

CARROLLINA MUSE

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LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE



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CAROLINA MUSE

literary & arts magazine

VOLUME II • NO. IV • OCTOBER 2022



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From the Editor

Since moving deeper into the mountains two months ago, I've learned that both human connection and solitude are integral to growth & creativity.

Our new house is perched on top of a mountain overlooking valleys of farmland and the rolling mountains in Pisgah National Forest. Here, I often feel disconnected from civilization, wrapped in the quiet embrace of the forest. Before moving to Brevard, I was anxious that I would feel lonely. Now, I have experienced the healing power of solitude. I have been writing poetry, taking notes in my journal, singing loud, and watching the sunset each night. My creative juices had been bottled up and now the pressure of silence and altitude have caused them to overflow.

Although I've come to love the time I've spent alone, I still crave human connection. Plus, the time I have spent with others has become even more fruitful. From short conversations with the lady who sells wildflowers at the farmer's market, to moments shared with my family & friends, I feel more tuned in, alive, and energized. Communication is how we empathize, connect with, and learn from one another. We work together to solve problems and generate positive change. Human connection feeds the soul.

Certain pieces in this magazine invite solitude & reflection. One of our short stories follows the incredibly lonely experience that follows the death of a loved one; several poems examine how loneliness follows you after lost relationships. Whimsical depictions of the natural environment in visual art pieces place readers in the comforting solitude of nature. Conversely, other pieces in this issue show the importance of our connection with others, such as art pieces & poems that draw parallels from us to our ancestors and music that elicits feelings of togetherness & support.

As you flip through this issue, I hope you connect with the work inside and that it reminds you to feed your yearning for both solitude & human connection; I promise they both live inside of you. This duality is what makes us human.

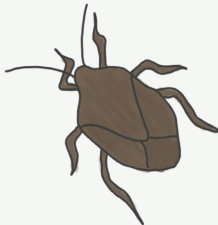


Madison

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Listening

Virginia Shepley

The Altar of the Moment

Ann Privateer

I'm inundated with plums
Think I'll make some wine
While my neighbor makes jam
Compatible takes on
Many different shapes
We breathe the same air
Exhale different realities
Long for companionship
Extend our differences
Feel the hurt of our
First grader self
Still present
Tears stifled
Pleading to get up
Off my knees.



network

V Shepley 2022

HOME IS A POEM

Sarah Cross

A home rhymes with a poem
but that's not how words work
perhaps but a lexicon of sorrow and existential
crisis slice into my noggin and enlighten me.
Everyone is right and never left
nothing in the mix
a tug of war between extremes
but I'm not making any sense.

It's the point
—the bullet of it all.

Existence proven by perception
I cling to the questions
but I'm out of poems.

If home is a poem
why do I always ask the what ifs?

I pray you'd see me only in the words of poetry
only in the musings of my brain.
This body of mine fails conceptually
but I am dwindling down the dread of existence, which cloaks me in pebbles.
I am the princess and the pea of the senses.

It's all grinding key teeth and the lasting whiff of shit.

Clothes that stick and prickle
every fiber felt
molecule by molecule—
I am a walking mental wreck.



Porch Pollen

Emily Furr

The Watchtower

Rush Johnston

The night is warm and thick with air like honey. The stars glimmer overhead, and I am stuck. It's as if the moon is just a pinprick in the fabric of the night, bathing the Earth in light from above. The forest surrounds me like a tattered shawl. I stay trapped in its embrace as coyotes holler in the distance. Salty tears stain my cheeks, but my sorrow is nothing new. I choke on memories of you.

It's been 3 years but here I sit. Night after night, sweaty and staring into the blackness, keeping watch for a girl who will never come home. It's been 3 years but here I grieve. No matter how hard I try, I can't swallow the remnants of you. It's been three years since the world collapsed around me, yet I know peace like never before. Even my bones know you are gone.

Still I pray to a faceless god that you may return and free me from this hellish watchtower.



the night hag

Ashlin Cross

you lie beside me in dreamland,
sweat-soaked satin, skin against skin,
sleep leaving the body at black mass and
likened to death, the night hag hanging—
stealing breath.

i lie beside you, a woman possessed
by thoughts of unrest, mouth open round
and soundless as i try to speak your name,
if you woke and looked upon the dark-winged
spirit's face, would you see that we're the same,
that i am her and she is me—
the waking nightmare, the vile thoughts set free.



A Spirit Thing
William Underwood

Golden

Caroline Clemson

I remember childhood
The way the air glistened with hope
Little lungs breathing in another world

Crossing a gilded landscape
On pale pink calloused toes
Straw colored hair painting the breeze

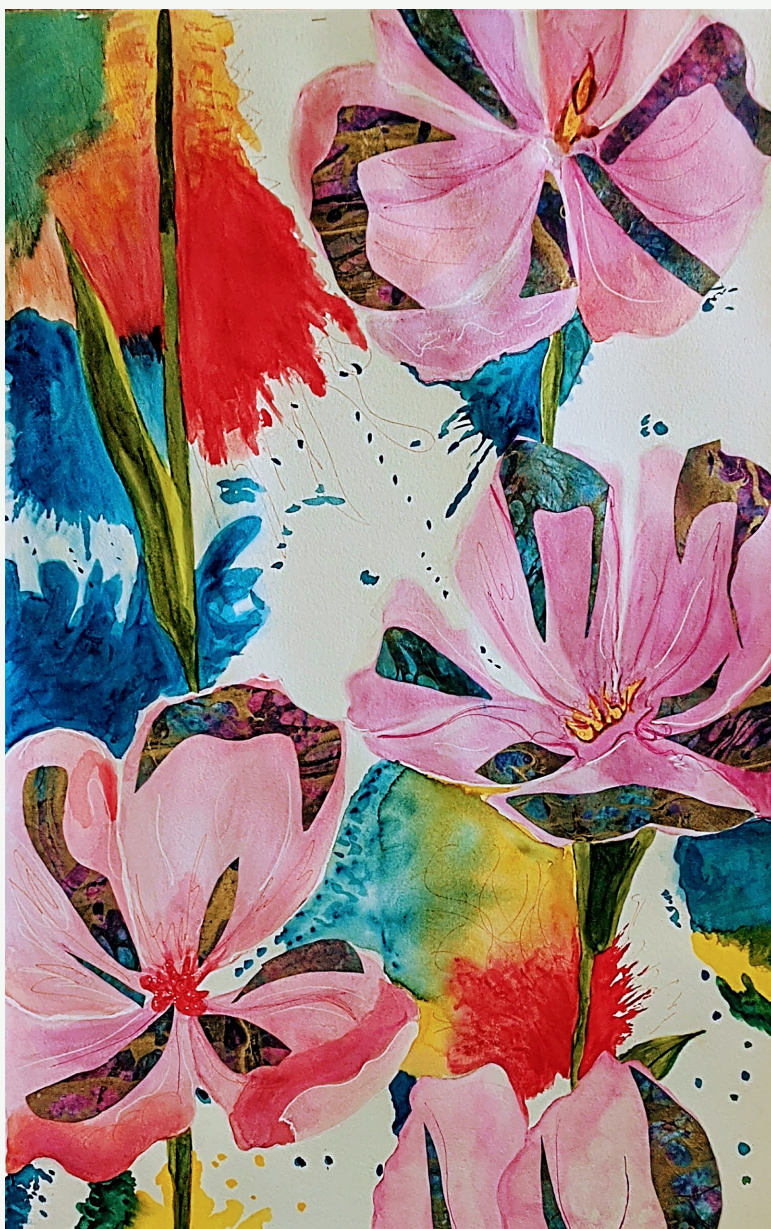
The soft glow of morning light
Reflecting off the walls of my heart
Covered in the weight of pleasant dreams

I remember the way
Time moved ever so slow
Hands on a clock wrapping arms around me

I never knew I'd one day wonder
How could I ever ask anyone to try to love
The desperate clawing girl within me?

Wearing childhood like a cloak
Sheltered from the things to come
Peace once ricocheted around this block

Joy is the other half of pain
I spent my youth blowing dandelions free
For a million wishes born of daydreams



Glorious
Gayle Miller



Won't Want

William Underwood

Under the Old Tree

Josh Poole

She drops her leaves, weighty in autumn
They brush past my hollow silhouette like blown kisses

In her old years she smiles at me
Her crooked limbs upon tangled loves of ancient roots
I have never seen such grace, bloomed and lost
I tiptoe upon the tattered moss

With untouched hands, she pulls the sky closer
My habergeon from the rain
Tethered to others' treetop brace
Their wicker bent in twisted pain

Do I dare place my hand upon
Where her years she counts widest?
Had fell over her course
The fruits of a hundred harvests?

Across those sturdy boughs I spy
Great beards of moss, draped to dry

My fitful eyes they span the cage
Where splintered fading daylight rage
Till by her shade the madness assuaged
I sit at her base
And open the first page





The Affair

Ryan Dowling

We had arranged it at a cheap motel in a town that stood between us. It occurred to me that millions of other unfaithful men & women must have thought the same thing: Why waste over a hundred dollars on a suite at the Holiday Inn when the average guy probably won't last more than ten or fifteen minutes? So, we agreed on a \$50 room at the local joint with a big red wooden *MOTEL* sign and a half-lit neon *NO VACANCY* sign swinging beneath it. Each room had a plain red door and a curtained window and chairs on the patios that nobody ever sat in. To the side of the hotel was a small fenced-in pool with chains wrapped around the gate and a sign that read "Permanently Closed." There were a few vehicles in the front parking lot, a couple tractor-trailers parked in the back, but otherwise the lot was empty.

I walked into the management office, a small room overcrowded with brochure stands, vending machines, and furniture. It stunk of cigarettes & stale coffee. There was a slender young man with long slick black hair and horn-rimmed glasses behind the desk. He lowered his *Rolling Stones* magazine and peered me up & down. The ironic smile he cracked told me he knew exactly what I was there for, and I grew self-conscious, as though I wore my infidelity like a badge. I was wearing a Chicago Bears shirt, cargo shorts, a Nikes cap, and New Balance sneakers—dressed like many other men my age—but at that moment I thought: "This is exactly the kind of thing a cheater would wear. I fit the profile. No, I'm a textbook definition."

We exchanged pleasantries, dollar bills, and change. When he offered me the key, I said, "Thanks, but it's not what you think." He said, "What do you mean?" and I said, "Never mind." I took the key and tried to make a smooth exit, but I tripped on the rug on the way out the door.

"Have a good night," he said.

I was climbing the steps to the second level where the room was located when Ariana called. "Hey, I'm so sorry, I'm running a little late. I had to deal with

the kids real quick, then Tyler had an accident and... anyway, I can't wait to see you!"

"I can't wait to see you either," I said.

"Oh my god, I've been fantasizing about this moment for sooo long. I'm just going to eat you up the second I see you."

She giggled, and I laughed.

"What did you end up telling Garret?" I said.

"I told him I'm running some errands. I could have told him anything in the world—long as he's got his vodka and video games, he won't even notice I'm gone."

"Yeah, right. All right."

"What'd you tell Maisy?"

"More or less the same. Said I had to run to Home Depot and Advanced Auto Parts for a few things, which was true. Except I already got them yesterday. Just never unloaded the car. I've got about an hour, two at the most."

I hoped I'd last at least five minutes.

"We'll make the most of it," she said reassuringly.

"Yes," I said. "We'll make it an hour we'll never forget."

"Mmm. I like it when you talk like that."

I had just unlocked the door to the room and opened it when I noticed a small spider descending from the upper frame of the door. It lowered itself to about eye level with me and then stopped, blocking the way to the room. I took a step back and craned my head away from it. I could see its fat hairy abdomen and its long quick legs and the hideous cluster of black globes that were its eyes. I blew at it, and it braced itself as it swung like a pendulum.

"Hey, Ariana, let me call you back."

"That's okay. I'll see you when I get there. Better be naked for me."

"Ok, I will," I said. "It's room 27 B, on the upper level, by the way."

"27 B, okay. See you soon, Koala Bear."

"Soon, Honey Bee."

She giggled mischievously and hung up.

Then it was just me and the spider, eye to eye. I didn't like it being on the cusp of my room, let alone so close to my face. I'd always hated spiders. In fact, everything about those insidious little stalkers inspired horror, disgust, and above all, contempt. I smacked it as hard as I could with an open palm and sent it out of the game. I rubbed the fine silk off my hands. It left me with the sticky feeling that its webbing was all over

me, clinging to my eyelashes, plastered across my lips, tangled in my beard. I ran a hand over my face & hair and shook it off. Then I let myself inside.

The room had a queen-sized bed with a prison bar headboard and an ugly floral comforter pulled over the pillows. The lampshades were yellowed with age, and the orange carpet's texture could have passed for sandpaper. There was an entertainment center with an old box television, but I, of course, would be providing my own entertainment. All that mattered to me was that it had a bathroom in the back where I could clean up after the deed was done. I had brought a little travel case, one I'd found under the bathroom sink, just to be safe. In it was a toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, facewash, etc., but beneath all that was a small bottle of Maisy's favorite perfume. As soon as I opened it I could smell it. It hit me in the face like the moment Maisy walks into a room, wanting to know why I haven't painted the garage, why I haven't fixed the ice maker in the refrigerator, why I haven't built a shed and planted a willow tree and taken the dog for a walk. It made me stiffen up. I fished out the half pint of Hennessy (Ariana's favorite) I'd tucked in there as well. I took a pull to take the edge off.

Feeling confident, I stripped down to my boxers and stood in front of the mirror. I sucked in my gut, puffed up my chest, and cocked my bald head.

"You still got it, Johnny," I said.

Then I laid down on the bed and checked my phone.

Maisy had texted me: "Could you please pick up some milk and flour? I need it ASAP for Peter's birthday cake tomorrow. Thanks! Love you."

I texted back: "Milk, flour and more beer—got it."

She texted me back an eye roll emoji, to which I responded with a heart.

"Don't forget! Five a.m. sharp for yoga tomorrow!" she texted.

I sighed and laid my head on the pillow.

"Yep," I texted back, but

truth be told I didn't get anything out of yoga, and getting up at five a.m. on a Sunday was the last thing I wanted to do.

I took another pull from the half pint and then I Googled the question: "Should I cheat on my wife?" as if some arguable source on the internet could validate my actions. As if there were some kind of support group for cheaters. After skimming a stern admonishment from a marriage counselor, a wave of boozy euphoria rushed to my brain. The day's events had dogged my mind. The sun had worn me out while I mowed the lawn, and I was sore from hammering together raised garden beds for Maisy's tomatoes. Drowsy, I pulled the covers over my head and closed my eyes for a minute. That which ached in me turned into a heavy, sinking feeling until I was pulled down like a swimmer sucked in an undertow, and I offered no resistance.

When I came out on the other side of it I awoke in the motel room—the same, yet different. I was standing in the middle of it, and now it was dark

Smoke Break

Ashley Rabanal



within the room except for a vague light that emanated from an unspecified source. A fine dust floated in the air, resembling a light fog. It smelled rubbery, like the inside of a Halloween mask. The walls were bare & cracked with hairline fractures that ran to the corners of the ceiling where they congregated in the dark. The room seemed much smaller now; there was no door or windows; the bed was a ragged mattress on a collapsing frame. The ceiling fan turned lazily. The strange light source ebbed & flowed against the dark.

I noticed insects moving over the carpet. Four or five of them. Upon closer inspection, I saw that they were spiders much like the one I had seen hanging from the door frame. I danced away from them. Then I noticed there were dozens of them, moving out from under the bed, from behind the curtains, from the cracks in the walls. Rigid with horror, I realized the entire carpet was alive with spiders. My feet vanished beneath them, and then they ascended my legs. I began jumping and stomping, kicking and swatting, scraping my legs clean of them even as they ascended my arms, but there were too many. It was futile. Then I heard a purring behind me; not like a cat's, but quicker, coarser; more like the

shuffling of a deck of cards. At its signal, the tiny spiders retreated into the cracks of the walls and the stitching of the carpet.

When I turned around I discovered, much to my horror, an enormous spider, big as a grown man, flexing its long stilted legs, pulsating up & down, its hairy abdomen swinging like a burlap sack filled with loot. The strange light source shone over it like a spotlight. Its predatory pose turned my veins ice cold. My legs became useless. Not with all of my might could I muster the strength to lift even a single finger, and I panicked within the chrysalis of my paralysis. The giant spider, however, did not sink its fangs into my neck nor wrap me in a cocoon to feed me to its young. It darted & squeezed through one of the hairline fractures in the wall—an impossible feat—after which I heard it skittering within the walls, until it faded into the far side of the building. I stood there, still paralyzed with the fear that it might come back.

When I awoke, I was lying in the bed again. I snapped my head up. The clock with red digits read 3:28 p.m. I hadn't napped but a few minutes. I could see the sun shining through the blinds, painting its golden bars across my chest. I had just begun to experience a sort of relief when the feeling of being covered in spider silk overwhelmed me. The blanket felt like a thick cocoon, which I kicked off while I ran my hands frantically over my body, tearing away at the phantom silk. Aware this was all in my mind, even confident that I

was on the right side of reality this time, I still entertained the fantasy that somewhere within the walls & ceilings, the enormous arachnid was lurking about, its chelicerae slowly opening & closing, its eight hooked legs spinning in cruel synchronicities, the shadow of its fat abdomen looming somewhere just behind me. I blinked until reality felt real.

I began to put my clothes back on, disgusted with the man who faced me—more with his debauched morality than his grotesque physique—in the mirror. And yet, Maisy had put up with this slob for

Casino Chaos

Jasmine Doctor



all these years, had turned the other cheek when most women would have walked away. I knew I'd never do better than her. She didn't deserve this. I grabbed my travel case and took one last pull of Hennessy before tossing it on the bed along with the room key. The slosh of the cognac and the jingle of the keys gave me a sense of resolve as I walked toward the door. I'd tell Ariana something came up, a work call, a family emergency, something like that. She was in the same position. She knew how these things went.

I turned the doorknob to open the door, and there she stood on its cusp, just as beautiful as can be. She had on a black dress that showed off her legs, smooth as silk & sexy as dark chocolate all the way down to the high heels. Her chest was pushed up with a show of cleavage, and her hair was braided up into a pretty little bun, just the way I liked it. Bangles clattered up & down her arms, giving her an exotic flare. Her lips were red as two flames. When she spoke, I could almost taste her mouth.

"Didn't I tell you to be naked?"

"Well, I know... you see... I just..."

"You're nervous, aren't you?"

I shoved my hands in my pockets and grabbed the inside lining. I pulled one inside out as if I were looking for something, but there was nothing in there but lint.

"Nervous? No. No, I'm just... conflicted. I mean, you're married. I'm married. We both have kids. We work together. What if things go wrong? Think of all the people we could hurt. Think of having to see each other every day at the office after that. It's just... I don't know."

Ariana twirled her hair with one finger.

"I know, I get it. If your woman's good to you, then I don't want to get in the way of things... but when was it you told me the last time you had sex? How many months ago?"

I bit my lip and looked down at the ground.

"Look," Ariana continued. "Garret's so detached I might as well have raised both my kids as a single mother. I do everything. I take them to school, doctor's appointments, baseball games. Dress them, bathe them, feed them. Everything. Garret's got some issues, and I don't know if and when he's ever going to deal with them. I really don't want to put the kids through another divorce. I keep telling myself he just needs time. But until then, I think I'm entitled to a little fun. Sex doesn't have to be this serious thing. We're just two adults relieving some stress. If you think I'm going to

get hurt or something, trust me, I won't."

She placed her hand on my cheek. I tried not to like it, but I did. I liked it a lot.

"It's not just you, I'm worried about getting hurt," I said. Ariana rolled her eyes.

"You're really not good at this kind of thing are you? Listen, boo, it's just sex. It's an exercise in pleasure. I'm not trying to steal you or anything. I'm not some kind of homewrecker."

"How would you feel if Garret were sleeping around?"

"Oh, hell no! Only I get to do that. Ain't nobody sleeping around on me."

Ariana chuckled mischievously and stepped closer to me, her breasts against my chest, her eyes narrowed to slits that oozed with longing.

"But you see the problem there, don't you?" I said. "A relationship is a two-way street. It's a bond between—"

"Oh, shut up, would you? You came here for a reason. And now here we are. Just stop fighting it—" she pulled me all the way into her and whispered into my ear "—I want you."

The smell of her hair and the softness of her skin aroused me immediately. Her perfume was not like the strong, offensive stuff that Maisy wore. It was soft & sweet, and I sucked it in with great pleasure. The warmth of her body was intoxicating, and my nerves stood on end as her hands ran up my shirt and over my skin. My mind cried out, "No, no, no, no, no!" but my body vetoed each one with a resounding "Yes!" She walked me back up to the bed until the backs of my knees hit the mattress, buckled, and I fell on my back. We squirmed together, our mouths locked, the sound of our teeth connecting with a *click*. Our clothes unraveled like molting skin. I entered her, and our bodies intertwined into a single eight-legged creature, writhing & screaming. Twisting furiously between the sheets. Caught in its own web.



Street Racing

Richard Hurteau

I wish I knew then what I know now
 Picking pennies right off the ground and I'm
 Street racing, like I know I can
 The way I see it I just sort of rolled out
 Jumping and skipping and pointing at sellouts
 But I can't see the point in it so I crawl

Chorus

It ain't a needin,
 It ain't a wantin
 It's a serious kind of craving haunting
 It grabs you
 It'll scare your mommas, it'll frighten babies
 It's the real thing, there ain't no mistaking
 What all it can do

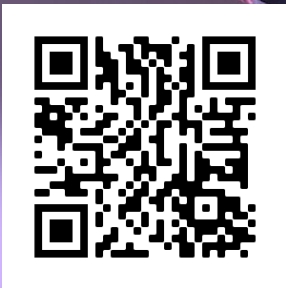
They feed me nickels and call me a bum
 But what they're missing is all the fun
 As I take everything I own
 We burned the bullets just yesterday
 Traded all I'd set for the day
 To get it, to grab it, this time

Chorus

It ain't a needin,
 It ain't a wantin
 It's a serious kind of craving haunting
 It grabs you
 It'll scare your mommas, it'll frighten babies
 It's the real thing there ain't no mistaking
 What all it can do

So I'm, street racing with all of the freaks
 Jumping and shouting with our two left feet
 And the hunting is something that we do

So I'm, street racing with all of the freaks
 Jumping and shouting with our two left feet
 And the hunting is something that we do



Street Racing

Richard Hurteau



A Moment With Jesse Fox at Sonark Media

Joshua Collins

Forgiveness

Browning Blair

I am watching the shadow of rain on your legs.
It is a strange thing to focus on, but I can barely look at your face.
Dew drops slither down my windshield, our only quiet company while we're
Parked and silently watching as the
damp women next to us hand broken bottles to passersby.

Maybe this is forgiveness.
I certainly don't feel the glass splinters in my heart now.
Maybe we can do this again sometime,
I know the women will be here again tomorrow evening,
fragments in their palms.



Lock Murray

Aaron Falls



Meditation on High School Crush

Catherine Phillips

At fifteen, I sit in the car of a boy who begged
to take me home from play practice. My mother
will never know I'm here because she will not need to.
"So, if I was a lesbian, you would let me go?" Gotcha.
No comment, but Kaylee will give me a ride next week.

The boy is Luke, like the Gospel man, red hair, face teenaged and angular.
The car floor is thin. The rush of the road is delicious.
He controls our forward motion. He's the river. I'm the rock.
I tell him our friends think we should date.
He tells me not to ask for what I can't have.

*But remember, little thing, this beautiful boy is not a well
from which to pull water, and he is not the sun.
He is wild, but you are wilder; and this is
what it is to be an untamable thing:*

*grow & wear down & and feel and tangle
your roots with others' roots and let them hold you
for a little while. Let yourself worship now
and be a living thing later.*

My body begins to feel crooked, like I have witnessed death
for the first and second times. For a tiny moment,
silence, then the quiet blanket of what my mother would say.
I told her we play husband and wife in the stupid goddamn play.
We call each other *spouse* in the hall. And now I know for sure he will not

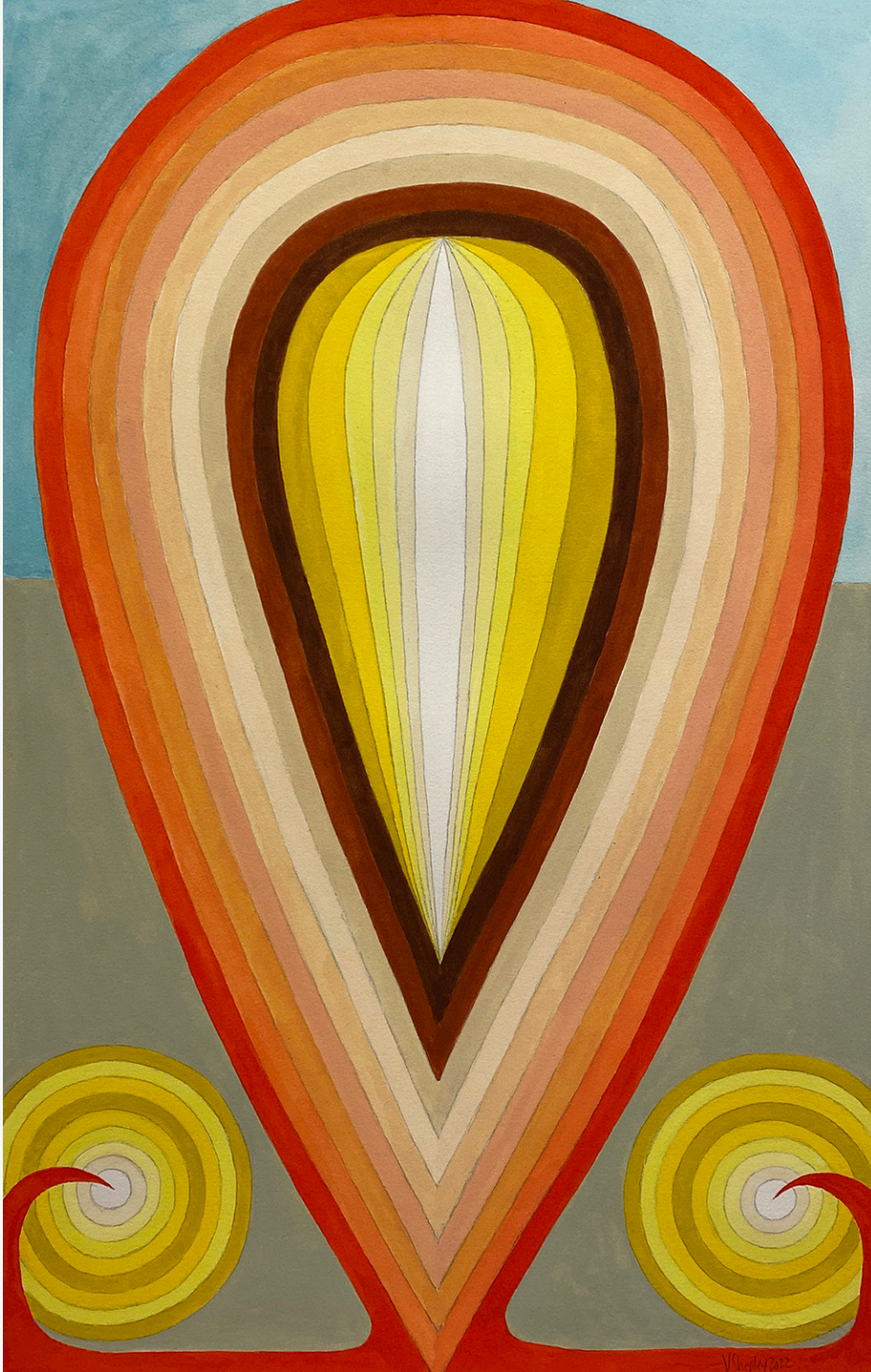
touch me he will not touch me he will not
touch for better or for worse. And who gives a shit. Not me. This night
I pretend I care nothing for the boy-prophet who won't even let me
hold his hand on stage. And somehow I understand that he will bald his tires
leaving our state for law school and will not think of me again.

We do not speak about the future, I decide, my shoulder pressed
against the grubby plastic door. At my house,
the lights are on, but I stay for a while in his space. He lets me. *Will I see
you tomorrow? You betcha.* Then I ask him to look me in the eye and tell me
something I don't already know. Isn't that what boys are for?



Healing for our Wounds

Virginia Shepley



SYNONYMOUS

Sydney Crutch

Let yourself die
down
all the way down into the dirt
Die from the inside first
the atriums of the heart,
the blood pumping through fascia
and nail bed and pupil.
Die from the bones
Die from the white and the marrow
the eggs and tubes and balloons pumping air.
Let yourself peel away
from the stories embedded in your spleen
that called you small, unseen
insignificant
irrelevant.
Peel away the parts
heavy in the chest
that were taught to distrust themselves.
The aches and shame
and chronic pain
that became
synonymous to your very name.
Die to it
Die to it all.
And come back unafraid.





Longline Coast

Amanda Scattergood

Wando, my Severn

Sabrina Sanchez

dusted by dunes, her skin
is spiced with salt and sand
her tender head perpetually
beach haired or bed headed

when she isn't in the water
she is sleeping for the tide
brackish breaking on the shore
she'll watch it from her porch

ghost crabs peek from burrows
when she walks through marshland
sweet grass slouching toward her
plastered with pluff mud

from sand bar to surf
the undertow pulls her along
farther out than is wise
she dives under each swell

regretfully returning her to shore
the crashing waves crest
foam clinging to her form, fighting
for footing against her friction

droplets of water glisten
opalescent in the sun like
pearls rolling along her body
bronzed and weatherbeaten

with a shell to her ear she hears
sirens singing songs of summer
sea shanties so seductive that saps
sink to sea-bed, solicitous

their screams for salvage and safety ring
 resounding over the tumultuous torrent
 could current carry cause for concern
 this river'd run a riot

and though no wholesome maiden
 harkening Hafren, she's still self-sacrificing
 a savior, reluctant though she may be
 those pearls wound round her wrists,
 her shackles

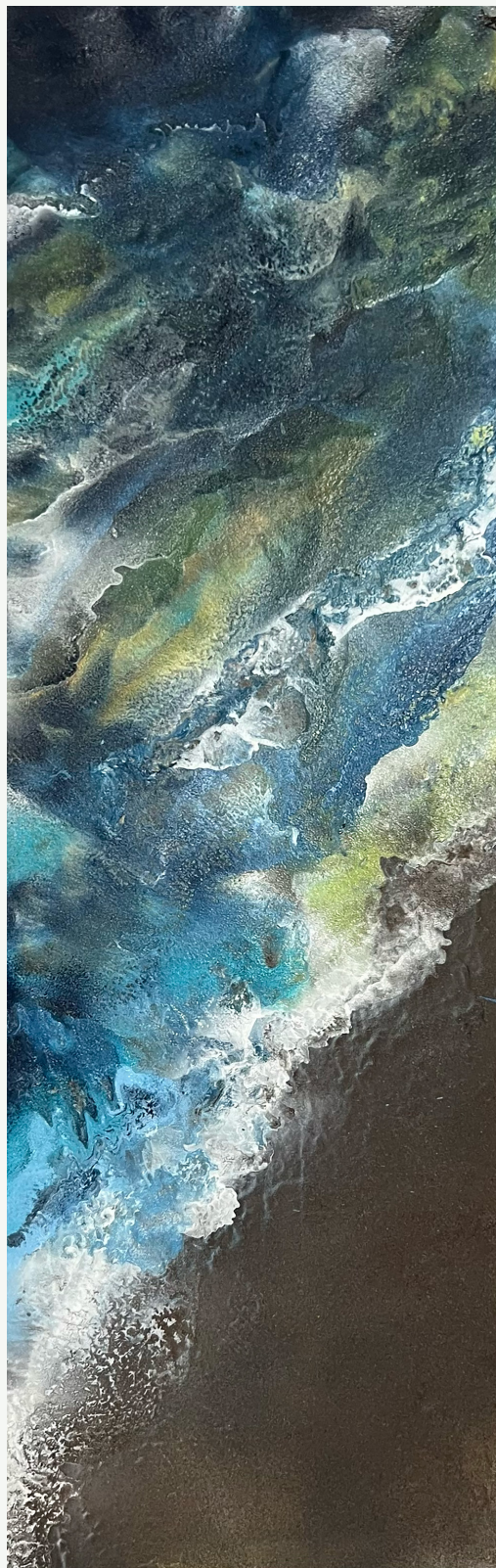
so wading through those willful waters
 she'll drag dunderheads to dryland
 deserting them to slump surrounded
 by spartina and sea pickles

the shattered shells of oyster beds having
 carved their mark into her soles
 she'll shuck her sheath, let the sun
 peel away what skin that remains

reeling, raw but recovering
 salt still stinging her wounds, she'll sprawl
 out across the warmed wooden planks
 of her dock, mouth huffing muggy air

someday sailors will sell her stories
 tell tall tales of some sultry sprite
 who dared deliver them from the depths
 their princess, pure

for now, this shedding shrew will muse
 on the distant day when none require her return
 from riverbed, she will not listen and save
 she will drown and rest



Abstract Realism Coastline

Amanda Scattergood

low tide at atlantic beach

David Blake

when I met the Atlantic
 I stood inches from its tide
 as the sea foam crept up to my toes
 like a dog tied to a tree
 with each leap forward
 it is wrenched back with intensity

I spoke low to the waves
 as they herded grains to their new home
 and asked them how long they have to carry on
 but they were voiceless
 so I moved amongst them
 and let the salt air stretch my lungs

then I float on my back along the shoreline
 and close my eyes
 so when the waves tempt me under
 it'll feel like dying in my sleep
 but instead I am guided towards the sand
 to stumble on shore like a castaway

so I yell to the atlantic if it even wants to rise
 and in response the tide retreats further
 revealing bounteous nebula of sand and shells
 and I wonder if the ocean is never ending

yet the further I swim
 the more ruthless its rejection is

so I anchor myself in the dunes
 and I turn towards the parking lot
 guided by the innocent illustration
 of a white crescent
 to a rusting green bench
 where I can wait for the humidity to defog my lenses
 and consider that the ocean
 in all its globe-encompassing greatness
 can not fear my presence within its waves

but it is I who hesitates to its sovereignty
 who wants to be sucked out by a riptide
 but swims parallel to the shore each time
 it is I who fears the oneness
 the stillness of forgetting
 and the permanency of eternity
 because when the tide pulls out
 it reveals that there is more

Sunrise Spray *Amanda Scattergood*



In Limbo

Catherine Phillips

My cousin Ellen sees me through the wet plexiglass bus stop and mouths some words I can't understand. She wasn't at the funeral, and I almost don't recognize her with short, mousy hair. As I see her, distorted, through the barrier, I feel relief and a slightly stronger sense of heaviness; this is really happening. I'm really coming to stay with Ellen because my sister is dead. Dead forever.

Ellen doesn't come inside, so I meet her at the entrance, the weight of reality hitting me all at once. It might be the first time I've sat myself down to think through the situation. I must look awful, too; my hair got soaked, but I had nothing to tie it back with, so now it's a tangled mess down my back. I slept in my clothes, and they are wet too. I've been waiting longer than I thought; she's dripping and I'm not. She doesn't say much, just hugs me mechanically and carries one of my suitcases two blocks to where her car – a squarish green thing – is parked next to a daycare. I put my backpack between my feet and throw my other bags in the back. I haven't unclenched my jaw since the bus came up over the mountains and I saw the city rocketing toward me and got scared. I should probably still be tense, but for some reason, it feels better to finally be moving, to see the city through Ellen's dirty windshield, to lean into the dance-like motions as she weaves through pre-pre-rush-hour traffic. It's already so dark. How did it get to be so late in the year?

"Why do people always lose their goddamn minds in the rain?" Ellen mutters. She glances at me. "Stop that, Leslie. We're not going to crash or anything. Relax." My leg bounces, but I can't control it. I look back at Ellen, a weird tension in my stomach, and she's silent, staring out the windshield, her expression telling me that, somehow, the downpour and the buzz of traffic are my fault. That I could (and should) make them go away so we can reach the apartment in peace. That, maybe, I never should have stepped off that bus. Part of me agrees. It's true that maybe I should have stayed in

the town where my sister has just been buried and stayed in college and done all the other things I was supposed to do. Grown-ups are supposed to be able to look their relatives in the eye and not leave town in the middle of the night with two suitcases and a ratty backpack full of books. But it's no longer clear what's supposed to happen.

Ellen must have got my letter, seeing as she picked me up at the right bus stop at the right time. Approximately. But it's not just that; I haven't stopped thinking about what I wrote, sitting on the floor of Aunt Carla's walk-in closet, listening to the footsteps of people trailing in and out of the house, trying to plug my ears against the clatter of silverware and the scrape of dining chairs. I didn't make any tearful confessions or say anything embarrassing – in fact, I hadn't even cried for Maggie yet when I wrote it. But, though I couldn't have sent it more than two weeks ago, it feels so long ago that I have the urge to confirm that it's real and that it was really me who wrote it. I'm not sure if I'm that person anymore, and I don't know how to check. I don't think I'm embarrassed about asking to come live with her, more embarrassed about actually following through with it.

For now, I let the thought go as much as I can. My hair is still wet, so I wring it out, watching the water drip onto the knees of my jeans. It's something our grandmother always did. She hated it when my sister and I dripped pool water in her car, so she'd towel us off in the parking lot, and then showed me and Maggie how to roll our hair up and squeeze it between our fingers. And even though we were mostly dry, we'd sit on towels on the hot leather and ride across town for ice cream at the place run by Grammy's church friends who always gave us free toppings. By the time we got home, we'd be all-the-way dry, just like that, without being conscious of it. Without having to think.

It's sort of strange to remember days like that: hot & cold, all mixed together into one memory. Grammy's been dead for a long time, of course, and so has that car, come to think of it. It's still sitting on Uncle Dan's lawn, half of it rusted through. If enough time has gone by, it's easy to put a person or a thing in the past and even pretend it was never in the present at all. It's easy for me to look at that car and pretend it never went anywhere under its own power. But I can't do that with Maggie yet. I can't imagine her away; there's an opening where she used to be that hasn't closed up yet. I watch the shiny, living cars that pass us as we cross the



bridge from one side of the city to the other. I'm not sure they make cars like Grammy's anymore, but if I had a car, I think I'd rather have a car like that than one like Ellen's. Ellen's car makes funny noises and smells like marijuana.

The apartment isn't quite what I pictured. It's actually the basement level of a house on a steep hill, and we have to go in through the back via a crooked gravel road. I can't see any windows. Ellen squeezes the car between a white sedan and a blue motorcycle – making me wonder which is hers – and gets out without saying anything. It's still raining, but more like a mist, like the water is hanging in the air instead of falling. I get out too and get a better look at the house. It doesn't look very old, but it's dull grey and sags a little toward the bottom of the hill.

Ellen slams the trunk. "We're gonna put you in

Dion's old room. His bed frame is still there, but you'll have to get all your own stuff. If you want." She shrugs and looks me up and down, probably considering my lack of luggage. "And there's an air mattress in the hall closet. Bev knows where it is." Then she heads toward the door with the smaller suitcase. I'm not quick enough – the door is open, and she's gone before I can think of anything to say.

In the quiet, I itch to open my backpack. Nothing should have changed; I did the same check every second mile on the bus. Twelve paperbacks and a hard-cover cookbook. One with the back cover missing. One dog-eared to all hell. Two romance novels with the cover models' eyes X'd out in sharpie. I haven't read most of them, but their colors & shapes are at least somewhat comforting. Maggie only ever had a few books at a time, and these had been on her shelf the

What We're Made Of

Jessica Swank



day she left. Four days before she died. She left our room, left me behind, to go on a road trip up the coast with her graduate school friends. Four days before the woman who hit them even considered putting a bottle to her lips.

I pull myself back, try to make myself normal & presentable. I've heard a little about Ellen's roommate Bev, and despite everything, I want her to think I'm cool, or at least not too much of a dork. In reality, I probably look like the grubby, damp kid I am. Leslie Gordon, literal & figurative hobo.

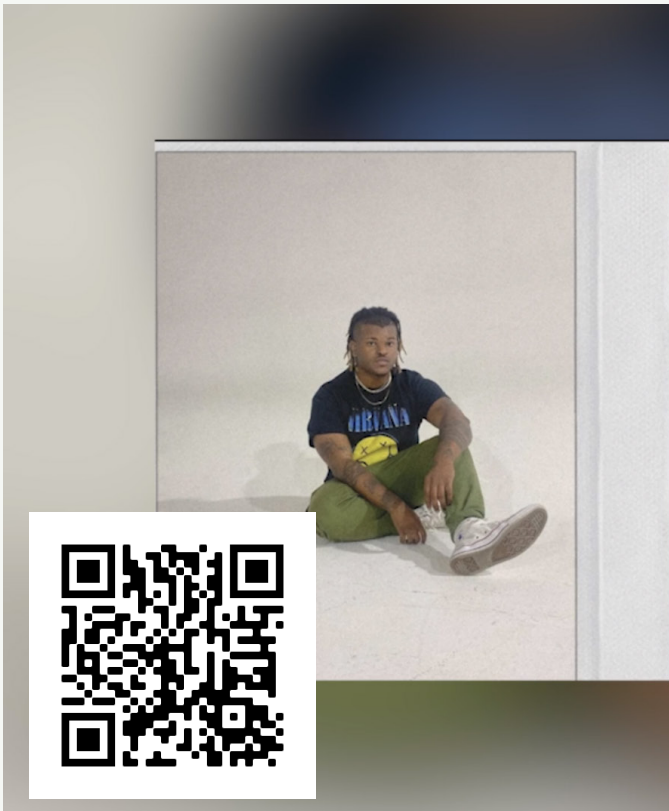
Inside, the apartment is bright, but in the way that dentist's office lights are bright: impersonal, almost probing. Ellen and a person who must be Bev stand on opposite sides of a dust-colored kitchen counter, and Bev is chain smoking. Ellen looks annoyed again. The kitchen is carpeted, and the carpet sticks up like speed bumps.

"Hey, Leslie," Bev says as though we have always known each other. She's short, red-haired, and has a face like a sideways oval, no chin. "Glad you made it. You know, you're welcome to stay here as long as you need, honey."

The room is all the way at the back and also smells like cigarettes. There are a couple of dinky windows,

and two walls are painted purple, the other two left beige, unfinished. An iron bed frame leans against a purple wall, and the carpet still has indentations from old furniture. I don't hate it. The mustiness makes me think of sleepaway camp, the summer I had the top bunk and slept curled up next to my backpack because there was nowhere else to put it where no one would take my stuff. Maggie did it too because she was going through a copying phase, but since she was on the bottom bunk, her clothes always ended up spilled across the floor. My suitcase is on its side under one window. There's also a wardrobe that looks like it's from the 1800s, only it's been painted baby blue, and a plugin for a phone next to the door. I want to call Maggie and tell her about it all. And then I have a weird twisty emotion, a feeling like reaching out for something in the dark and falling out of bed, except I haven't hit the floor yet. A laugh stops itself halfway up my throat, which is what happens basically every time I remember that Maggie is gone and that I'm off to do things she won't know about. It's strange, a *Maggie can't come to the phone right now* sensation that I know will never quite go away.

I strip down to my underwear and hang my clothes neatly on the bed frame, then pull on my still-



Sarah Lynn
Cervon Campbell

dry sweater. The wardrobe is empty, so I open it and sit on the bottom, hugging my bare legs to my chest

There are a few immediate concerns. Tomorrow, the city will wake up and take me with it. In the light, everything will look different. Maybe I'll go to work with Ellen, like she said I could. And part of me likes this idea. New start. *May her memory be a blessing*, says Revered Knight, more to my mother than to me. Onward & upward, like the way the bus climbed the mountains, going up to meet the rain where it was.

But tonight, I don't have to move or go anywhere or make any progress. In the other room, Bev and Ellen are laughing, close enough that I could probably hear their conversation if I put my ear to the wall.

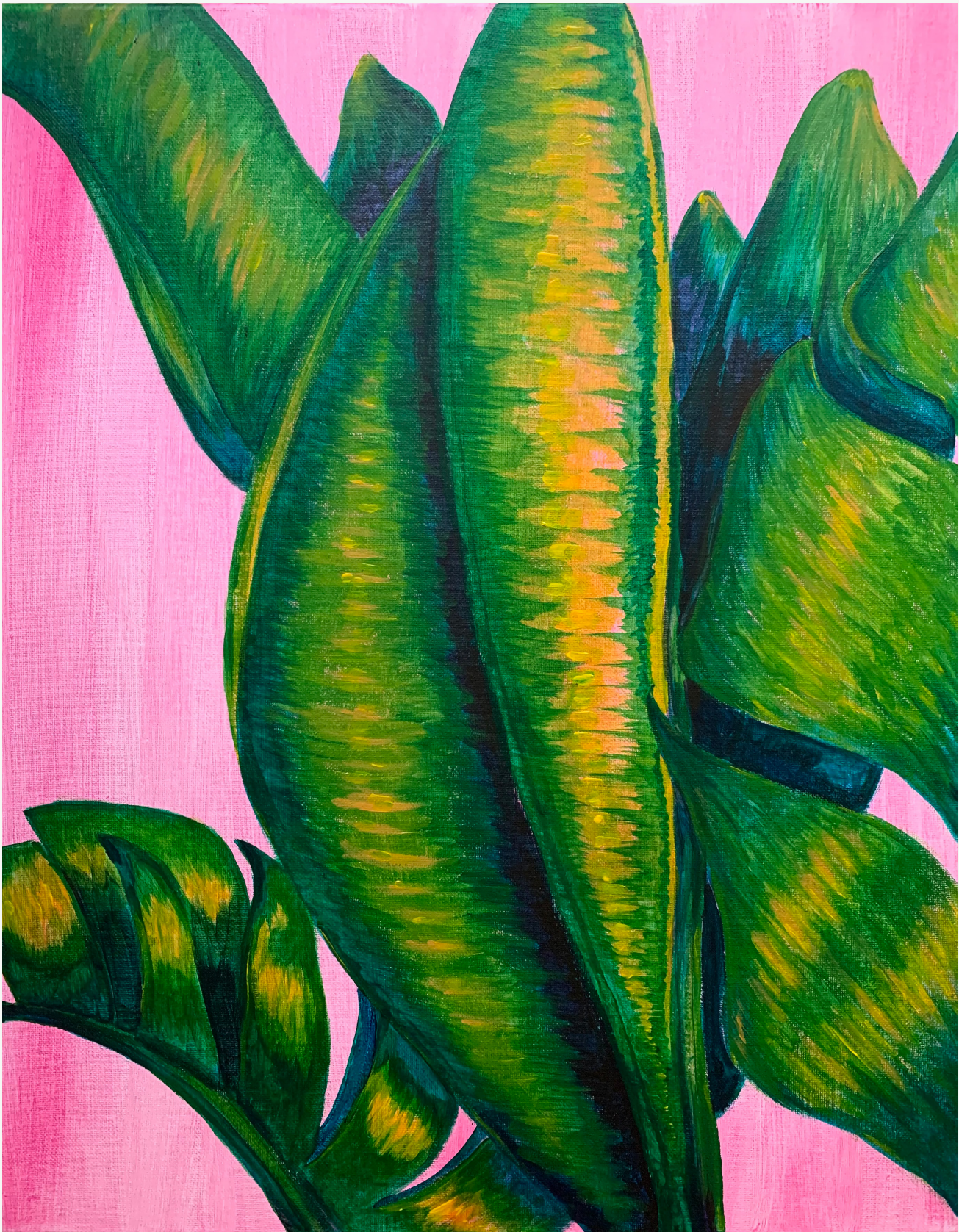
From the other wall, trap music thumps like a heartbeat. There's a notebook in the bottom of my suitcase, and I take out the stitches of the binding and spread the pages across the bottom of the wardrobe. I write with the stub end of a pencil, starting each page with *Dear Maggie*. Mostly, I continue that way, filling the page with *Dear Maggie's* until I can think of something else to say. Through the back of the wardrobe, there's chatter from a TV. Something sizzles on the stove. The light under the door turns off. I write and don't stop until the voices go to bed and until I can no longer hear the rain outside.



Feeling Like Water

Kimmi Phillips





Paradise *Kimmi Phillips*

Rush Johnston
Yesterday's Coffee

Drinking mud with a dash of creamer
 From that yellow duckie mug
 You got for me at Goodwill for 25¢

Whimsical and bright
 You thought of me immediately
 So-called Sunshine

From the back of the cupboard
 It reappeared this morning
 A melancholic magic trick

Your smell, your touch, your taste
 Hit me all at once
 How dare you show up uninvited?

When I least expect it
 You're back at my door
 Treating me like you never left

But you did.
 Squashing my plasticine heart
 And leaving it flat

I beg myself to let go, to move on
 But the artifacts of you ruin me
 Again and again

So I sit in the kitchen
 Trying to find the words
 To describe what you left behind
 In that yellow duckie mug

Keep Me Freer Than You Are. Beyond Free

Sadie Faith Andersen

1.

We may all die, but I refuse to be consumed. I've still got things to say.

Keep me quiet and poised, quiet and okay,

Please keep me the girl that I was. The girl who I devoured.

Keep me effervescent into her own melody, into her own sense of wonder,

Carry me out into the dim, beyond the shadows

Beyond all order,

Show me the stars, keep me rested, arrested within the dim-glowing-sun-dying-pink,

Teach me to stop being so afraid of just being alone to think,

To be with the sunset is our purest form of revenge to a life that seeks to blind us with our people, to wrap us in and lock us up whole, beyond our own swirls of imagination, away from ourselves.

Teach me to be beyond truly free in a world that never allowed me to be myself.



Untitled

Irina Novikova

Being alone is my little chrysalis from which I emerge, unscorched and fully protected from all other people.

I am a warrior in the labyrinth. But I will get there.

I am the safe harbor I can go to. I am my own lighthouse.

I was built to live life alone, in happy and contentful solitude, discovering all of the secrets of the universe out the windows

I am finally freed when I offer myself my writing. It's like I can finally hear myself.

I bring the light to the fire of the world. I bring the wisdom.

My demons can't last because my mind is in heaven.

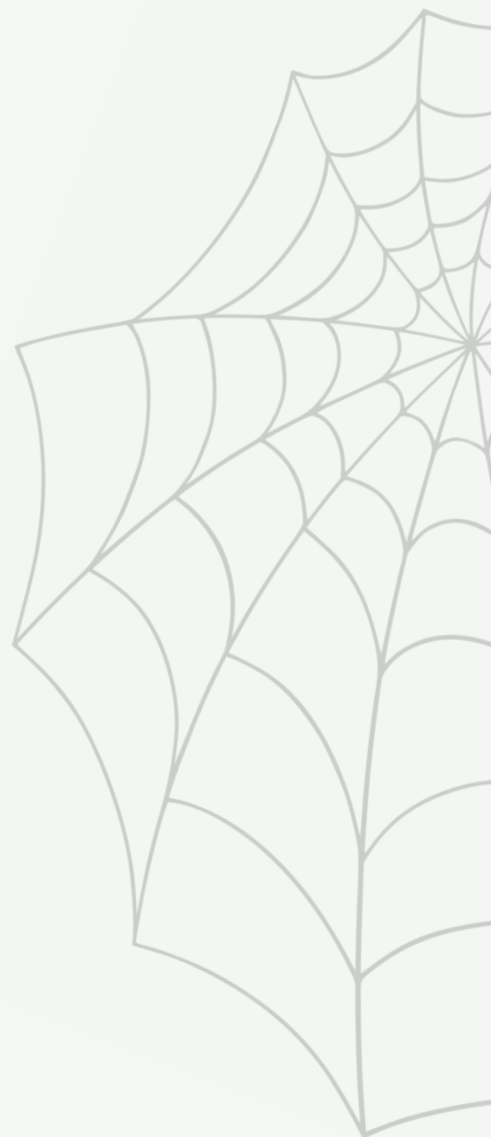
2.

And so,
She said to me
Earth is not Heaven,
So,
We will never get close enough
To what we want

But know that the pain
Of Earth not being heaven
Touches all of us

The only way out
Is to accept that
Earth is not Heaven,
And we are all lost,
And none of us will ever get
All that we want,
Everything is gone,
We are all wrong,
We are all worked, forced, wasted,
We are all seeking deep distractions
From the emptiness inside all of us.

But
Earth is not Heaven.
So if we are
All lost,
Perhaps
None of us are lost
And the emptiness is enough.



Self-Portrait

Catherine Phillips

I don't think I know how to sing anymore, but I can live with this.
Nothing turns out the way I want, but no longer

do I drive until I reach a cliff, get down on my knees, make
pro-and-con lists about jumping, then go home. I don't write in my diary

in the cemetery any more, back and legs braced on a tipped stone. Now I just walk. I make
better stuff now, see. *Pas bien mais de nombreuses choses*. Not more

but smaller. Lots of small little things I can print on paper and hide
like a squirrel, like the little squirrel that we took in, named,

then dropped at a wildlife rescue when he gave us fleas. I save things
for later, or for someone else. For the Me

who was/is/will be something else. Click *Yes* to proceed.
No longer do I run full speed to the back of my closet or ask around

for songs to listen to. I walk with both feet on the underside
of the clouds or the sky if clouds are unavailable. Though I can't

sing, I sing and sing, asking, leaving offerings: *Embrasses-moi, s'il te plait*.
Wrap me up in brown paper before you send me back

in time. *Fragile. Ne me plies pas. Give me a gift*. Today, I put the speaker
on the floor so my music will rise like heat and my dances will light the room. Today, I trace

the lines of air and noise coming in through the open window and paint them onto my walls.
Today, I ask: look at me and see through me and think of me

like I'm a boulder: inevitable *and* strong *and* in progress *and* on my way somewhere.
Today, I try to make myself into something even more miraculous.



People, Nature, Architecture, Religion & Expression

Ernest Kroir



Soon Enough

Browning Blair

Soon enough, we'll be staring at
each other from across my kitchen table
and I'll be observing your freckled nose and hazel hair, knowing what this is all about.
You'll be telling me you've found another
to try on for size, all because you need to see
that we're not just fading stars in the sea's reflection.

Soon enough I'll say I knew I saw it coming from all those miles and miles away. Then
I'll add you to my list of tired bygones, taped right to my refrigerator. No, I'll never look at
lavender or those songs you wrote the same way again, but I guess that's fine because we're
only twenty and too young for all of this.

Soon enough it'll all be done and I'll go back to normality, waking up alone,
how it all was before I loved you. Maybe you'll come back again because you realized we
weren't fading into nothing, but maybe not and that's okay, perfect, good. I'll sometimes think
about you before my eyes close for the evening, but our bygones will be long gone and that's
enough for me.



do you love me?

Ami Patel



love me more love me again

Ami Patel

Last Time *Tasia Phillips*

Now you got 5 seconds
To tell me why you're standing here
It's 2:30 in the morning thought I made it clear
You must have thought that I was playing
I'll never love again
it was a sin how you stole my fears and then turned them around
I promised I'd be down for you
I thought you kept it real with me
You played me like a fool, ha
This wasn't meant to be
through with all this jealousy
Sorry but our time is over

Over, I'll never be sober
Drunk off this pain in my heart and feeling numb cause it's now iced over
You should've listened to me from the first time
'Cause now it's over and I promise it's the last time

Chorus

Given you you my everything
All this darkness that you bring can't get my light to shine through,
So now this is me, telling you goodbye
Promise it's the last time
I tried but now forget you

Remember how you
How you told me?
That you need me?
You at how you treat me
You never loved me

Guess you thought, it'd be the same lines
Sucks for you, this is the last time

This is the last time I'll take you back
 No need to worry, I won't look back
 So done with wasting my time with you
 Glad to get over you
 I'm finally moving on!

Chorus

Given you you my everything
 All this darkness that you bring can't get my light to shine through,
 So now this is me telling you goodbye
 Promise it's the last time (yeahhh)
 I tried but now forget you (I tried but now forget you)

Remember how you
 How you told me?
 That you need me?
 Look at how you treat me
 You never loved me

Guess you thought, it'd be the same lines
 Sucks for you, this is the last time

This is the last time, I'm finally moving, finally moving on, yeah, yeah, yeah

Chorus

Given you my everything
 All this darkness that you bring can't get my light to shine through,
 So now this is me telling you goodbye
 Promise it's the last time x6



Meet the *creators*



Ann Privateer is a poet, artist, and photographer. Some of her recent work has appeared in *Voices* 2022, *New Feather Anthology* 2021, and *Sacramento Voices* 2018 & 2013, to name a few.



sentimentality of objects & tropes as the subjects of her work.



Drawing from the practice of psychic automatism, **Virginia Shepley's** abstract forms & representational motifs reconcile the dualities of life. An abstract painter using line drawing & biomorphic forms as a visual representation of fundamental spiritual ideas, her work

explores the connections and borderlines between physical reality and the invisible. Referencing elements of the body & nature, her color palette resonates as mystical vibrational imagery. Her work has been shown in solo shows in galleries in California & North Carolina. Her paintings feature in private collections in both Europe and the United States. Virginia lives & works on a farm in Winston Salem, NC.



Rush Johnston (they/them) is a Bronx-based multimedia choreographer, poet, performer, filmmaker, and movement researcher. Rush creates at the intersection of visual & performing art, often exploring modes of artistic expression beyond the binary. As a queer,

Native, neurodiverse artist, their work often plays with perception & identity, inviting viewers to question proposed truths of self & social misunderstanding. Social justice work is a key element of Rush's creative vision, often encompassing themes of political turmoil, queerness, and mental health. Rush is the founder & artistic director of *Kaleid Dance Collective*, an interdisciplinary artistic platform for creative experiments & exhibitions.



Sarah Cross was born & raised in the Carolinas, specifically being shuffled between Rock Hill, SC & Charlotte, NC. She loves playing *Minecraft* at 2 am, contemplating reality, and info-dumping K-pop onto anyone who breathes. She thrives off finding subtle ways to include these

interests in her writing, whether she's successful or not. Sarah is currently one semester away from receiving her BA in English and resides in North Carolina, where she's still trying to figure out neurotypical communication.

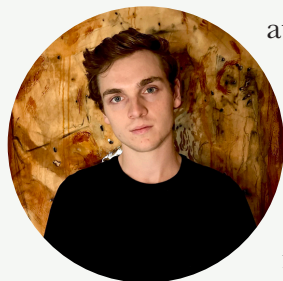
Emily Furr is an oil painter based in Charleston, SC. Her paintings dig into the formative moments in her life, including growing up on rural Johns Island, SC. She explores multiple mediums in her work and plays with the interactions of color while focusing on



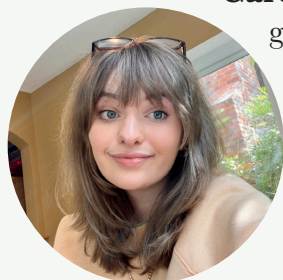
Ashlin Cross is a graduate student at the beautiful, historic College of Charleston and the assistant editor of *Illuminations International Magazine of Contemporary Literature*. Growing up in the South as the granddaughter of a mural

artist and the daughter of a graphic artist & jewelry designer, Ashlin was immersed in the arts at a young age. She was taught that the arts are fundamental to creating a community and a sense of togetherness. Through her poetry, she hopes to embody the confounding yet compelling aspects of the shared human experience.

William Underwood grew up on a small farm in the Appalachian mountains of eastern Kentucky and



moved to Florida at the age of 16 to attend a pre-professional ballet program and to pursue a career in the arts. When a hip injury kept him from continuing to dance, William decided to shift his career and artistic focus toward the culinary arts & painting. After having worked his way up to executive chef, he is currently focusing his creative energies on his painting. William is excited to once again have proximity to the Appalachians, this time calling Charlotte, NC home. His work has a strong connection to the Carolinas, as he gathers local clay and burns local wood to make pigment & charcoal as the basis for his work.



Caroline Clemson is a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina Honors College, where she studied public relations and political science. Serendipitously named after her state's biggest sports rivalry, Caroline has called South Carolina her home since birth.

While she was always an enthusiastic reader & writer, it was only during the COVID-19 pandemic that Caroline discovered a love of poetry as a means of connecting with her own human experience. She draws inspiration primarily from love, heartbreak, and all of the living done in between. Other than writing poetry, Caroline enjoys dabbling in graphic design, fashion, and far too many visits to her local coffee shop.



With confident brushstrokes, **Gayle Miller** tickles our imaginations with her unique take. There is so much joy in watching the playful dance with style, color, and emotion. Gayle paints in verbs instead of nouns, movement, and feeling. Gayle's paintings were displayed & sold at Society of Bluffton Artists in Bluffton, SC the Art League of Hilton Head and now at Open Art Studios in Greenville, SC. Her work has won her awards and was included in the Telfair Museum F3A Show 2017-2019. Gayle's paintings were the cover art for Lady

Lowcountry Magazine in 2016 and the September 2018 issue of Pink Magazine, Beaufort County.



Josh Poole is a visual artist & writer working out of a sleepy Virginia town. His family has lived in Appalachia for many generations, and most of his stories take place in the region.



Ryan Dowling lives in the Charlotte, NC area with his wife & dog. He studied English literature at SIUC. He is a frequent contributor to the Rockford Writers' Guild.



Ashley Rabanal is a painter who alters domestic environments and explores the ways that home falls apart. She lives in Greenville, SC, although she originally hails from Atlanta, GA. After spending a substantial amount of her childhood in South Africa and Kenya, she began her art education in South Carolina. In 2016, she received her Bachelor of Arts from Anderson University in South Carolina, and in 2020 she received her MFA in Visual Arts from Clemson University. She is both a 2017 Brandon Fellowship recipient from the Greenville Center for Creative Arts and a 2019 grant recipient from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation.



Jasmine Doctor is a native of Florence, SC. She graduated from the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities in Greenville, SC with two diplomas. She is a student in the Lloyd International Honors College at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Her major is animation with a minor in Asian studies. South Carolina has given her wonderful memories, such as spending time in the Lowcountry with her late grandmother. She is committed to community service

by feeding the homeless, playing the violin for senior citizens, serving lunch to veterans, and placing wreaths during Christmas at the Florence National Cemetery. Even when she went to the Governor's School, she made cards to be delivered to a local nursing home.



Richard Hurteau is a 21-year-old musician based out of McClellanville, SC. He wrote "Street Racing" in December and quickly decided to record it. Around this time, he began playing with Chris Austin (Drums) & Chad Phillips (Bass), both of whom were involved in the recording. Chad & Chris not only share musical interests but also share their talents of teaching, having met at Leaphardt Elementary School. Richard, on the other hand, recently graduated from the University of South Carolina and now owns a crawlspac company. The three-piece has quickly made a name for themselves across South Carolina. Their dynamic live performances have taken them from festivals like "Sol Fest Rol Fest" in Columbia, SC, "RJ Rockers Brewery" in Spartanburg, SC, and even the state's best kept secret, "Awendaw Green Barn Jam." They hope to build a reputation so music can be pursued full time.



Joshua Collins is a Hillsborough-based entrepreneur, photographer, and director. In 2017, Josh founded The Digital Butler, a marketing agency in Hillsborough, NC, which has created & implemented strategies for hundreds of brand launches, startups, small businesses, and artists. He's produced content that's been featured in INDY Week and live-streams that have reached global audiences. Additionally, Josh has been awarded for his music & event photography and has had photos highlighted in numerous publications & magazines. Joshua is also co-founder/creative director of local music agency, Sonark Media and serves as board chair for the Hillsborough Arts Council.

Browning Blair is a college student currently attending Clemson University in Clemson, SC. She is originally from Greenville, SC, and she enjoys activities such as



hiking the Blue Ridge, paddling on the upstate's gorgeous lakes, reading, writing, and painting. Browning is actively pursuing her Bachelor's in English and communication and hopes to eventually obtain a PhD in English. She aspires to continue pursuing her passion for writing & the arts for many years to come.



Aaron Falls is a photographer, videographer, and visual designer from Columbia, SC. He has experience in several fields of visual arts; however, photography & videography are his specialty areas. He is currently studying visual communications at the University of South Carolina, where he will graduate in May 2023. His photographic work focuses on capturing the world in a documentarian-style manner, or portraying overlooked objects, instances, and people. He takes photos with both a 35mm film camera and a digital camera.

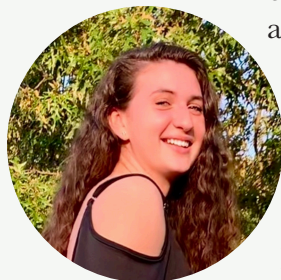


Catherine Phillips is a 22-year-old Tennessean who found her second home at Elon University in Central North Carolina, where she studied English, French, and history. When not reading or writing, she can be found hiking, thrift shopping, fixing her typewriters, or drinking tea.



Sydney Crutch, 30, is currently traveling out of her '96 Toyota Rav4 in the western United States. Sydney is a heARTist & writer who draws deep inspiration from our natural world. She is a believer in feeling to heal, expression as medicine, and is an advocate for our connection to the planet. Her art inspires & empowers the reader to live in their truth and find freedom inside themselves. Her words are vehicles to unlock the buried

pieces that hold keys to our individual & collective liberation. Find more of her words, art, and links to other platforms on Instagram @sydneycrutch.



Amanda Scattergood is a visual artist who works primarily in drawing, painting, sculpture, and clay. Amanda is from Brigantine, NJ, but lives in High Point, NC for much of the year while attending High Point University. She is a senior pursuing majors in political science and studio art and is a division I athlete on the school's track & field team. Amanda explores a variety of themes through her work, ranging from evocative landscapes to paintings of psychologically charged interior spaces. Being involved in so many things, she sometimes struggles to pin down how to create works with intention, works that convey what she wants to say. That being said, Amanda's attention to detail, color, and feeling composes pieces that give a glimpse into who she is beyond her words.



Born in Miami, FL and raised in Charleston, SC, **Sabrina Sanchez** is a Cuban American writer & artist. After graduating from the Charleston County School of the Arts, Sabrina attended The King's College in New York City, where she was the editor-in-chief of The Troubadour Art & Literary Magazine. Her poetry has been featured in literary journals such as The Whiskey Blot and Words & Whispers. Sabrina's work often explores themes of personal sacrifice & loss through the lens of myth & legend. When she isn't writing, Sabrina can usually be found sitting at the piano or curled up with a book.



David Blake is an educator, administrative director, and poet from Southern California. Since 2019, David has spent his summers between Greenville & Myrtle Beach, SC to revel in the natural beauty of the Carolinas. David has found that the peacefulness & hospitality

of the Carolinas offer an alluring atmosphere for self-reflection & writing.



Jessica Swank is a photography-based artist originally from Greenville, SC. She earned her MFA from Clemson University and her BA from Anderson University. Swank has exhibited in numerous exhibitions both nationally & internationally in galleries such as Millepiani in Rome, Italy, JKC Gallery in Trenton, NJ, and the Stay Home Gallery in Paris, TN. Her work has also been recognized by platforms such as Musée Magazine, Fraction Magazine, and Porridge Magazine. Swank is a founding member of the art collective Zero Space (0_) and is currently working as adjunct faculty at the South Carolina School of the Arts at Anderson University.



From Greenville, SC, **CerVon Campbell** is an artist known for his soulful sound & venting lyrics. Campbell is not only a singer/rapper but a stand-up comic & songwriter, too. Favored for bending genres, Campbell has crafted mixtures of Pop, Hip-Hop, and R&B along with Alternative, Indie, Country/Folk, Rock, and EDM throughout his discography.



Kimmi Phillips is a multimedia artist currently based in Sarasota, FL. Her artwork is inspired by various natural elements and forms to highlight the beauty that surrounds each of us throughout our daily lives. She spent her childhood summers at a camp in Western North Carolina and also worked there for four summers as a camp counselor during her time at the University of South Florida studying advertising and the visual arts. Kimmi loves to travel, go paddleboarding, and spend time in her garden.

Sadie Faith Andersen is a North Carolina-based writer who is passionate about community-building

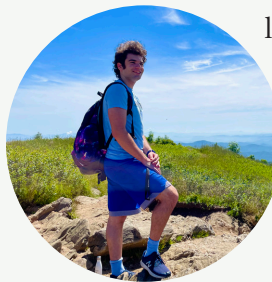


and meaningful connections. With a background in creative writing and philosophy from Virginia Tech, Sadie loves to explore the big questions in life through her writing. When she's not writing, you can find her running local meetup events. Sadie is a passionate advocate for open-mindedness, empathy, and understanding. She hopes that her writing will inspire others to think deeply about the things that matter most to them. In the future, Sadie looks forward to continued growth in her freelance writing career and feels honored to have the opportunity to share her work with the world.



Irina Novikova is an artist, graphic artist, illustrator, and writer. She holds a Bachelor's degree in art history and design. Her first personal exhibition, "My soul is like a wild hawk," was held in 2002. She draws on the topics of ecology & nuclear safety, and she has completed a lot of work on anti-war topics. The first big series she drew was *The Red Book*, dedicated to rare & endangered species of animals & birds. She also writes fairy tales & poems and illustrates stories. She draws various fantastic creatures: unicorns, animals with human faces; she especially likes the image of a man - a bird - Siren. In 2020, she took part in Poznań Art Week. Since the beginning of 2020, she has been constantly painting Sirens, birds from Greek mythology. For her, they are like half-humans, half-birds; it's like a dream. Poets and many artists describe wishing they could have wings to fly. The image of the Siren came to her during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, but then she wanted to depict scarlet burning birds. Later, her thoughts & feelings changed, and she began to paint white Sirens, calm & peaceful. Birds overcome vast spaces flying over different countries; they are a symbol of freedom and the destruction of borders, and the human face-mask has different personalities. For her, the scarlet Siren is a kind of pandemic symbol, white with a bright face: freedom. These are her personal symbols, her personal mythology.

Born in Asheville, NC, **Ernest Kroi** was raised in the



lush scenery of the Blue Ridge Mountains and greatly enjoyed the artistic downtown scene. He is currently attending the University of North Carolina of Greensboro, taking on two majors for art and media studies. Ernest's artistic influences include high saturation, stylized realism, and slice of life with subtle unnatural, juxtaposing, or comedic features. His work has also been featured in UNCG's *Coraddi* magazine.

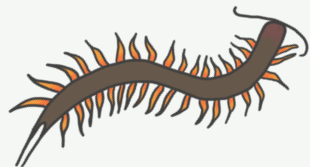


Ami Patel is a 2020 UNC Chapel Hill graduate from Asheville, NC, currently residing in Raleigh, NC. Her passions reside in entrepreneurship, health, and the arts. Ami is a lover of hiking, yoga, hot tea, Haruki Murakami novels, anime, and kittens. Her purpose is to create, lead, and inspire—all in conjunction to help others. She is led inevitably by her heart, at any cost, and she explores the concepts of love, nature, and the world beyond reality. Her artwork is focused on abstraction and centers around the intersection of chaos & order in hopes to better understand and connect with the earth and people around her.



Tasia Phillips is a 25-year-old alumni of Francis Marion University, where she majored in music industry. Born in Maryland, she moved around a lot due to her mother being in the military, but she quickly found her passion in music at an early age. Singing always made her feel like she was in her own world. She not only used music as a means to express herself, but she also used it as a way to cope with life. One day, she aspires to share her gift with the world and write songs that others can use to express themselves.





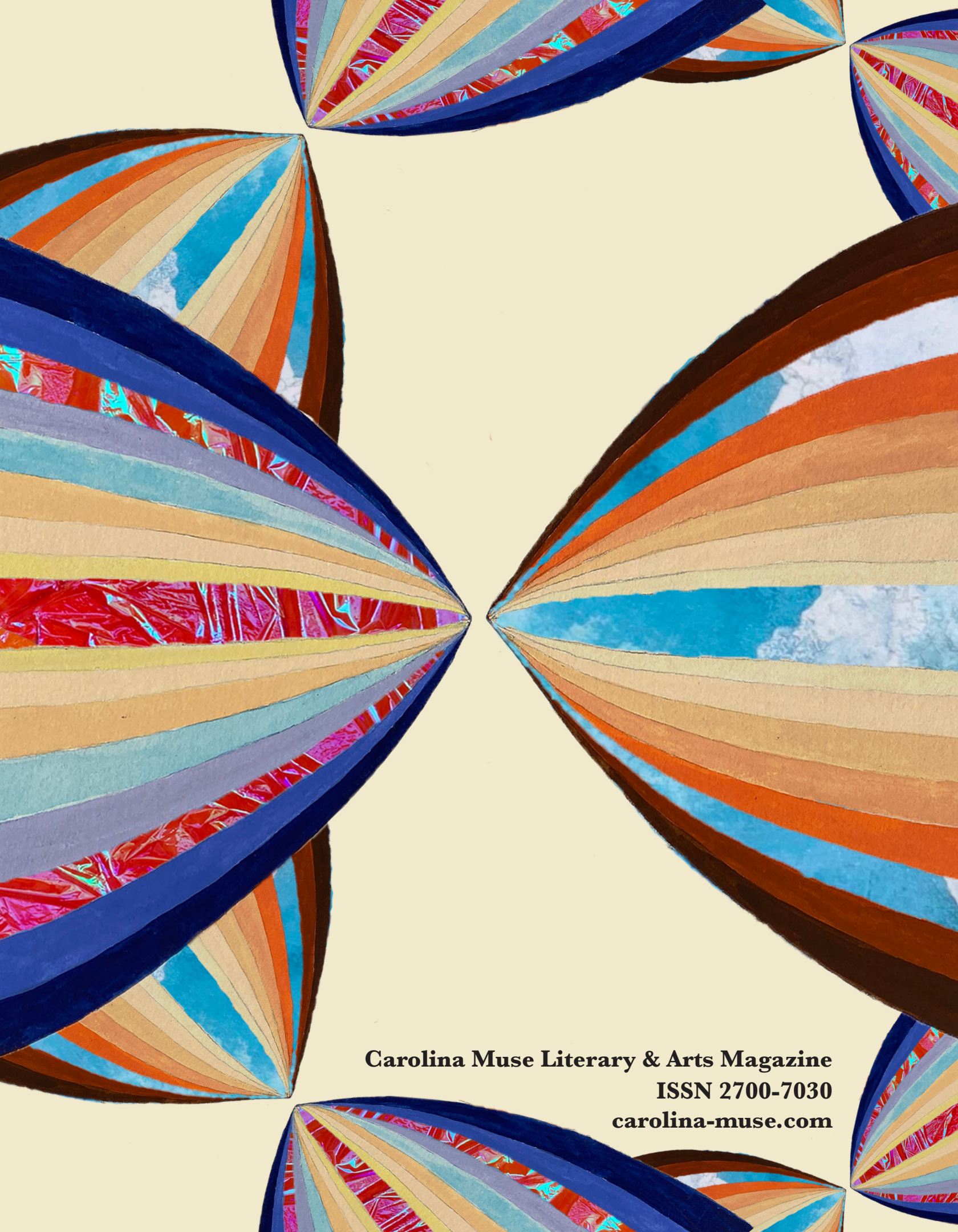
Credits

Carolina Muse Literary & Arts Magazine is a seasonal online magazine that publishes creative text, images, and videos to provide a multimedia creative experience. Each creator has a connection to the Carolinas that has shaped them in some way, whether this reflects in their work or not. Our mission is to provide a multi-sensory, immersive platform for young creatives' work that reveals the way various art forms can work together to tell the true stories of our human experience. We also seek to uplift voices that have been systematically ignored in our society.

Want to add your voice to the arts community of the Carolinas? Submit your creative work to carolinamuse.arts@gmail.com by midnight on November 31st, 2022 to be considered for our next edition. The subject line of your email should read: [Art Form]- "[Title]" by [Your Name]. Please view the specific requirements for your art form at carolina-muse.com/submit.

Once you submit your work, one of our editors will be in contact with you in the following weeks regarding your submissions' status and possible next steps. Carolina Muse is proud to have a collaborative editorial process in which multiple exchanges between creator & editor may be needed to polish your piece. We do accept simultaneous submissions; however, we ask that if your work is accepted elsewhere, communication remains transparent & timely. We reserve the right to edit short stories for grammar, mechanics, clarity, and consistency with the magazine's style. We also reserve the right to edit video submissions for consistency with the magazine's style. Creators will not be compensated upon their acceptance.





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