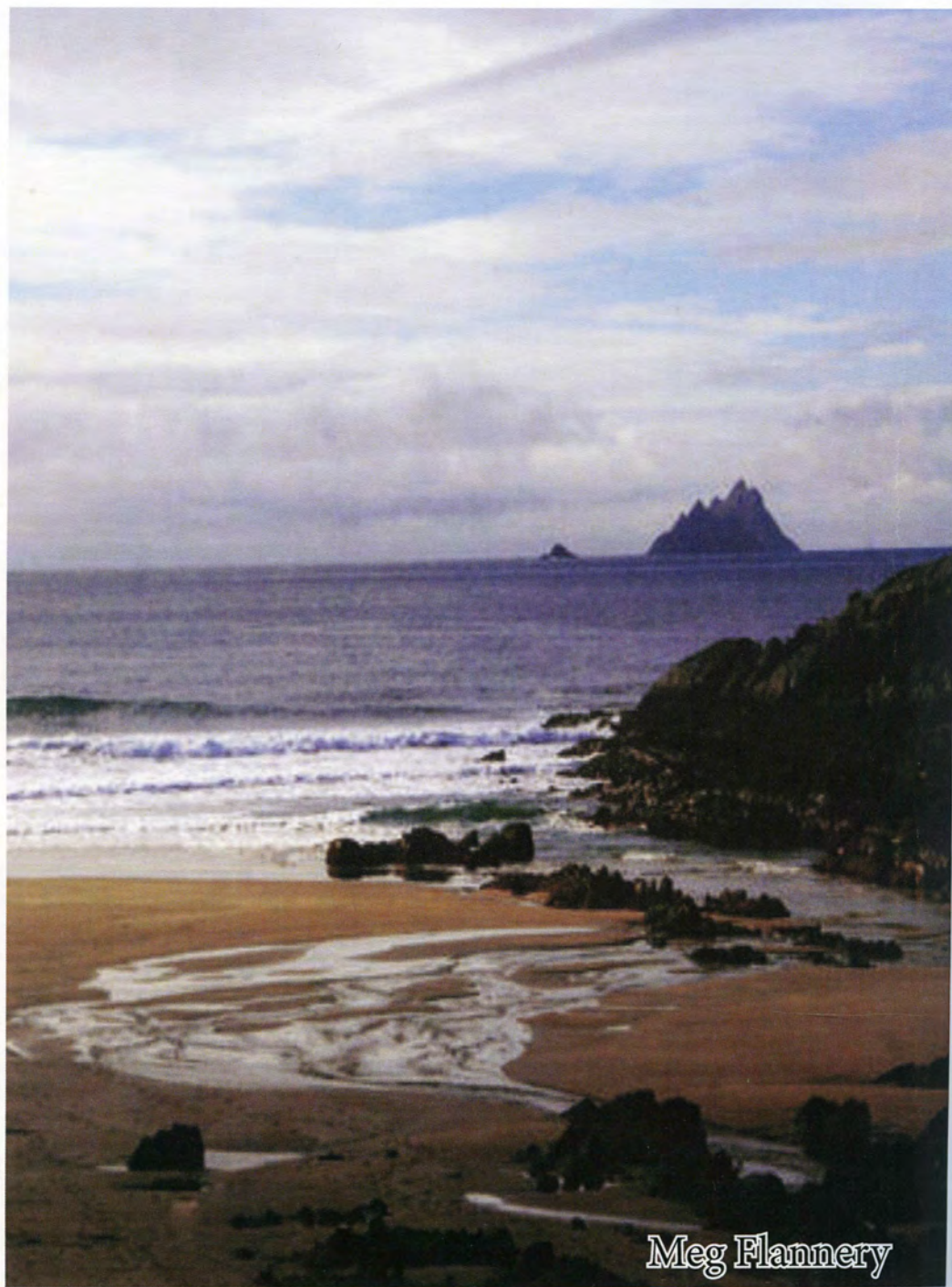




The Mosaic



Meg Flannery

Marist College
Literary Arts Society
Presents

The Mosaic
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Table of Contents

Mortification on the Rocks by Meg Flannery.....	4
Unseen by Lauren Hall.....	6
Thrill of the Chase by Alanna Coogan.....	7
365 by Nicholas Bolt.....	9
Life Lessons by Chris Raia.....	10
Time Heals All Wounds by Jessica Sturtevant.....	14
Reverie by Joe Connelly.....	17
Criminal Law by Christopher Prozora.....	17
Dirge by Dani Ferrara.....	18
Fortnight by Shelley Doster.....	25
Strangers by Taylor Crichton.....	26
MD by Anonymous.....	36
Lot's Wife by Shelley Doster.....	36
Uproot by Alison Carter.....	37
The Hunt by Jessica Brown.....	44
Endless Cycle by Nic White.....	47
Upon Traversing St. Anne's Hermitage by Nicholas Bolt.....	55

Mortification On the Rocks by Meg Flannery

It's true what they say about Irishmen. They know how to eat and they know how to drink. My father is no exception the man knows where to eat and what to drink better than Survivorman Les Stroud can find sustenance in the Kalahari. Jane, a new edgy restaurant that's popular with gay men and lipstick lesbians was the setting of choice. We started our evening off with cocktails at the bar the sour smell of grapefruit with the odd addition of rubbing alcohol radiated from my father's glass, overwhelming the sweet scent of my Shirley Temple. By the time we got to our table, his face was as pink as the maraschino cherry bobbing in my drink and the sweat beading along his forehead rivaled that of the perspiration on my glass. The king in his court sat at the head of the table, his cocktail, like a scepter, waving about the room, gesturing loudly to the other patrons, sloshing the potent liquid onto the floor, the tablecloth, and the passing waiters. He ordered for the table, but I snuck an order of the Big Pot o' Mussels for myself. Our waiter, with his head held high, paraded through the maze of tables, curly bleached locks bouncing to the rhythm of his own runway soundtrack, all the while balancing trays layered with plates of overpriced meals

and my Big Pot o' Mussels. After setting down all the dishes, the flamboyant fellow smiled, showing off his little dimples that reminded me too much of a Cabbage Patch Doll. He reached for my father's seemingly empty glass only three partially melted ice cubes and a pulpy lime left and retracted his hand so fast that I almost missed my dad stab it with a fork. An eruption of boisterous laughter followed, emanating from the diners saturated in alcohol. But I sat there, sipping my Shirley Temple, staring at the four evenly spaced red impressions on the waiter's hand. He tenderly stroked them, trying his best to smile, thinking he better get a good tip for this shit. The marks dotting his hand, like bloody brail without a meaning, left me without an appetite and instead I stared into my Big Pot o' Mussels, imagining them alive in the white wine tomato broth, drowning in its red depths, tangled in the linguini.

Unseen by Lauren Hall

He makes me
feel beautiful
in all my un
seen places,
touches curved
hips just to know
where the babies
(we refuse to have)
come from—
apple trees
sprout apple
seeds
peck wood
and all the time daunt;
flaunt plumage that forgets
to fret and fracture
every kind of light
remains dark and dampened
ruffle up my tail feathers,
sing to me in sweet
marigolds:
days of lazy,
pick the daisies,
raise our halos,
so rays can blaze
me, and John Paul
II reminds me
why I exist.

Thrill of the Chase by Alanna Coogan

It's the thrill of the chase. They say it is and they're right. It's the mystery. It's the What If.

I run my hands across his bare chest and over his ribs. He lets me. He kisses me carefully, slowly. But now the kisses are hard, passionate. They mean something. I have him in a chokehold. I'm his drug dealer and he can't get enough. That's when I lose it. I like the longing, the imagining, better than the happening. I discard them, swat them away like annoying flies when they get too personal. When they tell me I'm beautiful; when they tell me they've never felt this way before.

But you. You are different. Your eyes are always lit, dancing and winking at me like a late night bonfire. Your smile is sideways, a twist of your lips that pulls at my heart. Do I have a heart? You're a tease and you know it. You sit next to me but never quite close enough to reach out and touch. You stand near me in the dark and look down through those thick, heavy lashes – but you never lean in at all.

I wish I could reach up and grab your face. Pull it into mine. But then I would lose you too and I won't, can't ever, lose you. Your eyes are like razors and when you cut me with them, the thick, dark blood that oozes out is warm and beautiful like blueberry pie. You joke and laugh and spin my head in circles. I'm not ready to give that up.

Is this enough? If you never come any closer, can I live off your ghost? Only my toes are in the water and I'm not brave enough to fall in yet. Because...what if you really are different? What if it doesn't go away? I will implode from the sheer magnitude of your beauty, your greatness. You're too much, like breathing in winter air after having tic-tacs on my tongue. I will chase you and chase you. I will imagine and What If. If you ever come close enough, will I take hold of your ladder? Or will I keep floating in this sea alone, slowing letting the air out of my life preserver? The chase. The chase.



Liz Jasko

The wind whispers sweet nothings while
the leaves blush; red, orange, and yellow. Fleeting
as snowbirds fly south,
as apples spoil and ferment.
Lingering on the subtle shades
that will soon come to fade.

Empty branches claw the sky;
greedy or perhaps lonely.
The wind is still whispering, but when it does
it whispers nothing sweet. Just stinging
syllables and frozen fragments of
bitter beginnings.

Songbirds perch on pedestals serenading the sun.
Their melodies stretch on the currents of air,
coaxing everything to arise, usurping the snow and slumber.
Bellows begin to swell with nurturing zephyrs,
assuring vernal arbors safety and solace;
cradled in mild warmth.

Green leaves fertile with innocence
bask in the sunshine. Careless,
yet cautiously wavering in the breeze
that begs them to follow, to frolic.
Tactfully they tap-dance, teasingly they trot while
tree tops shyly hint at the first glimpses of red—

Life Lessons by Chris Raia

A Father: I have to tell you something.

A Son: I don't like the sound of that.

A Father: Do you want some time to get used to sound of that?

A Son: What does that mean?

A Father: It means I still have to tell you something.

A Son: What if I don't want to hear it?

A Father: Doesn't matter.

A Son: Okay, fine. Go. I'm used to the sound of it.

A Father: You're used to it?

A Son: Yes.

A Father: I need you to listen.

A Son: I'm listening.

A Father: I need you to really listen. Remember, growing up, when I taught you the difference between listening and hearing?

A Son: Yes, hearing is passive; listening is active. And even deaf dogs are better listeners than half of us humans. I remember, Dad. I'm listening. Really listening.

A Father: Okay. Good.

Pause

A Son: Dad?

A Father: Yes?

A Son: Speak.

A Father: I'm dying.

Pause

A Son: Can you pass the gravy?

A Father: You're not listening, are you?

A Son: I'm listening. I heard you. You're dying. Now, pass the gravy.

A Father: Do you know what dying means?

A Son: The process that eventually leads to the state of no longer living, yes.

A Father: Then you know that, for most people, hearing that their father is undergoing the process that eventually leads to the state of no longer living is usually approached with a sense of empathy. Matters of life and death are typically treated as serious.

A Son: You didn't marinate this chicken at all, did you? It could really use some gravy.

A Father: Is it dry? Sorry. I must have been distracted by my imminent death.

A Son: Would you stop that?

A Father: Would you react?

A Son: I'll react to the news of your imminent death when your death is imminent.

A Father: Oh, it's imminent. I've accepted its imminence. Here is your gravy.

A Son: Thank you. Finally.

A Father: How was work today? I understand you're up for a promotion – I'm sure Sarah is thrilled. Are you two thinking about getting out of that apartment and giving my grandkids a backyard yet?

A Son: You're asking about work right after you told me you're dying?

A Father: You told me I wasn't dying.

A Son: You're not.

A Father: I am.

A Son: If I get the promotion, we'll go house hunting. Then you'll help me assemble a Playset like we did when I was little. I already picked it out. It's Ikea.

A Father: I'll be dead. Dead and gone. I just hope you'll be able to manage without me. Do you remember the most important rule of building things?

A Son: Never lose the directions, because taking that shit apart is always more difficult than putting it together?

A Father: No, the other one.

A Son: Never use a hammer or a knife if you're frustrated?

A Father: Bingo.

A Son: I never understood that rule. Hammering things releases frustration.

A Father: And then the frustration that you release turns into a throbbing broken thumb.

A Son: Not if you're careful.

A Father: Nobody's careful when they're frustrated.

A Son: Can you pass the milk?

A Father: Are you ready to react to what I told you?

A Son: About what?

A Father: The fact that I'm dying.

A Son: Oh, right, the imminence?

A Father: The imminence.

A Son: No.

A Father: Are you sure?

A Son: Yes.

A Father: Don't waste too much time. I don't have much left.

A Son: You wouldn't dare die before you got the satisfaction of my reaction.

A Father: I might.

A Son: You won't.

A Father: You're right. I won't.

A Son: Dad, you've had cancer for almost a decade. You couldn't die if you tried.

A Father: What if I start trying?

A Son: And leave me here to use hammers in frustration? To let my children go untaught about the difference between listening and hearing?

A Father: I've met your kids. They already know all of that. They're much smarter than you were.

A Son: Fair. But what about your other lessons? Always pay for the person behind you at toll-booths when the charge is less than five dollars. Never walk down a hill with your hands in your pockets.

A Father: I'm glad you remember all of this. What else is on my paternal resume of wisdom?

A Son: Homeless people would rather get handwarmers or a meal than a couple quarters and nickels.

A Father: And if you have nothing to give?

A Son: A conversation.

A Father: See, you do listen.

A Son: Because you taught me how to.

A Father: And you'll teach your children.

A Son: You'll help me.

A Father: I'm dying.

A Son: You're not.

A Father: I am.

A Son: Not yet.

A Father: Soon.

A Son: Not yet.

A Father: Very soon, son.

A Son: Why now? Why - after nine years of being sick, after watching Mom die, after incessantly telling me you're not going anywhere, after telling me over and over again that your death is your goddamn decision - why now?

A Father: Because now, you're ready, which makes me ready. I can't go on any longer, and I know that you're ready.

A Son: What do you mean, I'm ready? That's a cop-out excuse to die.

A Father: Hey, don't antagonize the dying.

A Son: You're being annoying.

A Father: You're ready. Please, tell me you're ready. Tell me you'll tell my grand-kids I'll always love them. And when they get married, please don't introduce my ghost at the reception when everyone's happy. That's just too depressing for such a happy occasion.

A Son: I might do it out of spite.

A Father: Then I'll haunt you.

A Son: You'll haunt me?

A Father: Yes. Stop joking for just a second. Just one minute, and then we'll go back to jokes. Remember why?

A Son: Because when you're not laughing, it's much easier to cry. And lives aren't built on tears.

A Father: Got it.

A Son: Okay, I'll react. Say it again.

A Father: I'm dying.

A Son: I don't want you to die.

A Father: That's kind of you.

A Son: You said no joking.

A Father: You're right. I apologize.

A Son: Thank you. For everything. This won't be our last conversation, but if it is, I love you. I hope you know that.

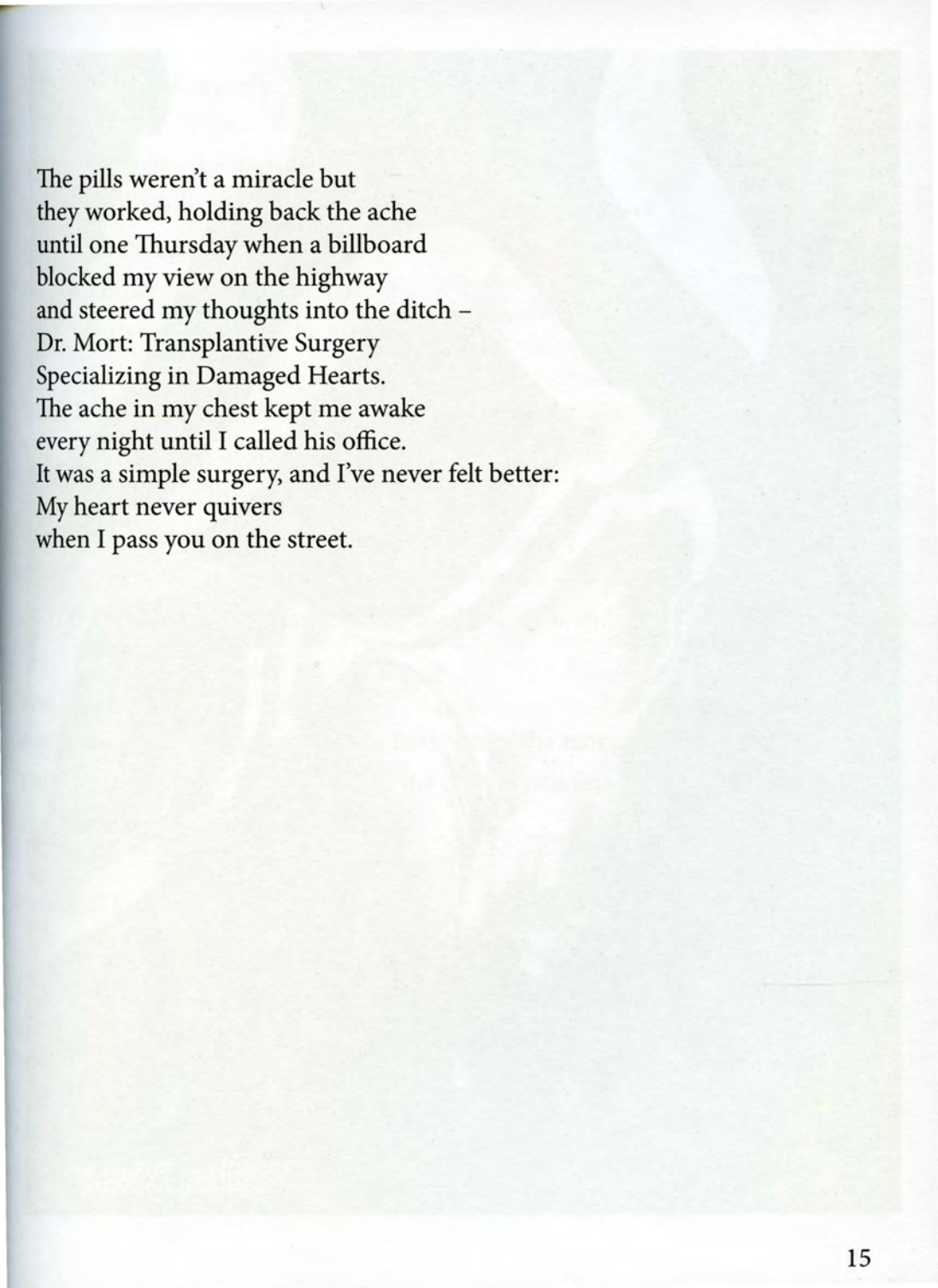
A Father: I do. That's why I'm ready. Now, I cooked. You clean. I'm going to watch the game.

A Son: Let's go Mets.

A Father: Let's go Mets.

Time Heals All Wounds by Jessica Sturtevant

I went to the doctor with a broken heart
and she sent to that specialist, Time.
You know the one – the grim, middle-aged man
with the numbing stethoscope
and the office on Merchants Row.
I sat on his exam table, sanitary
paper crinkling with every shift
and flushed as he looked me over.
Finally he spoke, his words caring, his tone indifferent.
“It’s a bad case, but not the worst
I’ve seen. Treatable, anyway.
Any history of heart disease in your family?”
“An aunt – on my mother’s side –
but it wasn’t anything serious.”
He frowned and gave me a prescription
of patience, said it would dull the pain.
“Start with that though we may have to consider
other options. There’s therapy, of course,
and interpersonal treatments – the standard rebound
though the side effects can be quite severe.”
I left with an appointment for three weeks later
and the receptionist’s confidential whisper
still audible in my mind: “They say
he’s the best there is with heart trouble
but you watch out – my mother always said
you can’t trust a man with letters
dragging down his name and that one
has a bookcase after his.”



The pills weren't a miracle but
they worked, holding back the ache
until one Thursday when a billboard
blocked my view on the highway
and steered my thoughts into the ditch –
Dr. Mort: Transplantive Surgery
Specializing in Damaged Hearts.
The ache in my chest kept me awake
every night until I called his office.
It was a simple surgery, and I've never felt better:
My heart never quivers
when I pass you on the street.



Carolyn Rivas

Reverie by Joe Connelly

With a fury like the gods of old

It rushes out from the dark underbrush of the forest

Cool and Precise

Like no other mechanism of nature

It carves its way through the night

With it come ribbons of light

That reveal islands of substance in the great dark abyss

Stark and stoic in their sudden illumination

These hamlets awake from their slumber

Casting their Great Western Dream to the vacant streets

And from the points of impact, long shadows grow and reach out across the islands

The shadows reach for the sea

And their easterly gaze catches the first rays of the rising sun

The immaculate fire blinds them to the empire that falls at their feet

Criminal Law by Christopher Prozora

Criminal Law: There are 3 types of criminal laws: 1) laws written for criminals 2) laws written by criminals 3) laws that are criminal.

Dirge by Dani Ferrara

“The gods will offer you chances. Know them.” –Charles Bukowski

With a rumply bag and the sun on one side and the mountains all around, in the dusty light, on a road going nowhere. Her legs itched with goose bumps, though it was very warm. Her hair looked like a five-car pileup. She remembered falling asleep in his car. She remembered tearing at her hair, but didn't touch it now.

She had wanted to say no, but she said okay.

What was that banging around the trunk? She had said.

Your clothes, he had said.

She had wanted to pry his tight, pale fingers off the steering wheel and then yank it to the right, and maybe they'd reach the mountains. That part of me is dead, and I don't want her back, she said as she walked the road.

The day they met they had danced to a dirge in a hotel parking lot in New Jersey, the slowest she ever danced, and every movement was an ache, dirty needle of her memory, outside the hotel and none of the lights were on, just crackles from his stereo and a crescent in the sky. Angel, he said. You're an angel.

The town was so dark that they simply lay where they were and danced to a love song.

One knee next to flower-shaped pinecones and he had cut his fingernails. They got married by a happy young boy. It was his first ceremony. I could be in Heaven already! I could be here forever. Eyes were black. They always were.

I love you to the mountains, he said, to the Sangre de Cristo at sunset.

She loved him like death – inevitable. She said, you liberate me. Once, she lost her acrylic paints. She watched him at dinner. She went and bought all new colors with her grubby cash. She bought a medium-texture cotton canvas with double acrylic titanium priming, 12" by 12", and dug up her old paintbrush from the junk drawer.

She decided to paint the Sangre de Cristo at sunset, burnt umber, cadmium red, so John could hang it on the cabinet in the garage where he kept his tools, and she would even sand it for him as a surprise, since he always got bad splinters. In the living room, he clutched it like porn. What's going on?

You bought more paint, he said.

Put it down. That's two weeks of me. It was your vow.

He hated it. He might walk out. She wanted him to.

She wanted his mouth loving on the painting. She wanted to spill something on it.

I'm just praying with Jesus you'll find it inside you to quit this. Did Jesus die for you to do this?

He saw her through a stained glass window.

I just want you to be happy with me, she said.

Love is sacrifice, he said.

She couldn't sleep. Neither could he. At two in the morning they got into his new Toyota and took a drive. After, they found a diner. He licked at red drips of ketchup on his French fry. The eyes of their waitress were swollen holes. Gritty chairs and a hard hunger that groaned with food. It was chilly outside, before dawn. The car keys sat in his back pocket. Mirrors the color of metal. Her stomach burned.

Excuse me.

Sure. I'll pay in the meantime.

She came back with a small smile. He drove them home to a music tape and held her hand. It was before dawn. I'm just stopping here for cigarettes. Her thoughts stayed down like sand, except for the red rolls of fat women and ketchup. He smoked fifteen in two hours. He splayed them in the ashtray. It was chilly, but she sat under the birdcage porch, playing with his matches. He just watched, slow as dawn. A cigarette got tossed, it didn't matter which.

Light was coming up on them.

You're killing yourself slowly, she said. Isn't that a sin? To slowly destroy the gift God gave you?

No. Love is sacrifice.

Who are you sacrificing for?

Mankind. I die from cigarettes and I become the best reason not to smoke. Maybe I'll save a worthier man. If I buy this pack here, nobody else can.

The light brightened the bottoms of houses, the gutters, the path from the road. It settled on dirty things and made them real.

She said nothing, but he knew her thoughts.

Heather, he said, it's different for you.

Nothing was awake then, no alarm clocks, no coffeemakers set to timers, no mumbled sleep-words. As night went away, the lawns, the dim squares of glass, the mailboxes all snored. But the trees were awake, and they all looked at the car. The flower skeletons looked at the car. The photons looked at the car. The in-between.

She went inside and closed the curtains. She sat on a hard chair.

She wanted to say, you could just buy them and throw them away. Burn them, bury them, hide them with my paints for all I care. You are lying to yourself and to me.

He came back inside. Want to go for a drive?

She wanted to say, why did you hide them? Why didn't you just throw them out?

I want to stay here, she said. She wanted to find her paints. She wanted to paint silver stars above a deep green tent.

Why? What are you going to do here?

Sleep, maybe.

You'll sleep all day. If you come out with me, I can spend some time with you.

Her ankles throbbed. She wanted him to leave. Get in his car and drive for two hours, just leave her to her paints, or to her sleep even, but more than that. She just wanted his face out of her face.

Go ahead, she said, faking a yawn. I'll be here when you get back.

He left, the screen door slamming and echoing.

She didn't paint or sleep. She sat on the hard chair. She wanted long hair and a magazine cover, golden blonde, shimmery on her cheeks, and shorts, a little bit bent, legs and her hand on her hip.

She wanted model friends behind the runway, saying how Celia's dress ripped and they had to ad-lib and hold it I have to get in my Louis Vuitton heels but it'll only take two seconds, oh how perfect.

Oh that's so sweet, oh am I? You're too sweet. Yes this jacket is pure silk. I couldn't tell you that. Oh yes I'd love to. And he'd have thin-soled shoes, and a dirty nasty beard, and maybe even a purple tie, and she would lay her cheek against his beard like dried-up bristles while protest songs crackled from the record player and low lighting and a white Virginia Slim in a jade holder smoking like an aura, long and white and thin; and coral lips. Coral lips like fish. I eat them but I'm a pescetarian. No thank you I don't eat meat. Must be cleaner than that, and that, and that one is just darling, I'll walk, nobody will recognize me, why all I have to do is don a pair of sunglasses! Ray-Bans, only four hundred dollars on sale, why I couldn't! Giggle. Online. Okay. But shhhh! Yes with the rising white sun above me in my window and coming straight off that crazy high what a crazy night and soft blanket life for days I think and I don't remember this and I don't remember that.

It's a new day!

He always said that. After the fat-ass woman with her face like a tomato and her dumb shirt and her dumb open mouth. And him under the covers and his hands moving under the covers and she puked in the toilet. Heather, he said. She ran away. Gas stations and little houses. She came back. Heather, he said. Let's go for a drive. I hate you, she thought. I hate you.

I-25 turned into 285 and then they went through Tesuque with the giant houses with the pools with the gates. They went all the way up to the reservoir, her favorite. They didn't speak except to say I'm stopping here for cigarettes and to sigh at the waterfall in the rocks. It fell like everything.

She wanted to get out. They used to sit together on rocks by the water and pretend. And swing their feet. He used to say someday. They were near some sharp rocks, and a small cliff or two. When she opened the door, his face burned and fell apart. She closed the door. Some part of her was in the sand like a child or a horse.

In the living room, his fingernails grazed the cadmium red. They grazed the burnt umber. They broke into the canvas. His hooked finger pulled the canvas.

His hooked finger pulled the canvas apart and ripped across both sides. The Sangre de Cristo spilled everywhere. He stood, leaving it behind, then kissed her, touched her lips with his lips and her tears with his fingers, and breathed deeply from her, tasted her life. She cried harder, wet his cheek.

What are you crying for? What are you crying for?

Stop, she sobbed. I just want you to be happy with me.

He felt tense. He came away from her. Let's go for a drive.

She wanted to say no, but she said okay. She always said that.

He hid her paintings, too, the ones he could find. She wondered why he didn't just throw it all away. When she snuck into the attic to look, he found her. He wanted to find her. He was sitting by the stairs, next to a broken lamp. She told him she was looking for Scotch tape. He took her hand and patted it. He took her to the church and sat her down on the hard wood, and made her listen to the illusions of priests. The priests were like dripping water faucets. At church, he put the Bible in her hand. He put it on the kitchen table when they were eating, and on the nightstand when they were sleeping. Maybe you'll find the light, he said, tomorrow morning. It'll be a new day.

That part of me is dead, and I don't want her back, she said as she walked the road to nowhere.

He had banged his forearms hard on the steering wheel.

Go! Talk! Say something! What is wrong with you? Don't you have anything going on inside your head or are you retarded? Talk, I am sick, sick, sick of sitting around waiting to ask you what's wrong with you all the time.

Nothing's wrong.

You know, I know you're lying. And you know it's a sin to lie, Heather? You know the Ten Commandments, right? Or are you stupid? Don't you know what's going to happen to you when you die, Heather, you're going to Hell, and that's a promise.

She watched him.

Adultery is a bad sin. And you hurt me, and you hurt someone else too. God. You know, I've never taken a hand to you before in my whole life? You know, I've forgiven you time and time again, as only a true angel could?

The colors of the day were fading and strange.

God knows, John, and he's asking, he's asking, if you can't stay loyal to me, how will you ever stay loyal to him? I tested you, John, and you failed. Every test I gave you from God, John, you failed. I gave you chances...I pleaded with God for you, but you're lost, He says, you'll never find the Way. And I agree with him, I agree with him.

John said, You're no angel. You're the Devil.

You took away what she loved, and then you gave yourself away, too. You left her with nothing. With nothing. To the Sangre de Cristo, John, and you ripped it apart. And you ripped my heart. And God is not happy, He is not happy.

Now John felt everything dark except the place above her head.

He took her hand.

I belong to God, she said. You cannot touch me now. I belong to Heaven.

Please, he whimpered. Please, I'm so sorry, I am so sorry, God, I'm so sorry, I've been bad...

You've been a bad boy.

I've been so bad...

She turned off the tape crackling music. John had his face in the steering wheel weeping.

It's over, she said. Her hair looked like a five-car pileup. There was no halo.

Black eyes.

There was a bag. She watched it. The car idled. She clawed the bag out. She watched the sky, how soft and dark it was.



Kathryn Herbert

Fortnight by Shelley Doster

When you asked how I slept
I wanted to say, "Poorly,
Because I kept trying to sync my breath to yours,
Because my limbs felt the need to wander the across the
Unfamiliar, wide expanse of sheets,
Because I rise with the sun when it isn't masked
By a heavy shade,
And I spent the greater part of an hour studying
The contents of your open closet
Trying to figure out why you've arranged your shirts like
that."

But all I mumbled was "fine" into your arm,
Extended past me like an open invitation.

Strangers by Taylor Crichton

On Saturdays that felt like Sundays I walked
Hyde Park through Serpentine trails and
unknown friends: a man in a suit with a guitar
strapped to his back, twenty footballers passing on
a patch of grass, bridesmaids in polka dot dresses.

Today I settled with bark against my
back, my wing bones sinking into the grooves
while my eyes wandered towards the sky.
I let the sun warm my clothes and Humilis
clouds tell me stories of their past lives:
a damaged key, a stopwatch, a running rabbit.

I listened until they bragged about their knack
for shape shifting into anything we needed
them to be, except for rain, of course. Not me.
They morphed into a hand, one finger extended
and pointing towards the ground where I saw them
for the first time: a boy and a girl.

I smiled at her laughter and the way he touched
her bare shoulder, at his sense of now, at her
appreciation for moments, and their ability to
ignore their skinny arms and jutting elbows
with a sip of Tesco wine and a chocolate croissant.

I looked up to see the clouds rolling the set of eyes
they had become. They're unknowable they warned
before glancing at the strangers and back at me,
now scratching my bare back, dented and uncomfortable,

I wish I were twelve years younger.

I wish I were gladly gawky and blissfully birdlike.

I wish I could approach them like a seven year old
asking for friendship and meeting an easy yes.

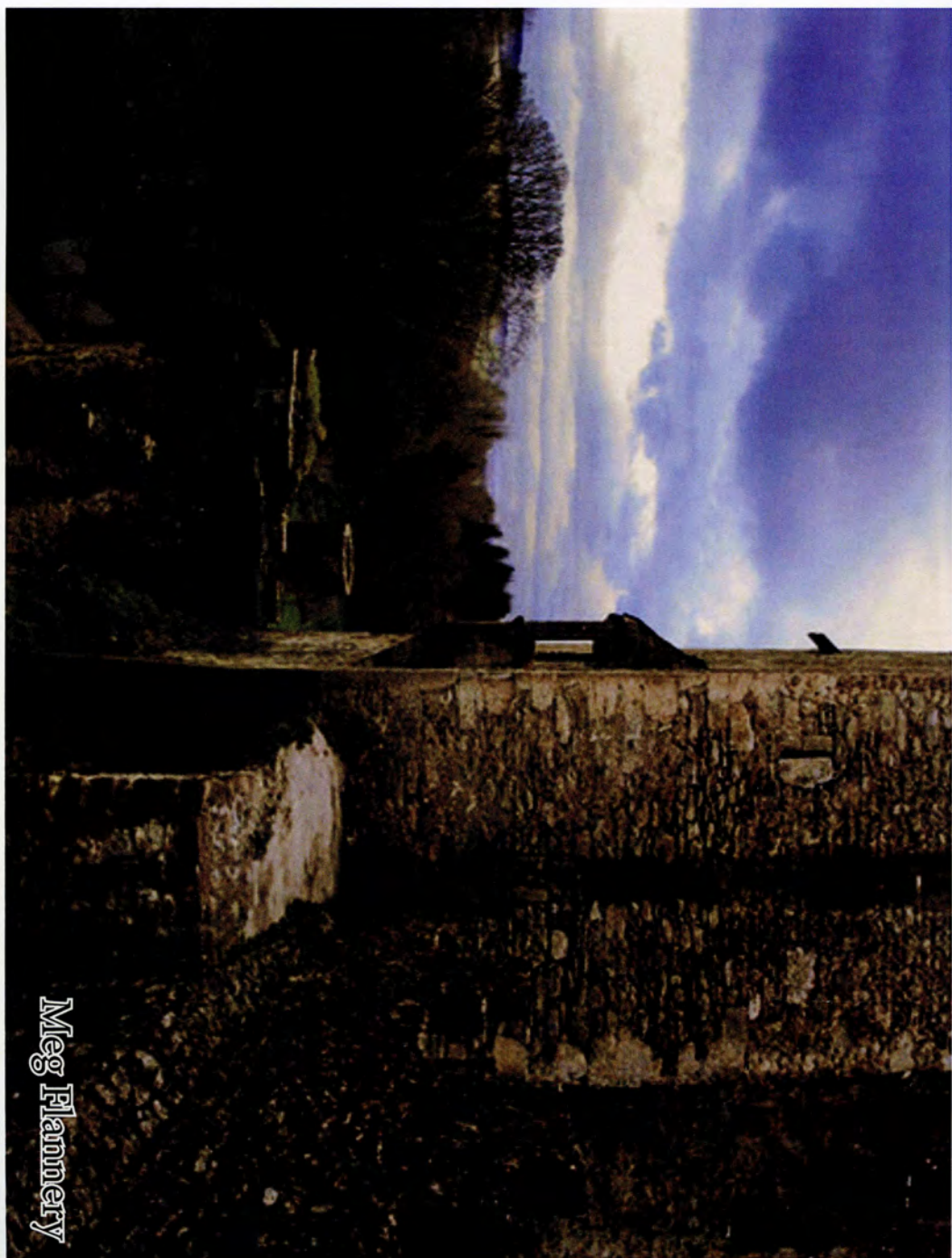
So, I look to the sky for signals: a nodding head
and a mouth telling me you are, you can.



Carolyn Rivas



Liz Jasko



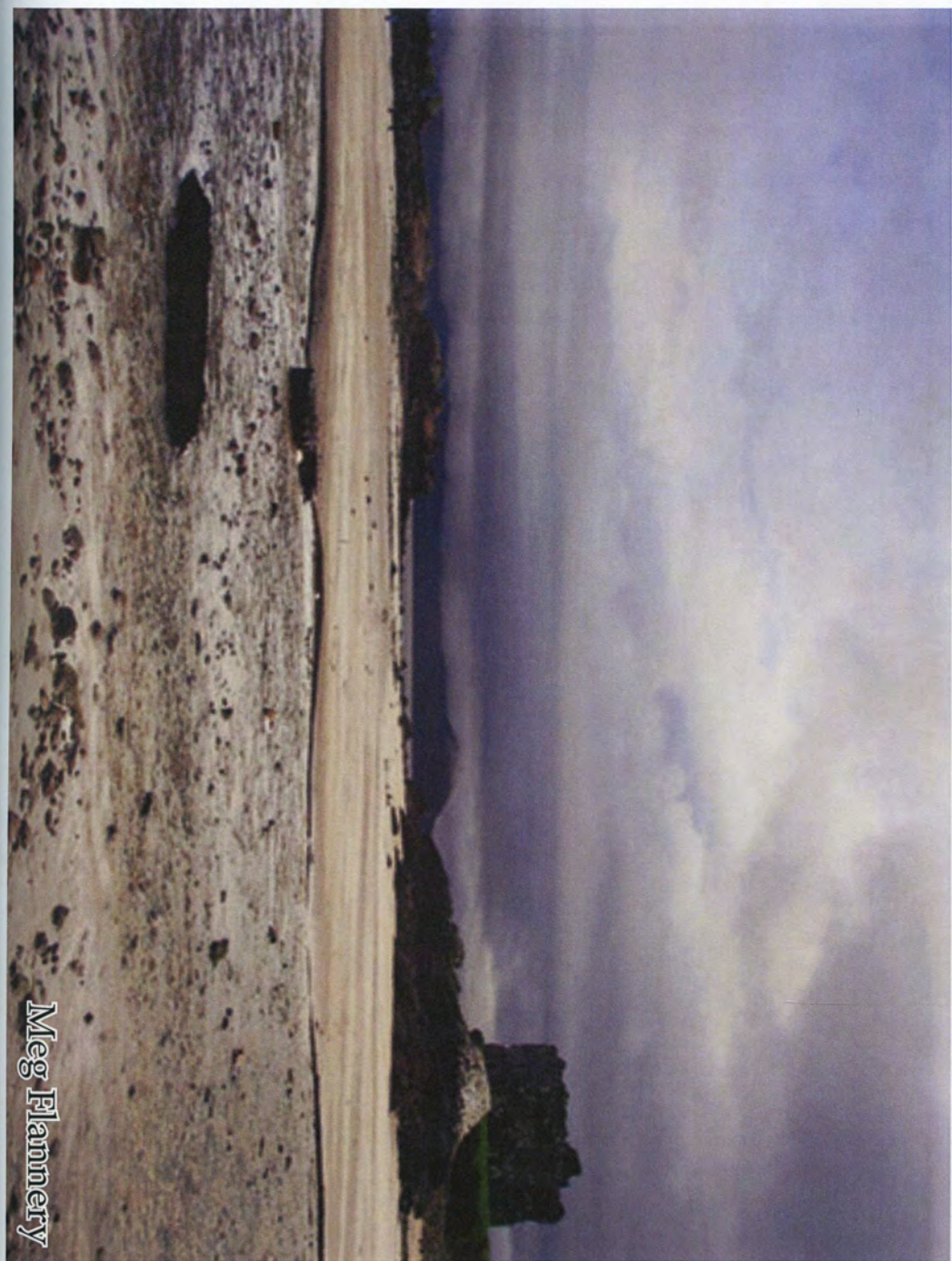
Meg Plannery



Kathryn Herbert



Carolyn Rivas



Meg Flannery





Liz Jasko

MD by Anonymous

Let me lose myself,
Drowning in a sea of E.
Throw me back on the couch.
Give me a wild ride!
Let me lose myself.
Let me be free!
Put my face between your knees.
I'm inviting you inside!
Let me lose myself.
Drop another bomb.
Straddle me from behind.
Ride! Ride! Ride!

Lot's Wife by Shelley Doster

What if this is our curse –
Tears that seep from quiet
Eyelashes dry on their own,
But leave a salty crust that
Ephemerally marries us to
Lot and we solidify, heads
Frozen gazing backward over
Sagging shoulders?

Uproot by Alison Carter

He was all about dark suit red tie red wine bouillabaisse. French shit.

Not her. She saw a half-chewed lollipop in a bathroom stall she picked it up and sucked it. Just to see what it tastes like.

He wore earmuffs. Furry earmuffs on cold days. Cold days cold days bouillabaisse. Cooked it in a pot with a little pin-sized hole in it and shrugged like I don't know when all the soup spilled out and two or maybe three flabby wet fish fillets were sitting naked on the bottom.

She had a boyfriend they all called Bone Jiggler. Jheri Curl motherfucker. She had real red red hair. She wore it in a little ponytail right on top of her head and on hot days the two of them just chased each other in circles til they fell down.

His mother had been a tiny little sickly looking street rat type with real squinty eyes because she didn't trust anybody. All the Dominicanas had called her la China and she liked it so much she changed her name to China Chastain because it sounded regal and poetic.

Her mother diced tomatoes for a living. Did high-quality mise en place in a low-quality restaurant.

They hated those mothers. Their own mothers. But they'd hate each other's mothers if they could ever meet them too.

The day they finally met one another was a turbulent one. For me. A relatively ordinary one for them. It had been just over a year and they'd crossed each another's paths every day. Between 5:12 and 5:17 PM at the Dyckman Street station she gets on the southbound A train and he comes home. I didn't know when I woke up that it would be the day. I never know.

Vin had come in at 3:30 the previous night. One of his friends had his arm slung around his shoulder and they swung the door open so it hit the wall and was so loud and Ben in 724 yelled “Jesus! Shut up!” and the friend kept saying really loudly “How the *fuck* did I get stuck babysitting *fucking Vin?*” I was just staring at my wall pretending like any human being could sleep through the whole thing and then Georges was at work selling kitchen equipment.

He worked in a wholesale appliance warehouse in an industrial complex by the river. Glamorous, just like he liked it. He had an office next to the elevator shaft on the third floor and he could see the river a little bit out of the corner of his window and when the elevator rumbled by he pretended as if he was waiting in line at the Eiffel Tower. French shit. Always French shit.

“What the *fuck*, Vin, get in your bed!” Vin had his bed lofted over his desk and the friend was trying to push him up the ladder from the sounds of it and Vin made noises that weren’t really noises.

He wore gloves when he sat at his desk, thin black gloves like the kind that clarinet players cut the fingers off of in marching bands but his had all of the fingers on and he liked to breathe hot on the glass and then press his gloved fingers to it and make a five-fingered bird on the window which he swore looked impressionist or post-impressionist or something.

“Never fucking mind. You can sleep on the floor. I don’t care.” The friend was pulling the comforter off of Vin’s bed and Vin was throwing up onto the window sill. I was pretending to be dead.

“The Elite new model is the sort of convection oven that other convection ovens dream of.” They liked him. They found him charming. Sort of unnerving. No one with a face like that could be proud of where he came from. That was what was unnerving. But he knew the appliances backwards and forwards.

“That’s disgusting. Oh my God, you dick. No, Vin, stay in the room. Go to sleep. Go the fuck to sleep. Fine. Whatever, I’m leaving.”

Sometimes, and he would never tell this to anybody, he dreamt of pushing the appliances out of his third floor office window. It was just an urge, the kind of urge like the urge to kill a man just to know what it's like to kill a man, the kind of urge he'd never realize. He knew them backwards and forwards and wanted to see them break into thousands of silver pieces and see if he could sell them then.

Vin was lying on the floor still throwing up a little. I stayed awake just in case he decided to choke to death. Georges packed his briefcase and started for home.

The first time they came to me was the first day of freshman year. I had to walk into an auditorium full of people and choose somewhere to sit. It was that simple. I stood in the back with my arms folded for a really long time just looking around as if I was trying to spot someone I knew and then I just slid into the closest row to me. There was a group of three girls next to me. I still remember their faces. One girl had an olive complexion but I don't know if it was her real complexion and one girl was very pale and very small and it looked as if her eyes were receding into her face and the third girl was wearing these green short overalls like lederhosen but I could tell that they were probably supposed to be fashionable. They were going through each other's wallets and pulling out I.D. cards to look at the pictures. They looked at me as if I were a homeless man who had wandered in off the streets, sat down next to them and started masturbating. I was not masturbating, for the record, if that was at all unclear. That's just how they looked at me.

I'm sitting there staring up at the stage and hoping the orientation thing starts soon so that the pressure to speak to anyone will be relieved and then something just runs through my mind—*He was all about dark suit red tie red wine bouillabaisse. She saw a half-chewed lollipop in a bathroom stall she picked it up and sucked it.* Over and over again these lines run through my head and I have *red tie red wine bouillabaisse* going like a song skipping over and over and occasionally it is interrupted by *she picked it up and sucked it.*

I'm not saying that it was a revelation from God or some schizophrenic voices. All I'm trying to say is I wasn't sitting there thinking of lines going "That sounds pretty good." They just came. Not really in my voice even, just in someone's voice.

That's the way that it would work from there on out. I wouldn't sit around going, "Did he go to college? Where did he go to college? What would she name her pet fish? Would she have a pet fish?" I just sort of knew these people. And the way their lives sort of ran before me it was like they really existed somewhere and I was just tuned in. For all I know they do exist somewhere, but I don't think so.

I know them. Georges and Debra. His name isn't actually Georges. It's just George. But he has this reverence that he can't really afford for French things. Her name is actually Debra. Debra, not Deborah. Deborah is too fussy a name for her. I know them.

Vin was in the shower for an hour and a half the next morning. I walked to class in the rain. Debra was eating a plate of barbeque chicken wings at her boyfriend's bar at four in the afternoon.

She was ferocious with those wings. She ripped each one apart and then dropped the bones into a shopping bag on the floor when she was finished. "Get those bones off my floor," said Bone Jiggler. "I can't," she said. "I can't just keep them on my plate. I can't have my food and my refuse on the same plate. It's animalistic." "You're animalistic." And she was. "Look at your fingers," he said, "You're covered in the stuff. You're filthy. Wipe that off." She studied her fingers for a moment and then painted two lines of barbeque sauce under her eyes like a linebacker. "Better?"

The rain picked up. I was carrying my papers under my jacket and when I passed my freshman roommate I pretended I couldn't see him through the rain.

He pulled a cocktail napkin from under the bar and grabbed her wrists together in a bunch and held her hands like a bouquet. He carefully ran the napkin up and down each finger and then finished by wiping the two lines from under her eyes. When he let her go she slid her plate toward him and jumped down and said, "Well. Work. You know." She kissed him across the bar and quick took her finger and slid it across the plate and dabbed sauce onto his forehead. "Christ..." he said and she laughed and ran out of the bar. "I'll call you," she said from the doorway and he replied "Yeah, don't bother," and she smiled and slipped into the street.

My mother stopped calling me. She would call me on Wednesdays every week in the evening and she would ask me what I was up to and I would just tell her

"Nothing. I have a lot of schoolwork." Every Wednesday. "Nothing. I have a lot of schoolwork." And after a while she just stopped calling except occasionally she'll send me emails about how she paid my housing deposit and she looks forward to me coming home and how my father says hi.

I was thinking about my mother at lunch. My mother and Debra's mother. My mother is a secretary in a real estate office. She's very tall, almost six foot and her hair goes down to her lower back almost her waist and she wears it in a braid most days. She looks at me in this way like she's trying to size me up for a tuxedo and she can't quite figure out the measurements.

Debra's mother is also tall.

"If you want to be the best," her mother said, "Get really good at something really easy and then associate with people who have no idea what they're doing." "Ma, where's my uniform?" "It's in the hall closet. I had it pressed for you. You owe me four dollars." "I never asked you to do that." "I told you, it's the little things. The easy things. That's what gets you ahead."

She worked in the laundry room at the Plaza in the evenings and into the nights. She used to work during the days cleaning the rooms but she got moved. She wore a gray uniform made of a sort of canvas material and it used to have a skirt for female employees but they switched to slacks for everyone. When she used to clean the rooms she would smoke cigarettes in the smoking rooms. Each smoking room. It was the only time she smoked. One cigarette in each room. If she cleaned all smoking rooms all day she would smoke about two packs over the course of the day. If she didn't clean any smoking rooms she wouldn't smoke a single one. It made her feel safe, cleaning a toilet with a cigarette dangling out of her mouth, the door firmly closed behind her. No one knew. It was just something she did to feel safe. Now that she was working in the laundry room she didn't smoke anymore.

"Debra, do something with your hair. You look slovenly with it all bunched up like that. Did anyone call for me this morning, Debra?" "Don called." "What'd he say?" She picked a note up from next to the telephone, "I'm quoting here. Word for word: 'Tell your mother that she needs to lose weight. I'm getting beyond the point where I'm comfortable with it and it's starting to disgust me.'" "Yeah, well, he's one to talk. He's got a paunch and a half." "He treats you like shit." "You treat your hair like shit. You need to do something with it."

She hated her mother not because of her berating but because of her nose. It was a nose that was foreign to Debra. Thin and upturned like a doll's. Debra's nose was more like if someone straightened out a coat hanger a little bit and then tried to re-bend it. It was someone else's nose. And she didn't know that someone else. He had been gone forever.

I was sitting on a bench and no one really saw me at all anymore, not even to look at me like an unruly homeless man and Georges was walking down the street and there was a girl six stories up undulating in her underwear.

He bought a white rose to tuck into his lapel. He was the only one in the warehouse who wore a suit every day. Three suits. He had three suits that he rotated and they all looked much more expensive than they were. His mother, the late China Chastain, had told him "Uproot and replant, Georgie. Uproot and replant." And she never did. But he did, was determined to. That's how he lived his life. He uprooted from a dung pile and replanted himself in a lapel.

He was walking away from the flower stand when he looked up and saw her. Sixteen maybe at best, skinny and flat chested and blonde hair cut shorter than his own and she was wearing just a black t-shirt and a pair of black underwear and she moved so violently and with such little care that if the window had been open she would be in danger of spilling out. He was ripping the stem off of the rose, twisting it in a circle and trying to get the stem to loosen and he started winding it and winding it faster and a thorn caught his finger and ripped a small cut into it. He raised it to his lips and sucked it instinctively and when he looked back up from the rose she was gone. He stopped twisting the rose and let it hang limply, folded in half. He walked across the street and placed it on the fire escape six stories beneath her. "Bravo," he whispered. "Bravo."

My phone rang in my pocket. I took it out and stared at it and I contemplated not answering it. After four and a half rings I gave in.

It was, as I said, a somewhat turbulent day for me. See, the thing was, Vin died. Vin was in the shower for a long time because he died. I thought that was just what someone does when they're hungover, stand in the shower for an hour and a half. It turns out that he fell asleep standing up and then lost his footing and hit his head hard on the shower head and hit his head again on the faucet.

Double head trauma. Unlikely, but true. He lost consciousness and it swelled and he died. So, somewhat turbulent, to say the least.

I was sitting in the hallway on the seventh floor of McDonnell with Ben from 724 but he wasn't saying anything to me. I don't know. I guess he just felt the need to be there. I hoped that he didn't want me to say anything.

They would call me in soon to question me. I didn't hear him fall. I mean I didn't. I don't know why I didn't hear him fall. I was presumably awake and in the room when it happened. I don't know. I don't know where I was. I don't know where I ever am.

They met. They met only briefly for the first time while I was in that hallway.

He came off the train with the sixth floor girl on his mind and he goes to walk out through the turnstiles and he takes his card out of his wallet and starts sliding it backwards through the scanner. A couple times. Dazed and not quite sure why it's not working. He saw her thighs pressed up against the glass and the way her toes pointed toward the window, pointed toward him a little bit maybe. He imagined cooking her coq au vin and playing something on the piano for her to dance to.

"You only have to swipe it on the way in," came a voice.

She was standing in the next turnstile over. Debra, in her gray uniform with her slacks and her red red hair in a little ponytail on top of her head. "Oh, he said. Thank you." "You a tourist? If you're trying to get to Radio City it's the other way." "No, I live here, I just...I'm distracted. Thank you again." "Yeah, listen. So, since I was nice enough to bring you back from the walking dead and not be an asshole about it, can you lend me a swipe? I'm in a hurry and I forgot to put money on my card." "Of course." She swiped his card and handed it back to him. "Cool. Thanks. Listen, I'll pay you back. I'll get you sometime when you need it. Promise." "Sure." "See you around." "Sure." He wished he still had the white rose.

It feels good, you know. Like when somebody you know becomes famous. To think, hey Debra, look at that guy. I know that guy. I do. I know him. I know them.

I think maybe this could be a love story. Maybe a love story. Maybe.

The Hunt by Jessica Brown

“To pursue with force, hostility, etc. in order to capture”
Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary

Dear Prospective Employers, or shall I say those who hold my entire future in their hands with callous disregard for the actual human being on the other end of the easily discarded resume and inept cover letter.

No, prospective employers makes it sound like I actually care about their opinion and general wellbeing when the only thing I care about these days is my own selfish but miserably poor behind.

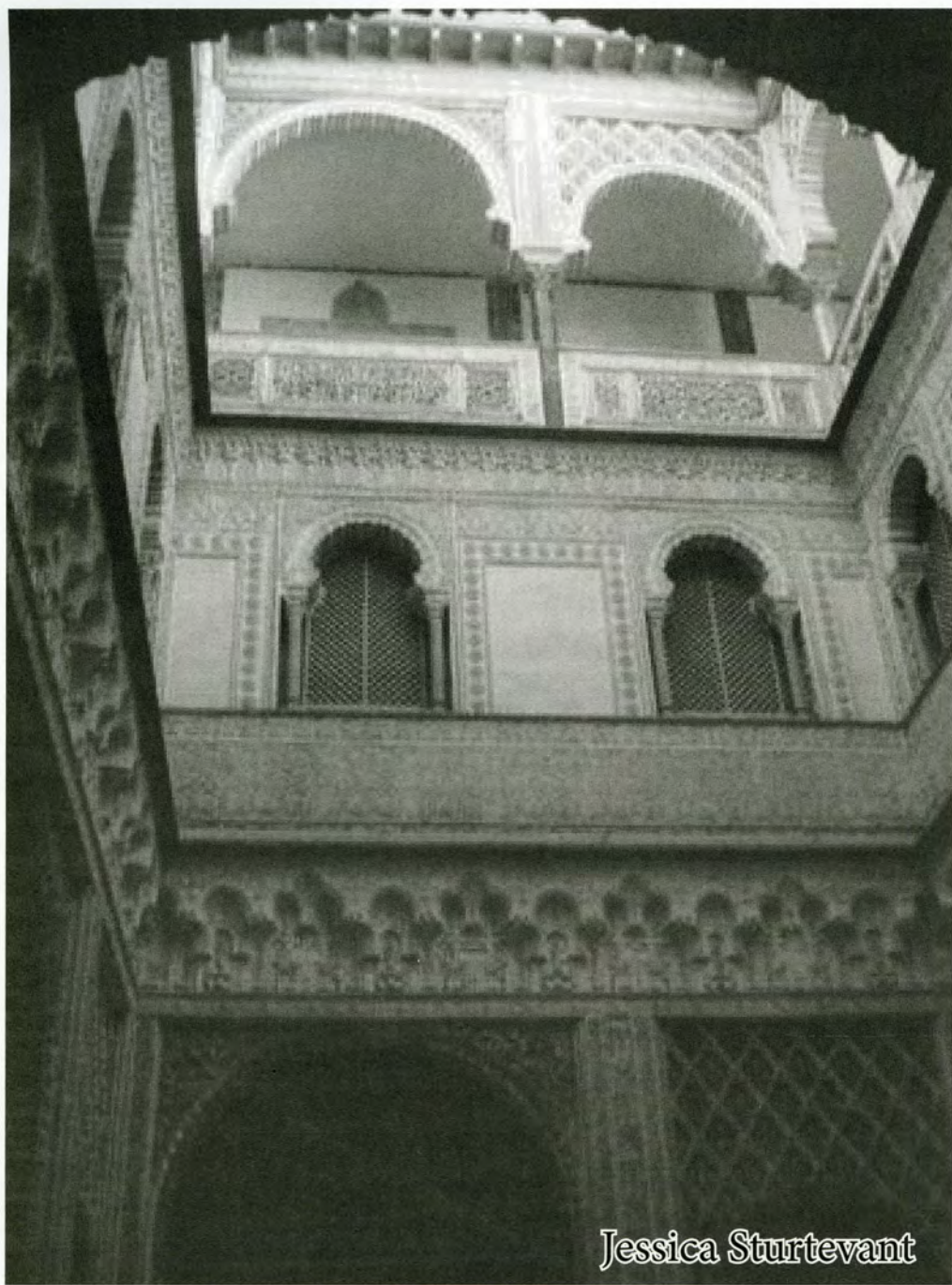
I am writing to you in regards to the wonderful opportunity otherwise known as one of the few occupations I am qualified for with my ridiculously expensive liberal arts degree which is entirely useless in the dismal economy as my parents love to remind me.

Not only have I been a lifetime supporter of your products of which I have absolutely no clue what they are nor at this stage of my months long search do I really give a flying fig, but hey it sounds good when I express interest.

I would be honored to be considered for such an esteemed position that a trained primate could perform with more pizzazz, dedication, and to be honest, more skill than I could demonstrate though it's nothing Google can't teach me.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions many of which I will lie through my teeth about with utterly no remorse so I can reach the exalted interview stage and further fib and fudge my way into gainful employment.

Sincerely, yours truly, forever yours, eternally sucking up salutations sure to demonstrate my desperation and willingness to bend over backward, sideways, and even upside down to finally nab the unicorn of today's society: a job.



Jessica Sturtevant

Endless Cycle By Nick White

“Have you ever felt déjà vu, Randy?” I said. “Because I feel it every time I’m here.”

“Certainly, man. Some say the universe is oscillating constantly; that it’s been recurring and will continue to recur infinitely.”

“What?”

“It expands until it cannot any longer, then compresses with the same result. Over and over again,” said Randy.

“So everything just repeats itself?”

“It’s possible.”

“Is there any way to stop it?”

“Who knows? Maybe the question is do we want to stop it? I let that thought sink in for a while, as I sipped the musky herbal tea he set out on the intricately carved coffee table. He said it was Darjeeling, but I always figured he brewed marijuana. I never realized how long it had been since I arrived in his cluttered living room, which was lined with draperies embroidered with Chinese writing and incense.

“Would you like any more tea?” he said, finally.

“Still working on this one,” I said. He walked into the other room, his long robe dragging behind him on the shag carpet from IKEA. I had never wandered anywhere else in Randy’s apartment (mainly out of fear) but if he told me there were hallways lined with fine art that stretched on forever, I would probably believe him.

“So, how’s the wife, man?” Randy said, returning with a tall mug.

“She’s doing OK.” I stirred my tea with a spoon absentmindedly.

“Come on, brother. Lay it on me.”

“No, really, it’s fine.” Randy always made me delve into my personal life, but I tried to brush it off. “Is that a new vase?” I said pointing to a blue and white jug perched in the corner.

“You know full well that’s always been there.” Randy twirled his thick beard between two fingers. He was a large man; much larger than me.

“She’s still on my case about the ovulating thing,” I said.

“Her cycle? So, what’s the holdup then?”

“I don’t know. Just waiting for the right time, I suppose.”

"Well, time is merely perception, Adam."

"Right."

"Do you want to have a kid, or not? There's a small window for Angela, she under produces."

"God, you sound like my wife. You've never even met," I said.

"Well, whose fault is that? Do you even tell her where you're going?"

"What time is it? Angela took my watch to the jeweler."

"What about your father? Has he passed yet?" Randy continued.

"Seriously, Randy?"

"Shit, I don't know, man. You know I don't have clocks."

"I got to get going. Thanks for the tea."

"No problem, my friend. Come back anytime."

I hurried out the door and jogged down the hall to my apartment. The sun had already set, leaving behind bitter winter cold. The clink of pots and pans in the other room led me to my wife, preparing dinner.

"What's going on, Ange?"

"Where were you?" she said, dicing a stalk of celery into small pieces. "I just told you to tell that whack-job neighbor to lower his music again."

"Yeah, I did. I just, uh, went to help Mrs. Thompson with her heater again."

"You're smoking pot over there, aren't you?"

"What? No...I don't think so. He's new in the building; I was just helping him get set up."

She rolled her eyes and continued cutting into a carrot.

"Smells good in here." I kissed her on the cheek. I just wanted to collapse in her arms.

"How's your father?" she said.

"He's hanging in there...for now. I guess the only thing to do is let him at this point." She gave me a pitying look; her big blue eyes staring right through me. My father had been on his death bed for weeks now, but nobody in my family seemed to care. My mother was in Florida with her second husband, planning senior socials or editing the large influx of obituaries for the "The Bally Breeze," her senior community's weekly paper. Their good-bye (if one could call it that) was brief. My mother patted his head, and walked out the door, never looking back. I don't know how she did it.

Once he pinned my mom against the wall with a pool cue and called her the biggest regret of his life, their marriage finally ended. My father was a lying, cheating, heartless man, but he still was a human being.

My brother lived in L.A. and was too busy scouting the “next big star” for his tanking record label. He’ll never find one. My sister lived in Colorado and always took my mother’s side when it came to Dad. So, there I was, six days a week, sitting by a man as he clung to his last shards of life. I took a bereavement leave from work, although I was hardly bereaving. I was just someone there to watch him die, as if that were a duty. Everyone who’s lived deserved to be accompanied by someone as they died; at least, that’s what I was told.

These days my sleeping companion was the warm glow of “Sports Center” on mute. I’d gotten so used to sleeping on the couch after coming home at all hours from the hospital that it became commonplace. Angela didn’t seem to mind. “A bed was for procreating,” she said.

I woke up to the loud beeping sound the washer made when a laundry cycle ended. I still habitually looked down at my wrist to see what time it was, but to no avail.

“Hey, Ange, what time is it?” I said groggily, as tossed sodden clothes into the dryer. She didn’t respond. I found Angela sighing as she folded my underwear.

“Ange?”

“What? I’m busy.”

“What’s wrong?” I said.

“We need to talk.” (The four words in the English language when combined respectively). “We talked about having a kid for so long. I know you’re father’s about to pass, and this is a tough time, but this is our chance right now.”

“I know. It’s just...are you sure we’re ready? I mean, I’m grieving right now with my dad and everything else. It’s a process.”

“You don’t even like your father, Adam.”

“Well, someone has to grieve for him,” I said without believing it.

“I understand, but you know how much this means to me. It’s the circle of life. People pass away, and then we have a child and continue the cycle. With death comes rebirth.”

“Where’d you get that from? The Lion King?”

“Look, are you going to fuck me or not? I’m sick of this conversation.”

I stared at her blankly for a moment. The drone of music from next-door broke the tense silence. “You can make your own dinner tonight...and for the last time, go next door and tell that whack-job neighbor to keep it down,” Angela barked over her shoulder as she left the kitchen.

I grabbed his keys off the table and followed the sound of spiritual music to the adjacent apartment door, rapping on it three times. Randy answered the door wearing long embroidered red robes, as incense poured out of the doorway.

“Hey, could you turn the music down a little bit?” I said.

“You don’t like it?” said Randy.

“...It’s fine, just a little loud.”

“You know, the human mind likes patterns.”

“I’m sorry?”

“That’s why we like music. We enjoy the repetition.”

“That’s interesting and all, but just turn it down, OK?” I said, slightly bemused. Randy began to bellow with laughter.

“I’m just fucking with you, my man,” he said. I began to walk away.

“Now hold on a second. What’s the hurry? You seem stressed out?”

“Nothing. It’s just been a long day.”

“Where’d you get that from? The Lion King?”

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“Now hold on a second. What’s the hurry? You seem stressed out?”

“Nothing. It’s just been a long day.”

“A long day, you say? Are days different in length? Oh, I’ve done it again.

I ask too many questions. What do you say you come in and have some tea or something?”

I sighed. This routine was getting a little too familiar. Randy ushered me into the den where candles provided flickering light against the incense. It smelled of lavender. Randy massaged the back of his hand, which contained a large colorful tattoo of a serpent devouring its own tail.

“Just a little arthritis,” he said. “So, what’s going on, man?”

“Same old. I feel like the past two weeks have been an eternity.”

“Hmm, well you met me about two weeks ago. That hurts, brother.”

“Oh, it’s not that...”

“I’m fucking around, my man, relax. You know, Adam, a housefly lives for around 20 days, but you can bet that feels like a lifetime to them, right?” Randy said.

“If you say so.”

“Did you and Angela fight again?”

“Say, is that a new vase?” I joked.

“Come on now. Give it to me straight.”

“Yeah, you could say we did. I know she’s frustrated but I just don’t know what to do. I can’t bring myself to have a kid.”

“How come?”

“I guess because my childhood was so hard. And because I can’t accept this whole circle of life bullshit.”

Randy looked at me pensively, expecting more.

“I’m sitting here, watching my deadbeat father die, and she expects me to just continue in this cycle. Sooner or later that’s going to be me in that bed, and I’m supposed to be fine with that choice—being replaced by my children. Living through them. Whatever,” I said.

“Sounds to me like you think it’s a choice. We all die someday.”

“Well, yeah, but I don’t want this daily minutia anymore. I don’t want to fulfill some primal necessity to be in the circle of life.”

“Have you ever seen *The Lion King*?”

I glared at him. “I know Angela has always wanted to be a mom. It’s all she’s talked about since college,” I continued.

Randy took a long, deliberate swig of tea. He gazed up at the ceiling as if expecting it to speak to him, then returned his focus to me. “Tell me, man. What do you want?”

“...I guess I just want to get out of this rut. I want to skip forward to the future, even just a little bit.”

“What you need is a wormhole.”

“...No thanks, I quit drugs after college.”

“No, man. A wormhole. A passageway through space-time. It connects two separate times, almost like a fold in the cloth of time.”

“What’s your fascination with time, Randy?”

“I think I could ask you the same question.”

“I don’t know. I suppose it was my father. He always had a watch. He always stressed making ‘good time.’ He was always rushing me wherever we went, even if we had nowhere to be. The guy almost got me killed once when I was a kid. We were hiking and I couldn’t keep up with him. Who knows, the details are blurry.”

“Have you ever meditated, Adam?”

“No, I can’t say I have.”

“Come on, humor me. Let’s have a go at it. It’s very therapeutic.”

“I don’t know, Randy. I should get going soon.”

“Picture an open field. Right now, in your conscious state, you’re standing on a small foothill, and can see just off into the distance. But in your enlightened state, you place yourself on a tall mountain, and you can see way out over the horizon. It’s simply awareness,” said Randy. “Relax yourself. Have a sip of tea if it calms you,” he continued, handing me a glass.

I took deep breaths of the warm air. It was as if I began to crawl out of my own skull, so that I floated just above myself from the corner of the ceiling.

The sky was cloudy that day. Dark clouds gathered above, ready to burst at any moment. I was 13; my father decided it was a good idea to go hiking out on Hidden Ridge.

He always wanted to “toughen me up.” I could feel the slick rocks beneath my feet, as we slowly climbed toward a roaring waterfall. My father went on ahead, yelling at me to hurry up in between grunts. The air smelled like copper by the falls. We reached an embankment, and dad stopped to rest with a squirt of water. I strained myself to catch up. I wanted to prove myself. The rocks disagreed.

Suddenly, the stones clanked against one another with a thud, and began to descend quickly towards the water below, taking my feet out from under me. I began to slide, hopelessly pulling out shrubs as I went backwards. My father hurried to action, racing toward me and diving upon the rocks. He took my arm in a tight embrace and held me out over the edge of the embankment. “I won’t let you go,” he said. “You’re safe with me.” I saw the trauma in his cool green eyes. I saw the love. It was maybe the only time I’d ever felt that in my father. He protected me, like I was a part of him, because I was. I was next in line. I was his legacy.

Days passed in much of the same manner. I took no notice to any separation between them. I visited his father at the hospital, came home to find a distressed Angela, and continued sleeping on the couch. Rinse. Repeat. Until Saturday the 29th. I received a frantic phone call from the hospital. It was time. I gather Angela in my arms and practically dragged her to the car.

I couldn’t miss this. I weaved in between lanes, and nearly put our own lives in danger, just to go and witness my father lose his. I owed it to him to watch him die. I was next in line.

Angela and I sat together with hands embraced as the nurse reentered the room, clipboard in hand, and examined the pulse indicator. We took a deep breath and accepted the fate.

“It appears he’s stabilized again. I’m estimating he’ll be OK for another week or so,” she said.

“...What was that?” I stammered.

“He’s still fighting it. He’s a real warrior, this one.” She smiled and exited the room. I nodded.

“Another week or so,” I repeated. There was nothing to do but wait. I returned home with Angela, forgoing the plastic lined hospital chair for a real bed, or at least the couch.

“Maybe it’s a sign,” Angela said, removing her jacket and collapsing on the sofa.

"A sign for what?" I said.

"Maybe he's waiting until you give him a grandson?" she smiled, ruffling my hair with affection. "Come on, Adam. Let's just at least try while we still can." As she finished speaking the familiar drone of spiritual music began again. "You have got to be kidding me. This guy is driving me crazy."

"I'll take care of it, Ange. Just hold that thought, I'll be right back."

I rapped three times on the door which opened to Randy smiling.

"I keep forgetting, my man, sorry about that," he said.

"It's fine. You got a minute?"

"Of course," Randy said, "Ask me anything."



Kathryn Herbert

Upon Traversing St. Anne's Hermitage by Nicholas Bolt

The first thing I notice
are the little green saplings
growing like moss. Miniature
trees. Miniature men, living in
glass jars.

Broken glass, smoothed down to curves and lumps—
the rain can craft the same art as sister ocean.
Graceful erosion of trite trash.
Nature has shaped our creations,
while we try to shape ourselves.

I smell the burning rubber of Route 9;
more morphing bodies. A chameleon sky
mimics the rocks that have been drained
of their color. Bleak and old are the hues
of their sad, weathered gray.

Lead is interrogated for its golden
answers. But how did this lead to
miniature men in glass jars?
Are we made of our desires
for the worthlessly valuable?

“What’s in there?”

*Leftover roofing material, pane-less windows, bricks,
wooden floorboards, waterfront property.
Prime real-estate.*

Nothing special, but we all must see for ourselves.
All the while the river goes unnoticed.

LAS Eboard



Top: James Napoli, Lauren Hall, Devin Dickerson

Middle: Catherine Natoli, Rachael Shockey, Carolyn Rivas

Bottom: Miles Wellington, Kellie Hayden, Raven Baptiste

Dear Readers, this spring we are proud to present a colorful and absolutely excellent collection of student work! We are grateful to the artists who have allowed us to share their work, and hope that you come away from this spring's Mosaic fully inspired!

Best,
Raven and Catherine.

