
had just taken its final breath.

The drinks were an act of letting go.
This small blessing was to let me know
that somewhere out there in an abstract nebula
some spirit of the great divine
actually gives enough of a shit to say:
“hey, I see your sulks and your Hulk rage,
maybe a little love in an unfair life
can set you back just right”

So I vow to light my joint,
let it be my amen.

Hummingbird Eulogy

Zoey Hunsinger

A flower-kisser collapsed on the ground.
He refused to sing, wouldn't flutter his wings
and wouldn't sip nectar from a trumpet.
He was imprinted into cement after the daring
revolving door wouldn't let him through.
I didn't know his name, no one ever does.
But I watched him
every day
from the cheap-seats of university grass.
He sucked up to the peonies and
licked the daylilies. His saturated red gorget
zoomed in the clouds, caught amongst the fallen stars.
He danced with Anna around hedges
until the pink throat hummed a blue note.
Now his wings give one last beat and his eyes
close. I lay a honeysuckle petal by his four toes.
Give it a day, the gardener will sweep him up.



Abstract I

Mailinh Ho

Oil on Canvas, 16" x 20"

The Impressionist

Zoey Hunsinger

He was a monochromatic man,
painted in pastel with an earthy hue
broken to the core of frosted flames.

His spectacles faltered as he studied the water
and ignored the rusted hills of cavalry New Mexico.
There wasn't enough paint on his palette,
so he marbled a pigment
of his imagination. While O'Keeffe
hung from a cross in the museums.

His hands feathered across
the ridges of a canvas
and his words, though soluble,
blistered at the touch.
He complimented others
with his opaque humor
but left his lover to dry on the easel.

He despised when Courbet arose,
for he preferred the imitation of art.
While surrealism flickered, like a votive candle
melting on its side,
he decided
perhaps a barren canvas was better than none.

Marty

Julia Spratt

The Malibu

The summer before my 8th grade year, I was homeless. Well, to be more accurate, my home was a 2004 Chevy Malibu crammed full of everything my mother and I could fit in it in the hour we had after getting kicked out of my grandparents' home. Full of uncertainty and fear, we spent three months hopping from one city to the next, traversing the wilds of Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, my mother taking odd jobs that lasted mere days or weeks. We occasionally had enough money to stay in a hotel, and I would have to hide my cat, Kiko, under the folds of a blanket in order to sneak her in. She, the cat, wasn't a fan of such treatment, but I generally credit her current The Dude-like zen attitude to the trauma of those months.

What's so strange about our time in the Malibu is that I never attribute it as a bad time in my life. Looking back, I was terrified, clinging to my mother like she was the last person on earth. I guess she kind of was at that point, disregarding the feline partner-in-crime curled in a ball on the dashboard. But some of my favorite memories of my mom come from that summer: hitting golf balls off the top of a dinky little Missouri motel, spending hours talking about our family and dreams of the future, singing along to Natasha Bedingfield's "Pocketful of Sunshine" as it came on for the tenth time in 4 hours as we sat in less-than-a-foot-an-hour traffic in the blistering summer heat. The Malibu, I will note, did not have air conditioning.

I learned more about my mother in those three months than I have ever gathered since. I learned her history, her motivations, her secrets. Over the course of that summer, as I distracted myself with counting clouds and figuring out exactly how much change we had left for McDonald's, I allowed myself to meet my mother, experience her, learn from her, learn about her, in a way I've never been able to replicate.

Those three months, the crux of our lives, were simultaneously the worst and best of my life, stuffed away with my mother and a cat, trotting along in that tiny little 2004 four-door.

The Spark

I have never been a “car person.” I understand their necessity and can appreciate their design and color schemes. I can even find comfort in their accessories and low mileage rates, but I have never changed a tire. The underside of a vehicle is a maze I’ll never find my way around. If I’m being completely transparent, I don’t have the faintest idea what the V in V8 stands for, let alone the 8.

And yet when recently asked what my most valuable item was, I answered, “my car.”

And let me tell you, my car is nothing to write home about. Marty (named after the quintessential teenage heartthrob Marty McFly) is a 2014 Chevy Spark, baby blue with only three cup holders and manual door locks. He does have an automatic lock, but it’s for the trunk... for some reason. He does not have cruise control, which makes cross-state trips to visit the family absolutely miserable, and there’s no place to plug in an aux cord so you’re stuck listening to the radio (no CD or cassette player to be found). His horn sounds like a cat meow, his trunk is less than spacious, and he wobbles on the highway if the wind is blowing too hard.

But he’s mine. All mine.

Coming from a poor family who had the power turned off on multiple occasions, I was never going to get a car for my Sweet 16 or as a graduation present. Hell, I rarely was trusted with the family minivan because we were so desperately reliant on it and my mother was worried I would send it careening into a lake. But Marty, he’s all mine. It was my sweat, my tears, my time, my effort and determination that got him off that lot. No one else’s.

Some would say I have an unhealthy relationship with Marty. I often talk directly to him while driving, and at least once a week I tell him how handsome he is as I lovingly pat his dashboard. With a husband allergic to dogs, he’s probably the closest thing I’ll ever get to owning a pooch, and just like a canine companion he rewards my affection with unbridled loyalty and looking like the cutest little thing on the planet.

The Focus

Last month I married a man who drives a 2013 Ford Focus. Black, with heated seats and cruise control. Its hatchback is great for storage, we can remotely start it from our apartment on cold

winter mornings, and it's got cup holders galore. It's a comfort car—nice size, nice mileage, nice radio. We didn't have to pay for it either - the perks of a wealthy father-in-law. When I picture it, I picture my husband lounging back in his heated seat, left hand gently gripping the steering wheel, right hand interlaced with mine. He's listening to some folk song or a favorite podcast, casually navigating the twists and turns of Indianapolis traffic.

But when I look forward, when I imagine what would happen in a personal apocalypse, if I found myself at my lowest point, without money, without a home, I don't imagine the comfort of that 2014 Ford Focus. I imagine my tiny Chevy Spark, baby blue and smelling like thunderstorms. I imagine finding my way, surviving, and I imagine I'm alone.



Sisterhood

Nancy Lee

Vitreous Enamel on Copper, 5" x 5"



Ciao bella

Kylie Dennis

Photography

The Hoosier Dome

Shannon Couch

Deadbeats and faux gutter-rats litter the sidewalk outside.
Run the gauntlet of smoke and wild-thinkers, glass and punk-purists –
now properly initiated,
enter.

The omnipresent eyes of *bathroom lumberjack Jesus*
survey as the rafters sag from the weight of hanging bodies
and the windows buzz in resonance
with the youth behind them.

“*Caleb was here,*” reads the hole in the wall.
Forever unrepaired, chosen to keep,
as the preservation of memory outweighs
structural integrity.

Stereocilia, dead and dying,
as the gore becomes gospel to starving, dirty hands.
Bassline pulse-drive and mechanical starry sky –
This shroud is a battle cry, *power incarnate*.

Joan Of Arc

Mason Farr

She lays with only soldiers,
then slays those lonely soldiers.
She calls herself Joan of Arc. This
Spider, taking trinkets in the darkness
of Paris in the winter, barren.
Their blood will start to splinter there in
the cold and misty morning.
To leave their mothers mourning.
She wonders about how many
Crosses in the cemetery
She has caused.
Sons' lives lost.

Though she isn't proud of her linen throne,
it's the best way to bring the boys back home.

pinstripe sheets

Daisy Wright

I remember striped sheets. Pinstripes, not those thicker stripes, and they were white with a pretty blue (blue is my favorite color). His eyes had blue too; blue, green, brown. I knew them well, I loved them. I remember the glass on the dresser, almost empty but not quite, and that for a moment I felt almost annoyed by it. Why not finish it? What was I thinking about again?

Oh yes. I remember the light shining through the crack in the curtains and creating a perfect spotlight on that slip of paper, the pink one with the feminine handwriting on it. Why did I hate that slip of paper? I remember a broken fingernail. I think it hurt. It was on my right hand, holding those white and blue pinstripe sheets in a strange, tight grip. Something was wrong. What was I thinking about again?

Oh yes. Hands. His hands were holding me. His lips were by my ear but what was he saying again? Oh yes. He loved me. I was his. I could never leave. Why did I think I could leave? I was his forever. I belonged to him. That didn't seem right.

I remember that those hands holding me tightened whenever I tried to move. I remember that I said no, but he didn't listen. I remember that I gave up because I'd been drinking, so I knew that it would never matter to anyone. I remember. I remember looking for something to hold on to as I suffered through it. I remember going numb and trying to forget before it was even over. I remember that he cried after. I didn't.

I remember striped sheets. Pinstripes, not those thicker stripes, and they were white with a pretty blue (blue is my favorite color). My bruises had blue in them too.

Cold Hands

Hannah Bryson-Price

Cigarette smoke swirled in the air of my grandparent's kitchen. Its tiles were worn and yellowed. My family's smiles radiated through the smoke like headlights shining in a rolling fog. I braced myself as wisps clung to my lungs. The cold seeped in from the window behind me. They fused together baring claws to chase me away. I wouldn't let them.

No frigid hands or toxic breaths would drag me from the chair where my feet barely scraped the floor. I was fixed on fluttering fingers. Talking hands swept through the air, captivating my eyes. They were soundless, but oddly loud. It was strange how those signing hands generated so much noise from a person living in eternal quiet.

I felt as though my fingers and palms were too small to paint the words my family used. I wanted to mimic their colors and movements, but the cold trickled its way to my shy fingers. Across the wooden table my grandfather slid me a wink followed by the one sign I knew. The ring and middle finger folded down to the palm. "I love you."



Cottage in the Mountains

Molly Wolfe

Oil on Paper, 15" x 20"

The Unkindness of the Raven

Evan Dile

Nevar Windsor approached the coffee shop, stopping just in front of the glass doors. He pulled out his phone and opened an email thread. After double checking that the address from the email was indeed the place he was standing in front of, he made his way inside.

His company, Windsor Enterprises, had seemingly taken off overnight. What started as a new Artificial Intelligence system created in Windsor's freetime to help him with everyday mundane tasks, quickly caught the eye of the entire world. Within a month it was improved until the system was able to talk and act like a real person. Companies like Apple and Microsoft raced to jump on board to work with Windsor Enterprises. But the workload had become too much, so he decided to take on an assistant. This would be the first of many interviews that would take place in this coffee shop for this position.

The aroma of coffee was strong, and he felt as if he was breathing in the caffeine. Each inhale slightly increased the buzz.

"Black coffee. The freshest you have, please." The barista gave him a smile and a nod as he placed the five-dollar bill on the counter.

As she made the coffee he surveyed the place, looking for a table. Spotting a small table for two he grabbed the coffee and walked over, and sat facing towards the window. As he sat down he caught a glimpse of a man, easily recognizable from a picture he found online. The man had a face as if he was only twelve years old, yet he had a receding hairline and a slight beer belly. He had a polo shirt that was slightly too big for him, the armpits lined with fresh sweat stains. His khaki pant legs dragged on the ground behind him.

Nevar waved over to him and made eye contact. He smiled back and walked over, sitting down in the chair opposite. "You want a coffee? On me," Nevar told him.

"Nope. I don't believe in that coffee shit. It's either beer or water for me," he chuckled, showing Nevar the water bottle he had with him. Nevar grimaced a bit, as it struck him as unprofessional.

Nevar started the interview with polite small talk, but then quickly moved to business.

"Start by telling me about yourself. Where you grew up, what

drives you, previous jobs..." Nevar immediately regretted this, as this man was apparently a nervous chatterer. He began from where he was born, moving slowly throughout his years. He seemed to talk himself out of breath, having to stop and gasp for air every few minutes.

There was the clicking of a keyboard behind Nevar. That was usually normal for a coffee shop, but something about the tapping was distracting. He listened more intently, completely tuning out the interviewee, who was now droning on about his middle school years.

The man stopped to take a drink from his water bottle and the clicking stopped. After a big gulp he screwed the cap back on and continued talking. Then the keyboard clicking continued.

"One second," he said, cutting him off in the middle of his sentence. He pulled out his phone as if he was receiving a call, but he was truly listening to hear if the typing had stopped in the silence of the conversation. He heard nothing.

He tried this two more times to see if, in fact, it was just a coincidence. But every time the tapping seemed to link up with the conversation.

"I apologize, but can we pick this up another time? Something important just came up."

"No problem, boss. Let me know when and where." The man stood up looking disappointed, knowing he did not get the position. Nevar pretended to take a call while he watched him stroll out of the coffee shop.

Nevar removed the phone from his ear. "Do you want my email so you can send me that transcript of our conversation?" he asked as he turned around in his chair. Sitting with her laptop was a woman with long dark hair. Her face was round, but her cheekbones were well-defined. She wore a jean jacket over an old black AC/DC shirt. He could tell she was tall even though she was sitting down.

Her face lit up with different shades of red. "Do I know you?" she murmured in a nervous voice.

"I don't know, do you? You seem pretty interested in my conversations." He switched from an aggressive tone to being slightly teasing.

She laughed, showing off her straight white teeth, contrasted against her tanned skin. "I can explain that."

"Please do!" Nevar turned his chair completely so that they were sitting at the same table.

"I'm working on a book, but I'm stuck on one of my characters. So, I decided to come here and study a stranger, and maybe base my character off of them."

"Why'd you pick our conversation?" he asked, genuinely intrigued.

"Okay, well you walked in and you instantly gave off these con-

fidant and powerful vibes. I could tell you were waiting for someone, so I sat down nearby and decided to see what happens, expecting you to be waiting for a date. You just seemed to be someone important.” She looked at him, and he felt as if she was still trying to analyze him. She was trying to read his whole life through his eyes. He broke the eye contact, afraid of what she might find.

He gazed out the window. “Well I’d love to make some notes about your observations of me, but I’ve got to be across town in twenty minutes. How about dinner Thursday night?”

She laughed as if he had made a joke. “You don’t even know my name and you want to take me out to dinner?”

“You’re right. Hi, I’m Nevar. The ‘confident’ and ‘powerful’ guy from the coffee shop,” he mocked, putting air quotes over the descriptions.

She smiled. “Okay, Nevar. I’m Traeh. The stalker writer from the coffeeshop.” She scribbled her phone number on a napkin and handed it over to him. He glanced at it, then shoved it in his shirt pocket.

“Thursday night!” he shouted, as he stood up and walked to the door. He could still feel her eyes as he left the coffee shop, analyzing everything about him.

* * *

The view from Nevar’s 32nd floor apartment was truly gorgeous. It overlooked Central Park, making the people that bustled through it seem miniscule. Trees appeared as small orange and red bushes, as the leaves were changing with the autumn. The rooftops of the buildings he overlooked stretched far below him. Rain spattered, streaking down the window as if the glass was crying. He could see a raven perched on the balcony of a building close by, cocking his head as if trying to understand what the rain was.

He leaned against the window, blinking hard as if it would push away the thoughts in his head. Behind him, the apartment was chaotic. Tables and chairs were overturned, shattered glass sprinkled throughout the hardwood floor, and a broken picture frame displaying Nevar and Traeh laid fragmented on the floor.

Her words rang in his head repeatedly. “Nothing will ever be enough for you.” “You’re an emotionless asshole.” “All you care about is your damn company. What about me, Nevar?”

He hadn’t cried. He can’t remember the last time a tear rolled down his face. Traeh’s face was red, her eyes swollen with tears, sniffing the snot running from her nose between her screams. But Nevar stood there and only watched.

He knew she wasn’t wrong. Windsor Enterprises had become the

fastest growing company America has ever witnessed. He kept working harder and harder, hoping to satisfy something in himself. But with every hour of strenuous work he added to his schedule, he slowly began to realize something that he had been trying to prove untrue to himself from the beginning: he could never feel satisfied.

It had been three years since that day at the coffee shop, and he had loved her ever since then. But he pushed her out intentionally. He wanted to take back everything during their fight. To explain that he was afraid of himself, that he was broken inside. But something stopped him. Something told him this was the easiest way for everyone. So instead, he just watched her, and she stormed out of the apartment.

A nervous voice from behind him spoke feebly, “Mr. Windsor?”

Nevar whipped around to see Ashley, the assistant he had finally chosen after his hundreds of hours worth of interviews years ago. She was looking at the mess of his apartment. He glanced at the watch on his wrist. The hands read 10:00 a.m. His fight with Traeh had happened at midnight the night before. He had been at the window ever since.

When he hadn’t answered, Ashley continued. “Would you like me to call the maid to clean this up?”

“That would be great. And how’s the work going with finding my successor?”

“I have someone set to meet with you today in the afternoon. Should I reschedule...”

“No, no. Today works great. Thank you, Ashley.” She retreated from the apartment.

* * *

The walls of Nevar’s office were blank, painted a light grey. His desk was made of dark mahogany wood, the top littered with papers and folders. Two wooden chairs sat on the opposite side of the room. He sat behind his desk, staring at the wall, examining it as a critique would analyze a work of art.

A knock at the door snapped him out of his trance.

Ashley poked her head in his office. “It’s time for the interview. For your successor position.”

“You can send him in.” Nevar quickly shuffled some of the papers on his desk to the side. The door swung open and a man walked in, wearing a bright blue suit. The tight fit showed he was slightly muscular. He had a closely shaven haircut that seemed to continue throughout his face in the form of a five o’clock shadow.

Without speaking a word he grabbed one of the wooden chairs, dragged it so that it was only a couple of feet from the desk, and sat down.

It was silent. Neither one of them spoke. They both just stared at each other, analyzing one another. Nevar recognized this as a power move, but he decided to break the silence anyways.

“What’s your name?”

The man gave a grin, realizing he succeeded in his power move. “Evod, but everyone just calls me Ev.”

“Fair enough, Ev. Do you have a resumé?”

Ev laid a piece of paper on the desk. Nevar grabbed it and proceeded to look it over. Nevar had a confused expression while reading. There were only two previous jobs listed, and both seemed to be internships. Another thing caught his eye: he had only graduated from college a year prior to this.

“You don’t have much experience. Why are you here?” Nevar asked.

Ev let out a laugh. “Well I was doing some job searching and came across this place. I sent your assistant, Ashley I think it was, an email with my resumé. She told me I was underqualified, but you know what I always say? Persistence is key! So I sent another email and she graciously set me up with an interview. So here I am!” He was chuckling.

Nevar smiled back. “Ashley is stubborn. What did you say that made her change her mind?”

“I told her that when I set my mind on something, I’ll do whatever it takes to achieve it. And I was damned set on getting that interview!”

From anyone else, this would have come off as threatening. But from Ev, it came off as charming, and Nevar believed him. It was something about his smile and the way he presented himself. He seemed intelligent and genuine. It reminded Nevar of himself, only happier and more driven. Nevar believed that if Ashley kept denying him the interview, he probably would have still showed up to the office.

Nevar and Ev sat in the office for over an hour. Nevar talked about the future of the company, struggles they were facing currently, and competitors. Ev not only listened, but he gave input and suggestions on what he would do. Some of which Nevar never thought of, even after day’s worth of brainstorming with teams of experts.

When they were done talking the office had started to close. They shook hands, exchanged information, and Ev left with the crowd of workers streaming out the door for the night.

Ashley peeked her head into Nevar’s office, as if she had been waiting outside for the meeting to be over. “The next person comes in tomorrow at the same time.”

“Cancel it. He was the one.”

She grinned. “Great, I’ll contact him tomorrow and get the paperwork set up.”

Nevar left the office late that night. He felt a feeling of relief, and for a brief amount of time, it seemed to lift some weight off of him.

* * *

The next week, everyone knew of Evod. Biographies were in every newspaper and on every news channel. But this also raised the question as to why Nevar was in search of a successor. He was bombarded by news interviews and paparazzi.

Rumors that he had a terminal illness or that he could no longer handle his position soon filled the same newspapers and news channels. Ashley did her best to deny the rumors, but within a couple of weeks it seemed that everyone had forgotten anyways.

It had been a month since the fight with Traeh. Nevar’s apartment now looked as if the fight with Traeh had never happened. The glass had been swept, the tables and chairs back upright where they belong, and the picture of him and Traeh in a new frame. He tried several times to get rid of the photo, but he could not bring himself to do it. He thought of her every minute anyways, so what was one more reminder.

Nevar looked out his window with content this time. It was a clear night, but the city was still glowing. Central Park looked to be empty. The trees that had once looked like bushes were no longer visible, as the leaves had fully fallen off. A black streak caught his eye as he saw a Raven fly downwards. Nevar wondered to himself if it was possible that it was the same bird as before.

He opened the window and took a deep breath. He held the cold, wintery air in his lungs before exhaling through his mouth. The sounds of the city rang even louder now. Police sirens, cars honking, glass bottles breaking.

Leaving the window open, he sat on a couch behind him. On a glass table to his right was an old revolver. He lifted it up, holding it in his hand as if it was as light as a feather. He took one more deep breath of the city air and pulled the hammer back on the revolver. For the first time that he could remember, Nevar felt satisfied.

* * *

A tall woman stood at the front of an audience. Her long and dark hair brushed against her sharp cheekbones, as her face tilted down towards a heavy book in her hands.

With a shaky voice, Traeh read from the end of the book, “Loving Nevar was so easy for everyone but himself. I spent so long thinking that I was never enough. It gnawed away at me, tearing at my insides until I

couldn't take it. It wasn't until after he died that I realized the problem wasn't me. He wasn't good enough for himself. I believe he was trying to prove to himself that he could be good enough, whether it was through money or by owning one of the most successful companies in the country. But in his head, he ended up proving that he would never be happy. I only wish I would have stayed with him to tell him that he was enough for me.”

Her eyes glistened as she closed the book. The audience clapped quietly as she held back her tears. After a couple minutes the audience began to shuffle and talk amongst themselves. A few people walked up to either thank her for a well-written book or to give their sympathies for her loss.

An elderly lady came up to Traeh with a copy of her book. “Would you mind signing this for me?” she asked nervously. “I loved being able to see into the mind of such a genius like Mr. Windsor, and it's so upsetting for him to leave the way he did.”

“Of course, thank you so much for your support,” Traeh said. But while she reached for the book, she caught a glimpse of someone in the audience. It was a man in a bright blue suit, tight enough to see his muscles. However, his undershirt was slightly untucked, and his beard, once neatly trimmed, was now scraggly and unkempt. Traeh could see a guilt inside him. It was the guilt of a man who craved power and success, but who achieved it through someone else's pain and suffering.

Evod, the new owner of Windsor Enterprises, met Traeh's eyes for a second, giving a sympathetic smile. He then lowered his head and shuffled to the exit.



On the Full Moon, of the 12th Moon

Chanya Ruby

Oil on Canvas, 30" x 40"



Abstraction #I

Chanya Ruby

Oil on Paper, 22" x 30"

Hers

Bryttney Schaible

The world here glows in effervescent pinks. Cotton candy clouds are strung high in the sky, and the constellations beyond them are painted with gilded color. This is the world of dreams, of limitless possibilities, and of moon-eyed wonderment. It is an endless tea party where company is always welcome, and the cake is served fresh from an Easy-Bake Oven. The air carries currents of sparkly girlhood memories and sweetly sung lullabies, and it leaves the saccharine taste of magic on the tongue. Here is the land of fairies, of princesses, of dragons for slaying.

Here is where blood falls; where love and light flit away into the night; where fights will be lost. Here, the world will dull to muddied purples. Cotton candy clouds will melt in the rain, and all the stars will tarnish and fall from the sky like teeth from a child's mouth. Dreams will deflate with the grace of popped party balloons, and possibilities will meet their limits. Here is where the moon will be torn down from the sky and stomped into the dirt. Tea parties will be cancelled, and all the cakes from here on out will be diet. The air will carry currents of secrets kept, of lies told, and of pillows cried into in the dead of night. The lullabies will be screamed to the heavens with the crescendo of electric guitars. The magic will take on the wicked taste of salt, tequila, and lime. The wings of fairies will be plucked away like stray hairs from an unkempt brow, and the crowns of princesses will be lost forever to the laundromat spin cycle.

The dragons will always need slaying.

Sacrament

Mason Farr

The last time I saw you was Christmas,
in the nursing home.

When you held that glass of gin above your head
like a sacrificial dagger

and said it gave you something to live for.
Then you plunged it into your body.

Sinewy hairs coated your face,
since you stopped shaving,

Hiding the popped vessels,
and lagan eyes

trapped in the sunken vessel
of you

surrounding a mouth
with lips wetted by the nectar of the gods.

Condensation dripping like blood,
down your bruised and shriveled forearm

And before I left,
I held you in my arms.

The frail and gruff
sacrificial Billy goat,

Dying,
so the rest of us can live.



Horton's World

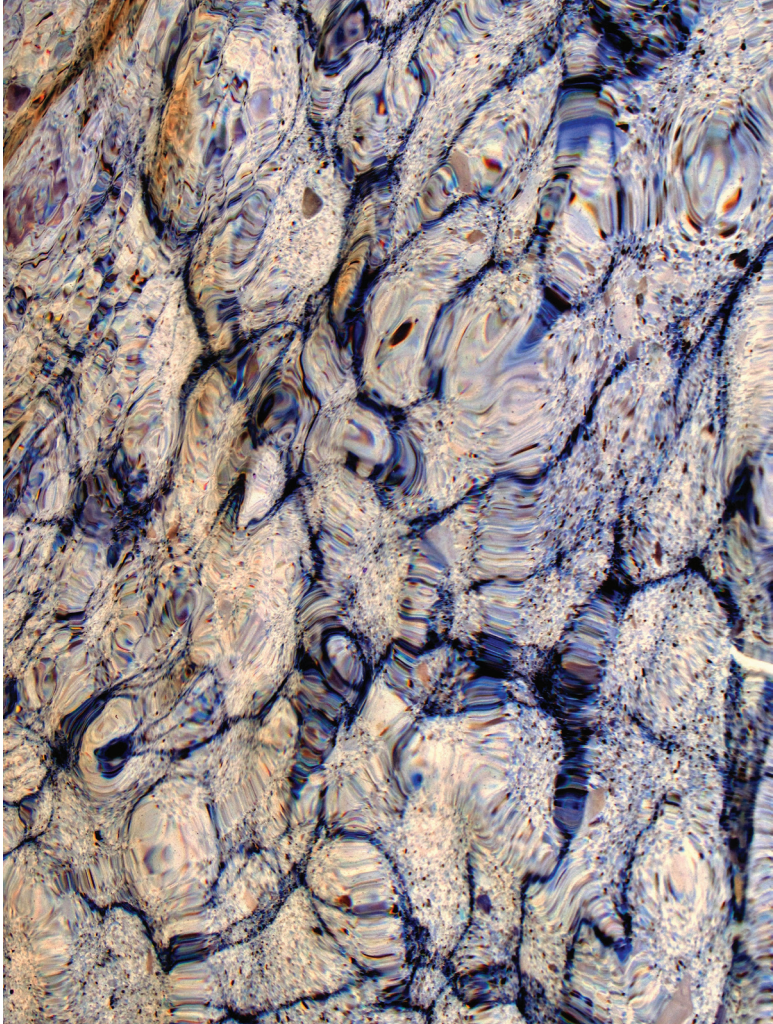
Nancy Lee

Vitreous Enamel on Cooper, 6" x 6"

Gladiator

Rebecca Trimpe

The first time he caught the ball, he was playing in the neighbor's front yard. Got taken out by a pissed-off bigger kid who thought he saw an easy interception. Who gets beat by a 6-year-old? Tackle. Left elbow smashed to the concrete. Says he's fine. Wants to go in, stretch out on the couch. Johnny Bravo's on. At the ER: Broken. Dislocated. Surgery around 2 a.m. Drunk guys in knife fights go first. Pins. Four months in a cast which has to be changed once because he's growing like a weed. Scar looks like a train track. Arm won't straighten out completely for months. Still wants to play. Can I sign up for PAL football? They don't have it in our neighborhood, we'd have to move, and we ain't doin' that, baby doll. Uncle played for the Packers for like six minutes in the '80s. Tells him he's not big enough. Says he should wait 'til high school. Kid listens. Mom thinks they're safe. The high school he'll go to doesn't have football. Until it does. Dammit. Kid she used to work with said his old lady bought him a silver trumpet and stuck him in the high school band to keep him off the team. She doesn't want to be that mom. Defense coach first year: Can't you hang some more meat on that boy? As a freshperson, he's five-foot nothin' and weighs less than the family Newfoundland. The second time he caught the ball, he was wearing the yellow cleats his mom bought so she could find him in the scrum. Five-nine and a buck-ninety as a senior, if you believe the program. Built for speed. Those thighs are original equipment but the shoulders and the biceps are not. Lived in the gym at school, and in the basement at home where they put the weight machine. He switched sides. Middle linebacker. Knew what the quarterback was going to do before the poor kid got up that morning. Didn't want the ball. Claimed he didn't know what to do with it. Just wanted to take out the kid who had it. Then he had it. No concrete around this time. He crossed the white line.



reflect

Olivia Van Renterghem

Photography, 6" x 8"



Sedna

Molly Wolfe

Digital Art, 9" x 17"

Let Me Be

Georgey Elaine

I don't want to be white shoes
Clean sneakers the high school boys are afraid to walk in
I don't want to be a decorative plate
Locked behind glass where no one will ever scrape their fork over me
Or chip me trying to put me in the cabinet
Most of all, I would loathe to be a wedding dress
Lacy white gauze worn once and hardly touched
Special for a single day
Before forgotten
I've never seen my mother's wedding dress
And I do not want to
The hint of her veil was enough
Smiling next to my father in an old photograph
I used to look upon with wonder
A dress worn to shackle herself to my father
No, let me be your favorite shirt
Wrinkled red, with the faded letters
Your most worn bra
Let me be wrinkled and stained
Sent through countless wash cycles
Let me be able to come back
Let me be soft
The fleece blanket draped over you
I want to be a poem
Something startling
An image seared into minds, a pain in your chest
Short, with meaning
Let me be chai tea
Deeply steeped, spiced with cardamom
Felt in the throat
Whipped cream on your lips
A piece of home hot in your hands
Let me be as I wish I could; something small but loved

Chicken Paprikash

Madison Weiss

This is my people's last rite of passage.
They didn't die in German camps
for me to not master this recipe.
Pearled chicken bone slips
and pricks me, tingeing oil
and onion an ember red that is
one with the paprika, and I am
reminded that this dish is my blood.

But did I add enough bouillon?
There are no directions
other than what Dad told me,
which Tova told him,
and a whole onslaught of dead
ancestors grumble from their graves
that there are no such things as teaspoons,
only "not too much" or "not too little."

The last bit isn't kosher, enough to where
I can hear Tova muttering
about the foolishness of Gentiles,
but I splash in that lump of sour cream
because I uphold no ancient law in my cuisine.
It is crucial to end the rite properly:
I take a bite, shrug like a Jew,
and say, "Meh. Maybe next time."



Herd of Library Camels

Katrina Tomeldan

Acrylic Paint and Colored Pencil, 15" x 12"

There's a Reason We Eat Latkes

Madison Weiss

I knew that my grandpa was Jewish, but for a long time, I didn't understand what that meant. He had different holidays than me, but that was fine. We went to Christmas at Gramma's, Passover at Papa's. Even after the incident with the gefilte fish, in which I had two helpings to be nice, nearly puking in the meantime, I longed to take part in that ancient remembrance of the Jews' exodus from Egypt. Like the Angel of Death, I learned to "pass over," and skipped the processed fish in favor of brisket or potato kugel.

The Jewish customs of my father's family permeated my childhood home, even though we were very Christian. It wasn't as though the Jewish-ness was "other," or that one religion was more correct. Sundays were for church and Jesus and customs from the old country were for at home. Instead of making pancakes, my dad made latkes. I didn't have chicken-noodle soup when sick; I had matzo-ball. Our cupboards were stocked with matzah crackers, simply divine when smothered with butter for a quick snack. We were scrambling to hold onto the traditions of our ancestors, even if we didn't quite know what they were.

For the longest time, I didn't know that my grandpa had a name other than Papa. I laughed when I first heard it. "Yehuda? But Papa, that's silly!"

"And so it is. That's why in America, I go by Harry."

"Yehuda," I repeated to myself, the taste of the word foreign on my tongue. I dismissed the feeling for many years. He was just Papa to me, someone who gave me candy and occasionally sang in Hebrew.

Years later, when I was in middle school, I asked him about Israel. "What was it like? What do you remember?"

"I was only five when we emigrated. I don't remember a whole lot."

I was a stubborn preteen and I begged him for more. After a while, he relented. "Fine. I can scrounge up some memories for you, but it'll cost you a hug and a kiss."

He sang of orange trees in the backyard, of a house by a train track. The air was hot and sweet and he ran around Ramat Gan with his twin sister and his cousin. But, they left. That is the way with the Jews; they are always leaving.

I was in high school before I thought to ask again. Now, I am ashamed that I didn't ask sooner. What was I waiting for?

"Papa, tell me what happened to your mother and father."

It was a sunny August afternoon, my attic bedroom humid with the heat. I had him on the phone, and the pause was unbearable. Maybe because I couldn't see his face.

"What do you mean?" he finally replied.

It was my turn to pause. I could hardly get the word out, so heavy with its burden. "The Holocaust. Tell me what happened."

And he did.

I laid there for a long while, silence screaming from my throat. He asked me if I was okay, but I quickly hung up. There was a lot to process, and my breathing was stunted with grief.

He told me how his father had been sent off to be a forced-labor slave.

How his two-year-old half-brother and grandparents had been immediately gassed at Auschwitz.

How his father's sisters, Esther and Suzy, died in the camp as well. One while working. One on the way to ambulance during liberation. Papa's sisters are named after them.

How his father's first wife remarried after the war, assuming his father to be dead.

How his mother, my great-grandma, Tova, narrowly escaped a ghetto.

How she lived in a cave in the mountains for a year.

How his parents met, with his father using a new name for a new life and a new wife.

Later, Israel. The birth of himself and his twin. Moving across an ocean. Pushing away the darkness. Not talking about it for fifty years.

Well, we were talking about it now. I wanted to know so much more about my family, and so every chance I got I had him tell me another story about them. I assembled a family tree, contacted organizations throughout Europe, including Auschwitz, to see if I could find records of my family. My searches were fruitless. To the world, my family does not exist.

I felt like I owed it to my family. Without their deaths and sacrifice I would not be alive, and it made for a guilty conscious. I thought that by learning about them and finding their names in a census somewhere, proof that they had lived, I was paying them back. But nothing I ever did was going to be enough. They were murdered, and I was standing because

of it. It felt like I was the result of blood money.

It wasn't until I visited my great-grandma Tova again that I finally found perspective. I had met her a few times in my youth, but after my family moved to the Midwest, we were able to visit her more frequently. In fact, once a year for Passover.

She was tiny in stature, but her attitude could knock down a giant. Tova often joked, her voice thickly accented, about the stupid people in our family. "Idiots," she would say, shrugging in her orange chair. "They're all idiots." Tova also laughed about how dumb her friends were, friends that she had been playing bridge with for over fifty years.

One afternoon, I was sitting on the floor by her knees, rolling about in discomfort after she essentially force-fed us an entire feast (egg salad, fried chicken, blintzes; she was then offended when we were too full to eat the torte cake).

"I wrote something down for you," she said, "but I will not read it out loud. Harry can read it to you." Her veiny hands shook as she pulled out a neatly folded paper. "It is my story."

This moment is poignant as far as memories go. I can still feel the carpet beneath me, the sound of her little voice as she helped pronounce names and cities. Tova is dead now, but her words are echoed in my heart: "I still dream about German soldiers chasing me, but when I wake up I say to myself how lucky we are compared to others who lost [more of] their loved ones. I promise to tell this story to my children, because the only way it will never happen again, is to remember."

The wise words of my great-grandmother transformed me. I had nothing to feel guilty about. I didn't need to repay them. I need only remember. Remember their sacrifice, their deaths, their lives. Remember their courage, their children, their recipes.

Remember, like how we recount the Hebrews' escape from Egypt.

Remember, like how we recall the eight days the candles kept burning.

Remember, like how we mourn the six million Jews of the Holocaust.

Remember, she told me.

And I will.



A River in Panama

Mailinh Ho

Oil on Canvas, 15.25" x 21"

Throw Away Your Prozac

Zoey Hunsinger

Stay in bed. Refuse to open the oxford curtains. Never feel the rays of sunlight against your face. Your best friend will call you lazy. Then when you two get a ‘treat yourself’ lunch, don’t offer to pay for your croissant sandwich. She’ll roll her eyes and mutter, “I got it.” She’ll pay the \$10.67 in cash. You’ll be indebted in a way that could not ever be repaid, even if you give her gas money on a later date.

Dry heave into a bag. Take two Tylenol for the Calculus homework headaches. Realize your best friend is right. You’ll fail your first college class. You’ll never know if it’s because you wouldn’t show up, or your professor just graded too hard. When summer cotton candy skies approach, get a copy of the Star—see Subway is hiring. Don’t apply, you won’t get it anyway. Once your classes start again, don’t sharpen your pencils—you won’t take notes, and you sure as hell won’t study.

You’re lazy.

Leave your textbooks in an unorganized pile. Don’t do your laundry. Your roommate will think you’re lazy too. She’ll also think you’re a mess. She won’t ever say anything, she’s too tenderhearted to ever lobby a criticism, but she won’t need to. You’ll know by the way she edges your dirty dishes to the sink. Start hiding moldy dishes under your bed. Never lift a finger to clean them.

One afternoon, you’ll walk in on her vacuuming. Don’t hang your petticoat up. Throw it on the couch. She’ll sigh. Don’t worry though, she won’t actually say anything. She won’t even comment about your leftover pizza box sitting on her desk (yours will be too crowded to place it there) or the crumbs gathering on your side of the room. She won’t even complain when you forget to clean your hair out of the shower drain. But, she won’t need to say a word, because you’ll know the truth.

You’re a mess.

Your art professor will think you’re a mess too, and that you’re sloppy. You won’t draw a straight line. You’ll get paint everywhere. You won’t be able to stay inside the box. Your drawing of a

blue-eyed Huskey that took four cups of coffee and a sleepless night will be stained in ink stating for you to draw “neater” and “cleaner.” In order to pass the class, you’ll have to stick to the status quo and draw a straight line. But you won’t pass the class, because you’re not normal.

You’re unusual.

Be an astronaut. Float in outer space while you kiss your boyfriend. He’ll think you’re unusual too. When you two touch, think about lines and what your art professor says. On occasion, kissing won’t even feel right. Don’t tell him this. Don’t dare mention the rock that’ll form in your stomach at the thought of undressing him. Lay awake at night. Run a starved finger over your lips. Brush your teeth four times to forget that his saliva has been in your mouth. Think if you weren’t unusual, you’d be able draw straight lines and enjoy having a boy touch your lips.

Your mother won’t like that you’re not normal. She’ll tell you this every time you mention your best friend with the cute auburn hair who pays for your croissant. She also won’t like that you stay in bed all day with your curtains shut. You’ll hate that you stay in bed all day. But it’s okay. You already hate a lot of things about yourself from your toes that are as long as your fingers to your elephant ears, to how you think more about your best friend’s lips than you do your boyfriend’s. Your mother will say that you worry too much. You’ll worry that you worry too much and that sometimes your thoughts aren’t even your own thoughts.

Every Tuesday, you’ll stare at the popcorn ceiling of your therapist’s office and think about all the problems in your life. You’ll sit in the plastic chair. Stare at your boney fingers. Your throat will be too dry to speak. You’ll rub your knuckles. Pick at your cuticles. You’ll do all you can to not look at your therapist’s red hair. She’ll click her pen and say if you got out of bed more often then things could get better.

But you’ll never get out of bed—you’re lazy.



Sunset on White River

Mailinh Ho

Oil on Canvas, 16" x 20"

At the Top of Kingsbury Grade

Madison Weiss

The legend goes like this:
an anchor dislodged from granite rock
turns Arthurian child into mermaid

And so, she paddles to its chiseled iron
her lungs constricted in Sierran waters
Knees scraping on memories

of summers in sunburned youth
spent planning, heisting
To no avail, the anchor remains fixed

in time (summers five through fifteen)
and space (beside the diving cliff)
Her legs remain separate, sapien

An Ode to Hot Sauce

Tanner Léon

Feeble bodies fumble
on tasteless foods,
causing grumpy moods:

lost in the black
and white world
of culinary catastrophe,
they search for any ounce
of color...

But wait!
There looms on the horizon,
a savior...

Oh graceful god,
save us all
from the nightmarish hellhole
known as bland supper.

Your shredded peppers
are blended red,
like tan shaman.

A few spurts of the bottle
will reinvigorate ramen,
painting lifeblood
amongst the crevices.

When tacos are dry,
totalitarian,
Tabasco liberates taste buds
into humanitarian holiness.

Tomatillo lush greens
condensed in a container
with jalapeños so serene,
they ride together
on an emerald wave,
splash into a bowl
of arroz con frijoles.

Put it on potatoes!
It's vibrant like tomatoes!
Sizzle me Sriracha!
Spice up the broccola!
Canvas the collard greens!
Lace the burritos!

Oh dear hot sauce,
thanks for never keepin' it
aburrido.

You profess picanté,
delve dishes
onto an edge of danger.

A smoldering whip cracks
Louisiana Lightning Strike
from the sky,

sauntering me into a slow sway,
coiled with the snake of spice.
Fire gleams in our eyes,
the hot passion of life.

Bodies must fight to grow
and I know
you're a sweaty
workout who waterfalls
noses while the eyes
run wildly
through a lively throat.

When I need a good kick,
I know where to go.



Gods of the Light

Katrina Tomeldan

Digital, 14" x 24"

Contributor's Notes

Hannah Bryson-Price is a sophomore at IUPUI majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in ASL. She is ecstatic to be published in *genesis* as it is her first publication.

Shannon Couch is a junior at IUPUI currently studying Communications and Linguistics. She has always had a love for writing, whether it be poetry, song lyrics, creative nonfiction pieces, or anything of the like. She is always seeking more outlets to express her creativity and learn more about herself in the process.

Kylie Dennis is a Senior in IUPUI's Honors College and is pursuing a degree in Neuroscience. She is passionate about traveling, serving the community, piano, photography, and her faith. Her goal is to become a family medicine physician practicing in an underserved community.

Evan Dile is a Junior in IUPUI's Kelley School of Business. Majoring in Marketing, Evan hopes to one day work at a publishing company marketing books for new authors.

Georgey Elaine is a junior majoring in Media Arts & Science and minoring in Creative Writing. She hopes to one day share stories through word, audio, and film. When Georgey isn't holding a pen, she enjoys watching videos, playing ukulele, and thinking of even more stories.

Mason Farr is in his final year at IUPUI, studying Secondary English Education. He has had his poetry published in the 2017 and 2018 issues of the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library's Literary Journal 'So It Goes.'

Mailnh Ho is a junior painting student at Herron, feel free to check out more of her work on Instagram @mickiesen.

Zoey Hunsinger is currently a sophomore at IUPUI. She is majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. Her favorite artist is Taylor Swift, though she explores all music genres. Her favorite Starbucks drink at the moment is the Iced Caramel Cloud Macchiato. She hopes to one day write a Best Selling Novel.

Nancy Lee is an English major focusing on creative writing. She is also a self-taught metalsmith and founder of Indy Metalsmith, a guild for metal artisans. Lee works out of the Circle City Industrial Complex, an artist enclave near downtown Indianapolis. She is married to a professional photographer.

Tanner Léon is an Indianapolis poet with a knack for rhythm and wordplay. He hosts a monthly open mic in the city called Discovery Open Mic. In his band, Fantastic Flying Couch, he also plays keys and does vocals. Stay on the lookout for his upcoming book of poetry titled: Midwest Psychosis.

Olivia Van Renterghem's art often utilizes bright bold colors to catch the eye of the viewer, her art often has humor or a political message behind it and is influenced by surrealism. She has focused on painting until her freshman year at Herron where she will study multiple studio practices in order to prepare her for a master's in art therapy. Via strongly believes that art should be seen as a way of expressing something and wants to share this message with others struggling to cope with something.

Chaya Ruby is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Herron School of Art and Design, IUPUI. Her major area of concentration is Painting with minors in Art History and Design Production.

Bryttney Schaible is a California native lost in the midwest and trying to earn her Bachelor's degree.

Julia Spratt is a graduate student at IUPUI pursuing her master's in English as well as the graduate certificates for teaching writing and teaching literature. She is the editorial assistant for the Journal of Teaching Writing and leads science classes to students and families at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

Katrina Tomeldan is a Filipino-American illustrator who specializes in digital arts and book-making. She was born in Skokie, Illinois and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. Her artwork focuses on showing intimate human interactions with all types of animals and how human decisions greatly affect their way of living.

Rebecca Trimpe is a writer and editor at the IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law. A former journalist, she's slowly been working her way through that undergraduate English major she wishes she'd done the first time through IUPUI. She's a proud Jaguar, but graduated during the Metro era.

Madison Weiss is a senior at IUPUI. While usually knee-deep in science textbooks, she has recently tried her hand at creative writing. She aspires to become a physician assistant, and maybe publish one or two novels one day. Many thanks to her family and friends for their endless support.

Molly Wolfe is a junior at Herron School of Art and Design where she majors in painting. Outside of school, Molly continues her work in art by volunteering for ArtMix, a local non profit, interning at the State Museum, and selling her artwork at local markets and galleries.

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