

The Lion's Eye



UNTITLED
ANNA MITAROTONDO

The Lion's Eye



Spring 2013

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> "Raise your words, not your vouce. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder." - Rumi

CONTENTS

POETRY AND PROSE

JANET PARK	6	The First Look
DANIELLE BRUNO-ARLEQUIN	8	Anchors
CARLY DASILVA	10	The Broken Pencil Sharpener, Room
		237
HAILEY MARR	11	Collection
DANIELLE BRUNO-ARLEQUIN	12	In Retrospect
CARLY DASILVA	13	The Pianist
CARLY DASILVA	14	Albedo
BRIANNA SADLER	16	Gone.
JANE RIED	17	To Find a Sunset and Swallow it Whole
HAILEY MARR	18	Roads
RACHEL FRIEDMAN	19	Sitting Shiva
NICHOLAS SANGIACOMO	20	A Plastic Sestina
AMY CHEN	21	Kitchen Drawer Love Poem
CARLY DASILVA	24	Butternut Squash Soup
CARLY DASILVA	25	The Small
JANE RIED	27	Something to be Said
RACHEL FRIEDMAN	28	About Nirvana
DANIELLE BRUNO-ARLEQUIN	29	Rain
CARLY DASILVA	30	Bellies
ALENA WOODS	31	Question Mark
CHRISTIAN DIETZ	32	A Day at the Beach With My Dad
ALENA WOODS	33	Proof in the Petals
CARLY DASILVA	34	Time Zones
KATIE TENCZA	36	Composing a Poem Before Sleep
		(Holden Would Understand)
KEERTHANA KROSURI	37	Radial

REBECCA CAUGHRON	39	Appalachian Spring
ALENA WOODS	40	Matthew 5:30
PATRICK GALLAGHER	41	Alternate Anatomy
ANNA MITAROTONDO	42	The Last Look



ART

CHRISTINE AUSTIN	(COVER)	Festishizing the Look
ANNA MITAROTONDO	2	Untitled
KLARA BLAZEK	7	For Sale
SCOTT SAMUELS	15	Self-Portrait, Dissasembled
SCOTT SAMUELS	22	Thanks, Mrs. Scofield
SCOTT SAMUELS	23	Small Sum
CHRISTINE AUSTIN	26	Untitled
ANNA MITAROTONDO	38	Stormy Night In
CHRISTINE AUSTIN	43	Caught Out
AMY CHEN	(BACK COVER)	Ghosts No. 1

THE FIRST LOOK

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

I never thought that one day my words would be the ones on this page; printed, published, and dedicated to you. I came into TCNJ incredibly shy and uncertain. I was unsure most of all, about my major. I declared an English major while considering, but unable to commit to, an education major, and constantly worried that I was missing out. Thankfully I started to genuinely enjoy my English classes and as I got more involved with Lion's Eye, I was able to affirm my reverence for language and literature. I'm now a happy English and Spanish major, and so beyond grateful to be able to study abroad next semester. The point of explaining my experiences is to share with you, Reader, that I sincerely hope this little magazine serves you a purpose. Whether it is a bit of inspiration, or something new you learn or appreciate, I hope you find something in this magazine that makes you think; think about something other than finals, exams, impossible essays or books and textbooks you're forced to read for class and inevitably resent. Be bold, Reader. Take action through your appreciation. I believe anyone who values art and literature can create good art and literature. Don't let your hesitation restrict you. Take these pages as my personal request for your original work and for creative thinking and growth. Allow these pages to be your catharsis amidst the stressful demands of the semester. Finally, some thanks to the e-board that I've been honored to work with: Anna, Rachel, Julia, and Christine, you guys are so great. I hope you continue to lead Lion's Eye and do your best to promote artistry among our student body. I'll miss you guys!

Ju þa

Janet Park Executive Editor



FOR SALE KLARA BLAZEK

ANCHORS

I once knew a girl who liked to draw a little, black-inked anchor on her delicate wrist. I never did question what it meant to her, but I figured it helped to hold her to reality.

I look down at my own naked wrist.

What reminds me of ever-present reality?

All I have done in my life is question.

It has been my curiosity that I used to draw conclusions, but what does anchor me to this world? What I can only see with eyes?

The pulse on my wrist pounds hard like the droppings of an anchor. Am I never to pry into reality? I draw a deep breath and ponder that question.

It is in my nature to ask questions. That is a part of me I can never forget. It is what draws me to life, puts blood in my wrist, makes me exist in reality. Is this my anchor?

Yes, this must be what anchors me, this ability to investigate, to question. If I do not wonder, how do I know I exist at all? The thumping in my wrist calms; reality and I end our draw.

I once knew a girl who would draw a little anchor on her wrist and now I have a question mark on mine to remind me of reality.

It is in my nature to ask questions. That is a part of me I can never forget. It is what draws me to life, puts blood in my wrist, makes me exist in reality.

Is this my anchor?

Yes, this must be what anchors me, this ability to investigate, to question. If none ask, what is the point of reality? If I do not wonder, how do I know I exist at all? The thumping in my wrist calms; reality and I end our draw.

I once knew a girl who would draw a little anchor on her wrist and now I have a question mark on mine to remind me of reality.

 $_{9}$

Hailey Marr

BROKEN PENCIL SHARPENER, ROOM 237

How many graphite tips have you swallowed whole?

Who did you provoke?

To the hand that pulled your body from your head and spiral innard: why?

Hanging torso, spinning nose, your hat hung you it seems: how?

I pity you, sitting, floating, forlorn legless elephant.

COLLECTION

I. There was white light On the top of your chest When the rain started. I can't wait to see the Faint shadows Decorating your spine.

II. Her body gives As my shoulders clench To carry her home.

III. Flower petal-ghosts around A circle of pinprick yellow He loves me not, oh he loves me! That kind, most handsome fellow.

IV. You remind me Of the kid I was And the person I wanted to be.

V. If I wrote the smallest love letter with the smallest words in my smallest handwriting and placed it in the smallest hiding place of the smallest crevice along your left collarbone, would you find it?

IN RETROSPECT

I took a walk in the infancy of Fall when I felt that the world was just too much. The last of the wild flowers were in bloom. The sky above, its pale celestial blue, felt the need to tumble; a rush of wind flew to my face in a frantic kiss.

And in that that moment, I wondered what it would be like to kiss the corner of your lips; I think I'd fall and float away on a current of playful wind. I've noticed you haven't smiled much in a while; your soul looks quite blue. Perhaps I can bring back your spring bloom?

But then I remembered why you wilt, and do not bloom. Your mind is still trapped on that one kiss. It brought storm clouds that from the west blew into your skies and made the snow fall. You feel like you have not experienced much. It haunts you, like a howling wind.

As I pondered, the early winter wind hurried through the trees, just previously in bloom. I thought that maybe I pondered too much about your heart, your smile, your kiss. I just want to save you, before you fall into that abyss of icy blue.

The air chills. I tug closer my coat of blue, my protection from the harshness of wind that pushes the leaves to fall.

Nothing, in a while, will be in bloom, similarly to that tentative kiss

I wished on flowers for so much.

I'm not used to taking my time much. I usually dive headfirst into the blue. But, perhaps for you, I'll wait for that kiss that will tickle my lips like a breezy wind. It may come when you bloom once more, but definitely not in Fall.

My heart blooms late in the infancy of Fall when I skipped like wind under a sky of blue thinking much about a future kiss.

Carly DaSilva

THE PIANIST

She took lessons since she was six, and gave them up out of rebellion. Still, she drummed her fingers on desks as if the processed wood could sing Tchaikovsky well into her college years. When she married her first husband, they'd hired an older pianist for the reception who'd played every song from memory; she'd smiled at him more than once, and when he'd smiled in return, one of his teeth had glinted gold. She worked as an accountant from nine to five, and she was always in bed by eight; her fingers practiced scales while she slept. After the divorce, she could listen to only the first few minutes of Beethoven's anything, Mozart's everything; she preferred to drive in silence, and the stereo in her living room slowly gathered dust. Her fingers twitched sporadically, forgetting their patterns. She didn't think she would ever play again. One night, after eating alone at a café, she followed the distant sound of Chopin into a bar filled with sweet-smelling smoke. She sat at a table close to where the spry young pianist played, hypnotized by his fluttering fingers, unaware that, in fact, hers moved in time with his.

ALBEDO

If you wanted a sip of nectar, you should have helped yourself to the honey in the pantry –

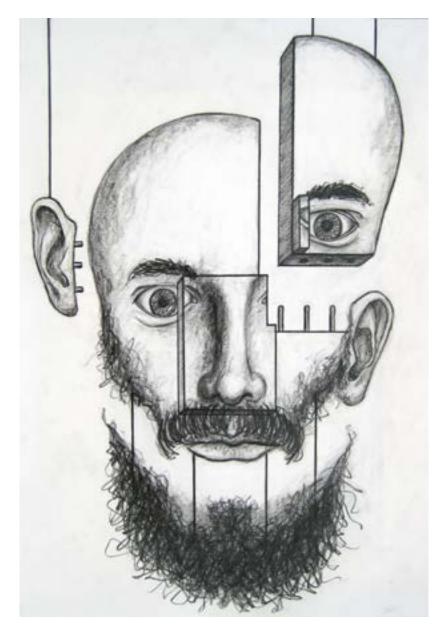
drizzled spirals on your tongue, painted the roof of your mouth,

attempted to articulate yourself, swallowed words with twisted wrists and broken ankles, tasted their rich, residual bitterness.

Look at me.

There's something to be said for so many dimples, such symmetry, how I look when I'm split into halves, how you look when you peel out the pulp with your teeth,

how I feel smoothed under the whorls of your thumb, not quite rind or forbidden fruit, but the tendrils, the power that holds them together.



SELF-PORTRAIT, DISSASEMBLED
SCOTT SAMUELS

15

GONE.

The sickly sweet smell of morphine the wilting flowers on the windowpane the sterility of the waxy, white floor Grandma's skin is too pale in the fluorescent light her lashes flutter eyes fixated on the bare ceiling as if stuck in dream or prayer Every essence of the being that is me wants to turn on my heel and leave like a dear leaping into underbrush But God knows I couldn't if I wanted to because her eves smoky, starless skies are rooting me into place I can pretend that the confused half-smile tugging at her lips the laugh-lines over faint freckles that crinkle as she grins I can pretend the smile is for me But she has forgotten her granddaughter's name she has forgotten the annual white Christmas tree the warm afternoons we picked grapes in her backyard the way she commanded the kitchen the Baptist hymnals she sang sweetly under her breath she has forgotten goodnight kisses and bedtime stories and all the tales she used to tell She has forgotten herself the little bright-eyed, red-headed colored girl the dreamer who grew up in Georgia thriving and strong and defiant in the face of racial unrest

She has forgotten her memories, her antics, her speech although I have desperately tried to grasp them And even as I stand before her, pressing a kiss to her wrinkled cheek I know I cannot save her from this loss— Of self of mind of being of memories She is gone.

Jane Reid

TO FIND A SUNSET AND SWALLOW IT WHOLE

Someone with an indigo soul told me to go watch a sunset And tell her what it tastes like.

I have never seen a sunset.

I've watched the sky fade into night,

But I haven't witnessed the arch of brilliant orange

Disappearing behind the curvature of the Earth.

So I'll find a sunset and swallow it whole.

It'll scorch down my throat and ignite in my chest.

I'll let it flow through my veins and burn in my legs

And it will pour over my tongue and come gushing out of my mouth like a river.

It will shine out of my fingertips and toes

And my eyes will glow,

Two adjacent sunsets.

Rachel Friedman

ROADS

I crushed up love letters With that bone I had to pick And put the dust on your front porch. I swept a few pieces under your mat For you to find later on And wonder if it was a hopeless sign Or a decayed souvenir. I drove for hours wishing the wind Would remove the cobwebs Stuck between my ribs. Cat tails and reeds along the road were Flattened under the heat wave. If I faint they'll say it was the weather And the meals I haven't eaten, Instead of my parasitic guilty conscious. The thought of your soft lines Plays games with my stomach And I've found sleep is my easiest exit. As much as I try I can't recall my dreams the morning after, But they must feature you Because when I wake I cling to my pillow Like it's my steering wheel.

SITTING SHIVA

When my grandmother died, we sat shiva at my house and scores of people I knew and didn't know occupied every corner and nook of the first floor.

My mom put out old photos of my grandmother, who would stare at me with her half-lidded Elizabeth Taylor gaze and I would wonder how I could be related to someone so glamorous.

And an old man or woman I didn't know would approach me and say, "Hello Rachel."

And I would say, "Hello."

And they would say, "Do you know who I am?"

And I would shake my head.

Then they would scoff, "Well I figured you would I'm sure your grandma has spoken of me. We were good friends in..."

Insert decade or era here.

And then they would leave to go eat a cookie or two.

But I would turn back to the photos of my grandmother wondering why death is about the living.

A PLASTIC SESTINA

Bless the inventor of plastic!
From cars to the baby seats inside, you can use it for industry or door stops or art.
They're all just inventions, really. Look back at the Bible, or to Twilight, toss them in fire and the flames dance on each of them, so pretty, right?

And every step forward steps me right into crap, with that squish you don't get from plastic. Crap, at least that goes up easy in fire, once it's in a brown bag. It can be thrown at any asshole, to give back like trade. But really crap and art

aren't so different. Smell for one—art might look nice but it's a shit job, you'd smell I'm right in a dirt-broke bar where the poets all sob. Back in the mansions with the rich— maybe they make plastic—they can afford to shower and shave and can go through Hell and not catch fire.

It's a skill, to not get scorched by fire.

Once that was called smithing, an art that melts and molds metal so it can do anything. Not so many anymore. Right now they're all getting replaced with Plastic People, the kind who stand with a straight back

and shake the life right out of your hand and back into your chest. The poets are all stooped over a fire scheming and hurt: "The new ones, the Plastic People, what do they know of art? All they know is geometry and right angles, not life on the sideline as a can-

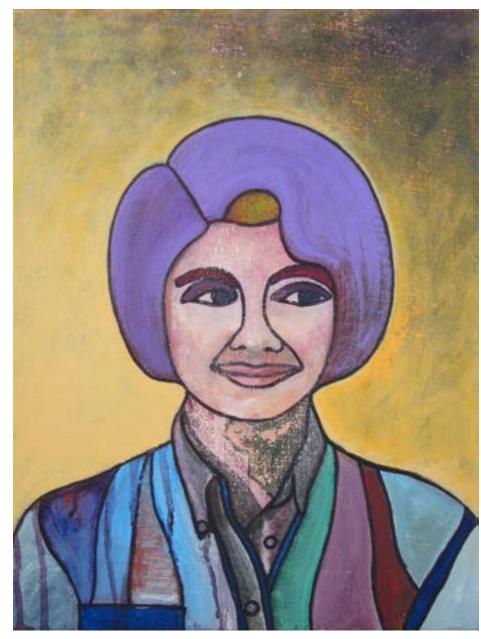
not, with too many days on their feet and not a can of beer to encourage you." And the smiths are back in forgotten factories, flipping and flopping right past a half moon, laughing, into an endless fire where snake oil salesmen speak of their art and laughter rings and reverberates in plastic.

It's not a question of right, nobody can answer that. All there is is fire, look—Plastic's posing on Art's embers.

Amy Chen

KITCHEN DRAWER LOVE POEM

What I would give to be a fork—Often in the dark,
Lights out, prongs spread,
Tangling chaotic in bed
With you.



THANKS, MRS SCOFIELD SCOTT SAMUELS



SMALL SUM
SCOTT SAMUELS

23

Carly DaSilva

BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

An old sweater with a hole in the bottom stripe, and a torn sleeve.

Purple - think clear summer nights crossed with roasted red peppers

but sweet-tasting, like air when the sun is halfway up, or a smiling-kiss.

Incandescence, as in warmth in proximity, as in arms around bodies – human, celestial,

or earth-toned – as in exorbitant energy devoted to small, golden spaces.

Suspension – breath – think papercut – think the moment the birds choose to swerve

against the peony, the periwinkle – think the nose of the old family dog,

rough tongue, bruised knee.
These are the remedies we overlook.

the soup that comes in a sippy cup – "Here, this will make you better." Think branches

wet to silhouette, dancing cardinals' feathers – leaves – tension, pressure just behind your

eyes, drops of dew and static cling – lungs tingling, skin snug in cold denim

jeans, tickled pink cheeks. Think how you followed the smell of cooking bacon,

cozy bed to kitchen. Follow your nose back to then. Follow your feet.

THE SMALL

"My hand belongs right here," you say to me and sure enough, your broad palm fills a space I never thought existed. Sure enough, I realize the small is shaped to hold what slips through fingers – shafts of light, shadows, the whispers of leaves on the trees in our chests and the water I drink of your lips, the warmth you drink of my brow – promises.

Does your hand still belong when the skin of my back goes slack, when it clings to my spine? I never thought the small was important – tucked beneath shoulderblades, cinched by my waist, shifting at turns – yet still, your broad palm fills a space – "My hand belongs right here," you say.

SOMETHING TO BE SAID

There's something to be said about trading stories.

There's something to be said about beautiful shoulders and anger.

About comfortable shoes and sneaking your own popcorn into the movie.

There is a lot that could be said about windows.

The way light catches them and the slips away into dusk like sand through fingers, for example.

About the warmth of muffin tins and long walks, we've said enough.

Yet to be discussed, however, is the loneliness of a coffee shop

When you came to avoid being alone.

There are observations I would make about ceilings.

The way the lights get smaller as they multiply.

There's something to be said about mistaking a stranger for an old friend.

About open space and the number of pockets in my backpack.

There is far too little said about the positive aspects of ugliness.

And far too much already published and frequently quoted on the subject of beauty.

27

There's something on the tip of my tongue about sunspots.

About eating the phases of the moon and time of the day.

And what more can I say about the birds in our lungs?

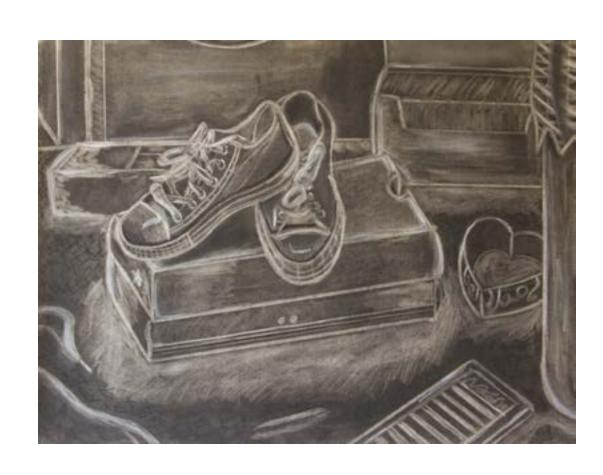
There's something quite loud to be said about the color yellow,

And another entirely silent one to be said for dusty bookshelves.

There is something to be said,

A lot in fact,

I just don't have the words for it.



UNTITLED

CHRISTINE AUSTIN

Rachel Friedman

ABOUT NIRVANA

Sometimes when I try to meditate my mind wonders about small details like what kind of flowers grow beyond Nirvana's gate.

And I know that I'm supposed to concentrate On my breathing, but my mind spins tales sometimes, when I try to meditate.

But I find it so hard to alienate the thoughts that often prevail like what kind of flowers grow beyond Nirvana's gate

or what types of food the Buddha ate. Because despite the gold good luck statues, he wasn't a whale and sometimes when I meditate

I meditate on the fact that I have to wait and see for myself what kind of trails are lined by the flowers that grow beyond Nirvana's gate.

But I also must remember that Nirvana is not a place. I usually choose to ignore this detail and sometimes when I meditate, I forget that no flowers grow beyond Nirvana's gate.

Danielle Bruno-Arlequin

RAIN

The sky in agony cries, ailing, Its lofty heights wringing and wailing, Its tears soak deep into my bones, So melancholy is not bore alone. Then it is you, the heaven sees Holding an umbrella out for me; In solitude, it longs to know The love it witnesses in us below.

Alena Woods

BELLIES

My grandpa likes his bellies pink and raw and cold, or warm and golden brown.

The hard gray shells in the big round bowl make bubbles.

"See, they're spitting," he says.

A clam is only a belly and a tongue and isn't that all one needs?

A tongue for tasting? A belly for safekeeping?

My grandpa points as the hot shells ease themselves open, and when they're done, he picks out the sealed few –

"- stubborn bastards -"

and drops them in the metal sink.
 I can see a belly through a cracked shell, in shadow.

"It's the belly you want," my grandpa says, and he slurps one from its shell and splits the skin between his teeth and smiles, and sticks out his tongue, and tickles my unguarded middle.

QUESTION MARK

You are flaky wisps of cigarette smoke clouds Encrusted with salty diamonds. You are flecks of magenta madness, Swirling in between bouts of milky lavender And landing somewhere in the middle of heaven and fantasy. You are made of existential ecstacy.

The sky seems much more alive in your time,
And I feel like absorbing your blackness whole before it absorbs me.
The crunches of enigmatic cricket hums
Accent the sly digs of my mighty molars
As they struggle to break my jaw apart.
I feel like swallowing my tongue before my words swallow me.
You find humor in my quiet struggle,
And my head bows down to you.
Yet you are a million reasons to hold my head up high.

You are caught in between Swirling words and fragment chasms. A supernova of "what ifs" and nuclear possibilities. I have constructed you from whims and philosophies, You are a problem to be left unsolved. A perpetual question mark.

I will dot my I's and cross my heart.
I will leave you unfinished.
You are a semicolon:
A fragmented revision,
Infallibly ceaseless and
Forever open-ended.

Christian Dietz

A DAY AT THE BEACH WITH MY DAD

The ocean takes no survivors, My dad's navy swim trunks were no exception,

The Atlantic was rough on that day in mid-August,

Mother ran for the car yelling, "He's your problem now!"

Grabbing a towel
I swam out to save my father,

Halfway up the beach, the towel fell to the sand,

Looking him straight in the face, I said, "that's your problem now."

Alena Woods

PROOF IN THE PETALS

I bloomed for you.
I stretched my feathery petals
Out towards your water-clear face.
You rippled in response.

I find a sedated solace in your eyes.
A deadly peace fills me now,
As you pull me petal by petal.
Love me?
Love me not?
I never promised you love.
I am a seasonal breed,
And I only promised you my perennial time.
However long that may be.

I am at peace now, Blown away by the breeze and your airy excuses; As you leave me in petalled pieces. I never loved you.

I loved the artificial sweetness you fed me.
You are some Splenda-sick sustenance,
But now I'm too bitter to be swayed, mixed into cups of
Your stale lies.
You materialize into my mind,
Then settle to the bottom.
Like grainy sugar memories.
Like a limp petal;
I think we're at the end of our season now.

Carly DaSilva

TIME ZONES

Take the hour by his hand and twist – even a sprain won't slow him.

Snap his fingers back one by one – he will not run for you.

But if you travel east, you can lift up your hand and sift the night between your fingers, come away with traces of light long since expired, defiant.

You exist in a future – you meet the dawn before the dawn meets home – eat a midday meal thick with meats and cheeses when you would be boiling water to pour over oats – the steam would be rising now, as you ask for the check and the waiter fixes his hair.

Try to glimpse the woman five hours back (now), buttering slices of toast, punching her nail through the skin of a clementine, staining her loose white shirt with a sunburst, wincing, shaking her head, fixing her hair. She will eat from a carton of leftover Chinese takeout that night (early morning), snap open a day-old fortune cookie that reads

"Your infinite capacity for patience will be rewarded sooner or later"

and while she scoffs – nearly chokes – on her chicken chow-mein, you are sleeping a sleep too deep for dreaming, palms pressed in prayer under your pillow.

You know what she doesn't know five hours back – how today's morning feels on your skin, how yesterday's morning compares, how rich things taste today on your tongue, how nuanced,

There is no magic in this.

This is no deity's trick – existing in one moment miles and hours apart.

She turns on the stove.

You turn off the light.

Katie Tencza

COMPOSING A POEM BEFORE SLEEP (HOLDEN WOULD UNDERSTAND)

Of course you don't let your mind do this in the thick of day so preoccupied, as it always is with what it's got to do next, next Next.

But now fatigue indulges
The fancy of a psyche,
Whose very soul is to create,
And slackens the stringencies
which usually hold any ambitions
of invention

So that now it forms a river let loose on some untapped track attaining in an instant places once thought far removed.

And on it rolls, roving, tumbling, mulling over and beyond itself, carried along in its own placidly curious meanderings

As each turn it takes finds it new, unpondered ground....

See, this is what I was worried about You're composing a poem when sleep is just minutes – seconds – away – and you simply sit by and watch its shape spilling into existence knowing all the while there is Nothing to catch it Nothing to catch it Where does a poem go When it falls?

Keerthana Krosuri

RADIAL

We're going to make it, you say as though you are talking about catching fireflies and not surviving our lives Because these loves connect us the way the air outside connects to your whooping noise, your incorrect lyrics to the song on the radio. I want to say We are dying even now, we will not live forever, tomorrow you will be someone else Instead I say, Bad moon, not bathroom. Bad moons rising, which means werewolves, which means sad people doomed to cycles, to repeat themselves and destroy the thing they love the most Who the fuck writes songs about bathrooms, I say. You laugh, the points of your teeth catching the light, stars in your mouth, black holes above us swallowing galaxies

Rebecca Caughron

APPALACHIAN SPRING

39

My father pointed out the cello shape of the concert hall. The organ at the front was the biggest I had ever seen. Like the face of God it watched and listened, just as I watched and listened as the clarinet began the familiar tune and the first gentle note entered my memory, like a grandmother giving me a simple gift. The seed of a smile planted in my mouth, nourished by the sweetness emanating from the strings of cellos far below me, began to grow as it bloomed from under my lips and came into being, so like the spring sung in brass voices, and my heart does the dance for which the spring was written.



STORMY NIGHT IN ANNA MITAROTONDO

Alena Woods

MATTHEW 5:30

If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away!

It's prudent to lose one part than the whole body itself.

I am losing you.

You are bloodheavy, and I am full of sinewy excuses.

Ligaments on rubbery cartilage, ready to be cut loose.

I crack jokes as you lay kisses on my chapped lips,

And you say that it's not hard, it's simple really.

Years of anatomy has not prepared me for the feel of your hips

On mine and the touch of silk on Levi jeans, white on red.

If my hesitation offends you, brush it off!

Let's pretend like any of this is easy,

It's better to cut loose the parts of you that sin than

Force yourself to begin again

As my hands sweat diamonds from my pious pores,

Dripping onto sinning skin.

I am a glistening goddess,

A brimming catastrophe of lusty shame whose always been afraid

Of the point where purity and curiosity break their binary binds

And merge like poetry stuck in lines of a holy stanza

That begins to mirror reality.

This is real life here, not just a page in a story.

I can't rip you out and crumple you up.

I will try not to offend you with my shaking palms

And lofty psalms that I don't even believe in.

And we are communal right here, confirming our juvenile lust

As something not regrettable, but memorable.

As something not sinful, but beautiful, I think I can handle this.

I'll just cut off what doesn't belong, start from scratch.

Be the Adam to my Eve, Eden in a dirty room that smells like something older than what's beginning.

Cut me off from reality, from my own self-saving commandments.

I hope I didn't cut you off like I usually do.

I didn't mean to offend you.

Patrick Gallagher

ALTERNATE ANATOMY

Pinkie

the bone that drew the shortest straw

Bellybutton

the world's smallest crater

Kneecap

hides hat hair legs might dread to show

Wisdom Tooth

as wise as it is fun to remove

Fingernail

Caution:

does not work well with hammers

THE LAST LOOK

A NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR

Reader,

As final exams, papers, projects and ultimately the end of the semester approach us, it can often be difficult to find time to accomplish our academic goals, let alone do the things that we like to do. The air is bitter and cold, and walking to class can sometimes feel like a travesty (and sometimes the biggest accomplishment of the day). Every second of the day seems to be filled with important obligations and deadlines, and when time does free itself up, our minds are still filled with thoughts of responsibilities and impending deadlines we may have (or maybe just the yearning for a good night's sleep and some good food from home). It can be difficult to find time to create, or even to invest ourselves into something that inspires us. But as difficult as it may be, I hope that during this especially stressful time of the year, you can let your mind escape from some daily monotonies and let it wander its creative halls. As the days get darker, I hope you make time for art whenever you can. I hope you give yourself time to curl up on the couch with a blanket and read a good book, or to explore and find color and inspiration in the icy grey of December with your pen, pencils or camera. And if you truly cannot find time to create now, I hope that when the semester ends, you take the time to rejuvenate yourself, and channel that energy into creating something or nourishing your mind with art.

As this year comes to a close, I also look forward to all the things to come with the New Year. I want to thank Janet for all she has done for us as an executive editor; we will miss her next semester and I wish her the best while studying abroad. And I would also like to thank Christine, Julia and Rachel for all of the time and dedication they have put into this magazine's creation, as well as all of our other wonderful members.

Yours,

Anna Mitarotondo Issue Editor

Anna Mitarotordo



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ABOUT US::

The *Lion's Eye* is published by the students of The College of New Jersey with funding from the Student Finance Board. The magazine provides an outlet for creative expression, publishing student short fiction, poetry, prose, photography, illustrations, graphic art, and more.

To learn more about The Lion's Eye visit: lionseye.pbworks.com.

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SUBMISSIONS ::

Although the deadline for our next issue has not yet been decided, submissions are currently being accepted. Please send all submissions via e-mail to lionseye@tcnj.edu.

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