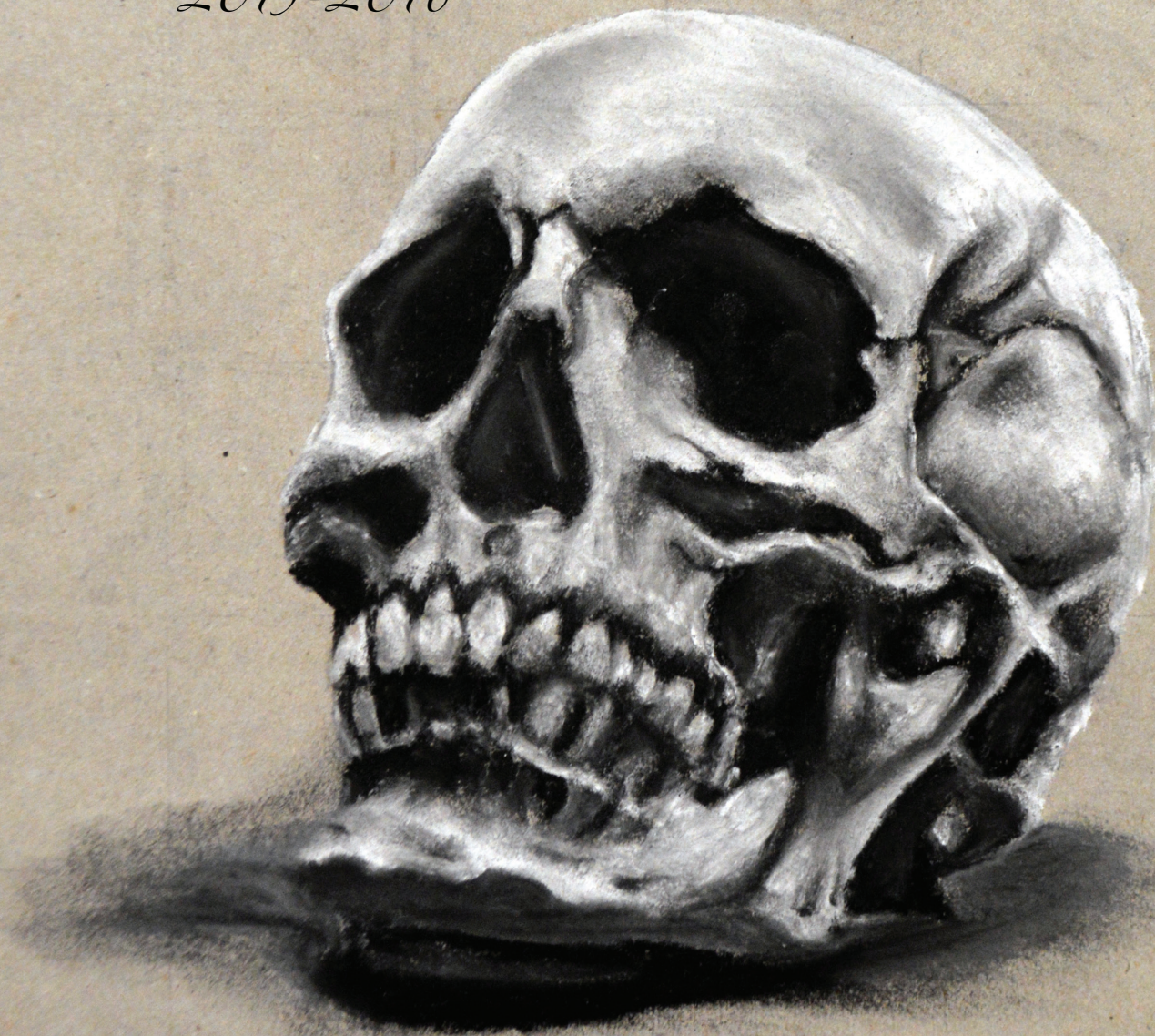


The Windmill

2015-2016





Windmill Staff

Managing Editor & Layout
Hyemin Han

Nonfiction Editor
Kathryn Kovarik

Art and Photography Editors
Hanna Seraji and
Rosmery Sicilia

Poetry Editor
Lydia Dwyer

Fiction Editor
Abigail Hodge

Faculty Advisor
Fred Montas, Jr.

Table of Contents

Art and Photography

“Morning Glory”
by Dorothea Hamblin
page 5

“Built Up Symmetry”
by Lilly Maresco
page 6

“Warmth”
by Madison Brang
page 9

“The Galaxy”
by Mitchie Qiao
page 13

“Mystical”
by Lilly Maresco
page 17

“The Waves”
by Mitchie Qiao
page 18

“Prayers”
by Madison Brang
page 20

Fiction

“Lemon Tree”
by Seamus Mulhern
page 4

“The Unwanted War”
by Ian Beckman
page 10

“Great Men”
by Kathryn Kovarik
page 14

“Property of W. H. Fleming”
by Maggie SextonDwyer
page 16

“Blood Moon”
by Carl Beach
page 22

Nonfiction

“Over the Creek”
by Carli Arbon
page 6

“Blank Walls”
by Mitchie Qiao
page 15

“Gender and Language”
by Emery Spina
page 21

Poetry

“The Contradiction in Art”
by Abigail Hodge
page 8

“Society”
by Suzannah Peckham
page 8

“The Walls and I”
by Lydia Dwyer
page 9

“Silence”
by Suzannah Peckham
page 12

“Emerge”
by Hyemin Han
page 18

Cover art “Skull Study” by Mitchie Qiao ‘16
Masthead art “Snowy Road” by Rachel Comfort ‘18
Back cover art “Tranquil Feelings” by Madison Brang ‘16

Lemon Tree

by Seamus Mulhern '16

Damon arrived home to find the avant garde film actor, Chev Goodwill, lying on the floor. He was painted yellow and in fetal position.

"I'm fairly confused," Damon said.

"Understandable."

Damon turned to his left to see his old college roommate, Wallace Pynchon, standing in the doorway of his kitchen. He was a bit heavier than he was in school. The only aspects of his appearance that remained were his glasses and his neckbeard. Although he looked traditionally unpleasant, he had an unexplainable aura of success around him. Like a homeless man on a roll in poker.

"Wallace?"

"Good to see you, Damon. It's been a while."

"I'd love to catch up with you, Wallace. Unfortunately, I feel the need to ask about... Chev Goodwill."

"Yes?"

"Why is he here and why is he painted yellow?"

"He's a lemon."

Damon paused as if he suddenly had some profound under-

standing of the situation. Then, he realized he was even more confused than before. Before he could ask yet another question, Wallace clarified his comments.

"He's acting in my new stage play. Lemon Tree."

"Since when did you start writing plays?"

"Since when did you start working at a light bulb development company?"

Three years ago. It was weird that Damon did not remember the exact number of years, considering how he thinks about it every day.

"How did you know that? Did you go through my mail? Why are you even here?"

"I want you to audition."

Damon hadn't thought about acting in five and a half years.

"What?"

"I came here with Chev because I thought it would be nice for you to give that acting thing another go. I mean, after all, you did major in musical theater..."

"...with a minor in business."

"I just felt bad that you never got to put that performing arts degree..."

"...with a minor in business..."

"...to good use."

"No."

"Come on. Why not?"

"Get out of my apartment!"

"Not even going to give me a reason? Typical Damon."

"Look, I don't have time to be in a play. My girlfriend just moved out. I'm trying to get a raise to cover for her part of the rent. It's just..."

"A Catch-22. I get it."

"Yeah... What? No. Do you even know what a Catch-22 is?"

"Damon... do me a favor and take a gander at my buddy, Chev."

Damon and Wallace examined Chev. He was still in fetal position and still painted yellow. So still. So delicate. Like a flower. Chev truly was a master of his craft. Damon felt like crying. Wallace was crying. He didn't even try to hide the tears. It was a moment of mutual understanding between the three men. Was there a Nobel Prize for acting? Damon did not know, but if there was... Chev had it in the bag.

"Wallace? How long has Goodwill been like this?"

"Nine hours. He was already in character when I picked him up. I had to take him out of his apartment in a wheelbarrow. You should have seen the looks on people's faces. They were all like 'Is that Chev Goodwill, the avant garde film actor?' It was sweet."

"I get it."

"The point I'm trying to make here is that Chev is a gambler. He



“Morning Glory” by Dorothea Hamblin ‘16

puts everything on the line for a scene. He gives it his all. It is not just a play for him; it is another aspect of living. And you know what? He’s rewarded for it. The world acknowledges how good he is. They give awards and money and houses in the Bahamas. So, why not for you? Why can’t you do what Chev does? In the words of a wise man, ‘the love you take is equal to the love you make.’”

Damon decided to ignore that last sentence and merely focused on the stuff about “putting your all into a scene.” Without saying a word, he slowly descended to the ground. He curled up his legs into his chest and wrapped his arms around them.

“How’s this?” he asked Wallace.
“Wait!”

Wallace ran into the kitchen. As this was happening, Damon

looked over at Chev. This man transformed lying still into an art form. Damon knew he was not as good a lemon as Chev, but it was never too late to start.

Wallace ran back in with a can of paint. He pulled out a brush and started slathering yellow paint on Damon’s face.

“Perfect,” Wallace said.

It was the greatest moment of Damon’s life.

Over the Creek

by Carli Arbon '18

Sitting on the edge of the dock, I noticed crayfish on the creek's floor and promptly lifted my feet out of the water, fearing pinched toes. He laughed behind me, and I pushed his shoulder so he'd fall in. Like all the times before, he didn't fall, but splashed me in return. I laughed, brushing the water from my face. That was how days went at the creek before the cold set in. He tucked a daisy behind my ear and I smiled. I crossed my legs and looked out over the familiar place

It was beautiful. From the small dock I could see the azure sky, not one cloud obscuring its beauty, and purple flowers with delicate petals sprouting along the riverbanks. I would sit on the edge of the dock, the sun kissing my skin, and watch tadpoles and minnows chase each other in the amber water while he looked out at the cattails on the opposite bank. No one knew about the creek except for the people who had previously carved their initials into the wooden dock. It was peaceful, a quiet place to talk.

It was a peculiar sight. The rushing water captured gliding dandelion seeds in its current. Dots of white tufts danced as they



"Built Up Symmetry" by Lilly Maresco '17

sailed down the river. Sticks and logs appeared to break the current, which always flowed back together. He'd laugh at me when I'd try to pluck one of the seeds from the water to make a wish. He didn't believe in wishes.

Some days, it looked as if the creek ran in two different directions. Just like us. Two people with opposite personalities getting along in peace. He was by the book; every statement, whether it was in a book or someone spoke it, had to be proven or it didn't exist, or worse, confused him. Everything had a reason, and if it didn't, it needed one. On the other hand I didn't care if the idea was from a fairy tale or an encyclopedia.

We complemented each other. He kept me grounded and gave a bite of reality to my ideas, and I kept him inspired. We were each other's rocks. But just like the rocks in the creek, we rolled away and were carried by different currents.

The more we went to the creek, the more imperfections I saw. I could feel the dock rock more and more, and I had to wonder if some of the driftwood in the water was from the rotting beams below. A sliver of cold had slipped into the warm air, and once in a while I felt its bite. I shrugged it off, knowing that warmth would return and that there were more daisies than weeds. But I forgot the simple facts: weeds invade flowerbeds,

and a cool summer breeze would turn bitter cold given time.

The leaves started to fall around late August, and they covered the creek like mosaic tiles. Summer had dropped the water level and there wasn't enough power in the creek to make the water move. It stood still. I went there alone one day, thinking he would meet me, and the frigid wind grabbed me by my hair and pulled me back. I hugged my knees to my chest to try to close out the wind. I laid my head on my knees and closed my eyes, imagining the warm springtime as if that would warm me up. Instead, I felt a rock drop in my stomach as the cold taunted me. It ran its icy finger up my bare arms and sent shivers down my spine.

The flowers had lost their petals, their beauty, and were left brown and dry. The trees hung their bare arms in shame, their colors stripped by the wind. I watched as the leaves turned on the still lake, mocking the branches above. The leaves were free from the branches' grasp. The still water had turned a deep tea color from the leaves, the minnows had moved upstream, and the tadpoles became frogs that hid in the cattails. The life was sucked out of the creek, and all that was left were

bare trees and brown plants.

I sat on the dock alone, this time knowing he wouldn't be meeting me. He had drifted over the last few months and now he was so far it wasn't worth trying to hold on. I was trying, but it was futile. As the days shifted deeper into autumn, he became nothing but a mere ghost that haunted my memories and hurt my heart. And yet I missed him.

As the cold breeze flew through the leaves, and mockingly kissed my lips, it brought back bittersweet memories of him holding me close on days like this. I could almost hear the sweet words he'd whisper, tickling my ear and placing a giddy smile on my lips. I closed my eyes and exhaled, and my breath became visible. Now I held myself alone on days like this. I felt my heavy heart drop to my stomach, as faded memories danced around my dizzy mind. Tightening my arms around my legs, I stared out at the creek. No words escaped my lips, for there were none left to say. I closed my eyes and could almost feel the springtime warmth tease me once again.

The cold, biting cold, reminded me where I was. I opened my eyes and forced myself not to be tricked again. For the first time I saw the invading cattails, and the fine

vines of poison ivy crawling up the branch of a log. I saw the tea colored flowers on the ground of the creek and the awful thorns lining the stems of the purple flowers. For the first time I saw the creek for what it was, a dying place that in a few years would become uninhabitable. For some reason I was not shocked by this revelation; instead, I realized that I had known what was happening all along. I had just decided to overlook it.

I went to the creek, after months of avoiding it. Trudging through the late winter mud, I knew this was going to be my last visit. The branches glistened with melting snow, and the ice that glazed the creek had started to crack and melt into the water. I walked down to the dock and sat on the cold wood. The sun peered through the grey clouds for the first time in months. I closed my eyes and relished its rays. For a second I felt the springtime warmth return, and the thought of him didn't disturb the moment. I opened my eyes and saw the tips of purple flowers peeking through the snow on the opposite bank. I smiled, then stood. Turning on my heels, I walked away, and for the first time I left the creek without looking back.

The Contradiction in Art

by Abigail Hodge '16

A withered rose we toss with scorn away,
Though give with joy its brother's corpse for love.
We gag at bodies next to roadside laid,
Yet marvel at the sight of old-breath doves.

We fear the ending of our tiny globe.
In nighttimes, burnt stars fill our vision far.
We know the dead will rot away in robes.
Old photos though, show lost folk without mar.

We humans shy from horror, pain, and cold,
But crimson dripped on snow is beautiful.
We don't want death to lead life into fold,
Yet sacrifice brings stories to their lull.

In books, in life, our focus stirs the pulse.
In death, we find delight, and then revolt.

Society

by Suzannah Peckham '18

Look pretty, the surface so smooth
Fight
Breathe
Move
Age used to be free

The Walls and I

by Lydia Dwyer '16

The walls and I both know
That the number is few of people
Who can take a bite of their own reality
And turn it into something truly and simply honest.

I'd rather tell you right now
That I do not need cheap words
Or fake, contrived speech
To make it through the day.

I do not need people who are
Desperate for knee falling praise, or are
Programmed to impress
Who, in secret, try the patience of us all.

I do not want to see idle minds
Expressing empty thoughts
With gestured hands
That make my eyes and ears cringe slowly
As I block their vocal chords'
Constant
Pollution.

Pretentious beings are inevitable and
Ego has no limit,
But I think you should lower your own bar
Because these sub-par actions make the Earth turn
Slowly.
Painfully so.

So I will try to find a sanctuary;
Someone who has the sun between his lips
And clean air in his words
And the sound of running water in his voice,

Who can exemplify what it means
To work someone's soul instead of their ear
And make the sound of thinking hands
Tolerable.
And enjoyable.



"Warmth" by Madison Brang '16

The Unwanted War

by Ian Beckman '16

The war should never have happened. The Etrumani were a reasonable, traditionally peaceful race. They had much in common with Humans in their philosophy on life, despite their significant physical differences. The Etrumani were ammonia-based life forms, who would have considered the icy dunes of Mars a hellish oven. They admittedly had faults, but all sentient beings do, to an extent. Let the record show that they had a deep sense of empathy for fellow sentients, with every desire to understand them, not to make war.

The war should never have happened, yet happen it did. The fault lies not in a carbon-based life form, nor an ammonia-based one. Rather, the blame for this war (if there were anyone to blame) may be directed at a single silicon-based object.

The area of a star system is incomprehensibly Brobdignagian. To describe its unending vastness is an unenviable task best left to the Orbital Guard. It is the duty of the Guard to ensure that that space is safe of dangers, be they natural or artificial.

If a single star system is vast,

all of human space is simply indescribable. If every living being devoted their lives to map every inch of it, the stars would go out before a fraction of a fraction of the task was completed. The Orbit Guard could not possibly have maintained order in such a space, especially with its limited manpower.

Smugglers, pirates, and more were known to easily slip between patrols. Thousands of valuable cargoes were stolen, huge quantities of weapons and drugs passed through customs with ease, and dozens of ships were simply never heard from again. The borders of Human space were as solid as a wet sheet of tissue paper. Something had to be done.

The solution proved to be the Guardian System. Each unit was small, inexpensive, and most importantly, unmanned. Billions of them were manufactured with ease by the great nanofactories in the asteroid belts. They were seeded in a thin dusting along the edges of the solar systems, each one responsible for a few light-hours of space. Immense still, but they were far superior to the previous state.

Each station was wholly autonomous, powered by the gentle push of the solar wind. There was very little to them, other than a small

brace of sensors, power systems, and weapons. The AIs were fairly simple. They were carefully hardened against cybernetic attack, and designed ruggedly enough for decades of life.

Within only a few years, the “hyper lanes” designated by the Orbit Guard truly were as safe as was promised. Pirates and smugglers were swiftly mopped up, the tiny satellites working with unceasing, patient effort. Not one innocent ship was destroyed, and not a single guilty ship escaped.

On Day 3297 of operation, an unknown object approached Guardian Unit #D1357046. It was emitting an unregistered drive signature and its transponder beacon was not turned on.

Guardian Unit #D1357046 sent the ship a request for its registration number and transponder beacon, as well as its reason for coming to the system.

The ship did not reply.

The unit tried its request again, boosting the signal power. It added a query if the ship needed repairs.

The ship did not reply.

The unit repeated its message, this time adding its emergency signal light, which could be seen even if the radio was nonfunctional.

The ship did not reply.

The unit powered up its weap-

ons and pointed a targeting beam at the ship. It once again requested the ship's registration number. The ship did not reply.

Guardian Unit #D1357046 triggered a brief maser pulse, directing the beam only 50 Km off the ship's hull.

The ship veered wildly, attempting to bring up its own meager targeting and defense systems. The unit interpreted this as a hostile action and opened fire on the unknown ship.

Some time later, the ship broke apart under Guardian Unit #D1357046's weapons, and was destroyed. Dozens of Etrumani scientists, researchers, and their families perished in the vacuum of space. However, before the ship was destroyed they had sent a brief, panicked message by hyper-wave.

Concerned by the message, the Etrumani leadership sent a small scout vessel to investigate the incident. It attempted to interface with Guardian Unit #D1357046, but the operating systems were too different to quickly establish a meaningful understanding. The unit obeyed its programming and attacked the scout vessel.

The scout vessel was tougher and better armed than its civilian predecessor, and the unit was badly

damaged. It transmitted a request for backup and repair when its sensor systems were destroyed. Responding to the request, an Orbit Guard destroyer arrived on the scene. Rather than face this much more powerful foe, the scout ship stole Guardian Unit #D1357046 and fled back to base.

Alarmed by the scout ship's reports of an extremely hostile species clearly intent on attacking any neighbors it encountered, the Etrumani assembled an overwhelming force and invaded the system. They were met by Orbital Guard destroyers, and both sides immediately opened fire as if they had been lifelong foes. The Guard was eventually defeated, and the surviving Etrumani forces slagged the planet.

Horried by this alien menace, the Human Alliance assembled its own massive fleet and counterattacked. After a short battle against a surprised population, they slagged an Etrumani planet. And so, as the expression goes, it all went to hell in a hand basket.

Fleet after fleet of immense starships went hunting into space, dropping mountain-sized boulders at high speeds onto enemy-held planets. For more valuable worlds, drop pods and shuttles would rain from the sky, disgorging hundreds

of thousands of soldiers and weapons, scouring across icy wastelands and hellish infernos to capture or destroy enemy resources. Dozens of planets were reduced to radioactive glass, billions slaughtered. Two species that ought to have worked together grappled like wolves for the upper hand.

It was inevitable that Directive 59 was born. Twelve huge asteroids were fitted with jump drives and mass drivers. They were dropped near the edges of Etrumani space and the engines began their long, slow burn. It would take years for them to accelerate to the proper path, but the Humans didn't care. The asteroids were cold hunks of metal, undetectable until they were very, very close. And by then, it would be too late. Whatever it took, the Etrumani menace would be blotted out from the Universe, the Humans vowed.

Still the war raged. The Etrumani, with their spider-like battlesuits and long, whip-like weapons clashed with blunt, blocky Human ships and their towering siege engines. The years washed by like acid rain, wearing away at sanity and patience. To the Humans, the Etrumani were the legions of Hell itself, sent by the Devil. To the Etrumani, the Humans were a cancer, a monster set loose on the

Universe, to be stopped at any cost.

On the red sands of Mars, the last battle was fought. Etrumani drop-ships rained down like hail. Human soldiers blazed away at them with Gatling cannons and heavy masers, sawing away through the Etrumani front lines.

Near the end of the battle, Staff Sergeant David Stein grappled with an Etrumani. His gun had run out hours ago, but a knife was never out of ammunition. Slamming his shoulder against one of its sensor-parts, he bought enough time to yank the knife out of his belt. He plunged the reinforced blade into the frigid alien flesh, bluish-grey blood steaming out of the rent.

With a last, massive shove, the Etrumani tackled him backwards,

onto the ground, slamming him into a jagged metal stanchion. A long twisted spike of aluminum pierced his combat suit, and he felt an unbearable burning sensation as his skin began to freeze, the frigid atmosphere sucking away his warmth and vital fluids.

Still, he hacked out a laugh, and spoke his dying words in a language that the humans had finally learned.

“You blue bastards won’t beat us. We’ve got an asteroid bombardment only hours away from your homeworld. Directive 59 gives its regards.”

The Etrumani replied in perfect English.

“I apologize. For we have done the same. The Highfall Project

sends its regards.”

Staff sergeant David Stein died that day on the icy Martian plains. Next to him, Sub-commander, 27th grade Chrub’nKa’rfa lost her life as her blood boiled out of the battlesuit.

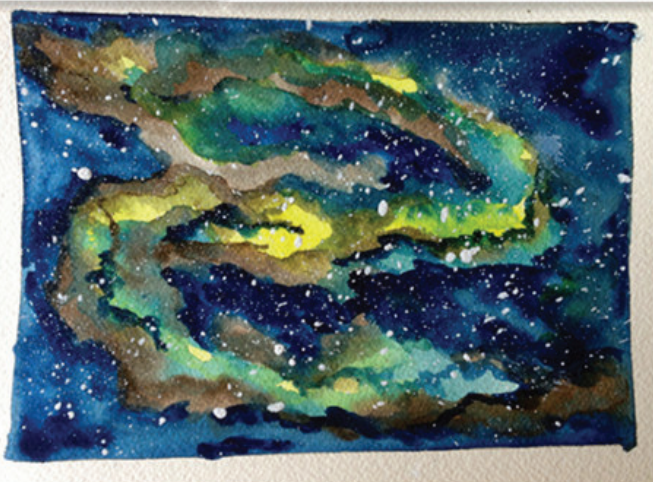
In a dreadful symmetry, twelve massive asteroids plummeted to Earth, shattering the planet into another nondescript belt of rocks orbiting the sun. Dozens of light-years away, the Etrumani capital world of Ara’Ksnrag was obliterated in a wave of fire and molten rock as death rained from the sky.

And then, there finally was peace. But only because everyone was dead.

Silence

by Suzannah Peckham ‘18

Silence shattered with a deafening crack
It wooshed and scattered into dizzy sparks
It hopped out beneath us
Then ran, disappearing behind the cavern of motion
It crouched on a ledge and then leapt into the air.



“The Galaxy” by Mitchie Qiao ‘16

Great Men

by Kathryn Kovarik '16

In the darkness sat two men, one handsome, one haggard; both were dressed finely and had trimmed beards of the latest style.

Spenser pulled uncomfortably at his linen ruff. He could feel the fabric rubbing against the pads of his fingers. It had been starched until it was stiff and straight.

Raleigh carelessly tossed his velvet hat upon one finger. It twirled round and round, the feather flashing. "You really should get one of these, Edmund," he said amiably.

Spenser squinted at his good-looking friend. "Sir Walter," he tried. "I do not think you understand. You have the queen's favor, I am a married man and—"

"Don't worry," said Raleigh. His smile never faltered. "Trust me, you'll find favor enough in the Virgin Queen's court. The Faerie Queen is a masterpiece, my friend. Opportunities abound in London for a poet such as you!"

The poet in question twisted his mouth, but made no further attempt to argue. The two men got to their feet, making their way through the smoky tavern. When outside, they paused a moment

to breathe in fresher air. Spenser immediately choked on the thick scents of rotting flesh and human excrement. Raleigh watched him, clearly amused.

"Still not used to our city, eh?" Spenser's eyes were streaming. "No, not quite," he managed.

On top of the scents of London were also the sounds: the yelling of shopkeepers, the whinnies of horses, the continuous rush of coaches on cobblestone. Raleigh was about to summon one such coach when he heard a sound beside him. He turned sharply, just in time to catch Spenser by the arm.

"What's wrong, man?" Raleigh said, assisting a drooping Spenser back inside.

Spenser held his head. He slumped in the chair Raleigh offered to him. "Think nothing of it. I only need a moment."

Raleigh quickly took a seat beside him. "Perhaps a bit of something strong would cheer you?" He sprung to his feet and made his way to the back of the tavern to fetch a beer.

As soon as Raleigh was out of sight, Spenser's entire demeanor changed. He got to his feet and slipped back outside. It was a short walk down the road, dodging carts

and people, before he reached the Thames. He watched the river, sluggish itself but a center of activity. Boaters, people dumping chamber pots, and of course, in the distance, the infamous London Bridge.

"Sir?" There was someone tugging at Spenser's jerkin.

Spenser recoiled when he saw who it was. "Away, urchin!" he snapped.

The small boy took a step back, but did not flee. "Sir—" he repeated, holding out grimy hands. "Sir, if you please?"

Spenser knew instinctively what Raleigh would do. The handsome man, a charmer to royalty like Queen Elizabeth, would rudely send this little rat on its way. But Spenser wasn't Raleigh.

He put a hand on his purse, gesturing for the boy to come closer. "What's your name?" he said.

The boy sniffed and rubbed his nose. "Sir, if you please?" he repeated, ignoring the question.

Spenser sighed and took out a coin. The boy shook his head. "No, sir—I just want a drink."

Spenser gestured to the river. "Look at all that water."

"I can't drink that." The boy wrinkled his nose. "It's dirty."

Spenser was losing patience. He threw his coin at the boy. "Take that and buy a drink! Now, be off with you!"

The coin bounced off his face. "Is the river yours, sir?" he asked.

Spenser laughed. "Yes! Yes it is!" he cried. "I am the King of all England! All that I see is mine!"

The tattered boy wasn't laughing. He stared at Spenser with big, serious eyes. "Can I buy the river?"

"I thought you said it was dirty," Spenser said.

"I can clean it," answered the boy. He picked Spenser's coin off

the ground and held it out. "I'll buy it from you—with this." The minted silver glinted in the sun.

There was a moment in which Spenser stared incredulously at the urchin. Then he shrugged and plucked the coin from the boy's hand. "All right. Sold."

A smile split the boy's face. "Oh, thank you sir! Thank you!"

Spenser headed back to the tavern, a new spring in his step. He ducked in the open doorway, colliding directly with Raleigh, who was coming out. The two men fell back. Miraculously, the beer in

Raleigh's hand was not spilled.

Raleigh handed it over. "Where were you, Spenser?" he said.

"Taking a walk," Spenser replied. He sipped his beer, barely noticing the taste.

"It's good, isn't it?" said Raleigh. "Top-notch!"

"Oh, I don't know," Spenser muttered, as he walked behind Raleigh. The taller man's shadow crossed over his face. "I just met a boy who bought the whole of the Thames."

Blank Walls

by Mitchie Qiao '16

On the walls of my family's old house, there were countless sketches and scribbles of lines and patterns that could hardly be distinguished. I used to be so proud of those works of art and my ignorant confidence encouraged me to add layers and layers of colors onto those walls. I don't know what happened to my parents' aesthetic values during that time, but they told me that those drawings were beautiful.

My father was strongly against sending me to art classes because he believed that a kid doesn't need

to learn how to cast shadows or how to draw a perspective cube. "Don't let those so-called rules limit your imagination, just draw whatever you want in the way you think it should be." That belief led me to draw blue trees up to age eight while some of my talented friends were drawing perspective figurative sculptures.

Yet those weirdly shaped circles and cubes that I had drawn all those years didn't extinguish my love for drawing. They made me see that there is truly nothing I can't express with my pencil and brushes, so long as I hold on to my imagination. I later did start learning some techniques that would allow me to cast a shadow or draw

a perspective cube, but that only helped me become a more skilled artist instead of changing the way I look at the world.

People say that we are always children in our parents' eyes, and I want to keep it that way. I want to stay as the little girl full of creativity and imagination whom my father sees; I want to view the world without rules or formulas that trap me into a box; I want to express myself in my art and convey my feelings to whoever is willing to contemplate me and my work. I am not allowed to draw on the snow white walls of my family's new apartment anymore, but there is always a wall full of colorful lines and sketches in my heart.

Property of W. H. Fleming

by Maggie SextonDwyer '18

The fall leaves crumpled under her feet as she made her way down the street. The crisp autumn air blew her long hair into her face, obscuring it from my view. I watched as she stalked past my hiding place, muttering to herself, scribbling into her journal. I don't know why I was so intent on following her. I'd never spoken a word to her. We weren't alike at all: she was quiet and only carried that small black notebook that she never stopped writing in. Not only do I hate to write, I wouldn't be able to stay focused long enough to copy down a sentence. Yet I felt a strange, inexplicable sensitivity for her.

She briskly walked down the road, without tossing even a glance behind her. I traced her path, following her from the shadows of the cold stone buildings lining the street. She was easy to follow. As she walked, she pulled the book closer to her face, as if it had something to tell her. It guided her off the empty road, into the woods lining the path. She didn't even look up as she entered the forest, and multiple times she only narrowly managed to avoid the trees stand-

ing in her way. Somehow, they just seemed to jump out of her path, as if they knew she was coming.

As we edged deeper into the forest, the trees thickened. They grew closer and closer together, challenging me to keep up with her. Just when they grew so close that I could barely see her before me, the trees opened and formed a ring around a circular clearing in the midst of the forest. At the edge of the clearing, she shut her book and set it down. She lifted her right hand in front of her, closed her eyes, and waited. All I could do was watch as, slowly, a building was erected in the empty space of the woods. It was as if the light was dancing in the air, bending to reveal a secret palace that had been hidden in these woods, and was just being summoned again for the first time in years. The architecture was simple, yet elegant: wide, marble stairs led up to a porch stretching across the whole front of the house. A small table rested beside double wooden doors, faded, but still standing strong. The walls were white marble, matching the stairs. To the left of the doors was a plaque that read, "Willa H. Fleming." Only then did I realize I hadn't even known the girl's name.

She walked up the stairs and placed her hand softly on the door

handle. I heard a faint click before she passed through the doorway and was gone. Unsure of what to do next, I stepped forward, emerging from the edge of the woods. There it sat in front of me, waiting: her black notebook.

I handled it cautiously as I lifted it, then opened the front cover: *This book belongs to W. H. Fleming. If found, please return to _____.* There was no return address. Inked into the next page was a sketch of the building that stood before me. The drawings continued, one after another, of different views of the house. Each one was unbelievably realistic, as if I was looking at a photograph. But none of them showed me what I really wanted to see: the inside of the house. In the last few pages of the book, in frantic handwriting, there were a few short sentences. Never let anyone in. It must be kept a secret. The words were underlined several times.

I walked, as if in a trance, up the stairs, and stood in front of the entrance. My fear and curiosity raged against each other. For what seemed like days, I stood on that porch, staring at those words. *Never let anyone in. It must be kept a secret.* Bracing myself, I closed the book, placed it on the table, and decided to walk through the door.



“Mystical” by Lilly Maresco ‘17

Emerge

by Hyemin Han '16

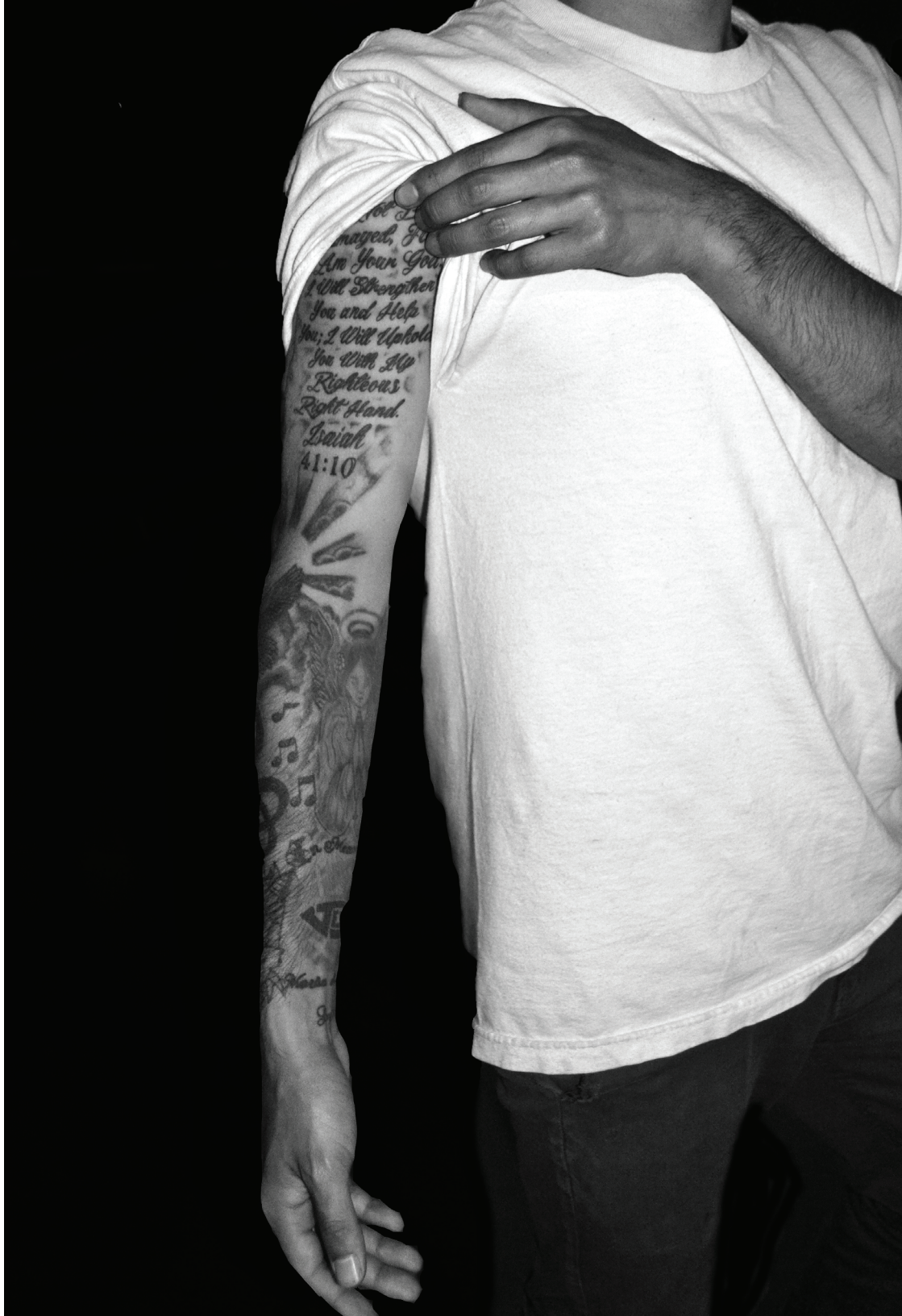
floating, rising fast
towards the bright ceiling of sun
out of the water

“The Waves” by Mitchie Qiao '16





"Prayers" by
Madison Brang '16



Gender & Language

by Emery Spina '16

I couldn't connect with the outside world until I was fifteen. Language was ineffective—I couldn't find words that resonated with me, words that expressed what I felt; and I found that the words that were given to me—words like daughter and sister—did not feel right. I didn't know that there were others besides me who shared that awful feeling. It seemed like everyone else was fine with their words; they all looked so at peace. I didn't understand why I wasn't like them. I was ashamed that I was different, so, naturally, I faked it.

I was around 11 years old when that frustration started to overshadow everything else. That year I had changed schools and had more contact with the world outside of my small Catholic elementary school. Language had a larger presence at my new school. I took Spanish that year and was confronted with something that I could previously ignore: gendered language. Everything in Spanish has a gender: the table (*la mesa*) is feminine; the telephone (*el teléfono*) is masculine; you can't even say you are tired without providing a gender—you are either *cansado*

or *cansada*. I found myself dreading Spanish class, yet I didn't quite know why.

Outside of the Spanish classroom, I encountered another new bit of language, a word that would have a huge presence in my life: transgender. I had heard the term in passing reference to one of the older students who attended my school. I didn't know what it meant, so off to Google I went. I was bombarded with the overwhelmingly negative response that the Internet offered. This one word sparked the onslaught of so much negative language: freak, unnatural, it, pervert. The term transgender was presented to me as if it were a curse word, an insult, something that you did not want to associate with.

Even still, a chord had been struck that I desperately tried to dampen; I had recognized myself in some people's online accounts, but I did not want that word, transgender, to be my future. I doubled-down on my femininity: my female friends taught me how to do makeup and straighten my hair; I started dressing like them, talking like them—getting farther and farther away from my true self. I lost a lot in trying to be one of them: my happiness, my health, my innocence, almost my life. I fell into an

eating disorder and self-destructive behavior that evinced how much pain I had been in.

Then, in 2013, in recovery, I finally came to terms with who I was. Coming out as transgender both to others and myself felt like I had broken through a shell. I had been reborn, and I greeted the world with the wonder that I would've had when I was a child—my curious years of discovery were just postponed a bit. I had finally been granted a body and voice; the pressure that had been building and crushing my words had lifted.

Now I've found that I can't get enough of talking and connecting with people. In addition, I found a new appreciation for Spanish. It was a thrill to be able to say what I was feeling; I wanted to learn how to share that with as many people as I could. That feeling grew when I started to use *cansado* instead of *cansada*, when I heard people saying I was their *amigo*, when my dad called me his son. Language has had such a powerful role in my life; it was incredible to finally feel the benefits of its presence.

It has been a long journey to feel comfortable with and confident in myself—to be someone I liked who maybe others would, too. I now am shamelessly here and eager to engage with the world.

Blood Moon

by Carl Beach '18

It was the morning of the night of the red moon, Gasetoto, and the spirits of the water upon which we floated were preparing for the night's mischief. The water quivered in anticipation, and below schools of fish hurried to coral dens, mangrove caves, and sheltered inlets in preparation for the coming storm. Though the water bustled, it was the excitement of air we were after, Aisea and I. To jump into the water now would be suicidal, though not due to any predator. No, a much more formidable entity was approaching our canoe, and approaching quickly. Aisea looked dizzy with anticipation, and I dare say I felt the same. The first catch of flying fish may be the most commonly described topic in all the islands, and by far the most exaggerated fisherman's tale. Aisea and I had wrapped our hands with cloth and we each carried a woven basket, but our backs remained exposed, for to be cut in this event was an honor in itself. In position and waiting, it took only a minute before a dagger hurtled through the waves, flying over our heads; our final and only warning of the

coming onslaught. Soon, hundreds of shining shards flung themselves at our canoe, battering themselves against our bare chests with stinging thuds. So startling was the attack that I dropped my basket and ducked behind the walls of the canoe. Aisea had more sense, and his hands darted towards the flying animals. I soon regained my senses and joined in, holding my bucket in the air collecting the raining fish. I counted eight in my bucket; Aisea counted twelve in his. Aisea looked at my bloody chest then into my bucket, and I let out a laugh.

There was an air of satisfaction on the short journey home, and I do think that I may have caught Aisea give a rare smile. I had seen Aisea smile on his birthday, and once when I told him about Iwalani, but these occasions were few and far between. Aisea's father had left his world and the islands some ten years earlier, when Aisea was only a couple of years old. Though the general topic of his absence is taboo, I do know his father was taken on a ship, but whether by his own will or not I do not recall. Aisea was left with two gifts: his father's legacy and a shiny tree with two rigid arms that had such a peculiar possessiveness to it that

Aisea would not let it out of his reach. I had often contemplated stealing such a peculiar object but until I truly realized that taking it would have to involve prying off his dead body. They say the pale gods took Aisea's father away on their ship in exchange for wondrous items made of that same wonderful alien material. The ship has not landed on our island since then, but rumors of encounters with these tall gods and their magic have traveled from our neighbors, telling stories of strong men who would also be taken aboard never to return. Since her husband's disappearance, Aisea's mother had been greatly changed. She too had been given all sorts of wondrous talismans, but she despised them, and forbid Aisea from wearing anything made of that shiny material. She had influenced many to believe that those aboard the ship were the evil spirits of the Ocean, whose gifts were cursed and whose debt we must pay or suffer for ten years. Aisea and I had never believed her, and Aisea had even stolen a wonderfully soft circular talisman for me, which though I could not wear, I still treasured. Aisea paddled the canoe behind me, and I held up the baskets of fish triumphantly over

my head as we passed other boats, who gave whoops of applause. All the while, Aisea was smiling.

Later that day, Aisea and I sat upon the shore, next to a fire and glued to the fish. We were misty with sweat. I had a feeling he would not be separated from his catch. This is the only conversation I remember from that day. It is strange, though; I remember so clearly the hot sun and the cool water, the stinging bruises, the surge of pride, the smiling faces, the smooth scales of the fish, and the bright colors, but I do not remember anything we said. I swam for who knows how long; time seems a warped light underwater. When I returned to the beach Aisea was gone, but the fish still cooked, now clearly overdone. I gazed up and down the beach while water dripped in sizzling puddles around me. Then a sudden flash in the water caught my gaze. I remember that evening so clearly, as if the rest of the day were a dream and this moment the only reality. I remember how Aisea flew across the water, parting the ocean with his powerful strokes. The red water simmered around him and the dying sun danced off his back with every movement, which was soon a darkening glow in the

coming evening. But most magnificent was that vessel, whose golden red flags whipped and whose stern seemed even to float above the water. Perched on the horizon on an ever blurrier line where water melts with sky, an even more beautiful sight lay; the dying sun in its final moment of glory that no words can describe. The sun, pulled by invisible chains, was the final anchor of the beast, and slowly it was drawn into the heart of the vessel. All the while Aisea swam towards the vessel whose only anchor was the sun, and his rhythmic strokes were lost as his body became a dot of ever blurrier proportion, that only when squinting still seemed to pulse. Then with a horrific yank, the greedy mouth of the ship swallowed the sun and the sky blackened. A dark mist spread over the water, and in that brief moment of twilight, the vessel, now with anchor aboard, had vanished, either to the dark waves or the silvery sky above I do not know. Also in that moment Aisea had disappeared, but with utmost certainty I can say he flew to the sky, where his back still twinkles as he swims after his father. Then the moon rose above the waves, its surface red but its light no less pure. The entire scene was so

breathtaking, and it wasn't until the beat of drums sounded that I pulled away from the magnet of the moon.

The following morning, the beach was riddled with ocean treasures from the red moon, and the village feasted on the free wealth that the ocean had provided. I ran through the many fresh bodies of fish washed to shore and sighed with relief upon finding that Aisea was not among them. I had told his mother of the vessel which had taken him away the previous night, and as tears of joy rolled down her face shuddering tears of anger washed my eyes. Never before have I seen such a wicked woman. She says her son's sacrifice to the ocean will mean that for the ten years until the next red moon appears, the evil spirits of the ocean will be subdued. I do not think he should have paid another's debt, but I know now that he has found his father, and that gives me peace. And as I sit here now, recalling my youth, I know the sun's rays still shine, the water's cool relief still remains, and the ocean still laps at the smooth beach, almost as if the land were an open wound that all know salt water, given time, will seal.

