



The Lion's Eye

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THERE'S A GREAT BIG WORLD OUT THERE
ANNA MITAROTONDO

The Lion's Eye

Winter 2015

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“The object of art is to give life a shape.”

— Jean Anouilh

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THE FIRST LOOK

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

If spring is the time of rebirth, then I suppose fall and winter are the times to reflect. As the semester comes to a close, and winter is almost upon us, I would encourage many of you to reflect on the past year—on yourself, your friends, your family, your relationships, among other things. The reflections may bring up joyful memories, or even regretful or sorrowful ones, but do not be afraid to ask yourself questions. Take notes on the small things. Stop for a moment and look all around you. These are some of the things I do when I reflect on myself and my past.

Sometimes this reflection can be a little bit challenging in our busy day-to-day lives, but this is where *The Lion's Eye* can be used as a tool for such. The artful pieces in this book are reflection of their creators, whether it is their whole of just a piece of them. But they are also a reflection of the world as a whole, and what sort of community has shaped each piece into creation. When reviewing these pieces, I could see how that personal insight into the self, others, nostalgia, and wonder all played a part in each. As you delve into this semester's edition of our literary magazine, you may even find a piece of yourself hidden somewhere in a line or sentence, or in the details of a piece of art or photograph.

In my reflection of this semester, I am thinking about the staff of *The Lion's Eye*, who put so much work into this semester's edition: Alena, Julia, Anna, Lucy, and Danielle as well as the general staff who came week after week to help us review submissions for publication. Without their participation and dedication, this little book you hold in your hands now would never come into being every semester. And of course, a thank you to you too, dear reader, for taking an interest in what we all have to show you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Friedman". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Rachel Friedman
Executive Editor



EAST SPIDER
CHRISTINE HATFIELD

YOU ARE THE POET

Poems are like nuggets of fool's gold,
that is, you, the fool, stubbed your toe on real gold,
and the throbbing pain jostled your tender cranial regions—
enough to make you forget what happened.

Poems are like Golden Eagles,
that is, mythically impossible to find,
until the forest ranger, frankly smirking at your stupidity, says,
“They’re not actually pure golden you know.”

Poems are like pots of gold at the end of the rainbow,
that is, a seemingly triumphant band of light streaking across the sky,
but actually just an intangible illusion,
and the pot is just a bowl of stale Lucky Charms.

Poetry is like dancing under the silver crescent moon,
that is, you are almost blindly thrashing about,
and crashing into trees,
wondering how you came to be in a thicket.

Poetry is like making a silver bullet,
that is, an object forged to kill werewolves,
until you realize that werewolves are cliché,
so you toss the poem into the fire.

Poets are like bronze,
that is, the poet can't afford a gold Rolex,
and loves the concept of plastic silverware,
your poems are better free, floating above your head.

BLUE MOONS

What I feel tonight is singular and maybe even selfish and
I wonder if the moon could possibly be shining so brightly anywhere else.
We run into the street in bare feet because the sky is all anyone
Can talk about this week.
Before today, blue moons are for millenniums and folktales
And things that have no concrete beginnings, but are what we
Are holding onto.

Time was something I had given up on.
There was either never enough of it
Or I was coughing it up from the bottom of my insides.
It coated my throat with sterilization and screams I had
Choked down on dark days and in the moments I was told
To just let it go.
Time was consuming and there was no other way to say
I was sorry for losing sleep when there were moons
Completing phases right outside my window and
There was someone waiting for me on
Sandy beaches, asking if we kept walking,
Would the moon follow us all night?

Would our footprints stick to the ground even after the waves
Came to break the moon's steady light and wash away words that
Had spilled out of vodka-filled water bottles and
Mouths that were always too sober to speak the truth.
Tonight was an understood apology to the version of myself
I didn't want to hold onto.
The sky was too bright to hold anyone who wasn't
Caught in the immensity of blue moons.

Right now, as we drink in the metallic clicks of
Beer tops and inside jokes we won't take part in,
There is a silenced calm that has begun spreading from
My body to the sky above us,
And blue moons are spotlights for the people
Who have begun embracing the possibilities of the night.

SLINKING TO MY HOT DORM AFTER
STUDYING FOR A TEST I'LL
PROBABLY FAIL, 2:07 AM

This damp street is not in Disney.

Despite this
it smells not
like Disney was ever supposed to, but,
regardless, like Disney does.
By which I mean bus exhaust.

...I wish I were in Disney.

And I wish I knew why everyone loves to gossip about
the people that died horrible gruesome deaths at Disney
but humph at and brush away the people that
nearly died horrible gruesome deaths at Disney,
the ones that got saved by a brave fellow guest
that they went on Big Thunder with a year later
as their favorite characters (let's go with Woody
and Stitch for simplicity's sake) cheered,
a happy ending that was actually the ending -
other than the fact that we can't stand it
when good things stay good.

And I wish I could have a dream tonight that I'm
standing
with Mickey Mouse
by the castle
like in the commercials
and then
some person known and rightly feared for being sociopathic
and right at the same time, someone who says
"brutal
honesty" ten times a day - think JK Simmons in Whiplash, think
Adam Conover if his smile was more forced, think
the Donald Trump his voters see -
shoves me out of the way and goes to pull his head off
with some cocky smirk but they grab it and

it doesn't come off
and they actually crack a sweat and
pull

and pull but
nope, it's real
and they are the desperate one
and they are the wrong one -
then Mickey blinks, smiles, takes out his wand
and defeats them
with magic
and with the power of love
(played straight, because TV Tropes will ruin your life.)

But that wish and that dream
and the use of those exact words to refer to Disney things
are just like me.
They're pieces of the fact
I'm only living on time I stole from the homeless,
the time until the time
a golden old paper hero, taller than me and with gray hairs
screams in my ear,

“grow up, you manchild,
stop living in the past”

and everyone claps

DROVES

I smile as the birds fall. A flock of sparrows.
All around me, all at once. Two dozen
hushed rustles of grass in the night.

And that is all. No time to
anticipate. No time to react.
Their obsidian eyes regard me

with posthumous pity. They see
how I envy them. Perceive how I
dream. How I want to tear away

this fragile husk of a reality and slip
beneath a shadow or inside a cloud.
To cross over into the tangential world

in which human beings die like this
—die in droves—together until
the unforeseeable, collective end.

The realm in which lives are defined by living
rather than dying, enjoying rather than enduring.
Reveling in the miracle of each ephemeral breath.

The dimension opposite this deficient one,
in which all that we do—everything we create,
destroy, and love—is merely a veiled reaction

against the indomitable apprehension
of dying alone—the guillotine at the end
of each tattered and winding thread.

Yet, as ever, I remain—among the flightless, lifeless ones.
Silent, they croon. I stoop to kiss the tiny corpses one by one.
I speak sorrow into their feathers, words rough against the lips.

Michelle Barclay

LIBERATION

If you tell me that you love me
I'll scrub myself clean
Clorox and steel wool
until I'm raw

Next time
you send fireworks to my door
I'll let the fuses fly out my open window
instead of strapping them to my body

Later
when your hands graze
the flesh on my stomach
I won't once allow you to
slice me open

There's a picture of us smiling

The flick of my lighter
combined with oxygen
combusted the physical evidence

I'm still trying to find
a chemical reaction
to rip you from
inside

I will fill myself.

Some day soon I'll pin my map
and dance across oceans to places where
you will never be

When you look out your window in the
Darkness
and see me
I will no longer be the familiar porch light
one suburban lawn over.

I will never be again.

PEARL

mark this –

we have primal instinct to live
 every gene in our body devoted to this
but I see him ripping instinct
 from his throat / tossing pearls off bridges

give me boy of divine ink / he is
 unafraid to sanguine the blue seas
/ he knows not what color the waters are
 and cares not what color he may turn them
the eddies will drag his blue body red for all to see
 like a vicious funeral procession

his body will be paraded as a symbol
he will become a martyr
 without his permission

when this boy of primal ink devours the ocean
 we will have war
he will swallow saltwater / eyes empty like a fish
and vomit a pearl
/ of opaque reflection
/ of fish eyes out of water
a disturbing familiarity

– you will see them amongst you.

there is more to this than one pearl
resting on the tip of one tongue
the ocean is rich / with pearls
 / with forgotten instinct

THINGS I WANTED WHEN I WAS YOUNGER BUT NOT TOO YOUNG

I wanted to be Emilia, to dangle the handkerchief of your world in front of you, Iago, tease you while you swipe at the cloth in my hand, you feral cat. My favorite mastermind is finally caught in a moment of weakness before the final act, before we all come back on stage for our bows. Before we head back stage and we are no longer Emilia and Iago but we still could be. I never got to be Emilia. And only briefly, did you hold Desdemona's handkerchief like the handle of your sabre at fencing. Neither were things I got to touch. Either way, you still pulled the blade on me.

I wanted to believe that when every man looked at me that he wanted to devour me. Like a snake content for days to follow after a worthy dinner, I wanted to know that I was the mouse trapped inside his stomach and that I would be stuck there in acidic darkness for days. I wanted to suffocate in that space, knowing well that I would be nothing left in due time. I wanted to believe that it was hopeless and that my physique would fulfill every craving, that my face was just enough. I wasn't the mouse I thought I was. Instead, it was me who swallowed the world whole and couldn't keep it down.

I wanted to know that you were not just a snake, my fallen Iago, that my stolen glances would start a fire. Think about me as your favorite arsonist. That you letting all the other girls sit on your lap was to make me not the nauseous kind of green; every cliché I could think of was wrapped in a neat little package on the chair in front of me. You wanted me nauseous kind of green. I'm sure you wanted me blue too, but that wasn't what I wanted so it didn't count. That was when I vomited up the world. I wanted to cry and say sorry until maybe there would be nothing for me to apologize for but I'm still saying sorry.

I wanted to tell you all of this when I was younger but not too young. But Iago, you were always the snake. Thank goodness God cut your legs off because now you will never get my handkerchief.

Meriah Murphy

WHEN THE WORLD IS FAST ASLEEP

Shhh,

Don't speak
For the world is fast asleep

A slumber so thick
So smooth
It drips like honey
Over every rooftop
Until each city contributes
To the same golden masterpiece
Colored with beautiful, long-awaited serenity

What speaks but the steady tick, tick
Of a clock that works overtime
Waiting for someone to acknowledge it?

Fallen leaves do not waltz
To the sound of crushed cans scraping the pavement
Or the tickle of debris earlier scuffed up
By mechanical feet
The wind needs a little rest too

The sky is an ink-saturated page
One that's been soaking in indigo liquid
Since the writer's tired hand knocked over the well
Just after the rest of his body fell asleep

The stars have checked out now
Gone back behind clouds
To let their tiny bodies sleep for just a night

The world has swallowed itself whole
Not rushing, but floating
Floating through its lazy esophagus
Lit by the moon and wonderfully nonsensical dreams

The earth lands in its belly
Here it will stay the night
Surrounded by the sound of all tired things
The calming hum of souls
Who have nothing to worry them
A sleepy symphony of nostrils
And gaping mouths
Whispering the melody
Of fourteen billion lethargic lungs

The drone will continue until morning
When the earth bursts from within itself
And with it are released sounds and colors
Of consciousness
It is a circus of lively existence
And the sun is the ringmaster
Spewing its light as far as it will go
Not afraid of being upstaged
By the beauty of a well-rested universe

Responsibility will dance atop every eyelid
Gently forcing every body to begin its daily feat
Never stopping until
The moon checks in for the night shift
And all sounds reunite
To become the harmonious lull
They were just twenty-four hours before

Overworked creatures will simmer down
Tuck themselves in for a well-deserved nap
Animals will return home
And trees will nestle with moss blankets
Nature will return to its peaceful coma
And, like clockwork, everything will be fast asleep
tick, tick

The slumber will be heavy as it always is
Heavy on weary minds
Replacing hyperactive thoughts with relief

Something so perfect should never be disturbed

So not another word
For a sound out of place
Could wake the entire world



BUTTERED BEAUTY
CHRISTINE HATFIELD



HIDDEN
SERENA GUPTA

Corinne Peterson

REBIRTH

Sprout from the ashes, from the flame-torn ground,
Reach for the sunlight; now the Earth has gone 'round.
Without a soul present—all chased from the war—
Nature (in silence) sweeps its paintbrush once more.

And up from between every charred, brittle patch,
Life lifts a feeble finger, its children to hatch.
One by one they creep up from under the soil,
Unknowing they are of the anguished ground's toil.

Unclasped the hands blossom in the glorious light;
Warm is the air at the parting of the night.
Gentle, unhurried, a melody without sound.
Sprout from the ashes, from the flame-torn ground.

Rachel Friedman

IN EVERYTHING, YOUR FACE

Wax pools in the hem of your slacks and smells like the time I fell into the fountain. The scratches from that remind me of wheat fields, of hair that grew when you tied your hair up. Straight lines, but uneven terrain under my fingers. In my house key, you are laughing with glitter on the tip of your nose and nail polish splashed a vibrant red over your cheeks, up to your ears that dangle like the keychain of my pocket. Well, not that much. In Everything, your face is an apparition. In Everything, your face forces a pen into my hand, makes the ink glide out until it pools into the cracks of my dry skin, turns to wax and seals you away. You refuse to wash off in the bathroom sink, in the shower. Ink, like dark blood on Lady Macbeth's hand, but maybe not as terrifying. It's only terrifying because I am in a museum and your face reads DO NOT TOUCH. But I am reaching out, the guard yelling, I keep reaching. In Everything, your face is inviting me to drip the ink on my hands onto a notebook page where words will form into a pathetic confession, not of love, but of apology. I am sorry for this.

ADOLESCENCE

A lime green Ford LTD pulls up
to the side of the highway.
With familiarity in his chest,
the father turns on the hazard lights
and unbuckles his seatbelt. He steps out
of his car and stretches twice.

July afternoons run down the son's forehead
as he waits in the car.

The father bends down to the grass and collects
dandelions and mushrooms in the family fruit bowl.
Not afraid of himself, he lets everyone see
his house slippers and protruding boxer briefs.
The neighborhood questions his strong legs
and year round Christmas decorations.
But no one ever says anything.
Everyone stays away, cool in their cars.

Even the son, not yet proud of his body, refuses
to look out the passenger window.

When they arrive home, the father finds new blood
pumping into his heart. He has never felt this alive.
The gardens of cucumbers, tomatoes, and sprouting legs
somehow still continue to thrive even under this dry day.

The son walks straight through the kitchen
and goes to the backyard to ride his bike.

The father stops at the window and watches him
pedal around the fence. He knows this is what being
a budding flower is suppose to taste like
and tries not to worry about his son. He chops
and peels, singing hymns about the news of Christ.

But the son is sick of his blushing cheeks and runs inside,
begging his father to at least turn the lights off.

Flourishing in the days of Christmas, the father brushes him away. He was raised with this love and only wants the best for him. The son turns around and makes his way outside. Unmoved on his bike he wonders if he would ever grow to be as tall as his father. The Father's lights shine down on his face, trying to tell him how dazzling a garden his body could be.

OMPHALOSKEPSIS

Omphaloskepsis, done right, carries you
to your primordial state –

to the first cells and blood of you,
the first light of you,
the essence that God Himself
would extract a drop of
if He studied forensics
and if forensics experts studied
happy moments instead,
the thing that was even then the secret of breath, of heart pumps and
that's why it would be locked away –

to the time you kicked
while Mom watched a cord-blood commercial
and Dad painted the room
he would argue with her in
over whether or not she could come to you
every time you cried -
she would want you to grow up right,
so would he -

to the day you found your fingers and your toes
and only ran your limbs over them,
the time you thought “how funny, how strange”
whilst becoming one, only one
with the sonar-like organics –

to the time you felt smushed in and
could breathe just fine –

to the first cry and breath of you,
the second first light of you,
the tears, the Polaroids, the giggles,
the first page of the flapping family book,
the dam open with first floods,

always firsts, always firsts -

to the instant your umbilical stump
dried up and fell out of you, waving bye-bye
as if to exclaim with a boop on the nose
that you were real now,
ignorant of the fact
you always were.

Always firsts,
for years
and years.

ABSENCE OF WIND

As I listen to the wind,
I hear it changing pitch.
When this happens,
I like to think of you.

I close my eyes and hear,
within the melody of the air,
the soft sounds of your exhortations,
your wisdom.

When the leaves begin to rustle,
I can dance to a song of common sense.
I think of how
you hum it quite a bit.

Scrawny trees dance along.
I like to think they do not notice
as their delicate leaves fall
because remembering you brings
them the same delirious joy
it brings me.

The wind then might whistle softly,
bringing about the scent of your sweet sanguinity,
which reminds me of caramel.

This is when I yearn for
the reassurance of your smile.

As if it knows,
the draft changes frequency again.
Everything it touches
is of a slightly rosier color.
It becomes warmer too.

My tangled hair settles
at my shoulders,
and I accept the wind's
gentle embrace.

A cloud covers the sun.
The wind turns chilly,
chaps my lips,
and I am forced to taste all of the times
I've disappointed you.
This tastes like grapefruit
because, in parts, the sugar of your lessons
masks bitter pulp.

The cool breezes pick up.
Thoughts crowd my mind's pathways
as quickly as dandelions lose their seeds.

My senses are overwhelmed
by powerful gusts
that force insecurity from my pores
and replace it
with a new kind of confidence,
which always seems to be a better fit.

I think of you,
and my heart grows so much
every minute that I do.

It swells inside of me,
becoming tidal,
the beats as complex as symphonies.

I must stop
before my soul gets too big for my body.
You could do that to me, you know.

I tend to remember these things
about you so often
that they blend into me
as a part of my insides
that shine through me
like sun through stained glass,
but even the colors are second nature.
I forget they are there
because they are just aspects of me.

And yet, on the stillest of days,
it is always the lack of you
that makes me realize
the absence of wind.

MOONLIGHT

One night in the middle of March we sat on concrete and shivered, sought comfort in the fog of each other's desperate exhalations while overtly conscious of our distance. The brisk air surrounding us was still and kept our racing hearts and minds in balance with the weight of the world which was tilting, encouraging me to dive into you. I wanted to explore you like the ocean although it's my biggest fear; I know surprises are carried in a positive light, and the moon suggested that you were worth fighting for.

I was defenseless against a glare that pierced through the arches of clustered oaks above, against rays that danced off leaves and kissed your opal skin goodnight.

Our desperation became hopelessness: selfish motives that nibbled at desire like mosquitos by the lake in summer, until passion became all-consuming, before I surrendered to the whim of your eager hands and shivered in the heat. We thanked the sheets that provided refuge from the coercive moonlight, and I prayed to God that this was more than just another virtue withered. I took a chance that one pretty evening during springtime and for once, I didn't drown.

LAKES

Skim me off of the surface,
for further down is a reservoir
built by man
and instructions not written by God
and carry me not to the heart
of the Earth all around
because I always need
something greater than me
for the divinity I look to find
is so far away from me here
I cannot even begin to hunt now.

You cannot remove the negativity
from your vocabulary
when there is no other way
to describe the settings not
up to His standards.
And in the end, I do not want to
be alone; I only want you here
to make me smile in my
last breath
maybe even laugh.
But if she makes you so happy
You write poems and celebrate in words,
the threes stop breathing
the clouds thin
and the river runs to the dam.

MIRRORS

I passed her again today
that girl with the broken mirror
she has skin like the moon
and midnight hair and
dark almond eyes and
she lives in my building
but we've never met.

I don't know her name
to me she's just that girl
who broke her full-length mirror
but I think about her sometimes
she's pretty and wears
an olive-green trench coat
and these combat boots that
remind me of my sister.

I imagine her to be artistic
and creative because
once I saw her
carrying a large canvas
but I bet she's also intelligent
probably an honor student
with an impressive GPA
and a love for learning.

I sometimes wonder if she
believes in luck or in fate
and if she also writes
or if she only paints
and I wonder what she
thinks of dreams and if they
mean anything at all
or if she thinks psychologists
are wasting their own time
and dragging us down with them.

I often wonder whether she'll get
seven years of bad luck for
losing her temper and cracking
that mirror down the middle
or if she would even care.

Corinne Peterson

DICTATOR

While Sun and earth were gliding through the night,
the moon was keeping watch upon its kin
who held their breath, pricked holes to let in light,
and floated in the place they'd always been.
The air was stale, no breeze could find its way
beyond the clouds that swirled above the blue;
and thick—so thick—the space around the day,
no voice could even speak a word of truth.
And when the beings on the earth awoke
to scorching rays that streamed through open windows,
still unknown was how the Sun could choke
the ones that always dwelled within its shadows.
So days will come and go, and life moves quicker—
but dying stars are always just a flicker.

Liz Wimberg

RED FRUIT

The cherries abut each other.

The butts are cherry red, cheery to be touching each other. Ignite.

My tongue ties knots in stems.

My stem makes tongue tied words. Your tongue tied to mine, tongues abutting, cheery to be together, and cherry red.

The stems point apart.

The stems are the cherries' umbilical tongues which connected them once to the same mother tongue.

The medusa laughs. The cherry bleeds tart. Helene Cixous sews seeds. A cherry and a cherry philosophize, bide time on wide water now-sound.

Fuck phallogocentrism, man. Even her fruit must struggle for woman-word in the photo.

LANGUAGE

We live in a world where
the language is such that
we can describe
galaxies far beyond our reach
molecules deep within us
deities and heavens
nymphs and demons
countless other things which
may or may not exist
but everything is called into question
when you realize
you can't
describe
a color.

THE LAST LOOK

A NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR

Dearest Reader,

Lately I have been feeling very philosophical and have been reflecting quite a bit on many of the things in this amazing world. Have you ever taken a minute to acknowledge how UNFATHOMABLE it is that we as humans have created this beautiful and messy marvel that is society? Not only do we have brains that have given us all of these abilities and gifts beyond basic survival (creative, artistic, athletic, poetic, linguistic, humoristic), but we have created so many things that otherwise would not have existed in the natural world. Here I am, sitting on a COUCH in my HOUSE on my COMPUTER, WRITING a letter to all of you for a MAGAZINE, that members of our community have submitted their work to. And there you are reading this, READING this magazine! It honestly fascinates me that here we are; living in a world with constructs and abilities that are all completely unnecessary to survival, but arguably make us what we are as a species. The world is a strange and magical place (and we barely know what exists outside of our tiny part of it).

By the same token, it absolutely blows my mind to think that every single person on this earth has as many unique thoughts and emotions as I do. And although we will never be able to take the time to get to know all of the people in this world, it is wondrous and humbling to remember that everyone, without exception, has as deep and exceptional of a story of their own. So thank you to all of the writers, readers, artists and communicators who want to share their stories and for listening to them.

I want to thank my fellow eboard members who are all responsible for bringing this issue to you. Thank you to Rachel, Alena, Julia, Lucy and Danielle for all of your hard work, dedication, and contributions to this issue. And of course, I want to thank you, reader, for picking up this issue and exploring with us. As I always say, without you, we would not have *The Lion's Eye*.

Anna Mitarotondo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Mitarotondo". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Issue Editor



TWO FAULKNERS

LIZ WIMBERG

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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