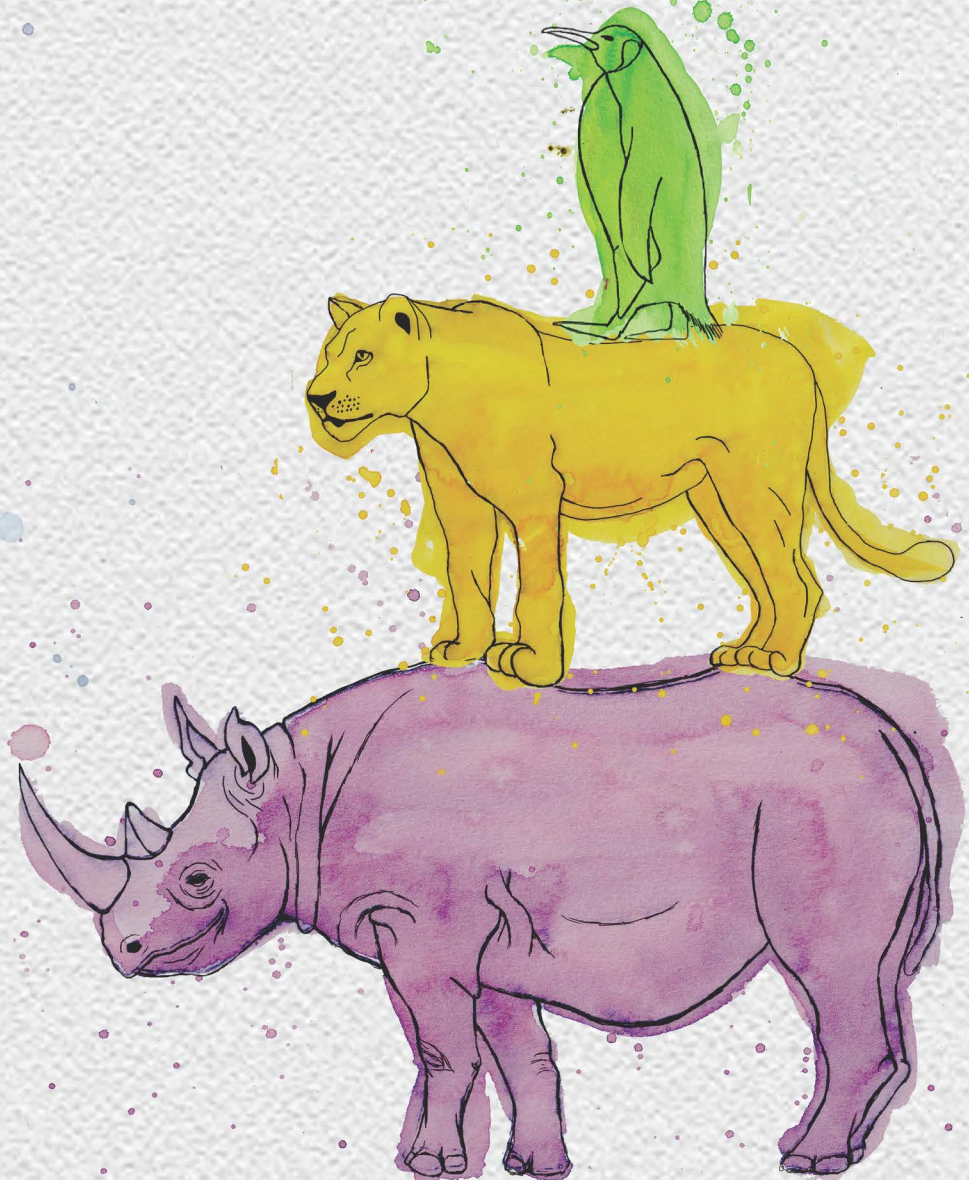


Inscape 2019



inscape
Literary & Visual Arts Journal

Inscape 2019



in-scape (n.)

The essential, distinctive, and
revolutionary quality of a thing:
“Here is the inscape, the epiphany,
the moment of truth.”

-Madison Smartt Bell



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Lin-hsiu Huang
Waste of Landscape I
Multimedia
First Place Award



Poetry

Justin Artrip

Deaf

Sizzling burns clawed up decaying arms
as silent thunder spat down strings of scarlet light.
Ash coasted down,
souring on tongues and strangling lungs.
An acrid stench clung to the passing breeze,
metallic and putrid.
The silence stretched as absolute as the day,
unbroken.

Justin Artrip

On an Otherwise Unremarkable Rainy Day First Place Poetry Award

The lonely street held few possessions:
a drowning storm grate flailing against the downpour in fright,
beaten down cars overcome by infection bleeding up as rust,
slumping lampposts whose sallow light flickered against night,
and stores whose only commodity was dust.
A lone man squatted on a stone stair,
once leading to a bank, now closed,
whose overhead awning fended off the chilling rain without flair.
As the shaking man huddled, snot-nosed,
he too, became a possession of the callous street.
Unwilling to move, unwilling to let his home go,
he let the coldness creep up his feet,
trapping himself with the street who gestured the flood to flow.
The water's ivory fingers plucked his final breath, and the street watched.

Justin Artrip
Lost Culture

The gothic church stood exalted in the aureate moonlight
as the heavy eldritch silence pervaded the overgrown ruins of home.
No street lamps or lanterns illuminated the night,
only the ink of darkness was permitted to spill and roam.

As the heavy eldritch silence pervaded the overgrown ruins of town,
there were no twinkling wind chimes singing to the chapel.
Only the ink of darkness was permitted to spill and roam,
there were no gilded braziers distilling the golden apple.

There were no twinkling wind chimes singing to the chapel,
no streams of wind shimmered or pushed the air.
There were no gilded braziers distilling the golden apple
as no one was left to carry on the ancient rite and prayer.

No streams of wind shimmered or pushed the air,
there were no street lamps or lanterns to illuminate the night.
As no one was left to carry on the ancient rite and prayer,
the gothic church stood exalted in the aureate moonlight.



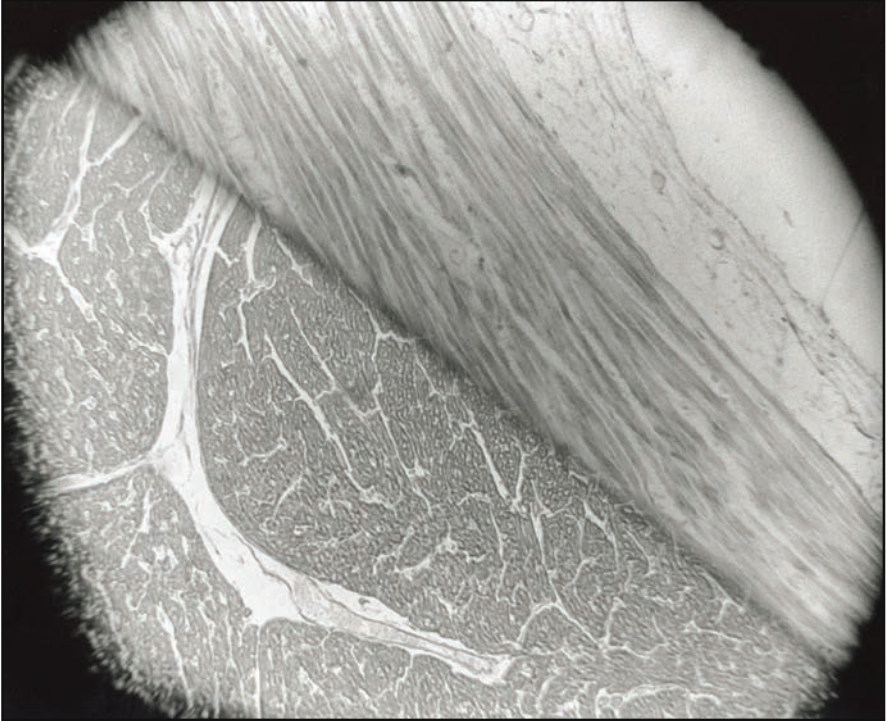
Addie Hogan
Tractor
Digital Photograph
Second Place Award

Sydney Cook
Heaven Bound

To the top branches, climbing carefully,
calloused hands pressed to sappy trunk,
bare feet propelling him toward the sky,
Davey slowly shrinks before my eyes.
He is already a skeleton,
thin bones wrapped tautly with bronze skin,
barely a layer of fat between them.
His head doesn't even reach the first branches,
he had to jump to grab hold and begin his ascent,
but now he climbs easily, expertly
toward heaven,
reaching each time for another branch,
or maybe God's hand,
to pull him closer to the darkening sky.

Sydney Cook
Night Walk

The woods whisper,
she says.
The wind through the Loblolly pines
tells you secrets in an easy murmur.
It makes you feel as if you know
the rings beneath their smooth shells
and the number of needles on each branch
and the moments they've witnessed
through all these years.
It makes you wonder,
she says,
who else these trees have come to know.



Garrison McMillian
Muscle Comparison
Silver Gelatin Print
Third Place Award

Sydney Cook

The Beauty of Songbirds, Bones and Bugs

My aunt sings Appalachian songs
coo coo on her flute
others on harmonica
always a smile on her face
and a clip in her wild curls.

Not only is she a lover
of folk music,
but osteology too.
Maybe it comes from within her bones.
She's taken me with her before
to walk creek-beds with great care.

She is also interested
in insect life,
spiders and bugs and the like.
She sees beauty there.
Moths trapped in a spider web
and fireflies glowing in the night
are what make this world unique.

Or so she says.

I, however, see differently
than my Aunt does.
Bones denote the lack of life
not life that once was.
And those moths trapped in a web
do not find beauty in their captivity.

Amber Shayde Deaton

A Continuous Chorus

I'm thinking about the front porch
I'm thinking about the songs no professional composed
Melodies at the back of my throat that have been passed down since
 before I was born
Ones that no one but my children may learn
Or their children
If they just remove their headphones

The vibrations in my mouth are living legends
I can't force you to listen but I want you to know them
Pick up your head
Chug some water
Sit and watch the dogs wrestle
And don't worry if you can't sing my son
Because neither can I
I don't have to teach for you to remember the words
Sit with me and spend some time
While you are young
Before you forget how to be still
How to close your lips
And sing like those before me
And teach those after you

Regina Klinges
Preconceptions

Silence does not come to small towns even
on Sunday mornings before seven.
Only then can you hear the robins in summer
And the hens clucking
Those hens privileged by city ordinance
to have left their fowl friends in the dust of the prairie
Outside the limits of this fine, wholesome city town.

—

Before seven on Sunday
Even the grasshoppers can enjoy
A small town free of the noise pollution of
Cars pattering down side streets
Tractors and
semis wailing down
Blacked paved highway road
Standing broad as the small town's survival belt to
Civilization and sustenance.

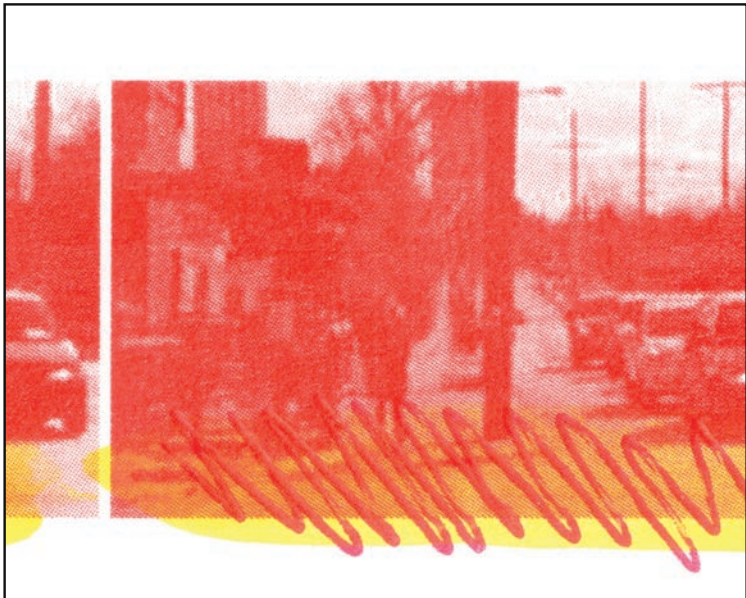
—

Only early on Sunday can the ear hear
No sneakers and basketballs hitting sidewalks
No swirling of bicycle chains.
No costly
cattle bellowing in the auction yard.
Enjoy the brief reprise
Bathe the ears in silence.

Taryn Syck

The Truth

you could say I broke hearts
walked through a graveyard of men
didn't stop to say sorry when the mourners cried
laughed in the face of my past
turned it on its head like an achievement
because, oh God, if you knew
if you
knew that
they
They were the first to strike
trapped me in a cage like a beast then reduced me to a bug
slammed their fist in my face and forced makeup on the bruise
they forced spice down my throat and licked the tears from my face
like alcohol
drunken off
my pain they forgot to stop when I begged for mercy
had the gall to call out to me for help in their stupor
and it was then I did not trot to their side,
didn't reach out my arm to help them from the ground
I did not return to the one who had ripped my heart from my chest
tossed it like a chew toy and yelled fetch in my ear until I left
disobedient girl
reckless woman!
who would not return, heart in hand
just so they could throw it
and now
now they say I broke hearts
but instead
the truth
—
I saved mine



Kristin Busby
Euclid Blue (above)
Euclid Red (below)
Mixed Media
Honorable Mention Award



Haley Younce
Motherhood
Oil on Canvas
Honorable Mention Award

Fiction

Justin Artrip *Risk Addiction*

Concrete docks were the only things separating open sea from the clustered shipping warehouses. Their rusted walls were tall, easily reaching up to three stories and cast in the pale-yellow light of flickering street lamps. Gunshots pierced the frigid night air without rhythm, and Oliver knew he only had a few minutes to be in and out. His black jacket helped conceal his pale skin and shut out the worst of the cold wind. Standing next to a warehouse security door, his deft fingers remained steady even as the rest of his frame shook with anxiety. He hated feeling encumbered by the empty duffel bag strapped across his back. With the click of the lock, the brass knob turned, he slid inside. Only a moment passed before he had closed it, muffling some of the uproar.

Oliver let out a shaky breath as his eyes adjusted to the dim lighting. It was exactly as Catherine had described it: a grid of large metal shelves that reached up to the ceiling, each shelf sporting wooden, nondescript crates stacked in neat pallets. Sprinting across the stone floor, his eyes roamed over stacks of crates and their shipping labels until he came to a stop in front of one marked with a red circle around the departure date. Caduceus Enterprise was printed on the delivery notice as the supplier, and all but two of the crates in the stack were already missing; these had to be the ones.

Dropping his black duffel, Oliver reached up and yanked one of the two crates to the floor and pried it open. Four dozen pill bottles were organized inside, each with hundreds of little white pills. They were organized in four rows of six with each row containing two columns. He had to slide each bottle out one at a time, check to make sure they were what Catherine wanted, before either tossing them into the bag or putting them back. The monotonous work had a subtle rhythm to it,



Benjamin Doss
Looking Around
Digital Illustration
Honorable Mention Award

but the gunfight outside was impossible for him to tune out. Each crack of splitting air inspired another spike of fear.

Rushing, he was on the other crate before a full minute had elapsed. He let out a shaky laugh as he worked. Risk was his drug of choice but robbing a warehouse with a gun fight right outside was high up on his list. His nerves were shot, and his hands wouldn't stop trembling.

He threw the last bottle, zipped the bag shut, and hoisted it over his back. By the sound of it, the fighting was still hot but in a flash of gun fire his eyes caught sight of something printed innocently on the crates' labels: Lorkshire General Hospital. A door on the opposite side banged open, and he darted even as a man's stern voice shouted.

"STOP! Don't move!" Oliver flew out the side door he had entered from and raced down the dark street away from the fighting. Feet pelting the blacktop, he took in the roiling smog that was the sky, the puddles of muddy water in the street's potholes, and he felt the strap biting into his shoulder. A bullet pierced a nearby trash can with a metal shriek, and Oliver instinctively turned down a side alley to break the line of sight. The dark roads were uneven, lined with ramshackle buildings, and devoid of passersby; he couldn't duck into a thick crowd or use people to get away as he normally would.

After a couple of streets and harsh turns, Oliver spotted a rundown hotel with about six floors and a fire exit. Speeding through the battered front doors, he barely saw the cramped lobby that greeted him. A startled old lady at the worn reception desk shouted after him as he shot past her and down the hallway with a stairwell sign. Taking the stairs two at a time, he exited on the third floor and ran through the hallway towards the door marked: fire escape. In a flash he had passed four doors and a fogged window. He was sure that his pursuer hadn't even entered the stairwell when he'd moved onto the third floor, and he felt a rush of victory as his hand closed around the fire exit door and pulled.

The door wouldn't budge. Oliver blinked hard and tried again with the same result. He couldn't believe it; the *fire exit* was *locked*. Panic and exhaustion began to catch up to him: his breathing came in erratic bursts, his heart pounded so hard it hurt, and his thoughts slid into a chaotic

jumble. Dissociating himself from the situation was easier than he would have liked, and he loathed to fall back on old habits. His feelings sank down, as though he had been drunk and was only then becoming sober. Thinking easily slid back into order, his breathing slowed, and everything fell into place.

Backing up, Oliver pulled up on the third story window. It slid up with a little effort, and there was just enough ledge for him to walk. Closing the window behind him, he shimmied over to the fire escape. The metal staircase was fenced in, so he had to grab the fencing itself. Rather than climb down, Oliver scaled around the fencing until he was facing away from the apartment building.

Taking a deep breath, he pushed off against the metal frame and reached out to brace himself as he landed on the flat roof of a second story building. Rolling forward, he winced at the sound of the plastic bottles cracking under his weight before he stood and continued to run from rooftop to rooftop. He paused to catch his breath on the roof of Coral Library before climbing back down to street level.

He trudged to his little alleyway, his uneven steps barely carrying him the whole way. The adjacent restaurant had appeared abandoned, but Oliver had waited almost a full two weeks to make sure no one was checking up on the place before he was comfortable sleeping there. Shivering from the chill, he let himself in through a side window that he'd busted open. He had thought of picking the door, but he'd feared his traffic through the front would attract unwanted attention. The bag was easily stashed in the rusted oven before he had pulled out a ratty sleeping bag and bedded down behind the countertop.

Oliver's allergies despised the dusty store, but he felt safe knowing the building had been left undisturbed for so long. Plush stools had been removed, so now only holes in the tiled floor served as a reminder of what once had been. The checkered pattern of the floor was half missing from all the grime, and there were no polished tables save for one tipped up against the front door to stop anyone from waltzing in. He figured he had a few minutes before Catherine showed up to collect, so he slid down into the sleeping bag and enjoyed heating up for a change.



Bethany Crouch
Autumn Dreams
Oil on Canvas



Justin Artrip
Worn-out Reminiscence
Split-Toned Silver Gelatin Print

Catherine waited in the quiet alleyway for Oliver to show. It was a crisp contrast to the blaring sirens and gunshots she had been supervising only an hour ago. Sometimes, it really did pay to be the leader of your own crime ring. Stretching her back and arms out, she turned to look around more at Oliver's residence, or lack thereof. She snorted as she took in the sparse dump of an alleyway. A sound scratched at her ear, and she paused, straining to hear it. A soft buzzing that faded intermittently: someone close by was snoring.

The shattered window was hidden behind two trash cans, and she maneuvered inside with ease. Warmth began to fill her legs and arms, it was surprisingly cozy for how broken down the old place was. There was Oliver, snoozing away in a sleeping bag. She contemplated waking him in various ways, before settling on the one she knew was easiest. Smiling, Catherine clapped her hands together in a hearty applause for several moments.

Oliver awoke violently, strange noises were all around him and he stuck one arm out to the side flailing for purchase before he realized he was tangled up in his sleeping bag. His blurry vision vaguely made out a woman's form, clapping. Rubbing the belated sleep from his eyes, he got up in time to receive a light slap to the face via Catherine.

"Ow! What the hell?" Oliver's hoarse tone cracked horrifically, and Catherine barely stifled her laughter.

"You left a lady waiting in the rain for you, for over an hour mind you. And if I hadn't heard your outrageous snoring I wouldn't have even found this place." Her voice was poisoned honey. Shrugging in response, Oliver retrieved the duffel bag before hefting it up onto the countertop.

"Sorry. I kinda landed on it when I jumped from a rooftop, they should be fine though ... I saw where they were headed to, Catherine. You said that I wouldn't be stealing from hospitals." Oliver's cold tone was steep, and his hands fisted to smother his anger. Catherine rolled her own eyes at the empty threat and pulled out a thick stack of leafy green twenty-dollar bills.

“You weren’t stealing from a hospital, dumbass. You were stealing from the shipping company.” Her tone was derisive, and her body language was slightly defensive as she counted out his take.

“And what’s the difference?” Oliver growled more than he spoke, his anger glimmering in his eyes.

“Can you chill out with the whole betrayed thing? Jesus Christ. Look, I’ll lay it all out for you okay? We just stole from Caduceus Enterprise, you’ve heard of them, right?” She raised an eyebrow when Oliver gave a half shrug in response.

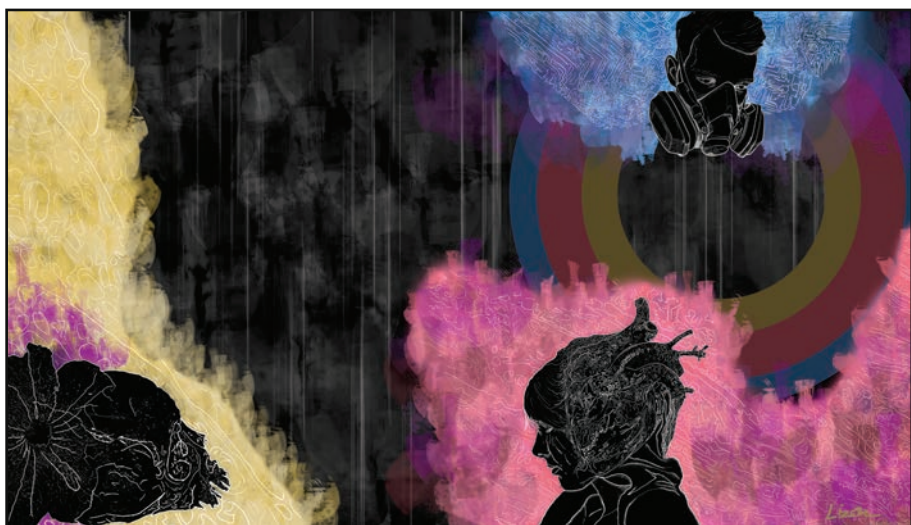
“Oh, wow you really don’t know do you? I thought you were just trying to give me the run around for more cash. So, tell me everything you know about them and I’ll fill in the gaps.” Patience colored her voice, and Oliver considered that it was probably faked. Catherine knew it was; the last few days had been stretching her thin, and even with this big break she didn’t know if it would be enough.

“Uh, they deal in medicine, right?” Hesitating, Oliver’s tone did anything but inspire confidence. Catherine let out a cackling of laughter at the almost non-existent answer.

“You’re technically right I guess. They’re a global medical supplier broadly known for hospital charities, research donations, and low prices. Of course, that’s all just the hogwash you get on the surface. The juicier bit is that they have an interest in the illegal side of things. They’re pretty good at it too. They look at the organized crime in a city, pick out the top dog, and make them a lucrative offer that they can’t refuse. We give you drugs, and in return if we want someone dead, they die.” Catherine organized the money on the table in ten neat stacks while she talked.

“Okay I think that makes sense. Wait, so we just took the payment? Won’t that piss off two really big factions?” A small bead of dread unfurled in Oliver’s stomach. Catherine continued as though he hadn’t spoken at all, opening the duffel bag and taking inventory.

“Or, ya know, if someone needs extorting they extort them. You get the gist of things. It’s cheaper to get a deal with organized crime, which grants you privileges with the criminal world, and take a peg out from under your competitors at the same time. As to your questions: we’re



Dakotah Lizotte
Venom
Digital Illustration

criminals. If Caduceus Enterprise doesn't think I'm top dog after this little stunt they'd be stupid. You weren't the only rat I had stealing from a warehouse, but you were certainly the most profitable one."

She zipped the bag shut and placed another full stack of cash onto the countertop. "You walked away with net profit of, oh, \$160,000? Yeah that sounds about right."

Oliver choked on air, he'd stolen a lot over the last three years, but that, that was a ludicrous amount.

"That much?" A grin broke out over his face, and Catherine couldn't help but share in his mirth.

"Oh yeah, your cut is the \$10,000 sitting out on the countertop." Her tone was cheerful as well, but Oliver's expression turned a little sour.

"Wait, that's not even-" he broke off as Catherine let out an irritated breath.

"You don't get half. There were lots of other people who pitched in tonight, and all of them have needs. If I split it fair, you'd be settling with just \$5,000 so I think I'm being plenty generous," her heated voice was brisk, and any trace of mirth had been obliterated. Oliver managed to feel bad.

"Sorry I, I've never done anything like this before." His voice was put out and sincere, and it mollified her as much as it irritated her.

"It's fine, whatever. God, you sounded like a pouty little kid just then." It was Oliver's turn to snort, and he waved a hand through the air in a vague gesture.

"I'm living on my own, that makes me an adult in most people's eyes." Catherine blinked twice and decided not to push that any further.

"Right, well, it's been fun, kid, but I've gotta split. Things to do, money to spend. I'll catch up with you a few weeks from now, so don't move away on me, you hear?" She waved her goodbye, and Oliver returned it as he turned to the stack of money. What to do now?



Dallas Braden Banks
Stop Do Not Enter
Archival Inkjet Print



David P. Jones
Runner's Expanse
Silver Gelatin Print

Jessica Kendrick
Stairs to the Attic

It spoke your name on the stairs that night.

I had awoken, months after your death, to the sound of clattering in the kitchen, a wild, frightened sound that reminded me more of a frightened animal than an intruder. Still, I was not one to risk my own death, not after how your screaming body was dragged into the deep woods, a trail of red slick on the leaves the next morning. I grabbed the candle holder by my bedside, fiddling around in the dim light for the silver fire poker gifted to me after your death. Holding my breath as if to walk more silently, I padded out of my room and into the dark, narrow hall.

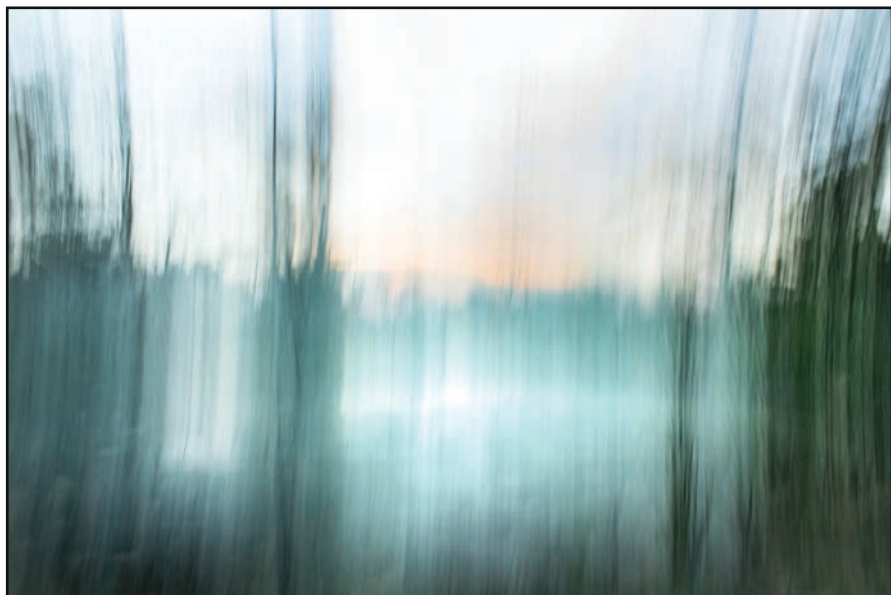
At first glance, I saw nothing. The new moon cast no light into the house, and I had to strain to see inches in front of me, even with my candle. Feeling like a foolish girl, I treaded into the kitchen, thinking of perhaps getting a glass of milk to calm my nerves.

I stopped upon the sight of pots and pans lying strewn about on the floor, the cabinet doors ripped from their hinges. Deep claw marks tore into the wood as if desperately trying to retrieve something that could not be found. I stopped by the entrance, gripping the poker with a pale, shaking hand. Lightning burst from outside, making me flinch and it was only then, under that flash of white light, that I saw glass scattered on the floor, peering up at a shattered window.

I backed up into the wall, knowing then that I was not alone, and knowing then that if I was seen, I would likely perish. From the corner of my eye, something moved. I whipped around, facing the stairs leading to the dusty attic.

Had I not had the flickering light of the candle, I would not have seen the black, unnatural figure standing - or perhaps crouching - on the stairs, peering down at me with white eyes.

We stood frozen like that for what felt like hours, staring at each other unblinkingly, neither of us daring to move a muscle. Were it not for the pointed ears pressed flat against Its head, I would have been



Darcy McDaniel
Shifting Paradigms
Archival Pigment Print

unable to tell whether It was man or animal. Finally, Its hind legs shifted, the old wood of the stairs creaking in such a way that my breath left my lungs.

Creda.

I was certain that It had not spoken, yet your name was as clear as day to me. I stared at It, eyes wide with tears that threatened to spill, and without thinking, I said, “What?”

It flinched upon my voice, and for a moment, I thought It would kill me. Its claws scratched along the wood, and a breath left Its nostrils.

Creda. Creda. Creda.

I was certain now that It spoke, and I clenched the poker with a sudden anger that even I was surprised at. I took a step forward, though I did not know what I intended to do. “Stop it, beast!”

It shuffled back against the wall, but I did not approach. Your name now was filling my head, escaping the endless days I had spent trying to forget.

Creda.

Creda.

Cred-

Its mouth opened, revealing rows of sharp, white teeth. At first I thought It was smiling at me, until a low growl rumbled in its throat, spilling your name slowly, trying out each syllable.

Your name pounded in my head as if thousands of voices were screaming at once. It took a step closer, the skin of Its paw twisting into a pale white hand before Its black fur took it again. I was not mistaken. The long, white scar on Its hand belonged to you.

My breath came in terrified hitches, watching as Its teeth flattened into a cruel smile before sharpening again. I remember your eyes, how they were so grey that they appeared white. I remember how your mother once said you were cursed.

I never believed in curses.

“Creda,” my voice came as a whisper, but I know that you heard me. You screamed a guttural sound that sounded more human than animal, and suddenly I was approaching you, dropping my poker and my candle, my arms wide with surrender.

“Creda.” You tried to scramble away, but you were trapped between me and the wall.

“Creda.” Perhaps I had forgotten that animals should stay as animals, because you lunged at me as if you no longer recognized your wife. Your claws cut into my shoulder, knocking me backward as you darted back through the broken window, into the blackness of the woods. The wounds on my shoulder poured with blood, though I knew that death would not grace me. Something else would come to take me, just as it had taken you. I waited for dawn to come, and then my vision went black.

Three days passed since we last met, and the doctor had diagnosed me with something unnameable, something that made priests offer to do blessings and that made the villagers whisper of a plague: cold, pallid skin, a persistent fever, hazy eyes that could never quite clear up. I stayed in bed most days, slipping into an uneasy slumber and occasionally snacking on leftover bread.

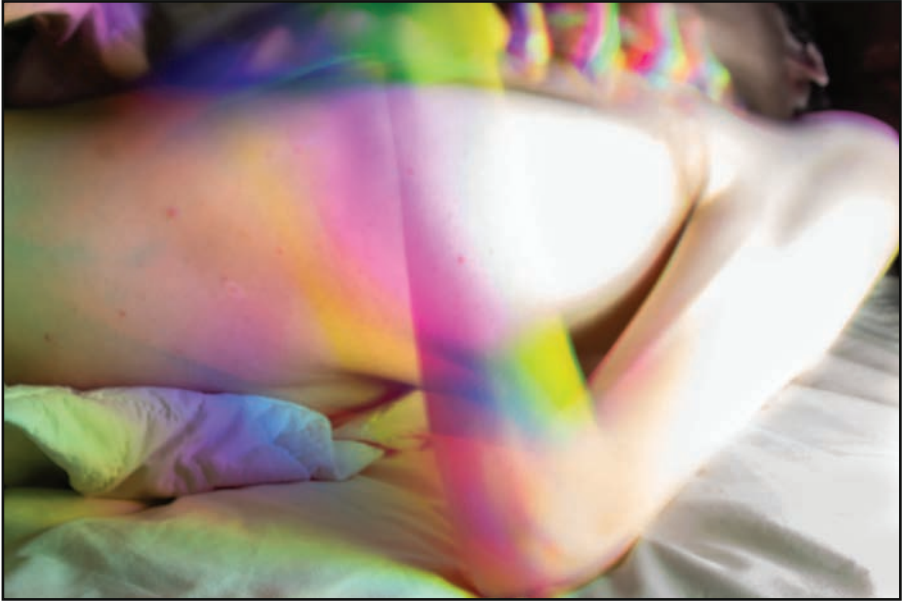
At night however, sleep never found me. I would sit up in my bed, bundled in wool blankets, and I would watch from my window, staring at the silhouettes of trees that would shake in the wind.

And sometimes, I would imagine that I saw you again - human this time, emerging from the woods as if simply playing a joke. I would imagine that you returned to me, climbing into the window, lying beside me in bed and suddenly my fever would be gone.

And then I would awake to the sound of the morning birds, and I would remember that you are gone, and that perhaps the cruelest parts of fevers are the too-real dreams that come each night. The doctors couldn't understand what this sickness was, but as the claw marks on my shoulder throbbed with each passing day, I began to understand.



Daniel Ossey
Reflections
Silver Gelatin Print



Karly Jefferson
255 0 255
Digital Photograph

The night after the doctors came, I forced myself to stand for the first time since our meeting. I stumbled, clutching my nightstand as the fever shook my legs and stole my strength from me. I, however, forced myself to persist. Wrapping myself in a thick shawl to combat the October chill, I stumbled out of my room and toward the kitchen door.

The moment I opened the door to face the woods, a shiver ran down my spine as if welcoming me for the first time in years. As I stepped off of my porch onto the crumbling leaves, I wondered if you felt this same welcoming, dear Creda. Villagers often spoke ill of the woods - especially at night. "Terrible beasts wander those woods," they would say. "Sometimes they steal wanderers who linger on the edge of the woods for too long."

Before I realized just where my legs were taking me, I was standing at the very spot where I watched your body being dragged. The very spot where I first lost you, at the edge of village and woods, humanity and monstrosity. I remember what you looked like. The villagers were all too afraid to retrieve your body, but I remember the blood smeared on your cheek, mixed with dirt and tears as you screamed out my name in desperation.

I wonder if you knew that death was not coming for you just yet.

A crunch of leaves snapped me back to reality, and from the darkness, I could see just the beginning of a black paw, a long snout, white eyes peering up at me like cautious full moons. "Creda," I whispered, and then you were gone, retreating back into your new home.

I'm sure you didn't mean for me to follow, but I did anyways, waiting for the moment I awoke from my fever dream to an empty bed. Only in fever dreams would a widow chase beasts in the woods, and only in fever dreams did they survive the false hunt. I stumbled into a clearing in the woods, the circle of thick trees surrounding me like a cage.

And that's when I finally saw you.

The pale moonlight cast silver light against your black fur, though even the moon was dull in comparison to the silver reflection of your eyes. Any doubt that I once had of you being a normal creature left me the moment I saw your eyes. I opened my mouth to call your name and your shoulders hunched, growling at me as if I were ready to cast a curse.

However, dreams should stay just that - dreams. Wherever you were, you would not return to me in your human skin, and I was ready to wake up. I straightened my back, ignoring the cold wind that whipped through my shawl. Taking slow, careful steps toward you and ignoring the instinct to run, I took a slow, steady breath. "Creda."

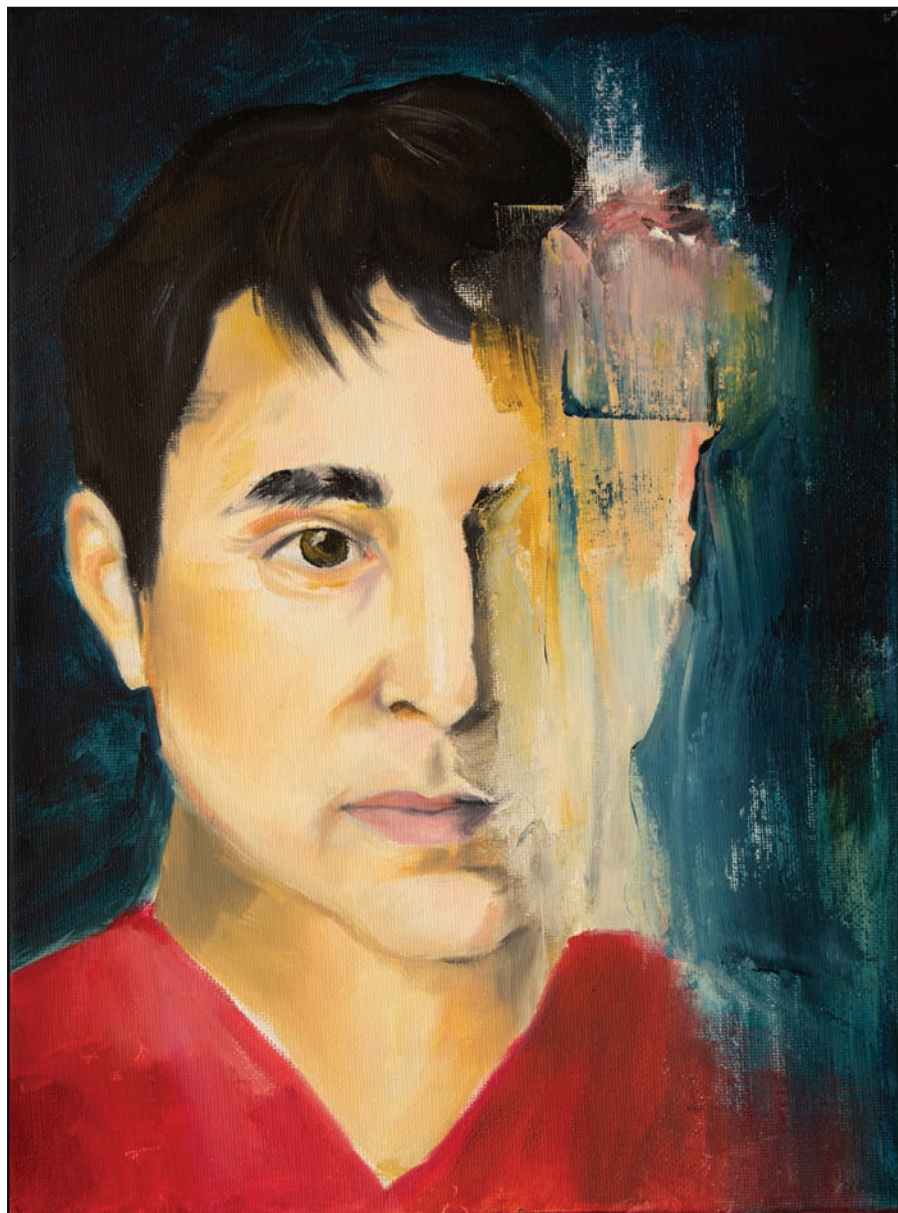
You were knocking me to the ground the moment your name left my lips, and as my back collided with the earth, I realized, to my horror, that this was no dream. I was awake and here you were, pinning me to the ground as you revealed sharp, white canines that seemed to beg to rip into my throat. The marks on my shoulder began to throb again, and I soon realized that you had ripped the stitching out of my skin. Blood began to pool from my shoulder, staining my nightgown.

I awaited death, though I considered why you had entered our home if you were truly so feral. Did you attack me to kill me, or was it so I would join you?

"Creda." You growled at me once more, teeth bared. I thought I saw your silver eyes begin to darken to that familiar grey.

"Creda." Your claws were on my shoulder once more, though for a moment, I thought I felt slender fingers gripping me instead. I was staring into your eyes now, willing you to return to me, willing me to wake up from my fever if you didn't.

"Creda." You rocked on the edge of monstrosity and humanity once more, and I thought I glimpsed pale skin emerging from black fur before the wilderness took you again. It seemed that either way, you would fall, and I prayed that you fell back to humanity. I grew tired of fighting, my vision blurring once more with fever and threatening to take me with a finality that you seemed to sense. You backed away then, just as I began shaking, both with the cold of the night air and with the heat of my own body.



Nancy Lewis
John Armstrong
Oil on Canvas

It felt like I would rip out of my own skin, had I the option.

I opened my mouth to speak once more, but only an airy breath escaped where there had once been words. I moved to sit on my knees, and instead fell forward, planting my hands to catch me and only seeing claws where there had once been fingers.

And in front of me, Creda, I finally saw you.



Mardy Wells
Abandoned (above)
Merry Go Round (below)
Silver Gelatin Prints



Meghan K. Smith

I Like Kentucky and Kentucky Likes Me (After Beuys)

Digital Photograph

Sam Roddy

What is Freely Given

First Place Fiction Award

It was the day of the Autumn Equinox Festival and Ailee was bouncing on her feet. She was finally old enough to spend the festival in town with Bria instead of staying with her parents. Her father and mother shifted everything around on their cart to make sure it was all secure. It didn't take them long, and soon her father had hopped in the front of the cart and set off to town with a wave.

Once he was out of sight, Ailee grabbed her mother's arm and started tugging. "Come on, Mama! Let's go and get ready!"

They went inside to change into the nice dresses they had laid out that morning. "Ailee, come sit with me and let me do your hair," her mother beckoned as they went back outside. Ailee sat down in the grass in front of her eagerly. She loved when her mother brushed her hair, taming the dark curls.

"Mama?" Her mother hummed in answer. "Do you think the faeries will come out today?"

Her mother's hands paused, and she tilted her head back to look at her. Her brow was furrowed, the corner of her mouth tugging down. She noticed her looking and smiled, pushing Ailee's head back around. "I thought you were too old for the faerie stories? Are you still going to see Miss Lena? What did we say about sneaking off to visit her?"

"They're not all stories!" She turned around, hands gesturing wildly. "There used to be faerie festivals! They would decorate the paths in the woods with little shrines and houses, and everyone would go in and leave an offering for them before the witching hour. People stopped leaving gifts for the faeries and respecting the truth. They would go into the woods when they shouldn't and that's why people started vanishing."

"Ailee!" She snapped her mouth shut, staring wide-eyed at her mother. She never raised her voice like that. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you like that, but those are just stories. People vanished, you



Dylan Evans
Looking Down
Archival Pigment Print

know this. One of those people was Lena's son, and she blamed faeries for taking him instead of accepting the truth."

"But what is the truth?" she asked. "No one ever says what happened to all those people."

Her mother sighed and stood up, grabbing her arms to pull her up too. "It was investigated. Nothing was ever found, and some of those people searching disappeared too. People were scared and abandoned the search and parents taught their kids to avoid that part of the forest. Ever since then, people stopped disappearing."

"Faeries make sense, though!" Ailee insisted. "Nothing was ever found because they can only be seen at certain times. Miss Lena also said that they were easily offended and could be very vengeful, so they could have taken them—"

"Faeries aren't real, Ailee!" her mother snapped.

Ailee felt her cheeks burn as she looked at the ground. She was old enough that believing in monsters in the shadows, magic, and faeries got her strange looks. But when she sat and listened to Miss Lena tell stories, she always wondered.

Her mother was running her free hand through her hair. "I'm sorry, Ailee. Just wait here for me and then we'll head to town, alright?" Ailee turned her attention to the forest separating her house from the town. She wanted to believe in the stories from Miss Lena.

Her mother called and she turned away from the forest and its shadows. "Coming, Mama!"

The first thing that reached them was the smells. The bakers had been making sweets and pies to sell all day, and the aroma drifted to them on the breeze, causing her mouth to water. Small plumes of smoke were becoming visible and her mother tugged her to a stop. She turned to look up at her, cocking her head. "I'll let you go from here, just promise me something."

"What is it?" The serious tone in her mother's voice was new, and she wondered if she had truly upset her with her talk earlier. Her mother had never reacted this way before.

“Promise me that you’ll let these ideas about faeries go. Promise that you won’t go in the forest.”

Ailee stared into her mother’s eyes, seeing a gleam in them that she didn’t recognize. “I promise Mama. I’ve never gone in before, and I won’t now.”

Her mother nodded before she pulled out a small pouch, clinking noises reaching their ears. “Here’s some money for sweets and things. Check in with your father and I regularly and meet up with us at sundown before the bonfire, okay?”

Excitement overcame her and Ailee forgot about the strange seriousness. She grabbed the little pouch and hugged her mother. “Thank you!”

She heard her mother call out for her to be careful, but Ailee was already running. It didn’t take long for the rough wooded and stone buildings that made up the village to come into view, moving spots of color weaving between the buildings in large groups. One specific spot of color was standing at the edge of the village and started running at her.

Bria came upon her quickly and she hugged her friend in greeting. “It took you long enough! You missed a lot,” Bria said, her free hand flying as she described everything. “Everyone’s been setting up stalls all morning. Cain and Fergus tried to sneak away with some of Roan’s honey buns as he was setting them out.”

They both went straight to Roan when they joined the crowd, sticky buns with honey drizzled on top getting all over their fingers. They browsed some of the stalls where people were selling food, clothes, fabrics of different colors, some gemstones and jewelry.

Musicians had gathered in the middle of town and everyone was in circles spinning and dancing. In between dances, Ailee looked up at the sky in surprise, seeing the darker shades of blue and growing shadows. She had been having so much fun with Bria she hadn’t noticed how quickly time had passed. Ailee looked at her friend. “I’ll meet you back here for the bonfire, I have to check in with Mama.”



Kelsey Hargett
Untitled No. 3
Archival Pigment Print

She didn't know exactly where her parents had set up, so she wandered lazily through town. She stopped when she saw the familiar figures of Cain and Fergus sneaking around corners. They were slipping away before she could draw attention to them and she followed. The crowd got smaller, fewer people lingering on the outer parts of the village as the bonfire was being prepared. Cain and Fergus stopped trying to hide in the shadows, instead laughing amongst themselves as they walked. Miss Lena's modest house came into view, it's rusting iron gate standing alone in front of her house. The stonewall that had marked the border of her property was crumbled and overgrown with weeds. There was no light on inside, so Miss Lena was probably off telling her stories somewhere in the village.

Ailee ran forward when Cain pulled something out from under his shirt and threw it at her house. "Hey! Stop that!"

Both boys turned to face her. Cain and Fergus were the only boys around her and Bria's age in town. They fought almost every time they saw each other. As Ailee ran up to them she could smell the horse dung on them and saw clumps of it wrapped in an old cloth at their feet. Blood rushed to her cheeks as she realized what they were doing.

"Oh, look, the faerie princess has arrived!" Cain taunted.

Ailee stormed up to him, seeing his blue eyes go wide. "Are you really so immature? Throwing dung at a harmless old woman's house!"

Cain was flushed red, furious. "The old bat is crazy! She's always spouting the faerie stories to everyone she sees!"

"So? She's always done that and no harm has ever come from it," Ailee said. "That's no reason to throw dung at her house!"

"It is when my little sister tried to go into the woods looking for faeries!" Cain yelled.

Ailee stopped and bit her lip, thinking of the little girl with red hair. If Cain had told anyone...Determination straightened her shoulders. Miss Lena was always kind to her. She cheered her up when Cain bullied her, gave her cookies, and took care of her and Ian when their parents got sick a few years ago. She was family.



Liz Ketz
Trapped in the Flower Garden
Mixed Media

Without saying a word, she spun on her heel and stormed off, out of town. If Cain told any of the other adults about why his little sister tried to go into the woods, something could happen to Miss Lena. The adults didn't like her stories, but mostly considered them harmless.

She ignored Cain behind her, asking what she was doing. She had listened to Miss Lena's stories about faeries all her life. More than that, she believed in them. If there were truly faeries in the woods, she would find out.

The festivals used to be about honoring the faeries, giving them gifts and leaving them offerings to keep them happy. If the reason people vanished was truly because the faeries were angry, then she would start the tradition again, she would leave them an offering every year. She reached into her coin pouch, where she had slipped the blue gemstone she had bought earlier. It wasn't much, and she didn't know if it would be accepted, but she was going to try.

Her fury carried her to the edge of the forest. The shadows seemed ominous and frightening as she stared into the trees. She stopped, her heart pounding. Was she truly going to do this? Go into the woods, even after promising her mother just a few hours ago?

Her anger with Cain carried her this far, but a life of hearing "Don't go into the woods" was keeping her feet rooted. Ailee understood that people were scared. People went missing and nothing was ever found. Nameless, faceless people were blamed, instead of people wanting to believe in something mystical. Ailee had always wanted to go into the woods, but she was also scared. She didn't know if there was truly something in here that would take her, or if her little offering of a stone would make them happy.

She was trembling when she took her first step into the forest. She didn't want to get taken, but there was something inside her that so desperately wanted to finally know. Were faeries as real as she and Miss Lena believed them to be? The countless stories came from somewhere right? If there were no faeries and no people, then she would prove that there was nothing to be afraid of in the forest any more, that whoever had taken those people all those years ago was gone.

She looked behind her one last time, the warm light of the torches and the bonfire being lit cast the village into strange shadowy shapes. “I’m sorry I broke my promise, Mama.”

The longing was pulling at her now, pulling her forward into the embrace of the trees, away from the orange light of the village. She wanted to know, to see more than anything. She stumbled, tripping over roots in the growing darkness. The sky was dark now, only a faint splash of pink blending into purple was all she could see through the leaves above her. “H-Hello? Is there anyone here?”

Silence answered her, only crickets chirped, going quiet as she stumbled by. Her head snapped to the side as a flash of color sped by, a strange tinkling sound she couldn’t describe echoing around her. Sweat dripped down her neck and she shivered. She pulled her shawl tight around her, trying to see in the darkness.

There was a faint glimmer of something ahead of her. She started to hear something as she got closer. At first it sounded like whispers, like the wind in the trees, but it started changing. These were different, like different voices speaking together, but she couldn’t hear the words.

She felt like she had walked for hours when she finally reached that glimmer, breaking through a row of trees. A pond stretched out in front of her, reflecting the sky above. There was a willow tree on the edge, its twisting branches brushing the water and sending out ripples. Her eyes were riveted to the ripples, to a play of colors. Little wisps of light were in the water, all the colors of the rainbow and more, leaving trails behind them like smoke that reflected in her eyes. Everything she was seeing fit Miss Lena’s stories. The sun was setting, it was the autumn equinox, and there was a body of water, all barriers and boundaries in nature that blurred the lines between the faeries and her.

“Can you speak to me? Is there anyone here?” she asked. The whispered sounds started forming words, echoing her own words back at her.

“...anyone...”

“ here...”



Julianna Leach
Transcendence
Archival Pigment Print

“I am here,” a voice said, clear as a bell in her ear.

Ailee jumped and turned around, but there was only a shadow behind her. When her eyes tried to focus on it they would blur. “A-Are you a faerie? I came to see if you were real, if you were responsible for those disappearances all those years ago.”

“That’s what your people call me, yes,” the voice hummed, the shadow circling behind her. Ailee tried to follow it with her eyes but all she could see were eyes boring into her. “We did not take anything that was not freely given. Those people wandered here wanting to see us. Even after making a mockery of our festivals, our way of life. After turning us into bedtime stories and warnings, people wanted to see.”

“What happened to them?”

A flash of teeth shown in the reflection, like a fox’s grin. “We answered their questions, and they did not leave after getting their answers. I have a question for you.”

Something in Ailee was telling her to run. She had her answers, so she should just leave. Faeries were tricksters and masters of playing with words. She was just an impulsive thirteen-year old girl. “What?”

“Why have you come here, when for two generations, your people have avoided this place? When your own people never came back?”

“I... I had to know if you were real. I am the only one my age who believes the stories. All the adults just indulge me and roll their eyes. I am tired of being afraid,” she whispered, the truth spilling from her lips, beyond her control. “I know the equinox used to be about honoring you, about respect and acknowledging your existence. People started vanishing when the meaning of the festival was changed. Even if it’s just me, I wanted to try and honor the true meaning of the festival.”

The faerie hummed. “Tell me, what reason do you believe that you alone can make up for years of ignorance and disrespect?”

Ailee swallowed, her head throbbing from trying to focus on the reflection. “I... My friend was going to get in trouble for telling stories about the faeries. A little girl was caught trying to come in and find you

because of them. I wanted to help her by proving that someone could go into the forest without being taken.”

Laughter rang out, not just from the one she had been speaking with, but the echoing whispers all laughed, sounding like wind in the trees. “Oh, the logic of children!”

“I may be a child, but I believe!” Ailee snapped, silencing the laughter. She spoke over her pounding heart. “I have always believed that there was more to this world than what we know. That there are things, beings, we can’t explain. All those stories came from something. There has to be some truth to it all!”

“What do you want, little child who believes?” the voice asked.

Ailee held out the hand with the blue stone, the flickering light of the faeries reflecting on its surface. “I bought it to give to my Mama, but this is my offering to you.”

The stone was gone when she blinked. “For your mother? Bought with thoughts of light and love, but gifted to another? To a faceless being that has made people vanish?”

She swallowed. “Yes. I give that stone to you. Just don’t take anyone else.”

“I ask one last thing of you, before I agree,” the voice said after a moment of silence. “Will you give me your name?”

“My name?” she asked.

“The name of the child who believes in stories and magic, when new forces push us from the minds of others. Give me your name, and I give you my word that no one else will be taken.”

Ailee felt like she was missing something, but she had felt out of her depth since she stepped out here. “Ailee. My name is Ailee.”

As soon as her name left her lips, the shapeless form became a person. A beautiful woman appeared in front of her, a halo of light around her as she stood on the water, ripples spreading under her feet. She looked like her mother, the soft face and curly hair so familiar. A warm smile greeted her and a hand stretched out. “Welcome, Ailee.”

Warmth rushed through her and she started to reach for the hand.
“Welcome to where?”

“You freely gave a gift of your love, your belief. You gave us your truth. You gave us your name, your very self. We will honor our word, these woods will be safe for your kind, but you, and everything you gave away, are ours.”



Taylor Ray
Flora and Fauna
Silver Gelatin Print



Makayla Holder
Glossed Over (above)
Refraction (below)
Archival Inkjet Prints



Dustyn Alexander Pruitt

Sip (above)

Stoneware

Holding On (Barely) (below)

Marbled Porcelain

Frank Scozzari
Yosemite Bear Bandits

The silence of the midnight valley was broken by the patter of running feet.

Then came the cry—"Bear!"

And again, a different voice, "Bear! Bear!"

And then a chorus of "Bears!"

Lantern lights came on, flashlight beams cut through the darkness, and my two buddies came shuffling past me, grinning.

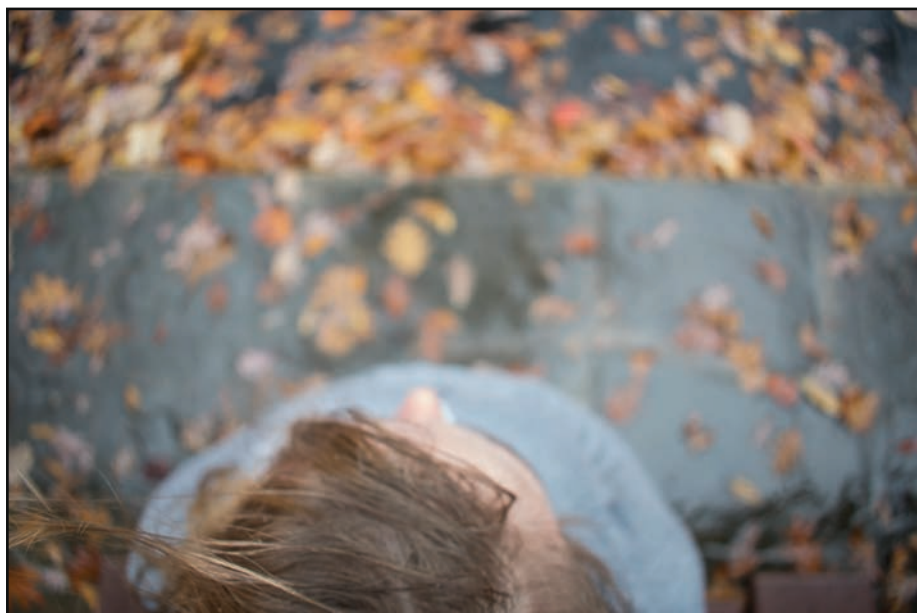
"Tea time," Rob said.

He was on one end of an ice chest and George on the other, each holding a handle, moving awkwardly. I turned and watched them disappear into the dark forest behind me. Then I turned my attention back to the campsites, where the door of a nearby camper opened. A man dressed in long johns poked his head out and glared into the darkness, but he was looking in the wrong direction. From a large tent in the adjacent campsite two children emerged. Their parents quickly grabbed them and held them back. One little boy had a Brownie camera with a flash on top and held it up and ready. The other boy held a toy tomahawk. The man from the camper now came fully out and walked in my direction. He carried a lantern in one hand and a hammer in the other. He looked like he wanted to tangle, but stopped at the edge of the forest.

"They took my chest!" he yelled. "Goddamned bears took my ice chest!"

Neighboring campers emerged from all different directions, gathering at his campsite. He stayed there looking into the darkness for a minute, his lantern held high, then he lowered the lantern and the hammer and walked back to his picnic table.

"It was sitting right there," he explained to the others, pointing. "It was sitting right there on the table. They just carried it off! Goddamned bears carried it off!"



Whitney Stamper
What's Out There
Archival Pigment Print

“I’ll be damned,” one of the other campers said, shaking his head.

The flashlight beams turned and searched the dark forest beyond the lantern light and I ducked low behind the large Douglas fir, and snickered. None of the campers were brave enough to venture beyond the light, and even if they did, I would just pop my head out and claim to have come from the next campground upriver. They just stood there, all bewildered, like a herd of wilderbeests looking at the carcass of a fallen comrade.

Dumb asses, I thought.

I watched for several entertaining minutes before I turned and followed the path of my companions, back along the dark trail to Happy Isles.

It was the summer of 73’ and the hippies were in Yosemite in full force. They were there to celebrate living and nature and the human spirit and the hope for world peace. That high tide mark that Hunter Thompson talked about hadn’t crested yet and beautiful spirits roamed freely, sometimes nakedly, through the meadows and along the Merced. It was commonplace to hear strumming guitars and serenading voices coming from the forest. The hippies held nightly love-ins at Happy Isles and you could hear the music echoing all the way down the Valley. And if you looked up at Glacier Point you could see the shadows of celestial dancers stretching high on the granite walls. Everywhere you went in the Valley you could find peace and love and anti-war slogans and music and celebrations of nature and the human spirit. Bead-laden sun worshippers lay out on the granite boulders along the river; hippie goddesses bathed beneath the waterfalls; guitar strumming and flute playing troubadours strolled the park’s roadways; and there was a Jimi Hendrix lookalike in a dusty black suit carrying a beat-up suitcase in one hand and a beat-up guitar case in the other, who could often be seen wandering through the village in a drug-induced daze. I think I even saw Joni Mitchell’s child of God walking along the road with a bong pipe strapped to his back. A blissful feeling was everywhere, except for the ranger stations. Back then, the rangers were crew-cut, red-necked Korean War vets looking to smash some free-spirited heads. This was before Mork & Mindy. And there had been a battle royale going on

between the hippies and the rangers. There had been an incident in a meadow where baton-wielding rangers had stormed a love-in on horseback. Many of the hippies were hospitalized, but it only made them more resolute and more anti-government and anarchical.

That was the Yosemite we stumbled into, four trail-worn kids looking for food, essentially anything that was edible. Marmots had raided our food stash at Florence Lake, so we had been improvising ever since.

And improvise we did, very well.

When we first arrived in Yosemite Valley, we relied on the hippies. They welcomed everyone in communal fashion. Into a huge pot everyone added something—a can of Campbell's tomato soup, a can of Dennison's chilly beans, Spaghetti-Os, chicken broth, etc., etc.—and anyone with a Sierra cup or an empty can or a somewhat-clean hand could dip into the pot and pull out dinner. We had made our camp only a short distance upriver from Happy Isles—a cave-like hideaway along the Merced beneath a large granite overhang—which made this arrangement with the hippies very convenient. We partook several times, contributing nothing, yet dipping our Sierra cups into the hippie-stew, often multiple times. And they were liberal with their alcoholic spirits as well. Pull an empty gallon jug from a trash can, go from one hippy campsite to the next, get half a beer here, some wine there, the last drops from a whisky bottle, a little rum, or whatever, and four teenagers had enough brew to get an army drunk.

Each evening of our first several days in the Valley, we'd return to our cave, full-bellied, and we'd sip and lay flat, and fat, in the pine needles. But as usual, when things are going good, we became discontent. We got bored. The hippie soup concoction got old. We craved something better, and as boys do, we planned and devised and schemed. So it became our daily routine to scour campsites for unattended ice chests, and our nightly routine to commandeer these ice chests. The way we saw it, we were providing a service to the weekend adventurers, all those L.A. urban dwellers who ventured into the wilderness only one week per year. It was a once-in-a-lifetime-into-

the-wild experience we bestowed, the telling of which could be passed down through the generations.

We weren't bad kids, we convinced ourselves. We were just hungry.

The rangers, of course, knew bears don't carry-off ice chests—bears simply demolish them on the spot. So they sought out us human bears, but could never figure it out, or find us. And the evidence of our labor piled higher beneath the overhanging rock we called home in the form of a pyramid shaped of ice chests, stacked six high. On top was our prize—a red, white & blue stars-and-stripes, lacquer-finished, custom Coleman.

Now we examined the bounty of our nightly catch and found the pickings to be slim. The ice chest contained only half a package of Oscar Mayer hot dogs, five to be exact, mustard, no buns but a quarter loaf of bread, three cans of Coke, and a ton of ice.

“Looks like they were ready to leave.”

“Why all the ice?”

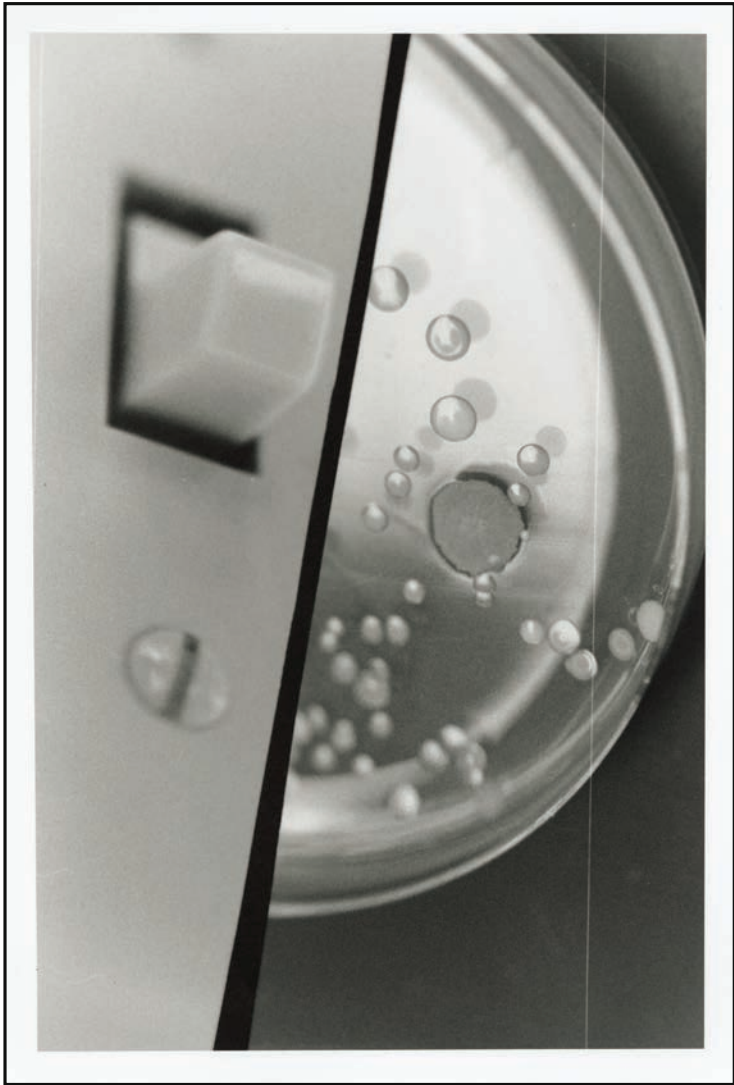
“Who knows.”

“Maybe they were planning to go to the store, but hadn't gone yet?”

“Maybe we need to be more picky?”

Willie, the youngest among us, who had stayed back at the camp, had a fire going when we arrived. He had made it correctly this time, keeping the flames low beneath the encircling-boulders so they could not be seen from the trail above or the road down at Happy Isles. Rob proportioned the catch evenly. The morsels handed out looked pitiful. One-and-a-quarter hotdogs each, one-and-a-half slices of bread each, and a few ounces of Coke poured evenly into our Sierra cups. We stuck our dogs on sticks and cooked them. Then we stuck them in between a slice of bread, added tons of mustard, and washed them down with the divvied up Coke. After we were through, George carried the empty chest to the back of the den and stacked it with the others.

Silence prevailed as the campfire burned down. The glowing embers lit our hungry faces. Somebody's stomach growled.



Kaitlyn Faith Jones
Shared Light
Silver Gelatin Print

"It's hit or miss," George finally said.

"We need to be more particular," said Rob.

"We need to stick with the best tents or the Winnebago's," I said. "If they have a luxury tent and good equipment, then they'll have good food."

"That's what I mean," Rob said, and he stuck his stick in the fire and moved the coals around. "I don't want to eat that hippy shit anymore."

"Me neither," said George.

Rob looked around at our glowing faces. "I want more steak." (We had gotten steak in one of the stolen ice chests, and it was our best feast yet.)

"Hamburger will do," George said.

"I saw a campsite with a Cadillac and an Airstream yesterday," Willie said.

"Where?" I asked.

"Upper Pines—I think."

"Was it Upper Pines or not?"

"I think so. We passed it on the bus."

"Okay, we'll ride the bus again tomorrow. We'll take a double-decker and stakeout the best campsites."

"Yeah," Willie said, "and maybe I'll find that Cadillac again?"

"We'll look for campsites with multiple tents, good tents."

"And a lot of children," said George. "Children need food."

"And parents usually have beer or wine," I said.

I looked over at Rob, who was strangely shaking his head as he stirred the coals with his stick.

"What'ya thinking?"

"We've hunted and scavenged and begged," he said. "We've gotten lucky sometimes, and sometimes we don't."

“Yeah.”

“We’ve eaten hippy shit.”

“Yeah, what’s your point?”

“Why scavenge when we have a shit-load of food right here at our feet?”

George and Willie exchanged glances.

I looked at Rob with a bewildered expression.

“The snack-bar, *dummies!*”

He was referring to the concession stand at Happy Isles, which was open during the day and boarded up at night. It was loaded with all the kinds of junk food teenagers love.

No one said anything. We were all aware of the snack stand. We passed it everyday on our way into the village and had watched, covetously, as tourists purchased and ate hotdogs and ice-cream bars and drank Dr. Pepper and Crush. We had never considered busting into it. Breaking the law stealing ice chests was one thing; breaking into the snack stand would be felony larceny.

Rob slowly glanced around the campfire, stopping on my face. With the end of his stick he flicked a little coal in my direction. “Well?”

“There is food there,” I said, matter-of-factly.

“They’ve got hamburgers,” said George.

“And ice cream,” said Willie.

“And they have cigarettes,” said Rob (he was the only smoker).

And I think we all thought of the Snickers bars, boxes of them.

“I could cut the cable with my axe,” Rob said.

We all knew what he was talking about. The stand was secured each night with plywood boards secured by a cable-wrap, which could be cut with a sharp axe.

We exchanged interested glances.

“When?” I asked.



Brianne Hatfield
Home at Dawn
Silver Gelatin Print

“Now,” said Rob.

“Now?”

“Yeah, now,” George nodded. “All the rangers have gone to bed and there’re no hippies tonight,” he paused, “and I’m still hungry.”

“So am I,” said Rob.

I thought about it. It was past midnight. Happy Isles was the ghost town it should be. And there were no hippy music festivals going on.

“You think you can cut that?”

Rob stared at me. Then he got up, went to his pack, took out his axe, and came back to the campfire. He took his seat and ran his finger over the blade. When he was being mischievous, he could put on one of those shit-eating grins, the kind that only Jack Nicholson could make, and he did that now.

“Yep. I think I can cut it.” He hacked the air twice for dramatic effect.

Willie grinned widely too. “Yeah, that should do it.”

“Okay, then,” I said, my mind was already racing ahead. “George and Rob will take the snack-bar. Willie will stand guard out back (meaning a cautionary watch of the unoccupied ranger cabin), and I’ll watch the road. Once you’ve got the cable cut, you come get us.”

Rob chopped the air with another practice swing of the axe, and grinned again. “Certainly.”

We immediately assembled into a unit, heading down the dark trail together along the white-flashing Merced. There was starlight, but where the forest was thick it was nearly black. Only out in the river could we see white. And we could hear various echoes down-valley—a garbage truck slamming dumpsters and some shouting voices—but they were distant sounds, none of which were of any concern to us.

We all took our positions and Rob and George got started at the snack stand.

From the road, I could hear the action but couldn’t see it. The first chop of the axe had a muted sound and the second a little louder. The third echoed off the granite base of Glacier Point.



Zachary Pace
Seritan
Acrylic on Wood

Then the chopping became a flurry and, reaching a crescendo, there was a pause and one last loud *Bang!*

Then nothing.

I tried to look in between the trees back toward the snack stand, but could see nothing. And I was getting nervous. I was expecting someone to come get me, but no one came. There were no lights on the road. The only light I could see was up high at Glacier Point.

Finally I left the road and walked back to the snack stand to see what was going on.

The snack-bar, which was a four-sided building about fifteen-foot square with a back door and an open counter facing the river, emerged in the starlight. What I saw, or thought I saw, was the bar open for business, as I had seen it so many times in daylight. Behind the counter, where the plywood had been removed, stood an attendant wearing one of those center-creased white café caps with two-pointed ends.

It was Rob.

“How can I help you?” he said, sporting that crazy Jack Nicholson grin.

George was already inside rummaging through boxes. I could see his backside bobbing up and down as he was going through the inventory. Willie suddenly appeared in the back door, which was now open.

“Yeah!” was all he said.

“Take those,” George told him, and Willie grabbed some boxes George had set aside and carried them out.

Rob grabbed the point of his café hat and tossed it out the opening. “C’mon, get in here and help!”

I went in through the back door. Willie was walking away with what I now saw to be a case of ice cream sandwiches.

We didn’t handle this very systematically. We were more like pirates pillaging, or rats in a cheese factory. We took whatever, and as much as we could. By the time we left, it looked like the bears had been

there, for real. Boxes tipped over, some ripped open, shelves disheveled and emptied, refrigerator items unwrapped, bitten into, and carelessly discarded. We even left the damn freezer door open. And I'm sure our fingerprints were all over the place. We really didn't think about that kind of thing, nor did we care.

Exiting the back door with arms filled, I saw Willie sitting there at the base of a pine tree in full-lotus position gorging on those ice cream sandwiches. He had white ice cream all around his lips.

"Come on," I yelled at him.

He wiped his mouth, got up, picked up the boxes, and followed me. I let him go ahead.

As we walked back up the dark trail, Rob carried a stack three boxes high. The box on top was a case of Salem cigarettes. He had jerky strips and pepperoni sticks stuffed in and hanging out of his back pockets. George was equally loaded. Being the biggest of us, he managed four boxes, the top one pressed up against the side of his face. He had to eyeball the trail through a slither between boxes. Willie had two big boxes. He was still munching on ice cream sandwiches. I know this because I could hear him and every once in a while an empty wrapper would drop to the trail in front of me.

"Hey! Don't leave a trail!" I'd picked it up.

He'd look back at me and shrug, and then do it again.

We reached our cave-like hideout exhausted. We set all the boxes down and took inventory. We had boxes of hotdogs, hamburger patties, buns, cases of Snickers, Almond Joy and Mounds, cookies, and even a boxful of ketchup in those small little packets. Rob's prize was the case of Salem cigarettes, and he took to smoking one right away.

Everyone had already eaten something, either back at the snack-bar or on the way returning to the camp. But we ate more now. We ate as many ice cream sandwiches as we could before they melted. What was left was set afloat downriver in a box. We ate some raw dogs, some pepperoni sticks, and some Snickers. Afterward, our bellies were feeling it. Willie was moaning all night and eventually threw up, which caused a



Alex Virostko
Reflections
Oil on Canvas

chain reaction. I remember, at one point, three of us were lined up along the river bank.

The next day, ranger trucks were all over the place. They stretched police tape around the concession stand. Tourists and hikers stopped and gawked.

We spied on them from a distance but stayed at our camp for the next two days, keeping out of sight, sunbathing on the large boulders along the riverbank, bare-backed with big bellies. We had no need to go anywhere. We had more food than we could eat. We utilized the ice chests to preserve the food and also rigged a line in the icy river, at the end of which was a huge plastic bag full of perishables, weighed down with some stones.

But truly, we had taken too much, and much of it was spoiled in the heat of the summer valley.

On the third day, we all headed into the village. We slipped by the ranger's crime line, acting shocked to see the concession stand still closed and taped up. We spent the day lounging around the village. At one point, I saw Rob sitting at the entrance to the village store selling half-priced cigarettes. Yes, he did that, and somehow didn't get caught. We heard some word about the snack-bar break in at Happy Isles. Rumor had it, among the day-hikers anyhow, that bears had done it.

Yeah, right, we thought, bears with axes.

We were all snickering at the news of this.

The rangers, of course, knew better.

We spent our last day in the Valley riding around on top of one those double-decker buses, sliding jerky strips to one another, trading Almond Joys for Mounds bars, enjoying the sunshine and the breeze. I remember looking at Willie's face, which had been gaunt after the long trail hike, and noticing it looking fuller. We went back to Happy Isles for our packs, and left with some misgivings. This granite overhang, nevertheless, had been our home for several weeks. We set the red, white and blue custom Coleman ice chest afloat downriver, hoping

for its return to its true owner. All the other ice chests we left stacked beneath the overhang, figuring someday someone would find them.

The postscript to all of this was a sad one, as the hippies were blamed for the snack-bar break in. The baton-wielding rangers banned them from Happy Isles. They could no longer hold music festivals there, or for that matter, anywhere in the Valley—the crackdown became park-wide. It’s funny how the sins of one can fall upon another—maybe not so funny, but that’s what happened. We knew of this before we left the Valley. I remember that last night we stayed at our camp there was no song or music echoing down the valley. Nor did we see the shadows of celestial dancers high on the granite walls. Nor, on that last bus ride, did we see the tie-dyed T-shirts and long dresses celebrating out in the meadows. We had crashed that long, beautiful wave Hunter Thompson had written about—maybe not for the rest of the country, but certainly for Yosemite Valley.

In reflection, I would say, we had gone pretty low, and we were not really starving. As with the sixties and seventies, we faded into responsible (and law-abiding) adults. The craziness of youth was gone, but not the memory of it, not entirely.

Still, I can see Rob lounging in the last seat on top of the double-decker, bare-backed as usual, smoking one of those stolen Salem cigarettes. He was grinning that crazy Jack Nicholson grin, like he was in on some joke the rest of the world didn’t know about. I couldn’t see his eyes because he was wearing dark sunglasses, but when he noticed me looking at him his grin widened, and when the corners of his mouth rose to their highest point, his lips moved slowly and he spoke one word, loudly:

“BEAR!”



Juanita Dixon
Nuclear
Intaglio Print



Hannah Adams
High Hopes
Digital Collage

Non-fiction

Elizabeth Von Mann

The Gift of a Penny

First Place Creative Non-Fiction Award

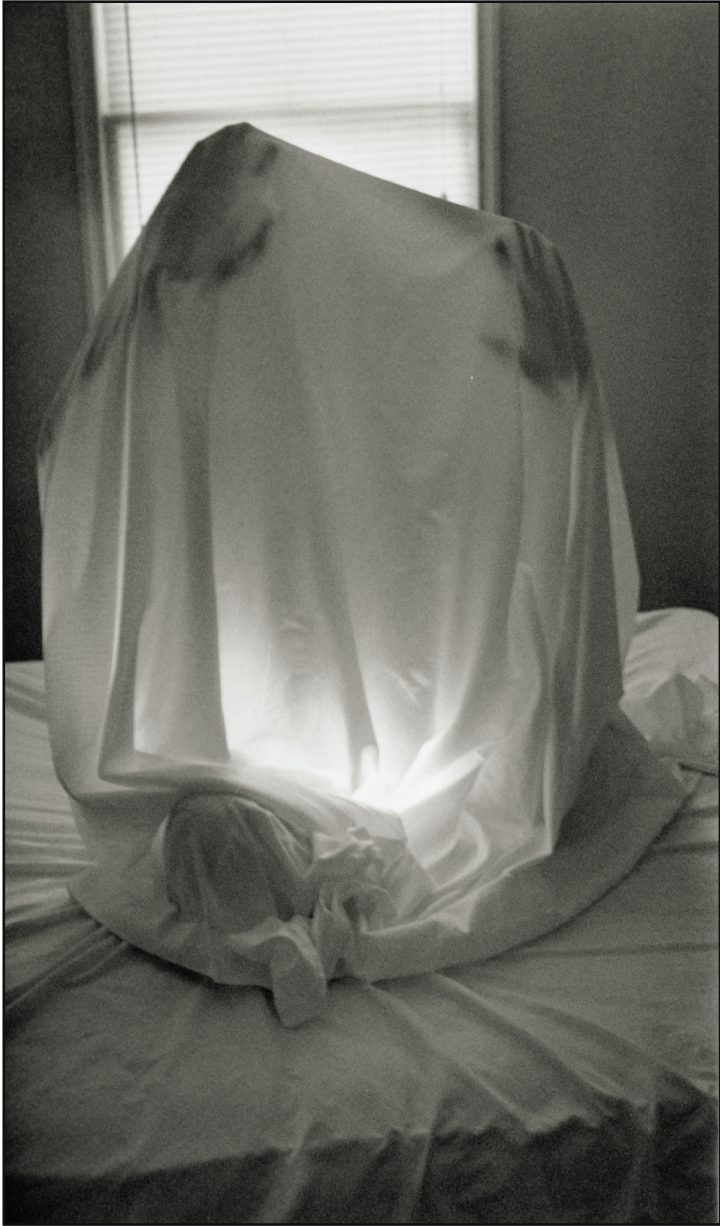
As a young girl, I remember the first time I was told ghosts could live in old homes from other kids on the playground at school. They said ghosts were dangerous and spooky, so I believed them. That evening, I performed my nightly ritual of following my mother around while she got ready for bed. As I stared at her bustling about while sitting on her mattress, I clutched one of her pillows to my chest. “Mommy, how old is our house?”

“Oh, let’s see,” she said, shrugging on her fluffy blue robe. “The house was built in 1965, so, it’s about fifty years old now.”

My house wasn’t just old; it was ancient! I gulped and squirmed from my perch on her bed. “You don’t think . . . that we have a ghost, do you, mommy?”

My mother paused on her way toward the bathroom. She glanced back at me, seeming to consider something, before she smiled gently. “Well,” she said. “I don’t think it’s a bad ghost.”

After those comforting words, and many a fearful night, I resolved not to ask my mother about anything resembling the paranormal again. I preferred to stay ignorant. What began as fear slowly transformed into quiet skepticism as I grew older. Yet my mother still expressed an ardent belief in the odd and supernatural. Admittedly, my mother was strangely attuned to her surroundings. Growing up, no matter how quiet we were, she would always know when my sister and I were trying to sneak up on her. Often, she seemed to intuitively know something ahead of time, such as asking my father about how a



Shelbi Basham
Compressed
Silver Gelatin Print

pregnant relative was doing, only for said relative to go into labor just a few hours later. She liked to express her “feelings” about certain subjects: “Don’t you worry about that project of yours, baby doll,” she would say. “I have a feeling it will all work out.”

What made it more confusing was my father’s apparent belief in my mother’s ability. My father is not the type of man one would describe as superstitious. Rational, stoic, he had worked as a banker my whole life, a job that fit his stable demeanor. Whenever I asked him if he thought the things Mom said were true, his answers were just as unsatisfactory. He once told me, “Your mother is one of the most spiritually, non-religious people I have ever met.”

The difference between my parents’ demeanors was jarring for me as a child. My father was Catholic, the son of a deacon, whereas my mother believed in more ambiguous entities, often citing “karma” and “the universe” in her opinions on things. Some of my earliest memories consist of going to mass with my father every weekend and then coming home to watch my mother dust her various statues and talismans dedicated to Egyptian and Roman deities. It wasn’t that she didn’t believe in God, but rather her beliefs stretched beyond simple Christianity. She adored shows that explored the unexplainable, such as ghosts or UFOs. They made me uneasy and so I hated them and became adept at tuning her out if she ever got onto the subject of the supernatural.

It wasn’t until after Grandpa died a week before my fifteenth birthday that I began to notice a significant increase in supernatural occurrences.

His death hit our family hard. He survived chemotherapy and had been announced cancer-free not two weeks before he died. I had never seen my mother as unstable as in the days following his death. On the way home from his funeral, my mother had insisted on driving, against my father’s suggestion. Her knuckles were white against the black leather of the steering wheel and the air felt stagnant inside the vehicle. To break the silence, I made a comment about how nice the weather had turned out to be since there had been rain clouds that morning. It seemed like the only safe topic worth mentioning.

Without warning, Mom veered off the road, making my sister and I yelp in the back seat. The moment she had the car secured safely on a side road, she wrenched the door open and leaned out just far enough to begin dry heaving over the pavement. No one else in the car moved. We just silently waited as my mother slowly got her breathing under control. “Do you want me to drive?” my father asked.

“No,” Mom slammed the door shut. “I’m fine.”

She drove back onto the road and no one tried to speak again.

In the following weeks, we all settled back into our routines and she no longer looked like she was moments away from breaking in half. Slowly, my mother seemed to be doing fine. However, it was around then that the occurrences began to happen.

They began small. I would be walking out in public with my mother when she’d stop to scoop up a random penny on the ground. “Look!” she’d say. “Grandpa left us a gift!” She told me that was how spirits show their loved ones they’re still with them – they leave pennies for us to find.

The first few times it happened, I could only blink at her in bewilderment. Mom was known for repeating the occasional old wives’ tale, but never once in my life had I heard this. Even if it was true, I wasn’t sure if I wanted Grandpa to be leaving me little presents like that in the first place. At fifteen, I barely knew how to process and cope with my own grief about my grandfather’s death, let alone my mother’s, and any mention of him made me uncomfortable and angry.

“Right,” I would say to her beaming face and dutifully hold out my hand to accept the gift, even though I wanted nothing to do with the ghostly pennies. If this was how Mom chose to grieve, then I guessed I needed to respect it.

However, the comments didn’t stop there. If anything in the house turned on or off on its own, then it wasn’t an electrical issue, it was my grandfather saying hi. If something was lost, then Grandpa had

“probably taken off with it, the mischievous ole thing.” If something was found, then Grandpa “thought he’d help us out.” When we all came home from school and work, I’d hear my mother talking to my father in the kitchen as I watched TV in the living room. “I felt him again today, Phil,” she’d say. “I was looking at his picture by my desk and this warmth settled over me and, somehow, I know he was there with me, in the living room.”

I flinched in my spot on the couch, eyeing the corner she was referring to warily. Staring at the picture my mother had put up of Grandpa the day after his funeral, I felt decidedly unwarmed.

“And it’s not just today,” she continued. “I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve been walking through the house, going about my day when I feel this sudden presence. Goosebumps will go up my arms and everything. I really think he’s still around, looking after me. I felt the same way when I was a girl and my grandmother passed.”

My father made a noncommittal sound, as he often did when my mother started talking like this. I was debating whether to panic. Was I going to actually believe the ghost of my grandpa was wandering through our home? Why wouldn’t he be at his own house, with my grandmother? If what Mom said was true, then nowhere in the damn house was safe. Goosebumps spread across my arms and I furiously rubbed them away, turning up the volume on the TV so I couldn’t hear any more of my parents’ conversation.

After a while, I learned not to react whenever my mother brought up the ghostly presence of loved ones who had passed. I quietly came to terms with my own grief and wished that my mother would do the same. Months became years and my mom slowly stopped mentioning my grandfather’s “visits.” Yet, there were times when I would spot a penny on the ground, pause, and wonder.

By the time I was in college, my grandmother’s health had deteriorated, both mentally and physically. Grandpa’s death was too much of a blow and it was clear she could no longer live on her own anymore. After several bad experiences in professional living facilities, my family had no other option but to move her in with us. In the



Samantha Smallwood
Tattered Memories
Cyanotype and Van Dyke Print

throes of Alzheimer's and relegated to a wheelchair, she was constantly confused and anxious. There were many days when she was practically comatose. But it was far worse on the days she asked questions.

"Where am I?" she asked us one day when I was home for the weekend.

My family all froze in our various spots around the living room where we had been watching TV. We had thought Baba – the family name for my grandmother - was having a good day, so we had wheeled her out of her room. I stared as Mom slowly stood up to sit by my grandmother, smiling gently as she took hold of her hand.

"You're at my house, Mom," she said.

"Oh." Baba paused. "But when am I going home?"

Mom sighed. "This is your home now, Mom. You've been living here for several months. Since February."

Baba stared at her and shifted in her chair, a small spark of defiance in her eyes. "That's not true," she said. "I drove here this morning."

"No, Mom," my mother said. "You woke up here. The last time you left the house was for your doctor's appointment three weeks ago."

"But that can't be right!" Baba said. "Because Jim isn't here!"

We all held our breath. The worst days were when she forgot Grandpa's death. My mother took a deep breath and held onto Baba's hand tighter.

"Dad died about six years ago, Mom."

"What?" Baba stared at my mother as if she had said the Pope died. "That can't be right. I saw him this morning! He was standing over my bed."

My mother's eyes grew wide and I couldn't stop the shiver that came over me. Baba's mind had been steadily worsening the last few weeks, but she hadn't said anything like this yet. My mother's expression was trapped between somewhere fascinated and deeply concerned. I felt the sudden desire to run from the room. My mother slowly rose and lowered herself in front of my grandmother's wheelchair.

"You saw dad? In this house?"

“Yes! I’ve seen him several times when I wake up. He’s always in my room with me.”

“He stands over you? Does he ever say anything?”

“Well, no . . .”

I glanced over at the rest of my family. My little sister, who always controlled the remote, had paused the screen so we could all better hear the conversation in front of us. My father sat on the other side of the room, quiet as usual. Both were blatantly staring at my mother and Baba, morbidly fascinated. Against my will, my eyes also strayed back to them as my mother spoke again.

“Dad is dead, mom. You haven’t been to your house in years now,” she said. “But I believe you. I do. I think he’s watching over you, over all of us, to make sure we’re all okay.”

My grandmother was quiet for several moments, looking long and hard at her daughter. “No, that can’t be. I’m telling you, I see him. He’s here.”

“I’m sure he is,” Mom said. “In spirit. Letting you know that he’s here for you. I sometimes feel him here, too.”

Deciding I was no longer interested in the television show, I quietly got up and walked from the room. My thoughts spiraled as I closed my door against any spirits who may try to get in.

Later that evening, I walked slowly into my grandmother’s room, trying not to wake her up while she slept. After several hours of anxious wheeling around the house, Mom had finally been able to put her to sleep. I rubbed at my nose as I walked across the floor, hating how it always somehow smelled both sterile and musty in the cramped space. Silently, I picked up the dirty laundry hamper my mother had asked me to grab for her. As I turned to leave, I spotted a picture of my grandfather, one of the few Mom brought from my grandparents’ house to keep with Baba.

It’s one of our favorites, from the final trip he was able to go on to fulfill his lifelong dream of visiting Ireland. In the picture, he’s sitting at an Irish pub bar, his cheeks and nose red from the cold, and proudly

holding up a mug of dark Guinness beer. Setting down the hamper, I stepped closer and picked up the frame. Glancing around the room, I thought about what Baba had said, about my mother's "feelings." I shivered, and goosebumps prickled along my body.

Looking back to the photo, I took one last look at my Grandpa from a time when he was healthy and happy, and then slowly lowered the frame back down. I turned to watch my grandmother sleeping, small and frail. I couldn't recall a time where she looked like my grandfather did in the photo.

I took a deep breath. "Take care of her, Grandpa," I whispered. Quietly, I picked up the laundry basket again and walked from the room.

Weeks later, my mother and I were out running errands, and she once again spotted a penny. "Look," she said, pausing. "Grandpa is thinking about us."

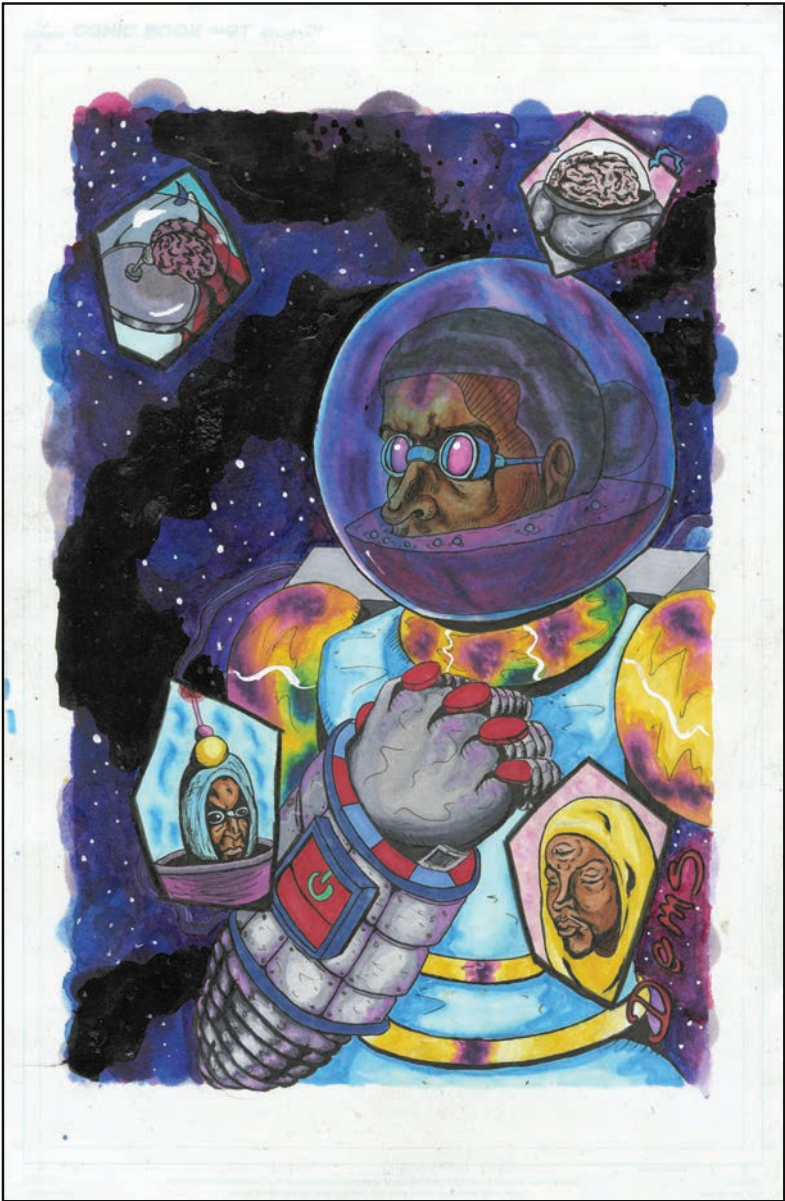
I followed her finger to the dirty parking lot ground. There, an unnaturally clean penny winked in the afternoon light. I gazed down at the bright copper coin and, smiling, found myself bending down to pick it up.



Taylor Burnette
Si-da-ne-lv-hi
Coffee and Ink with Sharpie on Paper



Joey Arnett
Eve
Digital Illustration



Trey Davis
Issue 2 Cover
Ink and Copic Marker Illustration



James Davidson
Make an Impression on Me
Acrylic on Canvas

Biographies

Hannah Adams is a sophomore and convergent media major at Morehead State University. Although she typically focuses on filmmaking, digital art and graphic design have recently become new passions. Adams classifies her work as modern vintage collage art.

Daniel Aossey is a math major at Morehead State University. Aossey, who is color blind, has been working with MSU photography professor Dr. Robyn Moore to develop his skills with an art form that does not require color. Currently, he is creating a series of prints inspired by science.

Joey Arnett, whose illustration work focuses on the tiny details of human emotion, is a Morehead State University art major and film studies minor. She is currently working on a graphic novel, *Shipwrecked*, and a hand-drawn animated short.

Justin Artrip is a senior at Morehead State University. Majoring in both creative writing and art, Artrip's poetry was published in the 2017 issue of *Inscape*. His photography has been exhibited in the Gateway Regional Arts Center's juried *Student Art & Design Exhibition* (Mt. Sterling, Kentucky) and the Rowan County Art Center's Spring Showcase (Morehead, Kentucky). Presently, Artrip is working toward publishing a novel and creating bodies of photographic work concerning mental health. He is currently working on a novel and a series of artworks using alcohol ink.

Dallas Braden Banks, an art major at Morehead State University, is pursuing a minor in photography, as well as his passion for the ceramic arts. His work was recognized with two awards – First Place Award

and Honorable Mention – in the 2018 senior exhibition *Endgame*, as well as an Honorable Mention at the Emerging Arts Leaders of Eastern Kentucky sponsored exhibition *Emerging Artists*. Banks' recent photographic work focuses on the compilation of images, depicting how inward factors can affect outward perceptions of our surrounding environments. In ceramics, he has been persistently working to enhance his skills in creating forms to be more functional while also exploring glazes complimentary to those forms.

Shelbi Basham, a 20-year-old from Salyersville, Kentucky, is majoring in art education at Morehead State University. Her current photography project is about genetics in women and their daughters.

Taylor Burnette, a first-time contributor to *Inscape*, is a freshman art major at Morehead State University. Much of her work is based on the lifestyle of Native Americans, particularly the Cherokee tribes. Burnette uses art to learn and understand more about her heritage and the heritage of others.

Kristin Busby is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Art at Morehead State University. Interested in combining analog and digital media, Busby's current focus is on experimental filmmaking.

Sydney Cook was raised in Edgewood, Kentucky. She is majoring in creative writing and minoring in dance at Morehead State University. Cook served as an editor and wrote an essay in *The Semantic Awakening: An Anthology of Translations*, where she also served as an editor, and is an editor for the Honors Newsletter at Morehead State. She is currently working on both a poetry collection and some short stories. While she enjoys writing works in many different genres, her favorite literary genre is poetry.

Bethany Crouch is a senior at Morehead State University pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Teaching P-12 with a photography minor. In 2018, she exhibited a photograph in the statewide juried exhibition *University Open* in Lexington, Kentucky. One of Crouch's photographs

was published in the 2017 issue of *Inscape* and another received the Visual Art Award in MSU's Judy Rodgers Gender Studies Competition that same year. Two of her photographs were juried into the Rowan County Art Center's *Spring Showcase* exhibition in Morehead, Kentucky, and four were exhibited in the annual juried *Student Art & Design Exhibition* at the Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, where she won the First Place Award in Photography in 2017.

James Davidson is an art major with an art history minor at Morehead State University. He exhibited work in the Gateway Regional Arts Center's 2018 juried *19th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, where he was recognized with the Best in Show Award. Previously published in *Inscape* (2017 and 2018), Davidson was awarded Honorable Mention for one of his pieces in the 2017 issue. He recently completed coursework at MSU including Drawing III, Painting II and Ceramics II.

Trey Davis, a Morehead State University alumnus, is known regionally for his comic art, as well as his comic book, *Nibiru*. This is Davis' second year in a row of publication in *Inscape*, having been recognized with a Third Place Award for his work in the 2018 issue.

Amber Shayde Deaton is a writer from Hazard, Kentucky. Her work focuses on mental health, relationships, the obscure and finding one's place in the world. Deaton studied creative writing at Morehead State University and is planning to get her master's degree in library science. Deaton is published in *The Best Emerging Poets Series: Kentucky, America's Best Emerging Poets: An Anthology* and in the 2017 and 2018 editions of *Inscape*. You can reach her at Amber Shayde Deaton Official on Facebook.

Juanita Dixon, a previous *Inscape* contributor (2018), is a recent graduate of Morehead State University, where she received her Master of Arts in Art Education. She is passionate about art education, art advocacy and art activism. In 2018, Dixon worked with the Emerging Arts Leaders of Eastern Kentucky organization to advocate and

fundraise for the Kentucky Folk Art Center. She is also the founder and program director of the Eagle Arts Academy, an after-school arts program at MSU, where classes in the arts are offered to elementary age students in the community. Dixon also explores art activism through her own artwork. In 2018, she was awarded Outstanding Graduate Student in the Department of Art & Design, First Place in the Rowan County Art Center's *Spring Showcase* exhibit for her intaglio print, *Corporate Greed*, and Second Place in the Drawing/Printmaking category in the Gateway Regional Art Center's *19th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* for her intaglio print, *Come, Come Nuclear Bomb*.

Benjamin Doss is an art major at Morehead State University. His work, which reflects upon his upbringing in Kentucky and Tennessee, was displayed in the Gateway Regional Art Center's *19th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* (Mt. Sterling, Kentucky) in 2018.

Dylan Evans is an art major with an emphasis in graphic design at Morehead State University.

Kelsey Hargett is a biology major minoring in photography at Morehead State University.

Brianne Hatfield is an art education major at Morehead State University. Her latest projects capture the natural world around her through 35mm photography.

Addie Hogan, an *Inscape* contributor in 2017, is a senior convergent media major with a photography minor at Morehead State University. Hogan has been passionate about photography her entire life, and she will pursue a career in photojournalism after graduation.

Makayla Holder is an English major with a minor in photography at Morehead State University. From Creal Springs, Illinois, Holder won a writing competition hosted by her high school, and she has been awarded scholarships for her poems, short stories and photographs. Holder's current projects are based on bettering herself and her skills in both writing and photography. She is working to expand outside of her comfort zone in both fields. Holder is also working within herself to not forfeit these activities in the face of mental issues that push her to do so.

Lin-hsiu Huang, a Morehead State University graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art and minor in mathematics, was a tutor specialist in the Tutoring and Learning Center and an Undergraduate Research Fellow. She exhibited and/or received awards in the 2017 *MAGI Art Show* in Morehead, Kentucky (2017); juried *18th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* at the Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky (2017); statewide juried *University Open* at the ArtsPlace Gallery in Lexington, Kentucky (2016); and the MSU Judy Rogers Art Competitions (2016 and 2017). In 2017, Huang designed promotional materials for the Cave Run Storytelling Festival in Morehead. She has worked at several nonprofit organizations, including Give Her Life (Pasadena, California) and The Future of Privacy Forum (Washington, D.C.). Huang is currently serving as a program coordinator at an arts nonprofit in Salt Lake City, Utah, through AmeriCorps VISTA.

Karly Jefferson, a third-semester graduate student at Morehead State University, is studying graphic design. Her work is generally in the digital field including, but not limited to, digital photography, video editing and graphic design. Her work utilizes color, typography and narrative to communicate unspoken truths about society's expectations on each of us. Jefferson's color photography addresses the themes of body insecurity, as well as the psychology of color.

David P. Jones is an emerging graphic designer majoring in art with a minor in arts entrepreneurship at Morehead State University. His published piece is based on a past documentary and dream photography project.

Kaitlyn Faith Jones is a biomedical sciences major and photography minor at Morehead State University. She feels her artwork is rooted in emotion and focuses on exploring human connection, specifically the relationships we share with each other and the world around us. Although Jones is a beginning photographer, she is eager to continue exploring and experimenting with photography to discover her personal aesthetic as an artist.

Jessica Kendrick is freshman at Morehead State University majoring in creative writing. As of last July, she published one novella titled *Wilde Ones*. In high school, she placed second in writing composition several times throughout her academic team career. Kendrick is currently working on a novel and novella.

Liz Ketz from Lexington, Kentucky, is a freshman art education major at Morehead State University. Best known for her functional art, painting and pressed flower art, Ketz is currently working on multiple commissioned works, including a painting of a German Shepherd and pressed flower necklaces. To keep up with her current art endeavors, follow her Instagram account (@lizart_of_oz).

Regina Klinges lives in rural Kansas. She just graduated this past December 2018 with a Master of Arts in English Literature from Morehead State University. Prior to this, Klinges earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, and a law degree from the University of Kansas. Klinges teaches high school English. She previously published three poems in Morehead State University's *Inscape* in 2018. When not grading papers, Klinges is writing poetry.

Julianna Leach is the managing editor for Morehead State University's *The Trail Blazer*. Her work has been published in newspapers across the state, such as *Kentucky Today* and *The Daily Independent*, and presented in the *Forgotten* exhibit at the Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. Her recent projects focus mostly on documentary photography, although Leach has started to incorporate artistic elements into the work. She is pursuing a convergent media major and photography minor at MSU.

Nancy Lewis is a second semester sophomore at Morehead State University and was recently accepted into the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art program. Her work focuses on culture, human anatomy, the use of color and technique.

Dakotah Lizotte is a junior in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art program at Morehead State University. He participated in the in the *19th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* at the Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, where his piece, *Venom*, received First Place in the Digital Art/Graphic Design category. *Venom* was also selected for the Best of Show Award in the Emerging Arts Leaders of Eastern Kentucky sponsored exhibition, *Emerging Artists*, held at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, Kentucky. Lizotte is currently working on narrowing his field of study to digital art, beginning this endeavor by becoming an Adobe Certified Associate in Photoshop.

Darcy McDaniel, raised in Hazard, Kentucky, is preparing to graduate from Morehead State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art focusing on photography. In 2019, her archival print photograph, *On the Run*, was juried into the *7th Annual SPE International Combined Caucus Exhibition* at the Cleveland Convention Gallery in Cleveland, Ohio. In addition, McDaniel's work was accepted by the Society for Photographic Education's Midwest Regional Chapter for their 2018 juried student exhibition, *Medium*, which was held in conjunction with SPE's Midwest Regional Conference hosted at the University of Kentucky. Her digital works have won Second Place awards in Photography for two consecutive years at the annual juried *Student Art*

& Design Exhibition at the Gateway Regional Arts Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. MSU honored her with the Outstanding Junior Award in Art and Design in 2018. McDaniel is currently cultivating work for her BFA exhibition, which is a series of photographs marking the importance of accepting uncertainty, vulnerability and transformation.

Garrison McMillian is a Morehead State University junior majoring in biomedical sciences and minoring in photography. He fell in love with the analog process while taking Basic Black and White Photography. The ability to physically manipulate all aspects of the photograph allows McMillian to feel a deeper connection to his work. He sees himself producing more analog photographs and prints in the future.

Josie Neff is from Wheelersburg, Ohio. She studies art at Morehead State University and is a previous contributor to *Inscape* (2016).

Zachary Pace, a Morehead State University art education major, was previously published in the 2018 issue of *Inscape*. Current paintings are of self-created worlds and characters.

Dustyn Alexander Pruitt is a Morehead State University graduate student in the Master of Arts in Studio Art program. His work has been selected for juried exhibitions, including *Emerging Artists* at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, Kentucky, and the *Student Art & Design Exhibition* at the Gateway Regional Art Center in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. At the latter exhibition, he was awarded Second Place in Ceramics & Sculpture in 2018. Pruitt's current work focuses on the hardships of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Taylor Ray is a junior in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art program at Morehead State University. She received First Place in Photography at the *19th Annual Student Art & Design Exhibition* in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, for her piece, *Flora and Fauna*, also published in this issue of *Inscape*. Ray, a graphic designer, is Adobe Certified in Photoshop and Illustrator and currently studying to apply for certification in InDesign.

Sam Roddy is a senior studying creative writing at Morehead State University. Her work was published in last year's edition of *Inscape*. She is currently working on short stories for her final portfolio inspired by her recent trip to Ireland. Roddy also has a larger novel that is in progress.

Frank Scozzari is an American novelist and short story writer. A five-time Pushcart Prize nominee, his short stories have been widely anthologized and featured in literary theater.

Samantha Smallwood from Pikeville, Kentucky, is an art major at Morehead State University focusing on alternative processes photography. Her work was also published in the previous three issues of *Inscape*.

Meghan K. Smith is a senior majoring in art at Morehead State University. A current theme in Smith's work is her love for Kentucky. Each piece has a personal story that brings in her relationship with this beautiful state. Her favorite aspect of art is art history. Smith is passionate in researching and writing about artists and their works, including their biographies and how they have gone on to inspire others.

Whitney Stamper is a senior at Morehead State University majoring in biomedical sciences. Her published piece was created while enrolled in MSU's Introduction to Digital Photography, a course she took to increase her knowledge of the medium. Stamper's work focuses on capturing individuals and the natural world in ways that are atypical or abnormal.

Taryn Syck is a junior at Morehead State University majoring in psychology with a minor in creative writing. She grew up in the Eastern Kentucky town of Pikeville and enjoys tying her cultural background into her work as much as possible. Though Syck has never been published in a journal before, she writes constantly and is looking forward to tackling larger writing projects in the near future. She hopes to eventually publish several novels.

Alex Virostko, a previous *Inscape* contributor (2018), is a senior art education major at Morehead State University. She received an Honorable Mention Award at the *2018 University Open*, a statewide juried exhibit, hosted by the LexArts Gallery in Lexington, Kentucky. Virostko's current work consists of oil painted landscapes on reclaimed wood pieces, creating a second life for the wood.

Elizabeth Von Mann is a native of Richmond, Kentucky and has dreamed of being a writer ever since she realized making up stories was a viable career option. She is a student in the BFA in Creative Writing program with a minor in public history at Morehead State University. Her work has been published in *Inscape* and Z Publishing House literary journals, as well as for Mindfray Inc.

Mardy Wells is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art at Morehead State University. Wells was published in the previous two issues of *Inscape*, receiving the Second Place Award in Art in 2018. While Wells mostly draws and paints with traditional media, they have recently become more interested in photography and digital painting. The black and white photographs published in this *Inscape* issue are triptychs, meant to have a fragmented and dream-like quality to them.

Haley Younce, whose work focuses on the human form, is a senior art education major at Morehead State University. She displayed work in the juried *Emerging Artists* exhibit at the Kentucky Folk Art Center in Morehead, Kentucky (2018), and the Gateway Regional Arts Center's annual juried *Student Art & Design Exhibition* in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky (2017 and 2018), where she received the First Place Award in Drawing in 2017. Younce was published in the 2018 issue of *Inscape*.



Inscape is a Morehead State University publication with a long history of cutting-edge literary and visual arts. Media and genres of work range from prose, poetry, short story, long narrative, non-fiction and creative essays to ceramics, photography, printmaking, drawing, painting, sculpture, design and digital art.

The Department of English offers MSU students the opportunity to submit work for publication. Students may submit poetry, fiction, non-fiction, translations or drama. The works are peer-reviewed by a panel and top selections are included in *Inscape*.

The Department of Art and Design offers students two opportunities to have their work juried for publication. Jurors review the competitive pool of submissions every issue for both the cover design and the visual artwork published. These selections help produce a unique and diverse issue of *Inscape* each year.

For specific guidelines and submission dates, visit
www.moreheadstate.edu/inscape.



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